

**FINAL MDG-F JOINT PROGRAMME
NARRATIVE REPORT**

Participating UN Organization(s)	Sector(s)/Area(s)/Theme(s)
UNWTO, FAO, UNICEF, UNEP, UNDP(lead)	Development and the Private Sector – Republic of Serbia

Joint Programme Title	Joint Programme Number
Sustainable Tourism For Rural Development	MDTF Atlas Project No: 00070513

Joint Programme Cost [Sharing - if applicable]	Joint Programme [Location]
[Fund Contribution): 4,000,000 USD Govt. Contribution: USD Agency Core Contribution: Other: TOTAL: 4,000,000 USD	Region (s): Central Serbia, Eastern Serbia, South Banat, Lower Danube Governorate(s): District(s) 19 municipalities

Final Joint Programme Evaluation	Joint Programme Timeline
Final Evaluation Done Yes x No <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation Report Attached Yes x No <input type="checkbox"/> Date of delivery of final report	Original start date 04.12.2009 Final end date 04.12.2012

Participating Implementing Line Ministries and/or other organisations (CSO, etc)
Ministry of Finance and Economy Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management National Tourist Organization of Serbia

I. PURPOSE

- a. Provide a brief introduction on the socio economical context and the development problems addressed by the programme.

Serbian rural economies face a number of challenges and opportunities in becoming more competitive and sustainable, requiring balance between agricultural production and other economic activities, environmental protection, and social development. In the past, rural development has focused on improving agricultural performance, increasing competitiveness, consolidating land and improving market orientation. More recent rural development policies focus on the integration of environmental protection principles in agricultural production and sustainable use of resources. Measures supporting the diversification of the rural economy in socially, economically and environmentally sustainable ways are needed for rural Serbia improve its quality of life, lower poverty and fight social and environmental degradation of natural resources.

Sustainable rural tourism is one of the key sectors with strong potential for diversifying Serbia's rural economy. In the past several years a movement has been developing toward sustainable rural tourism that counters the threats of unmanaged tourism. Sustainable tourism views tourism within destination areas as a relationship between host areas and their communities and peoples, tourists, and the tourism industry. In the past, the tourism industry has dominated this relationship. Sustainable tourism reconciles the conflicting interests between these three partners. In short, it minimizes environmental and cultural damage, optimizes visitor satisfaction, maximizes long-term economic growth, and balances tourism growth potential and the conservation needs of the environment.

In spite of economic growth over the past years, regional and rural-urban disparities, and social exclusion of vulnerable groups still remain concerns in Serbia. While poverty rate was reduced from 14% to 6.6%, it still remains twice as high in rural areas (9.8%) than urban (4.3%). The significance of this problem is compounded by the fact that 85% of Serbia's territory, 55% of the population, and 41% of its GDP comes from rural areas. Roughly 75% of the rural population is engaged in subsistence agricultural production (75%), with only an estimated 20% producing for markets. These statistics show that, while the Serbian economy is highly dependent on agriculture and the rural sector, many rural economies remain underdeveloped. While official unemployment Serbia-wide is 18%, in many rural regions it approaches 25% (unemployment at the village-level would certainly be significantly higher, while in urban municipal centers, lower). Women in rural areas are particularly vulnerable as they represent 74% of people engaged in a family business without being paid for the work done, usually in agriculture. Per capita GDP in most rural regions throughout the country is 70%-85% of the Serbia-wide per capita average.

In addition, the welfare of rural populations is also determined by access to services (e.g. healthcare, education and social protection), which implies that greater efforts are necessary to ensure rural development policy is fully cross-sectoral. Any rural development planning needs to take into consideration efforts that fully utilize existing resources. In this context, the human resources and infrastructure available within the education system in rural areas are of particular importance. Namely, village schools, having experienced a reduction in size over the past decades, mean that educated teachers, that are losing their jobs or have access only to part-time employment, represent an important resource that can be utilized for rural development. Along the same lines, village schools (usually located in the centre of village), have available space that can be used for rural development initiatives. Such measures are increasingly necessary and should help to reduce the migration of young people and the resulting loss of social capital from rural communities, as well as to provide economically and environmentally sustainable rural livelihoods.

- b. List joint programme outcomes and associated outputs as per the final approved version of the joint programme Document or last agreed revision.

JP Programme Outcomes

Outcome 1 (National Level):

Legal and policy framework for supporting diversification of rural economy through tourism is developed and contributes to achievement of Millennium Development Goals.

This outcome is intended to be implemented at the national level by supporting the Government to:

- Develop a National Rural Tourism Master Plan.
- Develop a National Rural Development Program.
- Provide guidance for public investments.

Related outputs:

1.1.1. National Rural Tourism Master Plan: Developed and submitted to the Government for approval by end of Year 1.

1.1.2. Principles & Framework for Children-Related Tourism: Define principles & framework for children-related tourism, including family-based tourism, school-focused tourism and youth (back-pack) tourism; and define measures that need to be implemented to stimulate the development of these types of tourism.

1.1.3. National Study on Sustainable Tourism: Provide environmental information for the development of the National Rural Tourism Master Plan, including recommendations following first draft of this Policy, within the first 12 months of JP.

1.1.4 Assessment of the potential contribution of rural tourism to small farming sector and rural development in general: Complete assessment in the first 6 months of JP, for inclusion in the National Rural Tourism Master Plan.

1.2.1. IPARD National Agriculture & Rural Development Program (2010-2013): Strategic guidelines for inclusion of rural tourism & related activities to Axes 2 & 3 developed, facilitating Serbia's access to EC IPARD Axis 2 & 3 funds.

1.2.2. IPARD Life-Conditions Study: Provide strategic input into IPARD with life-conditions so as to ensure integrated rural tourism development addresses issues of access to services (health, education & social protection) for children & women in rural areas.

1.3.1. Public Investments toward Rural Tourism Master Plan: Serbia public sector commits minimum \$75 million in rural tourism initiatives and supporting infrastructure in line with Rural Tourism Master Plan by end of JP.

1.3.2. Public-Private Partnership Guidelines: Functional guidelines for successful public-private partnerships developed and institutionalized, evidenced by completion of at least six PPP initiatives by end of JP.

1.3.3. SIFT Network: National focal point established for Sustainable Investment and Finance in Tourism (SIFT) Network.

1.3.4. Investment Monitoring & Evaluation Strategy: Formal process installed to feed lessons learned from Outcome 2 into public tourism investments.

Outcome 2 (Local Level):

Local rural tourism and support industries are better linked and organized; and local stakeholders' capacity is improved for delivering services and products in line with national strategies.

This outcome is intended to be implemented at the local and regional level, in four target regions, to provide support to local rural planning and destination development and management through:

- Tourist destination development.
- Diversification of the Rural Economy through Tourism.

➤ Active Learning Tourism Investments.

Related outputs:

2.1.1. Local Action Groups: Capacity of public, private and civil society sector stakeholders strengthened to enable establishment of six Local Action Groups (representing 10,000-100,000 citizens) and develop local rural development strategies, by end of JP.

2.1.2. Rural Development Network: Capacity of national Rural Development Network strengthened in the target regions to lead development and facilitation of Local Action Groups, independently lobby for development initiatives and secure resources for regional development by end of JP.

2.1.3. Local planning: All 19 target municipalities have included sustainable rural tourism measures in local development strategies, by the end of JP.

2.1.4. Organizational Capacity Development: 500 men and women trained via 20 workshops, representing at least 50 different tourism and rural stakeholder entities trained on organizational subjects by end of JP.

2.1.5. Marketing & Promotion: local tourism stakeholders trained via 15 workshops on product development issues, marketing and promotion in Years 2 and 3 of the JP.

2.1.6. Energy Efficiency & Alternative Energy: 300 men and women trained via 12 workshops, representing at least 100 different organizations, architecture & engineering firms, construction firms, and public officials trained on energy efficiency and alternative energy technical matters and funding opportunities by end of JP.

2.1.7. Rural Tourism-Oriented Networks: Twelve groups of regional tourism-oriented producers and processors provide a common touristic offer (integrating local services and products) by end of JP.

2.1.8. Product Development: Local tourism stakeholders actively participating in Product Development discussions through the TGOs and are trained to become active stakeholders in Tourism Master Plan Implementation.

2.1.9. Sustainable Resource Management: 300 men and women trained via 12 workshops, representing at least 100 different tourism stakeholders in sustainable resource management by end of JP.

2.1.10. Agriculture Quality Standards Training: 600 producers, farmers and processors trained via 25 workshops in agriculture quality production and standards.

2.2.1. Tourism Governance Organizations (TGOs) in four regions (one per target region) established throughout JP through expert support, while engaging local stakeholders.

2.2.2. Child-Related Tourism Supply & Demand: Guidelines/standards for schools and tourism service providers catering for children submitted to the Ministry of Education for endorsement by the end of JP.

2.2.3. Investment Forum: One national investment forum organized in Year 2 of JP.

2.2.4. Joint UN Fund for Sustainable Rural Tourism / Thematic window on Diversification of Rural Economy through Tourism: 23 projects for developing rural tourist sites, products & services supported by the end of JP.

2.2.5. Joint UN Fund for Sustainable Rural Tourism / Thematic window on Tourism Destination Development: Basic tourism services, Development of attractions, specific niche products and tourism clusters in target regions enhanced, in the last two years of JP. (Average project investment \$10,000)

2.2.6. Joint UN Fund for Sustainable Rural Tourism Fund / Thematic Window on Active-Learning Tourism Investments: 20 tourist sites developed through 8 child-, family-, and school-centered tourism competitions organized (4 per year, 2 in Lower Danube region due to higher number of municipalities; top 3 awards per competition).

c. Explain the overall contribution of the joint programme to National Plan and Priorities

The Joint Programme was aligned to the outcomes of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Serbia, namely “Sustainable development plans that effectively responds to the needs of people, communities and promote rural development”.

FAO component of the UNJP STRD have contributed to effective change of the national Rural Development support planning and programming of rural tourism development through providing inputs for the National and IPA Rural Development plans and studies on possible contribution of rural tourism to development of small farming sector and rural development in general. FAO have worked on establishment of synergy between diverse line ministries and their sectoral development strategies for designing efficient and harmonized policy frame for financial support to the rural tourism sector. FAO have devoted its resources to understand and develop support policies for assisting small farming sector and therefore contributed to the overall national strategy for eradication of poverty which is in Serbia rural phenomena and creating employment opportunities as the most important

Millennium development goals adopted by Serbian Government.

Also UNJP STRD have contributed to better understanding of SIFT concept as well as LEADER approach.

- d. Describe and assess how the programme development partners have jointly contributed to achieve development results

FAO have mainly cooperated with the line ministry responsible according to the Law on Government for its main topic of interest – agriculture and rural development – Ministry of agriculture, forestry and water management MoA (during 2011 it was Ministry of agriculture, forestry, trade and water management). The main topics of this cooperation were creation of national rural development support policy and building of institutional inter-sectoral support to rural and development of rural tourism. The other topic covered was cooperation for disbursement of grants in line with developed rural development support policy which included also capacity building for processing IPARD like support and direct exercising management of grants. MoA have also provided participants of working group FAO for quality – officers responsible for diverse aspects of support to agriculture and rural development such as officers from the MoA quality group and officer responsible for all 3 axes of rural development support to investments, which were responsible to work with FAO team and FAO experts in conducting diverse assessments and creating demand driven training programs and rural development support measures. The active participation in FAO activities was also provided through officer in charge for rural development network which was participating in capacity building planning and activities conducted on the field with this network. Finally, MoA have provided possibility for coordination of FAO activities with on-going projects in rural development and work with officers which were employed to make synergy between activities (STAR project components, AVALON project on agro-environment etc.). As a result, the part of the rural development policy which is provided through measures of the axis 2 which were developed by FAO team were done in coordination with AVALON guidelines, HNVF typology and results of the component 3 of the STAR project which have exercised some of measures. FAO team have also provided inputs from its work on capacity building for establishment of partnerships and strategic planning to the EC project team introducing LEADER concept in the MoA. This partnership was later continued by UNDP introducing activities concerning establishment of LAGs.

FAO have cooperated also with the Ministry of economy and regional development – MERR (later in 2012 Ministry of finances and economy) in designing and conducting culinary trainings. Representatives of the MERR and TOS were invited to participate in trainings, monitoring activities and FAO quality group.

Joint Programme, in cooperation with Ministry of Economy and Regional Development have jointly organized First Serbian Investment Tourism Forum. This forum had undergone a several-year preparation through the process of adopting relevant laws and regulations, improving tourism infrastructure and representing Serbian tourism abroad

Since UNWTO is a non-resident agency, it was fundamental to develop strong partnerships both with national and UN partners for the successful implementation of project activities. In terms of national partnership, this was extremely strong and successful. At all stages of the project, MFE were the main partner and owners of UNWTO's outputs ensuring that the Rural Tourism Master Plan was aligned to national tourism and rural development policies and strategies; the Tourism Governance Organization activity was re-oriented towards establishment of a Rural Tourism Task Force at the request of the MFE, and, capacity building activities were undertaken under the aegis of the Rural Tourism Task Force. Where NTOS was concerned, the partnership was also equally strong and successful since they implemented the UNWTO grants scheme. Through their intervention and joint implementation of UNWTO activities, MFE and NTOS strengthened their partnership and visibility with local tourism organizations and rural tourism stakeholders.

In terms of inter-agency partnership, this was also strong. All other agencies participated in the formulation of the Rural Tourism Master Plan – providing inputs and studies which fed into the document. UNICEF provided technical assistance and support to UNWTO for the child tourism

component of the Master Plan and, in turn, UNWTO provided some support for the organization of study tours organized by UNICEF. UNEP provided information based on environmental review and provided inputs to strengthen environmental sustainability aspects for the Rural Tourism Master Plan. UNDP and FAO also provided inputs into the Rural Tourism Master Plan and UNWTO provided support to UNDP's organization of the investment fora.

The creation of the PIU and the fact that all PIU members worked in the same office went a long way to ensure development of partnerships and synergies in the implementation of project activities and good and effective communication.

II. ASSESSMENT OF JOINT PROGRAMME RESULTS

- a. Report on the key outcomes achieved and explain any variance in achieved versus planned results. The narrative should be results oriented to present results and illustrate impacts of the pilot at policy level)

OUTCOME 1

A comprehensive strategic document was produced by UNWTO and approved by the Government of the Republic of Serbia on November 3, 2011 which will guide the future development, marketing, promotion and management of the rural tourism industry in Serbia over the coming decade. The Master Plan determined that rural tourism has a critical role to play in the development of tourism in Serbia and a leading role to play in the diversification of the rural economy and as a mechanism to reduce poverty, improve the quality of life, preserve cultural heritage and protect the environment. The Master Plan is based on a careful strategic analysis of Rural Tourism in Serbia and includes a detailed Action Plan and Implementation Plan prioritising the activities which need to be undertaken on an annual basis according to the different programmes identified, i.e. Governance System; Rural Activities Product Development (and special focus on Child and Family Tourism); creation of Man-made Facilities (to extend the stay of tourists and reduce seasonality); Accommodation; Human Resources; Environmental Sustainability; and Infrastructure. Moreover, the Master Plan identifies the roles and responsibilities of key players and provides orientative budgets. The Rural Tourism Master Plan was formulated in an extremely consultative manner:

- a. Extensive meetings and consultations with MFE, NTOS and other stakeholders (especially rural tourism stakeholders including women in the four target regions);
- b. Meetings with 19 municipalities of Serbia (total municipalities of the 4 target regions);
- c. Site visits;
- d. Survey with 106 Local Tourism Organizations of Serbia;
- e. 588 surveys to visitors in rural areas of Serbia;
- f. UN agencies' inputs (UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, UNEP) and
- g. 5 workshops organized on national level

The Master Plan is national in scope with focus on four priority regions of the project: Central Serbia, Eastern Serbia, Lower Danube and South Banat. The English and Serbian versions of the documents are available on the MFE and MDGF websites.

Striving to help establishment of the sustainable link from the field to the fork, FAO have established effective program activities within UNJP Sustainable tourism for rural development to promote improved adherence of food producers/businesses to international recommendations on good practices in food safety and quality at all stages of the food chain, and conformity with market requirements. The activities have included:

- **Provision of conditions for strong investments support** to rural tourism development through adequate rural development policy

- **Strengthening extension and knowledge transfer systems** for rural households dealing with tourism and/or producing food and shaping valuable rural environment

- **Supporting struggle for achieving sustainability of small-farming sector** through better networking of

primary food producers and processors with tourism services providers

Providing conditions for modernization of agriculture households to meet food quality and safety standards for increasing income in rural areas and contribute to increasing competitiveness of the local rural tourism offer. "The FAO for quality" (quality food value chain for a successful rural tourism serial) was the line of trainings, mentoring and coaching on different subjects which was provided to those households having the interest for combining local products and services provision in targeted rural areas with the most prospect in rural tourism development due to attractiveness of their natural and cultural tourism. "FAO for quality trainings" were provided on HACCP, GGAP including basics of organic agriculture, food processing in households, gastronomy standards, marketing, strategic planning, project proposal writing, fund rising, branding of products and regions including information on possible introduction of various external certification schemes and development of own brands. Capacity building was supplemented through organized study tours for learning about rural development support in Croatia and success stories in the regional and rural development in EU for farmers, National rural development network members and representatives of national rural development council.

For the FAO interest for the development of tourism in rural areas is direct – provision of markets for agriculture – on and off farm, elevation of poverty for small scale farmers and rural population in general, through provision of additional on-farm income through adding value to primary production and employment for surplus of its labor and available facilities. Development of tourism is seen as an incentive for improvements in agriculture production, procession and serving of food, introduction of modern standards including promotion of high quality foods, food safety issues etc. which are hard to happen on small scale farms due to high costs. Introduction of tourism in to the fragile Serbian rural economy fabric is giving chance for more consistent introduction of sustainable, "ecological" farming practices and farming as an environmental service, which helps rural areas keep and employ qualified and younger labor force. For tourism as an economic branch, from the other side agriculture and farming is not just a source of necessary food, but also source of attractive activities and creator and shaper of attractive rural environment, landscapes and biodiversity which are helping diversify offer. Tourism from the other side, keeps that environment alive, since interest of local community to maintain its attractive traditional look have the concrete value."

On the National level UNJP STRD FAO Component have provided support to rural development policy planning, support to National RD Council, its establishment and Capacity Building and support to rural tourism master planning. Analytical background and IPARD measures of axis 2 and 3 were developed along with inputs for Master plan for rural development inputs.

The work under this Outcome, related to UNEP component, focused on: Creation Study to assess capacity by collecting and using locally available environmental information/data; Identify potential impact of National Rural Tourism Master Plan by examining: i) potential impacts on ecosystems from proposed options; ii) energy consumption & efficiency; iii) buffer zone management; iv) other environmental impacts; Identify organizations and/or individuals to a National Environmental serve as SIFT focal point; Provide training to focal point on benefits and expectations as member of SIFT network; Engage SIFT network to share best practices, match destination demand with financial resources, & build network capacity. National Environmental Study provided inputs (with focus on environment) for the development of National Rural Tourism Master Plan. This study was produced in the form of Rapid desk study and included: topography, geology, morphology and landscape analysis, soil characteristics, climate characteristics, data on hydrology and ground water, biodiversity characteristics, information of protected areas and environmental pollution.

In particular, UNEP mainstreamed sustainability into tourism development investments through the SIFT network. Its role was to i) develop and share best practices in tourism investments; ii) match demand for sustainable tourism products in developing country destinations with financial resources; and iii) provide network members with research, capacity development, publications and workshop and event opportunities. UNEP facilitated Serbia's membership in SIFT by identifying the National Corporation for Tourism Development as the focal point. Stakeholders in Serbia was benefit through SIFT best practices, resources and access to its investment network. The training seminar on mainstreaming investments in sustainable tourism development for local stakeholders including environmental groups, private/tourism sector, and local authorities has been organized. The workshops gave recommendations and proposals for future investment interventions and plans regarding sustainable economic/tourism development in the region.

The Joint Programme contributed to the development of study that analyses how Serbian investments and policy

reforms provide the mechanisms and the financing for the reconfiguration of businesses, infrastructure and institutions, and the adoption of sustainable consumption and production practices. The subject of this study was to present the investment climate in Serbian tourism, primarily from the perspective of potential investors, but also from the perspective of all other stakeholders in tourism. After examining the current status of realized infrastructure and tourism projects in the tourism of Serbia, study provided policy proposals based on which the tourism in Serbia should be developed.

Advocacy and communication strategy which was developed within this JP informed policy decisions on investments in the tourism sector, including web portal for available tourism investments opportunities. This strategy helped in raising awareness and defining of the key priorities that are to be addressed by the policy makers.

Environmental conservation is perhaps the most challenging and potentially taxing issue with respect to tourism development, and particularly rural tourism. The obvious goal for the development of tourism initiatives is to attract or increase the number of visiting tourists. With this goal naturally comes with increased exposure of nature to human activity, as well as in many cases, new construction and development to increase access to destinations, improve attractions, develop infrastructure, and add a level of tourism-support offerings and services. According to UNEP, environmental sustainability must go hand in hand with rural development. In this JP, UNEP worked with project applicants to incorporate environmental requirements and reviewed all key documents and outputs to ensure that potentially negative environmental impacts are mitigated and proposed potential positive impacts that can be included in design.

One of the greatest achievement of the UNEP component is an increase of visibility of sustainable tourism concept, as well as use of SIFT concept in strategic documents and transfer of outputs to the local level through capacity building and information campaign.

The National Rural Tourism Master Plan which was developed in collaboration of UNWTO and other 4 UN agencies participating in the Joint Programme (UNDP, UNFAO, UNEP and UNICEF), 3 national partners (the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, the Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Forestry and Water Management and the National Tourism Organisation of Serbia) and numerous local stakeholders, has been **adopted by the Government**.

This document, consisting of the Diagnostic Report, Strategy, Action Plan and Implementation Plan, is a framework for the development of rural tourism in Serbia.

The Master Plan's special focus is child and youth tourism with educational component, so it offers a range of models for its development.

The cooperation between UNWTO and UNICEF (Tourism and Leisure and Education Forum) resulted in

- the study on demand for school, child, youth and family tourism, incorporated in the Diagnostic Study,
- the potentials for child and youth educational tourism, incorporated in the Diagnostic Study,
- the examples of best practices in child related tourism, incorporated in the Benchmarks,
- and
- the framework and measures for stimulating child and youth related tourism incorporated in the Strategy and the Action Plan.

The documents developed later throughout the JP are based on the findings and the guidelines from the Master Plan.

The work under this Outcome, related to UNDP component, focused on Identification of public, private and external resources that can leverage one another in rural tourism initiatives, engagement with all relevant line ministries to promote public investments that are in line with Rural Tourism Master Plan and environmentally sustainable; creation of strategy guidelines for securing and leveraging public-private partnerships; capacity building process for target group of public decision-makers and private investors and Support and monitor PPP initiatives in rural tourism..

Analysis of the public budget lines that refer to tourism in order to track trends in the last 4 adopted budgets, budget revisions and expenditure reports (for 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011) for the Republic of Serbia, Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and selected public enterprises was done. The objective of this analysis was to inform policy-making regarding the diversification of rural economy through development of tourism.

Publication on Public private partnership in rural tourism was completed. This publication is meant for local authorities, entrepreneurs and civil society organization engaged, in rural development. The JP organized training programmes for decision-makers in the finance sector at both the national and local levels. Participants included officials from the National Tourism Development Corporation. The JP supported eight PPP initiatives through the

grant scheme, across both grant scheme activities. This support went to Municipalities, local tourism offices (LTO) and to rural tourism providers, and partnerships between public, civil and private sectors in four regional stakeholder groups were fostered through all projects granted within the grant scheme.

Evaluation of Call for grant proposal process within the JP Sustainable tourism for rural development was done. Monitoring indicators was proposed.

OUTCOME 2

Capacity development:

Following on the recommendations of the Rural Tourism Master Plan and the recommendations of the Rural Tourism Task Force (please see below for more information on the Task Force), capacity building programmes were organized based on surveys carried out with stakeholders as well as on an assessment of the main capacity needs of the rural tourism sector. The programmes focus on marketing and promotion of rural tourism; conceptualization and formulation of project proposals for funding by donors and banking/financial institutions (so as to have access to funds to improve the quality of rural tourism services and facilities); and, development and implementation of a voluntary scheme for upgrading quality services in rural tourism with the introduction of a labelling mechanism. All training programmes resulted in the production of Manuals/Guidelines in Serbian and English which will be posted on the MFE and NTOS websites upon conclusion of the programme. Technical and capacity building assistance was also provided to NTOS on the development of selection criteria to showcase rural tourism best practices through an informative brochure. Approximately 160 stakeholders from local tourism organizations, municipality representatives, government officials, rural households, rural tourism service providers and NGOs participated in a series of six trainings which was based on the draft versions of the Manuals/Guidelines. The participants provided valuable inputs which were integrated in the final versions of the Manuals/Guidelines on marketing and promotion and formulation of project proposals. In the case of the capacity building programme for project formulation, training was provided under a Train-the-Trainer programme so as to build up a pool of national expertise which can replicate this training under the overall framework of the Rural Tourism Task Force. All training was organized in second part of November and in first part of December 2012.

2.2. The participants at the marketing training have enhanced awareness on the importance of creating partnerships to carry out promotional activities. They fully understand the importance of promoting products that are in line with the expectations of the demand, such as authentic products and experiences. They have also enhanced capacities to undertake “low cost” marketing actions (such as on line marketing and social media), to negotiate with tour operators and to participate at tourism fairs, etc. The participants at the training on project proposals formulation have strengthened their knowledge of EU funds and improved their skills for preparing project proposals for EU funding within the framework of the new phase of pre-accession funding (2014-2020), as Serbia becomes a candidate country. It is expected that opportunities for funding will be available in the field of regional development, human resource development and rural development. The participants at the trainings on quality services have enhanced knowledge on the existing European best practices and quality criteria for rural accommodation providers. They are also fully aware that upgrading the quality of services is a continuous and voluntary task and look forward to participating in a voluntary scheme for upgrading quality that could enable them to obtain a label and thus enhance their marketing opportunities.

Destination Development and Management:

a) Tourism Governance Organizations: During the formulation of the Rural Tourism Master Plan, the MFE stated its desire that no new entities or governance bodies be created - rather, governance mechanisms should be developed within existing institutions to enhance the overall development, management and promotion of of Serbia as a rural tourist destination. With the aim to avoid the duplication of responsibilities between the existing organizations in Serbia (MFE, NCTD, NTOS, RTOs, LTOs, DMOs and Municipalities), technical assistance was provided to MFE on rural tourism governance mechanisms which led to the establishment of the Rural Tourism Task Force in June 2012 within the Department for the Promotion of Tourism Products, Market Research and International Cooperation of MFE. Recommendations were also made for the formation of a Rural Tourism Monitoring Group (advisory group at the senior political level) but this has yet to be established. The Task Force comprises 6 staff and serves as a facilitator and coordinator between the Ministry, NTOS, regional and local authorities as well as private sector for the implementation of the Rural Tourism Master Plan. An Action Plan was

developed and adopted by the Task Force which highlights the main activities to be carried out in the short term – these focused mainly on disseminating the Master Plan at a national, regional and international level through the organization of workshops (between September to December 2012, ten events were organized), conducting surveys with stakeholders to identify their main needs and concerns including capacity building needs which served the basis for the training programmes identified in 2.1 above; building of partnerships and regular communication channels with stakeholders including LTOs, and, Chambers of Commerce and implementation of the training programmes on marketing and promotion, quality guidelines and formulation of project proposals. Moreover, recommendations for actions to be taken over the medium to long term were also provided. Moreover, recommendations for the medium to long term were also provided – the idea being to facilitate the implementation of the Rural Tourism Master Plan on a phased basis in line with the major recommendations of the Master Plan and national development objectives.

As mentioned previously, all the training programmes referred to in 2.1. above were conceptualized based on the results of the surveys carried out by the Task Force and were organized in collaboration with them.

b) Grants Scheme: UNWTO participated in the joint Call of Proposals to award grants which was undertaken in August 2011 in collaboration with the other UN partners.

In consultation with the MFE, NTOS, other UN agencies, tourism organizations, municipal authorities, NGOs and private sector, UNWTO developed a Grants Scheme for rural tourism stakeholders within the Thematic Window on Destination Development. It was jointly decided that the Grants Scheme would target households, independent rural dwellers, private entrepreneurs, companies and organisations whose enterprise is or will be part of the one of the Rural Tourism Clusters identified within the Territorial Development Strategy of the Rural Tourism Master Plan. Moreover, and since the majority of individuals interested in the grants did not have the experience to make the applications on their own behalf, 3 workshops for the officers of LTOs and potential applicants in the target regions were organized to familiarise with the procedure to be followed for grant applications and, in the case of LTOs, to enable them to provide support to the different applicants in the formulation of their project proposals. Approximately 90 participants attended workshops. The objective of the UNWTO-supported grants was to support rural small and medium enterprises in improving the quality of their products with the objective to increase the flow of tourists and tourist revenues to the priority regions of South Banat, Lower Danube, Central Serbia and Eastern Serbia through (i) improved quality of services and facilities in the rural tourism offerings, (ii) improved competitiveness, as well as (iii) the stimulation of mini clusters with expanded and convenient accommodation, products and things to do and see. UNWTO approved a total of 37 grants worth USD 200,194 (out of a total of 136 applications received) which support a wide variety of projects including improved facilities in rural accommodation; improved traditional food preparation mechanisms; support of rural agricultural initiatives such as honey-making associations; improvements related to the development of tourism products such as bird-watching, pedestrian trails, mapping of routes; as well as information and promotion material such as brochures, website development, stands, signage and storyboards, etc. A total of 36 grants were implemented successfully. 19 beneficiaries have improved facilities: toilets and accessible toilets, heating systems, water mills, pipes, rooms, paths, resting points, signage, conference rooms, fences, ; 10 beneficiaries have new marketing materials such as brochures, catalogues, mobile stands and websites (www.togm.org.rs, www.vrsacturizam.rs, www.gorskikonak.com, www.tookladovo.rs, www.topozarevac.rs); 7 beneficiaries have new equipment and are selling new products: packaged honey products, packaged cherry products, pottery souvenirs, warm food cooked in an oven, rental of pedal boats and bikes, sports facilities, cold drinks with an ice machine, etc. Unfortunately, one beneficiary utilised the funds for alternative refurbishments than originally approved which is why this grant was considered unsuccessful i.e. improvements were made to facilities but were not in line with the original approved grant application.

The service providers at targeted destinations are more advanced in service providing, they also offer higher quality services due the fact that many of them received grants for small infrastructural improvements (bathroom renovation, building of toilets, etc.). These types of grants contributed to the extension of the tourist season - for example, the installation of heating systems in renting rooms, or development of new tourism products which are available all year-round. The destinations have more diversified tourism offers and their products are more visible - for example, biking and hiking trails have been improved (there is more and improved signage, resting points have been built, support-service systems established, guided tours-programs developed, etc.), boat renting at the lakes, gastronomy trails marked, accessibility to localities improved. Various databases on destinations have been updated and the accessibility to rural tourism information is more user –friendly and easier.

Community stakeholder capacities to conduct rural tourism activities have been strengthened but there is still need

for further capacity building in project cycle management, pricing, networking, new promotional tools and marketing.

Temporary new employees were engaged on jobs which could be linked to the received grants, but due to the complex socio-economic situation, and the delay in grants distribution, permanent employment was not established.

On the local level FAO have provided capacity building for RD network and improving rural extension in general. Targeted training, technical assistance and mentoring were provided on topics important for introduction of modern standards, product creation & management, increasing competitiveness, marketing & commercialization for producers and their groups. Development of database and market analysis of traditional and regional agriculture and non-agricultural products and craft markets has to provide data of importance for tourism development.

Networking events of tourism and agriculture stakeholders were also organized for improving linkages in the value chain develop and strengthen local and regional brands and help their promotion together with regional tourism offer. Finally, support was provided for establishment of local partnerships, through strategic work and project planning introduction.

Few studies were produced: agro-environmental, rural economy diversification, possible contribution of rural tourism in small farming sector; marketing analysis for selected products of importance for rural tourism. Also a database on regional food & non-food products of importance for rural tourism was developed. To be able to exercise gained knowledge, rounds of trainings were completed with grant calls following LEADER concept and also IPARD like for individual projects and projects presented by vertical partnerships connecting agriculture and tourism services providers for coordinated development of the local and regional tourist offer.

FAO team have organized with its local partners promotion of regional food offer in rural tourism during *International tourism fair* 2011 and 2012, Opening of *Lepenski vir Archeological site*, *Rajac* mowing days 2010, 2011, 2012, *Balkan Culinary cup* and variety of rural events, regional and local. Chapters about activities conducted in UNJP were placed in *Gastromag* magazine and presented in National TV RTS programs. The most successful stories such as “Srpska magaza-small scale rural production and rural tourism marketing platform” – best project supported through grants and “*Scents and flavour of Banat Cheese*” were promoted during various events including PREPARE meeting in 2011 as the best practice in rural development for the year 2011, presented by Serbian RD network.

The successful multilevel training of leading local stakeholders - strategic planning, project development, fund rising, support for project development with Serbian rural network will be also presented in details as the example of good practices in capacity building for rural development and the new integrated approach in capacity building. Trainings which were held directly in rural environment with provision of various simulations/coaching/practical work, on-line mentoring and financial support to developed projects – grants as an exercise, along with organization of demand driven tailored trainings which were supplemented with scientific research to provide appropriate selection of topics and target groups and designing training plans and conducting trainings with combining national and international expertise was the best for beneficiaries.

Of course, certain challenges has to be faced. Problems with national level response/limited absorption capacity, limited local capacity, valuable but rare and without support local leaders, ineffective or lack of cooperation between various sectors to provide sustainable actions on the local level etc. forced FAO team to invest lots of efforts to network, lead and support. Making synergy with other actions of the Government in the field and other projects running in the country was also necessary due to lack of coordination and scattered diverse actions which are overlapping leaving huge gaps in Serbian RD practice. Limited financial means for providing permanent presence in the field and for engaging local coordinators made this job quite complicated.

Local level is highly sensitive to development work which is tailored to their needs in whole. An integrated approach to capacity building activities is very much appreciated so, it seems that UNJP multi-branch and area-based approach should be further developed and lessons learned disseminated with other international and national development programs, institutions and organizations.

It is also obvious that investments done through grants need to go hand by hand with strong technical support,

knowledge transfer and extension work; grant calls should be “a reality show” - an exercise to prepare grantees for reality

The UNJP STRD have clearly identified need for development programs to actively support identification of local leaders, positive and knowledgeable individuals and organizations and develop mechanisms to prevent their marginalization

Further work is needed on strengthening value chains heritage-agriculture-tourism using models of PPP partnerships, LEADER concept, regional branding etc. through concrete group work. Branding and standardization of national cuisine and introduction of modern standards, rules and procedures starting with regions is just tackled, and need more attention. Also support to farming as an environmental service through high nature value farming is important in regions of importance for tourism development and nature protection.

UNJP STRD was just the beginning of complex activities which are needed to support diversification of rural economy in Serbia through introduction of tourism activities in rural economy development. These activities can help a lot the ultimate goal of providing sustainability of small farming sector and rational use of available resources, although tourism is not and will never be the one and only way to make it complete. There is no such example of beautiful interlinks, whole net of life connections between two economic activities such as those which exist between agriculture and tourism in rural environment. These links are so productive and supportive to networked stakeholders that the whole set of diverse “tourisms” are recognized packed in special expression – “rural tourism”. The beauty of activities which one can hold is making every discussion on the appropriate term irrelevant – rural tourism or village tourism in Serbia, tourism in rural areas or whatever name we can give means always the same – it’s a tourism which occurs in rural areas using and benefiting of interactive relation with local peoples tradition, culture, agriculture, food processing, gastronomy, biodiversity created through management of meadows, pastures and forests, selection of animals and plants breeds and varieties, their traditional architecture, way of life, intangible heritage of beliefs and religion, ethnicity and struggle to survive throughout the history on the specific place, geographically and environmentally originally integrated. However, development of rural tourism is a long-term job, complex and multi dimensional. It is multi-sectoral in its nature, as much as rural development itself. No results can be achieved by engagement and hard individual work of tourism experts alone. It can’t be solved in one single action or a program; it is long-term by default and asks for permanent work with rural population and work with all other stakeholders through the value and supply chains.

Serbia misses holistic approach in development. UNJP is one of rare development programs which by default, following United Nations Millennium Development (MDG) goals and One UN concept, tried to provide multitasking assistance. For that reason this book is also produced as one more try to present the segment of valuable results of such complex and united efforts of specialized agencies of United Nations achieved, to serve to other donors to recognize its potentials. Area based approach of EU, which is presently under development, could be the way to continue support to such programs like UNJP STRD under MDG-F was. UN agencies have developed, through this challenging exercise, an approach and capacity to deal with complex problems of rural areas which could serve for the future actions of EU supported development actions. With its active partnership with local stakeholders, as much as national partners, its innovative contribution to development of the region could be valuable for its future.

On the local level UNEP has provided capacity building in the field of **Energy Efficiency & Alternative Energy and Sustainable Resource Management** . The objective of the training program was a demonstration of possibilities to increase competitiveness and to decrease negative environmental impact at the same time, by implementing measures of waste minimization, water and energy savings via low-cost/no-cost opportunities and voluntary instruments for environment protection. Local capacity for delivering tourism services in more sustainable way in line with national strategies(strategy on Sustainable Development, Strategy on Cleaner Production and Strategy on Tourism) was improved.

More than 600 representatives of private, public and civil sectors from 19 municipalities, had the opportunity to discuss with lecturers/experts about following topics:

- The Legislative in the European Union and in the Republic of Serbia
- Funding opportunities and the project implementation in this sector

- Energy management and the typical measures in the tourism sector
- The contemporary energy technologies in the tourism sector with examples of good practices
- Sustainable resource management and cleaner production in the tourism sector
- Water management measures
- Waste management and dangerous materials in hotels

The First Serbian Tourism and Business Forum in Belgrade, was organized in November 24-26, 2011

The aim of this three-day event, which gathered a large number of experts, consultants and managers from the UK, USA, Ukraine, Germany, Austria, Spain, Switzerland, Croatia, Russia and Italy, was to explore possibilities of investing in new tourist markets and to emphasize how attractive and competitive are tourist destination in Serbia.

Forum gathered more than 150 international and domestic participants and relevant stakeholders in tourism sector

The representatives of ministries, policy makers in the field of tourism of the Republic of Serbia and the region, investors, developers of investment projects, consulting companies and business people from the tourism industry also participated in the meeting.

Organizer of the Forum was Sustainable Tourism for Rural Development UN Joint Programme, funded by the Kingdom of Spain through Project Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDGF) in cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development. National Corporation for Tourism Development – NCTD, along with UNEP and UNDP, within UN Joint Programme “Sustainable Tourism for Rural Development” managed organizational and program aspects of the Forum.

At the Forum the successful investments in Serbian tourism in recent years were presented. The Forum facilitated the discussion how to identify and communicate the investment potential of tourism in Serbia and how to make a connection platform in the field of investment and sustainable development

[First Serbian Investment Tourism Forum had undergone a several-year preparation through the process of adopting relevant laws and regulations, improving tourism infrastructure and representing Serbian tourism abroad.]
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Joint UN Fund for Sustainable Rural Tourism Fund / Thematic Window on Active-Learning Tourism Investments: minimum 4 tourism sites developed (The only significant programmatic change in the UNICEF component of the JP was applied in the design of the Grant Scheme. The initial scenario, envisaged by the Programme Document, was to develop 20 tourist sites through 8 child-, family-, and school-centered tourism competitions organized (4 per year, 2 in Lower Danube region due to higher number of municipalities; top 3 awards per competition). After analysing the potentials, the demand and the existing circumstances in setting up a new and specific tourism product in the first quarter of 2011, it turned out that the initial design of the Grant Scheme would not have resulted in the sustainable educational tourism destinations, but in ad-hoc small scale support programmes. After considering this conclusion, the JP suggested the change in the design to the PMC: that 120.000 USD be spent for the support of at least 4 instead of 20 educational tourism sites with more significant funds per each destination. This suggestion was unanimously adopted by the PMC.)

After the Joint Grant Scheme UNICEF participated in with the thematic window **Educational Tourism Based on Active Learning** was opened on August 26, 2011 and closed on September 26, 2011, the agencies evaluated the project proposals with their respective committees.

UNICEF Committee was composed of the representatives of national institutions that supported the Grant Scheme and adopted the criteria for selection, Education Forum and UNICEF, i.e: Bogoljub Lazarevic, Ministry of Education and Science Kristina Kujundzic, Tourism Organisation of Serbia Stela Petrovic, Ministry of Economy and Regional Development Sanja Prodanovic, Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Forestry and Water Management Ivan Ivic, Education Forum Svetlana Marojevic, UNICEF and Vera Jovanovic, STRD, UNICEF.

Out of 24 applications that arrived in total, 5 were eliminated for not meeting the basic criteria, such as territory and partnership with school. 19 project proposals were evaluated by the Committee in the course of October, 2011.

6 projects were selected for funding by the Committee and approved by the PMC:

- Educational Adventure by Knjazevac Homeland Museum,
- Banat Diversity (Now I Can, I Know and I Want) by Vrsac Red Cross,
- Magical Village Ethno-Eco School by Kreativa CA, Mionica,
- Camp of Working Hands (Paleznica and Brankovina, Synergy of Knowledge and Skills) by Sava Kerkovic Elementary School from Ljig,
- Miraculous Djerdap Treasures (Educational Tourism) by Svetozar Radic Elementary School from Tekija
- Open Village School (Village School Open for its Surroundings) by Ivo Andric Elementary School from Pranjani.

All the projects include a rural school – either as a lead or an implementing partner. The importance of partnerships and participation of wide community has been recognised in all projects, so they include various institutions: civil society organisations, museums, Red Cross branches, local self-government institutions, private sector representatives, etc. What is also common for all these projects is the high quality of educational programmes these tourism sites offer. Producing the programmes which affect the quality of education, recreational learning, school in nature and other forms of out-of-classroom learning was one of the objectives of piloting educational tourism.

The activities and workshops vary from practicing archaeology, conservation, pottery and painting on silk and glass to journalism, puppet theatre play preparation, learning chess and traditional meteorology, history and heritage, etc. All the workshops, although entertaining, are linked with school curricula and they enable the children and youth to learn through active participation in the processes and to develop their functional knowledge. The destinations combine education and entertainment and pilot edutainment in Serbia.

The destinations combine the models defined in the Sustainable Rural Tourism Master Plan (farm school, edutainment centre, discovery centre, thematic centres, etc.).

The projects have also set up new facilities, or gave old facilities new purposes. The illustration of the first case is building the *Magical Village*, a village fit for children where most of the workshops are conducted. The example for the second case is turning an old and abandoned village school on Stara Planina into a museum with interactive workshop of reconstruction a class from the past, thus setting up the *Museum of Education* on Stara Planina.

All the projects have organised promotional events for children and adults– 2 events monthly, from April to June. The events included various forms of awareness raising activities: press conferences, round tables and presentations of all six destinations. About 500 children and 200 adults (mostly school representatives, but numerous other actors from all three sectors and parents) participated in promotional events. The participants came not only from Serbian schools, but from Poland, Slovenia and Macedonia.

Regarding the sustainability of the projects and educational-tourism sites, the destinations have been tried out with children and youth who have shown high level of satisfaction. Evaluation conducted with the teachers who brought the groups showed not only satisfaction and highly rated the destinations and activities, but have begun to recommend the sites for carrying out all forms of school tourism. The destinations receive groups and are placing themselves on the market. The intensity of their activities vary from one destination to another, but they have altogether accommodated over 1,000 children by the end of 2012. Their capacities for economic operations are improved. UNICEF distributed the funds through the Friends of Children of Serbia who have become an implementing partner that actively participate in all project activities and events, and will support the projects in their sustainability. The FCS is the oldest civil society organisation in Serbia and has a long tradition of successful cooperation with UNICEF. It also has a network in most of the municipalities in Serbia and is an excellent partner for promotion of the activities.

All six projects selected through the Grant Scheme within the thematic window Educational Tourism based on Active Learning have been successfully implemented and finalized. Their implementation has actually been a process of piloting educational tourism in Serbia.

Although the projects officially ended in April 2012, the JP has continued to work with the teams and strengthen their capacities. Several trainings, such as Basic Workshop Skills, Tourism Regulatory Framework and Defining a

Pricing Strategy have been organised in for the granted teams in order to improve their services and skills.

Another activities that contribute to the visibility of educational tourism and the destinations' sustainability are setting up the educational tourism web site (www.obrazovniturizam.rs) and initiating the founding of the Educational Tourism Cluster. These two are interlinked since the cluster will overtake administration of the web site after it has become viable and after the criteria for entering the cluster have been defined.

The web site is currently being administered by the Friends of Children of Serbia (until 2014) and it is a unique web portal where the users can find all the information about educational tourism, all the documents produced in the programme, national partners, UN agencies and, of course, the information about the educational tourism destinations developed with the support of the STRD.

Educational Tourism Knowledge, Skills and Practices Roll-Out

In order to spread the idea of educational tourism for children and youth and enable several other schools that did not have a chance to participate in piloting this concept to initiate such activities on their own, a Roll-Out Plan for the final quarter of the JP has been designed. The Roll-Out process is carried out with the Friends of Children of Serbia and lasts longer than the JP, thus additionally enabling the sustainability.

The Roll-Out of educational tourism practices has been carried out in the following way:

Selection of new schools for the process:

12 new schools that got a chance to gain knowledge and skills in educational tourism have been selected through the call advertised at UNICEF web site open for all schools in Serbia. Out of 54 schools interested in acquiring knowledge and skills for initiating educational tourism that applied, 12 schools selected according to their resources and previous experience have entered the process.

Organising study visits to the granted educational tourism sites

In order to get familiar with the educational tourism centres in practice, a study tour for the newly selected schools has been organized. The representatives of the 12 schools visited all the granted destinations and got familiar with their educational programmes. The study tour was also a chance for the new schools to get familiar with the idea of educational tourism and design the potential activities in their own environments. The visits have offered the opportunity for insight in practical aspect of educational tourism, acquiring additional motivation and gaining knowledge in this niche.

Joint capacity building

The training on Project Cycle Management, Project proposal writing and Communication, presentation and promotion skills will be organized for old and new teams. The training included, apart from 12 granted team members, the representatives of 12 new schools.

The training was implemented using learning-by-doing approach as the participants prepared joint project proposals for the educational tourism activities.

The training included the mentoring process and consultative services in order to finalise project proposals. This activity was organized upon the JP's termination, through the Friends of Children of Serbia.

Mentoring new schools - Each granted team was mentor for 2 newly selected schools in the process of establishing educational tourism in the period of 6 months after their joint activities. The granted teams were supporting and advising the schools in the steps they undertake to start educational tourism activities.

This activity was organized upon the JP's termination, through the Friends of Children of Serbia.

The Guidelines for the Development and Realisation of Tourism Services for Children and Youth has been produced after the creation of the Master Plan.

The guidelines define child and youth tourism in context of rural tourism, offer necessary classifications and definitions and provide practical advice for providers catering to children and youth. The guidelines also contain examples of best practices. This document should serve as a tool for every institution or individual who intends to

develop child and youth tourism by offering necessary information and advice. It represents the first document of its kind (child and youth tourism) in Serbia.

After the *Guidelines for the Development and Realisation of Tourism Services for Children and Youth* were completed, it was agreed with the National Tourism Organisation of Serbia that a brochure-like Tool Kit (booklet) convenient for promotion of the concept of educational tourism in rural areas should be produced.

The Tool Kit named *Child and Youth Educational Tourism in Rural Areas* has been prepared and promoted at the February International Tourism Fair. This document familiarises the readers with the idea of child and youth tourism, educational tourism, the role of school in the process and the models this tourism niche can be developed through. It also includes the suggestion of the labelling system for child-specific destinations, suggested by the STRD and designed for this purpose.

The Tool Kit contains a CD with the Guidelines for the Development and Realisation of Tourism Services for Children and Youth, as well as Slovenia and Italy study tour reports, the Master Plan, and several other relevant documents in the field of tourism and education. The Tool Kit was published and printed (5.000 copies in Serbian and 1.000 copies in English) in cooperation with the National Tourism Organisation of Serbia. Out of total of 6.000 copies, 3.000 contain a CD with the Guidelines and other documents.

The final publication dealing the topic of educational tourism is the *Manual on setting-up an educational tourism centre*. The manual about establishing an educational tourism centre compiles the knowledge and experience gathered in the process of piloting educational tourism and legal and documentary framework applicable in various cases and scenarios.

This manual is a user-friendly document composed of the

- definition of educational tourism,
- description of the models,
- legal framework,
- designing educational programmes,
- practical advice and
- the practices in Serbia – the granted projects.

It is a tool primarily for schools, but also for all other institutions interested in child and youth educational tourism. The manual (How to Establish and Educational Tourism Centre) has been prepared by external consultant working in close cooperation with the project team and local partners.

According to UNDP role at local level, Capacity of public, private and civil society sector stakeholders was implemented through set of workshops as well as through support for local initiatives. Local Action Group trainings were jointly organized by EU funded “The LEADER Initiative Serbia” (LEADER) project and UN Joint Programme “Sustainable Tourism for Rural Development”. In addition, Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Forestry and Water Management of Republic of Serbia as well as European Union (EU) Delegation representatives had active role at this Training. The purpose of the training was to introduce basic principles of EU LEADER approach, to provide crucial information and skills important for creation of Local Action Group (LAG), and finally, to promote cooperation between different actors active in the field of rural development.

Four trainings on the integration of a gender perspective into rural development and rural tourism were held within the joint UN programme “Sustainable Tourism for Rural Development”. Total number of participants was 59, trainings were successful, attended as planned, by representatives of local governments, local NGOs, private sector representatives and citizens associations. This training was excellent opportunity for local stakeholders to acknowledge basic elements in gender equality, as well as gender mainstreaming and gender responsible budgeting in local development strategies.

UNESCO workshop, “Cultural heritage in partnership with rural tourism”. The workshop gathered more than 30 key stakeholders including directors, consultants, architects, chairman, and coordinators from local tourist organizations, local economic development departments, the Republic’s Institute for the Preservation of Monuments, and cultural centers as well as media to discuss public-private partnerships in the context of connecting cultural heritage and rural tourism development. The workshop finished with a discussion panel on identification of business opportunities in Eastern Serbia based on cultural heritage of rural areas, with special emphasis on partnership-based initiatives and potential World Heritage Sites.

Process of revision of local development strategies with focus on tourism took place in all 19 program participating municipalities. The process of revision of local strategies involved broad group of stakeholders on local level, and

created the opportunity for local stakeholders to increase the importance of tourism on local and regional level, and to directly influence decision making process in terms of focusing on tourism project in the strategies for the upcoming period. Process of revision of local development strategies with focus on tourism took place in all 19 program participating municipalities. The working groups in municipalities were structured from representatives of public, private and civil sector. Workshops were held in all 19 JP participating municipalities, and recommendation for local strategies in terms of tourism development was presented to local governments. The process of revision of local strategies involved broad group of stakeholders on local level, and created the opportunity for local stakeholders to increase the importance of tourism on local and regional level, and to directly influence decision making process in terms of focusing on tourism project in the strategies for the upcoming period. The aim of the activity was to provide support to:

- ✓ local tourism stakeholders in the process of planning further tourism development and destination development;
- ✓ harmonization process of the existing tourism development plans, primarily local development strategies and National rural tourism master plan, as well as other development plans (tourism development master plans, tourism development programs, urban planning framework, etc.);
- ✓ local tourism stakeholders in taking over responsibility in the implementation of local development strategies and action plans development with clearly identified priorities;
- ✓ Improvement of local development strategies with tourism focus as a contribution to sustainable regional development.

10 projects aiming Diversification of Rural Economy through Tourism were supported through call for proposal grants. In order to achieve its goals, the Programme applied several strategic approaches during implementation, including support to the development of partnerships for rural development via the promotion of the EU's LEADER approach.

This call for proposals gave priority to actions aimed at:

- Establishing and strengthening partnerships between the public, private and civil sectors;
- Developing partnerships within production, marketing and services chains in rural tourism;
- Increasing awareness of rural tourism among the local population;
- Implementing the EU's LEADER principle;
- Developing an economic initiative for the establishment of associations guided by some common interest;
- Stimulating cooperation with the private sector on the realization of activities contributing to the sustainable development of rural economy.

Citizens' associations registered on the territory of the target regions, in partnership with public and private sector institutions was eligible applicants:

The overarching objective of the call for proposals aims at encouraging the diversification of the rural economy and strengthening its competitiveness by supporting development of rural tourism. By organizing education, workshops, financial assistance through grants, UNDP component supported local 10 NGOs in 4 regions through partnership with various local services providers, and in partnership with local governments. Programme has allocated over 100 000 USD through grants in order to foster partnerships and diversify rural economy through tourism, with emphasis on socially excluded groups in rural areas.

For example after implementation of the project *Project: Improvement of competition of village tourism in Central Serbia through the development of new services, following results was achieved:*

- The presentation www.selo.rs is completely improved and redesigned.
- Four new options were added, enabling special offers related to accommodation and booking:
 - Accommodation and activities for the needs of business users,
 - Offer of households with recreational contents,
 - Accommodation suitable for hunters,
 - Accommodation suitable for the needs of families with children.

- Visually-impaired persons can search the offer of village households – special software for this purpose has been activated.
- A map of households and open farms has been printed in 5,000 copies. The map presents 173 village households and 45 open farms.

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In short, the aim of the project was to increase and diversify the offer of village tourism in Central Serbia, increase and promote the quality of services offered to tourists and present modern technologies to village households, thereby enabling them to be competitive with tour operators.

- b. In what way do you feel that the capacities developed during the implementation of the joint program e have contributed to the achievement of the outcomes?

This output has been fully delivered. A significant amount of training that is envisaged in the program has been delivered. Over 1,000 rural tourism stakeholders were trained through coaching and workshops in programs concentrating on :

- Sustainable use of resources and energy efficiency
- Support to local NGOs and other groups in proposal development. Participants have produced projects which have received grants, and now they can provide support to future beneficiaries in developing projects.
- Mobilizing local and other resources

The capacity of local and national stakeholders for the improvement of child and youth educational tourism , was enhanced through constant raising awareness activities, foreseen in the grant projects. Capacities related to MFE raised especially with regard to policy and strategy development through their strong involvement in the formulation, review and approval of the Rural Tourism Master Plan. Through the constitution of the Rural Tourism Task Force, capacities have been raised in understanding the role of the MFE in the implementation of the Master Plan recommendations especially with regard to the coordination and partnership building at the central, regional and local level and the importance of setting quality standards, which will contribute to the competitiveness of the rural tourism offer of Serbia and its long-term sustainability.

Capacities regarding NTOS raised in the creation of partnerships with local tourism organizations (LTOs) during the implementation of the grants scheme. LTOs are constituted and funded at the municipal level and NTOS has no role to play in their recruitment or implementation of activities. However, the collaboration of LTOs in the development of products and circuits within the rural clusters has proved essential for NTOS to be able to identify and promote an integrated offer that can generate greater opportunities for the local population. NTOS has also enhanced its capacities with regard to quality standards and is able to identify and showcase rural tourism best practices through the production of promotional brochures and provides guidance to the LTOs on the different quality requirements.

LTOs: At the beginning of the project, most LTOs were at a loss on how to assist their stakeholders in developing and promoting rural tourism. Through this project, they were entrusted with the role and responsibility to work together with stakeholders in the creation of rural tourism clusters for the grants scheme. Therefore, a great sense of ownership and capacities have been generated within the LTOs, which have developed their marketing and promotional tools (through the development of websites and brochures – many of which were supported by the MDGF). The LTOs have also played a pivotal role in the organization and participation of the training programmes on marketing and promotion (especially in understanding their role in the development of clusters and partnerships for joint marketing and promotion), quality guidelines in rural tourism accommodation and services to ensure that their stakeholders are aware of, and follow, the voluntary scheme formulated under the MDGF programme, and, many LTOs were also trained as a pool of future trainers on formulation of project proposals. .

Rural tourism stakeholders: Capacities raised in understanding the importance of partnerships (with LTOs, NTOS and MFE) for rural tourism development and promotion. Moreover, they are aware of the need to upgrade quality of facilities and services to be more competitive and the importance of collaborating with

other stakeholders to create combined experiences for the tourist that are more attractive and increase the length of stay of tourists with resultant economic benefits.

Together, all capacities developed are focused on the Rural Tourism Master Plan and its implementation with the ultimate objective of creating a competitive and quality-based tourism product through active partnerships and linkages built between rural tourism stakeholders and government at the central, regional and local levels.

- c. Report on how outputs have contributed to the achievement of the outcomes based on performance indicators and explain any variance in actual versus planned contributions of these outputs. Highlight any institutional and/ or behavioural changes, including capacity development, amongst beneficiaries/right holders.

Outcome 1: Legal and policy framework for supporting diversification of the rural economy through tourism is developed and contributes to achievement of MGDs.

All outcomes have been achieved. The JP succeeded in all activities and the framework for Serbia's IPARD is in place now.

Outcome 1.1- National Tourism Master Plan (RTMP) for Serbia developed and submitted to the Government.

The outcome has been accomplished. The RTMP was submitted and approved by Government. It's being used by MFE as a strategy plan for framework. The goal is achieved, and there are indications that results can be maintained.

Output 1.1.1- National RTMP: Developed and submitted to the Government for approval by the end of Year 1.

The Master Plan for sustainable rural tourism development in Serbia, includes five phases; diagnostic, strategy, action and implementation plan that are approved by Government RTMP has now entered its implementation phase through National Rural Tourism Unit, with cooperation from UNWTO and NTOS.

Output 1.1.2- Principles and framework for Children- Related Tourism.

The RTMP used and developed the principles and framework in the formulation, with adequately gathered inputs. Further, two rounds of workshops presented and promoted the child and youth-related tourism through the 2011 grant scheme.

Output 1.1.3- National study on sustainable tourism.

The UNEP prepared a study focused on the environment and sustainable tourism in 2010, which was used by RTMP in the formulation.

Output 1.1.4- Assessment of the potential contribution of the rural tourism to small farming sector and rural development in general.

Through a study conducted per the planned activities, this output has been fully delivered.

Outcome 1.2.- Rural Development Programme Planning is mainstreamed in Serbia's national policies; National Program for Rural Development for IPARD Axes 2 and 3 developed and submitted to Government.

This output was partially achieved. The outputs have been delivered by effective work of the JP team, but delivery of the outcome and sustainability of the impact and initiative level effect is not visible.

Output 1.2.1- IPARD National Agriculture and Rural development Program (2012-2013): strategic guidelines for inclusion of rural and related activities to Axes 2 and 3 developed.

Outputs in this area were the growth of the Axis 2 analysis and the measures drafts for IPARD for STAR component 3 and measures in synergy with an Avalon programme.

For Axis 3, three measures were developed. A cognizant decision on the part of Government, is to remain focused on Axis 1 until 2013 at the earliest with some recommendations being given to Axes 2 and 3 after January 2013.

Output 1.2.2- IPARD Life Conditions Study.

The Life Condition Study was not only promoted and finished with MATFWM, but also to other agencies included indirectly and directly in rural tourism.

The JP's outputs on IPARD Life Conditions will probably not be published for some time, with possible exception of specific components related to tourism.

Outcome 1.3- Investment Mainstreaming – sustainable tourism investments mainstreamed in Serbia's national policies.

There is significant evidence of a growth in financial allocations from national budget to tourism.

Mainstreaming sustainable tourism investments was provided by RTMP in a framework.

Output 1.3.1- Public Investments toward the RTMP.

The National tourism budget has significantly grown during the period of the JP, which was contributed to by the JP.

Total budget for national tourism in this period was approximately \$US 133,326,000.

Output 1.3.2- Public Private Partnership Guidelines.

The JP created strategy guidelines for PPP, and for decision makers in the finance sector at local and national levels, organized training programs.

Output 1.3.3- SIFT Network.

In 2010 the National Corporation for Investment in Tourism (NCTD), became SIFT, and Serbia sustainable tourism investment group was provided with a set of training. NCTD was founded in 2009. NCTD was initiator and partner of the public sector, domestic and foreign investors, and it had a decisive influence on the growth of competitiveness of Serbian tourism product. The mission of NCTD was to provide strategic and practical support to the investment in a range of existing and new tourist destinations to develop Serbia as competitive tourist destinations..Decisions needs to be made on which entity will now take up the role of SIFT, after the discontinuation of the NCTD.

Output 1.3.4- Investment monitoring and evaluation strategy.

The strategy for monitoring and evaluation was used in each JP's PPPs.

The JP defined five indicators, and for project granted financial assistance used minimum of three.

Outcome 2: Local rural tourism and support industries are better linked and organized; and local stakeholder's capacity is improved for delivering and products in line with national strategies.

With the support of local and national partners and the structural, framework of the RTMP and Government, LTO's, Municipalities, NTOS and local provider are better connected, and local stakeholder capacity has been improved.

Municipalities and LTO's all indicate network outcomes as the most important accomplishment of the JP.

Outcome 2.1. – Capacity developed for sustainable rural tourism in order to enhance rural development.

The planning for better development and growth are already undertaken , and organizations have knowledge of areas that have direct influence on rural development and tourism.

Output 2.1.1.- Local Action Groups. Capacity of public, private and civil society sector stakeholders strengthened to enable the establishment of six Local Action Groups and develop local rural development strategies.

The LEADER approach (and LAGs) continued to 'drive' the conceptual approach of the JP, but LEADER and LAGs are specific, EU and legislated, concepts that are being implemented in

Serbia within an EU IPA framework – Serbia’s IPARD access timeframe has extended beyond what was imagined at the design stage of the JP. The JP used LEADER-type approaches, and worked with local groups that were established in such a way that they can and will take advantage of LAG legislation when it is established in Serbia.

Output 2.1.2- Rural Development Network capacity strengthened to lead development and facilitation of Local Action Groups, independently lobby for development initiatives and secure resources for regional development.

The further impact and development are constrained by external factors, because there has been collapse within its structure, as a result of no longer performing tasks and roles for MAFWM.

MAFWM will need to give financial support to the RDN, and in the meanwhile RDM will continue work on development LAG.

Output 2.1.3- Local planning.

The JP was fully engaged in area of local planning.

They provided recommendations to the work partners for improved uses of recourses at the local level. Process of revision of local development strategies with focus on tourism took place in all 19 program participating municipalities. The working groups in municipalities were structured from representatives of public, private and civil sector. Workshops were held in all 19 JP participating municipalities, and recommendation for local strategies in terms of tourism development was presented to local governments. The process of revision of local strategies involved broad group of stakeholders on local level, and created the opportunity for local stakeholders to increase the importance of tourism on local and regional level, and to directly influence decision making process in terms of focusing on tourism project in the strategies for the upcoming period. The aim of the activity was to provide support to:

- local tourism stakeholders in the process of planning further tourism development and destination development;
- harmonization process of the existing tourism development plans, primarily local development strategies and National rural tourism master plan, as well as other development plans (tourism development master plans, tourism development programs, urban planning framework, etc.);
- local tourism stakeholders in taking over responsibility in the implementation of local development strategies and action plans development with clearly identified priorities;
- Improvement of local development strategies with tourism focus as a contribution to sustainable regional development.

Output 2.1.4- Organisational Capacity Development.

A significant amount of training provided that the output be fully delivered.

Over 1,000 stakeholders were trained through workshops, coaching, and practical programs.

Also, the development of child and youth educational tourism was improved through activities that provided self awareness.

Output 2.1.5- Marketing and Promotion.

The RTMP and Rural Tourism Task Force have seen the importance of marketing and promotion, because it has contribute to their development.

FAO has organised activities focused on marketing of food , agriculture and handcraft products, which has been approved on national and regional levels.

What we can highlight is internet portal Srpska magaza and participation in Ethno-food fair in Belgrade (2011) and International Tourism Fair (2010-2012).

Output 2.1.6- Energy efficiency and Alternative Energy and SMART Output.

A training program was completed, emphasizing efficiency of energy and sustainability resource management.

There were 300 participants in 12 workshops. Local capacity for delivering services in line with national and local strategies was improved

Output 2.1.7- Rural Tourism-Oriented Network

Through the grant scheme the JP supported three partnership projects with individuals networking (promotional material and trainings , processing and production units for food, handicrafts and rural accommodation).

An example of the JP's outputs in this area is Srpska magaza in Ljig.

Output 2.1.8- Product Development: Local tourism stakeholders actively participating in Product Development discussions through the TGOs and are trained to become active stakeholders in RTMP implementation.

On this output, significant effort was used to create tourism product clusters, and they represent good example of how to improve local tourism in specific regions. The RTMP identified various areas with potential for the creation of tourism clusters, i.e. areas with presence of relevant natural and cultural attractions, facilities and services and a certain degree of organization, and four target regions were prioritized: Central Serbia, Lower Danube, South Banat and Eastern Serbia. Tourism stakeholders (rural households) and LTOs in each of the selected regions were brought to work together through the various activities of the project and thus synergies were created. It may be recalled that at the request of the MFE, it was decided not to create any new tourism organizations, Therefore, it is the existing LTOs who are currently promoting the offer in a structured manner that highlights the different assets of the cluster creating circuits: accommodation, gastronomy, excursions, etc. The following LTOs have developed new promotion materials presenting their offer in an attractive manner: TO Kladovo, TO Pozarevac, TO Dimitrovgrad, TO Negotin, To Knjazevac, TO Pirot, TO Vrsac, TO Gornji Milanovac, TO Ljig, TO Kosjeric,

SMART OUTPUT 2.1.9. - Sustainable Resource Management: 300 men and women trained via 12 workshops, representing at least 100 different tourism stakeholders in sustainable resource management by end of JP. Local capacity for delivering sustainable tourism services in line with local and national strategies was improved.

SMART OUTPUT 2.1.10- Agriculture Quality Standards training.

In Global Gap , HACCP, over 600 processors and farmers were trained in 25 workshops on agriculture quality production and standards.

Outcome 2.2- Tourism governance structures enhanced in target regions through dedicated organisations, pilot project and investment promotion.

It can be evaluated that tourism governance on target regions, LTO, and local providers have been improved.

Output 2.2.1- Tourism Governance Organisations

The Government of Serbia, did not want any new tourism organisations, so the concept of TGO was not accepted by MFE.

The Government wanted to focus on sustainable solutions, because of funding for these organisations, and their ability to be sustainable.

The Task Force is undertaking expansion and promotion of the RTMP, and the interested stakeholders are developing the RTMP hotline and website. This process will be completed after the formal finishing date of the JP , in the middle of December 2012.

Output 2.2.2- Child- related Tourism Supply and Demand

In this project it was decided to address only guidelines, even though the project document references “standards guidelines”.

This guidelines, Smernice za razvoj i realizaciju usluga u ruralnog turizmu namenjenih deci i mladima, can also be found online.

The guidelines are not yet into process.

Output 2.2.3- Investment Forum

The Tourism investment conference that was held in November of 2011, under the auspices of MFE, with support of JP, brought together tourism stakeholders and industry representatives, who was interested in investment in Serbia. The result was developing three hotel chains in Serbia, under the influence of the Conference.

Another Conference on STRD was held within the Tourism fair in February of 2012.

JP STRD supported organization of Conference on Sustainability of Rural Tourism (22-24 February, Belgrade). Globally recognized speakers and most prominent leaders in tourism industry presented topics such as product development, local economic development in the field of tourism, marketing and promotion. They were focused on the opportunities in Serbia and countries in the region have.

Output 2.2.4- FAO Diversification of the rural economy through tourism

In the first scheme, three partnership groups with 11 sub- project were supported, and in the second scheme, 12 small project and 12 individuals.

Output 2.2.5- UNWTO Tourist Destination Development

UNWTO has entered into an agreement with NTOS for NTOS to implement and monitor the grant scheme. A total of 37 grants were awarded (over the original target of 23) and all but one grant scheme was successful.

Output 2.2.6- UNICEF Active learning tourism investment

Six destinations that were focused on educational programs were funded through the 6 grants.

UNICEF is a result of this programme involving 12 newly selected schools.

UNDP supported the development of eight PPP initiatives (3 in the first grant scheme, 5 in the second).

The focus extended to LTO's, rural tourism providers to Municipalities.

- d. Who are and how have the primary beneficiaries/right holders been engaged in the joint programme implementation? Please disaggregate by relevant category as appropriate for your specific joint programme (e.g. gender, age, etc).

Regarding the beneficiaries, the mid term evaluation report indicate an oversight of JP in definition of direct and indirect beneficiaries. It was advised an assessment of intended JP beneficiaries.

As far as the outputs and projects, the beneficiaries of the JP have included NGO's, focused on tourism development and economy, as well as local tourism providers, which includes schools, families with tourism product, farmers, etc. National “beneficiaries”, have included the MFE, NTOS and MAFTWE in

terms that their participation was beneficial to their work on development of national plans and strategies.

Number of organized trainings	106
Number of people trained	2273
Number of training days	196.5
Gender issue	50% female
	50% male

e. Describe and assess how the joint programme and its development partners have addressed issues of social, cultural, political and economic inequalities during the implementation phase of the programme:

a. To what extent and in which capacities have socially excluded populations been involved throughout this programme?

Excluded populations has been given special attention, especially to vulnerable groups, such as unemployed women, and women in rural areas.

b. Has the programme contributed to increasing the decision making power of excluded groups vis-a-vis policies that affect their lives? Has there been an increase in dialogue and participation of these groups with local and national governments in relation to these policies?

The JP has indirectly affected their capacities, and increased their partnership networks, which represents condition for their more efficient role in policy advocacy.

c. Has the programme and it development partners strengthened the organization of citizen and civil society groups so that they are better placed to advocate for their rights? If so how? Please give concrete examples.

The JP had an direct impact on integrating sustainable development principles in national documents. Also the JP made direct impact on adopting and implementing national programmes, strategies and laws governing sustainable development and environmental protection in Republic of Serbia.

d. To what extent has the programme (whether through local or national level interventions) contributed to improving the lives of socially excluded groups?

The JP was designed with specific measures for addressing the needs of persons with disabilities:

- All pilot projects supported with JP funds with public access will be made accessible to persons with disabilities.
- All training, network forums and other initiatives supported by the JP will address disability issues and will be accessible to persons with disabilities.
- All websites and other information developed through the JP will be accessible to persons with disabilities by ensuring that all disabled persons' organisations are included in distribution.

The JP has considered gender equality in its implementation, including some specific activities and strategies to address gender priorities in rural tourism.

The JP project was intended to respond and contribute to MGD targets:

- Reduce unemployment rate of young by at least one third

- Reduce unemployment rate of persons with disabilities by at least 20 %
- Reduce unemployment rate of women by over 45 %
- Integrate sustainable development principals in national documents, stop the loss of natural resources and encourage their revitalisation.
- Adopt and implement national programmes, strategies and laws governing sustainable development and environmental protection of Republic of Serbia by 2015.
- Increase energy efficiency and usage of renewable energy.
- Adopt and implement national programmes, strategies and laws governing sustainable development and encourage their revitalisation/
- Increase energy efficiency and usage of renewable energy.
- Dynamic and sustainable GDP growth based on assumptions established by the National Investment Plan, the Strategy for Promotion and Development of foreign investment and the strategy for economic development until 2012.
- Increase investment in human resource development by 70%.

e. Describe the extent of the contribution of the joint program to the following categories of results:

a. Paris Declaration Principles

- Leadership of national and local governmental institutions- moderate
MFE and NTOS have assumed ownership of the entire tourism component of the project. Through the initiative of the MFE, the Rural Tourism Task Force was set up within the Ministry and, it was in collaboration with the Task Force that all capacity building programmes were organized and implemented.
- Involvement of CSO and citizens- 1
Great involvement of CSO, citizens, and even public sector in trainings, grant projects, especially through promotion of public private partnership and support to CSO implementing projects aimed at diversification of rural economy through tourism in 4 targeted regions in Serbia
- Alignment and harmonization- large extent
- Innovative elements in mutual accountability (justify why these elements are innovative)

b. Delivering as One

- Role of Resident Coordinator Office and synergies with other MDG-F joint programmes
not observed, nothing to report; the only synergy with other MDG-F JPs was permanent use of the YEM experiences with reporting
- Innovative elements in harmonization of procedures and managerial practices (justify why these elements are innovative)
- Joint United Nations formulation, planning and management
Not functioning even at least Programme manager is to be shared, nothing to report; joint planning of daily work depend in large extent of individuals and their readiness to cooperate; only technical assets e.g. cars were somehow managed together, although budget was shaped bad in that aspect since no cars were provided from the beginning of project, but few old were used with lots of troubles; constant tendencies of UNDP to establish itself as the lead agency was noticed. UNDP and WTO often tended to function individually on behalf of the UNJP

III. GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

- a. Report key lessons learned and good practices that would facilitate future joint programme design and implementation

One of the key to the success of the JP was dedication of national partners. The reason the cooperation was successful, is because the National partners (NTOS and MFE), treated JP as their own. There is one area where JP could have improved, and that is better understanding and learning about National institutions function, and in that way it is possible to have grater accomplishes in sustainability of initiatives .

- b. Report on any innovative development approaches as a result of joint programme implementation

The JP delivered a set of innovative initiatives that will have long-term, positive and structural impact on policies, procedures and legislative instruments at both national and local level.

LAG trainings were jointly organized by EU funded “The LEADER Initiative Serbia” (LEADER) project and UN Joint Programme “Sustainable Tourism for Rural Development”. In addition, Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Forestry and Water Management of Republic of Serbia as well as European Union (EU) Delegation representatives had active role at this Training. The purpose of the training was to introduce basic principles of EU LEADER approach, to provide crucial information and skills important for creation of Local Action Group (LAG), and finally, to promote cooperation between different actors active in the field of rural development.

Sequenced design of project activities which include assessments done by teamed external expert and local stakeholder with extension role in rural community, demand driven design of capacity building activity by an expert and policy making level and self evaluation of achieved results which follows monitoring action provided by local extension partner is obviously creating lost of benefits for local rural population participating in FAO activities on the field. Permanent partnership of FAO team and local extension organisation (NGO, but not limited to it) is providing better selection of possible target group for trainings then by ad-hoc invitation passed to the public through media or any other channel. Rural development network members are good local implementation partners, yet they themselves can also benefit of every training intended for local population to be able to later rise interest of the rest of rural population and provide answers to their question.

UNWTO is a non-resident agency. It was crucial therefore to develop a strong partnership with national partners. In this regard, the grants scheme was implemented, monitored and evaluated in its entirety by NTOS in partnership with UNWTO. This improved the capacities of the NTOS in project management while, at the same time, fostered and strengthened the partnerships between NTOS and LTOs to raise awareness of the concept of tourism clusters and promote the applications for grants which stimulated the creation of clusters.

Based on the development recommendations stated in the Rural Tourism Master Plan, municipalities are able to succesfully apply for funding from funds that were not as readily accessible prior to the development of the Master Plan. Some municipalities have already successfully mobilised funds, mainly for tourism infrastructure.

Sequenced design of project activities which include assessments done by teamed external expert and local stakeholder with extension role in rural community, demand driven design of capacity building activity by an expert and policy making level and self evaluation of achieved results which follows monitoring action provided by local extension partner is obviously creating lost of benefits for local rural population participating in FAO activities on the field. Permanent partnership of FAO team and local extension organisation (NGO, but not limited to it) is providing better selection of possible target group for trainings then by ad-hoc invitation passed to the public through media or any other channel. Rural development network members are good local implementation partners, yet they themselves can also benefit of every training intended for local population to be able to later rise interest of the rest of rural population and provide answers to their question.

- c. Indicate key constraints including delays (if any) during programme implementation

- a. Internal to the joint programme:

- The change in Joint Programme Manager. Once the change was effected, programme activities, but, more importantly in team and partnership building.
- Recruiting and contracting procedures (LoAs and ToRs)

b. External to the joint programme

Small capacity of MoA was creating delays in grants disbursements, but also absence of MoA representatives in field actions, trainings and monitoring activities; it was noticed that MoA representatives are mainly not interested to participate in any activity in which at least per diem is not provided (due to FAO rules, eligibility for per diems depended on time spent on the field plus provided transport and food) by UNJP. MoA obviously have limited absorption capacity for technical assistance and knowledge transfer, but also political instability is making even bigger problems – during UNJP program, MoA have changed 3 ministers and his associates with approximately 6 months requested for reestablishment of cooperation and provision of new contacts of responsible officers.

The national elections in May 2012 impacted on the implementation of certain project activities especially in relation to the constitution of the Rural Tourism Task Force.

c. Main mitigation actions implemented to overcome these constraints

Strong technical support was provided to Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management for processing grants and scheduling of activities was tried to be done in advance with M representatives in charge; political problems FAO couldn't mitigate although tried every time to establish immediately contacts with the new managements

External to the joint programme– the national elections in May 2012 impacted on the implementation of certain project activities especially in relation to the constitution of the Rural Tourism Task Force.

d. Describe and assess how the monitoring and evaluation function has contributed to the:

a. Improvement in programme management and the attainment of development results

The JP team managed a range of monitoring and evaluation process through the program, to ensure the relevance and quality provided to National partners. The JP team managed a range of monitoring and evaluation processes throughout the life of the programme to ensure the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the technical assistance provided to national partners. These processes included regular performance monitoring exercises focused on the technical aspects of the Joint Programme; a mid-term evaluation that appraised also management arrangement, synergies and coordination among implementing agencies; and a final summative evaluation conducted in November 2012.

b. Improvement in transparency and mutual accountability

Accountability and transparency was ensured at early stages of the JP;s implementation through a number of mechanisms, that included regular meetings. In both (a) and (b) above, it ensured that project activities were followed in accordance with annual work plans and budgets. It also helped to discover opportunities for synergies with work plans of other partners.

c. Increasing national capacities and procedures in M&E and data

The JP STRD aimed to strengthen the capacity of national and local institutions to generate and use data for programme development and implementation, policy advocacy and reporting. It also strengthened national and local institutions and partners to design, monitor and evaluate programmes.

Within the **M&E component** one of the activity was focused on research ‘‘*Structure and volume of rural tourism income*’’. The primary objective of this research was to determine the total revenue from this type of tourism, to determine the sustainability performance of tourism and its importance for rural development. Determination of income from tourism is followed by analysis of the elements of supply and analysis of ways of service commercialization in rural tourism. Understanding the structural elements essential for business and exploring ways of households functioning led to the regularities that show positive and negative aspects, important for generating revenue in the industry.

Also, research objectives was to determine the opportunities and obstacles for further development of rural tourism in Serbia and to clarify how the households engaged in rural tourism are functioning: what is their material base for the development of tourism, business and trade features, human resources, organizational, investment and other properties.

Based on the analysis and conclusions set out, the goal was to make recommendations to overcome limitations in the development of households offer and thereby create opportunities for more efficient operations and achievement of growth in total revenue.

d. To what extent was the mid-term evaluation process useful to the joint programme?

The mid-term evaluation was very useful, as it provided concrete recommendations, that JP team was able to use to enhance some of the segments. Again, to take stock of progress in programme implementation, identify areas of constraint, and, propose recommendations for re-formulation of certain activities to re-align outcomes with issues which emerged from the initial phases of the programme implementation (e.g. re-definition of capacity building programmes).

e. Describe and asses how the communication and advocacy functions have contributed to the:

a. Improve the sustainability of the joint programme

The JP communication and advocacy was design with the main goal, to create a framework for policy advocacy and strategic communication for JP, promoting the key of issues of rural tourism.

b. Improve the opportunities for scaling up or replication of the joint programme or any of its components

National partners have been well informed about JP STRD activities by exchange of programme information through PMC/NSC meetings, presentations and reports, provision of additional information, production of factsheets as summary information products, promotion of web-page etc. As they were regularly supplied with progress reports and informed about the achievements of the programme, representatives of National Partners expressed their satisfaction with the programme on many occasions, which contribute to potential provision of financial support for the replication of the programme.

c. Providing information to beneficiaries/right holders

Advocacy and communication has ensured that the beneficiaries are well informed about JP’s activities, and updated on overall achievements of the programme. This was achieved through proactive work to ensure regional and local media appearance and presence of fact sheets, and specific activities.

FAO team haven’t noticed any particular improvement due to engagement of communication specialist, but communication interactive line which was established with the local level through rural development network was very useful in all mentioned aspects. Unfortunately during 2012, activities of local member of the network were down, while regional centres continued with their work.

Communication and advocacy has ensured that the beneficiaries are well-informed about JP activities and continuously updated on overall achievements of the programme. This was achieved through production of factsheets as summary information products, proactive work to ensure local and regional media appearances and presence with success stories and overall positive coverage, outreach activities in order to disseminate relevant

information to all beneficiaries, as well as through promotion of JP STRD, and promotional movie.

- f. Please report on scalability of the joint programme and/or any of its components
- a. To what extent has the joint programme assessed and systematized development results with the intention to use as evidence for replication or scaling up the joint programme or any of its components?

FAO have compiled a whole book with systemised development results including description of actions and its rationale. This book align with all studies and trainings materials will be available to all regular participants of trainings and other activities, plus to ministries and TOS after the project is finished.

- b. Describe example, if any, of replication or scaling up that are being undertaken
Regional initiative of marketing small farmers products and rural tourism “Srpska magaza” was called to national level and spreading through UNJP pilot regions and out of them
- c. Describe the joint programme exit strategy and asses how it has improved the sustainability of the joint program

Document on Phase 2 of JP STRD was prepared and circulate by the Ministry of Finance and Economy during the last PMC meeting.

The document relates to the proposals prepared by the UN partners of the Joint Programme early 2012. It suggests development of regional tourism product, development of Tourism Information and Investment Portal (TIIP), create linkages not just for rural, but between all stakeholders in tourism.

IV. FINANCIAL STATUS OF THE JOINT PROGRAMME

- a. Provide a final financial status of the joint programme in the following categories:

1. Total Approved Budget 2.Total Budget Transferred 3. Total Budget Committed 4.Total Budget Disbursed (annex 7a and 7b)

- b. Explain any outstanding balance or variances with the original budget

V. OTHER COMMENTS AND/OR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

VI. CERTIFICATION ON OPERATIONAL CLOSURE OF THE PROJECT

By signing, Participating United Nations Organizations (PUNO) certify that the project has been operationally completed.

PUNO	NAME	TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE
UNDP				
UNWTO				
FAO				
UNEP				
UNICEF				

VII. ANNEXES

Annex 1. List of all document/studies produced by the joint programme

Annex 2. Minutes of the final review meeting of the Programme Management Committee and National Steering Committee

Annex 3. M&E framework with update final values of indicators

Annex 4. Final Evaluation Report

Annex 5. List of trainings and workshops

Annex 6. List all communication products created by the joint programme

Annex 7. Financial status of the joint programme