



SHORT BOOK

RIVER NERETVA DELTA ACTION PLAN

REGIONAL AGENCY DUNEA

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RIVER NERETVA DELTA PILOT AREA

Neretva Cluster consists of seven units of local self-government in the south-eastern part of the Republic of Croatia on a wide area along the Neretva River. These are 3 cities: Metković, Opuzen and Ploče and 4 municipalities: Kula Norinska, Slivno, Zažablje and Pojezerje. The Cluster is located in the territory of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County near the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Neretva cluster is spread over an area of 412.56km² representing 23.15% of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County area. Due to very specific way of life for local people who have co-existed with the wetland through centuries, Neretva Delta represents a unique landscape in Europe.



Neretva delta

A total of 1,620 ha of the delta are designated protected areas: ornithological reserves (Prud, Orepak and Podgredom), ornithological and ichthyologic reserve at the river mouth protected landscape (lake Modro oko). The major part of the area is under NATURA 2000 protection. The lowland wetlands, protected by the Ramsar Convention and cultivated areas surrounded by hills and connected to the seashore and the sea, are a peculiar feature in national frameworks which is still not sufficiently exploited, particularly in the context of (long-term sustainable) tourism business.

PRESENTATION OF THE BASELINE SITUATION

In the Neretva cluster, there are large number of traditional rural settlements and hamlets that are valuable as elements of local identity. Many of them are uninhabited or only partly inhabited. They have local cultural value, but are not protected as cultural heritage – therefore spatial planning documents are the only tool for their preservation and avoidance of spatial conflicts.

In the area along the Neretva river, tourist activity has not yet been developed in accordance with the potential of the available tourist resource attraction base. The key reasons for the under-developed tourism development in the Neretva cluster relate to traffic isolation but also an under-developed tourism infrastructure.



Pasicina village

For the desirable tourist profiling / positioning of the entire project area in the future, the increasing trend towards the authenticity and uniqueness of the tourist

experience is probably the greatest opportunity. This implies not only the originality / uniqueness of the tourist resource attraction base, but also the possibility of its creative, emotionally charged and nuanced presentations tailored to different audiences.

The development of tourism in rural areas can enable the reconstruction of abandoned settlements and the re-evaluation of the valuable cultural heritage of rural areas. Furthermore, it can contribute to disperse the pressure for new construction (related to tourism) that is evident in coastal settlements.



Agriculture of Neretva valley

CHALLENGES

In the Dubrovnik-Neretva County there are a large number of traditional rural settlements and hamlets of unexplored cultural and historical value, recorded but not protected as cultural heritage, which are included in the construction zoning areas in the same way as zones of new settlements.

In this way, provisions for new constructions of inappropriate volumes and spatial relationships for these settlements are applied in traditional settlements. For some settlements, the pressure for construction is more intense and cannot be met solely within the existing construction, that is, the plans also envisage the expansion of the existing construction areas.



Vidonje village

Therefore, the aim is to create guidelines for integral protection of rural landscapes and sustainable tourism development of the Neretva river that would include planning and architectural guidelines for construction in traditional rural settlements of the Neretva river valley.

METHODOLOGY USED IN THE PILOT AREA

Step 0 The planning set-up phase

It started from the main findings of the Neretva Cluster Tourism Development Plan. The concept of tourism development of the Neretva Cluster refers to the appropriate valorisation of total resource attraction potential of the project area. When it comes to the integrity of the tourism value chain in the Neretva cluster, it should be noted that the current situation is not satisfactory.

Namely, with the lack of abundance and the diversity of the accommodation offer, the whole project area is characterised by a distinct lack of catering and accommodation offers, lack of distinctive cultural entertainment and lack of a sufficient number of sports and recreational facilities.

Step 1 Building knowledge framework

Relevant information about the existing area status in relation to sustainable tourism development were analysed. The basic cartographic maps were collected and analysed: digital orthophoto map, basic map at a scale of 1:5000, topographic map at a scale of 1:25,000, topographic map at a scale of 1:100,000, historical map of Europe in the 19th century - third military survey (1869-1887) and the Cadastral Map of the Habsburg Monarchy (from source: www.mapire.eu).

Furthermore, during the preparation of the first phase, the Spatial Plan of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County and Spatial Plans of Towns and Municipalities were used in the area of coverage: Spatial plans of Metković, Opuzen, Ploče, Pojezerje, Kula Norinska, Zažablje and Slivno.

Step 2 Defining goals vision and objectives

The starting points were taken from the Neretva Cluster Tourism Development Plan. The Neretva Cluster Tourism Development Plan defined the determinants of economic sustainability, spatial-ecological sustainability and determinants of social sustainability of tourism development. The goal is to make the area internationally recognised as a tourist destination, recognisable primarily for its eco-system conservation of the Neretva delta. The vision for the tourism development of the Neretva cluster is therefore based on three “pillars”.

These are: (i) eco-tourism, based primarily on environmental conservation, biodiversity and nature characteristics of the wetlands of the Neretva Delta, (ii) special interest tourism, based especially on the culture of the life and work of the local residents, that is, on the beauty of the landscape and diversity reliefs, which provide tremendous opportunities for various, more or less demanding activities in nature adapted to persons of different physical fitness as well as (iii) seaside tourism, with the possibility of actively participating in various physical activities in the hinterland.

Step 3 Tourism-driven strategic planning construction

This step predicted the activation of practically the entire area of the Neretva cluster through five characteristic areas of tourism activity:

(i) Coastal area (an area that should be characterised by a contemporary offering of active holidays in seaside resorts, especially family-oriented with children, (ii) Natural values / Protected parts of nature (refers to valuable natural areas/eco-zones, where the Neretva estuary stands out as a particularly strong “marker” and one of the leading reasons for coming to the Neretva area, (iii) Neretva Field / Lake Field - an impressive mosaic of the culture of life and work of the local people, (iv) Vid - Metković - Opuzen axis (the core of the cluster's urban and historical identity) and (v) rural hinterland - hilly area of karst, forests, olive groves and lakes with settled and abandoned villages and hamlets.

Step 4 Plan's implementation

Th purpose was to apply the strategic approach to priority issues, i.e., on a smaller, more practical scale. As part of the implementation of the CO-EVOLVE project, the Guidelines for the Integral Protection of Rural Landscapes and Sustainable Tourism Development of the Neretva River Delta were created by external experts with professional support provided by the Institute for Physical Planning of Dubrovnik-Neretva County.

The guidelines include a detailed catalogue of rural settlements as well as elaborated data on rural settlements such as a detailed analysis and catalogue of landscapes, villages, hamlets and buildings; valorisation, architectural recordings, reviews and analysis as well as planning guidelines for the revitalisation of particular areas and structures.

TOOLS APPLIED

Through the project, 203 villages and hamlets in the Neretva valley were identified and valorised, of which slightly less than half were abandoned or only temporarily settled. The creation of a village database included a collection of relevant maps and sources for the project area of Neretva river delta. Based on the analysis of present and historical maps and available relevant sources, a first list of settlements was made in relation to the toponyms that appear on the maps.



Field visiting for creation of village database

Field surveys and photographic documentation

A detailed tour of the terrain and all the hamlets was carried out on two occasions. All hamlets accessible by road were visited. Extensive photo documentation was made on this occasion - a total of 2,753 photographs.

Creating charts and analytical views in GIS

After the visit to the terrain, analysis was carried out on the valorisation of rural landscapes through the development of characterisation and characterisation of rural areas, analysis of spatial structures and landscape elements (constituents), spatial organisation and composition of samples of the built and undeveloped landscape of the Neretva valley. The aforementioned analysis was made in GIS and presented on the charts.



Analyzed hamlets and settlements of the Neretva valley

Creating a catalogue of rural settlements / hamlets / groupings

After the field visit, a database was created for all hamlets in MS Access. A total of 203 hamlets were analysed. The database is linked to the graphical database in GIS. All hamlets were catalogued through the analysis of settlements, spatial structures, spatial organisation, images of settlements, identification of connections between the landscape and its constituents, and identification of historical and existing networks of settlement systems within the landscape and its wider area. Spatial resources and conflicts in space have been identified.

An analytical (catalogue) card was created for each analysis

Based on the detailed analysis, guidelines were created that include elaborated data on rural settlements of the Neretva River Delta: a detailed analysis and catalogue of landscapes, villages, hamlets and buildings; valorisation, architectural recordings, reviews and analysis, and planning guidelines for the revitalisation of particular areas and structures. The guidelines for the integral protection of rural landscapes and the sustainable development of tourism in the Neretva Delta contain planning and architectural guidelines for the revitalisation of rural settlements of the Neretva valley area.

GUIDELINES FOR THE RESTORATION OF TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE

The guidelines contain a description of the rural landscapes of the Neretva valley, historical and spatial contexts, description of spatial organisation and basic demographic indicators. Space is broken down according to its functional and spatial characteristics. The basic characteristics of traditional settlements (relation to landscape, relation to fertile soil, typologies of construction, relations of buildings, system of open spaces) are stated. The basic features of a traditional house (freestanding / assemblies, floors, layout, construction materials etc.) and the basic elements of a traditional house (walls, roofs and roofs, chimneys, windows and doors, exterior spaces, porches, wells, gourds, decorations, interior organisation etc. are analysed in detail).



Podcempres – example of good practice

Guidelines for the restoration of traditional architecture are given. The most common mistakes to be avoided are given and the positive examples of successful renovation and new construction in historic rural settings are cited. The planning-legislative framework, the implementation of spatial plans, the permitting procedure is analysed. The guidelines contain detailed planning directives for the spatial plans of the towns and municipalities of the Neretva valley.

WHO WE ARE

CO-EVOLVE is a three-year project that aims at analysing and promoting the co-evolution of human activities and natural systems in touristic coastal areas, allowing for sustainable development of tourism activities based on the principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)/Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP).

It couples a presently unavailable analysis at MED level of threats and enabling factors for sustainable tourism with local studies of seven representative Pilot Areas, to demonstrate through pilot actions the feasibility and effectiveness of an ICZM/MSP-based planning process.

Finally, CO-EVOLVE contributes to the Strategic Theme 2 (Joint Action 2.1) of the Bologna Charter Joint Action Plan: <http://www.bolognacharter.eu/>.

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