



South Eastern Europe
SWG RRD
Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group



Minutes from the 19th Stakeholders' Group Meeting for cross-border region "Prespa"

08th June 2018, premises of Dorcas Aid Albania - Korce, Republic of Albania



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Participants in the meeting:

The structure of participants in the 19th Stakeholder Group meeting included 24 participants from the Prespa cross-border Region. The meeting was organized and facilitated by the staff of the Project Management Unit, with the assistance of the 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 19th Prespa stakeholder group meeting 08.06.2018;
- ANNEX 2:** PPP_ Workshop "Development of Value Chains in the Agribusiness Sector"
- ANNEX 3:** PPP_ People to People events for Prespa cross-border region;
- ANNEX 4:** PPP_ Tourism potentials for diversification of economic activities;
- ANNEX 5:** PPP_ Agribusiness potentials for diversification of economic activities;

Program of the meeting:

19th Meeting of Stakeholders Group for the Cross-Border Region of “Prespa”

09:30 – 10:00 **Arrival of the participants and welcome gathering**

10:00 – 10:15 **Welcome speech**

Ms. Viola Bogdani, President of SHG “Prespa” Cross-border Region
Mr. Damjan Surlevski Project Manager SWG
Mr. Darko Buzarovski, Regional Manager of “Prespa” Cross-border Region

10:15 – 10:40 **Overview of the general activities related to implementation of ABDA in “Prespa” Cross-Border region within the EU project “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas”.**

- Presentation and discussion on cluster/value chains initiative working groups and the capacity building workshop "Development of Value Chains in the Agribusiness Sector"

Mr. Darko Buzarovski, Regional Manager of “Prespa” Cross-border Region

10:40 – 11:00 **Discussion about future activities related to implementation of "People to People" actions in "Prespa" cross-border region.**

- Nettle - Small gastronomy school
- Agribusiness, a new challenge for youth in the region
- Tour de Galicica 2018
- Vine and cheese days
- Meet Prespa
- Macedonian cultural summer 2018
- Sports and culture
- Rurality becomes a value within the manifestation "Prespa Apple Harvest"



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Ms. Etleva Thimo, Regional Coordinator of “Prespa” Cross-border Region

11:00 – 12:00 Presentation of potentials for diversification of economic activities in rural cross-border areas through short value chain development.

Mrs. Suzana Djordjevic Milosevic, Senior Expert - SWG

Mr. Predrag Markovic, Regional Expert for agriculture – SWG

Mr. Filip Sekuloski, Regional Expert for tourism – SWG

12:00 – 12:30 Discussion and conclusions of the meeting

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

Minutes of the meeting

The meeting started with the welcome speech of the Regional Manager of “Prespa” Cross-border Region, Mr. Darko Buzarovski who welcomed the participants and thanked the host of the 19th stakeholder group meeting – Dorcas Aid Albania. He expressed the pleasure confirming the intensification of good cooperation between stakeholders in Prespa region through the organization of different activities and joint events by the stakeholders in Prespa region.

On behalf of Dorcas Aid Albania, but also as the president of stakeholder group for Prespa cross-border region Ms. Viola Bogdani, welcomed the participants and expressed her pleasure for hosting the 19th stakeholder group meeting in the premises of Dorcas Aid Albania – Korce. She stressed the importance of these activities in the region expressing the good cooperation and work done by the stakeholders so far for organization of joint cross-border activities.

In addition, Mr. Vangjush Dishnica welcomed all the participants and thanked the host of the 19th meeting for the warm hospitality and all the participants for their presence wishing a fruitful collaboration with all stakeholders. After the welcome speech, the Regional Manager of “Prespa” Cross-border Region, Mr. Darko Buzarovski presented the program of the meeting, focusing on each session and the issues to be discussed.

Session 1

Overview of the general activities related to implementation of ABDA in “Prespa” Cross-Border region within the EU project “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas”

The session started with the presentation of Mr. Darko Buzarovski, regional manager for “Prespa” Cross-border Region, who gave an overview of the general activities organized and related to ABDA implementation in the last two months supported by the EU project “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas”. Also, the presentation was focused on the overview of the cluster/value chains initiative working groups and the capacity building workshop “Development of Value Chains in the Agribusiness Sector” for Prespa cross-border region. In addition, it was presented and discussed about the progress work done so far for the two working groups



established in the main priorities for the development of the cross-border region of Prespa such as agriculture and tourism.

The value chain training for Prespa cross-border region was held in Lakeview Hotel in Oteshevo, in the period from 14 - 16 May 2018. This three-day training was attended by stakeholders from cross-border region of Prespa from Macedonia and Albania, such as representatives from the public sector – municipalities and directorate for agriculture, private sector: apple producers, fruit processors, honey producers, fruit cooperative, and civil sector-representatives from Local Action Group of Prespa, rural women organizations etc. Conclusions and recommendations were presented and discussed during this session. So, it was emphasized that the value chains in the agribusiness and apple production, is a very important economic driver in both countries, Macedonia and Albania. It was discussed that the value chain should be improved to support the agrobusiness and apple production as a main sector and to improve living standard of the population. As a conclusion, it was emphasized that the Project Management Unit Prespa and SWG will support these cluster initiatives in the region and will try to find additional funds for the financial support of future activities for the two working groups.

Session 2

Discussion about future activities related to implementation of "People to People" actions in "Prespa" cross-border region

The presentation started with the overview of the People to People Call and actions implemented during this period for the cross-border region of "Prespa". During the presentation, general information was given regarding the main outcomes for the open call for People to People events. In total eleven (11) applications were received for the cross-border region "Prespa". The evaluation committee held on February 20th, 2018, reviewed and evaluated all the applications according to the scoring list and protocol. Eight (8) applications will be supported for further implementation of regional People to People activities in Prespa cross-border region and only two (2) were implemented until now.

The first event "Nettle - Small gastronomy school" was held in Kuratica village, in Ohrid on 02-03 June 2018 and was organized by the organization for rural tourism, ecology and tradition - O.R.T.E.T with guests from Ohrid and Pogradec who had the chance to promote touristic activities and taste local traditional products home-made foods and drinks with recipes based on Nettle herb.

Also, the second regional event was implemented by the Faculty of Agriculture, "Fan.S.Noli University", Korce, Albania. The workshop "Agribusiness, a new challenge for youth in the region" was held on 07 June 2018 intended to create a network on young motivated farmers who discussed their interests in agriculture and address their common challenges. In addition, six (6) more People to People events will be supported in the upcoming months:

- Tour de Galicica 2018; A cycling tour at Galicica mountain aiming to promote the nature and touristic opportunities of the Prespa region, will be organized by Resen Municipality on 28 August 2018.
- Vine and cheese days; A festival of Wine and Cheese and Organic Honey from local producers mainly from the rural regions of Prespa will bring their products and present them directly in the market. The event will be organized by Ohrid municipality on 10 – 11 August 2018.
- Meet Prespa; The event will be organized by the Association of apple producers Blagoj A. Kotlarovski - Focus group Rural women from Prespa on 31 August – 02 September 2018.



The aim of this workshop is to strengthen the regional cooperation between organizations of Agritourism and tourism in Prespa.

- Macedonian cultural summer 2018; The cultural event will be organized by the Association SONCE and will be held in Pustec, Albania on 25 – 30 July 2018.
- Sports and culture-the future of our region; The sports events will be organized by PE Biljani Izvori in Ohrid, Macedonia on 16-17 June 2018.
- Rurality becomes a value within the manifestation "Prespa Apple Harvest"; The event will be organized by ZRR Local Action Group AGRO LEADER and is planned as a two days event within the traditional Apple Picking Days of Prespa on 26-27 September 2018, in Resen, Macedonia.

Session 3

Presentation of potentials for diversification of economic activities in rural cross-border areas through short value chain development

The session included the presentation of Mr. Predrag Markovic, Regional Expert for agriculture – SWG and Mr. Filip Sekuloski, Regional Expert for tourism – SWG that gave an overview of the of potentials for diversification of economic activities in rural cross-border areas through short value chain development for Prespa region. In general, it was discussed and suggested that the stakeholders in Prespa region need improvement in order to provide better service and upgrade value chain. Also, the future donor support in agritourism and agribusiness will be needed for further development of the cross-border area. In addition, participants concluded that LEADER measure can contribute to improve the quality of life in the region and should be taken into consideration as a potential for attracting funds in the future.

Session 4

Conclusions and future activities

In the last session the following conclusions were drawn:

- Prespa Project Management Unit (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;
- After the evaluation process for financial support eight (8) project applications will be supported for further implementation of regional People to People activities in Prespa cross-border region. Only two (2) activities were implemented until now and six (6) more People to People events will be supported in the upcoming months;
- It was emphasized that the value chains in the agribusiness and apple production, are very important economic driver in both countries, Macedonia and Albania;
- The value chain should be improved to support the agribusiness and apple production as it main sector and to improve living standard of the population and also, the



stakeholders in Prespa region needs improvement in order to provide better service and to upgrade the value chains;

- Project Management Unit Prespa (PMU) and SWG will support cluster initiatives in the region and will try to find additional funds for the financial support of future activities of two working groups.
- Future donor support in agritourism and agribusiness will be needed for further development of the “Prespa” cross-border region;
- LEADER measure can contribute to improve the quality of life in the region and should be taken into consideration as a potential for attracting funds in the future.

Prepared by:

Etleva Thimo, Regional Coordinator for “Prespa” Cross-Border Region

Darko Buzarovski, Regional Manager of Prespa cross-border region