

Call:

Supporting Competitive and Sustainable Growth in the Tourism Sector - COS-TOUR-2015-3-04

Title of the project: Discovering Rural Europe through hiking trails**Acronym: Hiking Europe****Project duration and start date:**

18 months, started on April 1st 2016

Short description of the project:

- The project is about

The main objective of the project is to promote a transnational network of rural touristic routes structured in several hiking itineraries across Europe, unveiling the cultural and natural heritage of the partnering regions.

HikingEurope aims at diversifying the tourism offer and products in regions that have traditionally been oriented to a mass tourism model. This diversification will allow the development of tourism at a territorial level, reducing high concentrations in very specific locations and spreading the benefits of this activity across the territory, promoting sustainability and local community participation. HikingEurope will foster the capitalisation on the cultural and natural heritage of rural regions, including mountain areas, with a particular focus on bio-diversity and landscape characteristics.

The transnational tourism product is formed by hiking itineraries (1,170 km) located in 4 European regions (Catalonia, Donegal, Emilia-Romagna and Dubrovnik-Neretva). Its main aim is to offer a unique experience to international visitors by discovering the local reality of Europe, from its natural resources to its cultural heritage.

- Main objectives:
 1. To identify, valorise and internationally position local assets (mainly, cultural and natural heritage) of the selected areas for hiking;
 2. To build a strategic consensus with all relevant stakeholders identified for the making up of a solid and competitive offer of services and products for tourists;
 3. To design and structure the transnational network of hiking routes;
 4. To develop a joint promotional and commercial strategy to exploit the European network of routes, including the design of integrated and personalized proposals & holiday packages;
 5. To improve the professional skills of SMEs and to promote its internationalization;

6. To enhance the institutional framework devoted to support a more competitive industry, through a permanent dialogue at 3 different levels: public-public, public-private and private-private.

Lead partner/coordinator:

1. Catalan Tourist Board (Spain)

Partners:

2. Pirineu Emoció Agència de Viatges S.A. (Spain)
3. Institut für Tourismus-und Bäderforschung in Nordeuropa GmbH – NIT (Germany)
4. Regione Emilia-Romagna (Italy)
5. Development Regional Agency Dubrovnik-Neretva – DUNEA (Croatia)
6. Donegal Country Council (Ireland)
7. Naturefriends International (Austria)
8. Universiy of Girona (Spain)

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