



DEČAN/DEČANE

EU/ COE JOINT PROJECT –

Support to the Promotion of Cultural Diversity
 Local Economic Development component
 Pilot Actions



JP - EU/CoE Support to the Promotion of Cultural Diversity (PCDK)

Funded
by the European Union



Implemented
by the Council of Europe

BACKGROUND

The Local Economic Development (LED) component of the European Union / Council of Europe Joint Action Support to the Promotion of Cultural Diversity in Kosovo* (PCDK) has been inspired by and closely associated with the Local Development Pilot Project (LDPP) of the Council of Europe's Regional Programme for Cultural and Natural Heritage in South East Europe.

While the Regional Programme has a wider scope in the sphere of economic development, PCDK / LED focuses specifically on one aspect of the regional programme: heritage tourism. In this capacity, PCDK / LED aims to create conditions to facilitate social cohesion and economic development through utilising the potential of cultural and natural heritage for the region of Kosovo West.

Working with the six municipalities of Kosovo West (Pejë/Peć, Gjakovë/Đakovica, Klinë/Klina, Deçan/Deçane, Junik/Junik and Istog/Istok), the PCDK project highlights the importance of heritage protection, maintenance and management

with an integrated approach in the process of local economic development. This pilot project sets a feasible structure, methodology and examples of how, if managed effectively, heritage could be an asset of great benefit to local communities as part of a dynamic social and economic development process.

In preparation for the Regional Heritage Plan, the PCDK project acknowledges all heritage sites and assets in the region, based on the information provided by local and central authorities and institutions. These actions, however, have focused on attractions and features that are currently accessible and presentable to the general public and visitors for the purpose of heritage tourism.

This booklet has been prepared for stakeholders in the municipality of Deçan/Deçane to accompany the Regional Heritage Plan and its recommendations. It encourages the active involvement of local communities and stakeholders in the implementation of priority actions in the municipality, in coordination with the five other municipalities in the region, as well as with central authorities.

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Mosque in Deçan/Deçane



"Sheep Shearing ritual" traditional event, Isniq/Istinić village.



OBJECTIVES



Dečan/Visoki Dečani Monastery



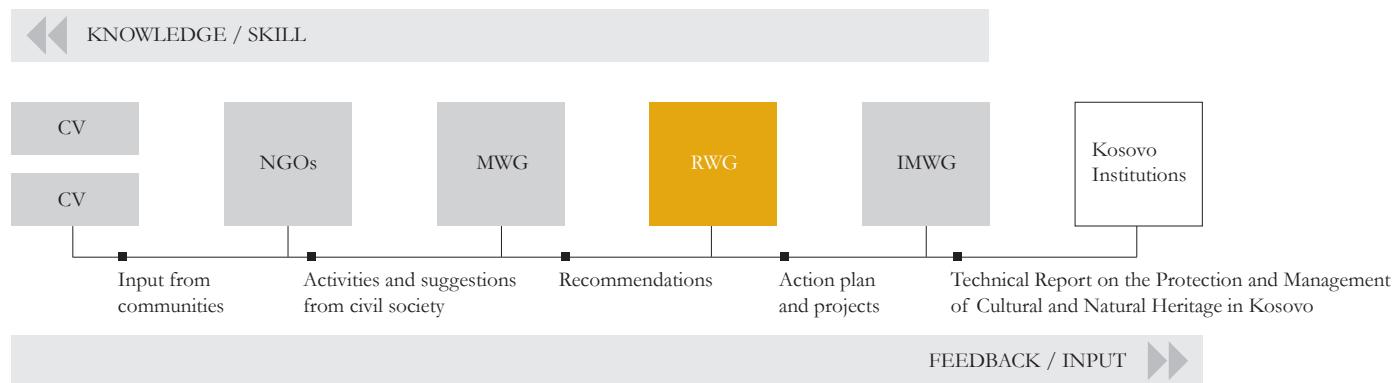
Local Economic Development activities and pilot actions focused on the:

- Assessment of the capacity of natural and cultural heritage of the region;
- Creation of a strategic planning instrument for heritage protection and revitalisation;
- Development of effective partnerships between different stakeholders and encouragement of public/private initiatives on heritage;
- Establishment of a community based regional coordination office for heritage management.

METHODOLOGY

The Heritage Plan is a dynamic process providing a strategic context for community actions with existing resources to ensure the greatest benefits to the local communities in the region. It aims to facilitate joint actions in the identification of priorities for the distribution of available funds for the conservation and promotion of heritage, in coordination with the central government, the municipalities and other interested parties.

To ensure active engagement of stakeholders, the PCDK project adopted the following methodology and workflow where there is continuous feedback and input from communities into policy-making, while regular knowledge and skill transfer is encouraged at the community level.



MUNICIPALITY OF DEÇAN/DEČANE



The municipality of Deçan/Dečane is located at the crossroads of Gjakovë/Đakovica, Junik and Pejë/Peć municipalities, running along the Strelc/Streoc Mountains on the borders with Albania and Montenegro. There are a total of 36 villages within the municipality, with an estimated population of around 40,000 inhabitants. The majority of the population is Kosovo Albanian, with minority groups of Bosnian (0.14%) and Egyptians and Roma (0.5%).

The characteristic mountainous landscape of Deçan/Dečane is shaped by the Prejlep/Prilep Mountain, Kozhnjer/Kožnjer reserve and the “Pines” Forest Park, and is an area well known for its rich biodiversity and rare species of flora.

Located within the municipality is the famous medieval Orthodox monastery complex of Visoki Dečani. Founded in the 14th century, the monastery plays an important role for Kosovo Serbs as well as for the Orthodox communities of the wider region as a pilgrimage site. In 2006 it was included in UNESCO’s List of World Heritage in Danger.

A number of stone tower residential buildings are also characteristic to the region (kullas), and have been preserved in a few villages of Deçan/Dečane municipality. The most representative of these, and those which are still inhabited, are the kullas of the Mazrekaj family in the village of Drenoc/Drenovac, the Demukaj family in Deçan/Dečane, and of the Kuklec and Osdautaj families in Isniq/Istinić. These hold valuable potential for rural tourism development. There are also two well-preserved mills - the Tahir Sadrias’ water mill in Isniq/Istinić, which is still in working order, and the Shabanaj mill in Deçan/Dečane which is occupied by the women’s association NGO Jeta and is used for selling traditional artisan handcrafts.

Weaving textiles on a loom is still one of the traditions practised by women in Deçan/Dečane municipality. The handmade handkerchiefs and scarves of silk and cotton could become a “brand” and attractive souvenir for visiting tourists.



*Entrance of the Osdautaj's tower,
Isniq/Istinić village*

INVOLVEMENT OF DEÇAN/ DEÇANE MUNICIPALITY IN LED ACTIVITIES

In the context of the PCDK project, a number of actions were carried out with the active involvement of local stakeholders in the municipality of Deçan/Deçane.

- Research on cultural and natural heritage assets and their heritage tourism capabilities were undertaken through surveys, interviews and semi-structured meetings with stakeholders, with the participation of:
 - UBO Research Company
 - NGO Agimi in Isniq/Istinić
 - Community volunteers
 - Regional Centre for Cultural Heritage

Pejë/Peć

- Municipality of Deçan/Deçane
- Pilot actions were implemented simultaneously in the six municipalities of Kosovo West. These consisted of three components which played a crucial role for community engagement during the preparation of the Regional Heritage Plan.



Shabanaj's mill



Mushkolaj's tower

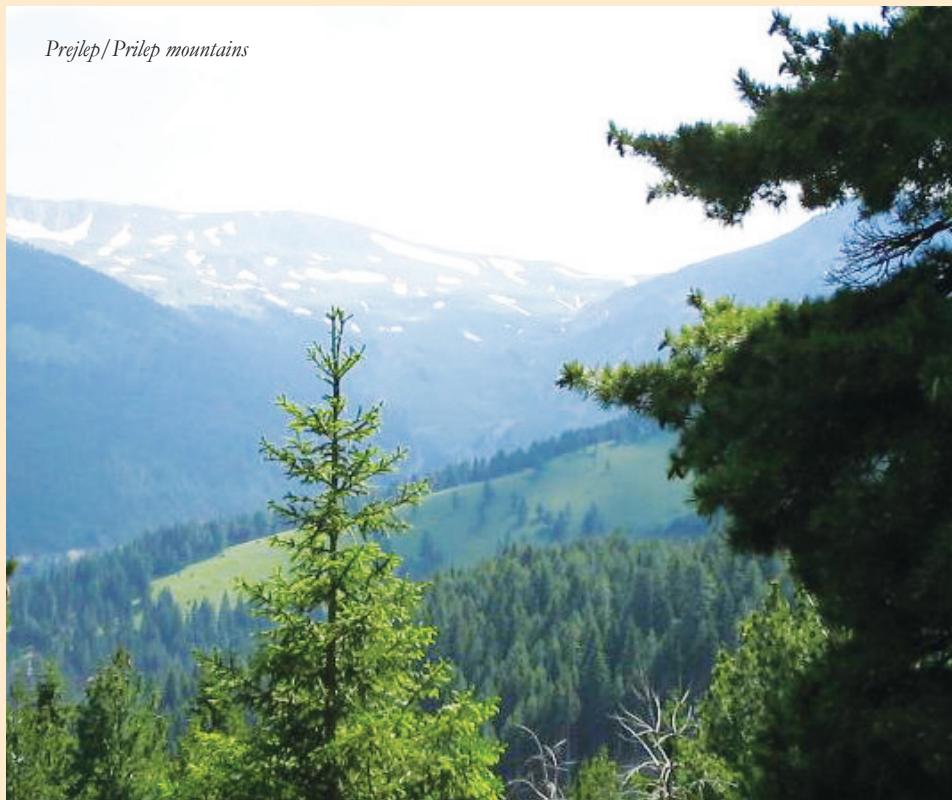
Activity	Local Stakeholders
A. IDENTIFICATION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSETS	
I. Data collection of selected natural and cultural heritage assets	
<i>Data collection of immovable cultural heritage assets</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visoki Dečani Monastery (Dečan/Dečane, 14th century) • Osdautaj's Tower (Isnqi/Istinić village, 19th century) • Kukleci's Tower (Isnqi/ Istinić village, 17-19th century) • Tahir Sadriaj's water mill (Isnqi/ Istinić village, 19th century) • Shabanaj's water mill (Dečan/Dečane, 19th century) • Demukaj's Tower (Dečan/Dečane, 19th century) • Mushkolaj's Tower (Dečan/Dečane, 18th century) • Binakaj's Tower (Drenoc/ Drenovac village, 19th century) • Mazrekaj's Tower (Drenoc/Drenovac village, 19th century) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional Centre for Cultural Heritage in Pejë/Peć - NGO Agimi, Dečan/Dečane - PCDK project team
<i>Data collection of intangible cultural heritage assets</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional weaving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGO Agimi
<i>Data collection of natural heritage assets</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kozhnjer/Koźnjer Mountain • Prejlep/Prilep Mountain • Dečan/Dečane pines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGO Agimi - Valmira Gashi (MESP)
II. Promotional material	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of Heritage Map of Dečan/Dečane • Design and production of information panels for each of the selected natural and cultural assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGO Agimi - Dečan/Dečane MWG member
B. INTANGIBLE HERITAGE PRACTICE	
I. Identification	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheep Shearing • Traditional weaving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGO Agimi
II. Organisation of event on intangible cultural heritage	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation of the Traditional Sheep Shearing Ritual (28th July 2011), held on Isnqi/Istinić mountain • "Sheep Shearing Ritual" - Documentary film 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGO Agimi
C. JOINT REGIONAL EVENTS ON CULTURAL TOURISM	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the "Chestnut Days" Regional Autumn Festival held in Drenoc/Drenovac village (25th November 2011). Dečan/Dečane municipality was represented by artisans, local traditional food producers and traditional musicians and performers. Chestnuts were prepared in different ways and served to visitors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGO Agimi - Artisans, producers, and performers of Dečan/Dečane traditional music - PCDK project team

Activity	Local stakeholders
Education and Awareness Raising	
Course design on Heritage and Diversity for elementary schools	Students, parents and teachers from the “Isa Boletini” elementary school, Deçan/Deçane municipality
HAIJE Tours - site visits	Students from “Isa Boletini” elementary school; groups from minority communities; people with special needs
Teacher Training on Heritage and Diversity	2 teachers from “Isa Boletini” elementary school
Institutional Capacity Development	
Study visits to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Belgium, Switzerland, Ireland, Turkey, Venice, Slovenia.	RWG and MWG representatives from Deçan/Deçane municipality, NGO Agimi
“Connections: Regional Conference on Intangible Cultural Heritage” March 2012, Prishtinë/Priština	NGO Agimi

Mushkolaj's tower



Prejlep/Prilep mountains



RECOMMENDED PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR DEÇAN/DEČANE MUNICIPALITY WITHIN REGIONAL HERITAGE PLAN 2012-2015

The following is a list of recommendations for actions in Deçan/Dečane that are in line with Regional Heritage Plan for Kosovo West 2012 - 2015 and with other municipalities in the region.

To raise awareness of and promote appreciation for heritage in Kosovo West

- Participate in regional annual festivals to raise awareness among the public and funds for activities such as the Chestnut Festival
- Support school-based awareness raising activities in the municipality
- Continue the organisation of sheep shearing ritual, with timely promotional materials
- Utilise the regional logo for branding
- Ensure regular waste collection and awareness-raising on a clean environment

To take necessary measures for the protection of heritage in Kosovo West

- Research and identify unique practices of traditions, games and heritage in Deçan/Dečane in order to document these according to guidelines
- Map the built, moveable, intangible and natural heritage assets with relevant information and regularly update the central authorities
- List the buildings at risk in the municipality

To develop and encourage thorough assessment, integrated project design and planning with sound heritage management plans in Kosovo West

- Identify necessary tourism service delivery standards and provide training to local service providers

- Have a clear and updated heritage tourism map of all assets that are ready for visitors
- Provide input to the annual regional report on 'State of the Heritage' in Kosovo West
- Ensure proper signage for sites that are ready for tourism
- Test cultural products and marketing styles in respective area of work in the region

To develop and coordinate appropriate management practices for the care of heritage in Kosovo West

- Organise capacity development for increased heritage management skills, including local guides
- Participate in regular meetings / forums to share developments and be informed about the regional programme
- Send locally produced brochures and promotional materials to Regional Coordination Office

Develop locally appropriate and sustainable heritage tourism initiatives in Kosovo West

- Identify a kulla structure in the municipality to participate in a Cultural Routes initiative
- Invest in one cultural product item based on local cultural heritage practices (sheep shearing) and identify another product
- Support Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) initiatives, including Bed & Breakfast
- Make Deçan/Dečane a tourist destination for initiatives in children's education and recreational activities
- Explore joint activities with the Visoki Dečani Monastery of Deçan/Dečane.

INVOLVED PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Main partners

Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports

Municipality of Deçan/Deçane

NGOs: Ship, Agimi, Jeta, Handikos, Orta, Hunting Association

Regional Working Group members

Avdyl Hoxha, Director of the Regional Centre for Cultural Heritage - Pejë/Peć

• Osman Gojani, Director of the Regional Centre for Cultural Heritage - Gjakovë/Đakovica • Shpresa Gjonbalaj, Director of Cultural Department - Pejë/Peć municipality

• Engjëll Berisha, Director of the Library - Gjakovë/Đakovica municipality • Musa Kaliqani, Head of Economic Department

- Istog/Istok municipality • Hajdin Morina, Education officer - Klinë/Klina municipality • Nimon Tofaj, Vice Mayor of Junik/Junik municipality • Shkëlzen Shehu, Urbanism Department - Deçan/Deçane municipality • Kujtim Rrahmani, NGO Arteza - Gjakovë/Đakovica • Shasimete Selimaj, NGO 7 Shtatori - Pejë/Peć • Rexhep Maksutaj, NGO Agimi - Deçan/Deçane

Municipal Working Group members Deçan/Deçane

Mirsat Nimanaj • Economy and Development Department - Deçan/Deçane • Shkëlzen Shehu, Urbanism Department - Deçan/Deçane • Zelfije Qorraj, Cultural

Heritage representative - Deçan/Deçane • Adem Lushaj, NGO Ship - Deçan/Deçane • Rexhep Maksutaj, NGO Agimi - Deçan/Deçane • Safete Gacaferi, NGO Jeta - Deçan/Deçane • Sabrije Zeqaj, NGO Handikos - Deçan/Deçane • Berat Osdautaj, NGO Orta - Deçan/Deçane • Jolanda Gacaferi, Student representative, NGO Jeta - Deçan/Deçane • Bajram Çeku, Agriculture Department - Deçan/Deçane • Avdullah Lata, Education Department - Deçan/Deçane • Avdyl Dautaj, Museum Supervisor - Deçan/Deçane • Beqir Tahirsylaj, Hunting Association - Deçan/Deçane

**Experts, representatives of institutions/
authorities, and private companies:**

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- Ireland • Liam Scott, Heritage Council
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• Zekë Çeku, freelance consultant on Tourism
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of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports

• Valmira Gashi, expert from the Ministry of
Environment and Spatial Planning • Arsim
Mulhaxha, representative from Regional
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Heritage Centre - Gjakovë/ Đakovica •
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