



**Interreg**  
**Italy - Croatia**  
**EXCOVER**

European Regional Development Fund



EUROPEAN UNION

## **Welcome! Discover Hidden Treasure Towns And Sites Of The Adriatic Area With Us**

Are you small or medium enterprise, supplier of tourist services, policy-maker on a local or regional level, tourist blogger or influencer? If yes, join us on a journey of discovering hidden treasure towns and sites of the Adriatic Area. We are 13 partners from Italy and Croatia gathered around project Excover. We'll be mapping the potentials, developing capacities and including local population in building innovative solutions and tourist products, improving the tourism supply chain, and trying to contribute to better territorial and seasonal distribution of tourist flows in Croatia and Italy.



# Creation of Competitive Cross-Border Tourist Products Through the Participatory Planning and Common Goals

The premise of creating a quality tourist product within the Excover **project is based on the active involvement of the local population** in the process of identifying and promoting locations on the outskirts of the main tourist routes.

## Active involvement of local population

Because of that, all project partners from Italy-Croatia Interreg programme area will start participatory planning that will give a voice to the residents of those areas and enable them to get involved in the project on two levels - through offering to the tourists the experiences of those locations through their eyes and through collecting information about the availability of accommodation facilities and services, that will serve as a supplement to newly created tourist products. This way, **locals will get the chance to offer existing, but underused capacities, knowledge, facilities and other resources, using the opportunities provided by the tools of the sharing economy.**

Methodology of the process of actively involving the local population for the needs of Excover project was developed by experts from the University of Udine, partner in the project, and using this methodology, **identification of tourist resources** in all project areas will be carried out.

## From fresh ideas to new products

Participation in the project is not mandatory, but it is desirable. All the stakeholders from tourism sector can get involved in the participatory planning, and everyone that can offer their knowledge and skills on the tourism market is certainly welcome. For effective results, it is crucial that process involves different groups of individuals and organisations. Also, it is important to **include young people with fresh ideas and views on tourism, as well as use the "snowball" technique** - involving individuals who are able to evoke interest and engage others, using available creative tools and platforms.

Through the project, a **database will be created as a foundation for all future marketing efforts**, and it will cover segments from cultural heritage (historical centres, monuments, events, theatres, local markets, festivals...), natural resources (parks, nature paths, lakes, mountains, caves, rivers, thermal springs, farms...), hidden heritage (tangible and intangible) and various experiences (cooking classes, art workshops, picking herbs...).

## Join us and contribute

Due to pandemic, interview activities and focus groups were suspended, and because those are the main tools of participatory planning within the project, they will continue as soon as conditions allow. So, **if you want to contribute, let us know**, share your experiences through interaction with our experts and with other people. Let's discover hidden treasures together and show tourists everything that can attract them to stay (at least one) day longer in Excover area.



Find out more about participatory planning processes

## Video: Cooperation of the Stakeholders for Tourism Development of Lika-Senj County



Video interview: Karolina Prpić Bogojević, head of Department for Preparation and Implementation of Programs and Projects of the Public Institution Development Agency of Lika-Senj County – LIRA.

Find out more about the tourism in Lika-Senj county

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## Video: Examples That Can Encourage Locals to Get Involved in Tourism



Video interview: Stakeholders from Lika-Senj county - Marijana Svetić, greenhouse vegetable grower from Lički Novi, and Goran Šarić, accommodation owner from Gospić

**Find out how disadvantages can become opportunities**

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University of Bologna hosted the first transnational technical meeting of the Excover scientific experts from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> of February.

## **Widespread Welcoming Implies Involvement of the Local Population in the Identification of Cultural Heritage - Excover Experts Say**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Technical meeting of the Excover project was held in Bologna from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2020. Meeting was mainly intended for the technical and scientific experts that discussed about the process of widespread welcoming within Excover project.

Hosted by University of Bologna, participants were firstly involved in bilateral meetings, after which plenary sessions were led by the coordinators. Gilberto Zangari, Rive d'Arcano's technical expert, discussed the specificities of the areas involved in the project regarding tourism products design and adequate accommodation supply. Monica Pascoli and Donatella Cozzi, from the University of Udine, described the field research they conducted with the host communities, in order to discover the local cultural heritage. They also introduced innovative tools to share results with the citizens and tourists, through the scientific contribution of Antonina Dattolo, Deputy Rector for Digital Inclusion at University of Udine. Finally, Andrea Guizzardi and Annalisa Stacchini, from the University of Bologna – Center for Advanced Studies in Tourism, informed the participants on the progress of SWOT and reputation analyses, while revealing foreseen completion dates. At the end,

representatives from the universities of Bologna, Udine and Zadar took the opportunity to share ideas about possible research developments of the project results.



Find out more about the 1st technical meeting

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## Video: Discover Ogulin Heritage Museum



Video interview: Ana Krznarić, Acting Director of the Ogulin Heritage Museum

Find out more about tradition in Karlovac county

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## Video: Enter the Magic World at Ivana's House of Fairy Tales

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Video interview: Sanja Kolić, storyteller and expert associate for content development, research, documentation and library at Ivana's House of Fairy Tales.

Find out more about the magic place in Ogulin



## Project Excover Goes Online due to the Pandemic of Coronavirus

Excover partners adapted to the pandemic and are continuing to work. Because of that, they arranged **series of online meetings** through which they

will continue the scheduled project activities.

## **Presentation of research results**

The topic of first such meeting was WP3 - SWOT and reputation analysis that most of the partners conducted just before the lockdown measures in Italy and Croatia. This online meeting was mainly used for presenting the research results that gave a **good insight into the perception of tourism and willingness for participation in sharing economy** throughout the Excover project area.

## **Great interest in use of sharing economy**

Annalisa Stacchini, from University of Bologna compiled the data received from all partners, and presented the first, provisional results of the research. Overall results showed that residents from considered areas are highly interested in participating in the tourist offer, while **people with different cultures are welcomed by the local community**. Also, there is a big potential for sharing economy, mainly because Excover area have **many accommodations available to be shared**. Lastly, in spite of rich cultural and natural resources in all considered areas, there is still a need to come up with more attractions, and to work further on marketing of the existing potentials.

Besides that, researches have also showed the other side of tourist point of view, from those who haven't yet visited considered areas, and they noted that the **most desired destination attributes are nature, prices and security**. Luckily, exactly those attributes are what makes the backbone of the tourist offer in the Excover area.

[Find out more about first online meeting](#)

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## Video: Visit Lika-Senj County and Learn About Life and Inventions of Nikola Tesla



Video interview: Ana-Marija Šolaja, expert leader at Memorial center "Nikola Tesla" Smiljan.

Find out more about one of the worlds greatest inventors



## Reaching the Public with the Series of Informal Online World Cafés

Modern tools will help carry out important activities within Excover project, so **in the next few months** four online World Cafés will be organised. Topics of these **chat-based Cafés** will be related to tourism, culture, involvement of the people, use of digital tools, mapping the heritage of specific areas, collecting data for development of tourism products and the ways of utilizing coronavirus free areas in attracting the tourists.

Informal conferences, which will be available to everyone because of their online format on **Zoom platform** and will be hosted by Excover project expert, **Gilberto Zangari**. Interestingly, these World Cafés are produced entirely on a **volunteer basis** and are open to whoever wishes to participate, and they are not limited to the Excover project partners.

Really **everyone can apply easily with the links and QR codes on projects website and social media**, and invite others so they can all share their thoughts and ideas from home or office. First Excover World Café was held on June 24th, and the topic was **"Participatory mapping of heritage to identify potential tourist attractions"**. The topic **"Inland and unknown areas becoming coronavirus free tourist destinations"** will be handled on July 8th, after which the participants will discuss **"How to use innovative digital tools to involve actively citizens and tourists in the collection of information"** on July 22. Lastly, on 9th of September, Excover World Café will end with the important topic: **"Content Management System (CMS) as dynamic database for storage of data collected during a tourism product development process."**

Find out how you can participate in Excover online Cafés

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