

Newsletter N°10, August 2023

Common Ideas for Better Future!



Dear readers,

In the first six months of this year 7 projects from the 2nd CfP were completed and their results presented to the public. Projects contributed to improving sustainable environmental planning and management systems for emergency interventions as well as improving employability of workforce and increasing employment opportunities in the cross-border area.

Twelve projects were contracted within the 3rd CfP with priorities in fostering social and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups as well as increasing the contribution of tourism to the socio-economic development of the cross-border area.

Please read more on our successes and activities we are undertaking in the future projects!



We've Counted to Zero!

The final conference within the project Zero Waste Municipalities took place on February 23 and 24, 2023 in Divčibare. The conference aimed to present the results of project implementation as well as the experiences of direct beneficiaries.



More than 85 participants, representatives of public utility companies, representatives of municipal administrations and educational institutions in the cross-border area had the opportunity to exchange experiences and opinions on the implementation of the concept of zero waste in local communities.

At the first day of the conference, utility companies from six pilot municipalities that participated in the project, presented results and the gained experience. The lecturers talked about the pilot actions based on the principles of zero waste and circular economy, carried out in the past two years and highlighted the results achieved in their local communities.

"I am very glad that our municipality participated in the project Zero Waste Municipalities. We are extremely satisfied with the results achieved through implementation of the project", stressed Jelena Aleksić, the representative of PUK 12 September.

On the second day, the focus was on project activities aimed at educational institutions. Ena Markotić, an expert in the field of environmental protection and chemical safety, who worked on the preparation of the Teacher's Manual, spoke about the pilot activities of introducing additional educational content into the educational program in six secondary schools.

"I am glad that we had the opportunity to exchange experiences with colleagues from other schools in the border area. Our focus was on introduction of content on environmental protection into curricula, as well as on the challenges and opportunities to implement them. It is particularly significant that the project brought together representatives of both educational institutions and the local community and utility companies. Gymnasium Josif Pančić will continue the implementation of activities that contribute to raising awareness of the importance of environmental protection", said Tanja Radovanović, speaker and panellist on the second day of the Conference.

Protection and Rescue Services Coordinate to Save Lives

On June 16, 2023 in Tuzla, the results of the Capacity of Protection and Rescue Institutions Strengthened - CoPRIS project were presented to the public.

The City of Tuzla and its partners, Water Management Company Galovica from Belgrade, Red Cross Tuzla, and Diving Club from Sremska Mitrovica implemented the project in the previous 27 months.

The project partners established a multi-disciplinary - mobile team for preparedness and response to natural and man-made disasters in the cross-border area. The protection and rescue services were strengthened with certified trainings and equipment. Members of the services received personal protection equipment, uniforms, and specialized clothes and footwear. Mobile teams were also equipped with the IT equipment and specialized vehicles. The Tuzla City Civil Protection Unit was equipped with the specialized vehicle that can be used in case of natural or man-made disasters in the city and in the wider cross-border area.



Mayor of Tuzla City, Mr. Zijad Lugavić, praised project partners on the implementation of the project to strengthen rescue and protection services: "This project had great importance for all of us, especially in the light of the latest floods in the nearby municipalities. Once again it was confirmed that the knowledge and readiness of the rescue and protection services is a key to saving lives and property, clearing roads, and dealing with floods. We need more projects like this one where a joint approach with our neighbours would be enabled".

Delegate in the Republic of Serbia Parliament, Mr. Tomislav Janković who participated in the creation of CoPRIS project pointed out the importance of the cross-border cooperation: "Local communities need to find the way to overcome potential obstacles created by the higher politics and continue cooperation on the local level. Cross-border cooperation for the local self-governments is an opportunity for four important things: utilizing EU funding, transfer of knowledge and experiences, educating local administration in EU procedures, and at the same time reconciling after the nineties' conflicts in the region".

At the closure of the event, Mr. Esmir Spahić, Project Manager wished for new joint projects and initiatives in which partners could continue learning from each other.

New Policies to Support Employment of Vulnerable Groups

Press conference was organized in Bogatić to mark the completion of the project Improving employability of people from vulnerable groups through provision of new knowledge and skills. Project was implemented in partnership by Caritas Šabac, Municipality of Bogatić, Centre for Training, Retraining and Professional Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities and other Categories Difficult to Employ PROREHA Sarajevo, and Institution for Adult Education –Social Educational Centre -Banja Luka.

Mr. Milan Damjanović, President of Bogatić Municipality welcomed conference participants pointing out that the project promoted values that bring many benefits to its participants. He reiterated that this was not the first EU project where municipality partnered with Caritas Šabac.



Mr. Matthieu Penot, representative of the EU Delegation to Serbia stated that the European Union supports citizens of the Republic of Serbia with the cross-border projects. He pointed out that the project results are fully aligned with the values presented in the European Social Charter on Social Rights. These values include rights to lifelong learning, education, and trainings adjusted to the needs of individuals, just as the project goals were.

Mr. Miroljub Nikolić, Director of Caritas, presented activities and results of the project. He pointed out that 360 people, out of which 120 disabled individuals, participated in 18 workshops with topics such as entrepreneurship, digital skills, and specialized training.

Project partners cooperated with local authorities and business owners to create new policies that support employment of vulnerable groups and new workplaces. At the end of the Conference, trainees were presented with the certificates of training completion, while the newly employed individuals were presented with their work contracts.

Accomplishments of the Bridging Project Presented at two Final Conferences

Project Bridging completed its final activities in the first two months of this year. Project partners from Serbia visited Sarajevo Canton Chamber of Commerce with two goals where local actors had a chance to meet and exchange experiences gained during the project implementation, and to attend the final conference organized by the Chamber of Commerce on February 23, 2023 in Hotel Hills Ilidža.



Užice Center for Human Rights and Democracy and Business School Užice prepared their final conference in the City Cultural Center in Užice on February 28, 2023. Both conferences included a presentation of project results. Project trainees were present at the conferences as well as project partners and stakeholders.



Project coordinators pointed out their pride in cooperation for the increase of employability of youth, young women, and women difficult to employ. They stressed the importance of helping 70 trainees acquire knowledge and skills necessary for faster employment in the tourist industry. By the end of the project 40% of newly educated trainees got a chance for employment in stakeholders' companies.

Emergency Services to Continue Cooperation

Final conference of the project Improved Emergency Preparedness & Coordinated Response in Cross-Border Area of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (CBC -lePCR) took place in Bajina Bašta on February 28, 2023.

Mr. Marko Čalijski, member of the Mountain Rescue Service of Serbia pointed out that the valuable rescue and medical equipment purchased within the project will contribute to the improvement of work in the future. He also mentioned that joint training added to the necessary knowledge and experience in rescue missions.

“We have purchased valuable rescue and medical equipment within the project that will help us in the future actions”, said Mr. Čalijski.



Mr. Samy Hermas, from Mountain Rescue Service MRS Station Sarajevo said that this was the first EU funded project MRS Station Sarajevo participated in, and as such brought very important experiences and new connections with the project partners.

Project activities took place in Zlatibor County in Serbia and in Brčko, Foča, Orašje, Sarajevo, Trnovo, Hadžići in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

“This project enabled us to purchase equipment for the Mountain Lodge in Rastište improving in that way conditions for the staying at the Lodge”, explained Mr. Nenad Lečić from the Mountaineering Association Tara.

Mountain Rescue Services from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Mountaineering Association Tara will continue their cooperation after the end of the project – the first one being the Drina River Training in rescue from rapid waters.

ENHANCE final conference in Sarajevo

Project leader, the Chamber of Economy of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with its partners, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia – the Regional Chamber of Commerce of Zlatibor County, and ENERGIS Centre tried to help businesses from metal, wood and food industries with presentations, education, workshops and advice during past two years. Project participants had a chance to visit companies to see how they operate and the unemployed underwent training for metal technicians.



Project results were presented during the final conference in Sarajevo on June 15, 2023, attended by the representatives of various institutions, businesses, NGOs and educational institutions.

“In the past two years ENHANCE project was a home for many companies and unemployed persons during the education, workshops, B2B meetings, and visits to companies. The project focused on metal, wood and food industries that have the biggest potential for growth and development. The unemployed were educated and prepared for the labor market, while the companies worked on improvement of their competitiveness”, pointed out Mr. Almin Mališević, Project Manager.

“One of the key benefits of the project is establishing of the cross-border cooperation between ES Commerce and Klas Sarajevo – they are currently working on the development of a

joint product”, said Ms. Danica Selaković from the Regional Chamber of Commerce of the Zlatibor County.

Vice president of the Chamber of Economy of the F BiH, Mr. Mirsad Jašarspahić, stated his satisfaction with the project results and pointed out that the projects such as this one should be base for the ideas and future development of the region's economy.

“We have behind us 24 months of work efforts that resulted in positive reactions from all the participants, but also potential financiers; we hope to continue upgrading the project in future calls for proposals”, pointed out Mr. Mališević at the end.

Increased Self-employment Opportunities

Project SYSTEM organized study visit to Slovenia for the entrepreneurs and project team members aiming to promote self-employment in two cross-border countries, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Participants had an opportunity to attend an international conference for startups companies PODIM in Maribor in May 2023. The Conference covered different topics such as technology, new market trends in leadership, marketing, AI, design, and health. Participating companies were offered an opportunity to present their startups to potential investors, connect to other entrepreneurs and look for prospects for their businesses.



Mr. Salko Kovač, participant from BiH and leader of FASTi app startup shared his experience: "Unfavorable business conditions in BiH should not be used as an excuse not to start a business but quite the opposite they should be seen as an opportunity to offer solutions for many existing problems. With this project we learned preparation and implementation of EU projects, but the most important thing for us was study visit to PODIM 2023 where we had an opportunity to promote our application and acquire information necessary to find an investor for us".

Project partners, Municipality of Novo Sarajevo, Municipality Ilijaš and National Youth Council of Serbia enjoyed being part of SYSTEM project and contributing to employment of young people in both countries.



Project team pointed that the connecting thread to all business attempts is the difficult road to success. Young people should be motivated to venture into their entrepreneurial ideas, be more confident in their potential contribution to the advancement of economy of two countries.

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Healthy Ageing for All

The HEAL project focuses on enhancing our senior citizens' well-being by improving access to vital healthcare and preventive services in rural areas.

Partner organizations the Red Cross of Serbia - Red Cross of Vojvodina and the Red Cross of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and European Affairs of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina held a conference to kickstart this remarkable endeavor.



During the event, the project team unveiled the HEAL project's objectives, upcoming activities, and events that will focus on introducing innovative healthcare and preventive services specifically designed for our elderly population in the border region.

Main project activities will include standardization of the preventative care, training of local mobile teams for field work and organizing days for information and preventing examinations.



New Tourist Products Inspired by Cultural Heritage

Project Together for Cultural Tourism- Cross-border Cooperation for Improved Socio-Economic Development and Preservation of Traditional Craftsmanship will try to empower women from two countries to continue tradition and preservation of cultural heritage while creating new tourist products. Over the period of two years project will be implemented by the partner organizations National Alliance for Local Economic Development (NALED), Belgrade, Bosnian Handicrafts UHD, Tuzla, and Ethno Network, Belgrade.



At the opening conference of the project Ms. Violeta Jovanović, Executive Director of NALED stated: "We are creating harmony between heritage and future. Our goal is to empower sixty talented women from 18 cities and municipalities, and to gather institutions and organizations to preserve cultural heritage of the region via joint programs and products".

The project will also try to connect different actors in tourism sector such as tourist agencies, development agencies, professional associations while trying to create more positive environment for the development of the local tourism in the cross-border region. Recognition of female artists in crafts will contribute to socio economic development of the region and hopefully slow down migrations from rural to urban areas.

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Via Dinarica Green Trail

The project Via Dinarica: Green Trail Above Borders is implemented by project partners Regional Development Agency Zlatibor, Terra Dinarica, and Municipality of Vareš.

The project aims to improve Via Dinarica tourist product in the cross-border region by improving existing and marking new trails along the Green Trail of Via Dinarica opening thus a possibility for its further development in other areas of the Republic of Serbia and the Balkans. Tourist organizations, mountaineering associations, and managers of the protected areas would get an opportunity to improve their capacities.



During the Kick-off Conference in Sarajevo, Mr. Nihad Uk, Sarajevo Canton Prime Minister pointed out that for Sarajevo which is surrounded by mountains the concept of Via Dinarica is one of the priorities in tourism development. He also pointed out importance and the added value of a regional project in cooperation with the Republic of Serbia and thanked European Union for the financial support.

Mr. Esad Hodžić, advisor to the Minister of Tourism and Youth of the Republic of Serbia also pointed the importance of tourism development and the regional approach to such projects: „This project aims to connect different communities in the Western Serbia in the exchange of ideas and experiences and in that way improve tourist offer and contribute to overall economic development of the region“.

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Pedestrian tourism in cross-border region

Pedestrian tourism, as a form of outdoor tourism, is becoming increasingly popular in these areas. It is extremely important in promoting sustainable development, connecting with nature, but it is also an important factor that affects the economic benefit of rural and remote areas. This is exactly what encouraged the Tourist Organization of Užice and project partners Mountaineering Society Konjuh from Tuzla, the Ministry of Spatial Planning and Environment Protection of the Tuzla Canton and the Mountaineering Association of Serbia to realize the project "Strengthening the pedestrian corridor in the cross-border area of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina - E-CrossPass".



Thanks to the E-CrossPass project, joint hiking trails with a total length of 580 kilometers will be established in the cross-border area between the Tuzla Canton and the Western Serbia region, which, along with the introduction of relevant European practices, will improve and unify the infrastructure for hiking tourism. The paths will be routed, marked, and equipped in accordance with the standards of the European Ramblers Association (ERA) as part of the European hiking route E7. With this, this cross-border area will occupy a significant place on the European tourist map as a popular destination for active

tourism, but it will also create a positive climate and new opportunities for local entrepreneurs and the entire local community. Work will also be done on the improvement and education of available human resources through the implementation of two trainings: training in the field of routing and marking of footpaths according to European marking standards, as well as training for the certification of mountain guides for leading groups of tourists in a sustainable, professional, and safe manner.

At the beginning of June, the E - CrossPass project was officially presented to the public with an initial conference in Tuzla. The conference was attended by many future collaborators on the project and end users: representatives of protected areas, mountaineering associations, mountaineering societies, tourist local and regional organizations and agencies from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"One of the key goals of the project is to promote outdoor tourism in the cross-border area, with a special emphasis on rural and protected areas, local culture and authenticity. Let's take this opportunity to build a prosperous tourist destination together that will benefit all our citizens. In the next two years, I wish us, as our mountaineers say, "clear" and that we successfully implement all the activities on this project with joint efforts!" - concluded Ms. Dušanka Selaković, project manager, at the end of the conference.



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NESESER for future entrepreneurs

Project NESESER has a goal is to encourage cross-border joint potential for self-employment by improving the entrepreneurial environment for young and women running start-ups. The project aims to stimulate economic growth and employment in the Brčko District of BiH and Loznica, in Serbia by increasing the entrepreneurial abilities and skills of vulnerable groups. The main activities include capacity building, business pre-incubation phase and business incubation phase.



Project partners, Development – Guarantee Fund of Brčko District, City of Loznica, and Institute for Development and Innovation from Belgrade hope to establish functional business centres and business incubators, raise capacities and awareness of the business environment, share best practices and support youth and women's businesses in improving their business turnover.

During the first meeting of the project partners Mayor of Loznica, Mr. Marko Vidić said: „I believe that with this joint project we will improve the quality of life of our citizens. I wish that this project becomes just the first-time cooperation and that in the future we continue joint endeavours in different areas”.

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One-stop-shop service for youth entrepreneurship and cross-border partnerships

The project aims to empower youth from vulnerable categories in the cross-border region of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Young people will be provided with the skills needed for employment in line with the current market needs. The project is going to be implemented by the Centre for youth work Novi Sad, Centre for youth education Travnik, Tuzla Community Foundation, and Youth Association Sremska Mitrovica.



All-in-one service planned within the project offers education on soft skills, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship, with mentoring support for up to 20 business ideas developed by young people. Partners will work closely with representatives of local authorities and government institutions, to improve the economic strength of the region and increase employment opportunities for young people.



A large number of young people will be engaged and provided help to develop their business ideas, with the ultimate goal of contributing to the socio-economic development of the cross-border area. The mission is to empower the next generation of entrepreneurs and contribute to cross-border development!

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Programs to Respond to the Needs of Children with Behavioral Disorders

The project Development and Implementation of Programs to Respond to the Needs of Children with Behavioral Disorders is conducted by a consortium of organizations that includes the Provincial Institute for Social Protection, the Public Institution Center for Social Work in Bijeljina in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Center for Social Work of the Municipality of Stara Pazova in Serbia.



Ovaj projekat sufinansira Evropska unija, a realizuje ga Pokrajinski zavod za socijalnu zaštitu u partnerstvu sa Centrom za socijalni rad Stara Pazova, i Centrom za socijalni rad Bijeljina, Bosna i Hercegovina

This project aims to establish a system to identify and assess children with behavioral disorders, develop and implement individual education plans and provide support and training to parents and experts working with these children. It also includes the development of a national database of children with behavioral disorders to improve data collection and analysis.

Project partners will work together to support engaging children with behavioral disorders in society and ensure they have access to the support and resources they need to thrive.

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Enhancing Caregiver Competencies for a Brighter Future!

This project, implemented by the Centre for Support and Inclusion HELP NET and the Center for Social Innovation from Tuzla, showcases the power of collaboration in empowering caregivers and professionals to provide exceptional care.



This project demonstrates the commitment to supporting initiatives that enhance caregiving competencies, strengthen social inclusion, and improve the well-being of both caregivers and care recipients.

Key aspects of this remarkable endeavor include:

- Tailored training programs and workshops designed to meet the specific needs of caregivers and professionals, ensuring their continuous growth and development.
- Access to valuable resources, information, and support networks, creating a collaborative environment for sharing experiences and best practices.
- Recognition and appreciation of the invaluable role played by informal caregivers, promoting their well-being, and equipping them with essential self-care tools.
- Cross-border cooperation between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, facilitating knowledge exchange and fostering a stronger support system for caregivers.

With projects like this one we can create a brighter future for caregivers, improve the quality of care, and make a positive impact on the lives of those in need.

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Exciting News in Eco-Tourism!

This project, Eco-Tourism in the Cross-Border Area between Serbia and BIH: Cross-Border Birdwatching, is implemented by Caritas Šabac, Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia in collaboration with Red Cross of Tuzla Canton their partners from Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is a testament to the power of cross-border cooperation in fostering sustainable tourism practices.

This initiative exemplifies the commitment to supporting projects that promote biodiversity conservation, environmental education, and economic development within the region.

Some highlights of this fantastic endeavor include:

- Guided birdwatching tours led by local experts, offering an immersive experience for enthusiasts of all levels.
- Exploration of breathtaking landscapes, from lush forests to serene wetlands, providing a glimpse into the region's natural wonders.
- Engagement with local communities, promoting cultural exchange and supporting the development of eco-friendly initiatives.
- Collaboration between Serbia and BIH, fostering cross-border cooperation and strengthening ties in the pursuit of sustainable tourism.



This project can make a difference in preserving our natural heritage, strengthening cross-border ties, and creating innovative and sustainable employment and business opportunities in eco-tourism for people from vulnerable groups.

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Roman Heritage of the Drina and Sava Region

A project, Experience Roman Heritage on Drina and Sava - Roman Emperors Route, is a collaborative effort between the Institute for the protection of monuments, Sremska Mitrovica, PI Archeological Museum, Skelani, Tourist organization of Srebrenica, and Centre for Sustainable Development and Democracy CORD, Belgrade.

This initiative aims to enhance tourism and contribute to the socio-economic development of the cross-border region. By activating valuable cultural heritage and significant monuments, we aspire to create sustainable growth and foster closer ties between communities.



With a duration of 18 months, the project will focus on improving the quality of the tourism product and services along the Roman Emperors Route (RER), a cultural route in the cross-border area. We will also strengthen the strategic framework for tourism development in the municipality of Srebrenica.

Through various activities such as infrastructure improvements, restoration of Roman mosaics, capacity building workshops, and the promotion of cultural tourism opportunities, we aim to attract more visitors, enhance awareness of Roman history, and boost the local economy.

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Open-Air Everywhere

A project named Open-Air Everywhere! is set to be implemented by Development Association NERDA in partnership with the City of Tuzla, Tourist Board of the City of Tuzla, and Tourism Organization of Western Serbia.

The Open-Air Everywhere! project aims to harness the potential of open-air tourism, eco-tourism, and sustainable tourism. By leveraging natural resources and aligning with evolving travel preferences, the project intends to create a framework for memorable experiences that break free from daily routines.



To achieve this, the project will focus on developing tourism infrastructure, capacity building of service providers, networking, and promoting new services. The objective is to enhance the tourism sector's ability in Tuzla Canton and Zlatibor District to attract domestic tourists.

Key stakeholders, including local tourism organizations, regional development agencies, educational institutions, and national tourism bodies, have been actively consulted and are committed to the project, ensuring its success and sustainability.

Throughout the 18-month project duration, cross-cutting issues such as environmental sustainability, equal opportunities, gender equality, and youth support will be prioritized. The aim is to create accessible and inclusive tourism experiences for all.



Old Railways – New Cooperation

An inspiring project Old Railways for New Cooperation and Experiences supported by the Serbia-Bosnia and Herzegovina Cross-Border Cooperation Programme intends to reinvigorate two railway museums in Banovići and Požega, while also incorporating small businesses and supporting facilities related to the museums and industrial heritage sites.



By breathing new life into these historical railway tracks and museums, the initiative aims to not only preserve our cultural heritage but also promote tourism, enhance infrastructure, and strengthen bonds between neighboring regions.

The addition of souvenir shops, professional guides, accommodation providers, and cafeterias will offer visitors an enriched experience, immersing them in the captivating world of railway history and industrial heritage.

Project partners, Business Innovation Programs from Zemun, Association for Entrepreneurship and Business LiNK Mostar, Municipality of Banovići, and Forum for Civil Action FORCA from Požega undertake this collaborative effort that fosters economic growth and community development, while celebrating the importance of our shared past.

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About Us

IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2014-2020 is implemented under the framework of the Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II).



The Programme is implemented jointly by both countries. Ministry of European Integration of the Republic of Serbia and Directorate for European Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina are in charge of the overall coordination of the Programme as the Operating Structures. Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Serbia, Department for Contracting and Financing of EU Funded Programmes (CFCU) is responsible for all contract as the Contracting Authority (CA). Programme is assisted by Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS).

The overall budget of the Programme for the period 2014-2020 is 14,000,000 EUR while Beneficiaries co-financing is expected to be 2,223,529.41 EUR.

So far, since its establishment in 2007 the Programme has funded 74 projects, providing a little over 23 millions EUR of EU funds across the Programme area.

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