

**PERSPECTIVES OF RURAL TOURIST DESTINATION MOUNTAIN
RAJAC I VRANICA**

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Abstract

The paper describes a cross-border project, which is funded by the European Union under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). The aim of the project is to strengthen the rural economy by supporting the professional development of rural tourism in Serbia and Bosnia.

Landscapes Rajac and Vranica are similar, both in their tourism offers and the growth potential. Both regions have been known tourist attractions, picturesque rural tradition and well-preserved natural resources. The project aimed to create a strong cross-border cooperation between the two regions, and to support the development of rural tourism destinations Rajac and Vranica.

The development of tourism in the villages of central Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia has the potential to increase the diversification of the rural economy, particularly the establishment of national cooperation. The main objective of the project is to ensure that the impact will go beyond strictly defined border areas and help the two countries to put into operation and capitalize on all their rural tourism resources.

Keywords: cross-border cooperation, rural tourism, Instrument for Pre-Accession, Rajac, Vranica

Introduction

The project “Support to the development of rural tourism destinations Rajac and Vranica“ was developed to respond to the efforts of the EU for cross-border cooperation between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to contribute to solving problems in rural areas, such as low levels of regional exchanges, the reduction of poverty and the negative trends of rural exodus, inadequate access to markets, protection of natural local identity and cultural heritage.

Support for rural tourism is an effective way to alleviating these problems. Target areas were selected Ljig-Serbia (already established as a destination for rural tourism), the municipality Fojnica of Bosnia and Herzegovina (already established as a spa and ski tourist destination), while the municipality Kresevo of Bosnia making the first steps towards the development as a tourist destination. The goals should be achieved through: professional education of tourism entities, renovation and rehabilitation of historic buildings and improving the tourism infrastructure, creating promotional materials, improving on-line access to the market and the establishment of cross-border networks in rural tourism.

Applicants in the project “Caritas International Belgium“ and Association “Rural tourism Serbia“. Other partners were: Caritas Bishops’ Conference of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kresevo municipality-Bosnia, Caritas Serbia and Tourist organization Ljig-Serbia. The CBC⁴² programs financed under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

⁴² CBC - stands for cross-border cooperation

(IPA), which provides support for the candidate and potential candidate countries on their way to European integration. Cross-border Programme Serbia - Bosnia and Herzegovina, seeks to promote sustainable economic and social development and to improve the connection between the program area.

ethods for project implementation

The aim is primarily to identify underutilized potential for the development of rural tourism, mountain tourism destinations Rajac and Vranica, and point out the flaws that prevent the growth of this type of tourism.

The development work will be used the following research methods: historical method, the method of content analysis; mapping method, the method of comparison; interview method and the method of synthesis reasoning.

The expected results of this study are to promote rural tourism destinations and Rajac Vranica at the national, regional and European tourist market. Taking into account the level of research for this study, the expected contribution will be the identification of tourism products and destinations Rajac Vranica and identification of tourist attractions and potential for rural tourism development .

The rural tourist destinations Rajac and Vranica with natural resources, cultural and historical heritage of traditional architecture, cuisine, folk traditions, local crafts, native livestock breeds and plant varieties have all the potential for the development of rural tourism. The offer of rural tourism in the two areas are villages, ethnic villages, ethnic houses and events that offer tourists an authentic experience of rural environment .

Providing advice and financial support to communities using the CBDA⁴³ (CommunityBased Development Approach) methodology

Advisory support (capacity building) will be provided through training, workshops and conferences and they can cover three main topics:

- Application CBDA approach (mobilization of local resources, facilitating meetings with community representatives),
- Management (proposals, strategic planning, financial management, etc.)
- Specific expertise (tourism, agriculture, poverty reduction, etc.).

The mobilization of local resources is a process in which members of the community together and contribute to the distribution of available funds, materials and services (facilities and equipment), through volunteer work and media coverage in order to meet the identified needs. Financial support should be most focused on direct action in the community, while the other portion of the funds should be allocated through small grants (organizations and individuals).

The criteria for the allocation of shared resources can be:

- The level of participation in the project planning process,
- The number and diversity of human resources that go planning meetings,

⁴³ CBDA (Community Based Development Approach) - The “development approach based on the community“.

- Local ownership of project ideas,
- Project from within the local community and is recognized as a local need or interest of the majority of community members,
- The number of people in the community interested in the project,
- Local governments, businesses and other local organizations interested in contributing to a project (material resources, volunteers, media coverage),
- The willingness of local authorities to provide financial support.

The agriculture sector is still the biggest opportunities for the rural population to overcome the difficult situation. Studies “Assessment of tourism potential of the municipality of Kresevo”, “Preliminary study on rural B&B⁴⁴’s in Bosnia and Herzegovina” and “A Study of Rural Tourism in Bosnia & Herzegovina”, show that the growth generated by agriculture is up to four times more effective in reducing poverty than growth in other sectors.

Linking small farmers with good functioning of local markets - plays a key role in long-term poverty reduction. Model linking small producers in the market, and identify markets that use certain types of manufacturers, are critical steps for the development of cross-border projects. Formal requirements of the market, including the quality, consistency, food safety, require direct communication and coordination in the supply chain of agricultural and food products. While these market requirements are not formal barriers to entry of new producers, especially those with fewer resources, they will still represent potential opportunities for diversification, income and the professionalisation.

Steps involved in the adoption of CBDA:

- Involvement of experts to develop a detailed methodology of CBDA with additional tools (access, principles, activities, methodology, mechanics, school programs, etc.),
- Design and build a model of the Caritas CBDA methodology,
- Educate staff about the practical implementation of Caritas CBDA methodology (training of trainers),
- Through a pilot project to implement a methodology in three selected communities, with monitoring by experts,
- To adopt the methodology of CBDA as a strategic tool Caritas, for project,
- CBDA methodologies - a factor in the success of the project.

CBDA methodology is the fastest growing mechanisms for channeling development assistance. CBDA term is a term that refers to projects that actively include beneficiaries in their design and management. This methodology has been implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina in various ways since 2000, at the beginning of international NGOs⁴⁵ such as Caritas and others., and later adopted by local organizations. Today, this methodology is integrated into the mission of many community organizations and is used in most of the projects supporting social and economic development of communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

⁴⁴ **B&B** - an acronym “bed and breakfast“, is a small lodging establishment that offers overnight accommodation and breakfast, but usually does not offer other meals.

⁴⁵ **NGOs** - non-governmental organizations, are legally constituted corporations created by [natural](#) or legal people that operate independently from any form of [government](#).

Expected outcomes of the project would be as follows:

- ✓ Developed sector of rural tourism in both areas by creating new and innovative tourist products;
- ✓ Strengthening the competitiveness of rural tourism stakeholders in both territories, through the improvement of professional skills;
- ✓ Promotion of the rural tourism in both areas, using a new marketing and ICT⁴⁶ tools;
- ✓ established sustainable regional cross-border networks of rural tourism for better representation at the European level.

Results and discussion

The planned activities of each partner led to improve the capacity of target communities to attract and receive tourists. Activities were carried out in the range from setting up tourist signs marking the trail (hiking and biking), the creation of themed travel to the reconstruction of buildings and protection of cultural heritage, and so on.

Marking and signposting of 10 footpaths in the length of 90 km in the territory of Serbia Rajac mountain was completed in collaboration with the Mountain association “Pobeda“ from Belgrade. Marking and signposting on footpaths 7 with a total length of 100 km in Bosnia, in the mountains Vranica was completed in collaboration with two mountaineering association “Vranica“ from Fojnica and “Bitovnja“ from Kresevo. Map of all these roads were designed and printed for free distribution among tourists. Information signaling panels were installed and are available to tourists and residents in the municipality Ljig. A total of 45 km of cycle paths is marked in Serbia. Marking the loop that makes the route length of 30 km of local roads in Kresevo also completed. The project has developed two new themed tours in Kolubara District, with labeling panel and two folders named “Rakija“ and “Kajmak“. Two thematic tours have been designed in the municipality Kresevo in an area called “Bosnian soul and spirit“ and “mouth full health“. Brochures two thematic sections are printed, and promotion conducted by the Tourism organization of Travnik.

During the project was the rehabilitation of 2 buildings of the old architecture of municipalities Ljig and Kresevo. Project funds restored chalet on the slopes Rajac “Dobra Voda“ which run by the MA “Pobeda“. In the war was reconstructed blacksmith’s workshop, which will be used for special occasions, such as for a demonstration and preservation of traditional crafts.

Platform and equipment for paragliding and meteorological instruments were purchased and installed on the mountain Rajac (1 platform/shelter, 10 sets of paragliding equipment, 1 weather station). Information about flight conditions (wind speed) can be obtained by phone, from people who work in the mountain hut. The implementation of the Project activities established recreational area on the mountain Rajac and purchased 13 bicycles for eco association. In the center of Rajac is a wooden hut for kids and installed with 7 wooden playground equipment. Also, funds project procured equipment for hiking MA “Vranica“ and MA “Bitovnja“ in the municipality Kresevo.

Trainings and workshops are a good way to improve the knowledge and skills of the actors. Each workshop is designed as 2 days of learning and education. Workshop activities are created trainers who are leading experts in the relevant field. For workshops focused on specific skills such as “Traditional gastronomy workshops“ participants were those who are using newly acquired knowledge in their daily activities. The workshops were attended by representatives of tourism organizations that have supported this form of education. After training were organized and planned study tours, new trainings and workshops. Published two

⁴⁶ ICT- stands for Information and Communication Technologies

bulletins on rural tourism in the blog⁴⁷ vranicarajac.wordpress.com. The first newsletter was published in december 2011, while the second was published in june 2012.

Promotional activities have been carried out via the website www.selo.rs. The site is improved and the number of services that are advertised on the site has increased. The site is very successful, and association “Rural tourism Serbia“ establishes quality partnerships with tourism organizations in each municipality in Serbia and in the region. Serbian national portal selo.rs is enhanced with an updated database of available services. It is a second generation site and is fully operational. It also increased the number of new services that are advertised on the site. Promotion of rural tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the beginning. Site created by the project participants www.alterural.ba first of its kind in Bosnia, so that all the work has to start from the ground up. Although there are not many services that are advertised on the site, it’s a great promotional site with excellent prospects for growth in the future.

Logos Rajac and Vranica are designed and approved by the parties involved. Logos destinations are now being used on the cards, flyers and other promotional materials. Network cross-border cooperation members provide stability and thus create a greater potential for creating and strengthening partnerships, they can be useful for those who choose to join.

The project has provided excellent networking opportunities through joint workshops, although to the relatively small number of people. These Studies are made iduring the project, they are very good documents, but very little to promote cross-border networking. In contrast to the study, “blog“ has contributed to a much better and more networking. Blogs and newsletters support cross-border cooperation and networking, as in the creation of texts included both the applicant and other partners from both countries. The blog is also available on the Internet still exists: vranicarajac.wordpress.com.

Table 1. Promotional materials presented and distributed during the project

| Materials | No. |
|------------------------------|-------|
| Project inauguration leaflet | 2.000 |
| Folders | 300 |
| Pens | 300 |
| Banner | 1 |
| Ljig tourism brochure | 1.000 |
| Regional rural tourism map | 1.000 |

Source: Association “Rural tourism Serbia“;

Promotional materials were presented and distributed during the life of the project (Table 1.) represent a very useful activity that despite financial expenditure gives the results for a longer period, as follows:

- a) Brochure “Tourism in Ljig“ was distributed at tourism fairs in Belgrade and Novi Sad, the stand of the Tourist organization of Ljig over Mountaineering society “Pobeda“ in Belgrade;
- b) Map “Rural tourism“ was presented and distributed at the Tourism fair in Belgrade and tourism organizations across the Gornji Milanovac, Kosjeric, Ljig, Mionica and Valjevo;
- c) Inaugural leaflet distributed during the opening ceremony of the project on Rajcu is given to

⁴⁷ **Blog or weblog** (blog for short, of Weblogs, forums) - is a series of chronologically organized text input, which is presented on web pages (mainly the entries are sorted from newest to older) through automated software that enables very easy creation and blogging.

partners from Bosnia, for further distribution (Caritas BK BiH), as well as reporters during a promotional trip.

Conclusion

The project “Support to the development of rural tourism destinations Rajac and Vranica“ has been developed in order to strengthen cross-border cooperation between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore it aims to contribute in solving the growing problems in rural areas. In addition, the project supports the development of rural tourism destination on the mountain Rajac and Vranica.

These objectives are achieved through: professional education tourism entities, reconstruction of historic buildings, improvement of tourist facilities, creation of promotional materials, improving online access to the market through the establishment of partnerships between stakeholders.

The main impacts of the project are: setting up rural tourism as a potentially valuable component of community development, to raise tourism (in terms of improving infrastructure, equipment and services), improving market access (through very good sites) and of local and cross-border cooperation.

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