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| **Person /Institution** | **Comments/remarks** | **MA / NA / Consultant Response** |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 3 – for the text “traditional and specific statistical methods for collecting information are applied” - Better to give some examples here. What kind of statistics for what purposes and variables were used?* | Sufficiently detailed description of the needs of the task could be found in the "Analysis" section. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 5 – “Lozengrad” to be replaced with Kırklareli* | It is done. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 5 – for the text “In addition to being related to commutes to work, these large development centres are part of national and regional systems for providing health, education and other services that are ‘alive’ and still functioning”- These two services (health, education) are vital and were affected from COVID-19 at the most. Thus it should be better to add those sectors under priorities.* | Healthcare and education are sufficiently affected according to the cross-border nature of the Strategy, incl. through operations proposals in each of the two areas. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 5 – for the text “All this gives grounds to argue that the geographical scope of the strategy defined in close coordination with the stakeholders is fully adequate to the related requirements and creates the territorial basis necessary for its successful implementation” - Who are these stakeholders? Better to provide some examples and data or statistics about the results of coordination.* | The Strategy is elaborated in open and transparent consultation process involving stakeholders from the region. A Task Force group is formed by stakeholders representing different groups of the CBC area – regional, local authorities, business, non-governmental sector. The external contractor for the elaboration of the Strategy consults the Task Force Group and the public of the CC area as regards each part of the Strategy.  Stakeholders / partners are described in an explicit point in the strategic part, which gives you the opportunity to get acquainted with them and their main subject of activity. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 8 – for the text “Specific objectives of INTERREG (ISO)”- Are those two ISOs newly determined or they are existing priorities suggested by EU as part of 3.1. European Strategic Objectives? If those were raised as a result of this planning, then more details and ground information should be provided. What are the reasons that these two ISOs were selected, any data or statistics?* | Interreg Specific objectives are defined by the proposal for Interreg Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council for the programming period 2021-2027 |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 8 – for the text “20246”- s there a typo?* | Yes. It has been corrected. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 11 – for the text “PO 5: Europe closer to citizens — an integrated approach tailored to specific needs and challenges of the territory and supported by stakeholders”- Any specific reason why only PO5 was chosen? Others are also as important as PO5. Territories need deep evaluation under all these POs. For example, A more social Europe — implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights — delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights and supporting quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare. That is one of the most important POs that sould be paid special attention.* | PO5 "Europe closer to citizens" has been identified as key to the Strategy with the technical documentation under the Contract.  According to the proposal for Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on the European Regional Development Fund for the period 2021-2027 the support under policy objective 5 Europe closer to citizens shall be provided through territorial and local development strategies. Therefore a CBC territorial strategy for integrated measures between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Turkey is being developed in order to meet the conditions for implementation of PO 5 under the Interreg CBC Programme Bulgaria-Turkey 2021-2027. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 13 – for the text “3.3.Preparation for INTERREG Post 2020 — guidelines for cross-border cooperation” - Better to capitalize all, sa the title of 2.2.* | We will pay attention to the proposal in the final formatting of the text. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 14 – for the text* “*CONCLUSIONS” - Before conclusions, it i*  *s better to give more details about methodology. How you approach the problem, what are the strategies and way of data collection? Number of stakeholders reached and who they are? what kind of information that they provided etc? Without knowing the methodology and nature of the data, its difficult to interpret the validity of the results.* | An analytical part of the Strategy has been developed, which precedes the strategic one and contains answers to the questions asked. The final version will contain all the parts in one document. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 14 – for the text “Along with the encouraging results, there are difficulties and sometimes lasting negative trends, leading to an imbalance in the development of the territory in both sectoral and territorial aspects” - What are they? encouraging results? difficulties and negative trends etc. where are they coming from?* | See section "Analysis". |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 14 – for the text “The accumulation of problems in various areas, especially in remote and depopulated areas, generates a negative cumulative effect, which is crucial for the deepening of more acute problems and has an overall negative impact in all areas of development” - What are these problems? Any examples?* | See section "Analysis". |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 14 – for the text “The dominant position of SMEs in the economic realities of the CBC region largely determines their potential to be a major driving force in the economic recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic and its subsequent long-term development”- That is true but there are other factors as well, such as agriculture and forestry.* | See section "Analysis". |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 15 – for the text “The integrated approach to meeting/addressing the needs and potentials of the territory in the developed strategy is manifested in three main aspects”- what is this developed strategy?* | The Strategy as a whole is the desired result of the process in which you took part as well. The text to which your recommendations are addressed is part of it. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 15 – for the text “Economic development, with a focus on SMEs and tourism”- These should be included, but limiting the economic development only with these two might not be enough to successfull achievement of program goals in a general manner. It should be added agriculture, industry, forestry, education etc.* | They are included according to the cross-border nature and possibilities of the Strategy. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 15 – for the text “Environmental protection and conservation of biodiversity” - protection of eco-systems should also be included.* | They are included according to the cross-border nature and possibilities of the Strategy. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 16 – for the text “Making sure that EU citizens have the necessary skills to succeed in the labour market is key to improving economic growth and employment in the EU”- the only way to do this is to promote education, vocational training, and in-service training and life-long learning. Thus, we cannot seperate education from economical growth.* | We agree. This is one of the reasons to pay the necessary attention to education and the development of adequate knowledge and skills. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 17 – for the text “Small and medium-sized enterprises are the backbone of the EU’s economy. It is also essential to strengthen them”- One way to strengh them to increasethe quality of employment and encourage them innovation and crossborder networks for trading.* | We agree. We have planned specific operations on the issue. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 17 – for the text “Climate change and environmental degradation are an existential threat to Europe and the world”- Leaving forestry and agriculture out of this discussion is not appropriate, thus these must be included specifically into the program.* | They are included according to the cross-border nature and possibilities of the Strategy. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 17 – for the text “5. The longer the respondents remained in education, the more likely they are to have heard of Natura 2000 (38% vs. 17%). The share of those who have heard of Natura 2000 varies between 18% for those who completed their education aged 20+ and up to 3% left by the age of 15”- Education, training for life long learning must be included into the program.* | They are included according to the cross-border nature and possibilities of the Strategy. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 19 – “Lozengrad” to be replaced with Kırklareli* | It is done. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 23 – for the text “Assistance in solving the specific problems of family SMEs (obtaining adequate qualification, planning and management of the inheritance process, etc.)”- thos problems might not be specific to family SMEs. Also, better to include definition of SMEs somewhere at the beginning of the report. What are the EU criteria to be considered as SME?* | We will take into account your remark. A definition for SMEs is included in the Analysis section. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 23 – for the text “Identification of Bulgaria as a major foreign trade partner of the Province of Edirne creates potential for joint action in cross-border cooperation related to exports and imports, respectively” - This is not a balanced statement. Kırklareli also has a potential for joint action in TR region. Also on the other hand, Turkey is also a major foreign trade partner for Provinces of Haskovo, Yambol and Burgas. Better to restate this more inclusive manner.* | This fact is used as an illustration of existing trade relations, as the potential is defined for the entire CBC area, ie. not only for Edirne, but also for Kırklareli. Regarding the statement that Turkey is a major foreign trade partner of the listed areas - we do not have such information. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 23 – for the text “Encouraging entrepreneurs in the SMEs to commit to improving the skills of their employees”- That is the way of education and lifelong learning, however, due to COVID and loss of working hours, this should be specified both distance and face to face. training.* | Your proposal is covered by the current drafting which does not exclude distance or face-to-face training. (The Strategy does not specify an exact way of training and retraining. Potential beneficiaries are free to make their proposals.) |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 25 – for the text “Building and developing knowledge and skills adequate to the modern challenges in the local population”- That is also directly related to training and education, thus it is better to have education as one of the common and urgent needs in the program.* | "Improving the qualification of local communities for successful realisation on the labor market" is one of the seven Specific objectives of the Strategy. The Strategy should not be mistaken for the Programme, which provides funding for the Strategy implementation as well as for the implementation of other policy objectives.  Your proposal is covered by the current drafting. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 26 – for the text “Improving qualifications by acquiring key skills - leadership, management, marketing, digital and other competencies, as a key condition for increasing the competitiveness of SMEs”- Having all these discussions by just focusing on SMEs is not adequate. From government workers such as teachers, policy makers to farmers and forestry workers all shoul get opportunity for professional development under lifelong learning.* | We agree, but in this case we are developing a strategy with specific parameters and a specific cross-border focus, not a regional development document. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 27 – for the text “Creating a regional tourist product for the CBC area, based on natural resources, cultural heritage, mineral springs and relatively good tourist infrastructure, and implementation of regional marketing and advertising”- what does it mean?* | Please specify your question. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 27 – for the text “The development of cycling routes in the region has the potential to create conditions for rediscovering and developing unpopular destinations and supporting local communities”- Better to have aa statement more like for an "Eco Tourism" instead being such a specific. Not only cycling routes, but also hiking routes should be developed.* | We agree. Creating a regional tourism product involves all of this. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 30 – for the text “- Growing level of ICT adoption on the Bulgarian part of the CBC area, while Turkish counterpart is less advanced. Yet, both countries operate in a less digitally transformed environment, which opens room for development of more digitalized solutions across various policy domains”- this statement is not very clear. Better to restate it in a more specific manner. Perhaps as a two separate statements.* | We will consider your proposal. |
| **Erdem Demiroz**  **Trakya University** | *Page 30 – for the text “Implementation of joint actions to reduce pollution and provide clean air, water and food and to mitigate and adapt to climate change”- That is about agriculture, thus as noted above, some sectors must be included into the report in a more comprehensive and completed manner.* | It is a multisector strategy therefore references to particular sectors seem inappropriate. In addition the need for demarcation with other national funding sources shall be considered (Programme for agriculture and development of the rural areas in Bulgaria) |