



“Area Based Development in the Western Balkans”

Boban Ilic, SWG Secretary General

“For the Balkans, which are characterized by small internal markets, inefficient cross border infrastructures and to some extent trans-border political tensions and conflicts, the elimination of the economic and political «border-effect» will enable the interaction and the integration between sub-regions belonging to different countries and strengthen the stability in the region”.

A. KOTIOS



What is Area Based Development (ABD) ?

The Area Based Development (ABD) is considered to be an innovative approach enabling breakthrough in sustainable growth

Main characteristics of the ABD

- area-specific (versus country)
- integrated (across sectors)
- inclusive (communities)
- participatory (bottom-up)
- flexible (responsive to changes)



ABD in the Western Balkan countries

Rural areas in the Western Balkans are characterized by great heterogeneity between the countries and within each single country.

The most prominent common characteristics of Western Balkan rural areas are:

1. Migration, depopulation;
2. Bad infrastructure;
3. Under-valorized territorial capital especially the local heritage;
4. Variety and plenty of natural resources and their favorable ratio according to population density;
5. High importance of agriculture in the structure of rural economy;
6. Presence of dual, farm structure;
7. Low level of fundamental services (health, education, social etc.)
8. Low level of business/ economic activities.



Implementation of ABD – political support to the process

The 4th Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture from South Eastern Europe, Zagreb, Croatia, November 23rd, 2010

....."As far as the area based development approach in the cross-border rural areas in South Eastern Europe is concerned, we are satisfied with the steps undertaken up to this point by the European Commission. We praise the started cooperation with SWG and other development agencies. We plead for continuation of this cooperation and ask the potential donors to explore possibilities for preparation of further studies and concepts for development of rural areas and to support the implementation process.

We, the Ministers of Agriculture and the Head of Delegations are ready to continue the cooperation amongst the countries in the cross-border rural areas in order to provide these areas with sustainable economic development. We are also ready to make further commitments in order to make this process possible. Detailed discussions about the application of area based development approach in certain regions will follow with the concerned parties. “



Implementation of ABD – political support to the process

The 5th Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture from South Eastern Europe, Macedonia, November 11th, 2011

.....”We support the progress in merging regional cooperation and ownership, through effective use of existing SWG RRD initiatives and instruments, founded on inclusiveness, transparency and complementarity via application of area based development approach in the cross-border rural areas in SEE. We encourage these efforts and stand ready to support them, by means of emphasizing regional dialogue and cooperation among the SEE countries within the SWG network. We task the SWG Assembly to prepare relevant proposals and action plans in order to apply the area based development approach. We encourage the SWG structures to continue the dialogue with the European Commission (DG AGRI and DG ENLARG) and to develop and propose comprehensive program for the SEE region. “



Implementation of ABD –support to the process

Split Agenda 2011 for Agriculture and Rural Development in South-Eastern Europe

....” The positive experience in the Drina-Tara cross border area (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia) should be replicated in other suitable cross border areas in the region, and the established network of stakeholders in this pilot area should be supported in effective implementation of their plans.

Coordination among various ministries and rural sectors should be established in order to promote and support cross border cooperation and area based development.”





JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE

Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS)

ABD in the Western Balkan countries

The ABD approach in the region was recently initiated as part of the EU-financed (DG AGRI) study, carried out in close collaboration with SWG. The study titled “Facilitating an area-based development approach in rural cross-border areas of the Western Balkans” was carried out by the Commission’s Joint Research Centre – IPTS.

It covered the Drina-Tara Region - a cross-border area between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia – and, as part of the study methodology for designing and applying the ABD approach to cross-border regions was developed.



ABD in the Western Balkan countries

The SWG in cooperation with the European Commission is continuing the cooperation through IPA Multi-beneficiary Annual Programme 2011 on Project Preparation Facility - Preparation of a Proposal for an Area Based Development in the Western Balkans.

During the SWG EC Project Preparation Facility three additional regions are included:

- Drina- Sava (cross-border area between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia)
- Prespa (cross-border area between Albania and Macedonia)
- Sharra (cross-border area between Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo*)

Kosovo "This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence."*



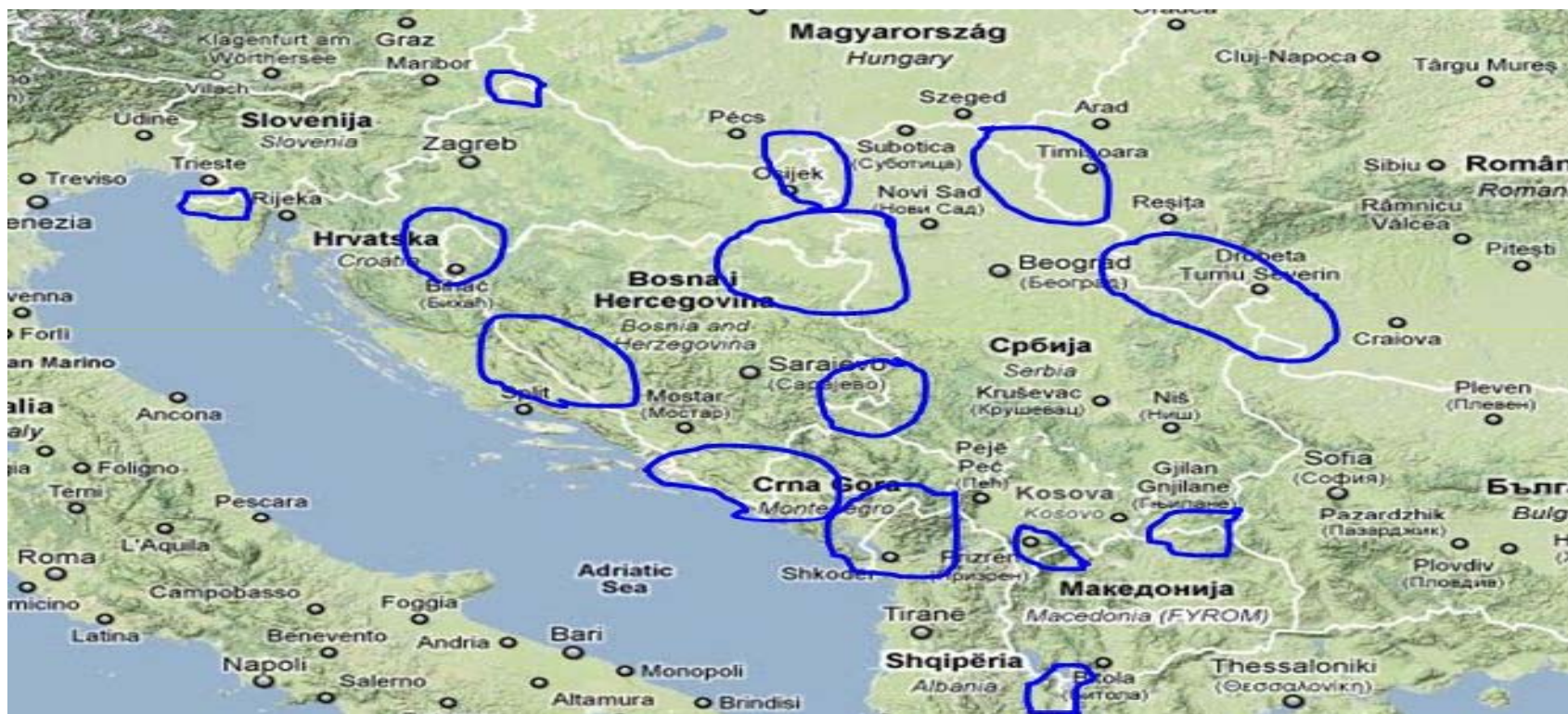
ABD in the Western Balkan countries

Methodology

- Mapping **potential areas** in the Western Balkans (WB)
- **Selecting** the most suitable areas:
 - **Size**
 - Uniform **development situation**
 - Common grounds for **cross- border- cooperation**
 - Sufficient **road connections**
 - Resolved **boundaries disputes**



Regions identified as a potential for ABD



- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Drina –Sava | 6. Prespa Lake | 11. Istra |
| 2. Pčinja | 7. Skadar Lake | 12. Plitvice (Una-Sana) |
| 3. Dinara | 8. Lower Danube | 13. Piva-Drina |
| 4. Neretva | 9. North Banat | 14. Upper Danube |
| 5. Šar Planina | 10. Mura River | |

ABD in the Western Balkan countries

Methodology

- I. Define the **target area**
- II. Assess the **development situation**
 - the baseline
 - critical needs/development gaps
 - priority development areas
- III. Elaborate the **development strategy and action plan**
 - development priorities
 - specific activities
 - monitoring - engage different levels



ABD in the Western Balkan countries

Participatory approach

Stakeholder Group



Business sector



Civil society

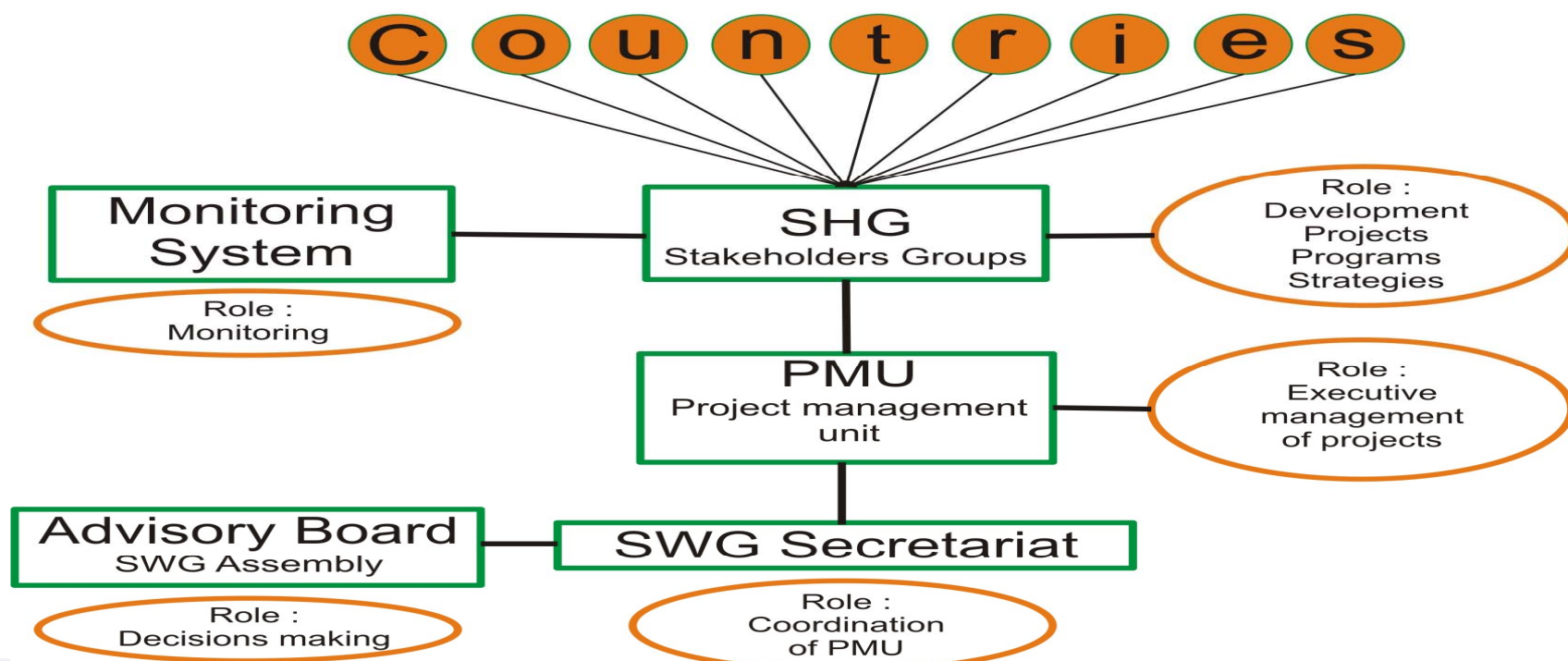


Local administration



ABD in the Western Balkan countries

Implementing structure



Implementation of ABD in the Western Balkan countries

Overall Objective

To facilitate regional cooperation, political reconciliation and economic growth in the Western Balkans through application of area based development approaches in selected rural cross-border areas.



Implementation of ABD in the Western Balkan countries

Specific Objectives

Objective 1: Facilitate cross-border and regional cooperation and reconciliation by providing mechanisms for legitimate, transparent, participatory and ongoing processes of needs assessment, priority setting, and action planning in a particular region.

Objective 2: Contribute to sustainable economic growth of a particular region by facilitating implementation of identified actions and in particular by providing investment support in the sector with the possible highest added-value and catalytic effects to the rural economies.

Objective 3: Strengthen cooperation of public administrations and other public bodies and NGO's in the field of local development and regional cooperation by building-up local and regional cross-border capacities.



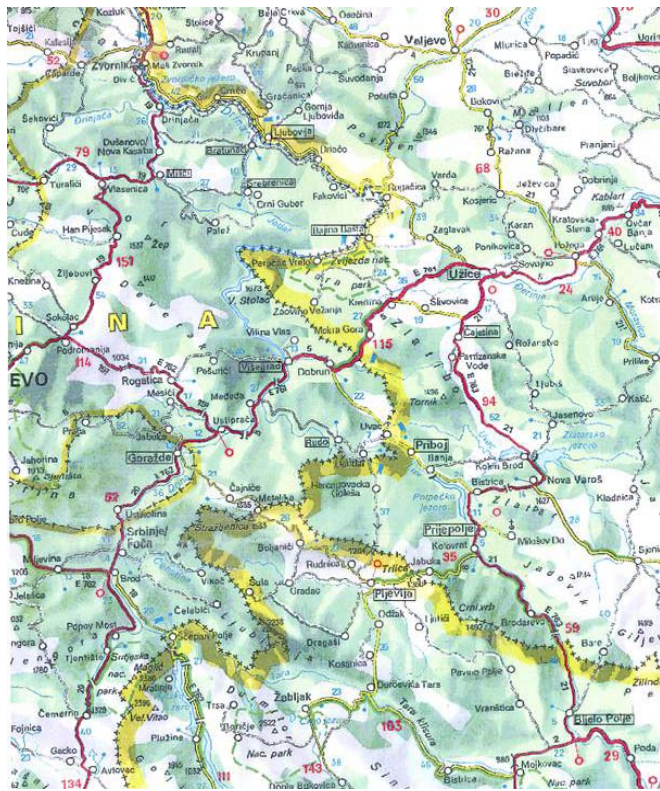
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Further steps

- Further **priorisation** between **development priorities and actions**
- **Funding**
- **Consolidation of the mid-long term vision** of local stakeholders group
- Consolidation of the Stakeholders Group and **establishment of Project Management Units**

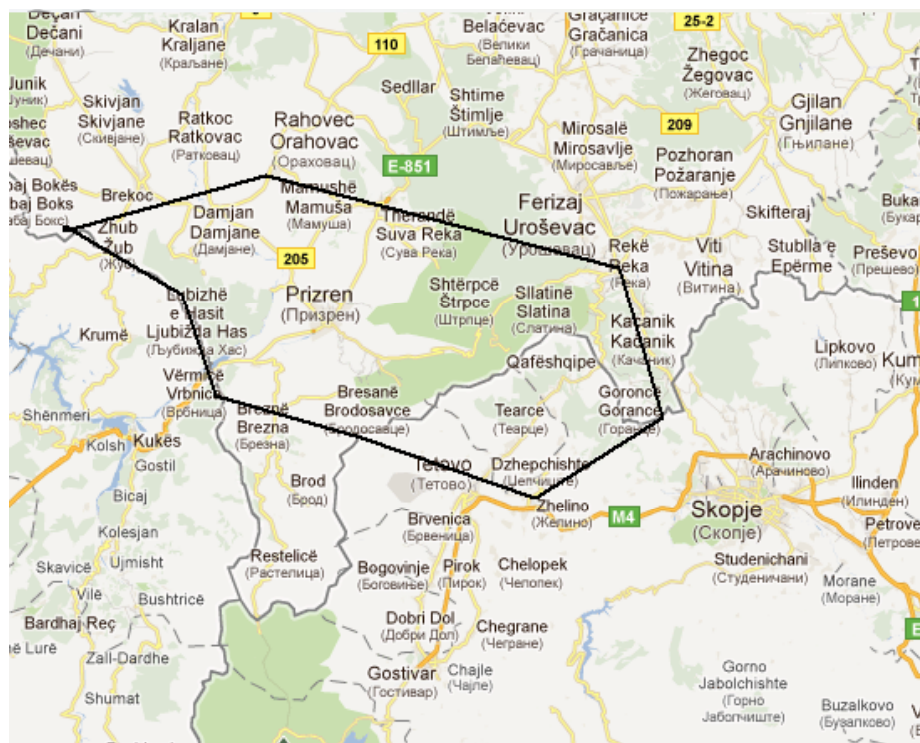


ABD in the Western Balkan countries – Drina – Tara region



1. Post-conflict area
2. Mountain area with potential for tourism
3. Weak internal road infrastructure
4. Negative demographic trends, but high population density
5. Initiatives for CB activities
6. Environmental problems (rivers, waste, industrial air pollution)

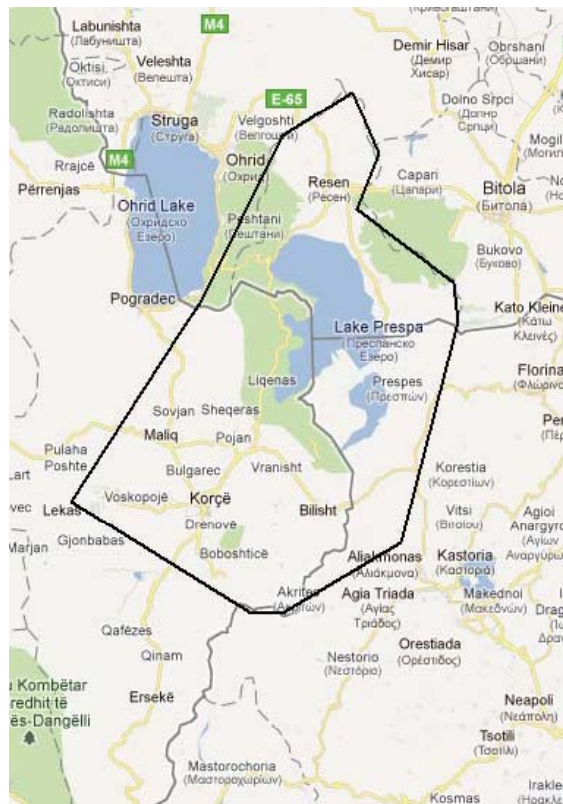
ABD in the Western Balkan countries – Sharra region



1. Mountain area with potential for tourism
2. Very poor internal road infrastructure (e.g. no connection MK-AL), but connection with Skopje
3. Negative demographic trends, but high population density
4. Subsistence farming with poor potential for competitive production



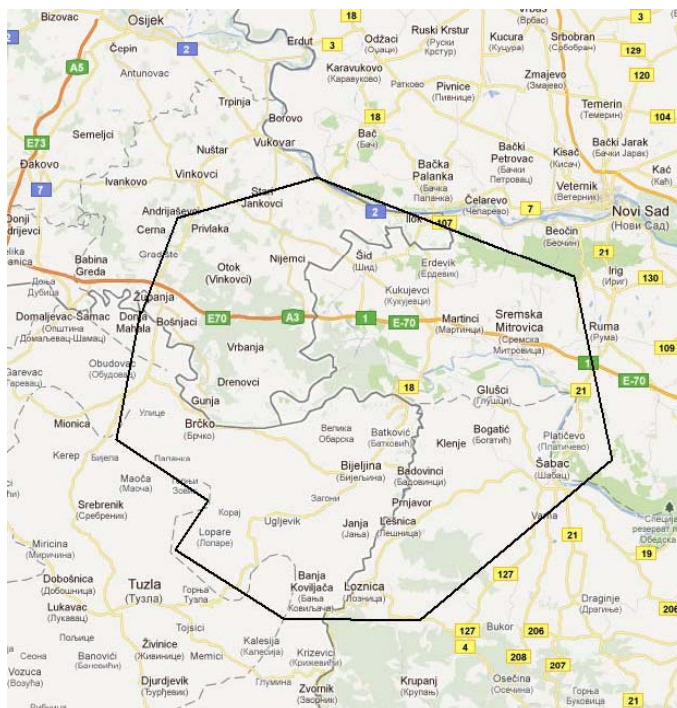
ABD in the Western Balkan countries – Prespa region



1. Real potential for tourism (lake) and fruit production
2. Isolated areas
3. Negative demographic trends and depopulation
4. Common environmental challenge (lake management)



ABD in the Western Balkan countries – Drina – Sava region



1. Well-developed infrastructure
2. Accessibility to markets
3. Potentially competitive agriculture (arable, vegetables, pig) and manufacturing
4. Experience in CB activities
5. Environmental problems (rivers, waste, industrial air pollution)
6. Depopulating trends and mine fields



Thank you!

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