



# PRONACUL

Promotion and preservation of natural and cultural heritage  
to develop sustainable tourism in protected areas

**Interreg**   
EUROPEAN UNION  
**ADRION** **ADRIATIC-IONIAN**  
European Regional Development Fund - Instrument for Pre-Accession II Fund

**PRONACUL**





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## Project identification info

- Programme priority: 2) Sustainable Region
- Programme priority specific objective: Promote the sustainable valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage as growth assets in the Adriatic-Ionian area
- Project title: Promotion of natural and cultural heritage to develop sustainable tourism in protected areas
- Project acronym: PRONACUL
- Project number: 842
- Project value: 1.770 348, 98 Eur
- Project duration: April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 - September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 (extended until 31.3.2023)
- Name of the lead partner: Zasavje Regional Development Agency
- www: <https://pronacul.adrioninterreg.eu/>



Grad Gamberk (Simon Rak)

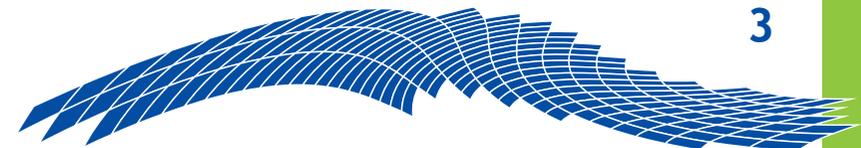
**PRONACUL, a practical Interreg ADRION programme with the focus to promote and to help to preserve natural and cultural heritage and to develop sustainable tourism in protected areas in the Adriatic-Ionian areas**

The PRONACUL project is funded under the INTERREG V-B Adriatic-Ionian ADRION Programme 2014-2020. The leading project partner is the Zasavje Regional Development Agency from Slovenia (Zasavje RDA).

The purpose of the ADRION\_842\_Pronacul project is promotion of natural and cultural heritage to develop sustainable tourism in protected areas within the Interreg ADRION Program under priority axis no. 2 Environment - sustainable region; Program priority of the specific objective regarding the promotion of sustainable valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage as a means of growth in the Adriatic-Ionian areas.

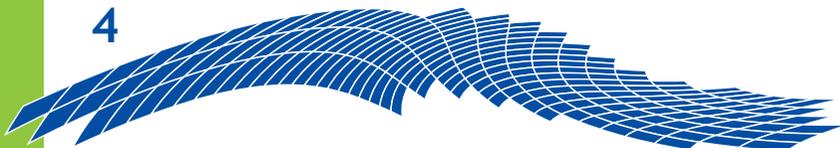
PRONACUL's main overall objective is to achieve level of capacity for the stakeholders in the fields of improved management of natural and cultural heritage for sustainable tourism development in ADRION area. PRONACUL's activities will make changes to the current situation by developing new tourist products, that will drive PRONACUL partners into position, where natural and cultural heritage will be perceived as new content. According to the Lead partner of the PRONACUL project, almost all 12 project partners and 2 associated partners have same form of heritage sights, some protected by UNESCO or Natura 2000 or will become protected sights within PRONACUL's pilot areas, which is the main focus of the project.

The partnership of the project was initially formed from 12 project partners and 2 associated project partners from selected areas of 6 countries. Project partner 5 Region of Ionian Islands ΕΛΛΑΔΑ (ELLADA) has not been involved in the project content and was therefore on their wish excluded halfway through the project. The end project partnership consisted of 11 active partners and 2 associated project partners.



# WHO ARE THE PRONACUL PARTNERS

 <p><b>Lead partner - NO1:</b> Zasavje Regional Development Agency SLOVENIA</p>	 <p><b>Partner - NO6:</b> Entrepreneurship and Business Association LiNK BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA</p>	 <p><b>Partner - NO11:</b> Metropolitan City of Bologna</p>
 <p><b>Partner - NO2:</b> LAG EASTERN VENICE VeGAL ITALIA</p>	 <p><b>Partner - NO7:</b> University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Sciences SERBIA</p>	 <p><b>Partner - NO12:</b> Centre for the promotion of entrepreneurship Piran Ltd SLOVENIA</p>
 <p><b>Partner - NO3:</b> Rijeka Tourist Board CROATIA</p>	 <p><b>Partner - NO8:</b> Public Institution “Development Agency of City of Trebinje“ BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA</p>	<p><b>Associated partners:</b></p>
 <p><b>Partner - NO4:</b> ILIA CHAMBER ELLADA (GREECE)</p>	 <p><b>Partner - NO9:</b> Zagreb County Tourist Board CROATIA</p>	 <p>Cultural center Zagorje ob Savi SLOVENIA;</p>
 <p><b>Partner - NO5:</b> Region of Ionian Islands (GREECE) - partner excluded from the partnership</p>	 <p><b>Partner - NO10:</b> Municipality of Raška SERBIA</p>	 <p>Public Institution „Nature Park Žumberak - Samoborsko gorje“ CROATIA</p>



## 1. THE PRONACUL INITIATIVE

## 2. THE PRONACUL PROJECT PARTNERS AND ITS MAIN OBJECTIVES

- Zasavje Regional Development Agency SLOVENIA
- LAG EASTERN VENICE VeGAL ITALY
- Rijeka Tourist Board CROATIA
- ILIA CHAMBER (GREECE)
- Region of Ionian Islands (GREECE)
- Entrepreneurship and Business Association LiNK BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
- University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Sciences SERBIA
- Public Institution “Development Agency of City of Trebinje“ BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
- Zagreb County Tourist Board CROATIA
- Municipality of Raška SERBIA
- Metropolitan City of Bologna ITALY
- Centre for the promotion of entrepreneurship Piran Ltd SLOVENIA

### ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

- Cultural center Zagorje ob Savi SLOVENIJA;
- Public Institution „Nature Park Žumberak - Samoborsko gorje“HRVATSKA

## 3. AN INITIATIVE FOR THE PROMOTION AND PRESERVATION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS

## 4. COMMON METHODOLOGY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

- 4.1 Better support and more visitors
- 4.2 Small scale investments and demonstration projects
- 4.3 Common methodology of natural and cultural management for heritage
- 4.4 Common Guidelines Management System
- 4.5 Trainings and workshops

## 5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH THE VIRTUAL CHAMBER

- 5.1 A virtual chamber, a way of promoting and transferring the common methodology to other protected areas of the Adriatic-Ionian area
- 5.2 How to become part of the story of the Virtual Chamber?
- 5.3 A strategy for improving transnational, national, regional and local policies
- 5.4 National and international networking conferences
- 5.5 Policy recommendations for different levels of policy making
- 5.6 The PRONACUL follow-up project proposals

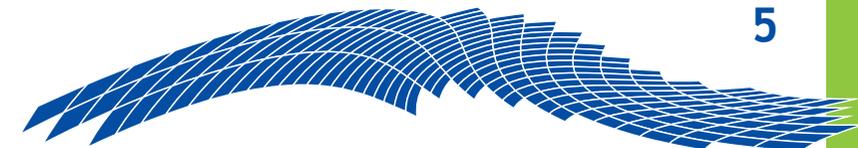
## 6. RAISING AWARENESS OF GENERAL POPULATION THROUGH DIFFERENT METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 How we communicated
- 6.2 Common visual identity
- 6.3 The pictures tell the PRONACUL story

### PRONACUL PARTNERS COORDINATORS

### CONCLUSION

### PRONACUL'S TRANSNATIONAL ROUTE



# 1. THE PRONACUL INITIATIVE

## Implemented Activities, Outputs and Pilot actions

PRONACUL's main activities and objectives were to achieve level of capacity for the stakeholders in the fields of improved management of natural and cultural heritage for sustainable tourism development in ADRIAN areas. PRONACUL's activities made several changes to the current tourism development situation in ADRIAN areas by developing and producing new tourist products, that will drive PRONACUL partners into a position, where natural and cultural heritage will be perceived as new content.

During the implementation of PRONACUL's activities, a methodology was developed and applied in 15 pilot areas where clusters have already been established, involving local, regional, national and transnational subjects in the field of tourism. The transnational framework analysis and exchange of 46 best practices have been contributed by all partners. There is a total of 21 protected areas, 15 of them pilot areas, where best practices from more developed areas have been implemented to less developed ones.

The project has set up a platform called Virtual chamber, that acts as an advisory body for tourism developers via an online platform, where partners and stakeholders exchange experiences and best practices in natural and cultural heritage management, thus enabling implementation in other not included ADRIAN areas and in case of sufficient interest shown by stakeholders, on an even wider scale. Small scale investments with a special innovative or demonstrative character are implemented in some of the pilot areas.

By implementation of various trainings, workshops, capacity building activities, dissemination and capitalisation activities, a Stakeholders network has been established. An action plan specifying operating tasks for the promotion of sustainable valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage in protected areas.

In an effort to improve policies, the project did not only influence key stakeholders but also to the policy makers by disseminating results, outputs and deliverables in the form of recommendations for concrete local, regional, national and transnational strategy documents to ensure further development on the field of valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage.

Experiences from the pilot areas helped formulate proposals for inclusion of a common methodology, that connects all partner destinations by a regional route, which will be certified by the European Institute of Cultural Routes, with a possibility to be placed under »Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe«. In this way, it will also serve as a best practice for the development of other themed routes in other areas across EU.

# THE PRONACUL PROJECT PARTNERS AND ITS MAIN OBJECTIVES



- |   |   |
|---|---|
|    | 1. Zasavje Regional Development Agency                              |
|    | 2. LAG EASTERN VENICE VeGAL   |
|    | 3. Rijeka Tourist Board   |
|    | 4. ILIA CHAMBER ΕΛΛΑΔΑ  |
|    | 5. Region of Ionian Islands - partner excluded from the partnership |
|    | 6. Entrepreneurship and Business Association LiNK                   |
|    | 7. University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Sciences                      |
|    | 8. Public Institution "Development Agency of City of Trebinje"      |
|    | 9. Zagreb County Tourist Board                                      |
|   | 10. Municipality of Raška   |
|  | 11. Metropolitan City of Bologna                                    |
|  | 12. Centre for the promotion of entrepreneurship Piran Ltd          |

#### Associated partners:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  | a Cultural center Zagorje ob Savi                              |
|  | b Public Institution „Nature Park Žumberak - Samoborsko gorje“ |

<https://www.adrioninterreg.eu/index.php/about-program/cooperation-area/>



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DEVELOPMENT  
AGENCY

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*Pronacul web page:*

<https://pronacul.adrioninterreg.eu/>

## Zasavje RDA, a key driver of regional development

Zasavje Regional Development Agency is the key regional institution, which is responsible for regional development tasks such as coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the regional development program, the regional development agreement and regional projects. Additionally, the Zasavje RDA provides technical assistance for the coordination and

implementation to several regional councils, the Council of the region and Regional development council being the most vital ones. Furthermore, our institution plays a very important part of the region's future development by managing the Just Transition Fund (JTF) for the Zasavje region. JTF is an important financial mechanism with measures to alleviate socio-economic challenges and to stimulate the regional economy growth in a fair and just way. Beside



*Municipality Zagorje ob Savi*  
*Source: Zasavje RDA*





Vila Medea - head office of the Zasavje RDA  
Source: Zasavje RDA

the main regional tasks and JTF, our institution is also involved in several local, regional, national and EU funded project, where we are continuously implementing new ideas and thus affecting the regional development of the Zasavje region. With the team of highly qualified employees, we try to follow economic, social, energy and other development trends to improve the lives of everyone in our region. One of the important aspects for further development of Zasavje region represent all the tourism programs from which PRONACUL project presents a significant role on which new development ideas will form.

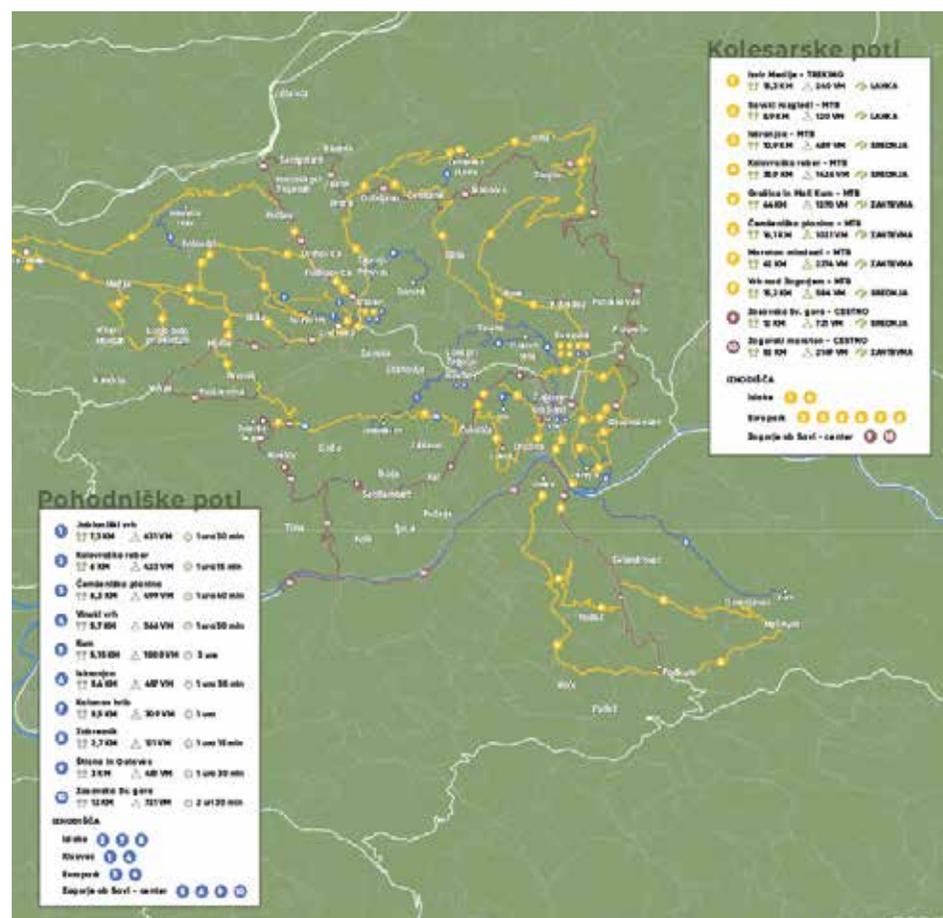
### Purpose of Adrion PRONACUL project activities for the natural and cultural areas in municipality Zagorje ob Savi

The Zasavje Regional development agency has decided through the proposed PRONACUL project content and activities to identify new potential, raise awareness and to raise recognition value for the promotion and interpretation of the existing natural and cultural heritage of the project area in municipality Zagorje ob Savi and to valorise them through new

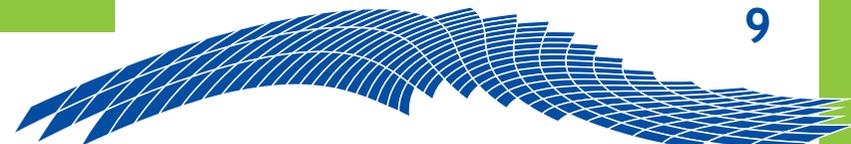
sustainable tourism offer and projects. Connecting natural and cultural heritage sites in the municipality Zagorje ob Savi by establishing a new traveling route composed with the points of interest of Natura 2000 areas and Zagorje ob Savi Mining Museum, which operates under the project's associated partner Cultural Center Delavski dom Zagorje ob Savi.

As an important part of the project content, an electric vehicle and an electric charging station were

purchased to facilitate accessibility to the pilot areas. This small-scale investment made during the project municipality Zagorje ob Savi more accessible to its citizens and tourists, symbolizing basic orientation in the pursuit of cleaner air in the Zagorje valley. An electric vehicle with an electric charging station was set shown as eco-innovation, which offered guided tours a positive environmental impact on visiting Natura 2000 protected areas in the municipality Zagorje ob Savi.



PRONACUL leaflet (cycling and hiking in Zagorje ob Savi), (Source: Andraž Grum)





*PRONACUL electric vehicle and e-charging station  
(Source: Jernej L., RRA Z)*

The concept of PRONACULs project development is based on the envisaged regional development strategy, which defines the potential development of tourism in the municipality Zagorje ob Savi. The newly designed strategy defines in more detail that future tourism should more emphasize the need for the development of tourism infrastructure and innovative thematic tourism products. Particularly in the part of integrating the different providers and achieving a level of awareness of the tourism sub-brand Visit Zagorje and Visit Zasavje, achieving adequate identification of tourism potentials arising from the appropriate use of cultural and natural heritage, the potential of people's customs and traditions, indigenous cuisine and the promotion of exercise and recreation in nature.

### **Project Pronacul as an important guideline for future tourism development in municipality of Zagorje ob Savi**

Of particular importance to this PRONACUL project was the fact that the municipality of Zagorje ob Savi is in the field of tourism income generation and in terms of the available tourism offer quite underdeveloped. It is defined that the tourism offer lacks the necessary financial inputs for development and promotion and a large number of organizational elements which are necessary for a quality tourist visit. Based on this fact, it is important to put into function existing attractions and resources that are available, using new funds from different project's sources of funding and earmark them for promotion, maximize the usage of management of tourism attractions, identifying the right natural and cultural heritage points, enhancing the necessary infrastructure and support infrastructure object, educating working class in the tourism industry and to actively involve different stakeholders and local, regional and national bodies to contribute to tourism development.

### **Tourism aspect in Municipality Zagorje ob Savi**

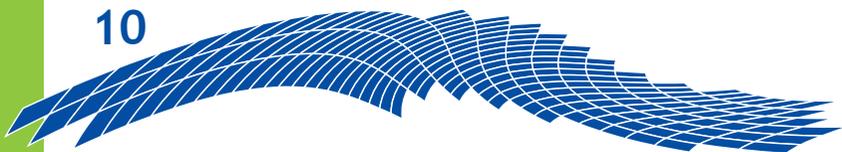
Tourism has been till now one of the least exploited opportunities in Municipality Zagorje ob Savi, as it first started to develop only a few years ago, when more systematic work started on the first tourism projects. To be clear, tourism was at home in Zagorje ob Savi and had its own development in the past. This was mainly thanks to the thermal baths of the Medijske Toplice and a large presence of coal industry. But with the closure of the thermal bath and decreasing number of jobs from coal and other industrialization, tourism development stopped over the night.

With the help of workshops and trainings and analyses carried out within the framework of PRONACUL project, it was defined how to exploit the many tourism potentials in the future and how to put the Zasavje region on the tourism map. Tourism activity within the Municipality of Zagorje ob Savi needs to be developed in a more coordinated manner in connection with non-governmental organizations, with a focus on the cultural and natural heritage, which consists of Natura 2000 areas in connection with the Sava river, the development of cycling and hiking trails and through the inclusion of industrial heritage elements such as abandoned buildings and other post-industrial features.

In order to make the natural and cultural heritage as accessible and promoted as possible, we have teamed up with the Zagorje Valley Cycling Club and the Zagorje Mountaineering Association and together created new hiking and cycling trails that connects these natural and cultural heritage elements. The newly designed cycling and hiking trails are illustrated in a newly produced leaflet. These new trails represent a new tourism offer that is assessable to all visitors.

In the last years Zagorje ob Savi tourism has already shown significant positive growth trends in the growth of the number of tourists and overnight stays, the growth of inflows from tourism and investments in tourism. There is the greatest interest from visitors and tourist coming on to hiking and sports and other recreational programs, events and elements of cultural heritage related to the mining and glass-making tradition. Many historical monuments commemorate the events of World War I and World War II in Zagorje ob Savi. A lot of castles and churches present an important tangible and intangible aspect of cultural offer.

The offer also provides a rich gastronomy experience, which comes from several typical food types that relate to the mining and glass industry and orig-





Show cooking dishes from the cuisine of Zasavje  
(Source: Jernej L., RRAZ)

inate from the municipality Zagorje ob Savi. Among them, Zasavska liver sausage, “Ajmuht” - kind of a cream soup and Rabbit soup are the best known for this place.

### **PRONACULs identification of cultural heritage iz Zagorje ob Savi**

One of the key facts that PRONACUL's focus with the connection of Mining Museum Zagorje ob Savi was to identify why and how to boost the cultural heritage that museum represents. There are, of course, several reasons why the attempts to develop cultural tourism in Zagorje ob Savi have not been successful so far - but the main reason is certainly the unprofessional implementation



Castle Gamberk (Source: Simon Rak)

of the related tourism programmes. Sustainable tourism based on cultural, natural and experiential heritage experiences is one of the opportunities in the long term. On this basis, cultural (and industrial) tourism and active tourism (cycling, hiking) have been through workshops and trainings identified as the key development orientation for the further development of tourism in the municipality of Zagorje ob Savi from which the main flag of boosting development represents the mining museum.

In line with the project findings of the above-mentioned starting points, cultural heritage, which is based mainly on mining, glass and industrial heritage, will be a key factor in the design of new tourism products through the implementation of tourism products and programmes that can be implemented to a high standard.

### **Mining Museum Zagorje ob Savi - potential for further development**

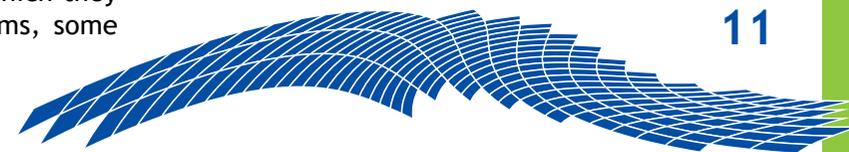
The Mining Museum Zagorje ob Savi was opened in November 1995 in an abandoned engine room of the Loka mine in Kisovec. The central part was the export shaft with the engine room, in which they set up a small collection of mining items, some



Mining Museum Zagorje ob Savi  
(Source: KC DDZ)

information boards, cave measuring instruments, and some pictorial and graphic material. A few different cave carts were set up on the outdoor platform and a demonstration of the development of excavation methods.

The modernization of the building and equipment started in 2017 and finished in 2020. The contents of the revised collection now address several areas: geology and coal formation, coal chemistry and environmental aspects of coal production and burning, mining history, ethnological topics such as clothing, working hours, habits, mining language, sociological topics such as migration, rebellion ... The sets are presented in different ways, using new media tools, object layouts, creating new »products« using char-



acteristic elements, graphic and pictorial representations, didactic tools, and the like. The visitor now have the opportunity to actively participate in some presentations and demonstrations. The renovated mining museum in Kisovec is well visited as it provides an insight into the various elements of cultural heritage related to mining and the life of miners in the municipality of Zagorje ob Savi, where development began precisely because of mining.

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 www: <https://rudarski-muzej-zagorje.si/>

### Cultural center Zagorje ob Savi

After almost ten years of design and work, on May 22, 1960, a mighty home of culture was built. The



Cultural center Delavski dom Zagorje  
 (Source: KCDDZ)

local people of Zagorje ob Savi found the construction of a cultural center so very important regarding cultural needs that they did not give up on the many obstacles that hindered the construction. Nowadays, the cultural center Delavski dom Zagorje is an important factor in the cultural life in the Zasavje region and beyond, and with the program contents it represents, it often exceeds the municipal framework. **Nowadays it represents an important monument for the working class of mining industry.**

#### Contact/web-page:

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 www: <https://www.kulturnidom-zagorje.si/>

### Natura 2000 sites - potential for further development

#### What is Natura 2000?

The Natura 2000 network is based on two directives: the Birds and Habitats Directives, both of which protect more than 1 000 rare and endangered plant and animal species and 200 habitat types across Europe. Slovenia has transposed both Directives into its legislation through the Regulation on Special Protection Areas (Natura 2000 sites).

#### Natura 2000 in Zasavje region

According to the Slovenian Nature Conservation Agency, the Natura 2000 site is a European ecological network for the conservation of biodiversity. Such sites can also be found in Zasavje. According to the data of the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Protection, there are 20 Natura 2000 sites in the Zasavje region from which 8 are located in the municipality of Zagorje ob Savi.

#### OBMOČJA NATURE 2000



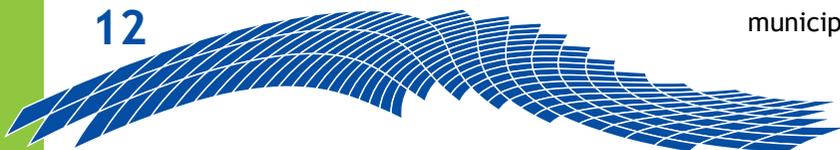
Natura 2000 in municipality Zagorje ob Savi



Sign boards for Natura 2000 sites

### Defining guidelines for further development in Natura 2000 sites in Zagorje ob Savi

Recognizing and offering the values of biodiversity, provided by Natura 2000 sites can represent an important development of new tourist products and services, not just for municipality Zagorje ob Savi, but for the whole Zasavje region. These will in the future affect the protection of animal and plant species (they will not be





Natura 2000 habitation  
Source: open source, Wikipedija

come extinct) and consequently increase income and the number of jobs coming from the tourism industry. Good opportunities to enrich the available tourism offer with Natura 2000 areas are natural sports and recreation areas in or near protected areas, as they help communities in developing a positive identity of desirable areas and thus encouraging people also for living in them. Green infrastructure can become environmentally friendly development (observation trenches, sign boards, bird posts, feeding posts, wood huts, ...). Creating eco-friendly multi-purpose paths that will be attractive for visitors and extend their visit (longer stay helps to increase multiplied economic impacts of tourism) in accommodation facilities.

### From identification to the proposal for new activities and events in Natura 2000 areas in municipality Zagorje ob Savi

The key problem that was defined during the PRONACUL's project activities in regard to the Natura 2000 sites is that the majority of the local population does not even know where the Natura 2000 sites are and what significant role they represent. They do not know which species and habitat types there are living and why is important to protect these areas.

During the trainings and workshops, we identified many new activities that will further boost the Na-

tura 2000 importance in connection with the tourism development. The key new identified proposed activities in connection with Natura 2000 sites were for instance: new guidance signs, wooden games with pictures for discovery of species, photo shooting contest, walking and hiking events, competitions in the knowledge of Nature 2000 sites, promotional gifts, learning toys and souvenirs and many more. All these will be a key factor for the continued development of the Natura 2000 tourism offer.

With the help of PRONACUL communication tools, we focused on to encourage local population and all stakeholders to be aware of the fact that Natura 2000 areas have a significant protected natural role in the municipality and region.

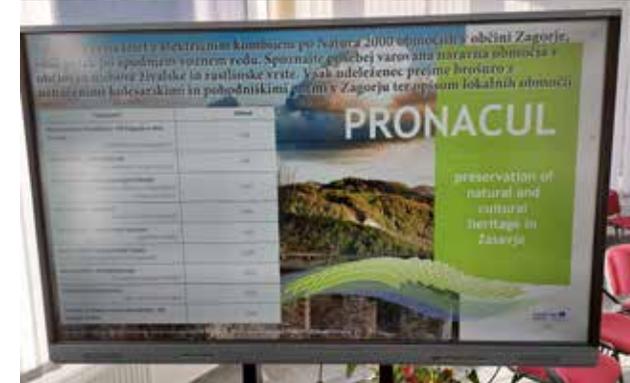
### Eko friendly transportation and e-charging station for all

From the start of the PRONACUL project we rented an electric vehicle that represented an eko friendly investment, thus also promoting greater mobility for the visit of Natura 2000 sites and Zagorje ob Savi mining museum. During the renting time the electric vehicle was available to use and free of charge for everybody. In addition, an electric charging station was bought as a tool for more efficient way to charge an electric vehicle. As a result, it was no longer necessary to adapt to other users for charging at points within the public Electric charging system. And also charging at the station was free of charge.

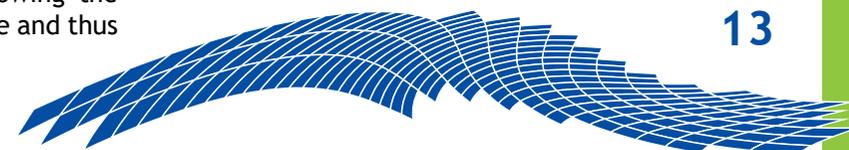
In course of the renting time, we organized and implemented several tourist visits to the pilot Natura 2000 areas and Mining Museum Zagorje ob Savi. Each passenger received a PRONACUL leaflet for easy presenting and discovering the facts of natural and cultural heritage represented by Natura 2000 and the mining museum.

In such way we closed the gap to unknowing the facts of Natura 2000 and the mining culture and thus

boosted the accessibility for everyone, even the handicapped, to be able to visit the locations and to connect with the natural and cultural heritage that is in the pilot area available.



Organized visits to pilot areas with e-vehicle  
(Source: 3x Jernej L, RRA Z)





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### Eastern Veneto development agency

The Association was founded in 1995 as a Local Action Group (LAG) to manage the Leader II Program, an instrument devised by the European Commission in the early 1990s to implement development policies in rural areas. In 2000, VEGAL changed its statutes, obtained legal personality and changed its mission to “Development Agency.”

Development Agencies intervene in a defined territory by making local actors dialogue (governance). “Customer” of the Development Agency is therefore the “territory.”

VEGAL was well-founded as a Local Action Group to implement development policies in rural areas. Today VEGAL has changed status, obtained legal status and became a local development agency, promoting and participating in EU projects with a bottom-up approach and participating in public-private partnerships. VEGAL behaves as LAGs in the framework of the EAFRD funds and as FLAG under provisions of FEAMP. VEGAL has promoted, coordinated and implemented a lot of cooperation projects, as part of the programming 1994/99, 2000/06, 2007/13 and 2014-2020, in the context of different programs (Interreg, Leader, FEP, FEAMP, LIFE, Lifelong Learning etc.).

The type of activity of a Development Agency is:

- The analysis of the territory (strengths, weaknesses, needs);
- Local animation, scenario development,
- Local consultation,
- The planning/design focused on financial sustainability.

In 2012, VEGAL also became a Coastal Action Group (FLAG) of the Venetian coast by applying the local

development strategy that suits it, thus based on a bottom-up approach as a tool for local governance and the ability to involve the various socioeconomic sectors and in particular representatives of the fishing sector, and the desire to address the socioeconomic problems of coastal areas affected by the fishing sector and to maintain economic prosperity and employment.

Current member entities fall into various types: Municipalities, EEPs, trade associations, universities/research institutes, cultural sector. Intervenes in 22 municipalities of the eastern metropolitan area of Venice city, promoting intersectoral action to qualify the local supply, in support of the territory’s competitiveness and businesses, acting in tourism, agriculture, environmental protection and in general to improve the quality of life.

### Framework to develop sustainable tourism in protected areas

The GAL Venezia Orientale (VEGAL) in the framework of the project within the project “PRONACUL” (Promotion of NATural and CULTural heritage to develop sustainable tourism in protected areas - Project 842), funded by the second call of the Operational Program Interreg V-B ADRION 2014-2020, specific objective 2. 2 “Enhancing capacity in transnational treatment of environmental vulnerability, fragmentation and safeguarding of ecosystem services in the ADRION area” “was able to develop a strategy for networking and enhancement of museums and archaeological areas usable by tourists (National Museum of Archaeology of the Sea in Caorle, Archaeological Areas of Concordia Sagittaria and National Archaeological Museum of Concordia in Portogruaro).



The aim of the project, as mentioned, is to promote natural and cultural heritage in order to develop sustainable tourism in fragile areas. The project involves areas rich in cultural heritage, protected by UNESCO or Natura 2000, or that will become protected sites within the identified pilot areas. This will be achieved through the development, application and promotion of a common methodology for natural and cultural heritage management in the Adrion area, based on a participatory approach.

The territory of VeGal is a territory composed of coastal areas, rivers, lagoons, SCI and SPA areas, parks, green areas and agricultural areas, which in fact constitutes a unicum in the metropolitan, Veneto, northeastern and national territory and whose efforts have won important recognition, regional, national and international.

There are numerous significant environmental areas connected to important ecosystems, including Natura 2000 network sites and protected areas, parks and reserves of local interest, areas of naturalistic environmental interest, forests, coastal forests, historic agricultural landscapes, archaeological sites, small villages and medium-sized towns, characterized by extensive architectural heritage derived from different historical periods. There is a rich environmental heritage in the area, an “ecological network” that finds its main structure in several sites of the Natura 2000 network, with a marked water value (littoral and coastal areas, wetlands and riverine areas inland, and residual strips of lowland forest).

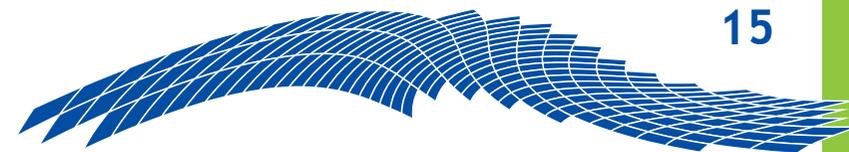
The area hosts relevant SCI sites - Sites of Community Importance (river areas of the Reghena and Lemene quarries - Cinto Maggiore, Bosco Zacchi, Caorle Lagoon, Mort Lagoon and Eraclea pine forests, Lison Forest, Livenza River Area); SPA Sites - Special Protection Areas (Valle Vecchia - Zumelle - Valli di Bibione, Foce del Tagliamento, Zignago - Perera - Franchetti - Valli Nova, Reghena and Lemene River

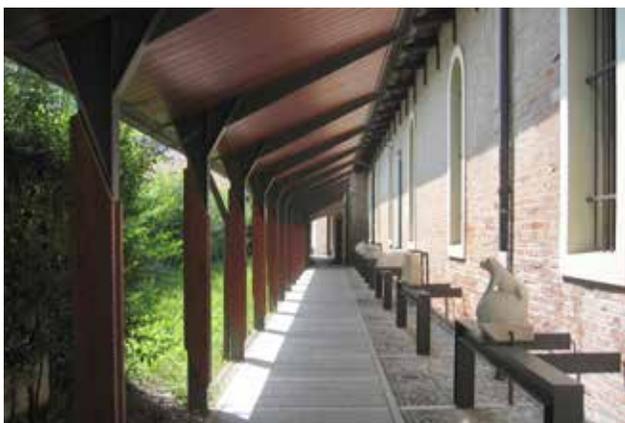


Source: VeGal

Areas - Cave of Cinto Caomaggiore, Sile River: Sile Morto and bight of S. Michele Vecchio) , and SCI/SPA sites (Bosco Zacchi, Bosco Lison, Cavallino Peninsula: coastal biotopes).

From the point of view of parks, there is the Regional Park of Local Interest of Lakes Reghena, Lemene and Cinto and, to a small extent, the Regional Park of the Sile River. There are also small areas of naturalistic interest, agroforestry and wetlands, coastal and lagoon areas, river and marine areas and fishing valleys, WWF oases and nature and environmental education centers.





Source: VeGal

In addition to the 27 fishing valleys, there is a wide variety of biotopes, characterized by rich biodiversity: agroforestry and wetlands (in the north), coastal and lagoon areas (mainly at the ends of the coast), river areas (from north to south) and marine areas (the so-called “Tegnue,” in Caorle, under protection since 2004).

On the forestry side, the Pianura Forest Association, the only association for the sustainable management of lowland forests and their touristic-recreational, educational and ecological enhancement, has been active since 2022 and is responsible for the protection of more than 300 hectares of forests in the area.

### Cultural heritage of the Eastern Veneto

As for cultural heritage, the Eastern Veneto is characterized, again, by a strong stratification, which has its roots in the time of the Roman Empire, for the Byzantine Empire and then between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, up to the Great War and the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the Great Reclamations that took place over a considerable part of the area.

The lagoon of Caorle constitutes an important ecological range and is affected by important core areas; it is an important resource not only economically, but also in terms of tourism and social issues, being an area on which bike paths, waterways, leisure and health activities, fishing and environmental education are developed. The lagoon system therefore needs its enhancement on a multifunctional plan, which also takes into account the consciousness and culture of the lagoon, with training and awareness of both children and adults. So a real plan of information, training and education.

From the point of view of museums, the network of the Polo Museale veneto includes the sites of Concordia, Portogruaro and Quarto d’Altino, as well as the Archaeological Museum of the Sea in Caorle and the recently established Ecomuseum of San Donà di

Piave, headed by Aquae, and the Museo del Paesaggio in Torre di Mosto.

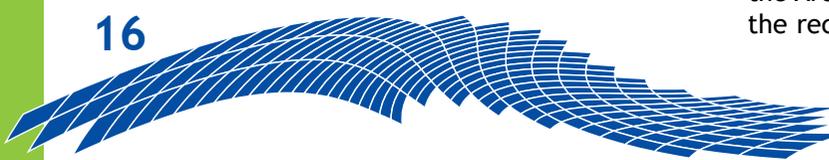
As for tourist enjoyment of a naturalistic-cultural nature, itineraries (GiraSile”, “GiraPiave”, “GiraLivenza”, “GiraLemene” and “GiraTagliamento”) are playing an increasingly important role.

### The actions in Eastern Veneto

The area of intervention identified by VeGAL is the Caorle lagoon system, which includes the wetlands falling within the territories of the municipalities of Caorle, Concordia Sagittaria and San Michele al Tagliamento, most of which are included in the Natura 2000 European ecological network and subject to environmental constraints, as well as areas that are very rich from a cultural and archaeological point of view.



Source: VeGal



### Three activities implemented thanks to the project have been launched:

Four free training courses, divided into workshops and trainings, addressed to the most relevant stakeholders in the management, promotion and enhancement of the cultural and environmental heritage of Eastern Veneto, including local or regional governments, tourism operators and organizations, associations, universities and museums. The objectives of these appointments, to implement the participants' expertise on the cultural and natural heritage of the Eastern Veneto, to gather insights and ideas for a better and more effective promotion of the heritage itself, and to create a cross-sectoral network among the various stakeholders.

The workshops and two trainings already organized with the participation of about 25 operators from the tourism, cultural and local economic sector, who had the opportunity to learn more about the rich collection set up in the museum space, with reference to the natural environment and the man-made landscape in its dynamics of use and modification over the centuries. Additional training courses were held at the archaeological area of Concordia Sagittari, with focus on the Via Annia and the GiraLemene project.

In order to promote and enhance the cultural and archaeological heritage in the area, a guide to the National Museum of Archaeology of the Sea in Caorle and the National Museum of Concordia in Portogruaro and archaeological areas in Concordia Sagittaria was produced.

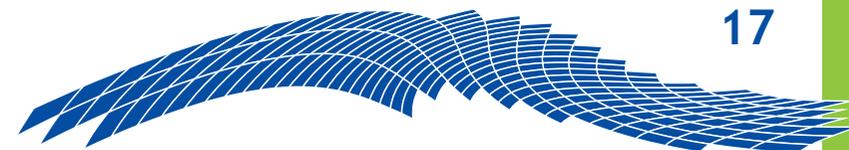
A document was also produced containing recommendations regarding the better management of the natural and cultural heritage of the northern area of the Caorle Lagoon, with the aim of improving transnational, national, regional and local policies addressed to decision makers. The actions indicated in



Source: VeGal

the document addressed to policymakers highlights the need for greater coordination between agencies and operators.

The issues the document addresses are: Accessibility, increased communication between coast and hinterland, internationalization, improved skills, networking and simplification of the bureaucratic apparatus related to funding.





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### Rijeka Tourist Board

The Rijeka Tourist Board is an organization operating on the principle of destination management, established in 1994 to promote and develop tourism in the Republic of Croatia, as well as the economic interests of legal and natural persons providing hospitality services and other tourism services or performing other activities directly related to tourism through destination management at the level for which they were established as well as for the city of Rijeka.

The main tasks of the Rijeka Tourist Board are product development, information and research, and distribution and it is obliged to harmonize the tasks with the strategic marketing guidelines and the instructions of the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County Tourist Board and the Croatian National Tourist Board.

Participation in the PRONACUL project enabled the Tourist Board to develop a methodology for management of Trsat castle, transfer best practices in cultural tourism and create a network of local stakeholders.

The reason for participating in the project refers to the preservation and valorisation of natural and cultural heritage, as well as the implementation of policies for its improvement. By partnering in the project, the city of Rijeka developed new opportunities in the form of sustainable tourism and increased funding for the preservation of natural and cultural heritage.

### Trsat castle as pilot area

Trsat castle is certainly one of the most visited places in the city, both by tourists and locals. It is a strategically protruding viewpoint on a 138-meter-high

hill that dominates Rijeka. It was first mentioned as the seat of the parish in 1288. This location served the Romans very well during the strengthening of their defence system, during the so-called of the Liburnian times, whose starting point was Tarsatika, a city-fort, on the site of today's Old Town of Rijeka. It is one of the oldest fortifications on the Croatian



Source: Rijeka Tourist Board



Source: Rijeka Tourist Board



Source: Rijeka Tourist Board

coast, where the features of early medieval town planning have been preserved.

Current appearance of the Trsat castle was created through five construction phases. The (1) medieval phase of construction lasts from 1225 to 1479, (2) the Frankopan phase begins in the 15<sup>th</sup> century with Nicholas IV. Frankopan, and (3) The transitional phase extends from 1530, taken as the end of the Frankopan phase, to 1824, when the management of Trsat and its renovation was led by the famous Count

Laval Nugent. In (4) the Nugent phase, from 1824, the castle gets the basis for the foundation of the museum, and, finally, (5) the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century phase marks the appeal for the restoration and preservation of Trsat castle.

Today, Trsat castle is enriched with a coffee bar “Vintage”, a gallery space with art exhibitions, themed events, summer concerts and open-air theatre performances.

## Activities created to involve local stakeholders

Rijeka Tourist Board along with the whole PRONACUL partnership worked throughout the project on the common methodology for management of natural and cultural heritage in Adrion area. To contribute to the common methodology as efficiently as possible, Rijeka Tourist Board invited local stakeholders from the field of cultural and natural heritage to exchange ideas and give recommendations to improve policies for management of the Trsat castle. Rijeka Tourist Board organized trainings, workshops and networking conferences for stakeholders and promoted it on Project's webpage and social networks to inform the wider public about the activities.

Trainings for stakeholders were the first step in involving stakeholders into decision-making and brainstorming process for the purpose of creating the common methodology. Local and regional pub-

lic authority as well as other relevant stakeholders in the field of tourism and culture participated in trainings to make an analysis of strategic local and regional documents in the field of natural and cultural heritage. Stakeholders were actively involved in creation of SWOT analysis with the help of examples of good practices in managing the cultural heritage.

Second cycle of activities for stakeholders started with workshops and the goal was to connect local public and private sector stakeholders and to prepare pilot activities. Trainings helped in gathering ideas to create pilot activities by defining the program for Trsat castle and establishing a cluster that would be formed by the quadruple helix model. This means that this body would consist of members of public bodies, academia, SMEs and culture and society (local museums, associations, local community). The cluster could take over the function of designing new programs, promotion of

activities, and help in connecting stakeholders at the national and cross-border level.

Rijeka Tourist Board further disseminated projects goals by organizing Networking conference for local and regional stakeholders, mostly members of tourist boards and travel agencies in the region and local media. The objective of this conference was to exchange expertise and to give recommendation for management of the Trsat castle, as the most important cultural spot of the city. Networking conference was a great opportunity to introduce the public with PRONACUL's Virtual chamber established for promotion of the common methodology.

Promotion of activities was of great importance for Rijeka Tourist Board and many different promotional tools were used to introduce the public with the project and include them in the process of creating the better management of the castle. Rijeka Tourist board directly promoted the proj-



Source: Rijeka Tourist Board

ect's goals during different tourism and cultural events in the area. Social media channels were used to inform the public about the progress and different articles distributed to local media for wider dissemination. Small scale investment

Trsat castle is the most visited cultural place in the area of the city of Rijeka, which is visited annually by more than 100,000 visitors, i.e. domestic and foreign tourists from all over the world. To inform visitors about planned activities and ticket purchases for the permanent exhibition at Trsat castle, the Rijeka Tourist Board purchased a ticket control system within project. This system allows visitors to purchase tickets through the Web shop, whether individual, group or special tickets. It is also possible to pay for tickets with debit or credit cards. The Web shop is available in Croatian and English with possibility to add new languages.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Media - the Conservation Department of the City of Rijeka and the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral, a new video surveillance system with all the necessary equipment was installed. Considering that the Trsat castle is visited by many visitors, mostly in organized groups, the surveillance system enables a better control of visitors and a timely response in potential unpredictable situations. Also, given the specific space, the system allows insight into every part of the Trsat castle.

Trsat castle is specific in shape and does not have an internal space for organizing events. In addition, many concerts, plays, literary evenings, and cultural festivals are organized throughout the year. For all visitors to be able to follow the programs unhindered, 100 chairs were purchased within the project. These chairs were used for all activities within the PRONACUL project that were carried out at the Trsat castle.



Source: Rijeka Tourist Board



ΕΠΙΜΕΛΗΤΗΡΙΟ  
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### Ilia Chamber

Ilia Chamber is a Public Law Legal Entity that was established in 1935 as an obligatory Union of merchants, manufacturers, craftsmen, and professionals operating in the Regional Unit of Elis. Ilia Chamber, located in Pyrgos, contributes to the national aim of development by offering constructive ideas to increase the competitiveness of local industry, while also serving as the government's counsel on issues and challenges of local and national entrepreneurship.



*Mr. Konstantinos Nikoloutsos is Ilia Chamber's current and longest-serving president and legal representative.*

### The PRONACUL initiative

The PRONACUL project has played a decisive role in the uptaking of cultural and natural management in the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, in terms of introducing a sustainable and ground-breaking model of operation for the development of the tourism sector and the engagement of local, regional, and national stakeholders of the wider tourism chain.

As a result of the PRONACUL project and the created common methodology, which will serve as a tangible and accurate compass for the execution of required measures and activities with the ultimate goal of broadening and enhancing the region's tourist offering, the local entrepreneurial ecosystem has an additional toolkit for capitalizing on the economic potential, that the region's rich cultural and natural assets represent.

Moreover, given the delicate nature of the region's ecosystem and the recent destruction caused by wildfires, as well as the worldwide landmark that is Olympia, the Regional Unit of Elis has absorbed the program's merits and offerings and has been provided, in the same time, with a rare opportunity to realign its priorities and direct its attention toward the regions and sectors that have the potential for growth and can help enhancing the region's tourist offering.

Afterall, tourism is the key economic driver in the Region of Western Greece, thus it is crucial that measures be devised and enacted in order to fully utilize the growth potential of this dynamic industry. To that end, Ilia Chamber's network of stakeholders and policy makers have been presented with tangible policy proposals based on the project's strategy intended outcomes.

## Virtual Chamber

PRONACUL's Virtual Chamber, a dynamic virtual portal, has proven to be a valuable asset to the project's goals, being continually updated and enhanced by the participation of the target area stakeholders and acting as an executive arm of the common Methodology of the project. Through the Virtual Chamber the network of stakeholders will be receiving a permanent support service for the protected areas, by linking actors in the broader tourism chain, facilitating the exchange of best practices, promoting the project's common methodology and supporting the development of future programming.

To ensure the long-term viability of the Virtual Chamber's infrastructure and services, the twelve (12) partner representatives at project level will provide input on the project's operational and financial strategy and make recommendations for improvement based on the suggested financing options.

This is a very crucial factor for the enterprises of the tourism sector of Ilia, since it has always been difficult for them to get funding and grants, despite the high quality of the goods and services supplied.

## Common methodology of natural and cultural management for heritage

The assessment results suggest that the original Olympic Games site has the largest cultural and tourist values and is located in the top right field of the matrix within the Common Methodology analysis, which was conducted in the Regional Unit of Elis, indicating significant cultural and tourism values. As a consequence, it's an excellent choice for future tourism activities.

The project has highlighted the need for upgrading specific tourist qualities in order to be more competitive on the tourism market and attract more

visitors, a prerequisite which is especially important for the hospitality industry, which vacationers and visitors of the Regional Unit of Elis rank as one of the most important.

## Common Guidelines Management System

The emphasis has been placed on gathering feedback from local communities, policymakers, and stakeholders in the broader tourism chain in order to determine the significance of the region's cultural and natural sites in terms of employment and entrepreneurial potential, and to highlight them as important aspects in the qualitative and quantitative upgrading of the region's tourism product. The Ilia Chamber's network and connections have highlighted the concerns, needs, and difficulties of the region's most notable cultural and historic assets, eliciting responses, ideas, and establishing the proper territorial level for policy implementation.

## Trainings and workshops

In order to expand Elis's appeal to visitors, the Ilia Chamber has trained groups on a local, regional, and national level. The first training session was set up as an open lab where participants brought their kids and other friends and family to participate. The event's attendees were introduced to the project's

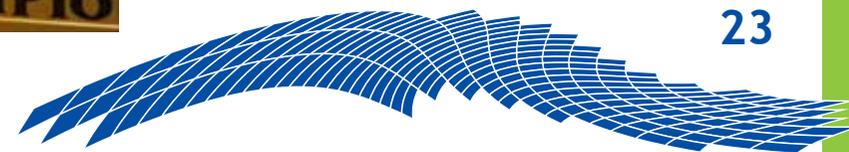


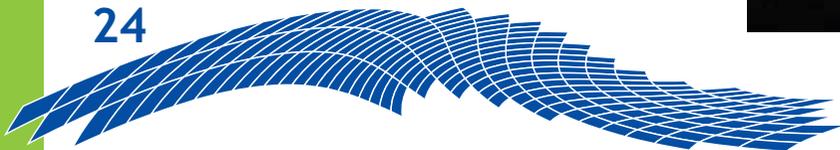
approach and essential concepts by the President of Ilia Chamber, who also spoke about the project's goals of increasing public awareness among young people about the significance of cultural components of life.

The second training session aimed to obtain feedback on the project approach and exchange ideas with relevant stakeholders from the tourism sector and municipalities. The trainings introduced participants to the Virtual Chamber and covered themes including the value that PRONACUL brings to the business field, the Cultural Economy, a mapping of Elis' natural and cultural assets, and more.

Trainings for key players in the Elis region took place at two renowned vocational schools: the Public vocational training institute - Division of Tourism studies in Amaliada and the Public employment service vocational training institution in Pyrgos.

With the intention of creating a group of young stakeholders who are already or soon to begin their entrepreneurial journeys and require novel approaches to exploiting their natural and cultural surroundings as economic drivers, relevant training has been provided to recent graduates and adult learners. In order to make a strong statement that young entrepreneurs need to "think outside the box" and be educated on the expedient capacity of cultural and natural heritage when used as a development factor and economic driver, Ilia Chamber has partnered with the aforementioned institution, which operates under the hospices of the Greek Manpower Organization.





Within the given time frame, Ilia Chamber completed its capacity building interventions by hosting two workshops at its headquarters and at the Cultural Association “Epi tis alos,” respectively, with representatives from the local and regional business ecosystems.

While the project’s implementation by the Ilia Chamber of Commerce demonstrated decisively that the tourist sector can provide competitive advantages for local and national economies, it also exposed concerns, skepticism, and agony for the future and the development of a sustainable tourism industry via the application of the programs’ common meth-

odology and interaction, exchange of ideas, and need discovery. These served as a foundation for concrete policy ideas, which may be utilized as a launchpad to enhance and promote sustainable tourism in the Regional Unit of Elis.

By proposing concrete steps and recommendations to diversify the region’s tourism product, leveraging shipping cruise tourism, paving the way for cross-sectoral innovation and the creation of large-scale economies, promoting environmental sustainability and the adoption of common legal standards and increasing capacity building, the PRONACUL project has shifted the public’s and policymakers’ attention

to the needs discovered in the Regional Unit of Elis.

In addition, the project will look into other avenues and methods for drawing financial support in the form of grants and investments. Tools and indices for gauging whether or not the program’s goals have been met have also been developed as part of this effort to guarantee the project’s results will last.

Following the above policy recommendations, the Regional Unit of Ilia’s cultural and natural heritage will be managed with an eye toward a complete upgrade of promotional tools, methods, and means, as well as participation in various targeted actions to boost the visibility of the regional economy both domestically and internationally. The Regional Unit of Ilia can become a unique tourist destination that respects and protects its natural and cultural environment, attracts investments, and creates favorable conditions for the economic development of the business ecosystem and societal well-being by placing these strategic planning and funding priorities at the center of local, regional, national, and interregional policies.





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### Entrepreneurship and Business Association LiNK Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Entrepreneurship and Business Association LiNK was founded in 2001 and is currently the largest association of entrepreneurs in Herzegovina Region, working on sustainable development and gathering over 140 private companies from various sectors.

LiNK continuously works on improvement of business environment, promotion of economic development, providing support to business, public, civil and educational sector. In the scope of its work, LiNK is committed to promotion and development of tourism through providing support to tour-operatres, capacity and institutional building, networking, promotion and support in development of documents of strategic relevance and development and submission of different initiatives for achievement of joint interests.



More than 20 years of business excellence (Photos by LiNK Mostar)



LiNK's premises in Mostar (Photo by LiNK Mostar)



## The role of the Association “LiNK” within the PRONACUL project

Taking into account the vision and mission of the Association “LiNK”, as well as the designated goal of the PRONACUL project to ensure sustainable development of tourism in protected areas, the contribution of the “LiNK” consisted of various strands of support: the improvement of the tourist offer and accompanying content (including initiatives for the development of small businesses that are key to the sustainable development of tourism), networking, promotion, and valorization, as well as improvement of strategic documents and improvement of communication between different stakeholders and competent institutions.

Association “LiNK” took part in change-making activities by developing new tourist products which will lead to a different perception and an enhanced offer of natural and cultural heritage. The changes were achieved thanks to the heritage management activities that were appropriate for the time period and the expected development. These activities were created on the basis of the Common Methodology for the Management of Natural and Cultural Heritage in the Adriatic-Ionian Region.



LiNK's team (Photo by Adi Đukić)

The Common Methodology, which is based on a participatory approach toward the stakeholders, was applied in the targeted area with the aim of establishing a regional route. These activities received the support of the Virtual Chamber, a platform established for the purpose of promoting the Methodology and its transfer to other ADRION areas. The Chamber serves as an advisory body for all stakeholders in the field of tourism development, and it offers the space where the regions may exchange experiences and best practices in the management of natural and cultural heritage. In order to improve local policies for the management of natural and cultural heritage, a Common Methodology has been shared with policy-makers in the form of recommendations for specific local, regional and national strategic documents.



Dugo polje necropolis, Jablanica (Photos by LiNK Mostar)

Bearing in mind that Bosnia and Herzegovina is known for the largest number of stećak necropolises, i.e. stone tombstones from the Middle Ages that represent one of the mysteries of Bosnia and Herzegovina's history, “LiNK” focused its activities on two necropolises that are under UNESCO protection: Radimlja (Stolac) and Dugo polje (Jablanica). Necropolis “Dugo Polje” Jablanica

### Necropolis “Dugo Polje” Jablanica

The stećak necropolis “Dugo Polje” (Jablanica) is reputed to be one of the most beautiful and best-preserved necropolises in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is located in a unique mountain setting, in the heart of the Blidinje Nature Park, and it contains 150 stećak stones of different shapes and sizes, 32 of which have interesting decorations. The necropolis is managed by the Municipality of Jablanica.

### Necropolis “Radimlja” Stolac

The stećak necropolis “Radimlja”, located in Vidovo Polje near the town of Stolac, represents one of the most valuable necropolises. It features 135 stećak stones, 63 of which are decorated. The most recognizable motif from this necropolis is a male figure with a raised open hand which seems to inform the traveler that (s)he will encounter hospitable and friendly people in the hard and karst region of Herzegovina. The necropolis is managed by JU Radimlja Stolac.

### PRONACUL initiative

Upon identifying the weaknesses and needs of these necropolises, the PRONACUL project improved the capacities for managing cultural heritage as well as the content for visitors to the necropolis, primarily through the procurement of furniture, such as smart boards for promotion and education, bench seating,



*Radimlja necropolis, Stolac (Photos by LiNK Mostar)*

waste baskets, tables, canopies, information boards, video surveillance equipment, and solar lighting.

In addition, various digital tools, including videos and interactive applications, have been created in order to promote as effectively as possible.

Aiming to intensify their promotion, we have created a promotional video that presents the “Dugo Polje” necropolis and its new content for visitors. The video is available to the interested public on the YouTube channel of the Association “LiNK”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAwNHrSWlrM>

Furthermore, we have designed two interactive promotional applications: “Experience Jablanica” and “Explore Stolac”, which are available on smart boards. These smart boards have been installed at key locations that serve as the first stop for all visitors and tourists: the “Museum of the Battle for the Wounded on the Neretva River” in Jablanica and the Public Institution “Radimlja” in Stolac. Interactive applications contain comprehensive and up-to-date information about the tourist offer and available content for visitors in the respective areas (accommodation, cultural heritage, restaurants, outdoor activities, events, etc.), and bring the story of the development of the region through history.



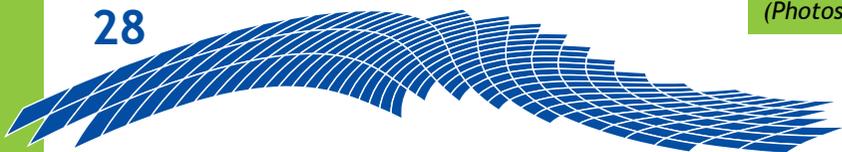
*PRONACUL promotional events (Photos by LiNK Mostar)*

It is with great pride that we recall the fruitful period of implementation of the PRONACUL project: we have organized 20 promotional events of a local and regional character where the rich cultural heritage and potential of the region were presented to different target groups. Furthermore, a strong emphasis was put on highlighting the various opportunities for future cooperation. Finally, particular focus was put on the promotion and valorization of cultural heritage through exhibitions, creative workshops, conferences, and promotional tours.

In addition, representatives of the Municipality of Jablanica, JU Radimlja Stolac, and local stakeholders took part in the 7<sup>th</sup> EUSAIR Forum, an event of a



*7<sup>th</sup> EUSAIR Forum in Tirana, Albania, May 2022 (Photo by LiNK Mostar)*



macro-regional character that was held in May 2022 in Tirana, where the PRONACUL project was also presented.

By applying the Common PRONACUL Methodology for the Management of Natural and Cultural heritage, we have generated a set of 26 recommendations and measures to improve the strategic documents at different levels. These recommendations predominantly relate to the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, promotion and networking, and development of new businesses.

The Association “LiNK” involved local, regional, and national stakeholders in all stages of the PRONACUL project: in the development of the Common Methodology for the Management of Natural and Cultural Heritage, in the process of developing a strategy, in the process of generation of recommendations and measures for the improvement of strategic documents at different levels, in education processes, exchange of experiences, as well as other processes.

Such a continuous and prolific collaboration enabled the PRONACUL project to produce the following significant results that contribute to the preservation



7<sup>th</sup> EUSAIR Forum in Tirana, Albania, May 2022 (Photo by LiNK Mostar)

of natural and cultural heritage and the development of sustainable tourism in protected areas:

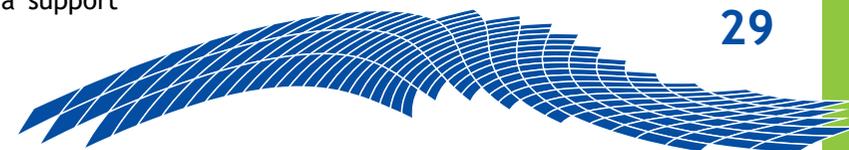
- A pilot action of investment in the necropolises “Radimlja” Stolac and “Dugo polje” Jablanica was successfully implemented.
- Specific recommendations (26) for the improvement of strategic documents at the local, regional, national, and transnational levels were generated. Two of the proposed measures were formally adopted at the local level.
- Cooperation channels and exchange of experiences between as many as 45 relevant stakeholders were established; 20 promotional and educational events of a local and regional character were organized; further project promotion was ensured through a macro-regional event - the 7<sup>th</sup> EUSAIR Forum in Tirana (05/2022).
- Memorandum of understanding were signed with 7 stakeholders who became active members and ambassadors of the Virtual Chamber.
- Project results were successfully promoted through a plethora of media announcements, articles in specialized magazines, TV shows, publications, applications, and through direct communication.
- A joint web application was created that will ensure the sustainability of the partnership and the continuation of joint initiatives in the future. As a result of the proposed initiatives, two recommendations were adopted at the local level:

1. The Municipality of Jablanica adopted a proposal to support the development of creative industries, which are an accompanying and crucial component of the sustainable development of tourism. To be more precise, the Municipality of Jablanica, recognizing the importance of this branch of industry for the sustainable development of tourism, accepted the proposed initiative for the establishment of the Creative Resource Center, which will serve as a support

hub for the development of creative industries in this municipality. The focus of the Center will be put on the development of photography, video production, creation of authentic souvenirs, and investment in digital marketing and related branches of the economy, which will contribute to better visibility and promotion of the region and serve to attract additional visitors.

2. The analysis conducted within the PRONACUL project showed that it is important to preserve the natural heritage and natural assets surrounding the necropolis also. Therefore, an initiative was sent to the Civil Protection Services at the local and regional level to establish and implement additional fire prevention measures, having in mind that wildfires negatively affect the “Dugo Polje” necropolis every year. As a result of the initiative, the Civil Protection Service has launched the procedure of establishing a prevention system in the area of Blidinje, which will include two rotating cameras for early fire detection. This measure should significantly improve the preservation of the natural environment around the necropolis and reduce the risk of disasters in the future.

The results of the aforementioned activities within the PRONACUL project are quite encouraging; a significant increase in the number of visitors was recorded in the stećak necropolises “Dugo Polje” Jablanica and “Radimlja” Stolac in 2022 - there were more than 400% visitors compared to 2020.





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**Faculty of Sciences** is an educational and scientific institution providing teaching and scientific research activities within the fields of biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, informatics, geography, tourism and environmental protection at five departments:

- Department of Biology and Ecology,
- Department of Physics,
- **Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management,**
- Department of Chemistry, Biochemistry and Environmental Protection and
- Department of Mathematics and Informatics.

The Faculty was established in 1969, but research in sciences and mathematics began long before that. Today the educational process of the Faculty is organized at bachelor, master and doctoral levels of study in the fields of: biology, ecology, environmental protection, physics, astronomy, geography, tourism, hotel management, chemistry, biochemistry, mathematics and informatics. The Faculty introduced vocational studies in optometry in 2007.



UNSPMF "Blue Building" (Foto: L. Lazić)

The studies are organized in three cycles - bachelor, master and doctoral studies, leading to Bachelor of Science, Master of Science and PhD degrees. This is a very big and complex faculty comprising **six thousand students, professors, teaching and research assistants and administration staff**. Teaching is provided for about **4,500 students at the bachelor level**.

There are over **600 employees**, with **400 members of the teaching staff**. Some of our outstanding professors are members of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and Vojvodina Academy of Sciences and Arts, and they have also been participating in executive government bodies of the Province and holding Rector and Vice-rector positions at the University of Novi Sad.

Teaching and scientific activities are held in six lecture halls, 65 classrooms and more than 70 laboratories and rooms, in a total area of over 23,000 m<sup>2</sup>. Well-equipped research laboratories are a basis for the scientific activity of the Faculty, which is achieved through a host of national and international projects. Each department has its own library with tens of thousands of books and several hundred journals. Special attention is paid to the cooperation with the industry through joint projects, organization of seminars, workshops and courses.



UNSPMF PRONACUL project team (Foto: M. Berček)

The Faculty of Sciences is a body, governed by public law with a good reputation in society and an influence in social and economic life in Serbia. It has substantial experience in tourism studies focusing on the Vojvodina region. The Fruška gora mountain has been in focus of the Faculty of Sciences research through numerous monographs, scientific research and projects. During the last 15 years the Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management has implemented several projects concerning issues such as sustainable development, tourism destination competitiveness, rural tourism, ethno-villages, eco-tourism, folklore heritage and cultural tourism and heritage.

**UNSPMF TEAM MEMBERS** are: Jasmina Djordjević, Vanja Pavluković, Igor Stamenković, Nemanja Tomić and Tijana Djordjević.

**UNSPMF PILOT AREA:** Fruška gora mountain is located in the south-east peripheral part of Pannonian lowlands, that is on territory of the Autonomous provinces of Vojvodina, located in the north of the Republic of Serbia. Fruška gora is located between two large river flows, the Danube, on to the east and north, and Sava, in a broad sense on to the south.

Position of Fruška gora, in relation to the more important tourist dispersives, represents a well-achieved component of mountains tourist potential. From that point of view, the biggest importance has the proximity of our biggest cities Novi Sad and Belgrade and several other city settlements. Therefore, Fruška gora has a touristic contractive zone of a national extent, which includes almost half of its population of Serbia, while international highway and the Danube river connect the other parts of Europe with this region. An advantage of this site in relation to other localities in Vojvodina is certainly cultural and natural treasure owned by Fruška gora. In addition to cultural and religious tourism, there are opportunities for development of ecotourism on this mountain, which is generally popular in the world. Likewise, there are opportunities for expansion of rural tourism, which could attract domestic tourists from the main dispersive city centers eager for rest, silence, nature and relaxation.

**CONCRETE BENEFITS FOR UNSPMF** will be transfer of know-how between institutions; getting acquainted with examples of good practice in PRONACUL participating countries, according to which models the economy and tourism in Serbia can be improved; writing of common strategies, action plans as strategic documents that are important for starting the process of investment and the development of economy and tourism in the pilot area; greater visibility and promotion of the Faculty and pilot area at the international, national and regional level; connecting with local stakeholders in pilot area. UNSPMF prepared a document “Fruška gora Tourism Strategy” within PRONACUL project. The strategy is very important for development of the area, because it will enable synchronized development and management of natural and cultural assets in the area of the National park Fruška gora. As coordinator of workpackage Common methodology for management of natural and cultural heritage, UNSPMF will foster transnational mapping of the common methodology’s applications from PRONAC-

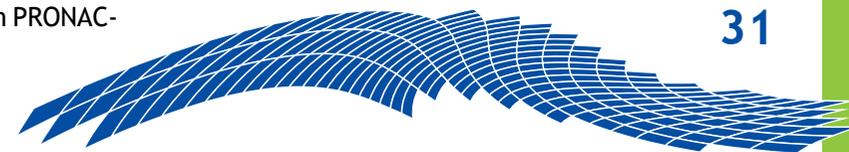
UL’s pilot areas to be able to improve methodology’s principles for Follow-up project proposals.

**UNSPMF organized several events as part of the PRONACUL project:**

UNSPMF held two Capacity building trainings for partners, during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> project meeting, with the aim to present 3 types of guidelines: Guidelines for identification of natural and cultural heritage as a development factor in protected areas, Guidelines for identification and participation of stakeholders and Guidelines for the preparation of action plans and to train all project partners for using the guidelines in their pilot areas and organising trainings for local and regional stakeholders, especially public bodies and workshops for tourism providers and organisations.

As part of the activity Setting up Common methodology for management of natural and cultural heritage, that was coordinated by the UNSPMF team on project level, UNSPMF team prepared deliverable T1.2.1 Common methodology for management of natural and cultural heritage, which was presented to all project partners and discussed during special meeting - Common methodology training organized by UNSPMF on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2021.

**The 5<sup>th</sup> PRONACUL project meeting and study visit was held in Novi Sad, Serbia from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2022.** During the first day, all of the present project partners discussed recent project activities and potential problems and future plans for further project implementation. The first day of the project meeting was held at the premises of the University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Sciences while the second included a study visit to Fruška gora National Park.





*The 5th PRONACUL project meeting at the premises of the UNSPMF in Novi Sad, Serbia (Foto: M. Berček)*

Mr. Andraž Malovrh as LP representative presented a detailed project progress overview - analysis of WPs, activities and deliverables, as well as review of assignments and deadlines for remaining activities and deliverables.

After the LP presentation of WP management, other WP leaders presented - through PPT presentations - the tasks carried out and foreseen. All deliverables have been brought to everyone's attention, overall, those where all partners' contribution is requested.

Mr. Nemanja Tomić, on behalf of University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Sciences, which is leader of WP Common methodology for management of natural and cultural heritage, presented the main activities executed in relation to setting up and testing common methodology for management of natural and cultural heritage in pilot areas. He informed project partners that they will get the results of testing common methodology for their pilot areas, which should be used for further action plans preparation. The meeting continued with presentations of implemented activities by each project partner.

On the second day, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022, a study visit to pilot protected area Fruška gora, with a focus on the examples of good practices, was organized. The participants visited Sremski Karlovci, the cultural and tourist center of Fruška gora. Sightseeing

with a tour guide was organized with visits to Radulovački Eco-center and the Museum of beekeeping and winemaking, which are examples of good practices in this area. Then, a visit and guided tour of the Velika Remeta monastery located within the Fruška gora National Park was provided. Participants had a tour of the monument Sloboda Memorial Site - located within the heart of the National Park and a tour of the cultural site Vrdnik tower with a short stroll through the forest of the Fruška gora National Park. Study visit ended in Erdevik winery, where the participants had the opportunity to taste traditional cuisine and wine from this region.



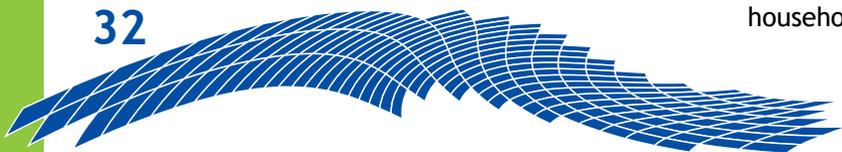
*Study visit to the Fruška gora National Park, organized during the 5th PRONACUL project meeting (Foto: M. Berček)*

During 2022, a total of six trainings and workshops were organized for local, regional and national bodies (4 trainings) as well as workshops for local stakeholders (2 workshops). These were held on March 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at Veritas winery in Sremski Karlovci, June 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> at Eko Center Radulovački in Sremski Karlovci and on September 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> at rural tourist household - Banstolka at Banstol.



*UNSPMF PRONACUL trainings and workshops (Foto: M. Berček)*

Jasmina Đorđević, the project manager UNSPMF presented the PRONACUL project, main objective, activities and expected results of the project, emphasizing the importance of active participation of local stakeholders - participants in the trainings and workshops. The next speaker was Mr. Nemanja Tomić who presented PRONACUL Common methodology for management of natural and cultural heritage, as a tool for the valorisation and evaluation of natural and cultural heritage with the goal of giving a clearer picture of the current state as well as tourism potential, benefits and drawbacks of our pilot area, Fruška gora mountain. Mr. Igor Stamenković as a moderator conducted the first part of the workshop by asking all participants to present themselves and their businesses/organizations and later posed some questions to participants, thus initiating a discussion among the participants. The questions referred to the cooperation of local stakeholders with the public sector, particularly local, regional bodies dealing with the management of natural and cultural heritage and tourism development and promotion, as well as cooperation among local stakeholders, particularly service providers and SMEs.



The UNSPMF project team prepared product promotions and these promotions were held during the following events:

1. Festival of Vojvodina events - Rogalj, held on October 2nd, 2022 at Salaš 137, Čenej



*PRONACUL promotion at the Festival of Vojvodina events - Rogalj (Foto: Igor Stamenković)*

2. an event regarding the World tourism day, September 27th, 2022 at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Vojvodina, Novi Sad



*PRONACUL promotion at the international conference Contemporary Trends in Tourism and Hospitality - CTTH, Novi Sad, Serbia (Foto: Vuk Garača)*

1. International conference Contemporary Trends in Tourism and Hospitality - CTTH, held on November 17-19 at the premises of Congress Centre Master of the Novi Sad Fair

2. the celebration of 60 years of Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management, held on 28 October, 2022, at the premises of the Faculty of Sciences.

UNSPMF organized a national networking conference on December 8, 2022 at the premises of the UNSPMF in Novi Sad. The participants were the representatives of the examples of good practice, workshop/training participants and decision makers to whom all strategic documents resulting from the PRONACUL project will be sent. As part of this event, UNSPMF project team members presented the Fruška gora Tourism Strategy and the Fruška gora brochure, and particularly, the PRONACUL Virtual Chamber. The principles of the chamber's work and functioning, the way in which they can become its members, as well as the rights and obligations arising from it, were explained to the conference participants. The content of the cooperation agreement with the UNSPMF in the case of interested parties from the territory of Serbia was also explained to the participants. This event had a significant impact on the overall dissemination of the project as well as on collaboration opportunities with the Serbian institutions that are responsible for the protection of natural and cultural heritage and tourism development/promotion.

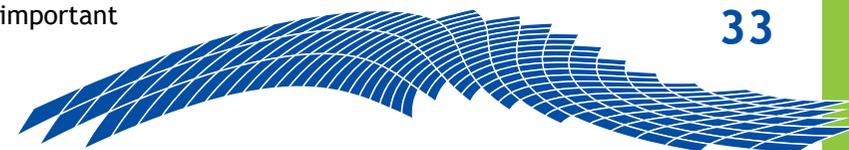
#### UNSPMF PREPARED

**The Fruška gora Tourism Strategy and the Fruška gora brochure.** The Strategy is a document where, through an analysis of the current situation in the area of Fruška gora, especially in the protected zone of the National Park, insight into natural and cultural assets is provided, as well as their assessment, in order to propose their protection and manner of management in function of tourism development. **The Fruška gora brochure** contains the basic information needed for tourists on an independent tour of Fruška gora, as well as all the safety information and restrictions in the National Park. The goal of the brochure is to present some of the most important

and beautiful hiking and walking trails in which the cultural contents and natural beauty of this mountain intertwine. Each track is graphically represented, and for each track, a link and qr code is enabled to download the GPS navigation trail.



*The Fruška gora Tourism Strategy and the Fruška gora brochure (Foto: J. Đjordjević)*





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### Development Agency of the City of Trebinje - TREDEA

The Development Agency of the City of Trebinje - TREDEA is a public non-profit organization established in 2005 and committed to local and regional development, particularly active in the area of tourism including contribution to protection and preservation of natural and cultural-historical heritage. The Agency has an extensive experience in implementing development projects, and also functional partnerships and good cooperation with local authorities, CSOs, similar organizations from wider region, international organizations and other relevant stakeholders.

TREDEA also provides support in the areas of employment and local entrepreneurship, vocational education, retraining and additional training of workers, implementation of training programs etc.

### City of Trebinje

City of Trebinje, placed in Adriatic hinterland, is the area with considerable cultural and natural heritage potential and growing tourist destination. Amongst other, tourism sector is recognized as strategic development priority, and positive trends in past period are just an example of strong momentum.

Role of Trebinje Development Agency in PRONACUL project refers primarily to implementation of the activities in the region of Trebinje, particularly Nature Park Orjen as an identified pilot area, but also at other linked locations of important cultural/historical/natural heritage in surrounding such as Old Town Trebinje.

Of course, there is a significant role and importance of networking, linking initiatives and exchange of ex-

periences with other local and international partners which cannot be ignored as it represents strong foundation for local capacities development in long term.

Finally, the cooperation with other regions in terms of creating joint tourist space in Adriatic-Ionian region means joining modern trends in tourism and placing all involved partner communities on wider tourist maps.

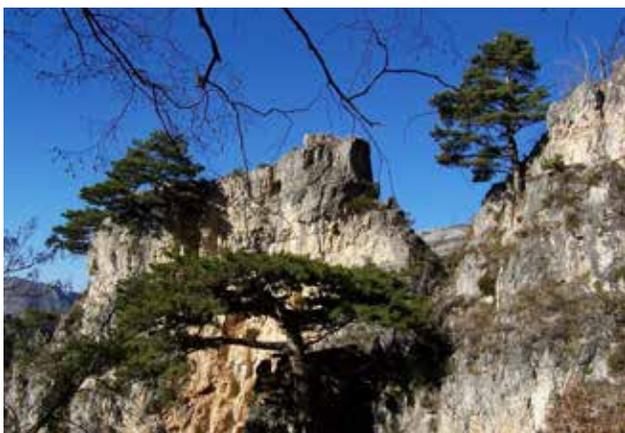
### PRONACUL in Trebinje

Very important segment of the project, contributing to overall coordination and aforementioned contacts and cooperation, were project partner meetings which were followed by particularly targeted study visits offering the opportunity to apply different solutions that can lead to the local improvements and compatibility of approaches in whole region.

Inception phase of the project included analysis of legal framework in all involved countries and exploring and documenting examples of good practices, showing the possible ways of improved management of cultural and natural heritage as well as potential valorisation



Trebišnjica river and Old town walls



*Orjen mountain - Herzegovina karst with Munika tree*



*Mountain Hut "Ubla"  
Endeavoring and volunteering for sustainable tourist valorization and exploitation. Positive impact of such approach can be expected to local population and wider community including tourists.*

of protected heritage in tourism. In Trebinje, these examples included following three locations:

Project PRONACUL laid its main expectation on development and application of Common Methodology and all partners contributed to its development. Implementation of its segments lead to achievement of some of the most important goals, particularly for local communities.



*Eco Camp "Ušće"  
With capacity for 60 people, it promotes healthy lifestyle among children and young people, raising environmental awareness, organizing various educational workshops, ecological actions, sports and recreational programs and tent-type camping.*



*Capacity building programme in Trebinje*

In Trebinje, it included activities such as Capacity building programme, performing various surveys and especially implementation of small scale intervention at Park of Nature "Orjen".

**Capacity building programme** covered series of trainings and workshops for relevant stakeholders, particularly for local regional and national and bodies and tourism operators. Besides gaining new skills and information, participants were in position to nominate key issues and recommendations to be incorporated in project documents and to be promoted through Virtual Chamber of the project.

Trainings and workshops in Trebinje brought together stakeholders from the private, public and NGO sector. Exchange and confrontation of opinions contributed to making practical conclusions regarding further steps when it comes to the protection and touristic valorization of the Orjen Nature Park.

**Three surveys** conducted covered information about pilot area, detailed information about key locations and sites of cultural and natural heritage and its tourism potential, and perception of tourists and local people concerning importance of heritage in the context of tourism.

### **Park of Nature Orjen - small scale intervention**

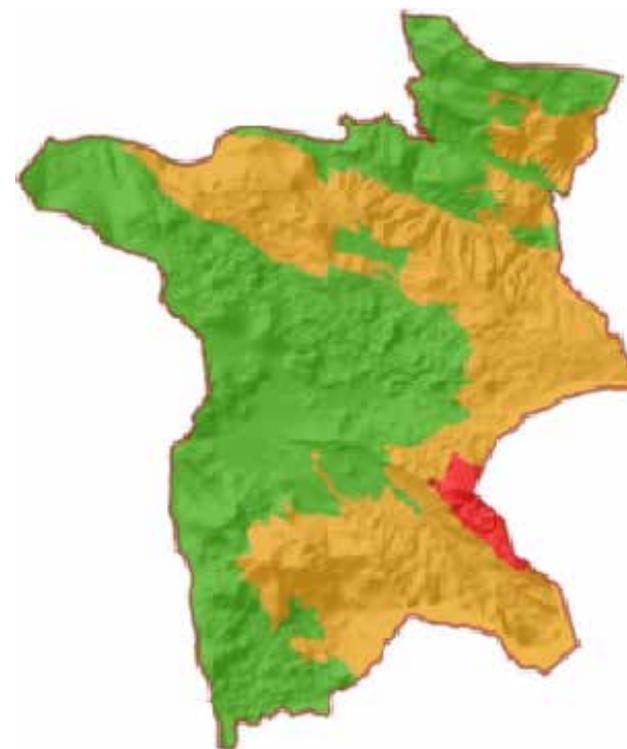
Orjen is the highest mountain in Dinaric maritime part, and its highest peak (out of 5 peaks over 1800m) "Zubački kabao" is 1894 meters high. Today's structure of Orjen was formed by glaciers which caused part of its floral diversity. Main factor that influenced flora on Orjen was its climate, with cold and wet winters and long summer dry periods. Along with karsts areas, there are also parts covered with fir, endemic "Munika", black pine and beech forests. There are also different endemic species which were not sufficiently introduced by science, such as particular kinds of Iris, Paeonia mascula, Acer heldreichi or Batula pendula...



Orjen mountain

Source: Development Agency of the City of Trebinje - TREDEA

Orjen/Ubla is very attractive location for mountaineers or enthusiasts such as hikers, picnickers, or nature devotees. Expeditions can be organized from Montenegro (Herceg Novi, Kotor, Risan) or from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Trebinje). As Orjen is located between three neighbouring countries (BiH, Montenegro and Croatia), it is very easily accessible for international tourists, adventurers or scientist from any of these countries. Because of its various values, Orjen was recognized by NATURA 2000 and declared as Nature Park at the end of 2020 by relevant authorities.



Map - Park of Nature Orjen and its 3 protection zones

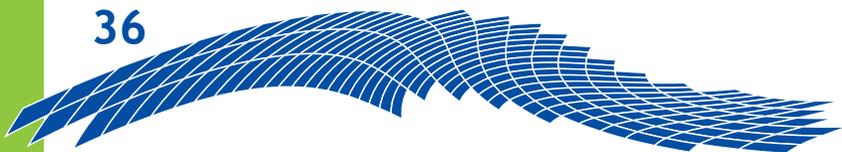
Legend:

Red: 1<sup>st</sup> degree protection zone

Yellow: 2<sup>nd</sup> degree protection zone

Green: 3<sup>rd</sup> degree protection zone

PRONACUL project strongly influenced the enrichment of the tourist offer in Park of Nature Orjen, and its tourist valorisation, which caused increase of visits to the Mountain. Even if it still requires investments in proper infrastructure and contents, preserving of its natural and cultural values still remains the main goal through future initiatives.



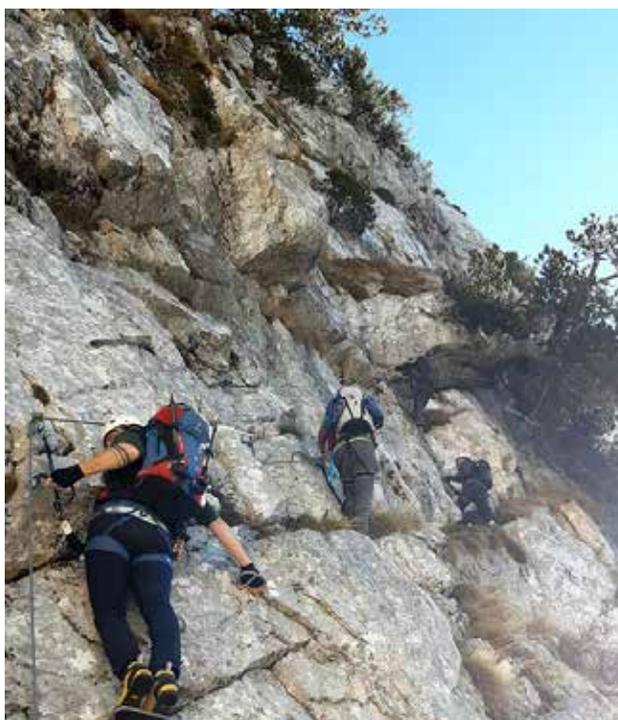


*Artificial rock*

*Source: Development Agency of the City of Trebinje - TREDEA*

Aforementioned contribution reflects in:

- Via ferrattas at peaks “Vučji zub” and “Kabao”, and also additional protections on three other walking routes;
- 10m high artificial climbing rock and 50m mini zip-line for children in front of Mountain Hut “Ubla”;
- Placing 5 boards with information about Orjen, its flora and fauna, available trails etc;
- Marking of 2 hiking and 2 cycling trails;
- Mountain resting place at the location “Pirina poljana”;



*Ferrata*

*Source: Development Agency of the City of Trebinje - TREDEA*

One of the activities aimed at ensuring sustainability of the project, providing the potential for further developments and recognized as very powerful promotion tool, is PRONACUL’s **Virtual Chamber**. TREDEA contributed to development of its concept and is continuously working on attracting organizations from various sectors to participate in its functioning and promotion. For the project lasting, it was ensured to sign MoUs with organizations with potential to support sustainability of this digital platform. Planned as a network to be used also for learning and exchange of experiences, it is a channel for advocating for new ideas and improvements as well as to promote joint Strategy for Policy Improvements and recommendations of the project.



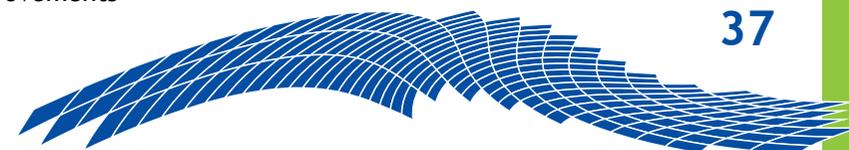
*Via ferrata Vucji zub*

*Source: Development Agency of the City of Trebinje - TREDEA*



*Info board plants*

*Source: Development Agency of the City of Trebinje - TREDEA*





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### Zagreb County Tourist Board

Zagreb County Tourist Board, represented by the director Ms. Ivana Alilović, is a public body founded in September 1998, with its headquarters in Zagreb (Croatia). The primary focus of Zagreb County Tourist Board is sustainable development and smart, sustainable and responsible tourism, as well as protection, preservation and valorisation of natural, cultural and historic heritage, and promotion of tourism overall. Zagreb County Tourist Board had an active role in the project and it implemented numerous activities with the aim of promotion of natural and cultural

heritage to develop sustainable tourism in protected areas, strengthening knowledge, exchange of good practice, and contributing to the development, use and promotion of common methodology for conservation management of natural and cultural heritage in the Adriatic area, and development of a transnational strategy for the joint promotion of the Adriatic-Ionian region as a tourist destination.

Zagreb County Tourist Board, represented by the director Ms. Ivana Alilović, was founded in September 1998, with its headquarters in Zagreb (Croatia). The primary focus of the Zagreb Coun-



Figure 1. Žumberak Nature Park and Samobor Highlands  
Source: Samobor Tourist Board (2021).

ty Tourist Board is sustainable development and smart, sustainable and responsible tourism, as well as protection, preservation and valorisation of natural, cultural and historic heritage, and promotion of tourism overall. Zagreb County Tourist Board actively collaborates with a wide spectrum of different national and international public and private stakeholders, and implements numerous activities, initiatives and international and EU projects in the field of sustainable development, smart, sustainable and responsible tourism, valorisation of natural, cultural and historic heritage, and quality management in tourism. For example, Zagreb County Tourist Board developed and implemented the strategic document “Study for quality management in tourism in Zagreb Coun-

ty” with the aim of establishing methodology for quality management in tourism for the purpose of further development of smart, sustainable, inclusive and responsible tourism. Zagreb County Tourist Board is oriented on quality management, sustainable development, sustainable tourism, heritage valorisation, and innovation, inclusivity, and overall strengthening and promoting all kinds of tourism. Zagreb County Tourist Board is also innovative and progressive and recognizes the key importance of the application of artificial intelligence in all aspects of life, business and tourism, and was the first tourist board in Croatia to join the “AI challenge” to ensure the education of 1% of Croatian population in the field of artificial intelligence.

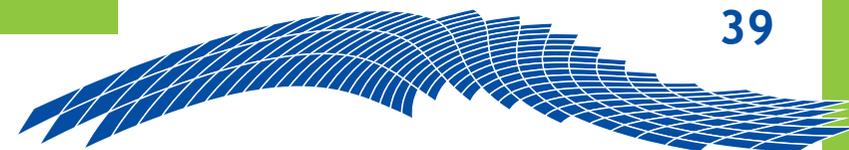
Zagreb County Tourist Board had an active role in the project, which was closely connected and tightly intertwined with Nature Park Žumberak - Samobor Highlands as a mayor natural heritage area in Zagreb metropolitan area with vast political influence as a crucial capital’s natural heritage protected area.

In the project, Zagreb County Tourist Board had the objective to, through the promotion and interpretation of the existing natural and cultural heritage of the project’s pilot action »Ecomuseum Žumberak«, raise awareness of natural and cultural resources and valorise them through tourism. The concept of project development is based on the availability and qualitative features of the area, and Zagreb County Tourism Board intended to strengthen them in Žumberak, in order to better valorise the heritage through smart and strategic use of tourism. Croatia’s Strategy for sustainable tourism until 2030 emphasizes the need for the development of innovative thematic tourism products, and of particular importance to this project was the fact that the Žumberak area is mostly covered by the Nature Park Žumberak - Samobor Highlands and that it is included in the European Ecological Network NATURA 2000, as well as economically very underdeveloped with a very pronounced depopulation trend.



Žumberak hills

Source: Zagreb County Tourist Board





Nature Park Žumberak  
Source: Zagreb County Tourist Board

### Nature Park Žumberak - Samobor Highlands

Nature Park Žumberak - Samobor Highlands is one of 10 nature parks, and one of two (2) “youngest” nature parks in Croatia. Based on its unique nature and history, on May 28<sup>th</sup> 1999, the area of Žumberak - Samobor Highlands was declared a protected natural value by a decision of the Croatian Parliament: the Nature Park.

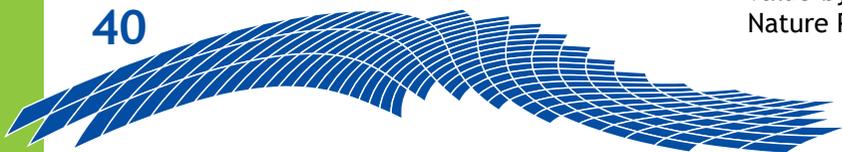


Source: Zagreb County Tourist Board

It is managed by the Public Institution “Nature Park Žumberak - Samobor Highlands ” established by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Croatia on September 16<sup>th</sup> 1999. According to the Nature Protection Act (Official Gazette, 80/13), economic and other activities and interventions are allowed in the nature park, as long as they are not endangering its characteristics and role. Nature Park Žumber-



Source: Zagreb County Tourist Board



ak - Samobor Highlands is a vast natural or partially cultivated area of great biodiversity characterized by valuable natural and ecological features and distinct landscape, and very special cultural-historical values - it has a very significant role and impact of natural and cultural heritage site, with great economic, social, spatial-environmental and political importance, which makes it a perfect pilot action for this project. Promoting the heritage value of the area and its population in the project, was aimed to give economic effects thanks to the development of tourism, and the increased social and economic val-

ue of the destination in the market is the result of strengthening the overall heritage identity of its territory. Tourism is an important resource, but it is crucial for tourist area to have a recognizable cultural and natural characterization, an authentic identity that works to increase the quality of everyday life of their residents. It is an innovative concept of branding and interpretation of heritage and destination management.

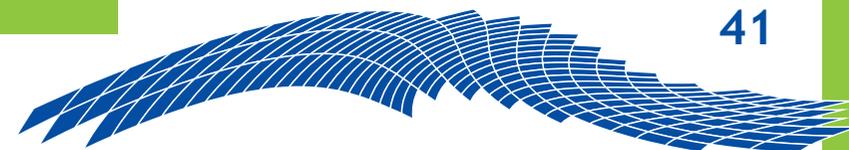
In this context, Zagreb County Tourist Board's main objectives were the promotion of natural and cultural heritage to develop sustainable tourism in

protected areas such as Nature Park Žumberak - Samobor Highlands, through strengthening knowledge, exchange of good practice, organisation and implementation of Project meeting in Zagreb and Study visit to Žumberak, contribution to the development of Transnational framework analysis and Good practice database establishment, building capacity with project partners for the development and use of common methodology, organisation of trainings for local, regional and national bodies, trainings for relevant stakeholders and workshops for local stakeholders, development of Ecomuseum Žumberak functioning and arrangement strategy, contribution to the development of concept for the virtual chamber functioning, Strategy on transnational, national, regional and local policies improvements and concept for the preparation of follow-up project proposals. Zagreb County Tourist Board's main purpose was to contribute to the development, use and promotion of a common methodology for conservation management of natural and cultural heritage in the Adria area, and development of a transnational strategy for the joint promotion of the Adriatic-Ionian region as a tourist destination.



Žumberak

Source: Zagreb County Tourist Board





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www: [www.raska.org.rs](http://www.raska.org.rs)



### The city of Raška

Raška is a town and municipality located in the Raška District of Southwestern Serbia. The municipality has its population of 24,680 people, while the town has a population of 6,574 people (2011 census). It covers an area of 670 km<sup>2</sup>. The town is situated on the rivers Raška and Ibar. The town and municipality bears the name of the historical Raška region. From 1929 to 1941, Raška was a part of the Zeta Banovina of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Serbia is the only country that is named after its people, and Raška is the only city that bears the name of the old medieval Serbian state. The first Serbian school was established at the old medieval royal court of Nemanjić which the cradle of Serbian literacy and spirituality. That school educated the first Serbian enlightener and writers such asw Saint Sava and Stefan Prvovenčani. According to the available historical data, Raška was founded on September 17, 1845, by the decree on the establishment of the town of Raška signed by Prince Aleksandar Karađorđević. In one period, during the First World War, from October 31 to November 15, 1915, Raška was in a way the capital of Serbia because the king and the then Serbian government resided there.

In the relief of the municipality of Raška, three morphological entities are clearly expressed: the zone of the basin floor, the basin rim and the mountain zone. The zone of the basin floor consists of two units: the first is the alluvial plain of the river Ibar and its tributaries, and the second unit is the terrace and valley relief of the river Ibar and its tributaries. The rim of the basin is formed by the cut terraces of the former Raško-Baljevac lake. The mountain zone consists of slopes above 900 m above sea level. The Raška area is distinctly mountainous, as 88% of the territory is above 500 m above sea level. Therefore, the National Park Kopaonik with the highest peak (Pančičev vrh) at 2,017m, as well as mountain Golija,

the highes in southwestern Serbia is located in this area. In the relief of the municipality of Raška, the river valleys that go deeply into the hilly areas of the mountain branches of Kopaonik, Golija and Rogozna stand out. Thus, in the first place is the valley of the river Raška, on the right bank of which there is a flat belt of the village of Panojević and the flat surface of the village of Supnje. The wider valleys were also built by the rivers: Brvenica, Trnavska and Jošanička. The territory of the municipality of Raška is rich in standing water and mineral springs.

### The mighty Kopaonik

Kopaonik stands out for its height, length, compactness, and massiveness of its heights and ridges, in the central part of southwestern Serbia, dominating the neighboring plateaus and hills. Kopaonik is located between the rivers Ibar and Sitnica in the west, Laba in the southeast, Jošanica and the Koznica river in the north, while the eastern side is bounded by the valley of the river Rasina and Toplica. The deep valleys and gorges of Kopaonik were carved by the Barska and Lisinska rivers on the western side, the Duboka and Brzečka rivers on the eastern side, and the Gyganska and Gobeljska rivers on the northern side. Together with the Samokovska River, the central water artery of Kopaonik, they influence the spread of flora and fauna and they also mark mountain Kopaonik.

The climate of Kopaonik is characterized over 200 sunny days per year, which is why it is called "the sunny mountain". The mountain Kopaonik got its name from the mining of ores from which the most silver was obtained, in the period before the arrival of the Romans in these areas. In the area of Kopaonik there are several Urvin lakes. The largest is Semeteško lake , unique of its floating islands which are rich of plants and trees. When the wind blows, the islands move across the lake.



This lake was declared a hydrological monument of nature because of its floating islands. The South-west of Jošanička spa, there are two more pristine lakes, Gornje (Long) and Donje (Small) lake. The most famous spas in this area are: Jošanička Spa (62-78.5°C), Lukovska Spa (about 38°C) and Kuršumlijska Spa (16-62°C). Due to its natural beauty, part of the Kopaonik mountain area as a spatial unit with special natural values, natural sights and rarities, well-preserved forests of natural composition and cultural and historical values, the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia declared Kopaonik mountain a National Park, by the Law on National Parks in year 1981.

The highest mountain in southwestern Serbia is Golija, stretching for 32 km in the shape of a horseshoe. The two dominant peaks are the highest peak Jankov Kamen (1833 m.a.s.l.) and Crni vrh (1795 m.a.s.l.). Due to the beauty and diversity of the landscape, as well as the preservation of the original natural and cultural values, it is one of the most attractive mountains in Serbia. The area of Golija itself is limited to the east by the Ibar valley, to the south by the Raška and Ljudska river valleys, to the west by the Moravica river valley and to the north by the middle course of the Studenička river. It is characterized by the abundance of water. In the dense river network there are Golijaska, Studenica and Ljudska river stand out. The considerable wealth of water, as well as the greater amounts of precipitation, enabled

the survival of a diverse living world. At the proposal of the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, the MAB/ UNESCO committee declared the “Golija-Studenica” biosphere reserve within the Nature Park of 75,183 ha on an area of 53,804 hectares. The reasons are in the fulfillment of three basic complementary functions: the function of protection, the function of development and the function of logistic support.

### Culture enriches us

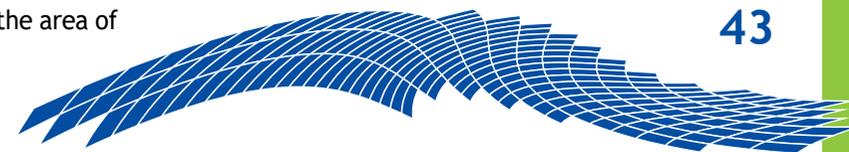
The municipality of Raška on its territory has 14 properties which are declared as immovable cultural property (hereinafter referred to as NKD), of which 12 are cultural monuments and 2 archaeological sites, as well as 8 properties registered as enjoying prior protection. On the territory of the municipality of Novi Pazar, on the basis of the same legal act, there are 36 properties declared as NKD, of which 2 spatial cultural-historical entities, 31 cultural monuments and 3 archaeological sites, as well as 3 properties recorded as enjoying previous protection. Also, in both municipalities there are an undefined number of properties under prior protection. This refers to goods that have not been registered, nor declared as NKD, but still enjoy protection by force of law and mainly concern archaeological sites that are specific from the point of view of protection because they are located below the surface of the earth and it is often not possible to know about their existence until any earthworks do not show their presence.

The area of the municipalities of Raška and Novi Pazar was reliably inhabited in prehistoric times, almost throughout its duration, as evidenced by numerous localities. In the period of antiquity, this area was an integral part of the Roman province of Moesia, known in the Roman world as an ore-bearing province, important for the supply of metal to other non-ore-bearing parts of the Empire. In the area of Raška and Novi Pazar, there are numerous localities that bear witness to mining and metallurgical activities within the dardanica metal of the imperial domain, which is primarily linked to the area of

mountain Kopaonik in its northern part. The numerous settlements, necropolises, mines, metallurgical points and fortifications were discovered in this area, so, well connected by ancient roads along which molten metal, ready for forging, went to Rome every day.

### The case study

The subject area of this study is a symbol for the national Middle Ages as a kind of cradle of Serbian statehood. From the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> and during the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the area of Raška was in the center of the Serbian medieval state. Almost all significant events of that time, which in many ways determined the course of the history of the Serbian people and the Serbian state, took place in these areas, and also, the centers of spirituality and artistic creativity of the Serbian medieval state were founded there. Historically and partly territorially, it is inextricably linked to the area of today territory of the municipalities Novi Pazar and Raška. The political and economic insecurity was felt in this area until the arrival of Stefan Nemanja (1166-1198) to the position of the great prefect, whom with his skills managed to get the expansion of the state's borders to the north and south from Byzantium and strengthen the influence of the Orthodox Church in the state. Stefan Nemanja, before he became the grand prefect, received from his father certain areas to administer: Ibar, Toplica, Rasina rivers. So, by assuming the post of grand prefect, Nemanja began the formation of an independent Serbian medieval state with Ras as its capital, with all its significant features. The religious seat of the country was the episcopacy in Ras, which was based in the church of St. Peter and Paul and it was extremely important councils of Nemanjić which were held there (the church-state council in 1186 and the great state council in 1196) and that determined the future history of the Serbian church and state. During his reign, Ras grew from a border area into the core of the Serbian state.



The largest part of the corpus of cultural heritage of the Republic of Serbia from the Middle Ages originates from this area and consists of settlements, churches, monasteries, necropolises, fortresses, etc. When presenting the cultural assets from this area, the spatial cultural-historical entity Stari Ras (Old Ras) Monumental Area, which represents the NKD of exceptional importance, must be singled out. A series of cultural monuments in this area illustrate the historical and spiritual-artistic continuity in the life of this area, from Nemanja's conquest of power and the laying of the foundations of an independent Serbian state, through the establishment of the first mint in the era of King Radoslav, the succession of the throne at the Deževski Assembly, to King Dušan and the greatest military-political rise of the country, even during the period of Turkish domination. The architectural and painting achievements of authentic and priceless artistic value are firmly connected with events and personalities of crucial importance for the history of the Serbian people over a period of several centuries - the church of St. Peter and Paul, the monasteries such as Đurđevi Stupovi and Sopoćani, the remains of the fortification above the mouth of the Sebečevska river in Raška and a number of the other archaeological sites. These monuments belong to the territorial unit that was inscribed in the List of World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1979.

The continuity of settlements in this locality has been traced since prehistoric times, and the oldest, smaller castle settlement on the hill above the mouth of the Sebečevska River in Raška dates back to the early Bronze Age, while younger, the Iron Age settlement was much larger. The suitable plateau of Gradina was also used during the entire period of Roman domination. Thus, the late antique fortress was one of the largest in a series of fortifications built for the safe exploitation of ores in the area between the rivers Ibar and Lim. It was used continuously until the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, and then it was modestly inhabited again during the second

half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. During the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the crew of the fortress was slightly more numerous, and then throughout the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the fortress was almost abandoned. A significant change took place at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, when Byzantium built a new dry wall and earth palisade rampart on town of Ras and extended the defended area to the entire plain. However, during the Serbian-Byzantine conflict in the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Serbs burned that fortress. At the time of Emperor John II Comnenus, Byzantium built a new fortress made of solid material on the lines of the old palisades, which encompassed the entire plateau at the top of Gradina. The stone ramparts were reinforced with towers on the accessible sides, the main gate was also protected by two towers, and in front of the main stone rampart there was an outer earthen rampart. However, the most important period in the history of Raška occurred in the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Then, from a border fortress, Ras became one of the ruling centers. Most researchers consider it the capital of the great prefect Stefan Nemanja. During the entire second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Ras was intensively used and built upon. The western gate was walled up and a new one was opened next to the main tower, and all the towers were strengthened. In the northern part of the fortification, new spacious buildings of the residential complex with buried basements, as well as a number of log houses, were built. Within the residential complex

there was also a residential tower, as well as one of the largest granaries on the territory of the Byzantine cultural sphere. When Nemanja's sons, Stefan and Vukan, destroyed the fortress, immediately after the end of the conflict, reconstruction and strengthening of the ramparts was undertaken and new wooden buildings were erected. During the reign of King Radoslav, there was a mint in Ras. The sudden burning and eventual abandonment of the fortress seems to have occurred during a violent change in the Serbian throne when King Vladislav was enthroned and the deposed Radoslav fled. The layer of the last destruction of Ras fortress is reliably dated with over 20 coins of King Radoslav minted at the beginning of the fourth decade of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. After systematic archaeological excavations, the entire fortification was conserved.

### Churches a piece of cultural heritage

The most important monasteries and churches in Raška area are: Končulić, Stara Pavlica, Nova Pavlica, Gradac, Baljevac, Šumnik, etc.; while in the territory of the municipality of Novi Pazar, Nemanjić's endowments are Đurđevi Stupovi, Sopoćani, St. Varvara on Relja's garden which have the status of NKD. The above mentioned monasteries and churches were renovated and built in the period from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> century and each of them can be the subject of a special study in terms of architecture, art, history, philosophy, etc. In the Middle Ages, these monasteries became carriers of culture, art and literacy among Serbs, and in later times, under Turkish rule, they became carriers of national and religious unity and identity.

Although the socio-political situation in these areas changed during the Ottoman rule, which also affected the economic flows of the country, the continuity of creation in the oldest areas of the Serbian medieval state can be traced through the cultural heritage. The best example of this is the remains of temples that today enjoy the status of NKD, such as the Church of the Virgin in Kovačevo, the Church of Lazarica and the Church of



St. Peter and Paul in Popa, Church of St. Dimitrija in Janački Polje, Church of St. Lazar in Živalići, Marinice in Dojinovići, Church of St. Nicholas in Štitare and the Church of St. Dimitrija in Mitrova Reka on the territory of the municipality of Novi Pazar; as well as the Church of St. Petka in Trnava, Church of St. Nicholas in Šumnik and the Church of St. Nicolas in Baljevac and many others located on the territory of Raška municipality.

The spatial cultural-historical complex of Old Ras (Stari Ras) and monastery Sopoćani is located in the southeastern part of central Serbia and is a serial property consisting of four separate components: the Sopoćani Monastery, the Monastery of George's Pillars, the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and the Ras Fortress, an archaeological site of the Middle Ages. Administratively, it belongs to the Raška district and includes the area of the municipality of Novi Pazar (N43 7 8.004 E20 25 22.008). The wider area of protection includes 198.72 ha, the cadastral municipalities of Postenje, Prćanova, Boturovina, Vidovo,

### **Cultural and natural heritage as a resource for the sustainable development of tourism**

The Municipality of Raška prepared a study "Cultural and natural heritage as a resource for the sustainable development of tourism in the wider area spatial cultural-historical entities Stari Ras and Sopoćani in order to get acquainted with examples of good practice in PRONACUL participating countries, greater visibility and promotion of the pilot area and Municipality of Raška at the international, national and regional level; connecting with local stakeholders in pilot area, cooperation and connection of institutions, establishment of inter-municipal cooperation with the city of Novi Pazar." The Municipality of Raška organized several events as part of the PRONACUL project

The Municipality of Raška has organized six trainings under the name "Valorisation and presentation of natural and cultural heritage in the protected area of Stari Ras and Sopoćani".

The first training was held on October 26<sup>th</sup> 2022. The aim of the training was to get acquainted with the needs and expectations of the local environment of the target group in order to present the heritage to a new audience in the best possible way and the acquaintance and assessment of existing types of presentation at cultural and natural sites, monuments and museums.

The aim of the second training was to identify the importance and value of creating a concept of a new presentation program for the processes of recognition, protection and transmission of cultural heritage, as well as supporting the formation of healthy cultural identities. The ideas, tools and strategies were developed for new practices in cultural heritage interpretation. The participants were introduced to innovative ways of presenting cultural and natural heritage through an interactive workshop. The examples of good practice are: augmented reality, interactive maps and video presentations.

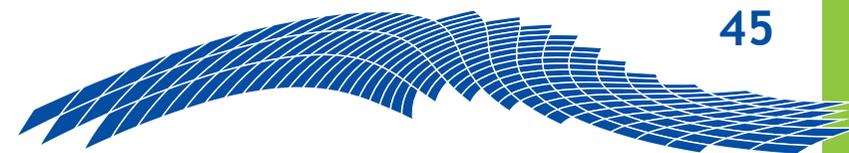
The third training was held on December 6<sup>th</sup> 2022. The goal of the training was to make an overview of the cultural monuments in the territory of the two municipalities; Raška and Novi Pazar, with a special focus on the spatial cultural and historical complex of old medieval town called Stari Ras with monastery Sopoćani, and to show the participants the state, number and importance of the cultural monuments: archaeological sites, sacral objects of famous places and the spatial and cultural historical units of the southwestern part of central Serbia.

The goal of the third training was to familiarize the participants with the content and values of cultural heritage, challenges and problems in its protection and presentation. The knowledge about cultural heritage in this area can be used as an inspiration and resource for creating new presentations of heritage, which directly leads to raising awareness of their existence and importance, and thus to permanent protection, both in a formal legal and physical sense, as a basis for long-term, controlled inheritance.

The main topic of the 4<sup>th</sup> training was protected natural environments in the Raška region - the National Park Kopaonik and the Nature Park "Golija". During the training, the diversity and richness of the natural environment - plant and animal life in the area of the municipalities of Raška and Novi Pazar were presented. The topic was also the ways of protection, preservation and presentation, but also challenges and problems faced by certain nature protection institutions. So, one of the aims of training was a discussion between the participants about the possible directions of further development of the protection and presentation of the natural resources of this area.

The goal of the 5<sup>th</sup> training was to encourage the participants with a series of practical examples to think about different tools that they can use for new presentations of cultural and natural heritage. The participants had the opportunity to get to know the skills and tools on which the successful presentation of cultural heritage depends. In the practical part of the session, the participants were divided into groups. The groups had the task, using the creative process, to come up with a concept for the presentation of cultural monuments in the local environment that would be receptive and attractive to tourists and a new generation of users. This was followed by the presentation of project proposals designed by the working groups. In the discussion, the participants received feedback from the moderator and other participants on the quality of their project solutions.

The goal of the 6<sup>th</sup> training was to present, from an economic perspective, in a practical way, a project that used the regional potential of cultural heritage in international tourism promotion. The international project "The connecting the Danube region with historical Roman routes - ISTER" aims to rediscover and restore the ancient network of Roman roads and settlements along the Danube region, as a key driver in the promotion of territorial development. This international project was implemented through the Intereg Danube Transnational Program (DTP).





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### The Metropolitan City of Bologna

The Metropolitan City of Bologna is an intermediate public authority with important responsibilities on policies for economic and social development, infrastructures and strategic planning. It's composed of 55 municipalities; it has 1 million inhabitants and it's located in one of the most economically relevant areas of Italy. The Metropolitan City of Bologna is a wide and complex geographical area where the main regional and national infrastructures are put together. An open and interconnected place where you can find different sites rich of culture, history and traditions. The city of Bologna is the capital of the Emilia-Romagna Region: it is rich of art, culture and commerce, well-known for its manufacturing and motor tradition. Thanks to its productive system with highly competitive companies, its international research facilities, the realities of excellence in culture, the favourable logistic position, the Metropolitan City of Bologna is one of the most advanced areas in Europe.

The Metropolitan City of Bologna is required by law to govern and guarantee the unified, planned and organised growth of the whole area, the delivery of core networks of public utilities to its citizens, and the construction, maintenance and enlargement of (tangible and intangible) infrastructures in the territory, all of which falls under its sole and direct responsibility. In order to pursue its objectives, the Metropolitan City works within its spheres of competence using differentiated powers and tools, which range from direct management to planning, from coordination to guidance. The strategic development of the territory, the organization of effective services for Municipalities and Unions, economic and social development, spatial planning, mobility

and infrastructure, digitization and computerization systems, are some among the main tasks and issues which belong to it. The Metropolitan City of Bologna operates by collaborating with other entities, institutions and those who participate in civil society and the economic area, and intervenes within the city according to the varying nature of different geographic areas, paying attention to their vulnerabilities, specific features and the special roles they play. After the metropolitan statute, the metropolitan Strategic Plan 2.0 constitutes the most important document for building a Metropolitan city that responds to such a vision, through which these actions are shared and fulfilled.

The Cultural and Creative Production System of Emilia Romagna produces 7.3 billion euro of added value, 5% of the wealth produced by the regional economy. In terms of jobs, the 123 thousand people employed in the sector account for 5.8% of regional employment. In particular Bologna ranks seventh among the top ten provinces for the incidence of culture and creativity in the creation of added value (6,1%) and jobs (6,8%). Emilia-Romagna boasts the second highest number of museums and heritage sites in Italy: in 2018, there were 454 institutions operating in the sector. At the city level, Bologna ranked fourth, counting 46 museums (just after Rome, Florence and Milan, and before Naples and Venice). The Majority of museums are small, local museums (90% attracting fewer than 50.000 visitors), owned and managed by municipal and regional authorities. At provincial level, Bologna counts 89 museums, of which 30 with less than one thousand visitors per year and just seven with more than 100.000 visitors. One of the main distinctive symbols of Bologna is its almost 62 km arcades, the longest in the world, recognized in July 2021 as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (original-



ly conceived as covered spaces of private property, but nowadays used by the public, and recognized by the inhabitants and visitors as identifying elements of the city, playing a leading role in the city's hospitality and good living).

In the last few years local actors supported the increasing of sustainable tourism and thanks to a multilevel and coordinated action, nowadays we can provide a multifaceted variety of sites and at-

tractions. The whole metropolitan area, from the Apennines to the flat lands, passing through the Imola area, has a large cultural and natural heritage: there are two UNESCO recognitions, 24 sites belonging to Natura2000, a network of protected areas and the territory is also rich in natural parks, suggestive hiking trails and panoramic cycle routes. Among the parks, it should be mentioned the Regional Park of the "Gessi Bolognesi and Calanchi dell'Abbadessa", hosting one of the largest (4,815 hectares) and most

spectacular gypsum cave system in Europe (over 200 caves). This area is one of the most important and studied karst system in Europe, rich in stunning erosive features, as well as caves where plant and animal species of remarkable scientific interest live. The Bolognese Apennines are surrounded by greenery, and are perfect destination for those who love to be in contact with untouched nature and explore authentic places. They are crossed by picturesque paths and trails. The most well-known is called "Via



Picture Hermitage of Tizzano, Casalecchio di Reno, Bologna (Source:Itineraria)



Picture Ice House spillways, Casalecchio di Reno, Bologna (Source: Itineraria)

degli Dei” (Path of Gods), starting from “Piazza Maggiore” (in the core of the historic centre of Bologna), crossing the ridges and ravines of the Apennines, it reaches “Piazza della Signoria” in the historic centre of Florence. In 2021 it counted 18.000 visitors. Another fast-growing route is the “Via della Lana e della Seta” (The path of Wool and Silk), connecting Bologna with Prato, two cities sharing important manufacturing history. A recently renewed and again viable route is the “Piccola Cassia” path (Little Cassia), crossing the Modena and Bologna territories, going down into Tuscany till Pistoia. This is a reminiscent route, rich in historical and religious heritage and featuring an interesting rural and natural landscape. From this year the Piccola Cassia path can be accessed also starting from the very city cen-



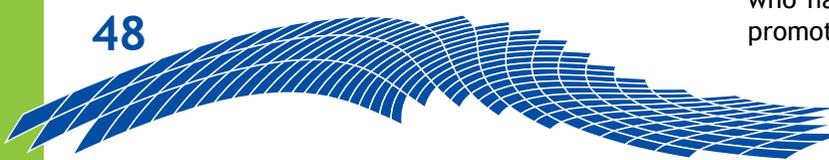
Picture Bolognese Apennine (Source: Itineraria)

tre of Bologna, thanks to new cycling and trekking connecting links created by the Metropolitan City of Bologna under the Interreg-Adriatic project Creatures (CreaTourEs-Promoting creative tourism through new sustainable and experiential routes). Among these sites, within the Pronacul project, the focus has been on the “Chiusa di Casalecchio” (Sluice of Casalecchio) and the surrounding protected area, which can be easily visited by people walking along the aforementioned routes.

To point out the tourism context, as well as policies and services put in place in the last few years, in the period 2013-2019 the number of presences in the metropolitan area grew by 45%, with international tourists accounting for 50% of the total. In the same period, the direct added value recorded by the tourism sector amounted to EUR 1,41 billion (+36%) and reached EUR 3,400 billion (+40%) for indirect value. Tourists, including international ones, represent twice as many residents. Like last year, the Apennines and green areas in general remain best sellers with diverse routes and events. Walks continue to be a great success, primarily the “Via degli Dei”, but also the “Via della Lana e della Seta” and the newborn “Via Mater Dei”. The Sun Cycle Route (Eurovelo 7: Verona-Bologna-Florence), protagonist of numerous articles in the national and international press, has been very popular. Both flatland and mountainous areas of the Metropolitan City of Bologna are crossed by the Sun Cycle Route, the latter also offers inter-modality with the regional train lines. The Sun Cycle Route is designed for and with the community. It provides travellers with essential services, such as accommodation (bike hotels), catering, assistance for cyclists (hire, luggage transport, workshops, spare parts), bike plus train option, dedicated reception at cultural sites and nature reserves. This acts as advantage both for tourists and for the tourism service providers, especially in less touristic areas, who have the opportunity to be part of a common promotion strategy and tourism product.

Local communities also play an important role: they can welcome active and sustainable tourism practitioners who can get to know local traditions, quality products, natural sites and festivals along the way. It is also important to mention the “Crinali 2022” festival, which offers hundreds of events in the Bolognese Apennines and the Imola district, also met with great success. The objective of Crinali events is to provide people with new experiential paths introducing them to the beauties and the timeless changing landscapes of the Bolognese Apennines: itineraries in the nature “with a view” on theatre performances, concerts, readings, circus exhibitions. Looking instead at previous years, in Bologna, tourism created more than 11,000 new jobs in the period 2016-2018 in the metropolitan area, with a growth of 31% for a total of 43,000 employees, representing 5.4% of the metropolitan city’s workforce.

It is clear that this great growth has exhausted its first phase of development and initiated important reflections on how to manage tourism so that it fits into the economic, social and urban fabric of the city in a balanced manner. Sustainability, balance and responsibility represent three key words for the future growth of the tourism in Bologna. The “Multi-year guidelines 2021-2023” are the reference strategic document for promoting the Bologna area as a single heritage of nature, culture and experiences. It is an important policy document which defines the role of the Tourist Destination as a project for the economic and social development of the territory, the regional legislation of reference, the dynamics of tourism in the metropolitan context, the governance and the work guidelines with the objectives. They also define the guidelines for tourism development in Bologna and in the metropolitan area, together with the product lines to be supported and promoted-marketed. Sustainability must also be understood in its meaning of balance with the resources of the environment. Balance that is operationally translated in the development of products and services that



minimize environmental impact: slow transport, products from 0 km suppliers, eco-friendly tourism tools. The tourist destination has set itself the goal of obtaining certification for sustainable tourism according to the criteria of the GSTC (Global Sustainable Tourism Council), a global reference standard for sustainability in travel and tourism.

Also of note is the fast growing of “eXtraBO”: the outdoor info point launched in December 2019. It is

a physical space and an online platform specialising in the promotion and marketing of the green and active offer of the metropolitan area. The project was developed by the Municipality of Bologna, the Metropolitan City of Bologna and Bologna Welcome, and animated by a network of local touristic operators; it aims to promote and valorise the existing - but still not well-known - natural and cultural heritage sites, located within the whole metropolitan area, thought

and designed both for local citizens and tourists. It follows the vision of the metropolitan area as a whole tourism destination to fight over-tourism in the city centre and valorise marginal areas fostering more sustainable and green tourism, quality of life for local citizens and increasing job opportunities in the tourism sector in both peripheral and marginalized areas.

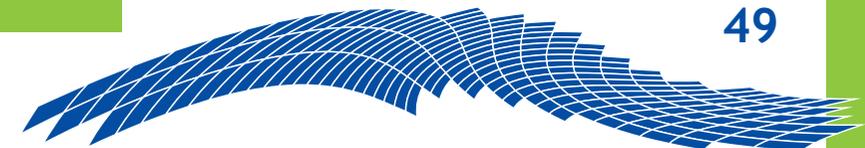
Parks, natural and green areas can be a key element of this tourism revival that could have a significant potential. However, it needs to be accompanied by an adequate supply of tourist services, a well-maintained and signposted hiking network, efficient logistics services (functional both for tourists and for the local population) and a set of proposals capable of offering tourists an all-round experience of the peculiarities (including food and wine, but not only) of the territories they visit or pass through.

Particularly significant and useful for activating the actors present in the area, in order to share visions and build networks and collaborations, was the implementation of training courses organized in the framework of the Pronacul project. In particular two courses have been created: one dedicated to private operators (30 hours) and one to public bodies (15 hours).

The metropolitan area and the whole Region itself offer a wide range of opportunity to enjoy and sharing experience with each other: organization of events, excursions and concerts set up in our beautiful places. All this accompanied with a high-level gastronomic experience: all the territory is famous for the local products that are able to rediscover and, at the same time, keep alive the traditions of those wonderful areas.



Picture Small Lawn - Chiusa di Casalecchio, Bologna (Source: Itineraria)





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www: <https://www.rrc-kp.si/center>

Project web page:

<https://pronacul.adrioninterreg.eu>

### Centre for the promotion of entrepreneurship Piran Ltd

The Centre for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship Piran was established by the Municipality of Piran, the Italian Union and the Chamber of Crafts and small business Piran.

The representative person of institution is Alberto Manzin, director.

Centre has a wide experience in national and international projects since it participated in several national and international projects and has achieved competences in project management. As part of the regional development agency of Coastal-Karst region, it collaborates in the fields of regional development, economy, business support, tourism, human resources and services for SME. In cooperation

with municipalities and other business centres, it additionally provides business consulting for a wide range of users: entrepreneurs, craftsmen, farmers, fishermen, students and other job seekers, self-employment program and preparation and implementation of development projects.

The project partner Centre for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship Piran joined the project with a purpose to support the program for preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the protected area of the Strunjan Landscape Park, which belongs to the European Union's Natura 2000 nature conservation network. In the light of the current situation, tourism is increasingly directed towards natural areas, but it also increases the pressure on them. By promoting sustainable tourism, we want reduce or at least limit this pressure.



Source: Strunjan Nature Park



## Pilot area Strunjan Landscape Park

Pilot area Strunjan Landscape Park is a preserved piece of nature in the Gulf of Trieste, which is unique due to its location by the sea. It was established in 1990 by the municipality of Izola and Piran on the basis of the valid Act on Natural and Cultural Heritage. The natural attributes of the Strunjan Peninsula, its Mediterranean climate and lee position in particular, have enabled the population of this area and the development of traditional economic activities in harmony with nature. Dispersed settlement, terrace

farming, an inshore fishery and artisanal salt making have moulded a cultural landscape characterised by a variety of living and cultural environments. Salt-pans, which are part of the cultural landscape with dispersed settlement, rural hedges and terraces separated by dry-stone walls, allows a quality co-existence of man and nature.

The Strunjan Saltpans are beside Sečovlje Saltpans, one of the last salt pans in the Mediterranean, where salt is obtained manually with a method which is several hundred years old.

Today, the economic role of the saltpans is subjected to the nature conservationist and cultural roles, furthermore:

- the salt from the Park is a delicacy for gourmets;
- the preservation of saltpans heritage contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage;
- the saltpan area is giving a shelter to rare animal and plant species and it is at the same time a reserve of ecologically precious environment and remain of once rich Mediterranean cultural heritage which rapidly disappearing.

With its cultural landscape and activities, the park plays an important role for the local population, such as employment opportunities or as a promotion of local produce under the common brand Krajinski park Strunjan. The Strunjan Landscape Park is an important part of the tourism offer for Istria, as well as for Slovenia, as it offers many activities such as hiking, cycling, water sports, education and workshops, etc.

With the goal of maintaining a more sustainable way of visiting the area, the Strunjan Landscape park, as part of the project, received electric bicycles, which are available for visitors. One of the contents of sustainable tourism, which is gaining ground in practice, is visiting local homesteads and farms. Because of the latter, the partner, together with the Public Institute Strunjan Landscape park, set up signposts that lead to individual farms in Strunjan with additional offers.



Source: Strunjan Nature Park



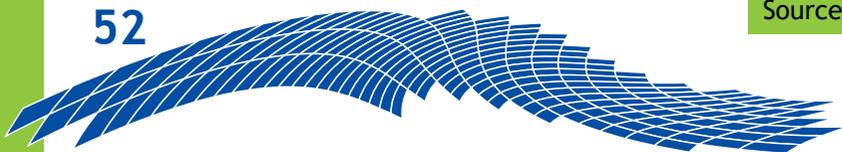
Source: Strunjan Nature Park

To raise public awareness of the issue of pressure on nature and with the desire to enable more sustainable forms of tourism, the project partner conducted several workshops and training sessions for stakeholders, regional and local authorities and the general public. The events presented the management of the heritage site and visitors' habits, as well as the resolution of various conflicts. Those present reviewed the local aspect and the possibility of product development, global trends and guidelines for establishing balance and harmony within tourist areas.

The heritage, legacy from the past with which we live today and what we will pass on to future generations is often the motive for traveling to a certain destination. Treating only these or elements of both natural and cultural heritage as well as tourist products is theoretically realistic and logical, but in practice



Source: Mojca Fabbro



problems arise in this regard, mainly for the reason of responsible and sustainable development. Most of the heritage attractions were basically not originally intended for tourist visits, so a special and responsible attitude towards the design of the tourist product and management strategy is required. The latter must be based on the principles of protection and sustainable and responsible development on the one hand and commercial utility on the other, and in all of this it is also very important to have good relations between the stakeholders in and around the location.

Experiences on tourist trips or one-day visits are a key element in understanding the way of life of people in other environments. People get to know and experience the country, city or location in question in a way that they learn about its history, people and culture. The challenge for those who manage a tourist destination and design tourism products is to shape the visitor's experience. It should be emphasized that the more senses involved in the experience, the greater the satisfaction and the richer the memories of the travel experience. visiting the

destination. It is necessary to keep in mind that the uniqueness, authenticity and innovation of the tourist offer contribute to a higher quality of the experience of the destination.

Common methodology for management of natural and cultural heritage analysis showed that the area currently has medium natural and tourist values, and therefore further tourism development should be focused towards improving the tourist values of the identified natural heritage sites, in accordance with the importance factor and the appropriate market segments.

The project partner and the pilot area will continue to support sustainable tourism and strive to preserve natural and cultural heritage. Therefore, they also prepared some ideas on how to act in the future in order to get as close as possible to the set goals. They want to additionally arrange the entry point to the park and install visitor counters, as well as establish an application to limit access. A better arrangement of stationary traffic and the possibility of a virtual visit to the park would also contribute to a more sustainable way of visiting the park. With the cooperation, awareness and support of stakeholders, residents and the general public, we can take a step towards a better adaptation to nature and thus help to maintain a more sustainable form of tourism.



Source: Tina Primožič

### 3.

## AN INITIATIVE FOR THE PROMOTION AND THE PRESERVATION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS

While the project's demonstrated decisively that the tourist sector can provide competitive advantages for local and national economies, it also exposed concerns, scepticism, and agony for the future and the development of a sustainable tourism industry via the application of the programs' common methodology and interaction, exchange of ideas, and need discovery. These served as a foundation for concrete policy ideas, which may be utilized as a launchpad to enhance and promote sustainable tourism in the selected Adriatic regions.

By proposing concrete steps and recommendations to diversify the region's tourism product, leveraging shipping cruise tourism, paving the way for cross-sectoral innovation and the creation of large-scale economies, promoting environmental sustainability and the adoption of common legal standards and increasing capacity building, the PRONACUL project has shifted the public's and policymakers' attention to the needs for further development.

In addition, the project will look into other avenues and methods for drawing financial support in the form of grants and investments. Tools and indices for gauging whether or not the program's goals have been met have also been developed as part of this effort to guarantee the project's results will last.

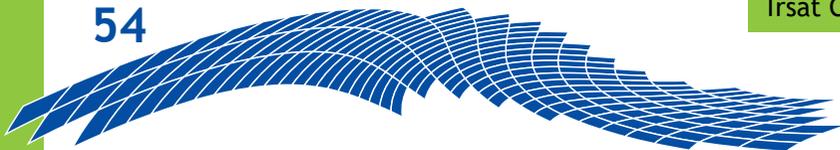
Following the above policy recommendations for cultural and natural heritage it showed steps on how to be managed with an eye toward a complete upgrade of promotional tools, methods, and means, as well as participation in various targeted actions to boost the visibility of the regional economy both domestically and internationally.



Trsat Castle Rijeka, source Rijeka Tourist Board



Radimlja necropolis, source LiNK Mostar



# COMMON METHODOLOGY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

The project has demonstrated that tourists visiting the pilot areas put a high importance on the degree of preservation, historical relevance, and uniqueness of a cultural heritage site when determining whether or not to visit it. The beauty of the surrounding landscape and nature is only rivaled by that of the structures themselves. The primary values of natural heritage sites are their conservation, rarity, landscape, and surrounding wildlife. The level of protection for both cultural and natural heritage sites is obviously extremely high. As a result, this is a crucial component of any future tourism destination.

Three of the most important parts of a tourist attraction are

- site maintenance and administration,
- accommodation service,
- and food service.

These three have the highest relevance value of any indicators across all three groups (natural, cultural and tourist values).



## 4.1

# Better support and more visitors

Setting up and application for Common methodology should improve management system of natural and cultural heritage protection and tourism development in protected areas to increase the stakeholders capacity level for increasing number of visits. Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions

The PRONACUL project targeted tourism providers, SMEs, public institutions, supporting services and other stakeholders already dealing with natural and cultural heritage in tourism. It also targeted the general public, public authorities, international organisations, agencies, research institutions, higher education institutions, schools, education/training centres, business support organisations, interest groups including NGOs and cultural/citizen associations and enterprises. General public is reached through media and strategically distributed promotional material with the aim of reaching the maximum number of individuals. The objective of involving target groups is for partners and stakeholders to be able to define appropriate networks of stakeholders consisting of the governance sector and tourism industry to develop the pilot area using natural and cultural heritage as a resource for sustainable tourism. Input from the PRONACUL trainings and workshops organized for stakeholders in pilot areas is used for preparation of main outputs. PRONACUL partners chose whether to organise all trainings and workshops at the same or different locations, depending on the territory of the pilot area and stakeholder interests to be able to involve the widest possible network of target groups. The Stakeholder capacity networks that resulted from workshops should prove the effectiveness of the com-

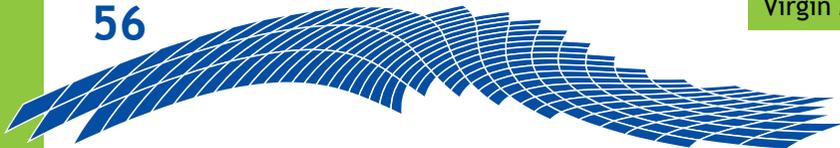
mon methodology by implementing pilot actions using a cross-sectoral cooperation, involving attendees from local, regional and national administrations, municipalities, regional development agencies, local and regional tourism providers and tourist organisations, universities, museums, etc.

Transnational framework analysis represents the combination of activities to develop the common method-

ology for management of natural and cultural heritage demanding PRONACUL partners to firstly gather data from protected areas. The analysis included pieces of information on transnational framework regarding management of natural and cultural heritage in protected areas and pieces of information on types of natural and cultural heritage defined as such according to relevant legislation. Transnational framework analysis served for



Krušedol Monastery (Fruška gora, Serbia), with the church dedicated to the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, is situated in a valley between the former monastery village (Prnjavor) and Krušedol village.



the formation of a joint definition of natural and cultural heritage and as input for the common methodology in the part of identification of natural and cultural heritage as a development factor. The analysis of natural and cultural heritage included three main components: a definition of less favoured protected areas; a comparative analysis of definitions in project countries will be done to make a unified definition; a joint definition of natural and cultural heritage. Scientific research will be based on a basis of the transnational aspect to find different frameworks in participating countries with similar characteristics. PRONACUL's main outputs and some of the deliverables are tightly connected to the idea of cross-fertilization and cross-capitalisation. PRONACUL's main outputs and some of the deliverables are identified in a way, which could freely cross-fertilize between outputs and deliverables from the TRANSFER and THEMATIC projects to stimulate the development of natural and cultural heritage in ADRION area. With an exchange of ideas and pieces of information according to the rec-

ommended activities, management skills and models regarding natural and cultural heritage sites in ADRION area should be improved.

Good practice database regarding management of natural and cultural heritage in protected areas should serve as an exchange tool among subjects in Adriatic - Ionian area, which is available at the project website. Particular database for each protected area is prepared, which is later united into one joint database that is available on PRONACUL's website. For database establishment PRONACUL partners used various methods: existing analyses prepared previous projects, meetings conclusions with relevant stakeholders, meetings conclusions with professionals in the fields of natural and cultural heritage and sustainable tourism, etc. Good practice database is presented in an interactive manner to improve the attractiveness of natural and cultural tourism destinations. PRONACUL partners focused on good practices regarding management of natural and cultural heritage with engagement of cross-sectoral

stakeholder networks. Additional focus is put on the Adriatic - Ionian area as specifics of its richness that have to be considered.

## SOME EXAMPLES - DESCRIPTION OF THE BEST PRACTICE

Transfers of good practices from areas with other specifics will be thoroughly considered and adapted to the needs of the area where they will be transferred, summarising characteristics of good practices within the database and using it as an input for the common methodology and for the preparation of action plans, where is explained how to transfer and adapt good practices. Good practice database serves as a tool for disseminating pieces of information within action plans, when good practices will be transferred to pilot areas. The collection of good practices represents a basis for preparation of general criteria for natural and cultural heritage to be used as a development factor or a resource for sustainable tourism.



The Škocjan Caves is a cave system in region Divača (Slovenia).



Ethno house under Okić is located in the northwestern part of Croatia, near Samobor.

## Small scale investments and demonstration projects

Small scale investments for the provision of innovative services and products in the touristic sector will define engagement of stakeholders in the promotion of sustainable valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage in pilot areas.

All partners contributed pieces of information from their protected areas to provide data on types of natural and cultural heritage and the common methodology regarding their management to ensure their application to other organisations/regions/countries outside of the current partnership. When selecting outputs, PRONACUL partners have been explicitly focused on those in which successful management of natural and cultural heritage with engagement of relevant stakeholders generated application of outputs to other organisations/regions/countries. Monitoring activities according to contribution of outputs is based on the methodology, which will be applied and transferred to other organisations/regions/countries outside of the current partnership. PRONACUL partners will monitor the efficiency of the common methodology and provide feedbacks of pilot actions to the virtual chamber, which will include them in outputs for further improvements, which will be gathered for possible transfer. Outputs include cross-sectoral approach, Communication plan, Time schedule, included partners and precise definition of good practices implementation in the strategy and policy papers of each participating partner with possible transfer to other organisations/regions/coun-

tries outside of the current partnership. Outputs follow the objective to increase the level of capacity for the stakeholders in the fields of natural and cultural heritage protection and tourism to sustainably valorise natural and cultural heritage as a growth asset and will therefore contribute to a sustainable economic position of pilot areas, after which organisations/regions/countries outside of the current partnership will be modelled. They will be harmonized with local, regional and national strategies in the environmental, tourism, natural, cultural and economic fields.

UNSPMF prepared instructions for reporting about the Transnational framework analysis regarding natural and cultural heritage in protected areas and coordinated the work of partners for preparation of joint outputs to ensure their durability. The preparation of instructions started after the beginning of the project, when all data from pilot areas is gathered. UNSPMF prepared the instructions for unified reporting on good practices and gathered good practice databases from project countries. It coordinated the preparation of outputs and did most of the operative work for the preparation of

the joint outputs with analysing good practices. Good practice database will be updated with new examples of good practices to be used in other protected areas after the completion of the project. All the partners were fully engaged in gathering good practices considering specifics of the Adriatic - Ionian area. UNSPMF was responsible for the preparation of all guidelines. The work started after data from previous activities were gathered and the first draft of guidelines for identification of natural and cultural heritage in protected areas was presented to assure further using once the project has been finalised. For this purpose all the partners contributed by providing pieces of information from useful experience from already implemented pilot actions. UNSPMF assisted partners in implementation and problem solving. Partners will expand implementation of pilot actions and implementation of action plans for their pilot areas. They will include further funding resources and report feedback to the WP responsible partner in order to improve the efficiency of the common methodology in practice after the project implementation.



# Common methodology of natural and cultural management for heritage

Setting up Common methodology for management of natural and cultural heritage will influence on identified destinations of natural and cultural heritage to become more popular in travel and tourism, representing an important factor in shaping travel patterns in the Adriatic - Ionian area, offering important opportunities for creating and selling new products.

These methods can be used as an assisting tool for the valorisation and evaluation of natural and cultural heritage and give us a clear picture of the current state as well as tourism potential, benefits and drawbacks of the analyzed destinations. These methods also enable us to identify the gap between successfully developed destinations and those which have potential but still don't attract the interest of a larger tourism market. We will also be able to detect barriers hindering further destination development and indentify the major fields for destination improvement whether in terms of destination management, tourism promotion, tour guide service, infrastructure or any other element of crucial importance for destination development.

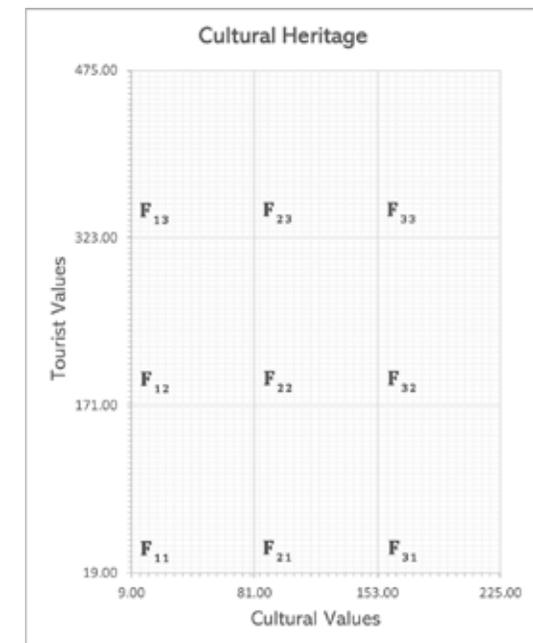
For the purpose of the international Interreg Adriatic ProNaCul project, a new method for the tourist assessment of natural and cultural heritage was developed. One of the project goals is the promotion of natural and cultural heritage for the purpose of sustainable tourism development. This method is based on the already existing M-GAM (Modified Geosite Assessment Model) and CREM (Cultural Route Assessment Model) models for tourism assessment and it is focused on the opinion of experts and vis-

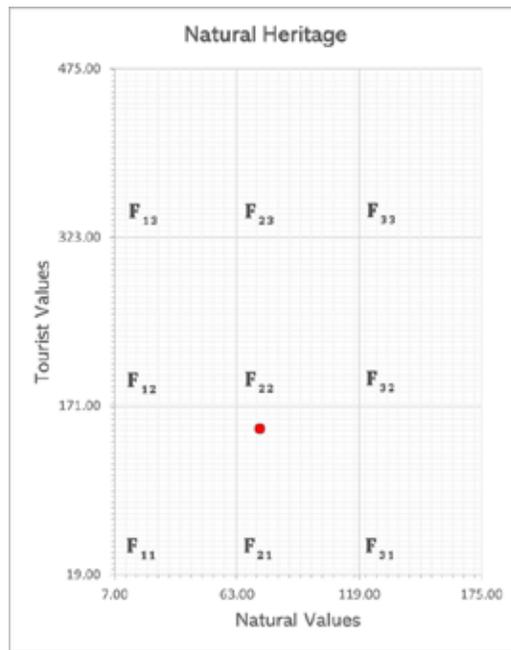
itors (tourists) about the importance of each sub-indicator when visiting a tourist site/destination.

The presented model consists of 35 subindicators divided into three groups (natural values, cultural values, and tourist values). In the case of assessing natural heritage sites, sub-indicators from the group of natural and tourist values are valued, and in the case of cultural heritage, sub-indicators from the group of cultural and tourist values are assessed. Additionally, the grades for each sub-indicator are not only determined by experts, but also consider the opinion of visitors and tourists regarding the importance of each sub-indicator in the assessment process. The involvement of visitors in the assessment process is done through a survey where each respondent is asked to determine / assess the importance (Im) of each of the 35 subindicators (using a five-point scale: 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) in the model. Thus, each visitor individually on a five-point scale determines how important each sub-indicator is to him when choosing and deciding which tourist site to visit. After each respondent determines the importance of each sub-indicator, the mean value is taken as the final value of the importance (Im) of that sub-indicator. The Importance Factor (Im) gives visitors the opportunity to express their opinion on each sub-indicator in the model by assessing how important each sub-indicator is to them when choosing and deciding between multiple sites they want to visit.

After that, the final value of the importance factor (Im) is multiplied by the values given by experts (1 to 5) who assess the current state and value of each

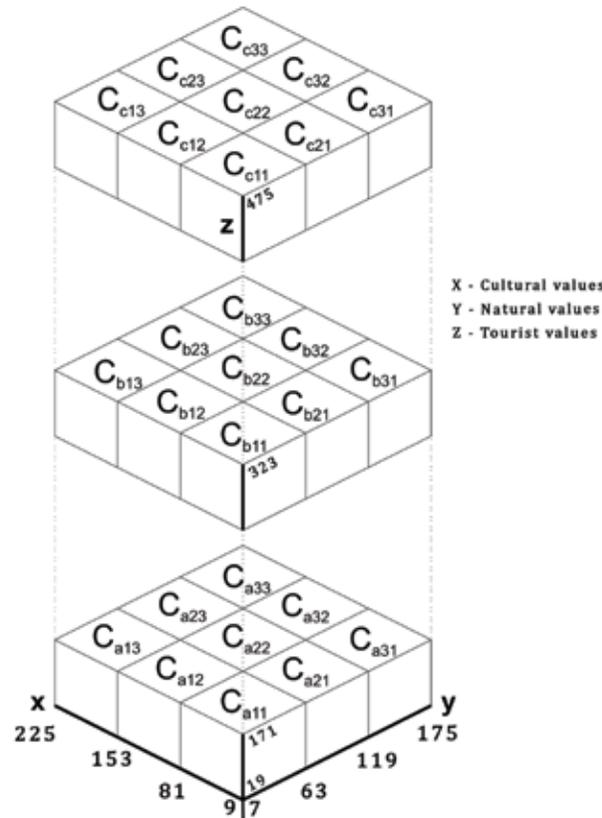
sub-indicator. By multiplying these two numbers, we obtain an overall score for each sub-indicator. The overall score represents a product of expert assessment and the importance factors determined by tourists through a survey. These overall scores are then added up for every group of subindicators separately (Natural, Cultural and Tourist values) leading to a final value of Natural, Cultural and Tourist values. Based on these values, a matrix of natural and cultural values and tourist values is created (figure below), where these values are represented by X (natural or cultural) and Y (tourist values) axes.





Twodimensional matrixes for natural and cultural values of a tourist site

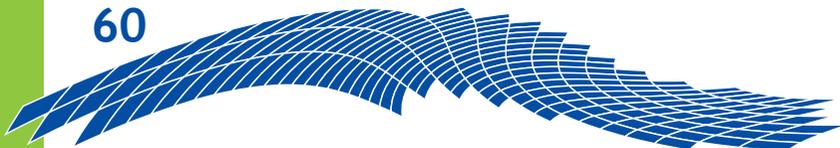
Besides the two matrixes for natural and cultural values which are used for individual site assessment, there is also a 3D matrix for the tourist destination as a whole. This matrix encompasses and presents natural and cultural heritage at a destination together with their tourist values. After the first two matrixes are created and the natural, cultural and tourist values are calculated for each site at a destination, the natural, cultural and tourist values for all sites at a destination are added up separately and their mean value determines the position of the destination in the 3D matrix.



3D matrix for natural, cultural and tourist values of a destination

The 3D matrix consists of 3 axes (x, y, z) representing cultural, natural and tourist values. Depending on the assessment score, a tourist destination will fit into one of the fields of the 3D matrix which will determine if it has low, medium or high cultural, natural and tourist values.

Following these methodological steps, each of the project partners had the task of filling out three surveys. The first one was related to general information about each partners' pilot area. The second one included the assessment of each subindicator for natural and cultural heritage sites within the pilot area while the third survey was distributed among domestic tourists in each partners' country with the task of rating the importance of each of the 35 subindicators in the model. The final results revealed which sites should be the main focus of future tourism development at each pilot area as well as the elements which need to be improved at each of the analyzed sites. Additionally, the results also revealed interesting differences among the preferences of different market segments (tourists from partner countries) where for example tourists from Greece, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina give more importance to human induced values such as visitor centers, tour-guide service and restaurant and hostelry service. Slovenian and Italian tourists also show more self-initiative and need less comfort and a lower level of services while giving more importance to nature protection and scientific values when choosing which tourist sites to visit.



# Common Guidelines Management System

## T1.3.1 Joint guidelines management system

PRONACULI's joint guidelines management system are developed by more developed partners in the project. Capacity building trainings for partners were organised during project meetings for partners to prepare them and educate how to organise trainings and workshops for relevant stakeholder, including local, regional and national bodies. PRONACUL partners gained the knowledge how to improve organisation of trainings for relevant stakeholders, especially tourism providers and proper organisations. Ensuring the optimal quantity of relevant pieces of information, trainings are organised simultaneously with project meetings. For the purpose of being better acquainted with activities for the Pilot actions implementation and in order to learn from real-life cases, study visits to pilot areas were organised.

Joint guidelines management system consist of three types of guidelines. First of all, guidelines for identification of natural and cultural heritage as a development factor in protected areas are developed. These guidelines set the criteria, how to identify the natural and cultural heritage which will function as a development factor in protected areas in order to promote the sustainable valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural assets as growth assets in the Adriatic-Ionian area. Their preparation was based on transnational framework analysis and the definition of natural and cultural heritage. Secondly, Guidelines for identification and participation of stakeholders in management of natural and cultural heritage in protected areas are identified as the main factor for increasing the level of capacity for the stakeholders in the fields of natural and cultural heritage protection and tourism. Different participa-

tory approaches for involving the widest spectrum of relevant stakeholders. Thirdly, Guidelines for the preparation of action plans are prepared. All the guidelines are integrated in the common methodology. The methodology were first applied in pilot areas which will serve as a mechanism for improvements, with an aim of constant updating.

## T1.3.2 Capacity building trainings for partners

Results from this deliverable were implemented in the Common methodology. Two Capacity building trainings were organized with the purpose of gaining the knowledge of dealing with heritage and how to use it in pilot areas.

- In the primary training natural and cultural heritage as a development factor in Adrion area were identified.
- In the secondary training PRONACUL partners were trained to choose the optimal methods for increasing the level of capacity for the stakeholders by developing action plans and implementing pilot actions.

Faculty of Sciences, Novi Sad coordinated the trainings and contribute to their content regarding presentation of guidelines. Faculty was responsible for the preparation of material, interesting approaches, practical exercises and simple presentations of guidelines.

## T1.3.3 Trainings for local, regional and national bodies

- Based on the 1. training of Capacity building trainings for partners
- Each partner organised 2 trainings which served for identification of natural and cultural heritage as a development factor in Adrion area.

## T1.3.4 Trainings for relevant stakeholders

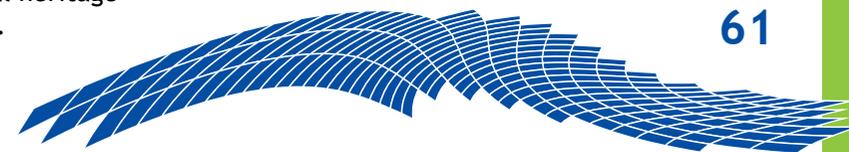
Based on the 2. Capacity building training for partners trainings were performed 2 times within the project by PRONACUL partners in their pilot areas.

UNSPMF coordinated other partners when preparing trainings in their protected areas, gathering their implementation and analysing them to be used for the preparation of action plans. All partners were responsible for the organisation of trainings in their protected areas to gather ideas for pilot action implementation and for establishment of cross-sectoral stakeholder networks.

## T1.4.1 Workshops for local stakeholders

Each PRONACUL partner organized 2 workshops. Target groups were: young people, tourism providers, SMEs, citizens on rural areas, land owners, supporting services and other stakeholders, already dealing with natural and cultural heritage for tourism development. The objective of the workshops was to establish capacity networks of stakeholders. Recommendations from workshops - part of pilot action plans.

**T1.4.2 Establishing national stakeholders capacity networks** - based on trainings and workshops that PRONACUL partners organized in their pilot areas, each partner prepared a stakeholder capacity network with contact details of stakeholders who participated in trainings and workshops. UNSPMF prepared unified document on project level with contact details of stakeholders from all project partners.



## Guidelines for identification of natural and cultural heritage

Some of the important issues within the project tasks include the selection of the participants in the tourism development process and affirmation of natural and cultural values in mountain regions. Exploration of these issues would help in: identification of participants and stakeholders in tourism development process; considering the time and forms of consulting and participation of stakeholders and finding the paths to develop good relationships. The process of identification of natural and cultural heritage with developmental potential & the process of identification and participation of stakeholders are simultaneous.

At the same time they are already a start of an action plan. Or vice versa, an action plan must contain also the process of identification of natural and cultural values and stakeholders and their engagement (as shown on the figure below).

What should be the process of stakeholders involvement?

1. First step would be identification of stakeholders that represent examples of good practice from the field of nature, culture and tourism.
2. Next step would be to include all other subjects that are interested in sustainable development of tourism in the mountain area and countryside.
3. Moreover, public sector institutions should as well get involved in the activities (tourism organisations from both municipalities, local authorities, Provincial Institute for the Protection of Natural or Cultural Monuments, cultural institutions in municipalities - museums, galleries, cultural and artistic associations, etc.).

4. Identify stakeholders from private sector (travel agencies, catering subjects, agricultural households, souvenir makers, common carriers, non-governmental organisations etc.).
5. It is necessary to enable the creation of the partnership between private and public sector in order to encourage investments, easier access to the existing funds, subventions and loans, all in accordance with the principles of sustainable development of tourism and especially in order to enable and encourage local producers (health food, souvenirs, etc.) invest in the market of tourism.
6. Stakeholders, especially those from private sector, can be identified on the account of the existing data bases provided by trade chambers or register for undertakings on the territory of the municipalities of pilot areas.
7. Once they are identified, they shall be contacted by telephone or e-mail, and later by the media or personal contact, when they shall be informed about all the advantages of taking part in the project activities and in the future (follow up).

### *1. How do you think the natural and cultural values should be identified?*

In order to identify natural and cultural heritage, one should explore the existing heritage resources (data bases provided by literature, Local & Provincial Secretariats for the Protection of Cultural Monuments and nature, Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Natural protection, Chamber of Commerce and Economy etc.).

Moreover, one shall question local community about the issues of heritage and objects or elements of natural and cultural heritage that have not been identified so far and which, according to the opinions of local community, could encourage the development of tourism and overall economic development - tourism

in the mountain areas, in countryside (desk and field research) in the pilot areas.

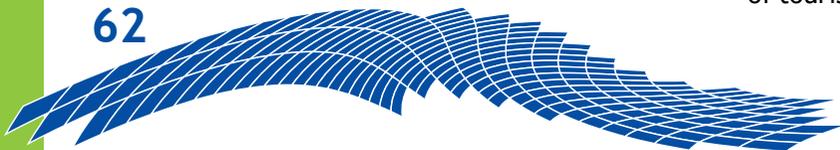
A special emphasis should be paid upon the examples of good practice on local level (on the territory of the researched pilot area and surrounding municipalities) that could be later used as a model for the identification of the objects of natural and cultural heritage (tangible, intangible, spiritual, folklore) and for their inclusion in tourism market.

### *2. Who do you envision will use the guidelines and how would they use them?*

Guidelines shall be used by:

- local community - inhabitants, public and private sector.
- local institutions from the field of nature and culture - cultural and artistic, nature associations, museums, galleries, cultural societies.
- primary and secondary schools for organisation of classes that cover the issues of development and familiarisation with local community.
- tourism providers - agencies, DMO/DMA, organisations, hospitality and catering employees.
- as well as households involved in the development of tourism.
- NGOs that are oriented towards the promotion of multi-ethnic and multicultural societies, promotion of natural and cultural content and policies as well as all those who wish to take part in tourism activities.

All of them shall first redirect their initial activity of work towards making better cooperation with subjects from the same or similar field of activity and later also towards institutions from different fields of activities, all aimed at creating a more quality and diverse product or service. Making of better communication on horizontal and vertical level shall enable



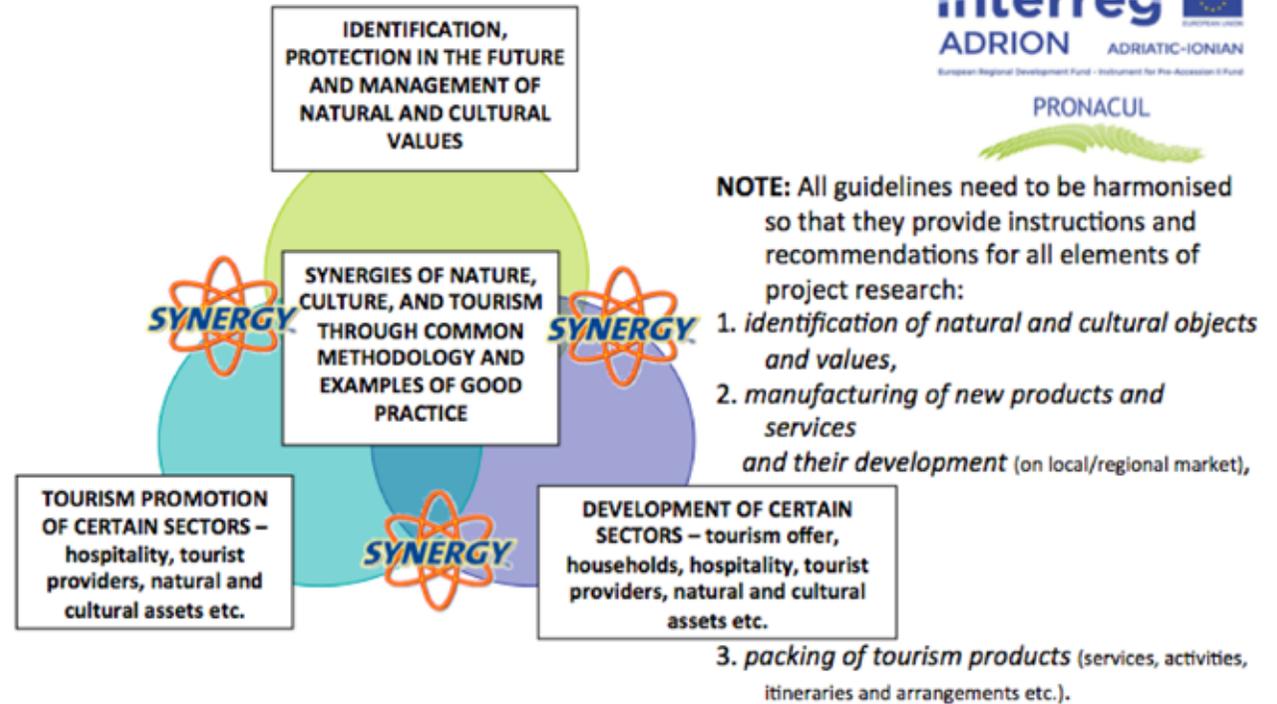
conjoining into societies and associations that shall adjust their activities and set certain minimal standards using the institutional way of activities (helping each other and harmonising joint objectives and business interests).

**MAKING CONTACTS WITH STAKEHOLDERS** - When making contacts and as a condition for establishing and maintaining successful relationships with stakeholders, it is necessary to take care of the needs and expectations of your stakeholders all aimed at making them completely satisfied. The relationships can be identified administratively and through interviews with stakeholders themselves.

At the beginning it is necessary to organise informational meetings, publish leaflets or organise some other types of activities in order to inform stakeholders about the characteristics of the project they have been contacted about. After that, it is advisable to create a temporary telephone number and a new e-mail address that shall be used for communication with stakeholders.

Communication with stakeholders changes in different phases of the project depending on the fact how they are involved in the realisation of the project:

1. Stakeholders are informed but remain passive - communication by the means of leaflets, brochures, posters, newspapers, commercials.
2. Stakeholders are consulted - organisation of creative group sessions, focus groups, study groups.
3. Stakeholders give advices - organisation of creative group sessions, Internet discussions - Internet forums, social networks.
4. Stakeholders become equal participants - organisation of creative group sessions, Internet discussions - Internet forums, social networks, organisation of workshops.



The major problems that can emerge during the work are the following:

1. Lack of adequate technical equipment (lack of computers and Internet - craftsmen, agricultural producers, in rural settings).
2. Language as an obstacle in communication with foreign project partners.

PRONACUL partners organised various workshops for local stakeholders on the protected action territories with the intend of capacity networks establishment. Stakeholders capacity networks were supported by mutual cooperation among local, regional, national public bodies, tourism providers and other organisations with specific roles for each protected area. Capacity networks were composed by relevant stakeholders with the ability to contribute to the Application of the common methodology in pilot areas. Stakeholders represented the power, resources and influence in the field of natural and cultural heritage in protected areas to develop sustainable tourism, especially in mountainous regions. Building stakeholders capacity networks implied inclusion of stakeholders into the sustainable development of the area on the basis of natural and cultural heritage with respect to sustainable valorisation and preservation.

Separate trainings were organized for:

1. Entrepreneurs from the private sector: agencies, carriers, accommodation facilities, tourist guides, event organizers, etc.
2. Public sector: officials dealing with economic, tourism at the level of municipalities in the pilot area and at the regional level, and who are in politics and make decisions.
3. In the end, partners organized a meeting with both groups so that they could face each other and draw common conclusions. There were, of course, discussions and mutual accusations.

Various methodologies can be used to conduct workshops to achieve cohesion and better understanding and communication among stakeholders:

- Brainstorming
  - nominal group technique
  - group passing technique
  - team idea mapping method
- Creative problem solving
- Technology of Participation (ToP)
- World Café
- Focus groups
- Goal oriented project planning/
- Logical Framework Approach (LFA)
- Open-space technology (OST)

Important notes for the organisation of trainings are:

- Provide enough space and time,
- round tables,
- chairs to be arranged in a circle,
- take notes,
- write conclusions,
- do a report after a training or workshop.

The following 5 components comprise the model:

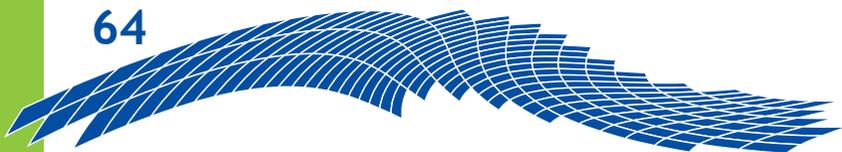
1. setting: Create a “special” environment,
2. welcome participants and Introduction,
3. small Group,
4. questions,
5. harvest / Insights / Results.

As the workshop leader is in the role of:

1. Facilitator (a person that makes an action or process easier).
2. Moderator (one who presides over an assembly, meeting, or discussion, the chairman of a discussion group).
3. Mediator (when there is a commotion you calm them down and return them to the initial rules).
4. a little bit Mentor (sometimes tell them what to do).

The person who leads the training should be:

1. communicative,
2. calm,
3. helpful,
4. to have the ability to listen actively and openly (verbs and adjectives used by the interlocutor),
5. that it is flexible but principled in the same time,
6. to respect the interlocutor and not to interrupt him,
7. to have an understanding in a different attitude,
8. to be an assertive person - not to attack,
9. to have the ability to know how to be sharp - if necessary,
10. determined and that has no problem returning the discussion to the main topic,
11. to have good diction, to pronounce words clearly,
12. be able to use flipchart and write down at the same time as brainstorming,
13. cheerful, in good spirits, smiling,
14. to have a satisfactory appearance - to be neat etc.



### POSSIBLE KEY STRATEGIES from Trainings:

- Raising consciousness of natural and cultural heritage tourism and possibilities that this activity brings to mountain areas;
- Encouraging social and economic development in the municipalities in the project pilot areas through the development of tourism, promotion and presentations of local natural & cultural heritage (including agricultural or some other products);
- Creating real and tangible values (economic and social) through the presentation of local natural & cultural heritage;
- Creating a new chance for the members of local communities (local population) in improving and gaining knowledge, skills, economic revenues;
- Offering possibilities that should enable them to move away from passive way of living in the mountain pilot areas;
- Including natural & cultural values/heritage on the territories of the researched municipalities into tourism promotion on national and international level, plans for the development of tourism on regional and national level and tourism offer in pilot areas.



### POSSIBLE KEY ACTIVITIES from Trainings:

- a) Raising consciousness of the advantages of the development of natural & cultural tourism. Actions: press conferences, contacts with the media (printed press, radio, TV) and public appearances.
- b) Educational programmes and educational workshops, Actions:
  - Programmes dedicated to local authorities, governmental organisations and mainly to local tourism organisations.
  - Programmes dedicated to local population (manufacturers of cultural products, households that offer or are interested in offering tourism and catering services, members of nature, cultural and artistic societies, owners of private museums and galleries and other target groups).
- c) Communication and participation, Actions:
  - Initiating advice process that should connect all the stakeholders (local authority, individuals and experts, in order to include all sources of knowledge and skills; joint meetings and performances).
  - Encouraging the development of ethical codex (for tourists, tourism economy and local population).
  - Encouraging cooperation between professional institutions for the protection of nature assets and cultural monuments, cultural institutions, nature, cultural or artistic associations and tourism economy (meetings and encounters).
- d) Designing and development of tourism products, Actions:
  - Defining the conditions of existing products and offers.
  - Creating preconditions for the creation of new and sustainable tourism products with strong educational connotations and unique on tourism market.
  - Developing and designing theme natural and cultural tourism routes.
- e) Identification of key market segments, Actions:
  - Market overview and analysis.
  - Analysis of present condition and projection of a desirable and possible condition (SWOT).
  - Defining the position of potential tourism products through considering all their strong and weak points.
- f) Evaluation and analysis of the possibilities for satisfying financial, technical and personnel requirements, Action:
  - Valorisation of all the potentials (financial, technical and personnel) and definition of models for overcoming all the obstacles.
- g) Carrying out and monitoring of activities, Actions:
  - Creation and application of the indicators of action success.

# 5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH THE VIRTUAL CHAMBER

Conceived as an executive arm of the common Methodology of the project and built as a dynamic virtual gateway, PRONACUL's Virtual Chamber will be continually updated and enhanced by the participation of stakeholders from the program's target areas, with the following goals in mind:

## 1. Provision of permanent support service for protected areas

The virtual Chamber is being established as a permanent support service for protected areas, with the primary goal of connecting local, regional, and national stakeholders as well as tourism providers in order to educate them on new initiatives and project cooperation opportunities in the fields of cultural resource management, natural resource exploitation, and tourism product development.

## 2. Connection amongst actors of the broader tourism chain and exchange of best practices.

The project's requirement for a consulting service for interested parties drove the design of the Virtual Chamber, which provides a platform for stakeholders to interact, share knowledge, and learn about new projects and potential avenues for collaboration around the conservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural assets. With the help of the Virtual Chamber, this strategy will spread to additional reserves in the Adriatic-Ionian region.

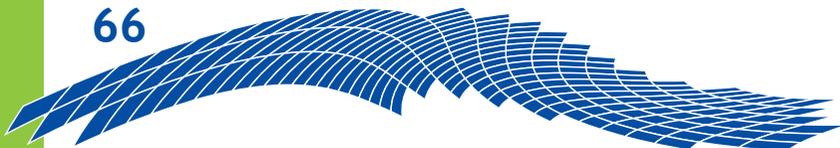
## 3. Promotion of the project's common methodology

The Virtual Chamber has been developed from the project's website and is including presentations from various training sessions for partners and stakeholders, with the goal of disseminating the common approach and promoting the project's accomplish-

ments. The implementation of the project's common methodology, which will be showcased via the Virtual Chamber, will assist in the marketing, exploitation, and conservation of protected areas.

## 4. Facilitating B2B meetings

Through the Virtual Chamber, local businesses and other interested parties may be featured as partners, with information about their activities and services to be shared with the public at large at various points in the project's lifetime. Each will have a unique topical emphasis and concentration. Examples of themed products include those centered on gastronomy, wine, architecture, archaeology, religion, culture, wellness, fishing, geoparks, and other places of extraordinary natural beauty. For business-to-business communication, there is the option of both one-on-one chat and one-to-many service, and online events and live presentations (via physical presence and/or online virtual events) are enabled.



## A virtual chamber, a way of promoting and transferring the common methodology to other protected areas of the Adriatic-Ionian area

The project's Virtual Chamber was created to promote international networking for policy implementation in protected areas, particularly in mountainous areas. The Virtual Chamber is acting as an advisory body for key stakeholders in mountain regions who want to use the same framework for managing natural and cultural resources, as well as a link to other protected areas in the Adriatic-Ionian region. Such international efforts will lay the groundwork for the development of a proposal for Regional Route certification in the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes, at a level based on the implementation of a destination management strategy. The results of the pilot area implementation have decisively demonstrated the utility of the collaborative procedure for introducing and enforcing new policies.

Numerous policy implementation networking events have been facilitated by the Virtual Chamber. During the seminars, trainings, and networking conferences, all partners promoted the Visual Chamber in order to attract new members to the pool of PRONACUL's stakeholders and disseminate the scope, vision, role, and specific goals of the common methodology, which will serve as a springboard for the development of a sustainable tourism offering in the Adriatic - Ionian Macroregion.

Following feedback from the pilot areas, the common methodology has been refined and presented at a variety of events so that policymakers can share their experiences in applying the methodology's guiding principles to the various policy documents at their disposal.



Moreover, the Virtual Chamber has defined the operational tasks and the roles among the project partners, relevant stakeholders and target groups, in order to promote long-term valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage in protected areas.

### The Virtual Chamber and the promotion of cultural tourism

The Virtual Chamber has been actively promoting the methodology used in pilot areas, so as to create new natural and cultural tourism destinations or to improve existing ones, thus is creating opportunities for new accommodation facilities, new jobs, and increased income not only in the tourism industry but also in entrepreneurship and its supportive environment.

Conservation, protection, promotion, and development of natural and cultural heritage are all encouraged by the PRONACUL guidelines, which will help to shift public perception of these resources to that of a vitally important development factor in the pursuit of environmentally and socially responsible mass tourism under the ADRION brand. Natural and cultural assets will be promoted, valorized, and maintained under the PRONACUL framework as a sustainable tourism model based on new goods and services with environmental and social effect to halt their further deterioration. With the use of international studies, pilot projects, and other instruments, PRONACUL will create mechanisms to better incorporate the Adriatic-Ionian region's rich cultural and natural legacy into the region's planning and development processes. Increased management for the preservation of natural and cultural heritage will be directly linked to UNESCO and NATURA 2000 protected areas, forming new potentials for other purposes, more suitable for this time period and estimated development, with the help of specific expertise and experimentation from different program countries.

In addition to the aforementioned strategy plan, the Virtual Chamber has created a toolbox that includes:

- **a dedicated publicity section:**

Each registered member devoted to routes, cultural events, history or other cultural tourism products, Links to existing website for extra information as well as an interactive map that can be used to show enterprises and records in the tourism-culture area.

- **Special benefits for registered users:**

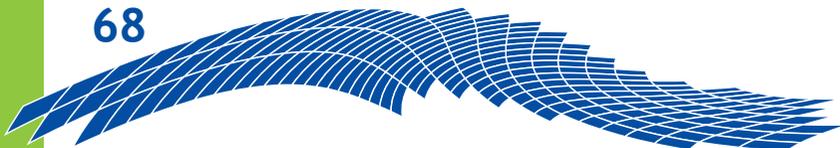
Registered users of the site/portal may submit information from other sources in addition to contributing information from the project itself. Each collaborator may develop their own project or activity in their own domain, which will subsequently be available to all users. Details such as the description of the activity, the purpose of the activity and the present state of the project/activity may be included in each particular project (this status can be successful, failed or in progress)

- **A system of Reviews and ratings**

Partners and stakeholders have the ability to monitor the project's development and provide feedback / suggestions using the Virtual Chamber platform's built-in reviewing and rating tools, which will allow the qualitative and quantitative assessment of the outcomes. A separate service was therefore developed for each registered user, while the reviewing component was made accessible to the public by means of a widely-accessible URL and a QR code. All users are able to rate projects and activities, and users may clone existing projects and activities to save time and effort when creating new ones. News and other announcements for all users will be posted here as well.

- **Future projects development**

There is a specific section of the Virtual Chamber devoted to news, announcements, and advice on relevant EU projects, which can provide details on the preparation and submission of proposals, obtaining support for their implementation, finding project partners, etc., all of which contribute to the project's long-term viability.



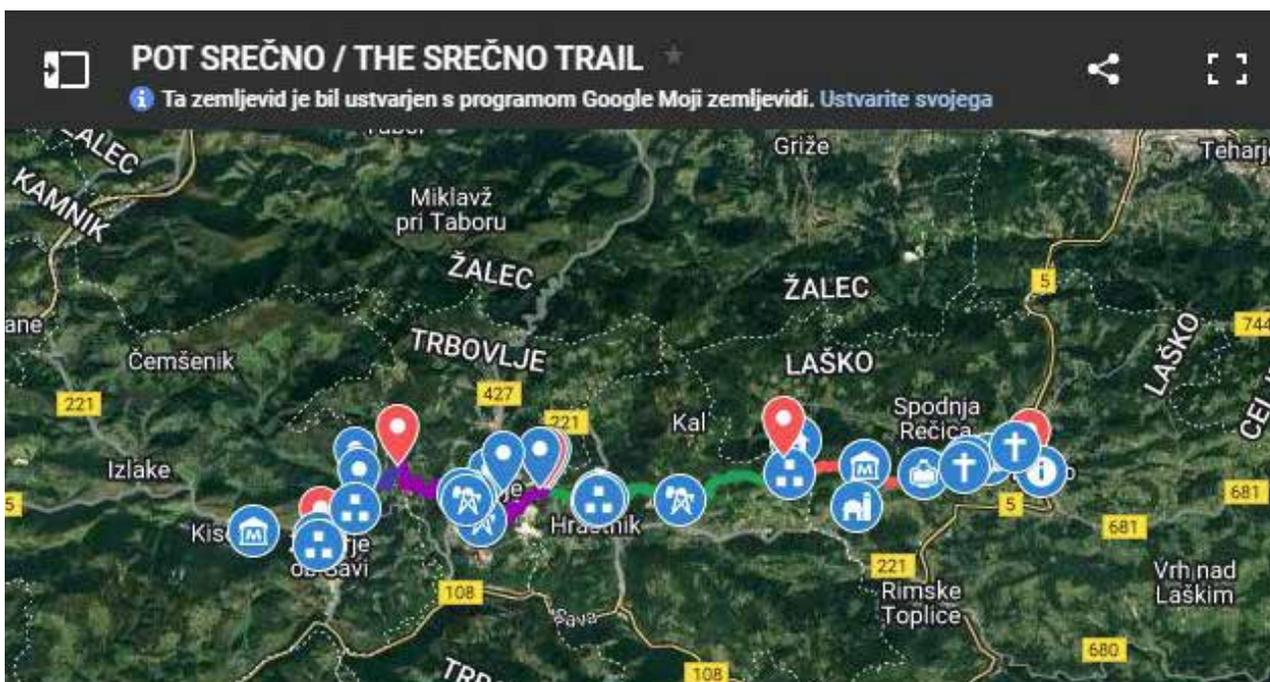
## How to become part of the story of the Virtual Chamber?

Are you an institution in the Adriatic-Ionian Macregion interested in dissemination and networking opportunities, as well as exploring financing options? **Then joining the Virtual Chamber is the way to go!**

PRONACUL's Virtual Chamber is a user-friendly platform that allows interested stakeholders across the wider tourist sector value chain to join the project, interact, benefit from the project's shared approach, and exchange experiences and best practices.

The process of registering with the Virtual Chamber services and submitting visual material, event information, enterprises, and routes of interest is pretty straightforward. Simply follow these steps:

1. Go to <https://pronacul.eu/>
2. Go to the section "BUSINESS DIRECTORY" and choose "Add Listing" from the drop-down menu. The same principle applies also in the case of the section "EVENTS".
3. You will then be prompted to login.
4. In case of a first-time registration, you will be requested to provide a working email address, where a confirmation email and a password setup request will be emailed to.
5. After successfully registering or logging in, you can navigate to the left section of the screen, where all available options will be listed, with the "Media," "Events," "Businesses," and "Routes" sections being the most important for networking, with options to add new entries or review existing ones.



But don't just take our word for it; follow the example of multiple enterprises that have already joined the Virtual Chamber and take advantage of the opportunity to promote your business or a scenic cultural or / and natural route in your region, such as the beautiful Themed Tourist Hiking Trail "Pot Sreno" in Slovenia, which connects Laško, Hračnik, Trbovlje, and Zagorje ob Savi and endears visitors to the country's living heritage, imbued with ancestors' passion, rebelliousness, and perseverance.

## A strategy for improving transnational, national, regional and local policies

Striking a balance between economic growth and development and the preservation of natural and cultural settings is challenging for countries in today's globalized world for a number of reasons. While the word "legacy" evokes a reverence for the past and thoughts of our forefathers' greatness, it may also be a key factor in driving local economic development and serving as a multiplier for communities.

This "gift" comes with a heavy load of duty, which must be shared not just by the current generation, which must work to ensure that this history is preserved and celebrated, but also by the generations that follow.

There is little doubt that the interconnection of economies, communication networks, trade routes, and financial flows in today's globalized world has enhanced the population's engagement with its natural and cultural environs, conjuring both new opportunities and new risks.

Given this context, commercial and financial actors face a dilemma when trying to prioritize profit above protecting cultural and natural resources; a problem that can't be handled without well-defined objectives, a far-reaching and imaginative vision of the future, and a methodical approach.

As a result, the PRONACUL project set out to fill this gap by providing guidance to policymakers as they develop and implement strategies that capitalize on the unique cultural and natural assets of individual nations at the transnational, national, regional, and local levels of the tourism value chain.

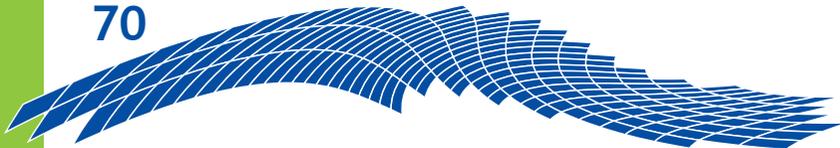
Each nation's natural and cultural heritage has served as the foundation for a blueprint to strengthen international, national, regional, and local policies. Each PRONACUL partner in the specified region has made the preservation of natural and cultural resources a top priority. In order to promote sustainable tourism and preserve natural and cultural sites, partners have exchanged successful strategies. Each project partner has contributed policy suggestions for a certain domain relevant to his or her own community, state, or nation. The notion of cross-capitalization, or making greater use of existing assets, is already accounted for in PRONACUL's primary outputs and deliverables. For the TRANSFER and Theme initiatives, this is a crucial problem for maximizing the value of the experiences of individual or thematic groups.

PRONACUL's Strategy on Transnational, National, Regional, and Local Policy Improvements is the result of enthusiastic collaboration among project partners

and was developed in accordance with and following concrete steps.

Each partner has listed the natural and cultural sites in their region and provided a brief description of their main characteristics, paving the way for a more analytical explanation of their role and impact at the partner level. The latter has been a cornerstone for the program's strategy, as project partners have elaborated on the significance of said natural and cultural heritage sites by drawing information, data, and indicators from official sources, with reference to their region and covering the following thematic fields:

- Economic significance, where financial data such as revenues, employment rate, tourism flows, contribution to GDP growth (national accounts), job creation, and so on have been analyzed.
- Social significance, with a focus on the social value of each natural and cultural site.
- Spatial - Environmental importance, with references to biodiversity, wild life preservation, contribution to climate change mitigation, and so on.
- Political significance, where said sites' positions on the political agenda and/or in public discourse, as well as the priorities of local political societies, have been highlighted.



Each partner has also conducted a **SWOT analysis** of their respective natural / cultural heritage sector in order to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats in order to recognize aspects that can be exploited or improved through local / regional / transnational policies, which would eventually build the foundation for the policy design and justify the proposed interventions.

Having identified the common cultural heritage strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, it has been possible to extract objectives that must be pursued in order to exploit strengths and opportunities and mitigate weaknesses and threats. These objectives have been linked to specific measures, which have formed the main framework of the policy proposals. Partners proposed long-term measures with a transnational, national, regional, and local aspect/dimension, aiming at specific targets:

- **Tourism product valorisation and diversification**  
A section devoted to the steps that must be taken at the aforementioned target-levels in order to assign a higher value and comparative advantages to the tourism offerings of the pilot areas.
- **Enchantment of collaboration among stakeholders at local / national / regional level**

Building synergies among actors in the cultural / tourism value chain.

- **Climate change mitigation and environmental sustainability**

Description of what goals must be established, what challenges cultural and natural sites are currently facing, what must be changed, and so on.

- **Harmonization of legal frameworks and adoption of common standards**

A brief description of the legal framework in the pilot areas in order to assess the possibility of adopting common standards.

- **Capacity building**

Methods and means of promoting the project's goals, raising public awareness, and enriching and enhancing dissemination activities.

- **Investment Attractions and funding**

The significance of securing funding for the management of cultural and natural sites, the investment opportunities that may arise, the added value in terms of employment, business discovery, income generation, and so on.

- **Monitoring and evaluation of PRONACUL's strategic plan**

The project's success is dependent on qualitative and quantitative assurances, so it was critical to establish the main guidelines for monitoring and evaluating the project's strategy. Indicators, milestones, and implementation phases have been established, on which policy actions and measures can be based.

## 5.4

# National and international networking conferences

All project partners participated in networking efforts to obtain feedback for policy suggestions, including the staging of national networking conferences at which relevant local, regional, and national public officials were invited as participants.

The national networking conferences were held in the pilot areas and project partners prepared targeted reports on discussions and proposals presented by policymakers and other stakeholders attending said events, laying the groundwork for the finalization of the project's common methodology, along with the analysis of pilot area reports.

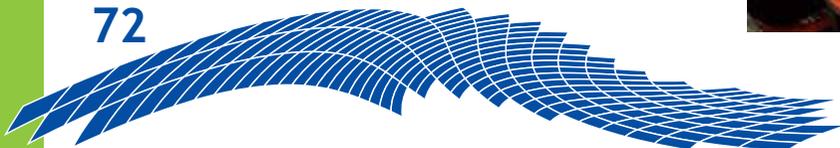
The National Conference highlighted the need of introducing new methodologies to the strategic planning of policy makers via the implementation of European initiatives like PRONACUL, which encourage entrepreneurship and the economy. The policy intervention suggestions of PRONACUL, the established network of partnerships, and of course, engagement with other organizations and institutions that are more advanced in areas where Elis still exhibits certain shortcomings, will definitely serve as useful assets in an endeavour by actors and SMEs in the broader tourist chain to draw beneficial conclusions, but also to gather ideas and best practices.

Within the PRONACUL program, the object of which is the management of natural and cultural heritage for the upgrade of the tourist product, the interac-

tion, exchange of ideas, and discovery of needs that emerged during the implementation of relevant actions by the Chamber of Ilia revealed issues, biases, and devaluations, but also gave compelling proof that the tourist industry may provide competitive advantages for the local and national economy. The policy recommendations developed by the project partners can serve as a springboard for the development and promotion of sustainable tourism in the wider region.



Moreover, the public opinion recognized cruise tourism, cross-innovation, and applicable regulatory interventions in the national legal systems of the project partners as theme goals in which policy makers could act, while the fundamental conclusion of the conference was that the tourist offering must be differentiated and strengthened.



# Policy recommendations for different levels of policy making

One of the project's most significant accomplishments was the creation of tangible policy proposals at various levels of policy-making. More specifically, each partner has prepared a relative document replete with policy recommendations, based on the common methodology, which has been applied in pilot areas and enriched by inputs and proposals from the program's networking conferences, resulting in the production of a unified policy paper with the scope to ensure economic stability of natural and cultural heritage preservation, particularly through income from the tourism sector.

The policy recommendations developed at the partnership level and incorporated into the final version of the common methodology were presented to all levels of policy-making institutions in the form of a policy recommendation document that included

general as well as specific recommendations for selected policy documents. These proposals are aimed at certain policy papers regarded as critical for the development of natural and cultural heritage tourist sites in participating countries throughout the Adriatic-Ionian region, with the intention of being applicable to other European regions. Following the policy recommendations, as they have been developed within the framework of the PRONACUL project, the new route that will be formed from all pilot regions can become a unique tourist destination that respects and protects its natural and cultural environment, attracts investments, and creates favorable conditions for the economic development of the business ecosystem and societal well-being by prioritizing the aforementioned strategic planning and funding priorities at the local, regional, national, and interregional levels.

The project has identified some common prerequisites for the upgrading of the tourism sector in pilot areas:

- Provide a unique experience based on fresh ideas that will diversify of pilot region tourist portfolio.
- Leverage maritime cruise tourism to mitigate variations in visitor flows and encourage local business.
- Cross-sectoral innovation and the establishment of large-scale economies in order to strengthen the local ecosystem's networking, collaboration, and extroversion potential.

- Promote environmental sustainability, with a focus on wildfire prevention and climate change mitigation.
- Adoption of common legislative requirements to address the gap in the supply of accessible services, as well as to compel an examination and revision of spatial and urban planning.
- Investments and Grant Funding, to provide the conditions for improving the value and economic management of natural and cultural resources.
- Monitor and evaluate program objective attainment in order to preserve and strengthen the efficacy of project implementation in the target area.



## The Pronacul follow-up project proposals

Follow-up on completed projects is frequently overlooked, despite being an important step in any partnership. Following up on a project after it has been finished is an important component of the assessment and monitoring stages, but it is also a helpful tool for measuring the project's absorption and outreach to the local society.

Moreover, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as the real backbone of regional economies, benefit greatly from effective collaboration and new project ideas help them do so through co-financing efforts or giving professional support.

In spite of the important role, they hold in their local economies, SMEs often lack the size and scope to effectively tackle global challenges on their own. Adopting the project's recommendations would pave the way for such cooperation, lead to the consolidation of specialized expertise, and encourage the arrival of new residents and businesses.

After all, the PRONACUL project has always shifted its strategic focus to the project's results' sustainability and transferability, in order to have a long-term impact on local societies and economies while also providing selected stakeholders and policymakers with the means and tools to capitalize on the project's existing results.

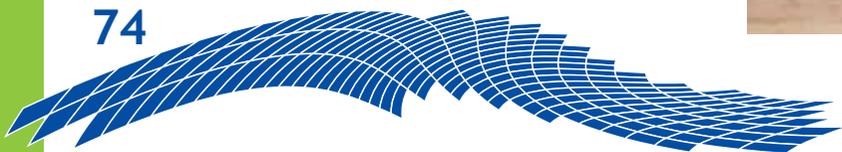
To that end, each project partner has proposed targeted follow-up project proposals in their country's

protected region, with the Virtual Chamber managing the development of follow-up project ideas in pilot regions and other underserved mountainous areas that choose to use the common methodology.

The agreement to collaborate on follow-up project proposals has definitely demonstrated the maturity of pilot areas in order to actively include stakeholders in the development of strategies in the field of heritage policy development. It has also developed

new transnational initiatives in collaboration with PRONACUL-supported projects. Follow-up project applications have been divided into three categories:

- follow-up projects in protected areas
- follow-up projects in other less-favored protected regions with the necessary resources to implement the PRONACUL common approach and
- follow-up projects for pilot sites.



# RAISING AWARENESS OF GENERAL POPULATION THROUGH DIFFERENT METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

Start - up activities including communication strategy and website visitors involved several joint communication activities, which were used throughout the project for effective internal communication among PRONACUL partners and for external communication according to presentation of the project activities and dissemination of results to the general public.

Communication strategy that was prepared from all project partners helped to identify the tasks of the project communication manager and defined communication objectives and means for effective internal and external communication with emphasis on tailored approach for different target groups that the focus was to reach.

Communication strategy included several ways on how to involve stakeholders for fluent communication and successful dissemination of project activities. Project website that was established had the aim to connect the partner pilot protected areas within the Adrion area to exchange experience and practices between the partners.



## How we communicated

The initiative of the PRONACUL project has been extensively to promote national and cultural heritage in selected Adrion regions through its newsletter and the publication of articles on its website. We used a variety of project-defined communication tools to communicate with the general public, potential stakeholders and others active in the field of natural and cultural heritage.

### Website visitors

Website visitors which were monitored were PRO-NACUL partners, associated partners, supporters, stakeholders and other individuals which were involved in project content with the aim of networking, problem solving, sharing experiences and examples of best practices and gaining information about protected areas in ADRION area. Website visitors were encouraged through promotional tools, such as Advertising, Products Promotion, Public Relations, Direct Marketing, Digital activities including social media and multimedia, and by the virtual chamber.

### Promotional material

A common promotional material (project leaflets in English and national language) was prepared in accordance with common visual identity. Promotional material was strategically defined, leveraging contributions and relevant dissemination channels from all partners.

### Promotional packages

Promotional packages for dissemination of the project results were prepared in all partner languages. Each partner prepared their own promotional packages which were used at training events in their protected areas and served for promotion of the project among involved stakeholders.

### Public Event(s)

Public events served for networking of protected areas and stakeholders' engagement. Promotional tools that were used included useful pieces of information according to each protected area, which helped to identify its natural and cultural heritage with recognizable authentic characteristics together with improvements derived from methodology used for their management.



The promotional tools helped to connect less favoured protected areas with more developed ones with similar specifics, which will serve as model areas, from where good practices will be transferred. Deliverables like Products Promotion, General Public Relations and Press conferences will constantly operate by the virtual chamber, whose representatives will support and consult activities regarding preparation of action plans for new natural and cultural tourism destinations managed with the common methodology.

### Digital activities including social media and multimedia

Communication with the media was oriented to all identified target groups. Through various communication channels according to media relations - press releases, appearances in the media, advertising and direct marketing, we communicated with public to attract the target groups and relevant stakeholders to encourage them to actively participate in the PRONACUL's activities, especially by using the common methodology and the virtual chamber service. The final project conference was organised to present all project results and to enhance the Media Communication with an announcement of follow-up project proposals.

### Publication(s)

Publication activity involved activities due to preparing final PRONACUL's publication. RDA Zasavje coordinated the activities regarding the preparation of the final publication with inputs from all protected areas and important activities that were implemented by all PRONACUL's partners. The document is prepared and printed (on FSC certified paper) as well as an electronic version is produced in accordance with the PRONACUL visual identity.

Common visual identity was designed by Lead partner with the aim to unify different promotional material. Common visual identity was designed to appear on promotional materials next to the ADRION pre-prepared products and requirements already foreseen by EU Regulations (i.e. project website, poster, project logo, etc.).

Common visual identity was used from all project partners for all PRONACUL's material. Firstly, it aimed to promote common methodology for management of natural and cultural heritage towards relevant stakeholders for the generation of future strategic and exploitation alliances beyond those already in place, thus preparing the ground for commercial exploitation and market introduction of the proposed methodology. The dissemination activities

helped to promote the benefits they provided to potential target commercial adopters to speed up their market take-up.

Secondly, actions and costs for the implementation of pilot actions and small-scale

investments helped relevant authorities and involved stakeholders to disseminate new identified information for raising their awareness of the potential benefits that the new integrated solutions for natural and cultural heritage can provide in regard to use and leverage of heritage assets in the ADRION area.

Promotional material was in regard to each partner and pilot areas managed and strategically defined, leveraging contributions and relevant dissemination channels from all partners.

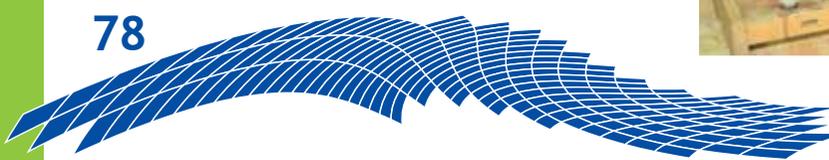
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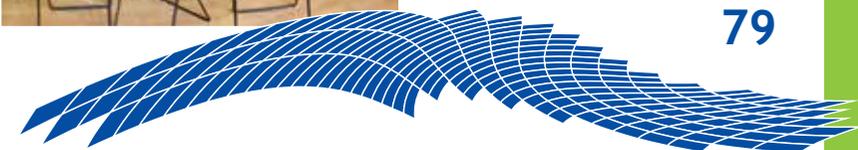
with the main aim of raising their awareness that the new integrated solution can provide in regard to use and leverage of heritage assets in the ADRION area.



## 6.3

# Pictures tell the PRONACUL's story





# PRONACUL PARTNERS COORDINATORS



**1. Zasavje Regional Development Agency SLOVENIA**

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Representative:

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The PRONACUL project abbreviation stands for Promotion of natural and cultural heritage to develop sustainable tourism in protected areas. The Zasavje Regional Development Agency was the lead partner of the PRONACUL project, which was approved under the 2<sup>nd</sup> call for proposals of the Interreg ADRI-ON Program; priority axis no. 2 Environment - sustainable region; Specific Objective 2.1 Promote the sustainable valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage as growth assets in the ADRI-ON area.

How did the idea for this project come about? The Regional development agency Zasavje is trying to preserve the region's natural and cultural heritage and we are exploring options for their inclusion in transnational strategies for a general promotion of the region as a tourist destination. The recent development of new industries in the region has been beneficial for the discontinuation of the indifference toward natural and cultural heritage and has created space for new contents, which can be developed further by the implementation of environmentally friendly investments. We have focused on potential transnational programs, where the Interreg Adrion call was perfect for placing our activities in a comprehensive project, as we found that institutions across the ADRI-ON are facing challenges similar to ours.

It is important to note that project partners are not randomly selected, they have common features such as protected areas and sites that are under the special protection regime of Natura 2000 sites, or they have UNESCO protected areas or have become protected areas as part of the project's pilot activities.

A total of 12 project partners from all of the ADRI-ON countries except Albania and Montenegro are participating in the project. The partnership is structured heterogeneously, involving different institutions from various fields, as recommended by the EUSAIR strategy.

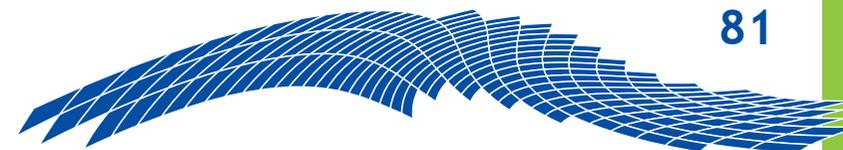
Project's result is improving the management of natural and cultural heritage by established common methodology, that will be more suitable for the planned development and the time in which we are living. This will be achieved by establishment, use and promotion of common methodology for management of natural and cultural heritage, based on a participatory approach of the stakeholder's involvement, thus establishing new natural and cultural tourism destinations or improving existing ones, and in this way contribute to the development of sustainable tourism in the various areas of ADRI-ON.

The methodology is developed and is applying in pilot areas, where clusters have already been established, involving local, regional, national and transnational subjects in the tourism field. Transnational framework analysis and exchange of 46 best practices have been made by contribution of all partners. By implementation of various trainings, workshops, capacity building activities, dissemination and capitalisation activities we are building Stakeholders network. Action plan for promotion of sustainable valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage in protected areas and Common Strategy on transnational, national, regional and local policies improvements are specifying operating tasks for the promotion of sustainable valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage in protected areas.

We have set up a virtual chamber, that acts through an online platform as an advisory body for tourism developers, where partners and stakeholders are exchanging experiences and best practices in natural and cultural heritage management, thus enabling transfer to other Adrion areas and interest has already shown, that also wider. Here is also Transnational route, which we are establishing at the moment. I will tell you a few more words about that a bit later.

There are all together 21 protected areas, where 15 of them are pilots, where best practices have been transferred from more developed ones to less developed ones. Small scale investments with special innovative or demonstrative character are implemented in some of the pilot areas.

Experiences from the pilot areas will help formulating proposals for inclusion of a common methodology, that will connect all partner destinations in a transnational route, which will be certified by the European Institute of Cultural Routes, with a possibility to be placed under "Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe". In this way, it will also serve as a best practice for the development of other thematic routes. With an intention of improving policies, we want to influence not only to the key stakeholders but also to the policy makers by disseminating results, outputs and deliverables in the form of recommendations for concrete local, regional, national and transnational strategy documents to ensure further development on the field of valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage.



# PRONACUL'S TRANSNATIONAL ROUTE

The most prominent ancient civilizations existed in the Adriatic and Ionian regions, leaving behind a great cultural and natural legacy. The PRONACUL initiative aims to promote sustainable tourism in the Adriatic and Ionian regions via the preservation of natural and cultural assets. To accomplish this purpose, the project developed, implemented and promoted a common methodology for natural and cultural resource management based on a participatory approach to stakeholders.

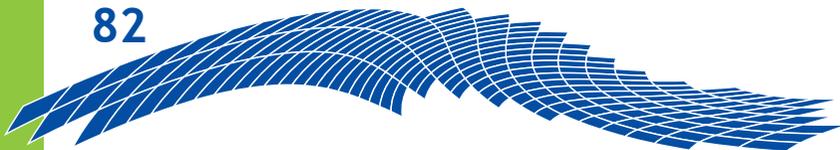
Its rich, natural and cultural heritage, as diverse as its individual countries and, without a doubt, vital to both social and economic development, makes the Adriatic and Ionian region one of the most attractive tourism destinations in the world. Cultural and natural routes of the Adriatic-Ionian region combine learning, recreation, and connection to place, enabling visitors to immerse themselves in the local culture while also learning more about its past and present. Historic buildings, archaeological sites, museums, monuments, artworks, literary and musical works, endless ridges, "alpine" landscapes and

meadows, lush green forests, shady gorges and rivers with crystal clear waters will be promoted through the PRONACUL project.

Experiences from the pilot areas help formulating proposals for inclusion of a common methodology, that connects all partner destinations in a transnational route, which could be certified by the European Institute of Cultural Routes, with a possibility to be placed under "Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe". PRONACUL's Virtual Chamber acts as a consulting service for relevant stakeholders in mountainous areas who would like to apply the common methodology for managing natural and cultural heritage in practice and to connect with other protected areas in Adriatic - Ionian area. Such transnational activities set preconditions for the development of a proposal for gaining a Transnational Route's certificate in the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe to base the level on the application of a practical destination management process.

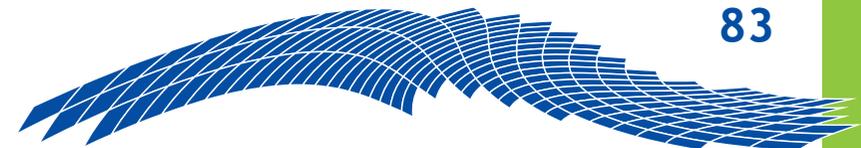
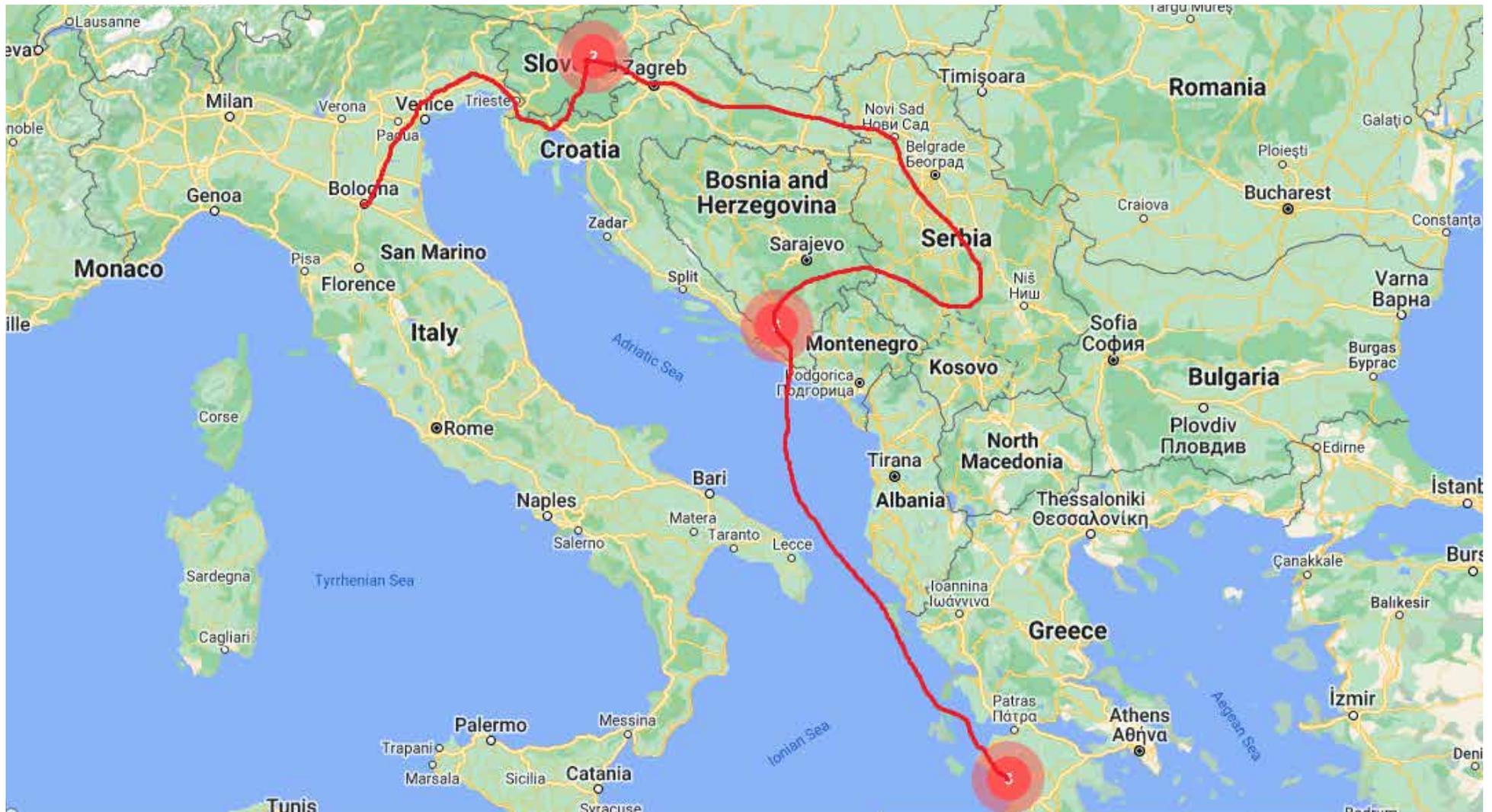
Results of pilot area implementation are used to show the effectiveness of the common methodology to adopt and implement new policies in practice. It also serves as a best practice for the development of other thematic routes, thus enabling transfer to other Adriatic areas and interest has already shown, that also wider. With an intention of improving policies, we want to influence not only to the key stakeholders but also to the policy makers by disseminating results, outputs and deliverables in the form of recommendations for concrete local, regional, national and transnational strategy documents to ensure further development on the field of valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage.

The spine of the route is a historical view of natural and cultural assets, which has a direct destination management impact on all areas of labour and life of the area's population with the purpose of transfer to other organisations, regions and countries outside of the current partnership. PRONACUL's partners signed a letter of commitment to recommend the application of project results to other areas.





# PRONACUL's Transnational Route





WWW



FB



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“The content of this document is the sole responsibility of the PRONACUL partners and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union and/or ADRION programme authorities”

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PRONACUL

