

Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area

Prespa Park Management Committee (PPMC)

Draft Rules of Organization and Procedure – Terms of Reference (ToR)

Article 1

Functions of the PPMC

1. According to Article 11 of the Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area, the PPMC shall:
 - (1) monitor and coordinate the activities carried out for the protection and sustainable development of the Prespa Park Area in the implementation of this Agreement and of the Strategic Action Plan for the Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park;
 - (2) identify and recommend to the Parties and other interested actors next steps and necessary actions, measures and activities for the implementation of the Agreement, and invite them to cooperate, to coordinate and carry out joint projects. More specifically, the Committee shall assist the Parties in implementing and strengthening the effectiveness of this Agreement by providing recommendations and opinions on:
 - a. the drafting and application of standards, environmental criteria and requirements, which will serve as the basis for accomplishing integrated protection and sustainable development of the Lakes and their watershed;
 - b. the completion of the regulatory framework of the watershed area, including spatial plans and protected area regulations and management plans;
 - c. the drafting and application of strategies, integrated management plans and programmes to be implemented in the Prespa Park Area, which affect or may affect the achievement of the objectives of this Agreement;
 - d. the application of a programme of effective monitoring in order to observe, manage and control the state of the environment and the status of surface and ground waterbodies;
 - e. the definition of priority directions and programmes of scientific study and research for the protection and sustainable development of the Prespa Park Area and the promotion of publication of expert information;
 - f. the gathering, elaboration and publication of environmental information on the Prespa Lakes Area;
 - g. the promotion of public, NGO and other stakeholders' participation in the protection of the Lakes and their watershed;
 - (3) facilitate the coordination of planning and activities with transboundary relevance by local protected area management bodies in the three States involved;
 - (4) evaluate the results of ongoing actions according to the objectives of article 2 of the Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area, and disseminate its findings widely;
 - (5) serve as the steering body for programmes and projects concerning specifically the Prespa Park Area as a whole, and act as the body on behalf of the Agreement system to coordinate with other processes, initiatives and programmes with a geographic

coverage indirectly or partially linked to the Prespa Park Area (e.g. the Drin Core Group)

- (6) identify and propose possible funding sources at a national, European and international level for necessary actions, measures and projects;
 - (7) gather any available information related to the Lakes and their watershed, ask for and receive proposals from governmental institutions, bodies and NGOs in order to improve its work and to increase the commitment of the Parties to the implementation of the Agreement;
 - (8) prepare and publish an annual report on the state of the environment for the Prespa Park Area, which will include one section where the Committee's work would be described;
 - (9) liaise with the Ohrid Management Committee, acquire observer status at its meetings and coordinate action in order to achieve the best results in the protection and sustainable development of the wider region;
 - (10) contribute as appropriate to the process for the sustainable management of the extended Drin basin dialogue;
 - (11) contribute to the mobilisation of resources of the Parties and the international community, as appropriate, to manage the risks and mitigate the negative impacts, in case of unexpected events, such as floods, forest fires and other natural or anthropogenic catastrophes as well as to protect the vulnerable ecosystems of the Area and their functions and services from the effects of climate change.
2. To effectively exercise its functions, the Parties to the Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area shall ensure that the PPMC, through its Secretariat, can directly liaise with the competent administrative Services of each Party through the nominated representative of the Ministry of Environment of each State Party and of the European Union.

Article 2

Composition of the PPMC

As provided for in article 10 paragraph 3 of the Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area, the PPMC shall have the following composition:

- (1) one representative of the Ministry of Environment of each State Party and one representative of the European Union;
- (2) one representative from the local communities in the Prespa region from each State Party;
- (3) one representative of the environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from each State Party, with significant local activities in the Prespa area;
- (4) one representative of the local protected area management authorities from each State Party;
- (5) one permanent observer from the MedWet Initiative of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar);
- (6) one permanent observer from the Ohrid Management Committee.

The members of the PPMC are appointed – and replaced if need arises - by the Minister for the Environment of each State Party and by the European Commission respectively.

Each member of or permanent observer to the PPMC may have an alternate, appointed and replaced as above mentioned, and fully authorised to replace him/her in case of inability to attend meetings or follow related PPMC work.

In particular, with regard to the permanent observer from the Ohrid Management Committee and his/her alternate, they should be nominated from both State Parties (North Macedonia and Albania) of the Ohrid Management Committee.

The representative of the Ministry of Environment from each State Party acts as Head of Delegation for each State Party and may be assisted by national experts.

The representatives of the permanent observers participate fully in the work of the Committee, but their assent is not required to reach consensus.

Article 3

Organisation of work of the PPMC

1. The PPMC shall meet on a regular basis, twice a year.
2. *Regular meetings:* Each calendar year the venue of the regular meetings will rotate among the three State Parties. Therefore, two consecutive regular meetings will be held in each State every 3 years. Preferably, regular meetings should be held in the Prespa region. It is further specified that the rotation rule can be curbed, as an exemption, by a common agreement of all the Parties to the Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area for one meeting, in case of justified inability to host a meeting, communicated well in advance to the Parties.
3. *Dates of regular meetings:* Unless otherwise agreed, the first regular meeting of the year will be held in the Spring and the second in the Autumn (or summer and winter) of each year. Their exact dates will be agreed at the end of the previous meeting or through diplomatic channels.
4. *Meetings via teleconference:* It is further provided that one of the two annual regular meetings of the PPMC under the same chair might be organized via teleconference for reasons of saving funds and time for travel. This will be decided on the initiative and proposal of the Chair at the end of the previous meeting. It is self-evident that meetings via teleconference might also be agreed upon by the Parties to the Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area for reasons of public health and safety.
5. *Chair:* The meetings shall be chaired by the representative of the Ministry of Environment of the State Party in which they are held. The term of the chair follows the annual rotation of the preceding paragraph 2 of this Article. It is further specified that the chair continues to serve as the chair of the PPMC for the duration of the year i.e. not only during meetings but also in between and until the next State Party takes over. In case of absence of the State Party representative, the meeting will be chaired by his alternate.
6. *Extraordinary meetings:* An extraordinary Committee meeting shall be called at the request of any of the Parties to the Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area. Members should be consulted by the Secretariat as to their availability at least 2 weeks before the proposed date of such meeting.
7. *Agenda and working documents:* The agenda of each meeting, as well as any working documents required, will be prepared by the Secretariat under the guidance of the Chair. The Secretariat will take care that such documents are circulated to the members of the PPMC well in advance of the meeting, preferably at least one month before, for the PPMC members' adequate preparation for the meeting and the possibility to comment on working documents in advance of the meeting.

8. *Annual workplan and budget:* The PPMC will adopt an annual workplan with the corresponding budget starting from its first regular meeting. This workplan will coincide with the annual chair of each State Party, and will include at least the planning of Committee meetings as well as of the meetings of other joint bodies operating under the PPMC, and the main tasks and activities that should be carried out by the PPMC Secretariat, including communication and public outreach activities.
9. *Working language:* The work of the Committee will be carried out in English.
10. *Communication:* Communication among members of the PPMC and with the Secretariat may be carried out through electronic means (email, web meetings etc.) and supported also over the period between meetings. The Secretariat should facilitate communication between PPMC members.
11. *Invitations:* The Committee may invite experts to participate at its meetings, depending on the theme of the meeting. The Committee may also invite members of the local societies and representatives of local stakeholders (e.g. local producer groups, as appropriate), to participate at its meetings with a view to provide information on issues of relevance to the work of the Committee. Such invitations shall be extended by the Chair of the Committee, following consent by all Parties to the Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area. Relevant proposals shall be put forth to the Parties well in advance of the meeting on the initiative of the Chair and taking into consideration related proposals by the Secretariat. Persons invited to the meetings of the Committee will have to cover their own travel and accommodation costs, except otherwise decided by the Committee on an *ad hoc* basis.
12. *Working groups:* The PPMC may form working groups on specific issues. The first working group is established under article 14 of the Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area on water management issues.
13. *Amendments:* The present Rules may be amended by mutual consent of the Parties to the Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area at any session of the PPMC, taking also into account any relevant modifications that might be suggested by the High-Level Segment under article 10 par. 10) of the Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area. Any proposal for amendment of the present Rules should be forwarded to the representative of the Ministry of Environment of each State Party and the representative of the European Union at least three weeks before the session.

Article 4

Decisions of the PPMC

1. The Committee shall decide by consensus. In case consensus is not reached, the issue shall be referred for settlement to the High-level Segment. It is further specified that decisions taken at each PPMC meeting will be clearly identified and reviewed before the closure of the meeting by the PPMC members, under the responsibility of the Chair. Such decisions may include, if relevant, implementation details, including the indication of a time frame and related financial implications.
2. *Minutes:* Each meeting of the PPMC will approve the Minutes of the meeting, summarizing the main conclusions and outcomes of the meeting, prepared in the English language by the Secretariat, reviewed by PPMC members and signed by the representative of the Ministry of Environment of each State Party and the representative of the European Union, at the end of each meeting. The Secretariat will keep an archive of all signed Minutes and will circulate certified copies of the signed document to the representative of the Ministry of Environment of each State Party and the representative of the European Union. For meetings taking place

virtually, draft Minutes will be elaborated by the Secretariat and circulated to PPMC members for comments no later than 2 weeks after the end of each meeting, following review by the Chair. They will be then officially approved through diplomatic channels.

3. The Committee shall keep, under the responsibility of the Secretariat, a register of the decisions taken, also attached to the Minutes of the related meeting. It is further specified that, as a matter of principle, these Minutes will be available to the public, unless otherwise specified on an *ad hoc* basis.
4. The Committee shall address its recommendations to the Parties.

Article 5

Expenses of the PPMC

1. The implementation of the work plan of the PPMC shall be financed by regular annual predictable contributions of the Parties and from other sources, as provided for in article 15 paragraph 1 of the Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area. It is further specified that the funds of the PPMC will be managed by its Secretariat, according to rules and standards that will be agreed within the PPMC.
2. Each Party shall in principle bear the expenses associated with the participation of its members (i.e. travel and accommodation expenses) in the meetings of the Committee, the Secretariat and working groups, with the exception of Article 14(5) of the Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area.
3. The seat of the Secretariat of the PPMC shall be located in Aghios Germanos, Greece, for a period of 4 years, on rotating basis, or until it is otherwise decided by the Committee. It is further specified that the seat will be located at the headquarters of the Management Unit of the Prespa National Park or of any successor Body of the Hellenic Republic for the first four years of its operation, which will place at the disposal of the Secretariat, through state funding, adequate facilities, will assist in administrative and accounting matters and will provide any other necessary support, thus facilitating the operation of the Secretariat.
4. The Party in whose territory a Committee meeting will be organised shall bear the cost of organizing the meeting.
5. It is further specified that the PPMC, through its Secretariat and under the guidance of its Chair, will approach international donors, including international and national aid agencies and private foundations, with a view to complement the core funding to be provided by regular predictable contributions from the Parties in order to enable implementation of its workplan.