



**HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT**



**MANAGING AUTHORITY OF ETCPS
JOINT SECRETARIAT OF THE CP
INTERREG V-A GREECE-BULGARIA
2014-2020**

**BRIEF MINUTES and DECISIONS
of the 4th Monitoring Committee meeting**

**Serres, Greece
13th of June 2017**

The Monitoring Committee (MC) of Cooperation Programme 'INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 was convened according to the invitation document number 300901/ MA 1923 dated 22/05/2017 and was assembled on the 13th of June 2017 in Serres, Greece, in order to discuss and take decisions on the following topics of the proposed agenda:

- **Presentation on the State of Play of the Programme**
- **Presentation and approval of the 2016 Annual Implementation Report**
- **Communication issues on the Programme**
- **Presentation and acceptance of the Guidance on Management Verifications and its annexes**
- **Presentation of the ESIF open data platform**
- **Presentation of the project with the acronym CrossBo by its partnership**
- **Other issues - Conclusions – Decisions**

The meeting was attended by 47 persons, including 15 members with voting right, 5 members without voting right, 5 staff members from the Managing Authority (MA) (the Head of the MA is counted as a voting member, substituting the Special Secretary), 5 staff members from the Joint Secretariat, 2 staff members from the National Authority (NA) (the Director General of the DG "Territorial cooperation management" is counted as a voting member), 1 member from the Info Point and 14 observers, according to the list of participants attached.

After the opening speeches, delivered by Ms. Bouziani, Ms. Duzova, Mr. Tzitzikostas - Governor of Region of Central Macedonia, Mr. Exakoustos, Mr. Slavov and Mr. Szokolai, the co-chairperson Ms. Bouziani consulted with the members of MC and concluded that no possible conflict of interest was declared by the MC members. The co-chairpersons also examined the signed participants' list and confirmed the quorum.

The draft agenda was approved and the meeting proceeded accordingly. Presentations were held, remarks/comments were made, discussions were conducted and the respective decisions were taken on the following topics:

- **Presentation on the State of Play of the Programme** by Mr. Samaras, based on the implementation of 3rd MC meeting decisions, including:
 - Information about the results and decisions concerning the second call, namely 49 project proposals under priority axis 2 and 4, as well as a reserve list of 14 projects to be funded in the case of savings;
 - A review of the outcomes from the budget revision procedure of the selected under the 2nd Call project shows average savings of 15 % and after a state aid assessment of the approved for financing projects is held, the total amount of the savings will be determined and a subsequent decision of the MC will be made on the projects from the reserve list that are going to be financed;
 - Project 2 on the Targeted Calls for proposals on flood prevention under PA 2 discussions on the foreseen activities;
 - PA 1, "Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area" discussions between MA and NA on the contents of the foreseen call will take place within the weeks following the MC meeting.

A question was raised by Mr. Szokolai on the achieved percentage of the committed funds by Priority Axis (PA), to which Mr. Samaras replied that under PA 2 the committed funds comprise 52% of the available budget, under PA 4 – 90% (Percentage calculation is based on the revised budgets of the approved projects), under PA 3 and PA 5 – 100% are committed and under PA 1 - 0%.

- **Presentation of the 2016 Annual Implementation Report** by Ms. Dinkova
 - A review of the content of the Report;
 - A review on the reflection of the comments received by the Monitoring Committee members.

Mr. Szokolai requested that a justification is added as regards the achievement of the targeted 8 km new built roads.

- **Communication issues on the Programme**

- Undertaken communication activities in 2016, presented by Ms. Lioliou.

Mr. Szokolai requested that all funds already spent for each communication activity should be included in the Annual Implementation Report. Ms. Lioliou confirmed that was already done.

- Web site development, presented by Mr. Papathanasiou.

Mr. Szokolai requested that the List of members and the Minutes/Decisions of the MC meetings are uploaded on the web site of the Programme and be open and available to the public.

Mr. Papathanasiou added that along with the above, the new site envisages dedicated area where MC members can access operational documents, drafts of decisions, etc. related to the functioning of the MC.

- **Presentation of the Guidance on Management Verifications and its annexes** by Mr. Christodoulou.

Ms. Sadonkova asked when the Management Information System will be ready to upload verified expenditure and whether trainings for first level controllers (FLC) and beneficiaries are foreseen.

Ms. Bouziani informed that on the 29/06/2017 there will be a meeting on the MIS in Athens and it is expected that the system will be fully operational till the end of the year. However this will not prevent the verification checks to be performed by FLC and after a respective check by the MA on the submitted documentation, the pre-financing of the Programme will be used to reimburse the verified costs of the Bulgarian beneficiaries.

Mr. Fotiadis added that training seminars will be organized in July 2017 for the beneficiaries of the 1st and the 2nd Calls and for the FLC from both countries.

- **Presentation of the ESIF open data platform** by Mr. Szokolai.

Ms. Tsaglioti appreciated the usefulness of the new EC tool. To her additional questions Mr. Szokolai answered that the requested 3 times per year financial reporting is an obligation and there is no additional burden to the MA. Also, the results of ex-post evaluations on previous period Programmes will be published on the platform. MC members were encouraged to put a link to the ESIF platform on their web sites.

- **Presentation of the project with the acronym CrossBo** by Ms. Thomaidou, Ms. Milusheva and Mr. Slavov.

Mr. Szokolai commented on the complementarity among 3 Programmes to fund the construction of Dimario–GR/BG Border new road section. He recommended that an agreement is signed by the 3 MAs with clear demarcation of results and funding.

Mr. Fotiadis confirmed that such document already exists, the construction works will be assigned by one tender and sources of funding will be precisely mentioned.

Ms. Milusheva pointed out that the Road Infrastructure Agency (RIA) implements two sub-projects within the CrossBo project: "Upgrading the Road II-86 – Srednogortsi-Rudozem and bypass of Rudozem" divided into three sections and "Upgrading the Road II-59 Momchilgrad – Ivaylovgrad" divided into two sections. She explained that the RIA is searching additional funds for upgrading of the Road II-86 and the 1st Section of the Road II-59 Momchilgrad - Ivaylovgrad from km 24 + 548 to km 30 + 439 as the provisioned funds in the project are not sufficient.

Mr. Slavov explained that the Regional Administration of Smolyan executes the Agreement between the government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the government of the Greek Republic to open three new border checkpoints and road links between the two countries. The TEN-T network must be paid special attention due to the fact that it already includes the section Plovdiv-Smolyan-Rudozem-border at Xanthi. Mr. Slavov also declared shortage of funding for the new Cross-border check point in order to be fully equipped and operational.

Both Bulgarian beneficiaries are searching funding opportunities from other programmes and also by the State Budget.

- **Other issues - Conclusions – Decisions**

- Discussions on the developments as concern the provisioned Call for the 2nd strategic project under PA 2, Investment Priority 5b on flood protection – discussion was additionally requested by the NA.

Ms. Duzova suggested that due to the lack of any progress in the bilateral negotiations concerning the scope of project activities (including the monitoring warning system of river Struma/Strymonas) a deadline for launching the strategic call to be set. In case no agreement among the project partners is reached no further extension will be given and alternatives for the available budget will be discussed among the programme bodies.

Mr. Grancharov advocated for the project stressing on the great importance of the remaining provisioned activities, such as trainings of BG and GR operational officers on floods situations and creation of the relevant training centers. The usefulness of such activities was proved with a similar successful project funded by RO-BG Cooperation Programme.

The need of such project for Blagoevgrad District and the whole CB area was re-confirmed by Mr. Mihaylov.

Mr. Fotiadis informed that a meeting will be held in Athens on 28/06/2017 on the open issues and solution could be possible no later than the 15/07/2017.

Mr. Szokolai expressed his doubts on the efficiency of replacing the provisioned restricted call with an open call, as possible shortage of quality proposals could hinder the achievement of Programme objectives.

Mr. Poulilios shared that flood prevention is a serious issue and competent experts should be involved in the discussions on project activities.

- 2nd Call 2nd Phase complaint panel.

Mr. Poulilios suggested that the rejected with majority by the Complaint panel project 1775 with the acronym Health Hubs is re-evaluated.

The representatives from the Region of Central Macedonia and Eastern Macedonia & Thrace, as well as the governors of the four Bulgarian Districts supported his proposal.

- PA1 Call, provisioned for 2017

Ms. Tsaglioti proposed that in the framework of Economic Diplomacy the Offices of Economic Commercial Affairs could be consulted during the discussions regarding the preparation of the Call as they are fully aware of the Bilateral Economic Relations, enhancing opportunities for cooperation on sustainable projects for the benefit of the whole Region.

Ms. Bouziani stated that this will be taken into consideration during the forthcoming meetings.

The Monitoring Committee

UNANIMOUSLY DECIDED:

1. To approve the Agenda;
2. To approve the 2016 Annual Implementation Report with the incorporated MC members' comments and mandate the JS to proceed with the necessary minor modifications, if needed, in order to upload it to the SFC;
3. To accept the Guidance on Management Verifications document and its annexes that will enter into force following approval by the Audit Authority;
4. To take a final decision and to start a procedure for launching the Call for the second strategic project under PA2, IP 5b - till 15/07/2017. In case no agreement among

the project partners is reached no further extension will be given and alternatives for the available budget will be discussed among the programme bodies;

5. The JS to re-evaluate the 2nd Call project 1775 with the acronym Health Hubs.

It must be noted that all decisions taken by the MC are final.

THE CO – CHAIRING PERSONS OF THE MONITORING COMMITTEE

Ms Maria Duzova

Director General

**DG “Territorial cooperation
management”**

Ms Angeliki Bouziani

Head of the Managing Authority

**Ministry of Regional Development
and Public Works**

**Ministry of Economy &
Development**

Attachments:

1. Table – Attendance Sheet of Monitoring Committee Members from the Greek and the Bulgarian side
2. Annual Implementation Report 2016 – updated version