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| **REPORT FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS**  STRATEGIC PART OF THE  INTERREG NEXT CBC PROGRAMME  POLAND - BELARUS - UKRAINE 2021-2027  CARRIED OUT 2 DECEMBER 2020 – 10 JANUARY 2021 |

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# 1. General information on the consultations process

## Legal Basis

In accordance with Art. 6 par. 1 of the draft *Common Provisions Regulation (6180/21)* (CPR) referring to the need of establishing partnership and multi-level governance in the preparation and implementation of the programmes as well as and Art. 16 par. 5 of the *Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) supported by the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments 2018/0199* (Interreg Regulation), stating thatin the case of Interreg programmes involving (…) partner countries, the Member States concerned shall consult the respective (…) partner countries before submitting the Interreg programmes to the Commission.

Moreover, taking into account Art. 6.1. of the Law on the Principles of Development Policy dated   
6 December 2006 (Polish Journal of Laws of 2009, no. 84, pos. 712, with amendments), according to which projects of development strategies are subject to consultations with local self-government units, social and economic partners, and the Joint Commission of Local Government and Self-Government, the draft Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2021-2027 (PBU Programme 2021-2027) was  directed to public consultations. It should be noted that the provisions of the Law on the Principles of Development Policy are not binding for the programmes of the European Territorial Cooperation objective (Interreg). However, its provisions on development strategy and European Territorial Cooperation programmes have been taken as an indication, in order to determine the course of action in the public consultation process so as to ensure participation of key partners in the preparation of the PBU Programme 2021-2027.

## The principles of consultations

To ensure the principle of partnership in the process of public consultations on draft PBU Programme 2021-2027 the following assumptions were made:

* minimum 35-day duration of the public consultations - 2.12.2020-10.01.2021;
* providing public information about the course of the public consultations;
* submitting comments via the electronic form (website of Managing Authority – Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy (MA)) in:
  + Polish <https://ankieta.mfipr.gov.pl/index.php/434298?lang=pl>
  + Russian <https://ankieta.mfipr.gov.pl/index.php/434298?lang=ru>
  + Ukrainian <https://ankieta.mfipr.gov.pl/index.php/434298?lang=uk>
* comments during on-line consultation events organized for all three participating countries.

During the consultation process of the draft Programme PBU 2021-2027 the following principles were applied:

* complexity - consultations had international (Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian), national and regional nature;
* documentation - the various stages and opinions / comments were documented;
* continuity - consultations were ongoing, carried out systematically and intended to formulate socially legitimized draft of the Programme;
* responsiveness - participants of the consultations had the right to expect a response. All comments referring to the consulted document were analysed and answered in the attached Annex 6;
* transparency – the basic principle during consultations; documents on the draft Programme and the opinions expressed by the participants of public consultations were made available to the public on the Programme website;
* accessibility - anyone interested in the topic (not only institutional partners) were able to take part in the public consultations and express their views;
* coordination - the MA of the Programme was responsible for public consultations.

## The objectives and scope of the consultations

The aim of the public consultations of the draft Programme was to collect the remarks and opinions on the priorities of the Programme and the support proposed within its framework. These remarks were taken into account in the preparation of the final Programme document to be submitted to the European Commission. All stakeholders and interested parties were invited to take part in the consultations, most particularly the representatives of the regional and local authorities and all partners indicated in art. 6 par. 1 of the *(draft)* CPR.

The Programme document was prepared in accordance with the requirements set up in the Interreg Regulation. The draft Programme document sent to the public consultation was approved by the Joint Programming Committee (JPC) on 20 November 2020. The base for public consultations formed the 1st part of the document consisting of two main chapters:

* Programme strategy;
* Programme Priorities.

The Programme strategy responds to the national and regional strategies of socio-economic development and reflects the results of the socio-economic analysis carried out on the Programme area in order to analyse and describe the potential, challenges and problems of the cross-border cooperation development on the area. The Programme adheres to two policy objectives of the cohesion policy 2021-2027 (*Greener Europe* and *More social Europe*) as well as both of the Interreg specific objectives.

# 2. Process and results of consultations

The consultations were carried out in all three countries participating in the Programme.

## Channels and forms of consultations

The following channels were used to reach the widest possible public with the information on consultations:

1. **Official websites of the Programme institutions, electronic form for consultation**

The main channel of publishing information on the consultations was the Internet. The information about the public consultation along with the draft Programme document (as well as working translations into national languages) were published on the following websites:

* Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020: <https://www.pbu2020.eu/en/pagesnews/490>;
* European Funds / European Territorial Cooperation: <https://www.ewt.gov.pl/strony/wiadomosci/zaproszenie-do-udzialu-w-konsultacjach-publicznych-dokumentu-interreg-next-polska-bialorus-ukraina-2021-2027/>.

The print screens of the on-line information on the public consultations from the websites mentioned below may be found in Annex 1.

Main base for the consultation was the electronic form published on the MA website (<https://ankieta.mfipr.gov.pl/index.php/434298?lang=pl>) in three languages (Polish, Russian, Ukrainian). Links to the forms were provided on the Programme website. The form was filled in and submitted on-line. The print screens with the forms may be found in Annex 3.

1. **Direct mailing**

On the JTS request, the Programme Branch Offices sent via e-mail the information about commencement of the consultation process directly to:

* PL – beneficiaries of PBU 2014-2020 projects, local authorities, cultural and touristic institutions, medical institutions, regional development agencies, euroregions, NGOs, universities, Border Guard units, State Forests, National Parks, complexes of landscape parks, museums, , potential applicants etc. (total: 2718 institutions, 5130 e-mails);
* BY – beneficiaries of PBU 2007-2013 and PBU 2014-2020 projects, representatives of regional authorities, potential applicants, persons interested in the Programme (participants of the Programme events, persons who applied to the PBU Branch Office in Belarus for information about the Programme and opportunities to participate in it), journalists, universities (total: 175 e-mail addresses);
* UA – beneficiaries of PBU 2007-2013 and PBU 2014-2020 projects, representatives of local and state authorities, regional state administrations, potential applicants, NGOs, medicians, scientists, teachers, students, journalists etc. (total: 884 e-mails were sent).

1. **On-line consultation events**

The very important form for consultations and contact between MA/JTS, respective NAs and stakeholders,

potential applicants/beneficiaries were the three on-line consultation events. They were open for everyone

interested in the cross-border cooperation on the borderland of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine. The on-line

consultation events were conducted by representatives of the MA, NAs, JTS and external experts:

1. In Polish language: 2 December 2020, number of participants - 72;
2. In Ukrainian language: 3 December 2020, number of participants - 40;
3. In Russian language: 4 December 2020, number of participants - 54.

During each of the on-line consultation events, the experts responsible for the socio-economic analysis and

development of the strategic assumptions of the Programme presented information on the:

* implementation and so far results of the 2014-2020 Programme edition;
* programming process, preparation, legal framework and the main assumptions of the 2021-2027 Programme edition;
* draft Programme document consulted.

The print screen from the Programme website with information on the on-line consultation events may be found in Annex 3.

The agendas and presentations from the on-line consultation events are annexed to the report (respectively Annex 4 and Annex 5). Following the MA/JTS presentations of the Programme, the open sessions devoted to the participants remarks and opinions were carried out.

## Results of consultations

As a result of consultations, broad public opinion, stakeholders, potential applicants/beneficiaries were informed about the proposed assumptions of the Interreg NEXT CBC Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2021-2027. Many representatives of these actors expressed their opinions/remarks to the draft Programme consulted. In total 155 of such opinions/remarks were submitted via on-line forms and during three conferences.

Out of them, 61 remarks/opinions relating to the JOP were sent with the use of electronic form. The most frequent remarks related the following issues:

* the selection and definition of specific objectives of the Programme;
* the indicative actions within particular priorities.

In most of them their authors suggested to enlarge or precise the description of particular specific objectives and expand the list of indicative actions.

166 people in total attended the on-line consultation events. Participants represented various types of organizations:

* national authorities;
* local and regional authorities;
* euroregions;
* higher education institutions;
* medical institutions;
* non-governmental organizations;
* inhabitants of the Programme regions;
* other social and economic partners.

Participants of the meetings expressed their opinions and enquired inter alia about the following issues:

* The Programme specific objectives and indicators;
* The indicative actions within particular Programme priorities;
* The forms of the application;
* Large Infrastructure Projects financing;
* Micro-projects financing;
* Programme’s support for building project partnerships;
* Financing of infrastructure;
* Launching of the call for proposals;
* Eligibility of certain types of institutions.

All comments/remarks to the Programme were considered in the preparation of the final version of the its document. Some of them were directly included, some partly and finally, some, for various reasons, were rejected and did not influence the final wordings of the Programme. The detailed list of all submitted remarks/opinions to the draft Programme document with references and decisions on their acceptance made by the JPC is annexed to the Report (Annex 6).

# Annexes

* Annex 1: Announcements on the public consultations of the Programme (print screens from the Programme and ETC websites).
* Annex 2: Print screen from the on-line form for submitting comments (3 languages).
* Annex 3: Information on the on-line consultation events (the print screen from the Programme website).
* Annex 4: Agendas of the three on-line consultations events.
* Annex 5: Presentations from the on-line consultations events (English versions).
* Annex 6: Table with the remarks/opinions on the draft JOP consulted submitted via on-line form and during on-line consultations events.