

Countdown 2010: Development of an Eco-Village Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the border with Serbia and Montenegro



Prokoško lake, BiH / Munever Sulhović

Project

Project Countdown 2010: Development of an Eco-Village Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the border with Serbia and Montenegro (www.ekosela.com) aims to better economic growth of local communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, while protecting biodiversity of local natural habitats.

The first eco-village project was implemented in 1995, and it involved only nine settlements. Today, twelve years later, there are over 15,000 settlements in which people's lives are guided by the principles of sustainable living. Eco-villages are organized in a

Global network of eco-villages (GEN) which enables mutual cooperation and exchange of information. The goal of project Countdown 2010: Development of an Eco-Village in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Border with Serbia and Montenegro is the inclusion of the pilot villages in the Global network of eco-villages. The regions where the project will be implemented include:

- The vicinity of Fojnica and Prokoško Lake on mount Vranica, Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Settlements Brzeće, Vlajkovci, Kriva Reka and Ribari on mount Kopaonik, Serbia;
- Settlement Podgora on mount Durmitor, Montenegro.

Although spatially segregated, these areas share similar natural environment and way of life. The common goals shared by said mountain regions simplify the development process as well as future mutual cooperation with respect to the proposed network of eco-villages.

Donors and Partners

The project is financed by Austrian government through the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), a unit of Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC). The coordinator of the project is the World Conservation Union (IUCN) through its Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe (IUCN SEE) in association with non-governmental organizations ReQuest (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Sunčani vrhovi (Serbia) and Most (Montenegro). IUCN's mission is to aid communities in preserving and protecting integrity and diversity of life by providing just and sustainable use of natural resources. IUCN SEE realizes its goals through activities designed to enable cross-border cooperation in the realm of integrated protection of biodiversity.



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Kopaonik, Serbia / Dragan Bošnić

For further information please contact:

Joerg Lohmann
E-mail: joerg.lohmann@iucn.org
Duška Dimović
E-mail: duska@natureprotection.org.yu
IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe
Dr Ivana Ribara 91, 11070 Beograd
Serbia
Tel/Fax: + 381 11 22 72 411
www.iucneurope.org

Siniša Stevović, Developmental and Cultural-Informative Centre MOST
Vučedolska bb, 84220 Žabljak
Montenegro
Tel/Fax: + 382 89 360 010
Mob: + 382 67 227 228
E-mail: hitss@cg.yu
www.ngo-most.org

Milan Radulović
NGO SUNČANI VRHOVI
Kralja Petra I 5b, 37220 Brus
Serbia
Tel: + 381 37 825 393
Mob: + 381 63 803 39 39
E-mail: nvo-brus@hotmail.com

Munever Salihović
NGO REQUEST
Bečarevac 56, 75000 Tuzla
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Tel: + 387 61 103 609
E-mail: munever@request.ba
www.request.ba

Goals

The purpose of this project is to direct economic activities of potential eco-villages toward sustainable use of natural resources and stimulating alternative ways of securing income. This enables preservation and protection of nature, as well as adds to the economic and social status of the population.

The project recognizes four areas in which the economic goals coincide with the goals of sustainable development and the need for preservation of biodiversity:

- Organic agriculture;
- Sustainable tourism;
- Harvesting of non-forest products and medicinal herbs;
- Traditional skills and art production.

A separate development plan would be created for each of said regions. The proposed plans would include (1) organizing production of goods and services, (2) developing product certification, (3) researching potential markets, (4) establishing a producers association, and (5) developing strategies for market placement of products and services.

The plans and activities of project Countdown 2010: Development of an Eco-Village in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Border with Serbia and Montenegro will be realized in the form of workshops and seminars. This way, the project will enable its beneficiaries (primarily the residents of the villages) to familiarize themselves with the project and participate in the activities of the eco-village. Moreover, special steps will be taken to educate the younger population with the basis for the project, as well teach the residents of the local communities about importance of nature preservation, biodiversity and proper use of natural resources.



Eco-Village Podgora, Montenegro