



**Cross-Border
Cooperation**



Funded by
the European Union

Montenegro – Albania

**1st Call for Proposals under IPA III CBC Programme
Montenegro – Albania published!**

Enhancing Cooperation - Newsletter

of the IPA CBC Programmes
Montenegro-Albania and Montenegro-
Kosovo 2014-2020 and 2021-2027

September 2025

CONTENT

The twenty-third 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 and 2021-2027. Programmes and project activities are funded by the European Union.

Please find below more information on the programmes.

IPA III CBC Programme Montenegro - Albania 2021- 2027

The global objective of the programme is to promote good neighbourly relations, foster Union integration and contribute to social, economic and territorial development by improving the quality of life of the population in the programme cross-border area by tourism development based on cultural/natural heritage and by protecting the environment.

Click [here](#) for more information.

IPA III CBC Programme Montenegro - Kosovo 2021-2027

The global objective of the programme is to promote good neighbourly relations, foster Union integration and contribute to social, economic and territorial development of the programme cross-border area by improving employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across borders; and developing sustainable tourism.

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.



CBC ZOOM

1st Call for Proposals launched under IPA III Cross-border Cooperation Programme Montenegro - Albania 2021-2027

The 1st Call for project proposals under the IPA III CBC Programme Montenegro-Albania 2021-2027 was published on 16 September 2025.

The deadline for submitting concept notes is **31 October 2025**.

The Call is open to authorities at all levels and institutions with competences in the policy area, local governments and their institutions, development organisations/agencies, organisations (including CSOs) for nature protection and climate change, public bodies responsible for fire/flood/emergency services, educational institutions of all levels, bureaus of education and vocational education centres, tourism organisations at national/local level, chamber of commerce, crafts, business associations, clusters, cooperatives, association of farmers, nature/environment protection institutions, institutions in the field of cultural heritage, CSOs active in the field concerned, business enterprises and other organisations involved in education, licensed youth and adult education providers and youth organisations.

As part of this call, projects worth up to 600,000 euros will be supported that aim at protecting the environment and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management, as well as projects worth up to 750,000 euros aimed at improving tourism and cultural and natural heritage. The duration of projects is limited to 30 months, while the total budget of this call is 7.4 million euros.

The programme area in Montenegro includes the municipalities: Andrijevica, Bar, Berane, Budva, Cetinje, Danilovgrad, Gusinje, Kolašin, Petnjica, Plav, Podgorica, Rožaje, Tuzi, Ulcinj and Zeta. In Albania the programme area includes: Shkodër, Malësia e Madhe, Vau i Dejës, Pukë, Fushë Arrëz, Lezhë, Kurbin, Mirditë and Tropojë.

All information about the 1st Call is available at the following [link](#).

Strengthening cross-border cooperation: Study visit to Prague enhances CBC programme implementation

A two-day study visit was successfully held in Prague, Czech Republic, from 8 – 9 July, 2025, bringing together representatives from the Montenegro – Albania and Montenegro – Kosovo IPA III Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) Programmes.

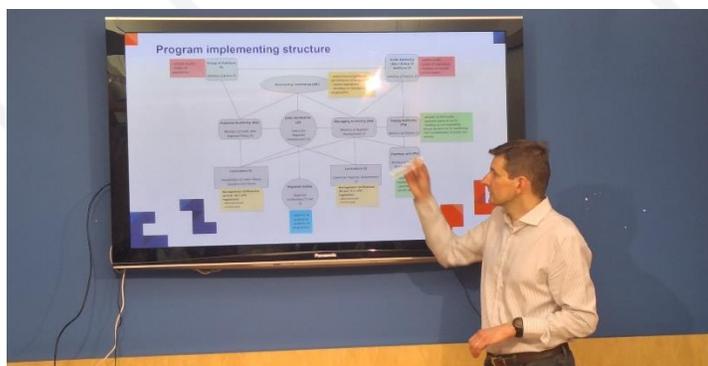


Participants included officials from relevant ministries and implementing bodies from Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo, as well as Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) staff. The purpose of the visit was to learn from the Czech Republic - Poland Interreg Programme's extensive experience in managing EU funds under indirect management. Hosted by the Ministry for Regional Development of the Czech Republic, the visit was part of the ongoing efforts to strengthen institutional capacities and enhance the implementation of EU-funded CBC programmes in the Western Balkans.



The visit featured in-depth sessions on programme governance, the project cycle, evaluation processes, monitoring systems, procurement controls and sustainability mechanisms. Special attention was given to best practices such as bilingual documentation, joint expert evaluation panels and pre-submission feedback to applicants, all contributing to transparency, inclusivity and project success.

One standout highlight was the presentation of the Small Project Fund, which supports grassroots cross-border initiatives through simplified processes and strong local engagement. Discussions also explored proactive measures to prevent and manage irregularities, reinforcing the importance of robust monitoring systems and continuous capacity building.





This

exchange of experience was not only educational but also a step forward in fostering greater cooperation and alignment with EU standards. Participants expressed enthusiasm for integrating lessons learned into their national programmes and supporting the continued success of cross-border collaboration in the region of the IPA III Programme.

News on projects financed under the 3rd and 4th CfPs IPA CBC Programme Montenegro - Albania

Project No Borders for Work finished

The Municipality of Cetinje, in partnership with NGO ProAct Hub (Podgorica), the Municipality of Fushë-Arrëz and the Institute for Sustainable Policies (Albania), has successfully implemented the *No Borders for Work* project. This cross-border initiative was designed to promote employment and socially inclusive economic development, with a strong focus on supporting entrepreneurship.



Through a series of activities, mentoring sessions, business owners and unemployed persons received practical guidance in legal compliance, financial administration and effective management. These sessions not only provided tailored support but also equipped participants with tools to navigate labour market challenges and unexpected crises, ensuring greater competitiveness in a fast-changing economy. By combining individual and group mentoring, the project has fostered a collaborative and resilient business community, in this way paving the way for long-term economic sustainability in the region.



On 27th June 2025 in Fushë-Arrëz, partners and participants came together to celebrate the successful conclusion of the project. The closing event featured inspiring stories, shared experiences from the field and the premiere of the project's final video, showcasing the impact of true regional cooperation.

Bajram Curri Museum revitalised

The restoration of the Bajram Curri Museum is completed, thanks to the *New Reality of the Heritage Sites* project. Namely, the revitalisation works have brought the museum's interior spaces back to life while addressing essential structural and functional needs.



Key improvements included roof waterproofing to safeguard against leaks, plastering of interior and exterior walls for enhanced durability as well as facade repairs with decorative stone to restore its historic charm.



This milestone marks an important step toward preserving the museum and ensuring its cultural legacy can be enjoyed by generations to come.

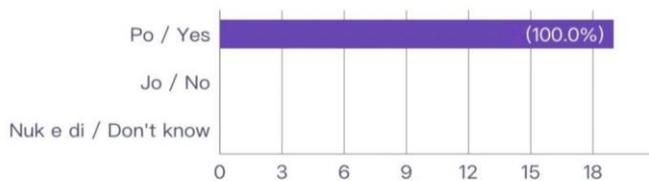


Survey highlights urgency for action: 84% see forest fires as major risk

As part of the *Building Smart Forests* project, in May 2025, project partners asked citizens in Shkodra and Bar about forest protection and early fire detection. The survey revealed strong awareness and support for action, as 84% see forest fires as a serious risk in the region. Moreover, only 53% believe authorities have the resources to manage fires efficiently, while a 100% support cross-border cooperation between Montenegro and Albania and believe fire-detection systems will make a real difference.

These insights highlight both the urgency of the challenge and the readiness of communities to embrace solutions.

10. A duhet të ketë bashkëpunim mes Malit të Zi dhe Shqipërisë për shuarjen e zjarreve? Should there be cooperation between Montenegro and Albania in fighting fires?



The *Building Smart Forests* project focuses on early detection, minimizing fire risks, protecting human lives, and improving fire management efficiency. It is led by the Foundation for Local Autonomy and Governance (FLAG) in partnership with Bar and Shkodra municipalities.

Closing event held for the project Skadar/Shkoder Lake Watershed - a Transboundary Biosphere

On 29th July 2025 the final conference of the project brought together around 100 participants, representatives of institutions, local authorities, international organizations, experts, businesses and communities from Montenegro and Albania. Alongside the conference, a *Nature and Culture Fair* showcased the richness of the region and highlighted the importance of joint efforts for the future of the basin.



High-level speakers, including EU Ambassador, **Johann Sattler** and State Secretary in the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development, **Nenad Vitomirović**, joined by numerous local representatives, reaffirmed their commitment to national and cross-border cooperation. They emphasised that this process “shows how nature protection and community development can go hand in hand.” Support came from actors across culture, nature protection, sustainable development, spatial planning and foreign affairs. A key milestone was announced, namely, the three nomination dossiers, one joint and two national, are set to be officially submitted in September 2025, marking the final step toward international recognition.



The process extended well beyond the preparation of a nomination dossier. It has served as a platform for bringing together people, expertise, values and shared aspirations. Institutions, civil society, the private sector, experts and local stakeholders have each played an important role in advancing a common objective: to ensure that the Skadar Lake Basin and its surroundings are recognised not only for their natural beauty and biodiversity, but also for their potential to pursue development that is sustainable, equitable and inclusive.



The project *Skadar/Shkoder Lake Watershed – a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve* intends to bring positive impact to the important transboundary ecosystem shared between Albania and Montenegro to sustainably and collaboratively manage the area for the benefit of communities and of nature itself, in line with UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme conditions.

Check out the website of the project [here](#).

The project is implemented by Environmental centre for Development, Education and Networking (EDEN center), Environment Programme – EnvPro, National Agency of Protected Areas in Albania and Public Enterprise National Parks of Montenegro.

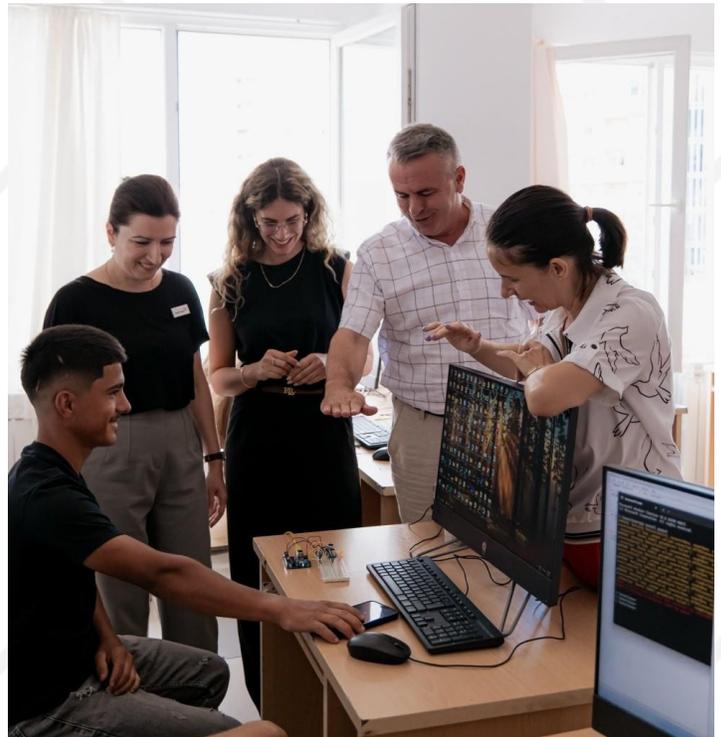
Capacity building for youth and unemployed

As part of the project *Boosting decent employment for youth and unemployed people in the cross-border area of Montenegro and Albania*, 20 young people successfully completed the *Digital Skills and Soft Skills* courses.



In addition to the intensive training delivered at the “Kolin Gjoka” Vocational High School in Lezha, also among 15 participants completed a one-month professional internship with ICT companies in Tirana.

During their placements, they worked on web platforms for financial systems and mobile applications, contributing to the maintenance and development of digital solutions within these companies. This experience not only enhanced their technical skills but also gave them valuable hands-on insight into the ICT sector, opening new opportunities for their future careers.



The project is implemented by World Vision Albania, the Employment Agency of Montenegro, and the Albanian National Employment and Skills Agency, and aims to empower young people and unemployed individuals through soft skills and digital training, professional internships, and entrepreneurial support.

Accessible Boat Tourism project advances regional inclusion efforts

On 29 May 2025, the partners of the *Accessible Boats Tourism* project, gathered to strengthen their joint commitment to promoting accessible tourism across Montenegro and Albania. The meeting brought together the Montenegrin Employers Federation, as the project’s lead partner, the National Chamber of Crafts of Albania and a representative from MontAbility, the first and only travel agency in Montenegro dedicated exclusively to travelers with disabilities. The discussions underscored the project’s broader mission of creating inclusive opportunities within the tourism sector, ensuring that people with disabilities are able to participate fully in social and cultural experiences.



Following the partner meeting, a roundtable discussion was held with artisans from Shkoder region. This dialogue provided valuable insight into the needs and perspectives of local craftspeople and highlighted the importance of accessibility as a cornerstone of sustainable tourism development. By actively involving artisans, the project aims to build stronger connections between local communities and inclusive tourism practices. The day concluded with a field visit to Skadar Lake, where participants conducted an on-site assessment of accessibility standards. This practical evaluation was an important step toward identifying challenges and opportunities to adapt natural and cultural attractions to the needs of all visitors.



The event reaffirmed the shared commitment of project partners and stakeholders to building a tourism model that is both inclusive and sustainable, with accessibility at its core.

Training on women’s entrepreneurship successfully completed in Ulcinj

The training on women’s entrepreneurship was successfully held as part of the project *Women Microenterprise Development in the Cross-Border Area*, organised by the NGO MogUL in cooperation with the Municipality of Ulcinj. The training was opened by the participation of the Mayor of Ulcinj, **Genci Nimanbegu**, who addressed the participants on behalf of the municipality. In his remarks, he welcomed the women entrepreneurs and extended his best wishes for a fruitful start to the six-month training programme.



During this initial session, participants were introduced to the training agenda and explored the fundamentals of entrepreneurship through interactive and creative activities. The session provided an opportunity

to learn about key concepts such as idea development, the first steps toward establishing an enterprise, and strategies for growing small businesses.

Strong participation of women and young women from the community reflects both the high level of interest and the significant potential that exists for women’s entrepreneurship in Ulcinj. The programme will continue according to the planned agenda, offering ongoing support and guidance for participants to strengthen their entrepreneurial skills and pursue sustainable business opportunities.



The project aims to empower women’s entrepreneurial initiatives in the cross-border regions of Ulcinj and Shkodra, fostering sustainable solutions for the growth of women-led small businesses. The project is implemented by NGO MogUL in partnership with the Municipality of Ulcinj and Code Partners from Shkodra.

Training on active job seeking successfully conducted in Berane

From 24 to 27 June 2025, a training program on active job seeking was successfully held in Berane with the participation of 15 persons with disabilities. The training aimed to strengthen competencies such as knowledge, skills and attitudes essential for active job searching, thereby increasing the employability and competitiveness of persons with disabilities in the labor market.

This initiative was implemented within the framework of the project *P.O.W.E.R. – Persons with Disabilities: New Opportunities for Work, Employability, and Professional Rehabilitation*.

The lead partner of the project is Caritas of the Archdiocese of Bar, with the Association of Paraplegics of Bar, Caritas Albania and Down Syndrome Albania Foundation as partners organisation in Montenegro and Albania. Through joint efforts, the project continues to provide meaningful opportunities for professional growth, social inclusion and economic empowerment of persons with disabilities in the cross-border region.



News on projects financed under the 3rd CfP IPA CBC Programme Montenegro - Kosovo

New equipment for utility companies

A new garbage truck for Utility Company Berane and a vehicle for the Secretariat for Inspection Affairs of the Municipality of Berane have been officially presented, both procured within the framework of the *Cross-Border Green Deal* project, implemented by FORS Montenegro in partnership with the Municipality of Berane and ECMI Kosovo. With these acquisitions, the capacities of the Utility Company and the Municipality have been significantly strengthened, enabling better waste management, more efficient control of waste disposal and improved environmental protection in Berane.



In addition, as part of the project, utility companies K.R.M. "Ambienti" from Peja and its units in Istog and Klina, NPL "Higijena" from Decani and KRM "Cabрати" Gjakove have received a wide range of modern equipment. More than 300 waste containers of different sizes (120 L, 240 L, and 1.1 m³), as well as practical tools and machinery for maintenance such as a multi-cultivator, two grass trimmers and twenty-six pruning shears were handed out to the utility companies.



To further support environmental monitoring, three air pollution meters were provided, while workers were equipped with 85 full sets of uniforms and protective footwear. Moreover, K.R.M. Ambienti from Peja benefited from the installation of three green islands in the scenic Rugova area.



The *Cross-Border Green Deal* project stands as an example of effective regional cooperation and the importance of EU support in advancing local environmental initiatives. It highlights the shared commitment of Berane and Peja to building cleaner, greener and more sustainable communities.



Mobile info stands, employer guide and training opportunities: advancing youth employment through the InEET project

In May 2025, mobile information stands were successfully installed in Berane and Podgorica in Montenegro, as well as in Peja and Istog in Kosovo, providing direct access to employment information and support services for job seekers. These stands were designed to reach vulnerable groups in particular, offering guidance on job opportunities, employability skills and available training programs.

Over the course of the activity, 289 individuals visited the stands, 63 in Istog, 47 in Peja, 87 in Berane and 92 in Podgorica. One of the central resources available at the stands was the *Employer Handbook for Kosovo and Montenegro*, which highlighted companies and organisations currently seeking employees. This practical guide allowed participants to review employment opportunities tailored to their skills and interests while also learning about training programs designed to boost employability.

This initiative surpassed expectations, with 64 employers registering to be part of the project, 28 in Montenegro and 36 in Kosovo, exceeding the

original target. Their participation has broadened the range of available opportunities and strengthened the link between job seekers and the labor market.

Moreover, as part of the project activities, a series of professional training and internship programs were also carried out. In Montenegro, 40 young people from Podgorica, Bijelo Polje, Berane, Plav and Tuzi completed paid on-the-job training schemes with various employers. In Kosovo, 34 young people benefited from similar paid internship opportunities, gaining valuable work experience and practical skills. The project also supported prequalification courses to improve the employability of young people. In Kosovo, all 20 planned training programmes have been completed, while in Montenegro 15 programmes have been implemented.

By combining direct outreach through mobile info stands, practical resources such as the Employer Handbook and tailored opportunities like internships and training programs, the *InEET* project implemented by NGO Juventas from Montenegro and NGO Labyrinth from Kosovo aimed to help young people in both Montenegro and Kosovo to bridge the gap between education and employment.

Educational workshop for tourism service providers held in Rožaje

From 18 to 20 July 2025 in Rožaje, an educational workshop for tourism service providers from Montenegro and Kosovo, under the cross-border project *Cultural Revival from Lake Skadar to Kosovo (Time Travel)*, was held. The training was organized by the Centre for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives (CSTI) from Podgorica, and was tailored for hiking and city guides, travel agencies and local tourism organizations.



During the workshop, participants explored the latest trends in designing cultural-tourism tours and learned interpretative guiding techniques, all with the goal of enhancing the quality of destination experiences. One of the key outcomes presented during the event was the upcoming cultural-historical tourism product *Journey Through Time*, which Montenegro's partners, CSTI and the National Tourism Organization of Montenegro will launch in the upcoming period. This product will interpret cultural heritage from the ancient period, through the Middle Ages and Ottoman era, up to the post-World War periods, to align with contemporary tourists' interests.

The *Journey Through Time* will be aimed at both domestic and foreign visitors who are passionate about history and culture, as well as outdoor enthusiasts. So far, three of a planned five thematic tourist trails have been developed, complete with interpretive panels and signage, in

Petnjica, Rožaje and Ckla near Ostros. Partners in Kosovo are likewise working to valorise their ancient, medieval and Ottoman heritage in a similar manner.

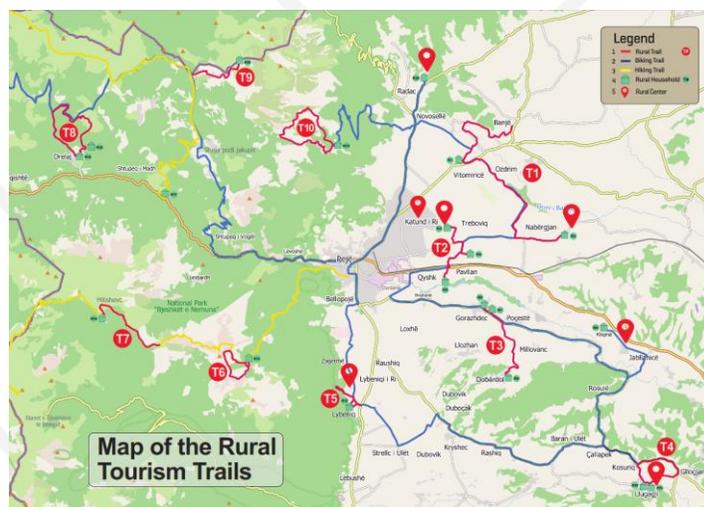


Check out also the promotional video of the project [here](#).

Boosting rural tourism in Kosovo and Montenegro

During the extended implementation period, RDA-West carried out tailored on-site training for 20 rural tourism households in Kosovo. These sessions built on earlier activities and used the materials developed through workshops, guidebooks and training tools, ensuring that future service providers are fully prepared to launch their rural tourism offers in time for the upcoming season. The training also created valuable opportunities for business-to-business exchanges between rural households and local tourism agencies, laying the foundation for stronger cooperation in building visitor itineraries.

Significant progress was made in developing trails, with seven main and three additional trails created in Kosovo and eight trails in Montenegro. All 18 routes are now fully integrated into existing tourism networks, offering visitors a richer and more connected experience.



In line with recommendations from earlier studies, both RDA-West and RDA-BKP collaborated with communities and stakeholders to enhance tourism infrastructure along these rustic routes. In Kosovo, improvements were focused on village centers and trail junctions in Lubeniq, Llugagji, Ruhot, Kliqinë, Katund i Ri, Jabllanicë e Vogel and Treboviq. In Montenegro, enhancements were made in Velika and Babino Polje (Plav), Konjuhe (Andrijeвица), Polica and Gornja sela

(Berane), Tomaševo (Bijelo Polje), Bojna Njiva (Mojkovac) and Limljani (Bar). The installations, that included benches, tables, flower pots, bike parking, playground elements, rustic signage and info boards, improved the visual appeal of these communities but also created functional gathering spaces for residents and visitors alike.



Support was also extended to 40 rural families, helping them make their homes more suitable for receiving tourists. Twenty households (10 in Kosovo and 10 in Montenegro) were equipped with covered outdoor seating areas, allowing them to host groups of 8 to 10 people for food and beverage service. Another 20 households received support to upgrade their garden spaces, through landscaping interventions or practical additions such as garden seating, barbecue sets and flower pots.

Second Project Steering Committee meeting held in Rugova

On 27 May 2025 in Rugova, Peja, the 2nd Project Steering Committee meeting for the IPA III Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes took place. Partners from Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo gathered to review progress, approve the Interim Report and plan upcoming calls for proposals.



After the event, the PSC member visited the Museum of Peja and the Creative Hub in Peja that benefited from the IPA II CBC Programme Montenegro – Kosovo through the projects *Culture heritage – Treasure of Cross Border Region* and *C.L.O.S.E.R. – Culture-Led Opportunities for Sustainable Economic Revitalisation*.



Sustainability visit within IPA I Project: Marubi - A Collaborative Model for Promoting Tourism Between Shkodra and Ulcinj

On 20 June 2025 representatives from DG ENEST and CBIB+ were welcomed for a sustainability-focused visit to the Marubi National Museum of Photography, part of the *Marubi Route* project implemented under IPA I. This initiative marked an important cultural milestone, fostering cross-border tourism and deepening appreciation of shared heritage in our region.

Co-funded by the IPA I Cross-border Cooperation Programme Albania - Montenegro, the *Marubi Route* project laid a strong foundation for promoting the extraordinary photographic legacy of Marubi on an international scale. Through community-driven exhibitions and touring museum showcases across European cities, the project successfully established Marubi as a recognised cultural brand.

It is worth noting that the impact continues today. The Marubi Museum of Photography stands not only as a dynamic cultural institution, but also as a site of global significance, officially listed in UNESCO's Memory of the World International Register. This recognition underscores the project's long-term contribution to heritage preservation and cultural exchange.



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



**Ministarstvo
evropskih
poslova**



**Montenegro
Ministry of Finance
Directorate for Finance and Contracting
of the EU Assistance Funds**



**Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova-Republic of Kosovo
Qeveria - Vlada - Government**
*Ministria e Administrimit të Pushtetit Lokal
Ministristvo Administracije Lokalne Samouprave
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