



# Final Report

on the evaluation study titled

**"Ex-post evaluation of actions cofinanced  
by the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme  
Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2007-2013"**

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## 1. SUMMARY

This evaluation study concerns the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 Poland-Belarus-Ukraine (Programme) implemented under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). This programme is a continuation and deepening of cooperation between the three neighbouring countries, with the aim of promoting cross-border development processes. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the achievements of the Programme, including the implementation of its main objective and specific objectives, which are implemented within the priorities and their subordinate measures, and the impact of the implementation of the Programme on the support areas and the economic and social lives of its inhabitants.

The final report consists of 4 parts that provide knowledge about the effectiveness and rationality of assistance provided under the Programme. Following a summary of the main conclusions (Chapter 1), the research assumptions and, in brief, the methodology used (Chapter 2) are presented in the report. Chapter three of the report provides an analysis of the effectiveness, utility and sustainability of the Programme's results with references to research questions. Part four includes the conclusions and recommendations of the study. The next sections of the report are annexes consisting of case study reports and research tools used in the evaluation study.

The conclusions of the study are positive, although most of them require confirmation in the longer term. The analysis of the products and results of the Programme shows that deepening and consolidating of cross-border co-operation takes place, and that the projects implemented contribute to the joint solving of the identified problems of partners.

The implemented projects cover all basic areas of the economy and represent all sectors identified in the Programme as representing the areas requiring support: small and medium-sized enterprises, tourism, road, water and sewer infrastructure, environmental protection and crisis management, border infrastructure, health systems, social and cultural sphere. Projects that were non-commercial in nature were implemented under three priorities and their subordinated measures across the Programme-supported area.

Beneficiaries of the Programme were representatives of all categories listed in the Programme catalogue of beneficiaries. The most of beneficiaries are local government units (38.78%), non-governmental organizations (16.84%), government administration organs (11.73%), educational units (7.65%) and hospitals (7.14%). The effects of the Programme are used by all target groups to whom the projects were addressed. Projects were mostly targeted to the largest possible population, and since almost every assumption was met, projects could be considered as effective.

The Programme has achieved the expected effects as far as the number and value of projects supported are concerned. Product indicators adopted in the Programme are determined by the number of projects in each measure. The effects expressed by the result indicators were also achieved.

An obstacle for assessing the extent to which the Programme has achieved its objectives is the absence of baseline and target values for the results indicated. On the basis of the diagnoses presented in the beneficiaries' conclusions it can be stated that the needs both in terms of infrastructure and soft skills far exceed the value of support that could be provided under the Programme. It is worth noting that a significant part of the expenditure incurred under the Programme will have long-term effects, resulting from the multiplier effects of investment made or support provided by enterprises. Rare are projects where higher tangible effects were possible, but beneficiaries managed to achieve higher than expected effects on the number of participants in

cross-border events, meetings, workshops, people trained. In this context, the analysis of project savings in terms of the rarely exceeded project indicators shows that funds were effectively programmed and used. Most projects have achieved their objectives and can therefore be considered effective. In some cases, some results have not been fully achieved (e.g. failure to complete certain construction works, or purchase certain equipment).

On the basis of the data from the reports, the reasons for incomplete realisation of the results planned can be divided into three categories: political reasons, procedural ones, and other. The reason of a political character was the change in the situation in Ukraine, which led to economic crisis, high inflation, changes in hryvnia (UAH) exchange rate, and even bankruptcy of the bank. The procedural reason was the obligation to use the PRAG, in particular the obligation to conduct tendering procedures that had to be repeated, for example, because of the lack of tenders, causing delays and sometimes even preventing attainment of the result planned. Other procedural reasons related to reporting or modifying projects - a long time of acceptance or revision led to delays in the payment of further tranches, which slowed down the process of implementation of the next phase of the project. Likewise, the procedure for the introduction of changes requiring signing of an addendum, which had to be accepted by the Joint Monitoring Committee, was lengthy. Other reasons included specific national legislation that resulted in the extension of financial procedures. In the case of Ukraine it was the so-called *kaznacheistvo*, on the other hand, in Belarus there was inflation, which indirectly caused the slowdown in the funds transfer. In the on-line and telephone surveys there were also indicated: lack of partner's involvement in the project, errors in project planning during the preparation phase, contact problems or lack of time.

The problems that the applicants diagnosed were of structural nature and without the Programme's support, it would not be possible to solve them. The projects implemented under the Programme brought certain benefits to all types of local community, beneficiaries of the Programme, and target groups. Coherence between the diagnosed needs of the cross-border region and the set objectives can also be found on the basis of the programme documentation. There was no shortage of projects in any type and all types of projects covered by the Programme were implemented. The designed intervention was defined as accurate with a high utility of the results achieved. Certain doubts have arisen only about a matter of closing the gap in the economy and living standards, whose results are likely to be observed in the long run.

Implementation of the Programme has positively influenced the development processes of the border regions. In spite of previous EU programs and funds managed by Euroregions, the level of integration of the area covered by the Programme requires further action as contributed by this Programme. Apart from noticeable changes in the area of infrastructure, security, health or accessibility of the area, the "soft" actions turned out to be important as they led to increased socio-cultural integration of local communities, the increased activity of local communities and non-governmental organizations, as well as intensification of cross-border cooperation. All the projects implemented under the Programme, especially under the Priority 3, have contributed to establishing and strengthening the cooperation. The changes observed show that the Programme has a positive impact on the lives of local communities and target groups. All beneficiaries and target groups provided for in the Programme have received the support planned.

It is more difficult to assess the extent to which the projects implemented have triggered noticeable mechanisms/trends in the support area. It seems that there can be significant improvements observed in cross-border cooperation and contacts, both at the regional and local level. This cooperation mainly involves the beneficiaries but also the local community. These trends can be of lasting nature. The answer to the question whether these trends require further support from EU interventions remains unclear - but certainly

respondents await future EU programmes, including the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020.

Joint cross-border initiatives have contributed significantly to the building and strengthening of good relations between border residents. The Programme has also proved useful in addressing common challenges in the fields of economy, infrastructure, environment, transport and cultural exchange.

The implementation of the projects helped to build lasting contacts and grounds for further cross-border cooperation. It can be said that the projects implemented under the Programme foster the cooperation of local communities and stimulate cooperation between the countries involved in the Programme.

The visible added value of the Programme was the socio-cultural dimension of the projects realised. The implementation of the projects has contributed to the dissemination of knowledge among citizens about the historical, social and economic situation of cross-border areas and the knowledge of neighbouring languages.

The projects implemented were part of the implementation of EU horizontal policies promoting sustainable development, equal opportunities, partnership and local development. The analysis of the project documentation leads to the conclusion that the sections on these issues may have been filled out in a way as if they were not understood or they were treated in an instrumental manner. However, the analysis of the reports from the perspective of the activities carried out under the projects allows us to make a statement that in practice those principles have been implemented in a rational manner.

Although most organizations that implement projects are looking for temporary alliances in order to meet specific goals, the projects that have been implemented so far have contributed to the creation of fairly permanent alliances. According to the matrix analysis, based on the distance from the border and wealth of the organization, the alliances of the type of beautiful sisters dominate (the alliance in which the parties see the common benefits of cooperation) followed by the alliances of half-sisters (the alliance in which the parties claim that the state border has a significant negative impact on cooperation). The analysis based on the results of the Internet and telephone survey identified mainly alliances of fatty bananas, ugly ducklings, beautiful sisters and shaking umbrellas. Because wealth analysis is fraught with errors, it is important to assume that the most common alliances are beautiful sisters, half-sisters and shaking umbrellas (cooperation requires a third party that stimulates interaction).

It can also be said that, as compared to previous programmes (INTERREG IIIA - Tacis CBC, Phare CBC), the interest in EU programmes on cross-border cooperation increases, the number of participants increases, and the number of partnerships increases. It seems that it takes time and the next programmes to be able to accurately assess how long-lasting the partnerships are, what they serve for, what benefits for the regions they bring.

Human capital was an important contributor stimulating the cooperation - those were people realising the projects, mainly the projects' beneficiaries, who turned out to be the most important stimulus to cooperation in the context of this Programme. Other stimulating factors include: local government who often helped solve problems, and the important role of the Joint Technical Secretariat which was helpful in solving problems. The pressure of time, however, and circumstances associated with the need to complete and account for the project, i.e. the desire to fully realise the project, was also identified as a stimulus. In contrast, the barriers identified by the beneficiaries included the existence of borders, lack of experience in the projects' implementation on the part of Ukrainian and Belarusian partners, especially in terms of financial clearance and reporting, some administrative factors, especially long financial procedures in Ukraine and Belarus resulting from the legal provisions being in force there. Finally, as barriers there were identified some factors related to



the very implementation of the Programme - the obligation to use the PRAG most often mentioned by the beneficiaries, especially the obligation to use tendering procedures, delays in payments due to long approval and possible correction of the reports, and a cumbersome process of making changes to projects, which may be summarized as the excess of formalities associated with the implementation of projects.

Socio-economic and administrative factors undoubtedly affected the course of projects' implementation. Particular difficulties were brought about by changes in the political situation in Ukraine and related inflation and the change in the hryvnia exchange rate, but also inflation in Belarus. These difficulties have translated into incomplete achievement of the assumed results in terms of certain projects. For this reason, in subsequent editions of the Programme it is worth to introduce (based on 2007-2013 experience) procedures to identify and verify potential threats to the project implementation, and to work out ways to mitigate or reduce them, thus reducing the project risks.

The project selection system has fulfilled its role as it has enabled projects to be selected and signed according within the timeline planned (by the end of 2013), and the projects selected have largely achieved their objectives and contributed to achieving objectives at the Programme level. However the recruitment procedure remained in the memory of all its participants as a long-term procedure. It should be sought to shorten it by e.g. eliminating the function of the Evaluation Committee. Early selection of appraisal experts should also be made in time in order to ensure that their absence does not delay the assessment. Projects' implementation within the framework of the PBU 2007-2013 took place from the signing of the contract to the acceptance of the final report. Project implementation period under the Programme lasted up to 3 years and was shorter than the project selection process. The beneficiaries considered the procedures for applying for the Programme funds as rather friendly, although rather complicated, but not enough to discourage them from submitting applications. Nevertheless they complained about the extended project bureaucracy, difficult reporting rules, cumbersome process of making changes to projects, and rigid rules imposed by the Programme, although they praised flexible attitude of both the JTS, the JMA and JMC who showed a lot of goodwill to change the rules to the benefit of project developers.

Project results can generally be determined as durable and long-term and can be expected to be continued also beyond the end of the project. Primarily the so-called hard results of projects that rely on investment in infrastructure are durable. However, durability is also characteristic of the so-called soft projects, involving investment in human capital. Sustainable results of this type of projects include further organisation of meetings, trainings, workshops, seminars, working meetings resulting in increased knowledge, experience and skills of the participants.

An important result of projects characterized by high durability, which is at the same time difficult to measure, is the shaping of attitudes towards obtaining funds for the implementation of projects and towards the European Union as the source of these funds.

Promotional and information activities were conducted for the whole Programme and at the level of each project. The main source of information about the Programme was the website, but other information channels were also used. Information about the calls for the Programme has been readily available, as evidenced by the applicants' great interest. Thus, the campaign about the calls has influenced the achievement of the Programme's objectives as it has enabled the preparation and submission of relevant projects. Each project implemented its promotional campaigns, although the beneficiaries emphasized that it was not easy to get media attention to the projects. Promotional activities not only promoted the PBU 2007-2013 but were also an important tool to stimulate cross-border cooperation.



The Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine has been a success. The strengths of the Programme were, among others, the successful implementation of projects that mostly achieved their objectives, successful cross-border cooperation, the broad formula of the Programme which enabled to introduce and implement projects that meet the current needs of the region; combining activities of soft and hard nature with different budgets and scales. In addition, the Programme has been smoothly implemented and was flexible in terms of introducing changes and responding to the difficulties experienced by beneficiaries, even if it took a long time to make changes. The principle of project financing through pre-financing and enabling beneficiaries to use their savings in the projects was also positively assessed. The Programme got great interest of the audience which proves its success. The weaknesses of the Programme include bureaucratism and the complexity of project reporting and settlement procedures, too long time required to select projects, the requirement to use the PRAG which was not fully compliant with the legal regulations in Belarus and Ukraine, and burdening beneficiaries with the exchange rate risk, and also the requirement to use English language in formal contacts.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1. Subject matter and objectives of the study

The Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007-2013 (Programme) implemented within the framework of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) was a continuation and extension of cooperation between the three countries in the border areas. Cooperation between local and regional authorities, different institutions, schools, NGOs and people in the Programme area had to be streamlined in order to realise and fully exploit the region's social and economic potential. The Programme built on the good practices developed during the implementation of the Neighbourhood Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine INTERREG IIIA/Tacis CBC 2004-2006 and focuses on enhancing competitiveness and improving the quality of life in the area covered by the Programme by supporting entrepreneurship and developing the main transport and environmental infrastructure. Another objective of the Programme was to encourage local initiatives and support them in various areas among individuals and communities.

This evaluation study concerns the CBC Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007-2013. The objective of the study is to:

- **assess the achievements of the Programme** including the degree of implementation of its main objective and specific objectives which are implemented within the framework of priorities and their subordinate measures;
- **assess the impact** of the implementation of the Programme on the support areas and the economic and social life of its inhabitants.

The evaluation study conducted is also supposed to answer questions about the **effectiveness and rationality** of the support provided under the Programme. Results of the study, conclusions and recommendations will serve among others to **draw up a final report** on the implementation of the Programme which will be submitted to the European Commission in accordance with the Art. 32 of the Regulation of the European Commission (EC) No 951/2007.

In addition, the results of the study will also help **identify issues that require improvement** and **show good solutions** that will be a model to follow in the next edition of the Programme, especially when preparing guidelines for projects that will apply support in the perspective 2014-2020, as well as the implementation of calls for proposals in this financial perspective.

The study covered all the projects implemented under the Programme, i.e. 108 projects co-financed under three open call for proposals (including 6 umbrella projects) and 9 strategic projects co-financed under the *direct award* procedure.

### 2.1.1. The scope of the Programme

The Programme, prepared by a working group composed of representatives of the central and regional authorities of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine, has been subjected to social consultations in the three countries, and the conclusions were taken into consideration in the final version of the document.

The main objective of the Programme was to support cross-border development processes.

The main objective has been assigned with the following specific objectives:

1. supporting socio-economic development in regions on both sides of the common border,
2. joint actions towards common challenges in areas such as the environment, public health and combating organised crime,
3. ensuring the efficient and safe functioning of the borders,
4. supporting cross-border local community initiatives,

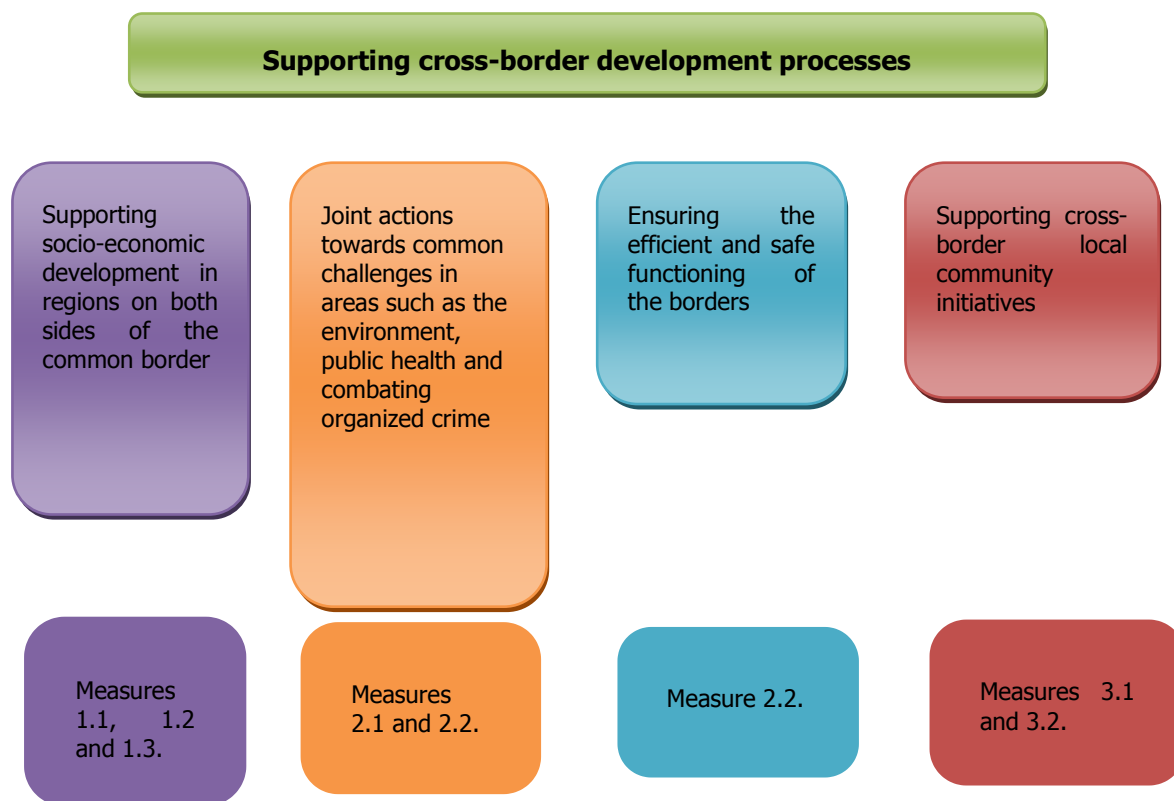
The main objective and specific objectives were to be realised within the three priorities and their subordinate measures:

- **Priority 1. Increase in the competitiveness of the border area**
  - Measure 1.1. *Better conditions for entrepreneurship*
  - Measure 1.2. *Tourism development*
  - Measure 1.3. *Improved accessibility of the region*
- **Priority 2. Improvement of the quality of life**
  - Measure 2.1. *Protection of the environment in the border area*
  - Measure 2.2. *Efficient and safe borders*
- **Priority 3. Networking and local community initiatives**
  - Measure 3.1. *Development of regional and local opportunities for cross-border cooperation*
  - Measure 3.2. *Local community initiatives*

It should be emphasized that the priorities and measures set out are closely linked to the Programme's specific objectives which in turn correspond to the strategic objectives set out in the Strategy Paper. Measures set under the Priority 1 correspond to the Objective 1 of the EU document - Support for socio-economic development in regions on both sides of common borders. Measures undertaken under the Priority 2 are in line with the Objective 2 - Joint actions towards common challenges in areas such as the environment, public health and combating organised crime. Besides, the Measure 2.2. is in line with the Objective 3 - Ensuring the smooth and safe functioning of the borders. Measures set under the Priority 3 correspond to the Objective 4 - Supporting cross-border local community initiatives.

The assignment of priorities and measures to specific objectives can be presented as follows:

Figure 1. Scheme for assigning priorities and measures to the Programme's specific objectives



Source: own development.

Within the framework of the Programme 117 projects (including 6 umbrella projects) were implemented.

Table 1. Number of projects broken down by priorities and measures

Priority/Measure	Total number of projects	Including umbrella projects	Including strategic projects
<b>Increasing competitiveness of the border area</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Measure 1.1 Better conditions for entrepreneurship	9	0	0
Measure 1.2 Tourism development	21	0	0
Measure 1.3 Improving access to the region	10	0	0
<b>Improving the quality of life</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Measure 2.1 Natural environment protection in the borderland	16	0	0
Measure 2.2 Efficient and secure borders	10	0	9
<b>Networking and people to people cooperation</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
Measure 3.1 Regional and local cross-border cooperation capacity building	45	0	0
Measure 3.2 Local communities' initiatives	6	6	0

Source: own development.

The Programme covered cross-border areas in 3 countries:

- in Poland (main area: subregions of Suwałki, Białystok, Łomża, Ostrołęka and Siedlce, Bielsk, Chełm, Zamość, Krosno, Przemyśl, adjacent subregions: Puławy, Lublin, Tarnobrzeg, Rzeszów),

- in Belarus (main area: Brest region, Grodno region, adjacent area: Minsk and Homel districts);
- in Belarus (main area: Brest region, Grodno region, adjacent area: Minsk and Homel districts);

The total budget of the Programme was EUR 203.6 million, of which EUR 186.2 million came from the European Union. A total of **117** grant agreements were signed (23 contracts in the 1st call, 79 contracts in the 2nd call, 6 contracts in the 3rd call, 9 contracts were for strategic projects implemented within the *direct award* procedure), totalling more than **EUR 174 million**.

## 2.2. Research questions

The questionnaire was designed to assess the actions implemented under the Programme on the basis of three criteria:

- effectiveness, including relevancy,
- utility,
- durability.

### A. The following research questions were used to determine the effectiveness of the Programme:

1. Did the Programme achieve its objectives and to what extent?
2. What results in terms of joint problem-solving within the framework of Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian cooperation the implementation of the Programme brought about? Could similar effects be achieved without the intervention of the Programme or by involving less financial resources?
3. What was the type and location of joint projects (industry/sector, complexity of cooperation, distance from the border)?
4. What groups of beneficiaries benefited most from the results of the Programme?
5. How far did the Programme/projects meet the local needs/needs of local communities/target groups and the challenges facing the cross-border area?
6. What factors stimulated/hindered the cooperation between entities located on both sides of the border?
7. To what extent external factors, such as socio-economic situation or administrative system, influenced the shape and achieved results of the Programme?
8. Was the project selection system effective? Have the application procedures/project implementation procedures been "friendly" in view of obtaining funding/implementation of projects? What solutions/recommendations for application/implementation procedures are proposed for the future Programme?
9. What were the reasons for not completing/not fully completing the projects approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee? How to prevent this phenomenon at the level of programming and implementation of the new Programme?
10. To what extent was the scope of the support offered under the Programme relevant to the Programme objectives? Was it possible to attain the Programme's objectives (intervention logic) using the scope of support (types and areas of projects) provided in the Programme? What types of projects were lacking in the Programme and what types of projects covered by the Programme were not implemented and what was the impact of the lack of these projects on achieving the Programme's objectives? How the relevance of the intervention designed influenced the utility of the results achieved?

11. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the information and promotion activities implemented in the Programme? What was their impact on the achievement of the Programme's objectives and results?

**B. The following research questions were used to determine the utility of the Programme:**

12. What changes are observed in the support area and how did the lives of local communities/target groups change as a result of the Programme's implementation?
13. What is the impact of the Programme on Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian relations? Do the projects implemented within the Programme foster the cooperation of local communities and stimulate Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian cooperation?
14. Has the implementation of the Programme contributed to the launch of noticeable mechanisms/trends in the support area? If so, which ones? Are trends likely to be stable? Do they require further stimulation through EU intervention?
15. What is the added value of the Programme in the socio-cultural aspect, including: constant dissemination of knowledge among the inhabitants about the historical, social, and economic situation of the support area (participation of local media in this process), learning the language of the neighbouring country as an element encouraging cooperation and communication in the support area?
16. Is there synergy with other actions undertaken by the beneficiaries?
17. To what extent has the Programme contributed to the implementation of EU horizontal policies (sustainable development, equal opportunities, partnership and local development, innovativeness and international cooperation, information society)?
18. What are the greatest successes and failures of the Programme?
19. What types of attitudes and alliances in terms of cross-border cooperation can be identified among collaborating organisations? How does a specific attitude and alliance affect the effectiveness, utility and sustainability of the effects of the projects and the Programme?

**C. The following research questions were used to determine the degree of sustainability of the Programme:**

20. What is the durability and quality of the partnership cooperation established?
21. Have project partnerships been created for the needs of the Programme, or did they exist before?
22. Have partners previously applied for EU funding for joint actions (e.g. INTERREG IIIA - Tacis CBC, Phare CBC)?
23. Do the partners plan to continue the cooperation? Do they plan to apply again for EU funding for joint action? Do they plan to cooperate without support from the EU?
24. Are the effects of project measures/results achieved lasting and long-term? Will they be felt also after projects' completion?
25. What are the conclusions/best practices that can be transferred to other similar interventions?

## 3. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

### 3.1. Analysis of the effectiveness of the Programme

#### 3.1.1. Location and types of projects implemented

This section of the report contains answers to the following research questions:

- What was the type and location of joint projects (industry/sector, complexity of cooperation, distance from the border)?

The Programme covered areas lying directly or indirectly by the Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian border with an area of 316.3 thousand km<sup>2</sup> of which 75.3 thousand km<sup>2</sup> (including: 22.7 thousand km<sup>2</sup> in adjacent regions) lies in Poland, 38.5 thousand km<sup>2</sup> (including: 68.9 thousand km<sup>2</sup> in adjacent regions) in Belarus and 102.5 thousand km<sup>2</sup> (including: 47.8 thousand km<sup>2</sup> in adjacent regions) in Ukraine.

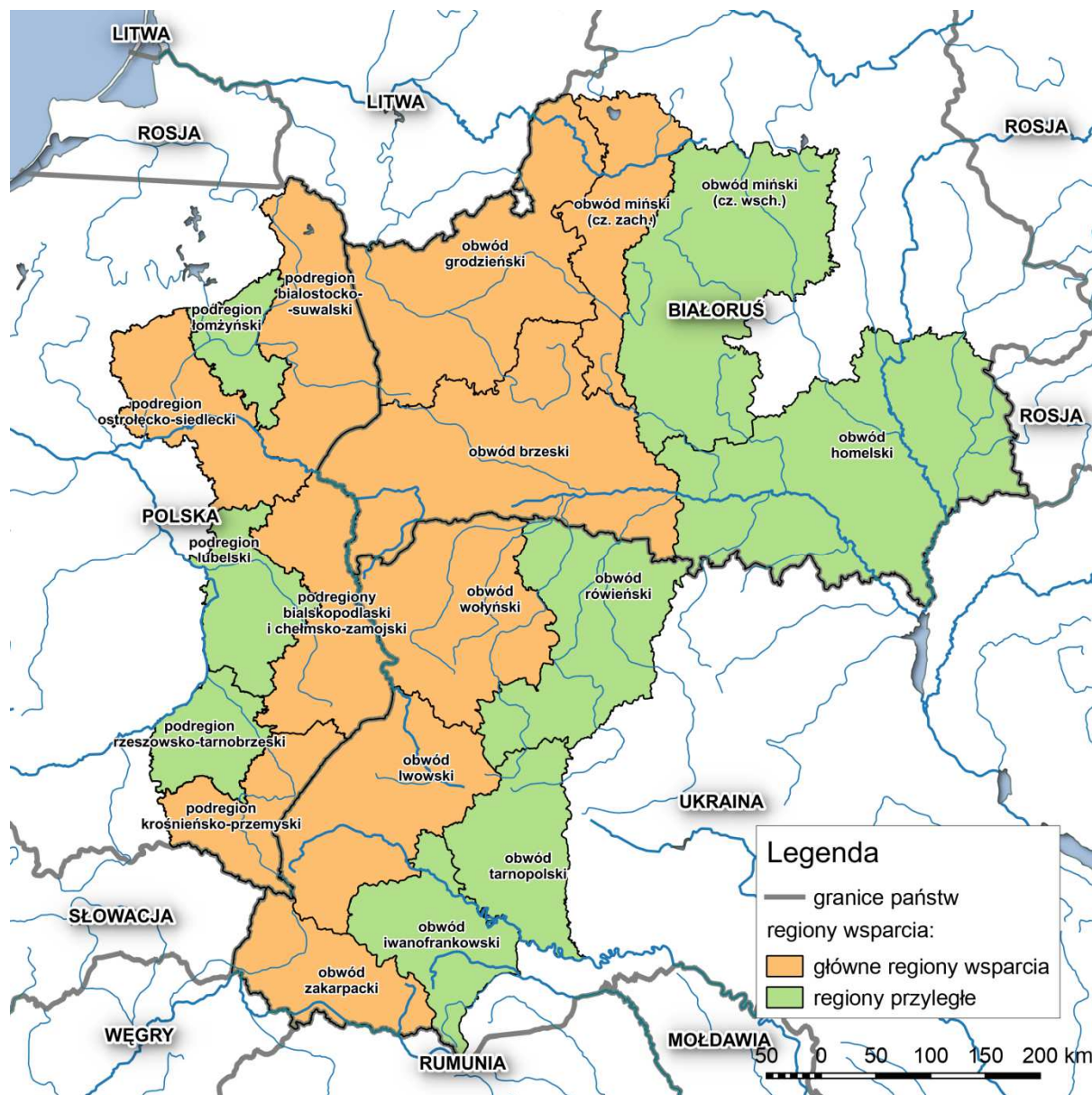
This area consisted of the following administrative units:

- Poland – **main subregions:** Krosno-Przemyśl (Podkarpackie voivodship), Białystok-Suwałki (Podlaskie voivodship), Bielsk Podlaski and Chełm-Zamość (Lubelskie voivodship), Ostrołęka-Siedlce (Mazowieckie voivodship) and **neighboring regions:** Rzeszów-Tarnobrzeg (Podkarpackie voivodship), Łomża (Podlaskie voivodship) and Lublin (Lubelskie voivodship);
- Belarus - **main regions:** Grodno region, Brest region, seven western regions of the Minsk region: Miadzioł, Wilejka, Mołodeczno, Wołożyn, Stołpce, Nieśwież, Kleck and **adjacent regions:** Minsk (city) and Eastern part of the Minsk region (15 districts), Homel region;
- Ukraine (**main regions:** Lviv, Volyn, Transcarpathia regions, and **adjacent regions:** Tarnopol, Rivne, Ivano-Frankivsk regions).

Out of 117 projects **in the Polish-Ukrainian partnership 74 projects have been implemented, 29 in the Polish-Belarusian partnership, and 14 in the tripartite partnership**, which indicates that the bigger was complexity of the projects the lower was the number of entities interested in implementing them. As far as the territory of Poland is concerned, 37 project leaders came from Lubelskie voivodship, 25 from Podkarpackie voivodship, 22 from Podlaskie voivodship and 5 from Mazowieckie voivodship. In Belarus, the leaders of 4 projects came from the Brest district, 2 from Hrodna and 2 from Minsk. In the case of Ukraine project leaders came from the Lviv region - 7 projects, Volyn - 5 projects, Ivano-Frankivsk - 2 projects, Rivne – 2 projects, Transcarpathia - 1 project and 3 projects from Kiev oblast.



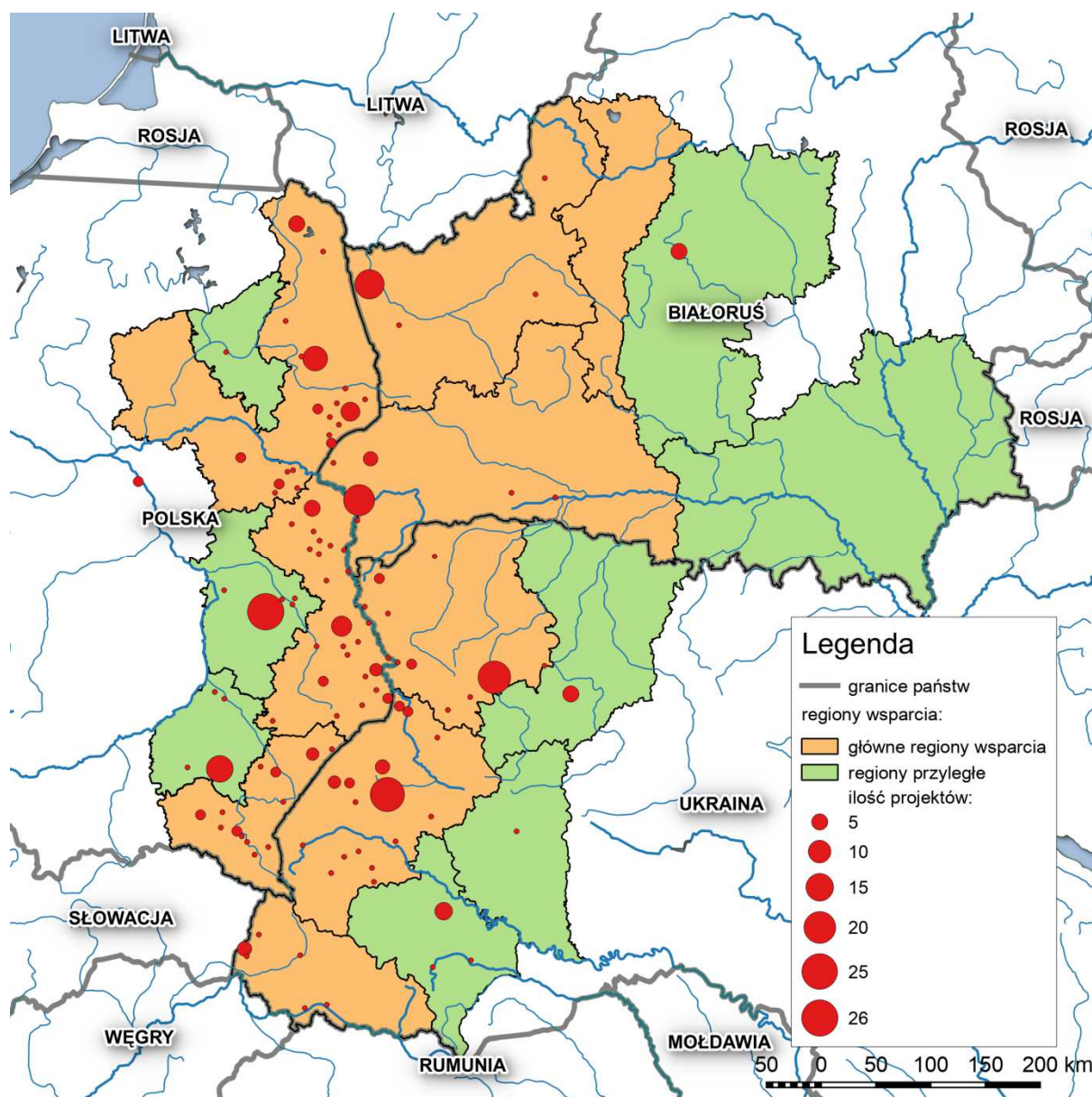
Map 1. Map of the area covered by the Programme by region



Source: own development.

The majority of projects came from the main regions, which was in line with the Programme's objectives. Projects coming from adjacent regions were subject to certain restrictions - neither they could not exceed 20% of the total value of actions financed from the budget of the Programme, nor could infrastructure tasks be performed in the adjacent area.

Map 2. Number of projects in cities located in the regions provided with the support

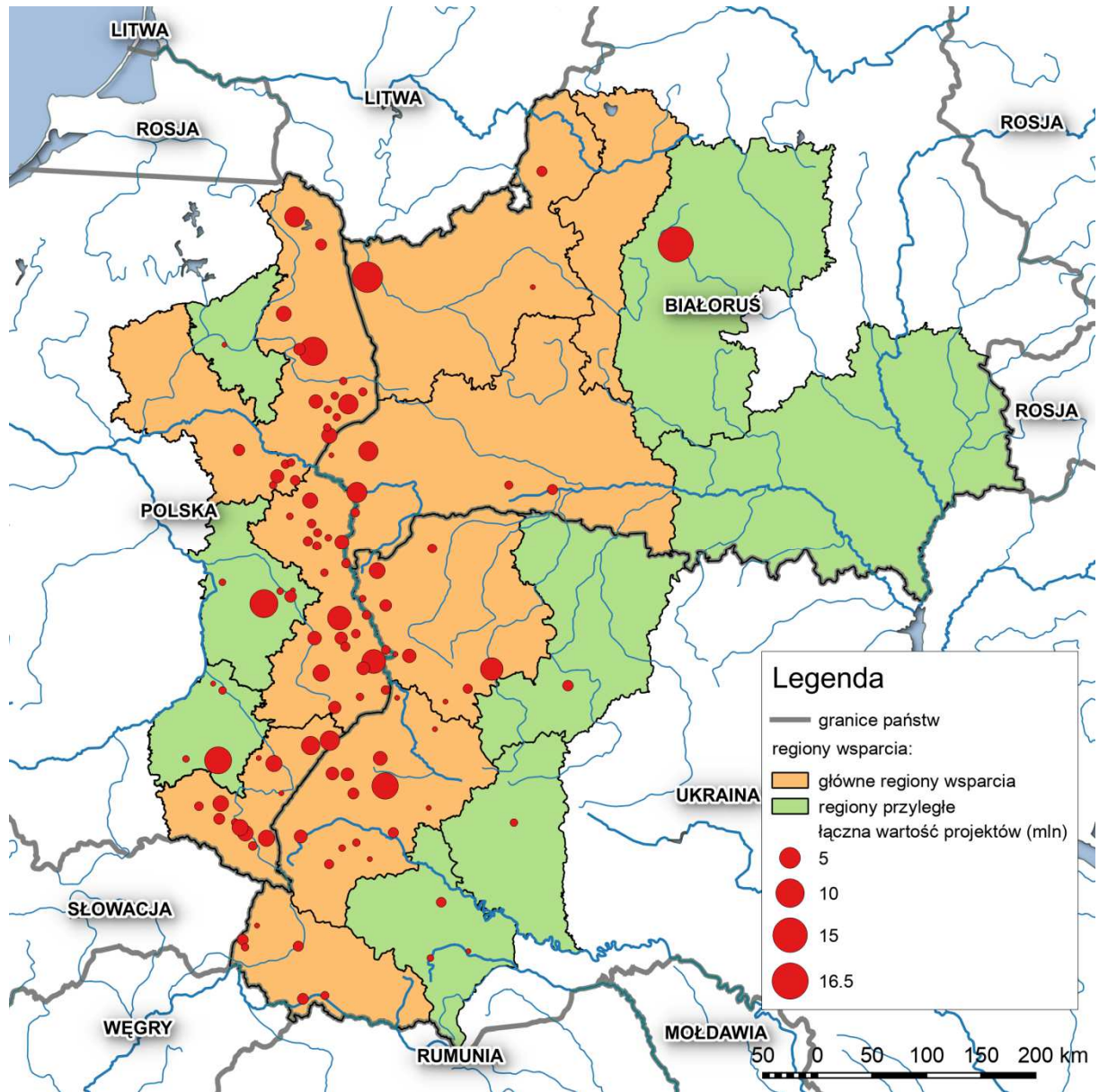


Source: own development.

There are the most of projects with biggest value located along the border.



Map 3. Value of projects by location



Source: own development.

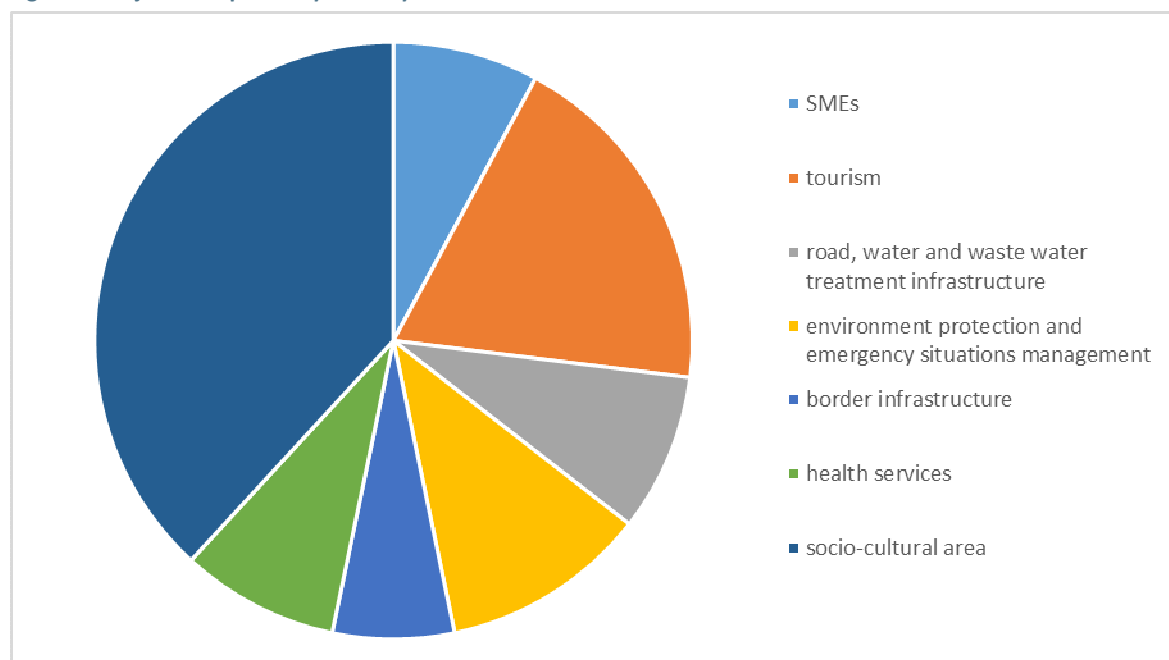
Under the Programme there were implemented projects from the following sectors<sup>1</sup>:

1. **small and medium-sized enterprises** – support in this field covered 12 soft projects implemented mainly under the Priority 1, Measure 1 (8 projects), the Priority 2, Measure 1 (1 project) and the Priority 3, Measure 1 (3 projects); these projects focused on improving the conditions for cooperation between cross-border regions (7 projects); collaboration between scientific and business centres (3 projects); development of modern technologies for the development of cross-border regions (2 projects);
2. **tourism** – support in this field covered as many as 29 projects of an infrastructure and soft nature, the majority of them (i.e. 21) were implemented under the Priority 1, Measure 3; 4 projects - under Priority 3, Measure 1, also 4 projects (all umbrella projects) were implemented under the Priority 3, Measure 2; these projects served innovation in tourism (4 projects); improving the quality of service and infrastructure (9 projects); were of informative nature (6 projects); related to cultural, religious and historical tourism (6 projects); there were also microprojects including activities to promote health, cultural, military and historical tourism (4 umbrella projects);
3. **road, water and waste water treatment infrastructure** – support in this field concerned 13 projects, primarily of an infrastructure nature, of which 10 were implemented under the Priority 1 Measure 3, while three were implemented under the Priority 2, Measure 1; most of the projects concerned improving road infrastructure (6 projects); others included: improvement of water infrastructure (5 projects) and sewerage system (2 projects);
4. **environment protection and emergency situations management** – support in this field concerned 17 projects of infrastructure and soft nature that were implemented mainly under the Priority 2, Measure 1 (12 projects), the rest were implemented under the Priority 3, Measure 1 (4 projects) and the Priority 3, Measure 2 (1 microproject); most projects dealt with crises (9 projects); other projects included: modernization and innovative solutions (4 projects), scientific cooperation (3 projects) and direct environmental protection (1 project);
5. **border infrastructure** – support in this area concerned 10 infrastructure projects implemented under the Priority 2, Measure 2, including 9 strategic projects;
6. **health services** – support in this area concerned 13 projects of infrastructure and soft nature (research, health promotion), all of them were implemented under the Priority 3, Measure 1;
7. **socio-cultural area** – support in this area concerned 58 projects, mainly of soft nature, including 26 projects implemented under the Priority 3, Measure 1, and 32 microprojects implemented as umbrella projects (Priority 3, Measure 2);

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<sup>1</sup> Developed on the basis of the programme documentation - Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007-2013 and the last available report on the implementation of the Programme sent to the European Commission.

Figure 2. Projects completed by industry and sector



Source: own development.

CAWI/CATI respondents when asked to indicate the thematic categories of their operations could tick a few responses, which gives a slightly more detailed picture of the activities and translates projects into different sectors of the economy. Results for this question are shown in the table below:

Table 2. Number of industries and sectors in which lead partners and project partners operate

Industries/business sector	Number of answers
Tourism and promotion	93
Natural and cultural heritage	92
Education, trainings, labour market	76
Social infrastructure	69
Culture, art, recreation	68
Public safety	66
Natural environment (including infrastructure and energy)	61
Transport and communication	59
Economy and entrepreneurship	43
Innovativeness, science, R&D	38

Source: own development (n=196)<sup>2</sup>.

The implemented projects cover all basic areas of the economy and represent all sectors identified in the Programme as representing the areas requiring support: small and medium-sized enterprises, tourism, road, water and sewer infrastructure, environmental protection and crisis management, border infrastructure, health systems, social and cultural sphere.

<sup>2</sup> The respondents were those beneficiaries who responded to the CAWI/CATI questionnaire provided in the Annex 8.3.11. 196 respondents answered the questionnaire, 104 of whom were project leaders and 92 were project partners. This test sample covers all CAWI/CATI responses cited here.

Respondents in the CAWI/CATI research when asked to indicate the thematic categories they were referring to in terms of their operations, indicated several answers, and the results show that their activities are often varied, contributing to the multifaceted nature of their projects.

### 3.1.2. Beneficiaries of the projects

This section of the report contains answers to the following research questions:

- What groups of beneficiaries benefited most from the results of the Programme?

When discussing the issue of the group of beneficiaries who have benefited most from the Programme's results, it must be stated that beneficiaries within the meaning of the Programme are both direct beneficiaries who were also applicants, and target groups that were to benefit from the implemented project.

According to the provisions of the Programme, its applicants and beneficiaries could be:

- local and regional authorities,
- central institutions responsible on behalf of regional and local authorities for carrying out public tasks,
- non-governmental and non-profit organisations (including international organisations);
- local organisations (including networks) involved in regional cooperation and integration,
- educational organisations, cultural, research and scientific organisations,
- regional border guards, rescue units,
- Euroregions.

On the other hand, the final beneficiaries of the Programme, besides the mentioned institutions and organisations, were also:

- residents of the cross-border area,
- business entities,
- investors,
- tourists and visitors to the region,
- students of colleges and universities,
- churches and religious organisations,
- unemployed persons.

According to the answers given in the CAWI/CATI questionnaire, the beneficiaries of the Programme were all the groups mentioned, the most of them are beneficiaries being local government units (38.78%), non-governmental organisations (16.84%), government administration bodies (11.73%), educational units (7.65%) and hospitals (7.14%). Detailed calculations are included in the following table:

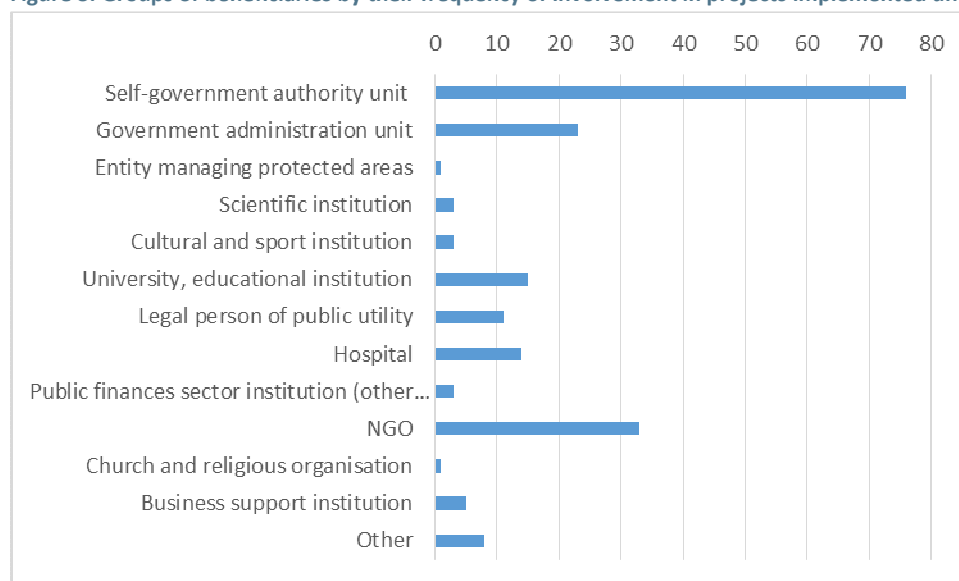
**Table 3. Formal status of project beneficiaries**

Value label	Value	Frequency	Percent
Self government authority unit	1	76	38.78
Government administration unit	2	23	11.73
Entity managing protected area	3	1	51
Scientific institution	4	3	1.53
Cultural and sport institution	5	3	1.53
University, educational institution	6	15	7.65
Legal person of public utility	7	11	5.61
Hospital	8	14	7.14
Public finances sector institution (other than the ones above)	9	3	1.53
Non-governmental organisation	10	33	16.84
Churches and religious organisations, etc.	11	1	51
Business support institutions	12	5	2.55
Other	13	8	4.08
<b>Total</b>		<b>196</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: own research (n=196).

The results of this study, shown in graphs, show best the groups of beneficiaries who have benefited the most from this Programme.

**Figure 3. Groups of beneficiaries by their frequency of involvement in projects implemented under the Programme**



Source: own research (n=196).

The **beneficiaries** of the Programme were mainly the central institutions, self-government institutions, economic entities, and non-governmental organisations. Analysis of the grant agreements confirms the above results obtained in the CATI/CAWI study.

As far as target groups are concerned, the beneficiaries of the Programme are, as planned in the Programme assumptions, inhabitants of border regions to whom all projects were targeted. The area covered by the Programme is inhabited by 20.9 million people (data of 2005), including 5.1 million in Poland, 7.3 million in Belarus, and 8.5 million in Ukraine.



In the final reports of the projects in 99 out of 117 projects, the number of final recipients of support was given as estimated. How varied the numbers were is pictured in the results of their statistical analysis:

- On average, 499,082 people were indicated as the recipients of the support which resulted from a relatively large number of projects in which more than 100,000 final recipients of the support were indicated (19 projects, of which in 11 there were declared more than 500,000 final recipients, and 7 projects with more than 1 million final recipients of the support. There were no indications of lower number of final recipients of the support than 100, and in 14 projects there were indicated less than 1,000 final recipients).
- The median for the analysed group of projects (n=99) was 15,850 people who would benefit as the final recipients of the support. Such a median value means that for half of the projects (49) the number of the support recipients was lower.
- In turn, the skewness of the distribution rate<sup>3</sup> of 4.06 and the kurtosis<sup>4</sup> of 18.38 show an asymmetric distribution of data. Definitely it is slim (leptokuric) and right-legged, so more results were achieved above average.

Based on the above results it can be stated that in half of the cases these projects were aimed at the mass recipient, while there were relatively few directional projects with limited activity. Even in the case of specialised projects the recipients of support in the institutions implementing the projects were numerous.

The projects with the largest number of support recipients addressed various issues. Among them there are the following projects:

- of economic nature (project titled "Cross-border system of investor acquiring Poland-Ukraine" - approx. 2.24 million persons),
- of transport nature (project titled "Improving the safety of transport network users in the Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian borderland", 1.05 million persons),
- of environmental nature (projects titled "Development potential rescue Poland - Ukraine in strengthening infrastructure of the cross-border management of natural hazards" (1.72 million persons), "Development of the cross-border cooperation aimed at protection of people and environment in the border area of Poland and Belarus" (approx. 1.43 million persons), „Together we protect the Białowieża Forest" (approx. 2.57 million persons),
- supporting access to culture and art ("Museums without Barriers - Coalition of Polish and Ukrainian museums for provision of professional service to disabled visitors") - the largest number of declared support recipients, i.e. 7.5 million people),
- cultural ("Borderland Culture as an integration platform of local communities in Bug Euroregion", 1 million people),
- tourism (the project titled "Integrated Promotion of Tourism Opportunities and Cultural-Historic Heritage of Lviv Region, Podkarpackie and Lublin Voivodeships", approx. 5 million people).

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<sup>3</sup> Skewness is a statistic that, along with kurtosis, is a measure of the shape of the distribution, defines the occurrence and the type of asymmetry of the distribution of the analysed variable.

<sup>4</sup> Kurtosis is a measure of the concentration of the value of the analysed variable around the central value.

It is characteristic that all projects achieved the assumed support intensity. The representative of the Joint Monitoring Committee of the Programme (JMC) commented on the role of the beneficiaries:

*Emphasis should be placed on the high involvement and **activity of project beneficiaries** whose efforts have been made to make effective use of funds. Cross-border cooperation should therefore **help to remove barriers and reduce the peripheries of border areas**. Beneficiaries who have at their disposal a wide range of possible choices and interventions have decided to pursue the most urgent regional and local development needs<sup>5</sup>.*

### 3.1.3. Results of the projects versus the planned objectives of the Programme

This section of the report contains answers to the following research questions:

- What results in terms of joint problem-solving within the framework of Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian cooperation the implementation of the Programme brought about? Could similar effects be achieved without the intervention of the Programme or by involving less financial resources?
- Did the Programme achieve its objectives and to what extent?
- What were the reasons for not completing/not fully completing the projects approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee? How to prevent this phenomenon at the level of programming and implementation of the new Programme?

The Programme was prepared in accordance with *Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of October 24, 2006*, which lays down general provisions on ENPI, on the development of cooperation between the European Union and its partners not belonging to it by providing integrated and sustainable development. The programme is a continuation and deepening of cooperation in the border area of the three countries that have so far implemented the Neighbourhood Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine INTERREG IIIA/Tacis CBC 2004-2006 (Neighbourhood Programme), and the PHARE Programme "Polish Eastern border" launched earlier in 1997.

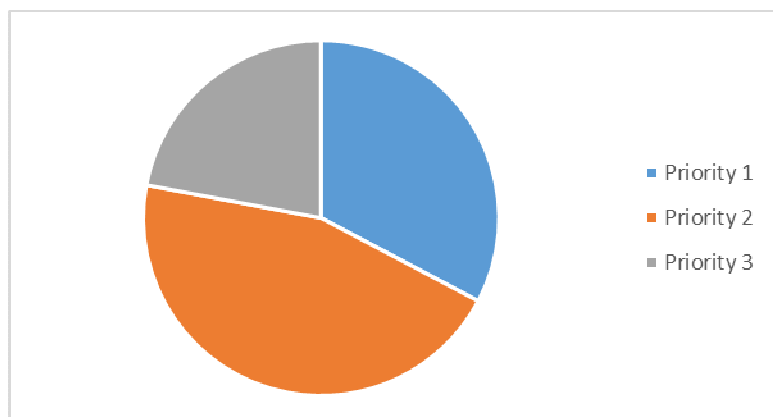
The analysis of the products and results of the Programme shows that deepening and consolidating of cross-border co-operation takes place, and that the projects implemented contribute to the joint solving of the identified problems of partners. The main objective of the Programme: supporting cross-border development processes, is in line with the *European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument Cross-Border Cooperation Strategy Paper 2007-2013 (Strategy Paper)* and the four strategic objectives described there.

Projects that were non-commercial in nature were implemented under three priorities and their subordinated measures across the Programme-supported area.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibidem.

Figure 4. Funds spent by Priorities



Source: own development.

### Priority 1. Increasing competitiveness of the border area

The projects under this priority were intended to increase investment attractiveness and development potential, and prepare for future joint initiatives (e.g. develop plans, studies, elaborations).

#### *Measure 1.1 Better conditions for entrepreneurship*

Within this measure, projects to improve the quality and availability of infrastructure could be proposed, including new technologies infrastructure, and soft operations aimed at the socio-economic development of the area (such as promotion and marketing of the region, trade, investment and business promotion, cooperation between business and science, social and economic rehabilitation and renewal of degraded areas, including contaminated areas).

#### *Measure 1.2 Tourism development*

The objective was to improve and exploit the tourist potential of the border area. The support centred on the development of tourism infrastructure and services, including agritourism, as well as soft actions in the area of regional promotion, tourism and agritourism development and the protection of cultural heritage.

#### *Measure 1.3 Improving access to the region*

The measure supported initiatives to improve the accessibility and quality of social and economic infrastructure, with emphasis on transport infrastructure, energy, logistics systems, transport safety and water supply systems.

### Results

Under this priority 40 projects were implemented, representing 34.19% of all projects implemented. Under the Measure 1.1 9 projects were implemented, under the Measure 1.2. - - as many as 21, while under the Measure 1.3. - 10 projects. The result indicators planned have also been achieved: additional enterprises have been

created, a number of innovative initiatives for entrepreneurs and a network of entrepreneurs/operators increased. The improved tourist infrastructure has enabled to service additional number of people. There has also been a growing number of cross-border tourism services and products, joint events or information services that enhance the attractiveness of the area covered by the Programme. There has been an increase in the number of new cross-border public transport connections, which has resulted in the integration of low-accessibility areas, also through the developed/tested model tools/methods/solutions.

## **Priority 2. Improving the quality of life**

The investments and organisational actions undertaken under this Priority were to contribute to increasing the speed and safety of the movement of persons and goods at the border, as well as increasing the level of social and economic integration in the Programme area. This Priority also financed projects designed to develop plans and studies leading to the implementation of joint initiatives.

### *Measure 2.1 Natural environment protection in the borderland*

Under this Measure, priority was given to infrastructure projects in the area of environmental protection of regional or local importance (e.g. crisis and natural disaster management systems) and in order to improve cross-border cooperation in this area. Energy-saving measures, actions to improve the use and development of renewable energy sources have also been supported.

### *Measure 2.2 Efficient and secure borders*

This Measure has supported projects that improved the efficiency of border infrastructure and procedures and increased security at borders by removing administrative, institutional and infrastructural obstacles to the free movement of goods, services and people across borders. This Measure co-financed major strategic projects concerning new border crossing points and modernisation of already existing ones. These projects were selected and agreed at a later stage by the Joint Monitoring Committee in agreement with the European Commission.

## **Results**

Under this Priority 26 projects were implemented, representing 22.22% of all projects that received support in this Programme. Under the Measure 2.1. 16 projects were implemented, whereas under the Measure 2.2. - 10 projects of which 9 were strategic projects. The implementation of the projects has led to: the increase in the number of people involved in education campaigns for ecology, the developed/tested model tools/methods/solutions in the field of environmental protection, efficiency and border security, joint planning initiatives.

## **Priority 3. Networking and people to people cooperation**

The Priority supported creation of permanent cooperation structures between local and regional organizations and institutions.

*Measure 3.1 Regional and local cross-border cooperation capacity building*

This Measure has supported the institutional capacity for cooperation, so it provided possibility to receive support for information and experience exchange projects, networking, joint ventures in order to increase the degree of integration of the area, and dissemination of examples of "good practices" within the scope of the Programme. Cross-border cooperation has also been promoted in the preparation, implementation and use of communication and information technologies to stimulate this cooperation.

*Measure 3.2 Local communities' initiatives*

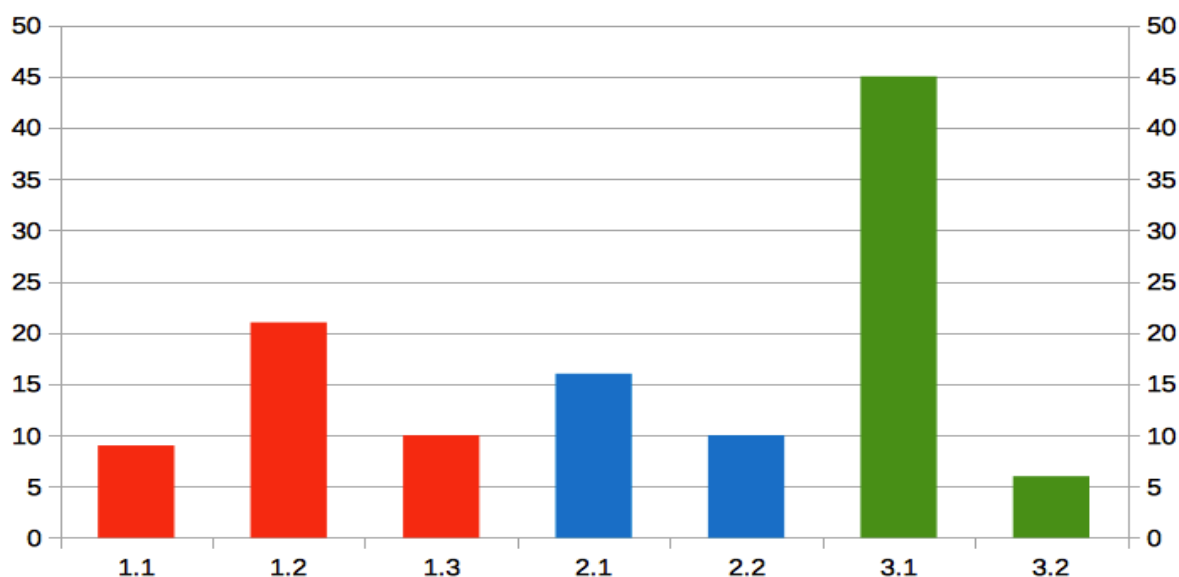
The Measure supported the development of cross-border interpersonal contacts and social initiatives, scientific and educational cooperation, cultural and sporting events as well as cross-border cooperation between schools, colleges, student exchanges, scientific conferences and seminars. Support has been provided to local community projects, such as those concerning promotion, sustainability of common border traditions, cultivating cultural diversity, national minorities and the understanding of civil society and local communities development.

**Results**

Within this priority the highest number of projects, i.e. 51, were implemented, which constitutes 43.59% of all projects supported by the Programme. As many as 45 projects have received co-financing under the Measure 3.1. Within the Measure 3.2 6 umbrella projects were implemented. The results achieved are indicative of an increase in the number of institutions that have established new cross-border contacts and the number of people participating in cross-border joint local initiatives.

A summary of the number of projects in each of the priorities and measures is presented in the chart below.

**Figure 5. Number of projects implemented under individual priorities and measures**



Source: own development.

It may be said that the Programme has achieved the expected effects as far as the number and value of projects supported are concerned. Product indicators adopted in the Programme are determined by the number of projects in each measure (1.1-3.1.):

- number of projects improving conditions for entrepreneurship - 9,
- number of tourism development projects - 21,
- number of projects reducing isolation by improving accessibility to transport, information and communication technologies in terms of networks and services - 10,
- number of projects improving environmental protection in the border area - 16,
- number of projects increasing efficiency and security at borders - 10,
- number of projects implemented to increase regional and local cross-border cooperation opportunities - 45.

With respect to the Measure 3.2, the product indicator refers directly to the number of microprojects implemented in support of local community initiatives. Within the framework of 6 umbrella projects 56 microprojects supporting local communities were implemented.

All the projects implemented were in line with the Programme's main objective - supporting cross-border development processes, its subordinate priorities and attributed measures. The objectives, priorities and measures are in line with the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument Cross-Border Cooperation Strategy Paper 2007-2013 (Strategy Paper) and the four strategic objectives described there. According to the indicators planned in the Programme (p. 34) that showed the budgetary contribution for each priority, they were assumed as follows:

- *Priority 1. Increasing the competitiveness of the border area;* 30% of the Programme budget, and on the basis of data from SIMIK, a slight deviation from the assumed value was noted, as under the Priority 1 the amount of funding requested for the projects implemented was 31.5% of the total amount of funding provided under the Programme;
- *Priority 2. Improving the quality of life;* 35% of the Programme budget, and on the basis of data from SIMIK, a deviation from the assumed value was noted, as under the *Priority 2* the amount of funding requested for the projects implemented was 44% of the total amount of funding provided under the Programme;
- *Priority 3. Networking and local community initiatives;* 25% of the Programme budget, and on the basis of data from SIMIK, a slight deviation from the assumed value was noted, as under the *Priority 3* the amount of funding requested for the projects implemented was 24.48% of the total amount of funding provided under the Programme.

It should be emphasized that these are the values determined on the basis of data from the SIMIK system and not the sum of the amounts of the final co-financing granted in particular priorities. Due to the savings, these ratios may change and discrepancies may be offset. Due to the significant share of infrastructure costs in the first two priorities, with the tendency to make savings in projects in infrastructure tenders, it can be concluded that the final proportions - possible to be determined after the financial closure of all projects - will be in line with those planned in the Programme or will be negligible.

The effects expressed by the result indicators were also achieved. In the Programme they were assigned to each of the priorities and measures as follows:

*Priority 1. Increase in the competitiveness of the border area*

- **result indicators for the Measure 1.1.:**
  - additional number of enterprises serviced by improved infrastructure,
  - number of innovative initiatives for entrepreneurs,
  - number of networks involving entrepreneurs/traders,
- **result indicators for the Measure 1.2.:**
  - additional number of persons serviced by improved tourist infrastructure,
  - number of cross-border services and products developed,
  - number of joint events or information services increasing the attractiveness of the area covered by the Programme,
- **result indicators for the Measure 1.3.:**
  - additional number of persons serviced by improved infrastructure,
  - number of developed/tested model tools/methods/solutions that increase the degree of integration of low-accessibility areas,
  - number of new cross-border public transport connections.

*Priority 2. Improvement of the quality of life*

- **result indicators for the Measure 2.1.:**
  - additional number of persons serviced by improved environmental infrastructure,
  - additional number of people involved in environmental awareness campaigns,
  - number of developed/tested environmental model tools/methods/solutions in terms of environmental protection,
  - number of joint activities/planning initiatives,
- **result indicators for the Measure 2.2.:**
  - number of developed/tested model tools/methods/solutions that increase the effectiveness and safety at borders,
  - additional capacity of new border crossing points.

*Priority 3. Networking and local community initiatives*

- **result indicator for the Measure 3.1.:**
  - number of institutions that have established new cross-border contacts,
- **result indicator for the Measure 3.2.:**
  - number of people participating in cross-border joint local initiatives.

The results are broken down by priority in the table below. It should be emphasized that these are approximate values, since the method of reporting results in the final reports significantly hindered aggregation of data. In addition, the reports allow for the evaluation of results only in relation to 73.5% of projects. In the case of more than 20 reports at the time of the study, final versions, especially financial statements, containing data on the indicators reached, were not ready yet. The question posed to respondents in the CAWI/CATI questionnaire: Has the project been successful - has it attained the results planned, 90.31% of the respondents declared that they fully achieved the expected results, while 9.69% declared that they had achieved part of results. Completely



negative response did not occur. On the basis of reports in their current form it can not be unequivocally assessed which indicators have not been achieved.

**Table 4. Achieved results of the Programme broken down by Priority**

Results achieved	Value
<b>Priority 1</b>	
Additional number of enterprises serviced by improved infrastructure	1,014
Number of innovative initiatives for entrepreneurs	11
Number of networks involving entrepreneurs/traders	2
Additional number of persons serviced by improved tourist infrastructure	103,790
Number of cross-border services and products developed	512
Number of joint events or information services increasing the attractiveness of the area covered by the Programme	1,725
Additional number of persons serviced by improved infrastructure	25,534
Number of developed/tested model tools/methods/solutions that increase the degree of integration of low-accessibility areas	3
Number of new cross-border public transport connections	3
<b>Priority 2</b>	
Additional number of persons serviced by improved environmental infrastructure	25,534
Additional number of people involved in environmental awareness campaigns	296,000
Number of developed/tested environmental model tools/methods/solutions in terms of environmental protection	13
Number of joint activities/planning initiatives	9
Number of developed/tested model tools/methods/solutions that increase the effectiveness and safety at borders	9
Additional capacity of new border crossing points [number of vehicles per day]	29,865
<b>Priority 3</b>	
Number of institutions that have established new cross-border contacts	214
Number of people participating in cross-border joint local initiatives	53,468

Source: own development on the basis of the reports.

For the purpose of developing "The Book of Projects"<sup>6</sup> the results of the implemented projects were summarized. The breakdown by type of intervention is shown below. As in the case of reports, these are not the final results of the projects, as data was aggregated in 2015. A significant portion of the projects was already completed at the time, so the data is roughly similar to those provided in the reports:

**Table 5. Results achieved by the Programme - data based on "The Book of Projects"**

Results achieved	Number
<b>Entrepreneurship development</b>	
Number of jobs newly created	467
Established business development organizations	12
Entrepreneurs/companies supported by projects	1,014
New entrepreneurs/companies created as a result of the support	453
<b>Tourism development</b>	
Invested places of cultural and historical heritage	52

<sup>6</sup> Rybarska H. (ed.), 2015, *Księga projektów [The Book of Projects]. Projects of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007-2013* Centre of European Projects, Warsaw.

Tourist information centres/points	31
Construction/designation/marketing of hiking trails/bike paths/waterways	1,875
<b>Investments in border infrastructure</b>	
Built/upgraded border crossing points	5
Increased capacity of new border crossing points [number of vehicles per day]	29,865
Increased capacity of new border crossing points in persons [number of persons per day]	48,800
<b>Investment in the environmental protection infrastructure</b>	
Households/public buildings connected to the water supply network	2,365
Built/upgraded sewage treatment plants	5
Built/upgraded sewerage systems [km]	90.8
<b>Investment in other infrastructure</b>	
Modernised facilities	71
Length of new or renovated roads [km]	116.5
Purchased cars (police, fire brigade, rescue vehicles)	246
Rescue and road equipment (e.g. to be used by police, fire brigades, for road maintenance) [sets]	349

Source: own development on the basis of "The Book of Projects".

The topic of the Programme's visible results was also discussed by respondents on the Internet and telephone surveys. This question was often answered with a list of specific products such as car purchase or road section construction. For the needs of the study, the indicated effects were categorized into several main categories.

**Table 6. The results of the project visible at the moment declared by the respondents**

Type of the result	Number of answers
Improvement of infrastructure	43
Exchanging of experiences/knowledge; cross-border contacts	16
Strengthening of partnership cooperation	14
Actions to exchange knowledge, make promotion, including the functioning of the portal	14
Logistic solutions - improving the handling of residents/visitors	11
Increase in the number of visitors	5

Source: own research (n=196).

The analysis of the results shows that the noticeable result is primarily improvement of infrastructure (43 replies). The next group includes soft actions such as exchange of experiences and cross-border contacts (16), information and promotion activities (14), strengthening of partnership cooperation (14). Logistic solutions that translated into improved service and increased number of visitors were indicated by 11 and 5 respondents respectively.

An obstacle to assessing the extent to which the Programme has achieved its objectives is the absence of baseline and target values for the results indicated. On the basis of the diagnoses presented in the beneficiaries' conclusions it can be stated that the needs both in terms of infrastructure and soft skills far exceed the value of support that could be provided under the Programme. It is worth noting that a significant part of the expenditure incurred under the Programme will have long-term effects, resulting from the multiplier effects of investment made or support provided by enterprises. In the case of the project "Cross-border system of investor acquiring Poland-Ukraine" (IPBU.01.01.00-78-677/11-00) measurable socio-economic benefits for Volyn and Podlasie will be felt within five years after the implementation of the project. Investment in these regions is expected to increase to EUR 204 million (in 2010 it was EUR 170 million). This means the emergence of new

jobs, change in the employment structure and improvement in the quality of life of the population. Increasing the availability of zoos in Lutsk and Zamosc (IPBU.01.02.00-06-690/11-00) will lead in the next few years to the increase in the number of visitors to approximately 35,000 and 139,000 visitors per year, respectively. In some projects these effects are already visible, as evidenced e.g. by research carried out in the project "Development of the small and medium entrepreneurship in Rivne and Lublin" (IPBU.01.01.00-88-784/11-00) where the number of joint ventures between Rivne and Lublin SMEs increased by 400 percent in 2013 compared to 2012. The number of cooperation agreements has increased by 500 percent at the same time. The value of exports of small and medium-sized enterprises in Rivne to Poland in 2013 increased by 380 percent (to USD 85 million) compared to 2011. The problems that the applicants diagnosed were of structural nature and without the Programme's support, it would not be possible to solve them. Similar conclusions are drawn from respondents' answers of the CAWI/CATI survey, as illustrated in the table below.

**Table 7. Evaluation of the feasibility of projects without support provided under the Programme. Respondents answered the question: Would your project be implemented if you did not receive support under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007-2013?**

Answers	Number of answers	Percent
Yes, to the same extent	14	7.14
Yes, but to a lesser extent	22	11.22
Yes, to a greater extent (e.g. due to no need to meet programme requirements)	3	1.53
No	129	65.82
Hard to say	28	14.29
<i>Total</i>	196	100

Source: own research (n=196).

A big number of negative responses, i.e. 129, clearly demonstrates that similar effects could not have been achieved without the involvement of the Programme. As many as 65.82% of respondents would not be able to complete the project without the support they were provided with. So the effects without the involvement of the Programme would be much smaller, and the process of supporting the development of cross-border areas in the above spheres in the cross-border area of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine would be slower. This opinion also results from the case studies, e.g. the study of the Ashmyany municipality. The Executive Committee of the Ashmyany District is of the opinion that without a grant from the project it would not be able to rebuild the stadium due to lack of funds. Likewise, the topic is commented by Deputy Chairman of the Kamieniec Executive Committee: "Without CBC Programme PBU 2007-2013 neither Kamieniec nor Wysokie would be able to build a modern sewage network and treatment plant." In the case studies it was also stated that the projects described did not experience the deadweight loss effect, because the beneficiaries of the Programme did not have the financial ability to carry out the projects from their own resources or to realize them to the extent that they were realized thanks to the funds acquired under the Programme. By analysing reports and questionnaires, it is more difficult to answer the next research question, whether similar effects would be achieved with less expenditure. It is worth noting, however, that rare are projects where higher tangible effects were possible, but beneficiaries managed to achieve higher than expected effects on the number of participants in cross-border events, meetings, workshops, people trained. In this context, the analysis of project savings in terms of the rarely exceeded project indicators shows that funds were effectively programmed and used.

Measures reported by the beneficiaries that have been partially completed include: infrastructural actions (in the case of 7 projects) and soft actions - less than expected number of promotional tasks implemented (3 projects), lower than planned number of support recipients (e.g. fewer participants in the conference, 3

projects), lower than expected number of seminars (2 projects), lower than expected number of study visits (2 projects). Full results are presented in the table below.

**Table 8. Types of activities that have not been fully implemented**

Activities of infrastructural nature	7 projects
Activities of promotional nature	3 projects
Acquiring the assumed number of beneficiaries	3 projects
Seminars	2 projects
Study visits	2 projects

*Source: own development.*

Also the CAWI/CATI survey respondents, as the most important results which were not fully achieved, the most often mentioned product indicators for the delivery of new infrastructure or the acquisition of fixed assets (failure to complete construction work, to purchase certain spare parts of equipment). However, those were not shortcomings that undermined the achievement of objectives by the projects. The most frequently mentioned in the survey was the fact that activities on the part of the Ukrainian or Belarusian partner were not fully implemented. For example:

*not all the effects assumed in the project have been achieved e.g. the length of the sewerage network built on the Partner side.*

*we could not finish the construction work on the Partner side*

*we could not fit Intensive Care Unit in the furniture completely*

*We failed to purchase 1 piece of equipment (of 23 pieces of laboratory equipment planned)*

*There was no institution created called the Local Development Agency, instead of which two Investor Service Offices were established by two project partners.*

On the other hand, as the direct results they indicated that they did not realise the expected increase in the number of seminars or meetings or failed to reach the assumed level of recipients' knowledge.

It is worth emphasising, however, that information on not full attainment of indicators was less frequent than information on the full implementation of measures and indicators. Incomplete achievement of the indicators does not necessarily imply failure to achieve the objectives set. Beneficiaries recognize that the objectives of their projects would have been achieved, even if the indicators were only partially achieved, as the objectives are not always achieved by the full implementation of the indicators. Projects' objectives are more general.

However, there are threats that, for the following 3 strategic projects, their objectives will not be achieved because the implementation of the projects has not been completed until the completion of this study:

- IPBU.02.02.01-70-006/09 (The reconstruction of international automobile border crossing point "Ustylug")
- IPBU.02.02.01-70-007/09 (Creation of the functional module "Filter of the border crossing point" in the international automobile border crossing point "Rava-Ruska" providing with equipment and facilities of border crossing points "Krakivets", "Shegini" and "Yagodyn")
- IPBU.02.02.01-70-009/10 (Development of IT infrastructure of Ukrainian customs and border guards services)

The lack of final reports on the implementation of these projects prevented them from being analysed and assess the scale of unrealised infrastructure actions and indicators set. However, the consent of the JMC and the EC to extend these projects indicates that the institutions see the possibility of achieving at least some of the expected results.

On the basis of the analysis of data from the reports, the reasons for incomplete realisation of the results planned can be divided into three categories: political reasons, procedural ones, and other.

**Table 9. Reasons for not achieving the results of the project**

political	7 projects
procedural	5 projects
other	6 projects

Source: own development.

The most important political reason was the change in the situation in Ukraine as a result of the events in Maidan. As one of the respondents commented on the project study, the people involved in the project engaged themselves in the political events:

*During the implementation of the project events in Maidan, Kyiv, took place, in which persons involved in the project took part with a varying intensity. For this reason, and also because of the lack of decision-making at local level in connection with the political situation in Ukraine, many of the project activities were stopped at its initial phase, which translated into delays and the need to prolong the project implementation (from the planned 24 months to 33), (project study "Development of alternative pre-school education system in rural communities", IPBU.03.01.00-76-257/10).*

Dramatic political events in Ukraine have led to economic crisis, hryvnia exchange rate changes, and even bankruptcy of the bank. In the CAWI/CATI survey for the projects involving the Ukrainian side there were mentioned: the political crisis and the associated economic crisis, high inflation. A respondent of another case study described that situation in this way:

*As in the case of other projects realised with Ukrainian partners, one of the most important problems that could endanger the proper implementation of the project was the political situation in Ukraine (...). This, at some point, resulted in blockages of funds on the part of the Ukrainian partner and delays in the implementation of the actions planned (...) This also resulted in difficulties in the tendering procedure since, after the tender was chosen due to the increase in the hryvnia exchange rate, it was unprofitable for a tenderer to realise the offer placed (study of the project "Clean Water at the Bug Estuary - A Cross-Border Water Supply System for Hrubieszów and Volodymyr Volynskyi - STAGE I and II", IPBU.01.03.00-06-161/IPBU.01.03.00-06-648).*

Both in the reports and in the CAWI/CATI survey responses, the main reasons were: in the case of projects involving the Ukrainian side: the political crisis and the related economic crisis, high inflation; problems with settlement of advance payments, partner's lack of financial resources; too high price offered in tenders by tendering companies or the impossibility of tenders' settlement as scheduled. Among other reasons there were: lack of partner's involvement in the project, mistakes in planning the project at the preparation stage, problems in contacts, lack of time or delays, as well as imposed way of conducting tenders.

On the other hand, procedural reason was the obligation to purchase by public procurement. Many partners have had problems using the procurement rules set out in the PRAG. Incorrect conduct of tendering proceedings resulted in delays in the implementation of projects, which sometimes translated into attainment of results. One of the respondents said about this experience in the following words:

*During the implementation of the project, there were some problems with the implementation of some purchases made through tenders, resulting from the lack of offers or the excessive bids. The tenders had to be repeated causing delays and difficulties in the implementation of the project (study on the project "Medical institutions co-operation in Belarus and Poland to improve the access to medical service and its quality within emergency service as well as stroke incidents diagnostics and treatment", IPBU.03.01.00-20-719/11).*

Other procedural reasons referred to procedures for reporting or modifying projects. Due to the long time of acceptance or correction, delays in subsequent tranches have slowed down the implementation of the next phase of the project. Likewise, the procedure for making changes to projects was also long lasting. All changes required to sign the addendum had to be approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee, which greatly prolonged the procedure. One of the respondents to the project study said:

*It was planned that 4 tranches (30%, 30%, 30% and 10%) would be paid in the project. The third periodic report was submitted to the JTS in November 2015, but was approved only on July 15, 2016, and the payment was received on December 12, 2016 (study of the project "Restoration of the E40 waterway on the Dnieper-Vistula section: from strategy to planning", IPBU.01.03.00-60-809/11).*

In a similar way the problem was diagnosed by a technical staff representative involved in the implementation of the Programme:

*Delays in the implementation of tenders were surely a problem. This is one of the most common reasons for making changes in projects. There were problems with the hryvnia exchange rate fluctuations. The ruble exchange rate fluctuations were also experienced, but not as dramatic as in Ukraine, and the political situation in Ukraine, first associated with Maidan, later the war in the East of the country.*

Other reasons that caused delays included specific national legislation that resulted in the extension of financial procedures. In the case of Ukraine it was so called kaznacheistvo.

*(...) difficulties related to financial flows in Ukraine. Foreign funds are credited to the account of the central administration of the Ministry of Treasury (the so-called kaznacheistvo) in the Rivne region, and this institution transfers the funds to the beneficiary (study on the project "Development of the small and medium entrepreneurship in Rivne and Lublin", IPBU.01.01.00-88-784/11).*

In turn, in Belarus, during the Programme, there was inflation, which indirectly affected the slowdown of the flow of funds:

*Another problem that occurred during the implementation was financial settlements. Although there was pre-financing in the project, the financial crisis in Belarus and exchange rate fluctuations caused that the advance payments were not enough to cover the costs incurred by both partners, so some of the invoices had to be repaid from their own resources and await to be refunded (...). That is why the pay period for the magnetic resonance imaging scanner has been extended considerably (...) The*



*tenders had to be repeated causing delays and difficulties in the implementation of the project (study on the project "Medical institutions co-operation in Belarus and Poland to improve the access to medical service and its quality within emergency service as well as stroke incidents diagnostics and treatment", IPBU.03.01.00-20-719/11).*

In the CAWI/CATI surveys, apart from the reasons already mentioned, there were also indicated: lack of partner's involvement in the project, errors in project planning during the preparation phase, contact problems or lack of time.

In the period 2014-2020 one should strive for the beneficiaries to have sufficient time to complete the projects by seeking to shorten/streamline the project selection process. All the improvements made in the period 2007-2013, for example, pre-financing, the euro exchange rate adopted for project clearance, should also be introduced into the new Programme. In order to avoid the problems of not achieving all the results, one should also introduce a simplification of the procedure of making changes in projects by increasing the role of the JTS in accepting the changes that require to sign the addendum, and simplification of the reporting to speed up the process to which the financial liquidity of the projects relates. Moreover, when conducting trainings for project developers one should pay particular attention to the issue of proper conduct of tendering procedures and even recommend to the Belarusian and Ukrainian partners to hire additional persons/experts in the project to help the contractors effectively carry out public procurement procedures. All these activities should be liable to reduce project delays, which are the most important cause of incomplete implementation of indicators.

### **3.1.4. Projects implemented in response to local needs and challenges facing cross-border areas**

This section of the report contains answers to the following research questions:

- How far did the Programme/projects meet the local needs/needs of local communities/target groups and the challenges facing the cross-border area?
- To what extent was the scope of the support offered under the Programme relevant to the Programme objectives? Was it possible to attain the Programme's objectives (intervention logic) using the scope of support (types and areas of projects) provided in the Programme? What types of projects were lacking in the Programme and what types of projects covered by the Programme were not implemented and what was the impact of the lack of these projects on achieving the Programme's objectives? How the relevance of the intervention designed influenced the utility of the results achieved?

Based on the analysis of the existing data it can be stated that the implementation of the Programme has positively influenced the strengthening of the development processes of the border regions. It should be noted here that the Programme covered extensive area (316.3 thousand km<sup>2</sup>) and had much less resources than other programmes (e.g. regional operational programmes), hence the changes we see in the support area are of local nature and should be evaluated from this perspective. In general, the changes observed relate primarily to the "hard" side of the projects, the most noticeable of which results were achieved by the strategic projects (*Large Scale Projects*) which received the largest funding. The changes we can see thanks to them are related to the emergence of new border crossings or upgrades made to the existing ones, which translates into increased

accessibility of cross-border regions. There has been an increase in the capacity of border crossings - nowadays they can be used by 29,865 vehicles and 48,800 people. Crossing of borders became easier, waiting time at the border shortened. This is a valuable change in the case of the border between Poland and Ukraine and Poland and Belarus. For example, the average waiting time in Medyka was up to 6 hours, now it is 1.5 hours. Other changes involve increasing the prevention and detection of crime - for example at the border crossing Połowce-Pieszczałka prevention and fight against organized crime and smuggling increased by 10%.

Remarkable changes have also occurred as a result of other infrastructural projects involving the construction of new facilities and the modernization of existing buildings, communal infrastructure and public spaces. This has improved the aesthetics of buildings and public space, and has therefore increased the attractiveness of these places and in the wider perspective - the region.

The modernization of roads realised, though not large in number of kilometers (116.5 km), served to improve the accessibility of the area and is important primarily to the local population, but also helps to streamline tourist and cross-border traffic. These projects, due to their small scale, can be considered as local projects, but contribute to positive changes and stimulate the socio-economic development of the region.

Further changes concern the sphere of environmental protection and reactions in crisis situations in the border area. The area covered by the Programme - especially Polesie and Carpathians - is a valuable natural area. The projects realised have succeeded in preventing the extinction of particularly valuable species of flora and fauna, neutralizing the negative effects on nature (e.g. the protection of the ecosystem in the Bug River Valley), as well as establishing of the scientific cooperation between the countries participating in the Programme in the field of environment as well as contacts between workers of bordering natural parks and reserves. On the other hand, projects focused on crisis response contributed to the increase of fire safety in the border region, in the Białowieża Forest, Żółkiew, Tomaszów Lubelski, Sokal, Łuck, Brześć and Sokołów Podlaski. The arrival time of the salvage brigade to the place of the accident decreased - e.g. as a result of the project "Stimulation of the tourism development in the Carpathian region by tourist's service and security improvement" the response time was reduced to 20 minutes.

**Table 10. Results achieved in the sphere of security**

Results achieved	Value
Number of rescuers trained	1,746
Fire trucks	33
Specialist equipment (obstacles on the road)	13
Specialist police equipment	15

*Source: own development on the basis of the reports.*

The water and sewage infrastructure has also been improved - more than two thousand households or utility buildings have been connected to the water supply network, several sewage treatment plants have been built or modernised, or nearly one hundred kilometres of sewers have been built or modernised.

Changes also concerned health care sector: 13 projects implemented under the Programme that concerned health improvement have equipped hospitals and health facilities with modern medical and preventive care equipment so it is easier now to detect the early stages of cancer, tuberculosis or cardiovascular disease among the local population.



**Table 11. Results achieved in the sphere of health care sector**

Results achieved	Value
Modernised or new hospital or outpatient departments	8
Diagnostic laboratories	3
Hospices	2
Medical equipment	1,061
Ambulances	7
Number of patients included in the study	15,049
Tools to facilitate diagnostic cooperation	5

*Source: own development on the basis of the reports.*

Tourism, as defined by the Programme creators, may become an important factor in the development of border areas, therefore separate measure (Measure 1.2.) is foreseen for projects realised in that field. Through the implementation of a variety of projects the level of tourism services has improved, including infrastructure, but also promotional and information services. The popularisation of the natural and cultural values of the region has increased, as well as the dissemination of information about the events taking place here. Among the most noticeable changes in the field of tourism there are the construction, marking of hiking trails, bike paths and waterways in the Białowieża Forest, near the Bug River or in the Eastern Carpathians, creating dozens of centres or tourist information points (e.g. Stara Wieś, Żółkiew, in the Grodno district, on the Wigry lake), investing in several dozen cultural and historical places (e.g. in Worocewicze, Łosice, Stara Wieś, Żółkiew). Tourism related activities have contributed to increasing the accessibility and attractiveness of border areas, as well as increasing awareness about the region among tourists and the local population.

Valuable conclusions about how to match projects to local communities and target groups identified in projects, and about the challenges facing cross-border areas, are provided by an analysis of the effects of umbrella projects. Within the framework of 56 microprojects local communities have developed common responses to the fundamental difficulties of cross-border areas, resulting from their peripheral location:

- low labour market fluctuations and lack of job offer for young people finishing education,
- limited possibilities of using cultural and natural values for tourism development,
- barriers arising from historical and cultural determinants.

The projects included many joint conferences (21), study tours (12), and various workshops, seminars, sporting events, culinary and artistic events, in which 8941 people participated. This has helped to establish bonds and provide ongoing contact between communities in each border area, as seen in e.g. 3 signed cooperation agreements. Sharing experiences and breaking down barriers is only the first step to further integration. However, the Programme has also managed to create a framework for specific results. The project "Cross-border Labour Market Support Center" (IPBU.03.02.00-06-827/12) has supported 200 schools and 15 labour market institutions that are in contact with graduates entering the market. 1,170 young people took part in various trainings, seminars and workshops that provided them with possibilities to improve their qualifications and gain the skills necessary in the labour market. For some of these, apprenticeships were organised. Developed guidebooks on the labour market are very popular (1,100 downloads). However, it is worth to wait for the assessment of the effectiveness of this measure, as the effectiveness of programmes that prepare for entry into the labour market is postponed in time. Similarly, it is difficult to assess the results of promotional activities concerning culture and natural heritage in other umbrella projects. On the basis of the data contained

in the reports it can be said that as many as 16,383 tourists had the opportunity to get acquainted with the tourist offer, but we have to wait for the effects of promotional activities and propagation of the region.

Regarding the answer to the research question on the extent to which the scope of the support offered under the Programme was relevant to the objectives of the Programme, it was noted that for the needs of the Programme the socio-economic analysis of the support area was carried out accompanied by a SWOT analysis defining the strengths and weaknesses of the cross-border areas, as well as the opportunities and threats facing it. The developed analysis has become the basis of the Programme, setting its main objective and specific objectives.

As the biggest **economic problems** there were considered: concentration of production in declining branches around cities, low level of innovativeness and technological advancement of companies, small investment outlays, including capital inflows, poorly developed business support and trade information systems, bad waste management legislation, low efficiency in terms of use of energy, legal and administrative barriers to business cooperation (including visa requirements), growing disparities between urban and rural areas, lack of joint/coordinated spatial and economic planning, administrative barriers to market competition.

In turn, as the biggest **challenges of infrastructural nature** there were considered: the lack of motorways and city bypasses, poor quality and capacity of roads, insufficient number and capacity of border crossings, lack of local border crossings, insufficient availability of telecommunications services (internet, landline and mobile telephony), insufficient waste and sewage management infrastructure, low use of renewable energy sources, negative environmental impact of the developed transport and communication infrastructure, lack of common/coordinated cross-border spatial planning.

The diagnosed problems related to the **labour market, education and social institutions** are: high unemployment, unfavourable and mismatched employment structure, low per capita income, language barriers, insufficient social and educational infrastructure, insufficient competences and funds at local level, weak institutional cooperation, social exclusion, and pathological phenomena.

The most important **environmental problems** include: insufficient protection of the landscape and habitats of flora and fauna against anthropogenic impact, low ecological awareness of citizens, lack of joint programming, lack of prevention and monitoring of nature protection, lack of infrastructure and waste management technologies, large number of objects that constitute an ecological hazard, insufficient recognition of natural values, absence of protected areas in certain areas of high natural value, pollution of surface waters and lakes, unsustainable economic development, especially the development of economic activity in protected areas.

Finally, among the most important **problems related to tourism and culture** there are listed: low standard of tourist infrastructure, lack of sports and leisure infrastructure, poor tourist information system, bad condition of monuments, lack of common tourism strategy of the border regions, lack of or poor promotion of the region, including non-commercial promotion, closure of border crossings for local tourism, and unsustainable development of tourism.

Economic problems were indicated as the basic problems. According to the diagnosis formulated in the project "Creating cross-platform Biznestrans promoting and supporting cooperation between business and academic institutions in the direction of better links" (IPBU.01.01.00-06-717/11) sealing Polish-Belarusian border after Poland's accession to the European Union and the lack of a border low traffic agreement resulted in reduced economic exchanges and contacts between businesses, universities and public entities in neighbouring areas. Entrepreneurs need information about potential business partners, business conditions on both sides of the border. They also need support in promoting companies and their products. Thanks to the project

implementation, the information gap was reduced. An Internet-based business platform has been created and additional promotional activities have significantly strengthened local entrepreneurship on both sides of the border. At the level of local governments a significant barrier to the lack of support for entrepreneurs is the lack of appropriate documents and analyses justifying such support and diagnosing needs in this regard. Municipalities (gminas) do not have appropriate strategic and executive programmes, and the actions taken are accidental and uncoordinated. Entrepreneurs have no knowledge of the possibilities of cooperation, they lack contacts, do not know good practices, and do not trust partners on the other side of the border. Knowledge and information is the most desirable commodity in business. Therefore, project participants particularly value training seminars for SMEs. An examples of additional added value in this area is the project "Science and experience for business" (IPBU.01.01.00-18-151/10) which initiated the transfer of knowledge from universities to entrepreneurs.

Another economic problem is the low investment attractiveness of border areas. Within the framework of the project "Cross-border system of investor acquiring Poland-Ukraine" a cross-border investment agency has been set up whose employees in direct contact with the interested entities cooperate with local government units free of charge to support the municipal officials in creating or updating investment offers and organise trainings concerning investor service standards, building an image of a business-friendly municipality, and rules for creating a comprehensive investment offer.

The analysis of projects carried out in the economic sphere, particularly with regard to the removal of barriers to the functioning of SMEs, shows that the Programme has met its tasks satisfactorily, responding to most of the challenges identified.

With regard to road infrastructure, the challenges far outweighed the opportunities for support in the Programme, particularly with regard to the need for motorways and city bypasses, as the road infrastructure investments made under the Programme have allowed to build only 116 km of roads in all three countries altogether. However, the effects of the Programme should not be assessed through the scale of the challenge, but through local needs diagnosed on a smaller scale in the beneficiaries' applications and the implementation of the principle of additionality for funds coming from the Programme. In the case of large infrastructural projects, they can be a valuable support in the preparation of technical documentation, which is a prerequisite for starting an investment or for completing an additional road segment which is needed. Those effects are pictured in the case of the project "Improvement of accessibility and quality of the border road infrastructure Stage II – redevelopment of the 2nd section of the poviast road No. 3432L Hrubieszów – Kryłów – Dołhobyczów – the State Border and a repair of the road in Uhryniv" (IPBU.01.03.00-06-318/11). The project is part of a comprehensive reconstruction of the entire district road No. 3432L Hrubieszów - Kryłów - Dołhobyczów which was started in 2006 due to the planned construction of the new Dołhobyczów - Uhryniv border crossing. All stages of investment are supported by EU funds. Complete technical documentation and reconstruction of a 680 m section in Hrubieszów were financed by the INTERREG III A Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Programme. Another 8.55 km long section has been modernised thanks to grant from the Regional Operational Programme of the Lubelskie Voivodship for the years 2007-2013. The project implemented under the Programme concerns the renovation of 10.24 km of this road running along the Polish-Ukrainian border, and on the Ukrainian side - renovation of the 620 m road in Uhryiv, directly at the Dołhobyczów border crossing. The communication system covering 12 local roads of VII technical class being redeveloped in the project "Development of the transport infrastructure in the area of Augustów Channel" (IPBU.01.03.00-20-008/10) is of a similar meaning for the local community. The new system combined most of the villages and towns there with the main road

Augustów-Płaska-Kurzyniec, running along the Augustów Channel to Belarus, with a fork in Gruszki prepared for the future border crossing point.

Investing in road infrastructure with budget constraints can also fulfil an important task, supporting the maintenance of roads in the unsavoury condition and maintaining road users' safety. The project "Improving the safety of transport network users in the Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian borderland" (IPBU.01.03.00-06-498/11) alongside hard investments, has also resulted in an interactive map of the infrastructure of the Włodawa and Szatki districts and the installation of GPS locators on vehicles. As a result, their operability and effectiveness have increased. Thanks to the cooperation of the road services of the border region, they have come up with a common idea for a realistic solution to one of the pressing problems without making expenditure, which in the current scale is unresolved, because many years of underinvestment caused considerable degradation of roads and bridges. Careful monitoring and selection of the sections that require the most urgent investment is a prerequisite for maintaining the use of these roads. Modernisation of communication routes is also an important investment impulse. From the perspective of the inhabitants of Stary Sambor it was an indispensable condition of urban and economic development of the city. Their poor technical condition hampered the construction of new public infrastructure facilities as well as single family homes, which would be the backdrop for agritourism. An additional criterion for choosing the road to repair was the location of the bus and train stations, to which tourists who starting kayaking on the Dniester arrive.

Infrastructure challenges are linked to the challenges of the environment. A good example of effective cooperation in this area and identifying challenges in the local sphere can be the project "Clean Water at the Bug Estuary - A Cross-Border Water Supply System for Hrubieszów and Volodymyr Volynskiy - Stage I" (IPBU.01.03.00-06-161/10). In both cities the problem was an outdated and inadequate water supply network. The first step was to develop a planning study "Diagnosis of the condition of water supply infrastructure in Hrubieszow and Volodymyr Volynskiy and postulated directions for its development and modernisation". It contained a full inventory of water supply and water treatment plants and a description of their technical condition. Based on this documentation, the necessary investment tasks have been identified over the next five years (until 2016). The technical documentation of the most urgent investments has been developed. For Hrubieszów there were five packages of documentation of water pipes of a total length of 23 km, and for Volodymyr Volynskiy - six packages, including two for water treatment stations and 10 km of water supply pipes. The Common Investment Plan of Hrubieszów and Volodymyr Volynskiy in the field of water supply also came into being. Similar projects of modernisation of the water supply network were also implemented by other local government units, but the scope of activities for the Polish and Ukrainian or Belarusian partners differed, according to the diversity of challenges for particular border regions. On the Polish side, investments consisted mostly of the construction of new networks, water treatment plants and retention tanks. On the other side of the border, the renovation and modernisation of the existing network was undertaken.

In addition to investments in the water and sewerage network, an important element of infrastructure projects positively impacting the environment was the thermomodernisation of public and residential buildings. For example, in Sokołów Podlaski, four schools and a health centre were warmed up. In the same project in Nowojaworowsk, a kindergarten that was located in a forty-year-old building was qualified. Nowojaworowsk was also a partner of another project of environmental importance, under which 253 m<sup>2</sup> of solar collectors were installed at the hospital. They cover a part of the heat energy demand, so that the consumption of non-renewable fuel (gas) will drop significantly. This will reduce the emission of harmful substances from the combustion of coal and gas by 18.7 thousand m<sup>3</sup> per year.

The border communities face social activities that are no less challenging. It is especially necessary to identify the needs accurately, and to integrate investment and soft operations. An example is the project "Across borders without barriers – integration of disabled people through tourism and culture" (IPBU.03.01.00-06-310/11) in which a facility adapted to the needs of the disabled with 52 beds was built. Cross-border tourist and rehabilitation stays, specialized rehabilitation and therapeutic activities, as well as training and conferences on methods of working with persons with disabilities will be conducted there. At the center there will also be continued the current cultural activities, conducted by the Association with partners from Ukraine and Belarus, including, among others, organization of concerts, festivals and music workshops. Similarly in the project "Overcoming Barriers. Lublin-Zamość-Włodawa-Brest. Partnership for Activation of the Disabled 2012-2013" (IPBU.03.01.00-06-655/11) realised within the framework of the partnership, which should be the model for other such initiatives, four Information and Advisory Points were created - in Lublin, Zamość, Włodawa and Brest, where people with disabilities, their families and institutions acting for the benefit of people with disabilities can benefit from expert advice - psychologists, lawyers, vocational and environmental advisers.

On the other hand, apart from one umbrella project, already mentioned, also the project "Cross-border methodological center" (IPBU.03.01.00-06-763/11) which was created at the Center for Educational Policy in Lviv with the inspiration of the Lublin "Klanza" Association answered the challenges of the labour market. The Center aims to integrate, coordinate, improve the qualifications of pedagogues, methodologists and NGO trainers through the exchange of experiences and dissemination of modern teaching methods.

A surprising and very important effect of the Programme was the significant involvement of hospitals and health care institutions. Most often that concerned twin projects on the Polish and Ukrainian or Belarusian side. An example is the project "The development of cardiological support for the Polish population and Belarusian population within Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2007-2013" (IPBU.03.01.00-06-417/11). During the project ablation treatments were performed for 20 patients in Biała Podlaska and 20 in Brześć, and eventually both centres will be able to perform 360 ablation treatments per year (about 30 treatments per month). In addition, about 3 thousand patients each year in each institution will be treated in the hemodynamics and angiography labs. The total number of hospital patients indirectly benefiting from the project is 26,000 people for each party. Other projects have been combating the recurrent risk of tuberculosis and cancer diseases (breast cancer, colorectal cancer, prostate cancer). Effects in the form of more than 15 thousand patients covered with medical treatment during project implementation and significantly increasing access to medical services are the added value of the intervention.

Another research question discussed in this section concerns the relevance of the designed intervention and its impact on the utility of the results achieved. It was analysed on the basis of CAWI/CATI survey results (sample description: see footnote No. 2). The assessment was based on the extent to which the selected effects, which overlapped with the diagnosed support areas, included in the Programme objectives, were recognized by the respondents as the results of their projects. The results of the questions and answers are summarized in the table below.

**Table 12. Evaluation of the effects of the project implementation**

	1 Definitely not	2 Probably not	3 Neither yes nor not	4 Generally yes	5 Definitely yes
Raising the level of human capital in the support area (e.g, through training and other types of educational activities)	23	21	38	61	53

Creation of new jobs	20	35	64	44	33
Networking, establishing new contacts	27	11	14	48	96
Improving the flow of information between partners	25	15	21	82	53
Improving the internal organisation of work in partner institutions	15	25	61	68	27
Tightening of cooperation with foreign partners	23	13	16	83	81
Tightening of cooperation with domestic partners	19	27	47	54	27
Retrofitting of Project Leader (purchased equipment, etc.)	29	13	31	35	88
Retrofitting of Project Partners (purchased equipment, etc.)	29	16	22	45	84
More contacts between communities on both sides of the border	23	19	36	57	61
Reducing the differences in the level of economic development between the areas lying on both sides of the border	10	37	88	43	18
Reducing the differences in the level of economic development between the border areas and the centre of the country	14	43	73	43	23
Reducing the differences in the standard of living of communities on both sides of the border	8	34	90	47	17
Reducing the differences in the standard of living of communities between the border areas and the centre of the country	10	36	79	52	19
Facilitating movement of people or goods across the border	12	24	41	73	46
Promotion of the idea of cross-border cooperation	28	6	15	49	98
Increasing the knowledge of local communities about communities on the other side of the border	12	24	41	73	46

Source: own research (n=196).

Analysis of the data contained in the table above shows that most respondents recognised that their projects brought the desired results. The spheres in which the implementation of the project brought effects can be classified as follows:

- raising the level of human capital in the support area,
- establishing contacts or fostering cooperation between partners and local communities,
- increasing knowledge about neighbours,
- improvement of infrastructure,
- facilitating movement of people or goods across the border.

To a lesser extent, the respondents pointed to the effects of reducing the economic disparities, as regards the level of life between the border communities and those living in the centre of the country. These questions were answered by "hard to say" answers which may indicate that too little time has elapsed since the end of the project so as to be able to observe these effects so quickly. The answers to the effects of increasing number of jobs were the least consistent, although the most often answers were "hard to say". **Analysis of the survey conducted allows to draw the conclusion about the relevance of the designed intervention and its great impact on the usefulness of the results achieved.** Certain doubts are raised only by economic issues and those related to the level of life, as changes in this sphere require a longer elapse of time, and also far greater expenditure.



The results of the project, which the respondents did not expect at the stage of project preparation, were also evaluated. 17 respondents clearly indicated such results, and according to 21 respondents unpredictable results were unlikely to appear, whereas 117 respondents could not provide a clear answer to this question, which in connection with lack of response here from 41 respondents suggested that this issue was not addressed. Only 2 people gave definitely negative answer to that question.

Among the unexpected results the project brought about, there were indicated a number of implications that could be broken down into three categories: those concerning cooperation, increased knowledge of the partner country/region, and the purchase of equipment/introduction of a new service/procedure. Most responses were in the first category. Respondents talked about establishing permanent cooperation, developing/strengthening cooperation, establishing a new partnership. As for the second group, there were answers such as: increasing knowledge of local communities, learning about the conditions in neighbouring countries, becoming an example for others or increasing interest in the organisation.

Finally, in the form of summaries, one can cite an example of a case study - Szack, describing two projects that are ecologically relevant:

*In would be difficult to underestimate the importance of Polish-Ukrainian cross-border projects. They have managed to, at least partially, solve the ecological problems, faced by local communities, especially in Volyn, which has contributed to the region's increased tourist appeal and, consequently, to its increased economic and strategic importance. [representative of local government]*

### 3.1.5. Limitations and stimuli of cross-border cooperation

This section of the report contains answers to the following research questions:

- What factors stimulated/hindered the cooperation between entities located on both sides of the border?
- To what extent external factors, such as socio-economic situation or administrative system, influenced the shape and achieved results of the Programme?

From source literature<sup>7</sup> it is known that cross-border cooperation is affected by several groups of factors that, depending on the circumstances, can stimulate or slow down cooperation between actors on different sides of the border. These causes may be related to the different levels of border areas' development, the existence of a border, and may be of a social character (e.g. stereotypes resulting from the common history of these areas) or administrative nature. The impact is also exerted by factors related to the implementation of a specific Programme. The potential causes identified contributing to the weakening or stimulation of cooperation between entities located on different sides of the border, to a greater or lesser degree existed in the case of projects implemented under the Programme.

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<sup>7</sup> E. Mikula-Bączek, *Czynniki ograniczające i aktywizujące współpracę transgraniczną Polski i Ukrainy [Factors limiting and activating cross-border cooperation between Poland and Ukraine]*, <https://www.ur.edu.pl/file/6544/09-Mikula-Baczek.pdf>.

### Factors that facilitate cooperation

1 Human capital was an important contributor stimulating the cooperation - factors of social nature. Those were people realising the projects, mainly the projects' beneficiaries, who turned out to be the most important stimulus to cooperation. Their activity, willingness and determination were decisive for the successful implementation of the projects and the success of the entire Programme. Based on project documentation and interviews, it can be argued that a successful partnership has been developed and the partnership principle has been followed. This cooperation has strengthened earlier projects, although not necessarily realised with the same partners, which provided the necessary experience to facilitate the project's implementation under the Programme. This can be seen in the high rating of partners in the reports, as well as the evaluations that appear in the case studies. Occasionally, communication problems between partners, low activity resulting from distances between partners or mental or cultural barriers of beneficiaries were mentioned.

2 On the basis of the data available (analysis of the final reports) it can be assumed that the Belarusian and Polish authorities generally did not create barriers to the implementation of projects. The highest number of complaints about the administrative barriers was related to contacts with the Ukrainian authorities, which is understandable in the face of the drastic political changes that occurred at that time in Ukraine. Nevertheless, the opinions expressed in project case studies on the involvement of local authorities in solving problems indicate that the attitude of the authorities, including the Ukrainian one, can in many cases be regarded as a positive factor.

3 Based on the analysis of project documentation and interviews prepared for the needs of this study, one can conclude that one of the strongest stimulus for cooperation between actors was the pressure of time and circumstances associated with the need to realise and account for the project, i.e. the desire to fully complete the project. It should be borne in mind that the Programme was implemented under difficult political conditions in Ukraine, and also during the economic crisis that followed the events in Maidan, and with the exuberant inflation associated with the implementation of projects in Belarus. There were also difficulties in implementing the Programme itself - the relatively short time in which beneficiaries had to complete the projects, long-term procedures for the receipt of reports and payment of further tranches, long-term procedures to make changes in projects, and the requirement to use the PRAG.

4 Significant help in removing barriers was a good contact with the JTS. This collaboration was rated very high or high. Often the evaluation was accompanied by extensive descriptions of technical support and assistance given to the beneficiaries during the project implementation. This assistance mainly concerned filling in reports and other forms, especially financial statements. The assessment of cooperation with the unit is shown in the table below.

**Table 13. Evaluation of cooperation with the Joint Technical Secretariat**

Assessment of cooperation	very poor	poor	no answer	good	very good
Number of answers	0	0	12	56	43

Source: own research (n=196).

Here are some examples of evaluations of cooperation with the JTS included in the reports:

*We greatly appreciate the support of the Joint Technical Secretariat to assist in the implementation of the project; Project partners highly value cooperation with the JTS. We have quickly received very professional answers to all our questions. The project coordinator was very helpful during the project implementation and writing of project reports. He helped us to interpret the project implementation guidelines (...); Cooperation with the Joint Technical Secretariat was smooth and effective; all our doubts and problems have been explained to us in an extensive and professional manner (...).*

### **Factors that are neutral or impede cooperation**

1. It is true that the cross-border regions of Poland, Ukraine and Belarus, albeit peripheral and poor in relation to other parts of these countries, also have different levels of economic development. The border areas of Ukraine and Belarus are much poorer than those in Poland, and the level of private entrepreneurship is lower there. In the case of factors arising from different levels of development, they have a neutral impact on the stimulation or reduction of cooperation between the actors. This is indicated by the analysis of existing data as well as interviews conducted for this study - neither the beneficiaries in the reports nor the respondents identify these factors as problematic. Beneficiaries of the projects knew about the developmental differences between the participating regions, but they treated it as obvious.
2. As for the factors that are bound to the existence of borders, they for sure hindered the cooperation in the opinion of the beneficiaries. In the CAWI/CATI survey, respondents predominantly acknowledged the existence of boundaries as a limitation. Such responses accounted almost to 80%; the rest of the respondents considered the border to be an indifferent factor in the development of cooperation.
3. In the case of social factors which include stereotypes related to the common history, it must be said that they have also been indifferent to most beneficiaries. In the CAWI/CATI survey, in 120 out of 196 cases this exactly was the answer. In 60 cases, however, they were considered to be a factor hindering cooperation. However, an important barrier was the frequent lack of experience in the implementation of projects on the part of Ukrainian and Belarusian partners, especially in terms of financial accounting and reporting.
4. An important identified barrier to cooperation was some administrative factors. These included long financial procedures in Ukraine and Belarus resulting from the legislation in force that led to delays in payments. Particularly burdensome for the Ukrainian beneficiaries was "kaznacheistvo" to whom the money for the beneficiaries of the public sector was submitted and who held it<sup>8</sup>.
5. Some factors connected with the very realization of the Programme were the barriers in cooperation between entities located on different sides of the border. These were factors related to the procedures in place, such as the most frequently mentioned by the beneficiaries obligation to use the PRAG, especially the obligation to conduct tendering, which was often carried out inconsistently and had to be repeated. Other

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<sup>8</sup> Kaznacheistvo of Ukraine - state executive body holding law enforcement functions in order to ensure the implementation of the state budget, cash management of the public finance system, initial and ongoing control over operations related to state budget funds carried out by the main administrators and recipients of these funds. The body is subordinated to the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine (see: Recommendations of the Congress of East European Initiatives 2015, Lublin, [http://www.kongres.lublin.eu/files/UserFiles/KIEW\\_2015\\_rekomendacje\\_PL.pdf](http://www.kongres.lublin.eu/files/UserFiles/KIEW_2015_rekomendacje_PL.pdf), p. 5).

barriers included delays in funding due to long-term acceptance and possible revision of reports, as well as a cumbersome project change process, in particular in case of those changes requiring addendum signatures, which can be summarized as an excess of formalities for the project.

As can be seen from the above identification of barriers concerning cooperation between partners, they concerned mainly external factors related to the socio-economic situation and the administrative system of the countries, and resulting consequences. As far as socio-economic factors are concerned, they were known at the time of the Programme creation, and would normally not have an impact on the achievement of results. However, during the Programme development there have been major changes in the field that have translated into projects' implementation. First and foremost, there were violent political changes in Ukraine that led to the deterioration of the country's economic situation - inflation followed, causing a significant change in the hryvnia exchange rate which was important in the context of the Programme. Economic changes, though not so dramatic, have also affected Belarus, where inflation has also risen. These factors have certainly contributed to the difficulty of project implementation, primarily causing delays in implementation and payment problems. Unfortunately, the exchange rate risk was compounded by the Programme beneficiaries - and therefore, in some cases, the products and results, mainly concerning purchases, were not fully achieved.

In turn, the administrative system of the countries participating in the Programme has not changed at that time. It was a certain barrier to the implementation of projects. This was especially evident in the case of the requirement to use the PRAG, which was not fully compliant with the regulations in Ukraine and Belarus, which was an additional source of difficulty in the implementation of projects in these countries. In this case, it was mainly due to the prolongation of the tendering procedure due to difficulties in interpretation of the law and delayed the implementation of the next stages of the project, but did not affect the achievement of the intended results.

Socio-economic and administrative factors undoubtedly affected the course of projects' implementation. Mainly the first ones have translated into incomplete achievement of the assumed results in terms of some projects. It seems that while in countries with less political stability the development of the situation is unpredictable, it is possible to try in subsequent editions of the Programme to introduce procedures for identifying and verifying potential threats in the implementation of the project and to work out ways to counteract or reduce the project risks in that way. Beneficiaries of the Programme are aware of that:

*In particular, it seems reasonable to identify the risks relating to such areas as project management, partnership cooperation, exchange rate fluctuations, the tender procedure implementation including ensuring the conformity of the tender procedure with the provisions of EU and Ukraine, selection of a contractor, supervision over the work of the contractor, delays in the schedule of the project. At the project evaluation stage, consideration should be given to the criteria for verifying the adequacy of the identified risks and the ways in which they can be counteracted ("Development of partnership cooperation towards the improvement of cross-border environment protection infrastructure in the townships of Poraz and Zagórz in Poland and in the city of Horodok in Ukraine" IPBU.02.01.00-18-563/11).*

### 3.1.6. Evaluation of the selection system and the effects of the project implementation

This section of the report contains answers to the following research questions:

- Was the project selection system effective? Have the application procedures/project implementation procedures been "friendly" in view of obtaining funding/implementation of projects? What solutions/recommendations for application/implementation procedures are proposed for the future Programme?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the information and promotion activities implemented in the Programme? What was their impact on the achievement of the Programme's objectives and results?

The project selection system under the Programme included two modes: the competition mode and the large scale projects (LSP) mode.

#### **Competition mode:**

Under the 2007-2013 financial perspective, the competition mode was applied three times in the Programme. Each time the recruitment rules were set out in a set of documents called the Application Pack prepared by the Joint Task Force for the preparation of application documentation. This team consisted of representatives from all three countries, which was supposed to cover for the specificity of each country and expressed the partnership on the level of implementation of the Programme. Application packs were prepared for each call and required JMC approval. After the JMC's acceptance the packages were still commented by the European Commission and required further approval by the JMC, if the EC wanted amendments.

On the basis of the application packs accepted by JMC the calls for proposals were announced.

The selection process until signing the contract covered the following stages:

1. preparation of application documentation (Application Pack) and its approval by JMC,
2. announcement of call for proposals by the JMC and the JTS, its promotion and support of potential applicants in the preparation of applications,
3. formal assessment,
4. substantive assessment,
5. proposal for a ranking list prepared by the Evaluation Committee (EvC),
6. JMC decision,
7. procedure of contracting/negotiating contract for cofinancing,
8. in Belarus - procedure for registering projects at national level,
9. signing contracts and launching projects.

Applications for financial support to be provided under the Programme were collected in three calls for proposals which took place in the following periods:

- 1st call: November 2, 2009 - March 1, 2010 - lasted 4 months and concerned the Priority 1 and the Measures 2.1 and 3.1,

- 2nd call: May 16, 2011 - September 30, 2011 - lasted 4.5 months and concerned the Priority 2 and the Measure 3.1 (by mistake 2 projects were also submitted to the Measure 3.2),
- 3rd call: February 16, 2012 - June 14, 2012 - lasted 4 months and concerned only the Measure 3.2.

After announcing the call, the JTS organized training for potential applicants, provided information on calls through leaflets, information posted on the Programme website (guidelines, answers to questions, etc.), meetings within the so-called "open days" or events organized by other entities.

**Table 14. Number of trainings for potential applicants**

Call for proposals	In Poland		In Belarus		In Ukraine	
	Number of trainings	Number of training participants	Number of trainings	Number of training participants	Number of trainings	Number of training participants
1st	4	525	1	81	6	385
2nd	15	857	14	577	15	553
3rd	10	417	8	428	12	420
	A total of 23 "open days" in 3 countries:					
	Open days	6	Open days	34	Open days	37

*Source: own development on the basis of annual reports on the Programme implementation submitted to the EC (until 2015).*

At the end of the call for proposals, applications were opened, registered, and then evaluated. Evaluation of applications required preparation of specific rules for the evaluation of applications, as well as procedures and human resources (JTS staff and external experts called assessors). The appropriate rules, procedures and requirements for members of the EvC, as well as their selection, were approved by the JMC for the 1st call in the period from May to October 2010, i.e. several months after the closure of the 1st call. They included: definition of the requirements that the members of the EvC had to meet, the nomination of the chairman and the secretary of the Committee, the EvC procedures, the selection of external assessors for the evaluation of applications (in July 2010), the selection of the persons with voting rights in the EvC, and the application assessment guide. Also during the 2nd call, the selection of assessors took place only during the applications recruitment process and was completed by the end of 2011, when the formal assessment of applications submitted by September 30 was already in progress. When it was found that the assessors were too few in relation to the number of applications submitted, additional recruitment for assessors was conducted. In addition, only in August 2012 the opportunity have been introduced, only in exceptional circumstances, to send requests for evaluation to assessors by post if they were unable to assess at the JTS premises.

The rating was divided into formal and substantive assessment. Formal assessment was conducted by JTS staff. Applications that have successfully completed the formal assessment have been subjected to substantive assessment. The substantive assessment of the application was made by completing the form and granting a specific score according to the detailed guidelines approved by the JMC. Each application was evaluated by two persons: a JTS employee and an external assessor or two assessors (if the project was trilateral). In the event of a large variation in the assessment, a third assessment was made. The results of these assessments were approved by consensus or voting by the EvC during the meeting (it made the so-called ranking list of projects). If



the EvC disagreed with one of the assessments, it was entitled to conduct its own evaluation of the project. The ranking list prepared by the EvC required a final decision on the selection of proposals by the JMC.

After selecting the projects by JMC applicants were informed about the results and contracts were negotiated with the applicants selected for funding. As a result of the substantive assessment, recommendations for changes in the applications that were introduced during the contracting process could be formulated. In Belarus, an additional step was the approval of the projects by the Belarusian government, which lengthened the process of contracting.

In case of the 1st call, the process of substantive assessment by the EvC ended in October 2010 (8 months after the call for proposals) and the applications were finally approved at the end of November 2010 by the JMC (9 months after the closure of the call). In December 2010 contracting began, including 2 training courses on this process organised, one in Poland and the other in Ukraine for applicants from Ukraine and Belarus. After the negotiations with the applicants whose applications were accepted for implementation were completed, the JTS prepared the documents for the contract and forwarded them to the JMA, which re-verified them and signed them after their acceptance. The applications' contracting process began in May 2011 (**14 months after the closure of the 1st call**) and ended in November 2012 (**2 years and 8 months after the closure of the call**).

Within the second call for which 506 applications were submitted, the formal evaluation process was conducted separately for each Priority and ended:

- on 28 February 2012 (5 months after the closure of the call) for applications submitted to the Priority 2,
- on 28 March 2012 (6 months after the closure of the call) for applications submitted to the Priority 3, and
- on 1 June 2012 (8 months after the closure of the call) for applications submitted to the Priority 1.

On the other hand, the substantive evaluation ended with the following dates:

- with regard to the Priority 2 - the ranking list was accepted by the EvC between June 25 and 27, 2012, almost 4 months after the completion of the formal evaluation, and the final decision of the JMC was adopted at the end of July 2012 (i.e. 10 months after the closing of the call);
- with regard to the Priority 3 - the ranking list was accepted by the EvC between June 4 and 5, 2012, the passage of time with regard to the completion of the formal evaluation and closure of the call was similar to that of the applications submitted under the Priority 2;
- Regarding the Priority 1, the evaluation process for applications has been the longest. The ranking list was accepted by the EvC on October 9-10, 2012 and the final decision of JMC was made at the end of November 2012, i.e. 14 months after closing the call.

The first contracts were signed in the second half of 2012 (**a total of 6 contracts by the end of 2012, i.e. 12 to 15 months after the closure of the call**), and the last ones on 30 December 2013 (i.e. **2 years and 3 months after the closure of the 2nd call**).

The third call concerned only the so-called umbrella projects under the Measure 3.2. A total of 22 applications were submitted. Formal assessment was conducted from July to December 2012. The substantive evaluation ended on 5 March 2013 with drawing up a ranking list of 8 projects by the EvC. JMC approved this ranking list on 10 April (in total about 10 months after the closure of the 3rd call). The contract negotiation process lasted

from April to December 2013. The last contract was signed on December 30, 2013, i.e. approximately 18 months after the closure of the calls.

The length of the selection and contracting process of the projects was certainly influenced by the **great interest of the callers in the calls**, in particular the 1st and the 2nd call. In the three calls, 835 applications were received, including 307 projects in the first call, 506 in the second call, and 22 in the third call dedicated to umbrella projects, totalling 226 microprojects. Within the framework of the Programme most of the projects were submitted in the Polish-Ukrainian partnership - 553, 145 - in the Polish-Belarusian partnership, while tripartite partnerships were in 127 projects. Such a large number of submitted applications proves a great interest and a huge need for activities that could be financed from the Programme. The results of the application process in competition mode are presented below.

**Table 15. Number and value of projects submitted and accepted under the competition mode**

Call for proposals	The value of co-financing of applications submitted in EUR (including the multiple of available allocations)	Number of applications submitted	Number of applications accepted by JMC (% of submitted ones)	Final number of contracts signed (% of the submitted ones)
1st	187,249,641.47 (11.6 times more than the allocation available)	307	21 (7%)	23 (7.5%)
2nd	796,116,573.36 (9 times more than the allocation available)	506	67 (13%)	79 (15.6%)
3rd	EUR 10,626,401.76 (1.6 times more than the allocation available)	22	8 (36%)	6 (27%)
Total		835	96 (11%)	108 (13%)

*Source: own development on the basis of annual reports on the Programme implementation submitted to the EC (until 2015).*

The difference between the number of applications accepted by the JMC and the number of signed contracts is the result of the contract negotiation process. In each call standby projects were identified (the standby list of projects was approved by JMC) which were positively evaluated and could receive funding if funds were available. Additional available resources may have occurred if the selected co-financing contractor resigned from the contract or the existing contracts were subject to savings, with the final date of contract signing being 31 December 2013, which means that the savings that appeared after 2013 could not be transferred to sign new contracts.

#### **Non-competitive project selection mode**

Major projects were implemented under the Measure 2.2, that is they were supposed to contribute to the implementation of the detailed objective of ensuring the efficient and safe functioning of borders. Due to the subject matter (management of borders, which is the responsibility of the state authorities and is of strategic nature) and the size of investments, most of the projects in relation to this specific Programme objective have been selected in a non-competitive mode. In the 2nd call projects could be submitted to the Measure 2.2 and one project that was selected in the competition was launched by the police.

The procedure of strategic projects' selection included the following stages:

1. indication of strategic project proposals based on project outlines by the Laboratory Group for Large Scale Projects,
2. preparation of requirements and samples of application documents for Large Scale Projects (LSPs) ,
3. approval of the list of LSPs by the JMC as well as the Grant Application Form,
4. approval of the LSP list by the EC,
5. inviting the applicants to prepare the Grant Application Form of the LSPs,
6. verification of Grant Application Form documentation by the JTS,
7. approval of application forms by the JMC,
8. approval of application forms by the EC,
9. contracting.

Despite the lack of competition between the projects, the LSP selection process took a long time. LSPs have been identified and proposed to the JMC by the Laboratory Group. The group developed an application pack and drew up a list of LSP. A list of 7 projects was approved by the JMC on November 3, 2009. At the same time, the institutions responsible for LSPs, which were included in the list approved by the JMC, were invited to submit Grant Application Form in accordance with the mode of selection of Large Scale Projects by 30 December 2009, which took place within the deadline. The next two Large Scale Projects were accepted by JMC in 2010. Grant Application Form required for the LSP yet the consent of the European Commission. This was not a quick or easy procedure. Preparing applications and attachments for complex investments required many months of preparation. The JTS helped applicants to organize training sessions and individual meetings. LSPs were identified in 2009 and 2010. No additional LSPs have been proposed since 2011. The timeliness and complexity of the project selection process is also reflected in the timing of contract signing. Between the date of submitting the first applications for LSPs (end of 2009) and the signing of the first grant contract (in April 2011 a contract was signed in the project "Infrastructural development of the Połowce - Pieszczałka road border crossing - Stage III (Polish-Belarusian border) - Powiat of Hajnowka RP - Brest District RB" over 16 months passed<sup>9</sup>. Another 6 contracts for the implementation of LSPs were signed in 2012, and the whole process was completed in 2013 with the signing of the last two contracts, with the last contract signed on 22 October 2013 in the project "Development of IT infrastructure of Ukrainian customs and border guards services" submitted in 2010.

Finally, 117 projects have been contracted (23 contracts in the 1st call, 79 contracts in the 2nd call, and 6 contracts in the 3rd call, strategic projects implemented under the *direct award* procedure - 9 contracts).

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<sup>9</sup> At the same time, this was the first contract within the CBC PBU 2007-2013 and across the EU under the cross-border cooperation programmes of this financial perspective.

### 3.1.7. Evaluation of the project selection system, including its effectiveness

The system applied in the 2007-2013 perspective of the Programme has fulfilled its role as it has enabled projects to be selected and signed according to the deadline (by the end of 2013), and the projects selected have largely achieved their objectives and contributed to achieving objectives at the Programme level. Nevertheless, the whole process remained in the memory of its participants as long and laborious:

*It took a long time because we had complicated evaluation procedures, there were former evaluation committees, later monitoring committees, long contracting because of Belarus, but we succeeded. [representative of the JTS]*

During the process of project evaluation and selection, various changes could be made, that made obsolete some of the plans contained in the applications:

*And later we had such an example (...) that the difference between what was planned a year ago and what is being done a year later is that this equipment is taken and it turns out that it is already a newer version available. [representative of a beneficiary]*

It should be emphasised that the study was carried out at the end of 2016, i.e. 3 years after the contracting process' completion, and in the case of projects contracted in 2011 and 2012, this was already a distant past. In addition, some respondents only managed projects without taking part in the application process. Therefore, during the interviews, respondents did not provide much details about the application stage, being much more concerned with closing their current projects and preparing applications for the new 2014-2020 perspective of the Programme. However, the most frequently reported characteristic of the **application process** was its **longevity**. However, it is not possible to fully agree with this common opinion because in the shortest possible cases the contracts were signed up to 15 months after the closure of the call (in the framework of the 2nd call) and in the longest - up to 2 years and 8 months (also in the framework of the 2nd call) . The period of up to 15 months is not very long if you take into account the number of applications submitted, the complexity of the procedure as a whole, the JTS staffing and other tasks at the same time, and if you evaluate this period against the results of other operational programmes financed by EU funds. It can even be said that the period of up to 15 months for signing the contract since the closure of the call is a good result. It shows that the relatively fast signing of contracts was possible, especially if the applicant himself carefully prepared the application documents. At that time, they did not need to be repeatedly corrected, supplemented or clarified.

The process of applying for funds under the Programme met all the features of this type of distribution of European funds. Information about the calls was publicly available on the Programme website, in the documents included in the application packages, in the media (especially in the press), during meetings with potential beneficiaries, as well as during trainings on applying conducted in all three countries. Recruitment procedures were known to applicants from the very beginning. The quality assessment was based on the criteria approved by the JMC, which were supposed to ensure selection of projects best suited to the objectives of the Programme, and transparency of the whole process. The trainings realised by the JTS also accompanied the negotiation process.

Some respondents **criticised the obligation to prepare for the call a full dossier with all attachments**, including those that were time-consuming and required a decision from other offices. You can understand this criticism if

you take into account that out of the 835 applications submitted in the calls, only 108 projects<sup>10</sup> (13% of the submitted applications) were completed. That means that in addition to a few cases of resignation from signing the agreement, the vast majority of applicants (87%) did not receive co-financing, and their efforts came to nothing. If the survey was conducted in 2013, the level of frustration expressed in the interviews would be greater for sure. It is also worth noting that we did not include ineffective applicants in the study, so we do not know their opinion. It is also worth stressing that the degree of difficulty in applying for funds was sometimes perceived differently depending on the country of origin of the respondent. Respondents of qualitative research from Ukraine and Belarus (representatives of Branches and of the JMC) believed that application forms were difficult for applicants from these countries, mainly because of their lack of experience in preparing such documents.

*"Obviously there were difficulties. For example, a cumbersome application package that required refilling the descriptive and budgetary part. Not everyone knew/understood how to complete the application form."* [a specialist involved in the implementation of the Programme in Ukraine]

On the other hand, the respondent from Poland stated that the documents and procedures used in the PBU 2007-2013 were much easier than in mainstream programmes implemented in Poland. In the current perspective (2014-2020) it was decided to pre-select applications based on their brief descriptions. However, if this solution does not work, we recommend to return to the grant application forms but without having to submit all the attachments, only the declaration of their submission within the indicated time limit in case of selecting the project to be implemented. It may turn out though that the assessment of applications only on the basis of short descriptions will be ineffective and may lead to the rejection of many good and valuable initiatives.

Projects were evaluated in a two-step procedure, which optimized the evaluation process, as the number of projects assessed in terms of quality was lower, i.e. only those projects considered eligible and meeting the formal requirements were assessed. The quality assessment of the projects was carried out by external assessors and the JTS staff. The information in the annual reports on the implementation of the Programme indicates that the recruitments of assessors were made at the time of the calls for proposals, which might have increased the duration of the quality assessment in the case of insufficient number of evaluators (a situation of additional recruitment of assessors occurred). A rigorous application evaluation principle was applied only at the JTS headquarters, which was not unrelated to the availability of assessors. Due to the departure from the obligation to comply with the PRAG principles, in the future we recommend appropriate early selection of assessors and the organization of their work so that their availability during the projects assessment process is maximised.

Therefore, external experts and the JTS staff made the quality assessment, and then their evaluation was verified by the EvC and approved by the JMC. We suggest that one of these steps is unnecessary and unnecessarily lengthens the process of selecting projects. It is not clear what added value was brought by the EvC to the assessment, nor in terms of the assessment made by JTS staff and assessors, neither in terms of the role of the JMC as a decision-making body, in which representatives of all three countries were present. The functioning of the EvC resulted from the need to apply the PRAG principles<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, we recommend to

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<sup>10</sup> Number of projects accepted in the competition procedure.

<sup>11</sup> Practical guide to contract procedures for external actions of the European Communities.

resign from one of the projects' approval stages, either from the EvC or from the approval of the list of projects by the JMC.

The various evaluation of the application process presented above is confirmed by the results of the survey (via web and telephone) conducted with the beneficiaries.

**Table 16. Evaluation of the application process for the funds provided under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2007-2013"**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
complicated	32	34	38	46	26	14	6	simple
transparent	19	50	41	48	22	7	9	unclear
fair	40	38	35	56	13	6	8	unfair
allowing only the best projects to be selected	29	41	36	57	13	12	8	allowing the selection of weak projects
efficient	25	42	43	42	28	8	9	inefficient
tailored to the specificity of cross-border projects	34	52	38	45	13	7	7	ignoring the specificity of cross-border projects
encouraging to submit a project	34	58	36	35	18	6	9	discouraging to submit a project
friendly	35	49	39	38	21	5	9	burdensome
enough time provided to prepare a project	23	56	35	43	16	14	9	too little time provided to prepare a project

Source: own research (n=196).

The beneficiaries assessed that the process of applying for funds was beneficial for the selection of the best projects (106 indications), and did not allow to select poor projects (33 replies), which means that it was effective in their opinion. In addition, it was considered that the process was tailored to the specificity of cross-border projects (124 responses vs. 27 responses that it did not address this specificity). Finally, the process was considered more as fair (198 replies) than unfair (27 replies).

In turn, the analysis of responses concerning the "friendliness" of the process leads to the conclusion that the respondents considered the procedures to be rather complicated (108 indications) than simple (46 replies), although more friendly (123 replies) than cumbersome (35 replies) and rather encouraging to submit a project application (128 replies) than discouraging (33 replies). This means that the beneficiaries further, even in the long run, recognize that objectively the application procedure was complicated, but this feature was counteracted by the actions that made it friendly and encouraging to apply, with a view to information and promotion activities and training.

In conclusion, the process of selecting projects for realisation under the PBU 2007-2013 began on 2 November 2009 and ended on 30 December 2013, i.e. it lasted over 4 years. It can therefore be seen as lengthy but it should be borne in mind that for many projects this process lasted up to 15 months and that the calls for proposals enjoyed great interest. The selection procedure should be shortened by one of the elements - the functioning of the EvC or the approval of the projects selected by the JMC - and the application process should be simplified by resignation from the annexes. It is also advisable to select a suitable number of assessors early enough to allow them to work remotely while ensuring the confidentiality of documents in order to make the most of their time. The selection process was effective because, within the deadline, it was possible to contract the entire allocation and select projects that had achieved most of their objectives and contributed to the achievement of the Programme's objectives. Beneficiaries in the perspective of time see the application process as complicated, but not enough to discourage them from applying for EU funds.



### 3.1.8. Implementation of projects

Projects' implementation within the framework of the PBU 2007-2013 took place from the signing of the contract to the acceptance of the final report. As stated earlier, the first contract was signed in April 2011, however, most of them in 2012, and the vast majority of projects ended in 2015. Thus, the duration of the projects under the Programme lasted up to 3 years, with 3 out of 9 strategic projects still not completed by the end of 2016<sup>12</sup>. It can therefore be said that the process of implementing projects under the Programme was shorter than the process of selecting projects.

As part of project implementation, beneficiaries purchased services, goods, and invested. The selection of contractors and/or suppliers was carried out in accordance with the principles of the PRAG and national legislation in the case of Ukrainian and Belarusian partners and in accordance with the Public Procurement Law for Polish beneficiaries (leaders and partners)<sup>13</sup>. The application of these principles was one of the most frequently mentioned difficulties in implementing projects. The JTS and its branches in Ukraine and Belarus have spent a lot of time and effort, together with project developers, in determining which way of proceeding is appropriate in specific cases according to both the **PRAG and national procurement rules** in Ukraine and Belarus. The long-term nature of public procurement procedures, the need to repeat them, significantly affected the prolongation of projects' implementation. Many respondents in the qualitative survey indicated that the procedure of making purchases on the part of Polish partners was much more efficient and faster than on the Ukrainian and Belarusian side. The problem in several cases was also the rule of the country of origin when the intended purchase of equipment could not be purchased in designated countries. Purchasing hardware from China or other countries not covered by this rule required additional approvals, i.e. letters, explanations, and waiting for decisions.

An important element of projects' implementation is their financing. A positive feature of financing the projects under the PBU 2007-2013 was the transfer of **pre-financing** to the project developers in the form of the tranches. The receipt of the next tranche was subject to the settlement of the previous tranche by submitting a financial and substantive report. The beneficiaries were positive about the principle of pre-financing. Its shortcoming, however, was that the rules governing the size and frequency of tranches were the same at the level of the entire Programme for all regular projects and the same for umbrella projects, rather than tailored to the life of each individual project. The beneficiaries sometimes expressed the opinion that the tranche was too small to make the whole purchase of equipment (when it concerned expensive equipment for a hospital) and the lack of purchase made it impossible to apply for another tranche. Ultimately, these issues were resolved in cooperation with the JTS, but caused unnecessary delays. In the future, we recommend greater flexibility in setting tranches of co-financing with beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries also expressed the opinion that the procedure for verifying financial reports is too long within the Programme and takes too many steps into account:

*But when I apply to ROP and even when I wait for it for a month, then after a month (...) I have this money, and then I have the next money. And here (i.e. within the CBC Programme PBU) one month later, it goes somewhere (i.e. the request for payment - a note from the researcher) to the Ministry and there in the Ministry it waits for the next month or several days. And finally after two months I can apply for the next*

<sup>12</sup> EC approval was granted for the extension of these 3 projects.

<sup>13</sup> This was an exception in the ECBC programmes negotiated by the Polish party.

*money. It would be great to make it shorter to last a month maximum. [project beneficiary]*

On the Ukrainian side, the additional difficulty was the fact that the funds from abroad for the implementation of the projects first came to the **state treasury account** (so-called *kaznacheistvo*) and were transferred to the accounts of the partners with a long delay. This led to the fact that in many cases the Ukrainian partners implemented projects without pay and did not pay their suppliers for long months, which reduced their confidence as trading partners (they did not want to provide more services on credit) and confidence towards European projects as such.

Another important aspect of project financing was the principle that **the exchange rate risk was borne exclusively by project beneficiaries**. According to this principle, if the exchange rate of the Euro was unfavourable to the beneficiary, the difference had to be covered by beneficiary's own funds. In addition, the question of the moment of calculation of the Euro exchange rate was problematic. Only in March 2015 the JMC decided to apply the Euro exchange rate from the month of actual payment. Moreover, in Ukraine, there was a principle binding that the money received in Euro was to be immediately exchanged for the currency of the country, even if the exchange rate was unfavourable and the beneficiary did not immediately need funds for the project. We recommend to introduce in future such solutions that maximise beneficiaries' protection against exchange rate risk, using the experience of the 2007-2013 period.

The implementation of the projects also included continuous making changes to the projects, which, if they were minor, required "only" approval by the JTS and, if more serious, required signing the addendum, i.e. the annex to the contract to be further approved by the JMC. On the basis of Programme annual reports the following data has been gathered:

**Table 17. Table. The number of annexes and amendments approved by the JMC**

Year	Number of annexes	The number of amendments submitted for the JMC approval
2012	13	31
2013	55	29
2014	79	113
2015	161	162
Total	308	335

*Source: own development on the basis of annual reports on the Programme implementation submitted to the EC (until 2015).*

When analysing this data, it can be said that three times more of annexes were signed than the grant contracts. Significant is also the number of changes made to the projects that required the approval of the JMC (335). In the future, we recommend less involvement of the JMC to accept changes in projects, by expanding the catalogue of possible changes to be accepted by the JTS. Nevertheless, the flexibility in terms of the possibility of introducing changes in the PBU 2007-2013 projects was, according to the beneficiaries, a strength of the Programme:

*In the case of these cross-border (programmes - note of the researcher), it is nice that you may change something during the project. Because in other funds, those regional ones, once you have written something it has to be done accordingly. [project beneficiary]*

During the implementation of the projects the beneficiaries received extensive training support. The trainings provided concerned the implementation of grant agreements, tender procedures and final settlement of projects as well as preparation of final reports. That also included training for auditors.

**Table 18. Trainings related to the implementation of projects, including their accounting and closing**

Information	Numerical data
Number of training days <sup>14</sup>	82
Total number of participants	1,953 <sup>15</sup>
Including number of participants from Poland	1,075
Including number of participants from Ukraine	528
Including number of participants from Belarus	329

Source: own development on the basis of annual reports on the Programme implementation submitted to the EC (until 2015).

According to our calculations, almost two thousand people have been trained on various aspects related to the implementation of projects, i.e. on average, almost 17 people per project. We recognize that this is a high result, which means that each project has received training support, and many project participants have benefited from several training sessions.

In 2015 individual meetings with beneficiaries on closure of projects and final reports were also held. Individual approach and close monitoring (e.g. weekly progress report on the preparation of settlements and reports) were applied to projects with delays in implementation.

The implementation and settlement of projects was also influenced by the fact that all projects were implemented in the **partnership**. The lead partner was responsible for the whole project and his task was to mobilise the other institutions to timely carry out their tasks and send timely properly completed documents. However, the lead partner was not always able to exert any pressure on his partners. The study often indicated that the lead partner had assisted his partners in preparing the documents. Nevertheless, the need to collect documents from different institutions from two or three countries negatively affected the efficiency of project implementation and settlement. This is a nuisance, which is compensated by the added value that is brought by the cross-border cooperation.

Under the PBU 2007-2013 56 microprojects were implemented, within the framework of 6 so-called umbrella projects. Interviews with staff of institutions responsible for implementation of the Programme indicate that the rules for the implementation of umbrella projects were extremely complex and therefore ineffective:

*There were situations where the umbrella leader was not able to draw any supporting documents to prove expenditures for a very long time. No information on what was finally done, what are the effects, or whether all the indicators assigned to each*

<sup>14</sup> The number of training days was counted as it was not always clear whether it was a few days training or several one-day trainings.

<sup>15</sup> For one training, attended by people from Poland and Ukraine, there is given only the total number of 21 participants. This number was included in the total number of participants.

*microproject have been implemented. In general, the overall implementation of this third call and the implementation of the umbrella projects selected in the third call brought also a lot of work, a lot of organizational problems both on our side and on the part of implementing institutions. The effects are rather barely visible. [representative of the institution of the Programme implementation system]*

Interestingly, such unequivocally negative opinions were not expressed by beneficiaries implementing umbrella projects.

Many respondents, more often on the Belarusian and Ukrainian sides, pointed to the difficulty of having to use English in official contacts with the JTS. Respondents say that this was a nuisance (although it was neither a barrier nor an obstacle), and sometimes it was difficult to complete documents, including reports. In contacts between themselves, the partners used their own language (during bilateral meetings, telephone conversations, email contacts, etc.), while the official correspondence and documents were in English, which was not a natural communication tool for anybody. This introduced some artificiality in relationships as well as in describing the effects and the course of projects. The projects were meant to foster cooperation of local communities. Language is a vital vehicle for this cooperation and mutual learning, getting to know each other. The Programme support area has a common history and culture that is sometimes difficult to express in English. In this context, the use of the English language for project descriptions (which is an expression of the common needs, objectives, activities and results that the partners want to achieve) is an unjustified administrative burden. We recommend the use of national languages in further cross-border programmes, which will certainly foster a better understanding of the culture and traditions of the nearest neighbours, and a better description of the effects of jointly undertaken actions.

The table below shows the types of difficulties encountered during the implementation of the projects most frequently indicated by respondents. The most cumbersome was the long waiting time for payments and extensive project bureaucracy (a large number of documents to be prepared).

**Table 19. Procedural difficulties in relation to the implementation of the projects under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2007-2013**

Type of the difficulty	Number of answers
Unclear instructions in the documents	38
Extensive project bureaucracy	121
Too rigid rules/regulations imposed by the Programme	54
Cumbersome process of making changes	76
Difficult reporting rules	78
Long waiting time for payment	101
Too little training	12
Other difficulties	15
There was no difficulty in implementing the project	17

Source: own research (n=196).

The implementation of the PBU 2007-2013 projects lasted almost 3 years (between 2011 and 2015, with the majority of contracts signed in 2012), i.e. less than the period during which the projects were selected. Therefore the projects had to be implemented quickly. Procedures related to implementation on the one hand caused difficulties for the beneficiaries (in particular in connection with tendering, the use of the PRAG by the beneficiaries of Ukraine and Belarus, the principle of bearing the exchange rate risk by the beneficiary, the long waiting period for verification of reports and transfer of the next tranche), and on the other hand the beneficiaries praised the flexibility of the rules (enabling them to make changes to their projects) and good cooperation with the JTS. Acceleration of the verification of narrative and financial reports would certainly be positively influenced due to the transfer of bigger competences from the JMA and the JMC to the JTS, particularly with regard to the acceptance of a wider catalogue of project changes. The requirement to use English in reports and settlements is a certain difficulty and artificiality. We postulate the use of national languages, which should facilitate reporting. Despite the fact that beneficiaries said that there was too little training, the data showed that the beneficiaries received very good training support as regards the project implementation principles.

### 3.1.9. Evaluation of information and promotion activities

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the information and promotion activities implemented in the Programme? What was their impact on the achievement of the Programme's objectives and results?

Information and promotion activities were an important element of the Programme.

The main source of information about the Programme was the updated **website of the Programme** (<http://www.pl-by-ua.eu/pl>) which was available in 4 languages. The website contained information about the Programme, calls for proposals (including application packs), about projects, promotional materials and contact details of institutions responsible for implementing the Programme. From the very beginning (the website has been in operation since July 2009), it has played an important role as it was the first source of information on a project's ability to be implemented under the PBU 2007-2013:

**Table 20. Sources of information on the feasibility of project implementation under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2007-2013**

Source of information about the Programme	Number of answers
Internet	71
From co-workers/supervisors	33
Partners	31
Meeting, conference, PBU training	15
Local government	13
Information point about the EU funds	13
Other project developers	7
Other sources	5
Hard to say/I do not remember	4
Local media (press, radio, television)	2
Leaflets, brochures	2

Source: own research (n=196).

Finding information on the Programme website is easy, although the project search engine is not entirely user-friendly. Project search is based on a project selection criterion that, in view of the time and perspective of the person looking for project information, is not relevant. Much more important criteria are the Priorities and Measures (as they divide projects by topic) and countries of project implementation.

The website was the primary instrument for informing about the Programme and promoting the Programme. Through it, one could access all relevant information about the Programme.

Other tools for information and promotion included:

### 1. Annual Programme conferences

The Programme was launched by the inaugural conference in January 2010 in Lviv. Subsequently annual conferences summarizing the given year of the Programme implementation took place. Next annual conferences were organized: in 2011 in Mukachevo, Ukraine (joint conference with CBC Programme Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine 2007-2013), in 2012 in Kazimierz Dolny, in 2013 - in Lviv, in 2014 - in Arłamowo, and in 2015 – in Lublin. The closing conference of the 2007-2013 Programme and - at the same time - opening the 2014-2020 edition was organised in Bukovel, Ukraine in 2016.

Separate conferences were also organised for umbrella projects: an inaugural conference in Rzeszów in March 2014, a conference summarizing the first experiences in Lviv in December 2014, and a conference closing umbrella projects in Przemyśl in December 2015.

Conferences were a kind of holiday in the Programme. Although they mainly gathered the beneficiaries together, they were always an opportunity to inform the media about the implementation of the projects and to prepare new materials promoting the Programme.

### 2. European Cooperation Days

Those implementing projects under the PBU 2007-2013 participated actively in pan-European events every year covering all CBC/ENPI programmes, i.e. in the European Cooperation Days (a series of annual events in September). The European Cooperation Days were organized not only in large centres such as Lviv, but also in smaller cities like Lutsk or Chorobrow.

### 3. Other events implemented within the PBU 2007-2013

At the level of the Programme there were other events realised aimed at involving specific social and professional groups in the promotion of the Programme, in particular the promotion of the idea of cross-border cooperation and the stimulation of contacts leading to increased opportunities for the development of border areas.

**Cross-border Forums of Journalists** (in Lviv, Belorussian part of Białowieża Forest (in Kamieniuki), Pińsk and Żółkiew) were organized annually (from 2010 onwards). Their aim was also, in addition to the promotion of the Programme, the mutual integration of the community of local and regional press of the border areas.

The annual reports on the implementation of the Programme included information about **competitions** organized to promote cross-border cooperation. One of them was an art competition for schools from 3 countries "Creativity knows no borders"<sup>16</sup>. The grand final of the competition, in which 12 schools from all 3

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.pl-by-ua.eu/create/>



countries participated, took place in 2013 in Lviv. Another competition "In the East, in the West, Poland - Belarus - Ukraine" was held in 2015. It was a photo competition, and selected photos were presented, among others, during the Open Days - European Week of Regions and Cities in Brussels in 2015.

Also in 2015, the **Educational Campaign** was implemented at schools. It ended with a meeting in Włodawa attended by about 100 students from 3 countries.

Promotion of the Programme was also held on the occasion of events that were important to the Programme, such as opening of Branches of the JTS in Brest and Lviv, signing the first agreement under the Programme<sup>17</sup>.

#### 4. Promotion of the Programme during events organised under other initiatives

Actions were also undertaken to inform and promote the Programme on the occasion of events organised by other actors, both within and outside the Programme area. Programme representatives each year participated in many of such events, examples of them organised within the Programme area are as follows:

1. Forum of European Funds in Warsaw.
2. Forum of Regional Partnership Poland - Belarus "Polish-Belarusian border in the face of challenges of the 21st century" in Brest, Belarus.
3. XVII Polish-Belarusian Economic Forum in Białystok "Good Neighbourhood Białystok 2013".
4. Congress of Initiatives of the Eastern Europe.

#### 5. Visualisation of the Programme

The Programme visualization tools were developed for promotion purposes. First and foremost, the Programme logo was selected, distinguishing it from other Programmes, and it was used in all activities and documents, both at the Programme and project level.



In addition, other promotional tools, including gadgets such as banners, pens, cups, pen-drives, notebooks, bags, calendars, t-shirts, sweaters, blankets, power-banks, etc. were also produced for the needs of the current promotion of the Programme and other important events.

#### 6. Information and promotion documents

Finally, as part of the promotion of the Programme, important editions and publishing activities were conducted. In the beginning, documents relevant to the application process were issued, such as the Programme itself (printed in 1,000 copies in 3 languages), application packs, and the PRAG, a map of the Programme area (in large and smaller format), and leaflets and brochures.

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<sup>17</sup> On 19 April 2011, the JTS organized the ceremonial signing of the first European agreement concerning a large scale project under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument: "Infrastructural development of the Połowce-Pieszczałka road border crossing - Stage III (Polish-Belarusian Border) - Powiat of Hajnówka RP - Brest District RB".

The implementation of the projects and achieving their results gave the opportunity to present the potential and achieved effects of the Programme. To this end, the regional handbooks have been published, as well as thematic publications (on entrepreneurship support from the Programme, tourism, roads and other environmental investments, health centres, border crossing infrastructures and bottom-up socio-cultural initiatives) and - for the needs of the annual conference held in 2015 - album of all projects. The 9 issues of "The Crossborderer" magazine, called a newsletter, were published.

The materials promoting the projects and their results, as well as the effects of the whole Programme, have been prepared very carefully, have a good graphic design, and are interesting in reading. The only shortcoming is that most of them are available in English only<sup>18</sup>. We recommend that in the next Programme this type of very important promotional activity is carried out in the national languages of the beneficiaries.

Each project also ran its promotion according to what was planned in the application and budget. The most popular forms of promotion were the project websites, local opening and closing seminars, posters, placards, sponsored articles in local press, leaflets, brochures, participation in local events. Beneficiaries also mentioned cooperation with local radio and television stations. Since 2013, Info Days has been organised within the framework of projects involving representatives of the JTS.

This diversity of information and promotion has caused that

*the Programme is well recognized in Western Ukraine. [project beneficiary]*

*(CBC - a note from the researcher) Poland - Belarus - Ukraine was very well advertised. And even if someone stubborn did not want to know about it (the Programme - a note from the researcher) he/she knew about it anyway. [project beneficiary]*

Not only beneficiaries have a positive image of the promotion of the Programme:

*We have done the promotion as wide as we could. I think it's really very, very decent. [representative of the institution of the Programme implementation system]*

This positive image does not mean, however, that it was easy to reach the media with information about the projects:

*but our media (...) are not interested in such things (like project implementation – a note from the researcher) [beneficiary]*

In quality research it was ensured that all the promotional and informational activities of the project were carried out but it was often pointed out that it was only possible to include sponsored articles in the press, still it was difficult to make journalists to write about the projects and the Programme on their own initiative. There were exceptions to this rule if the theme of the project was so lucrative that it was of great interest to the public, and therefore also to the media. This was a case of the project titled "Development of alternative pre-school education system in rural communities" (IPBU.03.01.00-76-257/10) in which 48 pre-school centres were established in rural areas of Western Ukraine.

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<sup>18</sup> The album of all projects prepared in 2015 is also available in Polish.

The analysis of press releases carried out within the framework of the study allowed to access 171 information published on approx. 120 different local and regional press portals, trade publications, websites of cities and counties and institutions on the Polish side of the border, up to 134 information published on 65 Ukrainian portals, and 82 information published on 16 Belarusian portals. Most often, those were short references to new or ending projects. Sometimes the expected or achieved results were mentioned, project and/or infrastructure users were quoted. A message of that information was mostly positive or neutral. There have been several isolated information about delays in approving some investments.

Under the PBU 2007-2013 the promotional and information activities were conducted for the whole Programme and at the level of each project. Most of the activities planned have been completed. The catalogue of activities was very extensive and covered conferences, publications, leaflets, media information, art competitions and educational campaigns. Main source of information about the Programme was the website. Information about the calls for the Programme has been readily available, as evidenced by the applicants' great interest. Thus, the information campaign about the calls for proposals has influenced the achievement of the Programme's objectives as it has enabled the preparation and submission of relevant projects. The effects of the projects have been presented in carefully released albums, in regional and thematic subdivisions. We recommend, however, to prepare such publications not only in English, but also in the national languages of the beneficiaries. Each project, depending on its scope and financial capacity, carried out its promotional campaigns, including local radio and television, although the beneficiaries stressed that it was not easy to raise media interest in the projects. All parties involved in the implementation of the Programme - representatives of the beneficiaries and institutions of the implementation system - agree that the Programme has "promoted" itself.

There is a fact that needs to be underlined that promotional activities not only promoted the PBU 2007-2013 as such, but were also an important tool to stimulate cross-border cooperation through meetings of artists, journalists, students, residents, etc. It can also be said that they have also contributed to the development of cross-border cooperation.

#### Effectiveness of the Programme - summary

The analysis of the products and results of the Programme shows that deepening and consolidating of cross-border co-operation takes place, and that the projects implemented contribute to the joint solving of the identified problems of partners.

The implemented projects cover all basic areas of the economy and represent all sectors identified in the Programme as representing the areas requiring support: small and medium-sized enterprises, tourism, road, water and sewer infrastructure, environmental protection and crisis management, border infrastructure, health systems, social and cultural sphere. Respondents in the CAWI/CATI research when asked to indicate the thematic categories they were referring to in terms of their operations, indicated several answers, and the results show that their activities are often varied, contributing to the multifaceted nature of their projects. Projects that were non-commercial in nature were implemented under three priorities and their subordinated measures across the Programme-supported area.

Beneficiaries of the Programme were representatives of all categories listed in the Programme catalogue of beneficiaries. The most of beneficiaries are local government units (38.78%), non-governmental organisations (16.84%), government administration organs (11.73%), educational units (7.65%), and hospitals (7.14%). All the target groups benefit from the Programme's effects, primarily - as planned in the Programme's objectives - inhabitants of the border regions to which all the projects are targeted. Projects were mostly targeted at the largest possible population, and since every assumption was met, projects could be considered as effective. The Programme has achieved the expected effects as far as the number and value of projects supported are concerned. Product indicators adopted in the Programme are identified by the number of projects in each measure (1.1.-3.1.): number of projects improving conditions for entrepreneurship - 9, number of tourism development projects - 21, number of projects reducing insulation by improving accessibility to transport, information and communication technology services - 10, number of environmental improvement projects in the border area - 16, number of projects increasing efficiency and security at borders - 10, number of implemented projects increasing regional and local cross-border cooperation opportunities - 45. With respect to the Measure 3.2, the product indicator refers directly to the number of microprojects implemented in support of local community initiatives. Within the framework of 6 umbrella projects 56 microprojects supporting local communities were implemented. The effects expressed by the result indicators were also achieved.

An obstacle to assessing the extent to which the Programme has achieved its objectives is the absence of baseline and target values for the results indicated. On the basis of the diagnoses presented in the beneficiaries' conclusions it can be stated that the needs both in terms of infrastructure and soft skills far exceed the value of support that could be provided under the Programme. It is worth noting that a significant part of the expenditure incurred under the Programme will have long-term effects, resulting from the multiplier effects of investment made or support provided by enterprises.

It is worth noting, however, that rare are projects where higher tangible effects were possible, but beneficiaries managed to achieve higher than expected effects on the number of participants in cross-border events, meetings, workshops, people trained. In this context, the analysis of project savings in terms of the rarely exceeded project indicators shows that funds were effectively programmed and used.

All projects have achieved their objectives and can therefore be considered as effective - in some cases some results have not been fully achieved (e.g. failure to complete construction works, not purchasing of part of the equipment). On the basis of the data from the reports, the reasons for incomplete realisation of the results planned can be divided into three categories: political reasons, procedural

ones, and other. The reason of a political character was the change in the situation in Ukraine, which led to economic crisis, high inflation, changes in Hryvnia exchange rate, and even bankruptcy of the bank. For procedural reasons, the obligation to use the PRAG, in particular the obligation to carry out tenders, that had to be repeated due to a lack of offers, caused delays. Other procedural reasons related to reporting or modifying projects - a long time of acceptance or revision led to delays in the payment of further tranches, which slowed down the process of implementation of the next phase of the project. Likewise, the procedure for making changes to projects was also long lasting. Other reasons included specific national legislation that resulted in the extension of financial procedures. In the case of Ukraine it was so called *kaznacheistvo*. Responses in the CAWI/CATI surveys also included: lack of involvement of the partner, mistakes in the planning of the project at the preparation stage, problems in the contacts of the beneficiaries, lack of time or delays. Based on the analysis of the existing data it can be stated that the implementation of the Programme has positively influenced the strengthening of the development processes of the border regions. However, It should be noted here that the Programme covered extensive area (316.3 thousand km<sup>2</sup>) and had much less resources than other programmes (e.g. regional operational programmes), hence the changes we see in the support area are of local nature. In general, the effects observed relate primarily to the "hard" side of the projects, the most noticeable results of what were achieved by the Large Scale Projects (*LSP*) in terms of improving cross-border traffic and crossing borders. Other achieved results include increased land availability, security, improved aesthetics and attractiveness of the region, improved environmental conditions, and improved conditions for the development of local entrepreneurship, particularly in the area of tourism. A surprising and very important effect of the Programme was the significant involvement of hospitals and health care institutions.

The problems that the applicants diagnosed were of structural nature and without the Programme's support, it would not be possible to solve them. The projects implemented under the Programme brought certain benefits to all groups of local community, beneficiaries of the Programme, and target groups. Coherence between the diagnosed needs of the cross-border region and the set objectives can also be found on the basis of the programme documentation. There was no shortage of projects in any type and all types of projects covered by the Programme were implemented. Hence the designed intervention should be considered to be accurate and translates into the usefulness of the results achieved. Human capital was an important contributor stimulating the cooperation - those were people realising the projects, mainly the projects' beneficiaries, who turned out to be the most important stimulus to cooperation in the context of this Programme. Other stimulating factors include: local government who often helped solve problems, and the important role of the Joint Technical Secretariat which was helpful in removing barriers. The pressure of time, however, and circumstances associated

with the need to complete and account for the project, i.e. the desire to fully realise the project, was also identified as a stimulus. In contrast, the barriers identified by the beneficiaries included the existence of borders, lack of experience in the projects' implementation on the part of Ukrainian and Belarusian partners, especially in terms of financial and material clearance and reporting, some administrative factors, especially long financial procedures in Ukraine and Belarus resulting from the legal provisions being in force there. Finally, as barriers there were identified some factors related to the very implementation of the Programme - the obligation to use the PRAG most often mentioned by the beneficiaries, especially the obligation to use tendering procedures, delays in payments due to long approval and possible correction of the reports, and a cumbersome process of making changes to projects, which may be summarized as the excess of formalities associated with the implementation of projects.

Socio-economic and administrative factors undoubtedly affected the course of projects' implementation. Particular difficulties were brought about by changes in the political situation in Ukraine and related inflation and the change in the Hryvnia exchange rate, but also inflation in Bielarus. These difficulties have translated into incomplete achievement of the assumed results in terms of some projects. For this reason, in subsequent editions of the Programme it is worth to introduce procedures to identify and verify potential threats to the project implementation and to work out ways to mitigate or reduce them, thus reducing the project risks. The call for proposals, which began in November 2009, covered the following stages: preparation of the application package and its approval by the JMC, announcement of the call for proposals by the JMA and the JMC and its promotion and support provided to potential applicants in the preparation of applications, administrative assessment, quality assessment, proposal of the ranking list prepared by the Evaluation Committee (EvC), decision of the JMC, procedure of contracting/negotiating grant contracts, signing of contracts and commencement of project implementation. Large scale projects were implemented under the Measure 2.2, that is they were assumed to contribute to the implementation of the detailed objective of ensuring efficient and safe functioning of the borders, they were selected outside the competitions.

The project selection system has fulfilled its role as it has enabled projects to be selected and signed according to the deadline (by the end of 2013), and the projects selected have largely achieved their objectives and contributed to achieving objectives at the Programme level. However, the recruitment procedure was too long; in the next edition of the Programme it should be shortened by eliminating the EvC function, as well as the early recruitment of external experts in order to assess the applications.

Projects' implementation within the framework of the PBU 2007-2013 took place from the signing of the contract to the acceptance of the final report. Project implementation period under the Programme lasted up to 3 years and was shorter



than the project selection process. The beneficiaries considered the procedures for applying for the Programme funds as rather friendly, although rather complicated, but not enough to discourage them from submitting applications. Instead, they complained about the extended bureaucracy, difficult reporting rules, cumbersome process of making changes to projects, and too rigid rules imposed by the Programme.

Under the PBU 2007-2013 the promotional and information activities were conducted for the whole Programme and at the level of each project. The main source of information about the Programme was the website, but other information channels were also used: conferences, publications, leaflets, media information, art competitions, and educational campaigns. Information about the calls for the Programme has been readily available, as evidenced by the applicants' great interest. Thus, the information campaign about the calls for proposals has influenced the achievement of the Programme's objectives as it has enabled the preparation and submission of relevant projects. Each project, depending on its scope and financial capacity, carried out its promotional campaigns, including local radio and television, although the beneficiaries stressed that it was not easy to raise media interest in the projects.

Promotional activities not only promoted the PBU 2007-2013 as such, but were also an important tool to stimulate cross-border cooperation through meetings of artists, journalists, students, residents, etc. It can also be said that they have also contributed to the development of cross-border cooperation.

## 3.2. Analysis of the effectiveness of the Programme

### 3.2.1. Assessment of changes and how were the lives of local communities/target groups influenced

This section of the report contains answers to the following research questions:

- What changes are observed in the support area and how did the lives of local communities/target groups change as a result of the Programme's implementation?
- Has the implementation of the Programme contributed to the launch of noticeable mechanisms/trends in the support area? If so, which ones? Are trends likely to be stable? Do they require further stimulation through EU intervention?

Conclusions resulting from the programme documentation covering the social and economic analysis of the Programme area show significant problems of these areas. These include: low level of economic development, obsolete road, border and educational infrastructure, as well as the infrastructure of environmental protection. Thanks to the implementation of the certain programmes (e.g. Phare, Neighbourhood Programme), significant progress has been noted in terms of cross-border cooperation, and the funds managed by Euroregions have also brought positive effects. The level of integration of the Programme area requires further action. This was

enabled by the Programme implemented in the years 2007-2013, which is already being continued in the financial perspective 2014-2010.

Supporting development processes in cross-border areas would not be possible without cooperation between the neighbouring countries. Strengthening cooperation makes it easier to solve common problems. Also the projects implemented under the Programme served to the establishment and strengthening of cooperation, but particularly those implemented under the Priority 3 concerning the development of regional and local opportunities for cooperation.

**Table 21. Results achieved that are mentioned as key results in the Programme beneficiaries' reports<sup>19</sup>**

Results achieved	Number of answers
Establishing cooperation at local and regional level	59
Improving the level and transferring of knowledge and experience	56
Networking	45
Improving conditions for economic development	24
Promotion of knowledge	23
Improving promotion and marketing activities related to the border region	23
Creating new technological solutions	13
Changing stereotypes about cross-border cooperation	7
Improving cooperation between business and research	6
Improving cooperation between self- government authorities and business	5

*Source: own development.*

Analysis of the project documentation leads to the conclusion that the beneficiaries were aware of the importance of the neighbourhood cooperation and that it was the first thing they indicated among the results achieved. The most common answer to the question on main results achieved was the establishment of:

- cooperation at local and regional level (59 affirmative answers),
- networking (45 affirmative answers).

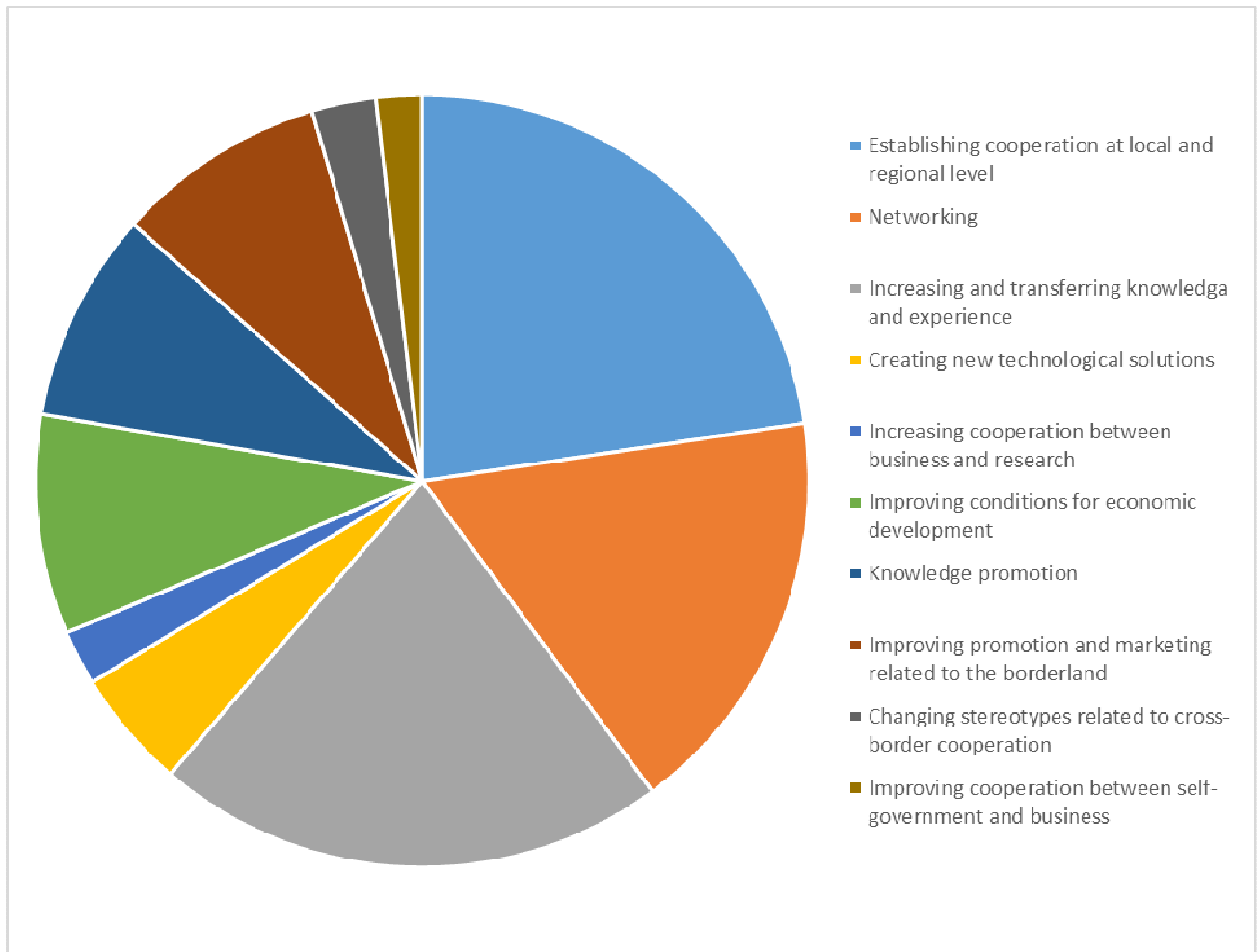
The answers concerning the importance of improving cross-border cooperation can also be seen as improving:

- the level of knowledge and transfer of knowledge and experiences (56 affirmative answers),
- promotional and marketing activities in the region (23 affirmative answers),
- cooperation between business and research (6),
- cooperation between business and self- government (5),

The fact that the process of establishing contacts and cross-border cooperation has already reached a significant level may, in turn, be attributed to a low number of responses (7) which have indicated the overcoming of stereotypes about cross-border cooperation as the result achieved in the project.

<sup>19</sup> Data based on the analysis of project documentation which included reports of 99 projects. Beneficiaries reported any number of results that they considered key results.

Figure 6. Results achieved that are mentioned as key results in the Programme beneficiaries' reports



Source: own development.

The analysis of the data collected, which to some extent also illustrates the problems of cross-border cooperation, are the proof of the skills gained by the project partners and evidence of what they have learned from the projects carried out. The following table applies to them.

Table 22. Basic skills gained by the partner as a result of the joint realisation of the project

Type of skills acquired by the partner	Number of answers
gaining experience and skills in the implementation of the EU project	99
increasing the level of knowledge and increasing knowledge transfer	87
building partnership relations, international cooperation, cross-border relations	83
gaining experience and competence	54
acquiring knowledge of the formal rules necessary for the implementation of the project in partner countries	37
acquiring knowledge of the legal rules necessary for the implementation of the project in partner countries	26
learning new technologies	15

Source: own development.

The table shows that the most important skills that partners gained through joint project implementation were issues that help solve possible cross-border problems, as they directly translate into improved interrelations (83 responses), and gaining knowledge that will be useful and help in future relationships or future projects. The second category includes answers concerning skills acquired in the field of EU project implementation (99 responses), increasing the level and transfer of knowledge (87 responses), knowledge of formal rules (37 responses) or legal principles (26 replies).

Answers to questions about the relationship between projects and the needs of local communities are primarily sought during the preparation phase of the Programme (which will be further discussed). The extent to which participants of the Programme have succeeded to meet those needs can be concluded from the CAWI/CATI surveys (sample description: see the footnote No. 2). The results are shown in the table below.

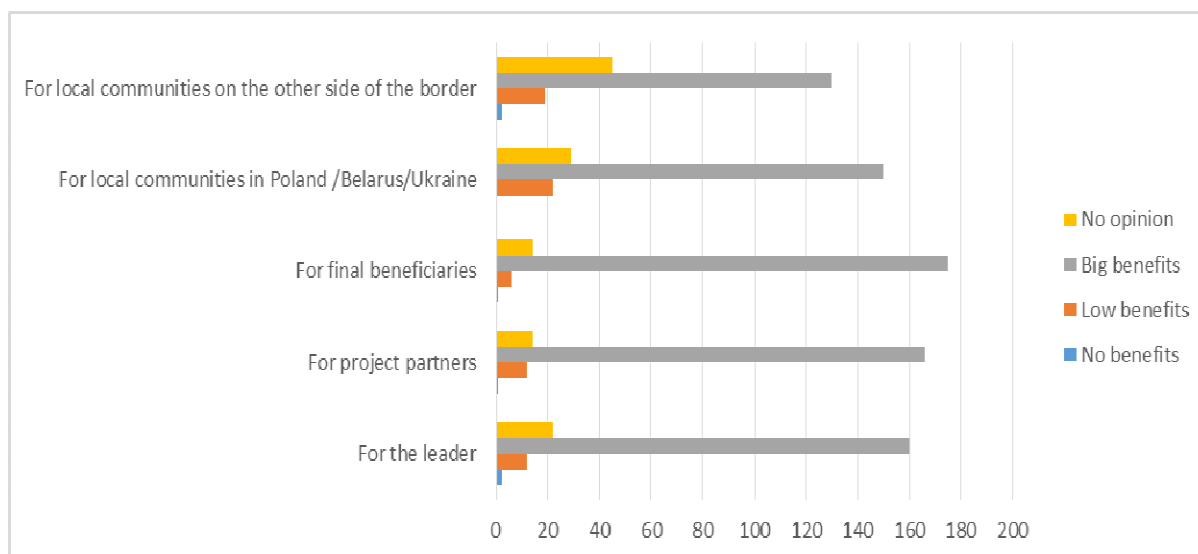
**Table 23. Assessment of the benefits of project implementation from the perspective of individual categories of recipients**

	0 The project did not bring any benefit	1 The project brought little benefits	2 The project brought significant benefits	3 Hard to say/not applicable
to the Project Leader	2	12	160	22
to the Project Partner(s)	1	12	166	14
to the Final Beneficiaries	1	6	175	14
to the Local communities in Poland/Ukraine/Belarus	0	22	150	29
to the Local communities abroad	2	19	130	45

Source: own research (n=196).

**According to the data presented, the majority of respondents were of the opinion that the project was of great benefit to all the beneficiaries and target groups to whom it was addressed.** The question whether the project brought benefits to local communities in Poland/Ukraine/Belarus and local communities abroad was positively answered by 280 respondents. The negative answer that it did not bring any benefits was pointed out in just two cases, little benefits were indicated by 41 respondents.

Figure 7. Assessment of the benefits of project implementation from the perspective of meeting needs of individual target groups



Source: own research (n=196).

Significant improvements were noted in border traffic. For example, new buildings have been built in Dołhobyczów, and individual facilities are located at the crossing in a manner that ensures a stable and very clear distribution of entry and exit traffic, which significantly increases the fluency of border traffic, facilitating neighbourhood contacts. Similar investments, often with facilities for people with disabilities, have also been carried out in other border crossing infrastructure projects, which will not only have positive effects on trade and neighbourhood contacts, but also through security systems, will increase the detection of smuggling. Smooth and safe border traffic is one of the fundamental challenges of the area, relevant to all target groups.

In the case study - Hajnówka - there was discussed in detail the fit of the project to local needs. Projects implemented in the municipality under the Programme resulted, in accordance with the declaration, from the needs and problems identified. Those were among others: 1) insufficient tourist infrastructure and insufficient use of tourist potential, lack of promotion of the region; 2) environmental problems, including fires, and the need to protect the health of the population, the problem of the ineffective rain drainage system; 3) insufficient infrastructure for specialised medical services or specialised education for people with disabilities; 4) social problems resulting from the specific nature of the cross-border area. The answer to these problems were the six projects implemented under the Programme, resulting in new investments, e.g. sewage treatment plant, purchase of modern firefighting equipment, promotion of the Białowieża Forest, improvement of tourist infrastructure, creation of new agritourism enterprises, improvement of roads' condition. The changes also apply to schools and kindergartens, cross-border cultural, arts and education cooperation, including that concerning children with disabilities, sports and health, and diseases such as those transmitted by ticks.

A similar fit can be indicated for the project implemented in Alojzów and Lviv ("Cross-border cooperation for education, rehabilitation and tourism of people with disabilities - reconstruction, development and adaptation of rehabilitation buildings in Alojzów and Lviv"). In Alojzów 67 rooms have been created, among others recreational and technical rooms, locker rooms, doctors' offices, office and social rooms, teaching rooms, hydrotherapy rooms, kinesiotherapy room, sanitary rooms, culinary rooms, colour and sound therapy rooms, world experience room, social skills rooms, rooms with mirrors, aromatherapy rooms and a farm home room.

The building of the Lviv Center was refurbished and an undeveloped attic was renovated, where seven specialist rooms were built, three supervisory rooms for working with children and parents, a staff room, two rehabilitation rooms, a registration centre, a seminar and training room, a library-archives, a conference room, recreation area (nature corner, aquarium, green area, game zone), seven family rooms, two hotel class rooms, and a utility room. The project also provided training for eight people on specialised methods of working with people with disabilities, such as the Sensory Integration Method, Bobath NDT Methods, and the Verbose Sherborne Development Methods.

Matching to local needs can be seen especially in projects that have been implemented as unique ones. An example may be the project "Creating the Veterinary School of Advanced Diagnostic Techniques with Specialized Laboratories" (IPBU.03.01.00-06-755/11). Universities in Lviv and Lublin have developed early epidemiological alert systems, an e-learning platform, an electronic data collection and exchange system, and modern diagnostic equipment. The early warning system will allow for continuous monitoring of the epidemiological situation and animal health. This will make it possible to increase the protection of EU and Ukrainian borders from the spread of animal and zoonotic diseases.

In conclusion, it must be said that the changes that have occurred have translated into improvements in cross-border infrastructure, environmental one, security infrastructure, health services' level, tourism, increased accessibility of the region, which can be defined as improving the quality of life and improving the conditions for economic development.

Projects implemented under the Programme have also influenced the lives of local communities and target groups. All the changes resulting from the "hard" ventures have improved the quality of life, security, health, accessibility of the area for people living in the area, but also for those who visit the region or do business there. Importantly, the analysis of the reports submitted by the beneficiaries of the Programme shows that all the target groups provided for the support for all projects received such support. A similar statement was expressed in the case study "Integrated Promotion of Tourism Opportunities and Cultural-Historical Heritage of Lviv Region, Podkarpackie and Lublin Voivodships" (PBU.03.02.00-76-820/12) by the Leader representative:

*(...) no action has proved useless in relation to local needs. The results of the project were useful for all target groups. They responded to local needs, allowed residents to show to the public and to tourists what the community was living and dealing with and to obtain income from that.*

A good source of information about the changes that could be observed in the support area are case studies, as they covered interviews with local communities and target groups. From the analysis of this information it can be concluded that the changes are felt, have a positive character and have a positive impact on the life of the local community. For example, in the case study of Kamieniec municipality in Belarus, where the conclusions of the study of target groups as part of the evaluation of the activities undertaken in the project "International aid project »Extension of the cross-border sewage treatment system in drainage area of the river Bug (Western)«" were presented, the inhabitants of the borderland of Hajnówka, Wysokie and Kamieniec positively evaluated the actions taken, since thanks to them they gained access to modern and well-developed sanitation and environmental infrastructure.

Other direct changes - as the local community was the subject of "soft" actions, particularly within the Measure 3.2 on local community initiatives - concerned improving social and cultural integration and increasing or intensifying cross-border cooperation.



Cooperation between large cities such as Lublin, Rzeszów, Chełm, Zamość, Przemyśl, Lviv, Lutsk or Ivano-Frankivsk, Brest and Grodno was established. But also a very important aspect of the projects was great activity of smaller towns such as Hajnówka and Brest and the Ivano-Frankivsk District, the Włodawa powiat and the Szacki district. Thanks to the projects carried out there happened integration of small local communities and development of their cooperation. The increase in the activity of local communities and non-governmental organizations in the border area of Belarus is particularly worth noting, which translates into strengthening civil society attitudes in this area.

Changes in the sphere of social and cultural integration of local communities and target groups are evidenced by the large number of partnerships and networks that contribute to the integration of local communities and social organisations. With regard to investments in social activities and human resources, thanks to the Programme there were held over one and a half thousand meetings, conferences, trainings, seminars. The most diverse events - festivals or sporting events - were also used to establish contacts, many of which continue after the end of the Programme, becoming cyclical events.

Other changes that have been directly targeted to local communities and target groups, in this case entrepreneurs located in the region, concern projects aimed at creating better conditions for entrepreneurship, e.g. within the framework of the project for the development of small and medium enterprises in Rivne and Lublin, development of cooperation between scientific centers and the business community, or the development of information systems to streamline the flow of economic information in the Euroregion Bug. As a result of these projects, a dozen or so business development organisations were created, new companies were established, and local entrepreneurs upgraded their qualifications, gained knowledge and established valuable contacts. At the end of the project, there were also some new jobs created.

Similar conclusions also flow from the case study - Lubaczów:

*The projects realised are characterised by high usefulness of results for different categories of target groups, from businessmen who have been provided with favourable conditions for conducting business activity, inhabitants for whom the better quality of life should be felt in connection with providing the city with a real function of the city center, to tourists that may benefit from a new attractive visiting place in the Eastern Roztocze, but also as a tourist destination, finally to local authorities thanks to greater possibilities of creating development policy, as well as local animators of cultural life, thanks to improved conditions for organisation of cultural events.*

Projects implemented under the Programme have also influenced the lives of local communities and target groups in an indirect, less tangible way. Based on interviews conducted in the case studies, we can talk about change of attitudes, e.g. the desire to continue cooperation in the exchange of information and experience, which can be read in the case study of the Sokal municipality, or the willingness to continue the contacts and relations referred to in the case study of the Hajnówka municipality.

Representative of the Association of Local Governments of the Euroregion Białowieża Primeval Forest stated:

*communes or local governments that have not seen each other so far, (...) Polish, Belarusian ones, now sign agreements and do something together.*

A similar effect was achieved by the project of reconstruction of the stadium in Ashmyany and the construction of the complex in Przebrodzie - as a result of cultural and sports events, the joint programme of the Suwałki and

Ashmyany communes was launched, "Healthy and active" which is continued after the formal finalisation of funding.

Residents of the areas where the project was implemented get active. For example, the coordinator of the project "Development of alternative pre-school education system in rural communities" (IPBU.03.01.00-76-257/10) has noticed that:

*We have already noticed some changes: target groups in local communities are proud of the campaign and are ready for action - for example, in some localities, parents have suggested that they would themselves collect teaching materials.*

Changes also affect the mentality of the local community, which has been achieved through the project. For example, let's use a quote from the case study of the Sokal municipality accompanying the description of the project realised in Uhryniv village:

*The mentality of the local community has also changed. The project served as a perfect example of what residents can work out together for their locality. The number of bottom-up initiatives has increased. First of all, however, the project broadened the horizons of the local community, taught to look at the world from a completely different perspective, inspired the people of the region, contributed to the belief that society can do something good and useful together and change the face of their place of residence.*

On the basis of the data analysis it can be confirmed that the implementation of the Programme has positively influenced the development processes of the border regions, the quality of life of the inhabitants as well as their attitudes, and resulted in the improvement of the conditions for the development of the economy. However, based on them, it is more difficult to assess the extent to which noticeable mechanisms/trends in the support area are launched. Based on the analysis of the case studies it seems that there can be significant improvements in cross-border cooperation and contacts, both at the regional and local level. This cooperation mainly involves the beneficiaries but also the local community. As for the economic mechanisms, it seems that although some respondents declare their existence, the unambiguous assessment requires a longer period of time. The number of partnerships, cooperation agreements and networks prove that these trends may be permanent. The next EU programs will undoubtedly reinforce them, including the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine for the years 2014-2020.

It is also ambiguous to answer the question whether possible trends require further support through EU interventions. It seems that the persistence of trends will be persuasive only in the long run, while their reinforcement will certainly be supported by further EU programmes. It must be borne in mind that the cross-border region, to which the Programme's resources are dedicated, is peripheral and poor in relation to other parts of the country. "Financial injections" are therefore needed to be able to continue to implement those projects that primarily concern infrastructure spheres related to the construction, modernisation of public facilities and spaces, the purchase of modern equipment and technology. Examples of environmental projects and the improvement of accessibility of road infrastructure in Chrobórow, which could not be carried out without EU funds, have been described in the case study of the Sokal municipality:

*Thanks to these projects, a small community of less than a thousand people, predominantly in retirement or pre-retirement age, has managed to create better living conditions. The level of support from the EU amounted to approx. UAH 2 million, i.e. the equivalent of two annual budgets of the Chorobrowska Municipal*

*Council. The Council's own contribution was also significant and amounted to UAH 300 thousand.*

It can be assumed that similar projects - for economic reasons - still can not be implemented without support or even if they can be implemented, it would be definitely on a smaller scale.

On the other hand, when it comes to "soft" activities, these trends are already more enduring and their cost is also lower. The analysis of data from the reports or declarations of the beneficiaries of the Programme shows that established contacts, cooperation, exchange of experience and knowledge, joint cultural and sports events will continue after the end of the Programme, so it can be assumed that it will happen regardless of EU support. In the case study of the Hajnówka municipality, the leader of one of the microprojects when asked whether these contacts will continue depending or regardless of the financial support of the municipality, declares:

*Regardless of that support. The platform we have achieved, this friendship, mutual trust ... is more than money. If I showed you my phone, there are 10 numbers there one after another of potential partners, and I can call them any time.*

### 3.2.2. Assessment of the impact of the Programme on Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian relations

This section of the report contains answers to the following research questions:

- What is the impact of the Programme on Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian relations? Do the projects implemented within the Programme foster the cooperation of local communities and stimulate Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian cooperation?

The main conclusions of the analysis of the support area, based on programme documentation, analysis of applications and reports, and CAWI/CATI surveys, are similar to those presented in previous years, in the context of the summaries and evaluations of previous EU programmes implemented in this area. Cross-border initiatives have made a significant contribution to the building of good relations between border residents, giving them the opportunity to meet their neighbours on the other side of the border and enhance mutual understanding. The cross-border cooperation programme has proved to be useful in addressing common cross-border challenges in the fields of economy, infrastructure, environment, transport and cultural exchange. In addition, the projects have helped to create lasting contacts and have provided a basis for cooperation on larger scale initiatives, including those financed from other sources than cross-border cooperation programmes. Therefore it can be said that the projects implemented under the Programme foster the cooperation of local communities and stimulate cooperation between the countries involved in the Programme.

Breaking the stereotypes that came from implementing the projects under the Programme was mentioned in the information portal:

*Study visit in Brest and Baranowicze is an exchange of experiences on the rehabilitation of people with disabilities. If anyone associates Belarus with poverty, "monstrous poverty", thinks that organizations, the disabled are "wrong" treated, it is a great myth and stereotype. What we saw, and we were in several organisations, deserves recognition (niepełnosprawni.lublin.pl).*

A similar opinion was expressed by a representative of the Association of Local Governments of the Białowieża Forest Euroregion from the Hajnówka case study:

*[thanks to the projects] primarily the stereotypes are broken, (...) I go to Belarus, and know that for a long time. Belarus? It is there (...) dirty and poor (...). (Such is the stereotype.*

The theme of strengthening neighbourhood relations, developing cooperation that translates into the breaking of stereotypes, was a leitmotiv in the case studies prepared for the needs of the study. For example, in the umbrella project "Support of cross-border local communities initiatives in the Białowieża Forest Euroregion", in which 8 microprojects were realised, the objective was to create the basis for developing a friendly and mutually beneficial cross-border cooperation between neighbouring regions in Poland and Belarus. Particularly worth mentioning is the microproject 7 "Another but the same one" which was aimed at changing the attitudes of the Polish and Belarusian pro-nationalist communities, including the school youth, as a result of their integration activities. Residents of the Hajnówka municipality, where the projects were implemented, note that through the implementation of the projects under the Programme the cross-border contacts of local communities have intensified, inter-neighbourhood relations have been established, and the sense of integration has increased, reducing negative attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices. A representative of the Association of Local Governments of the Euroregion Białowieża Primeval Forest stated:

*the inhabitants really got to know each other well, collaborated with one another, and made sure that they can really work together (...) with their partners from Belarus.*

Similarly, Hajnówka City Councillor notes:

*We got to know these people, they got to know us, we really met each other. We saw that this is not the third world. These are normal people. They also got to know us.*

Analysis of the data collected shows that all Programme beneficiaries declare their willingness to further cooperate with partners. Although, of course, it can be assumed that part of the answers is only declarative but many of the accompanying declarations describe the emergence of strong mutual relations between partners which translate into a general strengthening of Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian relations at local and regional level. Such projects include, for example, projects related to the modernisation of border crossings or improvement of the safety or health of the inhabitants of border regions. The improvement of relations was also made by soft projects, mainly those of a cultural and tourism nature.

The good relations that have been developed during the project implementation are reflected in the answers to the question about the assessment of partners. The good rate was obtained by 106 partners, very good by 61 partners. In only 6 cases this cooperation was rated as poor but no partner was rated as very poor.

**Table 24. Assessment of cooperation with the partner**

Assessment of cooperation with the partner	Number of answers
very good	61
good	106
not assessed	34
poor	6
very poor	0

Source: own development (n=196).

Good partnership cooperation was translated into achieving the expected results despite the problems:

*Thanks to the joint work of the partners, they managed to overcome many formal and legal barriers resulting from the specific nature of the project, which resulted in the creation of two products that are very important border areas: the Euroregion Bug geoportal and the common functional-spatial conception of the Euroregion Bug development by 2020.*

Joint plans for the future prove the strength of cooperation. From the descriptions in the final reports, it is clear that the joint actions that the beneficiaries intend to pursue after the end of the project will include the follow-up of the adopted strategy, information and promotion activities (63 replies), further project management (58 indications), continuation of the experience exchange (46 replies). The construction or strengthening of cooperation networks was indicated 23 times, and the remaining responses concerned the implementation of investments, institutional solutions, development of organizational or institutional solutions or technological solutions. Detailed calculations of this query are included in the following table:

**Table 25. Activities planned after project completion**

Activities planned after project completion	Number of answers
Implementation of strategy or plan, implementation of information and promotion activities	63
Project management and ensuring project sustainability	58
Exchange of experiences (trips, joint publications, conferences, study visits)	46
Building, strengthening networking and cooperation networks	23
Realisation of investments; implementation of the results of technological research	16
Implementing institutional solutions	13
Development of organisational solutions (strategies, action plans)	10
Development of institutional solutions (e.g. in terms of cooperation)	8
Development of technological and technical solutions	5

Source: own development.

Last but not least, the number of collaborative networks established, the number of common strategy papers adopted, and the number of collaborative agreements still in progress are the proofs for the strength of mutual relationships. Such agreements and networks are a guarantee of the sustainable development of cross-border cooperation at local and regional level, prejudging the usefulness of the Programme. According to data analysis, 155 networks related to establishing contacts were created, 76 strategic documents were signed, and 132 cooperation agreements were signed.

One of the interviewees from the managing authority interviewed in this evaluation study described the impact of the Programme on Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian relations as follows:

*[Although] the physical boundary (...) actually exists, people are closer to each other. Also, this is absolutely the added value of these programmes. There are no new divisions, so there is no such a wall of mutual aversion created, that is because these projects are realised in partnerships, and the bonds and relationships also translate into that, this is my opinion, that these societies mutually perceive themselves better, they get to know each other and see that on the other side there is a man with a similar problem.*

### 3.2.3. Evaluation of effects of synergy with other actions undertaken by beneficiaries

This section of the report contains answers to the following research questions:

- Is there synergy with other actions undertaken by the beneficiaries?

The forecasts of synergy may be confirmed by the number of projects carried out by individual beneficiaries before the project implemented under the framework of the Programme, through which capacity of the applicants to implement the project in the Programme increased. As indicated in the final reports, the beneficiaries completed a total of 120 projects before participating in the Programme. These were the most varied projects, mainly within the framework of previous EU programmes that were implemented with the same or other partners. The CAWI/CATI survey responds to the question under which programmes and with which partners the respondents realised the cross-border projects so far. The details are presented in the following table.

**Table 26. Answer to the question: Did you implement any partnership projects prior to this project? [multiple choice question]**

<b>Did you implement any partnership projects prior to this project?</b>	<b>Number of answers</b>
Yes, within the CBC PBU 2007-2013 with the same partners	21
Yes, within the CBC PBU 2007-2013 but with other partners	33
Yes, within the INTERREG IIIA (Takis CBC PBU 2004-2006) with the same partners	24
Yes, within the INTERREG IIIA (Takis CBC PBU 2004-2006) but with other partners	39
Yes, within the Phare CBC with the same partners	6
Yes, within the Phare CBC but with other partners	10
Yes, within other programme with the same partners	17
Yes, within other programme but with other partners	62
No	63

*Source: own research (n=196).*

The data in the table also shows that with the successive programmes, the number of projects implemented with the same or other partners increases, showing the synergies of the actions taken. It is worth pointing out that the number of responses given in the Table 20 are the declarations of particular respondents who spoke from the perspective of their professional experience rather than the experience of the beneficiary they represented. The result of this respondents' approach is the detailed information about the professional experience of people currently implementing cross-border projects. These are mostly experienced people who have benefited from the various opportunities to raise funds, establish and maintain cross-border professional contacts from previous projects.

On the other hand, the type of activities already undertaken during the Programme is visible through the analysis of the number of networks created (155), strategic documents signed (76), and cooperation agreements signed (132), which the beneficiaries have achieved during this edition of the Programme. These effects demonstrate the intensification of effects resulting from the implementation of projects under the



Programme. Increasing effects will also take place in the future cooperation planned by present partners of the project.

Respondents of the CAWI/CATI survey complement the picture of synergy of the actions undertaken by the beneficiaries.

**Table 27. Answer to the question: Was your project part of a bigger project or was it related to another project?**

Was your project part of a bigger project or was it related to another project?	Number of answers	Contribution to the response structure (%)
Yes, it was part of a larger undertaking that was implemented only by our organisation	18	9.81
Yes, it was part of the projects implemented with the same partners	18	9.81
Yes, it was part of the projects implemented with other partners	16	8.16
Yes, it was part of a bigger project financed from external funds	18	9.18
Yes, it was part of a bigger project financed from own funds	12	6.12
Yes, it was continuation of other project financed from external funds	10	5.1
Yes, it was continuation of other project financed from own funds	3	1.53
Yes, it preceded another project financed from external funds	7	3.5
Yes, it preceded another project financed from own funds	5	2.55
It was linked to another measures in a different way. Which one? Open days	5	2.55
It was not related	95	48.47
Hard to say	22	11.22

Source: own research (n=196).

Approximately 40% of the respondents declared (respondents could tick many answers) that their project was related to other projects, and that the links were varied. Most often, these projects were implemented using external funds, which may indicate that the project developers maximise the usefulness of individual programmes by combining various sources of funding into projects. This conclusion can also be confirmed by the fact that it is uncommon to continue projects with own resources, while more indications are for projects continued from external funds. If the project was tied to another operation in a different way, it was only partially linked to the project activity. In total, 229 responses were given, of which the responses that the project was part of a larger project or was related to another project were 112 indications (22 indicators were not included in the calculation), i.e. 48.91%. In comparison with the number of indications of no linkings (48.47%), there is a visible need to promote good practices and joint solutions developed by partners, especially for continued projects or larger projects funded from a variety of sources.

The synergy and logic of the activities is proven by a description of the project "Didactic infrastructure modernization of Poland-Belarus cooperation in aid of the handicapped" prepared for the needs of the case study of Kamieniec municipality. Cooperation has already been established, as part of two projects implemented in 2007 and 2008. Both projects concerned children with disabilities and served to improve forms and methods of providing support and exchange of knowledge and experience between partners. The project implemented under the Programme was a continuation of the previous cooperation. The objective of the project was to create opportunities for increasing long-term cooperation between the Kamieniec and Hajnówka centers. Partners plan further cooperation - they have already prepared 10 concepts of social and infrastructure projects that they plan to submit within the PBU 2014-2020.

Several projects described in project case studies are also part of a larger project or are a stepping stone. An example is the project "Infrastructural development of the Polowce - Pieszczałka road border crossing - Stage III (Polish-Belarusian border) - powiat of Hajnowka RP - Brest District RB". In addition to the Programme funds, funds from the External Borders Fund, the Swiss-Polish Cooperation Programme, and the state budget were also raised (PLN 178 million in total). The partners were involved in the implementation of other cross-border partnerships aimed at improving the infrastructure of border crossings between Poland and Belarus, such as "Construction of relocatable X-ray scanning control system of vehicle on the road checkpoint «Bruzgi»" (implemented also within the Programme). Cooperation between partners continues after the end of the project. Other projects are planned to improve the infrastructure at the border crossing point Kuźnica Białostocka - Bruzgi or Bobrowniki - Bierestowica.

In turn, "Restoration of the E40 waterway on the Dnieper-Vistula section: from strategy to planning", the PBU 2007-2013 project recognized as the best in terms of promotion and visualization according to a plan was the first stage of a large E-40 waterway restoration project that included the analysis and preparation of feasibility studies. The next two stages are to include: planning, preparation and approval of construction documentation and the construction itself. The project has now moved from transregional cooperation to transnational cooperation and has become a strategic project for each of the partner countries.

### **3.2.4. Assessment of the added value of the Programme in the socio-cultural aspect and in terms of implementation of horizontal policies**

This section of the report contains answers to the following research questions:

- What is the added value of the Programme in the socio-cultural aspect, including: constant dissemination of knowledge among the inhabitants about the historical, social, and economic situation of the support area (participation of local media in this process), learning the language of the neighbouring country as an element encouraging cooperation and communication in the support area?
- To what extent has the Programme contributed to the implementation of EU horizontal policies (sustainable development, equal opportunities, partnership and local development, innovativeness and international cooperation, information society)?

#### **Added value of the Programme**

The added value of the Programme was the socio-cultural dimension gained thanks to the project implementation. The implementation of the projects has contributed to the dissemination of knowledge among citizens about the historical, social and economic situation of cross-border areas. An important role in this process has been played by the promotion and information of the Programme and the projects carried out in local and regional media, which provided information on the implemented projects or reported various events accompanying their implementation. Promotional activities included conferences, festivals, various fairs, exhibitions, concerts, as well as various workshops and exercises (e.g. culinary, artistic handicrafts, theatrical ones). Particularly direct meetings and projects of a tourist nature deepened the knowledge of the neighbours as well as the contact with the language of the neighbours. Also the websites prepared under projects that were informative and promotional in character operated to the benefit of dissemination of knowledge about

the region and people living there. It should be noted that some projects directly realised socio-cultural elements, including those that contributed to increasing knowledge of neighbours. Such projects included mainly initiatives co-financed under the Priority 3.

The added value in socio-cultural aspect may be discussed especially in the case of umbrella projects that mainly carry out "soft" actions, which aim to increase socio-cultural integration and increase or intensification of cross-border cooperation. In the description of the project studies, the umbrella project "Support of cross-border local communities initiatives in the Białowieża Forest Euroregion" has been discussed, under which 8 microprojects were realised, and "Integrated Promotion of Tourism Opportunities and Cultural-Historic Heritage of Lviv Region, Podkarpackie and Lublin Voivodeships" under which 10 microprojects were realised. According to the declarations contained in the reports, the following happened as a result of the implementation of microprojects:

*the cultural and historical awareness of the inhabitants on both sides of the border has increased, including the cultivation of folk customs and rituals related to the language, folk dance and folklore and the environmental heritage of the Białowieża Forest (...) The common cultural and natural heritage of the Białowieża Forest has been popularised which will positively influence the development of the whole region.*

Similar statements fall on the discussion of the second project realised on the Polish-Ukrainian border. The intensification of cooperation between local communities on both sides of the border was noted. The project manager also emphasised the importance of the project for disseminating knowledge among the inhabitants about the historical, social and economic situation of the area in which it was implemented:

*at all meetings, information on the historical, social and economic characteristics of the region was disseminated.*

Microprojects have also helped to improve the knowledge of neighbouring languages.

One of the respondents, member of a technical staff involved in the implementation of the Programme interviewed, described the added value of the Programme, which he identified primarily in the social aspect:

*The added value of cross-border programmes in terms of territorial cooperation and the quality of partnerships are first of all mutual learning and building trust between partners in different countries. Despite its small scale, the Programme covers quite large areas and groups of people - in border areas.*

### Implementation of the EU horizontal policies

The implementation of the EU horizontal policies on sustainable development, equal opportunities, partnership and local development, innovativeness and international cooperation, and the building of the information society were included in the Programme. Questions on the implementation of particular horizontal policies appeared in documents that had to be filled in by the applicants and later the beneficiaries. Based on the analysis of the projects and the objectives they have put in place, it can generally be stated that the projects have implemented the EU horizontal policies. However, the analysis of the documents leads to the conclusion that the sections related to the horizontal policies have been filled in a large number of cases in a way that does not address these issues like they were not understood (e.g. answering in an instrumental way - answering "yes" irrespective of the type of project). In few cases, the positive response was accompanied by an explanation of how a project can contribute to a given policy.

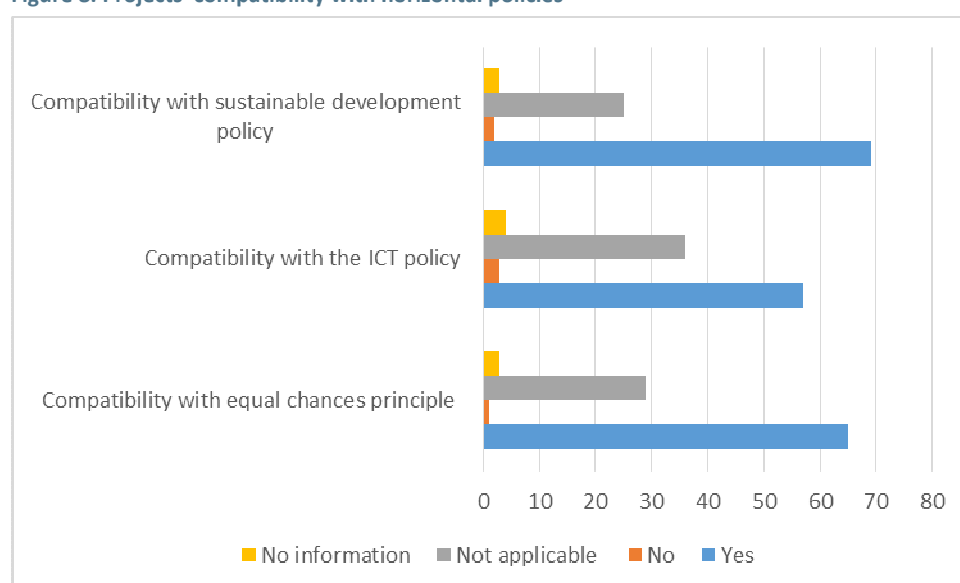
**Table 28. Answer to the question: was the project compatible with horizontal policies?**

Type of the policy	Yes	No	Not applicable	Not given
Compatibility with equal opportunities policy	65	1	29	4
Compatibility with ICT policy	57	3	35	4
Compatibility with environmental policy	69	2	25	3

Source: own development.

The distribution of the statements quoted is also shown in the graph in order to illustrate the possible randomness of the non-connection response ("not applicable") and the declarative nature of the affirmative responses.

**Figure 8. Projects' compatibility with horizontal policies**



Source: own development.

Horizontal policies were also a subject of the study in CAWI/CATI questionnaires. The table below presents the results.

**Table 29. Degree of consideration of horizontal policies in projects**

Evaluation of the project in relation to horizontal policies	Not at all	To a little extent	Moderately	To a big extent	Hard to say/not applicable
fostered the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men	20	11	63	62	40
fostered equal opportunities for people with disabilities	25	26	55	45	45
strengthened development of local communities	5	14	55	109	13
was conducive to sustainable development, with respect for the environment	10	5	45	114	22
was innovative	7	24	59	90	16
fostered the development of information society using modern	15	29	60	65	27

technologies					
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Source: own research (n=196).

A large number of "hard to say/not applicable" answers to questions about promoting equal opportunities for women and men (40 indications) or equal opportunities for people with disabilities (45 indications) can confirm the conclusions of the desk research analysis. On the other hand, a large number of positive answers to the question about project innovativeness or the promotion of the information society as compared to information obtained from reports may be more declarative than factual in terms of nature of the responses. The most confident and credible answers seem to be about strengthening local community development and fostering sustainable development, respecting the environment. This is confirmed by a large number of indications "to a big extent" - 109 and 114 respectively, and a small number of "hard to say" answers - 12 and 22 respectively. This is also confirmed by other data obtained during this study, both the existing data and that provided from the CAWI/CATI surveys. Similar conclusions are also drawn from case study analysis of projects conducted for this evaluation study.

In the case studies of projects and municipalities, the topic of horizontal policies was also discussed. In response to the question in which aspect the project realised the policies, the respondents focused on two aspects: sustainable development and equal opportunities. The implementation of the principle of sustainable development, mainly in the field of ecological activities, is mentioned in the case studies of the following municipalities: Sokal, Szack, Hajnówka. Projects that realised the idea of sustainable development were, among others "Clean Water at the Bug Estuary - A Cross-Border Water Supply System for Hrubieszów and Volodymyr Volynskyi - STAGE I and II" (IPBU.01.03.00-06-161/10, IPBU.01.03.00-06-648/11). It is worth to quote a part of this project study devoted to this issue:

*The project has a positive impact on sustainable development policy due to more efficient water management, elimination of water supply leaks that cause loss of water, installing more energy-efficient pumps that reduce electricity consumption, as well as, among others, replacement of asbestos pipes. Due to the specific nature of the project, it had a neutral impact on other horizontal policies (...).*

Another project, described in the study of projects, that implemented sustainable development policy in the field of environmental protection, was "Development of partnership cooperation towards the improvement of cross-border environment protection infrastructure in the townships of Poraż and Zagórz in Poland and in the city of Horodok in Ukraine" (IPBU.02.01.00-18-563/11)" contributing to protecting the environment from pollution.

On the other hand, the project that had a positive effect on equal opportunities was "Treasures of the cross-border area - preserving cultural heritage" (IPBU.01.02.00-18-373/11) which served among others to provide equal opportunities for people with disabilities. That was described in the project study as follows:

*The project has a positive impact on equal opportunities policy in the context of ensuring accessibility for disabled persons. Despite the unfavourable terrain in Stara Wieś there were used infrastructure solutions (suitable ramps) to provide people with disabilities with the access to the supported objects.*

Another example of equal opportunities may be the activities described in the project study "Modernization of Zoological Gardens in Zamość and Lutsk and Development of a Concept of Establishing a Recreation Zone in Rzeszów in Order to Develop Cross-border Qualified Nature Tourism" (IPBU.01.02.00-06-690/11) :

*It is worth noting that the emphasis on ensuring the accessibility of the Zamość zoo to people with disabilities is not limited to the implementation of projects cofinanced by the European funds but concerns also other initiatives. An example of such an initiative is organization of the "Evening of Dreams in the Zamość zoo" (...). Disabled children and their guardians can visit the zoo free of charge for a special invitation, and on that time the object is inaccessible for other people.*

A representative of the institution responsible for implementing the Programme during the interview conducted for the evaluation study when asked about the implementation of horizontal policies, stated:

*If we started to go down to the level of the projects, we would probably find some elements that really affect the implementation of these horizontal policies, because my awareness of these policies is that they are defined in very broad terms and have a very broad range of activities. I will honestly say that in the Programme it is not a key element of project evaluation. At the level of the programmes, it is generally accepted that something is not against these policies, or the justification is given that women, men and people with disabilities will have equal access to the services provided, or if we build sewage treatment plant - it is environmental protection. Such things are written on the level of projects. Information society. We had a couple of cool projects that involved increasing the access of a wider group to this type of e-services.*

Even more symptomatic seems to be the response given by another staff member involved in the implementation of the Programme:

*It is very difficult for an administrator of a small municipality to explain that we have to implement horizontal policies. He/she often did not even know about their existence, and only by profiling the recruitment criteria we can encourage him/her to make the project somehow fit into the horizontal policies. On the other hand, it is up to him/her to make a sewerage system, so tourists would come and those are the priorities for the beneficiaries. That's the truth.*

### 3.2.5. The impact of projects on shaping attitudes and alliances on cross-border cooperation

This section of the report contains answers to the following research questions:

- What types of attitudes and alliances in terms of cross-border cooperation can be identified among collaborating organisations? How does a specific attitude and alliance affect the effectiveness, utility and sustainability of the effects of the projects and the Programme?

Attitude determines a relation to phenomena expressing views, or behaviour towards specific phenomena. The definition of attitudes is of diagnostic importance and the attitudes themselves are shaped by mutual interaction. In the context of cross-border cooperation, three types of attitudes can be identified as expressed by the cooperating organisations. According to the literature of the subject those are: **utilitarian attitude** (cooperation is not an end in itself, but a mean to achieve other benefits, not necessarily related to the relationship), **intentional attitude** (concerns cooperation undertaken for a specific purpose and characterised



by combining similar interest groups on both sides of the border), and **ideological attitude** (motives are subordinated to ideas of cooperation, understanding, European integration, breaking down prejudices)<sup>20</sup>. Although on the basis of the analysis of the data in question, it can be said that the beneficiaries involved in the project represent different attitudes, it is extremely difficult to judge their type because of very uneven responses. The question of the report that we used in order to try to define the types of attitudes was the following: Will the cooperation continue? We were not interested in the answer itself - it was with one exception the affirmative answer - but in what the beneficiaries wrote in the comments. The qualitative analysis of their statements allowed us to draw the following conclusions: we can speak about utilitarian attitudes in the case of 16 responses, ideological attitude - in 34 cases, intentional attitude - in 11 cases. However, as many as 28 replies did not allow us to draw any clear conclusions.

The literature on the subject also identifies alliances that are formed by cooperating organisations. One of the classifications concerns the types of benefits achieved by the organisations<sup>21</sup>. From the point of view of designing of an intervention, the most characteristic and interesting alliances are:

1. fatty bananas, ugly ducklings and beautiful sisters - those are the types of alliances that are characterised with the ability to perceive the external benefits that flow from a common external environment to these organisations; this function of the partnerships should be supported in order to build the economic potential of the border region, e.g. by supporting the tools for joint external territorial marketing;
2. Siamese sisters and half-sisters are an alliance of organisations whose representatives recognise that they function in an environment where the administrative boundaries of the state have a significant negative impact on development; this type of alliance, characteristic of the places closest to the border, should be significantly neutralised;
3. shaking umbrellas - this is the type of alliance in which the presence of a "third party", an organization that stimulates cooperation, is necessary for its functioning (this is often the intervention financed by European funds); this type of alliance will not last, and assumptions about the decline in cooperation in the event of discontinuation of intervention are substantiated; it must be noted at the same time that social activity, which is the subject of the Programme interventions (e.g. getting to know neighbours, building a common cultural tradition, learning from each other) is often difficult even in one country and initiating such cooperation also in that case requires public support to be provided; durability of that type of alliances is also influenced by the type of collaborating organisations; local governments are most predestined for the sustainability of this type of alliances<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>20</sup>J. Blatter, *Political co-operation in cross-border regions: two explanatory approaches*, European Regional Science Association 36th European Congress, Zurich 1996; J. Blatter, *Beyond Hierarchies and Networks: Institutional Logics and Change in Transboundary Spaces*, „Governance – An International Journal of Policy, Administration and Institutions” No. 4/2003, from: K. Szmigiel, *Regionalne po co i z kim? Internacjonalizacja relacji polskich województw [What for and with whom? - in regional dimension. Internationalization of relations between Polish voivodships]*, Geoprofit, Warsaw 2009.

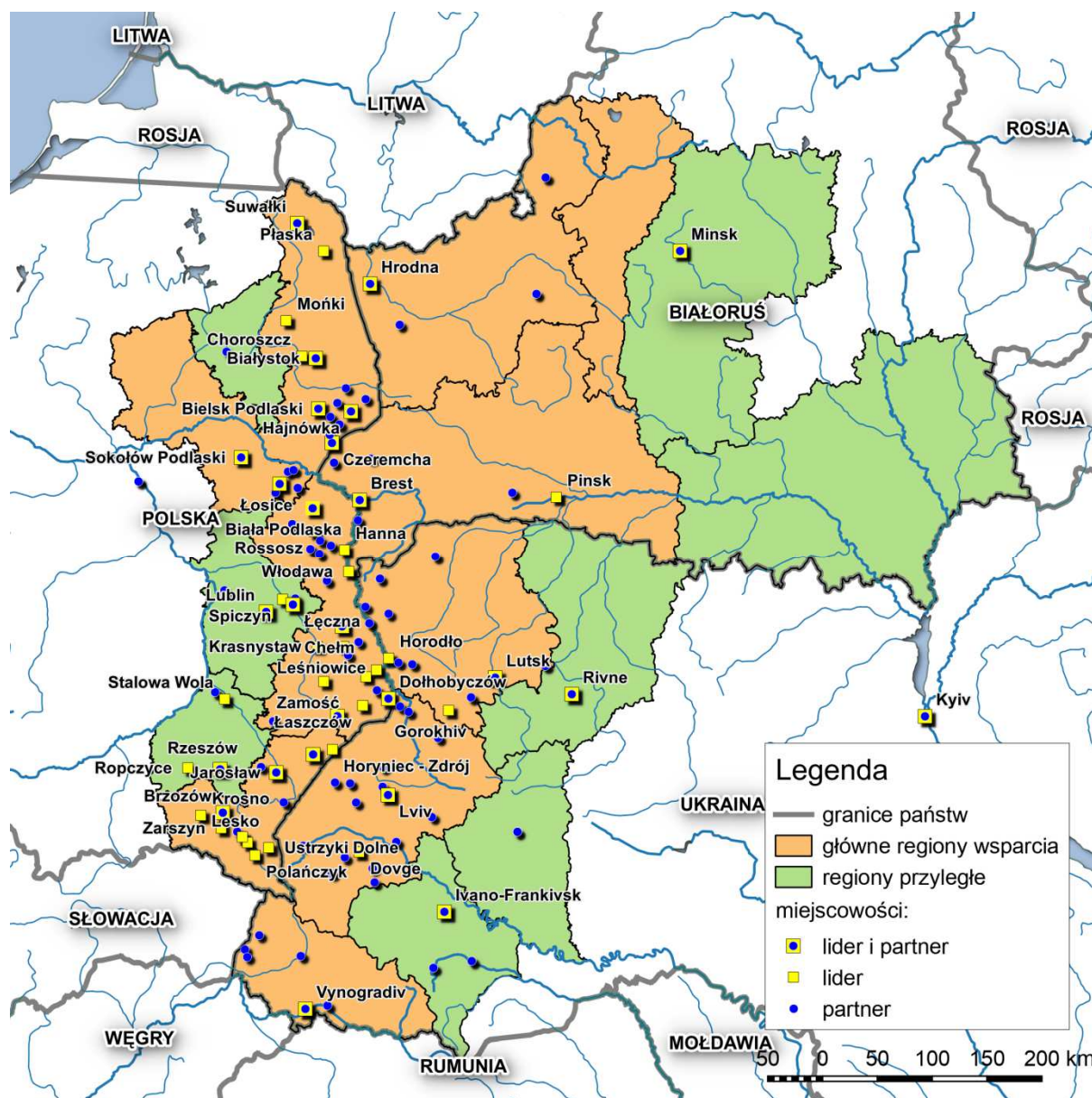
<sup>21</sup>H. Baldersheim, K. Ståhlberg, *Transborder region-building: Cement or solvent in Nordic- co-operation?* [in:] H. Baldersheim, K. Ståhlberg, *Nordic region-building in a European perspective*, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, Hants, Vermont 1999, pp. 3-23; P. Swianiewicz, *International contacts of local governments [Kontakty międzynarodowe samorządów]*, "Local government" [Samorząd terytorialny], No. 10/2005; K. Szmigiel, *Regional ...*, op.cit.

<sup>22</sup> WYG PSDB, Geoprofit. *Effects of implementation of the Operational Programme for Cross-border Cooperation Poland (Lubuskie Voivodship)-Brandenburg 2007-2013 [Efekty realizacji Programu Operacyjnego Współpracy Transgranicznej Polska (Województwo Lubuskie)-Brandenburgia 2007-2013]*, Ministry of Development, 2015, p. 59.



In the evaluation study, we sought to identify to which type of alliance each of the partnerships created during the Programme implementation belonged. The following map lists all the leaders and partners in the 117 projects analysed.

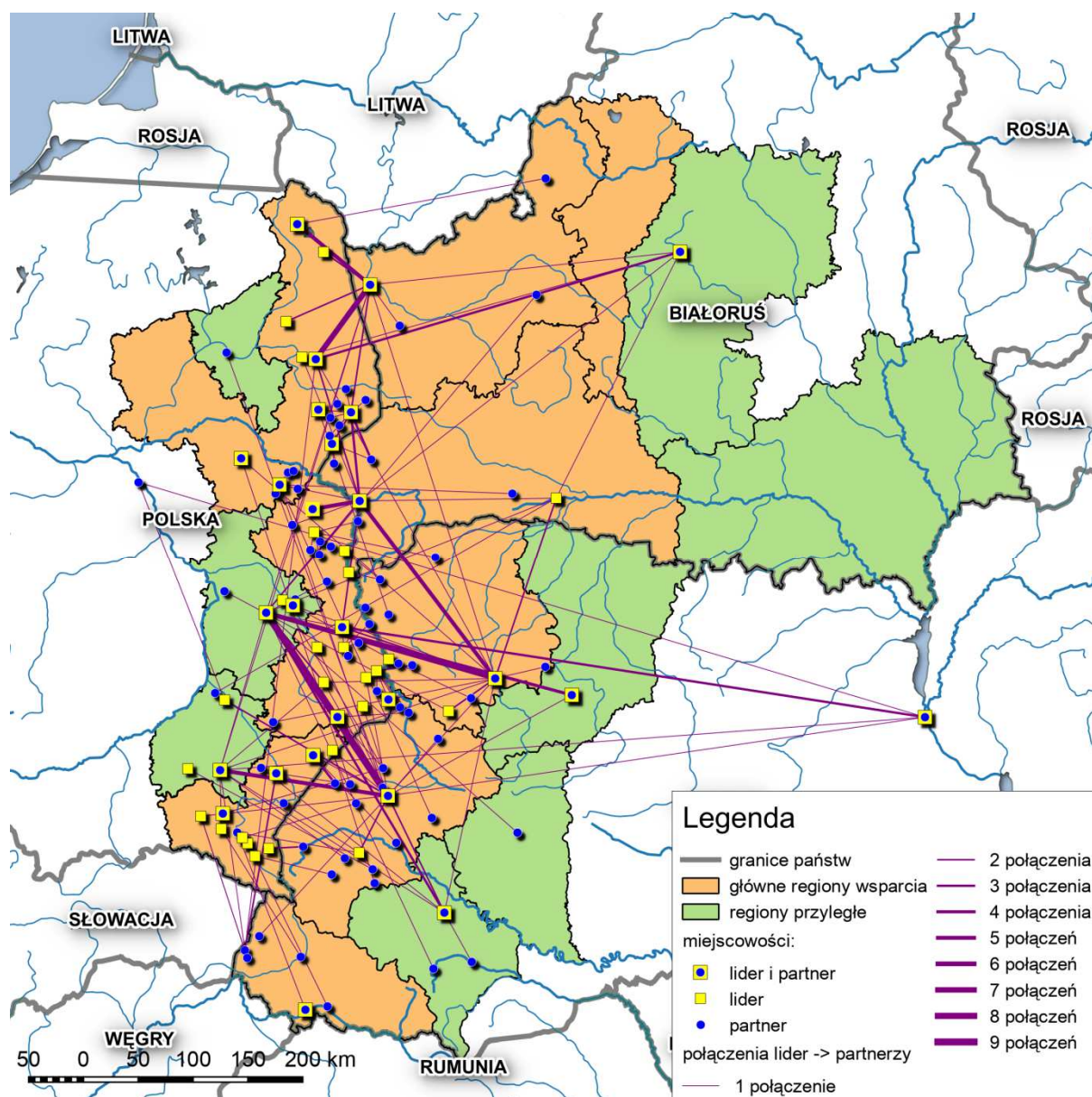
Map 4. Leaders and partners of projects implemented in the Programme



Source: own development.

The number and distribution of all types of alliances in the matrix will allow for a preliminary conclusion about the maturity and perspectives of the established partnerships that result from the implementation of the Programme. It should be noted here that the large number of alliance types proves the advancement of cross-border cooperation.

Map 5. Number of links leader-partners in the projects implemented under the Programme



Source: own development.

The cities where local organisations completed the most projects were:

- Lublin (28 projects, including 13 as leaders and 15 as partners),
- Łuck (26 projects, including 4 as leaders and 22 as partners),
- Lviv (26 projects, including 6 as leaders and 20 as partners),
- Grodno (22 projects, including 2 as leaders and 20 as partners),
- Rzeszów (16 projects, including 9 as leaders and 7 as partners),
- Brest (19 projects, including 3 as leaders and 16 as partners),

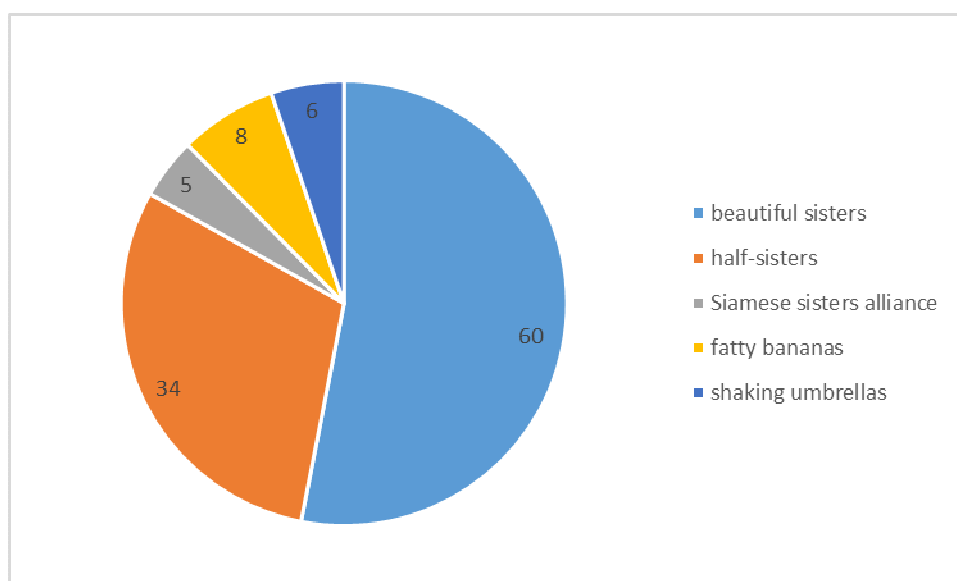
- Białystok (13 projects, including 7 as leaders and 6 as partners).

The organisations in these cities have produced the most connections in their projects, and they have often been grounded in earlier projects. There is also a perception that organisations from Ukraine and Belarus are more often project partners than leaders when they cooperate with organisations from large centres in Poland. It is easier to become leaders when the size of the centre is similar, mostly in small towns and villages.

It is not only the formation of partner-partner relationships, but also the consolidation of partnerships between partners. There are more of those links for given locations, and it can be inferred from their distribution that the wholesome spirit of these partnerships is whisper marketing since organisations from a given location (regardless of the country) are eager to use contacts with trusted partners recommended by other organisations from the same centre.

Analysis of projects in the matrix shows that the dominant type of alliance are beautiful sisters (60 projects). This means that the organisations carrying out these projects are characterised by the ability to perceive the external benefits that flow from the common external environment to these organisations, are capable of uniting forces, and perhaps their cooperation with information and promotion support will be sustainable. In the second place there are projects where the type of alliance is identified as half-sisters. As defined, this is an alliance of organisations whose representatives recognise that they operate in an environment in which the administrative boundaries of the state are significant barriers to development, but in the case of projects being analysed - it implies a temporary merger of forces on two sides of the border in order to achieve similar objectives at different levels of needs' satisfying. Although theoretically, this type of alliance is not sustainable, it may prove to be a good starting point for joint development, especially with the funds available provided there is a partnership established. The theoretical significance of this alliance is closer in case of the projects in which the Siamese sisters alliance has been identified, although the needs of the partners here are similar, so cooperation may also be sustainable. Fatty bananas (8 projects) mostly concern projects of political importance (e.g. improvement of border crossing points). A very small number (6 projects) is a group of projects that can be described as shaking umbrellas, which confirms the results presented so far on the effectiveness of the Programme.

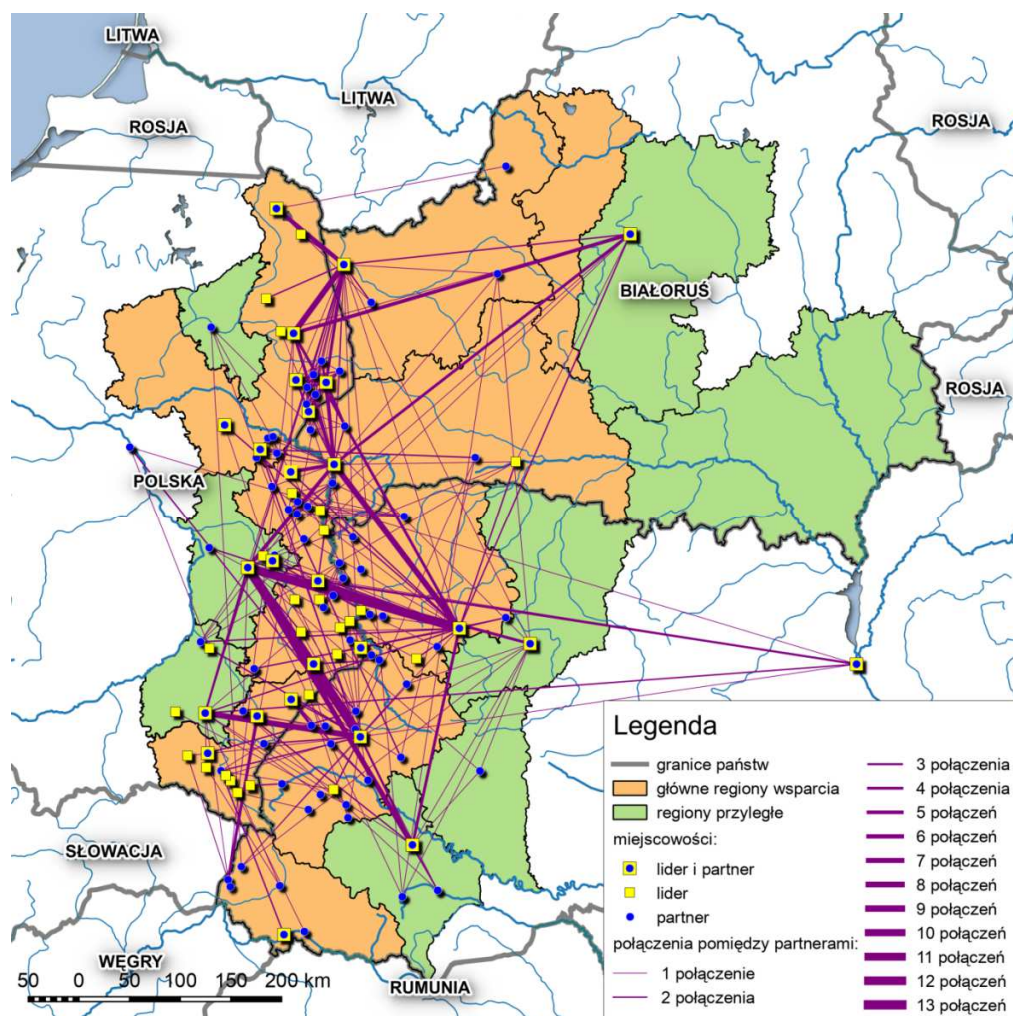
Figure 9. Number of projects by type of alliance





Source: own development.

Map 6. Number of links between partners in the projects implemented projects under the Programme



Source: own development.

The strength and type of contacts between the project partners within the Programme were also analysed on the basis of CAWI/CATI respondents' responses. They were asked whether relationships within the framework of other projects already completed or planned are continued (interrelate) or ceased. The tables below collectively show the results obtained.

Table 30. Projects implemented in partnership after project completion in the Programme. Answer to the research question: Did you carry out any projects in the partnership after the project was completed [multiple choice]?

Formula of projects implemented in the partnership	Number of answers
Leader with the same partners	21
Leader with other partners	35
Partner with the same partners	26
Partner with other partners	41

No projects implemented in the partnership	105
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Source: own research (n=196).

**Table 31. Plans for the implementation of projects in partnership with the same partners. Answer to the research question: Do you intend to implement any projects in partnership with the same Partners in the future?**

Answers	Number of answers	Contribution to the response structure
Definitely yes	92	46.94
Generally yes	67	34.18
Maybe yes, maybe no	32	16.33
Probably not	3	1.53
Definitely not	2	1.02

Source: own research (n=196).

**Table 32. Plans for the implementation of projects in partnership with the same partners. Answer to the research question: Do you intend to implement any projects in partnership with the same Partners in the future?**

Answers	Number of answers	Contribution to the response structure
Definitely yes	78	39.8
Generally yes	82	41.84
Maybe yes, maybe no	21	14.8
Probably not	2	1.02
Definitely not	5	2.55

Source: own research (n=196).

Analysis of the above answers from the CAWI/CATI survey does not give a clear answer to the question on the durability and quality of relationships between partners. Respondents asked whether they intend to pursue projects with the same partners in the future, answered definitely yes or generally yes in 81.12%. At the same time, the question on the implementation of projects with other partners gives a similar number of indications (definitely yes and generally yes) - 81,65%. This demonstrates the high openness to partnership projects. Also, the question on implementing another project after the completion of the project being implemented under the Programme seems to confirm this, showing the lack of clear attachment of the respondents to the partners. 38.76% would undertake the project but not with the same partners. The same partners were chosen by 27.86% of the respondents. These responses seem to indicate that although **there may be a large number of partnerships created, they are not yet sufficiently sustainable. Organisations look for temporary alliances to meet specific goals.**

Conclusions about types of alliances can also be drawn on the basis of the analysed data that have been used to determine the types of attitudes. It seems that **the responses characterising the intentional attitude can be considered as the most durable type of alliance characterising the first type of alliance (fatty bananas, ugly duckling and beautiful sisters).** The beneficiaries whose responses were included in this category represent the most durable alliances/partnerships that have often lasted for many years, regardless of grants, programmes, or cofinanced projects. It is also possible to conclude that **answers that have been classified as characteristic in**

**the utilitarian attitude may correspond to the third type of alliance (shaking umbrellas)** - respondents declared that they wanted to cooperate further, but they made the continued cooperation dependant on the external funds. Based on the answers given, the second type of alliances (the Siamese sisters and half-sisters) could not be distinguished, because none of the answers responded to this type of alliance. You cannot also classify answers that are specific to the ideological attitude or the rest of answers to any type of alliance.

Although most project organisations are looking for temporary alliances in order to meet specific goals, the projects that have been implemented so far have contributed to the creation of alliances. According to the matrix analysis, based on the distance from the border and wealth of the organisation, the alliances of the type of beautiful sisters and half-sisters dominate. The analysis based on the results of the CAWI/CATI survey identified mainly alliances of fatty bananas, ugly ducklings, beautiful sisters and shaking umbrellas. Because the analysis of wealth is faulty, it is important to assume that the most common alliances are:

- beautiful sisters,
- half-sisters,
- shaking umbrellas.

It can also be said that, as compared to previous programmes (INTERREG IIIA - Tacis CBC, Phare CBC), the interest in EU programs on cross-border cooperation increases, the number of participants increases, and the number of partnerships increases. However it takes time and the next programmes to be able to accurately assess how long-lasting the partnerships are, what they serve for, what benefits for the regions they bring.

### 3.2.6. The greatest successes and failures of the Programme

This section of the report contains answers to the following research questions:

- What are the greatest successes and failures of the Programme?

The Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine proved to be a success, with many reasons to be discussed in this subsection. In the opinion of the authors of this report, there can be indicated no failure that would be associated with the Programme, which does not mean that some of its shortcomings or weaknesses can not be shown<sup>23</sup>. It seems that instead of talking about successes and failures, it is better to talk about the strengths and weaknesses of the Programme, its advantages and disadvantages.

#### Strengths of the Programme

##### 1. Successful implementation of projects that have achieved their objectives

The greatest success of the Programme is the successful implementation of projects, both infrastructural and soft ones. According to the adopted assumptions, the objectives of the projects were defined at the Programme level, hence the success of the projects is a success of the Programme itself. This is the greater achievement that it has been achieved despite the unexpected change of political and economic situation in Ukraine, unfavourable rules of financial flows for Ukrainian partners, and little experience of beneficiaries of Ukraine and Belarus in the implementation of EU projects. This concludes from the analysis of CAWI/CATI reports and

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<sup>23</sup> During the implementation of the study there was a threat that 3 strategic projects would not be implemented, but the case was not settled at that time.

interviews.

*We have a beautiful village centre that allows you to take various activities in contact with partners, especially for our community; the greatest success is the complete realisation of the intended actions in the project, as well as the establishment of contacts and constant cooperation (participant of the project "Improving access to the tourist area "Zielawa Valley" and partner communities on the border of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine") IPBU.01.03.00-06-439/11; CATI interview) IPBU.01.03.00-06-439/11"; CAWI/CATI survey)*

## **2. Cross-border cooperation has been successful**

The Programme was dedicated to cross-border cooperation. This was the nature of the Programme emphasised in the project studies - respondents believed that only within the framework of such a Programme they were able to carry out joint ventures or undertakings on different sides of the border.

*(...) the value of the programme is that (...) „possibility to establish tripartite cooperation in solving common problems in terms of equal opportunities” (respondent of the project study "Integrated Promotion of Tourism Opportunities and Cultural-Historical Heritage of Lviv Region, Podkarpackie and Lublin Voivodeships" /IPBU.03.02.00-76-820/12);*

*(...) thanks to the CBC PBU Programme we could solve problems that are important for the region, and they also relate to the cooperation between Ukraine, Belarus and Poland (respondent of the project study "Development of the rescue services Poland – Ukraine within the strengthening the infrastructure of cross-border management system of natural hazard", IPBU.02.01.00-14-177/10).*

It seems more important, however, that the idea of the Programme in terms of cross-borderness has been successful. The Programme was implemented in border areas of countries, two of which do not belong to the European Union, the boundaries between these countries are difficult, the rules in force and procedures are also different from those in the European Union. Realisation of the idea of cross-borderness was therefore more difficult to achieve than, for example, in the case of the Western or Southern Polish border. Meanwhile, there happened successful cooperation and partnership building. It is particularly worth noting that this has been achieved in the case of state administration, large and bureaucratic structures such as border service, customs or police. As one of the representatives of the managing authority stated:

*[Programme] has influenced some systematised, structured cooperation between the regions concerned, as well as the central authorities (Ukraine, Belarus).*

## **3. Broad formula of the Programme**

The Programme had a broad formula and actually responded to the needs that existed in the support area at a given moment. While priority was given to sector-specific measures, such as tourism and environmental protection, the formula allowed for applying for funding for other, unspecified sectors, resulting in, for example, health projects.

This was commented in an interview by the JMA representative:

*That programme [i.e. PBU 2007-2013] was quite broad in scope. We had really very*



*broad priorities and in terms of subject and content everything could be done. There were really no restrictions. The limitation was that we did not have commercial entities, so inevitably private companies were ineligible, but there was no big controversy here.*

Another important manifestation of the broad formula offered by the Programme was the ability to carry out a variety of projects - soft and investment ones, small (and even micro) and large ones. It also provided the opportunity to carry out a variety of soft and hard activities within a single project, which is particularly worth highlighting in the context of other EU programs that focus on only one aspect (e.g. ESF and ERDF). Such a comment can be read in one of the project studies:

*A good solution worth pursuing is the ability to carry out projects with very different scales and budgets: „the value and strength of the programme is manifested in the fact that (...) projects are not too limited in funding, so everyone can realise their ideas - both small and large actors ("Integrated Promotion of Tourism Opportunities and Cultural-Historical Heritage of Lviv Region, Podkarpackie and Lublin Voivodeships" IPBU.03.02.00-76-820/12).*

#### **4. Efficient implementation of the Programme**

The smooth implementation of the Programme concerned the smooth running of information activities on the Programme, the recruitment and evaluation of the applications, the negotiation and signing of contracts with the beneficiaries, the receipt and verification of reports, and the financial audits of the projects. Here is the opinion in this subject of a technical staff member involved in the implementation of the Programme in Belarus:

*Because all these projects have been successfully [implemented - a note from the researcher] primarily thanks to the (...) informational activities. The information has reached the audience, we have received a lot of projects, all have been verified, all the contracts have been signed and despite these Belarusian procedures eventually with some delay [everything have been realised - a note from the researcher].*

#### **5. Flexibility of the Programme**

The flexibility of the Programme, carried out under difficult political conditions and changing economic circumstances, was its great advantage, and has contributed to the success of the entire Programme. It was reflected primarily in advance payments, which greatly facilitated the implementation of projects to beneficiaries. The advance payments' procedure was praised by representatives of institutions responsible for implementation of the Programme as well as project case studies' respondents.

*[Another advantage of the Programme was] of course the issue of advance payments, because it was not widespread, at least in the previous perspective. Most programmes, however, use refunds rather than advance payments. to make it as flexible as possible to allow these resources ... to be managed [interview with the JMA representative];*

*An important advantage of the Cross Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007-2013 is the offered possibility of advance payments of 70% of the project value, which is particularly important for institutions with limited own financial resources as church institutions and non-governmental organisations that at the same time experience difficulties in obtaining a bank loan. It is also very important for entities in Ukraine due to the difficult economic situation in the country. This is also important for local governments, given the high level of debt of many of*

*them and limited opportunities to take further credits (study on the project "Treasures of the cross-border area - preserving cultural heritage", IPBU.01.02.00-18-373/11).*

Flexibility also was manifested in the flexible approach to savings that occurred in ongoing projects. These savings have not been reimbursed - the beneficiaries could have spent them on other tasks, assuming that they contributed to a more complete achievement of the objectives. This was pointed out by a JMA representative in an interview:

*In addition, the use of various project savings was also highly praised by the beneficiaries because we were able to implement some activities complementary to the originally designed objective of the project in order to maximise the use of the project funds. It was also very praised.*

*An undoubted advantage of the Programme was the flexible approach presented by institutions of the implementation system to the issue of possibility of using savings arising after the tenders. In other words, if savings were made after tenders, there was no need to reimburse or reduce grants, but it was possible to use the resources saved for other tasks, provided that these tasks contributed to a more complete achievement of the project objectives (study of the project "Clean Water at the Bug Estuary - A Cross-Border Water Supply System for Hrubieszów and Volodymyr Volynskiy - STAGE I"; "Clean water in the Pobuże region – Water supply cross-border system for Hrubieszów and Volodymyr-Volynskiy – STAGE II", IPBU.01.03.00-06-161/10, IPBU.01.03.00-06-648/11).*

Flexibility also concerned the approach of the Programme creators to the projects during their implementation in terms of introducing changes and responding to the difficulties of the beneficiaries. The successful cooperation with the Joint Technical Secretariat was of great importance here.

*The technical support provided by the institutions implementing the projects [is of great value]. Partners appreciate the support from the Joint Technical Secretariat (...) The organisation has always received the necessary support from the Joint Technical Secretariat. (project manager, case study of the project "Integrated Promotion of Tourism Opportunities and Cultural-Historical Heritage of Lviv Region, Podkarpackie and Lublin Voivodeships" IPBU.03.02.00-76-820/12).*

## **6. Huge interest in the Programme**

The Programme enjoyed enormous and growing interest. A total of 835 applications were submitted to the competition, including 307 projects in the first call and 506 in the second call. In the third competition, however, dedicated to umbrella projects there were 22 projects submitted, which totalled in 226 microprojects. The interest generated by this edition translates into enormous interest in the new edition of the Programme, which is being implemented in the current perspective - 2014-2020.

The broad resonance that the Programme aroused was because it was responding to real problems, but also thanks to the good promotion that was taking place through a variety of channels and was done before, during, and after the Programme. It is worth to quote here a fragment of one of the project studies:

*The representative of the leader sees a good promotion of the programme. Numerous information and promotional activities and interesting papers make it possible to disseminate ideas and results of the programme and projects realised, helping to draw conclusions for the future. (study on the project: "Infrastructural development*

of the Połowce - Pieszczałka road border crossing - Stage III (Polish-Belarusian border)  
- Poviát of Hajnówka RP - Brest District RB", IPBU.02.02.01-20-002/09).

## **7. Practical application of the principles of horizontal policies**

The main advantage of the Programme was the approach to the theme of EU horizontal policies. This approach, based on the analysis of the existing data, mainly reports, may be determined as elastic. The requirement to adapt EU programmes to existing horizontal policies could have been a challenge for project beneficiaries who, in their proposal and in the reports, had to determine to what extent and whether their projects fit in with the idea of sustainable development, equality of opportunities, and realisation of the postulate of the information society. They could give the answer "not applicable" and often gave such answer. Meanwhile, the analysis of the responses presented in another part of this report shows that beneficiaries did not always understand the idea of horizontal policies. However, the analysis of their projects and their project activities shows that in practice they have undertaken such activities, e.g. conducting projects that aim to environment protection, by promoting their projects via the website, or by including in their events disabled or socially excluded persons.

In addition, the visible added value of the Programme, which also proves its success, was the socio-cultural dimension generated in the implementation of the projects. The implementation of the projects has contributed to the dissemination of knowledge among citizens about the historical, social and economic situation of cross-border areas and the knowledge of neighbouring languages.

Lastly, the success of the Programme may be proven by an answer to the question if the time went back, would the respondents decide to participate in the Programme. More than 90% of CAWI/CATI survey respondents would re-implement the project under the Programme.

## **Weaknesses of the Programme**

### **1. Bureaucracy and complexity of procedures**

One of the weaker sides of the Programme, which the beneficiaries complained about, was unnecessary bureaucracy and complex procedures. Both of these elements lengthened the process of application selection and then their implementation.

The CAWI/CATI survey respondents pointed to excessive bureaucracy and paperwork, unnecessary - according to them - obligation to carry out an audit of the project, which generated additional costs (duplication of documentation review by JTS staff), lengthy reporting time, and increased waiting for the next tranche. Another manifestation of unnecessary bureaucracy was the lengthy procedure for implementing changes in projects. Part of the changes had to be approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee, which greatly prolonged the procedure. The complexity of the procedures was especially felt by beneficiaries in the financial settlement of projects. CAWI/CATI respondents complained about this aspect, and more specifically the respondents commented on the issue, that they considered the procedure as "long-lasting, labour-intensive and tedious".

*Some difficulties in the implementation of the project are constituted by complicated procedures of its settlement, including the need to supplement the same data in various annexes, which in turn creates the risk of mistakes in the correction of data contained in the documents (need to remember to make corrections in different places), "Modernization of Zoological Gardens in Zamość and Lutsk and Development of a Concept of Establishing a Recreation Zone in Rzeszów in Order to Develop Cross-border Qualified Nature Tourism", IPBU.01.02.00-06-690/11.*

## 2. Long duration of the assessment process and project selection

Another defect or weakness of the Programme was a long-term assessment and selection procedure. This was commented by a representative of the institution responsible for implementing the Programme:

*The whole procedure takes a long time, of course there were a lot of such opinions. Well, a lot of time passed from the submission of the project to the signing of the grant agreement. Two years.*

The prolonged duration of this procedure has caused that many projects started as late as in 2013. Although the direct implementation of any project has not been shortened for this reason, however, fieldwork shows that the longevity of the project selection process has made that the project assumptions were out of date. That is how the Programme beneficiaries saw it.

*Projects' evaluation and selection was a long-term process. Too long process of evaluation and project selection affects the topicality of the project assumptions - they become obsolete (study on the project "Integrated Promotion of Tourism Opportunities and Cultural-Historical Heritage of Lviv Region, Podkarpackie and Lublin Voivodeships", IPBU.03.02.00-76-820/12);*

*It would be useful to shorten the process of evaluating, negotiating and signing contracts. The long assessment process makes bigger the difference between what was planned a year ago and what is being done a year later (study on the project "Medical institutions co-operation in Belarus and Poland to improve the access to medical service and its quality within emergency service as well as stroke incidents diagnostics and treatment", IPBU.03.01.00-20-719/11).*

In addition, the beneficiaries had relatively short time to complete their projects and the planned schedules were very tight.

## 3. Requirement to apply the PRAG

Beneficiaries of the projects had to obey the rulers of the Practical Guide to Contract Procedures for EU External Actions (PRAG) in terms of reporting and payment system, including the requirement for conducting tenders. The PRAG procedures did not coincide with national regulations in Ukraine and Belarus, which added to the difficulty of implementing projects in these countries. Remarks on this topic were reflected in the statements of local respondents who demanded that the Programme was adapted to national regulations, which would facilitate the implementation of the projects.

A respondent of one of the case studies described that situation in this way:

*... the Belarusian partner draws attention to the enormous problems he encountered in carrying out such purchases in the public procurement system and the need to combine EU and Belarusian requirements in this regard. We need to work out a solution to this problem. [Partner's representative] (study on the project "Medical institutions co-operation in Belarus and Poland to improve the access to medical service and its quality within emergency service as well as stroke incidents diagnostics and treatment", IPBU.03.01.00-20-719/11).*

#### 4. Exchange rate risk on the part of the beneficiaries

The Programme charged the beneficiaries with exchange rate risk, recognizing the difference in the rate as the non-qualified cost. Faced with a drastic change in the political situation in Ukraine, but also, to a lesser extent, inflation in Belarus, it turned out to be a huge problem for some beneficiaries of the projects. This was commented in the interview by the JMA representative:

*[The challenge was] the change in the Hryvnia exchange rate and the Belarusian Ruble (...) there has been an incredible inflation in recent years. The exchange rate differences, in principle, were not qualified in the programme (...) they [the beneficiaries] took the risk and the consequences on themselves ...*

#### 5. The artificiality of using English

The official language of the Programme was English, which was difficult for project beneficiaries. The most important project documents and official communication with the JTS had to be done in English, causing uncertainty about the proper understanding of instructions and information due to sometimes unclear translations. Hence, in the statements of respondents of the project studies, there was a demand for keeping the programme and project documentation in the languages of the beneficiaries.

A respondent of one of the case studies commented that artificiality in this way:

*Moreover, in many situations it was incomprehensible to the projects' beneficiaries that the explanations for the Polish institution by the Polish partner had to be formulated in English: "it was funny to me that I am writing to an institution that is located in Warsaw and I am writing to them in English and I apply Polish financial documents to it. Such explanations seemed to me absurd at times, it was a disadvantage of this programme" (project study "Development of alternative pre-school education system in rural communities", IPBU.03.01.00-76-257/10).*

#### 6. Too low budget of the Programme compared to needs

Huge interest in the Programme and the number of applications submitted make it clear that the Programme was too small compared to the needs. At the existing budget, roughly one in eight projects was provided with funds. A following conclusion was made in an interview by one of the representatives of the managing authority:

*It can be said that a major drawback is too little allocation and insufficient funds for cross-border cooperation.*

#### Analysis of the utility - summary

Implementation of the Programme has positively influenced the development processes of the border regions. Despite the earlier programmes (e.g. PHARE, Neighbourhood Programme) and funds managed by Euroregions, the level of integration of the Programme area requires further action, which was made possible by the Programme in the years 2007-2013, which is already being continued in the financial perspective 2014-2020. Supporting development processes in cross-border areas would not be possible without cooperation

between the neighbouring countries. Strengthening cooperation makes it easier to solve common problems. The projects implemented under the Programme served to the establishment and strengthening of cooperation, particularly those implemented under the Priority 3 concerning the development of regional and local opportunities for cooperation. Analysis of the project documentation leads to the conclusion that the beneficiaries were aware of the importance of the neighbourhood cooperation.

"Soft" actions have led to increased social and cultural integration of local communities, increased activity of local communities and NGOs, and increased or intensified cross-border cooperation. Changes in the sphere of social and cultural integration of local communities and target groups are evidenced by the large number of partnerships and networks that were established among others thanks to meetings, workshops, trainings and numerous socio-cultural events carried out within the framework of the projects.

The changes observed show that the Programme has a positive impact on the lives of local communities and target groups. All beneficiaries and target groups provided for in the Programme have received the support planned.

It is more difficult to assess the extent to which the projects implemented have triggered noticeable mechanisms/trends in the support area. It seems that there can be significant improvements observed in cross-border cooperation and contacts, both at the regional and local level. This cooperation mainly involves the beneficiaries but also the local community. These trends may be permanent, although their sustainability will only be persuaded in the long run. The answer to the question whether these trends require further support from EU interventions remains unclear - but certainly respondents await future EU programs, including the CBC Programme PBU 2014-2020.

Joint cross-border initiatives have contributed significantly to the building and strengthening of good relations between border residents. The Programme has also proved useful in addressing common challenges in the fields of economy, infrastructure, environment, transport and cultural exchange.

The implementation of the projects helped to build lasting contacts and grounds for further cross-border cooperation. It can be said that the projects implemented under the Programme foster the cooperation of local communities and stimulate cooperation between the countries involved in the Programme.

In case of many beneficiaries there is synergy of activities related to other activities undertaken by them. This is evidenced by the large number of projects carried out prior to the project implemented under the CBC Programme PBU 2017-2013, which increased the applicants' capacity to implement the project; there has been an increase in the number of projects implemented with the same or with other partners along with subsequent programmes; a large number of networks have

been created, many documents and cooperation agreements have been signed during the projects' implementation.

The visible added value of the Programme was the socio-cultural dimension of the projects realised. The implementation of the projects has contributed to the dissemination of knowledge among citizens about the historical, social and economic situation of cross-border areas and the knowledge of neighbouring languages.

An important element in this process was the media, especially local and regional media, as well as local or regional websites, prepared under projects that were informative and promotional.

The projects implemented were part of the implementation of EU horizontal policies promoting sustainable development, equal opportunities, and development of information society. The analysis of the project documentation leads to the conclusion that the sections on these issues may have been filled out in a way as if they were not understood or they were treated in an instrumental manner. However, the analysis of the reports from the perspective of the activities carried out under the projects allows us to state that in practice those policies have been implemented in a rational manner.

Although most project organisations are looking for temporary alliances in order to meet specific goals, the projects that have been implemented so far have contributed to the creation of alliances. According to the matrix analysis, based on the distance from the border and wealth of the organisation, the alliances of the type of beautiful sisters and half-sisters dominate. In the analysis based on CAWI/CATI results, mainly the first and third type of alliances were identified. Because wealth analysis is fraught with errors, it is important to assume that the most common alliances are beautiful sisters, half-sisters (Siamese sisters) and shaking umbrellas (cooperation requires a third party that stimulates interaction).

As compared to previous programmes (INTERREG IIIA - Tacis CBC, Phare CBC), the interest in EU programs on cross-border cooperation increases, the number of participants increases, and the number of partnerships increases. However it takes time and the next programmes to be able to accurately assess how long-lasting the partnerships are, what they serve for, what benefits for the regions they bring.

The CBC Programme PBU has been a success. The strengths of the Programme were, among others, the successful implementation of projects that mostly achieved their objectives, successful cross-border cooperation, the broad formula of the Programme which enabled to introduce and implement projects that meet the current needs of the region; combining activities of soft and hard nature with different budgets and scales. In addition, the Programme has been efficiently and effectively implemented and flexible in terms of implementing changes to projects and responding to beneficiaries' difficulties, including advance payments and



allowing beneficiaries to use the resulting savings. The Programme got great interest of the audience which proves its success. The weaknesses of the Programme include long-term bureaucratism and the complexity of project reporting and settlement procedures, too long time required to select projects, the requirement to use the PRAG which was not fully compliant with the legal regulations in Belarus and Ukraine, and burdening beneficiaries with the exchange rate risk, and also the requirement to use English language in formal contacts.

### 3.3. Analysis of the sustainability of the Programme

#### 3.3.1. Assessment of sustainability of project partnerships

This section of the report contains answers to the following research questions:

- What is the durability and quality of the partnership cooperation established?
- Have project partnerships been created for the needs of the Programme, or did they exist before?
- Have partners previously applied for EU funding for joint actions (e.g. INTERREG IIIA - Tacis CBC, Phare CBC)?
- Do the partners plan to continue the cooperation? Do they plan to apply again for EU funding for joint action? Do they plan to cooperate without support from the EU?

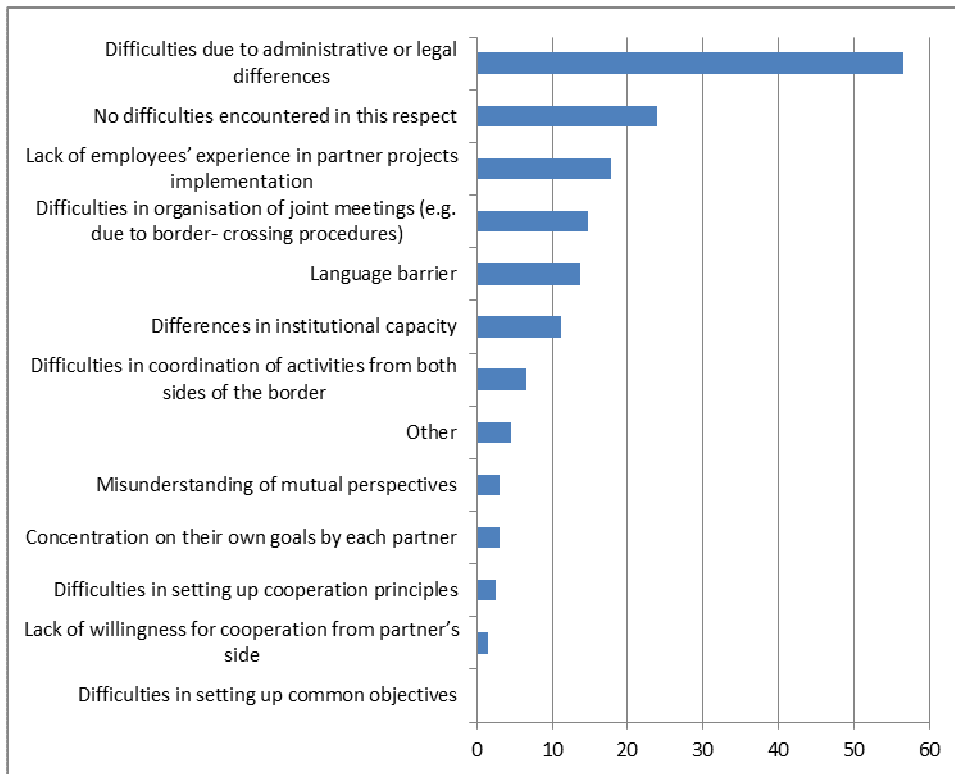
The data collected through the survey indicates that the partners provided an important source of information on how to apply for funding under the Programme. Nearly every six respondents pointed out that information about the possibility of implementing a project from this Programme was provided by a partner. In this respect a very large differentiation depending on the role of the project is noticeable. Every fourth representative of the non-leader indicated that the partner was a source of information about the feasibility of the project under the Programme, with less than 7% of the leaders indicating that the information was received from the partner.

It is at the same time coincident with the information about who, in the opinion of respondents of survey questionnaire, was the initiator of the project. The vast majority of the respondents indicated that their project initiator was the lead partner (leader). It is evident that there is a tendency to attribute the initiation of a project to a given respondent himself/herself. Both lead partners and other partners more often indicated that they were the initiators of the project.

Nearly every fourth respondent in the questionnaire survey found no difficulties in the partnership building phase. Pointing out the difficulties by the vast majority of respondents may be regarded as natural given that the implementation of the partnership project is generally more difficult than running a project individually without partners, especially if partnering is carried out between entities operating in different countries within different legal orders and organisational culture. Legal and administrative differences have often been pointed to as a source of difficulty in building partnerships. The discrepancies between EU and Ukrainian or Belarusian legislation are notable as the main difficulty, as highlighted not only by the respondents of the survey but also by the respondents who were interviewed during in-depth interviews in the case studies. The reason for these discrepancies is the fact that neither Ukraine nor Belarus belong to the European Union, so they do not have

the legal order adapted to that which is in force in the European Union, but on the other hand, the use of European funds implies the need to obey the rules required by the funding authority. In addition, a cause of difficulties encountered was the unstable political situation in Ukraine, which posed a threat to the implementation of many projects realised in the first half of 2014, as highlighted also in case study interviews. Another problem that can be mentioned in this context is another way of functioning of public entities related to more centralised management of public funds in Belarus and Ukraine.

**Figure 10. Difficulties in partnership building**

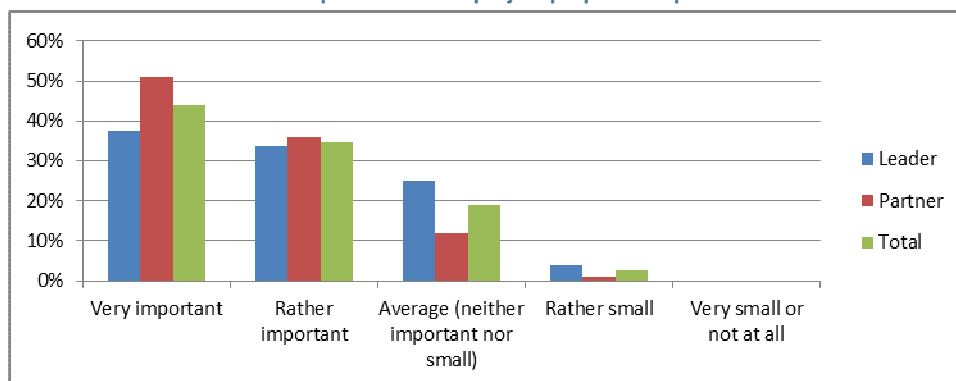


Source: own research (n=196).

Both leaders and partners highly valued the involvement of their partners in the project implementation, with a slightly higher rates given by the non-project leaders, which is not surprising given the fact that the involvement of project leaders had to be greater due to the responsibility for the whole project, still they also had the greatest awareness of the commitment of each partner.

It is noticeable that only a small number of respondents (less than 3%) rated the involvement of partners as rather small, with no respondent indicating that it was very small or did not exist at all. The survey respondents' opinions are not surprising given the solutions that stimulate cooperation implemented within the Programme, which involve providing funding opportunities for all partners.

Figure 11. Evaluation of the involvement of partners in the project preparation process



Source: own research (n=196).

On the basis of the data collected for the needs of the case studies, there is observed a wide variety of ways to establish partnerships, but it can not be clearly stated that some ways to build partnerships are more effective than others in terms of sustaining partnership cooperation. Based on the material collected, it can be said that the long-term cooperation of the partnership is much more influenced by the purpose of cooperation than by the way it was formed. For the cooperation to be effective and sustainable, it is therefore crucial for partners to have similar problems that can be resolved through collaborative actions. Respondents to in-depth interviews conducted in the case studies often pointed out that having similar problems in need of resolution was the main reason for establishing partnerships. Although the way in which the cooperation was established is not a guarantee of its durability, it is noticeable that some ways are a good foundation for the partnership to work smoothly and efficiently. One of the key success factors of a partnership project identified through the case studies is prior implementation of joint projects, which allows for building relationships based on shared experiences and trust. However, these do not have to be common projects with a wide range of external resources. It is crucial that joint ventures, even if their scope is not significant, allow partners to get in touch, get to know one another, because personal contacts between specific partners and their willingness to continue those contacts are key to the success and longevity of partnership cooperation. In the case of territorial local government units, partnerships established within partner cities are a good foundation for the implementation of joint projects. Of course, if they involve taking any joint action that are manifested in mutual contacts, organizing joint meetings, etc. During interviews in the case studies, there were statements that the reason for working with one and not another partner was the previous acquaintance with specific people on the partner side.

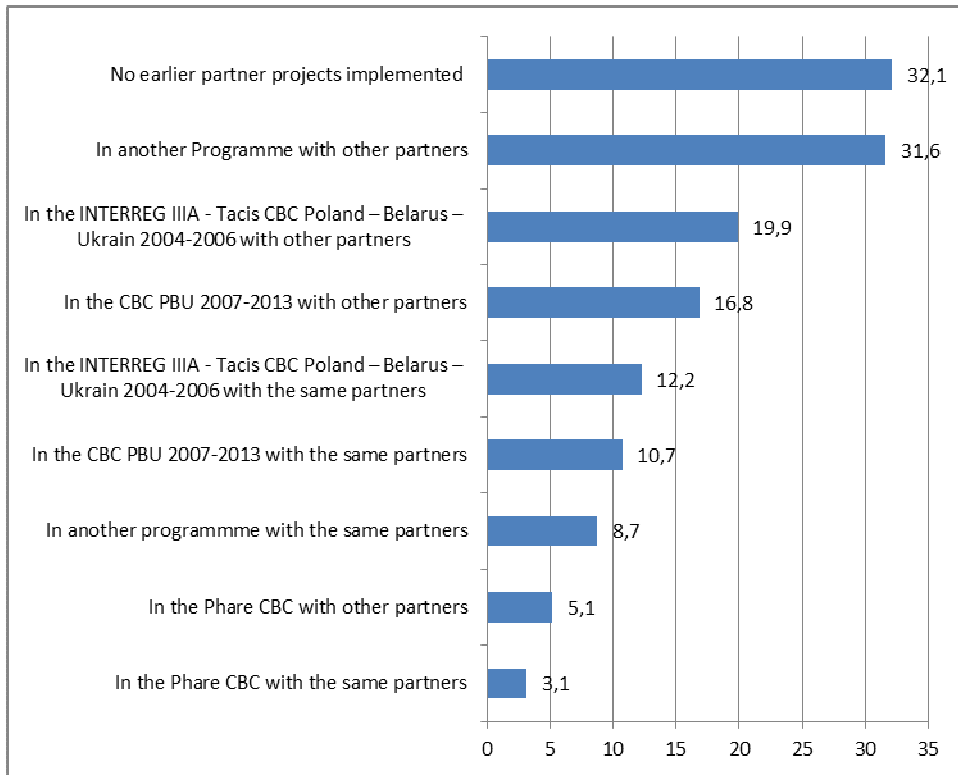
In assessing the sustainability of project partnerships in the context of the sustainability of the Programme, it is important not only whether partners plan to implement further joint actions co-financed or not with European funds, but also whether through their support under the Programme they increase their potential for partnering with the same or other partners. In other words, the durability of partnership cooperation seen from the perspective of the Programme's effects can be the case both when the partners plan to pursue further ventures with the same partners and when they plan such activities with other partners.

A valuable experience may be also prior cooperation in partnership projects, even if they were carried out with other actors. In this context, a particularly valuable effect of cooperation programmes would be the situation in which a person acting as a project partner through the experience gained in a next initiative decides to take on

a leadership role, as this could be a significant increase in the potential of such a partner in terms of implementation of partnership projects.

More than  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the entities implementing the projects under the Programme already had experience in implementing partnership projects under previous initiatives. It is noticeable, however, that relatively few respondents indicated earlier cooperation with the same partners in cross-border programmes implemented under the 2004-06 and 2007-2013 financial perspectives. This can be interpreted in two ways, indicating on the one hand that the cooperation established within the previous financial perspectives is not sustainable and, on the other hand, that the projects implemented under the previous financial perspectives have the effect of increasing the potential of the project developers to cooperate and implement partnership projects. The latter interpretation seems to be more justified given that the main effect of the partnership stimulated by the Cross-border Programme should not be the focus on acquiring further funding. It is important to note that the implementation of projects is designed to solve specific problems, meet specific needs (especially if they consist in investment in infrastructure), and above all reply to the problems and needs of the partners. For example, similar problems experienced by partners on both sides of the border may result in a joint initiative of a water supply network. The construction of the water supply network will solve a specific problem, satisfy the specific needs of the partners. However, partners may differ significantly in terms of other problems, so it may be wise to seek other partners who experience similar problems. The occurrence of such a phenomenon was observed during the case studies of some projects. Based on the case studies realised, it can be said that respondents are well aware that one of the key success factors of a project is that the activities planned in the project are tailored to the needs of all partners.

Figure 12. Experience in previous implementation of partnership projects (data given in %) <sup>24</sup>



Source: own research (n=196).

Nearly 87% of the respondents are convinced that the implementation of the partnership project has contributed to the establishment of lasting partnerships.

<sup>24</sup> The results were calculated on the basis of data collected during the survey. It should be stressed that the number of responses in the survey is not the same as the number of projects. In practice, the number of responses concerning the experience in previous implementation of partnership projects is higher than the number of partnership projects implemented, given that one project was implemented by at least 2 partners. It is therefore natural to assume that even several respondents have experience in implementing the same partnership project. For example, if one partnership project was implemented by 4 partners and each partner completed a survey, then experience in the early implementation of partnership projects would be quadrupled. This is due to the fact that the unit of analysis in the survey was not a project, but the entities implementing the projects. Accordingly, the survey provided answers to the question: "How many partners have experience in implementing partnership projects?" and not the question "How many partner projects have been implemented before?". The results do not add up to 100% because they were collected as answers to multiple choice questions. For example, one respondent could indicate experience in both project implemented under CBC Programme PBU 2007-2013, INTERREG IIIA (Tacis CBC PBU 2004-2006) and Phare CBC with both the same and other partners.

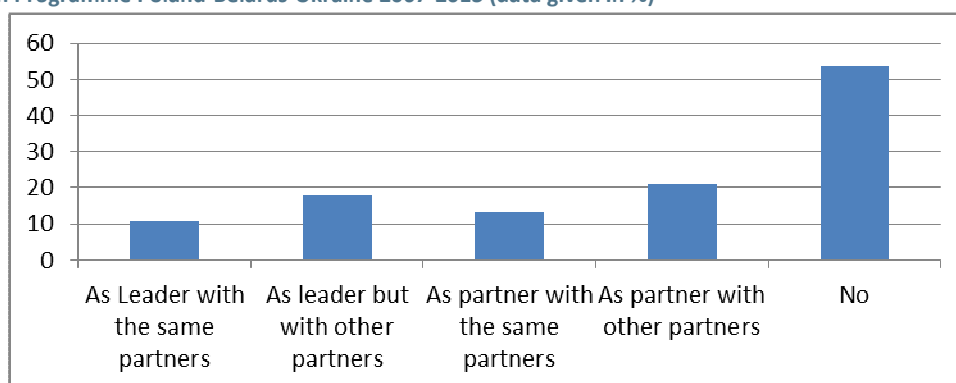
Figure 13. Distribution of the responses achieved in relation to the statement: "Project implementation in the partnership has contributed to establishing lasting cooperation with partners" (data given in %)



Source: own research (n=196).

The potential for implementing partner projects, which can be seen to some extent as a result of the Programme, may be proved by the implementation of further projects of that type after the implementation of the project co-financed under the Programme. According to the survey data it is clear that nearly half of the surveyed entities participated in the implementation of further partner projects, which can be considered as a high percentage given that some projects were implemented under the Programme by the end of 2015.

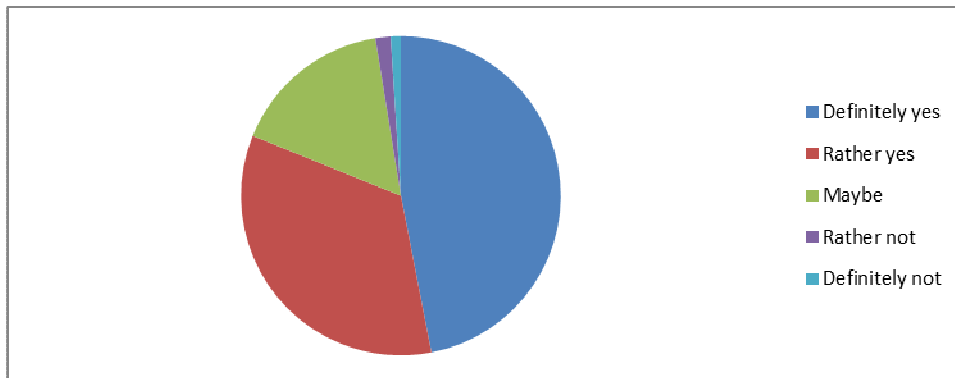
Figure 14. Implementation of projects in partnership after implementation of the project under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007-2013 (data given in %)



Source: own research (n=196).

The confirmation of the satisfaction of the existing cooperation between the partners as well as its expected sustainability is the fact that that more than 4/5 entities intend to implement joint projects with the same partners in the future. Only 2.5% of the entities does not intend to undertake further cooperation with the same partners.

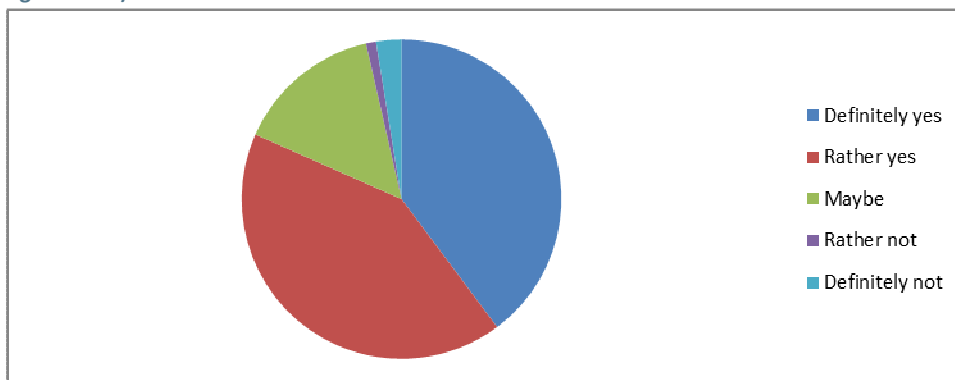
Figure 15. Distribution of responses: Do you intend to implement any projects in partnership with the same Partners in the future? (data given in %)



Source: own research (n=196).

More than 4/5 respondents indicated that they intend to implement projects in partnership with other partners in the future. Only 3.6% of respondents does not intend to cooperate. Therefore, a very similar percentage of entities intending to cooperate with the same partners also intends to cooperate with other partners. It also confirms that one of the most important effects of the Programme is the increased motivation and potential of the supported entities to implement projects in the partnership.

Figure 16. Distribution of responses: Do you intend to implement any projects in partnership with other Partners in the future? (data given in %)

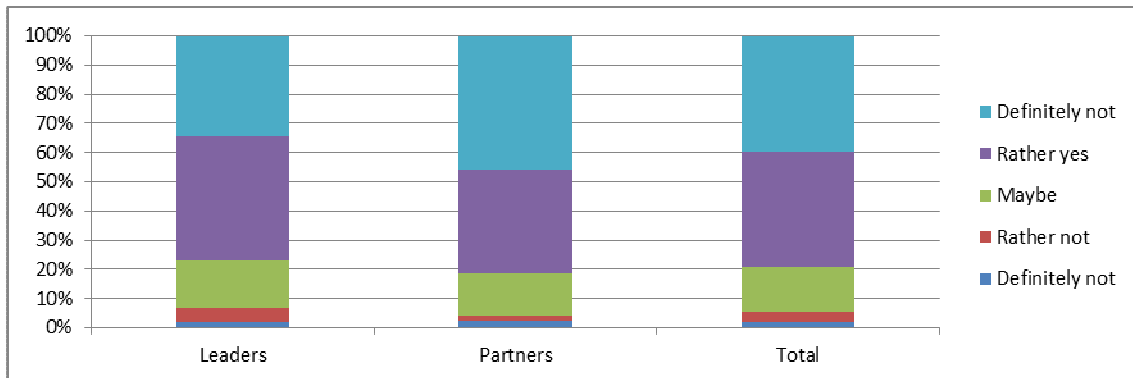


Source: own research (n=196).

Almost 4/5 of the respondents see better performance of their partnership projects compared to their own projects.



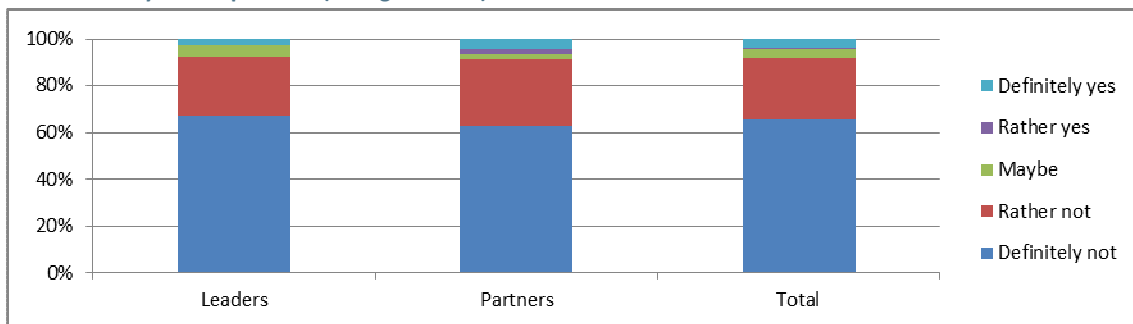
Figure 17. Distribution of the responses achieved in relation to the statement: "Implementing projects in partnership makes it possible to achieve better results when compared to projects implemented separately" (data in%)



Source: own research (n=196).

Similar patterns can be observed in the responses to the statement: "Implementing a project in a partnership proved useful only to one partner". Only few respondents agreed with this statement (less than 5% of the total number of respondents).

Figure 18. Distribution of the responses achieved in relation to the statement: "Implementing a project in a partnership proved useful only to one partner" (data given in %)

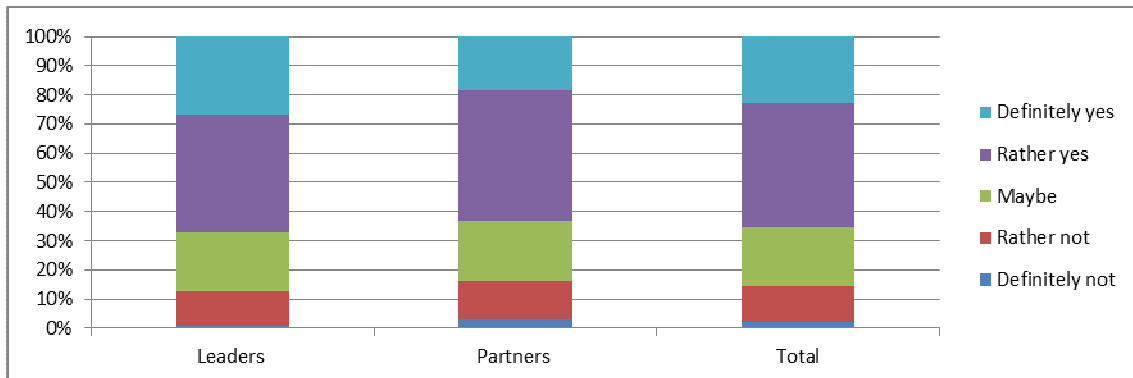


Source: own research (n=196).

Unfortunately, almost 2/3 of the questionnaire respondents agreed that the implementation of cross-border projects in a partnership is possible only with external funding. Only 2% of respondents strongly disagreed with this statement. Although due to the small number of respondents from Ukraine and above all from Belarus (38 and 23 respectively), it is difficult to derive statistical conclusions about the partner country, it is still noticeable that the responses of the Belarusian partners to this statement differ from the responses of the partners from other countries. Only few respondents agreed with this statement (less than 5% of the total number of respondents).

Opinions on the dependability of possibility to implement cross-border partnership projects on raising external funds can be considered as unfavourable in the context of the support effects and the sustainability of cooperation, as long-lasting cooperation is possible first of all when it is not dependent on the need for external funding, and at the same time this situation demonstrates a narrow way of perceiving this collaboration. It is worth noting, however, that lasting partnership cooperation does not necessarily involve undertaking large-scale joint ventures that require significant expenditure. Examples of effective and sustainable cooperation include ongoing contacts, meetings, study visits, and the organisation of joint cultural events, which does not have to involve high costs.

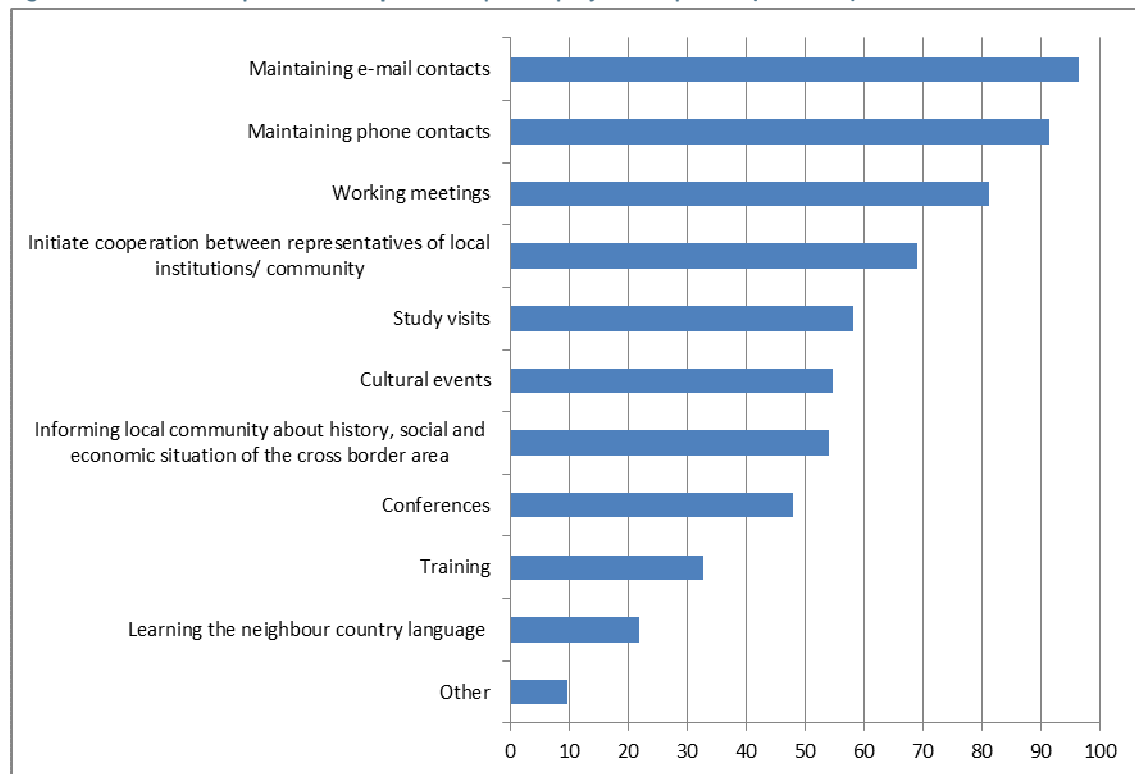
**Figure 19. Distribution of the responses achieved in relation to the statement: "Implementation of cross-border projects in a partnership is possible only in case of obtaining external funds" (data in %)**



Source: own research (n=196).

Based on the results of the questionnaire survey it can be stated that current cooperation actually takes place. Maintaining current contacts via e-mails or phone calls was declared by more than 90% of respondents, which at the same time demonstrates the durability of cooperation between partners.

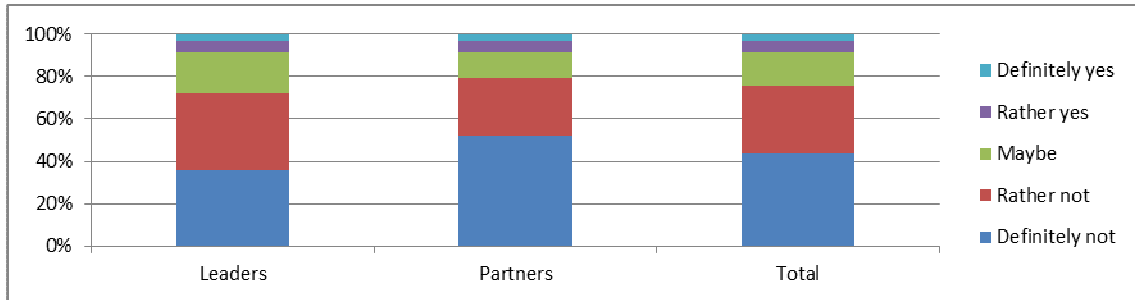
**Figure 20. Measures implemented in partnership after project completion (data in %)**



Source: own research (n=196).

Consistent with the replies to the previously discussed statements are the differences with regard to the statement: "The requirement for partnership in cross-border projects is superfluous." Less than 10% of respondents agreed with this statement, which can be considered as a dominant belief among the respondents that partnership cooperation in cross-border projects plays a fundamental role and is not only a common goal in the form of pursuit of co-financing,

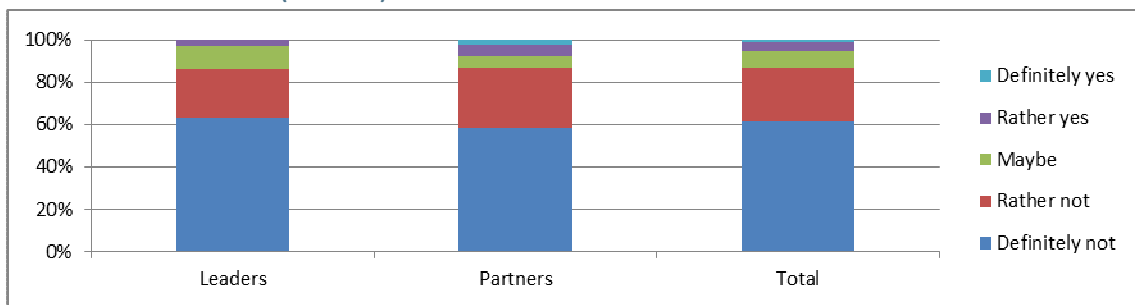
**Figure 21. Distribution of the responses achieved in relation to the statement: "The requirement for partnership in cross-border projects is superfluous" (data given in %)**



Source: own research (n=196).

Few respondents (about 5%) agreed with the statement that cooperation within the framework of the project was more declarative than factual. It is noticeable that the representatives of non-project leaders were somewhat more likely to believe this, but for this category there were only a few people who agreed with this statement and they accounted for less than 8%.

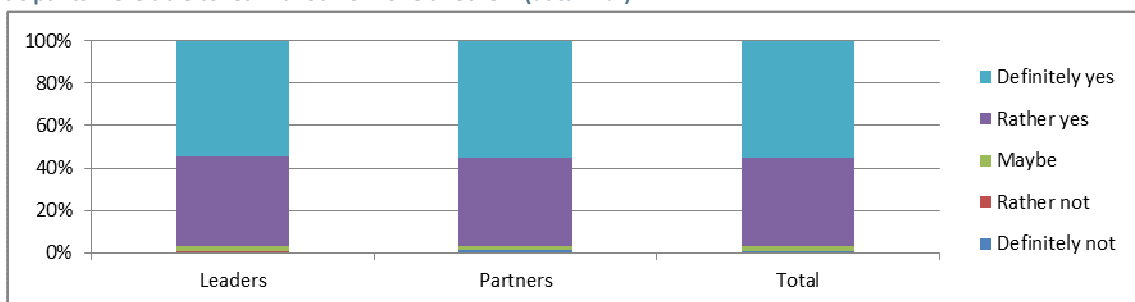
**Figure 22. Distribution of the responses achieved in relation to the statement: "Cooperation with the project partner was more declarative than factual" (data in %)**



Source: own research (n=196).

Almost all participants in the questionnaire survey agreed that thanks to the cooperation the project participants were able to learn a lot from one another.

**Figure 23. Distribution of the responses achieved in relation to the statement: "Thanks to the cooperation the project participants were able to learn a lot from one another" (data in %).**



Source: own research (n=196).

### Sustainability of project partnerships - summary

The durability and quality of the partnership cooperation carried out within the framework of the projects co-financed by the PBU 2007-2013 is to be highly assessed. Almost all the representatives of the entities implementing the projects under this Programme stated that they could learn a lot from their partners thanks to cooperation.

Partnership is seen as fundamental to the realisation of cross-border projects, as an intrinsic value of these projects, so that it is possible to achieve better results as compared to self-directed projects. After completion of the projects almost all partners continue to cooperate, at least by keeping current e-mail and telephone contacts.

The only thing that is disturbing is the fact that most of the partners (almost all of them from Belarus) are convinced that the implementation of cross-border partnership projects is possible only with the involvement of external funds.

Over 2/3 of the entities implementing the projects under the Programme have already had experience in implementing partner projects. It is noticeable, however, that relatively few respondents indicated earlier cooperation with the same partners in cross-border programmes implemented under the 2004-06 and 2007-2013 financial perspectives. A vast majority of the surveyed entities intend to undertake partnership cooperation in the framework of subsequent cross-border projects both with the same partners and with other partners. It can therefore be said that one of the most important effects of the Programme is the increase of the potential of the supported entities to implement cross-border partnership projects.

### 3.3.2. Evaluation of sustainability of the results achieved

This section of the report contains answers to the following research questions:

- Are the effects of project measures/results achieved lasting and long-term? Will they be felt also after projects' completion?

Evaluation of sustainability of the results achieved must account for their specificity. Depending on the method of classification and emphasis placed, the results can be divided into "hard" and "soft", "material" and "non-material", "measurable" and "non-measurable", "direct" and "indirect." Hard results are usually material, more easily measurable and direct, while soft results are usually non-material, more difficult to measure, or even non-measurable, and their relationship to public intervention is indirect. This means that it would be wrong to make an assessment of sustainability of soft results using the standards normally used to assess the sustainability of hard results. Since hard results are easier to observe and measure, it is easier to observe and measure their durability, but this does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that hard results are more durable.

Identifying the hard results of the Programme is a relatively simple task, given that a significant part of the projects undertaken under the Programme relies on supporting a specific infrastructure in the form of built, rebuilt, extended or upgraded facilities. Such ventures are typically characterised by high durability, apart from the investment in modern technologies (e.g. related to the IT industry). If the road, water supply or sewage system, any built-up facility has been solidly constructed with high quality materials, then they will serve the target groups for many years. However, on the other hand, the objectives of public interventions, even if they rely on infrastructure investments, cannot be limited to producing tangible results, as the infrastructure supported is intended to address specific problems. In other words, even if the results are sustainable in material terms, the public intervention will not be sustainable unless the infrastructure supported is not used in accordance with the objectives set, for example when the equipment purchased is not used due to the lack of personnel to operate it.

By making some simplicity one can conclude that, according to the logic of intervention, the results achieved at the Programme level are the sum of results achieved at the project level. Consequently, the sustainability of results at the Programme level depends on the extent to which the sustainability of results is maintained at project level. As a result, the sustainability of results at the Programme level would require prior aggregation to the Programme level of results achieved at the project level. This, in turn, would require a uniform system of project monitoring at the project level. Under the Programme, such a monitoring system was not created. Although the institutions of the implementation system provided lists of examples of indicators adequate to measure results for specific types of projects, applicants were not obliged to use them and could propose their own indicators, while also determining their own methodology for measuring them. From the perspective of the Applicant, this solution has obvious advantages because it allows for a flexible development of a performance monitoring system tailored to the specificity of the project, but in practice it prevents aggregation of results into higher levels of implementation, i.e. in terms of levels of the Measures, Priorities or the entire Programme. In other words, from an ex-post perspective, aggregation of results to higher levels of implementation is possible only if the Programme monitoring system and aggregation procedures are developed ex-ante. An additional difficulty in monitoring the results of the Programme (which from another perspective is its undoubted strength) is the variety of projects supported. Measuring very diverse projects with the same indicators could in turn lead to far-reaching simplifications or even distortions of actual results. Therefore, within the scope of this study, the attempt was made to determine the scale of sustainability of the results achieved, but we focused primarily on the qualitative assessment of this phenomenon by asking the project's representatives in the questionnaire survey open questions about the extent to which the project's results persist to date. In addition, the assessment of the durability of the results was one of the components of the case studies that were included in this report in the form of annexes. That is why it is only here that a synthetic summary of the results of case studies in relation to the sustainability of the results achieved is justified. Among the results achieved within the case study projects, the results of infrastructural projects are characterized by high durability. Examples of such investments may include projects such as:

- “Clean Water at the Bug Estuary – A Cross-Border Water Supply System for Hrubieszów and Volodymyr Volyns’kyi – STAGE I; “Clean water in the Pobuże region – Water supply cross-border system for Hrubieszów and Volodymyr-Volynskiy - STAGE II” realised by the Hrubieszow city and the city of Volodymyr-Volynskiy. The water supply network has been modernized or built under the project using modern technologies that would have been difficult to access, in particular as regards the Ukrainian party. Due to the nature of the project in principle there is no possibility to use the project results in a manner that would be inconsistent with its objectives. The results of the project are therefore characterised with high durability, as expected, since the built or

modernized waterworks, along with additional infrastructure and purchased equipment, will serve residents and other users for many years to come;

- "Treasures of the cross-border area - preserving cultural heritage" implemented by the Society of Jesus House in Stara Wieś, State Historical and Architectural Reserve of the city of Żółkiew and Brzozów Commune, consisting, among others, in the protection of historic infrastructure and the construction of tourist and pilgrimage infrastructure. As part of this project, the expected sustainability is achieved by protecting objects against the destruction of valuable cultural heritage and increasing their accessibility to visitors, thereby increasing the number of visitors. The increase in the number of visitors in Żółkiew resulted in an increase in ticket sales. On the other hand, the improvement of the financial condition of the entity managing the facilities stimulates and at the same time enables to undertake further investment stages in the future. For example, the restoration of the roof makes it possible to do the restoration of the interior of the castle in future, making it possible to equip the interior castle with museum exhibitions. This project is also a good example of how sustainable, direct, hard results consisting in investment in infrastructure result in attaining more of sustainable results. As a result of the establishment of the Information and Pilgrimage Centre in Stara Wieś, 6 permanent jobs were created, as the Centre operates not only in the summer but also in the off-season. One of these jobs was created for the artistic attaché responsible for organising cultural events with the use of assisted infrastructure including organ concerts played by the organ renewed under the project. Consequently, the sustainability of soft results has been achieved through the organisation of cyclical cultural events;
- "Infrastructural development of the Połowce - Pieszczałka road border crossing - Stage III (Polish-Belarusian border) - Powiat of Hajnówka RP - Brest District RB" implemented by the Podlaskie Voivode and the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Belarus consisting, among others, in the construction of border crossing infrastructure. The results of the project can be considered as sustainable. The project was of a long-term investment in nature and the financial analyses indicate the stability of financing for the operation and maintenance of the resulting infrastructure to be financed from the funds of the Podlaskie Voivode;
- "Development of the rescue services Poland – Ukraine within the strengthening the infrastructure of cross-border management system of natural hazard" implemented by the Powiat Office in Sokołów Podlaski, Provincial Headquarters of the State Fire Service in Sokołów Podlaski, and the Regional Board of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Ukraine in Lutsk consisting in, among others, support provided to infrastructure for fire brigade needs with equipment and purchase of rescue vehicles. It can be expected that the purchased rescue equipment will serve the partners for many years, which will permanently contribute to improving the safety of residents and other entities within the range of the operations of the fire departments supported. Investing in infrastructure in this case results in undertaking of permanent actions in the form of cooperation and exchange of experience involving annual partnership meetings of firefighter units. Common exercises, competitions, and trainings are organized, which in turn results in a lasting increase in the experience and skills of firefighters;
- "Development of partnership cooperation towards the improvement of cross-border environment protection infrastructure in the townships of Poraż and Zagórz in Poland and in the city of Horodok in Ukraine" implemented by Zagórz municipality and Horodok city consisting among others in building of sewage network. Thanks to the project realised a large part of the Zagórz municipality was connected to the sewage system, and also protected from environmental pollutants. The



results of the project are characterised by high expected sustainability, as the project's infrastructure uses modern solutions and high quality durable materials. Investments in this type of infrastructure will permanently contribute to the improvement of the natural environment in the Zagórz municipality and will also have an impact on other areas protected from the entry of pollutants into the rivers. The specialised truck used for cleaning and clearing the sewage system, so it will be kept in good condition, will strengthen the sustainability of the results. With regard to the Gródek evaluation of the sustainability of results is not possible due to the fact that they were not reached;

- "Modernization of Zoological Gardens in Zamość and Lutsk and Development of a Concept of Establishing a Recreation Zone in Rzeszów in Order to Develop Cross-border Qualified Nature Tourism" implemented by the City of Zamość, the Lutsk City Executive Committee and the City of Rzeszów, involving the extension or reconstruction of zoological infrastructure. The infrastructure supported by the project is expected to have high durability, which should additionally ensure that the infrastructure will be used for the day-to-day operations of the zoos, so that it will be necessary to continually maintain its proper condition.

As previously mentioned, the condition for the actual sustainability of the material results of projects that support a particular infrastructure is whether they contribute to permanent indirect results, which are at the same time difficult to measure and intangible. An example of the result of such a high sustainability is the increase in quality of life being undoubtedly a consequence of such projects as "Clean Water at the Bug Estuary - A Cross-Border Water Supply System for Hrubieszów and Volodymyr Volynskiy" or "Development of partnership cooperation towards the improvement of cross-border environment protection infrastructure in the townships of Poraz and Zagórz in Poland and in the city of Horodok in Ukraine" thanks to the improvement of the quality and availability of water and sewage networks. The latter of these projects is also characterized by environmental sustainability due to the reduction of waste water entering the groundwater and rivers.

Among the projects where case studies were realised there can also be found sustainable results in the form of permanent jobs, as exemplified by the project "Treasures of the cross-border area..." which resulted in the creation of 6 permanent jobs to service the resulting tourist and pilgrimage infrastructure (e.g. information desk, gourmet point, or cultural events organisation).

A sustainable effect of some projects is also the stimulation of the economic growth. An example of such a project may be a project covered by one of the case studies of a municipality consisting of comprehensive preparation of investment areas titled "Enterprise development through making investment areas of the Municipality of Lubaczów accessible and the recultivation of degraded areas of Yavoriv and Novyi Rozdil districts" implemented by the Town Municipality of Lubaczów, Lubaczów Municipality, Yavoriv District Council, Nowyi Rozdil City Council and Lviv Regional Development Institute. This is an example of a project whose results should be characterized by very high durability, and due to the long-term investment process of their occurrence can be expected only after a few years.

The lasting results, however postponed, can be expected for projects addressed to children. An example of such a project is the project "Development of alternative pre-school education system in rural communities" implemented by the Centre for Educational Initiatives (Ukraine), the Socio-Educational Association for Support of Disadvantaged and Disabled Educator in Łomża, the Volyn Resource Center in Rivne, the foundation Center for Civic Initiatives in Pereczyn and the Agency for the Development of the Region of Radziechów, consisting in the support for pre-school education. With regard to this project, the postponement of sustainability of the results in time consists in the fact that improving the quality and availability of pre-school education for children

can translate into their further development. With regard to this project, the threat to sustainability of results in the longer term may be the lack of funding in the local budgets of the districts of Ukraine to finance alternative pre-school education. However, one year after the end of the project, all the kindergartens supported by the project were still functioning. In many places local schools have included kindergartens in their structures. In addition, in a few places, the length of operation of kindergartens was extended to 8 hours, and further pre-school groups were started. Respondents to the study in the course of interviews have confirmed that they do not have any fears whether kindergartens will continue to function or not. The sustainability of the results of this type of projects is well illustrated by the words of one of the Project's representatives expressed during the in-depth interview conducted in the case study: "Our experience shows that if something is given, then it is harder to take it back and society is being activated. If a kindergarten has been opened and it has been functioning for a year or two, and even if it is only functioning six months, then the next year parents will go and knock on the proper door and say: »because my child learned to write, sing, dance, draw, play in a group, knows how to behave in one or other situation, please do not shut that kindergarten down, please give us something, please do something to make this resort operate«".

Although due to the dynamically changing reality the knowledge acquired is relatively quickly outdated, there is no doubt that projects that consist in upgrading qualifications are characterised by high sustainability. Many case study projects attach great importance to improving skills and knowledge diffusion through the organisation of training courses, workshops, but also through seminars and working meetings. An example of such a project may be "Planet of ideas - cross-border transfer of knowledge in the area of attracting investments for development of border tourism" implemented by Grodno District Unit of Social Organization "Tourism-Sport National Association" from Belarus, Department of Physical Education, Sport and Tourism of the Grodno region, Volyn Regional Entrepreneurship Support Fund and Center for Promotion of Innovation and Development (Poland). Another example may be the umbrella project "Integrated Promotion of Tourism Opportunities and Cultural-Historical Heritage of Lviv Region, Podkarpackie and Lublin Voivodeships" whose permanent result was also the transfer of knowledge in the field of tourism industry development, which is provided among others by organisations of trainings, workshops, seminars.

An important result of projects characterised by high durability which is at the same time difficult to measure is the shaping of attitudes towards obtaining funds for the implementation of projects and towards the European Union. Among the representatives of the partners who took part in interviews conducted in case studies, there was a common belief that the implementation of the projects poses positive attitudes towards the European Union, while stimulating entrepreneurial attitudes expressed in the desire to raise funds for the implementation of further projects. Consequently, improvement of the potential of the project developers to carry out further projects is characterised by sustainability. Implementing European projects often results in permanent change of behaviours, for example by introducing specific organisational management procedures or modifying existing procedures, or managing the organisation's work on a project basis, regardless of whether or not a given area of business is funded by European funds. An example of such a project is "Development of the cross-border economic cooperation of Białystok-Suwałki Subregion and Hrodna oblast in Belarus and also of Krosno-Przemysl Subregion and Zakarpattia oblast in Ukraine" whose sustainable result is dissemination of the concept of cross-border cooperation in the regions covered by the project, thanks to which both local governments and entrepreneurs are more interested in the further development of cross-border economic contacts. Institutional capacity for further cross-border cooperation initiatives has also been strengthened through the implementation of the umbrella project "Support of cross-border local communities initiatives in the Białowieża Forest Euroregion". Cooperation that started in the Białowieża Forest will be continued. There are new ideas that will be developed. A project for the establishment of a permanent cross-border cooperation center in

Hajnówka is being developed, which could be led by a lead partner of the umbrella project, i.e. the Association of the Self-governments of Białowieża Forest Euroregion.

It is relatively difficult to achieve sustainability of results in the case of undertakings consisting in developing a concept of something. An example of this may be the idea of creating a recreation zone with elements of the zoo in Rzeszów as part of the project "Modernization of Zoological Gardens in Zamość and Lutsk and Development of a Concept of Establishing a Recreation Zone in Rzeszów in Order to Develop Cross-border Qualified Nature Tourism" or the concept of restoration of E-40 waterway on the Dnieper-Vistula section within the framework of the project implemented by the Republican unitary maintenance and construction enterprise 'Dniepr-Bug Waterway', Local Foundation for the Promotion of International Dialogue and Cooperation Interaction, Brest Regional Executive Committee, Marshal's Office of the Lubelskie Voivodship, Association for Regional and Local Development *Progress*, Volyn Regional Department of Water Resources, and the Volyn Institute of Scientists and Innovators. Of course, such projects may have very high durability, but in order for this to happen the developed concept must be implemented, which may require regulating ownership issues, obtaining appropriate permits and, above all, obtaining the appropriate funds. For example, the cost of reconstructing the E-40 waterway in the Dnieper-Vistula section is estimated at around EUR 12 billion. Such a high cost of the whole investment makes it impossible to realise it in a relatively short period of time, but it has to be spread over many stages, which can take up to several decades. The end result, which is so distant in time, may in turn involve the difficulty of finding the right resources, which can first be used for investment to achieve the expected results over a shorter period of time. In respect to part of the project "Modernization of Zoological Gardens in Zamość and Lutsk and Development of a Concept of Establishing a Recreation Zone in Rzeszów in Order to Develop Cross-border Qualified Nature Tourism" the condition of sustainability of the results to be obtained on the side of the City of Rzeszów is to create a designed recreation zone with elements of the zoo. If the zone is created, then the results of the project will be characterised by high sustainability. The creation of the zone will contribute to the increase of Rzeszów's tourist attractiveness and will contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of its inhabitants and those living in the surrounding area due to the creation of additional leisure facilities. In case of the absence of that zone, the sustainability of the results will not occur at all. Unfortunately due to the difficulties of acquiring land for investment, consisting primarily of the need to pay high compensation for expropriation, the realisation of this investment is likely to be discontinued or at least significantly delayed, which in turn may result in the degradation of the developed documentation. However, also projects that consist in concept development may have a high degree of sustainability in terms of results achieved. In this respect, the example of good practice is the project "Clean Water at the Bug Estuary ..." characterised by very high durability, thanks to obtaining funding under the Programme first to develop the concept of construction of the water supply network, and then funds were raised for the construction itself. In other words, projects that consist in concept development can be characterized by high durability in the case of acquiring funds to execute an investment in accordance with the concept developed. At the same time, it demonstrates the appropriateness of defining project selection criteria in a way that allows to reward projects that consist in implementation of investments on the basis of concepts that have been funded by European funds.

When analysing and interpreting the answers of the questionnaire survey respondents to the open question, what results of the project are held to date, it should be borne in mind that the results obtained cannot provide the basis for conclusions about the sustainability of the results achieved, but only make it possible to find out what results are primarily seen by project developers in a spontaneous way. In other words, it is not possible to determine the actual sustainability of the results on the basis of the survey, but it is only possible to know the opinions expressed by the respondents. The frequency of categorised responses is below, but this has been

done only for reference purposes. The categorised responses do not equate to the statement that only those results that were indicated by the respondents occurred in the case of projects realised. For example, most respondents did not indicate any answer to this question, which obviously does not mean that their projects did not produce lasting results, but rather because they were reluctant to enter their own answers in the questionnaire survey.

Given the fact that the hard results are the most easily visible, one can hypothesize that they will most often be indicated by respondents. In addition, among the most frequently reported results, those that relate to the sustainability of cross-border cooperation can be expected as the most often indicated, because it is a distinctive feature of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007-2013 from other programmes co-financed by European funds, but also because every project supported under this Programme had to be implemented in partnership and cooperation within the partnership had to be one of the core elements of the project. On the basis of the categorisation of the answers given to the open question, these hypotheses can be considered as confirmed, while the issues of cooperation, and secondly the issues of infrastructure, equipment, and equipment, are at the forefront. Such a distribution of responses can be justified by the fact that each supported project had to establish a partnership cooperation, but not every project had to rely on infrastructure investments. However on the other hand maintaining cooperation requires commitment from partners, so the sustainability of partnership cooperation is not obvious. As a consequence, the frequent indication of the sustainability of cooperation as a result of projects can be considered as a success of the Programme. It is also noticeable that also during in-depth interviews with project leaders in case studies, the fundamental importance of cooperation within the projects under this Programme has been emphasized. It should be noted that the responses from the questionnaire survey included in this category concerned not only the sustainability of contacts and cooperation between partners, but also the interaction between the beneficiaries of the project's results, e.g. the research community, and the undertaking of joint research projects, communities involved in culture, entrepreneurs, local NGOs, etc. Issues related to the implementation of improvements, improvement of procedures, the introduction of new services or improvement of the quality of existing services are relatively often mentioned. On this basis it can be stated that the project developers see not only the tangible results of the implemented projects, but also the intangible results that are difficult to measure, which are closely related to the project objectives set. This is also confirmed by the responses that indicate increased knowledge and competences gained during project implementation, either by project team staff or by final beneficiary employees, such as university staff upgrading their research competencies, doctors, rescuers, officials, etc. Internet portals created and still maintained or project websites were also indicated as sustainable results of projects. It was also pointed out that the information or promotional activities of a certain range initiated within the project would continue resulting in increased knowledge of the recipients. Some respondents also pointed to the sustainability of the events, training sessions, workshops, meetings, study visits, etc. initiated by the project that are still organised. Responses categorised under other issues were provided by few respondents

**Table 33. Categories of answers given by the respondents of the CAWI/CATI questionnaire to the open question: "What are the results of the project that last so far?"**

Category of answers	Frequency
No answer	66
Contacts/cooperation between partners/continuation of partnership cooperation/ contacts with investors/business contacts/contacts of local communities within established partnerships	37
Infrastructure (built/rebuilt/supported facilities)	30

Purchased equipment	30
Introduced procedures/organisational solutions/introduction of new services/improvement of quality of service provided	26
All of them	15
Acquired knowledge/competences (of project staff/people trained)	14
Website created within the project/project website	13
Organisation of events/training/workshops/meetings/study visits	11
Information and promotion activities/increasing knowledge of residents/potential users/clients	10
Developed strategy/developed expertise	9
Articles in scientific journals/scientific publications/research results	4
Developed concept of technological project/project documentation	4
Commemorative/information boards/promotional materials	4
Increase in the number of visitors	4
Economic development of the area supported/creation of new jobs	2
Implementation of research results	1
Better energy efficiency	1
Increase in the attractiveness of the city	1

Source: own research (n=196).

On the basis of the case studies realised, it is also worth trying to identify conditions conducive to sustainability of results. As such a condition there may be considered the inclusion of the scope of the project in the current operations of the project developer, i.e. if the implementation of the project contributes to widening the scope or enhancing the quality of services provided so far by the project developer. For example, if a project involves the extension or reconstruction of an infrastructure of a zoo, then the sustainability of the results of such a project can be expected because the project developer will ensure the sustainability of those results as part of his current zoo operation as in the case of the project "Modernization of Zoological Gardens in Zamość and Lutsk and Development of a Concept of Establishing a Recreation Zone in Rzeszów in Order to Develop Cross-border Qualified Nature Tourism". One of the tasks of the authorities of the Sokołowski Powiat is to ensure the security of the population within the coverage area, which guarantees the sustainability of the results of the project "Development of the rescue services Poland – Ukraine within the strengthening the infrastructure of cross-border management system of natural hazard". In financial terms, project partners on both sides of the border have committed themselves to secure in their annual budgets the funds to carry out their tasks in order to ensure the sustainability of the results achieved through the project. The amount of these funds is sufficient to maintain the proper condition of the building and equipment supported by the project.

A similar situation applies to projects involving, for example, the expansion of a water or sewage network, as exemplified by projects such as: "Clean Water at the Bug Estuary - A Cross-Border Water Supply System for Hrubieszów and Volodymyr Volynskiy - STAGE I"; "Clean water in the Pobuże region – Water supply cross-border system for Hrubieszów and Volodymyr-Volynskiy – STAGE II", and "Development of partnership cooperation towards the improvement of cross-border environment protection infrastructure in the townships of Poraż and Zagórz in Poland and in the city of Horodok in Ukraine", "Infrastructural development of the Połowce - Pieszczałka road border crossing - Stage III (Polish-Belarusian border) - Powiat of Hajnówka RP - Brest District RB" because providing access to adequate quality of water and sewerage infrastructure is the primary task of units subordinate to the partners.

Another favourable condition for sustainability of results is the appropriate potential and stable situation of the project developer. In this respect, the sustainability of results can be expected in the case of projects implemented by public sector entities. The above-mentioned projects may serve as examples, i.e. "Modernization of Zoological Gardens in Zamość and Lutsk and Development of a Concept of Establishing a Recreation Zone in Rzeszów in Order to Develop Cross-border Qualified Nature Tourism", "Clean Water at the Bug Estuary - A Cross-Border Water Supply System for Hrubieszów and Volodymyr Volynskiy - STAGE I"; "Clean water in the Pobuże region – Water supply cross-border system for Hrubieszów and Volodymyr-Volynskiy – STAGE II" and "Development of partnership cooperation towards the improvement of cross-border environment protection infrastructure in the townships of Poraż and Zagórz in Poland and in the city of Horodok in Ukraine", as well as number of other other ventures such as: "Infrastructural development of the Połowce - Pieszczałka road border crossing - Stage III (Polish-Belarusian border) - Powiat of Hajnówka RP - Brest District RB" or "Development of the rescue services Poland – Ukraine within the strengthening the infrastructure of cross-border management system of natural hazard". Another example showing that a stable situation of partners (i.e. the Białystok Foundation for Personnel Training (BFKK) which has been in operation for more than 20 years, and the Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno, and the Ukrainian Fund of Transborder Cooperation and Special Economic Zones Development) is the guarantee of sustainability of the results is the project "Development of the cross-border economic cooperation of Białystok-Suwałki Subregion and Hrodna oblast in Belarus and also of Krosno-Przemysl Subregion and Zakarpattia oblast in Ukraine". The sustainability of results is also favoured by the perception of a cofinanced project as part of a larger undertaking, e.g. as a step of larger investment or a cyclical event. An example of a project which is a part of a multi-stage investment may be "Modernization of Zoological Gardens in Zamość and Lutsk and Development of a Concept of Establishing a Recreation Zone in Rzeszów in order to Develop Cross-border Qualified Nature Tourism". In order to strengthen the sustainability of the project the city of Zamość and the city of Lutsk are planning to further refurbish and expand the zoos and equip them with new species of animals. However, it will depend on the possibility of obtaining external funds. The project on the extension of the Zamość zoo was included in the *Development Strategy for the Lubelskie Voivodehip for the years 2014-2020* as a priority project. In order to reinforce the results of the project the Luck city authorities have announced improvements to the quality of the infrastructure on the way to the zoo (e.g. road signposts, signposts informing how to get to the zoo). It was also announced that further modernisation works will be undertaken, including the exchange of 13 paddocks. Taking further actions is necessary to further enhance the attractiveness of the zoo. For this purpose it is necessary to enlarge the zoo area and equip it with further species of animals. In addition, the Lutsk authorities plan to implement other tourism infrastructure projects that will synergistically reinforce the effects of the project being evaluated, as well as the sustainability of the results, by increasing the attractiveness of the city.

In the case of projects "Clean Water at the Bug Estuary – A Cross-Border Water Supply System for Hrubieszów and Volodymyr Volynskiy – STAGE I; "Clean water in the Pobuże region – Water supply cross-border system for Hrubieszów and Volodymyr-Volynskiy – STAGE II" realised by Hrubieszów and Volodymyr-Volynskiy, it is worth mentioning that the strengthening of the sustainability of the results was supported by the cofinancing provided under the Programme, first to finance the project consisting in elaboration of technical documentation, and then co-financing in the next competition of the project consisting in implementation of the concept developed. The perception of the project as a stage of a larger investment makes the project developer look forward to taking further action, which at the same time fosters the sustainability of the activities realised so far. On the other hand, with regard to projects involving the organization of cultural events, cyclicity can be regarded as a basic prerequisite for the sustainability of results. The umbrella project "Support of cross-border local communities initiatives in the Białowieża Forest Euroregion" in which initiatives were



undertaken involving cyclically organised joint events of folklore groups and other cultural and sports events may serve as an example. Also, a stable political and economic situation plays a very important role in the context of ensuring the sustainability of results. It seems, however, that after the political turmoil in Ukraine in the first half of 2014, the political and economic situation can be described as stabilized.

### Sustainability of the results achieved - summary

On the basis of the data collected and analysed during the study, the results of projects cofinanced under the Programme can generally be defined as durable and long-term, and can be expected to be continued beyond the projects' completion. Primarily the so-called hard results of projects that rely on investment in infrastructure are durable. Robustly constructed infrastructure using high quality materials and high quality equipment purchased through projects should function for many years. For this reason, it is also possible to recognise as sustainable the so-called soft results of infrastructure projects such as improving the quality of life of residents and other users of the supported infrastructure, improving the environment condition, improving security, access to medical care, improving access to border areas, increasing investment attractiveness and stimulating economic growth, increasing tourist attractiveness, jobs creation, or organisation of cultural events with the use of supported infrastructure.

Sustainability is also characteristic of the so-called soft projects, involving investment in human capital, that are cofinanced under the Programme. Sustainable results of this type of projects include further organisation of meetings, trainings, workshops, seminars, working meetings resulting in increased knowledge, experience and skills of the participants.

An important result of projects characterised by high durability which is at the same time difficult to measure is the shaping of attitudes towards obtaining funds for the implementation of projects and towards the European Union as the source of these funds.

Relatively the lowest durability of results have the projects consisting in development of the concept of something, if the development of the concept does not follow further actions leading to the acquisition of funds for the implementation of this concept.

Based on the results of the questionnaire survey carried out among the beneficiaries' representatives, it was found that the results most frequently indicated by the respondents as sustainable concerned further cooperation between the partners and maintaining the contacts established through the implementation of the projects both among the people involved in the implementation of the projects as well as local communities such as the business environment and the environment in the field of culture or school. Among the most

frequently listed as durable, there were also results concerning the use of supported infrastructure and equipment purchased through the implementation of projects. The most frequently mentioned long-term results include the introduction of procedures and organisational solutions leading to improved quality of functioning of the supported entities, including the improvement of the quality of the services provided.

The inclusion of the scope of the project in the current activity of the project developer can be considered as a factor contributing to the sustainability of the results achieved, so that the sustainability of the results is assimilated automatically in the course of the daily tasks of the given entity. Another factor supporting the sustainability of the results is the appropriate potential and stable situation of the project beneficiary, so that there is no risk that after the implementation of the project a supported entity ceases to conduct its business. The sustainability of results is also favoured by the perception of a cofinanced project as part of a larger undertaking, e.g. as a step of larger investment or a cyclical event. The perception of the project as a stage of a larger investment makes the project developer look forward to taking further action, which at the same time fosters the sustainability of the activities realised so far. On the other hand, with regard to projects involving the organisation of cultural events, cyclicity can be regarded as a basic prerequisite for the sustainability of results.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Realisation of assumed product indicators for the Programme, achieving results without reference to baseline or target values

Conclusion: As a result of the implementation of the Programme, the target product indicators were achieved, as they were defined as the number of projects in each measure. The second of the specified effects were percentage shares of projects assigned to particular measures in the total pool of funds disbursed under the Programme. In this case, the expected level of support for the projects in the individual measures was also reached. Measuring the results of the Programme was much more difficult for several reasons. Fundamental difficulty was the analysis of financial statements, which contained information on the results of individual projects. Despite the completion of the projects, final reports were missing for more than 20% of the projects, so the values of indicators are only approximate. The second difficulty was the absence of baseline and target values for the main indicators, which made it difficult to say with certainty whether the achieved results were satisfactory from the point of view of intervention objectives. The third difficulty was the considerable dispersion of the indicators reported by the beneficiaries and the lack of common indicators that would be uniformly reported during the Programme implementation at the level of all projects.

Recommendation: A fundamental change in the implementation of the Programme in the years 2014-2020 should be to identify results at the Programme level with an indicate the baseline and target values for them, which will allow to assess of the scale of results achieved with regard to intervention objectives. There should also be introduced a separate section in the reporting system on indicators aggregated at the Programme level to show the participation of individual projects in achieving the Programme objectives.

### 2. Strengthening cross-border cooperation and transfer of experience in the cross-border region

Conclusion: The implementation of the projects allowed for exchange of experience between organisations which often did not cooperate and did not know the solutions adopted by potential partners despite their proximity. The awareness of similar problems, challenges and needs on both sides of the border increases, people are convinced to one another and more and more willing to take advantage of opportunities provided by projects implemented. These partnerships are created and strengthened through joint conferences, seminars and study trips. Organisations learn cross-border partnerships and cooperation, for example in labour market activation, investor support, research collaboration or health care, or increasing security in border traffic. These experiences are important because progressive joint planning of investments takes place.(e.g. Multi-annual Investment Plan of Hrubieszow and Volodymyr Volynskyi in the area of water supply preceding the preparation of technical documentation for the most urgent investments or the improvement of five key areas of municipal economy (water-sewage, heating, collection and disposal of waste, and organization of urban transport in a joint project of Chełm and Lutsk). Especially valuable is the cooperation of central administration institutions, e.g. customs, which significantly improves fluency and safety in border traffic.

A number of activities that demonstrate the maturity of the beneficiaries in organising a partnership have been undertaken within the framework of the projects. Good practice in this case is the ability to creatively apply the experience gained in previous projects. As a result, partnerships are gaining strength and acquiring new competences, and by better role sharing, they effectively use the strengths of each partner. An example may be

the projects "Clean Water at the Bug Estuary – A Cross-Border Water Supply System for Hrubieszów and Volodymyr Volyns'kyi – STAGE I"; "Clean water in the Pobuże region – Water supply cross-border system for Hrubieszów and Volodymyr-Volynskyi – STAGE II". The case study of these projects is an illustration of the evolution of the "learning partnership" which learns the successful implementation of projects co-financed by this Programme. The information obtained during the interviews with project representatives shows that on the basis of the experience in implementing the first stage, a number of improvements have been made in project preparation and implementation at the second stage, and that the Project Leader being aware to have more experience in the implementation of European projects, as well as holding the responsibility for the project as a whole, dealt not only with the implementation of own tasks assigned, but also provided an important support in the implementation of the Partner's tasks.

### 3. Properly targeted support from the point of view of target groups and the needs of the border region

Conclusion: All the target groups benefit from the Programme's effects, primarily - as planned in the Programme's objectives - inhabitants of the border regions to which all the projects are targeted. Coherence between the diagnosed needs of the cross-border region in individual projects and the set objectives can also be confirmed on the basis of the programme documentation. At the same time, the projects fit clearly into the objectives set out in the Measures. There was no shortage of projects in any type, and all types of projects covered by the Programme were implemented. It is worth noting that the diagnosis presented in the Programme allowed for considerable flexibility in terms of going into details at the level of specific projects. Thanks to this, different projects adapted to the needs of the local community were available. Especially effective support was used in terms of the health service sector and in support of SMEs. As many as 1,014 of the existing enterprises have received support under the projects and there were also 453 new enterprises established.

Implementation of the Programme has positively influenced the development processes of the border regions. There has been improvement among others in infrastructure, security, which can generally be defined as improving the quality of life and improving the conditions for economic development. The changes observed show that the Programme has a positive impact on the lives of local communities and target groups. All beneficiaries and target groups provided for in the Programme have received the support planned.

Recommendation: It is necessary to maintain spatial and subjective scope in terms of target groups of support recipients in the Programme. The value of the Programme that needs to be maintained is the considerable flexibility of the support categories, resulting in a variety of projects and a high level of adaptability to the needs of local communities. Small and medium-sized enterprises and health care providers, especially in view of the health problems diagnosed in the cross-border area (epidemiological risk of tuberculosis, increased incidence of cancer), are important beneficiaries of the support.

### 4. Demand for projects in all core areas of the economy

Conclusion: The implemented projects cover all basic areas of the economy and represent all sectors identified in the Programme as representing the areas requiring support: small and medium-sized enterprises, tourism, road, water and sewer infrastructure, environmental protection and crisis management, border infrastructure, health systems, social and cultural sphere. The results of the CAWI/CATI survey show that the beneficiaries'

activities vary widely and that support needs in cross-border regions are reported from many sectors and segments of the economy. A similar situation is expected in the 2014-2020 programming period.

Recommendation: It is important to maintain the current broad catalogue of objectives and the arrangement of priorities and measures in order to enable applicants to implement similarly broad, complex and thematically diverse projects. At the same time, it is important to emphasize the importance of promoting the results of complex projects among the broadest possible audience of recipients of the support and prospective applicants in the current perspective.

## 5. Socio-cultural dimension as an important added value

Conclusion: The visible added value of the Programme was the socio-cultural dimension of the projects realised. The implementation of the projects has contributed to the dissemination of knowledge among citizens about the historical, social and economic situation of cross-border areas and the knowledge of neighbouring languages.

Recommendation: The projects that have already been implemented should be promoted, indicating the additional socio-cultural values that have been achieved through their implementation. The effects obtained should be cultivated and strengthened, also through the implementation of further projects in this field. The socio-cultural aspect should be constantly present in the information materials developed by the institutions implementing the Programme and by the beneficiaries themselves.

## 6. Horizontal policies that are realised *implicite*

Conclusion: The projects implemented within the Programme realised horizontal policies of the European Union in various scope. Some projects explicitly addressed sustainable development issues, such as environmental projects or projects that have created infrastructure for people with disabilities. There were, however, projects which, for example, equalized women's opportunities in the labour market through vocational training, but were not identified by beneficiaries as in line with horizontal policies due to low awareness of the full significance and scope of horizontal policies.

## 7. Beautiful sisters vs half-sisters - the strength and institutional capacity of alliances being established

Conclusion: Although most project organisations are looking for temporary alliances in order to meet specific goals, the projects that have been implemented so far have contributed to the creation of basis for alliances. The most common alliances are beautiful sisters, half-sisters and shaking umbrellas. Beautiful sisters are an alliance in which the partners involved are affluent and share the benefits of the projects together. Dominance of this type of alliance among implemented projects suggests that strong organisations have the greatest institutional and economic capacity (own contribution) to acquire and implement projects in the Programme. Half-sisters, the second type in terms of frequency, are much less in quantity. This is the type of alliance that is established as an answer to the difficulty of functioning in a cross-border region, e.g. infrastructure deprivation resulting from a peripheral location. Similarly, in the case of shaking umbrellas, the third type of alliance in terms of frequency among the analysed projects. Organisations that are suffering from problems in the cross-border region and cannot afford to work on projects from other sources for a variety of reasons are far more numerous than potential beautiful sisters, but the latter are more effective in applying for funding from the

Programme. This means that there is a need to limit competition between stronger and weaker organisations on economic and institutional terms.

Recommendation: Consideration should be given to possible division of allocations in individual measures to separate envelopes designed to support partnerships established with organisations with higher income potential, which would also be required to make higher own contributions than partners with lower income potential. Under Polish conditions a clear division criterion may be the G ratio value for the municipalities that are the seat of a given organisation.

## 8. Dependence of the implementation of projects on the support of the Programme funds

Conclusion: Based on the analysis of the CAWI/CATI programme documentation and surveys, it can be concluded that the effects without the involvement of the Programme or less involvement of funds would be much smaller and the process of improving the development of cross-border areas of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine would be more slower. The only thing that is disturbing is the fact that most of the partners (almost all of them from Belarus) are convinced that the implementation of cross-border partnership projects is possible only with the involvement of external funds. This attitude of the participants results in over-subscription of applications to the Programme, most of which should be implemented without waiting for the support. The prospect of being able to obtain grant funds urges to postpone the investment needed until new competitions are launched. The thing that is particularly worrying is the dependence of beneficiaries on the resources of the Programme in the context of their financial condition, since - on the basis of the analysis of alliances - in a large part they can be described as wealthy.

Recommendation: It is necessary to identify among beneficiaries of the Programme the organisations that use a variety of sources of funding in the projects they realise (including those based on their own income potential, public-private partnerships or commercial sources), and to organise seminars on alternative funding opportunities to support the Programme's funds' effectiveness use, possibility of creating financial assemblies and basing financing of projects on various financial resources. Seminars should be based on the experience of the Programme participants so that the examples presented there are as relevant as possible to the situation of other beneficiaries and potential applicants. In parallel with the educational campaign, it is also appropriate to introduce criteria that explicitly give priority to projects of fundamental importance to the local community or economy, which are implemented for the first time and could not be realised without the support, and also to award projects that apply for lower than the maximum level of cofinancing. The recommendation is consistent with the previous one regarding the creation of separate financial envelopes for organisations with different financial standing and making the level of cofinancing dependant on the level of development of the municipality in which the organisation is located. The modification of the criteria will result in the sifting of infrastructure projects, whose commercial potential allows to implement them from other funds (e.g. private, commercial sources) and increasing the availability of funds in the Programme for organisations of lesser economic strength. The priority will be given to projects that - when benefiting from the differentiated funds - will find additional source of funding under the Programme, not the main one.

## 9. Long duration of the evaluation process and project selection

Conclusion: the project selection system applied in the Programme proved to be successful as it allowed to select the right number of projects that contributed to the objectives of the Programme and to use almost the



entire allocation provided for the Programme. This process, however, was quite long (lasting over 4 years) and complex. Applicants, especially Ukrainian and Belarusian, considered the rules of application difficult. The main point of criticism was the need to submit a complete application documentation along with all the attachments. The prolongation of the application process was also related to the appraisal of applications by the EvC and then verification and acceptance of the ranking list adopted by the EvC by the JMC. The large number of applications that went through the substantive assessment required the involvement of a larger number of assessors who were recruited during the calls for proposals. Beneficiaries have assessed the application process as complicated but fair and friendly, which should be linked to the great support they had received from the JTS when submitting proposals.

Recommendation: one should strive to shorten the project selection process by appropriately early recruiting experts evaluating projects and eliminating one of the overlapping stages of the project selection - either the functioning of the EvC or the approval of a ranking list by the JMC. It would also be good to simplify the application process for the period 2014-2020 by introducing submission of the project concept first. In the 2014-2020 period, likewise in the period 2007-2013, the JTS should conduct a large information and training campaign for potential applicants.

#### **10. Projects implementation encountered procedural difficulties that could be overcome with the support of the JTS and thanks to the flexible rules approved by the JMC**

Conclusion: the vast majority of projects selected for implementation have been successfully completed, and most projects have achieved the results planned. Project implementation time was shorter than the duration of the entire project selection process in the Programme. The Programme's good practice was to pre-finance project activities. The biggest implementation difficulties were related to tender procedures (in particular in Ukraine and Belarus where applying the PRAG was required in addition to national legislation), exchange rate risk management, and complexity and long waiting times for verification and acceptance of financial statements and settlements. These difficulties have largely been overcome with the support of the JTS and the JMC's flexible attitude to the approval of project changes. At the same time, the need to accept many types of changes in projects by the JMC unnecessarily prolonged the whole process.

Recommendation: The support provided by the JTS and the flexible approach to project modifications, as well as the pre-financing principle, should be maintained. It is worthwhile, however, to make it possible to adjust the schedule of tranche payments to the project schedule. More decision-making powers should be delegated to the JTS so it approves changes to projects. The experience of the 2007-2013 period which has helped to offset the adverse effects of exchange rate risk carried by the beneficiaries should also be taken into account.

#### **11. Need to simplify reporting and settlement procedures**

Conclusion: A certain difficulty in the implementation of the project are complicated procedures concerning the project settlement, including the need to put the same data in different annexes, which in turn poses a risk of committing errors in the adjustment of the data contained in all the documents (need to remember and consider the introduction of amendments in various places). Significant difficulty for beneficiaries was reporting on the implementation of the project in English, so that some of the reports were incomprehensible.

Recommendation: This problem could be solved by the introduction of a simplified generator of payment applications in which the repeated tables would be filled automatically, or at least a form drawn up in a

spreadsheet with appropriately defined formulas thanks to which part of the calculations could be carried out in an automatic way. It is also postulated to move away from English as the primary language of reporting to the national languages.

## 12. Information and promotion activities were successful in promoting the Programme

Conclusion: Information about the calls for proposals proved effective as it generated more than 800 projects, of which only 117 were selected for funding. Beneficiaries underlined that the Programme is identified in the support area not only by those directly involved in it. A wide catalogue of promotional activities was used, both at the Programme level and in the individual projects. The main source of information about the Programme was the project website. Presentation of projects and their effects has been mostly done in English, both in carefully prepared and interesting studies such as regional and thematic publications, and in the album project released in 2015. This type of publications are not available in the applicant's national languages. Nevertheless, despite the full implementation of the information and promotion activities planned, the beneficiaries pointed out that it was extremely difficult to get interested the media in the Programme, despite the organisation of the annual Cross-border Forum of Journalists. The media expressed interest in projects and the Programme in the vast majority of cases only on the initiative of the JTS and beneficiaries, and very rarely on their own initiative. Only some themes, such as kindergartens in rural areas created within projects, aroused the media unassisted interest.

Recommendation: in the next programming period similar information and promotion activities should be carried out as in the years 2007-2013, as they effectively "promoted" the Programme. However, promotion should also be carried out in the national languages of the countries covered by the Programme. This will certainly contribute to a better knowledge of the effects of the Programme.



## 4.1. Table of recommendations

Table 34. Table of recommendations

Problem	Significance of the problem	Conclusion	Recommendation	Method of implementation	Expected effect	Addressee	Possible deadline for implementation
Programme results without possibility of reference to baseline or target values	Very high	Measuring the results of the Programme was very difficult for several reasons. Fundamental difficulty was the analysis of financial statements which contained information on the results of individual projects. Despite the completion of the projects, final reports were missing for more than 20% of the projects, so the values of indicators are only approximate. The second difficulty was the absence of baseline and target values for the main indicators, which made it difficult to say with certainty whether the achieved results were satisfactory from the point of view of intervention objectives. The third difficulty was the considerable dispersion of the indicators reported by the beneficiaries and the lack of common indicators that would be uniformly reported during the Programme implementation at the level of all projects and unambiguously aggregated.	A fundamental change in the implementation of the Programme in the years 2014-2020 should be to identify results at the Programme level with an indicate the baseline and target values for them, which will allow to assess of the scale of results achieved with regard to intervention objectives. There should also be introduced a separate section in the reporting system on indicators aggregated at the Programme level to show the participation of individual projects in achieving the Programme objectives.	Records in the Programme documentation and rules for the calls of proposals. Modification of reporting system in projects	Possibility of assessing the degree of realisation of the assumed objectives of the Programme.	JMA JMC	The fastest possible.

Problem	Significance of the problem	Conclusion	Recommendation	Method of implementation	Expected effect	Addressee	Possible deadline for implementation
Huge needs for support in all core areas of the economy	High	The projects completed cover all key areas of the economy and represent all sectors identified in the Programme as representative of the areas requiring support; there is still great interest in activities analogous to those implemented in the Programme.	It is important to maintain the current broad catalogue of objectives and the arrangement of priorities and measures in order to enable applicants to implement similarly broad, complex and thematically diverse projects. At the same time, it is important to emphasize the importance of promoting the results of completed projects (in national languages) among the broadest possible audience of recipients of the support and prospective applicants in the current perspective in order to strengthen the effectiveness of subsequent projects by referring to best practices.	Records in the Programme documentation and rules for the calls of proposals.	Improving quality of life and socio-economic situation in the cross-border region.	JMA JMC	Continuous
Disproportion of economic power and institutional capacity in forming alliances of different types	High	In spite of the relatively short time, alliance framing has already been formed between partners. The most common alliances are beautiful sisters, half-sisters and shaking umbrellas. Beautiful sisters are an alliance in which the partners involved are affluent and share the benefits of the projects together. Dominance of this type of alliance among implemented projects suggests that strong organisations have the	Consideration should be given to possible division of allocations in individual measures to separate envelopes designed to support partnerships established with organisations with higher income potential, which would also be required to make higher own contributions than partners with lower income potential. Under Polish conditions a clear division criterion may be the G ratio value for the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Records in the Programme documentation,</li> <li>Modification of competition procedures</li> </ul>	Improving quality and durability of alliances in the cross-border region.	JMA JMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuous</li> <li>Modification of competition procedures (to be considered) - at the stage of the next call for proposals following the assessment of the number of projects submitted under previously</li> </ul>

Problem	Significance of the problem	Conclusion	Recommendation	Method of implementation	Expected effect	Addressee	Possible deadline for implementation
		greatest institutional and economic capacity (own contribution) to acquire and implement projects in the Programme. Half-sisters, the second type in terms of frequency, are much less in quantity. This is the type of alliance that is established as an answer to the difficulty of functioning in a cross-border region, e.g. infrastructure deprivation resulting from a peripheral location. Similarly, in the case of shaking umbrellas, the third type of alliance in terms of frequency among the analysed projects. This means that there is a need to limit competition between stronger and weaker organisations on economic and institutional terms.	municipalities that are the seat of a given organisation.				existing partnerships in the currently closed call for proposals.
Dependence of the implementation of projects on the support of the Programme funds	High	Based on the analysis of the CAWI/CATI programme documentation and surveys, it can be concluded that the effects without the involvement of the Programme or less involvement of funds would be much smaller and the process of improving the development of cross-border areas of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine would be more	It is necessary to identify among beneficiaries of the Programme those organisations that use a variety of sources of funding in the projects they realise (including those based on their own income potential, public-private partnerships or commercial sources), and to organise seminars devoted to the possibilities of combining funds from the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modification of competition procedures</li> <li>• Promotion and information</li> </ul>	Increased availability of funds from the Programme for applicants who need support due to problems with their business/operations in the cross-	JMA JMC	Continuous.

Problem	Significance of the problem	Conclusion	Recommendation	Method of implementation	Expected effect	Addressee	Possible deadline for implementation
		<p>slower. The only thing that is disturbing is the fact that most of the partners (almost all of them from Belarus) are convinced that the implementation of cross-border partnership projects is possible only with the involvement of external funds. This attitude of the participants results in over-subscription of applications to the Programme, which in significant part should be implemented without waiting for the support. The prospect of being able to obtain grant funds urges to postpone the investment needed until new competitions are launched. The thing that is particularly worrying is the dependence of beneficiaries on the resources of the Programme in the context of their financial condition, since - on the basis of the analysis of alliances - in a large part they can be described as wealthy.</p>	<p>Programme with other funds. Seminars should be based on the experience of the Programme participants so that the examples presented there are as relevant as possible to the situation of other beneficiaries and potential applicants. In parallel with the educational campaign, it is also appropriate to introduce criteria that explicitly give priority to projects of fundamental importance to the local community or economy, which are implemented for the first time and could not be realised without the support, and also to award projects that apply for lower than the maximum level of cofinancing. The recommendation is consistent with the previous one regarding the creation of separate financial envelopes for organisations with different financial standing and making the level of cofinancing dependant on the level of development of the municipality in which the organisation is located. The modification of the criteria</p>		border region.		



Problem	Significance of the problem	Conclusion	Recommendation	Method of implementation	Expected effect	Addressee	Possible deadline for implementation
			will result in the sifting of infrastructure projects, whose commercial potential allows to implement them from other funds (e.g. private, commercial sources) and increasing the availability of funds in the Programme for organisations of lesser economic strength. The priority will be given to projects that - when benefiting from the differentiated funds - will find additional source of funding under the Programme, not the main one.				
Need to simplify reporting and settlement procedures	Average	A certain difficulty in the implementation of the project are complicated procedures concerning the project settlement, including the need to put the same data in different annexes, which in turn poses a risk of committing errors in the adjustment of the data contained in all the documents (need to remember and consider the introduction of amendments in various places). Significant difficulty was using English, so that some of the reports were incomprehensible.	This problem could be solved by the introduction of a simplified generator of payment applications in which the repeated tables would be filled automatically, or at least a form drawn up in a spreadsheet with appropriately defined formulas thanks to which part of the calculations could be carried out in an automatic way. Moving away from English as the primary language of reporting to the national languages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streamline the procedure by introducing a generator of payment applications</li> <li>Resignation of English as a compulsory language</li> <li>Training support for beneficiaries</li> </ul>	Reducing procedural barriers to project implementation.	JMA JTS	To be introduced at the latest before the first reporting period in the projects selected for cofinancing in the completed call for applications.

Problem	Significance of the problem	Conclusion	Recommendation	Method of implementation	Expected effect	Addressee	Possible deadline for implementation
Effective project selection process, although long-term and complex	Low	The project selection system proved to be successful as it allowed to select the right number of projects that contributed to the objectives of the Programme and to use almost the entire allocation. This process, however, was quite long and complex. Applicants, especially Ukrainian and Belarusian, considered the rules of application difficult. The beneficiaries considered the procedures concerning applications as rather friendly, although rather complicated, but not enough to discourage them from submitting applications.	One should strive to shorten the project selection process by appropriately early recruiting experts evaluating projects and eliminating one of the overlapping stages of project selection - either the functioning of the EvC or the approval of a ranking list by the JMC. It would also be good to simplify the application process for the period 2014-2020 by introducing submission of the project concept first. In the 2014-2020 period, likewise in the period 2007-2013, the JTS should conduct a large information and training campaign for potential applicants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion and information</li> <li>Training support</li> <li>Simplifying the procedure by eliminating the EvC function or approving the ranking list by the JMC</li> <li>Properly early recruitment of interviewers</li> </ul>	Limiting procedural barriers to project preparation	JMA JTS	Continuous
Projects implementation encountered procedural difficulties that could be overcome with the support of the JTS and thanks to the flexible rules approved by the JMC	Average	The vast majority of projects selected for implementation have been successfully completed, and most projects have achieved the results planned. The biggest implementation difficulties were related to tender procedures, exchange rate risk management, and complexity and long waiting times for verification and acceptance of financial statements and settlements. These difficulties have largely	The support provided by the JTS and the flexible approach to project and Programme modifications, as well as the pre-financing principle, should be maintained. It is worthwhile, however, to make it possible to adjust the schedule of tranche payments to the project schedule. More decision-making powers should be delegated to the JTS so it approves changes to projects. The experience of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advisory services/training in ongoing project management.</li> <li>Increasing the decision-making powers of the JTS, in particular as regards approving changes</li> <li>Training for beneficiaries on tendering procedures</li> </ul>	Reducing procedural barriers to project implementation and increasing fluency in current management.	JMA JTS	Continuous.

Problem	Significance of the problem	Conclusion	Recommendation	Method of implementation	Expected effect	Addressee	Possible deadline for implementation
		been overcome with the support of the JTS and the JMC's flexible attitude to the approval of project changes. At the same time, the acceptance of a large catalogue of changes made in projects by the JMC unnecessarily prolonged the whole process.	the 2007-2013 period which has helped to offset the adverse effects of exchange rate risk carried by the beneficiaries should also be taken into account.				
Information and promotion activities were successful in promoting the Programme	High	Information about the calls for proposals proved effective. Beneficiaries underlined that the Programme is identified in the support area not only by those directly involved in it. A wide catalogue of promotional activities was used, both at the Programme level and in the individual projects. The main source of information about the Programme was the project website.	In the next programming period, similar information and promotion activities should be carried out as in the years 2007-2016, as they effectively "promoted" the Programme. However, promotion should also be carried out in the national languages of the countries covered by the Programme. This will certainly contribute to a better knowledge of the effects of the Programme.	Broad catalogue of information and promotion activities, especially in national languages	Better knowledge of the effects of the Programme.	JMA JTS	Continuous.

Source: own development.

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## 8. ANNEXES

### 8.1. Annex 1 - Reports on the projects' case studies

At the stage of the draft final report, case studies will be delivered as separate files.

### 8.2. Annex 2 - Reports on the municipalities' case studies

At the stage of the draft final report, case studies will be delivered as separate files.



## 8.3. Annex 3 - Research tools

### 8.3.1. Scenario of an interview with technical staff involved in the implementation of the Programme

*The researcher presents himself/herself and the purpose of the study and asks for permission to record the conversation.*

1. How was the Programme implemented? What were the most important stages of the Programme's implementation? What challenges have you faced? What was the most difficult? And what is the greatest success of the Programme?
2. How did the calls for proposals take place? Have they been carried out on time? If not, why? What difficulties occurred for the JTS and applicants during the calls for proposals? How did the JTS and the applicants deal with them? What actions were taken by the JTS to make procedures and rules "friendly" for applicants? What has worked and what should be used in the future? What should be changed in the procedures of calls for proposals?
3. Have there been cases of termination of the grant contract or incomplete execution of the project? How often, in what measures, and what type of beneficiaries did it concern? What were the reasons for this situation? Do you think you could prevent this? If so, how?
4. During the implementation of the Programme did you find that some type of project was missing? If so, what extent of intervention was missing? Why? Was any type of project not implemented due to lack of applications? If so, what kind of project was it? Why did not it gain the interest of the applicants? How have these gaps affected the achievement of the Programme's objectives?
5. What information and promotion activities were undertaken by the JTS? Do you think they were sufficient to provide information about the Programme and to promote its effects? What measures were missing and why? What are the effects of these measures? How does the cross-borderness affect the implementation of this type of measures?
6. What are the results of joint problem solving indicated by the beneficiaries in the project implementation reports?

*A researcher discusses with a respondent every measure of the Programme (or the measure for which a respondent is responsible) as well as problems characteristic of the measure, and the results reported by the beneficiaries in the grant applications and in the reports. In case of any measure discussed the researcher asks what project or activity of the project the respondent regards as good practice.*

7. How was the cooperation between partners? Have there been cases of termination of cooperation? What factors contributed positively to cooperation? What barriers/problems have the beneficiaries encountered in jointly applying and implementing projects? How many of these factors are related to cross-borderness?
8. Has the socio-economic situation affected the shape of the project and the results achieved? If so, how did it appear? Was it a negative or positive influence?
9. Has the administrative system affected the shape of the project and the results achieved? If so, how did it appear? Was it a negative or positive influence?

10. How did beneficiaries implement horizontal policies? Which policy was the most applicable in the CBC PBU projects? Which one was the least applicable? Why?
11. What do you think is the greatest success of the Programme? - please justify your opinion. Is it related to the objectives of the Programme? Which one?
12. In your opinion what is the biggest failure in the Programme? Why? Has it affected the achievement of the Programme's objectives? Which one?
13. What projects or elements of projects do you consider good practices? Why?
14. What elements of the implementation system of the Programme do you consider good practices? What is worth to be applied in future? What should be changed/improved?

### **8.3.2. Scenario of an interview with representatives of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine - members of the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC)**

*The researcher presents himself/herself and the purpose of the study and asks for permission to record the conversation.*

1. What were the results achieved by projects implemented under the PBU 2007-2013? In what aspects? Which of these results are the most important? Why?
2. What factors influenced the shape, implementation and effects of these projects - social, economic, institutional and other factors? Was the impact of these factors on the Programme and the projects positive or negative ?
3. What problems/specific difficulties did beneficiaries deal with? What were the biggest difficulties and challenges? How did the beneficiaries deal with them? (specificity of government, local government and non-government sectors depending on the respondent). Did these problems result in the failure of the projects or the failure to achieve all the project results? How could these problems be limited in the future programmes?
4. What changes have occurred in the CBC PBU Programme support area in recent years? Which changes can be combined with the CBC PBU Programme influence? Why do you think so?
5. Will the effects achieved and changes induced by the CBC PBU Programme intervention be permanent? Why? Do we need further actions financed from external funds?
6. What are the results of projects and changes that are noticeable in terms of cooperation between institutions and organisations on both sides of the border? How does this cooperation evolve? Have the projects contributed to its strengthening and consolidation? Can you observe any cooperation that is not stimulated by external means? To what extent, in what areas? Who usually cooperates on their own initiative?
7. In your opinion what is the biggest added value in the Programme? What is its weakness?
8. What good practices can be identified in the Programme?
9. Was the scope of the intervention accurate? Was any type of projects missing? What kind of source?
10. How do you evaluate the implementation of the Programme, including the procedures for applying for funds and the implementation of projects? Were they "friendly" to the applicants and beneficiaries? Why?
11. Was the information about the project sufficient? Was the Programme promoted sufficiently?

### 8.3.3. Scenario of an interview with a leading partner (as a case study)

*The researcher presents himself/herself and the purpose of the study and asks for permission to record the conversation.*

#### Results of the project

1. Have you completed all activities in the project in the scope that you have planned? Have all the planned results been achieved? If not, why? What are the conclusions for the future? What mistakes should be avoided in the future?
2. Please indicate the results of the project and explain what problems in Polish-Belarusian/Polish-Ukrainian cooperation have been solved thanks to the project and how? Are these results persistent? What does their durability depend on? Would these problems be solved or limited without the CBC PBU intervention? If so, how else could this be achieved?
3. Have all the activities of the project responded to local needs? To what extent? Towards what social groups? *The researcher discusses each project activity and its relevance to local needs.*
4. What target groups have benefited from your project results? How did the results of the project affect these target groups? What did these target groups gain from the project and its results?
5. Were any actions missing needed? Have any measures implemented under the project turned out to be useless from the point of view of local needs? What measures were they?
6. Has the socio-economic situation during the project implementation affected the shape of the project (scope of activities) and the results achieved? In what way? What factors influenced that?
7. Has the administrative system on both sides of the border affected the scope of the project and the results achieved? What elements of that system influenced that? Was it possible to plan and achieve better results? If so, what stopped it?
8. What do you consider good practice in your project? Why?
9. Has your project been part of a continuation of another project? What kind of source? From what sources of funding? How do these different projects affect each other or how did they affected each other?

#### Impact of the project on the area

10. What has changed due to your project implementation? Are these changes for better or worse? For which target groups those changes are important? Why? Are these changes persistent? If not, why? Do these changes entail further changes? Which ones?
11. Did the project result in the intensification of cooperation between local communities on both sides of the border? If so, what examples can you provide? Does this cooperation affect Polish-Belarusian and Polish-Ukrainian relations? In what way?
12. According to the declarations contained in the reports, the following happened as a result of the implementation of microprojects: /How do you assess these effects - as positive, negative, neutral?
13. Has your project contributed to the dissemination among the residents of the knowledge about the historical, social and economic situation of the area in which it was implemented? In what way?
14. Has your project contributed to a better knowledge of Polish, Belarusian, Ukrainian language on the other side of the border? In what way?

15. Have you noticed a greater interest of local media in situation across the border, cross-border cooperation, etc. in connection with the realisation of projects and the CBC PBU? In which media that greater interest was noticeable?

#### **Partnership cooperation**

16. How was the cooperation with the partner/partners on the other side of the border going? What positively influenced this cooperation? What were the biggest difficulties in terms of cooperation? What did they result from? Did you manage to overcome them and how?
17. Is the cooperation continued? In what way? What mistakes should be avoided in the future? To what extent?
18. How did you cooperate with your partner in the past? Under what programmes? What did you do together? Have previous experiences prompted you to continue the cooperation? Do you also cooperate without external funding? To what extent?
19. What joint results have you achieved? What is the added value of the cooperation of institutions/organisations on the two sides of the border?

#### **Horizontal policies**

20. Have you considered the principle of sustainable development in your project? Have you implemented ecological solutions in any of the project measures? Have any project measures related to environmental protection? If not, why?
21. How did you take into account the principle of equal opportunities? Has any project measure covered people with disabilities and/or socially excluded groups? What measures were they? Were there measures that were directed only or mainly to women or men, the elderly or young people? What measures were they?
22. Did your project have innovative elements? Which ones? What was the effectiveness of this approach? Did you actually attain the innovative effects of the project?
23. Have you considered the principle of the information society (using modern technologies, preventing digital exclusion) in your project? If so, how? Was that approach effective?

#### **Projects' implementation within the framework of the PBU 2007-2013 took place from the signing of the contract to the acceptance of the final report.**

24. How was the preparation of the project going? Have you encountered any difficulty preparing the project? Was the issue of various languages problematic? Have you been provided with the necessary help in project preparation - answer to questions, training, other support?
25. How has your project been evaluated? Was that approach effective? Was the evaluation and selection of the project rapid?
26. How was the preparation of the project going? How did the project financial clearance and the preparation of the material report take place? Have you encountered any difficulty preparing the project? Which ones? Did you manage to overcome them and how? Have you received the help you needed from the Joint Technical Secretariat?
27. What is your opinion about information provided under the CBC PBU Programme? Did you receive the necessary information as a beneficiary in an easy and effective way? How was it provided?

28. In your opinion, was the Programme properly promoted? Was the local community informed about it adequately? Which media were used most often for promotion and was it effective? How did you promote the project and its effects? Was that approach effective?
29. Has there been any type of project/scope or support area in the CBC PBU Programme missing that you would like to pursue? If not, why?
30. What do you consider a strength and what a weakness of the PBU 2007-2013? Why? In your opinion, with what the Programme differs from other aid programmes? Do you see the added value of this Programme?

#### 8.3.4. Scenario of a telephone interview with a project partner (as a case study)

*The researcher presents himself/herself and the purpose of the study and asks for permission to record the conversation.*

##### **Project results and impact of the project on the area**

1. Have you completed all activities in the project in the scope that you have planned? Have all the planned results been achieved? If not, why? What are the conclusions for the future? What mistakes should be avoided in the future?
2. Please indicate the results of the project and explain what problems in Polish-Belarusian/Polish-Ukrainian cooperation have been solved thanks to the project and how? Are these results persistent? What does their durability depend on? Would these problems be solved or limited without the CBC PBU intervention? If so, how else could this be achieved?
3. What has changed due to your project implementation? Are these changes for better or worse? For which target groups those changes are important? Why? Are these changes persistent? If not, why? Do these changes entail further changes? Which ones?
4. Did the project result in the intensification of cooperation between local communities on both sides of the border? If so, what examples can you provide? Does this cooperation affect Polish-Belarusian and Polish-Ukrainian relations? In what way?
5. What do you consider good practice in your project? Why?
6. Has your project been part of a continuation of another project? What kind of source? From what sources of funding? How do these different projects affect each other or how did they affected each other?

##### **Partnership cooperation**

7. How was the cooperation with the partner/partners on the other side of the border going? What positively influenced this cooperation? What were the biggest difficulties in terms of cooperation? What did they result from? Did you manage to overcome them and how?
8. Is the cooperation continued? In what way? Will it continue in the future? To what extent?
9. How did you cooperate with your partner in the past? Under what programmes? What did you do together? Have previous experiences prompted you to continue the cooperation? Do you also cooperate without external funding? To what extent?

10. What joint results have you achieved? What is the added value of the cooperation of institutions/organisations on the two sides of the border?

**Projects' implementation within the framework of the PBU 2007-2013 took place from the signing of the contract to the acceptance of the final report.**

11. How was the preparation of the project going? Have you encountered any difficulty preparing the project? Was the issue of various languages problematic? Have you been provided with the necessary help in project preparation - answer to questions, training, other support?
12. How has your project been evaluated? Was that approach effective? Was the evaluation and selection of the project rapid?
13. How was the preparation of the project going? How did the project financial clearance and the preparation of the material report take place? Have you encountered any difficulty preparing the project? Which ones? Did you manage to overcome them and how? Have you received the help you needed from the Joint Technical Secretariat?
14. What is your opinion about information provided under the CBC PBU Programme? Did you receive the necessary information as a beneficiary in an easy and effective way? How was it provided?
15. In your opinion, was the Programme properly promoted? Was the local community informed about it adequately? Which media were used most often for promotion and was it effective? How did you promote the project and its effects? Was that approach effective?
16. What do you consider a strength and what a weakness of the PBU 2007-2013? Why? In your opinion, with what the Programme differs from other aid programmes? Do you see the added value of this Programme?

### **8.3.5. Scenario of an interview with a representative of a city/municipality council (as a municipality case study)**

**Scenario of an interview with a representative of a city/municipality council dealing with the development of the city/municipality - the mayor, the employee appointed by the mayor**

*The researcher presents himself/herself and the purpose of the study and asks for permission to record the conversation.*

**Impact of the projects on the support area**

1. In (name of the city/municipality) there were following projects realised (project names). Are you familiar with these projects? With what effects/results do you associate these projects?
2. What target groups (all residents, adults, youth, tourists, entrepreneurs, etc.) benefited the most from projects' implementation?
3. What local community problems did these projects addressed? To what extent have the projects contributed to solving these problems?
4. What changes in the life of local communities have been brought by these projects? Are these changes positive, negative or neutral? Are these changes persistent? Do these changes entail further changes? Which ones?
5. Have the projects influenced mutual Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian relations? What influence was it? In which aspect?

6. Have these projects contributed to cooperation and closer relations on both sides of the border in the social and cultural sphere? In what way?
7. What is the added value of the CBC PBU projects, especially in the context of other projects financed from other sources? What is the place of these projects in the context of other projects financed from other sources?
8. Was there any range of activities, project types, missing within the CBC PBU Programme that was supposed to be included in the Programme? If so, what scope of intervention was missing?
9. Are the projects implemented within the CBC PBU Programme complemented by other projects realised in the municipality area? Which ones?
10. What good practices result from the CBC PBU Programme projects? Why do you think this is a good practice?

#### **Territorial/cross-border cooperation**

11. What favours cooperation on both sides of the border? What hampers this cooperation? How to limit barriers in cooperation?
12. Is there increased cooperation between local communities? In what way? Who cooperates the most often? To what extent? Is cooperation undertaken financed from own resources, without the participation of EU funds?
13. Does further cooperation still require stimulation from EU funds? To what extent?

### **8.3.6. Scenario of an interview with a councillor in a city/municipality council**

*The researcher presents himself/herself and the purpose of the study and asks for permission to record the conversation.*

#### **Impact of the projects on the support area**

1. In (name of the city/municipality) there were following projects realised (project names). Are you familiar with these projects? With what effects/results do you associate these projects?
2. What target groups (all residents, adults, youth, tourists, entrepreneurs, etc.) benefited the most from projects' implementation?
3. What local community problems did these projects address? To what extent have the projects contributed to solving these problems?
4. What changes in the life of local communities have been brought by these projects? Are these changes positive, negative or neutral? Are these changes persistent? Do these changes entail further changes? Which ones?
5. Have the projects influenced mutual Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian relations? What influence was it? In which aspect?
6. Have these projects contributed to cooperation and closer relations on both sides of the border in the social and cultural sphere? In what way?
7. What is the added value of the CBC PBU projects, especially in the context of other projects financed from other sources? What is the place of these projects in the context of other projects financed from other sources?



8. Are the projects implemented within the CBC PBU Programme complemented by other projects realised in the municipality area? Which ones?
9. What good practices result from the CBC PBU Programme projects? Why do you think this is a good practice?

#### **Territorial/cross-border cooperation**

10. What favours cooperation on both sides of the border? What hampers this cooperation? How to limit barriers in cooperation?
11. Is there increased cooperation between local communities? In what way? Who cooperates the most often? To what extent? Is cooperation undertaken financed from own resources, without the participation of EU funds?
12. Does further cooperation still require stimulation from EU funds? To what extent?

### **8.3.7. Scenario of an interview with a representative of a civil society organisation**

*The researcher presents himself/herself and the purpose of the study and asks for permission to record the conversation.*

1. In (name of the city/municipality) there were following projects realised (project names). Are you familiar with these projects? With what effects/results do you associate these projects? What target groups (all residents, adults, youth, tourists, entrepreneurs, etc.) benefited the most from projects' implementation? What local community problems did these projects address? To what extent have the projects contributed to solving these problems?
2. What changes have you observed in the last few years in the life of the local community? Which changes are the most important? Why? Are these changes for better or worse?
3. What changes have you observed in relation to non-governmental organisations? Are these changes for better or worse?
4. How do you perceive cooperation with organisations or institutions on the other side of the border? What areas this cooperation relates to? Is it easier now, more intense? What has changed in this area? Are these changes positive or negative? Why?
5. What favours cooperation on both sides of the border? What hampers this cooperation? How to limit barriers in cooperation?
6. Do you think that the projects financed under the CBC PBU Programme, we mentioned earlier, have contributed to these changes? Why do you think so?

### **8.3.8. Scenario of an interview with a representative of the project implemented within the PBU 2007-2013 in the case study municipality**

*The researcher presents himself/herself and the purpose of the study and asks for permission to record the conversation.*

#### **Results of the project**

1. Have you completed all activities in the project in the scope that you have planned? Have all the planned results been achieved? If not, why? What are the conclusions for the future? What mistakes should be avoided in the future?
2. Please indicate the results of the project and explain what problems in Polish-Belarusian/Polish-Ukrainian cooperation have been solved thanks to the project and how? Are these results persistent? What does their durability depend on? Would these problems be solved or limited without the CBC PBU intervention? If so, how else could this be achieved?
3. What target groups have benefited from your project results? How did the results of the project affect these target groups? What did these target groups gain from the project and its results?
4. Has the administrative system on both sides of the border affected the scope of the project and the results achieved? In what way? What factors influenced that?
5. Has the administrative system on both sides of the border affected the scope of the project and the results achieved? What elements of that system influenced that? Was it possible to plan and achieve better results? If so, what stopped it?
6. Has your project been part of a continuation of another project? What kind of source? From what sources of funding? How do these different projects affect each other or how did they affected each other?

#### **Impact of the project on the area**

7. What has changed due to your project implementation? Are these changes for better or worse? For which target groups those changes are important? Why? Are these changes persistent? If not, why? Do these changes entail further changes? Which ones?
8. Did the project result in the intensification of cooperation between local communities on both sides of the border? If so, what examples can you provide? Does this cooperation affect Polish-Belarusian and Polish-Ukrainian relations? In what way?
9. According to the declarations contained in the reports, the following happened as a result of the implementation of microprojects: /How do you assess these effects - as positive, negative, neutral?
10. Has your project contributed to the dissemination among the residents of the knowledge about the historical, social and economic situation of the area in which it was implemented? In what way?
11. Has your project contributed to a better knowledge of Polish, Belarusian, Ukrainian language on the other side of the border? In what way?
12. Have you noticed a greater interest of local media in situation across the border, cross-border cooperation, etc. in connection with the realisation of projects and the CBC PBU Programme? In which media that greater interest was noticeable?

#### **Partnership cooperation**

13. How was the cooperation with the partner/partners on the other side of the border going? What positively influenced this cooperation? What were the biggest difficulties in terms of cooperation? What did they result from? Did you manage to overcome them and how?
14. Is the cooperation continued? In what way? Will it continue in the future? To what extent?
15. How did you cooperate with your partner in the past? Under what programmes? What did you do together? Have previous experiences prompted you to continue the cooperation? Do you also cooperate without external funding? To what extent?

16. What joint results have you achieved? What is the added value of the cooperation of institutions/organisations on the two sides of the border?

#### **Opinions of the beneficiaries on the PBU 2007-2013**

17. What do you consider a strength and what a weakness of the PBU 2007-2013? Why? In your opinion, with what the CBC PBU Programme differs from other aid programmes? Do you see the added value of this Programme? What is it? Why?

### **8.3.9. Scenario of an interview with a representative of the project implemented in the case study municipality financed from other funds than the PBU 2007-2013**

*The researcher presents himself/herself and the purpose of the study and asks for permission to record the conversation.*

1. What funds is/was your project implemented from?
2. What needs did the project answer? To what extent were these needs met? What joint results have you achieved? Who have benefited from the project results?
3. Have you heard about projects realised in [name of municipality/city] titled [projects' names] from the PBU 2007-2013 funds?
4. Can you indicate changes in the municipality [name of municipality/city] that resulted from these projects/in relation to the implementation of these projects? How do you rate these changes? Are they sustainable? Are these changes beneficial for the local community? For whom? Why?
5. Are the projects implemented within the CBC PBU Programme and your project complementary? To what extent? Are the effects of these projects mutually reinforcing? In what way?
6. How do you assess the added value in the PBU 2007-2013? What does it consist in?
7. Should territorial and cross-border cooperation be supported? Why?

### **8.3.10. Scenario of an interview with people from the cultural or educational background at the local level**

*The researcher presents himself/herself and the purpose of the study and asks for permission to record the conversation.*

1. In (name of the city/municipality) there were following projects realised (project names). Are you familiar with these projects? With what effects/results do you associate these projects? What target groups (all residents, adults, youth, tourists, entrepreneurs, etc.) benefited the most from projects' implementation? What local community problems did these projects addressed? To what extent have the projects contributed to solving these problems?
2. What changes have you observed in the last few years in the life of the local community? Which changes are the most important? Why? Are these changes for better or worse?

3. How do you perceive cooperation with organisations or institutions on the other side of the border? What areas this cooperation relates to? Is it easier now, more intense? What has changed in this area? Are these changes positive or negative? Why?
4. What favours cooperation on both sides of the border? What hampers this cooperation? How to limit barriers in cooperation?
5. Do you think that the projects financed under the CBC PBU, we mentioned earlier, have contributed to these changes? Why do you think so?

### 8.3.11. CAWI/CATI survey with partners

[Welcome screen]

Thank you for taking part in the evaluation study titled *Ex-post evaluation of actions cofinanced by the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2007-2013*.

The survey concerns the project titled [here the project title is automatically taken from the project database] implemented under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2007-2013.

If possible, please make the questions to be answered by persons who were appointed to contact the Joint Technical Secretariat (for a Lead Partner) or the Lead Partner (for other partners) in the implementation of the project.

**Question A1. How did you find out about the possibility of carrying out the project under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2007-2013? Please, indicate the most important source.**

1. From Internet
2. From co-workers/supervisors
3. From an Information point that provides information about the EU funds
4. During a meeting, conference, CBC PBU training
5. From local government
6. From partners
7. From other project developers
8. From local media (press, radio, television)
9. From leaflets, brochures
10. From other sources What kind of source? .....
11. I do not know/it is difficult to say/I do not remember

**Question A2. Why did you decide to implement the project under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2007-2013?**

1. Because only this Programme gave us a chance to complete the project
2. Because it was one of the programmes that allowed us to carry out our project
3. Because the Programme has allowed us to carry out a project with a selected Belarusian and/or Ukrainian partner/s
4. Because we were submitting an application to another programme but we did not receive a grant [go to the question A2a]
5. Because this Programme was the easiest way to obtain funding
6. Because of other reason. Which one? .....

**Question A2a. Under what programme did you submit your application? [open question]**

**Question A3. Who have initiated the project?**

1. Leading Partner
2. Partner(s)
3. Other entity(ies)
4. Hard to say/I do not remember

**Question A4. What difficulties did you have when building a partnership under this project? [multiple choice question]**

1. Language barrier
2. Difficulties resulting from administrative, legal differences
3. Difficulties in setting common objectives
4. Difficulties in establishing the rules of cooperation
5. Partner's reluctance to cooperate
6. Partner's willingness to realise own objectives only
7. Differences in institutional potential
8. Inadequate staff experience in implementing projects in a partnership
9. Difficulties in coordinating activities on both sides of the border
10. Difficulties in organising joint meetings (e.g. due to border traffic procedures)
11. Failure to understand each other's point of view
12. Other. Which ones? .....
13. There was no difficulty in that scope

**Question A5. How do you assess the involvement of the partner(s) in the project preparation process?**

1. Very big
2. Rather big
3. Moderate (neither big not small)
4. Rather small
5. Very small or none

**Question A6. How often did you contact the Partner(s) in the project, personally, by phone and e-mail?**

	Every day	Once or more times a week	Once or more times a month	Once or more times a year	Less than once a year
Personally					
By phone					
By e-mail.					

**Question A7. Did you implement any partnership projects prior to this project? [multiple choice question]**

1. Yes, under the *Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007-2013*, with the same partners
2. Yes, under the *Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007-2013* but with other partners
3. Yes, under the INTERREG IIIA - Tacis CBC *Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2004-2006*, with the same partners
4. Yes, under the INTERREG IIIA - Tacis CBC *Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2004-2006*, but with other partners
5. Yes, within the Phare CBC with the same partners
6. Yes, within the Phare CBC but with other partners
7. Yes, within other programme with the same partners
8. Yes, within other programme and with other partners

9. No

**Question A8. After completion of the project [project title automatically generated] have you implemented any partnership projects? [multiple choice question]**

1. Yes, as a Leader with the same partners
2. Yes, as a Leader but with other partners
3. Yes, as a Partner with the same partners
4. Yes, as a Partner but with other partners
5. No

**Question A9. Do you intend to implement any projects in partnership with the same Partners in the future?**

1. Definitely yes
2. Generally yes
3. Maybe yes, maybe no
4. Probably not
5. Definitely not

**Question A10. Do you intend to implement any projects in partnership with the same Partners in the future?**

1. Definitely yes
2. Generally yes
3. Maybe yes, maybe no
4. Probably not
5. Definitely not

**Question A11. Below there are a few different statements. Please, indicate to what extent they fit the projects implemented in the partnership under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007-2013. [apply rotation of statements]**

	Definitely not	Probably not	Neither yes nor not	Generally yes	Definitely yes
Implementing projects in partnership makes it possible to achieve better results when compared to projects implemented separately					
The project was carried out with partners who had not cooperated with each other before					
The project implementation made it possible to establish the necessary contacts from the point of view of all project participants					
During the implementation of the project, the administrative boundaries of states did not play a significant role					
Implementing a project in a partnership proved useful only to one partner					
Project implementation in the partnership has contributed to establishing lasting cooperation with partners					
Implementation of cross-border projects in a partnership is possible only in case of obtaining external funds					
The implementation of the project in partnership has led to noticeable positive socio-economic changes in the support area					
Effective collaboration is hampered by too much					

cultural differences between partners					
Implementing cross-border projects is difficult due to differences in institutional capacity between partners					
Better to be a Project Leader than a Partner					
Partnership requirement for cross-border projects is superfluous					
Cooperation with the project partner was more declarative than factual					
Thanks to the cooperation the project participants were able to learn a lot from each other					

**Question B1.** Below there are some couple of statements. Which of them best suit the application process for the funds provided under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2007-2013"? For example, if you consider that the application process for funds available in the CBC PBU Programme is complicated, please indicate a value of 1, but if you think it was simple then please choose 7. You may also indicate intermediate values.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
complicated								simple
transparent								unclear
fair								unfair
allowing only the best projects to be selected								allowing the selection of weak projects
efficient								inefficient
tailored to the specificity of cross-border projects								ignoring the specificity of cross-border projects
encouraging to submit a project								discouraging to submit a project
friendly								burdensome
enough time provided to prepare the project								too little time provided to prepare the project

**Question B2.** Which difficulties occurred in relation to the implementation of the projects under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2007-2013?

1. Unclear instructions included in various documents concerning the rules of project implementation in the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2007-2013
2. Extensive project bureaucracy
3. Too rigid rules/regulations imposed by the Programme
4. Cumbersome process of making changes
5. Difficult reporting rules
6. Long waiting time for payment
7. Too little training [\[ask the B2a question\]](#)
8. Other difficulties that occurred during the implementation of the Programme. Which ones? [\[open question\]](#)
9. There was no difficulty in implementing the project

**Question B2a** What trainings were missing? [\[ask if the question B2=7\]](#)

**Question B3.** Did you manage to achieve the planned results of the project?

1. Yes, fully
2. Partly [\[go to the questions B3a and B3b\]](#)
3. No [\[go to the questions B3b and B3b\]](#)

**Question B3a.** What were the results that you did not manage to achieve in the project? [\[open question\]](#) [\[ask if B3=2 or 3\]](#)



**Question B3b. What were the reasons for not achieving the results of the project?** [open question]  
[ask if B3=2 or 3]

**Question B4. Which difficulties occurred in relation to the implementation of the projects under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2007-2013?**

1. Yes, to the same extent
2. Yes, but to a lesser extent
3. Yes, to a greater extent (e.g. due to no need to meet programme requirements)
4. No
5. Hard to say

**Question B5. Was your project part of a bigger project or was it related to another project?** [multiple choice question]

1. Yes, it was part of a larger undertaking that was implemented only by our organisation
2. Yes, it was part of the projects implemented with the same partners
3. Yes, it was part of the projects implemented with other partners
4. Yes, it was part of a bigger project financed from external funds
5. Yes, it was part of a bigger project financed from own funds
6. Yes, it was continuation of other project financed from external funds
7. Yes, it was continuation of other project financed from own funds
8. Yes, it preceded another project financed from external funds
9. Yes, it preceded another project financed from own funds
10. It was linked to another measures in a different way. Which one? [open question]
11. It was not related
12. Hard to say

**Question B6. Please rate on the scale from -3 to 3 the impact of the following factors on cooperation between partners: -3 means that the factor hindered cooperation, 3 means that factor facilitated cooperation. 0 means that the factor had no effect. You may also indicate intermediate values** [apply rotation of statements]

	-3. factors hindered the cooperation	-2	-1	0. no influence	1	2	3. factors hindered the cooperation
administrative border of the countries dividing the partners							
condition of cross-border public transport infrastructure							
political situation							
differences in the level and quality of life of people living in cross-border areas							
periphery character of the regions relative to other parts of the countries in which the project was implemented							
condition of non-governmental organisations in the support area							
level of private entrepreneurship in border areas							
degree of involvement of local government representatives from the support area							
national legal and institutional arrangements							
procedures and formalities related to project							

implementation							
obligation of using English							
mental/cultural differences between partners from different countries							
different currency							
actual application of the partnership principle during project implementation							
hierarchical relationships between project partners							
academic, research and educational potential in the support area							
stereotypes resulting from the common history of these areas							

**Question C1. To what extent your project.....?**

	0. Not at all	1. To a little extent	2. To a little extent	3. To a big extent	99. Hard to say/not applicable
fostered the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men					
fostered equal opportunities for people with disabilities					
strengthened development of local communities					
was conducive to sustainable development, with respect for the environment					
was innovative					
fostered the development of information society using modern technologies					

**Question C2. To what extent your project.....?**

	0. The project did not bring any benefit	1. The project brought little benefits	2. The project brought significant benefits	99. Hard to say/not applicable
to the Project Leader				
to the Project Partner(s)				
to the Final Beneficiaries				
to the Local communities in Poland [if the survey is in Polish]/in Ukraine [if the survey is in Ukrainian]/in Belarus [if the survey is in Russian]				
to the Local communities abroad				
to Others. Who?				

**Question C3. What effects did your project achieve? Please answer your questions using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means "definitely not", 2 - "probably not" 3 - "neither yes nor not", 4 - "generally yes" and 5 - "definitely yes". [apply rotation of statements]**

	1. Definitely not	2. Probably not	3. Neither yes nor not	4. Generally yes	5. Definitely yes
Raising the level of human capital in the support area (e.g. through training and other types of educational activities)					
Creation of new jobs					
Networking, establishing new contacts					
Improving the flow of information between partners					
Improving the internal organisation of work in partner institutions					
Tightening of cooperation with foreign partners					

Tightening of cooperation with domestic partners					
Retrofitting of Project Leader (purchased equipment, etc.)					
Retrofitting of Project Partners (purchased equipment, etc.)					
More contacts between communities on both sides of the border					
Reducing the differences in the level of economic development between the areas lying on both sides of the border					
Reducing the differences in the level of economic development between the border areas and the centre of the country					
Reducing the differences in the standard of living of communities on both sides of the border					
Reducing the differences in the standard of living of communities between the border areas and the centre of the country					
Facilitating movement of people or goods across the border					
Promotion of the idea of cross-border cooperation					
Increasing the knowledge of local communities about communities on the other side of the border					

**Question C4. Did your project bring any results you did not expect at the project preparation stage?**

1. Definitely yes [\[go to the question C4a\]](#)
2. Generally yes [\[go to the question C4a\]](#)
3. Hard to say
4. Probably not
5. Definitely not

**Question C4a. What unexpected results did your project accomplish?** [\[open question\]](#) [\[ask if C4=1 or 2\]](#)

**Question C5. Which of the following measures are implemented in cooperation with the partner(s) after the project is completed?** [\[apply rotation of statements\]](#)

	Yes	No
Working meetings		
Trainings		
Conferences		
Study visits		
Cultural events		
Maintaining contacts by telephone		
Maintaining contacts by e-mail		
Initiation of collaboration between representatives of local institutions/local communities		
Disseminating information to the local community about the historical, social or economic situation of the supported area		
Taking up language learning in a neighbouring country		
Other. Which ones? .....		

**Question C6. What are the results of the project that last so far?** [\[open question\]](#)

**Question C7. And what is the greatest success of the your project? What are you most satisfied with?** [\[open question\]](#)

**Question C8. What are you most dissatisfied with? What was not achieved in the project?** [\[open question\]](#)

**Question C9. If you could once again decide to implement the project under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007-2013, would you ever decide to implement it again?**

1. Definitely yes [\[go to the question C9\]](#)
2. Generally yes [\[go to the question C9\]](#)
3. Maybe yes, maybe no [\[go to the question C9\]](#)
4. Probably not [\[go to the question C9a\]](#)
5. Definitely not [\[go to the question C9a\]](#)

**Question C9a] Why didn't you decide to implement the project under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2007-2013? [\[open question\]](#)**

**Question C10. Do you plan to apply for a grant under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2014-2020?**

1. Definitely yes
2. Generally yes
3. Maybe yes, maybe no
4. Probably not
5. Definitely not

**Question M1. What business do you operate in? Please, tick all matching answers.**

1. Economy and entrepreneurship
2. Innovativeness, science, R&D
3. Tourism and promotion
4. Transport and communication
5. Natural environment (including infrastructure and energy)
6. Education, trainings, labour market
7. Culture, art, recreation
8. Natural and cultural heritage
9. Social infrastructure
10. Public safety
11. Regional and local development
12. Partnership cooperation
13. Other Which one? .....

**Question M2. What formal status does your organization have? Please, tick one answer only.**

1. Local government unit (voivodship, powiat, municipality, town), their unions or associations
2. Government administration body
3. National and landscape park/entity managing protected area

4. PGL State Forests and its organizational units
5. Scientific unit
6. Institution of culture and sport
7. University, educational unit
8. Legal person of general interest
9. Unit of medical rescue system
10. Hospital
11. Unit of public finance sector (other than the ones above)
12. Non-governmental organisation
13. Churches and religious associations and legal persons of churches and religious associations
14. Business environment institutions/institutions and organisations supporting the development of entrepreneurship and innovativeness

**Question M3. Where do you hold your seat?** [open question]

**Question M4. What role did your organisation play in the project?** [project title taken from the database]

1. Leading Partner (Leader)
2. Partner

**Question M4a. An important element of the study is the analysis of network links between the Leaders of projects implemented under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2007-2013 and the Partners. Therefore, the request to complete the survey will also be sent to the project Partners. For that reason, in order to facilitate contact with Partners, we kindly ask you to provide the e-mail addresses of the partners responsible for the project contacts. [There appears a box with a space to type e-mail address]**  
[Ask if M4=1]

Thank you very much for completing the questionnaire!