

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION ON LANDSCAPE BETWEEN CROATIA AND MONTENEGRO

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In the east coast of the Adriatic in Croatia and Montenegro various aspects of development especially through tourism and large-scale investment projects threaten to degrade and destroy landscape values. Natural and cultural heritage of outstanding value is the most important resource of the cross-border region of Dubrovnik and Boka Kotorska. In 1979, both the City of Dubrovnik and the Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of Kotor joined the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites. These two combine to create one of the most attractive landscapes in the Adriatic area, which is also confirmed by the massive amount of tourist visits. In addition to two UNESCO sites, the whole region of Dubrovnik-Neretva County and Boka Kotorska Bay constitutes an exceptional cultural landscape, blending diverse and abundant layers of natural and cultural heritage. Adequate protection, planning and management of this landscapes are key to its sustainable development.

The areas of Dubrovnik and Boka Kotorska, which have cultural and natural heritage and overall landscape of similar characteristics, face the same problems when it comes to protecting and managing these valuable resources. The landscape is at risk of being inadequately managed and thus devastated. Individual cultural properties, buildings and urban complexes receive (in most cases) good professional care. This especially refers to the UNESCO World Heritage sites – the cities of Dubrovnik, Kotor or Perast. Nevertheless, problems arise when it comes to other segments of landscape heritage - part of it that has not been officially protected, but contributes significantly to the value of the region's overall cultural landscape. Current development trends, as well as excessive and poor quality construction, are threatening to degrade this authentic landscape and destroy its natural and created values.

Outstanding cultural and natural qualities of the Bay of Kotor, is considered to possess outstanding universal value by the quality of its architecture, the successful integration of its cities to the Bay of Kotor and by its unique testimony to the exceptionally important role that it played in the diffusion of Mediterranean culture in the Balkan lands. The mountain of Vrmac is a peninsula, dividing the Bay of Kotor from the Bay of Tivat. Its territory is likewise divided between the two municipalities, Kotor and Tivat. Due to its evident natural and cultural qualities it was selected as the first pilot area, where the knowledge and experience gathered within the project will be put to use.



Bay of Kotor and mountain of Vrmac

The city of Dubrovnik, the administrative and economic centre of Dubrovnik - Neretva County - has developed on the sea cliffs on the east coast of the Adriatic. Due to the good configuration in the

hinterland, Dubrovnik quickly became a link between land and sea, the interior of the Balkans and the Mediterranean. Due to the characteristics of its street network that make it a unique example of European medieval town construction, the Old City of Dubrovnik was registered in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The broader territory of the city, encompassing the suburbs, fortress, the district behind the Old City, and the island of Lokrum were also added to the list. Above the Old City and the harbour of Gruž rises the Srđ massif. It has a special place in the agglomeration of Dubrovnik. Srđ is the protagonist of almost every image of the city, precisely expressed by the contrast between its intact slopes and densely woven urban fabric at its feet. Srđ is an inseparable part of Dubrovnik's cultural and historical landscape. They are strongly connected in terms of history, culture, tourism. Nowadays Srđ hill serves as a recreational area for local residents. Even though it is not a UNESCO site, nor located in its buffer zone, it is functionally and symbolically part of the city. Construction projects like the one planned (apartments and golf course, with an area that is 17 times bigger than medieval walled city) will have immense consequences for the functioning of the whole area, even putting aside changes in the visual aspect (which should not be ignored as well)



The city of Dubrovnik and Srđ massif

Vrmac and Srđ share a number of similarities. They both well-preserved natural areas, forming an integral part together with the old towns of Dubrovnik and Kotor. They have both been largely neglected in recent decades as part of the cultural landscape and they have both recently become the subject of development through large-scale investment projects. There are also some differences. Apart from the natural differences, arising from different configuration of terrain, different types of flora, etc., administrative differences are also considerable. On the one hand Vrmac is divided among two municipalities, while Srđ is not. On the other hand, part of Vrmac, belonging to Kotor, is also formally part of the UNESCO World Heritage site, while Srđ is not. Nevertheless, the similarities make both pilot cases easily comparable and enable a very fruitful sharing of experiences. Essentially, the most important problem the region faces is that various stakeholders, especially policy-makers, perceive natural and cultural heritage as an "obstacle to development".

The value of landscape is not sufficiently recognized, despite the fact that it is one of region's basic resources and a possible driver of development. It is also important to say that the economic value of landscape has not been recognized either. These were the starting points for the project "Heritage – Driver of Development", a partnership action, coordinated by institutions and organizations from the regions of Dubrovnik and Boka Kotorska and aiming to improve the protection, planning and management of landscape.

The project aimed to improve collaboration between the actors through implementing joint programs, education, transfer of knowledge and know-how as well as awareness raising activities. The project also aimed to enlarge professionals' knowledge and increase citizens' awareness of how landscape heritage can be used as a driver of development. Within the context of the project these activities are often referred to as new methodologies in protection and management of landscape.

The project “Heritage – Driver of Development” was funded by the European Union and implemented within the cross-border programme Croatia-Montenegro, under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). The functional lead partner was the Municipality of Tivat, while the main partner in Croatia was the Physical Planning Institute of Dubrovnik-Neretva County. The project partners were: the non-governmental organizations EXPEDITIO Center for Sustainable Spatial Development and the Cultural Heritage Association NAPREDAK Gornja Lastva in Montenegro; and the Dubrovnik Neretva County Regional Development Agency DUNEA and the Public Institution for the Management of Protected Natural Values in the Dubrovnik-Neretva County in Croatia.

In Montenegro, the project associates were: the Administration for Cultural Properties Protection of Montenegro, the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro and the South East European (SEE) Heritage Network. In Croatia, the project associates included: the Conservation Department in Dubrovnik for the area of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County, the Croatian Section of ECOVAST – European Council for the Village and the Small Town and the Institution Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre Split. The project lasted for 23 months, from March 11, 2013 until February 10, 2015.

The approach towards protection, planning and management of landscape in the project has been characterised by methods and tools, which can be described as good practice and represent innovative approaches, at least in the context of Dubrovnik and Boka Kotorska.. Some of the methods and tools used are:

- Participatory approach. By being involved in project activities, stakeholders develop a sense of ownership of the project. The participation of various stakeholders ensures better quality of project activities and improves its sustainability; in addition, participatory processes are good opportunities for stakeholders to network.
- Workshops. Useful for a small number of highly motivated people interested in a specific topic, offering the possibility to exchange ideas, obtain practical knowledge and establish personal contacts.
- Training. Useful for a small number of selected participants to obtain practical knowledge.
- Studies and guidelines. Methods for jointly developing and applying methodology and obtaining concrete results that could be used further on in specific area.
- Study visits. This is a good method of learning about good practices and experiences in neighbouring regions; since the project envisages a joint study visit for partners/associates from Croatia and Montenegro, this method will improve connections between them.

On both sides of the cross-border region it has been noted that there is a low level of citizen participation in protection and management of landscape, and its cultural and natural resources. Being aware that citizen participation is one of the basic principles of spatial planning, one of the expected results of the project was to improve the participation of stakeholders in the Dubrovnik and Boka Kotorska region, believing that this will lead to a better protection and management of landscape. The joint methodology of the participatory process was determined between partners within the working group for both areas. It included questionnaires, focus groups, interviews and essays.

The “**Landscape Days**” campaign project partners wanted to inform public about the objectives, processes and results of a project, but above all to establish cooperation with the public, explore various uses of landscape through artistic and other social events, and increase interest in spatial and tourism development in areas of natural and cultural heritage.

The following events took place within the “Landscape Days” campaign in Dubrovnik:

- photography exhibition “Landscape of Dubrovnik” (photographs were taken by residents of the city),
- photography exhibition “Storm Chasers” by the local photography group,
- international symposium “The future of the historic urban landscape of Dubrovnik, UNESCO World Heritage – new methodologies for urban conservation and development in a territorial context” with presentation of the studies and photography exhibition “Landscape – the stage of life”,

- exhibition, singing and drawing event at Saint Klara,
- promotion of brochure and maps of cross-border region of Boka Kotorska and Dubrovnik – Neretva County.

In Boka Kotorska the following events took place within the “Landscape Days” campaign:

- photography exhibition “Landscape of Boka through the eyes of people”,
- “a three-day workshop on dry stone making in Gornja Lastva (Vrmac),
- “Concert at dawn” in Gornja Lastva (Vrmac),
- “Concert at full moon” (Vrmac),
- Art at the sunset” in Gornja Lastva (Vrmac),
- “Music at the top of the hill” in St. Vid (Vrmac)
- “Culinary event “Heritage in the pot” (“Baština u loncu”

Studies and guidelines

Lack of a knowledge base (analyses, studies, assessments and guidelines) for the protection and improvement of landscape was identified in the cross-border area, especially lack of coordination between legislative frameworks at the local and national levels, a lack of models for economic evaluation of landscape and a lack of assessment of landscape. Therefore project has foreseen making jointly developed studies and guidelines for improving a legislative framework, economic valorisation and more effective protection and management of landscape for Dubrovnik – Neretva county and Boka Kotorska. They will serve as the basis for developing and updating planning and policy documents in the region. The existing legislative framework on protection, planning and management of landscape for both pilot areas was analysed in a study called Comparative analysis of legislative framework for the protection and management of natural and cultural heritage. It is concluded with recommendations for improving a legislative framework. The following studies analysed landscape as part of the project:

- Study on the natural values of Vrmac (Montenegro)
- Study on the cultural heritage of Vrmac (Montenegro)
- Study on identification and valorisation of natural and architectural heritage of Dubrovnik (Croatia)
- Analysis of Dubrovnik cadastre from the 19th century with transcription of building parcels register and creation of a database(The city of Dubrovnik in the Francis cadastre)

All the studies were serving as an input for the landscape studies: Study of cultural landscape of Vrmac (Montenegro) and Identification and valorisation of the natural and cultural landscape of Dubrovnik (Croatia).

The **Study of cultural landscape of Vrmac** identifies and assesses its natural and cultural characteristics and values. The goal of the study was to identify the characteristics of Vrmac’s landscape by using integrated methods considering cultural and natural heritage. It identifies and describes landscape types based on methodology of Landscape Character Assessment and Historic Landscape Assessment. Trends and drivers of changes as well as pressures and threats to landscape are being analysed, as well as vulnerability of specific landscape to changes. The main parts of the study are:

- analysis of spatial planning documentation,
- analysis of natural, cultural, visual and historical features,
- identification of landscape character types/areas
- valorisation and vulnerability assessment
- guidelines for the protection, planning and management of landscape.

The Study of cultural landscape of Vrmac analyses the spatial development of Vrmac hill overtime. It describes the main activities, functions and ways of using this territory and also traditional knowledge and skills, historical events and famous personalities living here. Part of the study deals with associative elements and intangible heritage, such as song, music, drama, skills, cuisine, annual festivals, crafts and other parts of culture that can be recorded but cannot be touched or interacted with. The study uses an inductive/deductive approach when analysing existing theoretical approaches, spatial documents,

legislation and literature on the natural and cultural heritage of Vrmac. Archives are being reviewed for analysing historical written and graphical data sources. Terrain research results complement existing data and visual and morphological characteristics. Data and information are organized by using models, mathematical statistical methods, GIS and methods of synthesis interpretations. A model of typological classification of landscape, a model of visual exposure and a model of morphological characteristics were also used. Assessment of Vrmac area as a cultural landscape is carried out using an objective approach. Current pressures and the changing character of Vrmac landscape is analysed through analysis of spatial plans and other development documents. This study will serve as an input for spatial plans and strategies for the municipality of Tivat and Kotor. It stresses the value of landscape as a potential for economic development. The study can also serve as a basis for presenting and promoting the values of Vrmac and as a model of methodology for defining and improving cultural landscape elsewhere

The *Study of cultural landscape of Dubrovnik* is being conducted by experts who are trying to view the characteristics of the city and its settings in a broader context. The study will try to understand the Dubrovnik area through individual features of the landscape and urban issue and their interaction in the last few decades as one rational and integrated system. This will be a starting point for establishing effective protection, planning and managing system of this landscape. The study is being developed in the following stages:

- integral evaluation of the area (landscape analysis, mapping, assessment and integration of different layers of cultural, natural and landscape values),
- analysis of shortcomings of legal protection and managing system in the areas of outstanding values,
- characteristics of spatial development of this area and identification of drivers of current changes, together with vulnerability assessment and identification of areas of possible conflicts,
- defining the concept and methodology of heritage impact assessment (HIA), together with guidelines and recommendation for protection and management of heritage

This studies are very important since their recommendations become input for spatial planning documentation of region and city. They will serve as a support in a decision making process when it comes to the development pressures that have been emerging lately and threaten to devalue this landscape.