



Ceremony of Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding and the First Meeting of the Stakeholders' Group of the "Prespa" Cross - Border Region

Meeting of the Mayors from "Prespa" Cross - Border Region Meeting of the SHG members

Minutes of the Meeting

Location: Korcha, Hotel "Grand"
Date: 01.03. 2013
Time: 10:30 – 13:45
Attendees: (List of participants attached)

Summary:

The event was organized by the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South-East Europe within the SWG EC Project: "Preparation for implementation of the Area Based Development Approach (ABDA) in the Western Balkan countries".

This event consisted of two parts: The Ceremony of signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and the First working meeting of the Stakeholder Group (SHG) of the "Prespa" Cross Border Region.

The aim of the Ceremony was to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between participating municipalities from the "Prespa" cross border region. The main purpose of the document is to promote the mutual understanding and cooperation among the stakeholders, regional ownership of the actions to be implemented in function to sustainable economic growth of the SEE) cross-border region "Prespa", cross-border region shared between Albania and Macedonia.

The aim of the First working meeting of the Stakeholder Group (SHG) of the "Prespa" cross border region was to start the consolidation process, present and discuss the activities foreseen with the SWG EC project, as well as mobilize the Group for review the strategic framework for economic development and regional cooperation in the region and its content.

Meeting discussion

Opening Speeches:

The meeting was opened by Mr. Grigor Gjerci, Director of Directorate for Rural Development Policies of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection of the Republic of Albania.

Mr. Gjenci addressed the importance of SWG and the current SWG EC project in regards to the cooperation related to rural development in the cross border region. He confirmed the support, for the ABD process, given by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection.

The Deputy Mayor of Korcha, Mr. Sotiraq Filo addressed the participants of the Ceremony focusing on the importance of the cooperation within the cross border region as a tool for mutual and integrated development of the area. He stressed the readiness of Municipality of Korcha to continue to be actively involved and to support the process of implementation of the ABD process in the region.

Introduction to the ABD process

Ms. Irena Dzimrevska, the SWG Head of Operations introduced to the Mayors, the SHG members and other guests the work of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South-East Europe.

The concept of ABD process was introduced outlining the main elements which distinguish the ABD approach as one of the most appropriate tools for rural development in the cross-border regions, particularly related to the cross-border region "Prespa". She also briefly presented the already undertaken activities during the first phase which was realized in the period September 2011- September 2012 within the SWG EC project.

Mr. Zvonko Naumoski, the SWG Regional Coordinator for cross-border region "Sharra" presented the result of the work of the SHG members during the previous phase - The Baseline Study and Strategic Framework for economic development and cross-border cooperation of the "Prespa" Cross Border Region. In addition, he reviewed the process and the undertaken activities during the preparation of the document

- It was said that the document will serve as a basis for the up-grade during the current phase and the information, experiences which will be gained as the ABD process is being implemented.
- Also, the priority areas and actions for economic development and cross-border cooperation in the "Prespa" cross-border region were discussed. These were presented as core and main fields based on which the economic development and regional cooperation using the ABD process can be implemented.
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- The participants were introduced that the translation of the document from English language into Albanian and Macedonian is in progress and that the Mayors and SHG members will receive the document in their native language.

Ms. Irena Dzimrevska, the SWG Head of Operations, introduced the future steps and activities which are planned in regards to the preparations for implementation of the Area Based Development Approach in the cross-border region of "Prespa".

- Capacity building measures were planned in order to increase the capacities of the civil sector organizations, Municipalities as well as the private sector in the region, i.e. the Stakeholder Group.
- It was pointed out that it is important that all three sectors cooperate in the ABD process, stressing once again the core ABD principles.

Discussion

Mayors present on the meeting have requested that the area which is formally part of the region of "Prespa" not be closed to the neighboring municipalities.

Mr. Vangjush Dishnica, Director for International Cooperation of the County of Korcha requested that all of the Municipalities of the County of Korcha to become part of the "Prespa" cross border region.

- Mr. Naumoski, informed the Mayors that the region would remain open for future enlargement according to the needs with possible involvement of the neighboring municipalities from Macedonia (e.g. Bitola and Struga) and Greece (Prespa) to take part in the process. He noted that for such action, an approval by the SWG Steering Committee has to be obtained at the beginning. Mr. Naumoski also encouraged them to take active part in the process by providing recommendations, solutions and measures.
- In regards to the request of Mr. Dishnica, Mr. Naumoski stressed that all municipalities are and will be part of the “Prespa” cross-border region, pointing out the fact that all the Mayors from the County of Korcha will sign the MoU.

Information for the Stakeholders’ Group

Mr. Naumoski presented the future activities and meetings which are planned during the current phase January – October 2013.

The planned capacity building measures were presented. All Mayors were asked to nominate participant from their municipality which will take part in the work of the Stakeholder Group of “Prespa” region, as well will participate on the Stakeholder Group (SHG) meetings and foreseen trainings.

It was underlined that all participants should take part in the capacity building measures and be consistent with their participation in order to create stable and homogenous group. This is important for the future activities within ABD process in regards to implementation of the agreed actions.

The structure of the ABD Stakeholders’ group for the cross-border region of “Prespa” was presented and explained to the Mayors and other members of the SHG who were present on the Ceremony.

- The focus was put on the bottom - up approach – which means that the functioning of the activities and the subsequent project implementation depends on the mutual understanding, willingness and joint cooperation among the Stakeholder Group and the SWG.

Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding

- The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by 28 Mayors of the cross-border region of “Prespa”.







The project is financed by the European Union

Meeting of the Mayors from the “Prespa” cross-border region

Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding

And First Meeting of the Stakeholders` Group

March 1st, 2013

Korcha, Albania

REALIZED PROGRAMME

March 1st, 2013 (Friday)

Hotel”Grand”, Korcha

10:30	<i>Arrival of the participants and welcome gathering</i>
11:00 – 11:15	Welcome speech <i>Mr. Sotirag Filo, Deputy Mayor of Korcha Municipality</i>
11:15 – 11:30 Approach	Introduction to the concept of Area Based Development (ABD) <i>Mrs. Irena Dzimrevska, SWG Head of Operations</i>
11:30 – 11:50 economic	Presentation of the Baseline Study and Strategic Framework for development and cross-border cooperation implementing the Area Based Development Approach (ABDA) in the “Prespa” region <i>Mr. Ivan Toromanoski, SWG Regional Coordinator</i>

11:50 – 12:10
implementation

Presentation of the next steps and future activities related to

Area Based Development Approach

Ms. Irena Dzimrevska, SWG Head of Operations

12:10 – 12:40

Discussion

First Meeting of the Stakeholder Group Members

(for representatives of organizations and participants who were involved in the process of preparation of baseline analysis and strategic framework)

12:40 – 13:10

Presentation of the plan of activities related to capacity building for implementation of the ABDA in “Prespa” cross-border region

13:10 – 13:30

Discussion about the structure and operational functioning of the Stakeholder Group of the “Prespa” cross-border region

13:30

Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding by Mayors from participating Municipalities

13:45

Cocktail

Departure of Participants