



PRESPA
CROSS-BORDER REGION

Minutes of the 11th Meeting of Stakeholders Group for
the Cross-border Region of “Prespa”

October 22rd, 2015
Restaurant “Vasil”, Gorice
Republic of Albania



Participants in the meeting:

The structure of participants in the 11th SHG meeting included 37 participants and new appointed SHG in 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 SHG for the Prespa cross – border region.

The full list of participants' and presentations from the meeting can be found at:

ANNEX 1: Participants list of 11th Prespa SHG MEETING 22.10.2015

ANNEX 2: PPP_Prespa achievement and results June-October 2015

ANNEX 3: PPP_SWG_GIZ_LEIWW_SHG meeting Prespa

ANNEX 4: Prezi_Integrated economic development in Prespa cross-border region

Program of the meeting:

11th Meeting of Stakeholders Group for the Cross-border Region of “Prespa”

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

10:00 – 10:10 Welcome speech

Mr. Edmond Temelko, Mayor of Municipality of Pustec

Ms. Irena Dzimrevska, SWG Head of Operations

Ms. Viola Bogdani, President of “Prespa” Stakeholder Group

Mr. Naume Tashovski, Vice-president of Prespa Stakeholder Group

Mr. Olsi Duma, National Park “Prespa”

10:10 – 10:15 Introduction to the programme

Mr. Damjan Surlevski, Regional Manager of “Prespa” Cross-border Region

10:15 – 10:35 General achievements of ABDA implementation in “Prespa” Cross-Border Region (period June – October 2015)

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

10:35 – 11:00 Presentation of the official web page for “Prespa” cross – border region

Mr. Damjan Surlevski, Regional Manager of “Prespa” Cross-border Region

11:00 – 11:20 Coffee Break

11:20 – 11:40 Discussion on “Prespa” SHG Operational Protocol and Rules of procedure

Mr. Damjan Surlevski, Regional Manager of “Prespa” Cross-border Region

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

11:40 – 12:00 Future activities related to implementation of ABDA in “Prespa” cross-border Region

Discussion on future support of "People to People" actions in the "Prespa" Region

Mr. Damjan Surlevski, Regional Manager of “Prespa” Cross-border Region

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

12:00 – 12:30 Discussion about project proposals for Integrated Economic Development



Establishment of partnerships for upcoming calls for proposal in “Prespa” cross – border region

Mr. Damjan Surlevski, Regional Manager of “Prespa” Cross-border Region

12:30 – 12:45 Conclusions and future activities

12:45 – 13:45 Lunch break

13:45 – 16:30 Rural development via water and forest management in SEE

- Identifying and evaluating priorities for the 4 cross-border pilot regions, that could be included in the project strategy;
 - Assessment, verification and prioritization of the feasibility of measures for integrated forest and water resources management;
 - Assessment, verification and prioritization of the feasibility of measures for income generation by sustainable use of natural resources in the pilot regions, with a focus on economic activities of women within at least one of the measures.
 - Defining baseline and target values for identified measures, as well as relevant sources of verification;
 - Identifying needs and strategies for capacity development in the cross-border pilot regions;
- Moderated session by GIZ experts

16:30 – 16:45 Conclusions and future activities

16:45 – 17:30 Field trip to Prespa National Park Info center (optional)

Minutes of the meeting

The meeting started with the welcome speech of the Regional Manager of the "Prespa" cross-border Region Mr. Damjan Surlevski, who warmly welcomed the participants and wished a fruitful collaboration with all stakeholders.

On behalf of the Municipality of Pustec, the host municipality of this meeting spoke the mayor Mr. Edmond Temelko. He expressed his pleasure for the involvement in such important activities that have an extraordinary impact for the region as well as the responsibility and maximum readiness of Pustec Municipality for cooperation in the framework of ABDA program.

Then, Mrs. Viola Bogdani, President of the stakeholders group for "Prespa" Region and Mr. Naume Tashovski Vice President of stakeholders group for Prespa Region welcomed all the participants and the new appointed. They stressed the importance of the establishment and consolidation of stakeholders group for "Prespa" Region, and strengthen of future collaboration with all stakeholders within the ABDA program's framework of activities.

On behalf of National Park “Prespa”, Mr. Olsi Duma, welcomed the participants and expressed his confidence for the importance of the programme in the rural cross border development of Prespa Region.



In addition Mr. Damjan Surlevski presented in details the program of the meeting focusing on each session and the issues to be discussed.

Session 1

General achievements of ABDA implementation in “Prespa” Cross-Border Region (Period June – October 2015)

The session started with the presentation of Ms. Etleva Thimo, Regional Coordinator for “Prespa” cross-border Region, who thanked the group for the participation, and gave an overview of the performed activities and general achievements of ABDA implementation for the period June 2015 - October 2015.

In addition, the participants were informed about the facilitation of the process of economic development of rural cross - border areas, the implementation of capacity building measures for preparation of relevant projects with adequate quality, organization of meetings with the donors operating in “Prespa” cross-border region, and the consultancy support to the stakeholders for preparation of project proposals for different calls and organization of people-to-people (P2P) actions.

The presentation was also focused on the progress and details of actions taken, general achievements and their importance for the region, the involvement of stakeholders group as well as financial opportunities and support for future activities and collaboration.

Session 2

Presentation of the official web page for “Prespa” cross – border region

During his presentation, Mr. Damjan Surlevski presented the work done for the realization of the web page for cross-border Prespa Region. He explained in details all sections of this website by presenting to the participants the information provided as well as the opportunity for its enrichment with additional information. Mr. Damjan Surlevski stressed the importance of this web page as a useful tool in the presentation and promotion of the region. He also asked for stakeholders' cooperation to further enrich this page with data and information on activities and events organized in the region. During this session the participants also discussed and suggested that the link of this web site can be promoted in the stakeholders web pages and also the stakeholders' web pages will be promoted in the web site as well. This would increase not only the access to the page, but will also help stakeholders group in their consolidation and ongoing commitment in future activities. Also it was suggested the creation of the electronic map of the region for the promotion of Prespa region and its attractions.

In addition, regarding the promotion of activities in the region it was suggested to include in the web page all other relevant documents related to Prespa region that is developed on local and national level.



In the end of the discussion additionally was suggested to create a page on the social network Facebook, which will be administered by Prespa project management unit and the stakeholders group. This will help even more in increasing the visibility of stakeholder group and promoting their work in the region.

Session 3

Discussion on “Prespa” Stakeholders Operational Protocol and Rules of procedure

During this session, Mr. Damjan Surlevski asked the participants for a more detailed review of Stakeholders Operational Protocol and Rules of procedure with comments and concrete suggestions. So, looking at the importance of this document the stakeholders suggested having more time in order to examine it in details. It was also agreed that this document should be sent again via e-mail to the stakeholders group for review and comments. Suggestions will be sent by email until November 16th, 2015 and SHG Operational Protocol and Rules of procedure will be discussed for approval at the next meeting.

Session 4

Future activities related to implementation of ABDA in “Prespa” cross-border region – Discussion on future support of "People to People" actions in the "Prespa" region

At the beginning of this session Mr. Damjan Surlevski made a presentation focusing on the opportunities and concrete ideas for future possible activities under People to People program. He informed the participants about the organization of Wine and cheese festival in Ohrid, Macedonia supported by "People to People" program. He also introduced three possible ideas submitted to the project management unit by stakeholders for the organization of: Galicica cycling tour, Apple Harvest Festival and Workshop on integrated tour packages in Prespa cross-border region. Thus, concerning the organization of the workshop on integrated tour packages as an activity suggested by the stakeholders during the previous meeting, it was discussed the possibility of realizing it within December 2015.

Then, Mr. Damjan Surlevski invited participants in an open discussion about possible future support of events under "People to People" program. So, looking at the small number of the expression of interest submitted in Prespa region compared to other cross-border regions it was suggested to resend the application form and encourage stakeholders to apply. It was also suggested to establish new contacts with the private sector and newly created structures by the territorial administration reform in Albania. These meetings will serve as well to encourage them to apply and organize actions under the People to People Programme.



Also, Prespa project management unit will continue to cooperate with the stakeholders group for the creation and fulfillment of a database regarding the implemented projects in the region.

Session 5

Discussion about project proposals for Integrated Economic Development - Establishment of partnerships for upcoming calls for proposal in “Prespa” cross – border region

During this session Mr. Damjan Surlevski emphasized the importance of integrated economic development through facilitation of networking and cooperation among local population, entrepreneurs, craftsmen, small farming sector, tourism service providers and other rural community actors in cross-border regions organizing joint work processes, sharing resources and market placement of joint offers. So, the focus was on enhancing investments introducing new production processes that will improve products and/or services as well as the promotion of region and its resources through unique regional integrated tourism products and branding. In addition, the three project priorities identified by the Prespa stakeholder group: Prespa in your palm, New seeds for bio-heritage and Prespa women socio-economic cohesion were discussed as potential possible projects that in the future could be applied in different open call for proposals.

He also presented the implemented grant schemes within the previous phase of the project in Drina-Tara and Drina – Sava cross-border regions as a good experience with positive impact for the regions.

In the discussion was concluded that PMU and SWG will continue to serve as an information point where members of the group (SHG) 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 also other active calls for proposals. The SWG and Prespa PMU are continuously seeking for potentials for resource mobilization and are focused on finding additional fundraising possibilities within EU funds and other active donors on national and regional level, in order to support the integrated economic development of the region. In that sense he introduced the new project initiative (LEIWW) between SWG and GIZ which is in inception phase and could be one of the possibilities for the stakeholders. The session continued with presentation by Mr. Benjamin Mohr, Team Leader at GIZ, who made a detailed presentation of the project “Rural development through integrated forest and water management in SEE” (LEIWW). The focus of the presentation and discussion was about how the LEIWW program and sub measures could be linked with ongoing ABDA activities in the region. Also as part of this possible project there is opportunity for implementation of grant scheme intended for the cross-border regions under ABDA, focusing on integrated economic development respecting the sustainable use of natural resources (forests and water).



Session 6

Rural development via water and forest management in SEE

During this session, once more the overall objective of the ABD program in “Prespa” cross-border region was briefly presented, focusing on the already prepared measures, I and II:

MEASURE 1: Sustainable rural economy development
Sub Measure 1.1: Rural economy development through joint regional initiatives for development of integrated offer of products and services
Sub Measure 1.2: Increasing employment and the competitiveness of the region through strengthening value chains and capacity building
Sub Measure 1.3: Support to individual investments in businesses development within the regional initiatives
Measure 2: Rural economy environment improvements
Sub-Measure 2.1: Protection of environment and sustainable management of natural resources

“Prespa” Programme measures 2014-2020

Mr. Damjan Surlevski presented the conclusions of the Working group for the integrated economic development established during the Agricultural Policy Forum (APF 2015). In the working group different international experts, representatives of SWG, GIZ and ABD team members discussed about the possibility of linking the ABDA and LEIWW program and it was concluded that:

- The future actions targeting rural cross-border areas should build on the already defined measures within ABDA programming documents;
- Possible future grants scheme should focus on sustainable economic with special focus on the sustainable use of natural resources;
- Coordination of local and national authorities in the programming process of the rural development is of a crucial importance; and
- Commitment supported with financial contribution by the WB Governments will boost the sustainable economic development of rural cross-border areas.

The working group during the APF 2015 worked on and presented the priorities for development of the cross-border regions and also proposed different types of actions that would be eligible under the ABDA Program for economic development of the cross-border region “Prespa” (2014-2020). The proposed types of actions are the following:

- ✓ *Greening of production/processing process and increase of quality of traditional/typical products, as well as innovations and marketing and standardization for increasing competitiveness:*
- Sustainable collection and processing of wild gathered products;



- Organic agricultural production and environmentally sound processing of agricultural products;
 - Utilization of renewable energy sources and energy-saving measures;
 - Establishment of green clusters and cooperatives within the short agriculture value chains;
 - Introduction on quality standards based on protection and branding of traditional agricultural and wild forest products.
- ✓ *Rural-Tourism development based on sustainable utilization of natural resources:*
- Green value chains development in the agricultural/food/handicraft/ touristic products/offer of the region;
 - Utilization of renewable energy sources and energy-saving measures;
 - Innovative tourism products and services based on sustainable usage of natural resources;
 - Introduction on quality standards based on branding of tourism products and services;
 - Establishment of green tourism clusters.

The session continued with input by the GIZ expert Mr. Wehinger Thomas. During his moderation, Mr. Wehinger assessed as positive the experience regarding the collaboration, partnership, implemented grant scheme and capacity building activities in Drina-Tara and Drina-Sava regions. The session continued with open discussion for the creation of more specific project ideas and additional possible actions that could be supported under the potential LEIWW project. The participants suggested the following project ideas and additional possible actions under the potential grant scheme within the region:

- Tourism development - creation of joint products and packages;
- Exchange of experience in irrigation and sustainable management of irrigation systems;
- Improvement of infrastructure and intra-communication within the region (Bus line to connect Prespa, Ohrid and Korca);
- Branding and local shops (Prespa shop for traditional local products);
- Promotion and protection of fish and fish dishes;
- Support of artisans - Improvement of techniques for preparation of traditional products (handicrafts, gastronomy etc.);
- Promotion of the region through revival of native fairy tales and folk legends;



Session 7

Conclusions and future activities

In the last session the following conclusions were drawn:

- Prespa PMU and SWG will continue to serve as an information point where members of the group (SHG) 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 information on possible partners for active IPA CBC programs in the region and other open calls;
- Project management unit will continue to cooperate with the stakeholders group for the creation of a database regarding the implemented projects in the region;
- It will also facilitate contacts and meetings with tourism service provider and tour operators from the region in order to find common goals and to create integrated tour packages for Prespa;
- Project Management Unit will continue to support the coordination of potential activities (Galicica cycling tour, Workshop on integrated tour packages, Apple harvest festival) that can be supported by the "People to people " program;
- Prespa PMU will contact the new municipalities in Albania established after the new territorial administrative division and additional representatives from business sector will be invited to attend stakeholder's group meetings in order to be introduced with the work done in Prespa region;
- First draft of "Prespa" SHG Operational Protocol and Rules of procedure will be reviewed and comments should be sent by e-mail until November 16th, 2015. The final document will be approved on the next meeting;
- The web page of Prespa region will be promoted on the official websites of the stakeholder group members and also the links from stakeholders' web pages will be placed on the Prespa platform for promotion. The web page should be upgraded with other relevant local and national important documents related to Prespa region. In addition, preparation should be made for the creation of interactive electronic map of the region and placed in the Prespa web site;
- Prespa PMU in cooperation with the stakeholders will create and administer the Prespa cross border regional page on the social network Facebook;



- The project “Rural development via water and forest management in SEE” (LEIWW) is still in preparation phase and the final approval for the continuation and implementation will be given on the next SWG assembly in December 2015;
- Prespa PMU in collaboration with the members of the stakeholders group will target, collect and develop additional actions and ideas which can be supported by grant scheme or under People to People program in Prespa cross-border region.

Prepared by:

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“Prespa” Cross-Border Region

