



tourism development
& promotion project

SeeCulture

GRANT FACT SHEET

GOAL

Expanding the concept of “Sarajevo Meeting of Cultures” landmark as a tourist attraction and symbol of cultural tourism to Novi Sad and Kotor and promotion of their diverse cultural heritage and development of a joint brand and a regional cultural tour.

Location

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia

Action value

EUR 53,925.80 (EU/RCC grant: EUR 48,533.22)

Category

Cultural tourism

Lead applicant

Sarajevo Meeting of Cultures - SMOC

Implementation period

November 2018 - May 2019 (6 months)

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. Sarajevo Meeting of Cultures (SMOC) is amongst the first twelve grant recipients.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

Current situation

While Western Balkans is seeing an increase in the number of tourists visiting the region, there is still a gap between what could be achieved and what has been achieved in the tourism sectors thus far. This is particularly true in relation to cultural tourism offer which is still insufficiently developed and has to parallel growing global competition. As tourists are seeking more meaningful travel experiences, the Western Balkans economies need to identify innovative ways to present their cultural tourism offers and attract more visitors.

Actions to be performed through grant

SMOC was specifically established to map out and promote Sarajevo's cultural tourism offer and promote the capital and Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole. It opted to use the city's cultural diversity as its key asset and the "selling point". In developing the concept and story line for the tourism product that would be offered at national and international markets, SMOC defined the starting point of Sarajevo's cultural tour - Sarajevo Meeting of Cultures (the brand); a point at the main pedestrian street where the East meets the West, i.e. where Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian architecture meet surrounded by Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox and Jewish places of worship. This point, marked with a road installation (landmark) pointing to the East and West, sets the tone for the narrative and storytelling to be applied through the rest of the tour and one- or multi-day itineraries. The concept is now being successfully implemented with some 600 tourists starting their cultural tour of Sarajevo from that point on daily basis.

Due to Western Balkans historic similarities, the grant is being utilised to expand the Sarajevo Meeting of Cultures concept to other cities in the region that have an interesting story to tell from historical and cultural perspectives. Both Novi Sad (Serbia) and Kotor (Montenegro) have been identified as cities where the Meeting of Cultures is a significant cultural asset and both cities (local governments and cultural and tourism institutions) have expressed great interest and readiness to implement the concept. The cities have in fact, in the initial consultation phase, proposed their "meeting of cultures" points, Gradska kuća - City Hal in Novi Sad and Stari pješački put - Old Pedestrian Road in Kotor.

In cooperation with cultural and tourism institutions in Kotor and Novi Sad - in particular with Kotor Tourism Organisation and University of Novi Sad (Faculty of Science, Department for Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management), as SMOC's collaborators on the grant implementa-

tion, SMOC will map out their specific cultural city routes, develop an action plan for implementation of the new routes, and storylines for presentation of their cultural heritage. Each city and their cultural route will be enriched with specific and recognisable brand. Further to this, SMOC will produce educational/training materials for Kotor and Novi Sad cultural tours to be utilised by tourism organisations, agencies and guides.

To further strengthen the position of Western Balkans as a cultural tourism destination, SMOC will, in cooperation with its partners, develop a regional branding strategy, presenting the entire region as a "Meeting of Cultures", and produce a Tourist Book featuring Sarajevo, Kotor and Novi Sad illustrating their "meeting of cultures" stories through a presentation of their historic and cultural significance .

Development of new cultural routes in Kotor and Novi Sad, and of a joint regional Meeting of Cultures offer including Sarajevo will be promoted through a set of three exhibitions (outreach/media events), one at each location, and the distribution of the Tourist Book, as well as through SMOC's continuous media engagement and online communications including SMOC's and collaborators' websites and social media channels.

Results and sustainability

The action performed through this grant will enable Kotor and Novi Sad to introduce new and innovative cultural tourism product in their offer and further valorise on their specific cultural heritage. With a view to expending the "Meeting of Cultures" brand and concept through the rest of the Western Balkans SMOC will conduct a research in Skopje and Tirana to explore the possibility of the concept's application in these two cities.



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