



Newsletter N°8
July 2022

Let's Do Things Better Together



CROSS-BORDER PROGRAMME
SERBIA-MONTENEGRO
2014-2020



Republic of Serbia



Montenegro



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Dear Readers,

In the new edition of the Newsletter, we will present the latest events within the Programme that marked the first half of 2022. A very dynamic period is behind us, and in the following period we expect new projects and new challenges.

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The Third Call for Proposals within the IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Serbia-Montenegro 2014-2020 was launched on March 3, 2022, and the deadline for submission of project proposals was June 1, 2022. The Call was open for the submission of project proposals in the following areas: Increasing employability and employment opportunities, Improving waste management and wastewater treatment and Improving capacities for exploiting the tourism potentials of the Programme area. The Third Call ends the second cycle of the IPA, which covered the period 2014-2020.

The conference on opening of the Third Call for Project Proposals within the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Serbia-Montenegro 2014-2020 was held in Priboj on March 21, 2022.



The event was organized with an aim to promote the Third Call for Proposals, and the hybrid format of the conference enabled the general public, through live stream, to present both the Programme and the projects implemented within the Second Call.

During March 2022, two Info Sessions and Partner Search Forum on the occasion of the launching of the Third Call for Proposals under the IPA Cross-border



Cooperation Programme Serbia-Montenegro 2014-2020. The Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Serbia in cooperation with the Ministry for European Integration of the Republic of Serbia and the Government of Montenegro, European Integration Office, with the support of the Joint Technical Secretariat of the Programme, organized the events. The events were attended by more than 90 representatives of different institutions, who had the opportunity to be informed about the rules of the Call, while the Joint Technical Secretariat presented the Application form of the Call.

Online Implementation workshop for the awarded grant beneficiaries within the 2nd Call for Proposals of the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Serbia-Montenegro 2014-2020 was held on March 28, 2022. Aiming to provide support to grant beneficiaries in the implementation of the projects, the workshop was organized by the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Serbia, Department for Contracting and Financing of EU Funded Programmes (CFCU), with the assistance of the Joint Technical Secretariat of the Programme. The workshop was attended by 29 participants. It was an excellent occasion to pose questions to the Programme Managers and get answers. Further consultations and assistance will be available to grant beneficiaries through the Joint Technical Secretariat/ Antenna of the Programme.

Eight projects are currently being implemented within the 2nd Call, which aim to strengthen the social and cultural inclusion of vulnerable groups, as well as improve the capacities for the tourism potential of the program area. Our team monitors the work and continuously provides advisory support to grants beneficiaries.

In order to ensure smooth implementation of the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Serbia-Montenegro, a multiannual financing decision of Programme was adopted, which constitutes the multiannual work of the Programme for the period 2021-2027.

The objectives pursued by the multiannual Programme are to promote good neighbourly relations, foster Union integration and enhance the socio-economic development of the Programme cross-border area through social and economic inclusion of specific groups, especially youth, and the competitiveness of tourism.

The priorities selected for the financing of the Program are Employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across borders as well as encouraging Tourism and Cultural and Natural Heritage.

The maximum European Union contribution for the implementation of the Programme is €8.400,000.

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Creative cooperation lives on

The first half of 2022 was full of changes and new achievements for the RDA of the Raški and Moravički Districts team and for the project.

Lucija Vasiljević, the new project manager, was familiarized with the project in February 2022. She said about the project: *“The content of the project, which maintains and promotes the cross-border connection and offer between Serbia and Montenegro, is very important for the promotion of the cultural heritage of that areas. The selected trails in Serbia, which are all in the area of Golija, reveal that little hidden Serbian pearl and bring it closer to the visitor in a way that makes him think about nature, his culture, the culture of Serbia. Also carefully selected trails in Montenegro in the area of Prokletije, Tara river canyon, Brskovo and Žabljak reveal the rich history and natural heritage of the area.”*

The introductory conference of the project “Thematic journey through the corridor of cultural and natural heritage of Serbia and Montenegro – Creative Twinning” was held on March 15, 2022, where the goals, activities and results of the project were presented.



Examples of good practice from Serbia, Slovenia and Montenegro, the importance of the Creative Twinning project and cross-border cooperation for the region and cultural heritage, cultural tourism in Serbia and ‘storytelling’ were presented at the conference. A total of 39 participants got an insight into cross-border cooperation activities, new knowledge and competences, which can improve their work.

During the March 2022, a training on sustainable management of cultural/natural heritage was organised, which was attended by representatives of local governments. The following topics were realized: sustainable management and management of tourism impacts, sustainable tourism in protected areas, trends in ICT technologies and cooperation and partnership of the public sector with academia and (non) governmental organizations. The topics were harmonized with the content of the project in order for 20 participants to gain the best knowledge for future work with the project results.

Alma Henić Strahinja, a participant from Montenegro, described her view and experience of the event: *„During the study visit and participation in the two-day workshop in Kraljevo, I had the opportunity to gain a broader, academic insight into the topic of sustainable management of protected areas. The lecturer presented in great detail the agenda of sustainable development, management models of protected areas, the challenges of their valorization through tourism, and communication technologies and principles of private-public partnership, as forms of effective management of protected areas. Through the extremely useful exchange of experiences among the training participants, I gained insight into the degree of readiness of institutions to actively work on the application of the principles of sustainable development, problems arising from practice, and good and bad examples of management.”*

With the events, the meeting of the Technical Advisory Body at the project level, the project team laid the foundation for future work on the project. In the second year of the project, there will be intensive work on the visible results of the project - works on thematic trails, installation of boards and interactive platforms and other activities that will contribute to greater visibility and sustainability of the project.



Cult bike route

“During the first sixth months of 2022, the project team has met with the representatives of 12 municipalities, including local tourism organizations, located along the Cult bike route, with the purpose to present the project. All municipalities and tourism organizations have shown great interest in the implementation of this project as in these underdeveloped regions are in huge need of any new tourists. Municipalities and tourism organisations are very active in the fields we have asked for cooperation, hence we do expect not the only successful implementation of this project but also the exploitation of service, equipment, and facilities that are subject of this project. - Danijel Vučković, project manager.



In addition, intensive activities were carried out on the identification of cultural heritage and the identification of the Cult bike route alignment that passes through beautiful natural landscapes.

The total length of the route is much greater than the initially planned 420km, and more details will be published soon on the website www.cultbikeroute.com, which is currently under construction.

In the coming period, project team will intensively finalizing a lot of activities, such as marking of the Cult bike route, procurement and implementation of the shared bicycle system, organization of promotional cycling tours, visits to fairs to present the Cult bike route.



Spring has been very active within the “Hoo Hoo Project: Creation of owl and other wildlife experiences”

After the winter months and a lecture on the biodiversity of fungi and mammals in the cross-border region between Serbia and Montenegro, the training program for wildlife guides continued in June and July. Sjenica and Pljevlja hosted the last two trainings within the program, and the biodiversity of birds and medicinal plants were interesting topics for research in the field.

The Pešter Lake, the bird feeding area on Pešter, the area of the Karajukić Well, the village of Đerekare, the canyon of the Vape River allowed the participants to get to know the diversity of the bird life, interesting details about different types of birds, to have a birdwatching experience and see the possibilities and importance of birdwatching as a tourist activity for the local development of the municipalities they come from.

Brvnica, Rudnice, Meander of Čehotina river in Pljevlja in early July were inspiring for training on medicinal plants and their importance, and how to recognize them in nature and how to use them in a sustainable way. Medicinal plants are an inspiring topic, because all around us there is a whole range of natural medicines that people have been used since ancient times and whose healing properties have been passed down from generation to generation.



More than 25 people have passed the four-pillar training program for wildlife guides, and the preparation of training materials and manuals is underway, which will be helpful in their future work in passing on knowledge to the tourist, who will have the opportunity to demonstrate the acquired knowledge about wildlife in autumn during Regional camp.

In order to further encourage the creation of jobs in the field of tourism, five persons in Montenegro have already passed the Training Program for Licensing for Tourist Guides, which was implemented this year by the Faculty of Business and Tourism, Budva. After the three-month training, five new tourist guides will get license, and will be able to lead tours independently. A similar training program is being prepared in Serbia.

One of the important activities that started in spring was the Strategic workshop for the development of tourist itineraries within The Hoo trails destination, which was held in Berane from 18-20, May 2022. The goal of the workshop was to present international practices in the field of sustainable wildlife tourism, and to involve local tourism workers in the development of cross-border itineraries that will provide tourists with a seven-day and four-day wildlife experience. More than 45 participants worked together to unite all the authentic tourist spots from the eight municipalities involved in the project, which will be unite in August into innovative tourist itineraries of the new The Hoo Trails destination.



In order to show the richness of biodiversity to a wider audience, the project partners have prepared the “Wonders of the Hoo trails” exhibition, which consists of more than 55 photographs of the wild flora and fauna of the cross-border region. In the period May-July 2022, five exhibitions were realized in Berane, Bijelo Polje, Pljevlja, Tutin and Sjenica. More than 140 visitors attended the ceremonial opening, while it is estimated that more than 800 people visit the exhibitions. The exhibitions were organized in cooperation with local partners who provided additional local support to the project by providing venues for exhibitions.

Exhibitions are also being organized in other municipalities that are included in the project.

The Hoo Hoo project continues with activities during the summer with the preparation of work on the marking of the cross-border trail that will be part of the itinerary, creation and placement of a photo hides, recording of promotional videos, creation of promotional materials, and the final activities on the creation of a website for the promotion of The Hoo trails destination experience.





Development of religious tourism within the project “Mysterious ways of faith from Lim to Zeta”

A press conference within the project “Mysterious ways of faith from Lim to Zeta”, implementing by the Diocese of Budimlje and Nikšić, the Tourist Organization of Priboj, and the Diocese of Milesevo was held on May 9, 2022.



The idea for the development of this project is based on the fact that discretionary leisure travel, where religion is the main motive for travel, is popular in the cross-border area. After almost two millennia of Christianity in the cross-border area, the Christian heritage is a significant tourist resource of the two countries that needs to be nurtured, promoted and used. This project includes the adaptation and equipping of the historic villa in Niksic for the purposes of pilgrimage and cultural center and the construction and equipping of the Visitor Center in Pribojska Banja, branding the target area as a tourist attraction, developing itineraries for religious tourism, creating a manual on religious tourism to supported the development of the key product and contributed to its sustainability. The project also includes organizing a joint cross-border conference on the challenges of modern religious tourism and organizing a cross-border seminar to raise the capacity of tourism workers, presenting the cultural, religious and historical heritage of the cross-border area. Special attention will be paid to the joint capacity building through the organization of trainings in the field of tourism, whereby three tourist guides will be licensed – as stated in the joint announcement.

A cross-border conference on religious tourism was held in Kolasin on May 20-22, 2022. As part of the conference, networking workshops were held in order to connect travel agencies and tour operators with religious representatives in order to achieve a better understanding of the needs of tourists. Focus groups were also held on how to promote religious tourist sites and develop practical examples of package deals.



Religious and cultural tourism is recognized as an important potential for the development of the municipalities of Niksic and Priboj. Since economic activities, among other things, are concentrated on tourism, these areas will benefit from the valorization of existing resources. This project includes the adaptation and equipping of the historic villa in Niksic for the purposes of pilgrimage and cultural center and the construction and equipping of the Visitor Center in Pribojska Banja, branding the target area as a tourist attraction, developing

itineraries for religious tourism, creating a manual on religious tourism to supported the development of the key product and contributed to its sustainability.



One-stop-shop model for social inclusion and employability of young people

The project “One-stop-shop model for social inclusion and employability of young people” is a two-year project implemented by the Center for Youth Work (Serbia) in partnership with the NGO FORUM MNE, Novi Pazar Youth Office and Rozaje Civic Youth Initiative (Montenegro), in 6 municipalities the cross-border region in Serbia and Montenegro.

The path to achieving greater chances for employment, youth from this cross-border region began in late January as participants in the “One-stop-shop” training program. It is an innovative service that operates on an “all in one place” system with the aim of increasing employability, especially of vulnerable groups of young people from the so-called. NEET population, ie young people who are unemployed and not in the process of education. It includes a soft skills course, an entrepreneurship course and a digital marketing course.

Young people from cross-border regions had the opportunity to meet and attend the third module of the soft skills course, which was organized from May 13 to 16, 2022 in Rožaje. This 4-day regional training gathered about 50 young people from Serbia (Novi Pazar, Sjenica, Tutin) and Montenegro (Rozaje, Bijelo Polje, Berane).

The regional training was organized as the third module of the soft skills course, and was dedicated to the transformation of conflicts, ie. ways of reacting in conflict situations, techniques and approaches to conflict situations on a personal level and in working with clients and colleagues.





After the completion of the first phase of the training program, participants will work on concrete development of IT business ideas through 3 months of direct mentoring support, after which they will be able to present it at the regional event “Elevator pitch”. The best presentations, 6 of them, will receive additional support in the form of business consulting, support in finding financial resources and other important elements for starting their own business.



Some of the program participants stated:

I applied for this program in order to be more competitive on the Montenegrin labor market. Also, I applied to acquire new skills that will help me to finding a job - Alma, a participant from Bijelo Polje;

The program is designed to awaken the entrepreneurial potentials in us and thus give us the basic tools on that path - Maida, a participant from Novi Pazar.

This course helped me to see more clearly the direction of my career, so I would recommend to all young people who want to improve their knowledge and skills and be more competitive in the labor market, to be participants in this course - Amina, a participant from Sjenica.

I consider the program to be of exceptional quality and a great chance for young people to acquire additional education in this area, because digital marketing represents our future - Dušan, a participant from Bijelo Polje.



New Telecare service

The cross border Telecare service was officially established on November 1, 2021 in the Home for elderly Bijelo Polje and in the Social Welfare Centre in Novi Pazar.

The service works synchronously according with minimum standards developed aligned with European quality standards for Telecare service and Manual of Practice developed for Telecare social service with the using of Telecare cross border web platform and application.

During the 7 months of service life , it was conducted 350 online telecare services by Telecare staff as well as 175 home visits.

The service implies 24 hours on daily basis:

- User biometric tracking;
- Scheduled phone calls-elderly knows when to expect the calls;
- Scheduled Tasks - Taking medicine under observation, a reminder to take medicine, a reminder to dinning time, following dinning, drug supervision, confirming medicine taking, wellbeing check, daily support, psych monitoring , and hygiene;
- Psychotherapy;
- Mental rehabilitation;
- SOS calls;
- Home visits twice time during one month.



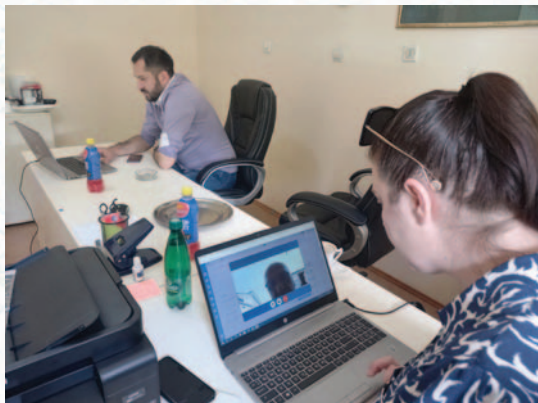
The particular added project values in COVID 19 pandemic circumstances bring multiply benefits:

- The cross-border Telecare services in Bijelo Polje and in Novi Pazar pandemic conditions have contributed through virtual monitoring to the quality of beneficiaries' health.
- Adding telecare to our practice was offered elderly simple, on-demand care – without the usual time loses and cost of most in-person visits. The elderly people who live in remote locations, video conferencing, smartphone apps, and online management systems connected the beneficiaries with the social service provider.
- Virtual visits assured beneficiaries that telecare staff are available and involved in their care, and also made it much easier for them to reach out with questions, reports early warning signs, and make a follow-up appointment to make sure they're on track in pandemic circumstances.
- In real fear of corona virus, the telecare beneficiaries scored better results related to depression, anxiety, and stress, and have fewer hospital admissions.



“In cooperation with the Center for Social Work Novi Pazar, with the support of the municipality of Bijelo Polje, with the grant we received through the Cross-Border Cooperation Program Serbia-Montenegro, we created a cross-border virtual Telecare social care service for the elderly, which is unique in Southeast Europe.

We are very satisfied with the functioning of this non-institutional service and the interest of the families of the elderly in using this service, which offers complete medical and social care by monitoring the daily health and mental state of the user by a professional and trained team of workers from these two institutions.” - Radosav Nišavić, director of the Home for the Elderly in Bijelo Polje.



“I am very satisfied with this project, because I am in daily contact with the medical staff who monitor my health condition. I have learned to handle a tablet computer and wear a smart watch, I have become disciplined and I am less lonely. I am also looking forward to the visits of the telecare team that takes care of to us. It would be good if this became a permanent service, I am not visiting the doctor anymore, because I have a doctor and other Telecare staff in my house every day.” - Rosa Veličković, pensioner from Bijelo Polje.



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