

# INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN BIOTOURISM “BIOTOURISM”

The IPA Cross - Border Program between Greece and Albania 2007-2013  
FROM NEIGHBOURHOOD TO PARTNERSHIP

## PRESS RELEASE

### Prespa and Korca benefiting from IPA Cross-Border Programme 2007-2013

The project **BIOTOURISM – Innovative Practices in Biotourism** emerges as a natural consequence of the need for a coordinated economic cooperation between Greece and Albania in order to promote sustainable economic development with a view to further expanding the cooperation on common business initiatives for the support of the local communities of Korca in Albania and Prespa in Greece. Funded by the European Territorial Cooperation Programme “Greece – Albania IPA Cross-Border Programme 2007-2013” and by National Funds of Greece and Albania, the project will run for 18 months, until the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2013.

The cross border project will assist the development of a **bilateral tourism platform with e-services involving Greek and Albanian businesses** around Korca and Prespa cross border region and construct a dynamic structure for the promotion of the comparative advantages of the area. The “BIOTOURISM” project will result in a **specific common touristic product of added value** that will be promoted and **contracted out to international tourism operators**. This common product will further support the cooperation of Greece and Albania on common marketing initiatives.

The coordinator of this cross border project is the **Biopolitics International Organisation (B.I.O.)** and the members of the consortium are: the **Biologists of Albania Organisation (ALB)**, **Erymanthos (GR)**, the **Cultural Triangle of Prespa –CTP (GR)** and the **Regional Council of Korca (ALB)**.

**The kick-off meeting of the project partners** was held on November 1, 2012 in Athens, Greece. The goal was to determine the strategy, the methodology and structure for the project’s implementation, so that cooperation among the partners may evolve in a beneficial and productive manner. In this context, the partners examined, in detail, bilateral affairs and opportunities for the development of sustainable tourism – biotourism – in Korca and Prespa. Prospective joint actions and the project’s work packages and actions were diligently discussed, in order to plan future actions.

B.I.O. President, Prof. Agni Vlavianos Arvanitis, and Helen Efraimiadou who is in charge of the project’s coordination on behalf of B.I.O., emphasized the advantages of such a concerted cooperation on the strategic economic development of the area with respect to the natural and cultural heritage. Entela Pinguli and Ardian Maci from the Biologists of Albania Organisation, as well as Gabriela Scheiner, Director of CTP, reinforced the discussions with an outline of the current needs of the local communities and identified potential opportunities, both on the bilateral and multilateral level. Nikos Kladis, representative of Erymanthos, emphasized the need for strong tourism initiatives that will be supported through interactive information technology tools accessible to all the tourism businesses.

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