**INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

**Republic of Macedonia, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia**

Implementing Agency: AD MEPSO - Electricity Transmission System Operator of Macedonia

Project: **Investment in the Development, Construction, and Operation of a Ski Centre and Resort in Galichica National Park**

Closing date: June 30, 2014

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia intends to find a prospective investor which will develop, construct and operate the future Ski Centre and Resort on the Galichica Mountain, Ohrid and invites all interested parties to submit Expression of Interest.

AD MEPSO issuing this notice, on behalf of the Government and as Implementing Agency, seeks a reputable company which will invest in development and construction, and will operate the Ski Centre and Resort Galichica.

The Project will be awarded through a transparent and a competitive tendering process, by applying the best international practices and the Law of the Republic of Macedonia.

**Background**

The Lake Ohrid set immediately next to the project area, is the strongest tourist attraction in Macedonia, a UNESCO World heritage with plenty of natural, historical and cultural sites. Situated on the shores of Lake Ohrid the town of Ohrid is one of the oldest inhabited settlements in Europe. With its numerous prehistoric sites and traces of the material culture over 5.000 old, Ohrid is indeed an archaeological treasury ([www.ohrid.com.mk](http://www.ohrid.com.mk)). Nowadays, Ohrid is the most renowned tourism brand in Macedonia, having attracted not only regional markets, but become a significant player on the global tourism market as well.

In the vicinity of Lake Ohrid, situated around the three-point of the frontiers among Macedonia, Greece and Albania, lies one of the oldest lakes in Europe and one of the cleanest in the world, the Prespa Lake. This lake is declared as the Monument of Nature.

Set between the two lakes is the mountain Galichica. The massif has developed relief with large deep valleys and a vast mountain crest that reaches an altitude of over 2.000 meters on the southern part of Galichica. Such terrain features, as well as the vicinity of the two lakes provides an unparalleled and beautiful scenic view for visitors. In addition to its extraordinary aesthetic values, Galichica is also a unique environment with well-preserved natural flora. Due to the exceptional natural beauty and specific flora and fauna in the forests of Galichica Mountain, a great part of it was declared as National Park in 1958. Today Galichica Mountain has several international nominations: "UNESCO World Heritage Site", "Emerald Area", "Significant Plant Area" and "Primary Area for Butterflies". The abundance of natural and cultural values in addition to Galichica Mountain being located between Lake Ohrid and Lake Prespa, contributes to the attractiveness of the National Park for visitors. The National Park Galichica is one of the most significant tourist destinations of the Republic of Macedonia.

**Project Description**

Located in a natural setting of exceptional beauty of the National Park are the future Ski Centre and Resort Galichica.

The Ski Centre and Resort Galichica is meant to be an all season mountain and lake resort providing alpine skiing and summer recreational activities, a versatile and innovative tourism offer. Not only is there the rare combination of a lake and a mountain, making together an exquisite tourism value chains, but in this case, there is a Mediterranean sun and beach destination combined with a modern mountain resort set in a National Park that is of rare occurrence.

It is envisaged the Ski Centre and Resort to be developed in two phases, as two separate packages.

**Package 1 - Investment, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the Ski Centre and Lake Resort on the Ohrid side**

**Package 2 - Investment, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the Lake Resort on the Prespa side**

The first package includes investment, design, development, construction, operation and maintenance of: (i) the Ski Centre on the slopes of the Galichica Mountain, with its auxiliary facilities (around 15 km ski tracks, ski lifts, snowmaking system, day visitor parking, services, commercial space, additional summer and winter supporting recreation facilities) and the cable transportation system – eight passenger gondola, (ii) mountain resort - containing hotels, apartments, chalets, commercial space and other development infrastructure as well as (iii) lake resort - with hotels, apartments, commercial capacities on attractive locations along the coast of Lake Ohrid.

The second package covers investment, design, development, construction, operation and maintenance of another lake resort with hotels, apartments, chalets, commercial facilities and other development infrastructure on the shores of Lake Prespa and construction of a gondola that will connect to the Ski Centre located on Lake Ohrid side.

The potential for alpine skiing on the terrain within the Galichica mountain – particularly on the west oriented slopes towards Lake Ohrid, allows for development of a well-balanced ski centre with a maximum of 3.000 to 4.000 skiers/day (maximum 130.000-150.000 skier visits per winter season). Eight-passenger gondola transportation systems on both sides of the mountain are to be used to provide access to the Ski Centre facilities from the Ohrid and Prespa lakes resorts.

The Implementing Agency has undertaken a process of developing a Feasibility Study and Master Plan for the construction of the Ski Centre and Resort in the NP Galichica. The final findings of the Master Plan for the entire project will be available in May 2014 upon which the notice will be updated. Meanwhile the interested companies may obtain the upfront information regarding the market analyzes, technical assessment and the capital budget for the ski resort only, on the website of MEPSO (www.mepso.com.mk), as well as on a written request sent to: Mrs. Anita Jovanova, Maksim Gorki 4, 1000 Skopje, R. Macedonia or email to: anita.jovanova@mepso.com.mk

**Expression of Interest Process**

The process will be comprised of two phases.

Phase 1 will be the submission of the expressions of interest accompanied by a short Project Concept proposal (ten pages outline) and the required company information. This phase will be completed by June 30th, 2014 followed by a selection of the participants for phase two. The Project Concept proposal should include the conceptualization of the scope of the project, investment magnitude and program, operations concept, development component, as well as proposals/suggestions for improvement.

In order to determine the capability and experience of the companies, the information submitted should include: (i) company profile; and (ii) specific experience and financial standing; and (iii) details of similar investment projects undertaken in the previous fifteen years.

The above information should not exceed 25 pages excluding promotional material and brochures.

Phase 2will include daily personal presentation by the selected and formally invited companies. The process will also comprise a detailed presentation of the initial proposal and discussions regarding the proposal and Project itself.

**Investors Profile**

The prospective investors shall be a company or a Consortium of companies where either the Lead member or each member, shall demonstrate that it possesses: (1) financial strength required to reach financial closing and implement the Project, and (2) sufficient construction management experience to implement the Project, and (3) sufficient experience in operating, managing and maintaining of large ski resorts and hotels.

**Timing and Submission**

Phase 1will begin with the Invitation for Expressions of Interest in March 2014 and will be completed by June 30th, 2014.

One original and one hard copy of the complete expression of interest (including required documents), in English or Macedonian, along with an electronic copy, shall be submitted to the Implementing Agency in an envelope marked EXPRESSION OF INTEREST for INVESTMENT IN Development, Construction, AND OPERATION of a Ski Centre and Resort in the Galichica National Park, to reach the Archive of the Implementing Agency not later than 30th June 2014, until 16:00 h (local Macedonian time), at the following address: AD MEPSO, Maksim Gorki 4, 1000 Skopje, Republic of Macedonia.

Phase 2will start in mid July 2014, the exact dates will be specified in the formal invitations, and will be concluded by July 31, 2014.

**Important Notes:**

Based on the developed Master Plan, proposals submitted and discussions made, the Government will produce the Tender Documentation that will reflect at the most the positions of the proponents and will initiate the procedure for award of the Contract.

The expression of interest is not a precondition for participation at the later Public Tender.