



PRESPA
CROSS-BORDER REGION

Minutes from the 9th Meeting of the Stakeholders'
Group for the
Cross-border Region of "Prespa"

March 4, 2015
Premises of Dorcas Aid Albania, Korçë,
Republic of Albania



Participants in the meeting:

The structure of participants in the 9th SHG meeting included 26 participants. 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 cross – border region of “Prespa”

Presentation form the meeting and also the full list of participants' and contact details can be found at:

ANNEX 1: Participants list of 9th Prespa SHG MEETING 04.03.2015

ANNEX 2: SCAN Participants list of 9th Prespa SHG MEETING 04.03.2015

ANNEX 3: PPP - Overview of the activities in the second phase of the project

ANNEX 4: PPP - Integrated Economic Development and future activities in Prespa

Program of the meeting:

Ninth meeting of the Stakeholders Group for the Cross - Border Region of “Prespa”

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

11:00 – 11:10 Welcome speech

- Mr. Ilia Dishnica, Executive Director of Dorcas Albania
- Representative from Regional council of Korca (TBC)

11:10 – 11:20 Official addressing and introduction to the programme

- Mrs. Viola Bogdani, President of “Prespa” SHG
- Mr. Naume Tashovski, Vice President of “Prespa” SHG

11:20 – 11:40 Overview of the activities in the second phase of the project

- Mrs. Etleva Thimo, Technical Assistant – “Prespa” CBR

11:40 – 12:10 Activities of “Prespa” SHG and promotion of “Prespa” region on other events

- Mrs. Etleva Thimo, Technical Assistant – “Prespa” CBR
- Mrs. Orieta Glozeni – DMO Albania, International fair of tourism Belgrade
- Mr. Vlado Ivanovski – Resgrup, P2P event Agriculture cooperatives – drivers of change

12:10 - 12:40 Coffee break and snack

12:40 – 13:10 Discussion about next phase of ABDA programme

- Mr. Damjan Surlevski, Regional Coordinator – “Prespa” CBR

13:10 – 13:30 Wrap up and Conclusions of the meeting

- Mr. Damjan Surlevski, Regional Coordinator – “Prespa” CBR

13:30 - 15:00 Lunch break

15:00 Departure



Minutes of the meeting

The Regional Coordinator of the "Prespa" Cross border Region Mr. Damjan Surlevski held a welcome speech and thanked all the participants for their presence and wished a fruitful collaboration with all stakeholders.

Then Mr. Ilija Dishnica executive director of Dorcas Aid Albania Korca, welcomed the participants and expressed the importance of such meetings for all stakeholders. He also highlighted the exceptional value of these meetings about the provided information, specific project ideas that were generated by the target groups as well as the continuous support provided by the Korca Regional Council. He expressed also his pleasure to be involved in such important activities for the region and at the same time the willingness for the success and extension of the project in the future.

Mrs. Viola Bogdani, President of the stakeholders group for "Prespa" Region stressed the importance of the establishment and consolidation of a stable stakeholders group for "Prespa" Region, despite the challenges encountered at the beginning of the project.

Then, Mr. Naume Tashovski, Vice President of stakeholders group for Prespa Region, presented in details the program of the meeting, focusing on each session of the program.

Session 1

Summary of the activities during the second phase of the project

The session began with the presentation of Ms. Etleva Thimo, who made an overview of all activities carried out during the second phase of the project focusing on the detailed description of each activity and event. Thus, the participants were informed on the results of each activity, their progress as well as the importance of the involvement of stakeholder group in such activities. The focus of the presentation was also the importance of all organized activities which have served as a good opportunity to promote the Prespa region, and also gave the stakeholders group the possibility to share knowledge, experiences and information between them.

Ms. Etleva Thimo made also a brief presentation on the participation of stakeholders group in other events, by making a summary of the training sessions on "Partnerships and Networking" in Banja Koviljaca, Serbia as well as the activity of People to People program in the regional conference "Agricultural Cooperatives - drivers of change", held in Ohrid, Macedonia.

In the discussions conducted by the stakeholders during the meeting was stressed the importance of organizing activities about promotion of the agricultural cooperatives especially for Korca region which is faced with significant challenges in this sector. Following this discussion, based on socio-economic problems of the region it was suggested to organize such activities also in other sectors.



It was also mentioned the problem encountered during the second phase of the project, that there was lack of participation of many communes in all realized activities due to the complex territorial and administrative division in Korca region. In the future, due to the new territorial and administrative division in Albania, it's expected the communication with the relevant authorities in Korca region to be easier and to have more productive involvement from the appointed representatives in the stakeholders group.

Session 2

Activities of the "Prespa" stakeholders group and the promotion of the "Prespa" Region in different events

During this session, Ms. Orieta Glozheni briefly presented the International Fair of Tourism in Belgrade and the involvement of Prespa stakeholders group in this event. Also Ms. Glozheni presented some details of the event focusing on the promotion (presentation and marketing) of the Prespa region in this fair.

During the presentation, she emphasized the the importance of organizing B2B meetings, presenting and selling touristic products and promoting packages and itineraries under the slogan "one destination two countries".

In various discussions conducted by the stakeholders, it was emphasized the importance of additional promotion of Prespa region in order to attract more visitors and further development of the tourism sector in the region.

It was also stressed the idea that development requires both time and financial resources and lack of financial support in the next phase of the project can be considered as obstacle, but the work of the stakeholders group in this direction will continue even in the future.

Other comments were linked to various suggestions about the importance of support of reviving the traditional hand crafts to new generations, the need of a market research, and also creation of a series of unified tour packages within the Macedonian and Albanian part of Prespa Region. Also the need for additional funds to promote the area as well as funds of other problematic socio-economic issues was stressed.

Mr. Olsi Duma director of "Prespa" National Park suggested to the participants and organizers the next meeting to held in the "Prespa" National Park and then to make a touristic tour in the Park with the aim of understanding better the importance and potential of the area. This suggestion was endorsed by all stakeholders.

Session 3

Discussion on the next phase of the ABDA program

At the beginning of this session, Mr. Damjan Surlevski made a presentation of the pathway for integrated economic development in Prespa region, through facilitation



of networking and cooperation among local people, entrepreneurs, artisans, small agricultural sector, tourism service providers and other stakeholders in the rural community in the region, by organization of joint activities, sharing resources and joint touristic packages. In his presentation Mr. Damjan Surlevski stressed also the importance of creating a web page for the Prespa region as a platform which will serve to improve the communication and information sharing on various activities, project calls, contact information and other relevant data.

Mr. Surlevski presented three project ideas that were generated in the first phase of the project by the stakeholders group as possible activities that could be realized in the future: Prespa in your hand - improving and promoting regional tourism offer; New seeds for bio-heritage - Protecting the natural potential; Prespa Women socio-economic cohesion - Strengthening social and economic position of women. Beside this three project ideas it was discussed on the additional ideas that could further develop the region through integrated economic development. At the end of his presentation, Mr. Damjan Surlevski, focusing on the importance of sustainability of the project made a presentation of Area Based Development approach in the context of the Macedonia – Albania Cross Border Cooperation program and the possibility some of the activities and project ideas to be applied and supported to through the CBC program.

In the discussions of the third session members of the stakeholders group stressed the importance of People to People activities which are a very good tool and that in the future it is necessary a greater involvement of the stakeholders group for new applications especially from Korca region.

Thus it was suggested that in the future PMU office, but even members of stakeholders group to identify potential partners and to apply on new programs. It was also highlighted the difficulty that some group members have on developing project ideas and writing projects. They expressed the need for additional capacity building on writing project proposals, especially for the representatives from Korca. Regarding this comment, the representatives from Municipality of Resen and the Prespa PMU, expressed the readiness to support the partners on this issue.

At the end of the discussions it was suggested that in the future meetings should be invited representatives of the respective Ministries from the both countries with the aim of introducing with the stakeholders group and promotion of their work.

In response to comments from the members of the group, the moderators of the meeting appreciated the suggestions of participants and comments for further development on the work of the stakeholders group and strengthening the future cooperation.



Session 4

Conclusions of the meeting

In the last session of the meeting, review was made on the conclusion of the previous meeting and the following conclusions from this meeting were added:

- The Web page for Prespa region is operational and in the future will be enriched with more information, activities, projects and other contact details related to the region;
- Promotional brochures for “Prespa” Region are not yet translated into local languages (Macedonian and Albanian) as it is suggested by the stakeholders, and this activity will continue with realization in the next phase of the project;
- Printed Promotional brochures are at the PMU Office in Korca and the delivery to the SHG will continue according to the field of interest and operating area;
- “Prespa” PMU will further support the discussed project ideas and will help in the coordination of the potential activities that could be supported under “People to People” program. Till this moment there are three events completed and another one will take place during mid-March 2015;
- In order to promote the activities and work done within the region and also to easily disseminate the information and news to the SHG Members, establishment of Facebook page for the cross –border region of Prespa will be realized;
- Although without significant results till this moment, “Prespa” PMU will continue with the lobbying activities to the local authorities for the importance of reconstruction on the local road infrastructure in “Prespa” region;
- Beside the three project ideas that are endorsed by the SHG members: Prespa in your hand - improving and promoting regional tourism offer; New seeds for bio-heritage - Protecting the natural potential; Prespa Women socio-economic cohesion - Strengthening social and economic position of women;, additional project ideas that could contribute to the integrated economic development of the region, and should be focused on the future are:
 - Revitalization of the traditional handmade pottery production and other handmade products in the both sides of the Prespa region;



- Activities for promotion and creation of cooperatives, producers groups, clusters, etc. (primarily in the agriculture sector) but also in other sectors such as tourism and processing;
- Activities for creation on joint touristic products and offers and promotion through direct B2B meeting, fairs, conferences to the touristic service providers and operators worldwide;
- “Prespa” PMU office and SWG will serve as an contact point where SHG members can obtain information for open calls for projects and programs and will get support for preparation and applying on project ideas and realization on the joint projects and activities in the Region;
- Increased visibility of the activities within ABDA program and Prespa region will be supported by the SHG Members with additional promotion on local level;
- Part of the members of the SHG participated on the International Fair of tourism in Belgrade and contributed to the promotion of the touristic offer, attractions and gastronomy in the Prespa region.
- In the future meetings, representatives of respective Ministries for agriculture and rural development from the both countries should be invited to participate on the SHG meetings in order to be familiarized with the work of the SHG for Prespa region;

Prepared by:

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