



Minutes from the Sixth Meeting of the Stakeholders' Group for the Cross-border Region of "Prespa"

26 March 2014

Hotel Millenium Palace
Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia

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Participants on the meeting:

The structure of the participants on the 6th SHG meeting is presented below:

- Stakeholder group representatives: 25
Female: 8
Male: 17

- SWG representatives: 6
Female: 4
Male: 2

- **Total participants: 32**
Female: 12
Male: 21

- Support staff(logistic, translation): 8

Full list of the participants and their contact details might be found in:

ANNEX 1: Participants list- lista na ucesnici- Lista e Anëtarëve 6th SHG MEETING Prespa 26.03.2014

ANNEX 2: SCAN Participants list- lista na ucesnici- Lista e Anëtarëve 6th SHG MEETING Prespa 26.03.2014

Programme of the event:

- 10:30 - 11:00 Arrival of the participants and welcome gathering
- 11:00 – 11:20 Welcome speech
- 11:20 – 11:40 General achievements related to the preparations for implementation of ABDA in the WB countries
Ms. Irena Dzimrevska, SWG Head of Operations
- 11:40 – 12:00 Progress made in relation to preparation of programming documents
Ms. Suzana Đorđević Milošević, Programming Documents Expert
- 12:00 - 12:20 Coffee Break
- 12:20 – 12:40 Views from Brussels and key issues related to future ABD activities
Mr. Kaj Mortensen, ABDA SWG International Consultant Coffee break
- 12:40 – 13:00 Presentation of the project on ABDA implementation – 2nd phase
Main outputs, project activities, milestones and general timeframe
Ms. Irena Dzimrevska, SWG Head of Operations
- 13:00 – 14:00 Lunch break
- 14:00 – 14:20 Future activities related to implementation of ABDA in Prespa cross-border region
People to people actions
Ms. Liljana Tanevska, Regional coordinator for cross-border region of "Prespa"
- 14:20 – 15:00 Discussion about future activities, the programme and project proposals
- 15:00 – 15:30 Discussion about nomination on SHG members (affirmation of current members and involvement of new members)
- 15:30 - 16:00 Discussion on possible support on "people to people" actions in the "Prespa" region
- 16:00 – 16:30 Conclusions
- 16:30 - 17:00 Departure

Minutes from the meeting

The meeting was opened with Welcome given By Mrs. Liljana Tanevska Regional Coordinator for Cross-border region" Prespa", where she introduced her as a newly appointed coordinator, welcomed the second phase of the project and all SH Group members. In addition she explained the purpose and predicted flow of the meeting. Later on the SH Group was welcomed in the host municipality by Mr. Gjoko Apostolov, app. Head of the sector for Local Development. Mr Apostolov has pointed out the importance of the programme in the rural cross border development and wished a successful work of the SHG in the second phase of the project.

1. General achievements related to the preparations for implementation of ABDA in the WB countries

Ms Irena Dzimrevska has clearly presented the so far achievements in the frame of the project, the role of the SWG in the whole process. She informed about opening of the Project office of in Korce. She pointed out that the project office is the place where the SHG members and well all interested parties from the region may obtain information and get services in the frame of the project. The project office is based in the building of Ministry of Agriculture and rural development of Albania. Ms Irena Dzimrevska has explained the process of the project in the previous phase including the analyses prepared and the successful cooperation during the preparation of the strategic documents with the SHG. She stressed the importance of the SHG contribution to the three project proposals which are base for the integrated development approach for the region. Concerning the process it was presented that the Programme for development of the CBR Prespa with other programmes of the other regions part of the project will be submitted to the EC prior to the IPA2 preparation and finalization. Project ideas that were developed should serve as basis for development of an integrated economic development of the region. Project proposal as separate projects will be also communicated to other donors active in the CBR Prespa.

Presentation from Ms. Dzimrevska is included in:

ANNEX 3: General achievements related to the preparations for implementation of ABDA in the WB countries

2. Progress made in relation to preparation of program document

Presentation of Mrs. Suzana Dordevic Milosevic included Measures and sub-measures included in the CBR Prespa's Programme. The programme includes actions whose focus is regional rural products and services as well development of the marketing strategies for improved access to markets. The deadline for the SHG to contribute with comments to the Programme is until 09.04.2014. During the presentation Mrs. Dzordzevic has pointed that in the Measure one and its sub measures are carrying actions on which the SHG and the regions should focus on. Those actions are that the SHG should focus on including development of business partnerships within the existing and potential value chains. She also distinguished the difference of the support scheme of ABDA for Drina Sava and Drina Tara regions and IPARD. ABDA focus on regional development and business initiatives, business development and quality standards. She specifically pointed the characteristics of the final beneficiaries of the measure one and its sub-measures. Explaining Measure two and its sub-measures it was noted down that the focus will be to find ways how to obtain support and finances from other sources than ABDA. The actions will be soft measures mainly and political influence will be put in force in order to enable advocacy and negotiation, utilise SWG assembly and influence inline ministries. The infrastructure interventions will not take place within the frame of ABDA.

ANNEX 4: Progress made in relation to preparation of programming documents

3. Views from Brussels and key issues related to future ABD activities

Mr. Kaj Mortensen has explained the process of negotiation for next phases of ABDA. He explained that the European Commission is in preparation of the multi country strategy for CBC Multicounty strategy. The process of ABDA integration as innovation in EC programming of IPA 2014-2020 will be further on discussed. Specifically as the ABDA has compatibility with the sectors of Competitiveness and Sustainable development. Presentation of the ABDA in the EC will take place in April 2014. European parliament and member states will discuss in June 2014, and endorsement if everything is approved is expected at end of July 2014. In autumn 2014 ABDA project is expected to receive the answer, if the results are positive the implementation will start in beginning of 2015. SWG is ready to submit the programme in the EC and start the negotiation process. The Positive fact is that Brussels has put 500.000 EUR to test off the scheme in Drina Tara and Drina Sava. The end line is that: Brussels will need concrete actions, the SHG should continue integrating partners in the Value chain, that the focus should be more on traditional products and services including innovations and the actions should take care and protect the environment.

4. Presentation of the project on ABDA implementation – 2nd phase, Main outputs, project activities, milestones and general timeframe/ Integrated approach to the economic development of the cross-border regions of the Western Balkans, Preparations in “Prespa” cross-border region

Ms. Irena Dzimrevska has explained the upcoming actions of the ABDA in West Balkans. She focused in her presentation on the future of the ABDA and what are the main actions and activities that might be considered.

Explanation on the idea of integrated economic development (IED) was given and especially for Prespa region focusing on: agriculture, tourism and handicrafts production. Tourism understood as small facilities in rural areas. Producers understood as agriculture producers and processors, or producers of local handicrafts and other products- typical for the region of Prespa. IED aim is to valorise the products on local level and through cross border cooperation to enhance the business cooperation and support the small producers and processors in following actions:

1. setup of business partnerships;
2. implementation of small grants schemes to support those partnerships;
3. include measures for improvement of skills and knowledge in the partnership (quality, skills, marking the products, logos, development of manifestations, promotion, participation on international fairs) Important for this development that is integrated to be supported (as its currently developed and will be implemented in the two test regions) is to have involvement of two countries, have two sectors included (tourism and agriculture) and to have inclusion of current operators (promotion of PPPs like NGOs and private accommodation facilities, National Parks and small processors etc).

The information concerning grants and IED activities for Drina-Sava and Drina-Tara CBRs are available at SWG web. The call for application for the test grant scheme will be online at 07.04.2014. All Prespa’s SHG members may visit the website and according to the information, requirements and documents provided, may prepare or develop local ideas.

ANNEX 5: Integrated approach to the economic development of the cross-border regions of the Western Balkans Preparations in “Prespa” cross-border region

5. *Future activities related to implementation of ABDA in Prespa cross-border region and ABDA People to people actions*

Ms Liljana Tanevska has shortly introduced the Second phase general and specific objectives of the ABDA. She has introduced the future activities that are foreseen in the region pointing out the following: Continuation of expansion of The SHG; Development of the future integrated approach and elaboration of the currently developed project proposals; Preparation of the promotional material for Prespa region, on which she stressed the importance of provision of information from the SHG from Albania and has expressed gratitude to the accurate provision of information from Macedonian SHG members.

In addition Liljana has introduced People to People activities support paying attention to the CSF and P2P concept. The ABDA support for P2P actions was explained introduction of the criteria and possibilities for support of the SHG members. Examples mentioned were: Prespanski Jabolkober, Korca beer festival, Exhibitions of cultural heritage and other events that might have cross border character and dimensions.

ANNEX 6: ABDA 2ND PHASE Project Presentation Objectives, Actions

ANNEX 7: ABDA People to people

6. *Discussion about future activities, the programme and project proposals*

- Naume Tashovski Municipality Resen:

Q1: Strategy for the region and its adoption, Possibility to use it as reference in IPA applications for projects, and use it as input from the SHG?

Q2: Drina Tara and Drina Sava pilot test explanation

Q3: Suggestion for SHG members to be registered and official entities/taxpayers, especially those from the business sector and those from NGO sector.

Answers provided by Kaj Mortensen and Irena Dzimrevska:

A1: Strategic document of Prespa CBR is officially adopted on the previous meeting in Voskopojje. As well the proposal and measures that were part of the programme for the CBR Prespa. The programme will be finalised and after the comments from SHG will be delivered to EC.

Strategic document and the programme might be used for preparation of proposals to CBC and as reference in application processes as well if required to get implemented from other sources. There will be donor workshop where the strategies and programmes will be presented.

A2: The two regions are in Pilot test phase. The projects and actions there are in line with the strategic documents and the programmes for the regions.

A3: The suggestion is accepted and it was like that even before. It was also explained that registered agriculture producers as individuals might also be in the SHG. As they are registered for the economic activity they perform.

- Orieta Glozani, DMO Korce

Q1: There is a need to include the tour operators in the project due to the fact of the lack of transport lines between Korce- Ohrid and Korce – Resen. More attention should be put in improving the public transport or engaging touristic agencies for facilitation of the transportation within the region.

A1: It is good suggestion and the transportation companies who are registered for bus lines might be invited in the SHG as well and Private tour agencies that may transport tourist from both sides of the border, answered Liljana Tanevska. Irena Dzimrevska noted that the sector of transport is a part of value chain which was confirmed and stated by Kaj Mortensen too.

- Gabriela Milososka, Municipality Ohrid

Q1: As Prespa in Your Palm is IED project is it possible to stay focused only on that project?

A1: Kaj Mortensen replied that the SHG should focus on the three project proposals, and integrate them in one IED approach. However for the particular project the focus should be on identifying real business partnerships within the identified Value chain, prepare business plans for each applicant, get evaluated and approved and payments delivered to all after finishing their obligations within the project.

Q2: Will be joint meetings for development and discussions over IED approach and project proposals organized?

A2: Irena explained that as in the other CBR in Prespa also meetings for support to development of project proposals with external experts be provided. Through workshops with business sector and including elements to the project proposals that are missing and support will be also provided during the application process.

- Viola Bogdani, Dorcas International

Q1: Who will apply for the developed project proposals? Will that be done by SWG or SHG? Is there going to be one or three projects?

Q2: Will be support for the Infrastructure projects already discussed in Mavrovo available?

A1: Kaj Mortensen replied that the project proposal development as well the integrated approach of the three of them is in process of development. The importance is in looking across them and put the ideas in the context of value chains. The projects will be base for the development of Call of Proposals. Their focus should be in the Value chain context. The call for proposals will be published at the end of April, after what the SHG from Prespa CBR may see how they should put the context of the projects developed.

A2: Irena Dzimrevska explained that infrastructure projects, as explained in the programming presentation will not be focus of support with project finance but subject to their presentation and support advocating with line national institutions and the international donor society. Kaj Mortensen added that what SWG can advocate through its bodies lobbying to government or other donors.

7. Discussion on possible support on "people to people" actions in the "Prespa" region

- Jone Eftimovski, Owner of a museum

Q1: He asked if there is possibility to have activities where he can exhibit the museum exponents in Korce? He explained that the tourism is only 3 months and that it will be good to expand the tourist season with different offers.

A1: It is possible this kind of activities to be part of the support within the ABDA people to people component. In addition it was explained once more that different actions with regional character might be applied, selected and approved in the process. The application format will be soon

distributed to the SHG members and Project Office team is there to explain and support the applications.

- Naume Tashovski, Municipality Resen

Q1: Is there possibility to apply for ABDA people to people component for one activity in frame of ongoing manifestion. He particularly asked about expanding the workshop for prespa apple market placement with producers and experts from the other side of the border as they also face the same problem.

Q2: How many applications are predicted to be funded within the ABDA people to people action?

A1: Irena Dzimrevska explained that this kind of application are eligible and that also eligible are applications and support for participation of the groups and SHG on existing fairs of local or regional national character. The pool for ideas is open; the application will be sent the SHG should follow the criteria presented in the meeting.

A2: There is no limit in number for the applications for ABDA people to people. Activities funded in the project are: Participation on local fair of group of women doing handicrafts, The regatta in Drina Sava, participation on fair in the region B2B meetings, etc..

8. Discussion about nomination on SHG members (affirmation of current members and involvement of new members)

Introduction concerning SHG and its activities were given by Liljana Tanevska. She presented that some of them have nominations but asked everybody to provide the project team with signed and stamped nominations. Liljana opened the possibility for election of president and vice president of the SHG.

- Naume Tashovski, Municipality Resen

His concern was not receiving already endorsed SHG operational protocol after the 5th meeting of SHG in Voskopoje.

Suggestion is given to check the proposed SHG members and their registration documents, so the principles of the formal entities will be clarified by the Project Office in Korce. He also suggested postponing the election of President and vice president of the SHG on the next meeting. Irena Dzimrevska asked TA Paskal Vogli to send operational protocol to all SHG members.

The group agreed to further proceed with SHG related issues: election at the next, 7th meeting of the SHG.

9. Conclusions and closing of the meeting:

Conclusions from the meeting were summarised by Liljana Tanevska RC of ABDA CBR Prespa:

- The comments on the Programming document presented by Suzana and provided by Suzana in **ANNEX 8** should be sent latest the 09.04.2014.
- The election of the SHG bodies and affirmations will take place on the next meeting of the SHG for CBR Prespa.
- Operational protocol will be send to all SHG by the TA Paskal Vogli.
- The project office will inform the SHG about the availability of application for ABDA people to people support
- The project office serve as point for support of the SHG

- SHG will include more SHG from the private sector
- SWG will inform the SHG on the progress of the approvals in EC
- SHG should work on IED with the development of the current project proposals and give a context to value chain development.
- SHG will include only official and registered legal entities. The registered individuals can belong to the agriculture producers register.
- Next 7TH meeting of the SHG Prespa will be on 03.06.2014