

Interreg



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IPA Greece – North Macedonia

Strategic Project Proposal

BorPres2 - Border Crossing at Prespa Lakes

Monitoring Committee

December 2024

OVERVIEW	Priority Axis 2: Strategic Focus on Prespa Area
	Investment Priority: 045 - Energy efficiency measures and sustainable public infrastructure
	Specific Objective: RSO3.2 - Promote sustainable transport and regional connectivity
	Total Project Budget: 7.727.272,00 €
	Duration: 36 months
	Lead Beneficiary: Region of Western Macedonia
	Scope: BorPres2 enhances cross-border connectivity,

	sustainable tourism and economic cooperation, transforming Prespa into a model of regional integration
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ABOUT	<p>The project "BorPres2" aims to enhance cross-border cooperation and sustainable development in the Prespa Lake area, connecting Greece and the Republic of North Macedonia.</p> <p>It involves the creation of a new border crossing point between Lemos (Greece) and Markova Noga (North Macedonia), along with associated infrastructure development.</p> <p>The project's goals include improving regional connectivity, fostering sustainable tourism and promoting economic, social, and environmental collaboration across the borders.</p>
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PARTNERS	<p>Region of Western Macedonia Greece Budget: 6.276.000 €</p> <p>Municipality of Prespes Greece Budget: 114.136 €</p> <p>Ministry of Interior (Sector Macedonia-Thrace) Greece Budget: 23.000 €</p> <p>Ministry of Interior North Macedonia Budget: 1.200.000 €</p> <p>Municipality of Prespes North Macedonia Budget: 114.136 €</p>
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INFO	<p>Infrastructure Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of a new facility for police and customs in Greece • Renovation of existing police facilities in North Macedonia • Creation of sustainable hiking and cycling trails connecting key cultural and natural sites in the region <p>Sustainable Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of regenerative tourism practices to enhance the area's appeal while preserving its environmental and
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cultural heritage

- Engagement of local communities in co-designing tourism solutions
- Promotion of eco-friendly tourism infrastructure and activities

Cross-Border Cooperation

- Strengthening institutional ties and collaboration between local authorities of Prespes and Resen
- Organizing public events and volunteer programs to foster regional integration and cultural exchange
- Enhancing trade and local business opportunities through improved accessibility

Environmental Sustainability

- Measures to ensure minimal environmental impact and resilience against climate change
- Alignment with international treaties like the Ramsar Convention and Natura 2000

Economic and Social Benefits

- Reduction of travel time between municipalities in the cross-border area, boosting local trade and tourism
- Development of a vibrant transnational region that supports sustainable economic activities and cultural exchange

OBJECTIVES

OUTPUTS

RESULTS

The "BorPres2" project aims to enhance cross-border connectivity and foster sustainable regional development in the Prespa Lake area by establishing a new border crossing point and developing associated infrastructure.

Expected outputs include the construction of modern facilities, the creation of sustainable tourism infrastructure such as hiking and cycling trails, and the organization of cross-border cooperation initiatives.

These outputs are anticipated to result in reduced travel times, increased tourist flows, strengthened local economies, and enhanced cross-border collaboration.

Ultimately, the project seeks to transform the Prespa region into a model of sustainable tourism and regional integration, benefiting local communities, businesses, and the environment.

Objectives

1. Enhance Cross-Border Connectivity

- Establish a new border crossing point between Greece (Lemos) and North Macedonia (Markova Noga) to facilitate efficient travel and trade
- Reduce travel time for residents and businesses in the cross-border region

2. Promote Sustainable Regional Development

- Foster collaboration between local municipalities (Prespes and Resen) to implement sustainable practices and joint initiatives
- Develop eco-friendly tourism infrastructure that highlights the natural and cultural heritage of the Prespa area

3. Strengthen Regional Cooperation

- Improve communication and cooperation between the two countries through shared infrastructure and coordinated activities
- Facilitate the implementation of joint projects in tourism, environmental protection, and economic growth

4. Revitalize Post-COVID Tourism

- Adopt regenerative tourism practices to make the Prespa area a model destination
- Engage communities in co-designing tourism solutions and improving visitor experiences

Expected Outputs

1. Infrastructure and Facilities

- Construction of a new border control facility on the Greek side
- Renovation and upgrading of the existing police station in North Macedonia
- Development of hiking and cycling trails connecting cultural and natural landmarks

2. Community Engagement and Cooperation

- Organization of public events and workshops to foster cross-border partnerships
- Volunteer programs focused on sustainable tourism and environmental conservation

3. Tourism Development

- Creation of promotional materials, including maps, guides, and digital content, to highlight the Prespa area as a tourist destination
- Hosting familiarization trips for tourism operators and influencers

4. Capacity Building

- Training programs for local authorities and stakeholders to ensure effective project implementation and sustainability
- Deployment of joint action plans for rational resource use and tourism management

Expected Results

1. Improved Accessibility and Travel

- Reduction of travel time between Lemos and Resen from over 2 hours to just 40 minutes
- Increased cross-border movement, benefiting over 5,000 people annually

2. Boost in Regional Tourism

- Establishment of Prespa as a key regenerative tourism destination
- Growth in visitor numbers, positively impacting local businesses and services

3. Economic and Social Growth

- Strengthened trade and business activities through better connectivity
- Enhanced economic resilience of local communities

through tourism and sustainable practices

4. Environmental Sustainability

- Integration of sustainable practices into tourism and infrastructure development
- Preservation of the sensitive ecosystems in the Prespa area

5. Stronger Cross-Border Relationships

- Increased collaboration and trust between Greece and North Macedonia
- Development of a unified transnational area that incorporates shared cultural, social, and economic elements



By achieving these objectives, outputs and results, the project aims to transform the Prespa region into a hub of sustainable tourism and cross-border collaboration

LOCATION OF ACTIVITIES

Municipality of Prespes

- Situated in the northwestern part of the Regional Unit of Florina, in the Region of Western Macedonia
- Features the Big Prespa Lake and Prespa Border Park, areas of significant natural beauty and ecological importance
- The site for the construction of the new border control facility

Municipality of Resen

- Located on the northern side of the Prespa Lake area
- The site for the renovation and upgrading of the existing police station at Markova Noga

Prespa Lakes region

- A transboundary area encompassing Greece, North Macedonia and Albania.
- Recognized for its biodiversity and environmental significance, protected under the Ramsar Convention and the Natura 2000 Network
- Includes trails and landmarks for developing sustainable tourism infrastructure

The area is a historically important border zone that has remained closed since 1967, despite its ecological and cultural value.

The Prespa region is a UNESCO World Heritage site and an international symbol of cross-border cooperation for environmental protection and sustainable development.

The location is chosen strategically to revitalize the region, connect local communities, and create a model transnational development area.



ADDED VALUE

The added value of the "BorPres2" project stems from its ability to address long-standing challenges in the Prespa region through a holistic and sustainable approach. Key elements of the project's added value include:

ENHANCED CROSS-BORDER CONNECTIVITY

Facilitation of Regional Cooperation: Establishing a border crossing point between Greece and North Macedonia strengthens ties between the two nations, fostering trust and mutual benefits

Reduction in Travel Time: Significantly cuts travel time from over 2 hours to just 40 minutes, enabling easier movement for residents, tourists, and businesses

Integrated Cross-Border Development: Creates a unified transnational area, promoting joint initiatives in economic, social, and environmental domains

BOOST TO REGIONAL TOURISM

Regenerative Tourism Model: Transforms the Prespa area into a sustainable tourism destination, prioritizing environmental preservation while boosting economic growth

Unique Visitor Experiences: Develops infrastructure such as hiking and cycling trails that connect natural and cultural landmarks, increasing the area's appeal to domestic and international tourists

Promotion of Cultural Exchange: Enhances the visibility of the region's shared heritage and traditions, attracting new visitors and encouraging local engagement

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SOCIAL IMPACT

Support for Local Businesses: Increased cross-border trade opportunities and tourism provide new markets for local products and services, boosting income and employment

Community Empowerment: Actively involves local populations in co-designing solutions, fostering a sense of ownership and long-term commitment to regional development

Rural Development: Promotes sustainable practices that enhance the livelihoods of

rural communities, reducing socio-economic disparities

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION

Sustainability Focus: Implements eco-friendly infrastructure and practices that protect the sensitive ecosystems of the Prespa Lakes region, which is recognized under the Ramsar and Natura 2000 conventions

Climate-Resilient Development: Incorporates measures to ensure that infrastructure and activities are adaptive to climate change, securing long-term sustainability

STRENGTHENED INSTITUTIONAL AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

Collaborative Framework: Builds on the successful partnerships from previous cross-border initiatives, setting a benchmark for cooperation in other regions

Knowledge Sharing: Disseminates best practices and lessons learned, creating replicable models for other transboundary areas facing similar challenges

Multi-National Collaboration: Involves Greece and North Macedonia, showcasing the potential of joint efforts in resolving regional issues

LEGACY AND LONG-TERM IMPACT

Infrastructure for Future Generations: Provides durable facilities and systems that will continue to serve the region beyond the project's lifecycle

Regional Identity and Cohesion: Strengthens the identity of the Prespa region as a cohesive, well-connected, and sustainable cross-border hub

Catalyst for Further Investment: Sets the stage for additional projects in tourism, infrastructure, and environmental protection, supported by national and EU funding

In summary, **the BorPres2 project** delivers transformative benefits to the Prespa region, combining environmental sustainability, economic development, and social integration. Its approach not only revitalizes a historically significant area but also positions it as a model for transnational cooperation and sustainable development.

CONTINUITY

The BORPRES 2 project is the continuation of the Strategic Project BORPRES under the Interreg CBC Programme "Greece – North Macedonia 2014-2020." It is the culmination of long-term collaboration among key stakeholders from both countries at the national level (Ministries) and local level (Regions, Municipalities and Environmental Civil Society Organizations).

1. Collaboration during the preparatory phases.
2. Close interaction among competent authorities during the preparation of the legal framework, surveys, technical studies, and architectural designs for the Established Crossing Point.
3. Engagement of local communities in all phases of project design and implementation.
4. Coordination of promotional activities on both sides of the border, at national and local levels, including several publicity events.

SYNERGIES

The project creates wide synergies with numerous supporting initiatives and financial resources, serving as a catalyst for various activities and financial leverage, with significant local and national impact.

1. EU Delegation in Skopje: "EU for Prespas," Contracting Authority UNDP – Construction of the Customs Offices' Building in the Republic of North Macedonia.
2. Regional Operational Programme of Western Macedonia – Construction of a new road connecting the Cross-Border Station to the National Road in Greece.
3. Ministries of Interior & Citizens' Protection – Provision of equipment and supplies for Customs and Police Offices.
4. Other small-scale interventions to upgrade infrastructure in the settlements of Laimos and Markova Noga.

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