



Newsletter №10

August 2023

Let's Do Things Better Together



Republic of Serbia



Montenegro



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Dear readers,

In the first six months of this year four projects from the Second Call for Proposals of the IPA Cross -border Cooperation Programme Serbia-Montenegro 2014-2020 were completed and their results presented in this Newsletter. Projects contributed to strengthening social and cultural inclusion and improving capacities for exploiting tourism potentials in the cross-border area.

Under the Third Call for Proposals of the IPA Cross -border Cooperation Programme Serbia-Montenegro 2014-2020, three additional projects were contracted from the remaining funds. The projects aim to improving waste management, enhancement of employability and employment opportunities and improving capacities for exploiting tourism potentials in cross border region.

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“Beyond” Project opened in Niksic

On June 8, 2023, the initial conference of the project “Business enabling environment for youth employment – BEYOND” was held at the Technopolis Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center in Nikšić.

The aim of the conference was to familiarize participants with the project activities and planned results that are focused on increasing employability in prospective sectors of the economy of the cross-border area with a special focus on supporting innovations, dual education and cooperation of the economy and secondary vocational schools of mechanical profiles. The mentoring platform, which will be one of the results of the project, will enable continuous support for start-ups and existing companies on the territory of the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro.



Marko Kovačević, the Mayor of Nikšić municipality, opened the conference, who congratulated the project partners on the start of the “BEYOND” project and emphasized that the Nikšić municipality will continue to support such projects by creating a good business environment.

Aleksandra Mugoša, representative of the Ministry of Science and Technological Development, welcomed those present, noting that this is an important project that represents the strong commitment of the two countries

in creating support for innovation, within which not only the future of technical schools will be shaped, but also work on strengthening knowledge, competences and skills our students. Ms. Mugoša emphasized that, bearing in mind that IEC Technopolis is one of the most important partners in the implementation of the innovation policy and the Smart Specialization Strategy S3, it is of great importance to establish cooperation with the Regional Development Agency Zlatibor, which is precisely aimed at the realization of the aforementioned policies.

Dordžije Malović, executive director of the Technopolis Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center, and Slavko Lukić, director of the Zlatibor Regional Development Agency, emphasized the role of the “BEYOND” project in establishing cross-border partnerships and its impact on balanced regional development.

Stefan Jovanović, representative of the Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro, pointed out that out of the 20 active projects they are currently implementing, this institution already has activities related to dual education, which is extremely important for the implementation of the “BEYOND” project.



In the continuation of the conference, the project manager, Snežana Milisavljević, presented the planned activities, results and goals of the project, which will contribute to the creation of a stimulating business environment for youth employment in the cross-border area of Serbia and Montenegro through the networking of business support organizations and the effective joint use of the existing support infrastructure business in both countries.



Successfully implemented project - Common actions for better care

As part of the IPA Programme, the European Union financed the construction of the first saline room as well as equipment for neurofeedback and biofeedback therapy in the Daily Care Center "Tisa" in Bjelo Polje, announced the director of this institution, Ensad Omerović, at the final press conference organised to mark completion of the project "Common actions for better care".

"In addition, we launched a new program for users over 27 years old, which is also a novelty when it comes to Day Care Centers in Montenegro. We organized work in the second shift and hired two professional workers, a driver and a nurse, who took care of and worked with the users in the second shift," stressed Omerović.

The partner in this project was the Association for Helping Mentally Underdeveloped Persons "Tahir Taša Delić", Novi Pazar, which procured a van, within the project, for the needs of mobile teams engaged in rural areas in Novi Pazar, and equipment for the production of candles was purchased, too.

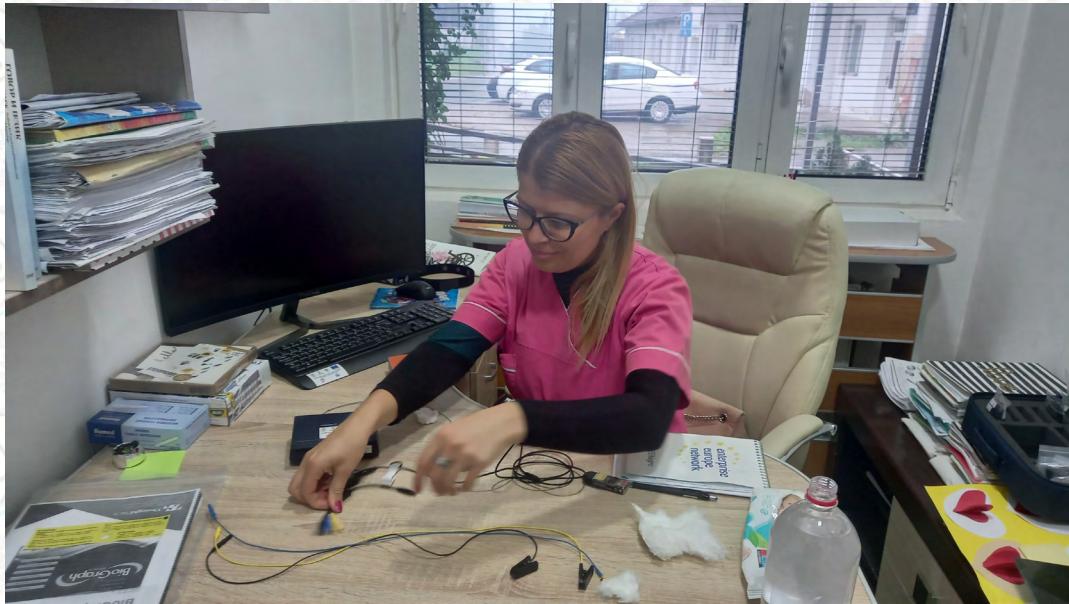


"As part of the IPA II Cross-Border Cooperation Program Serbia-Montenegro, 24 projects with a total value of over 6.74 million euros have been supported so far in the areas of employment, workforce mobility, social and cultural inclusion, environmental protection and encouraging climate





change adaptation, as well as the development of tourism potential through the valorization of natural and cultural heritage. The goal of these projects is to improve the standards and quality of life of people in the program area of the two countries," said Marko Dragaš, head of the Directorate for Regional and Infrastructure Projects in the Ministry of European Affairs of Montenegro.



"The commitment to the work of the structures in charge of managing the program in Montenegro and Serbia made it possible for us today to have the opportunity to present the results of this project, which are really significant and relate to the improvement of the conditions of children, young people and adults with disabilities in day care centers in Bijelo Polje and Novi Pazar, as well as the introduction of new services within these centers," said Dragaš.

The project "Common action to better care" was completed on May 31, 2023.



The first Cult bike route tour was organized

The first Cult Bike Tour was organized in period 4-10 July, 2023 and the tour gathered cycling enthusiasts from Austria, Norway, Germany, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Slovenia and Serbia as the first ones (as the Cult Bike Route Ambassadors) to experience parts of the newly traced 800km long bike route.

During five days of ride, the participants cycled over 150 km and passed through municipalities of Nova Varoš, Ivanjica and Raška, Rožaje and Berane, Kolašin and Mojkovac, Bijelo Polje and Pljevlja. The tour started in Kokin Brod in Serbia and finished in Zabojsko lake in Montenegro. Mixed gravel, grass, asphalt and dirt alternated on the route, contributing to its diversity. Village Štitkovo, village Katići, peak Jankov kamen on Golija mountain, Hajla mountain, Biogradsko lake, Đurđevića Tara bridge, Žabljak and Zabojsko lake are just some of the many places visited along the route.



All the tour participants shared their extreme satisfaction with the tour, willingness to join the next Cult Bike Route ride and wholeheartedly recommend it.

The new tours are already being developed and the Cult Bike Route will gladly host the familiar and new cycle enthusiasts and introduce them to the undiscovered beauty of nature and rich cultural heritage of Serbia and Montenegro.

The Cult Bike Route project was presented at three leading trade exhibition for the bicycle events: Bike Festival Garda Trentino in Italy, Willingen Bike Festival and Bike Festival Eurobike 2023 in Germany.





Borders that connect

Project “Borders that connect” - initiatives to improve the employment of people with mental disabilities in Serbia and Montenegro implemented in partnership by the NGO Impuls, Nikšić, the Humanitarian Organization “Dečje srce”, Serbia and the Day Care Center for Children and Persons with Disabilities, Nikšić began with implementation on February 1, 2023. The project is implemented in Montenegro in Nikšić, Plužine and Šavnik, and in Serbia in Priboj, Nova Varoš and Prijepolje.

Within the project, two vans were purchased, one vehicle for the Public Institution Center for Children and Persons, Nikšić and the other for the HO „Dečje srce“, Serbia. This purchase is of particular importance because it provides transportation for the users, both for the trainings in which they participated, and for going out into nature and harvesting medicinal plants.



Billboards were placed in all municipalities where the project is implemented, and promotional material was printed in order to present the project and raise awareness among the general public about the importance of integrating people with mental disabilities and their work engagement. For this purpose, meetings were organized with parents and representatives of local self-government, as well as a round table, the first of four planned during the project, which was organized in Priboj on May 9, 2023, on the topic “Fight against discrimination and stigma at the local level”.



A press conference was organized to present the project on June 16, 2023 in Nikšić and was attended by representatives of institutions, local communities, the NGO sector, employers, users with their parents, media representatives, and the support to the project was also provided by the Municipality of Nikšić.

During June and July, users were organized to go out into nature and harvest medicinal plants at locations that provided security for users and enabled them to enjoy a new, very useful and fun activity for them. With mentor support, they visited Lukavica, Krnovo, Ćeranića Gora. Further processing and drying of herbs is in progress in the previously secured area.



Hu Hu Project contributed to strengthening the development of tourism

Training for providers of tourist services was held in Berane in the period from May 17 to 19, 2023, in the organization of the NGO Center for the Study and Protection of Birds, Podgorica, NGO North Land, Berane and Regional Tourist Organization Sandžak, Novi Pazar. This three-day event, which brought together more than 20 participants, is one of the activities carried out within the Hoo Hoo project: Creation of Owl and Other Wildlife Experiences, financed by the European Union, within the Cross-border Cooperation Program Serbia-Montenegro 2014-2020.

The training participants were providers of tourist services from the cross-border area between Serbia and Montenegro, which includes 8 municipalities: Pljevlja, Bijelo Polje, Berane, Petnjica, Rožaje, Tutin, Sjenica and Prijepolje. The training was led by Jelena Krivčević, an expert with many years of experience in the field of rural tourism in Montenegro. The topics of the training were directed towards a stronger affirmation of nature-based tourism, as well as the acquiring of knowledge and skills that connect natural heritage with cultural heritage, gathering tourist offer as a whole package.



Rural tourism is increasing popularity each year, and more and more attention is being paid to sustainable practices and ways of promoting such destinations. The cross-border region of Serbia and Montenegro is full of potential for the development of nature-based tourism, and the education of local tourism providers is one of the first steps in order to improve the offer.

Within the two final press conferences were held. The first was held in Novi Pazar on July 26, 2023, and the second in Rožaje on July 27, 2023.

Project manager, Bojana Sekulić informed the audience in Rožaje that the project contributed to strengthening the development of tourism based on natural heritage and wild plant and animal species in the cross-border area between Serbia and Montenegro, through various activities jointly implemented by project partners. In the future, visitors will be offered a new tourist brand "Hoo wildlife experience" in the cross-border area between Serbia and Montenegro, within which they will be able to enjoy the tremendous beauty of flora and fauna of this region.

In addition to the project partners, the conferences were attended by representatives of local tourism organizations from Rožaj and Pljevlja, as well as representatives of local associations that were involved in project activities.

During the press conferences, promotional films were also shown, shot for promotional purposes of the new tourist brand "Hoo wildlife experience".



Training for doctors on reproductive health

In March 2023, a three-day training for doctors on “Prevention, diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer” was held in Vrnjačka Banja, which was attended by 20 doctors from Serbia and Montenegro. The training was held by prof. Dr. Zorica Milošević, radiology specialist with many years of experience at the Institute of Oncology and Radiology in Belgrade.

The training was organized within the cross-border project “IMPORTANT - Improving reproductive health in Serbia and Montenegro”, which aims to improve the quality and availability of services in the field of reproductive health and the level of awareness of the population about the importance of healthy lifestyles and prevention in preserving reproductive health, especially for socially vulnerable categories of the population. The project is implemented by the Health Center Novi Pazar in cooperation with FORS Montenegro - Foundation for the Development of the Northern Montenegro.



The main project activities include , procurement of new equipment and vehicles for public health institutions in the target area, training for the use of new equipment, cross-border trainings for medical personnel on prevention, diagnosis and treatment of breast and cervical cancer, lectures for women and youth on reproductive health, research on knowledge and habits related to reproductive health, a campaign to raise the level of citizens' awareness, publications on the importance of healthy lifestyles, preventive breast examinations and gynecological examinations, a cross-border conference on improving reproductive health, etc.

This two-year project, whose implementation began on December 1, 2021, is being implemented in Novi Pazar, Nova Varoš, Prijepolje, Raška, Sjenica, Priboj, Vrnjačka Banja and Tutin in Serbia, and in Nikšić, Pljevlja, Andrijevica, Berane, Bijelo Polje, Gusinje, Žabljak, Kolašin, Mojkovac, Petnjica, Plav, Plužine, Rožaje and Šavnik in Montenegro.

The total value of the “IMPORTANT” project is over 352,000 euros, to which the European Union allocated 249,900 euros.



Press conference – Protection of Polimlje environment from waste

Following two months since the beginning of the implementation of the project “Protection of Polimlje Environment from Waste”, the Public Utility DOO „Komunalno Lim“ Bijelo Polje organized press conference in Bijelo Polje on March 22nd 2023, where project objectives were presented, as well as upcoming activities within this eighteen months project.

The event was attended by legal representatives of beneficiaries including the Public Utility DOO „Komunalno Lim“ Bijelo Polje and Public Utility „Usluga“ Priboj, interested local stakeholders and representatives of media.



Through a mix of presentation and discussion, this was an opportunity for participants to be informed on environmental protection activities within the project and the actions to be implemented to improve technical capacities of two Utility Companies and methods for improvement of current state in Polimlje region when related waste management.

The total project budget is € 366,250.50 and it is implemented within the CBC Programme Serbia-Montenegro 2014-2020 in the municipalities of Bijelo Polje and Priboj.



Novi Pazar and Mojkovac get 2,000 waste separation bins

Municipalities of Novi Pazar and Mojkovac will soon receive an additional 2,000 waste separation bins and a press for recyclable waste, in order to reduce the amount of waste ending up in local landfills. Environmental protection measures were supported by the European Union, and municipalities will be assisted by the National Alliance for Local Economic Development (NALED) in establishing primary selection through the new two-year project "BEST - Waste management cooperation - Better Environment Sustainability Through Waste Management Cooperation".

The project, with the support of the European Union, is being implemented in partnership with the Center for Ecotoxicological Research of Montenegro, the municipality of Mojkovac and Public utility "Gradska čistoća" Novi Pazar, and the improvement of the waste system will be performed in the municipalities of Kolašin, Bijelo Polje and Tutin. All local governments will receive expert support in developing waste management plans that they are required to have, a road map for the circular economy and action measures for public utility companies. The focus will also be on awareness-raising campaigns among citizens about the proper separation of waste in households.

As the primary selection is just at the beginning in these regions, the project partners will work on developing the so-called system of two bins, in which one bin is intended for mixed waste, while the other is intended for recyclable packaging waste, such as PET packaging, aluminum cans and paper. After the new bins arrive in Mojkovac and Novi Pazar, PUC and municipal representatives will go through a series of trainings where they will learn how to properly collect and treat waste.

- We expect that the "new bins" on the streets of Novi Pazar and Mojkovac will arrive in the first half of next year, after the purchases that are expected in the last quarter of the year. So far, the operational working group of the project has been formed, the members of which are representatives of municipalities, public utility companies, civil society organizations and two private operators for waste management (business units), and we are currently working on the introduction of experts for environmental protection and waste management. They will have the important task of analyzing the current situation in the municipalities where the project is implemented, so that we can later measure the effects of our activities - says Director for Sustainable Development in the NALED, Slobodan Krstović.

The goal is that by 2025, the new waste separation system will include 1,000 households and ten business centers, and that the percentage of collection will improve by 20% in Novi Pazar, where currently only 1.6% of the total recyclable waste is properly treated. In Mojkovac, this percentage is still at zero, which is why the goal is to collect 396 tons in two years and hand them over for recycling.

In the process of joining the European Union, Serbia and Montenegro undertook obligation to harmonize the national legislation with the regulations of the European Union and fulfill the requirements of Chapter 27, which refers to environmental protection.

At the beginning of last year, the Waste Management Program 2022-2031 was adopted in Republic of Serbia, the main goal of which is to start the waste management system in accordance with the EU regulations, and local self-governments play a key role in it. By the end of 2029, separate collection of paper, metal, glass and textiles should be established in Serbia, the rate of recycling should be increased and illegal landfills should be cleaned.

Similar challenges are faced by institutions in Montenegro, where at the local and national level, about half of municipal waste ends up in unsanitary landfills, due to the lack of garbage bins.



Promo tour through the project - Mysterious ways of faith from Lim to Zeta

Within the project "Mysterious ways of faith from Lim to Zeta" a promotional tour was held in the period 20-22 June 2023 organized by the project partners of the Tourist Organization Priborj and the Diocese of Budimlje and Nikšić.

The aim of this project is to contribute to the improvement of capacities for exploiting tourism potential through joint integration, realization and development of religious tourism potentials and improving the institutional and human capacities of the cross border area.



"The promotional tour, which lasted three days, started from Priborj, where the newly opened visitor center in Priborj, which was built by the Tourist Organization Priborj through the project, was visited. Then we visited the monastery of St. Nicholas and the widely famous monastery treasury from the 17th century in Priborj. Then the Mileševa monastery with its treasury was visited, then the Kumanica monastery, and after crossing the border, the church of Saints Peter and Paul in Bijelo Polje, the Morača monastery was visited and Nikšić was visited while tourist sites were also visited during the trip. On the second day, a tour of the city of Nikšić, the Cathedral Church and the Church of St. Peter in Nikšić was organized, a visit to the seat of the Eparchy of Buda-Nikšić and the Patriarchal House, and a press conference and a tour of the pilgrimage center were organized. After that, there was a visit to the Ostrog monastery and a visit to Lukavica mountain and the church of St. Elijah. While on the third day we visited the Piva monastery, then the monastery of the Holy Trinity in Pljevlje, which has a rich treasury and where the participants of the promo tour were welcomed by the brotherhood of these monasteries," said project manager Vlada Radović, adding that after the successful completion of the promo tour, the project partners will cooperate with travel agencies and tour operators to offer the market a new tourist product - religious tourism tours.



Through this project, in addition to the construction of infrastructure facilities: the newly built visitor center in Priborj, and the adapted historical villa in Nikšić, a printed Handbook on religious tourism was created, training of hospitality workers was organized, a large conference was held on challenges in contemporary religious tourism. The project was promoted at tourism fairs in Belgrade and Budva, and a new tourist product was offered to the market in this cross-border area - the organization of religious tours. The project was successfully completed on June 30, 2023.



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JOINT TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

Zore Tomašević street no 5
31300 Prijepolje
Republic of Serbia
+381 33 711 705

jts@cbcserb-mne.org

www.mei.gov.rs

Živko KOLAŠINAC

Head of Joint Technical Secretariat
zivko.kolasinac@mei.gov.rs

www.eu.me

Miljana MATOVIĆ

Project Officer and Communication Specialist
miljana.matovic@mei.gov.rs

www.gov.me/mep

Darko ČUKURANOVIĆ

Programme Associate
darko.cukuranovic@mei.gov.rs

www.cbc-serb-mne.euolatebe.rs/en/

Milan ŽEŽELJ

Financial Specialist
milan.zezelj@mei.gov.rs

ANTENNA OFFICE

Šukrije Međedovića street no 1
84000 Bijelo Polje
Montenegro

Emil KOČAN

Project Officer
emil.kocan@cbcserb-mne.org

Mithat BAHОVIĆ

Programme Associate
mithat.bahovic@mep.gov.me

www.facebook.com/PrekogranicniProgramSRBMNE

www.cbc-serb-mne.euolatebe.rs/en/

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