

Project Destination SMEs Action Plan 04/2019-03/2021



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1 GENERAL INFORMATION

In the tourism sector in many European regions policies aiming at supporting SMEs are lacking effectiveness and efficiency. With a more favourable environment, SMEs could grow faster and create more jobs. Often this would require the creation of a Destination Management strategy.

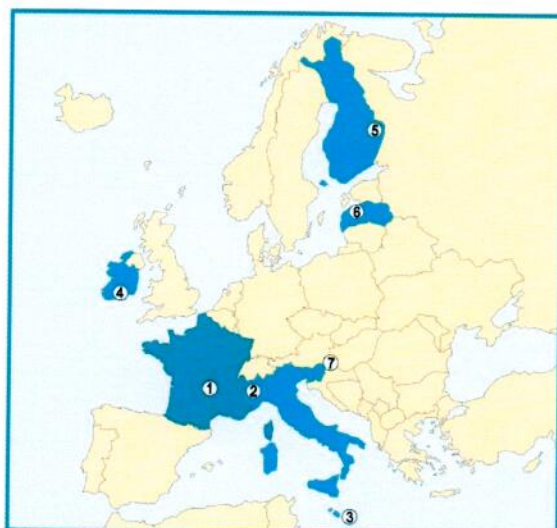
Within Destination SMEs project we are assisting European territories in designing effective destination management strategies in order to provide tourist SMEs with a favourable environment for growth and improve their competitiveness.

During the Phase 1 of the Destination SMEs project (April 2016 – March 2019), thanks to the interregional exchange all partners identified interesting practices and initiatives which are inspiring enough to lead to an improvement of public policy, or to the duplication of this experience in their territory.

Following these three years, a two year long second phase of the project is starting, when project partners will improve their policies and use the outcomes of the project. This document is the road map of the second phase project implementation in Slovenia.

PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

The project brings together 7 partners from 7 European countries consisting of a mix of public authorities at national, regional and local level and agencies:



1. Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Tourisme, France (Lead partner)
2. Grand Paradis Foundation, Italy
3. Ministry for Gozo, Malta
4. Cork County Council, Ireland
5. Regional Council of North Karelia, Finland
6. Vidzeme Planning Region, Latvia
7. Institute for Culture, Tourism and Sport of Murska Sobota, Slovenia

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION IN SLOVENIA

Partner organisation: Institute for Culture, Tourism and Sport Murska Sobota

Other partner organisations involved: Ministry of Economic Development and Technology - Tourism Directorate; Slovenian Tourist Board; RIC Bela krajina; City Municipality of Murska Sobota

Country: Slovenia

NUTS2 region: Vzhodna Slovenija (Eastern Slovenia)

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Velika Planina Plateau, photo: Aleš Frelj

2 IMPROVEMENT OF THE TARGET POLICY

At the application stage of the project, all partners identified a public policy which needed improvement. This section is dedicated to this target policy only.

Name of the target policy: Policy of encouraging competitiveness of Slovenian tourism (Slovenian Tourism Development Strategy), Measure 1.1 “Encouraging development of tourist destinations” (see note below for further clarification)

Nature of the target policy:

- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- European Territorial Cooperation programme
- Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the managing authority of the target policy: Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, Tourism Directorate

IMPORTANT REMARK:

At the time of preparation of the Destination SMEs project application, Slovenia had a tourism strategy valid for the 2012-2016 period. End of 2017 the government of Slovenia endorsed a new national tourism strategy, entitled the **Strategy of Sustainable Tourism Growth in Slovenia**, for the period 2017-2021 (summary in English [here](#)). The most important change from the previous strategy is that the current one no longer builds competitiveness of destinations on regional destination management organizations (former regional DMOs), but has divided Slovenia into 4 geographical macro-destinations and 36 leading destinations within these 4 macro-destinations. Eventually, development and promotion of a particular macro-destination will be guided by a dedicated masterplan, but until these are developed, there are no joint management or promotion tourism structures on the level of macro-destinations. So, in agreement with tourism managers from all 36 leading destinations, the drivers of tourism development and promotion are currently leading destinations themselves and - on their behalf - **local tourism organizations (LTOs)**.



*Slovenia and its four
macro-destinations*

In the frame of the new national tourism strategy, policy that addresses most similar issues to the one chosen at the application stage (Encouraging development of tourist destinations) is **Policy n. 1: Macro destinations and tourism products**. The main difference is, as mentioned above, type of key stakeholders. If the outdated strategy predicted measures to strengthen competitiveness of destinations via DMOs and their role, the new one addresses the same challenge via LTOs. Additionally, the new strategy has a very clear idea on how to increase competitiveness of destinations, namely by **strategically developing tourism products**. 10 leading (primary) products were identified - Mountain Holidays, Sports Tourism, Outdoor, Business Meetings & Events, Gastronomy, Experiences in Nature, Culture, Countryside Tourism, Touring, Gambling - and for each pillar vision and measures were defined.

By implementing the action plan which transfers policies and practices from abroad, we will contribute to realization of measures defined in the national tourism strategy; we will stimulate development of new tourism products on national and local levels (while, as explained, regional levels are difficult to reach due to lack of regional tourism organization structures). We will encourage an active participation of all stakeholders in Slovenian tourism for developing effective tourism destinations **with high-quality and attractive integral tourism products** as well as implementing sustainable and responsible management. We will transfer foreign policies to increase competitiveness of destinations by developing new products in the fields of gastronomy and experiences in nature, amongst others.

Further details on the policy context and the way the action plan should contribute to improve the policy instrument are presented below.

2.1 Action 1 - transfer of Taste Cork from Ireland

a) Relevance to the project

To promote Cork's food sector, to develop a network for local food businesses, to promote regional food products and to eventually position Cork as a leading food tourism destination, Cork County Council has developed the **Taste Cork** initiative which nowadays acts as a regional branding initiative, umbrella brand and a food network. In June 2016, they launched the **Taste Cork 2021 Food Support Strategy** with 4 key areas of focus: a) development of consumer communications, b) provision of supports, c) positioning of Cork as the leading food tourism destination, d) development of clear routes to market for producers. Inside each of the areas, numerous innovative actions take place with the aim to support and nurture culinary sector as an important sector of the Cork local economy.

Slovenian national tourism strategy defines gastronomy as one of 10 main tourism products and social foodies¹ as one of the main target groups. According to the strategy, the **vision** of Slovenia is to become an established culinary destination with high-quality, innovative and distinguished offer of food and wine, made by boutique businesses from local ingredients with a lot of passion and skills. Having won the title of the European Region of Gastronomy 2021, Slovenia has made another step towards bringing the vision to life by commissioning an **Action plan on development and marketing of Slovenian Gastronomy**. Action plan defines 5 main areas of action: (1) legislative framework, (2) brands and quality labels, (3) quality, (4) education and training, (5) marketing and promotion. Each of the 5 areas defines challenges and goals while measures are currently still pretty vague and undefined.

With the new action plan, Slovenian strategic framework is now pretty similar to the one of Cork. That is why Slovenia can learn from Cork and adopt same or similar measures that will eventually contribute to achievement of the set goals. Corks' success will help Slovenia in its efforts to become a recognized culinary region for foodies.

Most valuable lessons learnt:

- strategic approach towards using gastronomy as the main asset of branding and positioning of a region,
- development and implementation of comprehensive support mechanisms that include infrastructural supports, training and mentoring, and financial support,
- joint marketing and promotion.

¹ Social foodies' main topics of interest are gastronomy, culture and history. Their primary motive of travel is to taste and experience incredible sounds and sights.

b) Nature of the action

Implementation of measures defined in the Action plan on development and marketing of Slovenian Gastronomy will be a collaborative effort of public and private institutions. However, roles related to development and promotion of gastronomy as a **tourism product** (and so directly related to the addressed policy n. 1) are mostly taken and coordinated by the Slovenian Tourist Board where Mrs Barbara Zmrzlikar is currently a contact person. Mrs Zmrzlikar has visited Cork in the frame of Destination SMEs project and is well aware of activities which take place there. That is why national tourist board will be the one transferring Cork's experiences and practices to Slovenia.

As already mentioned, Slovenian gastronomy action plan addresses very similar issues as Cork's strategy. Both destinations have namely asked themselves how to position as a leading food tourism destination, and have proposed very similar issues that need to be addressed. Following solutions from Cork will be implemented in Slovenia:

(1) appointment of full-time project coordinator

In Cork, a full-time project coordinator was appointed in 2016. In Slovenia, such position currently does not exist whereby the action plan states the need for such a person. Partially this requirement was added based on Cork's experience which Mrs Zmrzlikar got to know at the study trip, and very concrete roles of the coordinator have been outlined in the action plan, some inspired by Cork. It is important that the roles exceed only promotion and reach into the field of development as well. The coordinator should be appointed already in 2019.

(2) green supply chains

Increase in number of green supply chains has been identified as one of key success factors in the action plan, whereby steps or measures to achieve the increase have not been defined. In the Taste Cork 2021 strategy, we find several measures and actions proposed to achieve this very goal (8.4 Development of clear routes to market from producers). Slovenia will use Cork's solutions to increase the number of green supply chains. Besides Slovenian Tourist Board, local tourism organizations will be an important player. Consortium Slovenia Green which brings together sustainable tourism destinations and businesses will also play a crucial role.

(3) development of tourism products

As an economic activity, tourism sells concrete services, programmes, products and experiences to visitors. If Slovenia wants to address food lovers, new tourism products need to be developed. Action plan outlines that Slovenian Tourist Board will work together with local tourism boards to develop high-quality culinary experiences, such as pop-up events, workshops, winery spa, honey wellness, picnic in nature etc. In this process, Slovenian Tourist Board will mimic Cork in its development of Cork Food & Drink Trails and other food tourism culinary experiences which are presented here: <https://www.tastecork.com/explore-cork/hands-on-experiences>. Consortium Slovenia Green will also play an important role.

(4) dedicated culinary webpage

Taste Cork has got a dedicated webpage www.tastecork.com which complements the official tourism webpage Pure Cork. Slovenia has currently only got a national webpage www.slovenia.info, but is seriously considering to design a dedicated gastronomy page (note that none of the other 9 main tourism products have dedicated pages). Since that would be so out of ordinary, the final decision is yet to be made, but it is very likely it would happen (mostly due to the title European Region of Gastronomy). Shall Slovenia design a culinary webpage, it will definitely be inspired by the amazing Taste Cork page.

c) Stakeholders involved

Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) as a public agency for promotion of tourism on foreign markets. STB commissioned an Action plan on development and marketing of Slovenian Gastronomy for the period 2019 - 2023 and is in charge of measures described in this document.

Local Tourism Boards as the ones developing and selling (via own or private channels) tourism products.

Local SMEs as the ones offering and/or selling experiences.

Consortium Slovenia Green, partner of Slovenian Tourist Board, as a network of sustainable destinations and businesses and facilitator in the process of tourism product development.

d) Timeframe

Estimated start date: June 2019

Main milestones:

- December 2019 - appointment of a full-time project coordinator at Slovenian Tourist Board
- December 2020 - 3 new gastronomy tourism products inspired by Cork developed in cooperation between Slovenian Tourist Board, Local Tourism Organizations and Consortium Slovenia Green
- December 2020 - 1 new green supply chain developed in cooperation between Slovenian Tourist Board, Local Tourism Organizations and Consortium Slovenia Green

Estimated Approval / enforcement date: December 2020

e) Indicative costs

Full-time coordinator = 30,000 € / year

Product development = 6,000 € - 10,000 € / product

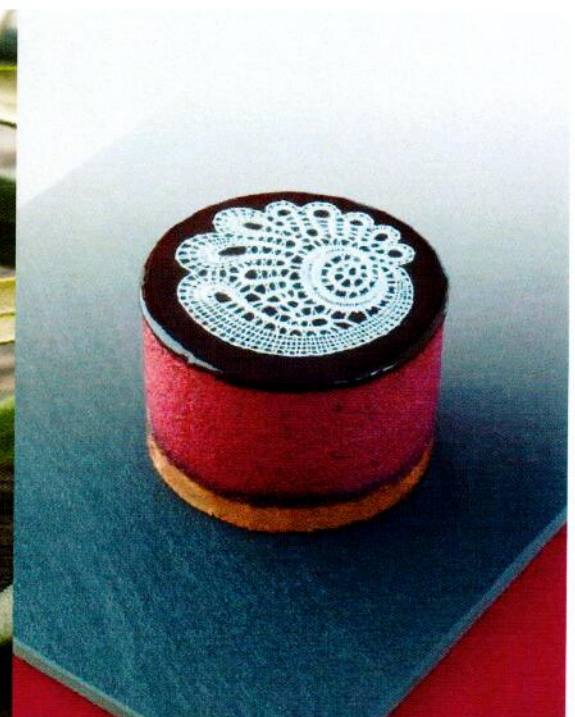
Green Supply Chain = 10,000 €

f) Indicative funding sources

30,000 € / year = staff costs → source: Slovenian Tourist Board

6,000 - 10,000 € = development of 1 new culinary product → source: Local Tourism Organization in cooperation with local businesses

10,000 € = development of 1 green supply chain → source: Local Tourism Organization in cooperation with local businesses



Olive, photo: ZKTMŠ Brda / Sugar Lace Cake, photo: Jani Petermelj

2.2 Action 2 - transfer of Silent Travel from Finland

a) Relevance to the project

Best practice we are transferring comes from Finland, where the main goal of **Silence Travel** was to turn the silence of North Karelia into a tourism asset. For this purpose, soundscape experts from the University of Eastern Finland engaged in a project through which experience of silence was converted into something that is nowadays offered as a product to tourists. The entrepreneurs of the Silence Travel Network are offering and sharing experiences of silence while respecting individual and cultural differences, abiding by the principles of sustainable tourism.

Silence travel could be described as a form of travel that provides the traveller with an opportunity to quiet down, to relax and to let go of the quotidian hurry and noise. The best locations for silence travel are situated in the middle of nature where natural sounds are prevalent and the disturbances caused by human activity in minimum. In addition to sounds, landscape and visual attractions are important for creating a positive experience of silence.

Slovenia is an ideal destination for silent travel. As third most forested country in Europe, with as much as 37 % of its surface area included in Natura 2000, it has a great potential for development of nature based tourism which follows the new trend of Joy of Missing Out, ie. escape to nature where nothing else matters. We will be working together with the region of Bela krajina, one of the lead destinations according to the new national strategy, and transfer the Finish best practice to increase competitiveness of this emerging tourism destination.

Most valuable lessons learnt:

- to use a natural asset and turn it into an innovative tourism product,
- to form a network of SMEs who are providing Silent Tourism products.

b) Nature of the action

Experts from Finland will help us transfer their best practice to Slovenia. This will be achieved by direct cooperation between Mrs Henna Konu from Natural Resources Institute in Finland and representatives of destination Bela krajina (local tourism organization RIC Bela krajina).

Bela krajina lies in SE Slovenia and is famous for its greenery, nature, rivers, wildlife and gastronomy. Bela krajina holds a Slovenia Green Destination silver certificate for their sustainable tourism development. The region adopted a new tourism strategy for the period 2018 - 2022 which outlines three product segments. One of the segments is explores natural assets and as such answers to tourism trends of selfness, wellness, getting back in touch with ourselves, getting back in touch with the nature.

Bela krajina is currently developing new integral tourism products that will support both the regional and the national tourism strategy. One of the new products will valorise the natural assets; it will rely on the Silent Tourism best practice from Finland by following the philosophy of silent tours and silent travel. By launching such innovative product, Bela krajina will address new tourism segments, bring together likely minded tourism stakeholders and eventually increase the competitiveness of the region.

Mrs Konu will visit the region of Bela krajina on 3 April 2019 to consult the representatives on-field, to outline most important aspects of silent tourism and to advise Bela krajina on silent product and silent network development. She will additionally hold a public presentation for the participants of the conference at the Green and Outdoor Slovenia Trade Show in Bohinj (attended by the decision-makers, tourist destination managers, tourism businesses and other stakeholders). Bela krajina will then work with a national external expert to develop the silent tourism product and establish a silent network of SMEs, following the Finish example.

Materials, such as Silence Travel brochure and Forest based well-being tourism in Finland study will be used, all provided by the Finish partner.

c) Stakeholders involved

RIC Bela Krajina (public institute for promotion and entrepreneurship in Bela krajina region) as destination management organization and coordinator of tourism product development and silent network.

GoodPlace as an author of the Bela krajina tourism strategy and as an external expert in the tourism product development process, sharing the silence travel philosophy.

Bela krajina tourism businesses as the ones adopting the silence travel philosophy in the product development phase, being part of the network and offering silent tourism products.

d) Timeframe

Estimated start date: April 2019

Main milestones:

- April 2019 - Mrs Henna Konu meets representatives of Bela krajina and attends the Green & Outdoor conference
- May 2019 - RIC Bela krajina, together with external expert GoodPlace, hosts a workshop for local stakeholders (SMEs) in silent tourism product development
- June 2019 - integral tourism product, inspired by silent travel, is developed in Bela krajina, and promotional material is prepared
- June 2019 - silent travel network is established in Bela krajina
- July 2019 - integral tourism product in Bela krajina is launched

Estimated Approval / enforcement date: July 2019



e) Indicative costs

Cost of product development: 12,000 €

3,000 € = internal staff costs

3,000 € = external experts

3,000 € = infrastructure in nature

3,000 € = promotional material

f) Indicative funding sources

3,000 € = internal staff costs → source: RIC Bela krajina

3,000 € = external experts → source: ERDF funds, given by the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology

3,000 € = infrastructure in nature → source: RIC Bela krajina

3,000 € = promotional material → source: ERDF funds, given by the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology



Logarska Valley, photo: Ana Pogačar / Sefness in Cerklje, photo: Alex Štokelj

2.3 Action 3 - transfer of EcoGozo from Malta

a) Relevance to the project

EcoGozo is the local sustainable development strategy for Gozo which is run by the Ministry for Gozo (Malta). EcoGozo strategy from 2010 outlines various projects and initiatives in the field of sustainable tourism development with the aim to promote economic growth. One of the actions implemented in the frame of EcoGozo was the **Blue Flag** certification for Gozo beaches.

Blue Flag is one of the world's most recognised voluntary eco-labels awarded to beaches, marinas, and sustainable boating tourism operators. In order to qualify for the Blue Flag, a series of stringent environmental, educational, safety, and accessibility criteria must be met and maintained.

Slovenian Tourist Board is running the world-class national sustainability programme, *the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism (GSST)*, which certifies destinations, protected areas, accommodations, travel agencies, tour operators, and attractions. It recognizes following certificates: BioHotels, EU Ecolabel, Ecocamping, EMAS, Green Globe, Green Key, Travelife for hotels, Travelife for tour operators, and World of Glamping Green. The scheme does not yet certify beaches or marinas and does not endorse the Blue Flag as one of the recognized certificates. However, EcoGozo is proving that Blue Flag certificate can find its spot in the sustainable tourism framework and same can be done in Slovenia as well.

Most valuable lessons learnt:

→ Blue Flag as part of the strategic approach towards integration of sustainability into all parts of destination's operations.

b) Nature of the action

Slovenian Tourist Board manages and annually upgrades the GSST, expanding it to new tourism categories. It started out with destinations, accommodations and travel agencies; protected areas followed in year 3, attractions in year 4. New categories are planned, such as restaurants, green supply chains and beaches, but no definite decisions or priorities have been made.



However, based on EcoGozo experience, STB will re-evaluate and re-think the category of beaches and will expand the list of recognized certificates to the Blue Flag. By integrating the Blue Flag in the national sustainability scheme, destinations will be encouraged to work with their beach managers and implement series of stringent environmental, educational, safety-related and access-related criteria; it will all result in an increased attractiveness and appeal of particular beaches and will strengthen competitiveness of individual destinations.

c) Stakeholders involved

Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) as a public agency for promotion of tourism on foreign markets and manager of the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism.

GoodPlace as an accredited partner of the Slovenian Tourist Board for the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism and as an external expert in the field of scheme's expansion to new categories.

Doves as a national representative of the Blue Flag initiative in Slovenia.

d) Timeframe

Estimated start date: September 2019

Main milestones:

- September 2019 - GoodPlace prepares a proposal for integration of Blue Flag into the GSST
- October 2019 - meetings with STB take place to finalize the proposal
- January 2020 - 1st national call for beaches is launched under auspices of STB and GSST

Estimated Approval / enforcement date: January 2020

e) Indicative costs

No direct costs are related to this activity.

Indirect costs are born by destinations and beaches that want to implement measures and receive the certificate.

f) Indicative funding sources

destinations' and beaches' own funding sources



Lake Bled, photo: Jošt Gantar / Piran, photo: Alan Kosmač, Sidarta

2.4 Action 4 - transfer of Wild Atlantic Way from Ireland

a) Relevance to the project

In Ireland, the **Wild Atlantic Way (WAW)** project was developed as a reaction to the challenging economic climate since 2008, which had a negative economic impact on tourism in Ireland. A shorter summer season and a decline among coastal communities were also being experienced. In order to overturn this decline, overseas growth in tourism was necessary. The national tourism authority, Fáilte Ireland, thus identified a single, connecting **route** along the entire west coast of Ireland, from Donegal to Cork. It was deemed that this would create the necessary scale and singularity required for a brand that would be visible in key overseas markets, re-branding the Western region of Ireland, resulting in generating incremental international tourists, increased revenue and job creation. Today the Wild Atlantic Way is the longest defined coastal touring route in the world stretching 2.500 km along the west coast of Ireland.

Also in 2008, the East & South of Ireland was identified as a regional area which was underperforming, despite its rich history and cultural heritage. There was a need to re-position this area from a transit zone to a **touring destination**, so in response Fáilte Ireland launched the **Ireland's Ancient East (IAE)** project deemed today as a place where you will meet the best story-tellers in the world.

Slovenia is currently in the process of developing unique tourism products in the four macro destinations which will help position them as four distinguished regions. For each of the four, stories and products supporting these stories will be developed. If they want to succeed on the international tourism market, Slovenian macro-destinations - same as western and south-eastern regions in Ireland - need to **find their own distinguishing features** which will offer the **basis for a clear, simple and understandable communication of their uniqueness**. They can gain much knowledge and inspiration from the WAW and IAE.

Most valuable lessons learnt:

- how to strategically re-position an area,
- how to strategically re-brand an area,
- how to stimulate local economy and answer to the challenge of peripherality, seasonality and regionality,
- how to generate local collaborations between destination stakeholders,
- how tourism clusters can foster entrepreneurship and innovation, leading to sustainable development,
- how to develop touring routes and touring regions,
- how to showcase what a country has to offer.

b) Nature of the action

In support of the national *Policy 1 - Macro-destinations and tourism products* that this document is addressing, Slovenian Tourist Board has already undertaken action. They are launching a Digital Marketing and Tourism Management Academy for destination managers from all the leading destinations this September. The Academy is planned as an 8-course programme, duration of each course will be 2-3 days. The main aim of the Academy is to strengthen competences of destination managers on digital marketing and on marketing management. Namely, if Slovenia wants to increase competitiveness of destinations, leaders of these destinations (ie. destination managers) need to be equipped with knowledge on tourism trends, tourism product development, tourism branding, storytelling, promotion, pricing, etc. It is only then that they can successfully identify authentic stories upon which tourism products and eventually promotion can be built.

Topics Failte Ireland addressed when developing the WAW and the IAE will be covered by three Marketing Management modules that will all together last 7 days. To steer destinations managers in the right direction, teach them how to develop joint tourism products, emphasize the importance of collaboration and networking, show them the added value of tourism routes and explain how tourism regions can use and capitalize on the unique and authentic stories, materials from Ireland, such as the Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme 2015-2019 and Wild Atlantic Way brandbook, will be used.



Beehives, photo: Jure Kravanja /Grapes, photo: NeaCulpa

c) Stakeholders involved

Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) as a public agency for promotion of tourism on foreign markets and organizer of Tourism Academy.

Mrs Miša Novak, STB as coordinator of the Academy.

Trainers at the Academy.

d) Timeframe

Estimated start date: **November 2019**

Main milestones:

- **November 2019** - start of the Marketing Management modules
- **January 2020** - end of the Marketing Management modules

Estimated Approval / enforcement date: **January 2020**

e) Indicative costs

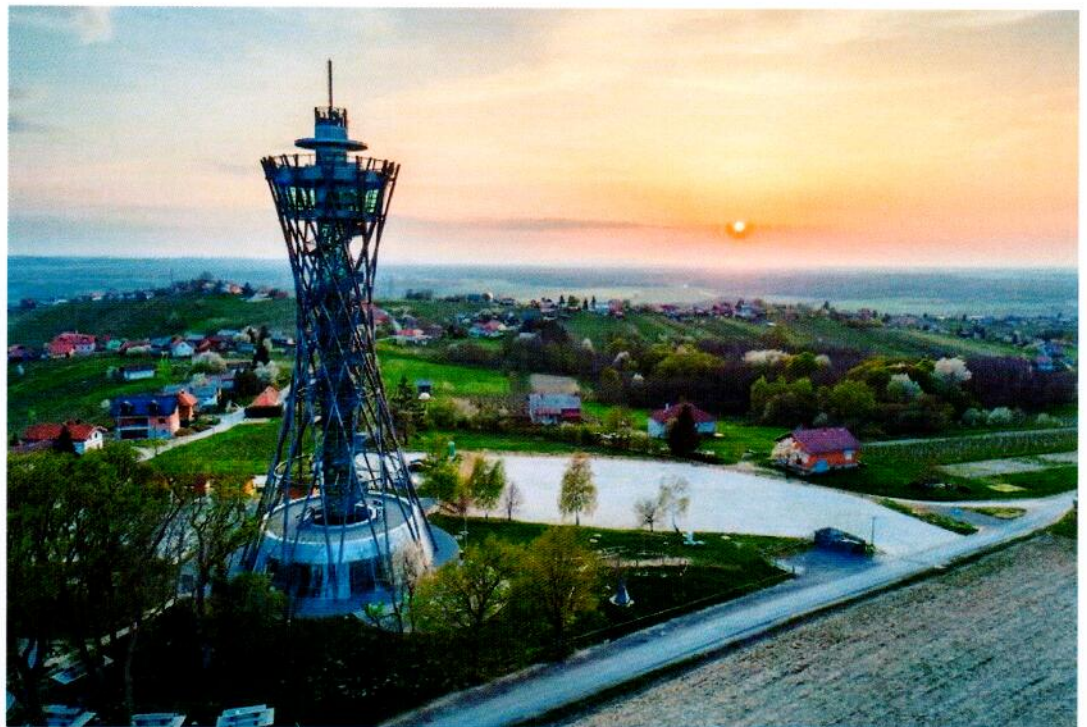
Costs are related to trainers who will be delivering the courses.

Estimated cost of trainers speaking about WAW and IAE = 1,000 €.

f) Indicative funding sources

partially financed by the Slovenian Tourist Board (own sources)

partially financed by destinations (course fee)



Lendava Vinarium viewing tower, photo: Jošt Gantar

3 OTHER RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

Thanks to the Destination SMEs project, many interesting practices, initiatives and policies were observed. Some of them offered inspiration to improve the main policy instrument tackled by the project as presented in part 2 of this action plan.

But these learnings can also benefit to other policy instruments or local and regional strategies. Destination SMEs partners intend to make use of as many interesting learnings from the project as possible, to make the most of this project.

This is the reason why, in addition to the actions presented in Part 2 dedicated to the main policy instrument target, we tried to identify all possible contributions from our project to transfer effective practices, of course always in relation to the main topic of the project: Destination management.

3.1 Good practices transferred

Name of the transferred good practice and region of origin

Events as a source of vitality, North Karelia

Name of the owner of the good practice

City of Joensuu, North Karelia, Finland

Description of the good practice

In the City of Joensuu numerous events are organised annually and they have a very positive impact on the city and region's economy, communities and the people. Joensuu is known for the versatile events that are organised in the area every year. These events are seen as a way to attract additional visitors, generate revenue and enhance positive image of the fairly remote destination. Their importance has been noted in the regional tourism strategy in which event tourism is listed as one of the main development focuses.

Joensuu has a long history as an event city and is constantly developing its capacity to welcome different scale events and looking for ways to increase the number of diverse events. The city has been successful in its endeavour due to the fact that they have event service office that provides various services for event organisers. They assist organisers e.g. in finding right venues, using effective marketing channels and renting event equipment.

In Joensuu presently the city is leading an ERDF project, Vitality from Events, which aims, among others, to improve cooperation between the event industry and SMEs, develop event producers' business skills and to create new attractive event concepts. Two staff members work for the project - Project Manager and Coordinator.

Above mentioned activities have increased tourism in the region and both local companies and residents benefitted since the use of accommodation facilities and the number of international visitors increased in the region.

Name and location of the organization implementing the transfer

City Municipality of Murska Sobota (CMMS), Murska Sobota

Murska Sobota is the economic, administrative, educational and cultural centre of the Pomurje region, which is the least developed and most rural in Slovenia, thus facing the challenge of 3 borders and peripheral areas where practically the whole region is a border area. According to Sustainable urban strategy of Murska Sobota 2016-2022 tourism is one of the four main pillars of development in Murska Sobota. So far Murska Sobota has built on business and excursion tourism, but since there is limited natural and cultural heritage, accommodation and other tourism facilities, the main asset beside hospitable people are the numerous city events. Namely in Murska Sobota people have already been trading in the past - it is a fair city which received free trade fair rights already in the 15th century. The trade fair activity in the city has been kept up to now, every first Monday of the month, as well as several big scale traditional open city fairs over the year are organised. Beside these open city fairs, there are numerous music festivals and cultural events organised over the year. Already at the study visit in North Karelia - during presentation of the event management good practice from city of Joensuu - the representatives of Murska Sobota were enthusiastic about the extraordinary successful and systematic approach in the city event management and got ideas about the importance of new events development. Several similarities have been identified between the cities – namely both cities are located in the remote and rural destination, Joensuu in the eastern border region and Murska Sobota in the three-border region in north-east of Slovenia, Joensuu is the capital of North Karelia and Murska Sobota, although significant smaller as the Finnish role model, the centre of Pomurje region with 125.000 inhabitants, and especially in both cities the events have an extraordinary important role in tourism development and beyond that.

Description of the transfer

Finish showcase of a really focused and effective event management was presented to the City Municipality Murska Sobota administration that was as well inspired by it and immediately saw a big relevance since the main tourism asset of Murska Sobota are exactly events and at the same time until now there has been a huge lack of coordination, cooperation and services within the city event management field.

CMMS administration decided to implement following activities based and inspired by the event management good practice from city of Joensuu:

1. CMMS administration will start a dialogue with all public bodies involved in city events organisation, promotion and implementation activities to present identified event management good practice from city of Joensuu and its advantages – these public bodies are Development Centre Murska Sobota, Pomurje Museum Murska Sobota, Murska Sobota Gallery, Research and Educational Centre Mansion Rakičan, Youth cultural centre MIKK Murska Sobota, Institute for Culture, Tourism and Sport Murska Sobota that are directly linked to event management and Public company Komunala Ltd. established for the implementation of public utility services in the area of Murska Sobota as well Pomurje Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Regional

- Chamber of Craft and Small Business Murska Sobota as the link to different business and services providers.
2. Appointment of the city event manager – CMMS administration will appoint a city event manager either from its own staff or from staff of one of the public institutes founded and funded by the city municipality and linked to events management.
 3. Formation of city events coordination group - each of the involved public bodies, institutes and companies will nominate one internal staff as a member to the city events coordination group that will be involved in the daily management activities with the city event manager as well periodical meetings of the coordination group dedicated to specific events or management issues.
 4. Implementation of Murska Sobota city event services – city event manager as well as nominated event coordinators in city institutions will:
 - internally coordinate and plan the events they are organising alone or with partners thus exchange all important information about these events;
 - help to other event organisers to plan a successful event;
 - assist to find the right venue for the event;
 - assist to receive city permit for the event;
 - help to use effective and affordable marketing channels;
 - rent or assist to rent event equipment;
 - contribute to improve communication and increase business opportunities between companies and events;
 - develop new attractive event concepts.
 5. Positioning of the city as festivals and events friendly city through Murska Sobota city marketing means and sources.
 6. Identification of one online platform out of existing ones that would be the most appropriate for a comprehensive online marketing of city events and implementation of this activity from city event manager.
 7. Optimisation of CMMS annual culture, youth, NGO and sports grants in terms of quality events development and promotion.
 8. Identification of potential new (and improvement of old) functional venues for events in the city.
 9. Development of common assessment and monitoring tools for events.
 10. Identification of potential project sources (national schemes; EU programmes with partner cities with the same objectives) that would enable additional sources for further activities in terms of events development and optimisation (like event forums, clinics, research, producer marketing etc.).
 11. Searching for and implementation of at least 2 new big scale events (music festival and/or sport event) and at least 2 smaller scale events (youth, children, culinary events).

Players involved

City municipality Murska Sobota
Development Centre Murska Sobota
Pomurje Museum Murska Sobota
Murska Sobota Gallery
Youth cultural centre MIKK Murska Sobota
Research and Educational Centre Mansion Rakičan
Institute for Culture, Tourism and Sport Murska Sobota
Public company Komunala Ltd.
Pomurje Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Regional Chamber of Craft and Small Business Murska Sobota.

Expected timeframe of the transfer

CMMS starts a dialogue with all public bodies involved in city events organisation, promotion and implementation activities - in progress.

Appointment of the city event manager – until May 2019.

Formation of city events coordination group – until May 2019.

Implementation of Murska Sobota city event services – from May 2019.

Positioning of the city as festivals and events friendly city – from May 2019.

Identification of functional venues for events in the city – from May 2019.

Identification of online platform for a comprehensive online marketing – June 2019.

Optimisation of CMMS annual culture, youth, NGO and sports grants in terms of quality events development and promotion – until December 2020.

Development of common assessment and monitoring tools for events – November 2019.

Identification of potential project sources that would enable additional sources for further activities – in progress.

Search for and implementation of at least 2 new big scale events (music festival and/or sport event) and at least 2 smaller scale events (youth, children, culinary events) – until February 2021.

Costs

Optimisation of internal staff resources (public sources) - app. 15.000 EUR / year for event manager; app. 35.000 EUR / year – for event coordinators in public institutes; minor costs for meetings

Optimisation of internal sources for city marketing

Implementation of new city events – depending on type and scale of the events

Funding sources

Public sources – Staff costs of City Municipality of Murska Sobota and public institutes

Public sources – in case potential functional upgrade of venues for events

Private sources - for new city events;

Public sources - in case of co-organisation contribution of City Municipality of Murska Sobota

Potentially additional public grants / EU funds for additional activities



Festival "Sobota days", photo: ZKTŠ Murska Sobota



Street food festival "Tasty fork/street", photo: ZKTŠ Murska Sobota

4 MONITORING AND ENDORSEMENT

Implementation of the Action plan will be monitored by the responsible project partner, Institute for Culture, Tourism and Sport Murska Sobota, during the phase 2 of the project in the period from April 2019 to March 2021.

Action plan will be endorsed by the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology which is responsible for the policy instrument addressed within the document - namely Policy 1: Macro destinations and tourism products from Strategy for the sustainable growth of Slovenian tourism for 2017-2021.

Signature:



Mag. Brigita Perhavec, Managing Director, Institute for Culture, Tourism and Sport Murska Sobota

Date: 27. 3. 2019

Stamp of the organisation:

