

2nd regular Meeting of the Prespa Park Management Committee (PPMC)

pursuant to art. 10 of the Agreement

31 January 2023, via teleconference

Summary Minutes

At the invitation of the PPMC Chair, Mr. Konstantinos Dimopoulos, on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Energy of Greece, the Prespa Park Management Committee (PPMC) held its second regular meeting, via teleconference, on 31 January 2023. The meeting was technically supported with funding provided by the Green Fund within the programme “Natural environment and innovative activities 2022” and managed by the Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (NECCA) through its Management Unit of Prespes National Park and Protected Areas of Western Macedonia, Greece, (MU-PNPPAWM).

Representatives of: (i) the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, the Regional Administration of the Protected Areas of Korca, the Municipality of Pustec and the NGO PPNEA, from Albania; (ii) the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP), the Municipality of Resen and the NGO MES BirdLife in North Macedonia from North Macedonia; (iii) the Ministry of Environment and Energy (YPEN), the NECCA, the Municipality of Prespes and the NGO SPP from Greece, and (iv) the European Commission (EC), Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of North Macedonia, participated at the meeting. The meeting was also attended by members of the Working Group on Water Management (WGWM) and by several officers and consultants of state services and organizations from the three countries as observers (see Annex I: List of Participants).

Agenda item 1: Opening session

The Chair welcomed the participants to the virtual meeting, introduced all PPMC members attending the meeting, reminded them of key decisions taken during the previous first regular meeting held in person last June in Pyli, Greece, and highlighted the main issues to be discussed at this second meeting, namely implementation of the 2022 workplan of the PPMC, the approval of conclusions of the second WGWM meeting held back-to-back earlier the same day, and the proposed workplan of the PPMC for the first semester of 2023.

The agenda of the meeting was then presented and unanimously approved.

Agenda item 2: Implementation of the 2022 workplan of the PPMC

The Chair, Mr. Konstantinos Dimopoulos, delivered a presentation on the implementation of the jointly agreed workplan for the second semester of 2022. He underlined the fact that according to article 13 of the Prespa Park Agreement and the PPMC ToR, the Committee should adopt annual workplans with a corresponding budget. However, as there are still no commitments by the Parties for annual regular contributions that could be the basis of

a PPMC budget, the PPMC in its 1st regular meeting in June 2022, adopted a modest six-month workplan, which included the regular operation of the PPMC Secretariat as a first activity. The Chair stressed that the Secretariat is not yet fully operational and more attention and resources need to be invested by all Parties to that effect. The second area of work was the organisation of meetings. Besides the 2nd meetings of the PPMC and the WGWM, which were successfully prepared and organised back-to-back on 31 January via teleconference, the workplan also included a first working meeting of the fisheries authorities from the three littoral states, which has not been possible to organise yet. The Chair added, at this point, that in the coming period all Parties will be asked to nominate their representatives in order to hold this meeting as soon as possible. In the field of communication, the joint information letter timely circulated by the Chair was only recently approved by all Parties and should be sent by the PPMC Secretariat to all recipients as soon as possible. The elaboration of the Communication Plan foreseen for 2022 has not been completed, however ToR were successfully drafted for the creation of the “website for the dissemination of the proceedings, actions and initiatives of the Prespa Park Management Committee (PPMC) under article 11 of the 2010 Agreement for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area”.

Mr Dimopoulos asked Mr Kourtzis from the NECCA, to present these draft ToR. Mr. Kourtzis presented in detail various technical aspects of the draft ToR, including target audience, design, functional requirements, usability, accessibility, security and reliability, content entry etc. Ms Kanellopoulou from the EC enquired whether all Parties could share the draft ToR with their respective IT experts before endorsing them and whether it would be technically possible to add on the website an element for sharing environmental data at a later stage. Mr. Kourtzis replied positively to both questions. Ms Gini from YPEN suggested that one year of support after construction needs to be extended to two years. Ms. Hatzilacou, representative of NECCA, clarified that the support phase should last for two years according to the draft ToR. The Chair concluded that there should be a short deadline set for further technical assessment of the ToR, after which the ToR would be deemed endorsed.

The floor then was passed to Ms. Roumeliotou from the PPMC Secretariat to present the last item on the PPMC workplan for the second semester of 2022, namely the preparatory work for the revision of the Strategic Action Plan for the Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park (SAP). She started by highlighting the fact that the Secretariat faced difficulties in the rapid assessment of implementation of the SAP. The main findings of this assessment related to the fact that planned targets and actions were in fact partially achieved, even though for almost 13 years there was no joint body in operation in the Prespa Park to drive implementation. Careful updating of environmental issues, biodiversity status and climate change impacts, as well as socio-economic conditions in local societies, is of course needed. Objectives and policy keystones are largely still valid, but these need to be enriched with new elements and brought in line with the environmental and socio-economic needs of today. Many operational targets related to fundamental management issues are still valid, some need updating and those that have been achieved need to be replaced with more advanced ones serving the objectives, reflecting recent developments and progress at all levels. Policy fields and the related environmental indicators are in need of revision to follow current policy priorities (EU and international) and best methods. The section on

formalization of transboundary cooperation is largely obsolete, since the quadrilateral Prespa Park Agreement should be the bedrock on which the new SAP should be built with a view at having a long-term plan for the implementation of the Agreement's provisions. Lastly, specific actions at transboundary or national level should be redesigned (action plan) to serve the above.

Ms Roumeliotou followed with a set of proposed guidelines that should feed into the updating and revision of the SAP. Main elements of these guidelines include the need to update the information on the environmental and socio-economic conditions in the Prespa Park area with special emphasis on climate change impacts, to focus on the requirements and obligations of transboundary collaboration introduced by the quadrilateral Prespa Park Agreement, to the EU law and policy, as well as other international developments and obligations since 2002, including the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, and to use a participatory methodology, in close consultation with the representatives of the Parties to the Agreement and all stakeholders of the Area. Mr. Petrakos from the Municipality of Prespes, Greece, agreed that information to be collected by the revision consultant should focus on already available data and information to avoid additional unnecessary reporting burden for Parties, however commented that it is not necessary to restrict information to only "open-source data" as some stakeholders might hold useful information that is not open source. Ms. Kanellopoulou from the EC noted that they would need more time to look into the guidelines in order to finalize the ToR for the future consultancy. Ms Roumeliotou clarified that the proposal is for general guidelines to be adopted by the PPMC in order to feed into the ToR that will be developed later by the EC.

The proposed Guidelines for the SAP revision were unanimously endorsed and are attached in Annex II.

Agenda item 3: Conclusions of WGWM meeting

The Chair gave the floor to Mr Spyros Tasoglou, who, on behalf of the Directorate for Protection and Management of Aquatic Environment, Ministry of Environment and Energy of Greece, presented the road map for the implementation of joint priorities for water management in the Prespa Park Area, which was unanimously agreed earlier that day by the advisory Working Group on Water Management (WGWM). The road map includes 2 sets of actions, referred to as Objectives: Objective 1 actions (1st - 8th month starting from the approval of the road map) with a view to exchanging of necessary data and information and Objective 2 actions (summer 2023 – 2025) aiming to the development of a common River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) of the Prespa Lakes River Basin. Mr. Tasoglou also presented the agreed modalities for the implementation of Objective 1 actions of the road map, including the establishment of a Task Group, consisting of experts by the 3 State Parties to the Agreement, which will be initially led by Greece, and other relevant details.

Subsequently, the Chair gave the floor to Ms. Maria Gkini, Chair of the WGWM, who presented the proposed amendments of the ToR of the WGWM, as earlier unanimously agreed by the Working Group. She reminded participants that the ToR for the WGWM approved by the PPMC in Pyli, in June last year, were in line with the provisions of article 15, paragraph 5 of the Agreement, stipulating that "The operational costs of the Working Group on Water Management (participation in and organization of meetings) shall be

covered for a period of four years after the entry into force of this Agreement, by the Hellenic Ministry of Environment”. However, during the discussions in June, the Members of the WGWM proposed and agreed that the meetings of the WGWM should follow the annual rotation of the venue of the PPMC meetings and that the WGWM meetings should be held back-to-back with the PPMC meetings. Taking into account this strong suggestion by the Parties, the proposed amended ToR accordingly introduce changes in Article 4, paragraphs 1 and 3 and Article 5, paragraph 1. With these changes, the Party responsible to chair the PPMC and organize its meetings, will also be responsible to organize and bear associated costs of the WGWM back-to-back meetings. The ToR were also proposed to be amended with a proposed addition of a sentence providing for the drafting of all working documents of the WGWM in English. A consequent related editorial deletion was also introduced to the latter part of paragraph 2 of Article 5 of the PPMC ToR. The Chair underlined in this connection that this amendment of the ToR of the joint bodies should not create a precedent of frequent changes of these ToR and should rather be viewed as an exception.

Ms. Brajanoska from MES-Birdlife in North Macedonia asked for clarifications on the collection of data under Objective 1 of the road map and the need to start relevant work as soon as possible, and these were provided by Ms. Gkini and Mr. Tasoglou. Mr. Petrakos commented on the data and metadata handling by the website in order to ensure its functionality for purposes of data sharing. Ms Hatzilacou made a clarification on the fact that the data to be shared should not be raw data.

After the discussion, the road map for the implementation of joint priorities for water management in the Prespa Park Area (road map for cooperation on water resources management in Prespa Lakes River Basin) was unanimously adopted by the PPMC and is attached in Annex III.

The proposed amendments to the ToR of the WGWM and of the PPMC, were approved by all Parties to the PPMC, and are attached in Annex IV.

Agenda item 4: Workplan of the PPMC for the first semester of 2023

The Chair asked Ms Roumeliotou to present the proposed workplan of the PPMC for the first semester of 2023, as the PPMC is not yet ready to adopt an annual workplan with a corresponding budget. At this point Mr. Dimopoulos proposed that all Parties commit to work internally with their Administrations and communicate in due time their respective commitments for annual regular contributions as stipulated in art.15(1) of the Agreement and art. 5(1) of the PPMC ToR so that an annual workplan with budget can be drafted and proposed in the next PPMC meeting in June 2023.

Ms Roumeliotou presented the proposed workplan, which is also short-term and remains conservative, with the same areas of work as the previous one adopted in June 2022, namely Regular operation of the PPMC Secretariat, Organization of Meetings, Communication and Revision of the Prespa Park Strategic Action Plan. A notable new element for the new semester is the proposal presented by the 3 Municipalities of Prespes (Greece), Pustec (Albania) and Resen (North Macedonia) for the creation of a new advisory Working Group on Sustainable Tourism (WGST), as per the PPMC Road Map, point 19 and

art.10(9) of the Prespa Park Agreement, for the operation of which draft Terms of Reference have been prepared and submitted for the PPMC's consideration.

The Chair asked Mr. Petrakos to present these proposed ToR for the WGST and thanked the local authorities for taking this initiative. He pointed out that the quadrilateral Prespa Park Agreement can only be adequately implemented if stakeholders take relevant initiatives in the fields of their special interest. Mr. Petrakos highlighted the main objective that should be pursued by the operation of this new Working Group, i.e. to facilitate coordination of efforts for development and implementation of a joint strategy for the touristic development of the Prespa Park Area, as foreseen under art.3(2)(e) of the Prespa Park Agreement. The proposed tasks of the WGST include support to the PPMC on sustainable tourism development, issuing of relevant recommendations, engaging relevant stakeholders in dialogue, organizing the exchange of data and best practices, supporting relevant project development and developing ideas on the promotion of Prespa as a sustainable tourism destination. The proposed composition of the new advisory Group includes national tourism experts appointed by state authorities, local municipalities and protected area authorities from the 3 countries, and an EC representative. Its meetings should be held twice a year, in person, by teleconference or in hybrid form, and most of the remaining modalities follow the Terms of Reference of the WGWM.

The PPMC workplan for the first semester of 2023 was unanimously adopted and is contained in Annex V. Upon a question by Mr. Bixio from the EC, it was clarified that the draft ToR for the revision of the SAP to be elaborated by the EC taking into account *inter alia* the guidelines elaborated, agreed upon and provided by the PPMC (see Agenda item 2) will be communicated to the Chair of the PPMC in order to be shared with all Committee members.

The final ToR for the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism were unanimously agreed by all PPMC members and are found in Annex VI.

Agenda item 5: Any other matter and closure of the meeting

The Chair wrapped up the meeting stressing again the main conclusions from the discussions held under each Agenda item, as presented in detail above. He recapped these as follows.

At its second regular meeting, the Prespa Park Management Committee unanimously:

1. Agreed to provide comments on the proposed Terms of Reference for the creation of a web-based tool for storing and sharing transboundary information, the PPMC website, by Friday, 10 February 2023. The updated version of the proposed Terms of Reference will be later circulated to the PPMC members for final approval.
2. Agreed on a set of guidelines for the revision of the 2002 Strategic Action Plan for the Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park to be taken into account by the European Commission in elaborating the actual ToR for this revision.
3. Endorsed the road map for the implementation of joint priorities for water management as recommended by the advisory Working Group on Water Management.

4. Endorsed the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Working Group on Water Management and the consequent editorial change to the Terms of Reference of the Prespa Park Management Committee as recommended by the advisory Working Group on Water Management.
5. Approved the proposed Workplan of the Prespa Park Management Committee for the first semester of 2023.
6. Agreed that the European Commission will send the draft Terms of Reference for the revision of the 2002 Strategic Action Plan for the Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park to the PPMC Chair to further circulate it to PPMC Members.
7. Approved the proposed Terms of Reference of the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism as an advisory body to the PPMC under article 10, paragraph 9 of the Prespa Park Agreement.

The Chair further informed the Committee that, according to the provisions of the PPMC ToR, the Minutes of the 2nd regular meeting will be prepared by the PPMC Secretariat under the guidance of the Chair and will be submitted to the Members, though electronic means, in the next days, for their comments and consequent finalization.

The Chair noted that as agreed during the 1st PPMC meeting, last June in Pyli, the next 3rd regular Meetings of the PPMC and of the WGWM will take place in Resen, North Macedonia, this coming June, organized and hosted by North Macedonia, which will be the Chair holding the next annual rotating Presidency of the PPMC. From the Greek side, he expressed his readiness to continue to steer the process and advance practical work as agreed today for the first semester of 2023, as appropriate, to ensure continuity of joint collaborative efforts. Once the next incoming Presidency signals the start of their practical preparations for the organization of the next Meetings, for example elaboration of the Agendas and sending out invitations, in late spring, the Chair will be handed over, while Mr. Dimopoulos will be remaining at the disposal of the new Chair for any cooperation the next Presidency might need, as appropriate and as deemed necessary. Ms Petkovska from the MoEPP reaffirmed that the next PPMC meeting will take place in the Municipality of Resen, North Macedonia, in June 2023, with the support of Prespa-Ohrid Nature Trust (PONT) and is looking forward to collaboration with Mr. Dimopoulos in this process.

The Chair thanked all PPMC members and invited observers for their contribution and declared the meeting closed.

Annex I

2nd regular Meeting of the Prespa Park Management Committee (PPMC)

31 January 2023, via teleconference

List of participants

PPMC Members

1. Daniel Pirushi, Director-General of the National Agency of Protected Areas (NAPA), Albania (daniel.pirushi@turizmi.gov.al)
2. Pali Kolefski, Mayor of Pustec Municipality, Albania (bashkia.pustec@gmail.com)
3. Aleksander Trajce, Director of Association for the Preservation and Protection of the Natural Environment (PPNEA), Albania (a.trajce@ppnea.org)
4. Edvis Koki, Regional Director, Regional Administration of the Protected Areas of Korca Region, Albania (kokiadzmkorce@gmail.com)
5. Jasmina Petkovska, Head of Department for International Cooperation, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, North Macedonia (jasminapett@gmail.com)
6. Vlatko Trpeski, Head of Nature Department, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, North Macedonia (trpeski@yahoo.com)
7. Jovan Tozievski, Mayor of the Municipality of Resen, North Macedonia (kabinet.gradonacalnik@resen.gov.mk)
8. Ajman Al Mala, Municipality of Resen, North Macedonia (ajman.almalla@resen.gov.mk)
9. Robertina Brajanoska, Executive Director MES BirdLife in North Macedonia, North Macedonia (brajanoska@mes.org.mk)
10. Konstantinos Dimopoulos, Chair of the PPMC, Director General of Environmental Policy, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece (dimopoulosmail@yahoo.gr)
11. Michalis Petrakos, Secretary General of the Municipality of Prespes, Greece (prespensis@gmail.com)
12. Myrsini Malakou, Managing Director, Society for the Protection of Prespa, Greece (m.malakou@spp.gr)
13. Dionysia Hatzilacou, Head, Directorate for Protected Areas Management, Sector A, Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (NECCA), Greece (d.hatzilacou@necca.gov.gr)
14. Lito Papadopoulou, Head of Management Unit of Prespa National Park and Protected Areas of Western Macedonia, Greece/NECCA, Greece (l.papadopoulou@necca.gov.gr)
15. Maria Kanellopoulou, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of North Macedonia, European Union (marie-madeleine.kanellopoulou@eeas.europa.eu)

PPMC permanent observers

1. Ylber Mirta, Department for Water, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, North Macedonia (ymirta@gmail.com)
2. Klodiana Marika, Director of Environmental Development Programs (MTM), Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Albania (klodiana.marika@turizmi.gov.al)

Observers (in alphabetical order)

1. Paschalis Anastasiou, Greek Embassy at Tirana, Greece
2. Stella Banou, Technical Consultant of 3rd RBMP Environmental Engineer, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece
3. Liza Bensasson, Consultant for the 2nd revision of the RBMP, Water Directorate of West Macedonia, Greece
4. Davide Bixio, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of North Macedonia, North Macedonia
5. Konstantia Dimitrakoudi, Project Manager, Department of Co-funded Programs and Regional Development, Ministry of Interior (Sector Macedonia and Thrace), Greece
6. Ioulia Drouga, Architect/Urbanist, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece
7. Karl Giacinti, member of the PPMC Secretariat, Programme Manager, European Delegation to North Macedonia, North Macedonia
8. Maria Gkini, Directorate for Protection and Management of Aquatic Environment, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece
9. Julia Henderson, Strategic Partnership Co-ordinator, Society for the Protection of Prespa, Greece
10. Henning Jensen, GFA Consulting Group, Albania
11. Michail Kagkas, Economist - Administrative staff, NECCA, Greece
12. Alexandra Karpodini, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece
13. Klaudja Koci, Project manager, Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania, Albania
14. Mirjam de Koning, Executive Director, Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust, Albania
15. Maja Kotevska, member of the PPMC Secretariat, Municipality of Resen, North Macedonia
16. Kourtzis, IT consultant, NECCA, Greece
17. Irene Koutseri, Society for the Protection of Prespa, Greece
18. Spyridoula Liakou, Head of Directorate for the Protection and Management of Aquatic Environment, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece
19. Vasil Male, member of the PPMC Secretariat, Regional Administration of the Protected Areas of Korca Region, Albania
20. Nikolaos Mavrakis. Dpt of European and International Environmental Issues, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece
21. Theodora Notidou, Head of Environment, Culture and Sports, Ministry of the Interior (Sector of Macedonia and Thrace), Greece

22. Aspasia Papadopoulou, B4 Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece
23. Dimitrios Papageorgiou, Communications Coordinator, Society for the Protection of Prespa, Greece
24. Maria Papaioannou National Expert EU and International Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece
25. Panagiotis Paraschou, forester, former chair of the Prespa National Park Management Body, Greece
26. Marina Petrou, Director General, Ministry of Rural Development & Food, Greece
27. Dimitris Psiachas, Secretary of Embassy of Greece in Skopje, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece
28. Ioannis Rigas, Expert Counsellor on Environmental Issues, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece
29. Vivi Roumeliotou, member of the PPMC Secretariat, Society for the Protection of Prespa, Greece
30. Orfeas Roussos, ARSINOE External Contractor, Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency, Greece
31. Spase Shumka, PPNEA, Albania
32. Julia Selmani, Head of Projects Unit, National Agency of Protected Areas, Albania
33. Spyros Tasoglou, Directorate for Protection and Management of Aquatic Environment, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece
34. Ioanna Tsalakanidou, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece
35. Vasiliki Tsiaoussi, Head of Department "Biodiversity and Protected Areas", Greek Biotope/Wetland Centre, Greece
36. Alexandros Vidouris, Consul General, General Consulate of Greece in Bitola, Greece
37. Anna Voziou, First Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece
38. Nikola Zdraveski, Project Manager, UNDP, North Macedonia
39. Maja B. Zendelska, alternate member of the PPMC Secretariat, Programme Manager, European Delegation to North Macedonia, North Macedonia

Annex II

Guidelines of the PPMC

for the
**Updating and revision of the Strategic Action Plan for the Sustainable Development
of the Prespa Park Area (Albania, Greece, North Macedonia)**

1. The **overarching objective** of the updating and revision of the 2004 Strategic Action Plan for the Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area should be to **identify, quantify, and set priorities for environmental problems and opportunities that are transboundary in nature and thus inform the action of the Parties of the Prespa Park Agreement**, which provides that its Parties are under an obligation to “design and implement integrated management plans and programmes for the protection and sustainable development of the Area, in accordance with the Strategic Action Plan for the Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park” (art.3(2)(a) of the Prespa Park Agreement). The updated SAP is, in this context, meant to serve as the central strategic document for transboundary interstate collaboration in the Prespa Park Area in the years to come.
2. The experts in charge of the relevant study should be expected to **gather, compile and assess existing information on the environment, biodiversity, social and economic conditions in all three littoral countries of the Prespa Park Area from already available open sources and should not be expected to undertake primary research**. In the two decades that ensued after the study team put together the existing SAP, a great deal of research and monitoring activities on environmental and biodiversity aspects of the Prespa basin have been carried out by protected area authorities, NGOs and independent scientists that should be taken into account in order to establish the current state-of-the-art knowledge base for the area.
3. The consultants should then **analyse and assess the current main problems facing the Prespa Park ecosystems, prioritize the transboundary problems, and briefly lay down their impacts and causes, present the main environmental and cultural values and assets of the Prespa Park Area and analyse the steps needed to conserve and promote these at the transboundary level**. Special attention should be given to **climate change impacts** already felt in the Prespa Park Area, especially on water ecosystems and their interaction with protected biodiversity.
4. The consultants should also proceed with an **assessment of what has been achieved in the field, good practices and lessons learned through previous and existing activities and transboundary collaboration in the Prespa Park Area and should draw a plan to capitalise on these achievements**.
5. They should continue with **identifying, quantifying, and setting objectives and priorities for transboundary action and action to be taken at national level to achieve the transboundary objectives**. Special attention is to be given to the requirements and obligations of transboundary collaboration introduced by the quadrilateral Prespa Park Agreement, which was not adopted at the time of writing of the 2004 Strategic Action Plan, to the European Union law and policy as it currently stands, as well as other international developments and obligations that have been undertaken by the Parties in the years since.

6. The consultancy should be carried out **using a participatory methodology, in close consultation with the representatives of the Parties to the Prespa Park Agreement and all stakeholders of the Prespa Park Area.** The consultant should contact appropriate stakeholders to collect the necessary information and should organize consultative meetings and workshops at national and transboundary level, without creating additional unnecessary administrative burden to the Parties, as appropriate for the discussion of all findings, as well as of the operative proposals before these are finalized and submitted as part of the updated Strategic Action Plan, with a view at securing full ownership and maximum consensus of all concerned to the updated version of the Strategic Action Plan. For that purpose, **a team of experts that should include national experts from the three littoral countries,** able to communicate well with national stakeholders and knowledgeable of the specific environmental, socio-economic, institutional and political circumstances in the three different sides of the basin, is expected to be engaged.

Annex III

ROAD MAP FOR COOPERATION ON WATER REOURCES MANAGEMENT IN PRESPA LAKES RIVER BASIN

(in accordance to the summary minutes of the 1st meeting of the Working Group on Water Management)

| Objective 1: Exchange of data collected and information | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| Action | Description of action | Timeframe (months – after the approval of the road map) | Responsible actors | Method of implementation | Estimated cost (in €) / Possible source of funding | Connection to WGWM list of priorities (No)* |
| 1.1 | List and contact details of competent authorities within each country, in relation or relevant to any aspect of water resources management, including: the core responsibilities of each competent authority and the legislation establishing the competent authority and laying down its duties. Register of all relevant legislation within each country concerning all aspects of water resources management. | 1 & 2 | National authorities from each country | Task group comprised of experts by each country | No extra cost foreseen | 1 |
| 1.2 | Exchange of information on existing operational or surveillance monitoring programmes: number of monitoring stations, co-ordinates, quality elements/parameters monitored, monitoring type and frequency. | 1 & 2 | National authorities from each country | Task group comprised of experts by each country | No extra cost foreseen | 1 |
| 1.3 | Exchange of surface and ground waters monitoring results: biological, hydromorphological, physico-chemical, chemical, quantitative data. | 1 - 6 | National authorities from each country | Task group comprised of experts by each country | No extra cost foreseen | 1 |
| 1.4 | Exchange of data and information concerning the identified pressures and their impacts in Prespa River Basin, including: point sources (UWWT plants, industrial plants, waste disposal sites, other relevant point sources), diffuse sources (agricultural activities, fertilizer and pesticide use, live stock, effluent in areas without sewerage networks, urban land use, other diffuse sources), water abstraction (for irrigation, for public water supply, abstractions by industry, other major abstractions), water flow regulations and morphological alterations of | 1 - 6 | National authorities from each country | Task group comprised of experts by each country | No extra cost foreseen | 1, 4, 6 |

Objective 1: Exchange of data collected and information

| Action | Description of action | Timeframe (months – after the approval of the road map) | Responsible actors | Method of implementation | Estimated cost (in €) / Possible source of funding | Connection to WGWM list of priorities (No)* |
|--------|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| | surface water (water supply reservoirs, flood defense dams, dykes and channels, etc.), river management (physical alterations, engineering activities, agricultural enhancement, land infrastructure e.g. road/bridge construction, etc.), other morphological alterations including barriers, flood plains, artificial recharge of groundwater, or any other pressures not covered above. | | | | | |
| 1.5 | Exchange of economic data and information: list of water services in the international River Basin, volumes abstracted/discharged per water service, costs of water services (in €), level of cost recovery in % per water service, water prices per water service in € per m ³ . List of uncertainties and data gaps. | 1 - 6 | National authorities from each country | Task group comprised of experts by each country | No extra cost foreseen | 1 |
| 1.6 | Inventory of measures that are planned or in implementation in the River Basin for the protection and restoration of the surface and ground waters status and their association with identified pressures, and evaluation of their effectiveness. | 1 - 4 | National authorities from each country | Task group comprised of experts by each country | No extra cost foreseen | 1, 8 |
| 1.7 | Inventory of gaps identified concerning the availability of necessary data and proposals for future actions. | 7 & 8 | Working Group on Water Management (WGWM) | Evaluation of identified gaps and proposals for further actions | No extra cost foreseen | 1 |
| 1.8 | Creation of a platform for exchange of information in the PPMC website. | See PPMC work plan | | | | 2 |

| Objective 2: Cooperation among the three countries for achieving at least a coordinated management plan or ultimately a common management plan for water resources | | | | | | |
|---|---|------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Action | Description of action | Timeframe | Responsible actors | Method of implementation | Estimated cost (in €) / Possible source of funding | Connection to WGWM list of priorities (No)* |
| 2.1 | Consultation of the 3 rd River Basin Management Plan of Western Macedonia RBD (EL09), as regards the Prespa Lakes River Basin, with the involved authorities and interested parties of North Macedonia and Albania. | Summer 2023 | General Directorate of Water of the Hellenic Ministry of Environment & Energy and Water Directorate of Western Macedonia (EL09) | Consultation meetings and electronic mail with timeframe for feedbacks | No extra cost | 7 |
| 2.2 | Delineation of transboundary River Basin of Prespa Lakes and assignment of surface and groundwater bodies to the River Basin. Coordination of typology of surface water bodies. | June 2023 | National authorities from each country | Task group comprised of experts by each country | No extra cost foreseen | 7 |
| 2.3 | Characterization of groundwater bodies: geological and hydrogeological characteristics, character of the overlying strata, associated surface systems, etc. | October 2023 | National authorities from each country | Task group comprised of experts by each country | Depending on the availability of relevant information and background work in each country | 7 |
| 2.4 | Register of the water-related protected areas lying within the international River Basin: areas designated for the abstraction of water intended for human consumption, areas designated for the protection of economically significant aquatic species, water bodies designated as recreational waters, including areas designated as bathing waters, nutrient-sensitive areas, areas designated for the protection of habitats or species where the maintenance or improvement of the status of water is an important factor in their protection, including | June 2023 | National authorities from each country | Task group comprised of experts by each country | No extra cost foreseen | 7 |

| Objective 2: Cooperation among the three countries for achieving at least a coordinated management plan or ultimately a common management plan for water resources | | | | | | |
|---|--|------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Action | Description of action | Timeframe | Responsible actors | Method of implementation | Estimated cost (in €) / Possible source of funding | Connection to WGWM list of priorities (No)* |
| | relevant Natura 2000 sites, and any other protected areas defined under national legislation | | | | | |
| 2.5 | Designation of Heavily Modified (HMWB) and Artificial (AWB) water bodies. | October 2023 | National authorities from each country | Task group comprised of experts by each country | No extra cost foreseen, depending on the relevant background work in each country | 7 |
| 2.6 | Analysis of anthropogenic pressures, including point sources, diffuse sources, water abstraction, water flow regulations, morphological alterations of surface water, river management, or any other pressures. Assessment of their impacts in a harmonized way. | End of 2023 | National authorities from each country | Study | Depending on the availability of relevant information and data in each country | 4,7 |
| 2.7 | Preparation of a Water Balance Study for Prespa Lakes. | Spring 2024 | National authorities from each country | Study | To be determined | 7, 10 |
| 2.8 | Investigation of ecological consequences of water level drop of Great Prespa. | Spring 2024 | National authorities from each country | Study | To be determined | 4, 5, 7 |
| 2.9 | Economic analysis of water use (disaggregated into at least industry, households and agriculture), taking into account the principle of recovery of the costs of water services, including environmental and resource costs, as well as long term forecasts of supply and demand for water in the international River Basin. | Spring 2024 | National authorities from each country | Possibility of study | Depending on the availability of relevant information and data in each country | 7 |
| 2.10 | Coordination of existing operational and surveillance monitoring programmes of surface and ground water bodies and proposals for | Summer 2024 | National authorities | Joint project by the involved | Cost of the joint project estimated at | 3, 7 |

| Objective 2: Cooperation among the three countries for achieving at least a coordinated management plan or ultimately a common management plan for water resources | | | | | | |
|---|---|------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Action | Description of action | Timeframe | Responsible actors | Method of implementation | Estimated cost (in €) / Possible source of funding | Connection to WGWM list of priorities (No)* |
| | enhancement of the network in order to establish a coherent and comprehensive overview of water status within the River Basin. | | from each country | Institutions from each country | 450.000 € for 3 years | |
| 2.11 | Harmonization of classification systems (reference conditions, class boundaries) for the assessment of the ecological status of surface water bodies, in order the ecological (biological, physico-chemical, hydromorphological) monitoring results (EQR values) to be comparable. | Summer 2024 | National authorities from each country | Task group comprised of experts by each country. Classification system to be approved by EC | To be determined on the basis of the availability of relevant information | 3, 7 |
| 2.12 | Harmonization of the environmental quality standards (EQS) for priority substances and certain other pollutants in surface waters and for specific pollutants in ground waters, in accordance with the relative EU Directives, for the assessment of the chemical status. | October 2023 | National authorities from each country | Task group comprised of experts by each country | No extra cost | 3, 7 |
| 2.13 | Setting of management objectives for the surface and ground water bodies of the River Basin, including the exemptions of the environmental objectives, e.g. less stringent objectives. | Autumn 2024 | Working Group on Water Management (WGWM) | Discussion within WGWM on the basis of the results of the previous actions | No extra cost foreseen | 7 |
| 2.14 | Development of a coordinated programme of basic and supplementary cost-effective measures in order to achieve the environmental objectives, e.g. measures to promote an efficient and sustainable water use, measures to prevent or control the input of pollutants, measures for the recovery of cost of water services, measures for the protection of water abstracted for drinking water, legislative and administrative instruments, economic instruments, emission controls, abstraction controls, demand management measures, efficiency and reuse measures, construction projects, rehabilitation projects, educational and research projects, etc. | Autumn 2024 | National authorities from each country | Study | To be determined on the basis of the results of the previous actions and the availability of relevant information | 7, 8 |
| 2.15 | Public participation activities to encourage the active participation of the interested parties in the international River Basin and consultation of the public in the development of the shared River Basin Management Plan (RBMP), including information on how the | End of 2024 | National authorities from each country | Activities to be organized and coordinated by PPMC Secretariat | To be determined at a later stage | 7 |

| Objective 2: Cooperation among the three countries for achieving at least a coordinated management plan or ultimately a common management plan for water resources | | | | | | |
|---|--|------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Action | Description of action | Timeframe | Responsible actors | Method of implementation | Estimated cost (in €) / Possible source of funding | Connection to WGWM list of priorities (No)* |
| | consultation on the shared RBMP is managed (including response periods), the arrangements in place to allow members of the public access to the background documents and an overview of the significant water management issues identified in the international River Basin. | | | | | |
| 2.16 | Development of a common River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) of the Prespa Lakes River Basin based on all the above actions. | 2025 | National authorities from each country | Collection and elaboration of the results of all previous actions | To be determined at a later stage | 7 |

*** List of priorities in water cooperation for Prespa for 2022, in accordance to the summary minutes of the 1st meeting of the Working Group on Water Management:**

1. Exchange of data collected and information;
2. Creation of a platform for exchange of information (or build upon the same as the PPMC);
3. Monitoring systems and status assessment with harmonized methodology;
4. Inventory of identified pressures;
5. Investigation of ecological consequences of water level drop of Great Prespa;
6. Information exchange on public utilities and decentralized treatment;
7. Cooperation among the three countries for achieving at least a coordinated management plan or ultimately a common management plan for water resources;
8. Inventory of measures that are planned or in implementation for achieving good water quality status
9. Creation of a road map for the above priorities by the next meeting;
10. Preparation of a Water Balance Study for Prespa Lakes.

Annex IV

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

Working Group on Water Management (WGWM) of the Prespa Park Management Committee

Rules of Organization and Procedure – Terms of Reference (ToR), as amended by the PPMC on 31.01.2023

Article 1

Functions of the WGWM

1. The WGWM is a standing expert group of the PPMC and operates under the auspices of the latter. More specifically, the WGWM will assist the PPMC in identifying and obtaining the water management information required for policy-making purposes and will provide expert technical support to the PPMC, primarily by ensuring that all available water management information is presented to the PPMC in an agreed and accessible manner.
2. The overall objective of the WGWM is to facilitate coordination of efforts for development and implementation of an integrated transboundary Prespa River Basin Management Plan as envisaged by the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). This objective will be pursued by providing technical expert support to the PPMC and by issuing recommendations based on the principles of integrated river basin management. In this context, the WGWM will facilitate cooperation and exchange of water-related information and will pursue the harmonization of the water management plans among the three countries based on the principles of integrated river basin management and the relevant EU and international legislation.

Article 2

Tasks of the WGWM

1. Pursuant to article 14(4) and taking into account article 5 of the Prespa Park Agreement, the specific tasks and mandate of the WGWM are defined as follows. The WGWM will:
 - (i) Support the work of the PPMC in the preparation of discussion / decision papers on issues related to water protection and management.
 - (ii) Prepare a four-year workplan for the prioritization of the tasks and activities to be pursued, in accordance to the PPMC requests.
 - (iii) Facilitate the establishment of data-sharing mechanisms and agreements for the regular and ongoing exchange and assessment of available water management information, including: a) data on monitoring of water quality and quantity of water resources; b) data on current water uses and water abstractions of surface waters and their impacts on water quality and quantity; and c) data on surface water status (ecological and chemical) and on groundwater status (chemical and quantitative) as specified in the EU Water Framework Directive.
 - (iv) Facilitate the development of a transboundary water monitoring scheme with the collaboration of all national institutes responsible for the national water monitoring programmes applicable in the basin.
 - (v) Exchange information on existing or planned water uses that could affect the ecological character of the Prespa Lakes Basin and discuss possible remedial actions and alternative solutions.
 - (vi) Provide information concerning the development of any technical works in any part of the water basin which might cause impacts in the Prespa Lakes basin and update this information; evaluate relevant environmental impact assessments, in accordance with appropriate international standards.

(vii) Facilitate the coordination of activities in order to ensure consistency and harmonization of the water management plans in the Prespa Lakes Basin based on the principles of integrated river basin management and the relevant EU and international legislation. In specific, facilitate the coordination of activities towards the following objectives:

- a. Set environmental targets and adapt to these the water uses in the river basin
- b. Development of consistent reference conditions and water quality elements for the surface and groundwater resources
- c. Adoption of appropriate joint emission limits for wastewater and threshold values for groundwater according to EU legislation
- d. Identification of Significant Water Management Issues which can directly or indirectly affect the quality of the surface and groundwater resources
- e. Elaboration of an inventory of Protected Areas according to the EU Water Framework Directive requirements
- f. Coordination of programmes of measures among the three countries

(viii) Recommend to the Prespa Park Management Committee the establishment of mechanisms and procedures to facilitate transboundary cooperation and exchange knowledge among the water management authorities and interested stakeholders at the river basin level.

(ix) Recommend to the Prespa Park Management Committee the establishment of mechanisms to facilitate cooperation in scientific research programmes.

(x) Facilitate the coordination of activities and make related recommendations towards the establishment of early warning systems and procedures and facilitate related preparatory work towards the development of risk management and contingency plans for extreme events of floods and droughts.

(xi) Facilitate better understanding of the law and policy context for water management activities, including analysis and exchange of information on relevant EU legislation, national law, international law and standards on transboundary waters and protected areas.

(xii) Liaise in respect of technical matters with the Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee.

Article 3

Composition of the WGWM

The WGWM will consist of a total of 7 members, including:

- a. one representative of the national water services (or equivalent administrative entity) of each of the three State Parties who may be assisted by national experts,
- b. one representative of the regional water services (or equivalent administrative entity) of each of the three State Parties,
- c. one representative from the European Commission, DG ENV, Water Unit (or relevant regional Commission official)

The members of the WGWM 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 may have an alternate, appointed and replaced as above mentioned, and fully authorized to replace her/him in case of inability to attend meetings or follow related WGWM work.

Article 4

Organization of work of the WGWM

1. *Meetings*: The WGWM will convene twice a year, in the same country. The venue of the WGWM meetings will rotate among the three State Parties. ~~It is specified that during the first four years of operation, the WGWM meetings will be convened in Greece since according to article 14 (5) of the Agreement for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area, the operational costs of the WGWM shall be covered for the first four years of its operation by the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy.~~ Their dates will be agreed at the end of the previous meeting. Extraordinary meetings may also be held upon request of the PPMC and whenever deemed necessary by any of the three State Parties or the European Commission. It is further provided that one of the two annual meetings of the WGWM under the same chair might be organized via teleconference following the relevant decision of the PPMC.

2. *Decisions and recommendations*: The Working Group on Water Management will propose recommendations based on the principles of integrated river basin management, as reflected in the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), for the adoption by the PPMC.

Recommendations of the WGWM to the Prespa Park Management Committee will be based on consensus and shall be included in the Minutes of the WGWM.

3. *Chair*: The WGWM will be chaired on a rotational basis for a period of one year by each of the national water authority representative. The annual rotation of the Chair of the WGWM follows the rotating Chair of the PPMC ~~even if the WGWM meetings convene in Greece during the first four years of the WGWM operation.~~ It is further specified that the chair continues to serve as the chair of the WGWM for the duration of the year i.e. not only during meetings but also in between and until the next country takes over. In case of absence of the state representative, the meeting will be chaired by his alternate. The powers and duties of the Chair shall be to: a. Convene the regular meetings of the WGWM.

b. Prepare the draft agenda for the meeting in consultation with the members. Any member may propose agenda items.

c. Preside over each meeting of the WGWM.

d. Review the Minutes summarizing the main conclusions and outcomes of the meeting, prepared in the English language by the PPMC Secretariat; ensure their review by all members of the WGWM at the end of the meeting; incorporate feedback; ensure signing of the final Minutes by all representatives of the national water services / Ministries of Environment of the three State Parties and the European Commission; ensure that Minutes are sent to the PPMC through the Secretariat; and that copies of the signed Minutes are circulated to representatives of the national water services of the three State Parties and the European Commission.

e. Ensure the observance of the present Terms of Reference.

The PPMC Secretariat will assist the chair in performing the above duties.

4. *Working language*: The working language of the WGWM is English ~~and the working documents of the WGWM are also to be drafted in English.~~

5. *Communication*: Internal communication among members of the WGWM between meetings will be conducted through electronic means (preferably e-mail, web meetings etc.)

6. *Technical expertise*: In the event that the WGWM lacks sufficient technical expertise on a relevant issue or specific thematic area on an agenda item: ~~af.~~ Relevant expert(s) (from the Parties or international experts) may be invited to participate in the meeting(s) on an ad hoc basis ; and/or

~~gb.~~ Ad hoc Task Groups may be established to contribute to the work of the WGWM, upon guidance by the latter.

7. *Attendance of meetings*: The WGWM meetings will be open to the PPMC and Secretariat members. Interested parties and stakeholders may be invited to participate in the meetings on an ad hoc basis upon mutual prior consent by all the WGWM members.

Article 5 Expenses of the WGWM

~~1. The operational costs of the WGWM (i.e. accommodation expenses and meals of all WGWM members during meetings taking place in Greece and organisation of meetings thereof) shall be covered for the first four years of its operation through funding provided by the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy.~~

~~2. After the end of this period, t~~The PPMC will cover the costs of operation of the WGWM by its core budget, the Party in whose territory a WGWM meeting will be organized shall bear the cost of organizing the meeting, and each Party shall in principle bear the expenses associated with the participation of its members (i.e. travel and accommodation expenses) in the WGWM meetings.

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

Prespa Park Management Committee (PPMC)

Rules of Organization and Procedure – Terms of Reference (ToR), article 5, as amended by the PPMC on 31.01.2023

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 organized 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.

Annex V

Prespa Park Management Committee (PPMC) – Workplan of first semester 2023

According to art.13(4)(a) of the quadrilateral Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area and art.3(8) of the PPMC Terms of Reference (ToR), the PPMC has to 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. The proposals for annual workplans, as well as any specific, issue-related work plans, are to be prepared by the PPMC Secretariat in consultation with the chair of the PPMC.

In the first year of its operation, starting at the second half of 2022, the PPMC has had no regular budget composed by dedicated annual, regular contributions by the Parties, according to art.15(1) of the Agreement and art. 5(1) of the PPMC ToR, nor a fully operational Secretariat. As a result, the PPMC in its first regular meeting in June 2022 adopted a relatively slim workplan, implementation of which started slowly and is not fully completed yet.

It is proposed that the set of tasks and activities to be included in the PPMC workplan for the first semester of 2023 is equally conservative. A main task to be undertaken by all Parties should be to identify and secure regular annual contributions to form a PPMC regular budget during this period. If this is done by the middle of 2023, then it is expected that the first regular contributions could be made available by the end of the year and this would allow at the second PPMC meeting of 2023 to put together the first annual workplan for 2024.

In the meantime, it is proposed to focus the work of the PPMC and its Secretariat on the following main axes for the first six months of 2023: *Regular operation of the PPMC Secretariat, Organization of transboundary meetings and working groups, Communication and Revision of the Prespa Park Strategic Action Plan.*

Regular Operation of the PPMC Secretariat

The PPMC Secretariat has to hold meetings in person and via teleconference in order to organize its work and discuss the best ways to implement its ToR, as well as carry out the tasks assigned to it by the PPMC. For the first four years of the PPMC Secretariat's operation, Greece is hosting the seat of the PPMC Secretariat (art.13(5)) at the Agios Germanos office of the Management Unit of the Prespa National Park and Protected Areas of Western Macedonia (MU-PNPPWM) of the Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (NECCA). During the second half of 2022, this has worked slowly and much more effort is needed for the Secretariat to become fully operational. This is a key element that needs to be in place, so that PPMC workplans can be effectively implemented.

Organization of Meetings

1. Organization of the 2nd High-level segment (art.9) meeting in June 2023 in the Municipality of Resen
2. Organization of the 3rd regular PPMC meeting back-to-back with the 3rd WGWM meeting, close to the date of the 2nd High-level segment meeting. It is proposed that during the 3rd regular PPMC meeting the Parties to the Prespa Park Agreement will provide information on their respective regular annual contributions to the PPMC budget.
3. Organization of the first meeting of the fisheries authorities of the three littoral states by teleconference in spring 2023, as per Road Map, point 18. Activity included in the workplan for the second semester of 2022 but delayed.

4. Organization of the first meeting of the PPMC Working Group on Sustainable Tourism, as per Road Map, point 19. The draft ToR for this working group will be presented to the PPMC for approval during the January 2023 meeting by the Municipality of Prespes, Greece.

According to the Road Map for the implementation of the Prespa Park Agreement, point 17, priority should be given during the current semester to the “Development of joint contingency plans and early warning system – preparatory stage”. However, it is proposed that this work is postponed until the institutional scheme of the Prespa Park is more mature, since it is quite a demanding task.

Communication

As already agreed in June 2022, a major first challenge for the PPMC and its Secretariat is to organize their “clearing house” function, i.e. collection and dissemination of information on activities of any kind that may have a direct or indirect effect on the natural or socio-economic status of the Prespa Park area (as required by arts.11 and 13 of the Agreement and the respective ToR). To this effect, the PPMC Secretariat has to:

1. Complete dispatch of the information letter to all local, regional, national, and international authorities and organizations concerned with Prespa of the establishment of the PPMC and ask for their collaboration. The task was included in the 2022 workplan but has not been fully completed yet.
2. At least 2 meetings to be held with main partner organizations and donors of the Prespa Park Area, as per point 22 of the Road Map, after dispatch of the information letter is complete. Specific details of this activity will be decided by the PPMC Secretariat under the guidance of the chair of the Committee.
3. To the extent the ToR presented to the PPMC by NECCA in its January 2023 meeting are approved, technical assistance for the creation of the Prespa Park website, as per Road Map point 21, should be pursued during this semester. The website can be developed with funding by the NECCA (funds to be provided by the Green Fund).
4. The draft Communication Plan, included in the 2022 workplan, has not been prepared yet and it is proposed to be included in the new workplan too. The plan will be prepared by a consultant of the Ministry of Environment and Energy of Greece (funds to be provided by the Green Fund).

Revision of the Prespa Park Strategic Action Plan (SAP)

Full Terms of Reference for the revision of the Prespa Park SAP to be developed during this semester under the responsibility of the European Commission, taking into account the PPMC guidelines endorsed at its 2nd regular meeting.

Incremental costs for the implementation of the PPMC workplan for the first semester of 2023

- Hosting of the PPMC Secretariat in Agios Germanos, Greece 2.000 euro/ Green Fund, Greece
- 3rd regular meeting of the PPMC and WGWM in Resen / funds are to be provided by PONT; cost to be determined
- IT consultancy for the construction of the Prespa Park website/ 12.000 euro/ Green Fund, Greece
- Consultancy for the preparation of a draft Communication Plan for the PPMC/ 30.000 euro/ Green Fund, Greece

Annex VI

Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area Working Group on Sustainable Tourism (WGST) of the Prespa Park Management Committee

Rules of Organization and Procedure – Terms of Reference (ToR), as approved by the PPMC on 31 January 2023

Article 1

Purpose and Functions of the WGST

1. The WGST is a standing expert group of the PPMC and operates under the auspices of the latter. More specifically, the WGST will assist the PPMC and the Parties in formulating and implementing a common tourism strategy as stipulated in the Prespa Park Agreement (arts. 3(1)(e) and (2)(e)).
2. The overall objective of the WGST is to facilitate coordination of efforts for development and implementation of a joint strategy for the touristic development of the Prespa area. This objective will be pursued by providing support to the PPMC and by issuing recommendations based on the principles of sustainable tourism, by organizing consultations with local, regional and national stakeholders and exchanges of best practices. In this context, the WGST will also facilitate cooperation, support project development and collaborate in developing ideas to promote Prespa as a sustainable tourism destination.

Article 2

Tasks of the WGST

Pursuant to article 3 and taking into account article 10(9) of the Prespa Park Agreement, the specific tasks and mandate of the WGST are defined as follows. The WGST will:

- i. Support the work of the PPMC in the preparation of discussion / decision papers on issues related to tourism, including providing inputs when requested;
- ii. Facilitate a regular transboundary discussion on sustainable tourism development, the coordination of tourist development plans based on the principles of Sustainable Tourism on United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), with the aim at developing and subsequently implementing a common tourism strategy;
- iii. Share relevant information, knowledge and experience in relation to sustainable tourism, while enhancing transnational and cross-border cooperation on sustainable tourism in the region;
- iv. Facilitate the establishment of data collection/data-sharing mechanisms for the regular and ongoing exchange and assessment of available tourism data, including: data on tourist flows, nights spend, added value, social impact etc.;
- v. Support identification and involvement of key actors (including national, regional and local stakeholders) for exchange and collaboration regarding sustainable tourism development in the Prespa Park Area;
- vi. Support project development and cooperate on resource mobilization with relevant stakeholders and donors;
- vii. Share best practice and expertise supporting activities on sustainable tourism development in the Prespa Park Area and beyond for exchange of knowledge with other regions with similar characteristics,
- viii. Contribute to ideas and actions to raise the attention to Prespa as a sustainable tourism destination.

Article 3

Composition of the WGST

The State Parties, after consultation, shall nominate representatives from competent organizations for sustainable tourism as members of this Working Group and inform on such nomination the chairperson of the Prespa Park Management Committee.

The WGST will consist of a total of 10 members, including:

- a. Three representatives from the national tourism organizations or other national experts of each of the three State Parties.
- b. Three representatives from local government, one from each of the three State Parties,
- c. Three representatives of Protected Area Authorities competent on tourism, one from each of the three State Parties
- d. One representative from the European Commission.

The members of the WGST 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 may have an alternate, appointed and replaced as above mentioned, and fully authorized to replace her/him in case of inability to attend meetings or follow related WGST work.

Article 4

Organization of work of the WGST

1. *Meetings:* The WGST will convene twice a year, in the same country. The venue of the WGST meetings will rotate among the three State Parties. Meeting dates will be agreed at the end of the previous meeting. Extraordinary meetings may also be held upon request by the PPMC and whenever deemed necessary by any of the three State Parties or the European Commission. It is further provided that one of the two meetings of the WGST each year under the same chair might be organized via teleconference, following a relevant decision of the PPMC. Both in person meetings and teleconference ones might follow a hybrid format that would enable all members to attend.

2. *Decisions and recommendations:* Recommendations of the WGST to the Prespa Park Management Committee will be based on consensus and shall be included in the Minutes of the WGST.

3. *Chair:* The WGST will be chaired on a rotational basis for a period of one year by each of the Municipalities' representative. It is further specified that the chair continues to serve as the chair of the WGST for the duration of the year i.e. not only during meetings but also in between and until the next country takes over. In case of absence of the state representative, the meeting will be chaired by his alternate. The powers and duties of the Chair shall be to:

- a. Convene the regular meetings of the WGST.
- b. Prepare the draft agenda for the meeting in consultation with the members. Any member may propose agenda items.
- c. Preside over each meeting of the WGST.
- d. Review the Minutes summarizing the main conclusions and outcomes of the meeting, prepared in the English language by the PPMC Secretariat; ensure their review by all members of the WGST at the end of the meeting; incorporate feedback; Proposal for reformulation: ensure signing of the final Minutes by all members of the WGST; ensure that the signed Minutes are sent to the PPMC in electronic form through the Secretariat; and that the signed Minutes are circulated in electronic form to all members of the WGST
- e. Ensure the observance of the present Terms of Reference.

The PPMC Secretariat will assist the chair in performing the above duties.

4. *Working language*: The working language of the WGST is English.
5. *Communication*: Internal communication among members of the WGST between meetings will be conducted through electronic means (preferably e-mail, web meetings etc).
6. *Technical expertise*: In the event that the WGST lacks sufficient technical expertise on a relevant issue or specific thematic area on an agenda item, relevant expert(s) (from the Parties or international experts) may be invited to participate in the meeting(s) on an ad hoc basis; and/or
- g. Ad hoc Task Groups may be established to contribute to the work of the WGST, upon guidance by the latter.
7. *Attendance of meetings*: The WGST meetings will be open to the PPMC and Secretariat members as well as interested parties and stakeholders to attend as observers.

Article 5

Expenses of the WGST

The operational costs of the WGST (i.e. hospitality expenses and meals during meetings) will be covered by the Chairing Party in whose territory the WGST meeting will be organized, and each Party shall in principle bear the expenses associated with the participation of its representatives (i.e. travel and accommodation expenses) in the WGST meetings.