



2023 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title: Eight Green Islands / "Zeleni otoci": Connecting Our Community

Destination, Country: Bosanska Krupa, Bosnia and Herzegovina

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- In the category:** Destination Management Environment & Climate Thriving Communities
 Nature & Scenery Culture & Tradition Business & Marketing

The Story in a picture:

Eight islands connecting our community



Summary:

"Zeleni otoci" or Green Islands is a unique city park made up of eight river islands in the heart of Bosanska Krupa. This idyllic place is a haven for the soul and body, showcasing the harmonious coexistence of people and nature. It is more than just a destination; it is our vision of a sustainable and harmonious future, a source of inspiration and motivation for everyone, a part of our community's identity, and a lifestyle that embraces nature in our everyday lives.

The main issue we faced was a neglected and unused communal space in the heart of the city center, a place only partially accessible to citizens and visitors. An area void of any content, plan, or protection.

Our story starts with the eight river islands and how the community came together to create the backbone and inspiration for all of its sustainable tourism activities.



Good Practice Story:

Destination description

Brief background of the destination.

Bosanska Krupa is a captivating city situated in the northwest of Bosnia and Herzegovina, near the Croatian border. It is characterized by its enchanting natural surroundings, with the Una and Krušnica rivers flowing through the town and the picturesque Grmeč mountain towering in the south. The city spans an area of 566 km² and is home to approximately 25,545 people.

With its strategic location, Bosanska Krupa benefits from excellent connectivity. The Una railway and road networks offer convenient access to both the coastal and inland Pannonian and European regions.

The city and its immediate surrounding areas showcase a diverse range of natural beauty, cultural and historical attractions, and opportunities for outdoor activities. The city's notable features include the stunning Una and Krušnica rivers, the Green Islands/Zeleni otoci, the idyllic picnic areas of Mlinčići and Šujnovac, the ancient towns of Pset and Jezerski, the Filial Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the City Mosque, and the Temple of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God.

Throughout the year, the community hosts an array of events, including the Una whitewater rafting regatta, the Traditional diving event "Ćevanuše," the Art colony of Krušnica, and the Krupa Literary meetings, to name a few.

Issues faced

Problems/issues solved with the Good Practice Story.

The following is a list of unique issues faced in Bosanska Krupa:

Lack of funding: The city budget was primarily allocated for the reconstruction of infrastructure after the war, leaving little room for investment in the "Zeleni otoci" park. This hindered the development of the park and its potential for sustainable development and tourism.

Limited accessibility: The park's islands were not connected by bridges, making them accessible only by boat. This limited public access and required the reconstruction of pedestrian bridges to connect all eight river islands.

Horticultural arrangement: The park area lacked proper horticultural arrangement, with trees and shrubs distributed irregularly. The central area lacked greenery, posing a challenge to the overall aesthetic and functionality of the park.

Content creation: The park required meaningful content to enhance visitor experience while maintaining harmony with nature. This process required significant resources and remains ongoing.

Riverbank erosion: The river Una posed a threat to the islands' river banks, requiring protection measures. This process involved complying with legal regulations and coordination between different government levels.

Documentation and permits: Obtaining urban planning and technical documentation, particularly for bridge construction, proved challenging due to the Una River's classification and jurisdictional complexities. The procedure took longer than anticipated.

In summary, the main issues faced and addressed include funding constraints, limited accessibility, horticultural arrangement, content creation, riverbank erosion, and bureaucratic hurdles arising from different government jurisdictions.

Methods, steps, and tools applied

Solutions implemented to address the sustainability problems or issues.

To address the sustainability issues and make the "Zeleni otoci" Park a sustainable and responsibly managed resource for the community and its tourism sector, the following steps and solutions were implemented:

Project Proposal and Partnerships: Preparation of a project proposal and finding supportive partners.

Division of Project Activities: Dividing project activities among partners for effective implementation.

Urban and Technical Documentation: Obtaining necessary urban and technical documentation.

Biodiversity Protection: Conducting a plant survey and creating an herbarium to ensure no special protection was needed.

Community Engagement: Involving the community through various events and nature lessons for children. Continuously promoting activities to inform the public about sustainable development plans.

Public Procurement Procedures: Conducting public procurement procedures to select contractors for construction and infrastructure works.

Stakeholder Engagement: Collaborating with stakeholders and NGOs to create meaningful content in the park.

Infrastructure Development: Opening beach bars, building an outdoor gym, a children's playground, a volleyball court, picnic and BBQ areas, an outdoor library, and other amenities. Creating an event space with a stage for concerts and other events.

Local Producer Involvement: Providing space for local organic food and other producers to display and offer their products.

Continuous Maintenance and Improvement: Ongoing maintenance and improvement of park content. Developing a conceptual solution for each island within the park to enhance its specific content.

By implementing these solutions, the park "Zeleni otoci" is being transformed into a place where the community and visitors meet, promoting sustainable tourism principles while further developing the tourism sector and preserving the park's and Una river's biodiversity.

Key success factors

Critical elements that led to successfully solving the issues.

The most important key factor for success was involving the community and gaining their support for the idea. We started with a public call to which young people responded with the idea of opening a beach bar. We supported that idea and continued with other public calls where we supported NGOs and youth projects which resulted in the creation of additional content.

Other important key factors for success included engaging all our human resources in the office for spatial planning to obtain the necessary permits for project implementation. Before commencing the implementation, we diligently collected input information from all relevant bodies and authorities at the municipal, cantonal, federal, and state levels. This provided us with an overall picture of the obstacles we would encounter during implementation.

To mitigate the risk of a shortage of contractors, we anticipated the specific nature of the work, where supports for wooden bridges are driven into the Una riverbed and made from oak or chestnut wood with certain dryness requirements. Prior to initiating the public procurement, the experts from the City Administration conducted a market survey and publicized the works execution, allowing potential contractors ample time to acquire the appropriate materials and apply for the tender.

All activities were financed by a combination of funding sources from the City Budget, International projects, Non-Governmental Organizations, and the business sector.

Lessons learned

Challenges faced while implementing the Good Practice and their solutions.

After completion, we evaluated the project and concluded and learned the following:

The period of preparation and collection of input information for the implementation of projects planned by strategic documents should be continuous. This is because there is a large number of insufficiently defined positive legal regulations and unharmonized regulations at different levels of government.

It is important to conduct quality market research for procurement of works, goods, and services within a limited time period.

During the preparation period, representatives of all competent services and other stakeholders who can contribute to the highest quality planning of activities and the project budget should be included.

All project partners must be involved in the project with the same level of responsibility from the preparation period to the end of the project implementation.

Planned activities must be coordinated with the season and weather in mind, taking into account factors such as the construction season, vegetation period, school vacation period, vacation and/or holiday period, etc.

Achievements and Results

Direct and indirect results of the Good Practice.

Bosanska Krupa possesses significant potential for sustainable development, thanks to its abundant natural, cultural, and historical resources. However, to kickstart our sustainable tourism endeavors and attract tourists and visitors, it was crucial to establish a distinctive space and brand. That's when we introduced the unique city park called "Zeleni otoci," which has now become synonymous with Bosanska Krupa and is drawing visitors from all around the globe.

Through the implementation of this idea, we accomplished more than just a park. We successfully built a brand and a comprehensive tourist offering, devised a destination management plan, and collaborated with community stakeholders to construct two beach establishments, a children's playground, an outdoor gym, an outdoor library, eight picnic and BBQ areas, four beaches, ten wooden bridges, an event stage, footpaths throughout the islands, and infrastructure for power and water supply. Additionally, we covered the park with urban lighting, protected the majority of the island's river banks from erosion, installed benches and garbage bins, and provided local producers with a space to showcase their products.

The benefits derived from this project are manifold for our community. Apart from providing a serene sanctuary for residents to escape their daily routines, the implementation of this idea has significantly boosted income generated by the local tourism industry. The number of visitors has more than doubled, and local tourism stakeholders now rent and sell their services and products. Previously vacant accommodation has been transformed into holiday homes and apartments. The surge in demand for various services has resulted in the growth of private companies, creating additional value and generating new tourist attractions that were absent previously. Unemployment rates have decreased, leading to a demand for more labor. As a result, investments in the tourism sector have been steadily increasing, elevating it to one of the three main industries in Bosanska Krupa.

Tips for other destinations

Your suggestions or recommendations for other destinations facing the same issues or implementing similar solutions

Based on the issues and solutions mentioned, here are some main suggestions and recommendations for other destinations facing similar challenges, or implementing similar solutions:

Develop a clear vision: Establish a clear and well-defined vision for your project, which will serve as a guiding framework for its implementation.

Create a strategic document: Prepare a strategic document that outlines the goals, objectives, and action plans for your project. This document will provide a roadmap for its successful execution.

Engage the community: Involve the local community in the decision-making process and actively seek their input and participation. This inclusiveness will foster ownership and ensure the long-term sustainability of the project.

Ensure project sustainability: Recognize that the project doesn't end with its implementation phase. Design it with a long-term perspective, considering how it can continue to benefit the community through subsequent projects and activities.

Collaborate with the business and non-governmental sectors: Seek partnerships and support from the business and non-governmental sectors. Their expertise, resources, and networks can greatly contribute to the success and efficiency of project implementation.

Involve environmental and sustainable development professionals: Include experts in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development in your project team. They can provide valuable insights and act as a corrective force, ensuring that the project remains aligned with sustainability principles.

Build a dedicated team: Form a dedicated and passionate team of individuals who will be equally committed throughout the project's preparation and implementation stages. This cohesive team will drive the project forward and overcome challenges effectively.

Plan effectively: Develop a well-structured project plan with realistic timelines for each activity. Proper planning ensures efficient resource allocation and timely completion of tasks.

Analyze the market: Conduct a thorough market analysis to identify competent bidders and service providers for specific works or services required for the project. This ensures a sufficient pool of qualified candidates and promotes fair competition.

Recognitions and Additional references

Recognitions and awards the Good Practice received and supporting evidence.

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