



PILOT ACTIONS FINAL REPORT

D.T2.5.1 - Landscape Park Strunjan (PP10)

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1. Introduction

The high density of tourists during summer season is a significant source of pressure on natural resources. The highest concentration of tourists is measured in the summer months, i.e. in June, July, August and September. The coastal area is an important component of summer tourism, yet it is not considered part of the landscape with its natural values.

The increasing tendency towards spending more leisure time in and around protected areas also means a larger number of visitors in ecologically sensitive areas, with the associated intensification in land use and pressure on such areas. It was observed that tourist do not behave responsibly and they do not comply with rules of the protected area (they access the beach through different points, walk outside designated trails; park outside the parking area and are not aware that they are in a protected area; camp illegally; light open fires, etc.).



Figure 1: Tourism "hot spot" in Strunjan Landscape Park in summer



Figure 2: Tourism pressure on the coastline



1.1. Participatory Processes

A common strategy to foster the development of sustainable tourism in the protected area was developed during a participatory process held on 10th July 2018 at the Municipality of Izola. The Forum Members consists of a stakeholder group which includes local communities, local authorities, institutes, ministries, tourism service providers, tourist associations and competent bodies. These 15 stakeholders (10 from the private and 5 from the public sector) are the main driving force behind the sustainable tourism development within the Landscape Park Strunjan involved in decision making processes.

The meeting began with a brief presentation of the CEETO project and the Pilot Action to be implemented in the area, while the participants sought proposals and additions to this new plan for developing a pilot action area.

The results of the Future Search activity were summarized and presented in the first draft of the Strategy to develop sustainable tourism.

The work plan for a sustainable Tourism Action Plan was defined through a Workshop on the spot, a Workshop with local stakeholders, and an internal meeting with external experts from responsible partners of the work package T2 - Testing of the project.

1.2. Developed Strategy

To manage environmental impacts and make constant improvements to the environmental management, a five-year goal based on the analysis of the planning process and the Park's long-term objectives was defined.

The Sustainable Tourism Action Plan is a five-year strategy document based on the existing situation of the protected area of Landscape Park Strunjan which identifies the specific goals to be achieved within five years in terms of sustainable tourism and nature protection.

These goals are:

1. **SUPPORT THE PRESERVATION OF VALUABLE FEATURES AT THE SITES AND PROMOTE THEIR PROTECTION**
 - A) **Cultural Landscape:** Preserve and promote the cultural heritage, with particular attention to local products, the production process of salt- and fish products, and local cultural events;
 - B) **Marine ecosystem:** Promote sustainable recreational activities to discover the area and support local small-scale fisheries;
 - C) **Cliff:** Take advantage of existing walking paths (maintenance, characterisation and promotion) and maintain a regular clean-up programme of the coast and the sea;
 - D) **Marine Lagoon:** Preserve the importance of this territory as large provider of ecosystem services;
 - E) **Salt Pans:** Maintain the knowledge of salt production and the strong connection of this activity with the development of the area.
2. **MINIMISE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**
 - F) Encourage visitors to act in an environmentally friendly manner;



- G) Proactively prevent harmful impacts;
- H) Promote the use of existing paths and service structures;
- I) Provide environmental education;

3. STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL VALUE

- J) Local knowledge;
- K) Quality guidance;
- L) Increase the appreciation of the site;
- M) Cooperate with local people and other stakeholders to take part in the management and development of the site.

4. PROMOTE GROWTH AND LOCAL ECONOMY

- N) Offer visitors high-quality services related to Landscape Park Strunjan and its surroundings;
- O) Collaborate with local producers;
- P) Encourage visitors to stay longer in the area.

The Sustainable Tourism Action Plan lists the possible management and related monitoring tools (actions) to be put in place, sets a time schedule and indicates possible funding sources. The strategy and actions were developed with a participatory planning process held on 10 July 2018 at the Municipality of Izola. The methodology used to manage the meeting of the participatory process (also called Workshop on the Spot) was taken from the European Awareness Scenario Workshop—an approach that allows an open discussion in order to identify concrete and easily actionable solutions.

After that, the participants were asked to tell their vision of the future of the pilot area and the whole landscape park, and provide a forecast both about desired positive aspects (what they hope will happen) and possible negative changes (what they fear will happen). The synthesis of the visions allowed to identify the common transversal aspects in order to define a common vision of the development of sustainable tourism in the pilot area.

The second part of the workshop focused on the proposed ideas, i.e. the formulation of operative proposals on the actions that must be undertaken to develop the common vision as previously defined. The participants were asked to elaborate some initial ideas concerning the chosen themes in order to build a “Bank of Ideas”—the first step for an effective Participative Action Plan.

The summary of the results of the Future Search activity –which was done using World Clouds where the words in bigger font size are those most frequently quoted by the participants (presented in Figure 3 below) – represents the first draft of the Strategy to develop sustainable tourism.

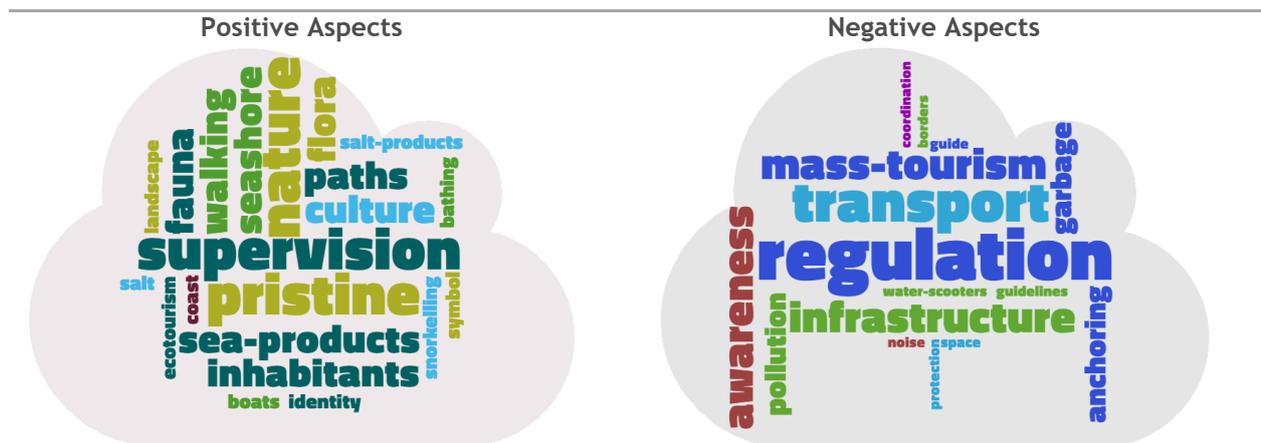


Figure 3: Word Clouds with results of the Future Search simulation

2. Pilot Action Design Phase

2.1. Monitoring Activities

The monitoring activity aims to monitor the effectiveness of educating/informing tourists about the protected area and its protection regimes (Landscape Park Strunjan) in the area of Belvedere terraces.

The Awareness-Raising activity consists of:

- 1) Leaflets (leaflets were distributed to visitors and tourists in the Pilot Area alongside questionnaires in the summer seasons of July and August 2018 and 2019);
- 2) An Educational video (an educational video about the protection regimes in the park, which was produced and displayed in 2019).

The monitoring activity was conducted with questionnaires. Monitoring and awareness-raising activity were 2 in 1 (a leaflet/questionnaire). Questionnaires were distributed in the pilot action area in the summer seasons of 2018 (100 pieces) and 2019 (160 pieces). Tourists delivered completed questionnaires at the beach bar or to a Park employee, and could take the leaflets with them.

2.2. Forecasted Management Activities

Monitoring activity: create and distribute paper flyers, partly questionnaires and partly leaflets, to raise awareness.

Awareness-Raising Activity: creation and distribution of an educational animation video of the protection regimes in the Park.

Conduct a study on landscaping and spatial planning solutions to increase the sustainability of tourist flows in the Pod Belveder area in the Municipality of Izola (Management Plan).

Clean-up and awareness-raising actions: regularly inspect and clean the shoreline; raise awareness of visitors and bathers (at least one awareness-raising campaign each year); organise clean-up action once a year.



Ecological Mooring: prepare the documentation and arrange permanent ecological moorings in Strunjan Bay; arrangement of daily moorings in Strunjan Nature Reserve.

Alternative ways of visiting the park - establishing electric bus transportation: provide an electric minibus to transport tourists to the different points of the Park and regulate the visitor flow; carry out a feasibility study on sustainable visits to the Park with alternative modes of transport and supporting activities; create an app and/or leaflets with bus routes and stops to inform and encourage tourists to use the minibus instead of cars.

Thematic Trails of Strunjan Landscape Park: promote the thematic trails to schools, other institutions and tourist information centres and points (general, botanical, geographical and geological trails); guided tours for private groups; update the content of thematic trails; organise workshops for children at the seashore and in the marine lagoon.

Bird Watching: identify suitable locations and obtain permits for observatories; construct observatories and install information boards; maintain observatories; promote funding projects, i.e. "Adopt a bird".

Visitor Monitoring: install electronic counters at entry points and analyse pressure and carrying capacity; monitor the visit and actions to reduce pressure if the carrying capacity is exceeded (i.e. peaceful zones, route changes).

Code of Conduct: prepare guidelines; prepare and publish a brochure; promote and distribute brochures in hotels and tourism centres.

Workshops for Local Residents: organise at least four courses/workshops per year with different topics; involve the local population in the actions of the Park's manager.

Sustainable Tourism Arrangements: develop guidelines for the future development of a sustainable tourism and ways to reduce the burden on the environment for visiting the park in cooperation with stakeholders; create packages/offers for various groups (international guests, including cruise ships guests, domestic guests) in collaboration with tourist service providers; comprehensively renovate tourist road signs, build educational playgrounds and create separate waste collection areas.

2.3. Expected Results

In cooperation with the Municipality of Izola, which is also the owner of the land of Belvedere terraces, we set out the content of one part of the pilot action (the regulation of the Belvedere terraces). The goal is to regulate this area and to provide socio-economic benefits to local communities.



Figure 4: Pilot Area - Belvedere terraces (monitoring area)

The objective is to control the movement of the visitors, ensure sustainable visits to the Park, establish an entry point to the pilot area, where we could provide visitors with information about the park and control the movement of visitors, while offering them various sustainable activities outside the Park, and relieve some of the pressure on the PA.

In the further implementation of the pilot project - the regulation of the Belvedere terraces, the Municipality of Izola, wants to establish a “transition zone” with the help of green public infrastructure, directly inform and raise awareness of Strunjan Park and its rules of conduct, and establish rules that will allow a sustainable business activity and environmentally friendly tourism in the area of Belvedere terraces. It also encourages sustainable forms of mobility, in particular electric public transport, which includes also maritime transport, cooperation with local tourist operators, a better connection of this area with the rest of the Park, include the local growers and producers and to implement traditional activities. Throughout a long period of history the areas of Landscape Park Strunjan and Pod Belveder were used for the purpose of growing crops, fruit and vegetables. In ancient times the Pod Belveder area had also an ancient port that served “villa rustica romana” in San Simon (Izola).

A study on landscaping and spatial planning solutions together with an additional study of utility equipment and traffic regulation for the same area represents the project documentation which the Municipality will use as the basis for changes in a Municipal Spatial Plan.

The second part of the pilot project was the introduction of an electric minibus, which was used to transport the visitors and locals to the different points of the Park and regulate the visitor flows. We estimated that the total number of passengers who used the minibus in a period of two months were from 12,000 to 15,000, which could mean approximately 6,000 cars. In addition to the Municipality, the activity was supported also by hoteliers and camp owner, because we wanted their guests to leave their cars in

the car parks in front of the hotels and use public transport for transportation around the Park. The problem is that the Park avails of only about 660 public parking spaces, half of which are payable. The minibus operated in the area of Landscape Park Strunjan that falls under the Municipality of Piran. This area has only 350 paid parking spaces and only a few less than 100 areas free. Other parking spaces are owned by hotels, apartment owners and campsite. The problem is there are far too few parking spots for the summer season.

We produced leaflets with bus routes and stops to inform and encourage tourist to use the minibus instead of cars. 2019 was the first testing year, which brought good response from locals and visitors. The plan for the next year is to extend the bus timetable to cover also the hours between 12am and 4pm. Until the end of 2019 we plan to carry out a feasibility study on sustainable visits to the Park with alternative modes of transport and supporting activities, titled “A Study of the Regulation of Stationary Traffic in the Piran Area of Landscape Park Strunjan”.

The main chapters are:

1. Design of Areas Intended for Stationary Traffic
 - 1.1 Intended Parking Areas and Parking Facilities
 - 1.2 Management of Existing Traffic Areas for Stationary Traffic
2. Sustainable Forms of Transport in the Landscape Park Area
 - 2.1 Transportation of Visitors Inside the Park
 - 2.1.1 Free Circular Electric Minibus System
 - 2.2 The P+R system (Park and Ride or Park and Take a Ride on the Bus)
 - 2.2.1 The P+R system relates to a Bicycle / E-Bike / e-Scooter Rental System
 - 2.2.2 The P+R system relates to a shuttle / On-Call Transport
 - 2.2.3 Bike, E-Bike and E-Scooter Rental System
 - 2.2.4 Increasing the Efficiency of the Koper-Piran Public Transport Bus
 - 2.2.5 An Efficient Network of Bicycle Connections
 - 2.2.6 Charging Points for Electric Vehicles



Figure 5: Electric bus with the CEETO logo



2.4. Pilot Action Work plan

		2018			2019		
	Tasks	3/4	4/4	1/4	2/4	3/4	4/4
1	Implementation of pilot actions						
1.1	Working Table with the Municipality of Izola to define the first draft of the Management Plan						
1.2	Approval of the Management Plan						
1.3	Awareness-Raising Action						
1.4	Reporting						
2	Sustainable Tourism Action Plan						
2.1	Workshop on the spot						
2.2	Working Table with the local stakeholder to develop an action plan						
2.3	Sustainable Tourism Action Plan						
2.3	Formal approval of the Action Plan						
3	Monitoring Plan						
3.1	Prepare a visitor survey						
3.2	Conduct a visitor survey						
3.3	Analyse data						
3.4	Repeat the visitor survey						
3.5	Evaluate results						

3. Pilot Action Implementation Phase

3.1. Monitoring Activities and Achieved Results

Monitoring and the awareness-raising action were 2 in 1 (a leaflet/questionnaire):

1. Questionnaire which helps us monitor tourist awareness about:
 - Protection regimes,
 - Whether they know or not that they are in the vicinity of the Park.
2. Leaflet on the Landscape Park Strunjan protected area and protection regimes.

An additional awareness-raising action was the creation and distribution of an educational animation video of the protection regimes in the Park.

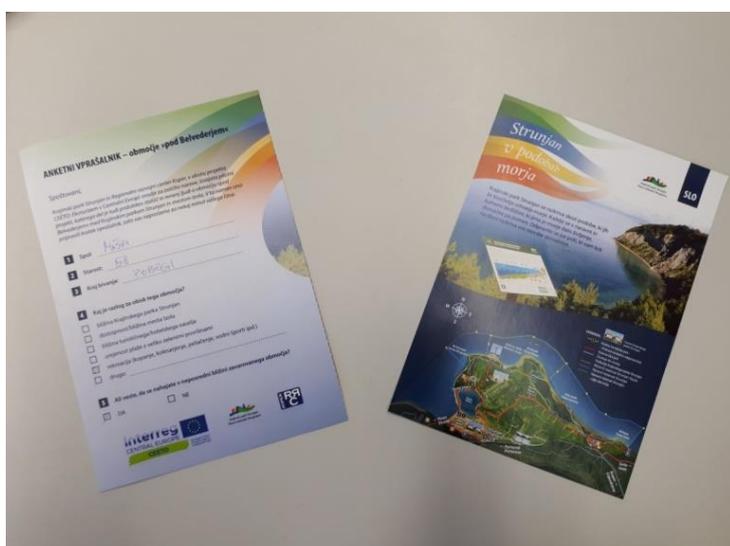


Figure 6: Answered questionnaire and leaflet to take away

Monitoring and the awareness-raising action were 2 in 1 (a leaflet/questionnaire). Leaflets were given to visitors and tourists in the Pilot Area alongside questionnaires in summer seasons, July and August 2018 and 2019. Tourists could take the leaflets with them.

The questionnaire consists of 10 questions. In 2018 we received back 100, and in 2019 160 completed questionnaires. In 2018 visitors delivered answered questionnaires to the beach bar. The difference was that in 2019 a student carried out all the interviews with visitors and completed the questionnaires with them. As a consequence, the indicator for measuring the obtained goal was improved survey results in 2019. The achieved results were better informed visitors. We received some useful answers about visitors' views and experiences which helped us improve the implementation of the pilot project. The questionnaire monitored the satisfaction with the arrangement of the area, the visitors' manners of transportation, the reason for visiting and suggestions for improvement what they are missing.

The obtained information gives us an opportunity to learn more about the profile of visitors in terms of number, origin, behaviour, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a protected area and



knowledge of the specific code of conduct. This information helps us understand the needs and opinions for a better development of the management plan, which is the part of Pilot Action.

Data results and analysis:

- Most guests were between 35 and 40.
- Most of the locals and other Slovenian guests have already visited the area.
- Most of the foreign guests have not been here yet.
- Most of them reached the area by car, followed by bicycle and walking, by motorcycle, while the least used mode of transportation was the minibus.
- The minibus was mostly used by the guests of the Belvedere Hotel.
- Those who came on foot, mostly answered positively to the question: “Do you know that you are located in the immediate vicinity of the protected area?” That is why they often come from the part of the Protected Area, passing by many information boards about the Park.
- Those who accessed the area by car often did not know that they were close to the Park.
- The best way to access the area by bike is from the town of Izola because of the easy and safe trail.

The main reason for visiting was recreation (swimming, cycling, hiking, water sports, etc.), accessibility/proximity to the town of Izola and the vicinity of the tourist/hotel complex - for hotel guests.

They were most satisfied with the accessibility to the sea, and the least satisfied with the offer of sports activities. Other options, like tidiness of the surroundings, catering providers and availability of tourist information were rated as average.

Visitors answered the question: “Do you miss anything in the >>Belvedere<< area? If yes, what?” Given answers provided different views and suggestions, for example: more sports activities, benches, playground, trash bins, arrangement of the area, better catering options.

3.2. Implemented Managerial Activities

The Pilot action was divided in two parts:

1. **Regulation of the Belvedere terraces**
2. **Alternative ways of visiting the Park**

Pilot action_1st part - The regulation of the Belvedere terraces is composed by 3 main activities:

1. Working Table with the Municipality of Izola to define the first draft of the Management Plan (Study on landscaping and spatial planning solutions to increase the sustainability of tourist flows in the Pod Belveder area in the Municipality of Izola).
2. Approval of the Management Plan with an additional study of utility equipment and traffic regulation for the same area.
3. Awareness-raising actions: a leaflet on the protected area of Landscape Park Strunjan and protection regimes; creation and distribution of an educational animation video of the protection regimes in the Park.



Figure 7: Study on landscaping and spatial planning solutions

Pilot action 2nd part - Alternative ways of visiting the park is composed by 3 main activities:

1. Provision of an electric minibus for the transport of tourists to the different points of the Park and regulate the visit flows.
2. Production of leaflets with schedules, the bus route and stops to inform and encourage tourists to use the minibus instead of cars.
4. Production of an audio recording in three languages which is played on the bus to inform the visitors about the features of the Park and rules of conduct.

Krajnski park Strunjan
Parco naturale Strugnano
Landscape Park Strunjan

GRATIS BUS

OBČINA PIRAN
COMUNE DI PIRANO

URNIK VOŽNJE brezplačnega električnega mini busa

Odhodi IZ PRED HOTELA SALINERA v smeri Stjuža:									
dopoldan:	8.00	8.30	9.00	9.30	10.00	10.30	11.00	11.30	12.00
popoldan:	16.00	16.30	17.00	17.30	18.00	18.30	19.00	19.30	20.00

H

Odhodi IZ STJUŽE v smeri Hotela Salinera:									
dopoldan	8.15	8.45	9.15	9.45	10.15	10.45	11.15	11.45	
popoldan	16.15	16.45	17.15	17.45	18.15	18.45	19.15	19.45	

S



Figure 8: Leaflet with schedule, the bus route and stops



3.3. Relationship with Action Plan Activities

1. Realisation of a feasibility study of sustainable visits to the Park with alternative modes of transport and supporting activities, titled “A study of the regulation of stationary traffic in the Piran area of Landscape Park Strunjan”.

Expected results: reduce the surface area for stationary traffic in nature-sensitive areas, relocate parking spaces outside the heart of the park, restrict parking in the natural environment and reduce walking/biking outside designated trails to protect the flora and fauna of the Park.

2. Distribution of an educational animation video of the protection regimes in the Park.

Some modifications are needed in the Visitor Centre for an easier and more efficient video distribution.

Expected results: visitors are informed about protection regimes, decrease of violations of protection regimes in the Park, reduced pressures of visitors on nature.

3. Renovation and arrangement of the trail to improve secure access to the shore and natural values (White rocks) from the pilot project area.

Expected results: secure access, greater use of marked trails and lesser use of the wild ones.

3.4. Deviation from the Forecasted Work Plan Activities

The forecasted activity for the pilot action was the regulation of the Belvedere terraces. Later on, the provision of an electric minibus was implemented as part of the pilot project, because in 2019 we unexpectedly received two electric minibuses and a financial support from the Municipality of Piran.

The creation of an educational animation video about the protection regimes was planned for June 2019, but due to a delay in production, the main tourist season went by and fewer people were informed of the rules of conduct in the Park.

To improve the presentation of the video at the visitor centre, we are planning to give a small part of the CEETO budget for renovation of the visitor centre.

With the rest of the money from BL transport and accommodation we decided to renovate and arrange the trail to White Rocks to improve the secure access to the shore and the natural value from the pilot project area.

Once again it was proved that there are always some differences between applying and implementing a project.

4. Achieved Results

4.1 Touristic Pressure Reduction

The main reason to start the pilot action - regulation of the Belvedere terraces was the environmental problem with the possible deterioration of the costal (cliff) area due to the construction of a large-scale hotel complex. The objective of the regulation is to control the movement of visitors, ensure sustainable visits to the park and establish an entry point to the pilot area where we could provide visitors with



information about the park and control the movement of visitors, while offering them various sustainable activities outside the Park and relieve some of the pressure on the pilot area.

The Municipality of Izola also wants to limit construction in this area and move the parking area from the existing beachfront location to another, less attractive location, in order to reduce traffic in the area. They also want to establish rules that will allow a sustainable business activity and environmentally friendly tourism in the area of Belvedere terraces. This kind of tourism also encourages sustainable forms of mobility, in particular electric public transport, which includes also maritime transport.

A study on landscaping and spatial planning solutions together with an additional study of utility equipment and traffic regulation for the same area represents the project documentation which the Municipality will use as the basis for changes in a Municipal Spatial Plan document.

The second part of the pilot project was the introduction of an electric minibus, which has contributed to the reduction of car use within the Park, long-term free parking search and unauthorised parking in the natural environment. Our common main goal with hotel and camp owner was to encourage their guests to leave their cars in the car parks in front of the hotels and use public transport for transportation throughout the Park. This activity also reduced exhaust gases in ecologically sensitive areas where there are two nature reserves in the immediate vicinity.

Some data on the activity of the electric minibus:

1. The total number of passengers: we estimated that in the period of two months from 12,000 to 15,000 passengers used the minibus, which could mean approximately 6,000 cars.
2. The length of the bus route is 2.7 km/one way.
3. The duration of bus journey is around 15 minutes with all stops.
4. The average travel time by car is 7 minutes.

4.2 Tourist Experience Improvement

The Municipality of Izola in the further implementation of the pilot project - the regulation of the Belvedere terraces wants to establish a “transition zone” with the help of green public infrastructure and through an info point, directly inform and raise awareness of Strunjan Park and its rules of conduct. They also want to establish a better cooperation with the tourist operators in the vicinity, to include the local growers and producers, to offer the visitors several sustainable and traditional activities outside the park and to better connect this area with the rest of the park. The objective is to control the movement of the visitors, try to distribute the tourists to a broader period and to ensure sustainable visits of the park.

This year the park is richer by 2 electric minibuses which were used to transport the visitors and locals to the different points of the Park and regulate the visit flows. They were driving in August and September 2019, daily from 8am to 12pm and from 4pm to 8pm every 20 minutes. They were free to ride and can accommodate up to 17 people at one go, stopping at six specially marked stops in front of hotels, beach and market in the centre of Strunjan.

We produced an audio in three languages which was playing on the bus to inform visitors about the features of the park and rules of conduct. We also produced leaflets with bus route and stops to inform and encourage tourists to use the minibus instead of cars. It was the first testing year which brought good response from locals and visitors. Next year the plan is to increase the hours of driving per day, to cover

also the hours between 12am and 4pm. Until the end of 2019 we are planning to realize a feasibility study of a sustainable visit of the Park with alternative modes of transport and supporting activities.

4.3 Socio-Economic Benefits

In the further implementation of the pilot project—the regulation of the Belvedere terraces—the Municipality of Izola will contribute to improving the socio-economic benefits by introducing a new content in the area with several sustainable and traditional activities outside the Park, such as electric bicycle rentals, sustainable water sports, fishing activities, harvesting of olives and persimmons, ethno concerts, comprehensive renovation of tourist information boards, build educational playgrounds and create separate waste collection areas, and connect the area with the hinterland or other parts of the Park with the electric buses etc. Maritime transport would connect seaside towns, resorts and three landscape parks, which would contribute, in collaboration with providers, to create packages/ offers for various groups (international guests, including cruise ship guests , domestic guests).

Above all, the development of a glamping site and new catering services would provide new jobs, and the info point would need additional employees.



Figure 9: Sustainable water sport activity to visit the Park in a more sustainable way



Figure 10: Olive harvesting

5. Conclusion

The pilot aims to implement the tourism governance model inside Landscape Park Strunjan, with the purpose to reduce the environmental impacts and pressures caused by tourism-related activities, and thus improve nature conservation, and enhance the socio-economic impacts on the local community that can result from a sustainable tourism approach.

Our efforts are directed towards achieving a form of tourism that can be implemented with minimal long-term effects on the planet and can serve as an example to other protected areas. A pristine, authentic natural environment and the care for it are turning into an increasingly significant task, as well as an investment for the tourism of the future.

Therefore, in the future, we will continue to strive to emphasize the value of the areas on the edge of the protected area, at the transition between urban and natural environment, by extending green zones and protecting and regenerating biodiversity beyond the protected area or Natura 2000 network. The objective is to reduce pressure on the protected area, either through smart planning and the implementation of preventive and monitoring measures, or through the development of green infrastructure, sustainable modes of transport in the Park, ecosystem services and sustainable tourism or with the protection and restoration of the affected areas.

We will support the cooperation between different local stakeholders and protected area managers and will strive to improve the exchange of knowledge, good practices and networking between project partners in the future projects.