



EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION
LANDSCAPE AWARD OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

7th Session – 2020-2021

APPLICATION FORM

Presentation

The European Landscape Convention aims to promote the protection, management and planning of landscapes and to bring together European co-operation in this field. It is the first international treaty exclusively devoted to all dimensions of European landscape. Taking into account the landscape, natural and cultural values of the territory, it contributes to promoting the quality of life and well-being of Europeans.

The Resolution on the Rules governing the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008 at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, draws attention to the fact that Article 11 of the Convention institutes the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe and that it is in keeping with the work carried out by the Council of Europe concerning human rights, democracy and sustainable development. It effectively promotes the territorial dimension of human rights and democracy by acknowledging the importance of measures taken to improve the landscape for people's living conditions.

Opened to the Parties to the Convention, the Award is intended to raise civil society's awareness of the value of landscapes, of their role and of changes to them. Its objective is to reward exemplary practical initiatives aimed at successful landscape quality objectives on the territories of the Parties to the Convention. The Award is conferred every two years and the files presenting applications must reach the Secretariat General of the Council of Europe.

At its meeting held in Strasbourg on 28-29 April 2008, the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP) decided that applications should be submitted to the Council of Europe Secretariat through the Permanent Representations of the Parties to the Convention.

*We would be very grateful if you could send no later than **30 January 2021** the following elements of the candidature file (20 pages maximum) established for your country on the basis of the proposals forwarded to you by the Ministries:*

- by E-mail, the Application form completed to: maguelonne.dejeant-pons@coe.int; susan.moller@coe.int;*
- by post, a copy of the Application form completed together with a CD-Rom, DVD or USB key, containing the all the additional material to: Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons, Executive Secretary of the European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe, Agora (A4-15V), F- 67075 STRASBOURG Cedex.*

*

*** * *

Please note that:

- participation to the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe is only open to local and regional authorities and their groupings and non-governmental organisations, as stated in the Resolution CM/Res (2008)3, Appendix, Article 2;*
- the application form must be completed in all its parts, in one of the two official languages of the Council of Europe (English or French);*
- the materials submitted must be copyright-free, for use by the Council of Europe in communications aimed at promoting the Award or any other publications or activities relating to the Convention. The Council of Europe undertakes to cite the authors' names;*
- files that are incomplete or fail to comply with the rules will not be taken into consideration.*

*For further information please visit the Landscape Award section of the Council of Europe website: www.coe.int/EuropeanLandscapeConvention
www.coe.int/en/web/landscape/landscape-award*

*

I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

1. State	Slovenia
Represented by	Ms Jelena Hladnik
<i>Address:</i>	Ministry of the environment and spatial planning Environment directorate Dunajska 47, 1000 Ljubljana
<i>Telephone:</i>	+386 1 478 7481
<i>E-mail:</i>	jelena.hladnik@gov.si
2. Applicant	Community of Brda – Institute for Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport Brda
<i>Name of the local, regional authority(ies) or NGO(s)</i>	
Represented by	Ms Tina Novak Samec
<i>Address:</i>	Trg 25. Maja 2 5212 Dobrovo Slovenija
<i>Telephone:</i>	+ 386 820 55 422
<i>E-mail:</i>	tina.novak.samec@brda.si

II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT

3. Name of the Project

Brda Tourist Destination Development

4. Location of the Project

Brda

5. Summary of the Project (10-12 lines)

The Municipality of Brda covers two thirds of the entire terraced landscape that stretches in western Slovenia between the River Soča, Mounts Sabotin and Korada and the Friulian plain. The pursuit to gain the best winegrowing and fruit growing produce resulted in terrace building on the slopes of the hills. It has a long history and tradition which continues to be preserved to this day and is promoted by a responsible spatial planning policy by the Municipality. Its focus is to ensure the authenticity of the terraced landscape as well as the traditional and predominantly manual agricultural work by integrating the old with the new. The exceptional landscape, its remarkable wines and fruits, especially cherries, as well as the tradition which is linked to cultivation go hand in hand with the tourist destination management, which is oriented especially towards experiencing the contact with the area and its people. It places at the forefront the exceptional value of the landscape, the intergenerational cooperation on farms, product development that are based on the products born of the soil: wine, fruit and olive trees. The autochthonous aspect of the landscape is also preserved with the development of boutique tourism which values high quality products that are drawing attention to themselves at awards all over the world.

6. **Photo representing the Project** (*high definition – JPEG 350 dpi*) and name of the author of the photo please



Brda – Terraced landscape
Author: Damijan Simčič – Zoso Photography

7. **Website of the Project** (*if exists*)

www.brda.si

III. CONTENT OF THE PROJECT

8. **Start of the Project** month year
The project must have been completed at least three years previously

9. **Partners**

Municipality of Brda

10. Financing bodies

Municipality of Brda
EU funds (Interreg, LEADER)
State budget (Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Ministry of Infrastructure, The Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Culture)

11. Central aims of the Project

The project's first and foremost aim was to give support to the Municipality's primary activity, i.e., agriculture. By developing its recognition, the destination has come full circle: it has paved the way to the selling of local products (wine, cherries, dried fruit, liquor, marmalades and olive oil), which consequently created a future to the intergenerational farms that are typical for this area. At the same time, recognition imposed the restoration of agricultural areas, which have throughout the centuries always maintained a terraced appearance, as this was the only effective method of land use. The ever-growing number of tourist visits also required restoration works on important infrastructural elements and a rearrangement of the appearance of villages (road and sewerage systems, cultural heritage – Dobrovo Castle, Vipolže Villa and the Medieval village of Šmartno). Furthermore, tourism development laid its foundation on the historical trade connections, thanks to the Alps-Adriatic Centre for Cross-Border Co-operation. Gradually, the growing recognition led to an enhancement of the tourist offer: agricultural products were quickly joined by overnight accommodations (in two decades, the number of beds increased from just a few in 1994 to over 700 scattered around the entire destination), various foodservices (from inns, pubs, tasting rooms to restaurants) and other complementary and service activities.

12. Outcome

The outcome of the Brda tourist destination development can be seen on several areas:

- the restoration and maintenance of the terraced agricultural landscape

European incentives enabled the farmers to restore old vineyards and orchards and modernize the terraces. With the help of the agricultural advisory service, they selected the most suitable crops, paying particular attention to the autochthonous varieties. This enabled the conservation of the typical terraced landscape characterized by a predominantly manual cultivation method. As a result, the landscape gained both a modern and an autochthonous aspect.

- the conservation of autochthonous varieties (rebula, olive trees, cherry trees)

The locals and the providers built the landscape's recognition on the value of autochthony. Hence, the main roles were taken by the rebula, olive oils and cherries. The rebula, once a promising bulb, has throughout the decades flourished thanks to the determination of local winemakers and the Masterclass - Brda Home of Rebula, placing the territory of Brda on the

world wine map. After the frost of 1929, olive growing has seen a revival fifty years later, and an expansion in the last decade. Both the rebula and olive oils were awarded at the most prestigious competitions from all over the world.

- olive growing revival

The revived olive growing story in Brda has had its milestones at the turn of the millennium with the foundation of the olive growers' association and, five years later, with the European project (**UELIJE**) which enabled to register the autochthonous varieties and purchase an oil press. The result of the first pioneers, among which it is worth mentioning Bruno Podveršič, is the appreciation of olive growing as an important complementary offer in Brda. From scarcely 100 trees in the mid-seventies, olive growing has become so popular that nowadays we can find over 100,000 trees in the area. Olive growing is attracting a growing number of young people. Hence, the areas in Brda, which were once covered with olive groves, are now featuring restored olive groves, thus recreating the landscape's former appearance.

- **Cherry festival**

It is the festival of all festivals and the Municipal holiday of Brda. Cherries represented the farmer's first income of the season. In the past they were sold (according to the legend quoted by the historian Štefan Kocijančič in 1853) even in Imperial Russia. To this day they represent an important source of income to the farms of Brda. The cherry festival began as an homage to the first fruit of the season, but it quickly established itself as an important event during which the local fruit growers sell a large portion of their products at their homesteads. As the result of the growing demand and supply, the local farmers have gathered in a common Fruit Growers Association of Brda and began cultivating a common brand name.

- **the beginning of the tourist offer development (agrotourism, hotels)**

The nineties represented a milestone in the development of Brda's tourist offer. In Medana, the greatest concentration of large landowners, an association was born which gathered the so-called young acquirers (Simčič, Ščurek, Dolfo...). Gradually, agrotourism also began to develop, firstly in the remote border village of Breg near Golo Brdo. As the recognition of Brda and its products grew over the years, so did the demand for beds and dining facilities. This stimulated the locals (with the support of EU funds as well) to integrate the offer with dining, accommodation and other complementary services. Nowadays these services are scattered in almost every single village and include entire families.

- **foundation of the Tourist Information Center and the Institute for Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport Brda, corporate image of stalls and promotional material**

The diverse supply, numerous promotional activities and visits to Italy, the Austrian Carinthia and twinned municipalities required an organizational unit that would serve as the backbone to all these activities and at the same time give the tourists information about what Brda has to offer. Thus, in 2000 the Tourist information Center was opened and, 10 years later, its upgrade the Institute for Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport Brda. This "backbone" became the link between the suppliers. It also enabled to make uniform the promotional material, the labelling system and signposts (Goriška brda wine road) as well as the stands, which resulted in a steady growth of visits. If in 2010 Brda registered a little over 15 thousand overnight stays, 4 years later, this number increased by 60 percent.

- **renovation of Dobrovo Castle, the medieval village of Šmartno, Vipolže Villa**

Brda's three main historical tourist sites. The Dobrovo Castle was renovated at the end of the

80's. Since the inauguration, its rooms have been adorned with the permanent exhibition dedicated to Zoran Mušič. The Castle is one of the most visited in the Goriška Region. Apart from the existing content, the premise is being upgraded with others, as for example the opening of the Rebula Center and in the Bagueri Cellar in the facility's basement. The exceptional view on Brda's terraced landscape and its medieval spirit attracted a growing number of visitors to the medieval village of Šmartno, registered as a cultural monument of local importance. This required a renovation of its center, which was realized with European funds. After the renovation, many suppliers recognised its opportunity, hence you can find in Šmartno a family hotel, private boutique accommodations, dining facilities, local products suppliers (natural cosmetics, ceramics), a museum exhibition, the House of Culture, a gallery, the premises of Brda's cultural associations etc. Šmartno has also become the site of various events that value local products. The Vipolže Villa (the only cultural monument of national value in the wider area) has established itself after the renovation as the Municipality's main multicultural and business centre. Situated in the heart of the terraced landscape, it is the only protocol premise in this part of Slovenia. This is where events on the local and international level take place, all of which integrate local suppliers. Furthermore, this is an incentive to further upgrade and optimise the quality of the local supply. The Dobrovo Castle and Vipolže Villa are also official marriage venues. Thus, Brda has become renowned worldwide as one of the most beautiful wedding destinations.

- worldwide recognition of the area's uniqueness

The picture-perfect landscape, the mineral content of the *opoka* soil, the resilient and loving nature of the locals have created through the years a renowned and inviting combination. Brda has been featured in the most prominent media, as for instance CNN ("11 great wine regions you've probably never heard of"), or The New York Times, Forbes, The Guardian and many others. This is the result of promotional activities of single winemakers and the Municipality's Institute for Tourism, which have in recent years agreed on how unique the territory on which they create their products is. As a result, the event Masterclass Brda Home of Rebula was created, which sparked an immense worldwide recognition of this cross-border territory.

IV. RESPECT OF THE CRITERIA OF THE ATTRIBUTION OF THE AWARD

13. Sustainable territorial development

Is the project part of a sustainable development policy?

Does it contribute to the enhancement of environmental, social, economic, cultural or aesthetic values of the landscape? How?

Has it successfully countered or posed a remedy to any pre-existing environmental damage or urban blight? How?

Brda's tourist destination development project is part of the Municipality's sustainable development policy. Its aim is in fact a long-term reinforcement of the distinctive characteristics of the terraced landscape through the development of an autochthonous, sustainable, green and ecologically oriented offer of this area. The tourist destination development has been from day one envisaged as a support to the main economic activity: agriculture i.e., winegrowing, fruit growing and later also olive growing. The landscape's values (environmental, cultural and aesthetic) are a composing part of the promotional activities carried out by the Institute for Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport Brda. Its title already illustrates the multidisciplinary nature of its work. Brda's landscape is composed of a multitude of experiences, picturesque views, local hospitality, high quality products grown on its soil (marl - opoka), natural and cultural jewels that represent the cherry on top of its entire itinerary. The destination's tourist development has combined all these values into a common offer; the combination has proven to be a successful tourist policy.

Brda has never seen any environmental or urban damage, as the local farmer has always been conscious and respectful towards nature. The concern for posterity has always been at the forefront, especially the awareness that nature/agriculture is a factory without a roof that demands deep respect. Consequently, we can see that most farmers are involved in nature-friendly growing methods and that they take into account the sustainable guidelines of the agricultural advisory services. The sustainable guidelines are also followed by the accommodation and dining suppliers. Since 2016 the destination has been part of the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism; through its policies it thus stimulates the suppliers towards environmentally-friendly actions. In 2016 the destination was awarded the silver label, whereas in 2019 the golden Green Destination label. In 2019 and 2020 it was enlisted among the 100 most green and sustainable destinations in the world. A growing number of our suppliers have environmental and eco labels. In 2019 the destination was proclaimed the best rural community in Slovenia, whereas in the year 2020 we are the Slovenian candidate for the best EU rural community.

14. Exemplary value

Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?

Which are the good practices that it implemented?

Brda's tourist destination development project is a successful combination of cross-border cooperation, effective planning, absorption of EU funds and attention to the needs of the locals – the suppliers in the local area. Alongside a growing recognition of the winegrowers, fruit growers, olive growers and other suppliers, the destination has arranged an adequate sewerage system and brought together various actors that together created a winning combination.

As examples of good practice, we would like to highlight the projects Open Cellars and Open Homesteads, the before mentioned Masterclass - Brda Home of Rebula, Brda and Wine and the Cherry Festival.

Open Cellars is an event during which winegrowers open their cellars, while visitors travel along the entire destination tasting wines. It is a group action which proves that there's strength in numbers. The same can be said about the project Masterclass Brda Home of Rebula, which was born on the initiative of local Slovene and Italian winegrowers to capture the attention and invite the most renowned enogastronomic media to learn about the territory that is home to the rebula.

Open Homesteads is an upgrade to the Open Cellars project. It is a list of cellars, dining and other suppliers where visitors can come without previous notice all year round. The list is updated every two months from March to November and it was upgraded by offering the Hop on shuttle. The project Brda and Wine is enogastronomic in nature and it includes all the best Brda has to offer; gastronomy, wine and local products, available to the visitors to taste by purchasing a ticket to the festival that takes place in the medieval village of Šmartno.

As already mentioned in the application, the Cherry Festival is the most important event in Brda. It is a holiday that remembers the road once traveled by the cherries. The Festival invites all the twinned municipalities, it is also very popular with visitors from the Austrian Carinthia, where the Municipality of Brda previously arranges mini cherry festivals.

15. Public participation

Does the project actively encourage the public's participation in the decision-making process? How?

Is the project in line with the wider policies implemented by national, regional or local authorities?

Brda's tourist destination development has been designed from the get go according to the bottom-up approach, thus the public/local inhabitants are tightly intertwined into the development of the destination, the tourist offers. Thanks to the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism the project has been over the past years also included into wider national politics. The development of the tourist offer has had a strong impact on this area, which is primarily agricultural and without any industry, in the sense of promoting the activities of younger generations in their local environment and in creating green jobs. The Municipality's task and, consequently, the task of the Institute for Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport Brda was solely to identify the needs of the local suppliers, offer them support and gather them into successful promotional stories. Furthermore, to modernize the infrastructure and create favorable conditions that would benefit not only the primary economic sector (agriculture, tourism), but also the development of the accompanying entrepreneurship and artisanship (currently a new small business area is in construction). The locals are also included into the local politics' decision-making process through local counsellors, who decide on the development of new projects in the Municipality of Brda and approve all the strategies.

16. Awareness-raising

Is the project effectively increasing public awareness of the importance of landscape in terms of human development, consolidation of European identity, or individual and collective well-being? How?

Brda's tourist destination development project most definitely raises public awareness on the importance of landscape in the sense of human development, strengthening of a European identity and also the individual and collective prosperity. It is in fact a project that strengthens the importance of a terraced landscapes that serves as the base for local supply and is characterized by its cross-border nature, interculturalism and European values, such as cooperation and the creation of common projects. Raising public awareness is carried out through various local events (Brda and Wine, Cherry Festival, St. Martin's Day), events on the international level (Masterclass Brda Home of Rebula, Eco Marathon, MTB Marathon and Castles in the Arias), as well as projects that are being realized in cooperation with national universities and world-renowned architects. The project also illustrates to the public that cooperation is of key importance for development and that a landscape in which autochthonous elements are preserved is inviting for visitors from near and far. Lastly, the importance of preserving the identity of a landscape is spread among the locals also through numerous local associations, as the Fruit Growers, Olive Growers and Beekeepers Associations of Brda, the Brda Wine Consortium and the Klet Brda cooperative wine cellar which includes over 400 members.

V. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Together with the printed version of the Application form, additional material in digital format should be included in one CD-Rom, DVD or USB key, and returned by post or courier to:

Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons

Executive Secretary of the European Landscape Convention

Head of Division, Agora (A4-15V), Council of Europe

F-67075 STRASBOURG, Cedex

Tel: +33 (0) 3 88 41 23 98

E-mail: maguelonne.dejeant-pons@coe.int

- Text (20 pages max.): *PDF format*
- Photos (10 max.): *JPEG 350 dpi high definition*
- Posters (2 max.): *PDF format high definition or JPEG 350 dpi high definition*
- Video (15 min max.): *mpeg 2 format - It is recommended to present a video (even of amateur quality).*

*