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# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## Partner country

Republic of North Macedonia

## Contracting authority

Project ALTERTRIP, Association of persons with physical disabilities of Bitola, Demir Hisar and Resen - MOBILNOST Bitola

## Country background

Republic of North Macedonia is a country in Southeast Europe. It gained independence in 1991 as one of the successor states of Yugoslavia. Republic of North Macedonia is a landlocked with total area of 25,713 km2. It lies between latitudes 40° and 43° N, and mostly between longitudes 20° and 23° E (a small area lies east of 23°). Republic of North Macedonia has some 748 km of boundaries, shared with Serbia (62 km) to the north, Kosovo (159) to the northwest, Bulgaria (148 km) to the east, Greece (228 km) to the south, and Albania (151 km) to the west. It constitutes approximately the northern third of the larger geographical region of Macedonia. Skopje, the capital and largest city, is home to a quarter of the country's 2.08 million population. The majority of the residents are ethnic Macedonians, a South Slavic people. Albanians form a significant minority at around 25%, followed by Turks, Romani, Serbs, Bosniaks, and Aromanians.

Map

Description automatically generatedProject ALTERTRIP will be implemented in Pelagonia Statistical Region. The Pelagonia Statistical Region is one of eight statistical regions of the Republic North Macedonia. It is located in southwestern part of the country along the eponymous plain. It borders Greece and Albania. Internally, it borders the Southwestern and Vardar statistical regions.

Pelagonia statistical region is divided into 9 municipalities: Bitola, Demir Hisar, Dolneni, Krivogaštani, Kruševo, Mogila, Novaci, Prilep, Resen

Project ALTERTRIP will be managed from Bitola, located in the Pelagonia Statistical Region. Bitola is a municipality in the southern part of the Republic of North Macedonia. Bitola is also the name of the city where the municipal seat is found. The population of the municipality is 105,644 according to the last national census in 2002. The majority in the municipality is represented by the Macedonians - 94,538, followed by the Albanians - 4,219, Romani - 2,619, Turks - 1,866, Bosniaks - 21, Serbs - 550, Vlachs - 1,271. A further 560 citizens declare other ethnicities.

## Current situation in the sector

Tourism today is an extremely important social phenomenon that mobilizes millions of people around the world, especially in Europe, constituting not only a driver of economic development but also a critical element in improving knowledge, communication and the degree of relationship and respect between citizens of different countries. Within the European social model, tourism can be seen as a social good that should be available to all citizens, without the exclusion of any group of people, regardless of their personal, social, economic or other life circumstances.

One of the key areas where the tourism sector in Europe can increase its offerings of sustainable and higher quality products and services, with greater value for customers, is by making tourism offers and services "accessible for all". This objective, when pursued effectively by destinations and businesses, can improve not only the national but mostly the regional and local tourism sector’s competitiveness and lead to increased market share. In particular, the provision of accessible tourism products and services opens up the market to the growing numbers of older visitors, disabled persons, people with long-term health conditions and families.

In parallel to the demand for Accessible Tourism, it was calculated that the market size in Europe was around 780 milion trips in 2012. Yet the demand far outweighs the present market supply, creating opportunity for “early adopters”, relative to the inbound tourism market.

Looking at the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, accessibility, participation and equality are three of the eight priority areas for the EU. Those three areas aim to make goods and services accessible to people with disabilities, allow them to enjoy all benefits of an EU citizenship, combat discrimination and promote equal opportunities. Making constant improvements in these areas will enable full and effective participation. This signals the political imperative of businesses enabling disabled citizens in the EU to participate fully in tourism, thereby allowing them to exercise their rights to choose travel destinations, without hindrance.

Through the analysis of the needs expressed by tourists with disabilities and access requirements, there is a clear and growing demand for accessible tourism products and services. This fact is confirmed by a growing awareness on the part of some tourism operators who are providing some of the new offers to cater for the demand coming from seniors and the segment of people with disabilities.

"Accessibility", aside from the dimension of physical access, also encompasses the dimension of functionality, communication and it is related directly to autonomy and safety. The CB area combines favourable natural resources, climate conditions, and cultural assets providing opportunities for sustainable development of tourism, with respect to the environment.

However, accessibility problems create difficulties for tourists with disabilities to enjoy equal benefits and services.

Touristic services are not well organized for groups with special interests, while joint efforts to create attractive itineraries and common branding are missing. Touristic facilities and their management need to be improved substantially. Access to tourist sites needs to be extended together with the development of the new forms of tourism products. Even though tourism is a growing sector in the Pelagonia region of the Republic of North Macedonia, the area itself is not promoted as a popular tourism destination. On the other hand, there is an untapped potential and underestimation of niche tourism prospects, such as tourism for people with disabilities etc. Such potential is significantly correlated with the urgent need to use opportunities that the cross-border region has to present. Although some important steps have been taken in recent years concerning legal and institutional framework, much remains to be done for making a destination truly accessible, attractive to national and international customers who today still prefer destinations most tested from the accessibility point of view. The actions taken by the central government and local / regional authorities are usually not part of a strategic plan to improve services for people with disabilities, as potential consumers of the tourism product, but are mostly confined only to few private initiatives.

# OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

## Overall objective

The overall objective of the project ALTERTRIP of which this contract will be a part is as follows:

To motivate transformation of a Cross-border Region between the Republic of North Macedonia and Greece (CB area) into an accessible and inclusive tourist destination and support the sustainable development of heritage tourism in the CB area. There as contributing to the development of a CB Partnership, with the involvement and participation of the various agents of the tourist value chain that provide quality services to tourists with special needs.

The project aims to:

* exchange and import know-how and good practices related to the improvement of the accessibility of cultural and natural heritage structures
* improve the accessibility and visit ability of selected cultural and natural heritage assets in the CB area
* improve the capacity of authorities responsible for the management of cultural and natural heritage assets, and of professionals from the tourist field (guides, travel and event agents, transportation services) in better addressing the needs of senior and accessible tourism (capacity building activities)
* develop a platform at which all disabled and elderly visitors would be able to design their trip to the CB area and be able through this platform (G.I.S.) to accomplish all the arrangements for their vacation trip.
* collect data related to the accessibility and friendliness to disabled and elderly visitors of key cultural and natural assets of the CB area (field studies)
* improve the visibility of cultural and natural heritage assets that are accessible and friendly to all, through electronic and physical media, campaigns, etc. and by producing an informative guide for all visitors with useful information for the elderly and the disabled (branding & promotion);
* conduct a joint strategic planning study towards branding the CB area as an international tourist destination for elderly and disabled, of high quality at low to medium cost

The projects' outputs are clearly linked between project’s objectives. The proposed intervention focuses on the competence gap on accessible tourism among SMEs in the tourism sector by offering a comprehensive training in the fields of accessible tourism, innovation and sustainable development of natural and cultural heritage areas.

The main desired outputs of ALTER TRIP are:

* Training of all stakeholders on issues such as offering services to persons with disabilities
* Pilot Studies for the development of "accessibility" at selected heritage attractions on both sides, including light structural interventions (e.g. placement of ramps, printed guides in braille etc).
* An Accessible Web Portal will be developed for communication and networking reasons, and also will serve as a tool platform where all potential disabled and elderly visitors would be able to design their trip to the CB area.
* At least 3 best practices of accessible tourism will be implemented in CB area.
* A participation to an International Tourism Fare
* An Accessibility Guide, which shall provide useful instructions for the stakeholders as regards the accessibility of infrastructure and their services
* A Guide for the actions relevant to information, publicity, and promotion of accessibility, and of the overall project
* Creation of a network among all stakeholders who shall communicate and continuously provide feedback to the digital platform
* Creation of new jobs

The main benefit resulting from project’s implementation is twofold: On the one hand improve attractiveness of the touristic product by creating a diversified all-season product in CB area focusing on the comparative advantages of rural areas attracting persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility in general and their families.

In parallel, the above will facilitate the partnership to address the competence gap on accessible tourism among SMEs in the tourism sector by offering a comprehensive training in the fields of accessible tourism, innovation and sustainable development of natural and cultural heritage areas, support entrepreneurship and increase the skills together with the public sector can develop further the project idea with enormous benefits for all, providing the relevant added value to the area.

The project ALTERTRIP is funded by the grant of the European Union and national funds of participating countries through Interreg IPA Programme “Greece – Republic of North Macedonia 2014 – 2020”. The project ALTERTRIP is implemented by three partners: Business and Exhibition Researches and Development Institute (IEE), Thessaloniki, Greece; Ministry of Interior, Sector Macedonia & Thrace, Thessaloniki, Greece; Association of persons with physical disabilities of Bitola, Demir Hisar and Resen - MOBILNOST Bitola, Republic of North Macedonia.

## Purpose

The purpose of this contract are as follows:

Preparation of Lecture notes - Manual about how to design tourist services to people with disabilities and their families, and realization of a one-day training. The topics of the manual and training should be, 1) how to design tourism products for people with disabilities depending on the type of their physical or mental disability 2) how to promote tourism products to people with disabilities.

## Results to be achieved by the contractor

1. An illustrated (visual) manual how to design tourist services to people with disabilities and their families, on the topics, 1) how to design tourism products for people with disabilities depending on the type of their physical or mental disability 2) how to promote tourism products to people with disabilities.

2. Two illustrated ppt presentations on 1) how to design tourism products for people with disabilities depending on the type of their physical or mental disability 2) how to promote tourism products to people with disabilities.

3. An one-day training (8 hours) on the topics 1) how to design tourism products for people with disabilities depending on the type of their physical or mental disability 2) how to promote tourism products to people with disabilities, realized

# ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

## Assumptions underlying the project

Capacity of the ALTERTRIP project manager and technical staff is adequate to cooperate with the external experts.

There is enough interest among local tourist managers to participate on the training

## Risks

Low level of communication and understanding between ALTERTRIP project manager and technical staff and external experts.

# SCOPE OF THE WORK

## General

### Description of the assignment

Assignment is composed of:

1. Preparation of an illustrated (visual) manual how to design tourist services to people with disabilities and their families, on the topics, 1) how to design tourism products for people with disabilities depending on the type of their physical or mental disability 2) how to promote tourism products to people with disabilities.

2. Preparation of two illustrated ppt presentations on 1) how to design tourism products for people with disabilities depending on the type of their physical or mental disability 2) how to promote tourism products to people with disabilities.

3. Realization of one-day training (8 hours) on the topics 1) how to design tourism products for people with disabilities depending on the type of their physical or mental disability 2) how to promote tourism products to people with disabilities.

### Geographical area to be covered

Pelagonia Statistical Region, Republic of North Macedonia.

### Target groups

Managers of tourist facilities (hotels, restaurants, museums, cultural facilities, sport facilities, tourist sites etc.).

Tourist agencies, tour operators.

National and local authorities responsible for development of tourism and for social welfare of persons with disabilities.

CSO of the persons with disabilities.

## Specific work

1. Preparation of an illustrated (visual) manual how to design tourist services to people with disabilities and their families, on the topics, 1) how to design tourism products for people with disabilities depending on the type of their physical or mental disability 2) how to promote tourism products to people with disabilities.

The manual should be prepared on the basis of the three studies in the framework of this project:

1. Study – Guidelines for tourism stakeholders about legal requirements for providing accessible tourism services and facilities.

2. Study - Assessment report for the performance of existing accessible tourism services and facilities.

3. Study - Analysis of difficulties and barriers for provision of accessible tourism services and facilities.

**The studies are attached to the tender dossier and are part of these Terms of Reference.**

The content of the manual should consist of illustrated (visual) guidelines to the tourist workers how to design a tourist product (tour, vacation, event, etc.) for persons with disabilities. Several aspects should be illustrated with good and bad practices, as accessibility, content/time frame/duration, guiding etc.

The content of the manual should also consist of illustrated (visual) guidelines to the tourist workers how to promote a tourist product (tour, vacation, event, etc.) to the persons with disabilities.

Because the expert knowledge is documented in the above-mentioned studies, the manual on the basis of these studies should provide illustrated information to the tourist workers, no experts in disability issues.

The manual should be structured as good vs bad practices with lot of illustrations (drawings, photos etc.), at least 30 illustrations on max 50 pages (standard A4) volume of the manual.

The manual should be prepared in Macedonian and English.

2. Preparation of two illustrated ppt presentations on 1) how to design tourism products for people with disabilities depending on the type of their physical or mental disability 2) how to promote tourism products to people with disabilities.

On the basis of the manual, the expert should create ppt presentations which will be delivered to training participants. The presentation should be prepared in Macedonian and English.

3. Realization of one-day training (8 hours) on the topics 1) how to design tourism products for people with disabilities depending on the type of their physical or mental disability 2) how to promote tourism products to people with disabilities.

The training will be one-day workshop with representatives of above specified target groups from he Republic of North Macedonia and Greece. The training should be mostly practical, realized from at least two trainers on the subjects specified above. The training should be delivered in English.

## Project management

### Responsible body

Project Manager of ALTERTRIP Project

### Management structure

N/A

### Facilities to be provided by the contracting authority and/or other parties

N/A

# LOGISTICS AND TIMING

## Location

Bitola, Republic of North Macedonia

## Start date & period of implementation of tasks

The intended start date is 1th March 2021 and the period of implementation of the contract will be **four months**.

# REQUIREMENTS

## Staff

Note that civil servants and other staff of the public administration of the partner country, or of international/regional organisations based in the country, shall only be approved to work as experts if well justified. The justification should be submitted with the tender and shall include information on the added value the expert will bring as well as proof that the expert is seconded or on personal leave.

### Key experts

**Key expert – Expert in design of tourism products**

Qualifications and skills

Higher Education – at least Bachelor degree (Master or PhD are preferable) in area of tourism or similar related areas.

General professional experience

At least 5 years (preferable 10 years) relevant work experience in tourism.

Specific professional experience

Participation of at least 1 (preferable 2) projects related to design of tourist products/ services.

**Key expert/ Expert for marketing in tourism**

Qualifications and skills

Higher Education – at least Bachelor degree (Master or PhD are preferable) in areas of architecture, tourism or similar related areas.

General professional experience

At least 3 years (preferable 6 years) relevant work experience related to accessible tourist and cultural heritage.

Specific professional experience

Participation in preparation of at least 1 (preferable 2) projects related to marketing of tourist products/ services.

The contractor(s) can involve number of non-key experts in the realization of the assignment. Their names and CVs are not needed to be provided in the tender dossier, but rather their role and task the realization of the assignment

## Office accommodation

Office accommodation for the experts working on the contract is to be provided by the contractor.

## Facilities to be provided by the contractor

N/A

## Equipment

**No** equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the contracting authority as part of this service contract or transferred to the contracting authority at the end of this contract.

# REPORTS

## Reporting requirements

The contractor will submit the following reports in English in electronic format:

**Interim Report** of maximum 10 pages (main text, excluding annexes) to be produced **no later than 45 days** from the start of implementation.

As annex to the Interim Report the following draft Illustrated Manual - How to design tourist services to people with disabilities and their families (in Macedonian and English).

**Draft Final Report** of maximum 10 pages (main text, excluding annexes), to be submitted no later than **10 days** after realization of training.

As annex to the Draft final report, shall be submitted (in Macedonian and English):

- two illustrated ppt presentations on 1) how to design tourism products for people with disabilities 2) how to promote tourism products to people with disabilities;

- report from realized training including evaluation from participants.

**Final Report** with the same specifications as the draft final report, incorporating any comments received from the parties on the draft report. The deadline for sending the final report is 15 days after receipt of comments on the draft final report.

As annexes to the Final Report, the final documents in Macedonian and English shall be submitted:

1. An illustrated Manual - How to design tourist services to people with disabilities and their families

2. Two illustrated ppt presentations on 1) how to design tourism products for people with disabilities depending on the type of their physical or mental disability 2) how to promote tourism products to people with disabilities.

3. Report from realized training including evaluation from participants

## Submission and approval of reports

The reports referred to above must be submitted to the project manager. The project manager is responsible for approving the reports.

# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

## Definition of indicators

1. An illustrated Manual - How to design tourist services to people with disabilities and their families

2. Two illustrated ppt presentations on 1) how to design tourism products for people with disabilities depending on the type of their physical or mental disability 2) how to promote tourism products to people with disabilities.

3. Report from realized training including evaluation from participants

Studies should be submitted in Macedonian and English.

## Special requirements

N/A