



REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL'S GRANTS WORK PROGRAMME

Triple-P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy, and Pilots

1. Title

“Support to the implementation of the RCC Triple-P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy, and Pilots Grants Work Programme”

2. Objectives of the Programme, priorities for 2018 - 2020 and expected results

The Regional Cooperation Council's Grants Work Programme 2018-2020 Triple-P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy, and Pilots (RCC GWP Triple-P) covers the period 2018-2020 and relates to the RCC's Triple-P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy, and Pilots Project. Its implementation is based on the RCC's Financial Management Manual (RCC-FMM), setting down the procedures for the financial provisions which apply to the RCC Secretariat in Sarajevo and Liaison Office in Brussels.

RCC Grants Work Programme Triple P 2018-2020 aims to contribute to economic growth in South East Europe by supporting increase in employment and sustainability of SEE economies through regional tourism development.

The Programme concentrates on three thematic priority areas deriving from the Triple-P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy, and Pilots Project:

Priority 1 - Product Development and Promotion

Objective: To support development of basis of joint products for the international tourism market, and promote it globally, upon analysis and selection of international target markets and development of appropriate branding/marketing/PR strategies for the products.

Within the framework of the action a regional value chain in tourism industry would be compiled as a basis to develop joint products for the international tourism market, and promote it globally, upon analysis and selection of international target markets and development of appropriate branding/marketing/PR strategies for the products. Joint regional products will entail routes through and visits to several destinations in the region (with the criteria “3+” economies in each product), and will be built upon existing regional initiatives where possible. The products will be diversified from the conventional tourism products (i.e. coastal, ski, and city tourism), with a priority focus on adventure and cultural tourism - i.e. combining region's adventure trails (hiking, biking, skiing, fly-fishing, kayaking, rafting, caving, etc.) with cultural tourism and the richness of the region's cultural heritage. In this respect, the region will rely and build upon or scale up the promotion for the trails/routes physically available and/or in development (i.e. in case of adventure routes Via Dinarica trails, and similar) while in the areas of cultural routes, it will utilise the base of the SEE's cultural heritage sites developed under the Ljubljana Process and the RCC's Task Force on Culture and Society. This value chain will represent the first regional product brand of a kind and will involve representatives of government, private and civil sector,

including the relevant local/regional and international stakeholders (organisations, tour operators, media, etc.) in the overall process. The civil society, including economic operators, will be properly consulted and involved in the development of the new tourism products to ensure that the various interests are taken into consideration.

In execution of Priority 1, the action will particularly:

- 1.1: Identify and assess regional tourism products: regional tourist itineraries/routes in priority market niches and with special attention given to: cultural/historical, adventure, and eno/gastro, rural/agriculture tourism, based on participation of 3+ economies in each route and through cooperation of public and business sector (particularly SMEs), as well as local communities and civil society
- 1.2: Analyse and select international target-markets for potential customer-base
- 1.3: Develop and execute appropriate branding, promotion and marketing action plans for tourism products developed
- 1.4: Support promotion of specific regional products through an array of PR and outreach activities (international publications, specialised tourism fairs and related events, specialised outreach events for potential customers, FAM trips for distinguished int'l travel journalists, bloggers, opinion makers, etc.)

Priority 2: Policy development

Objective: To address policy-level constraints in developing and rolling-out the regional tourism products and establishing an online platform to use for promotion as well as to serve as the community of practice among the involved stakeholders.

This component of the action will be focusing entirely on addressing policy-level constraints in developing and rolling-out the regional tourism products and establishing an online platform to use for promotion as well as to serve as the community of practice among the involved stakeholders. While different products will have different constraints, there are several shared challenges in terms of policy development identified also by the TEG in the previous period. These include skills gaps and skills mismatches in the tourism sector; lacking support services for the tourism industry such as information, health, and security; protected area management and development of destination management organisation; visa issues, border crossings and others. This component of work will use the TEG platform and the involvement of both public and private sector to prioritise the main policy constraints and roll-out appropriate solutions, whether these pertain to education of workforce in tourism industry, (where development/facilitation of the cooperation platform could be executed between national/regional/international providers of educational services in tourism, in order to create a capacity building portfolio of services to be offered across the region to companies, SMEs and individuals), border crossing or visa issues (with the possibility of defining - bilateral or trilateral - tourist zones, where tourists engaged in winter, water and other sports activities such as hiking, cycling, rafting, skiing, sport fisheries, etc. would be able to cross the border with special tourist permits outside the official border crossing points), or capacity development at the local level to provide tourism support services. The aim will be to define some of these details in special bilateral or multilateral agreements between neighbouring economies. The new policy proposals will be developed in an inclusive manner. To this aim: 1) internal consultations between the relevant ministries will be conducted to settle possible administrative disputes and avoid conflicting strategic objectives; likewise, consultations with the civil society, including economic operators will be held to ensure that all relevant interests are taken into consideration. In addition, formulation of new policy proposals will include an estimation of the implementation costs and an analysis of impacts on the society. This approach will contribute to credibility and relevance of the new policy proposal, thus facilitating their actual implementation.

The development of the regional tourism online platform will take the interoperability standards of the involved IPA beneficiaries into consideration.

In execution of Priority 2, the action will focus its efforts on:

- 2.1: Analysing, identifying and prioritising common issues and challenges hindering regional tourism development, promotion and cooperation, building on the previous work of TEG (i.e. skills gaps,

sustainable tourism development with special focus on protected area management and development of destination management organisation, visa issues, border crossings, improvement of tourism-related services such as information, health, security, etc.)

2.2: Developing regional proposals for addressing common regional obstacles to tourism development and promotion (i.e. tailor-made educational, training and certification programmes/modules, formal and non-formal learning tools for public/private sector representatives to address the skills gap barriers, annual high level conferences)

2.3: Providing support to initiate regional agreements to resolve obstacles to regional tourism development and promotion (including the possible creation of a regional Network of protected tourism destinations)

2.4: Developing regional tourism online platform (serving both the purpose of promotion, and internal community of practice among the involved stakeholders).

Priority 3 - Pilot Projects

Objective: To support creation of preconditions and enabling environment for tourism product development and support mitigating sector challenges on micro-localities.

In order to achieve best possible results in promotion of the joint regional tourism products, it has been determined of substantial importance to improve the tourism infrastructure and activities on the local level throughout the region, namely on the localities along the routes that will be part of the joint regional products. Local governments, small businesses and NGOs have an important role in contributing to the growth of tourism sector, and therefore need to increase their capacity in order to provide the services that would fit the needs of the tourism industry. The types of services could include information points on localities, local infrastructure network and utilities, health, security, etc. This area of intervention will engage the local community (local governments, small business and civil sector) along the routes of the joint regional tourism products and support them in capacity building in tourism destination management. In cases where specific local community is unable to develop the sufficient capacity, support will be given to multiple local governments clustering into destination management organisations. While Priority 1 and 2 will be focused on development and promotion of regional tourism products and improvement of the policies pertaining to SEE's tourism, respectively, Priority 3 will create preconditions and enabling environment for tourism product development and mitigating sector challenges on micro-localities. Namely, it will directly support small-scale projects in the local community(ies) on the tourism routes through the region, aiming to improve tourism infrastructure and services, ensure growth of tourism operations both within public and private sector, and ultimately create new jobs and income generation opportunities in target localities. Key beneficiaries of the assistance under this activity will be local authorities, local and regional tourism development agencies, civil sector, NGOs, small businesses, and tourism clusters in selected areas. The financial assistance to beneficiaries will be provided based on open and competitive selection processes and selection criteria. From the viewpoint of the action's internal coherence, this activity will, through particular approach through tourism, further reinforce implementation of local strategies from the viewpoint of economic development and competitiveness, and will also be directly inter-connected with Priority 1 and 2.

In execution of Priority 3, the action will focus its efforts on:

3.1: Implementing direct interventions on the ground to address specific and immediate gaps in tourism products identified (i.e. awareness-raising, capacity-building for sustainable destination management, tourism certification systems, small-scale tourism infrastructure development, etc.)

3.2: Initiating and fostering pilot public-private partnerships in implementation and promotion of regional tourism routes on micro-localities

3.3: Supporting local initiatives for innovative tourism

3.4: Assisting select local authorities in including tourism in local development plans

As per decision of Tourism Expert Group, dated 27th June 2018 the areas of intervention within Priority 3 – Pilot Projects are:

Cultural tourism, and in particular the **themes** of

- the Crossroads of Civilizations as regional identity – fortifications to be the first product archipelago to introduce the identity
- Archaeological sites from Roman period
- Art and design of post-World War II monuments – establishing the new product regional route

Adventure tourism:

- Via Dinarica including related programmes (i.e. Trans Dinarica)

The list below provides an indicative list of activities that address the needs as they are recognised in the current stage of product development and market readiness. The following list is not exhaustive and appropriate innovative activities that are not mentioned below may also be considered for support. By way of illustration projects could contain a range of the following indicative activities:

- Mapping out trails, sites and locations of interest for priority themes above, either as each route separately or as all routes together within a specific geographic area;
- Assessment of tourism readiness for specific sites and locations of interest for priority themes (in particular the cultural heritage priority themes) either as each route separately or as all routes together within a specific geographic area;
- Storytelling as a vehicle for heritage promotion and interpretation in relation to the priority themes above;
- Comparative analysis of Roman heritage sites against the requirements of the certified cultural routes of the Council of Europe that are active and present in the WB6 region, and that deal with heritage of the Roman period;
- Analysis and development of a regional coordination structure for Via Dinarica, including proposals for long-term business models;
- Identification of needs and development of training programmes for specialised adventure guides (i.e. hiking, rafting, mountain biking, kayaking, climbing, paragliding, etc..) or other service providers;
- Development of plan of promotion for Via Dinarica and/or related programmes for 2018/2019 promotion period, that could include but not be limited to development of promotional materials, attendance at trade events (fairs), organisation of promotional visits by trade or media and similar.

3. Eligibility criteria

In order to be eligible for a grant, applicants must:

- belong to one of the following categories:
 - non-governmental or non-profit making organisations,
 - associations or foundations;
- be a legal person or a local authority;
- be established in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia or The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹

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

¹ Beneficiary economies from the Western Balkans on a territory of the RCC Triple-P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy, and Pilots

- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action, not acting as an intermediary.

Elaboration of the above type of organisations that are eligible would include, but not be limited to: local and regional tourism development organisations, tourism clusters, educational and training organisations actively engaged in tourism development and national and nature parks.

4. Selection and award criteria

Activities envisaged under this Work Programme will be implemented through grant scheme modalities based on procedures defined by RCC-FMM. The table in section 7 below outlines the proposed distribution of funds per each priority. The evaluation will be carried out in accordance with the procedures set out in the RCC-FMM.

5. Maximum rate of the RCC financing

The RCC's contribution is to be calculated in relation to the eligible expenditure, which is based on provisions laid down in the RCC-FMM. The RCC's contribution is up to 90% of the eligible expenditure. The co-financing under thematic priorities 1-3 will be provided by the end grant beneficiaries and it can be from public or private funds. End beneficiaries of grants should contribute a minimum of 10% of the total eligible cost of the project.

6. Indicative time-schedule of calls for proposals

The RCC Grants Work Programme (RCC GWP) will be implemented in three annual cycles, 2018, 2019 and 2020. For the three calls for proposals both open and restricted procedures are possible. For 2018, the following time-schedule is envisioned:

The indicative timetable* of the 2018 Call for Proposals (CfP) is as following:

• Publication of 1st Call for Proposals:	16/07/2018
• Info sessions	16/07/2018 – 26/07/2018
• Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the RCC	26/07/2018
• Last date on which clarifications are issued by the RCC	02/08/2018
• Deadline for submission of concept notes	16/08/2018
• Information to the applicants on the results of the concept note evaluation and invitations to the successful applicants to submit the full applications	30/08/2018
• Deadline for submission of full application forms	27/09/2018
• Information to applicants on the evaluation of full application forms and notification on award and request for administrative documents	12/10/2018
• Complaints period	12/10/2018-26/10/2018
• Contract signature	26/10/2018

**Provisional date. This indicative timetable may be updated by the RCC during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the RCC website.*

The duration of the project proposal under this Call for Proposals is estimated to 2-7 months.

The time-schedule and allocation of CfP for 2019 and 2020 will be determined at the later stage.

7. Indicative amount of calls for proposals for 2018-2020

For 2018, the allocation is as following:

The Call for Proposals will be in the total amount of 540.000 EUR.

For 2019, the allocation is as following:

The Call for Proposals will be in the total amount of 540.000 EUR.

For 2020, the allocation is as following: 540.000 EUR.

Priority	CfP (in % points)	Rate of RCC's Contribution up to (%)
Priority 1 - Product Development and Promotion	0%	90
Priority 2: Policy development	0%	90
Priority 3 - Pilot Projects	100%	90