

PROJECT SUMMARY

FIELD	TOURISM DEVELOPMENT
Project Title	Krusevo and Elbasan – Journey in Nature and Adventure
Type of Contract/Category	Grant contract
IPA Component/ (national or regional) Programming year	Cross-border Programme the Republic of North Macedonia - Republic of Albania under the Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) allocations for 2022
Lead applicant and co-applicants	<u>Lead applicant:</u> Municipality of Krusevo <u>Co – applicants:</u> Municipality of Elbasan) Center for Sustainable Development ALKA Tjeter Vizion TVO
Context/background	<p>The Municipalities of Krusevo (North Macedonia) and Elbasan (Albania) cooperated on the IPA CBC Project "Krusevo and Elbasan – Acknowledged Cross-Border Tourist Destination" (Jan 2022 – Jun 2024), enhancing tourism infrastructure, creating a joint tourism package, and boosting marketing and local capacities. They aim to establish Krusevo and Elbasan as a top sustainable adventure tourism destination by leveraging cultural and natural assets. Krusevo, known for its cultural heritage and Meckin Kamen paragliding site, will host the World Paragliding Cup in 2026, while Elbasan is developing Funar Lakes for hiking, biking, and kayaking.</p> <p>The project addresses challenges like infrastructure gaps, skills development, marketing, and networking through integrated investments, training, and promotion to grow as a sustainable cross-border tourism destination.</p>
Abstract (short project summary)	<p>The project aims to promote sustainable tourism and economic growth in Krusevo and Elbasan by enhancing infrastructure, improving local capacities, and strengthening cross-border cooperation. Key developments include a paragliding site and sports field in Krusevo, and an adventure park and signposted paths in Elbasan, all aimed at attracting tourists and sports enthusiasts. Capacity-building activities will train local entrepreneurs in sustainable practices, while a cross-border network will foster collaboration among stakeholders through joint planning and marketing initiatives. Promotional efforts, such as social media and press campaigns, will boost regional visibility. The project is expected to improve tourism infrastructure, strengthen local stakeholder capacities, enhance cross-border collaboration, and increase regional visibility, benefiting residents, entrepreneurs, and providing sustainable economic growth.</p>
Final beneficiary	<p>Local Communities - Residents of Krusevo and Elbasan regions will experience improved local economies, job creation, and enhanced quality of life through increased tourism and related services.</p> <p>Tourism and Hospitality Sector - Local businesses, such as hotels, guest houses, restaurants, and coffee bars, will benefit from increased visitor numbers and revenue.</p>

	<p>Outdoor Sports and Tourism Enthusiasts - Members of paragliding, hiking, and cycling clubs and associations who will have access to improved facilities and opportunities for recreational activities.</p> <p>Local Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses - Business owners in the tourism sector will gain knowledge and skills in sustainable practices, leading to more resilient and eco-friendly operations.</p>
Action location/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Macedonia, Krusevo Municipality – Krusevo town • Albania, Municipality of Elbasan
Objectives	<p>Overall objective: To foster sustainable tourism development practices and socio-economic growth in the Krusevo and Elbasan cross-border region.</p> <p>Specific objective 1: Improved tourism small infrastructure in the Krusevo and Elbasan region, attracting more visitors and supporting the economic growth of local businesses.</p> <p>Specific objective 2: Enhance capacities and performance of local stakeholders and promote networking initiatives for effective cross-border tourism cooperation.</p>
Activities	<p>Tourism Infrastructure Improvements in Krusevo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct a dedicated paragliding take-off site (approx. 2000 m²). • Develop Advanced Sports Field and Event Space at Gumenje Sports and Recreation Center. <p>Tourism Infrastructure Improvements in Funar, Elbasan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an Adventure Park and an approaching parking site near the tourism information point. • Signpost paths to the Dopaj Canyons. <p>Capacity Building for Local Entrepreneurs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training and support for local entrepreneurs and small business owners on sustainable, circular, and low-waste tourism practices. <p>Establishing a Regional Cross-Border Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft a Memorandum of Cooperation for the network, conduct consultations with stakeholders, organize a signing ceremony to formalize stakeholder commitment as well organize round table discussions for joint design offers, planning sports or cultural events, and developing collaborative approaches. • Develop communication tools and channels such as social media groups to maintain engagement among network members. <p>Visibility and Promotional Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise one-day promotional events highlighting local attractions and activities. • Launch and manage social media campaigns on Facebook and Instagram targeting regional and wider audiences. • Organise FAM tours for journalists, bloggers, and influencers to experience Krusevo and Elbasan attractions and generate media coverage to attract visitors.
Impact/ Output/ Result	<p>Impact: To foster sustainable tourism development practices and socio-economic growth in the Krusevo and Elbasan cross-border region.</p> <p>Outcome 1: Improved tourism infrastructure in the Krusevo and Elbasan region, attracting more visitors and supporting the economic growth of local businesses.</p>

	<p>Expected outputs related to outcome 1:</p> <p>Op1.Tourism Infrastructure Improvements in Krusevo (expanding the paragliding success)</p> <p>*Establish a dedicated, safe, and accessible new paragliding take-off site for paragliding competitors and enthusiasts (app. 2000m2)</p> <p>*Advanced Sports Field and Event Space at Gumenje Sports and Recreation Center in Krusevo: urban landscaping of part of sports-recreational centre Gumenje, with pedestrian walking-running paths and access paths, horticultural arrangement, installation of urban furniture (trash bins, benches, candelabra, panels, fountain), installed smart LED lighting (renewed newly arranged space in the block, and refurbishment of sports fields and its transformation into a space for events, outdoors festivals, etc.)</p> <p>Op2.Tourism Infrastructure Improvements in Funar, Elbasan.</p> <p>* Development of Adventure Park, zone for outdoor activities; Approaching parking site near Tourism info point in Funar.</p> <p>* Signposting of the paths to the Dopaj canyons.</p> <p>Op6. Increased visibility and attractiveness of the tourism potential of the Krusevo and Elbasan region.</p> <p>Outcome 2: Enhanced capacities and performance of local stakeholders and promotion of networking initiatives for effective cross-border tourism cooperation.</p> <p>Expected outputs related to outcome 2:</p> <p>Op3. Increased knowledge and skills among local entrepreneurs and small business owners on sustainable and eco-tourism practices, circular economy principles, and low-waste tourism, enabling them to implement sustainable practices in their operations.</p> <p>Op4. Establish a regional cross-border network and create a platform for regular consultations and collaborations among key tourism development stakeholders.</p> <p>Op5. Development and execution of marketing campaigns targeting regional markets.</p>
Facts & Figures	<p>The key facts & figures relevant to the project:</p> <p>Facts: Project duration: 32 months Project start date: 01.11.2025 Project end date: 30.06.2028</p> <p>Figures: Total cost of the action: 833,204.60 € EU contribution: 708,223.91€ EU contribution percentage: 85%</p>
Final useful footnotes	<p>Contacts Elizabeta Gjorgjevska, ALKA, elizabeta.gj@alka.org.mk, 075317070 Tatjana Hasanu, Krusevo, tatjana_has@yahoo.com, 075484605</p>