



## CO-EVOLVE

*Promoting the co-evolution of human activities and natural systems for the development of sustainable coastal and maritime tourism*

# FACTSHEET #23

## RIVER NERETVA DELTA

### SUMMARY:

*Tourism for Croatia is an extremely important economic activity and one of the indisputable development priorities. The situation is the same in Dubrovnik-Neretva County. 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 and also an under-developed tourism infrastructure.*

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. The Neretva cluster is spread over an area of 412.56km<sup>2</sup> representing 23.15% of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County area. Due to a very specific way of life, local people have co-existed with the wetland through centuries, Neretva Delta represents a unique landscape in Europe.

In the Neretva cluster there are a 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.

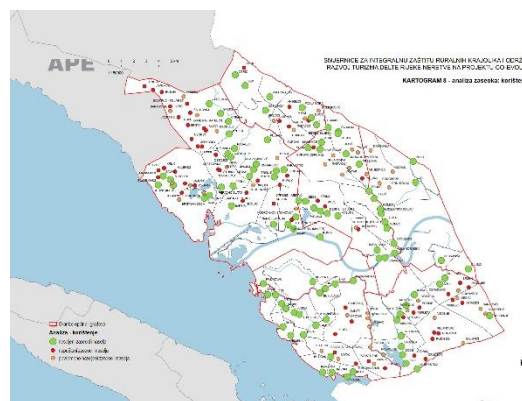


Fig 1.  
Populated hamlets and settlements in green  
Abandoned hamlets and settlements in red  
Occasionally populated hamlets and settlements in orange



*Fig 2. An abandoned village in Neretva valley – Vidonj*

#### Guidelines for the Integral Protection of Rural Landscapes and Sustainable Tourism Development of the Neretva River Delta

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, chimneys, windows and doors, exterior spaces, porches, wells, gourds, decorations, interior organisation etc. are analysed in detail).

The three documents are created:

- Recognising the value of the rural landscapes of the Neretva valley;
- Guidelines for integral protection and revitalisation of the rural landscapes of the Neretva valley;
- Guidelines for the sustainable development of rural tourism in the Neretva valley.

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



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