



Regional Cooperation Council



This project is funded by the European Union

tourism development
& promotion project

Hidden Gems of Skopje Old Town

GRANT FACT SHEET

GOAL

Developing seven cultural trails (70-100 locations/stories) in Skopje Old Town based on craftsmanship, oral history, gastronomy, customs, dances, festivities and religions in ten languages and their utilisation and promotion through an application, web site and social media channels.

Location

Skopje

Action value

EUR 35,944.00 (EU/RCC grant: EUR 32,344.00)

Category

Cultural tourism

Lead applicant

Institute for Strategic Research and Education - ISIE

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. Institute for Strategic Research and Education (ISIE) is amongst the first twelve grant recipients.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

Current situation

Skopje Old Town is one of the most visited tourist attractions in the Republic of North Macedonia; half of almost 650,000 foreign tourism (2017 data), who visited this economy, come to see the capital.

However, the Old Town is not being promoted in an organised and innovative manner. Its promotion is limited to a few churches and mosques, as well as the fortress, while its intangible cultural heritage remains underutilised. Furthermore, Skopje centre and the Old Town lack maps of tourist attractions and trails.

Actions to be performed through grant

ISIE will utilise the grant to take stock of the intangible cultural heritage currently present in the Skopje Old Town including craftsmanship, oral history, gastronomy, customs, dances, festivities and religions and use this information to synthesise at least seven cultural trails through the Old Town each based on authentic storytelling and promoted and made available to the public via an application, a dedicated website, social media channels and hand-to-hand promotional materials.

Their activities will include field research and gathering of information through door-to-door visits to business and shop owners, religious representatives, museums and their introduction to the concept of the trails on which they would be the points of contact for visiting tourists and whereby their work and stories would be promoted as a basis of tourism offer. Each trail would be comprised of some ten to fifteen stops and associated stories.

A story line will be developed around each of the trails and it will be presented through photos, audio and video materials, and a map navigating visitors through the trail. This content will be included in an application (iOS and Android) for mobile devices and a website, both of which will be promoted through dedicated social media channels (campaign targeting specific foreign markets) and traditional promotional channels including distribution of flyers at hotels, restaurants, airports, public transport stations and other points of interest, including the entrance to Skopje Old Town. Promotional video will also be developed and utilised.

The application and the website will offer narrated itineraries in ten different languages

including Macedonian, Albanian, English, German, Turkish, Bulgarian, Serbian, Polish, Dutch and Greek which have been selected on the basis of statistical data on the current structure/origin of visitors.

A unique branding will be developed for the application and the trails thus giving the entire offer a unified and recognisable look and presentation. The application and the trails will be launched at an event organised for hospitality industry, tourism information centres, media and other relevant stakeholders.

Results and sustainability

ISIE expects at least 10,000 downloads of the Hidden Gems application in first year, as well as 5000 visits to the website. Based on the overall results of the application launch and lessons learned ISIE will make an attempt to develop similar application for other cities or tourism products.



CONTACTS

Institute for Strategic Research and Education - ISIE

Bul. AVNOJ 16, 1000 Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia

+389 71 383 313

isie@mail.org, www.isie.org.mk

RCC Tourism Development and Promotion Project

tourism@rcc.int, www.rcc.int/tourism