

Cross-border region „Krsh“

“Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas”

Minutes from the 7th Stakeholders’ Group Meeting of the cross-border region “Krsh”



Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina

May 31st 2018

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SL Industry Hotel, Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina

I List of participants

The seventh Stakeholder's Group Meeting of the cross-border region „Krsh“ was attended by 38 participants, among which Associate for Agriculture and Rural Development of the City Trebinje, representative of the Centre for Development of Herzegovina, representatives of the stakeholder group of the cross-border region „Krsh“, senior and regional experts in agri-food and tourism.

Annex 1: List of participants

II Agenda

May 31st 2018, Thursday

10:30 – 11:00 **Arrival of the participants and welcome drink**

11:00 – 11:15 **Welcome speech**

Marko Zizic, SWG regional coordinator

Rade Drinjak, City of Trebinje, Associate for Agriculture and Rural Development

Slobodan Vulesevic, Center for Development of Herzegovina

11:15 – 11:20 **ABDA activities implemented in the cross-border region "Krsh"**

Marko Zizic, SWG regional coordinator

- Call for support of the events in the cross-border region "Krsh"
- Finished Workshop in the cross-border region "Krsh" "Development of the value chains in tourism and agro-business sector"

11:20 – 12:00 **Supported P2P events**
Presentation of the potentials in the region

12:00 – 12:10 *Suzana Milosevic Djordjevic – The mapping process in regions*

12:10 – 12:35 *Predrag Markovic – Presentation of the data collected in order to map agri-food value chains and its development*

12:35– 13:00 *Filip Sekuloski – presentation of the data collected in order to map tourism value chains and its development*

13:00 – 14:00 **Discussion**

14:00 – 15:00 **Lunch**

15:00 **Departure of the participants**

III Minutes of the meeting

The seventh meeting of the stakeholder group of the cross-border region „Krsh“ was held May 31st 2018, in SL Industry Hotel, Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in organization of the SWG.

The meeting was dedicated to the current and future activities implemented on the project “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas” financed by the European Union; presentation of the manifestations supported within Public call People-2-People; as well as to presentation of the collected data during the process of mapping value chains.

During the meeting next topics were discussed:

- ABDA activities implemented in the cross-border region “Krsh“
- Call for support of the manifestations in the cross-border region “Krsh“
- Workshop in the cross-border region “Krsh”, “Development of the value chains in tourism and agro-business sector“
- Supported P2P manifestations
- The process of mapping in regions
- Presentation of the the data collected in order to map agri-food value chains and its development
- presentation of the data collected in order to map tourism value chains and its development

1. Official opening of the meeting:

Marko Zizic, Regional coordinator for the cross-border region “Krsh“ welcomed all the present participants and thanked them for the finding the time to attend the meeting. Since some of the participants were on one of the stakeholder group meetings for the first time, he briefly presented SWG, and what has been done in the region so far. After the participants introduced themselves, representatives of the City of Trebinje and Centre for Development of Herzegovina greeted the participants.

Rade Drinjak, Associate for Agriculture and Rural Development of the City of Trebinje, welcomed participants. “Standing Working Group for Regional Rural Development in South-Eastern Europe is implementing this project, and this region, which we named “Krsh“, characteristic in many ways, especially when it comes to agroecology, climatic area, traditions of the rural population living in this area. I wish you to feel comfortable and that the meeting goes constructively, and share your thoughts“.

Slobodan Vulešević, in front of the Center for Development of Herzegovina, as someone who participated in the previous work of the cross-border region “Krsh“ wished a pleasant work and greeted the present participants: “It is my pleasure to see this number of people coming from the field without which this working group and region would not be what it is. Centre for Development of Herzegovina has been involved in mapping local potentials and using them for the purpose of developing of the local economy since 2004. Today, it means that the “Krsh” region is a completely

normal continuation of all those activities that the Centre for Development of Herzegovina realized in the previous period. With logistics support that is generally provided to all the regions that are developed on the territory of South-Eastern Europe, SWG provides new quality and opportunity for local and small non-governmental organizations such as Centre for Development of Herzegovina to affirm all the potential that the region offers and position itself in the place where really deserves".

1. ABDA activities implemented in cross-border region "KrsH"

Marko Zizic, Regional coordinator for the cross-border region "KrsH" presented what has been done in the region since the Project Management Unit office is opened in Niksic, in IPC Tehnopolis. A month after the opening of the office 6th stakeholder meeting of the cross-border region "KrsH" was held, during the which the Public call for support of the manifestations was announced. The call was opened for a month, till April 14th 2018.

The total number of 8 manifestations were applied, out of which 3 were chosen for the support. After the additional funds are provided from the other donators, two more manifestations are chosen for support. That means that the total of five manifestations will be supported in cross-border region "KrsH".

01.	Association "Herzegovinian fruits from the Mediterranean" Stolac	Fair manifestation Herzegovinian fruits from the Mediterranean Stolac
02.	Network for Rural Development of Montenegro	Regional Youth Rural Camp
03.	Bicycle club "Perun"	Bicycle on Forgotten Trails of the old train Cira
04.	Municipality of Nevesinje	"Goods from Herzegovinian Carstic" Regional fair of domestic products and handcraft
05.	Tourist cluster Montenegro	Boem Fest
06.	NGO Pro Futuro	Ninth Bedem Fest "Your City"
07.	Ski centre Vucje	Days of Kaloper
08.	NGO Morakovo	Promocija of traditional dishes from region "KrsH"

EU funded P2P events

01.	NGO Pro Futuro	Ninth Bedem Fest "Your City"
02.	Network for Rural Development of Montenegro	Regional Youth Rural Camp

03.	Municipality of Nevesinje	“Goods from Herzegovinian Carstic“ Regional fair of domestic products and handcraft
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P2P events funded by other donors in the cross-border region

01.	Bicycle club “Perun“	Bicycle on Forgotten Trails of the old train Cirra
02.	NGO Morakovo	Promocija of traditional dishes from region “KrsH“

In the period of 26-28 April 2018, workshop was held in Tivat, with the theme “Development of the value chains in tourism and agro-business sector“. One of the trainers was Ivica Sivric, expert for rural development and leader of the sector in REDAH. As someone who was involved in the establishment of the region “KrsH“, he talked about the importance of mapping and analysis of agricultural and tourist resources in the cross-border region „KrsH“ and about the role and importance of the all stakeholders in the development of the Agroturistic potentials of the region „KrsH“. Ratko Batakovic, from Rural Development Network of Montenegro lectured about the importance of the value chain analysis in agrotourism and the skills for its improvement and about the skills for adjusting the value chain and the role of the marketing activities in the process of branding the agro-tourism destination. On the third day of the workshop, participants visited Moric Farm as an example of the good practice. Farm’s owner is Ilija Moric, and his in olive growing. During the tour of the household, he talked about management skills of an agro-tourism household and skills of creating added value to agricultural products through the provision of services in tourism.

Activities on enlargement of a stakeholder group are done, which resulted in the presence of new participants at the meeting.

2. Supported P2P events

The applicants whose applications will be supported within the call for support of the manifestations presented their organizations and manifestations.

Ana Petrovic, from Bike club “Perun“ Niksic, presented the club she represent and the bike event “ Bicycle on the Forgotten Trails of the Old train Cirra“. The club is established in 2006. and they are putting more emphasis on the promotion of the mountain biking as a tourist product, as the tool for connecting sport and rural tourism, ecology and agriculture. The aim of the project is to clean the old railway section where the train Cirra used to go, in order to prepare it for the cycling route. There are two rural households on that section. According to her words, they connected cultural historical heritage monuments, cultural goods, nature, sources, lake Krupac. This section is 37 km long and its mapping and preparing would contribute to development of the rural area. The event is planned for June 3rd 2018.

Velizar Kovacevic, a representative of NGO “Morakovo“ , which organizes “Promotion of traditional dishes of the KrsH region“ presented his non-governmental organization. This organization is formed ten years ago, and during this time they implemented dozens of projects.

One of them is traditional regional Ecological Camp for children without parental care, from Bijela and Banja Luka. They promoted products, dishes, created bicycle routes. On the event they are organizing, in addition to more than one hundred people, they expect the presence of diplomatic representatives. Participants of the event are going to be producers from region, who are going to promote dishes from Herzegovina. On that occasion, he invited all of the present participants to come to Zupa on 9-10 June 2018, and attend the event.

Miljan Buha, from the Municipality of Nevesinje, presented Regional Fair of Herzegovina's Domestic Products – “Goods from Herzegovinian Carstic“. The fair will gather a large number of local and regional exhibitors, and will be held on August 11th, 2018, when the traditional Nevesinje Olympics, which lasts over 130 years, is also being held. This will help the fair to be sustainable in the future, and to retain some of the components that are included: working with young people, encouraging young people to enter into entrepreneurship, handcraft work. The fair consists of three components: the first is education for young people to engage in entrepreneurship and production of domestic products. The second is a fair where visitors will be able to see and buy products. And the third component is the networking of relevant stakeholders of the community, without which this project would not be possible.

The Regional coordinator presented the Bedem Fest and Regional Youth Rural Camp.

Bedem Fest is held for the ninth year in a row, and has overgrown from a local event, to a festival that is recognizable in the region, and cooperates with similar festivals in the region. Bedem fest is organized by NGO Pro Futuro, and is held on 3-5 August 2018.

The Regional Youth Rural Camp is organized by the Rural Development Network of Montenegro. The camp will gather around 40 participants from Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo*, Albania, Macedonia. The camp will present the LEADER approach and examples of good practice from the European Union and the countries in the regions in which this approach is applied. It will be held on 24-27 July 2018.

3. Presentation of the potentials in the region

Senior expert, Suzana Milosevic Djordjevic, talked about the region itself, having in mind that she was engaged in the establishment of the region and in preparing the strategy for the development of the region, and she also presented regional experts. From everything that has been considered as a potential in the region, some products that are not sufficiently developed, but are promising and attractive in terms of resources they rely on, are taken for mapping. They proposed some interventions in order to make those who participate in the production chains become more important in the economy. Their task was to get all the data and explain why are they asking for fund grants. It has been decided to process tourism that is related to wine and gastronomy, from one side, and cheeses on the other side.

Regional expert for agricultural products, Predrag Markovic, pointed out that SWG has always had the intention for people to be end users, and for that purpose they intensively cooperate with ministries. Everything that is related to strategy, supporting documents has been analyzed, and what is the fact is that gastronomy is something that can be the main product of this region. They

limited themselves to bellow cheese, which is mostly produced in this region. This product can have significant potential for achieving added value. The price itself varies from 20 to 5 euros, and this imbalance says it can have a higher added value. In order to develop the product, it is necessary for the producers to be better connected and to promote more. Connecting with wines and other agricultural foods can have a useful impact.

The sale of the bellow cheese was analyzed, and it is concluded that most of this cheese is sold in the market, while it is not included in tourist offers, or in hotels and restaurants in sufficient manner. Dairies from Bileca and Nevesinje have the distribution of bellow cheese in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but when it comes to the cheese produced in the traditional way, it has a problem with market placement and marketing.

There are many deficits to deal with:

- Dairies that produce bellow cheese do this in a different way, no in a traditional one
- There is a small number of restaurants where the bellow cheese can be tasted
- The existing associations are not functional as they should be
- Young people are not interested in dealing with this product, while the households engaged in the production are in aging, which leads to a fall in the production
- Administrative problems are also presented, especially in terms of registration and sale at the local market
- Standardization of production – bellow cheese is produced in different ways, milk comes from different regions, which affects the cheese itself

What needs to be done is much more intervention and support when it comes to the marketing, better connections between the cheese producers and the market. Including bellow cheese into a tourist offer can result in a better price of the cheese, and the connection with tourism needs to be strengthened. It is necessary to comply with the standards, to determine the minimum standards that must be applied by all producers. Making associations of the producers and opening of the gastronomic centres can result in better offer of the cheese. It is necessary to deal with administrative problems, both on national and local level. One of the solutions is facilitating access to places where the cheese could be sold. Herzeg House in Trebinje is a good example which is great opportunity for cheese producers to sell the cheese, but other products too.

Filip Sekuloski, regional expert for tourism, identified value chains from the tourism sector. He pointed out that, when it comes to the “KrsH” region, the focus is on wine and gastro tourism. Analyzed data are gathered from municipalities of region “KrsH”, from capacity building in Tivat, official statistics, studies, visits of the wineries. He presented the accommodation capacities in the region, the number of guests, the number of overnights and the number of wineries in the region.

Identified deficits are:

- Unlike the coastal part, the areas in the interior are not promoted in a sufficient way
- The short season also presents problem, so as non-standardized offer of accommodation, that is the lack of accommodation capacities in Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Hotels do not have certified, locally produced foods in their offer, but are based on commercial products
- Local guides are not used sufficiently, but some information say that it is a matter which is in the solution phase. There are many one-day tourists, and using the local guides from the municipalities themselves would get a better picture of the number of tourists
- Wild landfills are also a problem, so as poor solid waste management is a problem for tourism
- - High registration fees on booking.com, poor transport links, poor cooperation between tourist organizations, insufficient knowledge of foreign languages are also mapped as problems

He proposed potential interventions, such as better cooperation between local tourism stakeholders, linking small agricultural households to the market, in order to increase the number of overnight stays. Promotion of the use of Internet services for booking and development of mobile applications for wine companies are some of the potential solutions. His opinion is that it is necessary to educate small winemakers in order to include accommodation in the offer and to open wine tasting centres. Including larger number of locally produced products in the general tourist offer and introduction of local food, cheese, prosciutto, wine, to the offer of hotels and restaurants.

Some of the proposed interventions are also:

- additional infrastructure in accommodation capacities
- Organization of local events for the promotion of wine and cheese
- Promotion of 1-day tours in the wine region

4. Discussion

During the discussion, the most conversations were about mountaineering, where representatives of mountaineering clubs Subra from Herceg Novi, Volujak from Gacko and Dubrovnik-Neretva County talked about mapping paths and tourist valorization of them. It was pointed out that there is no assistance from the tourist organizations or municipalities in the mapping and maintenance process, but that their maintenance is carried out voluntarily. Very often tourist organizations from abroad have their own guides, and local, who are working on track maintenance are not contacted. A thematic meeting was proposed, which would include national mountaineering associations, not just clubs, and the meeting could be held on the triangle of Montenegro, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Conclusions

The stakeholder group agreed to continue activities on the implementation of Area Based Development Approach. In the coming period, implementation of supported P2P manifestations is expected, which will be implemented by 01.11.2018. In the period from June to November, support will be provided in order to prepare high-quality project proposals for applying for available funds. It is planned that the next meeting will be held in November of this year, and stakeholder

group will be informed in a timely manner about the place of holding and all other details. The idea is to organize and conduct a study visit for members of the stakeholder group in the period from October to November, for which a maximum of 5 members will be selected on the basis of pre-announced criteria. From 16 to 18 October, the Agricultural Policy Forum will be held in Jahorina, and if funds are provided, some of the stakeholders will have the opportunity to be present at the Forum.

Prepared by:

Marko Zizic

Regional coordinator for the cross-border region "KrsH"