

tourism development
& promotion project

Connecting Naturally - Development and Promotion of New Via Dinarica Routes in Kosovo*

GRANT FACT SHEET

AR BEN LLAPASHTICA

GOAL

Development and promotion of six new stages of Via Dinarica trail - some 50 kilometres long - to better connect Kosovo* portion of the trail with the trails in Albania and Montenegro, thus making the whole trail more competitive.

Location

Kosovo* (municipalities: Deçan/Deçane, Gjakove/Djakovica, Junik, Pejë/Peć)

Action value

EUR 49,499.00 (EU/RCC grant: EUR 43,559.12)

Category

Adventure tourism

Lead applicant

Community Development Fund - CDF

Implementation period

November 2018 - June 2019 (7 months)

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

INTRODUCTION

The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) implemented and European Union (EU) funded Tourism Development and Promotion Project worth EUR 5 million works to develop and internationally promote joint regional cultural and adventure tourism offer, increase number of tourists visiting the six Western Balkans economies (WB6), lengthen their stay in the region, increase revenues and employment in the industry, and remove policy barriers to further development of tourism.

The Project utilises EUR 1.62 million grants scheme to help improve quality of services and infrastructure along the selected routes. The first 12 out of 30+ grants - worth up to EUR 54,000 each - were awarded in November 2018. CDF is amongst the first twelve grant recipients.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

Current situation

The Via Dinarica and Trans Dinarica, i.e. 2,000 kilometres long hiking and biking trails along Dinaric Alps, are a crown of the adventure tourism in the WB6. The trails, though operational, are constantly being enhanced and further developed. The necessity to improve trail infrastructure and quality of services is especially present in the trans-border regions including in Kosovo*.

Actions to be performed through grant

The action to be carried out by CDF will build on the previous EU and USAID funded initiative that connected several national parks in Montenegro (Durmitor, Biogradska Gora and Prokletije) with Bjeshket e Nemuna/Prokletije in Kosovo* and Albania creating a trail that passes through numerous villages and local communities with their authentic cultures, customs, crafts and cuisine.

The action will develop and promote six new stages of the trail - some 50 kilometres long - that will better connect Via Dinarica trail in Kosovo* (60 km) with the trail portions going through Albania (100 km) and Montenegro (315 km).

Sections in Kosovo* include:

1. 10 km section between Gjakove/Đakovica, Molliq/Molić and Qafe leading to Morinë in Albania;
2. 8 km section from Stanet e Zogit leading to Rreshkëza - Lumi i Tropojës in Albania;
3. 6 km section between Stanet e Pllaqicës and Junik leading to Stanet e Dobërdolit crossing point in Albania;
4. 6 km section between Stanet e Belegut and Qafa e Belegut leading to Stanet e Bogiqës crossing point towards Montenegro;
5. 10 km section between Stanet e Belegut, Qafa e Hajnave leading to Goraždevac in Montenegro; and
6. 12 km section between Milishevc, Roshkodol, Podina e Madhe, and Pusi i Plavës leading to Jelen in Montenegro..

Development of these new trail sections will include mapping and GPS tracking of the new Via Dinarica routes in Kosovo*; cleaning, repairing and marking of the trail; and the installation of two info boards and three rest points.

To promote the newly developed trail sections, CDF will develop a set of promotional items to include hiking guidebook with maps for self-guided tourists (2,000 copies); trail maps (500 copies); a 20-minute documentary; social media content; as well as a website with interactive downloadable maps with GPS coordinates.

The guidebook and the maps will further include description of two to four day itineraries along

new trail sections and the information about some 20 service providers, amenities and products that can be found along the way including local food, crafts and bed and breakfast facilities. In addition, CDF will organise a FAM trip for 15 tour operators from the three economies to introduce them to the new tourism products and lobby for their inclusion in their offers.

In co-operation with the EU-funded *Extension of ViP Dinarica in the CBC region between Kosovo and Albania* project the new Via Dinarica trail sections will also be promoted at an international travel trade show.

In addition to development and promotion of the new trails, CDF will build capacities of the local tourism stakeholders through two sets of training courses. The course on mountain trails development for local mountaineering clubs will focus on uniform trail marking and maintenance model, whereas the course on tourism destination management will target local and central authorities, national park, and other relevant stakeholders in Kosovo*.

Results and sustainability

With the development of 50 kilometres of new trail sections, Via Dinarica hiking trail between Kosovo*, Albanian and Montenegro will be better connected, GPS trackable and thus more competitive. This new product will be promoted and local communities, women and youth in particular, along the newly developed trail sections will get involved in tourism by providing services to incoming tourists (local shops, restaurants, bed and breakfast, handicrafts).

Furthermore, a CDF-created working group for grant implementation, which includes representatives of central and local level authorities, destination management organisations, national parks and mountaineering federation, will continue its work after the grant is implemented and cooperate with counterparts from neighbouring economies, including a network of some 20 tourism services providers.



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