

**Reference document:**

LOT 4: Implementation of one (1) FAM tour – “Ride of the best sceneries in the Western Balkans” – cross-border mountain biking week in Albania – Kosovo\* – Montenegro

**1. Programme and Detailed Itinerary:**

**Details of the tour:**

Ride some of the best mountain biking trails and sceneries in the Balkans. This tour will introduce you to the best trails of Northern Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo\*. A mixture of single track and endurance through the remote parts of Western Balkans guarantees adrenaline filled days and amazing landscapes.

On this tour you will ride through areas untouched by mass tourism, but also get a chance to interact with local people and really experience the culture of local shepherds who populate the area during summertime.

**Clarification on the level of difficulties:**

Previous experiences of mountain biking in remote areas or challenging track is advisable. Sustained climbs for kilometres on off-road tracks and single trails are common. In terms of elevation we will be cycling through areas that range from 350 m up to 2200 meters. Sometimes it might take us 20-25 km of uphill climbing. In terms of accommodation we will be using a mixture of hotels, guesthouses and huts.

<b>Group:</b> From 5 to 10 participants	<b>Flight:</b> Regular	<b>Displacement:</b> 20 Seater Minibus
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<b>Accommodation:</b> 3 star hotel, guesthouses and huts	<b>Guide and accompaniment:</b> English Speaking Tour Guide
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<b>DAY 01</b>	<b>Flight from ... to Prishtina Airport</b>
<i>Transport : minibus</i> <i>Guesthouse: Aste,</i> <i>Tropoje</i>	Arrival at Prishtina Airport. After being welcomed by the Tour Guide and the Team you will be transferred to the village of Tropoje, just across the border with Kosovo*. It will take us 2.30h from Prishtina Airport to Tropoja Village. Along the way and based on the arrival time we can schedule a short break in the city of Gjakova and have a city tour. <b>Overnight: Tropoja Village, Albania</b>
<b>DAY 02</b>	<b>Tropoja Village (AL) – Bajram Curri – Çerem Village (AL)</b>

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<p><i>TRANSPORT:</i> <i>MINIBUS</i> <i>4.5 HOURS OF</i> <i>MOUNTAIN BIKING</i> <i>MAX ELEVATION</i> <i>1300</i> <i>MINIMAL</i> <i>ELEVATION</i> <i>350</i> <i>ACCOMMODATION:</i> <i>ÇEREM</i> <i>GUESTHOUSE</i> <i>DISTANCE: 37 KM</i></p>	<p>Today after doing initial adjustments to our bikes and fitting we start cycling from Tropoja to the city of Bajram Curri and then take the gravel road to the village of Çerem. In terms of elevation we will start from 350 meters on a paved road that sends us toward Valbona Valley. Then we take a sharp turn to our right to begin our ascent through an off-road track all the way to the village of Çerem which will be reached in about 10 km.</p> <p><b>Overnight: Çerem village</b></p>
<p><b>DAY 03</b></p>	<p><b>Çerem Village (AL) – Plave – Babino Polje (MNE)</b></p>
<p><i>5.5 HOURS OF</i> <i>MOUNTAIN BIKING</i> <i>MAX ELEVATION</i> <i>1800</i> <i>MINIMAL</i> <i>ELEVATION</i> <i>1300</i> <i>ACCOMMODATION:</i> <i>BABINO POLJE</i> <i>TRIANGLE</i> <i>WOODHOUSE</i> <i>DISTANCE: 34 KM</i></p>	<p>Today we start climbing all the way to Vranica Pass. This section of the road will be tough in terms of climb but eases up when reaching a certain elevation. It will take us about 6 km to reach the pass at the altitude of 1600 m ascending for about 400 m. The next section is going to be downhill of about 14 km negotiating between local walking trails and muddy road tracks until we reach the city of Plave. After a lunch break in Plave we continue cycling for 14 km to the village of Babino Polje. We will be gaining 700 m in elevation all the way to 1480 m in Babino Polje.</p> <p><b>Overnight: Babino Polje Village Guesthouse, Montenegro</b></p>
<p><b>DAY 04</b></p>	<p><b>Babino Polje (MNE) – Beleg – Milishevac (KS*)</b></p>
<p><i>5 HOURS MTB</i> <i>MAX ELEVATIO</i> <i>DIFFERENCE 2200</i> <i>MINIMAL</i> <i>ELEVATION</i> <i>DIFFERENCE: 1300</i> <i>ACCOMMODATION:</i> <i>LOJZA</i> <i>GUESTHOUSE,</i> <i>KOSOVO**</i></p>	<p>Today we will be prepared for another epic climb all the way to Bogicevica Pass. We start at an elevation of 1500m and slowly gain altitude further all the way to 2200m for 15 km in total. Once at this altitude it will be all downhill through the alpine pastures of Beleg in Kosovo* for around 10 km down to 1200 m.</p> <p>Next we begin slowly gaining altitude from 1300 m to 1700 m where the guesthouse we will be staying for the night is situated.</p> <p><b>Overnight: Lojza Guesthouse, Milishevac, Kosovo*</b></p>
<p><b>DAY 05</b></p>	<p><b>Milishevac (KS*) – Pejë - Gjakovë</b></p>

<p><i>5 HOURS OF MTB</i>  <i>MAX ELEVATION</i>  1700  <i>MINIMAL</i>  <i>ELEVATION</i>  600</p> <p><i>ACCOMMODATION:</i>  <i>GJAKOVA HOTEL</i></p>	<p>Today we start with a nice descent down to Rugova Valley for about 15 km from 1700 down to 600 m.  Will include a visit to the Patriarchate of Peja which is a UNESCO world heritage site.  Next we continue through secondary roads to the city of Gjakova where we will be accommodated for the night.</p> <p><b>Overnight: Gjakova, Kosovo*</b></p>
<p><b>DAY 06</b></p>	<p><b>Gjakovë – Prishtina Airport</b>  Today is meant to be a transfer day between the village of Radomire and Prishtina Airport. The transfer will take about 1.5 hours in total. This is the end of this amazing tour in one of the least explored areas of Europe.</p>

**Tour includes:**

- Return flights
- Airport / hotel / airport transfers
- Accommodation in 3 and 4 \* hotel
- Accommodation in a B&B
- Meals
- On-site transfers and luggage transport
- Tour Guide

**Tour does not include:**

- The drinks
- Personal expenses
- Tips options
- Travel insurance (provide details of any insurance/or options if any)
- Etc.

**Detailed Map of the Trip**

**Mountain Biking Tour of Albania - Montenegro - Kosovo**



## 2. LIST OF TOUR OPERATORS AND TRAVEL SHOWS

### 2.1 Tour Operator EU Market for Mountain Biking

#### **Ever Trek**

A Swedish company that operates Hiking and Cycling Tours in several places, including the Balkans. We can offer Albania and Kosovo\* in a mountain biking tour.

<https://www.evertrek.se>

#### **Global Cycling Adventures**

The company is based in New Zealand and they offer cycling and mountain biking tours in Europe, and also in Croatia. Albania and its neighbouring countries can be a new destination for them!

<https://globalcyclingadventures.com/tours-destination/europe/croatia/>

#### **Baobab Reizen**

The company is based in Netherland. They do have some tours in Albania, including cycling. We can offer them mountain biking if that will be interesting to their clientele.

<https://www.baobab.nl/groepsreizen/europa/albanie/alb-van-harte-welkom/>

#### **Saddle Skeaddle**

It is a British company that mostly operates cycling and mountain biking. They do have tours in Croatia, so being so close to Albania we can invite them to join our project in developing mountain biking tours in this region.

<https://www.skedaddle.com/uk/classicroad>

#### **EuroBike**

It is a company based in Austria and they offer several types of tours, including cycling. We can offer that also in Albania.

<https://www.eurobike.at/en>

#### **The Clymb**

The company is located in US and they offer several tours in Europe, including Croatia. We can offer Albania too.

<https://www.theclymb.com>

#### **Austin Adventures**

The company is located in US and they offer several tours in Europe, including Croatia. We can offer Albania with our biking tour.

<http://austinadventures.com>

#### **Bicycle Adventures**

The company is located in US and they offer tours in Croatia. Bike tours in Albania can be a new destination.

<https://bicycleadventures.com/destinations/croatia/>

#### **Pure Adventures**

They are located in Australia, and their tours are spread out also in Europe. Inviting them to visit Albania in our biking tour can give them a new destination to discover.

<https://pure-adventures.com/croatia/>

### **BikeFex**

They are a German company that based on the type of tours they offer could be interested in developing mountain biking in Albania.

<https://bikefex.at>

### **Mandala Travel**

They are located in Finland, and do offer bike tours. Albania can be a new destination for them to experience.

<https://www.mandalatravel.fi/pyoeraeilymatkat>

## **2.2 Exhibitions and travel shows:**

### **Fahrrad & WanderReisen**

The exhibition is held in Stuttgart, Germany and its focus is mainly on biking and hiking tours.

<https://www.messe-stuttgart.de/fahrrad/besucher/ausstellerverzeichnis/>

### **MATKA Nordic Travel Fair**

The Matka Nordic Travel Fair, the largest travel fair in Northern Europe. Albania can be its next destination.

<https://matka.messukeskus.com/?lang=en>

### **WTM London**

World Travel Market is a UK event for the global travel industry, launched at London's Olympia in 1980 before moving to Earl's Court in 1992 and then to ExCeL London in 2002.

<https://london.wtm.com/en/exhibitor-directory/#>

### **ITB Berlin**

The ITB Berlin is the world's largest tourism trade fair. The companies represented at the fair include hotels, tourist boards, tour operators.

<https://www.itb-berlin.com>

## **2.3 Magazines & Bloggers**

### **Mountain Bike Rider**

Is a British well known magazine

<https://www.mbr.co.uk/>

### **International Mountain Bike Magazine**

<https://www.imbikemag.com/>

### **Mountain Biking UK**

One of the most sold magazines in UK

<https://www.mbuk.com>