



PHOTO CREDIT: EUROPEAN COOPERATION DAY IN PEJA – EU OFFICE IN KOSOVO

# Enhancing Cooperation - Newsletter

of the IPA CBC Programmes  
Montenegro-Albania and Montenegro-  
Kosovo 2014-2020

## December 2023

### CONTENT

The eighteenth issue of the newsletter brings you information on activities and events implemented within both IPA Cross-border Cooperation (CBC) Programmes Montenegro - Albania and Montenegro - Kosovo\* 2014-2020. Programmes and project activities are funded by the European Union.

Please find below more information on the programmes.

### IPA CBC Programme Montenegro - Albania 2014-2020

The global objective of the programme is to promote/strengthen good neighbourly relations and socioeconomic development of the border regions, through valorising its touristic potentials, an environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive economic development, with respect for its common cultural and natural heritage.

Click [here](#) for more information.

### IPA CBC Programme Montenegro - Kosovo 2014-2020

The global objective of the programme is to improve the standard and quality of living of the people in the programme area through the environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive economic development of the region, with respect for its common cultural and natural heritage.

Click [here](#) for more information.

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\* 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.



This project is funded by  
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**MNE-ALB**

IPA CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME  
MONTENEGRO-ALBANIA 2014-2020



**MNE-KOS**

IPA CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME  
MONTENEGRO-KOSOVO 2014-2020

## CBC ZOOM

### European Cooperation Day marked for the first time in Peja

On 13 October 2023, the Ministry of Local Government Administration of the Republic of Kosovo in cooperation with the Ministry of European Affairs of Montenegro and with the technical support of the Joint Technical Secretariat organised a set of activities aimed to mark the European Cooperation Day within the framework of IPA II Cross-Border Cooperation Program Montenegro – Kosovo. The event was organised for the first time in Kosovo in the city of Peja and included a project fair, joint exhibition of young people from Peja and Gusinje within the cultural heritage project and visit to the cultural trail by bicycle.

The event was moderated by **Almir Čaušević** from the Joint Technical Secretariat of the IPA II Cross-border cooperation Programme who greeted the participants and thanked the project beneficiaries for their engagement in project implementation, stating that the achieved results within this Programme enabled this opportunity to present the cross-border cooperation between Montenegro and Kosovo as a successful story.



Deputy Minister of Ministry of Local Government Administration of the (MLGA), **Avdulah Džešević**, welcomed the participants on behalf of the Government of Kosovo and stated that European cooperation entails the establishment and implementation of policies, standards, and activities aimed at achieving social cohesion and improving the well-being of the people living in this region.



He added that good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation are essential prerequisites for accession, while strengthening interregional and cross-border cooperation forms the primary premise for social and economic development.

He praised the cooperation between the Republic of Kosovo and Montenegro as sincere and concrete cooperation among neighbouring states that enhances various aspects of citizens' lives, fosters economic relations between the two countries, opens up development perspectives, improves cross-border environmental management, and offers the exchange of best practices and experiences.

After this, the Head of Economic Cooperation at the European Union Office in Kosovo, **Johannes Madsen Stenbaek** stated that it is a pleasure to take part in the European Cooperation Day and to celebrate the achievements of cross-border cooperation between Kosovo and Montenegro, emphasising that cooperation across borders is a fundamental idea of a united Europe, and it serves as a powerful tool to build prosperity across the continent.

*"Once a year, on European Cooperation Day, we take the opportunity to discuss our significant achievements and celebrate the success of numerous cross-border, transnational, and interregional cooperation programmes funded by the EU",* he said. He added that the cross-border programmes and the people implementing them work tirelessly toward this goal and that are largely recognised as programmes that bring better quality of life to the local population.





He emphasised the main characteristics of the cooperation projects is that they bring people together from sometimes very different horizons, they help build trust, foster mutual understanding and that these are cornerstones for any long-term partnership. He underlined that he is pleased that two countries, Kosovo and Montenegro, are jointly finalising a successful process of the IPA II Cross-Border Cooperation Programme and success is only possible through strong partnerships and collaboration between different partners from civil society organisations, local, national authorities and municipalities, as well as that EU is continuing to support the development of good neighbourly relations and economic development of the border regions.



After the speeches, the participants had the opportunity to visit the fair with the stands filled with project promotional and informative material, visit exhibition (art colony) featuring artistic works created as part of the "Cultural Heritage - Regional Treasure", Visit Haxhi Zeka mill, take a cycling tour in the city of Peja within cultural route project as well as taste the traditional food.

## News on projects financed under the 2<sup>nd</sup> CfP IPA CBC Programme Montenegro - Albania

### Project on using Medicinal and Aromatic Plants finished

On 28 December 2023, a cross-border conference marked the completion of the project *Promoting Sustainable Use of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants for Livelihood Improvement and Biodiversity Conservation*. The final conference was organised by the *Democratic Integration and Development Center* and *Plav Municipality* in collaboration with the *Municipality of Tropoja* and *NGO Albanian Alps*.

The conference theme focused on "Supporting Sustainable Environmental Development in Albania and Montenegro." The conference, attended by 58 participants, emphasised increasing awareness and cooperation on managing environmental assets, particularly Medicinal Aromatic Plants (MAP). Project leaders presented results, data, and plans for future actions, fostering a commitment to ongoing cross-border collaboration for environmental development initiatives in the region.

### Disasters do not know borders 2 marks final activity

The final conference of the *Disasters do not know borders 2* was held in Budva on 13 and 14 December, during which the main results of this project were presented, as well as recommendations for improving the protection and rescue system.



On this occasion, **Veselin Šturano**vić, executive director of FORS Montenegro, **Ervis Krymbi**, professor at the University of Shkoder and **Milosav-Miki Korać**, commander of the Berane Protection and Rescue Service, addressed the media. The conference was attended by representatives of institutions and organisations that participated in the implementation of the project, and who during the two-day work highlighted the importance of the project, lessons learned, challenges and recommendations for future projects and initiatives in this area.



The main activities of the project included the procurement of flood and fire protection equipment intended for protection and rescue services, the procurement of equipment for forecasting hydrometeorological conditions, cross-border training, field exercises and workshops for employees of services and institutions dealing with protection and rescue, a conference on strengthening the protection and rescue system, training related to forecasting and the early warning system, a campaign to inform the population about the risks of floods, fires and reducing the risk of disasters, workshops for primary and secondary school students, evacuation exercises, etc.

### Final conference of the project SOLUTION held in Podgorica

The project *Skadar Lake withOut chemical pollution – SOLUTION* implemented by the Centre for Ecotoxicological Research Montenegro, University of Tirana and Association Green Centre organised its final conference in Podgorica on 28 September 2023.

During the event, the results of the project were presented to the participants and media. It was concluded that the environment transcends political and legal frameworks and borders created by man.



It was concluded that a research programme is needed to monitor the Morača River and connected groundwater for a specific insecticide over a six-year cycle, requiring analysis of 12 samples annually.



Moreover, it was emphasised that strategies must be developed in Albania and Montenegro to control PAH emissions, aligning with EU laws and that monitoring programmes are essential to locate banned pesticides and assess metal levels entering Lake Skadar. Continuous monitoring of fish from Lake Skadar is crucial to ensure compliance with food safety regulations regarding contaminant levels.

### Project Accent finished

As part of the A.C.C.E.N.T project, the Employment Fair for Persons with Disabilities was held on 8 September 2023 in the premises of the Colosseo Hotel in Shkoder. The employment fair brought together organisations from different sectors, which served as an opportunity for discussions on the employment of PWDs. Check out the report [here](#) from local TV on the Employment fair and conference held in Shkoder.



After this, project partners organised the final conference of the project in Bar, which was attended by 60 participants from institutions, civil society organisations and private companies that deal with employment and issues of importance for improvement of the position of persons with disabilities.

One of the most important results of the project is that 23 people with disabilities had the opportunity to do internships with employers for a year. A significant number of people with disabilities, 45% of them, continued to work for employers even after the end of the project. Four initiatives for self-employment of persons with disabilities based on their business ideas were supported, over 120 persons with disabilities had the opportunity to attend training within the project, five curricula for



informal training and seven education programmes adapted to persons with disabilities were developed.



### Zero Waste Margegaj as a good example

As part of the project activities of Montenegro and Albania towards Zero Waste implemented by the Regional Development Agency for Bjelascia, Komovi and Prokletije, Zero Waste Montenegro and Albanian Local Capacity Development Foundation and the Administrative Unit of Margegaj had multiple benefits. A series of community actions and awareness campaigns were conducted, while a Material Recovery Facility and Communal Composting Facility were set up with press for waste and manual transporter. Check out the news report [here](#).





## News on projects financed under the 2<sup>nd</sup> CfP IPA CBC Programme Montenegro - Kosovo

### *Equipment for health institutions*



Within the CARES 2 project, partners FORS Montenegro and ECMI Kosovo, continued with activities on both sides of the border. The equipment for preventive examinations for reproductive health was delivered to health institutions in Gjakova, Peja, Istog, Klina and Decan, while the medicinal staff was trained on using this equipment.

The project resulted in 2923 preventive examinations of vulnerable groups of women in the cross-border area.



## News on projects financed under the 3<sup>rd</sup> CfP IPA CBC Programme Montenegro - Albania

### *No borders for work!*

*No borders for work!* is the name of a project implemented in order to improve the socially inclusive economic development of the border regions of Fushe Arrez, Malesi e Madhe and the areas of Cetinje and Podgorica. This two-year project is implemented by a partner consortium led by the Old Royal Capital Cetinje, ProActHub, Institute for Sustainable Policies and Fushe Arrez Municipality.

As part of envisaged activities, a podcast station was set up in Cetinje. The platform was launched in order to inform, inspire and support young and future entrepreneurs in Cetinje and beyond.



The project aims to improve employability and social inclusion among young people, women, long-term unemployed persons and persons with disabilities in the sectors of rural tourism and catering services, circular/green economy initiatives, agriculture, and inclusive social entrepreneurship.



### *New vehicle for waste collection within project Joint Environmental Protection Action - JEPA*

The Municipality of Gusinje and Municipality of Puka are implementing the project *Joint Environmental Protection Action – JEPA*. As part of the project, on 14 December 2023 the Municipality of Gusinje procured a waste collection vehicle, which was handed over for use to the Gusinje Utility Company.



The project will improve the waste management system and environmental protection, through technical improvement of staff capacities of local waste management units and through increasing students' knowledge and skills on integrated environmental protection, circular economy and waste management.

### Workshop for business on mentoring held

On 18 September 2023 a workshop was held in the premises of the Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA) for business participating in the project entitled *Skills for Sustainable Employment and Comprehensive Economic Growth of the Cross-Border Region of Albania and Montenegro - Skills for Jobs*.



This activity brought together representatives of the businesses whose applications were successful in the open call for applications phase. Workshop participants were introduced to the Guide for Mentors, a guide designed to aid all mentors in the implementation of the on-the-job training.



Moreover, participating businesses were introduced to the complete package of documents needed to be filled throughout the training period. During the workshop, led by the expert, the participants engaged in a practical exercise with ideas and suggestions for completing the training program depending on the relevant sectors.

### Building Smart Forests

Partners of the project *Building Smart Forests* continued with awareness raising activities and preparation of procedures for valuable equipment that will enable the timely detection of fires in the cross-border area.



In order to consult all stakeholders in the process, a meeting was held between the project team and the National Forestry Agency in order to discuss the project, the installation of the technological system for detecting fires at an early stage and drones for surveillance.



The project *Building smart forests* is implemented by the Foundation for Local Autonomy and Governance (FLAG) from Albania, in partnership with the municipalities of Bar and Shkoder.

### Skadar/Shkoder Lake Watershed - a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve

The project *Skadar/Shkoder Lake Watershed - a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve* is being implemented by Development, Education and Networking (EDEN centre), Environment Programme - EnvPro, National agency of protected areas in Albania and Public enterprise National Parks of Montenegro. On 22 December 2023, a workshop entitled „What



could be the limit and vision for the Skadar/Shkoder Lake Watershed as a UNESCO Transboundary Biosphere Reserve?" was held in Shkoder.



The workshop brought together 38 different stakeholders who used this opportunity to share ideas, discussing and agreeing on which further steps are to be taken in order to make Lake Skadar an UNESCO biosphere reserve.



## News on projects financed under the 3<sup>rd</sup> CfP IPA CBC Programme Montenegro - Kosovo

### Capacity building activities for utility companies from Tuzi and Peja

The Municipality of Tuzi, in partnership with the municipality of Peja, is implementing the project *New Environment Revitalization Approach – NERA* that will contribute to environmental protection through a strategically oriented approach in local communities in Montenegro and Kosovo.



A two-day training, *Communal Waste Management*, was organised for the representatives of waste management companies of Municipality of Tuzi and Municipality of Peja, Komunalno Ltd. i PLC EKO - SIG Jsc. as well as Regional company for waste collection - Ambienti Jsc.



At the training, experts for the zero waste cities program **Vanja Cicmil** and **Marina Tomović** spoke about the methods for the sustainable separate waste collection system at the municipal level, organic waste management, the bridge strategy for residual waste and waste prevention in institutions through greening public procurement. They also presented best practices of a zero-waste methodology, which is being implemented in over 480 cities across Europe, and its results, as well as possibilities of its application in the local context of Tuzi and Peja municipalities.

Follow the project [page](#) for more information.

### Young NEETs: new opportunities for work and increased employability - "UNEETED"

In order to improve the social position of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in selected municipalities in Montenegro and Kosovo by increasing their employability and connecting them with potential employers, Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses, Institute for Development Policy (INDEP), Chamber of Economy of Montenegro and Municipality of Mojkovac are implementing the project *Young NEETs: new opportunities for work and increased employability – "UNEETED"*. As part of project activities, the partners launched a public call for unemployed persons for a three-month training for the development of business ideas.



## Skills for Sustainable Employment in the Cross-Border Region of Montenegro and the Republic of Kosovo - No Borders!

The project *Skills for Sustainable Employment in the Cross-Border Region of Montenegro and the Republic of Kosovo – No Borders!* aims to contribute to increasing the professional skills and competence of unemployed youth and women in the cross-border region in order to meet the needs for employment in the tourism and hospitality sector. The project is being implemented by Chamber of Economy of Montenegro, Chamber of Commerce of the Republic of Kosovo, Regional Business Centre Berane and Education, Training and Research Institute – ETRI.

The project launched calls for application and selection of training candidates for increasing the employability skills in the tourism (touristic guides) and hospitality sectors (cooks, chefs, bakers, waiters). After the launching training candidates for theory and on the job trainings were selected and will attend on-the-job training in up-coming period.

## Cultural Renaissance from Skadar Lake to Kosovo - TIME TRAVEL

The project *The Cultural Renaissance from Skadar Lake to Kosovo – TIME TRAVEL* started with its awareness raising activities. Namely, the kick-off conference of the project was held in Podgorica on 27 September 2023.



During the conference it was announced that the implementation of the planned activities will lead to the establishment of a new cross-border tourist product based on the historical and cultural heritage of the region, as well as on quality domestic products and services. The project is expected to contribute to an interesting and integral presentation of cultural-historical attractions and traditional products for the areas of Kosovo and Montenegro, as well as to the successful connection of service providers with visitors to this region.



## Evocation and Attraction of Cultural Heritage - Christian Antiquity and Turkish Bath for Cultural Tourism

The project *Evocation and Attraction of Cultural Heritage – Christian Antiquity and Turkish Bath for Cultural Tourism* will contribute to increasing the economic competitiveness of the area by increasing the cultural tourism potential of the area. This project is being carried out by PI Polimski Museum Berane and Marimangat e Pejës - Rock climbing Association from the Kosovo side. So far, several activities related to planned conservation were conducted (one conservation project for Turkish Bath in Peja designed), 2 Digital models of Tumbatrice castrum (Berane) and Turkish Bath (Peja) before conservation works created and archaeological excavation on Tumbatrice castrum (Berane) initiated, as well as foreseen equipment was procured.



## C.L.O.S.E.R. - Culture-Led Opportunities for Sustainable Economic Revitalisation

The Kosovo Foundation for Cultural Heritage Without Borders, in partnership with the Municipality of Bar is implementing a two-year project C.L.O.S.E.R. – Culture-Led Opportunities for Sustainable Economic Revitalisation.



As part of the project the first cross-border workshop for *Developing the Management Plan of the Creative Hub West* took place in Peja. The workshop was organised to foster exchange of knowledge between partners, where the Creative Hub from Bar, Montenegro, shared their recent experiences to help shape the future of Creative Hub West.



The most significant expected results of the project are the adaptation and putting into use of the cultural heritage site in Kosovo that will be used as the Creative Hub of the Western Economic Region, as well as the revitalisation of the old roads of the Old Town of Bar through cleaning, marking and minor conservation works.

### Turning our villages into tourism destinations

RDA-West, in collaboration with Peja Municipality and with the support from RDA-BKP in Montenegro, organised two study trips to Montenegro as part of the *Turning our villages into tourism destinations* project. The trips took place on 19-20 October and 24-25 October, 2023, involving visits to five rural tourism locations in Montenegro. Participants, including rural households from Peja engaged in farming and food production, as well as local organisations and tourism operators, gained insights and experiences on integrating tourism services into their businesses.



These trips are part of capacity-building efforts alongside workshops and future training sessions focused on rural tourism development.



### In Employment, Education, Training - IN EET

In order to contribute to the social inclusion of vulnerable population groups, as well as their access to the labour market, NGO Juventas from Montenegro and NGO Labyrinth from Kosovo are implementing the project *In Employment, Education, Training - IN EET*.

As part of the activities, project partners launched the call for selection of candidates to register for a three-month professional training in Podgorica. The selected candidates will work in 8 non-governmental organisations. It is expected that 40 young people will participate and cooperate with different employers.



### Tourism for the Future

The two-year project *Tourism for the Future* is implemented by the NGO Prishtina REA as a leading partner in partnership with the Mountaineering Association "Đeravica" from Kosovo and Montenegrin partners, the Municipality of Kolašin and the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development. A series of activities were implemented in the last quarter of 2023. Namely, a training 'Sustainable Effective Management and Eco-Development System' was held in Kolasin and was focused on key aspects of sustainable tourism.



In addition, two info session for the Calls for Grants - International Certification Standardisation ECO LABEL were held in Peja on 21 December 2023 and in Kolasin on 22 December 2023.



The goal of the project is to contribute to the development of cross-border sustainable tourism through networking, introduction of the green key and eco standards, improvement of competitiveness and joint promotion. Check out the promotional video of the project [here](#).



## Bilateral meetings held in Podgorica

On September 8 2023, a bilateral meeting between structures of the IPA CBC Programme Montenegro – Kosovo was organised in Podgorica in order to discuss the upcoming IPA III and current activities of the Programme. In addition, one more bilateral meeting was held also in Podgorica on 19 December 2023. During the meeting, various aspects of the future steps regarding the publication of the 1<sup>st</sup> CfP within IPA III Programme were discussed, as well the organisation of the final events within IPA II.



The main interest of the participants was directed towards possibilities for investments within the projects under the Programmes, financial framework, financial envelope and issues of co-financing and pre-financing of the Programmes and grants and implementation aspects. In addition, clarifications were given regarding the eligibility of actions and partnership, CfPs and for other rules that are common within the application and implementation process.

## Thematic meetings organised in programme area

Thematic meetings with representatives of municipalities from the programme area of IPA CBC Programmes Montenegro – Albania and Montenegro – Kosovo were held during October and November 2023. The meetings were held in order to promote the results of the projects funded under these two programmes and promote the new upcoming IPA III CBC Programmes Montenegro – Albania and Montenegro – Kosovo 2021-2027. The meetings were an opportunity for representatives of municipalities and other local authorities/companies to obtain more detailed information on both IPA III programmes and ask questions related to the programme, the structures of the programme, the objectives and thematic priorities and future call for proposals.



One of the main discussion points during the meetings was focused on the capacities of municipalities, local public institutions and enterprises regarding the drafting and implementation of EU funded projects. The conclusion that is applicable to almost all municipalities is that there is a need for additional capacity building within the municipalities and respective institutions, which will be provided in the upcoming period through capacity building activities that will be funded through the programme during 2024.

Thematic meetings were held in 31 municipalities, in 16 municipalities in Montenegro, nine in Albania and six in Kosovo and were conducted by the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) and by, depending on the country where the meeting was held, representatives of the Ministry of European Affairs of Montenegro, State Agency for Strategic Programming and Aid Coordination of Albania and Ministry of Local Government Administration of Kosovo. The meetings raised great interest and were attended by 139 participants. All visited municipalities expressed their readiness to participate in the upcoming IPA III Programmes in all envisaged thematic priorities.



Within the IPA III CBC Programmes Montenegro – Albania EUR 10,7 million are made available for projects under the Thematic cluster 2: Greener and improved resource efficiency and Thematic cluster 4: Improved business environment and competitiveness. While for the IPA

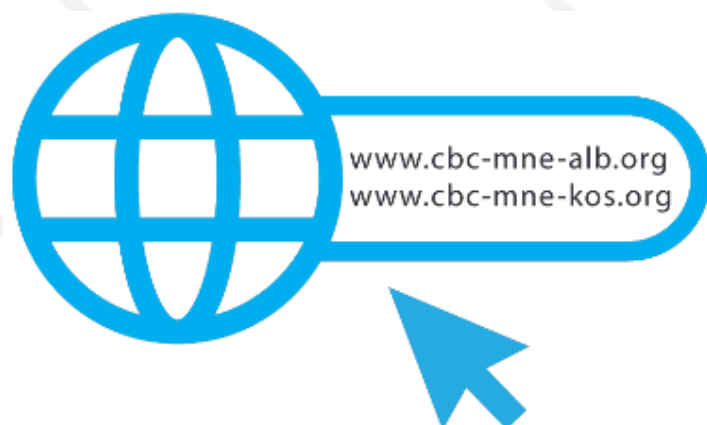


III CBC Programmes Montenegro – Kosovo EUR 7.5 million are available for projects from the Thematic cluster 1: Improved employment opportunities and social rights and Thematic cluster 4: Improved business environment and competitiveness.



### 1<sup>st</sup> JMC for the programme Montenegro - Kosovo under IPA III held in Podgorica

On 19 December 2023, the IPA CBC structures Montenegro – Albania and Montenegro – Kosovo organised the 1<sup>st</sup> JMC meeting for IPA III CBC Programme Montenegro-Kosovo 2021 – 2027 in Podgorica. The aim of the meeting was to adopt the JMC Rules of Procedures, as well as a proposal for financial allocation, thematic priorities, objectives, activities and eligible entities for the 1<sup>st</sup> CfP that is expected to be published during the first half of 2024.



### Read about new IPA III Cross-border cooperation Programme Montenegro - Albania

The Cross-border cooperation Programme Montenegro – Republic of Albania for 2021-2027 will be implemented in through two thematic clusters (TC) including one thematic priority (TP) per each of these clusters. Namely, the Programme document envisage the thematic cluster *Greener and Improved resource efficiency* under which thematic priority **Environment protection, climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management** has been chosen as TP1 for this Programme and the thematic cluster *Improved business environment and competitiveness* under which the thematic priority **Tourism and cultural and natural heritage** has been selected as TP 2 for this Programme.

The programme area in Montenegro includes Andrijevica, Bar, Berane, Budva, Cetinje, Danilovgrad, Gusinje, Kolašin, Petnjica, Plav, Podgorica, Rožaje, Tuzi, Ulcinj and Zeta, while the programme area in Albania covers Shkoder County, Lezhe County and Tropoje District.

The total budget of programme is EUR 13,790,000, while the EU contribution is **EUR 11,900,000**. The programme document for Cross-border cooperation Programme Montenegro – Republic of Albania for 2021-2027 can be downloaded [here](#).

Cross-Border  
Cooperation



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Montenegro – Albania

### Read about new IPA III Cross-border cooperation Programme Montenegro - Kosovo

The Cross-border cooperation Programme Montenegro – Kosovo for 2021-2027 will be implemented in through two thematic clusters (TC) including one thematic priority (TP) per each of these clusters. Namely, the Programme document envisage the thematic cluster *Improved employment opportunities and Social Rights* under which thematic priority **Employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across borders** has been chosen as TP1 for this Programme and the thematic cluster *Improved business environment and competitiveness* under which the thematic priority **Tourism and cultural and natural heritage** has been selected as TP 2 for this Programme.

The programme area in Montenegro includes Andrijevica, Bar, Berane, Bijelo Polje, Gusinje, Kolašin, Mojkovac, Petnjica, Plav, Podgorica, Rožaje, Tuzi, Ulcinj and Zeta, while the programme area in Kosovo covers Peć/Pejë, Istok/Istog, Klina/Kline, Junik, Dečani/Dečan and Đakovica/Gjakovë.

The total budget of programme is EUR 9,734.118, while the EU contribution is **EUR 8,400.000**. The programme document for Cross-border cooperation Programme Montenegro – Kosovo for 2021-2027 can be downloaded [here](#).

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Operating structures of the programmes (click on the icon to visit the website)



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MONTENEGRO – ALBANIA AND MONTENEGRO – KOSOVO 2014–2020

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