

## Report template on the Regional Stakeholder Empowering Workshops (Output 3.2.)

### Summary report on the Regional Stakeholder Empowering Workshop of LAG Central Istria

**Date: 27 September 2018**

**Venue: Borut**

Regional Stakeholder Empowering workshop related to the pilot implementation as well as strategy implementation in general, was held on 27 September 2018 in Borut, near City of Pazin on small rural farm. The location itself was connected to the pilot implementation since it represents additional offer along our bike and trail routes in the area and rural farms, or as we call it – agrotourisms which are one of the pillars of green, healthy and slow tourism in our area since all of the mentioned principles are incorporated in their everyday work.

#### **Invited participants and the reason of their invitation**

**The workshop was attended by 20 stakeholders from private, civic and economic sector relevant for the development of tourism in the area:**

- **Representatives of three touristic boards which operate in the area** - Municipality of Motovun tourist board, Municipality of Žminj tourist board and Tourist board of central Istria, that are actively participating in the implementation of the pilot project as well as in the development of the strategy itself and are crucial for its sustainability and future impact, were present in order to discuss work that has already been done and future plans for cooperation among three areas.
- **The mayors of Municipalities of Žminj, Gračišće, Cerovlje, and Pićan, as well as the mayor of City of Pazin** were present as policy makers and representatives of the public sector. It is expected that they will have a significant impact on strategy implementation and were invited to give their support in future efforts and joint actions as well as to get familiar with possible solutions for a more effective cooperation.
- **Head of Administrative department for tourism of Istrian region**, as associated partner on the project with rich experience in touristic field was invited to share their insights and knowledge regarding the development of pilot actions and overall development of green and sustainable tourism in the regional level.
- **Representative of Destination management organization for bike and outdoor under the governance of Istrian Region** participated with the practical knowledge on greenways, active and green tourism and its comprehensive and numerous benefits and potentials.
- **Representatives of economic sector - stakeholders** that work in the touristic field learnt about the initiatives and efforts regarding the green, healthy and slow tourism in

the area but also provided practical solutions and suggestions embodying the essence of bottom up approach.

- **Representative of Istrian Region tourist board** ensured that future development and cooperation plans are in line with overall regional touristic development and elaborated the means the organization has to support it.
- **Representatives of civil sector**, especially Local action group contributed with their valuable insights and knowledge of overall rural development and specific needs in the area.

## Attendees

Ranka Šepić- Project and event manager in the City of Pazin

Marijeta Matijaš- Entrepreneur, owner of accommodation facilities

Martina Hrvatin- Entrepreneur, owner of accommodation facilities

Nensi Pereša Licul- Representative of Municipality of Žminj tourist board

Iva Jeletić Prodan- Director of Municipality of Motovun tourist board

Sanja Kantaruti- Director of Tourist board central Istria

Željko Plavčić- Mayor of Municipality of Žminj

Ivan Mijandrušić- Mayor of Municipality of Žminj

Goran Franinović- Representative of Istrian Region tourist board

Emil Daus- Mayor of Municipality of Cerovlje

Renato Krulčić- Mayor of City of Pazin, President of LAG Central Istria

Nada Prodan Mraković- Head of the Administrative department for tourism of Istrian Region

Antun Selar- Representative of Municipality of Pićan

Roberta Krivičić- Communication manager of LAG Central Istria

Tamara Legović- Project manager of LAG Central Istria

Martin Čotar- Destination management organization for bike and outdoor of Istrian Region

Branko Bogunović- Hotel and Destination Consulting

Mladen Vojković- WYG consulting

Iva Jekić- Manager of LAG Central Istria

Vanesa Lorencin- Representative of FLAG Istrian Sole

## **Agenda of the workshop**

Regional stakeholder empowering workshop for coordinated development of slow, green and healthy tourism in the involved area.

The workshop covered following subjects:

1. Finding the best cooperation model between three touristic boards and other stakeholders in the area- improving destination management
2. Collaboration on product development – follow up on pilot actions
3. Joint branding possibilities and benefits
4. Joint marketing and promotion strategy.

## **The aim of the workshop**

The aim of the workshop was to improve regional/local governance based on specific local challenges that involve managing touristic development of relatively small and coherent area of inner Istria, with common characteristics, potentials and resources but fragmented touristic offer. Additionally, the area is divided by three touristic boards and 12 local self-government units: City of Pazin and Municipalities of Motovun, Žminj, Cerovlje, Lupoglav, Karojba, Sv. Petar u Šumi, Tinjan, Gračišće, Sv. Lovreć and Pićan.

The workshop was a chance to stress the unique approach of the project in linking the development of regional tourism sectors with sustainable mobility management, heritage protection and overall improvement of life quality through promotion of green & healthy lifestyle by various means related to active, slow and green tourism. At the same time, the importance of every group of stakeholders in ensuring the durability of the results was also emphasized.

Regional stakeholders thus had chance to discuss future projects and initiatives as well as multisectoral approach in destination management and learn about benefits of joint actions in terms of branding the area, marketing and promotion. They were also presented with tools to promote local resources and health-conscious attitude, offering alternative travel experience as an active form of recreation.

## **The background of the facilitator(s), speaker(s), other expert(s) etc. (if relevant)**

Branko Bogunović

Branko has 12 years of experience in managing multidisciplinary teams and delivering complex projects in service industry. He has managed over 40 and participated in over 100 projects in HTL industry with a focus in destination planning and best use concepts, but also including market and financial studies for hotel industry. Thanks to his involvement in over 30 national and regional level tourism plans for Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, Romania and Kazakhstan, Branko is very familiar with the general position of HTL industry in these countries and key success factors for delivering various tourism projects in the region.

His work experience has been exclusively related to the service industry. He has started as a project manager in quantitative market surveys for Accent market research ltd. Prior to his engagement in HTL consulting, he spent 3 years as a project manager responsible for introduction of the new services for business customers in T-Com, Croatia.

Such a career path paired with engineering background has put Branko in charge of the most complex analytical and strategic tasks in both hotel and tourism consulting projects. His academic interests lie in tourism economics, most notably modelling and projecting effects of hotel and tourism development. He has been in charge of several country level tourism industry assessments and reports, as well as authored articles on economic issues of tourism development.

Together with his former partners and colleagues from one of the leading international HTL consultancies, he has decided to found new HTL consulting company with a mission to customize, improve and innovate HTL consulting service.

Branko's key expertise is in determining market founded concepts for the given areas, either in destination planning (on destination, regional or national level) or best use concepts for smaller locations (hotels, resorts, tourism infrastructure). In that sense, he usually works in between analytics and strategy, trying to identify details that prove crucial for development strategies or the particular concepts. Thorough analytical approach and broad understanding of HTL industry (macro and micro level) made him specialize in projects that require complex quantitative procedures or dealing with complex stakeholder structures due to ability to elaborate and argue any proposal in detail.

One of his key projects is a development of Tourism Master plan 2015-2025 and Strategic and Operational Marketing plan 2015-2018 for Istria Region

Mladen Vojković

Mladen is a human resource development expert with 12 years' experience managing projects across the public, private and civil society sectors.

His main focus is on capacity building for public administration, employment, regional development and training. He has developed and implemented projects under EU and World Bank funded instruments including CARDS (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation), PHARE (Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies) and Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) programmes in human resources development, cross-border co-operation and institutional capacity building.

As a Project and Contract Director, Mladen has successfully managed more than 20 donor and state funded projects in Croatia, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia. He is responsible for a portfolio of 30-40 projects each year, mostly for public administration institutions, where he acts as team leader and consulting expert on a range of local development and employment schemes.

## Summary of the workshop

Regional stakeholders, based on experience of developing and implementing pilot action, defined outlines of future cooperation on strategy implementation and multisectoral destination management with special emphasis on preservation of local natural and cultural resources.

With guidance of external experts, they had a chance to learn about destination perception, regional and global touristic trends as well as good practices in tourism through comparison to similar destinations in the area (eg. Tuscany, Provence) in terms of slow, green and healthy.

Furthermore, they detected and discussed future areas of cooperation:

- banding
- marketing and promotional activities
- development of products based on slow green and healthy concepts

The necessity and joint approach were directly linked not only to touristic development and market position, but also to preservation of the specific threats that make this area unique and authentic.

Furthermore, stakeholders shared their experiences and knowledge in the field of tourism, acknowledged each other's capacities and expertise, strengthened connections and made the foundation for successful implementation of the strategy.

### **The main results of the workshop** *(including lessons learned, knowledge gained, tangible and intangible outputs etc.)*

The main result was finding the common ground regarding tourism development. All participants agreed that slow, green and healthy is the right direction, which will preserve the traditional way of life as well as natural and cultural heritage as most valuable resources of the area.

Representatives of touristic boards and local governance, encouraged by the fruitful cooperation on the project, especially developing and implementing pilot actions, expressed their willingness for future joint activities.

On their tourist councils and monthly mayor's coordination, they will present the idea of forming the touristic cluster that will represent needs and interests of stakeholders in the area as well as coordinate future development. At the same autonomy of the existing boards, in order to most effectively respond to specific needs of their local area, remains.

Positive examples of existing clusters were presented and discussed. It was agreed on that a future model of cooperation could be developed on the basis of the one functioning in the South Istria. A presentation on their working system and activities will be organized.

In these efforts, they will receive full support from Istrian Region as well as from Touristic board of Istrian Region.

It was decided that it is crucial to establish a regular meeting schedule during the strategy implementation lifetime, that is until the period of 2025 in order to supervise the realization

of the development activities as defined in the strategy and that possibilities of ensuring the financial means for the further assistance of the external experts in that process, needs to be advised and defined in the next meeting.

Furthermore, participants acknowledged the need of joint activity in terms of marketing and promotion as the best way for increasing visibility and touristic growth. Also, they have agreed that future branding efforts have to be closely connected with tradition, culture and nature preservation thus following the concepts of slow, green and healthy tourism.

The workshop has stressed the responsibilities of every group of present stakeholders in the upkeep and further development of the project results – the goals as defined in the strategy and the pilot actions results. The most important role of public bodies is to ensure good management schemes and working conditions (financial means, information, coordination) whereas the touristic boards as executive bodies and the representatives of private sector are responsible of extensive promotion (for example of the developed interactive map) and continuous persistence on the respected principles of sustainable touristic offer in their everyday work. It was decided that this and similar responsibilities will be formally listed with the help of the external experts once the future cooperation agreement will be definitely defined.

Encouraged by the good cooperation within this project, it was agreed on that LAG Central Istria as well as the tourist boards will be dedicated in forming new international project partnership with similar follow up objectives.

**The added values** (*how can you and your stakeholders use the knowledge gained during the workshop and the results of the workshop within the INSIGHTS project and after the INSIGHTS project. E.g.: in pilot action, in strategy, in tourism development etc.*)

Stakeholders will use gained knowledge and connections in fostering touristic growth within their fields of work. They will collaborate on future touristic development and strengthening the destination itself. They will contribute to sustainability of destination itself by implementing the strategy and promoting sustainable approach in tourism development. They will incorporate slow, green and healthy concepts and preservation of cultural and natural heritage in their everyday work and try to avoid traps of mass tourism knowing that is not what area wants and needs.

Additionally, the possible positive effects of enlarging the cooperation area on the whole inner Istria was discussed during the workshop. Since the INSIGHTS project is covering one part of the non-coastal municipalities, present stakeholders concluded that this can be a good starting point of spreading the project results and cooperation agreement on the whole inner part of the region making it thus more coherent and strengthened to develop an independent touristic offer based on sustainability principles. It was agreed on that coordination meetings with representatives of other municipalities and touristic boards will be arranged.

**Photo documentation:** (3-4 photos)



