

## **EXPERIENCES RELATED TO HERITAGE AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE PROTECTION, PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT IN THE CROSS-BORDER REGION OF DUBROVNIK, CROATIA AND BOKA KOTORSKA, MONTENEGRO GAINED FROM THE PROJECT “HERITAGE – DRIVER OF DEVELOPMENT”**

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Starting from a globally recognized importance of redefining the role of heritage in the development of modern society<sup>1</sup>, the focus of the project “Heritage – Driver of Development”, implemented in the cross-border region of Dubrovnik in Croatia and Boka Kotorska in Montenegro, was the outstanding natural and cultural heritage of the region that could be used as a driver for its development. By focusing on **natural and cultural heritage**, which in its broader understanding *“includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time”*<sup>2</sup>, the project was dealing with **cultural landscape** as the widest and most comprehensive category of heritage. Different methods and tools in the protection, planning and management of heritage and cultural landscape that were used during the project implementation can be described as good practices and represent innovative approaches, at least in the context of Dubrovnik and Boka Kotorska, but also can serve as a model for other areas in Croatia and Montenegro and even broader.

### **Values and challenges in the cross-border region of Dubrovnik and Boka Kotorska**

Natural and cultural heritage of outstanding value is the most important resource of the **cross-border region of Dubrovnik in Croatia and Boka Kotorska in Montenegro**. This region, comprising two UNESCO World Heritage sites in its immediate vicinity - the City of Dubrovnik and Culturo Historical and Natural Region of Kotor, both inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979. These two create **one of the most attractive landscapes in the Adriatic area**. That is also confirmed by current massive tourist visits. In addition to two UNESCO sites, the whole region of Dubrovnik-Neretva County and Boka Kotorska Bay represents an **exceptional cultural landscape** blending diverse and abundant layers of natural and cultural heritage.

The areas of Dubrovnik and Boka Kotorska, which have cultural and natural heritage and overall landscape of similar characteristics, face the same **problems** when it comes to protecting and managing these valuable resources. Cultural and natural heritage, and

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<sup>1</sup> The Paris Declaration - On heritage as a driver of development, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), 2011

<sup>2</sup> Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society – Faro Convention

especially the overall landscape, are under the risk for being inadequately managed and thus devastated. Individual cultural properties, buildings and urban complexes, receive (in the most cases) a good professional care. This especially refers to UNESCO's World Heritage sites – the city of Dubrovnik, Kotor, Perast... Nevertheless, problems are recognized when it comes to other segments of cultural and natural heritage - part of it that has not been officially protected, but contributes significantly to the value of region's overall cultural landscape. **Current development trends, supported by the spatial and planning documents that allow for excessive and inadequate construction, are threatening to degrade this authentic landscape and destroy its natural and created values.** Essentially, the most important problem the region faces is that various stakeholders, especially policy-makers **perceive natural and cultural heritage as an “obstruction to development”**. The value of heritage is not sufficiently recognized, despite the fact that it represents one of region's basic resources and a possible driver of development. It is also important to say that the economic value of heritage has not been recognized either.

The above challenges and the fact that adequate protection, planning and management of this outstanding natural and cultural landscape are the key to its sustainability, valorisation and sustainable development, have led to starting the project “Heritage – Driver of Development”.



*Boka Kotorska bay, Montenegro and the pilot area of Vrmac Mountain*



*Dubrovnik area, Croatia and the pilot area of Srđ massif*

## **The approach, key issues and results of the project “Heritage – Driver of Development”**

The project “Heritage – Driver of Development” was a **partnership action** coordinated by institutions and organization from the region of Dubrovnik and Boka Kotorska, aiming to improve the protection, planning and managing of cultural and natural heritage in the cross-border area. The project was funded by the European Union and implemented within the cross-border programme Croatia-Montenegro, under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). The project lasted for 23 months, from March 2013 until February 2015.

The functional lead partner of the project was the Municipality of Tivat, while the main partner in Croatia was the Physical Planning Institute of Dubrovnik-Neretva County. The project partners were: the non-governmental organizations EXPEDITIO Center for Sustainable Spatial Development and the Cultural Heritage Association NAPREDAK Gornja Lastva in Montenegro; and the Dubrovnik Neretva County Regional Development Agency DUNEA and the Public Institution for the Management of Protected Natural Values in the Dubrovnik-Neretva County in Croatia. In addition to partners, the project also had associates. In Montenegro, the associates were: the Administration for Cultural Properties Protection of Montenegro, the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro and the South East European (SEE) Heritage Network. In Croatia, the project associates included: the Conservation Department in Dubrovnik for the area of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County, the Croatian Section of ECOVAST – European Council for the Village and the Small Town and the Institution Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre Split.

The **objective** of the project “Heritage – Driver of Development” was to improve collaboration between institutions and actors dealing with protection, planning and management of natural and cultural heritage through joint activities in applying new methodologies in cross-border region of Dubrovnik and Boka Kotorska. The project also aimed to enlarge professionals' knowledge and increase citizens' awareness of how heritage can be used as a driver of development.

Specific project activities were developed focusing on selected **pilot areas**, Vrmac Mountain in Boka Kotorska and the Srđ massif in Dubrovnik. Vrmac and Srđ share a number of similarities. They are both well-preserved natural areas, forming an integral part together with the old towns of Dubrovnik and Kotor. They have both been largely neglected in recent decades as part of the cultural landscape and they have both recently become the subject of development through large-scale investment projects.

The project “Heritage – Driver of Development” was based on the below described **approach** that served as a framework for its implementation and results that have been achieved.

### ***Cooperation between actors dealing with protection, planning and management of natural and cultural heritage***

One of the most positive aspects of the project “Heritage – Driver of Development” was a well organized project governance and very successful cooperation. The cooperation of actors within the project took place on two levels: the cross-border level and the local/national level. A Steering Committee was formed to coordinate project implementation at the cross-border level, and project teams at the local/national level composed of different collaborators and stakeholders. In order to discuss the key topics treated by the project, working groups were formed intended to provide inputs for concrete activities implementation, consisted of applicants’, partners’ and associates’ representatives, as well as external experts. The topics discussed by the working groups were: participatory process, legislative framework and EU standards, cultural and natural heritage and landscape, economic valorisation, a manual for applying new methodologies in heritage protection and management and a map and brochure of the cross-border area. Cooperation between the project partners and other actors in Montenegro and Croatia was very successful during the whole project duration. Partners on both sides were enthusiastic about the project and its implementation and made constant effort to jointly implement the activities in the best possible way.

### ***Information sharing and transparency of the process***

Strong attention was paid in this project to various ways of spreading information about project activities and cultural and natural values of both cross-border regions. A special web page for disseminating information was created at [www.bastina.eu](http://www.bastina.eu). The project was promoted using social networks. They were also used as a tool for collecting information on people views on chosen topics by questionnaires. External and internal mailing lists were formed: internal for communication among partners and external for promoting the project results and inviting people to the events. Furthermore, two journalists, one from Montenegro and one from Croatia, interested in the protection, planning and management of natural and cultural heritage were engaged and trained to cover all project activities. One of the advantages of such an approach was to have all the processes covered in the media (events, studies, workshops). The other was to educate journalists about legislation, good practice, case studies and burning issues in the area so they can spread the word long after the project is finished. Also, they can use the knowledge gained when reporting on other similar areas elsewhere.

It has been proved that a project like this one can be a very effective tool for rising awareness of the region’s values. All the stakeholders involved in the project, including the public, have learned a lot about the cultural landscape of Boka Kotorska and Dubrovnik. The project was also great opportunity to disseminate knowledge on new approaches in protection, planning and management of heritage. People of different profiles, many of whom are involved in spatial planning of their local environment, gathered to learn. Passing on the knowledge on new approaches from the project partners further to the local level was ensured by engaging different institutions with close relations with local people.

### ***Participatory process***

On both sides of the cross-border region it has been noted that there is a low level of citizen participation in protection and management of cultural and natural resources. Being aware that citizen participation is one of the basic principles of spatial planning and protection and management of heritage, one of the expected results of the project was to improve the participation of stakeholders in the Dubrovnik and Boka Kotorska region, believing that this will lead to a better protection and management of the landscape. Two main activities were carried out in that aim: the participatory process in pilot areas and the “Landscape Days” campaign.

The participatory process in pilot areas was conducted in both countries, in Croatia for the area of Dubrovnik and in Montenegro for the area of Vrmac, in order to assemble opinions of different groups of stakeholders as an input for development strategy of these areas. The joint methodology of the participatory process was determined between partners within the working group for both areas. It included questionnaires, focus groups, interviews and essays. Target groups were identified beforehand. However, implementation was left to each partner as well as the decision on which studies or processes would benefit from the participatory process. Results of the participatory process were summarized in two separate studies, which are a good indicator of public opinion as multiple views on chosen topics from all groups of stakeholders are gathered and analysed. These studies served as input for further studies of cultural landscape and economic valorisation, as well as an important referencing material for municipalities when making plans and strategies for their territories.

The “Landscape Days” campaign was organized in order to improve stakeholders' understanding and to improve people's “ownership” of heritage. Through the campaign project partners wanted to inform public about the objectives, processes and results of a project, but above all to establish cooperation with the public, explore various uses of cultural landscape through artistic and other social events, and increase interest in spatial and tourism development in areas of natural and cultural heritage. The “Landscape Days” campaign included 14 different events organized in the area of Vrmac and Dubrovnik, ranging from concerts in nature, photo exhibitions of landscapes of Dubrovnik and Boka Kotorska, symposium, hiking tours, promotions, culinary events, etc. All the events were well-attended and people could see how this unique landscape could be valorised without tarnishing its natural and cultural heritage. One of the events, “Music at the top of the hill” was part of the 2nd European Land Stewardship Week, a campaign aimed at promoting events throughout Europe to raise awareness about the importance of taking care of the Earth and its wealth of natural and cultural resources.

### ***Capacity building of institutions and organizations in the cross-border region***

During the project’s implementation, several activities were organised in order to improve the capacity of various stakeholders from the cross-border area, project partners and associates to deal with issues of heritage and landscape protection, planning and management, including:

- Workshop on landscape assessment, Training “GIS in the landscape analysis: GIS in geography, geodesy, spatial and landscape planning”
- Study visit in Provence, France,. Many interesting and useful examples regarding protection, planning and management of the heritage were presented at different sites, many of them dealing with similar challenges as those that Dubrovnik and Boka Kotorska face.
- Presentations on new approaches in protection and management of heritage

### ***Studies and guidelines***

Lack of a knowledge base (analyses, studies, assessments and guidelines) for the protection and improvement of natural/cultural heritage/landscape was identified in the cross-border area, especially a lack of coordination between legislative frameworks at the local and national levels, a lack of models for economic evaluation of heritage and a lack of assessment of natural and cultural landscape. Therefore project has foreseen making jointly developed studies and guidelines for improving a legislative framework, economic valorisation and more effective protection and management of natural and cultural resources for Dubrovnik – Neretva county and Boka Kotorska. The following studies were produced and they will serve as the basis for developing and updating planning and policy documents in the region:

- Comparative analysis and recommendations for improving legislative frameworks in Montenegro and Croatia related to planning, protection and management of cultural heritage
- Assessments of natural and cultural heritage and landscape: Study on the natural values of Vrmac (Montenegro), Study on the cultural heritage of Vrmac (Montenegro), and Study on identification and valorisation of natural and architectural heritage of Dubrovnik (Croatia), and the additional study Analysis of Dubrovnik cadastre from the 19th century with transcription of building parcels register and creation of a database (Croatia). All those studies were serving as an input for studies of the cultural landscape: Study of cultural landscape of Vrmac (Montenegro) and Identification and valorisation of the natural and cultural landscape of Dubrovnik (Croatia).
- Two studies of economic valorisation: Economic valorisation of Dubrovnik: Consequence of changes to authentic cultural landscape on brand, image and successfulness of Dubrovnik as tourist destination and Economic valorisation study of Vrmac.

### ***Awareness raising and experience sharing***

An important group of project activities focused on raising awareness of the region’s values and sharing the experience gained during the project.

- Map and publication “Krajodrazi” - Project partners decided to present archetypal landscapes of the Boka Kotorska region and Dubrovnik-Neretva county through the eyes of the artists to raise awareness on exceptional value of the whole cross-border area. Individual areas are interpreted through literary texts or citations from works by writers evoking the atmosphere of individual micro regions. The text is accompanied by collages of illustrations and art paintings by artists to accompany the tone of the chosen texts. The map was made using a digital collage technique, representing the entirety of all types of heritage. The publication and map comprise a joint educational and promotional tool intended for institutions in the cross-border area of Croatia and Montenegro, as well as for citizens and tourists, acquainting them with the values of heritage and landscape in the Dubrovnik and Boka Kotorska area.
- The “Manual on protection, planning and management of heritage”, summing up the lessons from the project, was envisaged as a tool for spreading knowledge on new approaches in heritage protection, planning and management, as well as for presenting the guidelines for the practical application of the project results in the local and national framework, and even broader. The goal of making manual was also to review the positive and negative experiences in the project and to critically assess its realisation.
- The final conferences organized in Tivat and Dubrovnik aimed to present project results to all interested parties at the local and national levels.

## **Conclusions**

The realization of the project “Heritage – Driver of Development” has produced many useful results for the cross-border area of Dubrovnik in Croatia and Boka Kotorska in Montenegro, and has meant a great experience for all the project partners, especially from the point of view of application of new approaches in heritage and cultural landscape protection. The project has proved that cooperation and active participation of all interested parties is crucial for successful implementation of any activity, especially for the pilot zones of the cross-border area and that participation has to be encouraged in an active way and through different means. Experience gained and methodology developed during this project was many important for the partners and all those involved in the process and it can serve as a model for other areas in Croatia and Montenegro and even broader.

Recommendations produced during the preparation of the “Manual on protection, planning and management of heritage” can serve as guidelines for adequate treatment of heritage and cultural landscape in the cross-border area, and for their use as drivers of development:

- Dealing with heritage/cultural landscape demands a long-term perspective on development
- Spatial planning should be used as a framework for the protection and management of heritage/cultural landscape
- Protection and management of heritage/cultural landscape has to be as open to the public as possible, especially to the local residents of the area



- In order to actively involve the public in the protection and management of heritage, heritage/cultural landscape must be presented in a context to which the public relates
- A firm knowledge base needs to be established in order to support systematic efforts for the protection and management of heritage/cultural landscape
- Examples of good practice are the most effective motivation for changing attitudes towards heritage/cultural landscape
- Exchange of experiences and knowledge between the heritage/cultural landscape sites in different countries must be established
- Cooperation between neighbouring local authorities and between various levels of administration is needed for the effective protection and management of heritage/cultural landscape
- New models for management of heritage/cultural landscape can also be based on experience from other management models in the area



*Different activities implemented during the project "Heritage – Driver of Development"*