



2022 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title of the Story: Nature Park "Orjen" - a protected area in the service of improving the tourist offer and sustainable development

Destination Name: City of Trebinje

Country: Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Submission category: *(Please check one of the boxes that indicates the focus of your story)*

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- Governance, Reset & Recovery
- Nature & Scenery
- Environment & Climate
- Culture & Tradition
- Thriving Communities
- Business & Marketing

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DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

Issues faced

What was the problem/issue solved with the good practice?

What was the problem/issue solved with the good practice? Click to add your text

Position: "Orjen" Nature Park is located in the extreme south of Republika Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina, within the territory of the city of Trebinje. The protected area includes the area of the outer belt of the Dinarides, in the hinterland of the Adriatic Sea. The eastern, southeastern and southern borders of the Orjen Nature Park are at the same time the interstate border with Montenegro. Part of the southwestern, i.e. western border of the protected area, represents the interstate border with Croatia.

IUCN Classification: According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, it is classified in category V – Protected Landscape/ Seascape.

International status: At the international level, the Orjen area was delegated for the Ecological Network of Republika Srpska and the Natura 2000 area by the expert team of the "Support for the Implementation of the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive in Bosnia and Herzegovina Project".

Problem/issue solved with a good practice:

For decades, the Orjen massif has been known as an area that represents an exceptional potential for the development of tourism, in terms of creating new tourist content as well as the promotion/presentation of a rich natural and cultural-historical heritage. However, the basic problem was reflected in the fact that natural and cultural-historical values in the area of "Orjen" had not been properly identified, valorized and placed under protection. Therefore, comprehensive studies and research have not been performed, which should have been the basis for developing the legal solutions and guidelines for high-quality and sustainable management of the "Orjen" area. All this has limited the space for launching initiatives and realization of concrete activities for the purpose of tourist valorization (eco-tourism, active tourism, etc.), as well as establishing mechanisms for protection of the area and creating preconditions for sustainable development of the "Orjen" area and the local community. In this regard, the City of Trebinje, in cooperation with the Institute for the Protection of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage, the Center for Karst Management in Trebinje, the Association of Citizens CORIE from Trebinje, Hunting Association "Leotar", Speleological Society "Green Hills" ("Zelena brda") and Mountaineering Society "Wolf's Tooth" ("Vučji zub"), realized activities in the period from 2015 that were aimed at the following:

- Declaring the Orjen massif a protected area and
- Creating tourist content in this area.





Methods, steps and tools applied

How was the good practice implemented?

1. The process of establishing a protected area - the proclamation of the “Orjen” Nature Park.

For the realization of this goal, it was primarily necessary to prepare a Protection Study for the proclamation of the “Orjen” Nature Park. The institution in charge of developing the study was the Institute for Cultural, Historical and Natural heritage of Republika Srpska. Through the project, experts were hired to conduct expert field research for the needs of the Study, based on which the Institute for the Protection of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage prepared the Protection Study document, which was the foundation for the Decision to declare the “Orjen” Nature Park. The initial steps and agreements were undertaken and concluded at the end of 2015. The Institute obtained all the necessary approvals from the competent Ministries, the Public Company “Forests of Republika Srpska” and the local community, and conducted all the necessary consultations at the end of 2017 and the beginning of 2018. Field research was done in 2018. The study of the protection of the Nature Park “Orjen” was developed by the Institute in 2019. The Republika Srpska Government passed the Decision on the proclamation of the “Orjen” Nature Park (Official Gazette of RS issue No. 93/20), which completed the procedure of establishing a protected area.

2. The process of creating tourist contents in the “Orjen” Nature Park.

In parallel with the initiative to declare the protected area “Orjen”, activities were realized on the design of tourist contents in this area. The institution in charge of these activities was the Mountaineering Association “Woolf’s Tooth” from Trebinje, which in cooperation with the City Administration of the City of Trebinje did an exceptional job in the field of valorization of the tourist potentials of Orjen. The first activities carried out by Mountaineering Association “Woolf’s Tooth” were related to the recognition and marking of footpaths. At the moment, in the area of the “Orjen” Nature Park hiking trails are marked in the length of about 80 kilometers, the trails are recognized as a great tourist potential, which resulted in them being included in the route of the blue trails of the Via Dinarica project. The hiking trails are well marked, so that visitors to the “Orjen” Nature Park have no difficulty in using these trails. The next very important step was the revitalization of the Mountain Lodge “Ubla”, which had not been in function for many years, the facility was practically devastated. In cooperation with the City Administration, the Mountaineering Association “Woolf’s Tooth” was ceded the facility of the Mountaineering Home “Ubla” for use, which affected the intensification of activities related to the reconstruction of the facility and its re-commissioning. Reconstruction of the Mountain Lodge began in 2018, during 2019 the Lodge started working on weekends, and the consumption of local food and drinks is on offer, but without the possibility of overnight accommodation. It is planned that the accommodation capacities will be established by the end of August 2021. For a start, there will be 25 beds, while after the completion of all planned works, the total capacity will be 60 beds. This





is extremely important, because in the area of the “Orjen” Nature Park there are no accommodation facilities that could be used by visitors/tourists, which prevents quality spending time and longer stays in this extremely attractive area. These activities caused more active involvement of the wider community in the process of creating new tourist contents. In this regard, the Association of Citizens “CORIE” from Trebinje, through the financial support of the City of Trebinje and the Via Dinarica project, built the first Adventure Park in this area (Adventure Park “Ubla”), which was officially opened in June 2021. The realization of the project financed from the transnational program ADRION is in progress, and through it new tourist contents was created in the “Orjen” Nature Park, as artificial rocks for climbing, and a zip line for children. Info boards will be set up, as well as other signalization, followed by the construction of mini rest areas and lookouts along footpaths, marking of new paths, etc. All these activities are accompanied by the education of staff that will be included in the provision of tourist services in the area of the “Orjen” Nature Park. In this regard, during the month of June 2021, in the city of Trebinje, a training for mountaineering guides was realized for the first time, and it was successfully completed by 20 participants. Participants were trained for Category III mountain guides, according to UIAA standards, which allows them to guide tourist groups in mountainous areas up to 3500 meters above sea level. In this way, the City of Trebinje receives a completed new tourist product in the area of the “Orjen” Nature Park (accommodation facilities, contents for active holidays, certified hiking guides, etc.)

Key success factors

What helped you tackle the issues?

Speaking of the process of declaring the “Orjen” Nature Park, taking into account that it concerns about 16,000 hectares of the area that was the subject of research and protection, the aspect that assisted the most was the possibility of hiring external associates (experts), who realized most of the activities in cooperation with the Institute for Protection of the Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage of Republika Srpska. Therefore, the financial and professional support received within the project of “Achieving the conservation of biological diversity through the establishment and efficient management of protected areas and capacity building for nature protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina” was extremely important. Through this project, for the first time, a Protection Study for the proclamation of the “Orjen” Nature Park was developed, which was the basic document for the implementation of the necessary administrative procedures and the adoption of the final decision of the Republika Srpska Government. Speaking of the process of creating tourist contents in the “Orjen” Nature Park, the key success factor was the involvement of the wider local community (City of Trebinje, Mountaineering Society “Wolf’s Tooth”, NGO “Corie”, etc.), which, along with financial support of various donors (UNDP, USAID, Helvetas Foundation My Future (Moja Budućnost), ADRION program, etc.) decisively influenced the design and implementation of many activities, thus establishing a new tourist offer in the City of Trebinje.





Lessons learned

While implementing the Good Practice what challenges were faced, and how were they overcome?

One of the main challenges related to communication with the population that has private property in the area of the “Orjen” Nature Park. Potential difficulties have been overcome through a professional approach and high-quality presentation of all information regarding the future status of private property and possibilities of use. Private property was placed in the third protection regime, the prescribed measures did not deny the basic rights to use private property. The inaccessibility of certain locations in the area of Orjen was also a challenge, because some places could not be accessed by vehicles. In this regard, a great contribution was made by the Center for Karst Management in Trebinje, Speleological Society “Green Hills” from Trebinje and Mountaineering Society “Wolf’s Tooth”, which hired professional staff for research in “critical” places. Field research lasted slightly longer than planned, but in the absence of support of the mentioned actors, it would have been practically impossible to conduct high-quality research at all planned sites.

Results, achievements and recognitions

What were the qualitative and quantitative results of the good practice?

Results achieved through the process of establishing a protected area - “Orjen” Nature Park:

1. In the “Orjen” Nature Park, 47 speleological objects have been identified and described, 13 of which have the characteristics of caves, as well as 13 hydrogeomorphological objects of the original character. A total of 262 species of fungi were registered, of which 25 species were proposed for protection due to their importance, rarity and endangerment. The list of flora of the investigated area includes 1088 taxa up to subspecies levels. During field research of birds, 87 species were registered, which were classified into 14 orders and 33 families. Recent research has confirmed the presence of 14 mammal species. It is necessary to point out the presence of significant species of large carnivores, bears (*Ursus arctos*) and wolves (*Canis lupus*). For the area of the nature park Orjen a field research identified the sites of cultural and historical heritage and part of the natural heritage. In the field, 19 sites of cultural-historical and part of natural were recognized heritage.

Results achieved through the process of creating tourist contents in the “Orjen” Nature Park:

1. 13 hiking trails (over 80 kilometers) have been routed with countless designated and marked lookouts. The trails are recognized as a great tourist potential, which resulted in them being included in the route of the blue trails of the Via Dinarica project.
2. Mountain lodge “Ubla” was reconstructed and put into operation, for the first time accommodation facilities were established (25 beds), in the area of Orjen.
3. The first Adventure Park in the area of Trebinje was built.





4. 20 mountaineering guides have been trained, who will be available to all visitors of the “Orjen” Nature Park.

5. An artificial rock for climbing, a mini zip line, and information board was built in the vicinity of the Ubla Mountain Lodge.

6. 3 Via ferratas was built on the slopes of Mount Orjen, which represented a unique tourist offer in the wider region.

Additional references

Provide links to further information. Pictures and videos should be available for download either from YouTube, Vimeo or other Cloud-based (Google/ One Drive) download URL (not WeTransfer).

<https://www.lokoportal.com/index.php/sadrzaj/vijesti/22100-orjen-i-zvanicno-proglasen-parkom-priode>

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