

Summaries of Approved Projects from the 3rd Deadline of the Open Call in the Frame of Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia - Croatia

The projects were approved at the Monitoring Committee of the programme Interreg V-A Slovenia - Croatia. The ERDF Subsidy Contract has not been signed yet.

Summaries of the projects were prepared by the applicants in the context of submitted project applications.

Priority Axis 2 Preservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources (specific objective 2.1. Active heritage preservation through sustainable tourism)

Project acronym: RIDE&BIKE II (744.151,66 EUR ERDF)

Lead Partner: Zagorska razvojna agencija d.o.o. za promicanje regionalnog razvoja

Project Partners: Turistička zajednica Krapinsko-zagorske županije, Turistička zajednica "Savsko-sutlanska dolina i brigi", Razvojna agencija Kozjansko, Razvojna agencija Sotla, Javni zavod za kulturo, šport, turizem in mladinske dejavnosti Sevnica

Mutual cooperation on a project of a similar thematic (OP SI-HR 2007-2013: RIDE&BIKE), created partner's vision about smart integration of natural and cultural heritage, especially those dispersive elements of heritage (f.e. castle ruins, outside of tourist routes) worth seeing and ways of tourist travel (biking, riding a horse). New mutual challenges were detected and are related to insufficient link of natural and cultural heritage, active tourism and disconnection of offer in rural areas. Therefore, the main goal of project RIDE&BIKE II is development of selective tourist products based interpretation of natural and cultural heritage through establishment of management system for development of active tourism. The key project result is to increase number of visitors in cross-border destination (for 3600 visitors), and direct project outcomes are: 1. organized cross-border offer defined through 2 tourist cross-border tourist products based smart integration of protected nature (NATURE 2000, other forms of nature protection) and cultural sites (old cities-registered heritage, castles; museums); 2. developed RIDE&BIKE standards with 10 standardized subjects of tourist offer (hospitality, accommodation); 3. developed awareness about importance and possibilities of tourist valorisation of natural and cultural heritage and their smart integration of the active tourism offer. Cross-border approach is necessary due to wholeness of specialized tourist offer that this unique destination can offer, and planned approach is focused on optimal use of ambient resources with respect of social-cultural authenticity of the destination and creation of long-term sustainable economic activities. Innovation of the project is manifested in creation of mutual cross-border tourist destination: cross-border specialized tourist products, mutual destination standard will be created, and an integral innovative promotion of the crossborder area will be implemented.

Project acronym: INSPIRACIJA (1.277.550,00 EUR ERDF)

Lead Partner: Občina Trbovlje

Project Partners: Razvojno informacijski center Slovenska Bistrica, Labin Art Express XXI, Riječka razvojna agencija Porin d.o.o., Muze d.o.o. za savjetovanje i upravljanje u kulturi i turizmu , Naj Tura d.o.o., Turistička zajednica Grada Labina

The common cross-border challenge is the need to revitalise industrial heritage towns and activate them by means of sustainable tourism. The images of town centres in the former mining and factory towns Trbovlje, Labin, Rijeka and Slovenska Bistrica are sad ones of desolate dilapidated buildings. At the same time, these towns are rich in unique industrial cultural heritage – desolate mining shafts, chimneys, former miners’ lodgings, the remains of, for those times, innovative factories and workshops, and diverse cultural happenings. In spite of these riches, these towns face a negative public profile, brain drain, high unemployment and utterly dispersed approaches to servicing visitors. The project’s objective is therefore to revitalise the decrepit industrial parts of participating towns, so that their revived unique industrial heritage builds up the towns’ appeal both for the locals and visitors. The area’s common history will receive an attractive interpretation in contemporary information centres at the central heritage sites. This content will be offered to visitors in the form of an all-in-one sustainable culture tourism product INSPIRACIJA (INSPIRATION), which will connect 4 revitalised heritage sites under a common brand, setting up: a common cross-border circular tour from the Pohorje sawmills and mills to the Trbovlje and Labin mines, and finally to the port of Rijeka; all-in-one programmes for different target groups; and unique ways of experiencing industrial culture: escape from a mine/factory, a common festival and a biennale of industrial heritage. Such a common cross-border approach is innovative as we are connecting local know-how and upgrading it with top experts’ insights, which will allow a sustainable presentation and experience of industrial heritage based on local resources. Local tourist providers and entrepreneurs will build on their know-how and connect across the border to create a unique cultural and tourism product. The common entry on international markets will also be a breakthrough, being based on interactive media, visitor inclusion, and digital presentation.

Project acronym: MITSKI PARK (633.292,50 EUR ERDF)

Lead Partner: Občina Hrpelje-Kozina

Project Partners: Općina Mošćenička Draga, Sveučilište u Rijeci, Fakultet za menadžment u turizmu i ugostiteljstvu, Visokoškolsko središće Sežana, Univerza na Primorskem/Universita' del Litorale, Turistička Zajednica Općine Mošćenička Draga, Arhej d.o.o., arheološke raziskave in druge intelektualne storitve

The project addresses the common challenge, typical for the entire PA, of preservation and enhancement of material and immaterial cultural heritage that is currently poorly utilised. The project's common main objective is to actively preserve and enhance mythical landscape's cultural heritage from the perspective of sustainable tourism in the territory of Mošćenička Draga and Hrpelje-Kozina municipalities. Visitors of the Cross-border myth park (CMP) will be offered a unique experience which will enrich the destination's attractiveness and increase the number of visits. The project's main direct effects are: tourist visits to new CB tourist destination (5000); a company providing interpretation knowledge and development of animation program in the CMP (1); tourist products for sustainable use of heritage of myth tradition (2); people trained on CMP contents (131); small-scale investments in infrastructure: visitors' centres on HKM and MDM areas (2). All target groups will benefit from direct effects (general public - tourists/visitors, mainly children, SMEs, local and regional bodies, interest groups, non-profit organisations and other institutions). Innovative approach consists in creation of new CB tourist products combining new CMP with a series of services, thus promoting economic and sustainable tourist development. The park will have a uniformed appearance; while visiting one of the two destinations, the visitors will be shown a virtual presentation of the other location, which will motivate them to visit also the other location. In the CMP, classic signage tables will be replaced by environment-friendly stone indicators. CB tourist products can be created and successfully marketed only if supported by active cooperation of actors from both counties. Revitalisation of heritage and the combining of heritage with CB tourist products, resulting in a rich bid, can be achieved only through establishing a CB tourist destination - the Cross-border Myth park.

Project acronym: CARNIVORA DINARICA (1.983.897,98 EUR ERDF)

Lead Partner: Univerza v Ljubljani

Project Partners: Zavod za gozdove Slovenije, Občina Pivka, Javna ustanova Nacionalni park Risnjak, Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Veterinarski fakultet, WWF Adria - Udruga za zaštitu prirode i očuvanje biološke raznolikosti, Grad Vrbovsko, Primorsko-goranska županija

Carnivora Dinarica aims to improve conservation status of large carnivores (LCs=lynx, wolf, and bear) in the Natura 2000 areas Javorniki-Snežnik, Notranjski trikotnik and Gorski kotar i S. Lika. This unique landscape of continuous transboundary forests in Central Europe is shared by appr. 20 lynx, 50 wolves and 600 bears. Their long-term conservation is vital for preservation of biodiversity and ecosystems in the SI-HR area. Therefore, the project focuses on 3 common CHALLENGES: i) concretization of strategies and mending of gaps in CB management of LCs; ii) mitigation of threats to LCs, especially the increasing pressure of humans, (traffic mortality, agricultural damages, habitat fragmentation), and iii)(mis)understanding of the roles of LCs in ecosystems.

As a contrast to previous projects, Carnivora Dinarica will, for the first time, address these issues systematically, complementary to national/EU policies, and especially through transfer of knowledge from research to practice at the local level. The measures are designed to ensure transferability and durability after the project is completed. THE PROJECT WILL:

- IMPROVE TRANSBOUNDARY MANAGEMENT OF LCs through harmonisation of measures for wolf and lynx, a better understanding of threats to habitat connectivity, and of ecosystem services, and strengthening of collaboration between institutions from both countries;
- DECREASE THREATS TO LCs through 10 demo-activities, such as a best-practice farm, damage prevention fences, sheep dogs, installation of active signalization, young lynx rehabilitation area, bear-resistant bins, visitors management measures in the NP Risnjak, Snežnik and Kolpa areas and creation of a Centre for visitor management and awareness raising about LCs in Pivka;
- STRENGTHEN COMPETENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE AND WAYS OF COEXISTENCE BETWEEN HUMANS AND LCs through training of over 280 national and local stakeholders and residents of conflict areas.

Project acronym: KULTURA (1.118.806,54 EUR ERDF)

Lead Partner: Grad Jastrebarsko

Project Partners: Turistička zajednica grada Jastrebarskog, Občina Črnomelj, Razvojno informacijski center Bela krajina, Univerza v Ljubljani, Libertas međunarodno sveučilište

There are more than 50 small historic towns along the SI-CRO border with rich cultural heritage representing the only underused potential for revival of ran down squares and lanes in the town centers. ČRNOMELJ and JASTREBARSKO are one of these towns. Do you know them? Probably not; although we drive past them on our way to the Adriatic coast and even though they are less than an hour drive away from the two capitals. Therefore our CHALLENGE is to use the heritage and tourism trends for increased visit of the border area. The CROSSBORDER dimension is recognized as an important OPPORTUNITY for the small towns which can find their place on the market along with Zagreb, Ljubljana, Piran, Rovinj.

The OBJECTIVE is to activate and renovate dilapidated cultural heritage for sustainable tourism breakthrough of small border towns. To achieve this we will, first in Jaska and Črnomelj, develop and test new CB tourism product kulTura, which will be encouraged for wider use. KulTura will be simple, different and slow. It will be "cool" tour along the hidden cultural heritage, supported with CB digital card and designed according to visitors expectations and needs, especially of those with functional constraints. KulTura will present the heritage of small towns; it will package local offers, strolls and tasting experiences enable digital animations and lively meetings with historical characters of streets, squares and parks. In Jaska the visitors center and the pavilion will become the main attraction of kulTura. In Črnomelj the lane of kulTura trail shall be 'paved' along renovated historic streets. All these will be achieved through holistic, sustainable, inclusive and smart approach. We can overcome the current state of small towns only with innovation; therefore the non-standard approaches are introduced in all segments of the product - from renovation details to revival of great stories of random people. KulTura is designed as a development model and the CB card as a tool for further expansion and marketing of all small historic towns along the border.

Project acronym: PREHISTORY ADVENTURE (612.246,44 EUR ERDF)

Lead Partner: Općina Donja Voća

Project Partners: Občina Zreče, Muzej Turopolja, Občina Radenci, Arheološki muzej u Zagrebu, Univerza v Ljubljani (Filozofska fakulteta)

Prehistory heritage in the programme area is not fully presented in the form of attractive content and is not managed sustainably. Two gaps have been identified by archaeologists: lack of innovative approaches to the tourist interpretation of the archaeological heritage in nature, and the neglect of individual findings. There are traditional (classic) exhibitions in vitrines, archaeological parks that lack information and badly promoted paths. Individual findings are not interpreted in the sense of tourist contents. The GENERAL OBJECTIVE of the project answers this challenge – how to connect the course of prehistory from the earlier Stone Age to the Iron Age in an instructive and exploratory way, evaluating and highlighting the importance of individual findings and experimentally demonstrating how people lived, ate, worked, their clothes and habits.

The expected CHANGE will include new, interesting contents without dangerous impacts on the protected core of the heritage. The project will connect and activate the prehistoric potential in 5 different regions of the programme area and offer an unforgettable insight into the most distant period of human history to target groups.

Tourist sector, local population (economic activation), tourists and other interested public (life-long learning and new skills) will BENEFIT from the project.

The complexity of the area and diversity of archaeological prehistoric findings requires an URGENT CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION of experts. New methodological approaches will be created by synergy through their diverse experience and professional knowledge, providing a comprehensive interpretation of prehistoric facts and push the events to the entry points of protected heritage through different INNOVATIVE elements of experience (1 augmented reality application, 1 virtual kiosk, 1 prehistory learning polygon, 5 interactive smart boards, 86 organised events and workshops etc.).

Project acronym: NATURE&WILDLIFE (835.290,12 EUR ERDF)

Lead Partner: RRA Zeleni kras, d.o.o.

Project Partners: Javni zavod za upravljanje dediščine in turizem Pivka, Javni zavod za kulturo, turizem in medgeneracijsko sodelovanje Snežnik, Jezerski hram, Zavod za ohranjanje naravne in kulturne dediščine, Cerknica, Javna ustanova Nacionalni park Risnjak, Lokalna razvojna agencija PINS d.o.o., Riječka razvojna agencija PORIN d.o.o.

The aim of the project is a tourist product for experiencing nature and wild animals in the cross-border areas of the Dinaric karst. The area is an undivided forest on both sides of the border that is a part of the northern Dinarides. It is the only area in Europe where all three large predator species (bear, lynx and wolf) are still preserved. It is an important environmental and marketing advantage, which can be used in this cross-border cooperation. Three protected areas (Risnjak, Pivka intermittent lakes, Zeleni vir) take part. They offer an exceptional natural heritage, connected to the forest area and typical karst phenomena, as well as knowledge of nature conservation which represents a rich source for designing an attractive sustainable tourist product. With a wider, but thematically niche product and joint marketing operations, it will be easier to direct foreign visitors seeking a specific green product from tourist centres into the hinterland. The project will thus contribute to better conditions for smart growth as one of the key common challenges of PO.

The main project goal is active preservation of joint natural heritage in the project area. This will be achieved by means of sustainable tourism with enhancement of situation in participating heritage areas, increasing content attractiveness, encouragement of green economy and with raising awareness and knowledge of local SMEs and area inhabitants. The main direct effects of the project will be the design of new crossborder green products/programs, the increase of the number of people with enhanced competences and the encouragement of visitation of areas and natural heritage points, included in the project.

Organized promotion and marketing shall increase the number of visitors by 10%. We will use the partnership to integrate the competencies of development organizations and park managers. During the setup of visitor infrastructure, we will apply the know-how of various experts to better pursue our active nature conservation approach. We will implement the ideas and skills of local stakeholders, and use targeted stimulation of visitors' interests. The project will help increase the visibility of PP, improve the green infrastructure within and outside the parks, contribute to a better positioning of the two regions as green destinations and thus increase the number of tourists.

There will be actual benefits for the participating groups: the interpretation of the heritage (hunters, guides, providers); business integration of providers of tourist services and an increased economic benefit for the local area.

Project acronym: MINE TOUR (972.929,08 EUR ERDF)

Lead Partner: GRAD LABIN

Project Partners: Občina Litija, Razvojni center Srca Slovenije, d.o.o., Zavod za gradbeništvo Slovenije, TURISTIČKA ZAJEDNICA ISTARSKÉ ŽUPANIJE, LABIN ART EXPRESS XXI, TURISTIČNA ZVEZA SLOVENIJE

MINE TOUR project addresses the challenge of unexploited mining heritage potential in the marginal areas of the PA, more precisely, it focuses on the natural site of the Sitarjevec mine in Litija and the mining cultural monument “Šoht” (i.e. mine tower) in Labin. Both sites are in poor condition and are lacking a cross-border promotion and cooperation between the national and cross-border actors. There is a need for improved knowledge on sustainable tourism principles of all tourism stakeholders as well as a need for a better heritage management. The project’s objective is to establish an active mining heritage conservation through the development of new sustainable cross-border tourist products. The change is expected to be reflected in improved accessibility and recognition of the mines, an improved experiencing of heritage, an increased number of on-site visits and an improved site attractiveness. The sites will be valorised with contents enabling a high-quality experience and at the same time, their preservation for future generations will be provided for. The direct effects, linked to the mining heritage, will be: a cross-border sustainable tourist product; the visits to the mining sites (i.e. monuments); the inclusion of sustainable tourism stakeholders in training programmes and two small-scale investments made in the preservation of the mining heritage. The benefits will be enjoyed by tourists who will be offered a rich experience; the attractiveness of the hinterland will increase; a development of entrepreneurship will follow, providing employment opportunities to the local people; stakeholders in tourism will gain new competences. Through the bottom-up approach, the project will connect both the sites (i.e. monuments), the public and private tourism stakeholders as well as both local economies and local communities united by the same mining history, into one unique tourist product. In this manner, we will consolidate the sustainable tourism as the driving force of development in the PA. The cross-border approach is required for a unified preservation of sources whereas through the cross-border marketing and promotion, we will register a higher number of visitors of the mining heritage pooled into a new tourist product. The following will be elaborated: a new visitors’ management plan, a new cross-border marketing model, a training programme and a tourist guide for the promotion of the mining heritage.

Project acronym: IN CULTURA VERITAS (852.819,44 EUR ERDF)

Lead Partner: Zagrebačka županija

Project Partners: Udruga hrvatskih putničkih agencija, Muzejski dokumentacijski centar, Razvojna agencija Sotla, OBČINA ŠMARJE PRI JELŠAH, Kmetijsko gozdarska zbornica Slovenije – Kmetijsko gozdarski zavod Maribor

The main project goal is to increase attractiveness, number of visitors and protection of cultural heritage as well as to boost economic activity of local producers through development of sustainable cross-border touristic destination, capacity building of local stakeholders and promotion. Zagreb County and Obsotelje and Kozjansko are regions rich in cultural heritage, oenological tradition and wine routes. However, heritage sites and wine routes have little visitors and do not generate enough income which leads to decrease in economic activity, loss of local identity and deterioration of valuable cultural heritage. Reason for that is lack of offer and cooperation, which will be dealt with in this project. Identified challenges will be tackled primarily through development and promotion of innovative touristic destination which will connect the cultural heritage with wine roads by connecting services and offers from both sectors and their integration (exwine exhibits at museums, tastings in cultural heritage facilities). The new destination will be developed through consultations with stakeholders in the area to obtain realistic and applicable solutions, and ensure sustainability. In order to fully develop the destination partners will invest in attractive, modern technology based visitor infrastructure on selected heritage sites, develop visitors monitoring system and educate stakeholders, in order to strengthen their capacities for active participation thus ensuring a bottom-up approach in the presentation and sales of the offer and its sustainability. Finally, by digitizing the entire product and its overall promotion they will ensure good visibility and attract many visitors. The synergy of project results will ensure an attractive offer for visitors, an increased number of visitors on cultural heritage sites, as well as wine roads, which will lead to increase of revenues for all stakeholders, economic growth of the region and preservation of heritage.

Project acronym: LIVING CASTLES (1.236.470,80 EUR ERDF)

Lead Partner: Međimursko veleučilište u Čakovcu

Project Partners: Raziskovalno izobraževalno središče Dvorec Rakičan, Znanstveno-raziskovalno središče Bistra Ptuj , Razvojna agencija Savinjske regije d.o.o., Gradski muzej Varaždin , Muzej Međimurja Čakovec , Muzeji Hrvatskog Zagorja , Proteus d.o.o.

The project "Living Castles" focuses on the preservation and valorisation of manors/castles through the development of a common cross-border tourism offer and the integration of innovative activities for the preservation of cultural heritage. Project's main theme is the creation of a common brand – a network of castles/manors that will enable bigger recognisability and promotion. The goal is to present castles/manors as a common tourism product (home and abroad), inspired by castles in south Bohemia and Bavaria. Buildings will be furnished with common signs. Joint promotion and thematic events will enrich the current tourism offer. As castles/mansions are buildings under historical/cultural protection, their use is often rigidly defined, thus any changes are costly and difficult to realize. The project focuses on finding solutions how to use small investments and ICT tools to fill such gaps and to breathe new life to old historic walls and to offer visitors a unique experience. The usage of VR headsets makes it possible to walk through historic corridors and see how buildings have changed through time; hologram technology pushes boundaries when historical characters and mythical creatures come to life in front of our eyes; 3D projections breathe new dimensions to old walls. Only a few years ago this technology was inaccessible to the general public, as it was too costly or because advanced skills were needed for its usage. Today such technology is accessible, affordable and very advantageous as it can be adapted to various content and tailored to different target groups in order to enable a dynamic range of unique offers with just one investment. Thus, the transfer and exchange of digitized cultural heritage (photos, images) is much cheaper, moreover it also enriches permanent museum collections and promotional activities. A set of common events and investments to cultural heritage will offer a unique experience of castle lifestyle.

Project acronym: KAŠTELIR (1.203.872,84 EUR ERDF)

Lead Partner: OBČINA KOMEN

Project Partners: OBČINA IZOLA, UNIVERZA V MARIBORU, INŠTITUT IRRIS za raziskave, razvoj in strategije družbe, kulture in okolja, ISTARSKA ŽUPANIJA, OPĆINA LANIŠČE, GRAD MALI LOŠINJ, JAVNA USTANOVA "PARK PRIRODE UČKA" , JAVNI ZAVOD KOMENSKI KRAS

Istria, together with Karst, Čičarija, Brkini and a part of Quarner share many common natural features, as well as a common history. The surprisingly dense arrangement of fortified boroughs, named also as »kaštelirji«, »Castellierik« or »zidine«, reveals densely populated territory in the Bronze and Iron Age. The area of »kaštelirji« was in the pre-historic times actually one uniform region. Thus, it would be impossible to achieve project goals and yield project results, without applying the trans-boundary cooperation. Main Common Challenge: This project aim to reveal and re-establish the ancient connection between people and wild plants and to present the traditional knowledge in a contemporary way in order to be used for sustainable development and tourism, in particular. The key point of the project are the fortified boroughs - "kaštelirji", today overgrown with scrub and forest. Depopulation caused land abandonment and consequently, the folk traditions were lost to a large extent. Along with this, also the traditional knowledge regarding the wild plants was lost. Thus, we aim to revive the knowledge, still existing among the local populations, properly represent it and raise interest about this knowledge among the local inhabitants and tourists. The final goal is to create new tourist products, based on traditional knowledge and old recipes.

The main project goal is to preserve and maintain the cultural heritage of »kaštelirji by developing the innovative sustainable cross-border tourist offers. The following key results are foreseen:

-Revived four selected "kaštelirji" (ruins of fortified boroughs)

-The trail ""kaštelirji" from Karst to Quarner"

-Centre for promotion of "kaštelirji" and traditional use of plants (Čičarija) and info-points on each selected "kaštelir"

-Botany – plants in folk medicine and culinary from the areas of "kaštelirji"; plant gene bank.

Archaeobotany – plants from the period of "kaštelirji". Ethnobotany – traditional use of plants and products; presentation of way of life on "kaštelirji"; 8 educational trails, also presented by use of ICT.

-Education and training in relation to "kaštelirji"

Development of products of sustainable tourism for the promotion of cultural and natural heritage.

The most important project results will be awareness raising regarding the preservation of the cultural and natural heritage through education, collecting and cultivating the edible, medical, and other useful plants. The key emphasis will be on sustainable development of countryside and transboundary tourism. The project will encourage the social life and sustainable development of the rural areas. It will enrich and diversify the touristic offer. All this would stimulate the return of inhabitants, who left the area due to economic reasons. Revived area would be attractive also for the newcomers, attracted by way of life in natural environm., rich with cultural and natural monuments.

Project acronym: VEZI NARAVE (2.170.821,80 EUR ERDF)

Lead Partner: Občina Grosuplje

Project Partners: Občina Rogaška Slatina, Zavod Republike Slovenije za varstvo narave, Javna ustanova Nacionalni park Risnjak, Grad Vrbovsko, Udruga Hyla, Javna ustanova za upravljanje zaštićenim dijelovima prirode Krapinsko-zagorske županije

The project TIES OF NATURE addresses the challenge of conserving and restoring biotic diversity for future generations and raising awareness of the impact nature has on the well-being of man. In order to reach this objective, the project will implement activities addressing: the lack of joint harmonised cross-border measures for the improvement of target species in poor condition; the lack of inter-sectoral collaboration in the introduction of modern, sustainable methods of natural resource management; poor awareness of the relevance of nature conservation and benefits that conserved nature has for the long-term quality of life and for preventing natural risks in an area.

The project's main objective is to ensure the durability of the conservation and restoration of target species in Natura 2000 areas of the rivers Sotla and Kolpa, Risnjak National Park, the Radensko polje area, and the Kamačnik canyon. The partnership was composed so as to ensure that species and measures planned for improving their state of conservation are dispersed across comparable areas in Slovenia and Croatia. By implementing 5 programmes of measures consisting of actual demonstration activities in nature covering a total surface area of 3,159 ha, we will improve the state of conservation of the otter, stag beetle, great capricorn beetle, marsh fritillary, large copper, amphibians. This selection of charismatic species represents an excellent platform for communicating the intrinsic value of nature to the widest public, which is why they will serve as a basis for communicating ecosystem services. The project strives to set up sustainable structures for the long-term conservation of biodiversity. By involving stakeholders in the implementation of nature preservation measures and in the development and implementation of content for the interpretation of nature, the project will bring nature protection and care for nature closer to the wider public. An innovative education programme will familiarise 190 individuals with the practical aspect of Natura 2000 management and ecosystem services. An important contribution to long-term nature conservation is the setup of the network of TIES OF NATURE points intended to raise awareness on the importance of nature, with the objective to show people the often invisible links between ecosystems and man's connection to them. Two nature protection centres will be set up—Šica in Radensko polje and Sotla in Rogaška Slatina—and two interpretative access points—one in the area of the Zelenjak natural monument by the river Sotla, and the other in the Kamečnik canyon. The inclusive and integral approach to biodiversity conservation is an innovation in this cross-border area. The TIES OF NATURE project is thus opening new opportunities for the society to gradually but permanently change its attitude to nature protection and conservation, and for its recognising nature's key role in ensuring the well-being of future generations.