

Cross-border region “Drina - Tara”

“Fostering regional cooperation and balanced territorial development of Western Balkan countries in the process towards EU integration”

Minutes from the 10th Stakeholders Group Meeting for "Drina-Tara" cross-border region



The project is financed by:



Minutes from the 10th Stakeholders Group Meeting for the
Cross-border region "Drina-Tara"
17. June 2015.
Pljevlja, Montenegro

I. List of participants

The Tenth Stakeholders' Group Meeting for "Drina-Tara" cross-border region was attended by 25 participants, representatives of Stakeholders' Group from "Drina-Tara" region, Secretary General and SWG project team.

Annex1: List of participants

II. Programme

June 17th, 2015 (Wednesday)

Municipal Assembly Hall, Pljevlja, Montenegro

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| 10:30 – 11:00 | Arrival of the participants and welcome gathering |
| 11:00 – 11:20 | Welcome speech <i>Mr. Boban Ilic, SWG Secretary General</i> <i>Mr. Budimir Bajcetic, Secretary for Economy, Municipality of Pljevlja</i> |
| 11:20 – 11:30 | Introduction to the programme <i>Mr. Aleksandar Damjanovic, Regional Manager of "Drina-Tara" Cross-border Region</i> |
| 11:30 – 11:45 | General achievements related to the preparations for implementation of ABDA in the WB countries <i>Ms. Irena Dzimrevska, SWG Head of Operations</i> |
| 11:45 – 12:00 | Presentation of the project on ABDA implementation – 3 rd phase Main outputs, project activities, milestones and general timeframe <i>Ms. Irena Dzimrevska, SWG Head of Operations</i> |
| 12:00 – 12:45 | Future activities related to implementation of ABDA in Drina-Tara cross-border region - Discussion on possible support on "People to People" actions in the "Drina-Tara" region - Discussion about project proposals for Integrated Economic Development and role of "Drina-Tara" Project Management Unit - Discussion about nomination on SHG members (affirmation of current members and involvement of new members) <i>Mr. Aleksandar Damjanovic, Regional Manager of "Drina-Tara" Cross-border Region</i> |

Ms. Danica Radojicic, Coordinator of "Drina-Tara" Cross-border Region

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|---------------|--|
| 12:45 – 13:15 | Coffee Break |
| 13:15 – 14:00 | Identification of donors, communication and fundraising activities – Role of PMU's <i>Mr. Kaj Mortensen</i> |
| 14:00 – 14:30 | Conclusions and future activities |
| 14:30 – 15:00 | Lunch |
| 15:00 | Departure |

Minutes from the meeting:

The 10th SHG meeting aimed at discussion about the general achievements related to the preparations for implementation of ABDA in the WB countries, as well as discussion about the future ABDA perspective.

The main objectives of the Tenth Stakeholders' Group Meeting held on 17th June in the Municipality of Pljevlja Assembly Hall was to present the overall results of ABDA Grant scheme, progress made regarding people to people actions and to discuss about next phase of ABDA programme.

Topics during the meeting:

- General achievements related to the preparations for implementation of ABDA in the WB countries
- Presentation of the project on ABDA implementation – 3rd phase (Main outputs, project activities, milestones and general timeframe)
- Future activities related to implementation of ABDA in Drina-Tara cross-border region
- Identification of donors, communication and fundraising activities – Role of Project Management Unites (PMU's)

Official opening of the event

The meeting was opened and welcomed by Mr. Budimir Bajcetic, Secretary for Economy from Municipality of Pljevlja. He said that Municipality of Pljevlja as a bordering municipality between tree countries is well positioned and willing to cooperate with neighbouring countries and municipalities in the sphere of agriculture and rural development. As well the meeting was welcomed by Mr. Boban Ilic, SWG Secretary General. He stated that SWG as a platform of Ministries of Agriculture in respective countries of South Easter Europe (SEE) have support at national level as well have acknowledge support at a local level. In the forthcoming period SWG will facilitate the process of development of project proposals with a focus on CBC programmes.

Aleksandar Damjanovic, greeted the participants and said that he will be a new Regional Manager for cross border region “Drina-Tara” and “Drina-Sava”.

1. General achievements related to the preparations for implementation of ABDA in the WB countries

Irena Dzimrevska, Head of Operation presented general achievements related to the preparations for implementation of ABDA in the 4 cross border regions. Programme documents for Economic Development with defined objectives and measures were developed. Concrete financials sources are not allocated within this programme but could be financed within other programmes. These strategic documents are ownership of Stakeholders and could be used as a base for developing of different project proposals. Four Project Management Offices are establish and functional as well as Regional Office in Belgrade.

In the previous phase 16 **Stakeholders Group Meetings** in four cross border regions were organized, where 526 participants were present.

In cooperation with FAO, within **Capacity building activities** were organized 2 study tours with 40 participants and 4 workshops with 143 participants.

People to people activities were supported with the aim to promote the cross border regions.

- 49 people to people activities were organized
- 1070 exhibitors and 125 471 visitors
- Estimated income to local communities was 148.520 € and 68.000 € estimated direct income from selling products during the events
- 10 Contracts for business cooperation were signed and 4 Memorandum of Understanding for future cooperation
- 30 events promoted traditional food and handicraft products
- 18 conferences and workshops were organized with 1127 participants
- 20 sports and other cultural events with 18.724 visitors

ABDA Grant scheme was implemented in the cross border regions “Drina-Tara” and “Drina-Sava” out which:

- 9 cross border partnership projects were granted with 28 partners
- Total investment of all 9 projects = 259.386, 3 € (55% contributed by the European Union and 45% contributed by beneficiaries)
- 7 new products are launched
- 7 beneficiaries have improved and modernized their production processes introducing new technology
- 6 projects have improved the tourist products and services in the regions
- 4 innovative services and products are developed
- 4 tourism facilities are reconstructed
- 3 new products are expected as a result from the investment
- 17 people were additionally engaged as seasonal workforce due to the investment
- 6 additional employments as result of the investments
- Additional employments are expected in the upcoming years due to the investments.

Danica Radojicic, Coordinator for the cross border region “Drina-Tara” presented implemented activities in the previous phase of the project in the cross border region “Drina-Tara”. Within people-to –people activities 14 regional events were supported and 6 projects with 19 partners

under the ABDA Grant scheme. The grant beneficiaries shared their positive experiences. In the next phase will be organized the process of monitoring the effects from implemented Grants scheme. Some effects are already visible. The aim of the implemented activities were to connect people and to strengthen cooperation and partnerships. In the next two years there will be no Grant scheme, but SWG will continue searching for alternative funding.

Annex 2: SWG ABDA 4 Project presentation

Annex 3: ABDA in Drina-Tara region

2. Presentation of the project on ABDA implementation – 3rd phase (Main outputs, project activities, milestones and general timeframe)

Irena Dzimrevska, Head of Operations stated that the implementation of 3rd phase of EU funded project started as of 1st June 2015. In the new phase of the project SWG will continue with implementation of Area Based Development. The main focus on implementation of ABDA will be on capacity building activities and support to preparation of applications for calls for proposals, development of short value chains, and analysis of situation in three more WB cross border areas.

The foreseen activities aimed at facilitation of process of economic development of the cross-border areas:

- Organization of meetings with stakeholders
- Capacity building measures for preparation of project proposals
- Support to stakeholders for preparation of project proposals for different calls (emphasis on IPA II)
- Performance of publicity activities related to available funding
- Organization of people-to-people actions
- Participation on meetings of other regional structures
- Initiation of assessment of situation and strategic planning in three of the cross-border areas

In this phase, criteria for supporting the regional events will be much more rigorous, because of the lack of funds. In the cross border region “Drina-Tara” at the moment exist around 90 events. Stakeholders made comments and suggestions about possible events that should be supported. Some of them said that commercial events with economic impact should be supported, others that advance should be given to events with smaller budget. There were suggestions to initiate new events, where more municipalities will be included in promotion of the region. As well it was suggested that cross border region “Drina-Tara” should obtain exhibition stands, movable stages and required equipment that will be available for all stakeholders.

The Project Management Units (PMUs) will have responsibility to:

- Assist the SHG in preparation of projects based on the ABD programme and other donors as appropriate,
- Carrying out information and publicity activities for different available EC instruments and programmes and potential donor activities in the area,
- Managing activities in the respective cross-border area during the implementation phase,
- Manage funding of the functions of the SHG and the PMU activities,
- Serve as a Secretariat for the SHG,

- Serve as the interface with the SWG Headquarter,
- Develop knowledge about existing support instruments potentially available to support projects in the region.

In this phase will be Initiated the assessment of situation and strategic planning in three of the cross-border areas: "Pcinja region" (Serbia-Macedonia-Bulgaria); "Neretva" (Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro); "Prokletije (Albania-Montenegro-Kosovo*).

Annex 4: List of manifestations in Drina-Tara region

3. Future activities related to implementation of ABDA in Drina-Tara cross-border region

Aleksandar Damnjanovic, Regional Manager stated that the work of Stakeholders Group should be formalize. Executive Board as a working body of Stakeholder Group from cross border region "Drina-Sava" consist of five representatives from three countries. Following the LEADER approach priority was given to NGO and private sector. Among the representatives from the Executive Board, the President and two Vice Presidents are elected on a rotational bases. It was agrees that Operational Protocol for functioning of Stakeholders Group for "Drina-Tara" region should be formalized, and as well to establish working body. In the future, Mayors of the Municipalities should be invited on SHG Meetings, and Mayors from host municipality should invite other mayors from respective countries at the meeting.

Annex 5: Operational Protocol

4. Identification of donors, communication and fundrasing activities – Role of Project Management Unites (PMU's)

Mr. Kaj Mortensen, Consultant and Aleksandar Damnjanovic presented the potential donors and fundrasing activities.

EC developed Multi-Country Indicative Strategy Paper for the period 2014-2020. Standing Working Group (SWG) and Area Based Development Approach (ABDA) are included in this Strategic Framework. CBC programme covers largely same thematical topics as ABD programme. No support to investments in private businesses will be provided, but can support public private partnerships.

IPA II assistance for programming period 2014-2020 is adressed in 5 policy meassures among which agriculture and rural development. The measures under the IPARD instrument were presented as well. IPARD II is based on principles for EU rural development policy. In Montenegro IPAR like was already implemented. IPARD II is expected at New Year with a fokus on bigger producers and processors.

Project Management Unites will have a role to facilitate ongoing adjustment of development goals, identification and development of short value chains and partnerships, facilitate development of investment projects, keep record of funding opportunities and periods of call for applications under the respective instruments, monitor and publicise calls for applications under other instruments on the ABD website, provide first level of information and advice on where to get detailed information about the conditions for call for applications.

Annex 6: Presentation ABDA Funding opportunities

Mr. Boban Ilic, Secretary General announced that there is possibility for implementing the GIZ Programme for Solid Waste Management in “Drina-Tara” region as one of target cross border region that suffer consequences of waste pollution.

At the end he said again to all participants that the most important thing is to foster partnerships, cooperation and to use this meetings as a platform where people are gathering and exchanging ideas.

Conclusions from the meeting:

- Formalization of Stakeholders Group through establishment of Executive Board (5 people from each country) and among them three representatives as presidency (president and two vice presidents)
- PMU as a Secretariat of SHG will facilitate the process of development of project proposals (emphasis on IPA II)
- Stakeholders should in line with criteria propose a list of manifestations to be supported
- Possible implementation of Project “Improvement of Solid Waste Management” in “Drina-Tara”, “Sharra” region and partly “Drina-Sava” region
- No Grant scheme in the next two years (continue to search for alternative funding)