

**Summary of the Minutes
of the 1st Monitoring Committee (MC) Meeting
of the
Interreg V-A Hungary-Croatia Cooperation Programme 2014-2020**

Date: 8 December 2015

Place: Nagyatád, Hungary

The meeting was held, in line with the general suggestion of the Desk Officer of the EC, in premises reconstructed earlier as part of the project 'ViNaK' (AF ID HUHR/1101/1.2.2/2020), implemented in the framework of the Hungary-Croatia (IPA) CBC Programme 2007-2013. The mayor of the town introduced the meeting with a few words dedicated to the results of the joint project with the Croatian town of Križevci, which focused on the development of infrastructure for active and ecotourism and as part of which the building of the town's tourist centre was refurbished.

Agenda Point 1: Welcome – Approval of the Agenda, technicalities (MC decision)

Mr Zsigmond Perényi, Deputy State Secretary and Head of Managing Authority, acting as the Chairman of the Monitoring Committee (MC), welcomed all the participants of the 1st meeting of the MC. Following a short introductory round, the Chairman read out the proposed Agenda and, establishing that the quorum for the meeting had been met, put the Agenda to vote.

The Chairman informed the MC that the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary expressed their wish to address the meeting on the issue of the planned strategic project within Priority Axis 2 of the Programme under Agenda Point 5. There were no objections to the proposal.

Conclusion: The amended Agenda was approved unanimously.

Agenda Point 2: Address of the European Commission (EC) to the Monitoring Committee (MC) about the EC view on the role and functioning of the MC during the implementation of the 2014-2020 programme (MC information)

The representative of the EC informed the MC about the EC's view of the role of the MC pointing out that in the new period the MC has the opportunity to ask from the Managing Authority (MA) information about the implementation of the Programme, and can propose changes in the approach to the implementation in relevant cases. Furthermore, the EC would like to encourage the application of decision-making via written procedure on exceptional occasions only and in case of operational issues – with most of the decisions to be taken at meetings and following open and in-depth discussions of issues. The members of the MC are encouraged to contribute to the meetings and to the lively discussion of all the important issues regarding the implementation of the Programme in an even more participatory and active manner than in the past.

Agenda Point 3: Modification of the Rules of Procedure due to the nomination of new observers (MC decision)

The Joint Secretariat presented the modifications effected to the document since its adoption, reflecting the most recent changes in the composition of the MC, with the inclusion of the General Directorate of Social Affairs and Child Protection Sub-Office in Zala County, the Equal Treatment Authority, and the Drava Federation from the Hungarian and Croatian Chamber of Economy, the Association of Municipalities and Cities and ACT-Autonomous Centre from the Croatian side. The Croatian member of the Group of Auditors will also be included in the work of the MC in the future. A short discussion ensued during which a clarification was asked from the EC on the concrete form in which the requirement of publishing the list of MC members is to be met. The MC members were informed that although the publishing of the list is not a legal requirement and no consequences are envisaged for not following the recommendation, the publishing of the list would contribute to the transparency of the Programme.

MC Decision 1: The Modification of the Rules of Procedure (RoP) was adopted unanimously.

Agenda Point 4: Approval of the Technical Assistance (TA) projects and TA forms (MC decision)

The Joint Secretariat presented the 8 projects suggested for support within the Priority Axis "Technical Assistance", pointing out the slight differences in comparison to the previous programming period, which were mostly due to the changes in the institutional set-up.

There are in total eight TA projects proposed:

1. Core Activities
2. Managing Authority
3. Certifying Authority
4. Audit Authority
5. Hungarian FLC
6. Croatian FLC
7. Hungarian National Authority
8. Croatian National Authority

Some minor technical changes effected to the forms are to be expected following the possible changes in the institutional setup in Croatia, which will be communicated to the MC members in due time.

MC Decision 2: The proposed eight Technical Assistance projects and the related TA forms were approved unanimously.

Agenda Point 5: Approval of the 'De-contamination of war-affected territories (De-mine HUHR II)' project as the strategic project of the Programme (**MC decision**), and presentation on the status of other potential strategic projects under Priority Axis 2

The Joint Secretariat presented the project status to the Members of the MC, recounting the steps taken since the approval of the Co-operation Programme (CP) and the preliminary MC meeting in September in Čakovec. The project was approved as part of the CP by the EC, the Lead Beneficiary (LB) stated the indicative start date of 1 January 2016, and the indicative EU contribution amounts to 3 million EUR.

The MC members were informed that, as indicated earlier during the consultation process, there was a change in the partnership proposed by the Hungarian side, with the inclusion of the Danube-Drava National Park Directorate (DDNP) as a third member, to be in charge of the activities directly involving the protected areas of nature.

Although the project is a strategic one, its assessment is to follow similar logic to the other projects submitted within the first call, but the adjustments of the project to fit with the documents of the 1st CFP would be made in consultations with the LB following the approval of the 1st Call application package by the MC. There are few technical points to be considered, which should be resolved with no major problems before the beginning of the contracting procedure.

As soon as the documents needed for contracting are submitted by the Hungarian side, the contracting for the project may begin, however there is no clear indication as to when this would happen. An official letter was recently sent to the partnership by the MA, and the reaction of the partnership is expected soon.

After a short discussion, it was concluded that since the project is already included in the CP, the support of the Programme is clear, and the programme structures should not present an obstacle to the implementation of the project, which should be approved with conditions for contracting including the submission of the relevant documents and the technical modifications effected within the AF.

MC Decision 3: Strategic project HUHR/1501/2.1/4001, De-contamination of War-affected Territories 'De-mine HUHR II' was unanimously approved with conditions for contracting.

The representatives of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the MC on the status of development of the strategic project(s) within Investment Priority 6c, dedicated to small-scale investments relevant for enabling or improving access to natural and cultural attractions. The feasibility study commissioned by the Hungarian government has been finalised, including the part relating to the Hungary-Croatia border region, and the potential cross-border road links, ferries or other types of connectivity have been identified. The study was financed by the Hungarian national transport development OP of the 2007-2013 period and was conducted with the inclusion of all the relevant local, regional and national-level bodies, involving consultations also with the Croatian Ministry of Transport.

A number of small-scale infrastructure projects have been identified that could potentially be financed from the Programme. The consultation process with the Croatian side has slowed down due to the recent elections and the forming of the new government, but a joint decision on the proposed strategic project might be expected in spring 2016.

Agenda Point 6: Presentation of the two potential Lead Beneficiary organisations for the 'PP Light Scheme' (see Priority 1 of the Programme), selection of the actual LB to lead the project partnership **(MC decision)**

The two potential Lead Beneficiary organisations for the 'PP Light Scheme' for the position of the LB presented themselves in short five-minute presentations, followed by a discussion and the decision on the matter.

The MC members found that at the moment there was not sufficient information to make a decision on the LB for the scheme, as neither of the organisations has presented thoroughly their envisaged role as the Lead Beneficiary, but rather focused on their experience and references.

The MC concluded that a separate meeting is necessary, dedicated exclusively to the issue, with an opportunity for posing questions and discuss the issue in more detail.

MC Decision 4: The MC unanimously decided to postpone the decision on the selection of the LB for the strategic project in Priority Axis 1 ('Project Partner Light Scheme') and called upon the JS to organise a separate consultation meeting dedicated only to this issue, as early as possible.

Agenda Point 7: Approval of the Guidelines for Applicants and its Annexes of the 1st Call for Proposals of the Interreg V-A Hungary-Croatia Co-operation Programme **(MC decision)**

The Joint Secretariat presented the content of the Application Package of the 1st Call for Proposals in detail with special focus on the Guidelines for Applicants and the Application Form, pointing out the main still unresolved issues.

Inputs from the members of the MC were given and some key points in the documents discussed that are to be incorporated into the final documents, as well as on the basis of which the Assessment Grids are to be further developed.

MC Decision 5: The MC unanimously decided that the 1st Call for Proposals of the Interreg V-A Hungary-Croatia Co-operation Programme 2014-2020 will be launched as soon as the documents are finalised, according to the inputs from today's meeting and a subsequent round of comments, but no later than the first week of February 2016. The submission period will be 90 days.

Agenda Point 8: Approval of the Communication Strategy of the Interreg V-A Hungary-Croatia Co-operation Programme **(MC decision)**

The Joint Secretariat presented the main strategic document for the programming period, to be guiding the communication activities during the seven years. The document was drafted based on the relevant regulations and elaborated taking into account the experiences of the previous period, as well as the conclusions and recommendations of the on-going evaluation of the previous Programme. The Document includes the main communication objective, the tools and means of achieving them, the groups targeted by the activities and the indicative yearly budget for their implementation.

The Strategy will be supplemented by yearly communication plans, detailing the communication activities planned within each year and reported on annually to the MC. The Communication Plan for 2015 is annexed to the Strategy.

A short discussion ensued with several technical inputs from the representative of the EC, who recommended the inclusion of some additional analytical data.

MC Decision 6: The MC unanimously approved the draft Communication Strategy, with the comments of the EC to be incorporated into the document before finalisation.

Agenda Point 9: Any other Business

The form of the future meetings of the MC was discussed, with several members of the MC expressing their preference for a two-day meeting, especially in case of important decision-making meetings, as there is much more opportunity for informal conversations and even shorter preparatory meetings. The matter will be considered and if technically feasible, implemented.