

Feasibility Study for Trans-border Biosphere reserve Osogovo

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Funding

The realization of the project “Feasibility Study for Trans-border Biosphere Reserve Osogovo” bearing the acronym TRANSBIORES is possible through provision of funding by the European Union through IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Bulgaria – the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The total value of the budget is EUR 145 003,77: 85% are IPA funds, and 15% are National public contribution.

Project Partners

Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation - Belasitsa Branch is the leading partner in the project and the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food, University Ss. Cyril and Methodius – Skopje, represented by its regional office in Strumica, is the partnering organization from the Macedonian side.

Project duration

The project implementation period is from 13th May until the 12th November 2015.

Project goals

The project aims at achieving a sustainable cross-border development of the Osogovo region. In a long term the project supports the implementation of the Biosphere reserves concept which in accordance to the “Man and Biosphere” program of UNESCO is dedicated to sustainable development of local communities. The Biosphere reserve offers possibilities for combining economic and social benefits for local people with the protection of valuable natural resources in a certain region.

The task of the Biosphere reserve is to achieve a sustainable balance between nature protection, economic development and preservation of the cultural values of a region.

The project is related to the initiative „European Green Belt“, which aims at conservation of the largest Pan-European ecological network stretching along the former “Iron Curtain”. The initiative helps for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources by the local communities along the former border.

A further aim of the project is to turn Osogovo into a model region for trans-border cooperation for sustainable development, an example that could be applicable in other border areas as well.

Project activities

In order to define Osogovo’s potential for a Biosphere reserve series of researches for the natural, cultural and economic features of the region were done, as well as a sociological research showing the opinions and attitudes of local people and institutions towards nature protection and sustainable development in the region.

After conducted tender procedure for provision of external expertise, following experts on the Bulgarian side were selected: Stanislava Zahova (Cultural and Historical Heritage and Sociology), Simana Markovska (Tourism) and Dimitar Sabev (Economy); after the same procedure conducted on the Macedonian side following experts were selected: Metodija Veleviski (Fauna), Natalija Melovska (Flora), Oliver Avramoski (Forestry) and Vasko Hadzievski (Agronomy).

The geographical scope of experts' surveys is the whole territory of Osogovo: Municipalities of Kyustendil and Nevestino (District of Kyustendil, BG), Municipalities of Kriva Palanka, Kratovo and Rankovce (NorthEast Region, MK) & Municipalities of Kocani, Cesinovo-Oblesevo, Probistip, Makedonska Kamenica and Delcevo (East Region, MK). The reports are prepared in English.

In order to coordinate the work of the Bulgarian and Macedonian experts three meetings have been held (experts and administrative project team).

The experts' studies served as a base for the publication "Feasibility Study for Trans-border Biosphere reserve Osogovo". After conducted tender procedure for provision of external expertise by the Macedonian partner, Ljubomir Dimovski was assigned a composition of the above paper. The included conclusions and recommendations in the document hint at the possible future interventions/ projects in the region, related to nature protection and environmental friendly use of resources, as well as to potential nomination of Osogovo for a contemporary Biosphere reserve.

The end of the project was marked by closing events both in Macedonia and Bulgaria attended by the administrative project teams, part of the experts, as well as representatives of NGOs, educational institutions and businesses from the project area.

The experts' reports and publications created during the project can be downloaded from the project partners' websites:

<http://bbf.biodiversity.bg/>

<http://www.fznh.ukim.edu.mk/>