

**Cross-Border
Cooperation**



Funded by
the European Union

Serbia – Montenegro

STORIES CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

**Results of projects implemented under the IPA II Cross-Border
Cooperation Programme Serbia – Montenegro 2014–2020**

INTRODUCTION

Working Together for the Sustainable Development of the Cross-Border Area

The Serbia–Montenegro Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2014–2020, funded by the European Union under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II), made a significant contribution to the economic, social and territorial development of the Programme area. Throughout its seven-year implementation, the Programme supported projects that improved the quality of life of citizens, strengthened cooperation between institutions and organisations, contributed to the protection of natural resources, and promoted sustainable tourism.

During the implementation of the Programme, three Calls for Proposals were launched, resulting in the contracting of 31 projects with a total value of EUR 8,535,773.49, of which EUR 7,109,964.88 was financed by the European Union. A total of 176 project applications were submitted, demonstrating the strong interest of institutions and organisations in cross-border cooperation.

The implementation of the projects delivered tangible results that extend far beyond the local level. New infrastructure was developed, joint tourism products were created, healthcare and social services were improved, capacities for environmental protection and risk management were strengthened, and citizens acquired new knowledge and skills that enhanced their employability and competitiveness.

The results presented in this publication demonstrate that the Programme successfully brought together institutions, local authorities, civil society organisations, educational institutions and businesses from both sides of the border, creating lasting partnerships and sustainable models of cooperation that will continue to generate benefits long after the projects have been completed.

RESULTS OF THE SERBIA – MONTENEGRO CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME 2014–2020

TOGETHER FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR BORDER REGION

PROGRAMME AREA



PROGRAMME FINANCING



THE PROGRAMME IN NUMBERS



THREE CALLS FOR PROPOSALS

FIRST CALL 2015–2016



SECOND CALL 2018



THIRD CALL 2020



THEMATIC PRIORITIES OF THE PROGRAMME

1. PEOPLE AT THE CENTER OF DEVELOPMENT

Promoting employment, labour mobility, social and cultural inclusion across the border.

2. NATURE WITHOUT BORDERS

Protecting the environment, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management.

3. TOURISM THAT CONNECTS

Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage.

TOGETHER WE HAVE ACHIEVED



more job opportunities



better quality of health and social services



better protection of the environment



sustainable tourism development



strengthened cross-border cooperation

Serbia – Montenegro

TP1

TP1 – PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT, LABOUR MOBILITY AND SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INCLUSION ACROSS BORDERS

Cross-border cooperation Programme **Serbia - Montenegro 2014-2020**

Through joint actions and strong partnerships, the Programme has created new opportunities for people on both sides of the border. Citizens gained knowledge and skills, businesses started and grew, and services for vulnerable groups became more accessible. Together, we build a more inclusive, competitive and connected cross-border region.

KEY RESULTS

**116,023**

people reached
through information
and promotion
campaigns

**177**

capacity-building
events organized

**2,396**

participants in training
and capacity-building
events

**75**

organizations
involved
in cross-border
networks and
partnerships

**48**

strategic, investment
and business plans
developed

**6**

new training curricula /
courses developed

**20**

innovative IT business
ideas created

**9**

new businesses
established

**10**

new jobs
created

**78**

participants found
employment

**264**

vulnerable persons
gained access to
improved services

**550**

social service
interventions
delivered

**EMPOWERING
PEOPLE****BUILDING
SKILLS****SUPPORTING
ENTREPRENEURSHIP****PROMOTING
SOCIAL INCLUSION****WORKING TOGETHER
ACROSS BORDERS**

THEMATIC PRIORITY 1

Knowledge, Skills and Equal Opportunities

The Serbia–Montenegro Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2014–2020 made a significant contribution to improving employability, fostering entrepreneurship, and strengthening social inclusion across the Programme area. Through joint projects, the capacities of public institutions, civil society organisations, and educational institutions were enhanced, while citizens gained new opportunities to acquire knowledge, develop business ideas, and improve their access to the labour market.

Particular attention was given to young people, unemployed persons, women, rural communities, and other vulnerable groups. A total of 177 capacity-building events were organised, bringing together nearly 2,400 participants, while six new training curricula and courses were developed to better respond to labour market needs. In parallel, more than 116,000 citizens were reached through information and awareness-raising campaigns, increasing public awareness of employment opportunities and Programme activities.

The Programme also encouraged entrepreneurship through mentoring schemes and support for innovative business initiatives. Twenty new IT business ideas were developed, with six receiving further mentoring support to facilitate business start-up and long-term development. As a result of Programme support, nine new businesses were established, creating ten new jobs. More than 200 beneficiaries received mentoring services, while 78 participants secured employment thanks to the new knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired through Programme-supported activities.

Beyond employment, the Programme made an important contribution to strengthening social inclusion and improving access to social services. New cross-border partnerships were established, innovative social services were developed, and existing health and social care services became more accessible. More than 260 people from vulnerable groups gained access to improved services, while 550 social service interventions were delivered to address concrete social needs and improve the quality of life of beneficiaries.

Overall, the Programme brought together 75 organisations in cross-border networks and partnerships, creating sustainable cooperation mechanisms and innovative approaches that continue to support employment, entrepreneurship, and social inclusion beyond the lifetime of the funded projects.

Serbia – Montenegro

RESULTS OF THE CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME SERBIA-MONTENEGRO 2014-2020

THEMATIC PRIORITY 2:

Protecting the Environment,
Promoting Climate Change Adaptation
and Mitigation, Risk Prevention and Management

Nature without borders



Through joint projects, the capacities of institutions and local communities have been strengthened for protecting the environment, preserving natural resources and increasing resilience to climate change and emergency situations. The results contribute to a healthier environment for all citizens.

**43**

organisations and institutions
with increased capacities
and competences

**38**

upgraded facilities, equipment,
procedures and operations of public
utilities dealing with solid waste

**1,596 t**

of waste collected
for recycling

**32,000**

citizens reached through
environment awareness
raising activities

**60**

waste containers
purchased

33

sets of bins for
primary waste
separation

**86,043 t**

of waste disposed
of in a proper way

**4**

specialised vehicles
purchased

**276**

pieces of equipment
purchased for emergency
situations

**436**

people with increased
competences in emergency
preparedness and risk
management

**371,524**

citizens benefitting from
emergency preparedness
and risk prevention
measures

**926,300 ha**

covered by joint monitoring actions
against the effects of floods,
wildfires and soil erosion

**39.95%**

of the programme area
benefitting from better
enforcement of wastewater
standards

**37,650**

citizens reached through
awareness campaigns for
prevention and mitigation
of natural and manmade
disasters

**1,020**

new dwellings/households
served in the collection
of solid waste in the
programme area



Working together,
we build a cleaner and
more resilient cross-border
area between Serbia
and Montenegro.

THEMATIC PRIORITY 2

Nature Without Borders

One of the Programme's most significant achievements was strengthening environmental protection, promoting the sustainable management of natural resources, and increasing the resilience of the cross-border area to climate change and emergency situations. Through joint projects, the capacities of public institutions and utility companies were enhanced, waste management systems were modernised, and modern equipment was procured to improve environmental protection and the quality of public services.

The Programme supported the procurement of 60 waste containers, 33 sets of recycling bins, four specialised waste collection vehicles, and one catamaran for collecting floating waste, while 38 waste management systems, facilities, equipment and operational procedures were upgraded. As a result of these investments, 1,596 tonnes of waste were collected for recycling, while 86,043 tonnes of waste were properly disposed of.

A strong emphasis was also placed on raising public awareness about environmental protection and reducing the risks posed by natural and man-made disasters. More than 32,000 citizens participated in environmental awareness-raising activities, while 37,650 people were reached through campaigns focused on disaster prevention and risk reduction.

The Programme also significantly strengthened capacities for emergency preparedness and risk management. 436 representatives of institutions and organisations improved their knowledge and skills in risk management, while 276 pieces of specialised emergency equipment were procured. More than 371,500 citizens now benefit from improved emergency preparedness and risk prevention measures. Joint monitoring activities covered over 926,300 hectares exposed to floods, wildfires and soil erosion, while almost 40% of the Programme area benefits from improved wastewater management standards.

TP3 ENCOURAGING TOURISM AND CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Tourism that Connects

Cross-border cooperation Programme Serbia-Montenegro
2014–2020

The Programme supports sustainable tourism development by promoting the sustainable use of cultural and natural heritage, improving tourism infrastructure and services, and fostering cooperation between tourism stakeholders on both sides of the border.

• KEY RESULTS AT A GLANCE •



355,853

Visitors to the
cross-border area



58,511

Increase in the number
of overnights
made per year



977 km

New and improved
cycling and hiking
trails



9

New or improved
tourism trails
or routes



109

Natural, cultural and
historical sites and
buildings newly open
to public visits



8

Installed theme routes
with interpreted heritage
of high significance



105

Small-scale investments
in tourist infrastructure



142

Organisations /
institutions with
increased capacities /
competences



41

New jobs created by
businesses supported
by the Programme



15

New services / offers /
ideas / products
available in the market
one year after project end



5

New joint tourism
products
commercialised



4,200

Users of outdoors
active tourism
services and products



41

Promotion events
organised



2,211

Participants in
information / promotion
events



5

Guides
certified



11

Existing tourist
providers with
improved competences



4,165

Direct
beneficiaries
involved



25%

Population in the
programme area
benefiting directly
or indirectly

MORE ACHIEVEMENTS



800 km

Biking trails
132 km
Hiking trails
(rehabilitated
or new)



26 Resting points
2 Camps
6 Camping sites
8 Photo-hides
constructed



8
Plans
developed
(strategic,
investment,
business, etc.)



7
Cross-border
cooperation
agreements /
memorandums
signed



184
Sets of
equipment
purchased
and made
available to
target groups

THEMATIC PRIORITY 3

Tourism that Connects

The Serbia–Montenegro Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2014–2020 significantly contributed to strengthening the tourism sector by promoting the sustainable use of the rich cultural and natural heritage of the cross-border region. Through joint initiatives, the Programme supported the development of innovative tourism products, improved destination management, enhanced tourism infrastructure, and strengthened cooperation between tourism stakeholders on both sides of the border.

The Programme created new opportunities for sustainable tourism development by improving the attractiveness and accessibility of the Programme area. A total of 355,853 visitors were recorded in the cross-border region, while the number of annual overnight stays increased by 58,511, demonstrating the growing appeal of the area as a tourist destination.

Significant investments were made in tourism infrastructure and visitor facilities. The Programme supported the development or improvement of 977 kilometres of cycling and hiking trails, established nine new or upgraded tourism routes, and opened or enhanced 109 cultural, historical, and natural sites for visitors. In addition, eight thematic heritage routes were developed, showcasing the unique cultural and natural assets shared by Serbia and Montenegro.

The Programme also strengthened the capacities of tourism organisations and service providers. 142 organisations and institutions improved their competencies, while 15 new tourism services and products remained available on the market after project completion. Five new joint tourism products were successfully commercialised, contributing to the long-term sustainability of cross-border tourism cooperation.

Support to local businesses and tourism operators generated tangible economic benefits. Programme-funded initiatives created 41 new jobs, encouraged innovation in tourism services, and attracted more than 4,200 users of outdoor tourism activities. Through 41 promotional events, the Programme increased the visibility of the destination and strengthened its position as an attractive year-round tourism region.

The achieved results demonstrate that the Programme successfully transformed the rich natural and cultural heritage of the Serbia–Montenegro border area into sustainable tourism products, creating new opportunities for economic growth, employment, and long-term cross-border cooperation.

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Serbia – Montenegro

STORIES CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Behind every figure in this newsletter is a place, a partnership and people who made it happen. The following pages bring three of these stories from the Serbia–Montenegro cross-border area to life.

TOURISM & NATURAL HERITAGE — UVAC SPECIAL NATURE RESERVE

Improving the Tourism Offer of Uvac through the For.REST Project

The viewpoint at Kobilja Glava, above the Rastoke Dam on Uvac Lake

Within the **For.REST – Forest Tourism in the Cross-Border Area between Serbia and Montenegro** project, implemented through the 3rd Call for Proposals of the IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Serbia–Montenegro 2014–2020, significant results have been achieved in improving tourism infrastructure and strengthening capacities for the development of sustainable tourism in the Uvac Special Nature Reserve.

One of the project's most significant activities was the construction of three new viewpoints, which will provide visitors with an even more attractive experience of Uvac's unique landscapes and rich biodiversity. The viewpoints were built at carefully selected locations: Kobilja Glava, above the Rastoke Dam on Uvac Lake; Ravni Krš in Donje Lopiže; and Vraneši, above Radoinja Lake. All three locations offer spectacular panoramic views of the Uvac meanders, the lakes, and the habitats of the griffon vulture, one of the area's most important protected species.

The new viewpoints were constructed from timber and feature covered upper viewing platforms, representing modern visitor infrastructure that blends harmoniously with the natural surroundings of the reserve. Their construction has further enriched the network of viewpoints within the Uvac Special Nature Reserve, creating new attractions for nature lovers, hikers, photographers and birdwatchers.



The viewpoint at Ravni Krš, Donje Lopiže



View of the Uvac meanders from the Rastoke viewpoint



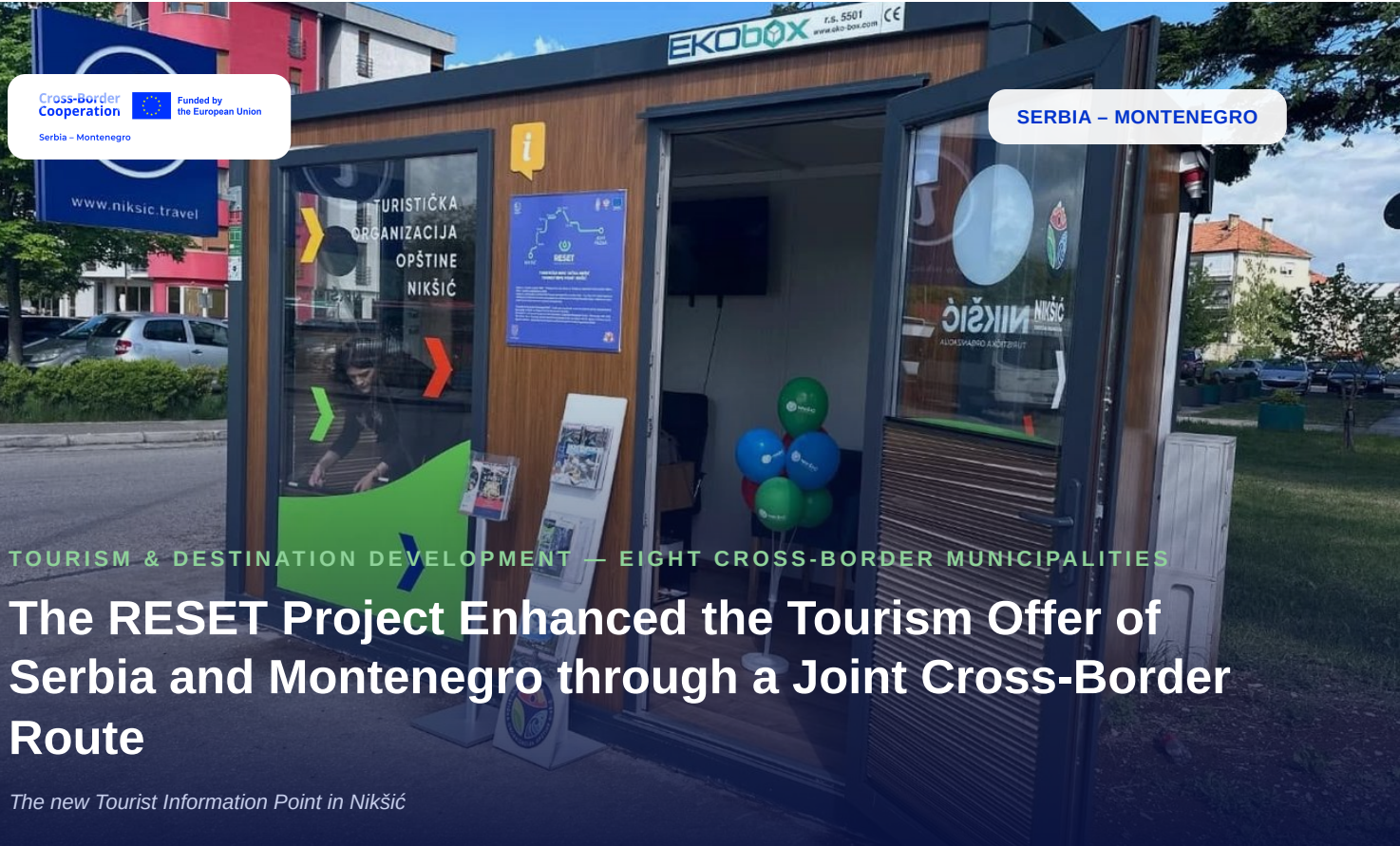
Training for tourist guides, Zlatar & Uvac

“The first viewpoint was built at Kobilja Glava above the Rastoke Dam on Uvac Lake and the abandoned quarry, the second is located at the Ravni Krš site in Donje Lopiže, and the third in Vraneši above Radoinja Lake. A viewpoint had previously existed at this location, but the deteriorated wooden structure was replaced with a new and significantly more attractive one,”

Darko Ćirović, Uvac Reserve Public Enterprise

In addition to improving tourism infrastructure, the project also focused on strengthening human capacities. From 6 to 8 April, a three-day training for tourist guides was held in the area of Zlatar Mountain and the Uvac Special Nature Reserve, gathering tourist guides, representatives of environmental organisations, tourism service providers and institutional representatives from Serbia and Montenegro.

The programme covered biodiversity, sustainable tourism and forest therapy, combining theoretical sessions with field activities during which participants developed skills in interpreting natural heritage and explored ways of applying it within the tourism offer. A dedicated module focused on the characteristic plant species of the Zlatar and Uvac area, while participants also visited the region's most important sites — including Uvac, Zlatar and Radoinja Lakes, the griffon vulture feeding site, and the aviary for temporary accommodation of injured birds.



TOURISM & DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT — EIGHT CROSS-BORDER MUNICIPALITIES

The RESET Project Enhanced the Tourism Offer of Serbia and Montenegro through a Joint Cross-Border Route

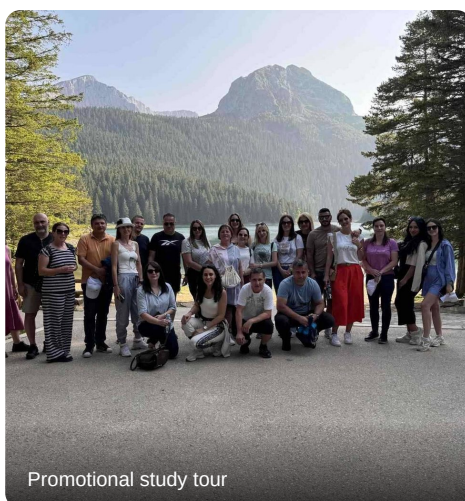
The new Tourist Information Point in Nikšić

The “**Cross-Border Tourist Route – Green Eyes (RESET)**” project has successfully contributed to enhancing the tourism offer and strengthening cooperation between local communities on both sides of the border. During its 27-month implementation period, a new cross-border tourist route was developed, connecting eight municipalities – Nikšić, Šavnik, Žabljak, Pljevlja, Prijepolje, Nova Varoš, Sjenica and Novi Pazar – through a unique combination of natural attractions, cultural and historical heritage, and authentic local experiences.

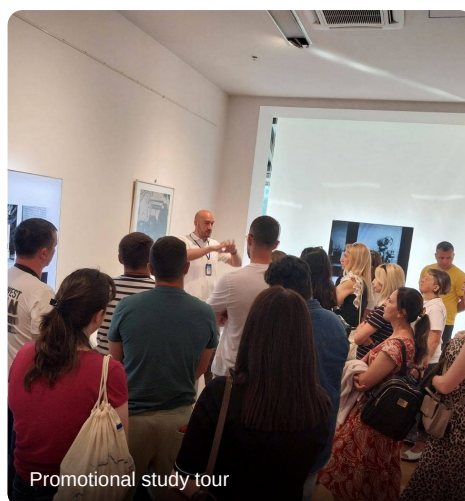
One of the project's most significant achievements in Serbia was the procurement of a 12-seat tourist catamaran on Lake Gazivode, significantly enriching the tourism offer of the area. The catamaran enables visitors to experience the lake and its surrounding landscapes from a unique perspective while encouraging the development of additional tourism services along the shoreline, including hospitality facilities and supporting infrastructure.



The 12-seat catamaran on Lake Gazivode



Promotional study tour



Promotional study tour

“The catamaran is certainly the flagship investment of the part of the project implemented by our organisation. It is of excellent quality, passengers’ feedback has been very positive, and I believe it will contribute to improving the tourism offer of the lake, revitalising the destination and encouraging others to get involved in developing tourism facilities,”

Elvir Bogučanin, Director, Regional Tourism Organisation Sandžak

In addition to investments in tourism infrastructure, the project included training programmes for tourism stakeholders, promotional study tours, the production of promotional materials, the development of the Travel RESET mobile application, the installation of information boards, visitor and cyclist facilities, and the creation of the new cross-border tourist route “Green Eyes”, linking 37 attractive sites across the eight participating municipalities.

In Montenegro, one of the project’s most visible results was the opening of a new Tourist Information Point in Nikšić, providing visitors and local residents with information on the town’s tourism offer, accommodation, gastronomy, cultural attractions, recreational opportunities, and local souvenirs.

“This project demonstrates how cross-border cooperation can contribute to tourism development, the preservation of natural and cultural resources, and the promotion of local communities. Through the project, new opportunities have been created for sustainable tourism and stronger connections between towns and regions,”

Marko Perućica, Municipality of Nikšić

EMPLOYMENT & YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP — PLJEVLJA & SJENICA

The Youth Start-Up Project Contributed to the Development of Youth Entrepreneurship in the Cross-Border Area

Participants at the Start-Up Camp in Sjenica

The “**Youth Start-Up**” project successfully contributed to strengthening youth entrepreneurship, improving the employability of young people, and enhancing cross-border cooperation between Serbia and Montenegro. The project was implemented by the Municipality of Pljevlja as the lead partner, in cooperation with the Municipality of Sjenica and the NGO ADP-Zid, with the aim of creating a supportive environment for young people wishing to start their own businesses and develop entrepreneurial skills.

Throughout the project implementation, numerous activities were organised, enabling young people to acquire practical knowledge, exchange experiences, and establish links with institutions and the business sector. A key component of the project was the Start-Up Camps held in Sjenica, where young participants from Serbia and Montenegro developed their business ideas through interactive workshops, mentoring sessions, and teamwork, while strengthening their entrepreneurial skills and learning about available institutional support mechanisms.



Pitching event in Sjenica



National conference in Pljevlja

An important achievement of the project was the organisation of pitching events, where young entrepreneurs presented their innovative business ideas in the fields of digital services, tourism, creative industries, environmental protection, and social innovation. The presented projects demonstrated a high level of creativity and the willingness of young people to contribute to the development of their local communities through entrepreneurship.

The project also included national conferences held in Pljevlja, bringing together representatives of local governments, public institutions, educational organisations, the business sector, the media, and young entrepreneurs. The conferences showcased the project's achievements, explored opportunities for improving local policies supporting youth entrepreneurship, and highlighted the importance of cross-border cooperation for the development of local economies.

One of the project's significant outcomes was the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between the "Tanasije Pejatović" Gymnasium in Pljevlja and the "Jezdimir Lović" Gymnasium in Sjenica, creating the conditions for continued cooperation between the two educational institutions beyond the project's completion. During the project, a total of 24 business ideas were developed, while young participants acquired new knowledge in entrepreneurship, business planning, public speaking, and business presentation skills.

The Youth Start-Up project demonstrated that joint activities of public institutions, local governments, and civil society organisations can make a significant contribution to creating a more favourable environment for young people, fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, and opening new opportunities for employment and sustainable economic development in the cross-border area of Serbia and Montenegro.

LOOKING AHEAD

Europe in Everyday Life

The greatest value of these projects is seen in what remains after their completion: viewpoints that visitors climb, a catamaran that sails, an information point that welcomes guests, and a network of young entrepreneurs who keep building on what they started. These are the results that became part of everyday life in the cross-border communities of Serbia and Montenegro.

The Serbia–Montenegro Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2014–2020 has been completed, but its results are not a finished story. They remain as a foundation for new ideas, new partnerships and a new cycle of cooperation within the IPA III Programme 2021–2027, which continues to build on the themes, networks and experience established during this cycle: employment and social inclusion, environmental protection and resilience, and sustainable tourism.

Borders may be lines on a map. But through cooperation, they become spaces of encounter, development and shared opportunities — and the European Union's support becomes something people can see, use and benefit from in their everyday lives.

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

About Us

The Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Serbia – Montenegro 2014–2020 was implemented under the framework of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II).

The Programme covered an area of 17,402 km² with 664,522 inhabitants (65% in Serbia, 35% in Montenegro). Through three Calls for Proposals, EUR 8.4 million in EU funds were allocated to the Programme, resulting in 31 contracted projects with a total value of EUR 8.54 million, of which EUR 7.11 million was EU co-financing.

The Programme was structured around three thematic priorities: **People at the Centre of Development** (employment, labour mobility, social and cultural inclusion), **Nature Without Borders** (environmental protection, climate change adaptation and risk management), and **Tourism that Connects** (sustainable use of cultural and natural heritage).

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