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# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## Partner country

Republic of Serbia

## Contracting authority

UDRUŽENJE GRAĐANA POKRET ZA MALE PIJACE, Aranj Janoša 3, 24416 Male Pijace, Serbia

## Country background

**Economic Context**

Tourism plays a growing role in Serbia's economy, contributing significantly to GDP and employment. However, the tourism sector faced considerable challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, with reduced international arrivals and economic uncertainty. The crisis emphasized the need for diversification and resilience in tourism offerings, prompting efforts to develop specialized sectors like adventure tourism. Globally, adventure tourism has seen growing demand due to its focus on nature, sustainability, and immersive experiences, which aligns with Serbia's rich natural and cultural heritage.

Serbia's economy is in transition, characterized by moderate growth and increasing integration with European markets. The focus on regional development, particularly in less urbanized and economically disadvantaged areas like Banat, aligns with broader economic goals to reduce regional disparities and enhance rural livelihoods. Investment in adventure tourism can contribute to these efforts by fostering local entrepreneurship, creating jobs, and attracting visitors to underdeveloped areas.

**Social Context**

Serbia's urban population is increasingly seeking outdoor recreational opportunities to escape the pressures of city life. This trend reflects a global shift toward sustainable, nature-based tourism, especially among middle-class travellers who prioritize experiences over material goods. Adventure tourism offers a means to meet this demand while promoting healthy lifestyles and environmental awareness.

In rural areas, adventure tourism presents an opportunity to combat depopulation by providing economic incentives for residents to remain and engage in tourism-related activities. It also fosters community engagement and pride by showcasing local culture, traditions, and natural assets.

**Environmental Context**

The Banat region, straddling the Serbia-Romania border, boasts diverse natural resources, including rivers, forests, and wetlands, making it an ideal location for adventure tourism. However, sustainable use of these resources is essential to balance tourism development with environmental preservation. The proposed project aligns with global trends toward eco-tourism and Serbia's commitment to sustainable development as part of its EU accession process.

**Challenges and Opportunities**

**Challenges:**

* **Infrastructure Development:** Many rural areas lack adequate infrastructure to support large-scale tourism activities. Investments in transportation, accommodation, and tourist facilities are essential.
* **Workforce Skills:** A shortage of trained professionals in tourism and hospitality, especially in niche areas like adventure tourism, could hinder the project's success.
* **Marketing and Visibility:** Serbia's adventure tourism offerings remain relatively unknown on the global stage, necessitating targeted marketing campaigns.

**Opportunities:**

* **Increased Regional Cooperation:** The cross-border nature of the project fosters collaboration between Serbia and Romania, enhancing resource sharing and promoting mutual growth.
* **Post-Pandemic Tourism Trends:** The pandemic has shifted preferences toward less crowded, outdoor, and eco-friendly travel options, aligning with the project's focus on adventure tourism.
* **EU Funding and Support:** As a candidate country, Serbia has access to EU funds for regional development and cross-border cooperation, which can support infrastructure and capacity-building initiatives.

**Alignment with Project Objectives**

The proposed project effectively addresses these economic, social, and environmental factors by developing adventure tourism infrastructure, creating a cross-border network of service providers, and promoting sustainability. It targets middle-class urban travelers and aligns with Serbia's broader goals of rural development, economic diversification, and environmental conservation. By building on the region's natural assets and fostering regional cooperation, the project has the potential to establish Banat as a competitive adventure tourism destination in the cross-border region and beyond.

## Current situation in the sector

Adventure tourism in Serbia is an emerging sector with significant untapped potential. National and local policies increasingly recognize its role in fostering rural development, economic diversification, and environmental sustainability. The National Tourism Development Strategy of Serbia (2021–2025) emphasizes promoting sustainable tourism, including niche segments like adventure and eco-tourism, as a way to enhance Serbia's competitiveness in the global tourism market. The strategy aligns with broader EU integration goals, particularly in regional development and environmental management.

Locally, the Banat region has seen limited structured development of adventure tourism, despite its rich natural resources, including the Tisa River, Pannonian plains, and protected natural areas. While some municipalities have initiated small-scale tourism projects, a cohesive regional approach and cross-border collaboration have been lacking. Infrastructure gaps, insufficient professional training, and low international visibility of the area remain challenges.

Organizational structures in the sector are relatively informal, with a mix of municipal tourism boards, local businesses, and civil organizations operating independently. Recently, there has been a shift toward collaborative models, driven by EU-funded cross-border initiatives. These programs aim to strengthen institutional capacities, promote partnerships, and create sustainable tourism products.

The proposed project builds on this foundation, addressing gaps in strategy implementation by fostering collaboration between key stakeholders, improving infrastructure, and developing a cohesive adventure tourism network for the Banat region.

## Related programmes and other donor activities

This Project is complementary to other national programmes financed by the EU.

# OBJECTIVES & EXPECTED OUTPUTS

## Overall objective

The overall objective (Impact) to which this action contributes is :

Contribute to the development and implementation of measures for the development and promotion

of adventure tourism, the strategic development of tourism using tourist potential and resources and

the implementation of marketing campaigns, as well as the diversification of tourist destinations in

the program area, while increasing the accessibility and visibility of less developed tourist areas.

## Specific objective(s)

The contract should support UDRUŽENJE GRAĐANA POKRET ZA MALE PIJACE Association, in the implementation and management of the project, procurement procedures, and translation services for quality implementation of the project, as well as reporting under the project "Development of adventure tourism based on natural values of the Banat region”, financed under INTERREG-IPA CBC Romania-Serbia Programme.

## Expected outputs to be achieved by the contractor

The expected outputs of this contract are as follows:

* Output 1 to Outcome 1: successful implementation of project project "Development of adventure tourism based on natural values of the Banat region”

Preparation and Implementation the public procurement plan of the project "Development of adventure tourism based on natural values of the Banat region” respecting the INTERREG IPA Romania-Serbia Programme requirements.

* Output 2 to Outcome 1: successful implementation of project project "Development of adventure tourism based on natural values of the Banat region”

Provide overall technical assistance with project and partner reporting tasks for “Development of adventure tourism based on natural values of the Banat region” respecting the INTERREG IPA CBC Romania-Serbia Programme requirements.

* Output 3 to Outcome 1: successful implementation of project project "Development of adventure tourism based on natural values of the Banat region”

Provide translation services for the project activities for “Development of adventure tourism based on natural values of the Banat region”.

# ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

## Assumptions underlying the project

Not applicable.

## Risks

Not applicable.

# SCOPE OF THE WORK

## General

### Description of the assignment

To arrange for services of external experts who will implement public procurement procedures according to the project Contracting plan, prepare and monitor financial records as well as partner reports and assist the overall financial management of the project “Development of adventure tourism based on natural values of the Banat region” respecting the INTERREG IPA CBC Romania-Serbia Programme requirements. External project management will be active during the entire implementation period.

To arrange translation services related to the written translation of documents during the project implementation, namely, translation from Serbian into English for marketing activities—translation of Elaboration of the development and the marketing strategy of the adventure tourism of Banat, and online and offline marketing tools. It will also provide consecutive translation at project meetings depending on the contracting authority's expressed needs.

### Geographical area to be covered

Male Pijace, Serbia

### Target groups

UDRUŽENJE GRAĐANA POKRET ZA MALE PIJACE management and project implementation team.

## Specific work

The service will be contracted for the 22 months of project implementation (from contract signature until project closure) for the complete service of technical support.

The service should include the following tasks:

**I. Implement the public procurement plan of the project “Development of adventure tourism based on natural values of the Banat region” respecting the INTERREG IPA Romania-Serbia Programme requirements.**

The Consultant should provide expert services in implementing all procurement procedures for the project “Development of adventure tourism based on natural values of the Banat region” respecting the INTERREG IPA CBC Romania-Serbia Programme requirements.

The Consultant is obligated to provide expert consultation to the Contracting Authority regarding procurement procedures upon request, by telephone, email or personally within working hours.

The service covers the preparation of the tender dossiers in accordance with the contracting and implementation plan according to the tentative procurement plan:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **DESCRIPTION** | **CATEGORY** | **TENDER PROCEDURE** |
| 1. | Renovation and formation an tourist information centre +  Build a quad (ATV) track | Infrastructure and works | Simplified tender procedure |
| 2. | Elaboration of data base of the service providers in the adventure tourism in the Serbian side of the project + Elaboration of the thematic adventuristic routes | External expertise and services | Simplified tender procedure |
| 3. | Organizing the test tours and the elaborated routes + PR activities of the Serbian side of the project ***+*** Organizing the education for rangers and greeters | External expertise and services | Simplified tender procedure |
| 4. | Furniture for Touristic information centre | Equipment | Single tender |
| 5. | 4 pcs quad (ATV) | Equipment | Simplified tender procedure |
| 6 | Purchase a horse carriage with 2 piece trapping (harness) + Horse trailer | Equipment | Single tender |
| 7 | 4 Horse | Equipment | Single tender |
|  |  |  |  |

It should be noted that the above Procurement Plan might be revised during the course of implementation, therefore any changes requested by the Contracting Authority to the initial Procurement plan should be adopted by the Consultant with no changes to the contract value.

All tender dossiers have to be prepared according to the provisions of directives on public procurement applicable to INTERREG IPA CBC Romania-Serbia Programme, in English language (or Serbian where applicable) and the Consultant is obliged to send all prepared documents by e-mail to the Contracting Authority.

In the case of a request for any changes in the tender dossiers, the Consultant is obligated to adopt them and to send the revised tender dossier back to the Contracting Authority in a timely manner, the latest by 7 days, depending on the volume of requested changes.

The Contracting Authority is obligated to provide all the necessary information to the Consultant needed for the preparation of Terms of References and Technical Specifications. The Contracting Authority is also obligated to prepare the list of potential tenderers and to send it to the Consultant to prepare the List of entities, where applicable.

Details about timing of public procurement procedures will be communicated by the Contracting Authority during contract implementation.

The Consultant should participate in tender evaluations upon the Contracting Authority request at the premises of the Contracting Authority. The Consultant is required to participate in the opening, examination, evaluation and ranking of tenders or applications, upon the request of the Contracting Authority, at their premises, in the role of consultant and internal monitoring.

Also, the service should include the preparation of contracts and notification to candidates, as well as contract addendums if the case may be.

The duration of this activity is 12 months from the signing of the contract.

**II. Provide overall technical assistance - management with project reporting tasks project “Development of adventure tourism based on natural values of the Banat region” respecting the INTERREG IPA Romania-Serbia Programme requirements.**

The service should include:

Overall project administration:

- Administration and adequate preparation of documentation for archiving.

- Preparation of storage documentation.

Assistance with project reporting:

- Identification of relevant areas of reporting per project periods;

- Collection of relevant information and documents from the management team;

- Giving an assessment of the adequacy of data;

- Assistance in collecting and preparing all required and relevant supplementary and supporting documents;

- Amendments, modifications and adaptations following the requirements of reporting forms;

- Assistance in the preparation and submission of partner reports in a three-month period and in shorter periods if the Contracting Authority finds it necessary, respecting deadlines prescribed by INTERREG IPA CBC Romania-Serbia Programme,

- Assistance with clarification requests for reporting at the request of the competent control body.

Additional technical assistance and monitoring services:

In order to harmonize the implementation of project activities with the approved activities and the associated project budget, the Consultant should provide professional assistance with:

- Continuous analysis of project progress to support management and adequate decision-making;

- Periodic assessment of the effectiveness, impact, sustainability and relevance of the project in the context of the identified objectives;

- Ensuring efficient implementation, as well as regular monitoring, ie. providing support to the project team.

- Tracking costs and spending according to budget lines and schedule,

- Verification, revision and adjustment of the public procurement project plan based on project needs,

- Professional support in preparation of project modification requests according to INTERREG IPA CBC Romania-Serbia Programme requirements if requested by the Contracting Authority.

- Professional support in preparation for Programme monitoring visits and FLC on-the-spot visits.

Outputs to be achieved:

- 1 project team meeting organized on a quarterly basis,

- Prepared and submitted 8 reports at partner level and prepared and submitted 7 reports at project level + prepared 1 report at project level, according to the rules of Interreg VI-A IPA Romania Serbia.

The Consultant must also comply with the latest Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU-funded external action, laid down and published by the European Commission. The assistance of the Consultant is required until the issuance of validation of the Final Partner Report.

The duration of this activity is 22 months from the signing of the contract.

**III Provide translation services for the project activities for “Development of adventure tourism based on natural values of the Banat region”.**

To arrange translation services related to the written translation of documents during the project implementation, namely, translation from Serbian into English for marketing activities—translation of Elaboration of the development and the marketing strategy of the adventure tourism of Banat, and online and offline marketing tools. It will also provide consecutive translation at project meetings depending on the contracting authority's expressed needs.

Translation service will include the engagement of one external expert:

External expert 1 -Translator/Interpreter for English language

The Contractor has to provide the following:

* Translation of written texts (documents and promotional materials) in English. Written translation – Elaboration of the thematic adventuristic routes, educational material for rangers and greeters, PR materials, as well as other project documentation at the request of the Contracting Authority.

In total up to 100 pages in English.

* Consecutive interpretation during project team meetings in Serbia (the meetings will be organized in two formats: online through digital platforms and in person, with the physical presence of all participants at a single location), from English into Serbian and vice versa, in a total duration of 6 working days (corresponding to approximately 35 working hours)

The choice of the translator will be the subject of an agreement between the contractor authority and the contractor.

## Project management

### Responsible body

The Contractor is responsible for all the activities regarding this contract.

### Management structure

The responsible person for implementation of the tasks related to this contract, in the Contracting Authority is Zoltan Bagi, Legal Representative.

### Facilities to be provided by the contracting authority and/or other parties

The Contracting Authority will provide office space with an internet connection for the facilitation of this service if required by the Contractor.

# LOGISTICS AND TIMING

## Location

Tasks related to this contract will be implemented in Male Pijace, Republic of Serbia.

## Start date & period of implementation of tasks

The intended start date is <20.03.2025.> and the period of implementation of the contract will be 22 months from this date. Please see Articles 19.1 and 19.2 of the special conditions for the actual start date and period of implementation.

# REQUIREMENTS

## Staff

Note that civil servants and other staff of the public administration of the partner country, or of international/regional organisations based in the country, shall only be approved to work as experts if well justified. The justification should be submitted with the tender and shall include information on the added value the expert will bring as well as proof that the expert is seconded or on personal leave.

### Key experts

Key expert is defined and he/she must submit CVs and signed statements of exclusivity and availability.

The expert who has a crucial role in implementing the contract is referred to as a key expert. The profile of the key expert for this contract is as follows:

Qualifications and skills

• a university degree in economics or a relevant, directly related discipline, or equivalent relevant professional experience

• IT skills: MS Office, MS Excel or similar;

• Serbian and English language fluency,

General professional experience

• At least 5 years of general professional experience.

• Experience in project management.

• Narrative and financial reporting skills.

Specific professional experience

• Experience in procurement procedures in accordance with EU directives on public procurement (engagement in such one EU-funded project will be an asset).

The expert must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on.

### Other experts, support staff & backstopping

CVs for experts other than the key experts should not be submitted in the tender but the tenderer will have to demonstrate in their offer that they have access to experts with the required profiles. The contractor shall select and hire other experts as required according to the needs. The selection procedures used by the contractor to select these other experts shall be transparent, and shall be based on pre-defined criteria, including professional qualifications, language skills and work experience.

The costs for backstopping and support staff, as needed, are considered to be included in the tenderer's financial offer.

## Office accommodation

Office accommodation for each expert working on the contract is to be provided by the contracting authority.

## Facilities to be provided by the contractor

The contractor shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular, it must ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provisions to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. It must also transfer funds as necessary to support their work under the contract and to ensure that its employees are paid regularly and in a timely fashion.

## Equipment

**No** equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the contracting authority / partner country as part of this service contract or transferred to the contracting authority / partner country at the end of this contract. Any equipment related to this contract which is to be acquired by the partner country must be purchased by means of a separate supply tender procedure.

# REPORTS

## Reporting requirements

The contractor will submit the following reports in English in one original and 1 copy:

* **Interim Report** shall be submitted at the end of 12th and 18th month from the start of implementation. The approval of interim reports will be the basis for issuing respective interim payments as indicated in the Special Conditions. The interim reports must be provided along with the corresponding proforma invoice.
* **Final report** at the end of the contract, upon all contract results have been achieved. The approval of the final report by the Contracting Authority will be the basis for issuing final payment as indicated in the Special Conditions. The final report must be provided along with the corresponding invoice.

## Submission and approval of reports

The report referred to above must be submitted to the project manager identified in the contract. The project manager is responsible for approving the reports.

# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

## Definition of indicators

The indicator of the successful implementation of the contract is “Services provided in timely, quality and quantity manor, as required in these Terms of Reference”.

## Special requirements

Not applicable.