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IPA CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME
MONTENEGRO-KOSOVO 2014-2020

Final Conference of the IPA I Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Montenegro - Kosovo 2011 – 2013

REPORT

Purpose: The purpose of this Final Conference was to present to the wider public the impact that programme has made to the community of the programmes area in order to improve the quality of their lives, as well as to share the successful stories of the projects implemented and to promote good cross border cooperation between beneficiaries within IPA I financial support from the European Union of the CBC Programme Montenegro-Kosovo 2011-2013. Moreover, the aim of the conference was to provide detailed information to the participants and wider public about the previous IPA I Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Montenegro-Kosovo 2011-2013 and achieved results through the implementation of the activities within the projects that were supported by the European Union in the previous financial perspective.

Date: 19 January 2018

Venue: Centre Ville Hotel, Podgorica, Montenegro

Participants: *Mr. Aleksandar Andrija Pejović*, Minister of European Affairs of Montenegro (MEA), *Mr. Beqir Fejzullahu*, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA), *Mr. Hermann Spitz*, Head of Cooperation Section in Delegation of the European Union in Montenegro (EUD MNE), representatives of the Delegation of the European Union in Montenegro, OS MNE representatives, OS KS representatives, JMC members from both beneficiaries countries, representatives from beneficiaries organizations from Montenegro and Kosovo, representatives of the municipalities from MNE and KS, representatives of public enterprises and state institution, civil sector representatives from MNE and KS, media representatives from MNE and KS, JTS staff etc. (Please see annex 1 – list of participants).

Subject:

The Final Conference of the IPA I Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Montenegro - Kosovo 2011–2013 was organized in Podgorica by the Ministry of European Affairs of Montenegro in close cooperation with its counterpart ministry from Kosovo, the Ministry of Local Government Administration of the Republic of Kosovo, whereby the projects implemented within the Programme, achievements and results of the implemented activities within this programme were presented. Moreover, the overall impact on the programme area of the projects financed within the 1st CfP within this programme was presented in detail. The audience had the opportunity to get informed about a total of 9 projects that have been implemented within this programme. Additionally, statistics and results on the programme implementation were presented in detail as well as information on the new IPA CBC Programme Montenegro – Kosovo 2014-2020.



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In order to communicate the achievement of the programme results with wider public, the invitations to attend the Final Conference were sent to the representatives of Operating structures in both countries, the representatives of the relevant institutions in Montenegro and Kosovo, the municipalities of the programme area, the project beneficiaries of the CBC Programme MNE-KOS 2011-2013, the potential applicants of the CBC Programme MNE-KOS 2014-2020, non-governmental organizations and media from both sides of the borders.



The conference was followed by 83 participants who had the opportunity to be informed about the achievements and project results of the IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Montenegro - Kosovo 2011-2013. The conference was attended by representatives of the Montenegrin and Kosovo ministries, mayors of the municipalities, representatives of local and state institutions, public enterprises, project beneficiaries, representatives of Montenegrin and Kosovo media and the civil society.

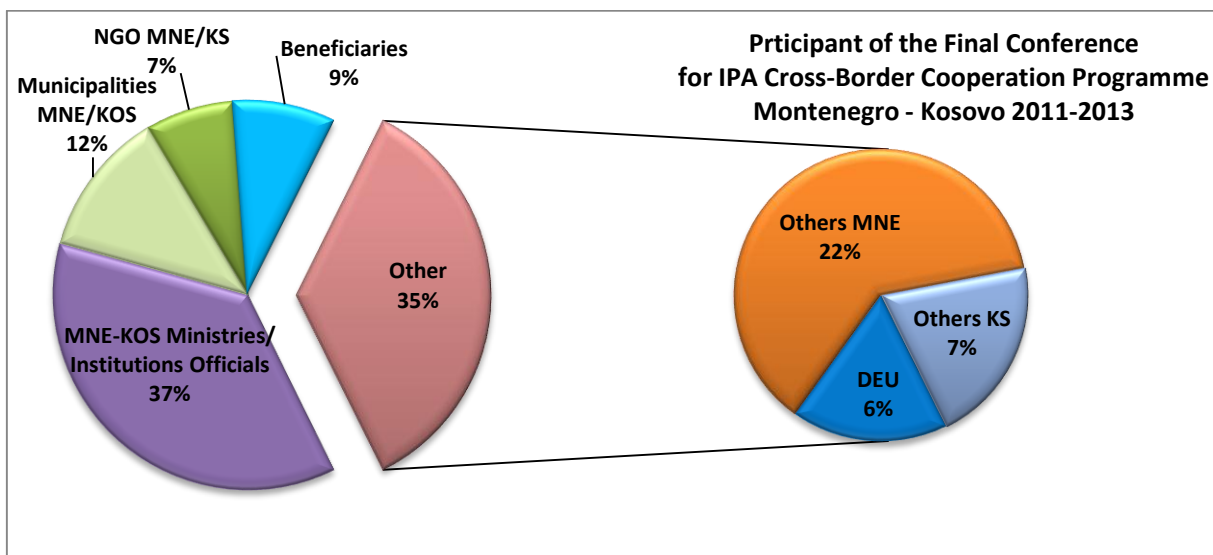


Chart 1 – The structure of the participant of the Conference



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Namely, 37% of the participants of the conference were high officials of the Ministries of European Affairs in Montenegro and Ministry of Local Government Administration in Kosovo, as well as the representatives of other ministries and state institutions from Montenegro and Kosovo. The municipalities from the both side of the border expressed their interest, as they presented 12% of the participants, including the mayors of the Municipalities of Podgorica, Petnjica, Plav, Gusinje (MNE) and Klina (KOS). The 9% of the participants were the representatives of the final project beneficiaries, out of which four of them took part in the panel discussion at the last session of the conference. Non-governmental organizations showed fair interest regarding the updating with the result of the previous IPA I Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Montenegro - Kosovo 2011-2013, presenting 7% of the participants. On other side, the event was followed by 35% of the participants that were not included in these categories, such as potential applicants, state and local public enterprises as well as civil society organizations from Montenegro and Kosovo and other interested parties. The Delegation of the European Union in Montenegro was led by the Head of the cooperation sector Mr. Hermann Spitz who was accompanied with Task Managers and consultants of the CBC Programmes.



The conference was organized in threefold set up.

At the beginning the opening speeches were delivered by the Minister of European Affairs of Montenegro, Mr Aleksandar Andrija Pejović, the Deputy Minister of Ministry of Local Government Administration of the Republic of Kosovo, Mr Beqir Fejzullahu and the Head of Cooperation Section in the Delegation of the European Union in Montenegro, Mr Hermann Spitz.

Mr Aleksandar Andrija Pejović, Minister of European Affairs of Montenegro expressed his satisfaction with the fact that the concrete and visible results of the projects implemented under CBCP Montenegro – Kosovo 2011-2013, have contributed to the comprehensive development of the border area and confirmed the success of the cross-border cooperation concept.



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He recalled that in the framework of the Cross-border Cooperation Program Montenegro-Kosovo 2011-2013, nine projects were funded and implemented, in total sum of 3.7 million Euros and that



their sustainability is visible even after the formal closure of the projects. The project results made a significant impact on the protection and management of water resources, creation of the unique touristic models and social inclusion of vulnerable groups, especially of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians community. Accordingly, these projects have contributed to the achievement of the programme objectives related to economic development, environmental protection and promotion of biodiversity, promotion of common

natural resources at the border, such as agriculture, forestry and tourism development.

He also stated that even though that this was financially the smallest Programme and the one that started the last, this program laid the foundation for future cooperation and linked beneficiaries and other stakeholders in the border area. Just worn by the excellent results from the completed program, as Pejović pointed out, we managed to get the first call within this new program Montenegro-Kosovo 2014-2020 among the first, so we will soon have a contract award ceremony. He announced that for the forthcoming period 2014-2020, almost three times more, or 10 million euros were allocated for cooperation between Montenegro and Kosovo.

Mr Beqir Fejzullahu, deputy minister of Ministry of Local Government Administration, in his speech stressed that "with the successful implementation of these projects, both countries have testified to be successful, in implementing the CBC programme IPA I (2011-2013) and achieving of the intended overall objectives of the Programme". He implied that through implementation of these projects, mountainous and rural tourism is being stimulated, achieving to attract local, regional and international visitors, while the eco-product infrastructure of local producers has been created by building their capacity, which led to local economic growth. The awareness regarding the protection



of optional energy sources, water resources, protection of biodiversity, proper management of SMEs, as well as for inclusion of RAE community members in educational institutions has been raised. The capacities of civil society organizations as well as awareness raising campaigns have been strengthened.

Among others, Mr. Fejzullahu emphasized the fact that, with the assistance of IPA funds for the CBC programme, Kosovo has made significant progress in its economy, as one of the most important priorities of the country. The CBC program Montenegro - Kosovo was highly appraised by representatives of both states, as well as by the EU delegation to Montenegro. Also, the mutual achievements between the two states have strengthened the cooperation and the partnership for future cross border cooperation programs.



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Finally, Mr Fejzullahu assured the participants that MLGA will continue to remain fully committed to ensure a successful implementation of IPA II CBC Programme between Kosovo - Montenegro (2014 - 2020).

The Head of Cooperation for the Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro, Mr. Hermann Spitz, emphasised that the implementation of the IPA I CBC Programme Kosovo – Montenegro 2011-2013 contributed to improving the quality of life in the border area through project support. He pointed out that 9 implemented projects not only contributed to development, but also promoted



common European values such as mutual respect and cooperation. Mr Spitz said that the new generation of programmes, which began in 2016, brought new challenges, but also simplified the procedures, such as a unique programme budget, a unique grant contract per project and the establishment of a single contracting authority. All this, he added, has caused more responsibility of the states, especially Montenegro, which is the leading partner in the programme.

In the second part of the conference, the JTS Project Officer, Mr Nikola Djonovic has presented in brief the previous programme and related technical aspects, informing the public also about the new



IPA II Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Montenegro - Kosovo 2014–2020. Following the information about the current stage of the new Programme, the nine (9) projects implemented under IPA I of the CBCP Kosovo-Montenegro 2011-2013 were presented, including main activities and achievements. The projects that were financed within the previous financial perspective (MNE-KS 2011-2013) are the following:

1. “Via Peak of Dinaric Alps” implemented by CSTI in Montenegro in cooperation with Community Development Fund from Kosovo, with the objective to develop network of mountaineering routes - ViP Dinarica and raise awareness on economic, environmental and social benefits of long-distance trails and tourism package through valorisation of unique natural wealth and cultural-historic heritage.
2. "Improvement of Water Resources Management in Gjakova and Bijelo Polje" implemented by Water Supply Company "Bistrica", BLLC Bijelo Polje in cooperation with Regional Water Company Radoniqi Sh.A. Gjakova in Kosovo, with the aim to improve the protection and management of natural water resources in Gjakova and Bijelo Polje municipalities.
3. “Building Social Inclusion through Education” implemented by Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CEDEM) and Kosova Education Centre, aimed to strengthened capacities of



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CSOs dealing with RAE to engage in the dialog with educational institutions and better respond to the priorities of their constituents in the field of education.

4. “Harnessing innovation & entrepreneurship in cross-border region of KS and MNE” **was** implemented by Tourist Organization Berane and STIKK - The Kosovo ICT Association, with the goal to increase welfare and opportunities for better utilization of local resources by generating business opportunities and employability.
5. “Eco Products Valorization” implemented by Municipality of Bijelo Polje and Municipality of Deçan in Kosovo, intended to promote and support the development and promotion of eco-products in the cross-border area.



6. “Rural tourism for economic development of cross border area of Kosovo and Montenegro” was implemented by Regional Development Agency for Bjelasica, Komovi and Prokletije and Initiative for Agriculture Development of Kosovo, with the main objective of promotion of economic development of the programming area through economic valorisation of its tourist and sustainable agriculture and forestry potentials.
7. “Revitalisation of local communities for tourism and youth development” lead by Municipality of Andrijevisa and implemented in cooperation with Municipality of Junik in Kosovo, fostered the sustainable development and promotion of tourism in Junik (KS) and Andrijevisa (MNE) municipalities through the improvement of infrastructure and empowerment of youth.
8. “Joint Action for Sustainable Employment” has been finalized by Employment Agency of Montenegro in cooperation with Employment Promotion Agency Kosovo (APPK), while the main purpose of the project was to remove obstacles and provide conditions for employment and human resources development in the cross-border region, to increase labour force flexibility and ensuring better quality of life, as well as to strengthen the cooperation among various labour market stakeholders for their better inclusion into development of local employment strategies
9. “BORN - BORderless Nature. Biodiversity protection and development of Prokletije and Bjeshkët e Nemuna Natural Parks” implemented by Municipality of Plan (MNE) in cooperation with Trentino con il Kosovo in Kosovo, was focused on the defining and deepening the knowledge of flora and fauna habitats, on the enhancement of natural resources in order to and on raising of the awareness of local people on the value of the natural environment.



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The third session of the conference included the panel discussion with project beneficiaries of three implemented projects under this programme and one final beneficiaries of the project. Namely, the panellists of the third session were Mrs Jelena Krivčević form Regional Development Agency for Bjelasica, Komovi and Prokletije as a beneficiary and Mrs Marica Bučković as final beneficiary of the project "Rural tourism for economic development of cross border area of Kosovo and Montenegro", Mr Marko Bulatović from Water Supply Company Vodovod "Bistrica" Bijelo Polje, and Mrs Milena Bešić from Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CEDEM).



Mrs Jelena Krivčević underlined the importance of the project for the economic development of the rural areas and the benefits for local inhabitants that occurred within the implementation of the project activities.

Mrs Marica Bučković expressed her satisfaction with the project outputs and explained her experience during the project and the sustainability and impact of the project after its formal closure. Moreover, she invited potential final beneficiaries/local inhabitants of the programme area to participate in similar projects. She explained that the project enabled them to first of all, transform their agricultural holding into facilities providing the rural tourism services. In addition, this project developed their capacities in provision of quality services to tourists in the cross border area through the trainings on provision of tourist services which was organized within the project. The EU funds also assisted them in the reconstruction/adoption of spaces and introducing the electricity in this distanced rural areas through provision of the solar panels for several households. Moreover, she informed the participants that after the project completion she already had guests in their household and that in cooperation with the local touristic organisation they already have bookings for this year.

Mrs Milena Bešić informed the participants about the obstacles they faced during the implementation and the achievements in the policy level regarding the social inclusion of Roma Ashkali and Egyptians communities, especially in education. She emphasized the importance of inclusion of the REA population in the formal education system and the facilitation of communication between this population with relevant institutions in the field of education.

Mr Marko Bulatović presented the results and the benefits that municipalities covered with the project activities experienced with the introduction of the GIS for the measurement of the water consumption and water management. He also underlined the importance of the GIS in ensuring



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sustainability and reduction of water loss at the local level, especially considering that only three municipalities so far in Montenegro have applied this system.

Conclusions:

This modality of interactive presentation of the achievements of the results within the IPA I CBC Programme Montenegro - Kosovo 2011-2013, the implemented projects, as well as specific experience of the final beneficiaries of the 1st CfP within this programme had significant impact on the raising of interest of potential applicants to become more active in drafting project proposals that could potentially contribute to the socio-economic development.

The Final Conference attracted the attention of the public and media from both sides of the border and was presented in the central news of Radio Television of Kosovo (RTK), in the news of Voice of America (VoA) in the Albanian and Montenegrin languages as well as in Montenegrin Radio Television (RTCG). Moreover, a series of articles on online and written media was published informing the citizens of both countries on the event.

Following this fact, it is expected that the media reports will reach citizens on both sides of the border by reporting on activities undertaken in the field of CBC Programmes and related results, with a side effect of raising the level of people who supports the integration of both countries in the European Union. Moreover, the results of the projects and the experience of the beneficiaries and final beneficiaries will contribute to the overall interest in the activities implemented within the CBC programmes as well as increase the interest of potential applicants to apply with their ideas on similar/new actions.

EU visibility:

During the Final Conference in all power point presentation slides and accompanying video material the appropriate EU flag was visible with the text "the project is funded by the EU". The EU flag was prominently and visibly displayed also in the conference room. The EU funding of the programme was announced wherever appropriate namely in the agenda of the conference, opening speeches, in the speeches of the Minister of MEA of Montenegro and the MLGA Deputy Minister of Kosovo, submission of invitation letters, e-mail signature, registration forms, participants lists, PowerPoint presentation, etc.