

SCOPING REPORT

FOR THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE CROSS BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME BETWEEN SLOVAKIA AND HUNGARY IN THE PROGRAMMING PERIOD 2021-2027

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1. SCOPING APPROACH

1.1. The analysed territory

The cooperation area of the Cross Border Cooperation Programme between Slovakia and Hungary in the Programming Period 2021-2027 (hereinafter: SKHU CBC Programme) covers a territory of 61 496 km², homes for 8,85 million citizens.

The programming region on the Slovak side covers the following 5 NUTS3 regions ('kraj') giving home to 3.34 million people altogether:

- SK010 - Bratislava region
- SK021 - Trnava region
- SK023 -Nitra region
- SK032 - Banská Bystrica region
- SK042 - Košice region

The programming region on the Hungarian side includes the following 8 NUTS3 regions ('megye' and the capital city of Budapest) in Hungary:

- HU101 - Budapest
- HU102 - Pest county
- HU212 - Komárom-Esztergom county
- HU221 - Győr-Moson-Sopron county
- HU311 - Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county
- HU312 - Heves county
- HU313 - Nógrád county
- HU323 - Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county

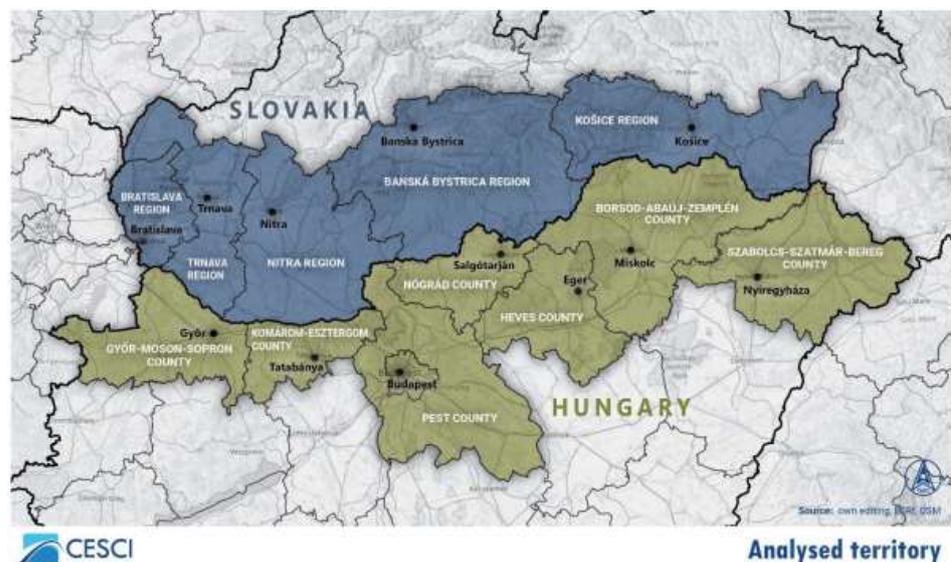


Figure 1.
The analysed territory
of the SKHU CBC
Programme
(Source: Territorial
analysis prepared by
CESCI, 2020.)

1.2. Development process of the programme document

A programme documentation template has been provided by the Interreg Regulation, that defines the content of Interreg Programmes. Chapter 1 of the programme document provides the main development challenges and untapped potential in a form of a Territorial analysis. The Territorial Analysis forming Chapter 1 has been prepared and handed over to the expert teams responsible for the preparation of Chapter 2 of the programme document and the expert team responsible for the preparation of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

Chapter 2 defines the priorities, policy objectives, specific objectives, potential beneficiaries, type of actions, target groups and indicators of the future Programme. This is the backbone of the programme concept. The development of Chapter 2 is in progress, its draft version has been handed over to the SEA expert team. Therefore, SEA experts can be involved in the process to channel their recommendations into the planning process in order to lead to an improved documentation.

1.1. Legislative basis, stakeholders' list

The below table includes the list of national environmental authorities responsible to be consulted as relevant stakeholders in the SEA process. Please note, that in case of some organizations several different departments participate in the consultation process (this is especially relevant to the Government Offices of the Hungarian counties).

	Hungary	Slovakia
Legislative basis:	Gov. Regulation No 2/2005 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment	Act no. 24/2006 Coll. on environmental impact assessment and on amendments and supplements to certain acts
Institutions involved in the SEA process	Ministry of Agriculture	Ministry of Environment
	Government Offices of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Heves, Nógrád, Pest, Komárom-Esztergom, Győr-Moson-Sopron Counties and the Capital City Budapest	Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization
	Directorates for Disaster Management of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Heves, Nógrád, Pest, Komárom-Esztergom,	Košice Self-Governing Region; Trnava Self-Governing Region; Nitra Self-Governing Region; Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region Office of Bratislava Self-Governing Region

	Győr-Moson-Sopron Counties and the Capital City of Budapest	
	Fertő-Hanság National Park Directorate, Duna-Ipoly National Park Directorate, Aggtelek National Park Directorate, Bükk National Park Directorate	State Nature Protection of the SR, Banská Bystrica
	County Councils of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Heves, Nógrád, Pest, Komárom-Esztergom, Győr-Moson-Sopron	Hl.m. SR Bratislava

All comments and recommendations of the relevant national authorities that modified the programme document and the draft Environmental Report are to be noted and taken into consideration within the final Environmental Report.

1.2. List of data resources used during the SEA process

Major sources to be used during the environmental-based verification of SKHU CBC Programme are EU level and national databases and documents such as:

- European Commission's orientation paper on INTERREG NEXT Programmes and its Annex III;
- Territorial analysis of the SKHU CBC Programme
- Situation analyses of relevant national and regional strategic documents listed in section 2.3.1.
- Hungarian Central Statistical Office(ksh.hu)
- National Environmental Information System (okir.hu)
- Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (statistics.sk)
- Enviroportal – Information portal of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic

2. PLANNED CONTENTS OF THE FUTURE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The exact contents of the Environmental Report are laid down in Annex 1 of the SEA Directive assumably incorporated by the Member States. The scoping approach differs slightly among the involved countries, however it is assumed that compliance with the related EU regulation shall fulfil the expectations of national environmental authorities of Hungary and the Slovak Republic.

The following subsections present the main elements of the future environmental report on SKHU CBC Programme.

2.1. Potential alternatives

As the SKHU CBC Programme is not an action plan preceding some major works contract, but a financial framework for cross border cooperation programme the observation of alternatives shall be narrowed down to a no-programme scenario and one that includes the implementation of the Programme and observes its possible positive and negative environmental effects.

2.2. Main objectives of the Programme

As the SKHU CBC Programme is under development, below-mentioned objectives might be changed until their adaptation.

Based on the first draft version of Chapter 2, the intervention logic of the Programme is expected to be as follows:

Policy Objective	Specific Objective	Action
Greener Europe	Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy	Rational use of raw materials and sustainable waste management
		Establishing short supply chains
		Increasing the use of renewable energy in public services
	Protecting and enhancing nature protection, and biodiversity and green infrastructure, in particular in the urban environment - including functional urban areas -, and protecting natural heritage and natural resources, preserving and highlighting protected natural areas and natural resources, and reducing every form/ all forms of pollution	Protection of endangered species and actions against alien invasive species
		Flood protection and disaster management initiatives
		Improvement of surface and ground water quality and remediation of pollution
More Social and Inclusive Europe	Enhancing the effectiveness and inclusiveness of labour markets and access to quality employment through developing social infrastructure and promoting social economy	Supporting social innovation for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups

Policy Objective	Specific Objective	Action
	Improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and on-line education and training;	Strengthening educational cooperation
	Ensuring equal access to health care through developing infrastructure, including primary care and promoting the transition from institutional to family- and community-based care	Jointly developed services for senior citizens, to support healthy and active ageing
		Supporting institutional cooperation in healthcare
	Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation	Valorisation of the local cultural heritage sites
		Development of tourism infrastructure and marketing
Better INTERREG Governance	Enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens, civil society actors and institutions, in particular, with a view to resolving legal and other obstacles in border regions	Joint strategies for eliminating border obstacles
	Build up mutual trust, in particular by encouraging people-to-people actions	Small project fund

Figure 1. The proposed Policy Objectives, Specific Objectives and Actions of SKHU CBC Programme (Source: Draft version of Chapter 2, prepared by Ex-ante Consulting Ltd, 2021.)

2.3. Cohesion and consistency of documents

2.3.1. Relationship with other relevant plans programmes, and environmental protection objectives established in these documents

The assessment will cover the programme document's relation with relevant EU directives and national, county level legislation and strategies. The analysis focuses on the environmental aspects of these documents and on the way those objectives have been taken into account during the preparation of SKHU CBC Programme. The following strategic documents shall be observed to detect possible inconsistencies between the Programme and national / regional strategies from an environmental point of view:

EU level strategies:

- EU Green Deal
- European Climate Law
- EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change
- EU 8th Environmental Action Programme (proposal)
- EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (proposal)

Hungary:

- National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development of Hungary
- National Development and Territorial Development Concept of Hungary
- National Climate Change Strategy of Hungary
- National Energy Strategy of Hungary
- National Energy and Climate Plan of Hungary
- National Transport Infrastructure Development Strategy of Hungary
- SME Strategy of Hungary
- National Tourism Development Strategy 2030 of Hungary
- National Water Strategy (Kvassay Jenő Plan) of Hungary
- National Landscape Strategy of Hungary
- Territorial development programmes of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Heves, Nógrád, Pest, Komárom-Esztergom, Győr-Moson-Sopron Counties 2021-2027
- Climate change Strategies of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Heves, Nógrád, Pest, Komárom-Esztergom, Győr-Moson-Sopron Counties

Slovak Republic:

- Strategic plan for the development of transport in the Slovak Republic until 2030
- Greener Slovakia - Strategy of the Environmental Policy of the Slovak Republic until 2030
- Concept of the development of culture in the Košice self-governing region 2020-2025 (2030)
- Vision and Strategy of the Development of Slovakia 2030 - National Strategy for Regional Development

- National Strategy for Sustainable Development
- National Strategy for Biodiversity Protection
- National Territorial Strategy for Development of the Slovak Republic until 2030
- Land-use plan of the Self-governing Region Bratislava
- Land-use plan of the Self-governing Region Banská Bystrica
- Land-use plan of the Self-governing Region Košice
- Land-use plan of the Self-governing Region Nitra
- Spatial Development Perspective of Slovak Republic
- Regional Integrated Territorial Strategies of the Košice, Banská Bystrica, Nitra, Trnava, Bratislava Regions

2.3.2. Internal consistency of the programme document

The internal consistency of the programme document will be observed to detect possible contradictions with special regard to:

- possible contradictions between Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 of the programme documents, and
- possible contradictions between the foreseen actions of the planned priorities from an environmental point of view.

2.4. Current state of the environment in Programme Area

This chapter will present the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the Programme. The analysis will put special emphasis on the cross-border landscape and environmental systems, including the advantages and disadvantages given by their cross-border location.

2.4.1. The environmental characteristics of the areas which are likely to be affected by the programme objectives

This chapter is to be completed based on section 2. of the Territorial analysis. It focuses only on those aspects that the programme is expected to have a significant impact on. The analysis will cover the following aspects:

- Landscape structure
- Soil conditions
- Natural values, protected areas, biodiversity
- Cultural heritage
- Water resources, river basins, water management
- Waste management
- Climate characteristics, the impacts of climate change
- Natural resources, energy potentials

2.4.2. Relevant environmental conflicts and problems

Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the Programme, including in particular those which relate to any areas of particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC, and taking into account other objectives being set for the area in order to establish sustainable territorial systems.

2.5. Likely environmental effects of programme implementation

The assessment of the potential effects on the environment through the programme implementation will be carried out by environmental systems, such as:

- soil
- air
- noise and vibration
- water and ground waters
- biodiversity, flora, fauna, habitats
- Natura 2000 territories
- climate
- built environment, landscape, settlement surroundings, and cultural heritage
- human health, and lifestyle
- environment consciousness

The ways in which the impact characteristics are taken into account: probability, intensity, complexity/reversibility, time dimension (duration, frequency, reversibility), spatial dimension (location, geographical area, size of the exposed population, transboundary nature of impact), cumulative and synergistic nature of impact.

Main goal of this chapter is to identify any potential emerging environmental conflicts, new or escalating problems due to the implementation of SKHU CBC Programme. To achieve this goal, all interventions of the programme document shall be observed if they pose potential threats to the above-mentioned systems. Finally, interrelationship and cumulative effect of these potential threats shall also be evaluated.

2.6. Recommended measures to protect environment, guidelines for lower hierarchy levels

The chapter lists measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset as fully as possible any significant adverse, unfavourable effects on the environment of implementing the Programme, which have been identified in the SEA process. The measures typically concern the implementation phase of the Programme.

2.7. Assessment of the monitoring system

A thorough assessment shall be carried out regarding the planned indicator system within the programme document. Its primary objective is to assess whether the indicators provided are suitable for monitoring the environmental impacts caused by the Programme. Where appropriate, the Environmental Report shall also include proposals for further improvement of the planned indicator system of the Programme.

2.8. Non-technical summary

Non-technical summary of the information provided in the Environmental Report.