Prevention of risks for environmental sustainable practices for agro producers - PRESPA

Project Title: Prevention of risks for environmental sustainable practices for agro producers PRESPA

Funded by the European Union

IPA Component: IPA 2, Cross border cooperation: Republic of North Macedonia – Republic of Albania (www.ipacbc-mk-al.eu)

Project duration: 30 months

Start date of the project: 15.12.2021

End date of the project: 14.06.2024

Lead applicant and co-applicants:

Center for Civic Initiative (CCI)

Destination Management Organization (DMO)

Municipality of Resen

Municipality of Devoll

Context/background:

Situated in Southeast Europe, Prespa forms a single high-altitude tri-border basin shared by Albania, Greece and North Macedonia. The basin covers a total area of 1 519 km^2 and encompasses two interlinked tectonic Lakes - Great and Lesser Prespa - and their surrounding mountains. Nevertheless, unsustainable human practices in the basin bring about deterioration of natural resources. Main threats to the eco system include: water and soil pollution, deforestation, soil erosion, depletion of fish stocks and biodiversity loss (TDA, 2009). Considering that the main challenge in protection of the environment in Prespa Lake basin is the man-made inputs on pollution of the waters in the lake, in the past period the projects and initiatives that have been undertaken were mainly aiming at the reduction of agricultural inputs achieved through the shift to more environmentally friendly methods of cultivation. These initiatives were related mainly to the bean monocultivation in Greece and the introduction of Good Agricultural Practices in apple production in the Republic of North Macedonia. Unsustainable agricultural, fisheries, water and forest management practices are causing stresses on the ecosystem health of the Prespa Basin. Even though a lot of projects and plans have been made for protection of Prespa lake starting with the UNDP programs and programs from other donors as EU and Swiss Agency for Development, the lake is still suffering from pollution and eutrophication. On the other side of the border, in the Small Prespa Lake very few concrete measures have been taken for its protection. Small Prespa Lake is part of National Park of Prespa (NPP) in Albania, stretched in Balkan Peninsula to the South East Europe and is shared between Albania and Greece. Prespa Lakes, Great and Small, are among the oldest and highest tectonic lakes of Europe. They are located about 850 m above the sea level and are surrounded by high mountains above 2000 m. The reed invasion in Small Prespa Lake occurs due to deviation of Devoll River toward Small Prespa Lake during communist era, with purpose to collect water during the winter and to use it during the summer for irrigation of Korça field. Bad design and malfunction of decantation leads to accumulation of alluvions in lake's bed. Considering that the water from Small Prespa Lake is flowing in to the Big Prespa lake, bringing the pollution also there, concrete actions are needed to be undertaken as to protect both of the lakes.

Abstract (short project summary):

The project is designed as to contribute towards the environment protection of the Pespa Lake basin including the big Prespa Lake in the Municipality of Resen and the small Prespa Lake in the Municipality of Devoll. In order to protect the Prespa lake basin, actions to contribute to the prevention of negative effects of anthropogenic processes on the environment, increased sustainable use of the natural resources and better protection of the environment are needed. This will be achieved through: Development of infrastructural activities i.e building of Waste Water Treatment Plants (WWTP) with sewage systems on the

Prespa Lake Basin and introduction of new online monitoring system for water quality. Awareness raising activities with the population. Capacity building activities for waste water management. The waste water plants along with a sewage system will be constructed in both countries or more particularly in Village Dolno Perovo in Municipality of Resen and villages Zagradec, Shuec and Rakicke in Municipality of Devoll. The development of the WWTP will contribute towards the reduction of waste water flowing into the big and small Prespa lakes having impact on the reduction of the eutrophication of the lake which is the greatest problem of the lake. The new online monitoring system will enable both municipalities to have access to the information on the quality of the water in both lakes. This will allow for the authorities to timely react when needed and will boost the effectiveness of the action. Through the development of an awareness raising campaign, developed by the youth, the local population and the agro producers in Resen and Devoll will be addressed, raising their awareness on environment protection and reduction of the usage of fertilizers and pesticides that are polluting the lake and further cause eutrophication. In order to boost the effectiveness of the action and really assure the achievement of the overall impact the public utilities will have their capacities built in management of the WWTP and usage of the monitoring system. The awareness raising and capacity building activities will change the attitude of the relevant stakeholders and the general population resulting in improvement of their code of conduct.

Final beneficiary: People from Municipality of Resen and Municipality of Devoll

Action location/s:

- Municipality of Resen, Republic of North Macedonia

- Municipality of Devoll, Republic of Albania

Objectives: To contribute to the prevention of negative effects of anthropogenic processes on the environment, increased sustainable use of the natural resources and better protection of the environment in the Prespa Lake basin.

Specific objectives:

1. To improve waste water treatment for the population in Municipality of Resen and Municipality of Devoll;
2. To increase the knowledge of the population on the merits of complying with EU waste water management and environment protection.