

**INTERREG VI-A IPA PROGRAMME
"GREECE –NORTH MACEDONIA 2021-2027"**

4th MONITORING COMMITTEE (MC) MEETING
Hybrid: Thessaloniki & online

December 5, 2024

Brief Minutes & Decisions

The Monitoring Committee (hereinafter referred to as MC) of the Interreg VI-A IPA Programme "Greece – North Macedonia 2021-2027" convened online for its 4th meeting on December 5, 2024, following an invitation by the Managing Authority INTERREG 2021-2027 (hereinafter MA).

The **Chair** of the General Secretariat of the Regional Development Corporate Agreement (ESPA) under the Hellenic Ministry of Economy and Finance, **Ms. Vasiliki Pantelopoulou**, inaugurated the event with a compelling opening address. In her speech, she underscored the critical importance of the strategic border crossing project at Lemos/Markova Noga. Ms. Pantelopoulou highlighted how the initiative aligns with broader regional development goals, emphasizing its potential to enhance cross-border cooperation, stimulate economic activity, and foster socio-economic growth in the area. She framed the project as a vital step towards achieving greater connectivity and integration between neighboring regions.

On behalf of the Ministry of Local Self Government, the **Co-Chair** of the meeting, **Mr. Stefan Vangelski**, extended a warm welcome to all participants. He expressed optimism and strong belief in the significance of the strategic project BorPres2, stating that it represents a transformative opportunity for the region. In his remarks, he positioned the operation as not merely an infrastructure development but as a symbol of progress and unity, heralding a new era of cooperation for the cross-border region.

Then, the Chair announced that quorum was achieved, in line with the attached list of participants and informed the members to declare any conflict of interest and subsequently confidentiality and impartiality. The Region of Western Macedonia formally declared a conflict of interest concerning the approval of the strategic BorPres2 project, as it leads the partnership scheme of this project. Consequently, it abstained from voting on the project's approval for funding.

Ms. Maria Nezeriti, Head of the Managing Authority Interreg 2021-2027, welcomed the participants and **Ms. Maria Galewska**, representative from the European Commission, Regional and Urban Policy wished a fruitful and productive meeting.

Mr. Themis Chatzikonstantinou, Head of the Joint Secretariat, began by presenting the current status of the 1st Call for Proposals and outlined the timeline for the next stages in the evaluation process. He then informed the MC members about a project, with the acronym "advenTOURII" which was unable to be electronically submitted via the Management

Information System (MIS) within the deadline for Stage B1/1st Call for Project Proposals. This issue was caused by a technical malfunction in the MIS and has been officially confirmed by the relevant Managing Authority of MIS. Mr. Chatzikonstantinou raised the matter for a vote, requesting the MC's approval to allow the submission of the project in the form it was in at the time of the original submission deadline (November 13, 2024), once the technical issue is resolved. Next, he presented the timeline of administrative actions for the 2nd Targeted Call for Strategic Focus on Prespas Area.

Mr. Alexandros Samaras, Programme Officer, Unit A/MA, provided a comprehensive presentation on the strategic project BorPres2, highlighting its main actions as well as its complementarities and synergies.

Then, **Mrs. Eva Karagianni**, Head of Unit A/MA delivered a presentation on the revised timetable of planned Calls, an updated version compared to the one that was approved during the 3rd Monitoring Committee.

The meeting proceeded with a detailed discussion on the strategic project. During the course of the discussion, the following remarks were made;

Mr. Dimitrios Voulgarakis, voting MC member representing the Hellenic Economic & Social Council, expressed his strong endorsement of the strategic project, emphasizing its substantial benefits for the region. He praised the vision and effort of all individuals and entities involved in the project's conceptualization, design, and maturation stages.

Mr. Alexandros Mourouzis, the substitute voting member of the MC representing the National Confederation of Disabled People (NCDP) of Greece, suggested that the project should adopt a more engaging and appealing acronym. He emphasized that, given the project's anticipated widespread recognition, a distinctive and memorable acronym would be advantageous.

The update provided by **Mr. Enzo Damiani**, the representative of the EU Delegation to the Republic of North Macedonia, underscored the progress in the ongoing "EU for Prespa" Programme/Action. This initiative, financed by the European Union and partially supported by UNDP, is designed to promote sustainable development in the Prespa region. A significant component is the financial assistance allocated for the construction of the Markova Noga border crossing, which will connect North Macedonia and Greece. This infrastructure element complements the BorPres2 project, reflecting a coordinated effort to enhance regional connectivity and cross-border cooperation.

Mr. Dimitar Mitrevski, representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in North Macedonia, expressed his congratulations to all parties involved in the BorPres2 project and emphasized that this project will serve as the crown jewel of the Programme.

The members of the Monitoring Committee decided unanimously to approve the:

- 1. Funding of the operation of strategic importance entitled “Prespa Lake Area border guard station: Establishment of the border crossing point between Greece and Republic of North Macedonia at the Prespa Lake Area” with the acronym BorPres2 (MIS 6018199) under the 2nd Targeted Call for Strategic Focus on Prespas Area**
- 2. Allowance for the electronic submission of the project proposal with the acronym advenTOURII (MIS 6007131) under the 1st Call for Project Proposals – Stage B in the form it was in at the time of the original submission deadline (November 13, 2024) and permission to undergo the evaluation of STAGE B1.**
- 3. Updated timetable of planned Calls for proposals**

Following the above, the 4th Monitoring Committee hybrid meeting was adjourned, with the Co-Chairpersons’ instructions of its decisions to come into force.

This document is signed by the two co-Chairpersons.

**The Co-Chairpersons
of the Monitoring Committee**

Ms. Vasiliki Pantelopoulou

Mr. Stefan Vangelski

General Secretary of Regional Development
Corporate Agreement (ESPA)
Ministry of Economy and Finance

Ministry of Local Self- Government

Attachments:

1. Final agenda of the 4th MC online meeting
2. Participants’ list of the 4th MC online meeting
3. Presentations delivered during the meeting
4. Updated Timetable of planned Calls for Proposals (.xls)