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Interreg - IPA CBC 
Greece - Albania

INTERREG IPA CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION
PROGRAMME "GREECE - ALBANIA 2021-2027"

1st PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE MEETING

24 June 2020

Brief Minutes & Decisions

The Programming Committee (hereinafter referred to as PC) of the Interreg IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Programme "Greece-Albania 2021-2027" convened for its 1st Meeting on June 24th, 2020, via teleconference, following an invitation by the Hellenic Managing Authority of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes (hereinafter MA of ETCP).

Ms Niki Dandolou, Special Secretary for the European Regional Development Fund, Cohesion Fund and European Social Fund Programmes, who is Chair of the Committee, welcomed the participants, thanked the EC representatives, as well as the representatives of the Albanian and the Greek side and wished a fruitful 1st Programming Committee Meeting.

The floor was then passed to Ms Brunilda Tushaj, Head of the National Support Unit of the Albanian Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, who welcomed everyone and wished a fruitful meeting.

The floor was then passed to Ms Angeliki Bouziani, Head of the MA of ETCP, who welcomed the members, wished a successful meeting and passed the floor to Ms Sagona, Head of Unit B2 of the Managing Authority, who presented the Rules of Procedure.

Ms Tushaj expressed her opinion regarding the composition of the PC and asked if it is not too late to add some more bodies. Ms Bouziani explained that it is too late to add more voting members. Some non-voting members, however, can be added. Ms Tushaj said that the Ministry will send a proposal in the following days.

Ms Kalliopi Tesia, representative of the Region of Epirus, suggested that the Union of Regions of Greece should be added as voting member of the PC. Ms Dandolou replied that in order to do that it is necessary to have a new Ministerial Decision, which is not convenient at this stage. Finally it was agreed that the Union of Regions of Greece will participate as an observer.

Ms Lenoel, Programme Manager at DG for Regional Policy and Urban Policy of the European Commission, intervened and mentioned that the Partnership principle should be respected and all persons affected must be included in the process of the Programme preparation. The EC sent an email to all MAs with observations on the Partnership principle on 29/11/2019. The EC would like to see the partnership principle reflecting more in the RoPs. The work of the PC should be published, so that the outside world is aware of the work of this Committee.

Ms Bouziani mentioned that all points will be taken into consideration and as regards the publicity of the PC, there will be a public consultation.

Ms Sagona explained that once the external consultant produces the 1st deliverable (Methodology) we will know which means will be used for the public consultation (platforms, emails, questionnaires, etc).

Ms Dandolou mentioned that we should give until next Monday to all members to comment on the wording of the RoPs (using track changes).

The floor was then passed to Ms Brozou, member of Unit D of the MA, who presented the details of the Call for the external consultant, who will prepare the New Cooperation Programme Document.

Ms Lenoel mentioned that a single Implementing Act for all Programmes will be prepared by the EC. She also informed the PC that the Programmes' budget will be finalized in July 2020, while the Regulations will be approved in the autumn of 2020.

Ms Dandolou asked which is the deadline for the Programme Document and Ms Lenoel replied that there is no fixed deadline yet. Ms Dandolou declared that nevertheless the MA will do its best to meet with the timeline set by the EC.

The floor was then passed to Mr Vassilis Charitantis, member of Unit B2 of the MA, who presented the Orientation Paper.

Ms Koutsianou, representative of the Region of Western Macedonia, suggested that in the new Programming period, Kozani should be included in the eligible area. Ms Bouziani said that this suggestion will be taken into consideration and it will be discussed.

Mr Kapodistrias, representative of the Region of Ionian Islands, suggested that all Ionian Islands are included in the eligible area. Ms Bouziani agreed and added that the Ionian Islands are in the functional area of the Programme.

Ms Lenoel mentioned that the funds available are limited and the focus is more on the land borders, rather than the coastal borders. The EC will create the Implementing Act where the geography of all Programmes will be included. Nevertheless, it was stressed by the Greek side that there is no such official document mentioning that focus should be given on land rather than coastal/maritime borders.

Ms Lenoel also mentioned that the EC will explore the possibility to create a trilateral Programme between Greece, Albania and North Macedonia.

Ms Dandolou mentioned that such a change is too complicated and stressed that the Managing Authority was not informed that there was such a proposal by the EC, even informally. Ms Dandolou clarified that the Ministry was neither officially, nor unofficially asked about this issue and she declared the position of Greece is that a trilateral Programme is not acceptable.

Ms Dandolou also asked the representative of EC for a deadline by which the MA will present the proposals of the two countries and send an appropriate argumentation on the subject. In any case Ms Dandolou clarified that this

issue goes beyond this meeting at a higher level of hierarchy, but in any case such a proposal cannot be accepted by the Greek side.

Ms Tushaj agreed with Ms Dandolou that changing from bilateral to trilateral at this stage is not appropriate and clarified that the Albanian Ministry is not in favour of this change. She also stressed the fact that this proposal should be sent officially by the Commission as soon as possible in order to have the final statement.

Ms Bouziani explained that the Orientation Paper is only a proposal by EC, to be used as a basis in the dialogue with the counterparts and does not represent a negotiating position.


It was agreed that the MA will send the RoPs (in word document) shortly after the meeting, so as the members of the Programming Committee are able to add their comments and reply by Monday 29/06/2020. The RoPs will then be approved via written procedure.

At the end of PC meeting, brief Minutes and Decisions were drafted by the MA/JS.

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

Chair

Ms Niki Dandolou



Special Secretary for the European
Regional Development Fund,
Cohesion Fund and European Social
Fund Programmes
Hellenic Ministry of Development &
Investments

Co-Chair

Ms Brunilda Tushaj



Head of Unit
Managing the National Support Unit

Albanian Ministry for Europe and
Foreign Affairs

Attachments:

1. Agenda of the 1st Programming Committee Meeting
2. List of participants