

tourism development
& promotion project

Creative History Balkans Tour

GRANT FACT SHEET

GOAL

Developing a cultural tour of four fortresses: Citadela (Budva, Montenegro), Kastel (Banja Luka, BiH), Petrovaradin (Novi Sad, Serbia) and Roze-fa (Shkodër, Albania), for young people through storytelling and superb design, and promoting it digitally and through the largest regional music festival - EXIT.

Location

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia

Action value

EUR 59,000.00 (EU/RCC grant: EUR 53,100.00)

Category

Cultural tourism

Lead applicant

Foundation EXIT

Implementation period

November 2018 - June 2019 (7 months)

INTRODUCTION

The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) implemented and European Union (EU) funded Tourism Development and Promotion Project worth EUR 5 million works to develop and internationally promote joint regional cultural and adventure tourism offer, increase number of tourists visiting the six Western Balkans economies (WB6), lengthen their stay in the region, increase revenues and employment in the industry, and remove policy barriers to further development of tourism.

The Project utilises EUR 1.62 million grants scheme to help improve quality of services and infrastructure along the selected routes. The first 12 out of 30+ grants - worth up to EUR 54,000 each - were awarded in November 2018. Foundation EXIT (EXIT) is amongst the first twelve grant recipients.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

Current situation

Western Balkans has a very rich cultural heritage but its promotion is inadequate both locally and internationally. At the same time, youth travel has become one of the fastest growing segments of international tourism; youth accounts for more than 20 percent of the one billion tourists travelling internationally every year.

Music festivals organised by Foundation EXIT (EXIT) every year: EXIT Festival in Novi Sad, Serbia; SEA DANCE Festival in Budva, Montenegro; SEA STAR Festival in Umag, Croatia; Festival 84 in Jahorina, Bosnia and Herzegovina; and Revolution Festival in Timisoara, Romania, are some of the largest cultural tourism events in the region. EXIT will thus develop a new regional cultural route encompassing four WB economies and fortresses built in different historic eras, and use the power of its flagship festival - EXIT - to promote it amongst young people from the region and the world.

Actions to be performed through grant

EXIT will use the grant to develop Creative History Balkans Tour (CHBT) which will be based on four historical fortresses: Petrovaradin Fortress in Novi Sad, Serbia; Citadela Fortress in the Old City of Budva, Montenegro; Kastel Fortress in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina; and Rozafa Fortress in Shkodër, Albania.

All these locations and fortifications are significant as each of them symbolises specific period, architecture and design, and tells the story of the circumstances that led to their creation. CHBT as such will tell the story of the region's turbulent history, promote cultural heritage that derived from it, and teach common history to young people from the region and the world.

In developing the tour EXIT will solicit inputs from historians, art historians, culture and tourism experts, copywriters, art directors and designers to develop an appealing story and present it in a way that speaks to young people and motivates them to take the tour. EXIT will build on the results of its research that has shown that majority of international visitors to the EXIT Festival want to extend their stay in the region pass the four festival days and up to 15 days in total; the tour will be one of the offers.

Information about the tour will be presented on a dedicated CHBT internet portal which will be a permanent promotion tool, providing ample information and promotional material to be used by tour operators and guides. EXIT will further promote the tour through its online

communications platform used for festival/s promotion which has impressive following (EXIT Festival annually gathers some 200,000 people from 60 countries). To raise interest and allow for public to participate in the promotion of fortresses and cultural heritage, EXIT will run a photo competition. Best photos will be published on the CHBT portal and EXIT's online and media channels while the "best of the best" photos will be awarded.

Being the European Youth Capital in 2019 Novi Sad is a contributing factor to the tour promotion.

To ensure synergy and collaboration with all the relevant actors, EXIT will communicate about the CHBT with central and local level authorities in the four economies; local, regional and international tour operators and travel agencies; and the media among others. It will strive to replicate the EXIT Festival model whereby local government, communal services, population, businesses, and the media all work to make the Festival a pleasant experience and tourists in turn contribute some EUR 15 million to local economy.

Results and sustainability

The CHBT internet portal will continue to be active following the grant implementation, whereas EXIT will work on its enlargement with a view to including other cultural heritage location. Some of the locations already being considered include Golubac Fortress (Serbia), Kotor Fortress (Montenegro), and Kadinjača Memorial (Užice, Serbia).

Furthermore, CHBT can become part of the larger cultural tourism promotion platform that includes support from various regional and macro-regional programmes and initiatives.



CONTACTS

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