



tourism development
& promotion project

Connecting Naturally Through Via Dinarica White Trail

GRANT FACT SHEET

GOAL

Construction of a new circuit trail on Via Dinarica White Trail in Tara Canyon and development of an associated cultural tourism component (storytelling) based on a tradition of river log-driving (today's rafting) employed by lumberjack prior to the 2nd World War; mapping, GPS tracking and consistent marking and promotion of eight standardised one-day itineraries along the cross-border Trail portions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro; and development of a feasibility study for a cultural route connecting fortress in the same geographic area.

Location

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro

Action value

EUR 53,980.00 (EU/RCC grant: EUR 48,460.00)

Category

Cultural/Adventure tourism

Lead applicant

Centre for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives - CSTI

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. Centre for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives (CSTI) is amongst the first twelve grant recipients.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

Current situation

The concept of Via Dinarica as a mega hiking trail along the Dinaric Alps (from Slovenia to Albania) has grown from an idea and a grassroots initiative into a market-oriented regional tourism product which is constantly developing. Though the product is far from being fully developed in the six Western Balkans economies, it is receiving high recognition and attention at international markets.

Some of the challenges in the product development and marketing include unified presentation and promotion, as well as obtaining permissions to use the land and to implement infrastructure projects and install signage.

Actions to be performed through grant

Since 2011, CSTI has been involved in the development and promotion of Via Dinarica trail in Montenegro and the cross-border region with Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Kosovo*.

Through its previous activities it has developed a feasibility study to construct six-kilometre-long thematic circular trail along Via Dinarica White Trail passing through Tara Canyon (Durmitor National Park), one of the main natural attractions in Montenegro. Upon obtaining necessary permissions, CSTI will clean, fix and construct parts of the trail as necessary, and install trail marking, pointers and eight info boards along the trail, as well as a sheltered seating area, nine benches and a safety fence at a viewpoint. This circular trail will be enriched with a cultural tourism segment, i.e. developed storyline about the traditional river log-driving performed by lumberjacks in the Canyon up to the 2nd World War and its transformation into today's rafting. This story will be part of the tourism offer presented at six specific points (information boards) along the circuit. Further to this, CSTI will also install five orientation boards on the access road to the circuit trail for easier orientation and tracking.

To further improve the quality of hiking experience on the 210-kilometre long segment of Via Dinarica White Trail in the cross-border region between BiH and Montenegro, CSTI will conduct mapping and GPS tracking of the trail and will produce topographic maps and a hiking guidebook including eight one-day itineraries in the region; five in Montenegro and three in BiH. Produced in two languages (English and

Montenegrin) and in 4,000 copies each, maps and guidebooks will be distributed by tourism offices, tour operators and outdoors clubs and used by tour guides and individual hikers and will entail description of the trail and information about some 100 service providers on the path including guest houses, bread and breakfast facilities and restaurants.

With a view to further product development, CSTI will conduct a feasibility study for the creation and promotion of a cultural route in Montenegro building on the stories of medieval fortresses present along the Via Dinarica trail. It will also conduct needs assessment for further White Trail development in Montenegro.

The new circuit trail, improved infrastructure and guiding/promotional materials will be promoted at a high-level media event organised in Tara Canyon.

Results and sustainability

Actions conducted under the grant will result in the development of a new portion of Via Dinarica White Trail in Tara Canyon featuring cultural tour which will become a benchmark for future trail upgrades; detailed mapping and GPS tracking of more than 200 kilometres of Via Dinarica trail in BiH and Montenegro; and the production of hiking maps and guidebook in two languages.

Through the needs assessment and the feasibility study, the actions will also pave the way for further trail and product development to be funded through similar grants and by the Montenegrin Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism.



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* 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.