



**HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**



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

**BRIEF MINUTES and  
DECISIONS  
of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monitoring Committee meeting**

**Komotini, Greece,  
18<sup>th</sup> of October 2016**

The Monitoring Committee of Cooperation Programme 'INTERREG V-A Greece- Bulgaria 2014-2020 was convened according to the invitation document number 301028 / MA 4157/08-09-2016 and was assembled on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 2016 in Komotini, Greece, in order to discuss and take decisions on the following topics of the proposed agenda:

- Presentation and approval of the Evaluation Plan of the Cooperation Programme "INTERREG V-A Greece – Bulgaria 2014-2020"
- Brief presentation and approval of the modifications of the Communication Strategy 2014-2020
- Presentation of EC Day 2016 events in Xanthi and in Smolyan
- Brief presentation of the Website for the programming period 2014-2020
- Presentation and approval of the Rules of Procedures of the Complaint Panel
- Presentation and approval of the text of the 3<sup>rd</sup> (targeted) Call for proposals, open for SO 5b
- INTERREG V-A Greece–Bulgaria 2014-2020: 2<sup>nd</sup> Call for project proposals, 1<sup>st</sup> phase of evaluation:
  - A brief review of the evaluation procedure
  - Presentation and approval of the proposed Permitted Errors
  - Presentation and approval of the results of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the evaluation
  - Presentation and approval of the proposed Budget Reduction Methodology
  - Presentation and approval of the proposed State Aid Assessment document
- Specifics issues of the CP INTERREG V-A "Greece – Bulgaria 2014-2020" (Management and Control system and designation of Authorities and e-Cohesion)
- Other issues - Conclusions – Decisions

The meeting was attended by 61 persons, including 19 members with voting rights out of 20 in total (ensuring the required quorum), 8 members with no voting right, 6 staff members from the Managing Authority (the Deputy Head of the MA being also a non-voting member), 6 staff members from the Joint Secretariat, 4 staff members from the National Authority (the Director General of the DG "Territorial cooperation management" being also a voting member), 1 staff member from the Info Point and 19 observers, according to the list of participants attached.

After the opening speeches, the co-chairperson Ms. Bouziani asked the members to state any possible conflict of interest, in order to establish impartiality. No such oral statement was given by any of the members, so impartiality was established. The co-chairpersons also examined the signed participants' list and confirmed the quorum.

Before the approval of the agenda, Mr. Samaras proposed an additional item to be included in the agenda namely: discussion on the issue of the increase of the Programme's budget and the respective amendments of the programme document, along with the necessary amendment in the same document regarding the Complaint Panel. The proposal was unanimously accepted by the voting members.

The meeting was held in accordance with the approved already agenda and presentations were held, remarks/comments were made, discussions were conducted and the respective decisions were taken on the following topics:

- *Current state of play of the Cooperation Programme "INTERREG V-A Greece – Bulgaria 2014-2020" was presented to the MC members for information*

- *Evaluation Plan of the Cooperation Programme "INTERREG V-A Greece – Bulgaria 2014-2020"*

Mr. Samaras stated that a set of remarks by the EC have been unofficially received and they have been integrated into the document, along with remarks from other stakeholders. The establishment of a Joint Steering Group including representatives of the MA, JS, NA and other experts if necessary with a common approach is foreseen. Any further issues will be subject to a written procedure. The Monitoring Committee approved the Evaluation Plan of the CP Programme "INTERREG V-A Greece – Bulgaria 2014-2020".

- *Modifications of the Communication Strategy 2014-2020 as well as Presentations of communication events related to EC Day 2016 (in Xanthi and in Smolyan) and the Website for the programming period 2014-2020 were made by the JS*

The Monitoring Committee approved the amended version of the Communication Strategy 2014-2020

- *Rules of Procedures of the Complaint Panel*

Ms Evaggelidou started by giving a detailed presentation on the relevant text and, furthermore, she also presented the position of the Programme's desk officer Mr. Szokolai, which had been received via e-mail. Mr. Voulgarakis raised the issues of consensus and the need for MC meetings when there is a need to examine a complaint. Ms. Evangelidou stated that the Complaint Panel offers only an opinion on a complaint to the Monitoring Committee, which is responsible for the final decision. The members of the Complaint Panel sign the conclusion, which is submitted to the MC to decide upon. Only the Monitoring Committee can establish the Complaint Panel and has the power to take decisions. The MC convenes either via a written procedure or in a meeting, according to the available resources and the severity of the agenda. With regards to the consensus, all members have to be present and all have to decide quickly, in order not to lose time in the project approval and implementation. Ms. Katsiyanni added that a simulation has been performed. The written procedure has been established to save time, but any MC member can request a meeting. Mr. Mladenov requested a modification in the text in Article 3 (1) alter the word *proposals* into *proposal*, so as a Lead Beneficiary to have a right to complain only for its own proposal if affected by the MC decision. Ms. Evangelidou replied that the text is written more broadly to cover all possible cases and not to limit the content of possible future complaints. Ms. Nikolova stated that this nonrestrictive approach might result in receiving too many complaints which will obstruct the examination of complaints, the assessment and the contracting of projects but the text may remain unchanged if the MC members decide so. Ms. Bouziani clarified that the Complaint Panel operates only on the evaluation phase. The Monitoring Committee approved the establishment and the Rules of procedures of the Complaint Panel and the respective Programme modification in the relevant section concerning the composition of the Complaint Panel envisaging NA participation.

- *Presentation and approval of the text of the 3rd (targeted) Call for proposals, open for SO 5b*

Mr. Fotiadis stated that only a presentation of the data of the Call is going to be given, since the bilateral consultations for Project 1 have not been completed. After the presentation, Ms. Blagova - Karamfilova stated the position of the Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Water (MoEW) that the interventions of Project 1 for prevention of floods are of no use for Strymon/Struma River, but only for Evros/Maritsa River. Therefore the Bulgarian MoEW disagrees with some of the proposed activities in WP3 and WP4 and in particular: the establishment of automated early warning web based system and the fixed location of the Joint Working Group which must operate only during the project implementation. On the other hand the MoEW supports Project 2 for both the cross border area. Ms. Nikolova proposed to separate the project proposals from the Call, in order to proceed with Project 2 and to give project 1 a month deadline to finalize the consultations, and in case the deadline is not observed other possibilities to be discussed by the MC (launching of an open call or transferring the available amounts to project 2). Mr. Giantsis agreed to the separation and asked to be noted that flood problems are also present at the Strymon river and they should be taken into consideration for Project 1. Mr. Poulilios requested that the Deputy Minister also examines the issue for the decrease of the water levels at the dams. Mr. Samaras proposed to have a targeted Call for project 2, since it is ready and to give Project 1 and a month deadline, in order for the partnership to coordinate and solve the pending issues. The targeted Call for Project 2 is proposed to be finalized and have a written procedure for its approval, in order to proceed to its publication.

The members of the Monitoring Committee decided to authorize the MA/JS in separating the project proposals from the Call and to approve the targeted Call for Project 2 via written procedure. The members also agreed that Project 1 has a month to be finalized, otherwise the MC will decide on the use of its available budget. Mr. Giantsis asked to be noted in the minutes that the WPs have to be implemented by eligible public bodies, the tenders have to abide to the legislation and the sustainability has to be safeguarded. The M.A. accepted the above notes and authorized the MA/JS to take them into consideration during the preparation of the two Calls and during the evaluation procedure of the two submitted proposals.

- *2<sup>nd</sup> Call for Proposals, 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the evaluation*

- *A brief review of the evaluation procedure*

No remarks.

- *Presentation and approval of the proposed Permitted Errors*

After a discussion between the members, the MC approved the proposed Permitted Errors and the proposed reasons for rejection. Regarding the cases of projects that have not submitted a Bill of Quantities (BoQ), legal/financial documents or exceed the 10% management cost rule, two main positions were expressed as follows: on one hand the BG delegation finds the lack of BoQ as crucial for the quality of the investment projects (as an indicator for projects' maturity and for the financial terms of an investment) while the other two cases as acceptable and on the other hand the GR delegation considers all three cases acceptable as having equal weight having into consideration also their obligatory character according the Guidelines for applicants. Taking into account that this is the first call for proposals under the programme the BG delegation made the compromise just for this call and declared that will accept all the cases as permitted errors, but the affected beneficiaries should be requested to submit the missing documents in a very short time.

In that respect it was decided for the JS to send an email to each of these cases lacking Bill of Quantities and legal / financial documents and request the missing documents, which have to be provided by the beneficiaries within 3 working days from the following day of the email. If the beneficiaries fail to abide to this deadline, the respective project proposals are rejected and do not proceed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase.

The cases where projects exceed the 10% management cost, these will be subject to budget reduction during the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the evaluation.

- *Presentation and approval of the results of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the evaluation*  
Mr. Samaras stated that the results table will be finalized after the above mentioned procedure is concluded and it is then going to be forwarded to the MC and the beneficiaries.
- *Presentation and approval of the proposed Budget Reduction Methodology*  
No remarks. The Budget Reduction Methodology was approved.
- *Presentation and approval of the proposed State Aid Assessment document*  
No remarks. The State Aid Assessment was approved.
- *Specifics issues of the CP INTERREG V-A "Greece – Bulgaria 2014-2020"*  
No remarks.
- *Other issues*
  - Use of available funds from the IPA "Greece-Turkey 2014-2020": Mr. Samaras stated that the approval by the EC for the use of the extra funds, which have become available from the INTERREG-IPA CBC "Greece-Turkey 2014-2020" programme, is going to be submitted via the SFC, after the closure of the necessary written procedure, which will be open for 5 days. This must also be included in the amendment of the programme document, together with the relevant amendment regarding the Complaint Panel. Mr. Liatsis presented the amended financial tables of the Programme, in case these funds are added. It was also suggested for these funds to be allocated in Priority Axis 3 and more specifically to project "Cross.Bo" and its interventions regarding the Rudozem-Xanthi border crossing point. Ms. Nikolova stated that time is needed for a national decision regarding the respective national co-financing and to submit the request to the EC. Ms. Bouziani kindly requested for the internal procedures from the Bulgarian side to be concluded as soon as possible, in order to have an approval of the programme by the end of 2016.
  - Expatriation allowance: It was stated that in order the allowance to be granted to the BG members of the Joint Secretariat its percentage and attribution for the period 2014-2020 has to be decided by the Monitoring Committee. Ms. Bouziani proposed for a calculation methodology to be drafted and to have an approach by the MA, which will be proceeded to the MC members via written procedure. Ms. Duzova stated that a preliminary agreement between both national authorities on the presented the calculation methodology is needed before a written procedure to be conducted.

The Monitoring Committee:

**UNANIMOUSLY DECIDED:**

1. To approve the Agenda;
2. To approve of the Evaluation Plan;
3. To approve of the Communication Strategy 2014-2020
4. To establish the Complaint Panel and approve its Rules of Procedures with the respective amendment in the operational document
5. To authorize the MA/JS in separating the project proposals from the targeted 3<sup>rd</sup> Call and to approve the targeted Call for Project 2 via written procedure; Project 1 has a month time to conclude the scope of activities, otherwise the MC will decide on the further use of its available budget;

6. To approve the proposed Permitted Errors and the proposed reasons for rejection. Regarding the cases of projects that have not submitted a Bill of Quantities, legal/financial documents or exceed the 10% management cost rule, it was decided for the JS to send an email to each of these cases that lack Bill of Quantities and legal / financial documents and request the missing documents, which have to be provided by the beneficiaries within 3 working days. If the beneficiaries fail to abide to this deadline, the respective project proposals are rejected and do not proceed to the 2nd phase. The results table will be finalized after the completion of this procedure;
7. To approve the Budget Reduction Methodology;
8. To approve the State Aid Assessment
9. To approve launching of the necessary procedures for the allocation of the available funds from the INTERREG-IPA CBC "Greece-Turkey 2014-2020" programme to the "Cross.Bo" project and more specifically to its interventions regarding the Rudozem-Xanthi border crossing point;
10. To approve launching of the necessary procedures for discussion and possible adoption of the expatriation allowance for the BG JS staff (including amount rate) via written procedure.

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

#### **THE CO – CHAIRING PERSONS OF THE MONITORING COMMITTEE**

**Ms Denitsa Nikolova**  
**Deputy Minister**

**Ms Angeliki Bouziani**  
**Special Secretary Advisor**

**Ministry of Regional Development  
and Public Works**

**Ministry of Economy, Development  
and Tourism**

#### **Attachments:**

1. Table – Attendance Sheet of Monitoring Committee Members from the Greek and the Bulgarian side