



South Eastern Europe  
**SWG** RRD  
Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group



## Minutes from the 20<sup>th</sup> Stakeholders' Group Meeting for cross-border region "Prespa"

06<sup>th</sup> November 2018, Hotel Enkelana, Pogradec, Republic of Albania



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## Participants in the meeting:

The structure of participants in the 20<sup>th</sup> Stakeholder Group meeting included 26 participants from the Prespa cross-border Region. The meeting was organized and facilitated by SWG staff and SWG expert.

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

**ANNEX 1:** Participants list of 20<sup>th</sup> Prespa stakeholder group meeting 06.11.2018;

## Program of the meeting:

### 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Stakeholders Group for the Cross-Border Region of “Prespa”

10:30 – 11:00 **Arrival of the participants and welcome gathering**

11:00 – 11:15 **Welcome speech**

*Representative of municipality Pogradec (TBC)*

*Ms. Etleva Thimo, Regional Coordinator for the cross-border region “Prespa”  
- SWG representative*

*Mr. Darko Buzarovski, Regional Manager of “Prespa”, “Sharra” and “Pcinja-Krajshte” cross-border regions - SWG representative*

11:15 – 11:40 **Experiences from the implementation of the activities relevant to Area Based Development Approach in 7 cross - border regions within the EU funded project: “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas”**

*Mr. Darko Buzarovski, Regional Manager of “Sharra”, “Prespa” and “Pcinja-Krajshte” cross-border regions - SWG representative*

11:40 – 12:10 **Overview of the supported People to People events and Capacity Building Activities related to implementation of Area Based Development Approach in “Sharra” cross-border region, within the EU funded project “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas”:**

*- P2P events  
- Capacity building activities*

*Ms. Etleva Thimo, Regional Coordinator for the cross-border region “Prespa”  
- SWG representative*

12:10 – 13:00 **Diversification of economic activities in the rural cross-border areas through short value chains**

*Ms. Dori Pavloska – Gjorgjieska, PhD Project Manager - SWG representative*



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13:00 – 13:30 **Discussion and conclusions of the meeting**

13:30 – 14:30 **Lunch**

## **Minutes of the meeting**

The meeting started with the welcome speech of the vice mayor of Pogradec municipality Mr. Avdulla Cano. On behalf of Pogradec Municipality he welcomed the participants and expressed his pleasure for hosting the 20<sup>th</sup> stakeholder group meeting. Also, he confirmed and expressed the maximum support for future cooperation with the stakeholder group and organization of different joint cross-border activities in Prespa region.

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 expressed the maximum support of the Macedonian Embassy for future cooperation with the stakeholder group in Prespa and the joint cross-border organization of activities in Prespa region.

In addition, Ms. Etleva Thimo, Regional Coordinator for the cross-border region Prespa welcomed the participants and endorsed the Prespa stakeholders for their cooperation during the implementation of the ABDA programme and presented the agenda with the objectives of the 20<sup>th</sup> stakeholder group meeting.

## **Session 1**

### **Experiences from the implementation of the activities relevant to Area Based Development Approach in 7 cross - border regions within the EU funded 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. Predrag Markovic, SWG Regional Expert who presented the achievements and shared the experience regarding the implementation of the activities relevant to Area Based Development Approach in 7 cross - border regions within the EU funded project: “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas”.

Focus in the presentation was given on the following topics:

- SHG meetings - Organization of 3 sets of SHG meetings in all 7 cross-border regions – more than 530 stakeholders involved till now, total 780 involved stakeholders are the expected number after realization of the last third round of Stakeholder’s Group Meetings;
- Info related to P2P open calls, selection process and implementation of the events. In total 31 supported P2P events in 7 cross-border regions;
- Capacity building measures: 220 stakeholders and staff were trained on local development actions and preparation of project proposals under various grant



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The project is funded by the European Union

schemes, 100 stakeholders and staff participated and will participate during 7 study tours;

- Agriculture Policy Forum: APF 2018 was held in Jahorina, BiH and gathered more than 160 relevant stakeholders from 15 countries from SEE and beyond, who shared views on agricultural and rural development policies in the Western Balkans and provided policy recommendations for improving the current situation;
- 12th Annual meeting of Ministers of agriculture from South East Europe;

## Session 2

### **Overview of the supported People to People events and Capacity Building Activities related to implementation of Area Based Development Approach in “Prespa” cross-border region, within the EU funded project “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas”**

In the second presentation Ms. Etleva Thimo, Regional Coordinator for the cross-border region Prespa provided overview of the supported People to People events and Capacity Building Activities related to implementation of Area Based Development Approach in “Prespa” cross-border region, within the EU funded project “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas. Focus in the presentation was given on the following:

- People to People events:  
In total, 11 (eleven) applications have been received and selection for support of P2P actions was based on the results of the Evaluation Committee.  
Five (5) events - Macedonian cultural summer 2018; Sports and culture; Days of wine and cheese 2018; Tour de Galicica 2018 and Rurality becomes a value within the manifestation "Prespa Apple Harvest" were supported within the EU funded project “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas”  
2 People to People activities: “Nettle - Small gastronomy school” and “Agribusiness, a new challenge for youth in the region” events were supported under SWG GIZ project: Rural development through integrated forest and water resources management in Southeast Europe: Rural perspectives: qualification, reintegration and (self) employment”.
- Capacity building activities:  
Cluster/value chains initiative working groups and the capacity building workshop “Value chain development in the Agro-tourism sector” for Prespa cross-border region”.  
Study tour for stakeholders of apple produces from the Drina-Tara cross-border region to Prespa cross-border region on good examples of apple production and Field presentation of positive practices and examples in tourism and agro-food value chains, though LEADER approach and Local Action Groups in Pelagonija and Prespa regions for stakeholders and participants from the cross – border region Prespa;



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### **Session 3**

#### **Diversification of economic activities in the rural cross-border areas through short value chains**

In the third session Mr. Predrag Markovic, SWG Regional Expert provided detailed presentation and facts regarding the potential for the diversification of economic activities within the “Prespa” cross-border region, by developing short values chains. Mr. Predrag Markovic, again shared with the stakeholders group the findings, previously presented during the 19th Stakeholder group meeting in the premises of Dorcas Aid Albania. Also, SWG Regional Expert explained that from the analysis made, tourism and agribusiness - apple production have the biggest potential in the region.

### **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;
- It was emphasized that the value chains in the agribusiness - apple production and tourism as very important economic driver in the region should be improved and supported;
- More promotion of stakeholder group work and the region is needed;
- Cooperation of stakeholders in the region is important in terms of LAG establishment and networking as a potential tool of organization for attracting more funds in the future;
- 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;
- Capacity building measures are identified as a very helpful tool for stakeholders in order to provide better service, create brands for products mainly on apple products tourism and strengthen the network in the cross-bored 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;
- The processing industry in the region is still weak and more investments in needed in infrastructure for processing of the fruit (apples);
- To create added value of processed apples - domestic cakes and apple juice need to integrate in tourism offer;
- The detail actions regarding promotion of apple and the tourism need to further discuss;



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- The ecological aspect is important both in the apple production but also in the development of tourism;
- The stakeholder group is giving endorsement for the conclusions from experts work and believe that joint actions regarding tourism and agribusiness and apple production value chain will be more useful for future development of the cross-border region.

Prepared by:

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

Darko Buzarovski, Regional Manager of Prespa cross-border region