

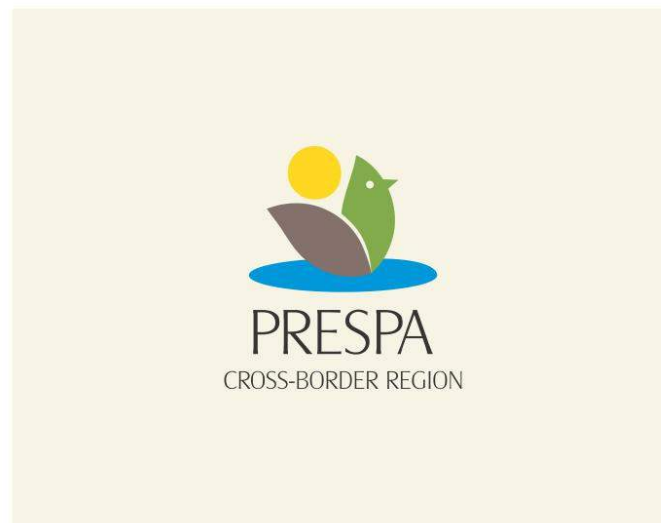


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CROSS – BORDER REGION OF “PRESPA”

AREA BASED DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

MINUTES OF THE STAKEHOLDERS’ GROUP MEETING



Minutes No. 00-0001

Minutes of the 5th Stakeholders’ Group Meeting of the cross-border region of “Prespa”

19 September, 2013 / Voskopoje, Albania

I. List of attendees

The Meeting was attended by the Stakeholders' group members of the cross-border region of "Prespa" as representatives of the Municipalities, Non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

Annex 1: Complete list of participants on the meeting

II. Agenda

Arrival of the participants and welcome gathering

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 10:00 – 10:15 | Welcome speech
<i>Mr. Nexhip Bacelli, Major of Commune Voskopoje</i>
<i>Mr. Vangjush Dishnica, Head of Local Development of Qark Korcha</i>
<i>Mr. Kaj Mortensen, ABDA SWG International Consultant</i> |
| 10:15 – 10:30 | Information on the current state of the concept of Area Based Development (ABD) Approach
<i>Ms. Irena Dzimrevska, SWG Head of Operations</i> |
| 10:30 – 11:15 | Presentation and discussion of the draft Programming Document for economic development of the cross-border region of "Prespa"
<i>Mrs. Suzana Đorđević Milošević, SWG ABDA Programming Expert</i> |
| 11:15 – 12:15 | Presentation and discussion of the completed concepts for the Project Proposals for the cross-border region of "Prespa"
<i>Mr. Ivan Toromanoski, SWG Regional Coordinator</i>
Discussion of the concepts for the future Project Proposals for the cross-border region of "Prespa"
<i>Mr. Kaj Mortensen, SWG ABDA International Consultant</i> |
| 12:15– 13:00 | Presentation and discussion of the Operation Protocol and Rules of Procedure for the SHG for the cross-border region of "Prespa"
<i>Mr. Zvonko Naumoski, SWG Regional Coordinator</i> |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | Lunch break |
| 14:00 – 17:00 | Technical discussions with members of the Stakeholder Group (SHG) |

- Programming Document for economic development of the cross-border region of "Prespa"
- Completed concepts for the Project Proposals for the cross-border region of "Prespa"
- Concepts for the future Project Proposals for the cross-border region of "Prespa"

17:00 Departure of participants

III. Outcome of the ABDA cross-border region of "Prespa" Stakeholders' Group meeting

The proposed agenda was accepted without interventions of the participating members.

In relation to item 1 of the Agenda: Welcome speech

Mr. Nexhip Bacelli, the Mayor of Commune Voskopojë, welcomed the participants of the meeting. Mr. Bacelli affirmed the support for the ABDA process as a unique chance for nurturing good neighboring relations, as guiding principles, among the participating communities in the cross-border region of "Prespa".

Mr. Dishnica also affirmed the support for the process and supported the joint efforts of the Mayors of the participating municipalities to continue with their cooperation in order to improve the economic development of the region.

Mr. Kaj Mortensen, the SWG ABDA International Consultant, expressed his admiration for the Mayors present at the meeting and their engagement in conveying their political support for the process. Mr. Mortensen reaffirmed Commissioner's Cioloş support for the process as the SHG became a platform and elevated ABDA from a project to a programme. The ABDA programme is intended as an economic development guiding structure for seven years. He also suggested that the SHG needs to be more oriented towards real economic measures which generate real economic activities rather than the soft measures. Last but not least, the political leaders should be engaged twice a year as a support to the SHG and in order to provide guidance to the SHG related to the economic development of their respective Municipalities.

No vote or decision was required

In relation to item 2 of the agenda: Information on the current state of the concept of Area Based Development (ABD) Approach

Ms. Irena Dzimrevska, SWG Head of Operations, informed the participants that the aim of the process is to facilitate regional cooperation, political reconciliation and economic growth in the Western Balkans through application of Area Based Development Approaches in

selected rural cross-border areas. Once again the accent was put on the two main specific objectives:

Objective 1: Contribute to sustainable economic growth of a particular region by facilitating the preparatory activities for implementation of identified economic development actions.

Objective 2: Strengthen cooperation of public administrations and other public bodies, private sector and NGOs in the field of local development and regional cooperation by building-up local and regional cross-border capacities.

It was announced that SWG Head Office/Secretariat in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection of Republic of Albania is opening SHG Secretariat / SWG Project Management Unit in Korcha.

Related to the work of the SHG, it was conveyed that the official nominations for participation in the group is in final stage. The group involves representatives from Municipalities, public institutions, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as the private sector which representation in the group at the moment is at lower level.

In the previous meetings the SHG has identified three priority projects which at the moment are in their final stage.

Furthermore, at the moment the ABDA for the cross-border region of "Prespa" is in the final stage of establishing Project Management Unit, the finalization of the Strategic Frameworks and the preparation of the Programme for economic development of the "Prespa" region which are intended to be implemented within the Regional and Territorial Cooperation policy area in the framework of International Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) 2014-2020.

The process will continue with the second phase of the project of the bridging period (January 2014 – September / December 2014).

The results and progress of the ABDA process will be presented on the Agricultural Policy Forum 2013. Also, there will be a presentation of the progress in front of the Ministers of Agriculture from WB countries during their Annual Working Meeting.

The project proposals for the cross-border region of "Prespa" will be presented to the European Commission and other donors for possible funding.

In relation to item 3 of the Agenda: Presentation and discussion of the draft Programming Document for economic development of the cross-border region of "Prespa"

Mrs. Suzana Đorđević Milošević, SWG ABDA Programming Expert, gave brief overview of the steps which has lead to developing the ABDA programming documents for the cross-border region of "Prespa".

- The Baseline Study assesses the current socio-economic situation, disparities and potentials for development within the region. **(Completed)**

- The Strategic and the Action Planning were developed in order to present the strategic framework through strategic goals and their corresponding objectives and actions. **(Completed)**
- Measure Fiches Design was developed to define eligible activities, beneficiaries, criteria and financial structure of financing projects in line with priority areas, objectives and actions defined under the strategic part of this document. **(Ongoing)**

And further

The objectives and activities identified are covered with set of 3 priority measures with 3 sub-measures each intended for implementation in the period of 2014-2020 with donator assistance, national and local contributions under defined rules.

- The final compilation of the Regional Programme Document and definition of operational structures with final updates will be completed in October 2013.
- Final ABD Programme design and fundraising **(end of 2013)**

The following main measures are proposed within the Programme for economic development:

Measure 1: Support to sustainable rural economy development

Measure 2: Support to sustainable management of environment and natural resources

Measure 3: Support to improvement of the infrastructure and energy potentials in the region

Discussion:

- Not all the measures are under the competences of Ministry of Agriculture;
- Engage the potential – to get into involvement of other relevant Ministries – SWG political and technical part
- Re-arrangement of the measures might be needed
- The programme has measures which are grouped – areas which are suggested and accepted and would get financed
- Municipalities should provide co-financing
- Prespa region will have greater opportunities; support from the political level
- The municipalities from Albania could be represented by the County of Korcha
- Need to further work on project concept fiches
- Budgets for each of the measures need to be discussed and budgeted within the SHG and presented to SWG team.. this would facilitate the preparation of the realistic budget of the overall programme.

Conclusion:

- The general framework is accepted.
- Follow up information should there be re-arrangement of the measures.

Decision:

1. The Stakeholders' group members endorsed the process of preparation of Programme for economic development of "Prespa" cross-border region and proposed draft measures for the cross-border region of Prespa without amendments.

In relation to item 4 of the Agenda: Presentation and discussion of the completed concepts for the Project Proposals for the cross-border region of "Prespa" and Discussion of the concepts for the future Project Proposals for the cross-border region of "Prespa"

Three projects developed by the Stakeholders' group members in cooperation with the SWG Head Office/Secretariat were presented.

It was confirmed that the three project concepts will be subject for further development and finalization.

Mr. Kaj Mortensen elaborated on the importance that the project should focus on the economic development of the cross-border region. For this, it is crucial that the project achieve concrete results and measurable indicators.

Discussion:

- Ohrid Municipality expressed interest to be partner in project: Prespa in your palm.
- Some of the projects which are implemented in the regions which have similarities should be used for experience, outputs and results in order to improve the projects.
- Institutional profiles which include information on donors and projects implemented should be completed. This is important in order to avoid overlaps with completed and on-going actions (projects).
- Accent will be put on involvement of private sector members of the Stakeholders' group.
- The gender balance should be improved.

Conclusion: The work on the project concepts should continue in cooperation with the SHG members. Data required for the projects will be provided by the SHG members. The focus of the project concepts will be changed in order to provide intergraded economic development of the region.

In relation to item 5 of the Agenda: Presentation and discussion of the Operation Protocol and Rules of Procedure for the SHG for the cross-border region of "Prespa"

Mr. Zvonko Naumoski, SWG Regional Coordinator presented the Operational Protocol and rules of procedure for the Stakeholders' group of the cross-border region of "Prespa".

- The Operational Protocol and Rules of Procedure were sent to the members for review.

- It was discussed that the framework is acceptable and it could be redeveloped to fit the operational needs of the Stakeholders' group following the development of the group/ in the future.

Decision:

1. The Stakeholders' group members endorsed the proposed Operational Protocol and Rules of Procedure for the cross-border region of "Prespa" without amendments.

In relation to item 6 of the Agenda: Technical Discussions with members of the Stakeholder Groups (SHG)

1. Programming Document for economic development of the cross-border region of "Prespa". No comments and suggestions were added.
2. Completed concepts for the Project Proposals for the cross-border region of "Prespa"

Discussion on the project concept: New seeds for Bio-heritage

- Concrete steps needs to be defined
- A study on situation of rural women in Prespa region in Macedonia should be consulted and their experiences to be used. Possible project idea is making of traditional cloths from the region.
- 3. Concepts for the future Project Proposals for the cross-border region of "Prespa"
- The accent should be placed on developing value chains among possible partners which would ensure better sustainability and reduce the project risk factors.

Additional annexes of the 5th Stakeholders' Group meeting's minutes:

Annex 2: Presentation of information on the current state of the concept of Area Based Development (ABD) Approach

Annex 3: Presentation of the Program Document

Annex 4: The Operational Protocol and Rules of Procedure

Signatures:

Ex-officio Chairperson of the Stakeholder group	For the SWG Head Office / Secretariat
Mr./Mrs./Ms.	Mr./Mrs./Ms.
Title	Title
Signature	Signature
Date:	Date: