



Project funded by the European Union



Minutes of the 17th Meeting of Stakeholders Group for the Cross-Border Region of “Prespa”

April 19th, 2017

Hotel “Life Gallery”, Korca

Republic of Albania

Participants in the meeting:

The structure of participants in the 17th Stakeholder Group meeting included 36 participants from the Prespa Region. The meeting was organized and facilitated by the staff of the Project Management Unit, with the assistance of the President and Vice President of the Stakeholders Group for the Prespa cross – border region.

The full list of participants' contacts and details can be found at:

ANNEX 1: Participants list of 17th Prespa stakeholder group meeting 19.04.2017

ANNEX 2: PPP_Prespa achievement and results

Program of the meeting:

17th Meeting of Stakeholders Group for the Cross-Border Region of “Prespa”

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| 10:00 – 10:30 | Arrival of the participants and welcome gathering |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | Welcome speech
Representative of Korca Municipality
Ms. Viola Bogdani, President of SHG “Prespa” Cross-border Region
Mr. Naume Tashovski, Vice President of SHG “Prespa” Cross-border Region
Ms. Bojana Jovanovska, Regional Manager of “Prespa” Cross-border Region |
| 10:45 – 11:15 | Overview of the activities within the EU project “Fostering regional cooperation and balanced territorial development of Western Balkan countries in the process towards EU integration” related to implementation of ABDA in “Prespa” Cross-Border region

Ms. Bojana Jovanovska, Regional Manager of “Prespa” Cross-border Region
Ms. Etleva Thimo, Regional Coordinator of “Prespa” Cross-border Region |
| 11:15 – 11:30 | Informative session on the outcomes of the ABD Grant Scheme within the LEIWW project

Ms. Bojana Jovanovska, Regional Manager of “Prespa” Cross-border Region |

11:30 – 12:00	Video Documentary “Prespa Lake of Apples”
12:00 – 12:10	Conclusions and future activities
12:10 – 12:30	Press conference
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30	Departure of the participants

Minutes of the meeting

The meeting started with the welcome speech of the President and Vice President of the stakeholder group for the Prespa cross-border region, Ms. Viola Bogdani and Mr. Naume Tashovski. They welcomed the participants and expressed their pleasure for the presence of the stakeholder group members in the 17th Stakeholder Group meeting. In addition, they stressed the importance of these meetings through this phase of ABDA implementation approach and confirmed the intensification of good cooperation between stakeholders in Prespa region through the organization of different joint activities and regional events.

On behalf of the Macedonian Embassy in Albania - Ms. Atina Nichoska, Counsellor at the Macedonian Embassy in Tirana, also welcomed the participants and expressed her pleasure for her presence in the regular meeting of the stakeholder group for Prespa region. She concluded, expressing the maximum support of the Macedonian Embassy for future cooperation with the stakeholder group in Prespa and the joint cross-border organization of activities.

On behalf of Korca Municipality, Ms. Aida Shkodrani welcomed the participants and expressed the pleasure for the involvement of Korca Municipality in such important activities in the cross-border region. She expressed her gratitude for the fruitful cooperation on the activities organized so far in Korca municipality, under the People to People program. She concluded, expressing optimism and maximum support for the future cooperation.

In addition, Ms. Bojana Jovanovska, Regional Manager of Prespa cross-border region, thanked all the participants for their presence and wished a fruitful work and collaboration with all stakeholders. After the welcome speech, she presented the program of the meeting, focusing on the issues to be discussed.

Session 1

Overview of the activities within the EU project “Fostering regional cooperation and balanced territorial development of Western Balkan countries in the process towards EU integration” related to implementation of ABDA in “Prespa” Cross-Border region

The session started with the presentation of Ms. Etleva Thimo, Regional Coordinator for the “Prespa” cross-border region, who gave an overview of the general performed activities and achievements within the EU project “Fostering regional cooperation and balanced territorial development of Western Balkan countries in the process towards EU integration” for Prespa cross-border region. The presentation was focused on the general achievements during the period June 2015 – April 2017, emphasizing the objectives of the project regarding the implementation of the ABD approach in Prespa cross-border region. The project implementation included activities such as regional People-to-People events, workshops for capacity building for the stakeholders, facilitation of development of project applications, regular stakeholder meetings, as well as creation of policy documents in line with the European Union acquis. Concluding the presentation was emphasized the importance of the integrated economic development in the cross-border region of Prespa, by sharing information and organizing joint actions with the stakeholders in Prespa cross-border region.

During the discussion, it was emphasized that the future work of the stakeholder group should be focused on the establishment of different working groups for important sectors. Meanwhile, it was concretely suggested that these working groups should be focused in the main priorities for the development of the cross-border region such as agriculture and tourism. Also, these working groups can focus their work on the specific issues, problems and challenges of the respective sectors. The establishment of these working groups will increase the wider cross-border cooperation by including new stakeholders in the stakeholder group and will also create opportunities to further improve the integrated economic development of the region.

Session 2

Informative session on the outcomes of the ABD Grant Scheme within the LEIWW project

The session started with the presentation of Ms. Bojana Jovanovska, Regional Manager of Prespa cross-border region, who gave an overview of the ABD Grant Scheme implementation within the LEIWW project. During the presentation, additional information was given regarding the evaluation process and the implementation process of the grant scheme. In addition, general information was given regarding the main outcomes of final results for the second call for the Prespa cross-border region. In total, there were nineteen (19) project applications submitted, from which ten (10) applications succeeded in the evaluation process, and the official signing of the grant contracts with the grantees was realised on 21 March, 2017. Meanwhile, because of insufficient grant funds, one (1) project application that succeed the evaluation process with the necessary points was put in the waiting list for future possible support. Also, it was stressed that the project applications submitted were mainly focused in the sectors of agriculture and tourism.

During the open discussion, it was stressed that the grant scheme implementation was a good opportunity to improve the business conditions and the integrated economic development of the Prespa region. Also, it was emphasized that during this project implementation phase a lot of positive results have been achieved, including the participation of new stakeholders from important sectors, as well as increasing the cooperation between the stakeholders and sustainability of the stakeholder group. In addition, it was suggested that in the future the business sector participation should be increased and included to actively participate in the stakeholder group.

The session ended with the presentation of the video documentary “Prespa Lake of Apples” stressing the message that the nature and the neighbouring can thrive together.

Session 3

Conclusions and future activities

Within the last session, the following conclusions were drawn:

- This project phase of the EU funded project: “Fostering regional cooperation and balanced territorial development of Western Balkan countries in the process towards EU integration” implemented in the period June 2015 – April

2017, for Prespa cross-border region, included the implementation of activities such as regional People-to-People events, workshops for capacity building for the stakeholders, facilitation of development of project applications, regular stakeholder meetings, as well as creation of policy documents in line with the European Union acquis;

- During this project implementation phase a lot of positive results were achieved, including the participation of new stakeholders from important economic development sectors by increasing the cooperation between the stakeholders and the sustainability of Prespa stakeholder group. In addition, it was suggested that in the future the business sector participation should be increased and included to actively participate in the stakeholder group;
- The ABD grant scheme was a good opportunity to improve the business sector conditions and the integrated economic development of Prespa region;
- The grant project applications submitted for Prespa cross-border region were mainly focused in the sectors of agriculture and tourism. In total there were nineteen (19) project applications submitted, from which ten (10) project applications succeeded the evaluation process and official signing of the grant contracts with the grantees was realised by March, 2017. Meanwhile, because of insufficient grant funds, one (1) project application that succeed the evaluation process with the necessary points was put in the waiting list for future possible support;
- The future work of the stakeholder group should be focused on the establishment of different working groups for important development sectors of Prespa region. It was suggested that these working groups should be focused in the main priorities for the development of the cross-border region such as agriculture and tourism. Also, these working groups will focus their work on the specific issues, problems and challenges of the respective sectors;
- The establishment of the working groups will increase the wider cross-border cooperation by including new stakeholders in Prespa stakeholder group and will also create opportunities to further develop the integrated economic development of the region;
- Prespa PMU and SWG will continue to serve as an information point where members of the stakeholder group will obtain the necessary information on new calls for proposals and programs. They will continue to support the preparation of applications for different call for proposals and will provide

possible partners for active IPA CBC programs in the region and other open calls;

- At the end of the meeting a press conference was organized with local and national media in order to promote and share information regarding the regular meeting of the Stakeholder Group for cross-border region of "Prespa" and the closure of the project financed by the European Union "Fostering regional cooperation and balanced territorial development of Western Balkan countries in the process towards EU integration".

Prepared by:

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