

# Support to the Inbound Tourism Development in the Western Balkans Cross-Border Rural Areas



# When, where, who

- **Duration:** 1 October 2020 – 31 December 2021
- **Countries/territories:**
  - Albania
  - Bosnia and Herzegovina
  - Kosovo\*
  - Montenegro
  - North Macedonia
  - Serbia



# Objectives

- To increase the level of **integration of ecotourism, rural tourism and adventure tourism value chains** in rural cross-border regions of the Western Balkans and strengthen the cooperation among their participants
- To **build the capacity** of ecotourism, rural tourism and adventure tourism value chain participants to meet the requirements of the target market
- To **apply marketing approach** in inbound tourism development in the Western Balkans
- To obtain endorsement (by national authorities responsible for rural development) of **relevant policy recommendations** related to inbound tourism in rural areas in the Western Balkans.



# Definitions

- **Ecotourism** is a type of nature-based tourism activity in which the visitor's essential motivation is to observe, learn, discover, experience and appreciate biological and cultural diversity with a responsible attitude to protect the integrity of the ecosystem and enhance the well-being of the local community.
- **Rural tourism** is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle/culture, angling and sightseeing.
- **Adventure tourism** is a type of tourism which usually takes place in destinations with specific geographic features and landscape and tends to be associated with a physical activity, cultural exchange, interaction and engagement with nature. This experience may involve some kind of real or perceived risk and may require significant physical and/or mental effort.

# Activities

- **Activity 1** – Product Development
- **Activity 2** – Promotion and Sales
- **Activity 3** – Policy Recommendations



# Activity 1 – Product Development



## Workshops

- 12 workshops (2 per country) with stakeholders from rural cross-border regions for preparation of regional ecotourism, rural tourism and adventure tourism tours (cross-border online connection)
- Guidelines on developing joint tourism tours covering at least 2 Western Balkan countries
- Including, but not limited to:
  - Micro and small enterprises: accommodation facilities, traditional food producers (including fresh and processed fruit and vegetables), local tour operators/travel agents
  - NGOs: association of mountain guides, mountain biking association
  - Local authorities

## Development of tours

- Groups of stakeholders jointly propose regional ecotourism, rural tourism and adventure tourism tours covering at least 2 Western Balkan countries;

## Selection of tours

- Committees of representatives from ministries evaluate tours proposals and select 5 to 7 tours (ecotourism, rural tourism and adventure tourism tours), each including at least 2 WB countries (tours involving women as service providers or owners will receive extra points);

## Score cards

- Tourism expert develops score cards for evaluating different segments of each selected tour (accommodation, food, experience);

## Testing

- Project staff evaluate the selected tours by completing the score cards on-site.

## Training

- Based on the results from the testing, tourism experts develop customized training programs and deliver training sessions for specific value chain groups of participants.



# Activity 2 – Promotion and Sales

## Logo

- Design of the logo of the Tours of the Western Balkans

## Brochure

- Production of a brochure of the selected Tours of the Western Balkans

## Web-site

- Developing of a web site promoting the Tours of the Western Balkans

## Trade fair

- Representatives of the selected tours
- Stand at International tourist/trade fair
- Promotion + survey with targeted foreign tour operators
- Possible next stage of the project - familiarization trip for selected foreign tour operators

## Follow-up

- Communication with potential customers to plan further actions for placing the regional tours in the offerings of the foreign international tour operators.



# Activity 3 – Policy Recommendations

- Working group as part of APF 2021 - Assessment of rural tourism policies conducted by REAWG on Economic Diversification through Rural Tourism - starting point for discussion
- Recommendations for overcoming specific barriers to cross-border trade and investments related to rural tourism – to be included in APF 2021 Agenda

