

tourism development
& promotion project

Horseback Riding Trail Across the Balkans

GRANT FACT SHEET

GOAL

Development and promotion of a new horseback riding route spanning over 500 kilometres connecting northern Serbia with southern Bosnia and Herzegovina and networking some 50 farmers (horse keepers) and horse riding clubs as service providers/tour operators and engaging them in the equestrian tourism industry.

Location

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia

Action value

EUR 54,000.00 (EU/RCC grant: EUR 45,900.00)

Category

Adventure tourism

Lead applicant

Fund for Microregional Tourism Cluster
Subotica-Palić

Implementation period

November 2018 - June 2019 (7 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. Fund for Microregional Tourism Cluster Subotica-Palić is amongst the first twelve grant recipients.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

Current situation

More than a 100 million people in the world and about 45 million Europeans relate to horseback riding. Equestrian tourism is one of the most developed branches of tourism in Western Europe, which started spreading towards the South East Europe in the 1980s due to attractiveness and diversity of terrain and the region's rich cultural heritage.

The potential for development of equestrian tourism in the Western Balkans, however, is not adequately exploited as the existing horseback riding tours are provided and promoted locally, tours operators are not acquainted with each other and there is no coordination between them or with tourism agencies. As a result long trail riding tours are rarely organised and potential visitors are not sufficiently informed about such offers.

Actions to be performed through grant

Through this grant the Fund for Microregional Tourism Cluster Subotica-Palić (Serbia) will join forces with its long-term partner - Organisation for regional tourism development - ROTOR (Bosnia and Herzegovina) - to develop and promote a 500-kilometre long horseback riding trail spanning from the north of Serbia (Vojvodina) to the south of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The trail will be composed of 10 to 20-kilometre long sections each starting and ending at a farm or an equestrian club where riders will be able to rest, get acquainted with the local history and heritage, enjoy cuisine, and change horses. The horseback riding and Via Dinarica trail will intersect at several locations. The tour as such would follow the model of "Robinson by day, king by night", whereby days would include riding adventure through the nature and evenings would provide time for leisure and storytelling.

The trail development will include survey of farms and farmers (horse owners) and equestrian clubs and centres providing horseback riding services in the two Western Balkans economies and their networking; preparing the feasibility study for the horseback riding trail; and trail marking and testing.

Based on the experience acquired through the trail testing, the trail will be branded and promoted in Serbian, English, German and Hungarian languages through a mobile-friendly website presenting the trail and attractions of the region, each involved farm, and includ-

ing a booking system and an interactive map. Promotional material including a high resolution trail map, leaflets, brochures and promotional gifts will also be produced, while the trail signage will include 50 info boards.

Results and sustainability

The grant will lead to the development of a first long horseback riding trail connecting Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the creation of a network of some 50 farming families, entrepreneurs and equestrian clubs which will become part of a common value chain. As such the trail can be include in the Europe-wide riding trail (bridge to Hungary) and can serve as a model for the expansion of the equestrian tourism in the region.

It is expected that in the first six months of operation the trail would be visited by at least 1,500 tourists and that this number would increase in the years to come (2020 onwards).



CONTACTS

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RCC Tourism Development and Promotion Project

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