Improving competitiveness in Western Balkan rural cross-border regions – the innovative case of Area Based Development (ABD) approach

JRC Macro-Regional Innovation Week
25th January, 2018 - Ispra, Italy
Area Based Development (ABD) approach

- **Targets** defined geographical areas in cross-border regions, characterized by a set of common, complex development problems;

- **Facilitates sustainable growth** in small and socially cohesive rural areas in decline;

- Based on LEADER and CLLD principles, enables substantial rural networking experience among the stakeholders, and further extends in cross-border setting

- Initiated in 2012, today the ABD approach is being implemented in seven WB cross-border regions.
ABDA cross-border regions

“Drina – Tara”
(Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro)

“Drina – Sava”
(Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia)

“Sharra”
(Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo*)

“Prespa”
(Albania and Macedonia)

“Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna”
(Albania, Kosovo* and Montenegro)

“Pcinja - Krajishte”
(Macedonia, Bulgaria and Serbia)

“Neretva - Krsh”
(Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro)

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

- **Strategic development programs** prepared by bottom-up approach – cross-border Stakeholder groups for networking and cooperation (SHG)
- **Technical support** – regional Project management units in each cross-border region (PMUs)
- **Regional dialogue platform** coordinating the discussions among the rural stakeholders, policy creators and academia in line with EU integration process, CAP and IPA mechanism (SWG)

Implementing:
- **Grant schemes** - income generation by improvement of production processes, technology and quality of products and services in “green” value chains (tourism, agriculture, etc)
- **People-to-People** (P2P) ties on promoting socio-cultural and economic priorities of local communities
- **Knowledge transfer and capacity building** (working together in short agri/food and tourism value chains/partnerships/clusters)
ABD GRANT SCHEME funded by EU

In the cross-border regions “Drina - Tara” and “Drina - Sava”

143,223,79€ 55%
Contributed by the European Union

259,386,3€
Total investment of all 9 projects

116,162,51€ 45%
Contributed by the beneficiaries

Tourism facilities are reconstructed

4

New products expected as a result from the investment

3

Expected ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENTS in the upcoming years due to the investments

17

People additionally engaged as seasonal workers due to the investments

28

Partners

7

New products launched

9

Cross-border partnership projects granted

6

Projects have improved the touristic products and services in the regions

6

Innovative services and products

4

Additional investments in all the investments

6
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<tr>
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<th>Investment</th>
<th>Grants</th>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Employment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>513,348,67 EUR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
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<td>334,718,50 EUR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
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<td>2,098,559,35 EUR</td>
<td>37 new jobs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
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Innovativeness of the ABD approach

- Multi-country LAGs
- Strategic development programs based on area (cross-border)
- Management of natural resources based on area (cross-border)
- Cross-border partnerships as Grant Scheme eligibility criteria
- Area-based responsibility and ownership (cross-border)