

AYEG

Cross-Border Cooperation

Practical Guide

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Foreword

The present guide has been prepared within the frames of the project “Enhancing cross-regional cooperation between Georgia-Turkey border regions and CBC capacity development in Georgia”, implemented by the Association of Young Economists of Georgia (AYEG) and its partner organization – Black Sea NGO Confederation (KASTOB). The guide is designed to develop the capacity of local stakeholders (representatives of local authorities, CSO, community organizations, and business associations), as well as to establish and maintain cooperation schemes with their counterparts from bordering regions. The guide includes both legal and managerial perspectives on how the cooperation schemes should be initiated and implemented. It also includes various cases of cross-border cooperation from Georgian as well as European experience. For its most part, the present guide is based on European experience and approaches to cross-border cooperation, and is intended to stimulate Georgian authorities to participate in the process.

The guide consists of six parts. The introductory part provides definitions and forms of cross-border cooperation, as well as historical review of its emergence and development. This part also discusses the rationale for cross-border cooperation within regional and national context.

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PART I - Introduction

Definition

Cross-border cooperation can be defined as neighborly relations exercised bilaterally or trilaterally among local communities and authorities on either side of land and sea borders. While cooperation may take place between various players including local/regional public administrations, civil society/community organizations, educational/research institutions, business companies or even individuals, in the present guide cross border cooperation will be mainly used to describe relations between “local communities and authorities”, as defined by the Madrid Outline Convention, that is, public and para-public bodies whose geographic location gives them *“powers covering a smaller area than those of the State”*

Simply said: “...cross-border cooperation is cooperation among local communities and authorities who are neighbors since divided by state borders...”

Forms

The process of developing cross-border co-operation may be more or less complex depending on:

- Partners’ size and functions;
- Number of partners;
- Agreements and treaties;
- Cultural traditions, ethnic and languages disparities;
- Historical background;
- Existing challenges and society needs;
- Etc.

Different forms are applied in different cooperation areas. Respectively, it is very difficult to identify the model that might be universally and uniformly applicable, particularly given the cross-border co-operation infancy, gradual development and adaptation to a wide range of geographical and legal contexts.

Co-operation may take a form of informal dialogue in the area of common concern or the form of building joint facilities in the fields such as sanitation or health. Therefore, two main forms of cooperation have been identified based on the type of relationship between the cooperating parties: informal and formal cooperation.

Informal Cooperation

A great deal of cooperation is conducted informally, which means that partners do not have any formal agreement that would provide legal basis; rather they are bounded by an agreement in principle. This form of cooperation is often used in the early stages of co-operation or in the absence of a legal

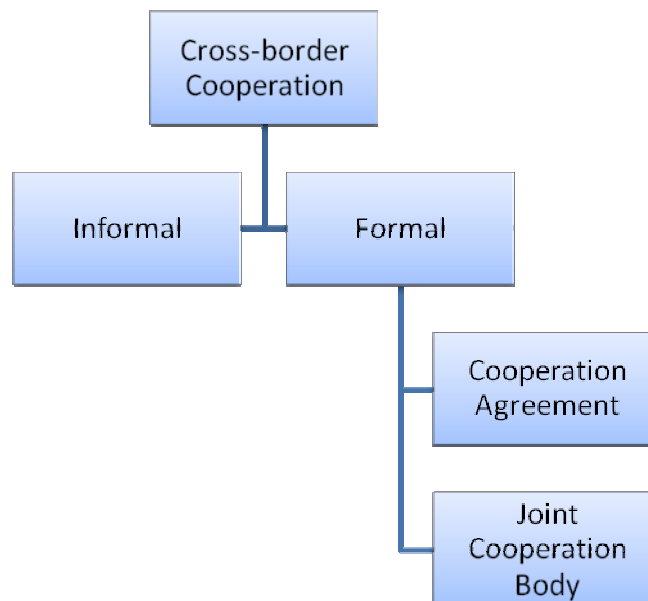
framework enabling local communities and authorities to formalize their co-operation (e.g. joint events/meetings organized by counterparts from bordering regions that do not require any legal basis, but rather commitment and interest from both parties.)

Formal Cooperation

Formalization of cooperation might take several forms. At the initial phase, partners usually sign co-operation agreements legalizing their partnership, set common objectives and enter into mutual relationships while overcoming differences between countries with respect to administrative and institutional structure of local authorities.

Agreements, depending on their type, might be legality binding or non-binding. Most cooperation agreements take the form of memorandum of understanding in which parties state their commitment to certain issues (e.g. a memorandum of understanding/memorandum of cooperation between local universities to cooperate in curricula development process).

At a more advanced level of cooperation, partners may set up and *joint cross-border co-operation bodies* with or without legal personality and autonomy, which implements cross-border arrangements and projects under the supervision of their members. The establishment of such joint bodies has become possible thanks to the combined effects of some domestic law and certain international agreements, such as the Additional Protocol to the Madrid Outline Convention.



Historical Background - Europe

Besides its diverse, but nevertheless often shared culture and history, Europe is also characterized by its multiple borders. The state borders, created in Europe during the last three centuries often separate regions and ethnic groups, which actually belong together. Transport routes often used to run parallel to the national borders, mainly for military reasons. In the border areas, possessing raw materials such as coal and ore, important industries emerged, which led to and population and wealth growth. The development frequently caused envy and political disagreements between neighboring borders leading

sometimes to even wars. However, apart from these exceptions, the European border areas rather developed into peripheral, structurally weak areas with limited transport links.

The fear of military aggression led to the development of extremely sparsely-populated border areas. Economic activity, commerce and population tended to dwindle away from the borders to the centre of the nation-states. Natural borders, such as rivers, lakes, seas and mountains even reinforced natural barriers. Different policies on either side of the border, especially concerning law, administration, taxation, economics, culture and social affairs, supported the transformation from state borders into actually noticeable barriers between nation states. The people in the bordering regions, who were most affected by the consequences of historic conflicts, developed mutual fears and animosities. These conditions, in turn, had negative effects on the willingness to cooperate and to establish closer contacts.

In the 20th century, however, the development of economic, cultural and social exchanges and population and commuter flows between border areas – of the Benelux zone¹, for instance – helped to bring local communities and authorities together around common concerns and problems (environmental protection of, say, a river border, cultural and economic development, use of health facilities and so on).

Shortly after the Second World War representatives of a number of European border areas got together to discuss the dismantling of border barriers and the possibilities for cross-border cooperation. This was motivated mainly by the desire to raise living standards, to ensure lasting peace as well as to overcome border barriers, restrictions and other factors, which had led to the separation of people and institutions in adjacent border areas. This also included the overcoming of natural borders by the construction of bridges and tunnels. Consequently, the first cross-border co-operation schemes appeared immediately after WW II in the form of twinning between municipalities and communities of various European countries.

The first “Euro-region” was set up in 1958 along the German-Dutch border (the EUREGIO around Gronau) and the first Council of Europe recommendation on cross-border co-operation, which later gave rise to the Madrid Outline Convention, was produced in 1966. Since then, a number of euro-regions, as well as international organisations aiming to promote cross border co-operation, have been created. The Council of Europe has recently made a first step towards the establishment of a Black Sea Euro-region at a meeting held in Samsun in autumn 2006.

Since the beginning of the 1970s, the border regions successfully started to pursue their policies with the help of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), which was founded in 1971. AEBR established close contacts to the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, the European Commission and national governments. The network of border and cross-border regions in Europe has become a powerful force in the development of cross-border cooperation on all European borders, the enhancement of the European integration and the development of European aid programs in favor of the border regions in the whole of Europe. At the end of the 1980s, the establishment of the European Single Market and the democratic developments in Central and Eastern Europe opened most national borders even further. Numerous new border and cross-border regions were established and became members of AEBR.

A steady increase in the number of cross-border co-operation schemes appeared after the establishment of the European Union since the EU paid more attention to the support of cross border co-operation development within its internal and external borders as well as the cross border regions of the partner states. In the late 1990s, the EU launched INTERREG, the first community initiative for promotion of cross border co-operation, INTERREG started as INTERREG I for the programming period 1989-93, and continued as INTERREG II for the subsequent period 1994-99. It moved on to INTERREG III for the period 2000-2006. Projects from that were closed by the end of 2008. INTERREG IV is currently operational, covering 2007-2013.

INTERREG is a community initiative designed to stimulate the cooperation between the member states of the European Union on different levels. One of its main targets is to diminish the influence of national borders in order to attain equal economic, social and cultural development of the whole territory of the European Union by fostering the balanced development of the continent through cross-border (stand A), transnational (stand B) and interregional cooperation (stand C). Special emphasis has been placed on integrating remote regions and those, which share external borders with the EU candidate countries. The initiatives have been financed under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

INTERREG differs from the majority of cohesion policy programs in one important respect: it involves collaboration among authorities of two or more Member States. Also, INTERREG measures are not only required to demonstrate a positive impact on the development on either side of the border, but their design and, possibly, their implementation must be, respectively, developed and carried out on a common cross-border basis.

Once the operational programs get approved by the European Commission, the implementation of the programs is coordinated by steering committees, comprising representatives of the authorities responsible for cohesion policy measures in each member state. These can be both central state agencies and regional agencies. Like almost all cohesion policy measures, INTERREG projects require co-funding to be provided by member states, regional authorities or the project leaders themselves. The amount of co-funding required differs by region, ranging from 50% down to 0% in the poorest regions.

The final beneficiaries of INTERREG funds usually are public authorities, interest associations and non-profit organizations, such as chambers of commerce, employer organizations, unions or research institutes. Under INTERREG IV, private are only eligible if they apply through a consortium of several firms; in previous program periods, they were not eligible at all.

INTERREG community Initiative has been recently renamed as European Territorial Co-operation objective. However, the idea behind it is the same: it encourages regions and cities from different EU member states to work together and learn from each other through joint programs, projects and networks. The European Territorial Co-operation objective covers three types of programs: cross-border cooperation programs (cooperation along internal EU borders), transnational cooperation programs (cooperation between larger areas, such as the Baltic Sea, Alpine and Mediterranean regions) and interregional cooperation programs (cooperation between regional and local bodies of all 27 member states of the EU).

Overall, during the period from 2007 to 2013, 52 cross-border cooperation programs will be implemented under the European Territorial Co-operation objective, including:

Encouraging **entrepreneurship**, especially the development of SMEs, tourism, culture and cross-border trade;
Improving joint management of **natural resources**;
Supporting links between **urban and rural areas**;
Improving access to **transport and communication** networks;
Developing joint use of **infrastructure**;
Administrative, **employment** and **equal opportunities** work.¹

In addition, the EU formed the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), a new European legal instrument designed to facilitate and promote cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation. Unlike the structures, which governed this kind of cooperation before 2007, the EGTC is a legal entity and will enable regional and local authorities and other public bodies from different member states to set up cooperation groupings with a legal personality. Member States, regional or local authorities, associations any other public body may become members of the EGTC.

The EGTC is unique in the sense that it enables public authorities of various Member States to team up and deliver joint services, without requiring a prior international agreement to be signed and ratified by national parliaments. Member States must, however, agree to the participation of potential members in their respective countries.²

Besides the European Territorial Co-operation objective that encourages cooperation between EU member states, Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) has become a key priority of the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) which aims at reinforcing cooperation between member states and partner countries along the external border of the European Union and covers the countries of Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus, and the Southern Mediterranean.

Adoption of the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) has considerably enhanced the scope for cross-border cooperation, both qualitatively and quantitatively. In the perspective of reinforcing cooperation with countries, bordering the European Union, the ENPI includes a component specifically targeted at cross-border cooperation (CBC).

The ENPI CBC strategy has four key objectives:

1. **Promote economic and social development in border areas.** Integrated and sustainable regional development in the border regions is essential in helping to promote prosperity, stability and security on the EU's external borders – the key objective of the ENP, and an important element in the EU's Strategic Partnership with Russia. The ENPI-CBC programs aim at helping public and private actors to address the opportunities and challenges offered by proximity with the EU. The promotion of economic and social development is a key objective deserving special attention in the ENPI CBC programs.
2. **Address common challenges.** Working together to address common challenges in fields such as the environment, public health and the prevention of and the fight against organized crime.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/crossborder/index_en.htm

² http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/index_en.htm

Local authorities on the EU's Eastern borders will face a particular challenge in addressing the environmental degradation caused by economic restructuring and the historical neglect of environmental issues.

3. **Ensure efficient and secure borders.** The EU's external borders still face challenges with respect to the quality of basic border infrastructures and procedures relating to their operational management. Border crossings need to facilitate the movement of goods and people to contribute to wider economic and social objectives beyond the adjacent border regions.
4. **Promote people-to-people cooperation.** In addition to initiatives carried forward at the national and regional level, the ENPI-CBC programs provide the opportunity to strengthen people-to-people and civil society contacts at the local level, in a context of full local ownership. Actions in the social, educational, cultural and media fields, as well as enhanced cross-border contacts between civil society groups and NGOs, can also contribute to promoting local governance and democracy, and to enhancing mutual understanding.

Two types of programs have been established under the ENPI:

1. Land border programs between two or more countries sharing a common border (or short sea crossing)
2. Multilateral programs covering a sea basin

Altogether 15 CBC programs have been established along the Eastern and Southern external borders of the European Union with a total funding of 1,118,434 million EUR for the 7-year period 2007-2013. among them are:

Three sea basin programs

1. The Black Sea Program
2. The Mediterranean Sea Program
3. The Baltic Sea Region Program

It is the task of the regional and local partners on both sides of the border to analyze their common needs and to identify priorities and actions that are most relevant to their local situation. The management of the programs is entrusted to a local or national authority jointly selected by all participating countries in a program. For this purpose, specific provisions for CBC have been incorporated in the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), and detailed implementation provisions are set out in Implementing Rules adopted by the Commission.

By its nature, CBC is intended to benefit those regions which directly share a land or maritime border with the EU, and their counterparts on the EU side of the border. CBC uses an approach largely modeled on 'Structural Funds' principles such as multiannual programming, partnership and co-financing, adapted to take into account the specificities of the EC's external relations rules and regulation. One major innovation of the ENPI CBC can be seen in the fact that the programs involving regions on both sides of the EU's border share one single budget, common management structures, a common legal framework and implementation rules giving the programs a fully balanced partnership between the participating countries.

Importance

Cross-border cooperation is considered to be a driving force for regional development. It is generally assumed that cross border co-operation is a necessary component for regional development since it contributes positively to the socio-economic development of the regions and solves specific problems related to border regions.

Border regions usually suffer from low levels of infrastructure, strong dependence on interstate relations, fear from border conflicts which lead to underdevelopment and frighten away investors and businesses, ageing population and out-migration, low level of attraction to businesses. Cross border cooperation may play an important role in rural development through the joint rural development strategies (road, sewage and wastes, energy, education, etc), infrastructural development and improvement of transport facilities, joint utilization of environmental resources.

Indeed, the importance of cross border cooperation is illustrated by the growing attention paid to it by the two main European institutions: the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

Greater importance of the cross-border cooperation was observed after the interest and involvement of the EU. Indeed, the statement of the European Union says that “the EU considers co-operation with its regional partners – and between the partners themselves – to be an important political objective. By helping beneficiary countries to focus on common challenges, a regional approach has the potential to enhance confidence among partner countries, thus promoting increased security, stability, and prosperity. Some challenges – such as developing trans-national transport corridors, tackling sea pollution or fighting terrorism and organized crime – have an inherent cross-border character and can only be tackled through a co-operative effort at regional level.”³

Under the new approach foreseen in the ENPI, cross-border cooperation (CBC) has an essential role to play, distinct from other forms of cooperation by virtue of operating for the benefit of both sides of the EU’s external border.

The core policy objectives of CBC on the external borders of the Union are to support sustainable development along both sides of the EU’s external borders, to help ameliorate differences in living standards across these borders and to address the challenges and opportunities following on EU enlargement or otherwise arising from the proximity between regions across the land and sea borders. Notwithstanding the substantial differences, which characterize the different regions on the European Union’s Eastern and Southern borders, a number of common challenges can be identified. In this particular context, cross-border cooperation may play an important role since an integrated and harmonious regional development across the EU border is particularly important in a situation characterized by different rates of economic development, high-income disparities and different demographic dynamics.

Environmental issues are particularly important in the context of shared sea basins like the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Environmental issues are no less important on land-borders, though here they are often of a more localized character, particularly in relation to cross border waters (rivers and lakes).

³ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/regional-cooperation/index_en.htm

Public health issues take on a particular value in the cross-border context, for example, in relation to communicable diseases (e.g. tuberculosis, HIV-Aids), or possible epidemic or pandemic disease.

Fight against organized crime is a key cross-border challenge. The EU supports bilateral, regional cross-border and international cooperation with third countries in improving the prevention and fight against organized crime, corruption and terrorism.

Effective border management requires that the EU's external borders are both efficient (facilitating cross-border movement of persons and legitimate trade and transit) and secure (preventing illegal border-crossing, illegitimate trade and transit).

Another challenge, and opportunity, shared across all the EU's external borders is that of promoting people-to-people cooperation, enhancing contact between civil-society groups on both sides of the border.

In addition, CBC serves as an effective tool for conflict prevention and plays an important role in establishing stability and democracy at the regional level⁴, which is particularly important in Georgian context. The South Caucasus Republics have been invited by the EU to enter in an enhanced regional and cross border co-operation and shared responsibility in conflict prevention and conflict resolution. The promotion of regional cooperation in the Southern Caucasus is a high ranking priority of the action plans signed with the three countries. It has been acknowledged that the peaceful solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Georgia's conflicts are essential for stability in the EU neighborhood. The cross-border programs in the South Caucasus should be seen as tool for conflict transformation and peace-building, they should promote confidence-building across ceasefire lines and increase engagement with non-recognized republics.⁵

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) has recently adopted a recommendation stressing the particular importance of cross border co-operation and its importance for promoting democratic stability and mutual understanding between the states and their communities including ethnic minorities living in the border regions.⁶

In this regard, cross border cooperation acquires particular importance in the Georgian context as a tool for conflict prevention and peace building as well as an important component for socio-economic development. The new cross-border cooperation programs being established under the ENPI will for the first time offer a real possibility of promoting grass-roots cooperation among local and regional authorities and addressing issues of common concern – such as the environment, transport and communications, maritime safety, the marine environment, regional economic development, tourism, and socio-cultural exchanges.

Along with numerous organizations established for Black Sea area development, since from January 2007, the Black Sea States formed the union; a strengthened regional approach is expected to become

⁴<http://www.ewi.info/ourwork/index.cfm?title=Regional%20and%20Transfrontier%20Cooperation&activityID=11>

⁵ http://www.caucaz.com/home_eng/breve_contenu.php?id=290

⁶http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/majorhazards/ressources/APCAT/2008/apcat2008_12_REC1829_EN.pdf

an essential part of our neighborhood policy. The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) is being perceived as a useful platform for dialogue and cooperation with the region as a whole.

PART II - Legal framework for Cross-border cooperation

International legislation overview

Institutional capacity of local and regional authorities in the EU's partner countries is the crucial element for the successful implementation of CBC program, defining the opportunities for EU bordering countries to take part in this type of cooperation. The capacity includes not only the resources necessary to implement the projects but also legal capacity, which determines the forms and frames of cooperation. Because of the above factors, issues of local government reform become important for a country and find their way to national reform agenda to be reflected in the ENPI Action Plans. The issues concerning the capacity are also crucial for Georgia.

Before discussing Georgian experience, it is important to view CBC through the prism of legal framework, which importantly defines the frames for countries participating in CBC projects. One of the most important international Documents providing the legal framework for cross border cooperation is a Madrid Convention.

The Convention was launched by Council of Europe in 1980. One of the main reasons behind the initiation of a Madrid convention was the goal of developing border regions, which were underdeveloped and had mostly peripheral roles. Macro-regional integration initiatives, such as the European Union and NAFTA, have also spurred the establishment of [cross-border regions](#). These were initiatives driven by local or regional authorities, aimed at dealing with local border-transcending problems such as transport and environmental degradation.

The major goal of the Madrid Convention is to promote cross border cooperation and facilitate the conclusion of agreements between regions and local authorities on opposite sides of a border. It provides a legal framework for cooperation below national level in different fields of a state's social, economic or political life.

The convention consists of two major parts. The First part outlines the legally binding regulations of agreements and the second part provides guidance in the form of model agreements, for potential cross border cooperation cases, like the treaty of 1974 between Luxembourg and the German Land [Rheinland-Pfalz](#). These model agreements and treaties range from the exchange of information between the border regions to clearly defined legal obligations.

The convention legally binds the signatory states to facilitate and support cross border cooperation initiatives coming from territorial authorities, and if necessary promote conclusion of agreements between the interested parties which in their nature will be legally binding.

In 1995 November 8, the additional convention was supplemented to the convention. The major goal of this additional protocol was to broaden opportunities for cross border cooperation. According to this

protocol cross-border co-operative arrangements can be realized in the form of independent bodies which may or may not have [legal personality](#). The body can be a public or [private law](#) entity but its arrangement correspondingly should coincide with the relevant national legal systems.

The co-operative body which has a legal status and which confines with national legal requirements cannot be empowered to take measures which affect the rights and freedoms of individuals. However, the additional protocol expands the mode of cross-border cooperation, by giving the signatory states the option to extend the powers of such co-operation bodies (art. 5). They can be established as public law bodies whose decisions have the same [legal power](#) as the participating authorities themselves. Such entities can make decisions which are legally binding not only for the participating authorities but also for any individuals affected.

The article changes the nature of cross-border cooperation, and takes it onto the whole new level, which might have far-reaching implications. The body will be defined as transnational [public authority](#). Because of these far-reaching implications and possibilities Germany, France and Sweden chose to sign the protocol without art. 5.

In 1998 May the 5th the second optional protocol was added to the Madrid Convention. The major objective of this protocol was to give the overall convention backing, by promoting cooperation between the authorities of territories that are not directly contiguous.

Talking about legal opportunities or boundaries in cross-border cooperation it is important to note that while most council of Europe members have ratified Madrid Outline Convention (33 out of 46) border local communities can only cooperate with neighboring state communities within the framework of their domestic law. In short, if a subject of communication or a form of cooperation is against the domestic law and its principles, no international law or agreement can make a cooperation legally bounding for parties.

Article 2 of Madrid Convention outlines that “trans-frontier cooperation shall take place in the framework of territorial communities or authorities powers defined in domestic law.”

Finding a legal framework for cross-border cooperation between border communities is a complex matter as the rules and laws governing the communities, as well as competencies assigned to them vary widely across the states depending on a state’s institutional structure. States have different arrangements and systems of local and regional governments. For example in Georgia Regional administration does not have legal power to initiate cross border cooperation in contrast to local communities, which does hold that power.

In such circumstances the role of international agreements such as Madrid convention, which gives the baselines of cross-border cooperation for states joining and accepting the principles of the Convention, can be put under the question. But in reality the Madrid Convention does provide broad opportunities for cross-border partnerships, as the combined effect of states domestic law and international agreements concluded by the states will determine the room for maneuver for local communities.

Accordingly, the absence of a legal framework has prompted the communities to use “de facto” tools such as associations or foundations, in order to implement cross-border initiatives.

Therefore, a great deal of cooperation within the cross border framework is being conducted informally. Partner communities and authorities are bound by an agreement in principle. This informal form of cooperation is often used at the beginning of cooperation or in the absence of a legal framework, which enables the parties to formalize their relations.

Georgian legislation overview

Before we discuss stages of cooperation existing in Georgia and how the regions are involved in cross-border cooperation, we should discuss Georgian territorial arrangement and legal aspects governing this type of relations.

Georgian territorial arrangement is quite complicated. Currently, Georgia consists of two autonomous republics, one temporary administrative and territorial unit and 69 local self-governments.

Georgia is divided into 9 regions (Kvemo Kartli, Kakheti, Imereti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Guria, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti; Tbilisi – the capital - does not hold the status of a region) but at present, Georgia has no legal act providing the definition of a “region”. Legal acts concerning regions use this term with its different meaning, marking geographic location, or historical site. In international treaties as well as in national legislation the term region is frequently applied in relation to the historical-geographic regions of Georgia.

In addition, any agreements signed between Georgian and neighboring region face certain restriction because of problem connected with the territorial arrangement. The state territorial arrangement of Georgia is stipulated by Article 2.3 of the Constitution subject to which “the territorial state structure of Georgia shall be determined by a Constitutional Law upon the basis of the principle of circumscription of authorization after the complete restoration of the jurisdiction of Georgia over the whole territory of the country”.

By declaring the above said, the Constitution of Georgia puts a temporary restriction on the issue of the state territorial arrangement of the country. Accordingly, until the restoration of Georgia’s territorial integrity, any legal acts defining the country's state territorial arrangements contradict the Constitution of Georgia. The aforementioned article of the Constitution represents an impediment, which affects measures undertaken in defining territorial arrangement of the country.

The regions have their administrations, governors. However, the regional administration does not have legal power to implement cross-border cooperation schemes. Correspondingly, regions and their administrations cannot act as a subject of legally binding relationships. Notwithstanding this Georgia has concluded different international agreements and treaties, which contribute to the development of partnerships between the bordering regions.

For facilitating cross-border cooperation it is important for a regional administration or municipalities to have a strategy, based on which the relationships with the representatives of CBC partners will be directed

According to Article 16.2 (q) of the Organic Law on Local Self-Government, the exclusive rights of local self-governments include the one “to approve social and economic development priorities, municipal

programs and plans for self-government.” The Law, however, has no provisions on the right to authorize the development of a strategy for the self-governments. However this does not deprive the self-government of the right to develop a strategic paper.

In Georgia, regional development priorities were and still are defined by the ministries and state Trustees – Governors - based upon the information provided to the Government of Georgia. No legal instrument ensures the involvement and participation of the local self-governments in the elaboration of regional development programs.

Notwithstanding the above legal restrictions, it is important to note that Georgia has signed the Madrid Convention. In 2006 28 of April Georgian parliament has ratified by the resolution #2961 – I “European Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation”. According to this convention, each signatory party takes on the responsibility to support and stimulate trans-frontier cooperation between the administrative territorial units/governmental bodies of one country with the same bodies of a bordering country. In addition, parties take the responsibility to support any kind of agreement between the regions, based on the considerations of the differences inherent in the national laws of each party.

According to the convention, if signatory parties consider signing a separate interstate agreement, on cross-border issues, in this case this agreement can be concluded inter alia settling down the form, content and frame, within which governmental bodies can cooperate in order to implement cross-border programs.

Georgia has concluded international agreements with Italy, France, China, Germany, Poland, Iran, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia and others, according to which Georgia takes the responsibility to support and stimulate partnership between Georgian regions and cities with regions of other countries.

Notwithstanding these agreements as we have noted earlier, because the region does not have a legal status, the responsibilities taken under these agreements are not fulfilled.

Local self-governments are more eligible to conclude agreements with municipalities, as they have legal status, within the Georgian national legislation. Georgian parliament resolution N2961 of April 2006 states that within the framework of the "Convention on Trans-frontier Cooperation", cross-border cooperation with other signatories of the convention will be realized by the conclusion of interstate agreements between the parties”. According to this statement Georgian municipalities or governmental bodies will only have the right to sign a cross-border agreement with other regions, if Georgia signs an agreement with a certain country and defines the content, forms and frames of the cross-border cooperation. In addition, it is possible to define in the agreement the bodies that will have the right to set a cross-border agreement.

It is important to note that, according to the convention after the interstate agreement between the countries regarding the cross-border cooperation is signed, local self government or other government bodies will have the right to set an agreement only within the framework of the rights, which are given to them y the national legislation.

At present local self-governments does not have the right to independently set an agreement with other country’s local self-government bodies.

From April 28th 2008 till today Georgia has not set any interstate agreement, on the basis of which local self-governments will have the right to sign so called cross-border agreements with neighboring countries regions or municipalities.

Experience of Georgian regions in cross-border cooperation

Notwithstanding the fact that Georgia lacks legal basis for establishing effective cross-border cooperation schemes, majority of Georgian regions (regional authorities), have established some forms of co-operation with the regions of neighbouring or foreign countries.

The co-operation of Georgian regions is mostly demonstrated by twinning between major cities and municipalities and by signing a memorandum of co-operation. These are the major forms that CBC takes within the Georgian reality. Tbilisi and major cities from nine Georgian regions (Ajara, Kvemo Kartli, Kakheti, Imereti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Guria, Samtskhe-Javakheti, and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti) have been twinned or signed a memorandum of co-operation with other cities.

Co-operation of Georgian regions with neighbouring regions is mostly based on information sharing activities, which is the early first stage of co-operation. More advanced forms of co-operation, such as implementing joint projects or the establishment of joint committees, are very rare. Most co-operation practices are conducted in the form of individual meetings with representatives of regions or study visits and tours aimed at information and experience sharing between the regions.

In addition most information sharing activities or study tours are exercised in the fields of education and culture. This also indicates on the early stages of co-operation practices, as generally these are two major fields which serve as a start up projects, before establishing long term strategies in co-operation.

A number of activities have been implemented aiming towards strengthening economic and business relations between regions although this is still mainly conducted through information and experience sharing. They would better be defined as educational rather than economic programs owing to their nature.

Currently, it seems that there is a low importance attached to cross-border co-operation of regions by the Government of Georgia. International co-operation of regions and cross border co-operation has not been mentioned in any major state documents produced by the Government of Georgia. Neither the Basic Data and Directions (BDD) document nor the Law on the State Budget for 2009 mention cross-border co-operation of regions. Co-operation perspectives for regions are not mentioned in the Passports on the regions of Georgia, the only official reports on Georgian regions produced by the Government of Georgia in 2007-2008.

As mentioned above most cross-border activities implemented in Georgia are at the initial stage of cooperation. At this initial stage of initiating communication and information sharing with bordering regions different actors can be involved. This means that local Authorities, interest groups as well as non-governmental organisations are at the same footing and have the opportunity to start-off the initial stage of cross-border cooperation.

PART III - Cross-border cooperation in action: initiation and development process of cooperation schemes

Prerequisites for success of CBC

Successful cross-border cooperation requires firstly, for elected representatives or local authorities of each border regions, to know each other and their interests well enough to base their relationships on a mutual trust. Secondly these elected representatives should have human resources in order to formulate and implement cross-border cooperation schemes. The human resources necessary for CBC can take a form of a team or a department, responsible for undertaking necessary steps in cross-border cooperation.

Successful cooperation requires:

- A strong political commitment from the side of involving parties;
- This commitment should be backed up by a strong team which manages the cooperation project;
- This arrangement can start with “one off activity” but should turn into long term cooperation;
- There should be clearly defined priority action area.

It is important to remember that these prerequisites are also necessary for starting off a concrete cross –border cooperation projects. In addition for successful cross border cooperation:

- Cooperation should be based on partnership and subsidiarity, involving all those who can contribute to the process;
- It is vital to keep cross border cooperation as close as possible to the individual citizen at regional and local level;
- Politicians at all levels, being it local, regional, or national should be involved;
- There should be established a cross-border structure; a joint branch office and a joint budget need to be developed, as a tool for increasing cooperation.

Stages of Cooperation

First of all, before we start discussing stages of co-operation it should be noted that two basic forms of working structures can be outlined in the process of cross-border cooperation: First – “One-off Activity” which is the cooperation for a specific purpose. In many cases, bordering regions enter into co-operation in connection with particular problem or project, mainly this is a one-off activity aimed at resolving a problem.

Second structure is a “Strategic and Development Oriented Cooperation”, which is directed at more long term initiative. Obviously these two major forms of cooperation require different structures. Coming out from these two major types of co-operation, the stages of cross-border partnership are evolving.

Usually along many borders, de facto cooperation precedes co-operation between local authorities. This means that at the initial stage of cross border communication it is not necessary to have any legal framework or authority to develop cross-border cooperation schemes.

It is important to note that, notwithstanding the stage at which the cooperation between borders develops, or the structure within which cooperation evolves or the tools with the help of which cooperation is realized, all of these should be directed at enabling parties to meet the specific needs and expectations of people living on both sides of the border.

Talking about stages it is also important to note that different stages may involve the usage of different tools to accomplish the communication on different stages, while discussing the stages of cooperation we will touch upon those instruments.

We can define three major stages in cross-border cooperation

- (1) Coordination between partners: getting to know each other;
- (2) Development of strategies;
- (3) Program management;

(1) Coordination between partners - Getting to know each other

The first stage starts out with the communication of interests with bordering representatives. The initiative may come from the small group of communities or authorities. Generally cross border cooperation starts with individual initiative and the first step is the initial contact with the representatives of bordering regions. Gradually in the process of information sharing and communication between the parties the representatives get to know each other, which means knowing the historical background, traditions, thus in the process building trust which is crucial on the first stage of communication.

At this first initial stage, cooperation evolves and develops in terms of partnership, partners involved in the cooperation slowly gain better understanding of the issues and area of cooperation and slowly define more specific projects.

So, the first stage of cooperation involves two major components:

- gaining the mutual understanding of participants on the both sides of the border;
- identifying issues and actions of common interest, and deciding on the goals to be pursued and first activities to be implemented.

This is the first stage when the parties decide on initiating cross border cooperation, communicate with the border authorities or other representatives and define the possible areas of cooperation.

One instrument used during this first stage is different cross border forums and networks established in regions on both sides of the border and supported by a secretariat. These instruments serve as a mechanism to facilitate cooperation and overcome major cultural or language barriers. So at the first stage of the cooperation socio cultural cooperation is crucial and often serves as a basis for future more

deep cooperation and as a basic platform on which successful cross border economic or infrastructure projects can be built.

Instituting initial political and technical working procedures

In order to carry out the cooperation tasks after the initial informal approaches, it is essential to:

Establish the **political management structure**, which may simply take the form of an **informal cross-border steering group** meeting at regular intervals to review the progress and ensure that it is in line of the objectives originally set. This group will be made up of representatives of the initial communities and authorities behind the project, and may be enlarged to include other participants as work progresses;

Set up a **technical working group**, for example by co-coordinating representatives of the departments responsible for town and country planning and development; this group, which will meet more frequently than the steering group, will be responsible for monitoring the progress, conducting initial technical exchanges, carrying out any initial researches, organizing the meetings of political steering groups and possibly setting up the sub-groups on specific issues;

Decide the partners' **working language(s)** and set **initial timeframes** for partner communities and authorities to formalize their common objectives (setting a work schedule);

Lay down number of working procedures for the political steering committee (for example, a co-chairmanship or rotating chairmanship, frequency and place of meetings, reports and so on).

Public, private or non-profit sector bodies can be involved in the construction of cross-border networks. On the first stage of cooperation, such relatively loose cooperation may emerge between regional authorities, chambers of commerce, employers' associations, chambers of industry, and trade unions from bordering regions. Cooperation may be ad hoc or based on agreements at local, regional or national level.

From a legal perspective, on this stage it is not necessary to sign a co-operation agreement and to set out a legally binding framework within which the relationship will subsequently develop. Such an agreement is likely to be restrictive or incomplete and might not consider all the activities that might be necessary to undertake in order to accomplish the goals of cooperation. It is possible to have an agreement of a "technical" nature, which outlines the rules governing the steering committee.

(2) Developing cross border strategies

After the priorities and cross-border needs are defined, the second task the partners must carry out, or attempt to carry out, is to formulate common objectives and projects that satisfy the needs and expectations identified in the area.

This may prove the difficult exercise, for it requires viewing separate authorities as single unit so as to have an objective view of existing dynamics and obstacles within the cross-border area, work with reliable cross-border data, marry the *modi operandi* of different communities and authorities on either side of the border and address politically sensitive issues. Cross-border cooperation is based on an effort to reach the consensus and set shared objectives.

In order to avoid the sticking points, the main purpose of this initial activity is to yield a preliminary understanding of:

The cross-border area as a whole(it's strengths and weaknesses, pressing needs, how the area will be changed in ten years time);

The policies pursued by the indentified stakeholders and the local/regional development strategies put in place (on which point do they coincide, how can they be coordinated, etc.) with the view to pinpointing structures, services and resource people in the area who can assist politicians in promoting the initial arrangement;

The aim is to:

Identify the common problems, issues and objectives to be formalized as a cooperation agreement;

And in best case, generate – from this early stage – a set of coherent, jointly designed projects with limited objectives, calibrated on the limited legal, human and financial resources available.

Co-operation arrangements aimed at developing long-term relations need an effort to agree on a common vision. Strategic and development oriented cooperation requires a long term approach. This second stage is devoted to carefully analyzing the existing situation, previous cross border experience and potential for further cooperation. On this stage the main objective of cross-border development concepts is to provide the information and analysis for an integrated and long-term (15-20 years) strategic approach. This information will serve as a basis for defining priorities and objectives in which individual projects can be carried out. So it is important for the both parties to formulate a joint strategy.

This stage requires, that the common vision agreed on by the both sides, be somehow formalized in the form of charter or a document, which will outline objectives and concrete fields of action as well as action plans. This is important process as the projects decided upon by the representatives of certain regions must be incorporated into the relevant local planning documents. This stage also ensures effective and coordinated development of the trans-frontier area.

Following the start up phase, the aim of co-operation on this stage is not so much to introduce an additional tier of authority as to slowly turn the cooperation into a subject of joint management in order to implement trans-frontier projects.

(3) Program management and implementation

This stage in the cross-border cooperation requires a permanent cross-border structure which will accompany the whole process of strategy development and review. This could be an executive committee, permanent working groups and/or cross-border secretariat with members representing both parties from bordering regions. Such cross-border decision making bodies and financial and technical support systems formed outside or inside the border regions, are utmost necessity for this advanced stage of cooperation.

Cross-border decision-making structures, whether established under public or private law, should be structured carefully and it is essential that there be equal representation of the participating bodies from both sides of the border. It is important that all contributors to the cooperation project from both sides of a border be involved in the process of implementation of different projects and programs, be it public authorities, social partners, different associations and so forth.

This stage considers the mobilization of respective local/regional players and public-private partnerships in order to stimulate project development. The aim is to involve as many public or private players as possible which are beneficial for the projects implementation process. This stage is also aimed at consulting all players involved in order to make sure that projects are feasible and will get financial backing.

This stage makes easier transition from a research stage process of identifying common issues of interest to the launch of the project. At this stage implementation of cross-border projects by local partners is executed. At this point partners should also agree on a contracting authority to take responsibility for administrative, technical and financial aspects of the project.

As it was noted earlier long-term and objective-oriented cross-border cooperation sooner or later demands permanent and binding cross-border organizational structures. For this structure to be potent and really contribute to establishing long term cooperation, it is necessary to have technical, administrative, financial and decision-making capacities commensurate with the growing number and complexity of various tasks. In these decision-making bodies, bordering parties should be equally represented, regardless of a region's size, population and legal authority.

Cross-border operational teams represent the first structured level of co-operation. They differ in this respect from one-off activities, which do not have that many resources at their disposal and are not part of a wide-ranging strategy. They can consist of staff provided by the various partners and/or staff recruited as part of the cross-border arrangement.

Cross-border organization may take different forms depending on the partners their nature and scale as well as their objectives. It is crucial to note that a political support body, irrespective of its form, can never replace the member communities or authorities in making decisions and most importantly does not constitute a new tier of authority.

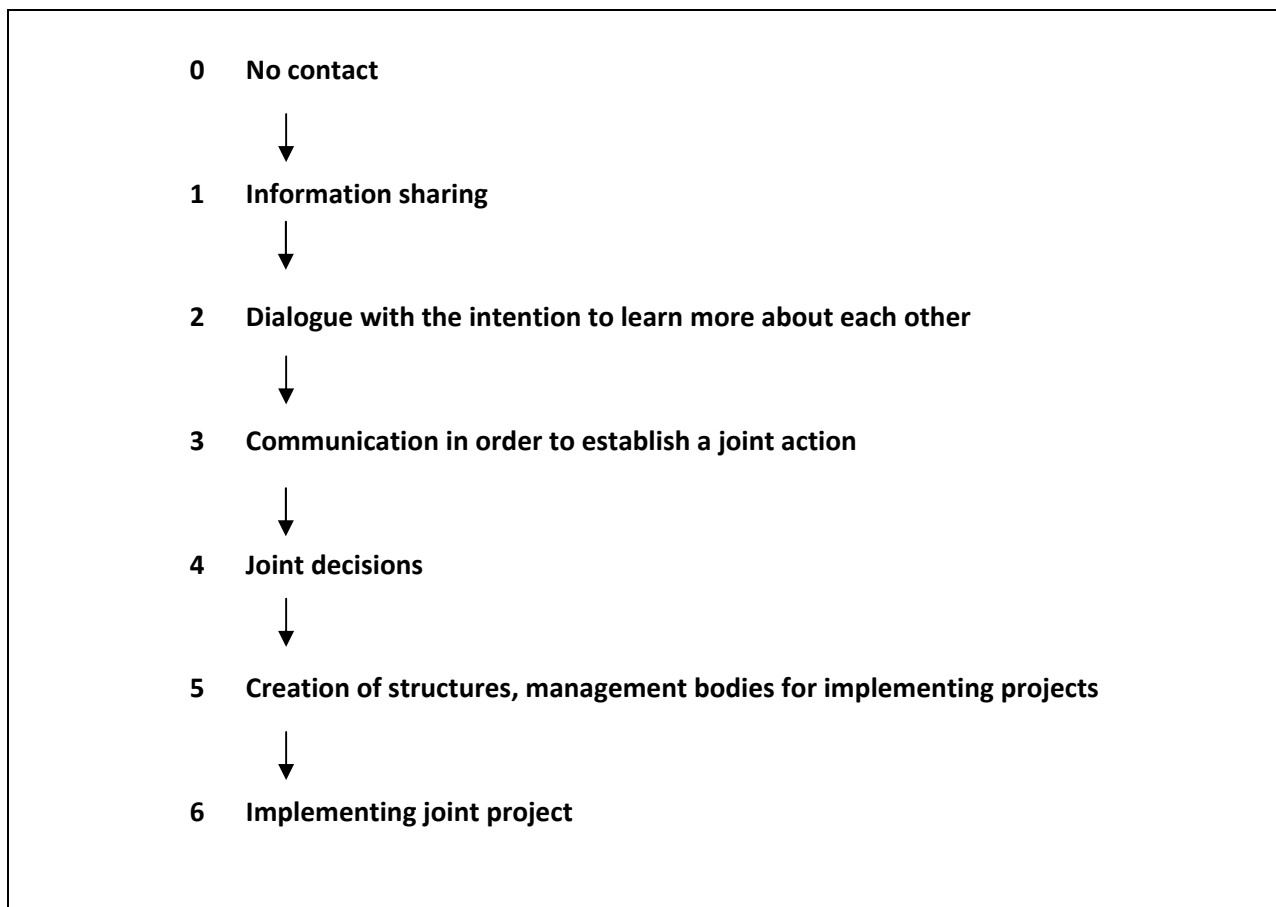
Bodies presiding over cross-border areas can be ranging from informal forums to contracting authorities local trans-frontier co-operation groupings. These bodies have various names: bureau, commissions, standing committees and so on.

While discussing the stages of cross border co-operation it is important to note, that it is not obligatory to go through all the stages of cooperation, meaning that, it is not necessary to go through all stages in order to accomplish cross-border communication. The major point here is that objectives set out by the parties (ad hoc or long term), issues of common interest, the degree of intent and cooperation will determine structures chosen for cross border cooperation and the stages gone through, as well as domestic legal system will influence decision about tools applied at each stage and intensity of relations developed through the process. All of these factors will determine the stages of cooperation undertaken by bordering parties.

Alongside these three phases a number of activities can be undertaken:

- Launch of pilot and trial projects
- Training for participants and awareness-raising among trans-frontier partners.
- Presentation of the project by means of media
- Setting up a legal monitoring system, conducting a project evaluation.

Measures and the intensity of partnership in a nutshell:



Advantages and Disadvantages of different cross-border body set-ups

Types	Law applicable	Advantages	Disadvantages	Examples
Informal cooperation between local communities and authorities.	Law of each party	Enables local communities and authorities to engage in cooperation in the absence of a legal framework.	Communities are bound only by an agreement in principle. There does not exist any joint political or technical instrument.	Informal co-operation in respect of investments or research on both sides of the border, leading to the implementation of a joint transfrontier project.

Transfrontier cooperation agreement between local communities or authorities.	Law of one of the signatories, as specified in the agreement.	Approach adopted in all bilateral co-operation agreements and in the Additional Protocol to the Madrid Outline Convention. Can establish an entity without legal personality.	Each signatory is responsible for implementing the provisions.	Political statement of intent. Establishment of a Euroregion without legal personality, implementation of a project by a community on behalf of all the transfrontier partners.
“De facto” cooperation instrument established by local communities or authorities or other local partners	Law of the headquarters country	It is often possible for legal entities or persons to be members. Enjoys legal independence from its members. Easy to set up.	This form cannot be used on all borders. It has limited purpose and role in terms of the scope of cross-borders co-operation (consultation, lobbying).	Setting up an entity to undertake consultation, lobbying and research, enjoying the necessary legal personality and financial autonomy to act on behalf of its members and to represent the territory to the outside world.
Autonomous structure established by an international agreement and set up by local communities and authorities	The agreement plus the law of the headquarters country	Setting up an entity with its own technical team to implement cross-border cooperation projects. This entity will perform its functions, make investments, etc on behalf of its members and under their supervision.	Partnership and scope is restricted to communities and public bodies and to the territories specified in the agreement. Establishment procedure can be lengthy and complex.	Public body (Benelux Convention). Local cross-border co-operation grouping (Karlsruhe Agreement). Making public investments, putting in place cross-border public services.

PART IV - Funding Opportunities

The issue of funding the cross-border cooperation projects is usually key concern of both parties of the cooperation agreement. Most of the cross-border activities are funded by the initiators themselves. However there exist three levels of funding:

- Regional funding** - local municipality funds and funds accumulated from regional governments;
- National funding** – funds from national government agencies and regional/municipal development funds (in Georgia’s case – for example Municipal Development Fund (MDF); also for example, the cross-border cooperation initiators for funding cultural projects may approach the ministries of culture;
- International funding** – the cross-border partners may ask for funds the organizations such: European Union, European Commission, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, USAID and others.

For Georgia’s case we will look through the 3 international funding opportunities, providing funds on Black Sea and South Caucasus level: Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Program; German Marshall Fund of the United States; Eurasia Partnership Foundation;

1) Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Program (Black Sea JOP)⁷ is one of the EU’s operational programs under the European Neighborhood & Partnership Instrument (ENPI) that is being implemented during the period 2007 – 2013.

The Black Sea JOP aims at a stronger and more sustainable economic and social development of the Black Sea Basin regions. Through the program, communities in identified areas will be encouraged to further develop their local economy, confront environmental challenges and promote greater interaction among people.

The program is financed by the ENPI (participation of Turkey is financed by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance), although the participating countries are required to co-finance projects with a minimum of 10% of the EU’s contribution. There are 10 participating countries in the Black Sea JOP: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine, Romania, and Greece. However, only certain regions of each country are eligible to get funding for cooperation programs. In Georgia’s case, all regions are eligible which means that local and regional administrations and various civil society organizations from all Georgian regions may qualify to apply for funds, although they need to meet certain specifications defined by the program (i.e. the potential projects should fall under the priority areas defined by the Black Sea JOP).

Overall, three priority areas have been established under the Black Sea JOP. Each priority area provides certain characteristics organizations should meet to be eligible for funding.

Priority 1 - Supporting cross border partnerships for economic and social development based on common resources. (Eligible candidates: local and regional administrations, development agencies, NGOs active in

⁷ <http://www.blacksea-cbc.net/> www.rcbi.info

local development, associations of agricultural producers and fishermen, public agencies active in the fields of business promotion etc.)

Priority 2 - Sharing resources and competencies for environmental protection and conservation. (Eligible candidates: local and regional administrations, NGOs active in environmental protection and conservation, research and higher education institutions and environmental protection agencies etc.)

Priority 3 - Supporting cultural and educational networks for the establishment of a common cultural environment in the Basin. (Eligible candidates: local and regional administrations, NGOs active in the cultural and social areas, cultural and educational institutions etc.)

In addition, submitted projects should also drop into one of the following categories:

1. **Integrated projects** with different activities in several countries that jointly achieve a certain objective having a cross border impact;
2. **Symmetrical projects** with the same activities in all countries participating in the project;
3. **Single projects**, implemented mainly or entirely in a single partner-country but having a cross-border impact.

The projects will be implemented by partnerships that will always involve partners from both EU Member States and non-EU partner countries. The recommended financial size and the number of partners involved in each project partnership will be defined in the calls for proposals.

After project definition and partner identification, potential applicants (local/regional administrations; civil society/community organizations; research and higher education institutions) should apply for funding whenever “call for proposals” will be announced by the Joint Managing Authority (JMA).

Calls for Proposals are published in the national and regional media as well as on the official website of the Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Program. The Calls for Proposals are inviting potential applicants to consult the respective Guidelines for Applicants. Those guidelines provide all necessary information regarding the eligibility of projects and applicants, the project selection criteria, the required documents and the procedures for project selection and implementation. During application stage in each country a number of information, events (trainings, workshops) are held to support the potential applicants in the preparation of their applications.

Once projects are selected successful applicant start project implementation process which may vary considerably depending on the type and size of the project.

2) German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF)⁸ is a nonpartisan American public policy and grant making institution dedicated to promoting greater cooperation and understanding between North America and Europe. GMF does this by supporting individuals and institutions working on transatlantic issues, by convening leaders to discuss the most pressing transatlantic themes, and by examining ways in which transatlantic cooperation can address a variety of global policy challenges. In addition, GMF supports a number of initiatives to strengthen democracies.

⁸ <http://www.gmfus.org/blacksea/>

Founded in 1972 through a gift from Germany as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan assistance, GMF maintains a strong presence on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to its headquarters in Washington, DC, GMF has seven offices in Europe: Berlin, Bratislava, Paris, Brussels, Belgrade, Ankara, and Bucharest.

Grant making is one of GMF's core missions, and through this process, GMF supports a wide range of institutions and individuals working on transatlantic policy issues. GMF awards grants primarily through six major grant making programs among them is the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation, a public-private partnership modeled on the successful Balkan Trust for Democracy (BTD).

BST initiated Cross-Border Initiatives program that seeks to encourage public, private, and nonprofit policy elites to develop programs that promote regional cooperation and stability through funding initiatives aimed at:

- Arranging cross-border dialogues among governmental entities, civic organizations, and policy institutes
- Facilitating an exchange of best practices in key economic and governmental policy areas, as well as among citizens and nonprofit groups
- Exploring ways to lower the physical and legal barriers between countries in the Black Sea region
- Devising and promoting solutions to the region's frozen conflicts
- Promoting regional-wide efforts to build political, cultural, and economic networks

Non-governmental organizations, governmental entities, community groups, policy institutes, other associations legally registered in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Turkey, Ukraine and Russia (the oblasts of Krasnodar and Rostov) may apply for grants ranging from USD 16,000 to 19,000. The projects have to be implemented in one or more of the countries mentioned. There are no application deadlines. Project proposals are accepted on a rolling basis and grant decisions are made monthly. For further information on application process the potential applicants should visit the trust's website.

3) Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF) is a regional fund established in 2007 as an outgrowth of Eurasia Foundation. It is comprised of three locally registered offices in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, each with nearly 13 years of experience in the field of grassroots civil society development. Cross-border cooperation is one of the five program areas supported by the foundation. Grant applications for cross-border projects are accepted on rolling bases. For further guidelines on application process and eligibility criteria applicants should visit the foundation website⁹.

⁹ www.epfound.ge

PART V - Sustainability methods

Cross-border cooperation is a complex, cross-sectoral process. If it intends to last, it must not be confined to one-off projects but become a component of the regional policies of cooperating parties. Cross-border cooperation arrangements can address all kinds of spatial planning and development issues and numerous areas of public policy (transport, health, waste and so on).

The differences between partners (such as different legal systems, different practices and cultures and, in some cases, different working languages) can give rise to difficulties inherent in any cross-border project, which must not be underestimated. Participants face numerous legal, cultural, economic, fiscal and methodological obstacles, which may gradually be resolved as the cooperation arrangement develops.

Once cross-border cooperation schemes are established, next steps should be aimed at sustaining and enhancing existing mechanisms, which requires consistent and deliberate policy to be designed and implemented. While cross-border cooperation may take various forms depending on geographical area and partners involved, the sustainability of cooperation arrangements between local communities and authorities depends on three main factors: 1) political governance and public support; 2) sustainable technical resources and a shared working culture; 3) and incorporation of cross-border strategies into local, regional and national policy.

1. Political governance and citizen support

Cross-border cooperation calls for political support from elected representatives and communities on both sides of the border, and provides scope for a joint solution to meeting the expectations and needs of those living in cross-border areas.

Elected representatives and deliberative assemblies as well as the partners and the general public should be kept regularly informed of how projects are progressing and should be involved in practical arrangements. To insure that the projects genuinely meet the community's needs there is a need of a "cross-border management team" that will be able to address questions with cross-border citizenship, coherent policy for the cross-border area and cultural differences of local-policy approach. Namely, the "cross-border management team" should:

- communicate with citizens about cross-border strategies,
- encourage wider public to express their views and to become involved,
- show citizens how the project objectives are in the interests of border citizens so that to generate a genuine desire to identify them with the cross-border area.

This process may involve publications, workshops, symbolic occasions, shared cultural events and the setting up of information and advice points for border residents, affording an opportunity to strengthen their sense of belonging to the cross-border area.

2. Sustainable resources and shared working knowledge

While political support is essential, it is also important to ensure the continuity of the cross-border arrangement by means of a standing organization with stable resources from the partners' budgets. These resources can be used to fund a secretariat and, if possible, a team of professionals (economists, town and country planners) able to implement an annual or long-range program of projects and joint events, forming the core of the co-operation arrangement. It should also be noted that such contributions may not be purely financial, rather they could take the form of provision of staff, premises or computer facilities (in kind contribution). The partners must also decide a scale apportioning the financial cost among them. Many areas have opted for population size as the apportionment criterion. Partners contribute to the joint budget in proportion to the number of inhabitants they represent.

In addition to material resources, it is important to develop a shared cross-border way of thinking. Project management calls for considerable technical expertise, the specialist staff on both sides needs to be familiar with the other country and other national system, and lastly there has to be effective co-ordination between technical teams and elected representatives. Border zones present opportunities for partners from different backgrounds to learn about one another and reap the benefits of cultural diversity, which somewhat broadens the scope for solutions to economic, social and environmental problems.

This inherent cultural diversity must go hand in hand with developing a basic shared working approach:

- politically and culturally, since ways of thinking differ from one country to another;
- in economic and social policy, as regards thinking on development;
- in town-planning, economic and financial matters, with a view to setting up the project;
- legally, since the project raises questions of national sovereignty and above all involves different legal systems;
- environmentally, because pollution is no respecter of borders and so on.

3. Incorporating cross-border strategies into local, regional and national policy

The last factor is incorporation of cross-border strategy into local policy. It is particularly important to incorporate the cross-border dimension into each side's planning and programming instruments as the timeframes for preliminary studies and project implementation can be very lengthy. The administrative and legal culture differs from one side of the border to the other, as do the prerogatives of the relevant government departments.

It could well be that a cross-border project entered into by one municipal or regional team will end up being implemented by a different one; cross-border plans are forward-looking, formulating strategies for the area for the next 10, 20 or 30 years. Accordingly, it is important that co-operating parties:

- build cross-border objectives into local policies, and particularly into planning instruments such as urban development plans,
- incorporate these policies into the organization of public services, for instance when a public transport concession comes up for renewal;

incorporate the cross-border dimension into thinking on public investment strategy: in order to achieve economies of scale, it may be worth considering co-ordination of networks (water, sanitation, electricity) and building shared facilities (for water purification and household waste removal, for example).

Nevertheless, long-term thinking must not stop project partners launching pilot projects as a means of giving practical effect to co-operation arrangements and demonstrating to the public that there are concrete, immediate benefits. The best way to bring about lasting co-operation is to implement practical projects that actually meet the needs of those living in border areas.

PART VI - Examples of good practice

There are many different and good international practices of CBC in various sectors of human activity, such as: Economic development, spatial planning, tourism, environment, culture, media, agriculture and rural development, trade, transport and infrastructure, etc. This section will cover several major fields which bare high potential for developing successful cross-border cooperation and most importantly are crucial for developing border regions economies, ensuring increase in standards of living, as well as resulting in better social, cultural and economic policies and conditions for a region.

Economic development

For regions to develop economically it is important to explore new markets and new opportunities provided by the market economy. Proved by the experience of different developed countries, it becomes obvious that economic development requires breaking of barriers to achieve the heights in growth and to create more windows of opportunities. It is very important to view economic development, particularly the promotion and development of Small and Medium Size Enterprise within the framework of cross-border cooperation.

Cross-border regions because of their peripheral location in their national economies, generally experience distorted patterns of trade, weak physical and economic infrastructure, and fragile development of cross-border networks, contacts or partnerships. These disadvantages combined with other general problems faced by businesses, impede the development of SMEs in the cross-border region.

The need and potential for small business development in cross-border regions differ across the characteristics of bordering regions. Differences in the internal characteristics of cross-border regions such as the level of development, laws governing the enterprise, trade across the border and so forth, result in different patterns of needs and potential for developing small business.

Rural and less developed peripheral regions have less chance to follow international standards, as they face most acute problems of restructuring and adjusting regional economy to compete on an international stage. Problems may include:

- The lack of culture to support entrepreneurship,
- The need to restructure economies from traditional agricultural into the development of new small or medium size business start-ups,
- Existence of formal barriers to trade, such as customs and different administrative or regulatory regimes.
- The lack of appropriate infrastructure to support the development of small business.
- Distortions in investments, trade, labor force, as well as “black economy” which strongly influences the development processes.

In contrast the more developed border regions within EU are better equipped to take advantages of new opportunities of SME development coming from global trends and most importantly from the creation of common market and the breakage of the barriers.

In cross-border regions, this area of policy is concerned with closing the gap and linking suppliers and producers. The development of business relations between suppliers and producers across the border creates new windows of opportunities for cross-border regions. This enables border regions to develop the strength and capacity of small business, to explore new markets and contribute to the economic growth in the region. The crucial point here is that the development of networks of groupings of small business in border regions enables SME to build up capacity and strength.

The capacity will be developed through:

The development of a broader range of products, improved quality and increased capacity of small business to respond to the demands of the market.

The realization of economies of scale through cost sharing and reduction of unit costs which results in improved competitiveness which is crucial for growth.

Benefiting from comparative costs and even comparative advantages on both sides of the border.

For cross-border regions, preparatory actions which are oriented at establishing the framework of cooperation are very important to follow. These actions may include:

1. Identifying the scope of cooperation,
2. Creating opportunities for contact between business representatives.

Specific steps might include: Familiarization visits, business forums, workshops, conferences and so forth.

It will be also advantageous to conduct research in order to identify problems and opportunities as well as potential fields of cooperation. These types of actions and contact lay basis for developing more permanent forms of exchanging information and experience and informal as well as formal networks of business.

Special/ thematic seminars and meetings can help create a good socio-cultural basis, leading to successful sustainable development.

Information and advice services are also very important in this process. These services are generally directed at advising on cross-border trading opportunities, business and investment opportunities and the development of the joint ventures.

Cross-border business training for improving business capacities in the cross-border region.

Joint facilities and services to promote new and improved product development; usage of new technologies in production processes and management.

To help business overcome the problem of access to capital is also crucial step in supporting the small business development. Development of regional, investment funds for start-up, including seed and venture capital facilities.

Development of joint marketing services, joint purchasing, joint selling and distribution.

Examples of Good Practice

INTERREG IIA Program No.49: (Austria/Slovenia)

This Program on the external borders of the EU is aimed at developing the economy of the cross-border region. It is concentrated on cooperation in the development of the physical infrastructure, the promotion of technology clusters of small businesses, and cooperation between chambers of commerce and the provision of services to small businesses

INTERREG IIA Program No. 13: Saar-Lorraine-Westpfalz (Germany/France)

INTERREG IIA program for the Saar-Lorraine-Palatinat Occidental cross-border region, which involves an internal EU land border between Germany and France. This program is oriented on economic development, research and technology transfer.

German-Polish Economic Development Organization (Germany/Poland)

This is a public limited company, which is established under Polish law. This body involves partners on both sides of the border and is focusing on economic cooperation between Germany and Poland. This organization is supported by the INTERREG IIA program and Phare CBC program. The organization aims to improve economic cooperation in the border region and provides services to small businesses.

Business Forum Galicia/Norte (Spain/Portugal)

This event took place on 9/10 December 1998. The objective was to increase awareness and knowledge in the two regions about the economic and business opportunities. AT this forum parties presented and discussed following themes:

- Textiles and clothing
- Metallurgy and mechanics
- Wood and furniture
- Civil construction
- Public works and construction

The forum also included an exhibition of business products and services. This event contributed to a greater awareness on the part of local businesses about the opportunities offered by the region and the existing public and private support organizations.

Salón Pirevino (France/Spain)

Salón Pirevino is an annual international fair started in 1996. This fair is supported by the Exhibition Park of Tarbes (France) and the Fairs Institution of Barbastro (Spain). Each year the fair is conducted in one of these two places with the aim of bringing together small scale wine producers in the border region who cannot participate in trade fairs in large cities. The SMEs experience a disadvantage in this sector in the border region, because of long distances to relevant markets. This project is aimed at developing the

cooperation networks between producers which may facilitate greater knowledge of different products existing in the border region as well as opportunities for joint action by firms. Along with fostering cooperation the fair aims to promote the Pyrenees product image as of a high quality. One of the most important goals of the project is to develop a single wine business for the border region.

Spatial Planning

Spatial planning constitutes a horizontal activity which includes the assessment of regional and national conditions and the formulation of development plans (policies, actions, solutions and options for implementation) for cross-border regions.

In 1983 Council of Europe adopted *European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter*. In the charter it is explained: "*Regional/spatial planning gives geographical expression to the economic, social, cultural and ecological policies of society. It is at the same time a scientific discipline, an administrative technique and a policy developed as an interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach directed towards a balanced regional development and the physical organization of space according to an overall strategy.*"

According to this document, the term 'regional/spatial planning' is defined as "the spatial expression of the economic, social, cultural and ecological policy of each society."

For some time there was confusion over the terms - 'spatial planning' or 'spatial development'. Since 1994 the EU Member States in their policy statements have referred to more neutral term - 'spatial development policy', defined as 'a policy which favors the development of an area in accordance with certain principles and guiding concepts'.

The major aims of spatial development are as follows:

The promotion of economic and social cohesion in the EU with the help of reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the creation of a balanced regional structure;

The promotion of sustainable development, which means both an environmentally sensitive economic development, and a more balanced spatial development maintaining diversity.

The aim of cross-border spatial planning is to help overcome all the negative effects of how borders are drawn, which influences the extent to which they are open. Cross-border planning contains cooperation in the fields of spatial planning, regional and local planning as well as town and country development planning.

There can be distinguished two basic levels in cross-border cooperation in regional development planning:

The national level – at this level cross-border regional development planning is carried out with the help of governmental or spatial planning commissions;

The regional/local level – at this level regional development planning is promoted according to a division of authority which varies by country;

European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning in the Council of Europe's *European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter* (1983) and the "Framework Convention on Improving Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities" (1981) set the most important legal and technical foundations for cross-border spatial planning.

Legal measures such as inter-state agreements, coordination of spatial planning, as well as organizational measures such as; coordination and development of spatial planning commissions can strongly contribute to intensification of cross-border regional planning.

There are several important agreements which lay basis for transnational cooperation and spatial planning with neighboring regions. Several bilateral and trilateral governmental and spatial planning agreements are worth mentioning, such as those between the Benelux countries and between Germany and its neighbors Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland and Switzerland.

These agreements spurred the creation of governmental, spatial planning and regional commissions, which have carried out successful cross-border cooperation in spatial development planning.

EU under INTERREG I and II has contributed much to increasing and deepening of regional/local cooperation in spatial development. The euro regions coming out of their experience provide their own development concepts. These concepts highly contribute to spatial planning perspectives. They stimulate national and regional spatial planning on both sides of borders.

While working on spatial development policy it is important to elaborate cross-border guidelines with the participation of municipalities and regions; as well as inclusion of spatial planning considerations and goals into the cross-border development and action programs of regional policy.

Early information and participation of neighbors plus the coordination of spatial plans is often enough for cross-border coordination in spatial planning. It is important to note that in those cases where the voluntary commitment to resolve the issues in spatial planning and provision of recommendations are not sufficient, because there might be conflicts of interests which may threaten the development of the border region, the states involved have to be ready to make cross-border planning subject of a treaty and make it obligatory.

Examples of good practice

Euro region rhein-maas nord project; (Netherlands/Germany)

Description:

The egregious rhein-maas nord recognized the need for cross-border regional planning and development. The need for cross-border regional planning came from the changing role of the region in the Single Market. Its position is changing from that of two peripheral areas on either side of a national

frontier with neighboring areas of economic importance (the nodal points: Eindhoven (Netherlands) and Rhine/Ruhr (Germany), to that of a location in the core of Europe.

The previous instruments used by region for regional planning have been mostly territorially-oriented; a new regional development strategy is being prepared for the euregio rhein-maas nord area, which involves new changed circumstances. All the developments resulting as a consequence of the dismantling of barriers will be examined.

Results:

In December 1993 a workshop was organized, which was attended by many different organizations, cities and ministries. The workshop included extensive socioeconomic analyses of the region. The results of this workshop were incorporated as regional development guidelines in the review and preparation of the Operational Program INTERREG II of the euregio rhein-maas nord. The participants of the workshop identified major trends which need to be addressed, these include an increased cross-border functional division of labor, rapid economic and technological structural changes, growing traffic volumes and worsening environmental conflicts.

In the process of exploring projects for the cross-border region a wide variety of organizations were involved. The results of these consultations were incorporated into the development of a strategy and the Operational Program for INTERREG II (1995-1999).

Slovenian/Austrian border region Project

Description:

This project is concentrated on preparing cross-border strategy for Slovenian/Austrian border region in order to develop a strong basis for multi-annual planning of cross-border cooperation activities, the annual review of the Phare CBC multi-annual indicative program (MIP) and for further physical, environmental or socio-economic planning purposes.

The need for this project came out of the preparation of the socio-economic assessment of the Slovenian/Austrian border region. During this assessment it became evident that the methodology and statistical sources for data collected on both sides of the border vary considerably.

Outputs of the project are:

- Joint development concept;
- Cross-border inventory and information systems;
- Analysis of selected development issues of strategic importance.

Under this project a cross-border Steering Committee is to be established comprising of representatives of the Federal State Chancellery on the Austrian side, and on the Slovenian side, representatives of the Ministry of Economic Relations and Development and two representatives from the border region. The Steering Committee determines the methodology and directs the study.

Results:

The project will provide the opportunity for exchanging know-how and experience as well as lay a foundation for on-going planning of cross-border activities, not only within the framework of Phare CBC / INTERREG IIA but beyond.

Spatial planning model project**Description:**

The "Spatial planning model" of the "German-Dutch Regional Planning Committee-UK South" represents a special model for the future "cross-border cooperation" of UK South and is mainly the result of a cross-border regional planning study. There are thematic models for "spatial structure, cities, urban areas", "mobility and transport systems" and "landscape, open spaces and the environment". It also comprises regional models for four cross-border regional planning action areas.

Results:

The "cross-border cooperation" model constitutes an agreement between North-Rhine Westphalia and the Netherlands on how to organize future cooperation in spatial planning and regional planning. It also establishes cooperation by UK South with other cross-border bodies like the Euregios. The governmental "regional planning model" confirms the Euregios' outstanding role in cross-border cooperation and reflects the desire that these regional planning models will become part of the euro regions' development concepts. This means that, the basic ideas presented in the model should be suitable for implementation in regional policy projects in the euro regions.

A cross-border development perspective for regional planning for North of the German-Dutch Regional Planning Committee**Description:**

The area under consideration includes the region between the northern part of the Netherlands and the German border area of Lower Saxony plus a sub-region (EUREGIO) of North Rhine-Westphalia. By studying the entire area and analyzing its strengths and weaknesses, there have been developed spatial planning approaches.

Results:

Within the project "models for regional planning" are worked out for the three priority areas of rural regions and urban nodal points; mobility and transport systems; and the natural and cultural landscape. These models reflect the desired development perspectives in the northern German-Dutch border area.

These perspectives have no direct legal binding force at the cross-border level, although in future they should in order to facilitate coordinated development measures on both sides of the border. For this reason an action framework was established for strategically significant projects, and the development perspectives identified for the action areas.

Tourism

In the European Union tourism is regarded as an important component of regional economic development and a significant source of employment. Tourism is considered to be important field within which cross-border cooperation plans can be successfully implemented. In the majority of cross-border regions, tourism is an important part of development strategies. In addition tourism is one of the priorities for INTERREG Operational Programs.

The importance of tourism for cross border regions and cooperation comes from the fact that the development of tourism can help address many development needs of border regions. It can contribute to the creation of new employment opportunities, promotion of different economic activities; the development of new skills; importantly tourism helps and influences decisions of local regional authorities regarding conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of a region.

Tourism requires good infrastructure, thus cross-border cooperation in the field of tourism may induce governments to initiate and stimulate the rehabilitation of local infrastructure.

It is important to mention that those cross-border regions, which tend to "lag behind" in their development, usually have a good potential for tourism development. Promotion of cross-border communication and cooperation in this field may contribute to the development of the region and act as a catalyst for the structural adjustment of the region. Following effects of tourism on development should be noted;

- Tourism can promote the diversification of the regional economy by generating additional economic activity thus an income,

- Tourism is generally labor intensive field so it can spur creation of additional jobs, thus contributing to partially easing employment problems in cross-border regions

- Tourism demands infrastructure and facilities, so as a result, tourism business will stimulate the increase in the quality of infrastructure and services including roads, railways, airports, telecommunications, accommodation and leisure facilities. Tourism also requires effective public transport and health care services as well as shopping facilities;

- These developments aimed at attracting tourists and developing border regions in combination contributes to the attractiveness of a region as a location for companies to invest.

It is important to note that the barrier effect of cross-border regions serves as an impediment to developing cross-border cooperation in the field of tourism. There might be different problems that might halt cross-border initiatives.

- Lack of information about the border region and its potential;

- Lack of cross-border contacts and networks between the public institutions and other organizations in order to develop common policy;

Weaknesses in the transport and economic infrastructure, which makes border regions cost intensive regions

Lack of knowledge and skills needed to offer quality services in tourism

The perception of strong competition between the border regions which makes it difficult to stimulate cooperation.

It is very important for border regions to develop common strategy which will incorporate interest of each border region. The strategy will maximize opportunities for cooperation and reduce threats of failure. This strategy will be based on assessing the potential as well as weaknesses of a border region.

It is important to note that tourism and environment are intertwined and are difficult to separate in the process of elaborating the strategy for cooperation. On LACE Annual Conference in 1999 in Joensuu on the theme of reconciling development opportunities with environmental and agricultural interests it was stated: "Favoring forms of sustainable development in tourism means, in general, that activities harmful to the environment, natural resources or agriculture should be avoided. In this way a harmonious coexistence between tourism and environmentally friendly agriculture shall be achieved".

It is common when cross-border regions happen to share the same historical and cultural traditions as well as attractive natural landscapes which turn to be interesting for developing tourism business. Coming out from these facts, it becomes clear that cross-border regions can highly benefit from cross-border cooperation.

Cooperation projects aimed at development can stimulate the creation of a greatly diversified tourism and environmental products; create economies of scale, promote the regions worldwide by publicizing their potential in tourism. With the help of cross border projects the region can better address specific problems for tourism as well as environment development – such as finding solutions to the problem of seasonality, advancing sustainability of employment in the field of tourism in the cross-border region, and increasing tourism opportunities beyond traditional periods.

Examples of Good Practice

INTERREG IIA Program No. 26: Bavarian-Czech Border Region; (Germany/Czech Republic)

For 40 years after the Second World War, this cross-border region was turned into a totally peripheral area by the "Iron Curtain". The result of this isolation was that there were not any joint cross-border initiatives which would turn this location into a more favorable site for developing its tourism potential.

The promotion of tourism to aid socio-economic development of this region has therefore become very important for cross-border development plans. The natural environment and landscape offer ideal development opportunities for tourism and short-term leisure activities.

Results:

Within the program important steps have already been taken. These include:

Cross-border cycle and hiking routes;

A cross-border German-Czech information centre, which primarily deals with tourist matters directly on the border,
Cooperation between German and Czech thermal baths in the Euregio Eggeses area,
A cross-border countryside group combining a number of environmental projects,
Cooperation between museums on both sides of the border which organize joint touring exhibitions and numerous cross-border tourist and cultural events (festivals, orchestral concerts, German-Czech symposia).

These activities prove that throughout the Bavarian-Czech border region, significant efforts are undertaken to make the area more attractive for tourism and leisure activities, such as the creation of more joint recreation areas or initiatives directed at developing national parks and nature reserves. The cross border cooperation priority is to improve the competitiveness of the region and its tourism, whilst respecting the specific features of the region.

INTERREG IIA Program No. 39: (Ireland/Northern Ireland UK)

After 25 years of violence in this region tourism requires extensive development. The conflict has turned the cross-border region into the least developed tourist regions in Ireland and the United Kingdom, despite its considerable tourism assets and potential. Under INTERREG I tourism projects received 21.8% of the total EU contribution.

Under INTERREG IIA tourism (a specific measure under the Regional Development Priority) the tourism measure supports projects which develop the potential of the region's natural assets and improve accommodation and services for visitors. A stronger emphasis within the program is placed on marketing and developing quality products and services. EU funding supports cross-border marketing campaigns and the development of tourism products as well as services which also include development of heritage centers and cultural tourism events. These measures address problems of seasonality and offer a more diversified tourism product, which is especially important in attracting overseas' visitors.

Tourist Map Galicia/Norte (Spain/Portugal)

This project is aimed at promoting joint tourism in the cross border region through a joint marketing and promotion strategy. The important product of the project was the design and production of a tourist map covering the regions of Galicia and Norte. On this map important resources, tourism products and walking routes – including Santiago de Compostela, wine routes, artist routes and environmental and heritage routes were highlighted.

This project is managed by the Working Community of Galicia/Norte, in close cooperation with a tourism organization from each region. The first edition of the map was produced in 100, 000 copies. The map was produced in different languages: Galician, Spanish, Portuguese, English and German.

INTERREG IIA Program No. 33: Corsica-Sardinia (France/Italy)

Within this program, the steps implemented deal with the following areas:

Promotion of the sea basin to develop water-related tourism; the development of sailing and other water sports as well as the introduction of new tourist products. The specific intention is to work towards the integration of the Corsican-Sardinian port network in an attempt to diversify tourism opportunities in this region.

Development of tourism and cultural routes and of tourist products: archaeological and historical trails, golfing, discovery and nature trails, the promotion of historic and cultural heritage in the province of Sassari and the department of South Corsica;

Aid for the marketing of tourist products, as well as the promotion of the image of the two islands.

Environment

Environment does not have borders.

Environmental problems of one border region can easily turn into the problem of a neighboring region. Because of this effect that environment brings for bordering regions, environmental issues can act as a catalyst to stimulate the need for the development of cross-border cooperation schemes between border regions.

Environment is a “natural” area for cross-border co-operation, as environmental issues such as problems of air pollution cannot be contained within national boundaries. Thus in promoting sustainable development, environmental issues must be integrated into regional planning and development.

Environment is directly related to the economic development of a region. Environment is a very important field for cross-border cooperation as it is a neutral field and does not bear that much political implications. Generally cooperation in this field is very efficient for peace building activities, as well as efficient starter for long-term cross-border cooperation projects.

The quality of the environment of a region, determines the quality and standard of living for people living there. The goal of promoting sustainable development in tourism and economic activity, which can be followed by cross-border regions, generally, involves avoiding activities which harm the environment and natural resources.

Rural cross border regions tend to be characterized by relatively better condition of natural environment. This is determined by the low level of economic activity. Notwithstanding this factor there might be problems facing cooperation perspectives in the field of environment for cross-border regions

The border regions differ from each other with a physical characteristics as well as economic activities conducted on each side of a border. This difference results in diversity of problems facing the regions. This may be an impediment in developing common strategies of cooperation. It also might happen that certain strategies or actions may contradict or not reflect the national priorities in the neighboring region.

Strategies and actions developed by cross-border regions should recognize the inter-dependencies between environment and economic development as well as tourism. As most environmental problems

have a cross-border impact, effectively combating environmental and ecological problems requires cross-border cooperation.

Examples of Good Practice

INTERREG IIA Program No. 17: (Germany/Luxembourg)

An important objective of this INTERREG II program is sustainable development. Tourism and environmental issues play an important role in this program. From the cross-border point of view, priority is given to water purification activities in the rivers and to natural parks. Measures in this program are also directed to the preservation or restoration of the natural environment, as far as it has been affected by industry, tourism and intensive agriculture.

Project examples include:

- The construction of common cross-border water purification and treatment installations;
- The substitution of fast growing coniferous woods by mixed forest taking into account natural growing conditions and circumstances.

International Marine Reserve – Bouches de Bonifacio/Maddalena Archipelago; (France/Italy)

This International Marine Reserve covers most of the maritime cross-border area between Corsica and Sardinia. This area has a tremendous ecological value; also it is very valuable as a tourist attraction. Therefore this area requires a high level of protection. The project involves the setting up of facilities and an infrastructure which will ensure the management, monitoring, organization as well as the promotion of the Reserve.

Cross Border Project Between Protected Areas; (Spain/Portugal)

This project is focused on the regions of Castilla y León (Spain) and Norte (Portugal) and also includes partners from the Portuguese Natural Parks of Montesinho and the International Duoro, together with the environmental department of the Regional Government of Castilla y León.

The major goal of this project is to develop a strategy for protected areas within the cross-border region. This strategy also includes the scheme of the system of public access, which would contribute to protecting the natural environment. In addition it includes a strategy for developing rural tourism and for safeguarding against forest fires.

Joint Action Against Forest Fires (Germany/Poland)

The cross-border area of Peitz (Germany) and Zielona Góra (Poland) is heavily wooded and, between 1991 and 1996 some sixty fires have ravaged nearly 2000 hectares of forest. An action plan for preventing and controlling forest fires has been jointly established by the forestry authority in the town of Peitz and their counterparts in Zielona Góra.

Fast and coordinated action was needed to deal properly with this ecological disaster. In 1996 the Polish partners developed an action plan for joint activities, using Phare program funds. At the first stage the work focused on information exchanges between the specialized services and on learning to collaborate. Later coordinated measures to prevent and control fires were established. Finally, a public awareness campaign was initiated jointly in both languages, using explanatory brochures and signs alerting people to the danger of forest fires.

Culture and Media

Usually cultural activities provide an efficient basis for starting up cross border cooperation projects. Cultural activities can serve as a stage for developing mutual understanding between the bordering regions, perceive the partner and its cultural values, strengths and weaknesses and even overcome language barrier.

Cross-border socio-cultural cooperation in every area of life is a precondition for sustainable cooperation in other fields such as economic, environmental and infrastructural matters. Cooperation process in this direction involves an ongoing process to break down mistrust and prejudice, and to build up confidence in neighboring border regions.

Cultural cooperation represents a source of major information about the cross-border region, which later will serve as a framework within which cooperation projects will develop. Getting familiar with the cross-border region and its geographical, structural, economic, social, cultural and historical conditions is therefore important in raising awareness regarding both the similarities and differences of cultures.

This knowledge is also the vital precondition for the active participation of all socio-political groups and citizens in every type of cross-border cooperation.

Cross-border socio-cultural cooperation enriches the social, cultural and economic life shared by peoples. This affects the quality of life of the population on both sides of the border and improves attractiveness of the area for business interests and investors.

Cultural policy is significant as:

Culture is an important source of employment, creation of cultural products is essential source of jobs, not mentioning efforts to sustain cultural-historical heritage which can affect employment.

Culture is important factor in improving an area's potential as a location for future investment,

Culture contributes to the promotion of social integration and strengthens social cohesion.

Culture contributes to an improvement in the image of a region, and in reviving both urban and rural areas;

The INTERREG and Phare CBC programs are oriented at complementing the economic measures with socio-cultural ones, as this assists in achieving the economic targets set out in programs.

As for the media and its importance, it is crucial to note that, the main goal of media policy is to achieve a balance between cultural and business requirements. Another important goal is to ensure that the transmission of television products, which inevitably goes beyond borders, do respect the rules of the border state which receives the signals.

Another significant goal of media policy for European community is to promote European identity. Joint projects such as, Euro-News the five-language news channel, ARTE the European arts channel, and different cross-border programs on various issues, all actively bring a European dimension into the media.

Cross-border regions are those who suffer the consequences of the border on which they live. Despite the Single European Market, problems are concentrated in cross-border areas. The obstacles include administrative structures, legal systems, social laws, services etc.

Therefore it is urgent to create socio-cultural field cross-border networks and joint strategies at regional/local level, so that these problems can be solved in partnership with the respective national authorities.

Important aims for socio-cultural cooperation in border and cross-border regions include:

- Cross-border cooperation in all cultural areas,
- The development of cultural priority areas on a regional level
- Better take-up of the cultural resources on offer on both sides of the border,
- Improvement of information systems regarding cultural resources on offer, projects, artists etc.
- Provision of facilities for learning the language of the neighboring country in all types of education,
- Improvement of border transport in specific border regions to facilitate socio cultural contact,
- Development of cultural-tourism and of cultural-historical projects

European and national structures provide the framework for cross-border cooperation in cultural issues, although it is notable that real cross-border socio-cultural cooperation takes place at regional and local level.

Examples of Good Practice

INTERREG IIA Program No. 57 Ett Gränslöst Samarbete; (Norway/Sweden)

This region is known with its unique forests, lakes and canals, a vast range of cultural assets such as medieval churches, rock painting, attractive towns and villages which combine traditional trades with modern industrial history.

The aim of the program is to rebuild, preserve and develop the region's cultural heritage with a view to strengthening its cultural identity and boosting culturally-oriented tourism.

The following activities have been undertaken to achieve the aim:

joint cultural events;
preservation and consolidation of the natural environment;
information and marketing of the region in the mass media;
the development of cultural institutions.

Desde la Raya: Cross-border Radio Programs

The project aimed to raise awareness of cross-border cooperation issues between Spain and Portugal. The project included the radio programs, which involved representatives from various towns on both sides of the border. The programs incorporated discussions on a wide range of subjects, such as the agriculture, tourism, education, Spanish Flamenco and Portuguese Fado.

This program was broadcast twice a week. The production was supported by the municipalities in the respective Spanish and Portuguese towns.

Meetings Between People Involved In Music (Spain/Portugal)

This project involved Galicia (Spain) and Norte (Portugal) regions. The project itself consisted of a number of events revolving around the theme of "Music in Cross-Border Cooperation". Participants discussed themes, such as culture as a factor in social and economic development, as well as recent cultural activities in both regions, also opportunities for a more formal cultural cooperation policy. After this first initial event, there have been a number of bilateral links between musicians in both border areas.

Culture and Tourism in the Kvarken Region (Finland/Sweden)

An important objective of the INTERREG IIA Program in the Kvarken cross-border region of Sweden and Finland is the promotion of joint tourism and cultural activities, in order to create a "Kvarken" cultural identity.

Major projects promoted within the program include the organization of musical events, cooperation between music companies and orchestras, including: "Music in Kvarken II" - a series of cross-border music concerts Kvarken " - four performances of Handel's Orlando and "Jazz Kvarken" - 32 concerts in the cross-border region.

Television Magazine Program "Hier-Her"

The program Hier-Her is a regular, independent television broadcast produced by cross-border television stations in the German region of Schleswig and the Danish region of Sonderjylland. The main goal of this project is to provide information about each region concerned, to raise public interest in their neighbors on the other side of the border, to provide insights into the history, culture, and traditions of the two regions, as well as promote tolerance amongst people living in the cross-border region and to stimulate communication between the regions by improving knowledge of the language, local area and region as a whole.

Agriculture and Rural Development

Generally most of border regions represent the areas that are primarily rural in structure, because of their peripheral location within their country. Therefore agriculture plays one of the major roles for most of these cross-border regions in terms of development.

In border regions usually there is sparse population with small villages and small to medium-sized towns. If a region on one side of the border is surrounded by "Central Places" or there is an urban conurbation, this factor is considered to be an advantage for development. This advantage can contribute very much to regional trade, culture, provision of public utilities, and etc.

There are vastly different circumstances that affect the prosperity of people living in rural areas and the development of the region. Generally development proceeds quite differently in well-situated rural areas and border regions with larger centers, therefore there can be different types of border regions.

Cross-border regions with rural areas can be of following major types:

Border regions with relatively densely-populated rural areas, good agriculture, relatively good employment, population growth;

Border regions with sparsely populated rural areas near a larger urban development centre, which determines relatively good opportunities for employment and the provision of public utilities;

Border regions with lagging rural areas far away from larger centers, sparser population, poor provision of utilities, few opportunities for non-farming employment and difficult conditions (climate, long distances, poor transport links) for agriculture.

It is crucial to promote sustainable and environmentally-friendly agriculture in border regions. These activities require the efficient use of resources, and the retention of pollution. The creation of new jobs in rural areas is also important as it can contribute to the preservation of a farming-oriented landscape.

The following objectives and projects are particularly significant in safeguarding agriculture in rural areas close to borders:

monitoring structural changes in agriculture, and preserving family farms on both sides of the border;

improving cross-border regional marketing for family farm businesses;

promoting direct cross-border marketing through individual proprietors and cooperative associations;

processing the border region's farm produce;

Development problems and impediments in the field of agriculture and rural development can be solved through many forms of cooperation, including the promotion of all the different sectors of the economy and the transfer of know-how. In terms of rural development, this could entail the following types of projects:

The improvement of production techniques;

Initiatives based on a shared or similar cultural heritage;
Emergence of new markets for the sale of local products;
The development of certain types of production or service;
There should be better coordination with INTERREG on the potential for promoting rural areas through integrated programs for border regions.

The problems faced by cross-border regions with rural structures require integrated solutions. This can only be achieved through cross-border associations involving all regional entities such as authorities, business and local population.

To ensure success of cross-border projects in the field of agriculture and rural development, it is important that local initiatives be supported. The population, enterprise and institutions in the rural area know better the constraints and opportunities in their local area. They should be the ones who put forward projects and ideas.

Examples of Good Practice

INTERREG IIA Operational Program N°46 (Austria-Czech Republic)

Within this program there are a number of action areas and projects initiated, which demonstrate the achievements of the program under the rural development priority:

The project of cross-border agriculture and forestry training in the fields of energy, the environment and conservation, which deals with such issues as alternative plant-growing methods, switching to organic farming or ecological forest planting. The training is attended by participants coming from Southern Bohemia and Waldviertel. The courses take place in both countries.

The project of cross-border fish-farming in Waldviertel, which aims to stabilize the market price for carp by co-coordinating with Southern Bohemian fish-farmers, and thus protecting their livelihoods. As a result of this cooperation the cross-border region has become an international centre for fish-farming.

Cooperation on agriculture in the three-country 'Weinviertel-Southern Moravia-Western Slovakia' Euro-region to strengthen local farms and farming cooperatives by encouraging cooperative market structures and tackling a historically determined unwillingness to work together.

INTERREG IIA – Operational Program No. 54 "Karelia" (Finland/Russian Federation)

The program area is sparsely populated, it has two large and nine smaller towns, therefore all program initiatives are directed at developing rural areas. These activities include projects aimed at promoting:

small and medium-sized enterprise in rural areas;
all initiatives designed to develop agricultural structures and production, the processing of agricultural products and export to Russia
the development of sustainable tourism.

All these activities necessitate close cross-border cooperation, as well as cultural collaboration, the elimination of language barriers and the solution of the diverse problems experienced on the border.

Student and Teacher Exchange in Agriculture (Germany/Denmark)

This project was initiated in order to help trainers and students in the farm sector, expand their knowledge of agricultural conditions and practices in the entire border region, in particular organic farming, as well as gain experience in their neighbor's methods of cultivation.

Young farmers complete 12 months practical training in their neighboring country which is credited as professional experience. Cooperation between the agricultural schools takes place initially at the level of the teaching staff, which undergoes an intensive language course, learns about the complementary training system, and conducts joint excursions and projects.

INTERREG IIA Operational Program No. 41 Italy-Austria

This program supports research on the impact of different agricultural practices on the alpine ecosystems, particularly focusing on the effects of intensive farming on erosion and water resources.

The research also is aimed to determine whether natural forestation of land is preferable to artificial forestation, both from an economic and ecological standpoint. The program aims to develop the declining timber sector, which represents huge potential for the cross-border area. The program is also oriented on the exchange of expertise and experience in cultural, farming and forestry practices, it supports marketing strategies, preparatory work on cross-border cooperative and information network initiatives (fruits, vegetables, dairy products, timber, etc.).

Transport and infrastructure

Transport and infrastructure are important fields for border regions to cooperate in. Because of the fact that border regions are mostly on the periphery of their country, and in some cases on the periphery of Europe too and at the same time are expected to serve as bridges to neighbors, it is obvious that upgrading transport and infrastructure is among the most important issues on the agenda in border and cross-border regions.

Cross-border cooperation schemes and programs will be almost impossible to realize without extensive and interregional road, rail and navigation routes, as well as air transport. Effective transport and infrastructure create the necessary physical conditions for developing cooperation schemes.

In cross border areas infrastructure development is generally in poor condition and in many border regions is still inadequate. One of the major reasons for this poor development is that generally border regions are sparsely populated resulting in low demand on infrastructure development.

The role of infrastructure is increasingly important as extensive transnational and cross-border mobility of persons and goods is widespread. The development of Trans-European transport, energy and telecommunications networks (TENs) is one of the EU's top-priority measures.

EU transport policy has developed rapidly in the last ten years, and has the second most extensive body of Community legislation after agriculture. Commission's "Common transport policy" action program (July 1995) is aimed at ensuring the efficiency and quality of the integrated transport system in the EU single market, and developing closer ties with third countries.

There are different factors, which may hinder development in transport and infrastructure for border regions. These factors may include:

- population scarcity and remoteness of regions;
- difficult geographical conditions that making building communications technically very difficult and expensive;
- low level of trade and business activities across border;
- military and political reasons.

It is important to note that border regions generally lack connection to main transport and infrastructure networks at national level, therefore it is very important to upgrade their linkage to main national transport and supply infrastructure, which will contribute to achieving higher level and intensity of cooperation across a border.

There can be undertaken various measures to develop transport and infrastructure linkages between border regions of neighboring states for promoting high degree cross-border cooperation, these may include:

- coordination of planning transport and infrastructural projects across border
- development of multifunctional cross-border transport infrastructure
- expansion of local public transportation
- improvement of traffic flow
- development of production and marketing activities in transport and infrastructure sector
- improvement of network of water, energy and IT communications both on regional and local level
- development of cross-border information and communication technologies
- establishment of joint facilities on research, development and technology transfer

Basic transport infrastructure development creates only prerequisite for cross-border cooperation. Integrated planning approach including education and marketing is needed to develop high degree cooperation. Integrated planning requires:

- introduction of cross-border transport strategy and permanent coordination of policy and technical planning in transport and infrastructure sector
- establishment of data banks and control systems
- permanent meetings and contacts of officials of neighboring regions on transport and infrastructure issues

In order to facilitate development of transport and infrastructure cooperation in cross-border regions, activities for enhancement of transport and infrastructure manufacturing and marketing have to be carried out, including:

Transport companies facility development and promotion
Improving conditions for companies intending operate in cross-border regions
Development of joint marketing and promotion strategy for cross-border regions transport companies
Facilitation of investment attraction to transport and infrastructure sector of cross-border regions
Creation and promotion of “transport image” on both sides of border

Examples of Good Practice

INTERREG IIA Program No. 44 (Italy-Albania)

The program concentrates on a sea border in the southern part of the Adriatic Sea on the edge of the EU, in the provinces of Bari, Brindisi and Lecce (Italy) and a few coastal provinces of Albania. The major objectives of the program are the development of the transport and communication systems and cooperation across sea borders with Albania.

Specific infrastructure activities include:

Development of the ports at Bari (Italy) and Vlore (Albania),
Expansion of an air transport network in Albania,
Production of a fiber optic cable link and development of the telecommunications sector.

Upgrading transport connections in the Pyrenees – INTERREG IIA (Spain/France)

For the regions concerned it became obvious that the two high-speed sections through the central Pyrenees linking Toulouse with Barcelona and Pau with Zaragoza can help improve transport as well as economic and social ties. In 1991, France and Spain approved the construction of a 40-km tunnel under the Somport pass. From the local perspective this project ensured safer travel, while from the international standpoint it was an improved link between the mountain regions and their administrative and economic centers, better regional communication between the regions of the Andours-Garonne region and the Ebro valley, better cross-regional links between Aquitaine, Midi-Pyrenées and the Spanish regions.

In 1988 the "Pyrenees Association" (CTP) approved:

the creation of two high-speed sections along the Atlantic coast and the Mediterranean Sea;
the reorganization of the two conventional railway lines in the western and eastern Pyrenees
and construction of a conventional section meeting international standards over the central Pyrenees.

Cross-border "Data highway" between Mons and Valenciennes (Belgium/France)

The cross-border cooperation area of Hainault/Nord-Pas-de-Calais/Picardy (France) was experiencing decline in traditional economic activities. The region necessitated upgrading of telecommunication

infrastructure which could serve as a possible springboard for a targeted policy to restructure and modernize the border region's economy.

The construction of a 54-km high-capacity fiber optic link between the two cities of Valenciennes and Mons began in 1994 and was completed within a year. The conclusion of the work quickly resulted in intensive cooperation between chambers of commerce, universities and local TV stations. The universities soon asked for additional connections. Other actors (e.g. clinics, the media and the IT sector) are also showing increasing interest in using the fiber optic infrastructure. A follow-on project submitted under INTERREG IIA is "Extension of the high-capacity fiber optic network link between the university centers of Valenciennes and Mons".

Some of the key goals were:

- functional use of the fiber optic-based high-capacity network;
- development of cross-border cooperation in the area of image generation and services related to the fiber optic network;
- enabling technology transfer between the production sites involved and industry; and
- promoting synergies of new equipment for digital image generation.

Improved access to the Guadiana bridge; (Portugal/Spain)

The Guadiana is the natural border between Andalusia and the Algarve. Cross-border connections between the regions were poor in the past.

The bridge constructed in 1994, (some four million in the direction of the Algarve) is the most important connection between the two border regions, making it very important to regional economic development and for visitors to Andalusia and the Algarve.

To optimize the use of the bridge, the connections to the main roads have to be improved. The project's main goal is to develop a good road network and stimulate economic development in both border regions. Good connections ensure better access to markets on both sides of the border.

INTERREG IIA Program No. 55 Southeast-Finnish Region (Finland/Russian Federation)

The program includes areas in southeastern Finland east of Helsinki and in the Leningrad oblast including St Petersburg (Russian Federation). One of the major goals of the program is extension of the European transport corridor through the gateway to Russia on Finnish territory. This involves the development of border crossing points and upgrading transport connections, including water transport.

INTERREG IIA Program No. 28 External borders in Greece

This program concerns Greek border areas on the EU's external borders such as those with Albania, FYROM, Bulgaria and Turkey. The main goal of the program is to promote cross-border cooperation with neighboring countries. This requires the development of the basic infrastructure such as roads, cross-border rail transport and airports, and extending the telecommunications network.

Trade

Neighboring countries markets are the most easily accessible. Proper transport infrastructure in these regions substantially increases this natural advantage. Stimulation of cross-border trade gives an impetus to economic growth for depressed border regions and vitalizes overall economic development of a country. At the same time it is an efficient tool for integration of neighboring economies, which contributes to the economic growth.

SME's can especially benefit from cross-border cooperation, as border regions provide proximity to markets. Entrepreneurs in border regions can benefit from the proximity of bordering market, as distribution of their production to distant markets within the country is more costly than to a bordering market. Proximity of markets of cross-border regions lowers transportation costs thus it is more profitable for a local firm to export in an adjacent region. If we take into account prospect of frequent delivery of goods in small quantities it seems especially attractive for SME's.

Cross-border cooperation in trade brings a dual benefit for business and customers. But this potential of dual benefit for trans-frontier regions customers and traders might be artificially eliminated by state borders. Borders limit high trade potential of cross-border region's intermediaries and traders.

Separation of neighboring countries by borders influences decisions of businesses. Different national standards for governing the sphere of enterprise, different rules, tax codes, different development trends result in different business expectations and investment initiatives, from bordering regions. These differences need to be reconciled and common vision and strategy should be elaborated for successful cross-border cooperation.

Mutual benefit of cross-border trade still is applicable for regions with unequal economic development or different size of their economies at national level. Richer border region can offer less developed neighbor better quality and high variety of goods, whilst poorer region would be a perfect location for manufacturers from adjacent country due to lower labor cost and prices as well as new market to explore. The same scheme is completely applicable to service sector as well as to service trading. These advantages that trade brings for cross-border regions serve as a good reason to start intense trade turnover between neighboring regions of bordering countries.

Examples of Good Practice

InterTrade Ireland

InterTrade Ireland was created under the UK and Republic of Ireland Agreement Act 1999. The main goal of the organization is the promotion of prospects for business development between Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland. The main tasks of InterTrade Ireland are: information exchange and coordination of work on cross-border trade and business development as well as other related issues.

InterTrade Ireland is focusing on cooperation in following areas:

Facilitation and cooperation on business development opportunities

Elaboration of new approaches for cross-border business development including research, training, marketing and quality improvement
Consultancy in skills development, telecoms, IT and electronic commerce order to increase competitiveness of companies in south-north context
North-South trade and supply chain promotion
Cross-border trade promotion through organizing trade events, marketing initiatives and searching for new opportunities for north-south trade
Rising cross-border market and trade awareness
Initiating joint cross-border trade promotion projects
Providing advice on cross-border trade issues

Rheinland-Pfalz Saarland-Lorain, Germany and France

Cooperation between chambers of trades

This project covers a cross-border area, which also includes Luxembourg, and is known as the “Great Region”, which symbolizes its role as a cross-border economic area. Inter-regional Council of Chambers undertook the three major projects.

One of the projects is concerned with the environment field and involves the provision of environmentally-linked aid to SMEs-SMIs engaged in cross-border activity. The second project involves a permanent forum which coordinates cross-border market strategies led by the various chambers. The third, the “Culture and Material” project aims to establish an inter-regional price for craft products to raise awareness of artisan businesses regarding the commercial importance of maintaining a product quality policy. This project also includes measures to support marketing.

Ireland Interreg North-South

InterComm

The major objective of this project is to improve trade relations across the Irish Sea. By using information and communication technology, the project aims to establish contacts, publicize SME's, and ultimately to increase employment, and with these activities bringing the area into the global market.

This project developed from an initial twinning of the Chambers of Commerce in Wexford and in Pembrokeshire in 1993, since then links between the two organizations have been firmly established.

The main actions undertaken by the project include the development of a web-site, which provides a database regional information shared by the regions, and a complete list of enterprises in the areas under consideration. The project also supports the efforts of the Industrial Development Agency (IDA) and the Welsh Development Agency, undertaken in attracting potential investors to the region.

Within the project an Annual Forum (Commercial Bridge) is organized, which gathers potential investors in order to identify opportunities for investments and to discuss the promotion of local enterprise. The project actively encourages joint ventures as well as the transfer of technologies, and sales contracts

between the countries. The project also permits a reduction in travel costs for SME's involved in the project thanks to an agreement reached with navigation companies and ferryboat operators.

This project has shown a high level of cross-border co-operation based on the promotion of the interests of SME's. In the future there are plans to extend the area covered by the project.

Education, Training and Labor Market Development

It is generally assumed that the development of a single labor market operating across the border would promote regional restructuring and endogenous development of the area. This will mean that employers can recruit skilled labor and job seekers can find employment opportunities without immigrating to remote areas. To achieve this, cross-border cooperation must be established between education, training and employment services to facilitate planning and delivery on a joint basis. This should include the delivery of services common to the whole of the region (information, educational and training courses) and mutual recognition of qualifications (examinations/certificates).

Two types of action (preparatory and advanced) have been identified in this respect. Preparatory actions might include:

- establishing contacts between education, training and employment services through activities such as meetings, study tours, conferences and so on;
- exchanges of information and people as components of training and education programs or as part of work experience/job placements, and also to
- cooperation between education and training institutions, which could include setting up specific programs/courses, exchanging and providing information on what services (courses) are on offer, cooperation between primary and secondary schools, colleges and other bodies (including Chambers of Commerce), with a view to creating conditions in which to develop cooperation in other fields (socio-cultural, economic and business cooperation).

Advanced activities are known to be of genuine cross-border nature and aim at managing the set of skills available in the cross-border region and integrating education, training and labor market measures into comprehensive strategies and programs of regional development. Activities of this category might include:

- on-going joint initiatives which will provide information on the development of services for the cross-border regions, including research on the labor market (surveys on skills and labor market needs) and preparation of common strategies and plans;
- permanent joint planning and delivery of education and training courses (curricula, materials, teaching methods, training of trainers, recruitment of trainees/ students etc.) in specific institutions. this may also involve the development of new shared facilities (training centers);
- development of common labor market structures and information and management systems, including the collection and dissemination of shared information, joint databases, information access points in centers throughout the region
- initiatives and services to assist recruitment into jobs available in the cross-border regions by providing information and advisory services to employers, job seekers etc. Information and

advisory services may also deal with the practical aspects of cross-border mobility, including social protection, terms and conditions of employment, access to grants for study, accommodation etc.

There are many examples of conducting these activities successfully in the European Union. A number of initiatives have been implemented within the INTERREG II program (stand A).

Examples of Good Practice

Vocational Training in Hotel and Catering (Germany/Czech Republic)

Established in 1996/97, the main aim of this project has been to improve human resources through cross-border co-operation in the areas of education and vocational training. More specifically, this project consisted of a program based in the technical college of Pirna-Sonnenstein in Germany, which gave more than 100 students - including 40 Czech ones - the opportunity to benefit from vocational training in the field of hotel management and catering. Moreover, at the end of the third year of training, all students (German as well as Czech trainees) could qualify for a degree from IHK Dresden. Following the training, the Czech students can study for another year in Usti, Labem and Templice and receive a degree recognized by the Czech Republic.

EURO-TEAM (Germany/Denmark)

This project aimed to provide students with methods and practices in relation to the removal of barriers within the construction industry. Project activities included joint planning and an exchange of information with regard to building standards in both countries.

The project allowed Danish and German apprentices in carpentry and bricklaying to work together on the renovation of a building in Germany, thus strengthening the understanding of each other's construction methods and cultures. In addition, a cross-border conference and construction meetings were organized.

Training through Cross-border Cooperation (Italy/Albania)

This project is designed to develop and strengthen cross-border cooperation across the maritime border between Italy and Albania. The project aimed at addressing the lack of linkages by initiating a training program managed by the Training Department of the Puglia region (Italy).

The primary objective of this project was to provide the Albanian public administration with technicians equipped with the necessary skills to coordinate different operations linked to the development of the area. These include spatial planning, the programming of actions, the conception of integrated projects, implementation and follow-up and evaluation.

Training Courses for Moroccan Executives (Morocco/Gibraltar)

Economic co-operation between Morocco and Gibraltar is impeded by a lack of a common language, with Arabic and French spoken in the former and English and Spanish spoken in the latter. To combat

this problem a project has been developed to encourage contacts at the academic, administrative, and business level. The rationale is that by overcoming the difficulties arising from language differences and by helping familiarize the Moroccan business community with Gibraltar's financial services, further co-operation in the field of commerce will take place.

A key component of the project is the development of a series of subsidized residential courses, which will provide training in commercial English, business skills, and information technology to Moroccan businessmen and other Moroccan professionals. As a first step in the development of the project, the British Council in Rabat commissioned a feasibility study which concluded that there is a huge demand for the English language in Morocco, Moroccan businesses will be made more competitive through training, and there is a need for improved systems of vocational and technical training. With this in mind, it has been decided that project courses will combine English with specific areas of interest, such as IT skills, presentation skills, negotiation skills, management skills, business language, and communication skills. The project partners include the Department of Education and Training in Gibraltar, the Gibraltar Finance Centre, and representatives of Gibraltar and Moroccan private sector.

A Revitalized Cross-border Area (Belgium/Germany)

The establishment of the Single Market in 1993 led to the closure of customs offices which employed nearly 500 people in the cross-border area of Lichtenbusch between Belgium and Germany. This project consists of reasserting the value of the area to prevent it from becoming a nondescript piece of land and to create new jobs. First of all, it is promoting the reconversion of the old customs buildings into business centers. Among other things, an information centre was set up to cater for potential investors and other people seeking information on the region's economic situation or touristic potential. Other developments have been undertaken to ensure the safety of pedestrians (walkways over the motorway, pavements) and to enhance the area's attractiveness (flower beds, etc.).

Health and Social Services

It is often the case that social and cultural cross-border cooperation actually creates the basis and conditions for sustainable success in the economic sector. Therefore the cross border cooperation in the field of health and social services is regarded as equally important to that of the economy and the infrastructure.

Many border regions suffer from underdevelopment and remoteness often characterized by low population, out-migration of younger people and a higher dependent population (children and elderly). Rural areas and areas with a declining population often suffer from poorly developed social services where insufficient demand may limit some services.

Given these circumstances, some border regions may have difficulty guaranteeing a basic provision of social services and health care facilities. Therefore, to maintain the scope and quality of the health and social services and related resources in peripheral regions, appropriate and creative solutions must be developed in cross-border regions.

The key aspects of cooperation to provide health and social services might include:

cross-border use of hospitals such as cooperation between blood banks and transfers of patients (for some border region residents, the nearest and most convenient hospital may be located across the border);

cooperation in emergency and ambulance services including joint emergency response exercises;

joint planning of common central health facilities to maximize complementarity;

cross-border funding pool of insurance companies for balancing out payments in the event of cross-border use of health care and social services;

development of cross-border contingency plans for emergency and rescue services so that personnel, vehicles and other resources can be made available. In cases like this, national plans should be adapted simultaneously, so that the provision of equipment and personnel across borders can be implemented without difficulty within each country's catchment area.

While cooperating in the development of joint facilities, an examination of the availability of large-scale facilities in the health and social service sector should be conducted to avoid duplication of investment and to insure planning of more rational cross-border facilities. Some of the successful cases of cross-border cooperation in the field of health and social services include:

Examples of Good Practice

Mountain Rescue (France/Italy/Switzerland)

Danger, accidents and rescues are not limited by borders. It is particularly hard to mobilize emergency response in the remote, mountainous regions. With the increase in alpine tourism, mountain accidents are more and more frequent and organizing rescues becomes ever more complex and costly. For air rescues, the authorities from Haute Savoie (France), the Swiss Valais (Switzerland) and the Val d'Aoste (Italy) decided to organize a common service based at the Chamonix station. Every year 850 helicopter rescues are launched from this Savoy station to save injured patients.

A Plan to Assist Drug Addicts (Germany/the Netherlands/Belgium)

Seven institutions involved in assisting drug addicts have joined forces to increase and improve the availability of care for drug-addicts and drug users. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the project lies in its cross-border team of social workers, which take care of foreign drug addicts in particular. Their activities in the field are carried out in co-operation with local colleagues. Contacts with other sectors that deal with drug addiction (aid agencies, the police, and the legal services) are also provided for, so as to ensure coherence between the different interventions.

Comparative Study on Access to Health and Social Services (Spain/Portugal)

This project, carried out in 1996, involved a study into the access conditions of cross-border workers in Galicia(Spain) and Norte (Portugal) to health and social services. The overall objective of the project was to provide an incentive to harmonies legislation so that equal treatment of the two populations would be achieved in the area of health, social security, employment and professional training.

Findings of the study have been published and distributed to appropriate organizations. It is hoped that by highlighting the obstacles to real cross border mobility, the regulatory environment will eventually adapt to improve the situation for cross border working.

Dental Hygiene and Treatment (Greece/Albania)

The project involved the development and equipping of a mobile dental unit to visit schools in specified border regions, especially in Albania. The establishment of the mobile unit was accompanied by a training program for Albanian dentists and dental technicians. The unit which was staffed with a Greek dentist, the instructor, and an Albanian dentist, the trainee, carried out school visits in order to provide educational materials on dental hygiene and dental treatment to pupils.

As a result of the project, the mobile dental unit was equipped and became operational providing treatment to a large number of the border population. In addition, a significant number of Albanian dentists and dental technicians received theoretical and practical training on new dental techniques, materials and research.

Radio Assistance Directly to the Home (Spain/Portugal)

This project which began in 1995 had the objective of bringing together the two "Red Cross" organizations in Spain and Portugal. The project "Radio Assistance Directly to the Home" already existed in Spain but not in Portugal. The transnational aspect of the project included the setting up of a radio communications network allowing the co-ordination of actions from one central alarm station in Badajoz (Spain).

In 1996 the project was further developed. An attempt was made to introduce into the Portuguese Red Cross organization its own "Radio Assistance" project in the region of Alentejo (Portugal), on similar lines to the Spanish project. This new project aimed to widen the Radio Assistance project to both Extremadura (Spain) and Alentejo (Portugal) and to include users with physical movement difficulties. It is supported by a radio telecommunications network, which allows co-ordination between existing Portuguese resources and the Central Alarm station of the Red Cross in Badajoz.

The project initially focused on the communities of Evora, Beja, Portalegre, Estremoz and on the Spanish side those communities in Extremadura where the Red Cross currently operates. The project has broken new ground in bringing together the Spanish Red Cross and its Portuguese equivalent.

PART VII - Georgian Experience

Despite legal restrictions outlined in the second chapter, Georgia has been able to gain some experience in cross-border cooperation over the last decade or so. However, this kind of cooperation has been basically limited to certain donor-funded initiatives whereas a systematic approach to cross-border cooperation from the government of Georgia has been apparently missing. As outlined in the diagnostic paper prepared by the Task Force for Regional Development, cross border co-operation has not been mentioned in any major state documents produced by the Government of Georgia. Neither the Basic Data and Directions (BDD) document nor the Law on the State Budget for 2009 mentioned cross-border co-operation of regions. It is not either covered by “Passports” - the only official reports on Georgian regions produced by the Government of Georgia in 2007-2008.

In spite of this, both formal and informal cooperation forms have been developed to some extent. While informal cross-border cooperation is known to be widely spread among civil society organizations and private companies from bordering regions of Georgia and its neighboring countries, it is hard to obtain systematic data and gather information about all cooperation projects that have taken place.

As for the formal cooperation, it has also taken place, although formalization has not usually have a legally binding nature and mostly has been achieved through the cooperation of agreements, such as memorandums of understanding and/or memorandums of cooperation between cooperating parties. There have been certain attempts to develop even more advanced forms of cross-border cooperation, such as establishment joint bodies, however, this kind of initiatives have not been finalized in the end. E.g. in 2007 an infrastructure development project was jointly initiated by regional authorities from Kvemo Kartli and Armenia’s Tavush regions with support of the Delegation of the European Commission to Georgia and the Government of Poland (Polish Aid). The project aimed at supporting infrastructure development and the establishment of joint enterprises in both regions although it was ultimately suspended after the initial meetings and workshops.

One of the early cases of development cross-border cooperation with Georgian involvement is the South Caucasus Cross-Border Programs launched by Eurasia Foundation in 1998. The initiative continues till now and is designed to address shared regional challenges by developing common approaches, as well as by exchanging experiences and innovative ideas among engaged citizen groups in the South Caucasus.

Since 1998, the program invested over 6 million in grants and technical assistance to Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia by supporting more than 150 trilateral projects in such areas as independent media strengthening, economic development, environmental protection, and public policy development.

Some donor-driven recent cross-border cooperation programs/priorities are given below:

GTZ - Multi-country projects of German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ's) Caucasus initiative
Title: Training and upgrading in the Agricultural Sector

Overall term: October 2002 to September 2010

At selected agriculture education institutions in the three countries, students, graduates and workers will be trained as technical and managerial personnel for the farming sector. This will support the privatization process in agriculture and create framework conditions favorable to market-oriented, sustainable farming. New jobs are expected to reduce rural-urban migration. Agriculture management courses are being introduced at technical schools, colleges and vocational schools. Similarly, advanced courses will be offered at the agricultural universities of the three countries. Graduates of the national agricultural universities will receive further training as multipliers at the Weihenstephan technical university in Triesdorf, Germany. They will then ensure the teaching of technical subjects at their home universities.

Title: Promotion of Municipal Democracy in the South Caucasus
Overall term: October 2002 to September 2009

The project supports cities, municipalities and associations to initiate local-level development processes and to execute local tasks transparently and effectively, with the participation of institutions, organizations and the population. The emphasis is on a better flow of information between the citizens and the municipality and enhancing the planning competence of the municipalities through new participatory approaches. The establishment and strengthening of inter-municipal associations is also promoted, as is their role in representing the interests of the respective municipalities and in acting as agents for the implementation of superregional tasks.

Title: Caucasus City Network
Overall term: March 2002 to December 2009

The project focuses on consultancy and training measures. The key tools are fact-finding trips within the region and to Germany, internships in special fields and job-shadowing. Regional workshops, training programs and conferences promote exchanges between the countries. Financial contributions enable local German authorities to initiate local-level development processes with the partner cities and to provide them with constant support. GTZ offers advice on the selection and development-policy orientation of the measures.

Title: Sustainable management of the biodiversity in protected areas and forests, South Caucasus
Overall term: June 2008 to May 2016

Development cooperation gives priority to efforts to help to create the conditions needed for sustainable biodiversity management in the Southern Caucasus countries. Support is provided for the reform of relevant laws, ordinances and implementation guidelines, organizational development and the development of capacity and potential at the environment ministries, staff development within and outside the environment ministries, and environmental communication.

One local-level priority area is the management of natural resources at the pilot locations. The sustainable and economic use of biodiversity is promoted in this area through the development of value chains. Local trade opportunities and alternative ways for people to earn a living are intended to provide women, in particular, with new means of generating their own income. The project also promotes the cross-border dialogue and technical exchange between the countries. The partners are invited to take part in a regional dialogue to learn about project measures, methods and results and to develop cross-border initiatives.

Swiss Cooperation Office South Caucasus

The new Cooperation Strategy for South Caucasus 2008–2011 pursues the overall objective of reducing economic disparities and supporting the transition process in the South Caucasus. The main fields of operation are:
Principles of good governance (accountability, transparency, efficiency, non-discrimination, participation) the monitoring of key governance features in specific programs will be done on a regular basis so as to assess the potential achievements of this mainstreaming methodology.
Gender mainstreaming - The projects and program will be designed according to a sex-disaggregated baseline and promote equal opportunities
Market development approach -The program will focus on interventions allowing the beneficiary groups to integrate into existing or potential markets. Projects will primarily target farmer families, enabling them to develop from subsistence producers to market-oriented, small entrepreneurs.
Disaster risk consciousness in project design - Due to the high disaster risk exposure of the South Caucasus, Disaster Risk Reduction remains a priority topic for SDC in its new Strategy. SDC has formulated its own Guidelines on Disaster Risk Reduction in order to stress the link between Disaster **Risk Reduction and developments** - Georgia has been selected as a pilot country to test the implementation of the guidelines.
Human Rights policy - The provisions of the Human-Rights-Based Approach as adopted in SDC’s Human Rights

Policy (2006) are reflected, for instance, by the strong focus on the rights and well-being of the IDPs (humanitarian operations and policy interventionism Georgia and Armenia; development projects in Azerbaijan).

Selection of partners and aid modalities - An increase in harmonized and aligned program-based activities with higher responsibility of government partners is foreseen, provided coordination by countries becomes more effective.

Harmonization & alignment - The Cooperation Strategy is fully in line with national priorities such as poverty reduction programs and action plans and efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals.

Conflict sensitivity - The unresolved and potential conflict lines within and among the societies of the South Caucasus are addressed through the selection of the domains of intervention (e.g., increase and diversification of incomes for vulnerable groups of population in order to reduce socio-economic disparities), as well as through a conflict sensitive implementation approach.

Migration issues - The Federal Office for Migration of Switzerland has signed agreements with Armenia and Georgia and is in dialogue with Azerbaijan. On the basis of these agreements, projects in favor of the socio-economic re-integration of returnees are implemented in the region under the supervision of SDC.

REC Caucasus

Information program- Information Service of the Program provides free access to environmental information, assists others in improving access to information, raises environmental awareness and promotes cooperation between the stakeholders in the countries of the South Caucasus.

Public Participation program- Objective is to ensure sustainable development and diversification of the program involving new target groups, especially from outside of capitals, and in cooperation with other program and projects increasing level of awareness, as well as skillfulness of citizens of the South Caucasus countries to take active part in environmental decision-making.

Environmental Policy and LEAP program- implements projects aiming to solve the existing environmental problems at regional, national and local level through providing Environmental Government structures of the South Caucasus countries with expert assistance, financial and technical support in the following areas: Environmental Policy and Local Environmental Action Plans (LEAPs)

NGO Support Program- is designed to provide assistance to environmental NGOs when and where it is needed the most. One of the key directions of the Program is the grants component
The organization provides free consultations to improve the writing of project proposals, strengthen project management, and assistance to search for partners for collaborative projects, also conducts permanent trainings and consultation in NGO management, assists donors and foundations in building locally developed grant schemes and advise on appropriate, user-friendly procedures.

Sustainable development program-via assistance to inter-sectoral cooperation, implementation of pilot projects and initiatives, providing education and knowledge, promoting dialog and decisions on regional problems, public-outreach, etc.

Mountain Program- REC Caucasus, being member of Global Mountain Partnership established by UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UN Environmental Program(UNEP) supports the following processes in the Caucasus:

- Development of decentralized system of governance of local level
- Capacity building of local self-governance institutions
- Introduction of complex and integrated approach to local problems solving and environmental management
- Promotion of sustainable development tools such as Local Agenda 21 to governments of the region
- Development of regional approaches for trans-boundary problems solving on local and national levels
- Introduction of other European and international tools for integrated management of mountain regions of the Caucasus

Supports governments in elaboration of complex legal and policy documents for management of the Caucasus

Mountain ecosystems

Water Program- Being established by the Governments of the three Caucasus countries, and based on the requirements of international environmental policies, such as the Environment for Europe Process, EU Water Initiative, the EECCA (Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia) Strategy, and the European Neighborhood Policy, the Water Program aims at strengthened cooperation and coordination between the various stakeholders of the three countries of the region for integrated management of trans-boundary water resources. REC Caucasus plans to achieve it through:

- Calling and facilitating a dialogue between concerned parties on trans-boundary water resources management;
- Fostering public participation in water related decision-making processes through an increased awareness, information and knowledge of the stakeholders and public in water related issues;
- Assisting the Governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in their initiatives towards integrated management of trans-boundary water resources.

Education Program- The aim of the Program is to assist the countries of the South Caucasus in implementation of the UNECE Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development.

Institute for War and Peace Reporting

Cross Caucasus Journalism Network

CrossCaucasus.net

The aim of this program is to build journalistic connections across the Caucasus, share information and form collaborations across the borders and divides of the Caucasus. The program aims to:

- Establish a sustainable network of over 50 journalists from South and North Caucasus
- Develop their skills especially in reporting conflict and national minorities
- Increase the knowledge of the Caucasus journalists of their own region
- Provide the readers of the respective societies with accurate and balanced reporting
- Build dialogue and cross-border cooperation

The journalists are provided with regular training opportunities in different countries and regions of the Caucasus concentrating on issues of conflict resolution as well as reporting national minorities.

Another early attempt of enhancing cross-border cooperation in Georgia was the program titled “Cross-border cooperation between the Shirak region in Armenia and the Samtskhe-Javakheti Region in Georgia” initiated in 2005 by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and supported by the Government of Norway. The overall goal of the project was to improve the socioeconomic conditions of the population in the Shirak (Armenia) and Samtskhe-Javakheti (Georgia) regions by encouraging and supporting cross-border cooperation, particularly through trade and economic cooperation. Within the project framework a study examining economic relations between Georgia and Armenia has been undertaken by a group of Georgian, Armenian and international experts with the aim to identify the reasons challenging cross-border trade between Samtskhe-Javakheti and Shirak (the neighboring regions of Georgia and Armenia), and to offer recommendations on how to open up new cooperation opportunities.

However, the final study was mainly focused on trade in general rather than in cross-border context, since, according to the authors, the research was almost exclusively limited to the Georgian side of the border. Consequently, in the absence of data from both sides of the border, it proved irrelevant to evaluate cross-border trade opportunities within the scope of that particular research paper. The study

found out that there was very little of the development work focused on cross-border trade and it proposed to conduct a more detailed analysis to assess cross-border trade opportunities in full.

The same project proposed to produce a needs assessment for possible cross-border cooperation between Georgia and Turkey based on the argument that Turkey is one of Georgia's main trading partners and consequently, cross-border cooperation between Georgia (Samtskhe-Javakheti) and Turkey (Kars, Artaan and Artvini) would undoubtedly facilitate, and, most likely, considerably increase trading activities. As a result, it would accelerate economic development in communities on both sides of the Georgian-Turkish border. However, this proposition was not realized and this kind of study has not been undertaken in the end.

Later in Georgia cross-border cooperation gained momentum with the announcement of the European Neighborhood & Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which aims at reinforcing cooperation between member states and partner countries along the external border of the European Union. Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) is a key priority of the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument under which 15 programs have been established.

Georgia became a part of the Black Sea Joint Operational Program (JOP), one of the sea-basin programs established under the ENPI for the period 2007-2013. Besides Georgia, there are nine countries participating in the Black Sea program: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Moldova, Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine, Romania, and Greece.

The most recent development with respect to cross-border cooperation in Georgia was the establishment of the Task Force for Regional Development, an initiative of the Delegation of the European Commission, Governments of Poland (Polish Aid) and Germany (GTZ) and the Government of Georgia. The Task Force was established on December 18, 2008 and consists of a wide variety of stakeholders including representatives of local and regional authorities, line ministries, local and international NGOs and financial institutions. Task Force is chaired by the Minister for Regional Development and Infrastructure.

The stated aim of the Task Force is "to elaborate a draft of the Strategy for Regional Development in Georgia, to achieve a consensus amongst major stakeholders and to set out recommendations for the Government of Georgia whose realisation, using the experience of European and other countries, would lead to the higher competitiveness of the regions across Georgia and would lessen the disparities in the level of development amongst the regions thereby bringing Georgia closer to the European Union".¹⁰

Seven working groups have been established within the Task Force secretariat to work on various aspects of regional development. One of the groups is specifically focusing on international/cross border cooperation of regions. In June 2009, the Task Force approved the diagnostic report prepared by the working groups. Currently, the draft strategy for regional development is under preparation, which will be followed by the action plan and specific projects.

The diagnostic report (the part on international/cross-border cooperation) is the first comprehensive examination of existing practices of cross-border cooperation in Georgia. Conclusions are based on

¹⁰ Terms of Reference of the Task Force for Regional Development

information gathered from local authorities of all Georgian regions (except for the autonomous republic of Abkhazia), as well as international/non-governmental organizations and public entities.

The study concluded that the vast majority of Georgian regions (local and regional authorities), have established some forms of cooperation with the regions of foreign countries. However, this kind of cooperation have been more of international rather than cross-border character, i.e. local and regional authorities have established links with non bordering regions. Nevertheless, this kind of cooperation is very useful in cross-border context, since it provides a fruitful ground for further expansion and continuation.

According to the report, the cooperation between regional/local authorities is mostly demonstrated by twinning between major cities and municipalities. E.g. Tbilisi and major cities from nine Georgian regions (Adjara, Kvemo Kartli, Kakheti, Imereti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Guria, Samtskhe-Javakheti, and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti) have been twinned or signed a memorandum of cooperation with foreign cities. Five Georgian regions (Adjara, Guria, Imereti, Kakheti and Shida Kartli) are members of the Assembly of European Regions which is the largest independent network of regions in Europe established in 1985 and bringing together over 270 regions from 33 countries and 16 inter-regional organizations.¹¹

Other conclusions of the study are concerned with the forms and areas of cooperation. The report states that cooperation of Georgian regions with foreign (neighboring or not) regions has been basically limited to information sharing activities, while more advanced forms of cooperation, such as implementing joint projects or establishment of joint committees has been rare or totally absent. In addition, according to the report, most information sharing activities have been exercised in the fields of education and culture. Exchange programs for students and pupils (e.g. student and teacher exchange programs between the universities of Lviv and Kutaisi) and trainings for public servants (e.g. in 2000 and 2001 representatives of the Tbilisi committee on environmental protection and natural resources attended educational programs in Bristol; in 2008 representatives from Kakheti municipalities attended the training in Alba Iulia) have been implemented.

Several international projects with Georgian participation are also worth mentioning. Although they have more regional rather than cross-border approach, still are relevant in this respect, since they promote active cooperation between countries of the Black Sea Basin and consequently provide a very fertile environment for cross-border cooperation. Among them are:

Black Sea Euroregion was initiated by the Council of Europe (CoE) in 2006. The objective of the Euroregion initiative is to reinforce regional cooperation in order to protect natural resources, strengthen social cohesion through joint projects and provide a platform for co-operation complementary to existing national intergovernmental co-operation initiatives, acting in the remit of regional and municipal competencies. Black Sea Euroregion is supposed to serve as a launching pad for multilateral initiatives using existing national, European and international financial instruments.

Black Sea Euroregion was officially established on 26 September 2008 on 26 September 2008 when the constituent act was signed by representatives of 14 Region and Municipalities of 5

¹¹ The largest independent network of regions in Europe established in 1985 and bringing together over 270 regions from 33 countries and 16 inter-regional organisations. <http://www.aer.eu/>

countries (Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, Romania and Moldova). The "Black Sea Euro-Region" is also open for the territorial units of seven countries (Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Albania, Greece and Serbia) within the pool of Black Sea countries. The Euroregion has taken a form of a non-profit association designed to facilitate inter-regional and inter-municipal co-operation in the Black Sea basin. From Georgia, Autonomous Republic of Adjara was united in the "Black Sea Euro-Region."

Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) was established in 1992 and brings together twelve States: Albania, Greece, Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, Georgia, Russia, Serbia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Ukraine. Its main areas of cooperation include: trade and economic development, transport, energy, combating crime, tourism, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), communications, environmental protection, science and technology and education. The BSEC has a permanent Secretariat in Istanbul, a Parliamentary Assembly (PABSEC), which has been active in adopting recommendations in various fields, from promoting economic integration to combating organized crime, and a Business Council.

Black Sea Trade and Investment Promotion Program (BSTIP) is a joint initiative of the Government of the Hellenic Republic, of the Government of the Republic of Turkey, the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the United Nations development Program (UNDP). It is managed from a Program Management Office located in Athens with an additional liaison unit hosted by the BSEC Headquarters in Istanbul. The BSTIP was launched in 2007 and aims at the expansion of the intra-regional trade and investment links by identifying the untapped investment and trade potential in the sub-region, and putting into place the mechanisms to exploit it. Three main objectives of the project include: 1) Developing networking arrangements; 2) Supporting the introduction of the Global Compact in the sub-region; 3) Building capacity on the EU and WTO legislation.

Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership was launched in June 2006 at a summit in Bucharest. The declaration adopted by the heads of state and government delegations from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, R. Moldova, Romania, Ukraine and Turkey indicates as main areas for strengthening future cooperation: fostering synergy and a common agenda, promoting good governance, strengthening tolerance, sustainable development, environmental protection and civil emergency planning. The Forum is not meant to establish a new structure, but to enhance problem-solving and result-oriented cooperation in the region. Its added value stems from focusing on involving, alongside governmental and inter-governmental actors, a wider range of stakeholders like civil society, the business sector, academics and mass media, in promoting regional partnerships and networks.

Commission for the Protection of the Black Sea against pollution acts as the coordinating mechanism for the implementation of the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against pollution (adopted in 1992) and the Black Sea Strategic Action Plan (adopted in 1996, revised in 2002). The Black Sea Commission comprises one representative of each of the Contracting Parties (Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine)

Black Sea Littoral States Border/Coast Guard Cooperation Forum (BSCF) was established by the the Black Sea Littoral States Border/Coast Guard Agencies (Bulgaria, Georgia Romania, Turkey and Ukraine) in 2000. The aims of BSCF is to promote stability, safety and the security in the Black Sea area and improvement of co-operation and coordination of maritime law enforcement activities in order to prevent terrorism, illegal immigration, smuggling of drugs, oil, arms, radioactive substances and other kinds of illegal activity in the black sea.

PART VIII - Useful Links

European Union

EU general site

http://europa.eu/index_en.htm

EU Inforegio regional policy

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm

EU Inforegio regional policy - Interreg III

http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/interreg3

Centre for Cross Border Studies

www.crossborder.ie

EU Enlargement site

<http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement>

European Union in the world – EuropAid Co-operation Office

http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/index_fr.htm

SCADPlus - EURES: the European Employment and Job Mobility Network

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/community_employment_policies/c10527_en.htm

SCADPlus – Free movement of workers

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/internal_market/living_and_working_in_the_internal_market/free_movement_of_workers/index_en.htm

European neighborhood policy

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm

Cross-Border Cooperation within the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/regional-cooperation/enpi-cross-border/index_en.htm

European cross-border cooperation groupings (EGCC)

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/agriculture/general_framework/g24235_en.htm

European Territorial Co-operation

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/index_en.htm

Regional co-operation

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/regional-cooperation/index_en.htm

Interact

<http://www.interact-eu.net/>

Interact ENPI CBC section

http://www.interact-eu.net/enpi_news/189

EU Committee of the Regions (CoR)

<http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/HomeTemplate.aspx>

Cross-border cooperation within the framework of the TACIS program

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/external_relations/relations_with_third_countries/eastern_europe_and_central_asia/r17004_en.htm

EU-Russia Cooperation Program (Tacis/ENPI)

http://www.delrus.ec.europa.eu/en/p_522.htm

[The web page of the European Commission \(EC\) Delegation to Georgia](#)

<http://www.delgeo.ec.europa.eu/ge/index.html>

Interreg III

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/interreg3/

Georgia

Municipal Development Fund

<http://www.mdf.org.ge/georgian/>

Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia

www.mrdi.gov.ge

State Minister of Georgia on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration

<http://eu-integration.gov.ge>

Council of Europe

CoE General Site

<http://www.coe.int/>

Council of Europe – the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

http://www.coe.int/t/congress/default_en.asp

Council of Europe - Democracy and Political Affairs - Local and Regional Democracy –Department of Local and Regional Democracy and Good Governance

http://www.coe.int/T/E/Legal_Affairs/Local_and_regional_Democracy/

Council of Europe Euro regions

http://www.coe.int/t/congress/specific-programs/Euroregion/default_en.asp

Cases of CBC projects

Black sea euro region

<http://www.bser.eu/index.php?lg=2>

Change on Borders

<http://www.change-on-borders.net/index.php>

INTERREG II Programs

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/interreg3/inte2/summary_en.htm

INTERREG III Programs

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/interreg3/abc/progweb_en.htm

Bodies/Organizations

Council of European Municipalities and Regions

<http://www.ccre.org/>

Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière

<http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/en/>

Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)

<http://www.aebr.net/>

Assembly of European Regions

<http://www.aer.eu/>

Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CRPM)

<http://www.crpm.org/>

IRE Network - Innovating Regions in Europe

<http://www.innovating-regions.org/>

Organization for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)

<http://www.bsec-organization.org/Pages/homepage.aspx>

Programs/Initiatives

Black Sea Euro region

<http://www.bser.eu/index.php?lg=2&s=1>

Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Program

<http://blacksea-cbc.net/>

Black Sea Trade and Investment Promotion Program (BSTIP)

<http://www.undpforblacksea.org/>

Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership

<http://www.blackseaforum.org/>

The Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution

<http://www.blacksea-commission.org/main.asp>

Black Sea Littoral States Border/Coast Guard Cooperation Forum

http://bscf-bcg.org/anlasma_metni/ingilizce.aspx

Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation

<http://www.gmfus.org/blacksea/>

Armenia-Turkey Cross-border Dialogue and Cooperation

http://www.epfound.am/index.php?article_id=37&clang=0

Eurasia Partnership Foundation Georgia

<http://www.epfound.ge/>