



South Eastern Europe  
**SWG** RRD  
Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group



## Minutes from the 20<sup>th</sup> Stakeholders' Group Meeting for cross-border region "Sharra"



02 November, 2018

restaurant "Kod Lipe", Strpce, Kosovo\*

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\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence



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## I. List of Participants

Participants in the meeting:

At the 20<sup>th</sup> Stakeholder Group Meeting for “Sharra” attended 42 participants from the “Sharra” cross-border Region. The meeting was organized and facilitated by SWG staff and SWG expert.

The full list of participants' contacts and details can be found on:

ANNEX 1: Participants list of 20th Sharra stakeholder group meeting 02.11.2018

## II. Programme

20th Meeting of the Stakeholders' Group for the Cross-border Region of “Sharra”  
02 November, 2018, at the restaurant “Kod Lipe”, Strpce, Kosovo\*

### PROGRAMME:

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

11:00 – 11:15 **Welcome speech**

*Ms. Flaka Bytyqi, Regional Coordinator for the cross-border region “Sharra” - SWG representative*

*Mr. Darko Buzarovski, Regional Manager of “Sharra”, “Prespa” and “Pcinja-Krajshte” cross-border regions - SWG representative*

11:15 – 11:40 **Experiences from the implementation of the activities relevant to Area Based Development Approach in 7 cross - border regions within the EU funded project: “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas”**

*Mr. Darko Buzarovski, Regional Manager of “Sharra”, “Prespa” and “Pcinja-Krajshte” cross-border regions - SWG representative*

11:40 – 12:10 **Overview of the supported People to People events and Capacity Building Activities related to implementation of Area Based Development Approach in “Sharra” cross-border region, within the EU funded project “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas”:**

- P2P events

- Capacity building activities

*Ms. Flaka Bytyqi, Regional Coordinator for the cross-border region “Sharra” - SWG representative*



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12:10 – 13:00 **Diversification of economic activities in the rural cross-border areas through short value chains**

*Ms. Dori Pavloska – Gjorgjieska, PhD Project Manager - SWG representative*

13:00 – 13:30 **Discussion and conclusions of the meeting**

13:30 – 14:30 **Lunch**

### **III Minutes of the meeting**

#### **Topics during the meeting:**

- Experiences from the implementation of the activities relevant to Area Based Development Approach in 7 cross - border regions;
- Overview of the supported People to People events and Capacity Building Activities related to implementation of Area Based Development Approach in “Sharra” cross-border region;
- Diversification of economic activities in the rural cross-border areas through short value chains.

#### **Official opening of the meeting**

The meeting was opened by Regional Manager, Mr. Darko Buzarovski, who welcomed the participants and guests, also endorsed the Sharra stakeholders for their cooperation during the implementation of the ABDA programme and presented the agenda of the meeting and the objectives of the 20<sup>th</sup> SHG meeting. Mr. Rodoljub Mladenovic, as an active representative of the stakeholder group and host of the 20<sup>th</sup> SHG meeting welcomed the stakeholders and expressed his gratitude towards SWG on behalf of the stakeholder’s group for the SWG’s constant support in Sharra cross-border region. Also, Mr. Predrag Markovic, SWG regional expert, welcomed the participants and expressed his pleasure for taking part on the 20<sup>th</sup> SHG meeting.

#### **1. Experiences from the implementation of the activities relevant to Area Based Development Approach in 7 cross - border regions within the EU funded project: “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas”**

Mr. Darko Buzarovski, Regional Manager for the cross-border region of “Sharra” presented the achievements and shared the experience regarding the implementation of the activities relevant to Area Based Development Approach in 7 cross - border regions within the EU funded project: “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas”.

Focus in the presentation was given on the following topics:

- SHG meetings - Organization of 3 sets of SHG meetings in all 7 cross-border regions – more than 530 stakeholders involved till now, total 780 involved stakeholders is the expected number after realization of the last third round of Stakeholder’s Group Meetings;



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The project is funded by the European Union

- Info related to P2P open calls, selection process and implementation of the events. In total 31 supported P2P events in 7 cross-border regions;
  - Capacity building measures:  
220 stakeholders and staff were trained on local development actions and preparation of project proposals under various grant schemes,  
100 stakeholders and staff participated and will participate during 7 study tours;
  - Agriculture Policy Forum:  
APF 2018 was held in Jahorina, BiH and gathered more than 160 relevant stakeholders from 15 countries from SEE and beyond, who shared views on agricultural and rural development policies in the Western Balkans and provided policy recommendations for improving the current situation;
  - 12th Annual meeting of Ministers of agriculture from South East Europe;
- 2. Overview of the supported People to People events and Capacity Building Activities related to implementation of Area Based Development Approach in “Sharra” cross-border region, within the EU funded project “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas”**

In the second presentation Mr. Darko Buzarovski, Regional Manager for the cross-border region of “Sharra” provided overview of the supported People to People events and Capacity Building Activities related to implementation of Area Based Development Approach in “Sharra” cross-border region, within the EU funded project “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas.

Focus in the presentation was given on the following:

- People to People events:  
In total, 4 (four) applications have been received and selection for support of P2P actions was based on the results of the Evaluation Committee.  
Only one event - “Beans day 2018” was supported within the EU funded project “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas”  
Second supported event - “The third Regional Gastronomic Fair in the Municipality of Strpce”, previously, on the waiting list for additional funds, was supported via funds available from other donors;
- Capacity building activities:  
Cluster/value chains initiative working groups and the capacity building workshop “Development of Value Chains in Tourism and Agribusiness Sector”;  
Study tour for stakeholders of “Sharra” and “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Namuna” cross-border regions: “Good examples, practices and further development of value chains in tourism sector in “Sharra” cross-border region”;

### **3. Diversification of economic activities in the rural cross-border areas through short value chains**

In the third part Mr. Predrag Markovic, SWG Regional Expert provided detailed presentation and facts regarding the potential for the diversification of economic activities within the “Sharra” cross-border region, by developing short values chains. Mr. Predrag Markovic, again shared with the stakeholders group the findings, previously presented during the 19<sup>th</sup> Stakeholder group meeting in Belovishte. Also, SWG Regional Expert explained that from the analysis made, mountain tourism and Sharra lamb have the biggest potential in the region.



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#### IV. Discussion

**Mr. Bekim Bytiqi** - National Park Sharra, stated that this activities in municipalities gravitating the Sharra mountain are from great importance and that focus should be given on 2 segments: mountain tourism and sharra lamb. Mr. Bytyqi thinks that mountain tourism has a lot of potential and importance in rural development and in relation to above stated, services and trainings should be provided. Also, it was stated that there are many opportunities to work jointly with municipalities and to build more capacities with improved quality. Mr. Bekim Bytiqi stated that Sharra lamb, is very important product, but still there is a lot to be done to preserve the pastures of the national park Sharra and to have a plan to sustainably management of the pastures. In this regard, Mr. Bekim Bytiqi - National Park Sharra, again emphasized the importance of future development of mountain tourism, as a driver for the cross-border region. Mr. Arben Palushi, Kukes municipality point out that the National Park Sharra is one of the most beautiful parks in the Balkans, biologically. This Park differs from village to village, from country to country. Its richness, identity, the way of living, the practice of treating and producing different products differs from place to place. Products such as Sharra Lamb, Sharra cheese, different teas are different in every village. It has been done a good work, but a lot of work is needed to be done in the future, but the bases and connector of all activities related to above stated local products is tourism.

**Mr. Bukurosh Jonuzi**, tourism manager and tourism expert emphasized that Sharra mountain needs to have a guide in English and Macedonian. Studies showed that the biggest number of tourists visiting this cross-border region are from Albania and Kosovo\* and most of the guides are providing their services in English even the fact that the foreigners are less from the total number of tourists. In this region there's an entity that is very important in terms of cultural preservation/protection – Gora region and the promotion of this entity is important to promote the region. It's time that shepard houses (katuni) turn into models of tourism. Mr. Bukurosh Jonuzi stated that a model like this exists in Prokletije - Bjeshket e Nemuna but not in Sharra cross-border region. At the end of his speech, Mr. Bukurosh Jonuzi stated that if we as a stakeholder group want to promote this region, we need to promote the accommodation for tourists in these areas.

**Mr. Ahmet Aliu** – representative from municipality council of Strpce thanked everyone for the meeting. He stated that IPA II is very important when it comes to rural development. Also, Mr. Ahmet Aliu mentioned the raspberry and how these initiatives have direct contribution the development in agriculture and in general for the rural development.

**Mr. Flamur Sulejmani**, Dragash municipality agrees with the proposals for the value chains, mentioning that if the region wants to have tourism expansion, the stakeholders will need to work on different aspects. He mentioned that in Sharra cross-border region it has been worked in different areas, different festivals have been organized and supported, presenting the tradition of these areas that preserve the traditional culture. Mr. Flamur Sulejmani addressed that more promotion for the region is needed so the region can attract more tourists. Except for events, the stakeholders and donors need to support the artisanal products that come from the region, that can be offered for tourists and locals hotels. Also, food that is traditional in the region is important and needs to be promoted. Except for food it is important to organize capacity building events, to make better education and selection of guides, organize hiking, and mountain bikes to attract young. The trails need to be marked because tourist can easily get lost. There is a need to put signs and mark the trails.



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**ABD**  
**PROGRAMME**



**Mrs. Rajna Sedati** - Imago sees that a lot of present here are men, and her opinion is that it's important to have more involvement and participation of women from the cross-border region. Mrs. Sedati stated that the presentation of hand-made products from local women needs to be supported in future and to begin stronger mutual cooperation, so they can find a new market or to use the existing distribution channels and local touristic operators for their hand-made products. Also, the training of young people from the region is needed, students need to be included as guides. Every country has a protected product and Mrs. Rajna Sedati thinks that the group should endorse the state responsible institutions to include sharra cheese as such, and that within this stakeholder group and SWG, women from different areas should come and present in a different scope of work, to strength the cross-border cooperation and to develop idea so later their project would have possibilities to be implemented.

During discussion several other themes of interest were opened and elaborated:

- Beside the fact that Sharra mountain has beautiful nature and landscapes, Sharra has more than 500 species of medical herbs and those herbs are used and collected in rare occasions. There are not enough hygienic conditions to produce Sharra Cheese, despite the fact that in a past lot of investments via different donors were made.
- Experience from Bergamo Alps was shared, on how much a kitchen recipe is important in the promotion of the region.
- Discussion regarding the ministry of trade's initiative of registering the sharra cheese/meat as a geographic entity was opened, and the stakeholder group stated that these products that have a definition for geographical origin and standard of production, will give a guarantee for the rural development and for promotion these products. During this discussion beekeeping sector was mentioned as an important link for the further development of tourism value chain.

## **V. Conclusions of the meeting**

The stakeholders and SWG representatives conclude the needs for the further development of the Cross-Border Region of Sharra, which are as follow:

- **More involvement in the People to People activities in the future.**
- **Capacity building measures are identified as a very helpful tool for stakeholders for development of their skills and gaining new knowledge.**
- **For the future working activities of the stakeholder group, women need to be more involved. Also, the group is dedicated to actively work on gender equality and inclusion of women, in all future activities.**
- **More promotion for the region is needed so the region.**
- **Education and increased number of guides will add additional value for the cross-border region.**
- **The stakeholder group is giving endorsement for the conclusions from experts work and believe that joint actions regarding mountain tourism value chain will be more useful for future development of the cross-border region.**

Prepared by:

Flaka Bytyqi, Regional Coordinator for "Sharra" cross-border region;

Darko Buzarovski, Regional Manager for "Sharra" cross-border region;