

# MARKETING CONCEPT COMPONENT PART SNEŽNIK

D.T1.3.8

Final Version  
02/2021

Sašo Gorjanc, Miha Varga, Bojan Kocjan, Špela E. Koblar Habič, Urban Prosen  
SLOVENIA FOREST SERVICE, Slovenia





## Abbreviations

BEECH POWER - Interreg Central Europe project: World Heritage BEECH forests: emPOWERing and catalysing an ecosystem-based sustainable development

RDA (Green KARST) - Regional Development Agency Green Karst

SiDG - Slovenian State Forests Ltd.

SFS - Slovenia Forest Service

TIC - Tourist information Centre

UNESCO - United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WH - World Heritage

## 1. Description of the Deliverable

The thematic work package 1 will sustainably enhance the cooperation between Protected Areas comprising World Heritage component parts and adjacent communities, on a regional and transnational level. In order to actively involve local stakeholders in planning processes, there were organised several different activities and events (mostly workshops) where stakeholders were invited in included.

In Deliverable D.T1.3.8, marketing concepts from component part Snežnik in Slovenia are presented. Marketing concepts are based on previous activities in Working Package 1, especially Activity A.T1.3 (Pilot implementation of 3 identified measures from former projects (testing and evaluation)). In Activity A.T1.3 we organised kick-off meeting for relevant stakeholders - local working group for tourism and recreation (D.T1.3.6 and D.T1.3.7). This marketing concept itself covers mostly the activities, which will be led by stakeholders from local working group for tourism and recreation. The document of regional strategy (D.T1.2.1) goes hand in hand with these marketing concepts.

## 2. Introduction

Snežnik forest reserve is the largest and one of the most visited forest reserves in Slovenia, due to the summit of Snežnik being the highest Slovenian mountain outside of the Alps and thus a popular hiking destination. The status of the forest reserve in the area is not widely known and the protection regimes that come with it are not clearly presented. Some 10.000 visitors hike to the summit of Snežnik annually, using four marked and maintained hiking trails (and one unmarked hunting trail, which is not allowed). Vast majority of these visitors do not stray from the hiking trails and as such their impact on the environment is more or less contained. The exception is the summit (WH buffer zone), where all the hikers congregate and the signs of accelerated erosion are already present. The southern part of the reserve does not have any



hiking paths and it is therefore not allowed to visit it. Nevertheless, trespassing does occur. With the inscription of the of the reserve on the UNESCO WH list, an increase in the visitor interest was already noted, particularly the pressure on the southern part of the reserve, as the full name of the reserve draws attention to it.

The visitor pressure has been recognised as one of the primary pressures on the forest ecosystem within the reserve and thus further increase of visitor numbers is not perceived favourably. The marketing concepts will thus focus on minimisation of promotion of the forest reserve itself and redirecting the attention to its environs, while developing expert based guided tours as the only offer within the reserve to minimise the visitor impact in this area.

### 3. Analysis of the current situation and of (existing) marketing concepts in the WH target area

There are currently no official marketing concept in place already. There are some specific guided tours on offer, but that is the full extent of it. Given that the aim has been to minimise the exposure of the area and not attract more attention or visitors to it for a few years already, there are no communication channels developed. Rather the communication channels of other relevant stakeholders and inconsistently being monitored and checked so that the mentions of the forest reserve can be adapted in a way to minimise the exposure.

The main stakeholders in the area are Slovenia Forest Service, Slovenian State Forests, municipalities Loška dolina and Ilirska Bistrica, mountaineering societies, and Regional Development Agency Green Karst. The entire area of the forest reserve is state-owned and thus managed by Slovenian State Forests in accordance with forest management plans prepared by Slovenia Forest Service. The reserve belongs to two municipalities, which often see the area as a major opportunity to develop, however the implementation of their ideas so far has been limited. Tourist organisations are linked into two Tourist Information Centres in Ilirska Bistrica and Loška dolina, however they all operate under the umbrella of the tourism sector at the Regional Development Agency Green Karst. In recent years, most of the tourism development has been directed elsewhere (Postojna Cave, Cerknica and Pivka lakes, Križna cave). Given that hikers are the most common visitors of the area, the mountaineering societies and managers of the mountain huts on Snežnik and Sviščaki are very relevant stakeholders too.



## 4. Concept

- Overarching aim of the concept
  - Provide meaningful visitor experience outside of the forest reserve for non-hiker visitors
  - Minimise the visitor number increase within the reserve (limit exposure)
- Definition of target groups
  - Mountaineering societies
  - Sviščaki and Snežnik mountain hut managers
  - RDA Green KARST, TIC Ilirska Bistrica and Loška dolina
  - Municipalities Loška dolina and Ilirska Bistrica
  - SFS, SiDG
- Positions and messages
  - The forest reserve Snežnik is a fragile WH site, which was awarded this status to preserve the natural functioning and processes of the forest ecosystem without human influences. As such, it is of paramount importance to conserve it as it is, which would be impossible with larger visitor pressure.
  - The forest reserve Snežnik is a part of UNESCO WH and was recognised as important refuge for beech from where it spread to central Europe after the last Ice Age. Snežnik is a part of extension in 2017 as a transboundary UNESCO WH property - Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe.
  - How to establish meaningful collaboration with local communities while respecting the protection regimes in place?

## 5. Objectives & Activities

The concept should reach the following objectives, which should be implemented through different activities:

Objective 1: Provide meaningful visitor experience outside the forest reserve

Activity 1.1: provide guided tours for interested visitors along Mašun Forest Trail with topics including also WH forests and the story of beech and its adaptation to extreme conditions



- The Mašun Forest Trail is currently under renovation and it will be together with the renovated Mašun Forest House present the specificities of the area and large carnivores that are present
- The existing and renovated infrastructure should be supplemented with information for visitors who come to the area because they are interested in WH status.
- The path is short and accessible to all types of walkers

Activity 1.2: Renovate Forest Trail Sviščaki and equip it with information about UNESCO forests.

- The established trail is dire need of renovation and then also presents ideal opportunity to equip it with informational boards, and as such is ideal for interpretation of the area, while keeping the visitors out of the forest reserve.
- The path is 4,3 km long and as such of moderate difficulty.
- Guided tours along the trail should be provided.

Activity 1.3: Supplement the promenade View of Snežnik with information about UNESCO beech forests

- The short trail offers expansive views of Snežnik and is easily accessible to non-demanding walkers.
- There is no information about UNESCO inscribed beech forests along the trail, which should be added.

Activity 1.4: Develop appropriate visitor materials and information (printed and/or electronic)

- Visitor materials and information about the walks around Snežnik and rules of conduct within the reserve to be prepared and readily available at Forest House Mašun, as well as Mountain Hut Sviščaki and Mountain Hut Snežnik. This should focus on directing the visitors to existing Forest Educational paths Mašun and Sviščaki, rather than within the reserve itself.

Objective 2: Provide guided and expert tours within the reserve, respecting the protection regimes in place

Activity 2.1: Develop an overarching rulebook for conduct and information given on guided tours within the forest reserve for any tourist providers that offer visiting Snežnik

- A common code of conduct should be agreed upon with the main tourist providers and their cover organisations (RDA, TIC, municipalities, local guides, SFS, SiDG)

Activity 2.2: Develop guided tour for experts and schools (SFS)

Activity 2.3: Reach an agreement about events organised within the reserve with mountaineering societies/hut managers to minimise increases in visitor numbers and promotion of prohibited activities



## 6. Implementation plan

Slovenia and the stakeholders responsible for implementation of laws and decision makers (Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning, Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia Forest Service, Slovenia State Forests Ltd., Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for nature Conservation) are currently in the process of drafting and harmonizing the decree, which will also lead to designating an official area manager. Current “de facto” manager in Slovenia Forest Service but does not have the full permission, legal basis and resources to officially and effectively manage forest reserve Virgin forest Krokar and its buffer zone forest reserve Borovec.

Due to the lack of official management in the area, we at BEECH POWER project cannot define any specifics like budget, priorities, who implements what and how often since these all depend of manager and his vision. This will probably have to be dealt with within the management plan of the newly established nature reserves in the future, if that status will be achieved. The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning should provide funds for one of the key stakeholders to implement these actions.

By the latest current information from February 2021, the responsible ministry is already in process of preparing a draft Decree (on nature reserves), which has to be later on reviewed and agreed with all responsible ministries and other stakeholders. The optimistic plan is that this could be done still in 2021 year.

### **D.T1.3.8: Marketing concept Snežnik**

Authors: Sašo Gorjanc, Miha Varga, Bojan Kocjan, Špela E. Koblar Habič, Urban Prosen - all Slovenia Forest Service

Citation: Gorjanc, S., Varga, M., Kocjan, B., Koblar Habič, Š. E., Prosen, U., 2021. Marketing Concept Component Part Snežnik. Interreg CE BEECH POWER CE1340.