



CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, THROUGH VALORIZATION OF RURAL CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION OF NATURAL ASSET OF AREAS WITH ANCIENT OLIVE GROVES

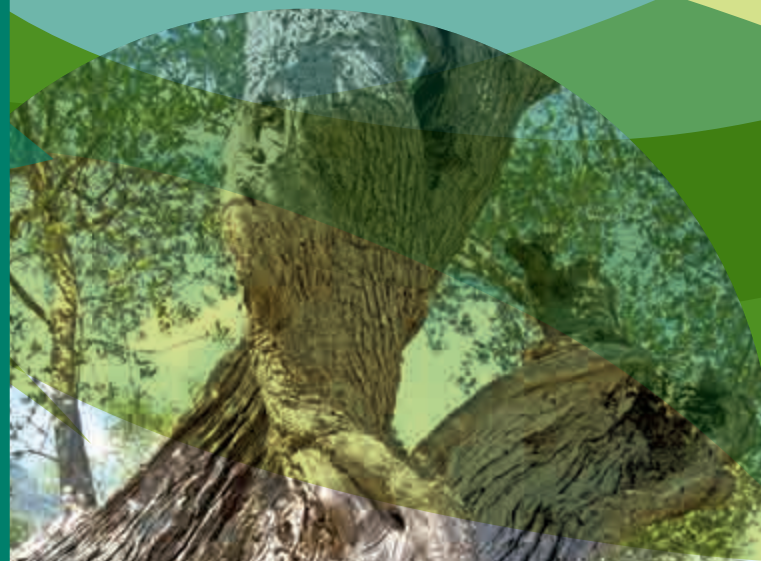


CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, THROUGH VALORIZATION OF RURAL CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION OF NATURAL ASSET OF AREAS WITH ANCIENT OLIVE GROVES

The SMART and Sustainable Cross-Border Tourism Plan for Ancient Olive Groves in Albania, Montenegro and Molise

With Community Maps inside

The SMART and Sustainable Cross-Border Tourism Plan



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Park Authority of Venafro



Municipality of Bar



Association for Sustainable Regional Groves - Valdanos



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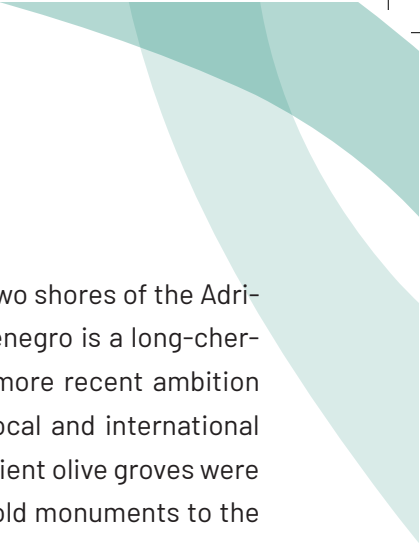
THE SMART STUDY

1. THE GOALS OF THE PLAN	7
2. SURVEY OF THE SITES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT	10
2.1. The “system of ancient olive groves”	10
2.2. Tangible and intangible resources	21
2.3. Socio-economic background of project areas	32
2.4. Land-planning tools in rural areas occupied by ancient olive groves	41
3. POTENTIALS AND CRITICALITIES OF PROJECT SITES	46
3.1. Existing criticalities in olive-growing areas	46
3.2. Potentials of olive-growing areas	50
4. THE MAP OF GOOD PRACTICES FOR THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF ANCIENT OLIVE GROVES	54
5. COMMUNITY MAPS OF MONUMENTAL OLIVE GROVES	74
6. THE MAP OF THE ACTORS INVOLVED	78

7. THE PLAN'S SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	84
8. AN ACTION PLAN FOR ANCIENT OLIVE GROVES	93
8.1. The relationship of ancient olive groves with the natural system, and their sustainable management	99
8.2 The sustainable use of olive groves and the creation of a new tourism product	105
8.3 Operators' training and professional development and environmental and food education	110
8.4 Promotion of the area, of tourism products and services	114
9.CONCLUSIONS	119


THE COMMUNITY MAPS

NROQ, MARIKAJ, PREZA	122
VENAFRO	134
BAR, DŽIDŽARIN	140
VALDANOS	148



A Common and Sustainable Tourism for the two shores of the Adriatic Sea, connecting Italy, Albania and Montenegro is a long-cherished aspiration of coastal communities, a more recent ambition of tour operators and a new discovery for local and international tourists. This dream could become true if ancient olive groves were properly valued: they are the living and age-old monuments to the interweaving of diverse civilisations.

The Cross Border Olive project has identified a Common Cross Border Plan that outlines relevant measures to promote sustainable tourism, combining traditions, typicality, and natural trails. This is the case of the thousands of hectares of ancient olive groves scattered across different areas that reveal all the beauty of their landscape: Venafrò in Italy, Ndroq, Marikaj and Preze in Albania, Džidžarin in Bar and Valdanos in Ulqin (Ulcinj) in Montenegro.



Although separated by only a few hundred kilometres of sea, the project areas display exceptional individual qualities in terms of biodiversity, landscapes of unique beauty, historical, cultural, and culinary traditions, yet all share a common asset: their ancient olive groves.

The Cross-Border Development Plan represents a landmark, having been the result of an in-depth study and a number of field activities. Several actions have been carried out with the close collaboration and exchange of knowledge of the three countries' experts, to take a snapshot of the biodiversity state, identify local interest groups, interview operators to define the best cultural practices for the management of ancient olive groves, and map the historical, cultural, and culinary heritage of each area. This document also marks

a new start, from an ambitious proposal that is now translated into the Local Environmental Tourist and Economic Development Plans, and the Local Environmental and Cultural Resource and Community Maps. A collaborative approach has been the driving force behind the project and the people who have contributed their skills and knowledge to its implementation: researchers, operators in the olive oil sector, tourist operators, representatives of national and local institutions and, finally, the residents and communities involved along both sides of the sea.

Unfortunately, the current pandemic situation has limited knowledge transfer in the second phase of the project, which would have been greatly facilitated by personal presence, on-site missions and stakeholders' travelling to exchange experiences.

The work carried out within the INTERREG CROSS BORDER OL project was intended to support the creation of imaginary bridges across the Adriatic Sea, to link peoples, ethnicities, and cultures under the peaceful eye of ancient olives and foster international exchanges and tourism.

Maurizio Raeli

Director of

CIHEAM Bari

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THE SMART STUDY







1. THE GOALS OF THE PLAN

WPT2 is the second and the last WP, which promotes sustainable tourism and natural and cultural heritage, through a participatory process involving both public and private stakeholders with a view to co-developing and sharing a Smart and Sustainable Cross-border Tourism Plan among the partners, aimed to be implemented also beyond the borders of the target areas in Albania, Montenegro and Molise.

More specifically, the WP includes collective initiatives aimed to raise awareness of stakeholders (SHs) and especially of local and central governments/administration, on natural and environmental assets, local development planning and capacity building. The outcome is the cross-border plan, which is a new model for the joint promotion of the heritage through the network. It contains both economic measures for sustainable development and an integrated route planning aimed at the promotion of natural and cultural heritage. This is achieved via local tools (maps and plans) for environmental protection and sustainable tourism. All project Partners

(PPs) have been involved in the definition of maps and local plans aimed at the co-planning of the Plan for smart and sustainable cross-border tourism.

CIHEAM IAMB leads the WP, building on its previous experience in the design of rural and economic plans and transfer of knowledge and good practices with a bottom-up approach.

The Smart and Sustainable Cross-border Tourism Plan:

- Integrates at the cross-border level the local thematic routes implemented in previous activities, including environmental and cultural resources and community maps (CIHEAM IAMB will take charge of supporting and supplying the tools to integrate the results of previous activities)
- Is an environmental, economic and tourist plan bringing together the results achieved by local development plans
- All partners contribute to the process by identifying and giving priorities to the resources and assets characterising their own territories resulting in the drafting of Local Environmental Tourist and Economic Development Plans
- Is a new model to jointly promote the heritage through the network, by tracing paths tracing paths to proper development


- Is a tool that concerns the cooperation area to improve the effectiveness of cross-border policies and tools
- Is a common action plan for the sustainable management of tourist destinations that could be adopted by the public authorities in the target area
- Is an effective tool to promote stakeholders' commitment to enhance the beauty of the natural asset as part of sustainable tourism
- Is applicable and replicable to other areas or regions to improve rural activities related to tourism, considering the transferability of outputs and results of Local Environmental Tourist and Economic Development Plans.

2. SURVEY OF THE SITES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

2.1. The “system of ancient olive groves”

In Albania three ancient olive-growing areas have been selected in the region of Tirana, i.e., Ndroq in the Municipality of Tirana and Prezë and Marikaj in the Municipality of Vlora. Albania has an overall heritage of over 1.7 million centuries-old olive trees, most of them being sited around Tirana and Vlora, but also in Durrës, Mallakastër, Elbasan, Lezhë and Shkodër.

The existing olive trees in the three selected areas are representative of the ancient olive groves of the country; they belong to the so-called “Tirana crown” including a series of hills with altitude less than 400 m asl and covered with a mixed vegetation, including maquis and centuries-old olive groves with a distinct wealth of flora



and fauna that makes these areas very attractive for tourists. For centuries these forms of natural and agricultural biodiversity have lived alongside achieving a well-established ecological balance sometimes disturbed by human-induced action, although the current management of these olive groves may be classified as having a low environmental impact.

The three selected areas are similar also in terms of traditional agricultural practices. 100% of farming operations are carried out by hand, thereby making operating costs higher.

Most olive groves are sited in hilly and mountainous areas, resulting in problems for harvesting and timely tillage. Part of farmers have chosen to carry out minimum tillage, whereas for over 50% of existing olive trees no-till is practised. Traditional and marginal olive-growing is based on occasional interventions, with pruning done every 10 years to remove the whole canopy. This drastic and irrational pruning compromises the monumentality and aesthetic value of large tree specimens.

Soil management in sloping olive groves is ensured by lunettes made with dry stones or earth mounds on the bottom side of the slope to create small terraces that may contribute to balance the hydrological, thermal, and microclimatic factors of the soil, improve the landscape, provide shelter for a multitude of beneficial insects that help preserve biodiversity and maintain the natural balance of the agro-ecosystem. Another natural way to ensure the same function consists in maintaining rows of trees or trees perpendicular to the slope line.

Olive groves at high altitude or hard-to-reach due to the slope or to

the absence of road are abandoned, resulting in a high risk of fire. A large part of olive groves is not accessible by rural infrastructures. Late olive harvesting and the practice of storing olives into bags are the major causes of yield losses and deterioration in olive oil quality. The main cultivar, *Ulliri i Bardhë* (White olives) is associated with Olivaster, cv *Ulliri i Zi* (Black olive), cv *Ulliri i Kuq* (Red olive) and, in Preza, even with cv *Kushan*. The red 'Olivastër from Tirana is found in nearly all existing centuries-old olive groves in Tirana and Durrës.

Ndroq is one of the 15 Administrative Units of Tirana, with a population of about 9,356 inhabitants. The old village connected by the road Tirana - Durrës - Kavajë, stands on the olive groves. The castle on the hill overlooks the plain.

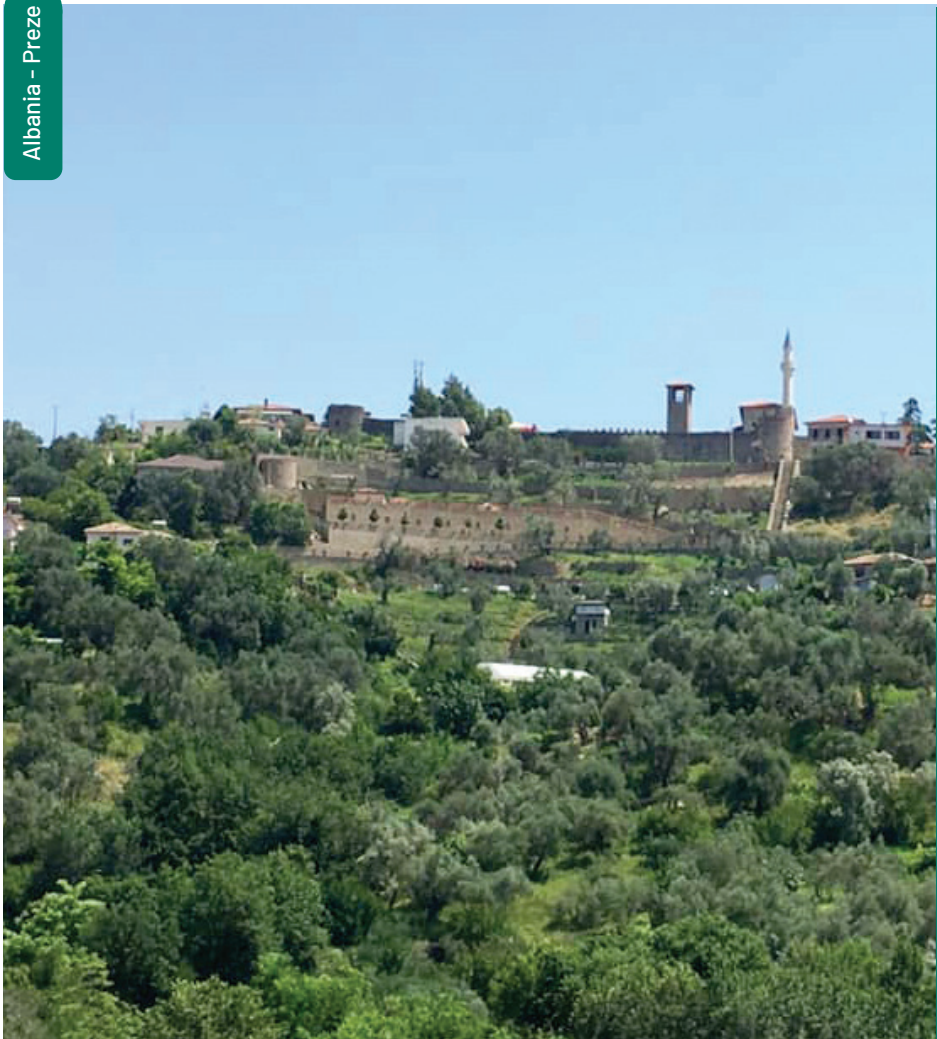
In the area of Ndroq, there are 795 hectares of olive groves, of which 682 ha occupied by centuries-old olive orchards standing on the hillsides of Ndroq, South of Erzen river. About 191 ha are located on hills with 15 and 20% slope, whereas 543 ha have a slope exceeding 25% and 28% ha in terraced hills.

Out of the 25,000 centuries-old olive trees, over 200 are very ancient and are found in Kërçukje, Sauqet, Grëbllesh and Varrosh. This area shows one of the most ancient testimonies of olive growing, immersed in a context with a high cultural value. Some monumental olive trees are located near the castle of Varrosh, whose walls were rebuilt during the barbarian invasions of IV - VI centuries.

There are old stone mills proving the ancient olive oil production, and 8 modern oil mills are currently operating in Ndroq.

Preza belongs to the Municipality of Vora and is halfway between Tirana and Durres. It dates to 2000 years ago, when the castle was built. The centuries-old olive groves stretch over about 17 hectares on the foothills of the area of Prezë, with a density of 120 trees

Albania - Preze



per hectare. Among them there are about 8 ha of olive plantations around the castle on steeply sloping soils, sometimes terraced. It is a very ancient olive grove with over 1000 plants of outstanding landscape value. Most trees are 400 to 500 years old. Many plants do not receive appropriate care in cultivation.

There is no oil mill, they use the mill sited in Marikaj.

Marikaj belongs to the Municipality of Vora. The ancient olive groves are located on the hills of Marikaj village that has a long tradition for olive oil production. The total area planted with olive trees is 806 ha, of which 155 ha with centuries-old olive groves (86 ha only in Marikaj). They are planted in soils with a slope exceeding 15% and an average density of 80 trees per ha.

The oil produced in Marikaj was exported from XVII to XVIII century to the Republic of Venice and to the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

The landscape around Venafro is characterised by the presence of olive groves that occupy a total area of 457 hectares. Most traditional olive groves fall within Venafro Regional Olive Park that extends over the southern side of Santa Croce or Cerino Mountain and Corno Mountain.

The olive-planted area reaches up to 500 m and spreads over terraces with varying degrees of maintenance. Planting pattern mainly follows the contour lines; in some cases, quincunx arrangement is also adopted in lower-lying areas.

Some centuries-old olive groves still show signs of the historical memory of old cultivation techniques used in the Mediterranean, such as the accumulation of stones at the base of the tree that help regulate the rooting system temperature, and dry-stone walls that serve the same function, even more amplified, as they allow optimal soil drainage.

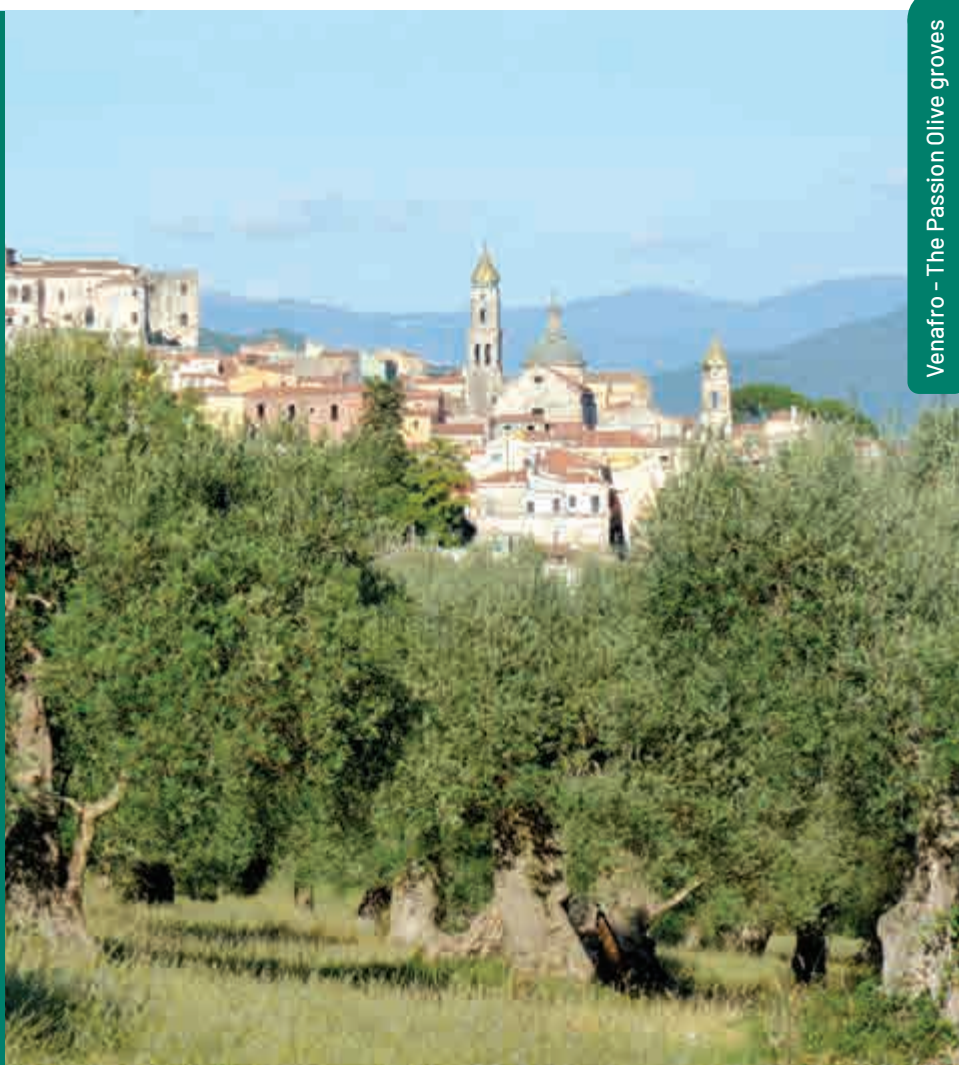
There are also unique cultivars, such as *Aurina*, a native variety of Venafrò, that may be associated with the ancient “*Licina*” variety of the Roman times; *Olivastro dritto*, widespread in Venafrò olive groves; *Olivastro breve* with a short and compact inflorescence; *Rossuola*, bearing a fruit that remains reddish until ripe; *Gnagnaro*, which has the smallest fruit among all cultivated varieties, and to be considered the *Oleaster* of the Romans; *Sperone di Gallo* bearing a fruit that recalls in shape and size a cockscomb.

In 1936, Gennaro Nola, an agronomist born in Venafrò (*L’Olivicoltura in Agro di Venafrò e le varietà coltivate* - 1936 - Roma) identified the morphological traits of local varieties, which resulted to be 15, namely: 1) *Aurina* or *Licina*, 2) *Pallante* or *Pallone* or *Luceгна*, 3) *Olivastro breve* or *Olivastro d’Aprile*, 4) *Olivastro dritto* or *cacacciaro*, 5) *Rotondella*, 6) *Rossuola* or *Resciola*, 7) *Olivastrello*, 8) *Olivo maschio*, 9) *Gnagnaro*, 10) *Lagrimella*, 11) *Coglioni di gallo*, 12) *Ghiandara* or *Circelluta*, 13) *Oliva spagnuola*, 14) *Olivo Gaetano*, 15) *Trignola*.

The presence of many varieties in the olive grove is justified by its greater versatility to weathering, ensuring steady production according to the annual fruiting of each cultivar.

Land fragmentation is still a characteristic feature of Venafrò piedmont olive-planted areas. Olive-growing is thus still based on tra-

ditional methods that are often impervious to rational agricultural practices. Applied cultivation techniques mostly concern, especially for family-run olive groves, mowing herbaceous plants and pruning. Pruning is done by hand, every second year, in April. Un-



Venafrò - The Passion Olive groves

der well lighted conditions, trees are goblet-pruned to leave 3 to 4 large branches with dichotomous branching. In most cases drastic pruning leading to lower the canopy is necessary to counteract the assurgent growth of *Aurina*.

Venafro's historical olive grove is devoted to marginal olive growing and for this reason it has been progressively degraded and abandoned over the last decades. The Park Authority promotes the spread of old olive cultivars, including *Aurina*, that are essential for agro-environmental biological diversity, and it is seeking to steer grazing, favouring sheep-grazing as natural means for the maintenance of olive groves.

In the area of Venafro there are three main oil mills, whose marketing activities give little space to the considerable historical background of Venafro's area. In contrast, under the impulse of the Park, new Farms have been created within its territory that are committed to combine history and quality as their mission.

In Montenegro the surveyed areas are only Džidžarin and Ulcinj (Ulqin).

Džidžarin is an ancient olive grove with over 10,000 plants aged between 200 and 500 years and some thousand-year-old trees, among the largest and most beautiful specimens in Bar. Žutica is the most common variety (98%).

At 800 metres from Džidžarin, there is Mirovica's olive tree, which is among the world's most ancient olive trees, protected by national

law since 1957. The Istanbul Forestry and Agricultural Institute has estimated its age as 2245 years.

Dabanovo and Marijala have some of the largest olive groves in Montenegro with more than 50,000 trees aged between 200, 300 and 500 years, situated in the immediate proximity of the urban area.

Bar has been known for centuries for olive and oil production, which started to decline in the '70s and '80s, with the abandonment of Džidžarin olive groves that were more difficult to cultivate. At present these olive groves need regenerative pruning aimed to reduce the height of plants higher than 7 - 10 or even 15 meters.

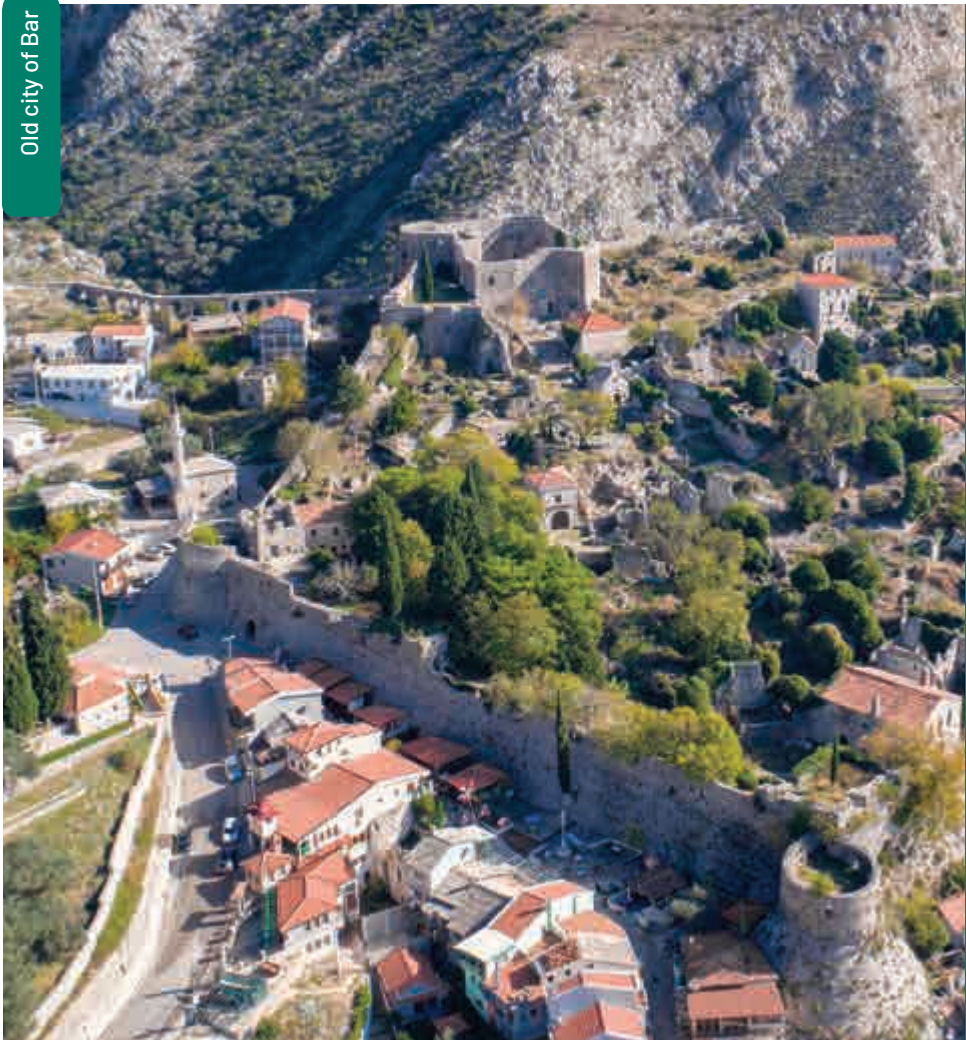
Olive is the main crop, but land fragmentation, the small number of trees and their state of health, and the large number of landowners are restraining factors on productivity.

There are 350-400 olive growers owning 50 to 100 olive trees and even more, and two olive growers' associations in Džidžarin, i.e., the Association of Bar olive growers, established in 2002 and the Association of Antivari olive growers, created in 2020, gathering 150 olive growers. The objective of associations is to enhance the value of olive growing by supporting members to renew old and abandoned olive groves, set up new plantations, spread growing techniques aimed at improving quality. There are 6 mills, 2 of which in the vicinity of Džidžarin.

The ancient olive groves grown for over 2000 years in the town of Ulcinj (Ulqin) represent the history of the town. Olive growing and olive oil production in Ulcinj (Ulqin) constitutes an indissociable part of the local culture.

Ulcinj (Ulqin) lies on the Adriatic coast and is an ancient seaport; it is appreciated for its historical, cultural, and natural sites. Olive plantations cover about 3200 hectares, grown along the coast where *Žutica* is the predominant variety accounting for 95-98%. Other va-

Old city of Bar



varieties include *Crnica*, *Lumbardeška*, *Sitnica*, *Šarulja* etc. Foreign varieties, such as *Picholine*, *Leccino*, *Coratina*, *Itrana*, *Ascolana tenera* account for 3% of the total.

The municipality of Ulcinj (Uqin) hosts over 80,000 trees, of which



Valdanos- Old town

18,000 – including many that are over a thousand years old – are sited in Valdanos Bay, declared as a natural monument in 1968. 92 trees have been mapped in the framework of a cross-border cooperation project.

Most olive groves have been abandoned (about 30%) due to migration or to legal disputes concerning the ownership, as they were redeemed by the government 40 years ago, as in the case of

Valdanos Bay.

Pruning frequency in Ulcinj (Ulqin) varies between 2 and 5 years (29%), whereas in 41% of cases it is carried out regularly every 1-2 years, but pruning residues are left in the field and create fire risks.

2.2. Tangible and intangible resources

Due to its strategic position in the Mediterranean, Albania offers a wide variety of ecological niches generated by the convergence of Mediterranean and continental climates, the isolation and protection ensured by the presence of the mountains, the topographical contrasts and the succession of valleys and rivers that cross the region.

Many ancient olive groves, conducted using traditional practices

and surrounded by a dense network of dry-stone walls with Mediterranean shrubland, constitute semi-natural habitats that play an important ecological role to ensure a high level of diversification of plant and animal species.

The survey of the floristic composition of the three sites under study is useful for characterising the agro-ecosystems of monumental olive groves in relation to the level of biodiversity of wild vegetation.

In all three areas, a total of 45 species belonging to 26 families have been identified. Out of them, 7 species were found in all three olive groves under study.



Marikaj

The Mediterranean and euro-Mediterranean species account for 53%, whereas 87% include medicinal, edible plants or plants that are both medicinal and edible. Two among the associated species observed, i.e., *Arbutus unedo* L. and *Quercus ilex* L., are used in the local tradition for handcrafting.

In addition to the species found inside olive plots, there is a wide variety of typical perennial species of the region.

This high level of biodiversity is maintained over time thanks to the absence of chemical weed control in olive groves. A significant experience for the natural control of olive fly is turkey grazing on the grove that helps eliminate the pupae and larvae of soil insects, thus reducing olive fly population and possible infections of future generations.

Forests include large areas covered with larch, chestnut, beech, and hornbeam. The area with spruce formations is characterised by the association with oak, juniper, ash plants, etc... The oak area includes plants, such as wild apple trees, hornbeams, ashes, junipers, etc.

In the context of sustainable development, the country is considered to have biopotential capacity, characterised by flora and fauna species, woods and, above all, typical olive groves which may provide a source of income for residents, watersheds, Ishëm river and Ahmetaq and Fushë-Preza agricultural fields.

The area of Preza offers historical and cultural heritage consisting of the XV century castle, placed on Preza hill. The typical architecture is concentrated in rural settlements on the hills, whereas hamlets benefit from a very close relationship with the surrounding

area, offering pleasant landscape views. Architecture of ancient houses is featured by the turret-style, where you have windows with arches and wooden shutters at the four sides of the house..

In the village there are private service providers, including 3 consumer goods stores, 3 restaurants, 5 cafés. The town of Preza, although known for some tourist attractions, does not offer services for visitors, such as inns and hotels, info points, guides and tour packages, ATMs, and “exchange” points.

In the area of **Ndroq** there are many natural resources within a small radius, such as the Erzeni river that runs alongside the village, water resources and scenic beauty of natural biodiversity on hilly terrain, which could offer local development opportunities for sustainable tourism.

Ndroq, the old village is in an area densely populated by olive groves. The Varrosh castle, built in the IV century (387 m above sea level) stands on the hill and dominates the village. Other attractions include an over 4000 years old tree located in the middle of the village of Ndroq and the “Tomb of lovers” situated next to the Tiranë - Durës - Kavajë highway.

Venafro hosts many sites of historical and cultural interest to tourism. The Castle (Pandone Castle National Museum) originates from a megalithic fortress modified over the centuries and finally transformed into a Renaissance residence in the XIV century. Today, it is also home to a National Art Gallery.

The Archaeological Museum in Venafrò has been created in the eighteenth-century convent of Santa Chiara. Mention should be made of “Venafrò’s Venus”, dating back to the Antonine age (II century after Christ). Equally important, the Aquaria table of the Roman Augustan aqueduct and the “Chess of Venafrò”.

Annunziata or the Church of the Annunciation in Venafrò is one of Molise’s most beautiful churches, built in 1386 by the Confraternity of the *Annunziata*.

Venafrò cathedral, built in the XI century on a pre-existing Christian temple, has the privilege of having the Holy Door since 1508, two centuries after the first Jubilee.

Venafrò - Torricella



An important museum located in *Via De Utris*, at the homonymous palace in the historical center is dedicated to historical events dating back to the Winter line, the German defensive line, which was faced and overcome with great sacrifice by the allied troops during the winter of 1943.

Quite attractive is the rustic villa situated in the nearby countryside of Pozzilli that some scholars attribute to the properties and agricultural estate of *Marco Porcio Catone*.

The Park as well boasts many tourist attractions. It hosts ruins from the Samnite and Roman age: the Roman theatre and the Amphitheatre within the built-up area of Venafrò; numerous remains of rustic villas and cisterns, in particular at *Madonna della Libera*, the visible traces of a Roman villa dating from the age of Sulla with terraces made in an accurate polygonal structure, with a cistern in cement work.

Another interesting location is the paleontological site of Tora and Piccilli, not far from Venafrò, where it is possible to see the most ancient human footprints imprinted on a lava flow, dating back to at least 400,000 years ago.

Among the Park attractions a special mention is made of the Italian garden of historical olive trees, i.e., the "Green Patriarchs". This space includes 20 twin plants of millenary Italian olive trees, one per Region, reproduced with grafts from the original plants. The Garden represents a must-stop place for all tourists visiting the Park and constitutes an Italian genome bank of millenary plants.

The territory of Venafrò Park is rich in water resources, as it is crossed by two rivers, i.e., Volturno and San Bartolomeo (whose sources are in

Venafrò's old town). It is marked by a network of ancient mule tracks, Samnite and Roman walls and the remains of rustic villas, including numerous cisterns scattered throughout the territory.

At 3 Km from Venafrò there is *Le Mortine* wetland, characterised by extensive riverine forests, crossed by the Volturno river that describes lush river islands that are habitats for various species of herons and many Anatidae. There are also many IUCN red-listed animals, such as the otter and the turtle.

The wetland is at the border with the former Royal Hunting Reserve of Torcino, famous for the extensive forests often visited by Bourbon royal family.

Beyond Monte Sammucro at about 8 km from Venafrò, there is San Pietro's Memory Park that is accessible to visitors. Lastly, the charming village behind Venafrò.

20 km far from Venafrò, Fontegreca cypress forest represents a rare spontaneous biotope covering about 70 hectares, existing in the area since at least 1500. It represents one of the spontaneous cypress forests of major interest in the Mediterranean region.

Roccamonfina Regional Park is a volcanic area with luxuriant chestnut woods, full of centuries-old plants.

The floral abundance of Venafrò's olive groves has been confirmed by the 302 species surveyed within the Interreg Project CBO. The area is considered to have a high biodiversity and the list is expected to be increased over the years, as new species are discovered and surveyed. The environmental value of the Park is further increased by the presence of *Himantoglossum adriaticum* H. Baumann, the Adriatic lizard orchid, reported in the national IUCN red list.

Beyond the belt cultivated with olive trees and partially included in it, there is the site of Community importance “Monte Corno Sam-mucro” (ITIT7212171) that covers a total area of 1356 hectares lying between 610 and 1205 m.s.l.m.

In Montenegro, the **olive grove of Džidžarin**, not far from the historic town centre of Bar, can be explored on foot by crossing the paths where you can find remarkable historical and cultural evidence (the old stone bridge, the remains of the St Urban church of the XIII century, the ruins of two ancient fountains).



Džidžarin - Ancient stone bridge

Most tourists who visit the historical town centre of Bar with its old castle, can visit the old olive tree in Mirovica. This could help enhance tourism in Džidžarin, which is located along the road between the historic centre of Bar and the Old Olive Tree. The walking tour that starts from the canyon of the Bunar river towards Džidžarin and to the old town of Bar (and for physically trained people following the so-called Londža trail), presents a unique opportunity in Montenegro's coastal area, offering picturesque landscapes, historical and cultural monuments – catholic and orthodox churches and mosques, ancient stone walls and waterfalls.

The area of **Ulcinj (Ulqin)** has significant tourist appeal due to the presence of both natural and cultural resources. Its famous sea-shores include stretches of beach, some with sand, others with gravel and sand, and others with pebbles. The most important archaeological and historical resources are the citadel with the ruins of cyclopean walls and the old market, the Illyrian tombs scattered in the village of Zogaj, the ancient mosques and churches, Sabbatai Zevi tomb in Balshaj tower inside the citadel.

Moreover, these places evoke Cervantes, the famous Spanish novelist who is believed was taken prisoner in this area. He was inspired by the name of the town to the Latin name of Ulqin – *Dulcinea*, the woman loved by Don Quixote.

Arnold von Harff- a German traveler on pilgrimage in the XV century also in Ulqin, left a lexicon of Albanian words – the second oldest written in this language. There were also noted navy battles as that between British and French ships and Ulqin pirates Lika Ceni and

Haxhi Ali in 1772. Ymer Agë Ulqini is still alive in traditional songs for maintaining his promise to the king of Spain and his wife on returning in prison.

The Italian composer Leopold de Wenzel (1847-1923), inspired by Ulqin traditional dances wrote the *Dulcigno Polka*.

Lami's Mosque (1689) and Pasha's Mosque (1719) have typical architecture and a unique hammam.

Located next to the Castle and Balsha tower - the Cyclopean Illyrian wall, dating back to 2500 years ago, is an interesting common point with Venafro Caton wall.



Valdanos Bay - Sea

In the area of Džidžarin, 294 species of wild plants have been recorded, of which 2 are protected by national legislation and 6 are endemic species found on the hillsides of Rumija mountain range. The presence of various natural habitats is due to extensive farming practices that often result in the abandonment of olive groves. Floral abundance in olive groves could provide new opportunities for tourism with the enhancement of herbal plants for medical purposes and of protected endemic species and edible plants for culinary uses.

In Valdanos Bay, the main vegetation is evergreen forest (NATURA 2000: 9320 Olive and carob tree woods), dominated by wild olive (*Olea europea ssp. Sylvestris*) and carrob (*Ceratonia siliqua*) trees. Psammophyte and halophyte vegetation, and saltwater plants are also found in the Long Beach at Ulcinj; this type of vegetation has been destroyed on the rest of the Adriatic coast. On Ulcinj saltworks, there are the halophyte communities populating the muddy base, which are rare on the Adriatic coast. The underbrush community includes *Quercus coccifera* and *Fraxinus ornus*, but also *Quercus ilex* at Liman close to Ulqin, below the village of Komina on the sea-coast, to the north of Old Ulqin island, *Quercus pubescens* at Zogaj and Krythe near Ulcinj, and *Quercus coccifera*.



2.3. Socio-economic background of project areas

In the three Albanian rural areas the main economic activity is represented by agriculture. A major modernisation of olive processing facilities has been recently introduced in the country with increased consumption in a land where per capita olive oil consumption has

always been low, as it is used almost exclusively for medicinal purposes. Today the Albanian consumer is willing to pay a higher price to buy extra virgin olive oil.

In the area of **Marikaj**, the most important oil mill belongs to one of the key stakeholders in the region, i.e., the Subashi family which is very active in the olive and oil sector and in the eno-gastronomic and cultural promotion of the region. They own an olive grove of 1,200 trees about 500 years old, of Kalinjot variety, named “Scanderbeg orchard” and they also produce aromatic soaps based on olive oil, various seasoned and packaged spices, local tea, olive wood souvenirs and various types of olive oils flavoured with spices.

In **Preza** the agricultural activity is being diversified to include on-farm tourism owing to the presence of rich cultural heritage including the medieval castle and to greater readiness to invest in rural infrastructures.

In **Marikaj** and **Preza** there is the local handicraft production related to woodworking that does not find other markets, besides the nearby centres. In fact, the souvenirs marketed are mostly industrial products imported from other countries. A limitation of craft production is the lack of competence and professionalism, in addition to the absence of generational turnover and women’s involvement.

In the area of **Ndroq** agriculture is the largest sector of the economy, based on the cultivation of olive and other fruit crops. Besides

olive oil, other agricultural products are processed such as wine and fruit jams obtained with traditional methods.

There are no craft activities, but Ndroq castle was used by artisans to trade with other areas.

Tourist attractiveness in Ndroq area is related to the local gastro-nomic tradition and to agricultural production. There is flow of local tourists who visit Ndroq only for few hours, due to the lack of tourist services, the absence of information on historical and cultural sites and natural resources in the area.

The three selected areas interrelated by commercial exchanges have great potential to increase sustainable tourism thanks to their closeness to the capital, Tirana, the largest city in Albania with one million inhabitants and thousands of foreign tourists who visit the city every year.

The presence of cultural and natural assets, such as the lakes, the Erzeni river, wooded areas, in addition to centuries-old olive groves, represent elements to be used at their best to stimulate and promote new tourism activities. The sustainable use of these resources can be a driving force for economic development based on sustainable tourism.

Venafro site is characterized by an extensive agricultural activity. Based on the morphology of the Venafro territory, it is possible to distinguish the wide plain for arable crops and greenhouses and a foothill belt intended for an environmentally friendly, unprofitable olive growing, mostly for family use. Livestock farms, especially for

Venafro - Exhibition of the Historic Rural Landscape of the Olive Trees



dairy production, play an important role in the primary sector. This is a traditional activity that still survives thanks to the high quality of local products and to the inclusion of the territory of Venafro in the *Mozzarella di Bufala Campana*, *Ricotta di Bufala Campana* and *Caciocavallo Silano* PDOs.

Although agriculture is widely practiced within the municipal area, the data relating to farm management and to the economic size of holdings show a certain inherent fragility, as well as the data on the diffusion of organic farming, almost completely absent from

local agriculture.

In the area of Venafrò there are three main oil mills, as well as three new recent agricultural enterprises geared towards enhancing the value of quality products, stimulated by the Regional Olive Park of Venafrò. The above enterprises, i.e., *Luca Del Prete* and *Arco Antico*, that have Molise PDO organic production, and *Colonia Julia* have joined the European collective quality mark "*Terre degli Olivi di Orazio*" registered by the Park.

The handicraft in Venafrò is little developed, although true artists, such as olive wood carvers show their skill at hobby level. Among the professionals of the sector it is worth mentioning a young craftsman who creates artistic glass and marble mosaics and makes reproductions of Roman and Greek mosaics emphasising the many finds of ancient Roman villas now preserved in the National Archaeological Museum in Venafrò. Another important activity concerns ceramic and pottery gifts.

Tourist attractiveness in Venafrò site is positively affected by the adequate supply of typical products also strongly linked to the Park's territory: Venafrò cookies, born as a recovered product, made from leftover bread dough (to use up scraps); the *Signora di Conca Casale*, a pork sausage dating back over 200 years: today it is also produced for commercial purposes (about 600 pieces per year) by a charcuterie maker from Conca Casale, and is certified as P.A.T. (traditional Italian food products) by the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies and also recognised as Slow Food Presidium; the *Spezzato di Ceppagna*, a sheep meat dish that has a historical-cultural and gastronomic value for the entire hamlet of

Ceppagna, and becomes a unique dish during the festivities in honour of Our Lady of the Rosary, patron saint of the village; the panettone "*Panevo*" produced by the Ricci bakery from Montaquila, made with extra virgin olive oil from Venafrò instead of butter; the Beer flavoured with olive branches, launched in Venolea 2019.

In Montenegro, Olive oil production is estimated at 400-500 tons. The quantities produced are not sufficient to meet national demand.

Olive growers in Bar are 600 to 800, but only 350 to 400 have olive growing as their only source of income, since they own 50, 100 olives or more.

Farmers' registration with the national land registry is being implemented to allow quality control. However, the challenge is to implement practically the guidelines for improving quality standards in olive production.

Olive processing still occurs, predominantly, in mills that do not meet international standards, although in recent years major efforts are being made in the implementation of agro-technical practices and in the modernisation of milling plants. There are 6 local oil mills. Some olive growers have begun to label their olive oil and in recent years there has been a growth of the sector, with EU-funded projects aimed at improving the marketing of small and medium enterprises. The local production of oil is the basis of traditional cuisine and has also enabled the start-up of craft activities related to the production of olive oil-based soaps and cosmetics. In Bar there was the



first soap factory, “Barska sapunara”, founded in 1888, which has traditionally supplied the Montenegrin Royal Families. The soap production was a traditional practice in almost every household in Bar and still has potential, given the demand on the market for natural cosmetic products.

There are only a few craftsmen who make olive wood objects even though in recent years there has been an increased demand for these products, and supply has begun to meet demand. There is a

need to train artisans in terms of improved design and labeling. Among the food products available in the area, it is worth mentioning the light feta cheese of local handicraft production. There are also interesting traditional recipes of the local gastronomic tradition including olive oil and table olives of the native variety Žutica, in addition to the preparation of fish and Japrak, rolls made with the leaves of the vine.

Bar's olives, both green and black, should be protected as local gastronomic specialties.

In Džidžarin there are examples of active tourism, such as canyoning across Suva, Vruća and Bunar rivers; hiking along signposted trails on the slopes of Lisinj (where is Džidžarin), interesting for bird-watching; recreational fishing in Vruća and Bunar rivers.

The walking tour from St. Vić to Sustaši, crosses the olive heart of Bar, with the climb to Kurilo hill, which offers a breath-taking view of the city.

There are macadam roads ideal for walking, running, and cycling, directly connected to main roads and highway. Therefore, this olive grove has the potential to become an active vacation zone for local citizens.

In the late autumn, the agritourism offer includes the active participation of tourists in the activities of harvesting and processing of olives.

English and Australian entrepreneurs have purchased Duke's Maša Vrbica oil mill, dating back to 1882 and driven by the motive power of Bunar river, to adapt it into hostel.

Most events are organised in the Old Fortress of Bar. Maslinijada is an event organized since 2002, which brings together producers of local products in the region, whereas Maslinom Susreti pod Starom is an event for children that is organized under the ancient olive tree and gathers the region's renowned writers.

Tourist offer in Bar's historical center with 100,000 presences over the last year could be integrated with other tourism services, such as agritourism, cultural tourism and active tourism, that would make it possible to lengthen the stay of tourists in the area.

The main economic activity **in Ulcinj** is agriculture with olive as the dominant cultivation, next to melliferous plants, medicinal herbs, and various species of fruit (figs, citrus, chestnuts, pomegranates, apples, pears, and plums), grapevines and cereals. Other agri-food products in Ulcinj include kiwi, tomatoes, and sweet peppers, which have traditionally been exported to other former Yugoslav republics. Additional products are wine and raki.

The area of Ulcinj also hosts a wide range of restaurants, hotels, B&B, and the most recent agritourism farms that offer a range of services necessary for tourism development. Other tourist attraction services are related to kite surfing and hiking trails located in wooded areas and ancient olive groves.

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of B&B built illegally in ancient olive groves, thus compromising the historical olive grove landscape.

Valdanos – Olive groves



2.4. Land-planning tools in rural areas occupied by ancient olive groves

After the political change in the 1990s, **all olive groves in Albania** were privatised by Act 7501 so each olive tree has an owner who is responsible for its cultivation.

There is a lack of planning for economic development that is spontaneous and uncontrolled resulting in loss or degradation of the resources which are crucial to sustainable tourism development.

Legislation on the protection of monumental olive trees facilitating the identification and conservation practices is lacking. Longevity is at risk and the oil obtained from those olive groves is not promoted for its real value.

The village of Marikaj has been selected by the government and by the National Agency for Land Use Planning as part of the programme “100 villages” that is expected to receive support for the development of infrastructures, tourist, cultural and commercial initiatives.

The Regional Agricultural Historical Olive Park of Venafro was established by regional law no.30 of 2008. It is managed by an entity with legal personality under public law and is subject to supervision by the Molise Region.

The park aims to promote the conservation, restoration and recovery of the natural environment, the historical-agricultural landscape and its “historicized” architectural features, the archaeological, historical, and ethno-anthropological heritage. Moreover, it intends to safeguard the genetic resources of Venafro olive trees and promote the spread of the olive “cultivars” grown in the region of Venafro.

Another tool for the protection of olive groves in the upper part of the Park is its inclusion in the SIC area (Site of Community Interest IT7212171) of *Monte Corno Monte Sammucro*. In accordance with the RDP 2007/2013 (Measure 3.2.3, Action A “Support for the drafting of management plans of the sites falling within Natura 2000 are-

as”) the management plan for the nature protection of the site was drawn up, although it is unworkable due to lack of a managing body. Much of the area is constrained by the Authority responsible for the Liri, Garigliano and Volturno river basins according to the Hydrogeological Structure Plan for landslide risk on high slopes.

The archaeological heritage of the park, consisting of Roman, Samnite walls, cisterns, and remains of Roman rustic villas is under the jurisdiction of the Archaeological Superintendence of Fine Arts and Landscape of Molise region.

The Olive Park of Venafrò has also been listed in the national register of historical rural landscapes by decree no. 6419 of the Minister of Agricultural, Food, Forestry and Tourism Policies dated 20.02.2018. There is also a Tourism Development Plan of the Province of Isernia and the MuSST strategic plan (for museums and the development of territorial system) drawn up by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities for the upper Volturno valley. This Strategic Cultural Development Plan, defined “Paths of Water and Stone”, has involved local entities and communities, including the Park.

The Local Environmental Tourist and Economic Development Plan (LEETDP), worked out by the Park Authority through the present project, intends to prioritise an area with great cultural and natural potential but with a high degree of social fragmentation, abandonment, aging population, and very little aptitude for the enhancement of the environmental and architectural heritage.

In Montenegro legislation relating to the olive oil sector is regulated by the national law of 2012, harmonized with the EU legal frame-

work. There are also guidelines and regulations that provide for the measurement of olive oil quality according to EU standards, within the national strategy for the development of agriculture and rural areas for 2015-2020. This strategy includes grant programmes from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development for the support of olive and olive oil production.

There is a national advisory service that supports olive growers to adapt production standards to EU guidelines.

A trademark to protect the geographical origin of the product would give legal personality and recognition to the "Bar's oil" label.

There is a project of the Government of Montenegro which allocates one million euros for the construction of the Olive House in the old town of Bar. This structure will be equipped with an exhibition area, the olive museum, a presentation hall, etc. The Olive House will be the headquarters of the future National Association of Montenegro's olive growers.

Another project developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development named "One million olive trees in Montenegro by 2020", provides for the planting of new olive groves in the municipality of Ulqin, but it has not been completed yet.

As a result of a fire in 2018, which burned about 1000 centuries-old olive trees, the local government has defined a plan to revitalize olive-planted areas, exempting owners from paying the property tax for the next 5 years.

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of B&B built illegally in ancient olive groves, thus compromising the historical olive grove landscape. It would be appropriate to adopt instru-

ments of protection against unauthorized construction and possible devastation, both at local and national levels, to safeguard the rural landscape of ancient groves stretching from St. Vič to Sustaši.

Valdanos – Olive groves



3. POTENTIALS AND CRITICALITIES OF PROJECT SITES

3.1. Existing criticalities in olive-growing areas

Listed below are the most important criticalities that do not ensure the protection and full exploitation of ancient olive groves in the three countries:

In Albania:

- Lack of legal protection of ancient olive groves
- Lack of management and poor maintenance resulting in the degradation of olive-planted areas with fire risk
- Mismanagement of natural resources
- No cataloguing (database) of environmental and cultural assets

- Unplanned and uncontrolled economic development
- Poor market outlets for local products
- Failure to use water resources to satisfy the needs of the local population, with lack of water supply service and uncontrolled discharges of wastewater into the rivers
- Loss or degradation of the local resources and values which are also elements of tourist attraction and development.

At Venafrò:

- Lack of services in the area surrounding the Park, which has a strong potential for sustainable tourism development
- Daily tourism despite the opening of the Archaeological Museum and the medieval castle
- Industrial development with polluting factories (cement plant and waste-to-energy plant) in the area of Venafrò, which is mostly agricultural
- Poor attitude to cooperation between operators, in particular between olive producers
- Discontinuity of the Region's financial support for the management of the Park, with the consequent administrative difficulties
- Unauthorized cattle grazing among terraced olive groves, with consequent risks of erosion and hydrogeological problems
- Deficient supervision by the forestry group of the Carabinieri in charge of land control
- Abandonment and poor management of olive groves in mar-

ginal areas

- Senescence of farmers and low generational turnover, only partially offset by the interest of professionals in the purchase of valuable olive groves for recreational use
- Land fragmentation, low propensity for innovation and lack of stable supply chain relations
- Abandonment of traditional practices and of olive fields
- Lack of specific measures for historical rural landscapes in Molise' RDP
- Low propensity to invest for tourism purposes in inland rural areas, although the opening of museums, the castle and the establishment of the Park have contributed to the growth of tourism
- Non-recognition of the value of land resources by the local population
- Poor organization of the tourist offer for the difficulty of networking the peculiarities of Venafrò (e.g., es. Roman theatre hardly visitable)
- Non-collaborative public-private approach in the offer of events that leads to disorganization of the events calendar.

In Montenegro:

- Abandonment and mismanagement of ancient olive groves resulting in a high fire risk
- Milling often non-compliant with international standards
- Inappropriate management of ancient olive groves with abusive

interventions leading to the blocking of paths and uncontrolled illegal construction for tourism purposes, thus compromising the historical olive landscape

- Unmanaged tourist flows causing damage to historical sites or to dry-stone walls
- Lack of best practices for regeneration of abandoned olive groves through pruning
- Loss of knowledge on the construction of dry-stone wall terraces
- Outbreaks of diseases such as *Xylella fastidiosa*
- National regulatory framework for the olive sector, not fully implemented
- Lack of training, limited experience with computers and poor English language skills among local producers
- Difficulty in meeting the costs to purchase modern equipment for the production and processing of olives;
- Olive-oil production not sufficient to satisfy local demand resulting in higher product prices on the domestic market
- Disputes over legal ownership of olive groves
- Absence of land development policies
- Water shortage
- Scarce supply of valuable handicraft products that do not enhance the value of olive wood processing and are penalized by the lack of adequate marketing, design and packing skills
- Little diversification of craft products
- No interaction between olive growers and Bar old town tourists
- Inadequate tourist information regarding local olive production
- Some trails are not well maintained and are blocked by shrubs

and have no signposts;

- Covid-19 virus pandemic situation is threatening the tourism potential of olive groves.

3.2. Potentials of olive-growing areas

Listed below are the potentials of the areas under study that can ensure proper management and enhancement of ancient olive groves in the three countries:

In Albania:

- Presence of cultural heritage that together with the local tradition represent the potential for the sustainable development of the area
- Inland hilly areas with panoramic views of high scenic value
- Available natural resources and plenty of water sources;
- Potentials of processed agricultural products (olive oil, wine, honey, etc..) that can positively affect tourism development in the area

- Olive growing spread throughout the area, managed with traditional methods with quality processing lines
- Monumental olive groves attractive to visitors with tourism initiatives that are beginning to take off in Marikaj
- Good connections with surrounding villages, proximity to the airport and other important urban areas (Tiranë, Durrës)
- Communities with average level of education and well-functioning educational institutions
- Elements of tradition still present, such as ancient oil mills, handicrafts, castle museum
- Local village actors interested in investing in tourism.

At Venafro:

- Ancient olive groves with significant landscape peculiarities, praised by Horace and other authors in past centuries
- Floral abundance of olive groves, with 302 species being surveyed
- Inclusion in the national Register of historical rural Landscapes of MIPAAF that has the potential to attract direct investments, projects and funding for the enhancement of these areas, and offers the opportunity for local companies to bear the mark for certification of rural landscape promoted by ISMEA with bonuses for companies that participate in public tenders
- The landscape, historical, archaeological and natural properties of a marginal olive-growing area as leverage to enhance the

environmental and agricultural context also through the support of public-private initiatives

- History coupled to quality product, with quotes from Horace, Pliny and other Roman authors that represent a first “historical” certification of quality
- Strategic geographical position of Venafro, important junction of activities and traffic from Naples, Rome and Pescara
- Creativity that characterises the small number of craft activities linked to the territory (e.g., reproductions of mosaics linked to the numerous Roman artifacts found in the area)
- The history of Venafro’s olive growing and olive oil as an element of attraction for selected and conscious tourism (e.g., Venolea event, the National Walk among Olive Trees, the Passion, and the organisation of oil themed tours).

In Montenegro:

- Potentials of agricultural production (cultivated and wild fruits) and products for processing (olive oil, wine, honey, medicinal herbs, etc.) that can positively affect tourism development in the area
- Olive growing spread throughout the area and strongly encouraged by the Ministry of Agriculture through the project “one million olive trees” that aims to promote new planting in the area
- Presence of 2 olive growers’ associations actively engaged in technical assistance to farmers and tourism initiatives

- Recent projects supporting marketing
- Availability of tourist services (restaurants, hotels, B&B, agri-tourism businesses, canyoning, trekking, cycling, etc.) and naturalistic and traditional gastronomic resources
- Presence of paths in the olive groves for walks, bicycle rides, directly connected to main roads and highway that constitute the potential for the development of sustainable tourism aimed at local communities
- Tourism opportunities linked to Džidžarin olive groves, sited along the road between the historic center of Bar and the Old Olive Tree
- Long tradition of tourism in the area that boasts natural and historical resources, in addition to the recognition in 1968 of Valdanos Bay as natural monument
- Financial potential of EU funds for agriculture and olive production support
- Availability of olive wood and human skills and experience for local handicrafts
- Growing demand for handmade craft products
- Important historical and cultural monuments and archaeological sites in the historical centre of Bar and in the nearby olive groves (churches, mosques, ancient oil refineries, bridges, etc.)
- Possibility of lengthening the tourist season to olive harvesting period by proposing services for experiential tourism
- Interest of foreign entrepreneurs to invest in hospitality and rural tourism services.

4. THE MAP OF GOOD PRACTICES FOR THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF ANCIENT OLIVE GROVES

Nowadays, in all the three project countries / target areas many ongoing initiatives are based on the criteria identified for the development of tourism in ancient olive groves. An important achievement in this direction is the Historical Olive Park in Venafrò. Other successful experiences can be found in Apulia region and they shall be briefly described hereafter.

Regional Agricultural Historical Olive Park of Venafrò

Its activity began in 2011, with initiatives aimed at reusing abandoned olive fields, attracting tourists with the reopening of ancient walkways and mule tracks. Its aims are a model for the enhancement of the Italian historical rural landscape.

The Park Authority carries out an intense promotional activity with participation in events throughout Italy, with publication of brochures and books, organisation of national events like VENOLEA that, over the years, have seen the participation of leading experts

from Italian universities and research centres.

One of the main goals was to rewrite in modern terms the great story linked to Venafro's olive oil. Relationships have been built with other mythological and religious places of Mediterranean olive growing, such as the Olive Branch Foundation of Taybeh-Efraim-Palestine, and together with other Tuscan partners the management of the Gethsemane olive grove has been proposed to the Custody of the Holy Land.

"Terre degli Olivi di Orazio" trademark

To stimulate quality products of Venafro's traditional olive growing, the Park Authority has registered the European collective quality mark "Terre degli Olivi di Orazio", which makes up for the lack of adhesion to the Molise PDO, difficult to apply in an olive growing area with highly fragmented holdings and very small farms. Product specifications have been approved for olive oil, bakery products, nurseries to produce autochthonous olive trees, and accommodation facilities. Product marketing is based on short chain and direct sales. Farms participate in trade fairs and competitions, thus boosting Venafro's olive growing.

Venolea

The Park Authority promotes olive growing and its products all the year round with tourism initiatives and tastings of products. The culminating event at the end of the year is Venolea, sponsored by MIPAAF, Molise Region and the National Association of Oil Cities, with a considerable national media coverage. The event also in-

volves producers from neighbouring regions and addresses topics related to olive growing.

Inclusion of Venafrò Regional Olive Park in the national Register of historical rural landscapes

The Landscape of Venafrò Regional Park is listed in the national Register of historical rural landscapes, agricultural practices, and traditional knowledge (by decree no. 6419 of the Minister of Agricultural, Food, Forestry Policies dated 20.02.2018) as one of the 13 landscapes registered so far.

ISMEA – Directorate for Rural Development Services is defining a label to certify the landscapes for the benefit of those areas recognised in the national Register.

The inclusion in the national Register is a prerequisite for nominating sites in the FAO World Programme, called GHIAS (Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems), to support farmers who ensure biodiversity, food security and social cohesion.

The National Landscape Observatory selects from the Register the proposed sites of rural landscapes for their inclusion in the UNESCO Representative List of World Heritage, as well as the agricultural practices and traditional knowledge for selection in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Heritage. It is clear, therefore, how important it is to be listed on the national Register.

The Italian garden of the “Green Patriarchs”

In view of the protection of “historical” olive growing, the unique Italian olive tree garden of the Patriarchs has been created, in col-

laboration with the Association of Italian Patriarchs and Rome's Beautification Committee. It collects twin specimens of the oldest Italian olive trees, one per region.

The National Walking Tour among Olive Trees

Implemented in collaboration with the National Association of Oil Cities.

Venafro "Living passion"

This event, which consists in the living representation of the Passion of Christ, is set among the olive trees of Venafro Regional Olive Park, near the Cathedral, with unique scenic features; it is one of the first created in Italy, being represented since 1967.

The event takes place in an outstanding landscape scenery, created by the Campaglione olive valley. A memorandum of understanding is being drawn up with the Biblical village of Nazareth for the identical representation of The Passion in Palestine.

Membership of the National Association of Oil Cities

The National Association of Oil Cities has thirty years' experience in promotion of olive growing with its economic and cultural satellite activities and events and actions that have a positive return on the territory.

To liaise more effectively on these issues with other institutions, the Park Authority has promoted a national coordination of historical olive landscapes at the National Association of Oil Cities.

The hiking network of Džidžarin olive groves and good practices of active tourism

Sited not very far from the historical centre of Bar, these olive groves are passable on foot across paths with important historical and cultural evidence (the old bridge, the vestiges of the XIII century church, the remains of two ancient fountains). The walking tour that starts from the canyon of the Bunar river towards Džidžarin and to the old town of Bar (and for physically trained people following the so-called Londža trail), presents a unique opportunity in Montenegro's coastal area, offering picturesque landscapes, historical and cultural monuments, ancient stone walls and waterfalls.

In Džidžarin we also mention canyoning across Suva, Vruća and especially Bunar rivers, hiking along signposted trails on the slopes of Lisinj (where is Džidžarin), interesting for birdwatching; recreational fishing in Vruća and Bunar rivers.



The Old Olive Tree in Mirovica

Most tourists who visit the historical town center of Bar, go to see the old olive tree in Mirovica. This is one of the oldest olive trees in the world, protected by national law since 1957. The Istanbul Forestry and Agricultural Institute has estimated its age as 2245 years.

Rural hospitality in old mills

Duke's Maša Vrbica oil mill dating back to 1882 and driven by the motive power of Bunar river, was adapted into hostel by English and Australian entrepreneurs.

Events for the promotion of local products

Maslinijada is an event organized since 2002, which brings together producers of local food products in the region, whereas *Maslinom Susreti pod Starom* is an event for children that is organized under the ancient olive tree and gathers the region's renowned writers.

Montenegro's olive growers' associations

They include the Association of Bar olive growers, established in 2002 and the Association of Antivari olive growers, created in 2020 and gathering 150 olive growers. The objective of associations is to add value to olive growing by supporting members to renew old and abandoned olive groves, set up new plantations, spread growing techniques aimed at improving quality. The two associations are also engaged in tourism initiatives.

Good practices of slow tourism linked to the historical landscape of ancient olive trees in Puglia

There is a rural area in Puglia which has focused, in recent years, on tourism linked to the rural landscape of monumental olive groves, i.e., the Alto Salento. This area has increased its tourist attractiveness thanks to the rural development policies implemented by local development agencies (Local Action Groups) and the managing authorities of protected natural areas (Parks and Nature Reserves) by promoting start-ups linked to hospitality, with the conservative recovery of buildings of historical-architectural value (*trulli* and farmhouses).

The plain of monumental olive groves is a millennial agricultural landscape, but it is still alive and productive, as it has adapted to the changing times by offering new services linked to olive farms' multifunctionality. New services associated with slow and sustainable tourism have been started using models of tourism linked to the culture of oil and the historical rural landscape.

The Alto Salento area is crossed by three European long-distance routes, i.e., the Apulian aqueduct cycle route, the Hellenic Way and the *Via Traiana* or Francigena of the South, passing through the agricultural landscape of monumental olive groves. The route of the *Via Traiana* represents a **road-landscape** recognised both as the long-distance national route no.6 of *Bicitalia* (the Adriatic bike-route that from Venice leads to Santa Maria di Leuca) and as path of the Francigena of the South.

There are many farmhouses and underground oil mills in the Olive Plain along the *Via Traiana*, which represents a key element to de-

velop a type of tourism aimed at those who intend to travel through rural areas slowly and consciously, following the model of what has been developed in past decades in *Santiago di Campostela*.

The actions implemented by the LAG have been meant not only to recover valuable structures but also to extend the know-how of residents, tourism operators and farmers who operate along these paths. An intense training activity aimed at improving reception services for cyclists and travellers has been carried out through “study visits” to areas of excellence for slow tourism (Maremma, Trentino) on the themes of reception, inter-operator networks, qualification of cycling, hiking and active tourism services.

An emphasis was put on the qualification of tourism operators to upgrade professional skills on reception services and sustainable mobility, or to set up cycling-friendly accommodation facilities. This area is the one with the highest concentration of cycling-friendly accommodation facilities (within the *trulli* and farmhouses) in Central Southern Italy.

Venafrò - Mule track



Several companies today provide services for the fruition of rural and natural areas (hikes and bicycle rides in olive groves, even at night, excursions on horseback, with electric cars, trekking with donkeys, oil tastings in the courts of historic farmhouses and underground oil mills, live theatre, and cultural events in olive groves through direct contact with rural communities). These de-seasonalised and innovative services compared to the old “sun-beach” tourist offer have created opportunities for young people and women by enhancing their skills. Olive-oil tourism is an established area of activity involving farmhouses with monumental olive trees that organise tasting classes with the oils obtained from monumental olive trees. The Olive Oil-Tourism combination is apparent from the 15 olive oil boutiques in the historical center of Ostuni, i.e., points of sale set up by olive farms that make direct sales thus shortening the supply chain.

This tourist model started about twenty years ago and has ensured added value to olive production ([Collina di Brindisi PDO](#) olive oil ob-



Džidžarin - Hiking trail

tained from monumental trees) and to historical rural landscape.

The first infrastructure of the *Via Traiana* took place in 2008 with the setting up of 34 rest areas and the placement of road signs to serve the Adriatic cycling route (no. 6 of Bicitalia). Rest areas have upgraded the route of the *Via Traiana* in places where previously there were landfills with abandonment of waste. A disused railway station situated where the railway intersects the *Traiana* has been recovered. *Fontevicchia* station surrounded by centuries-old olive groves hosts a Visitor Centre of the Regional Natural Park of the Coastal Dunes with bike rental service for cycling and hiking activities.

A former ANAS roadman's house along the *Traiana* has been recovered and transformed into a cycling-friendly facility (**Albergabici**) that houses an equipped cycle workshop, a Visitor centre with excursion and guide services to rural areas, bike rental service and accommodation for cyclists and pilgrims with 18 beds, with laundry service, breakfast, etc.

The numerous small accommodation facilities (with 1,600 new beds), created with LAG incentives, have not only contributed to recover buildings of historical and architectural value widespread in the olive plain (*trulli*, *lamie* and farmhouses), but have been useful to consolidate a tourist offer with little impact, linked to slow mobility and to food and wine, and released from a seasonalized and impactful tourism industry.

Rural landscape preservation in the plain of monumental olive trees along the *Via Traiana* has been achieved via the creation of new profitability ensuing from the enhancement of agricultural products and the supply of innovative tourism services related to the

protection of monumental olive groves.

The latter have been recognised by Puglia Region with **Regional Law 14/2007 on the protection and enhancement of the plain of Apulian monumental olive trees**, and nowadays through an app it is possible to identify every georeferenced single plant with a descriptive card and photograph.

Moreover, the Ostuni and Carovigno Plain of monumental olive groves has been recognised as **Historical Rural Landscape listed in the national Register of the Ministry of Agricultural Policies**.

In 2007, the trans-national cooperation project LeaderMed between the Alto Salento LAG and the Ibled region in Syria, supported by Puglia region and the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari, allowed for the creation of the **Road of Monumental Olive Groves** bringing together in a participatory process olive and oil producers, olive oil points of sale, farmhouses with ancient olive plantations and medieval underground mills.

Last to be mentioned is the **Bio-route of Via Traiana**, a project that integrates sustainable agriculture models in a region with strong environmental and cultural values. The trail winds along the route of the ancient *Via Traiana* in the plain of ancient olive groves and runs through assets of archaeological and historical-cultural interest, farms, agri-tourism enterprises, which carry out their activities in an interesting landscape context with a great tourist appeal.

Slow tourism and national and European long-distance routes

Slow tourism has been growing strongly in recent years, with a sharp increase in the number of walkers and cyclists who follow

routes recognized at the international level. The network of walking trails is part of the EU strategies aimed at enhancing the value of inland marginal areas, untouched by mass tourism and which still retain their authenticity. These are territories where it is still possible to find valuable natural and cultural elements, a traditional type of agriculture and a cuisine rooted in tradition and based on the use of local raw materials.

All this represents a great opportunity to promote a sustainable form of tourism, one which gets in tune with local communities, appreciates the history and nature of the places to be explored and discovered in slower times, prefers experiences where there may be direct contact with the environment, the habits and food of local communities.

However, it is necessary to be adequately equipped to accommodate cyclists and walkers, providing them with appropriate reception services, ranging from affordable accommodation to the possibility of bike shelter and repair, to the need to provide tools for

Valdanos - Trail



knowledge of the surrounding area, including all the existing paths and all services available along them. You must also have knowledge of languages and have available maps and information material in various languages. It becomes essential to qualify operators both for services to be provided at your accommodation facility and to be aware of what is being provided outside your structure in the surroundings, providing adequate information on environmental and cultural assets, on services provided by public entities (museums, parks, archaeological areas, visitor centres) and private persons (accommodation, catering, leisure services, visits to oil mills, olive groves, tastings, etc.).

The territories covering the olive growing areas targeted in the present project are crossed by the following national and international long-distance routes (paths and cycle routes):

- **The via Francigena of the South** runs across Venafrò with a stop on the way towards San Vittore. The path starts from the border with Campania, at the Tre Torri crossing, slopes down towards **Venafrò's Plain of Olive Trees** and then climbs towards the medieval villages of Santa Maria Oliveto and Roccaravindola Alta, with scenic lookouts towards the plain and extensive olive groves at the foothills of the Matese, to finally reach Isernia.
- **The Path of Saint Tomotheus** runs for 188 km **starting from Venafrò** to Termoli with 18 areas to stop. Passable on foot, by bike and on horseback it crosses Molise's most charming villages. It

is a route created to emulate the most famous spiritual paths, such as the ancient Via Francigena and the Way to Santiago.

- **The Via Dinarica** is a 2,000 km trekking route across 8 countries, defined by the National Geographic Traveller as the best hiking trail in the world. It is a cultural journey through the Dinaric Alps and eight countries, namely Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia, Albania, and Macedonia. Although different from each other, they all have in common spectacular landscapes. The Via Dinarica has been made practicable since 2010 with the purpose of supporting small mountain communities through tourism. In Montenegro it is possible to raft in Tara river that crosses the deepest canyon in Europe at 1,300 metres of altitude in a breath-taking scenery. Reaching Albania, in the town of Shkodra, you get to the small village of Theth: a 7-hour walking tour climbing up to 2,700 metres of altitude and leading till the Valbona Valley National Park. Before reaching the border with Kosovo, it is possible to stay with host families in the mountain community of Dobërdol.
- **The Bicalia Francigena Cycle route (BI3 itinerary)** with a path of 150 km that starts at the foothill of Mt Azzone, at the border between three regions: Abruzzo, Latium and Molise, and runs along the Volturno river up to Capua, crossing Cerro al Volturno and Venafrò on paved and unpaved roads that can be covered by bicycle, trekking and mountain bike.

- **The Eurovelo 8 in Montenegro** runs along and close to the coast for about 160 km through natural parks and enchanting landscapes. Arriving in Montenegro you can visit the Bay of Kotor, which is a world heritage site. From the town of Herceg Novi (named Castelnuovo during the Venetian domination) you can head for numerous beaches surrounded by vegetation and visit several orthodox and catholic monasteries protected by UNESCO. Eurovelo 8 runs along the whole coast, crossing **Bar**, an ancient Venetian stronghold of which you can admire part of the fortifications of the time. At Ulcinj (at 135 km) you turn back towards the interior to cross the border in Albania.
- **The Eurovelo 8 in Albania** is 355 km long. You enter the country through Shkodra, the ancient capital of the Illyrians, on the lake. After a long stretch on the plain, passing through cultivated fields and small villages, you reach Tirana where the path starts to climb towards the province of Elbasan, in the innermost inland and mountainous Albania, on winding roads, without crossing large cities: the best way to experience the hospitality that characterises local communities.

4. The map of good practices for the sustainable management and enhancement of ancient olive groves

Ndroq



Venafro - Pandone Castle



Džidžarin - Aqueduct



Bar - City Center



LEGAL FRAMEWORK SHEET

Based on the need to expand as quickly as possible the experience of tourism development from the most advanced areas, e.g. in Molise and in Apulia, the present study underlines the need for special legal frameworks in Albania and in Montenegro to apply in their specific conditions the following legal acts:

Regional Law n. 14 of 4 June 2007 on protection and enhancement of the plain of Apulian monumental olive trees

http://www.sit.puglia.it/portal/portale_rete_natura_2000/Documenti/Ulivi%20monumentali

This is one of the first European laws on the protection of ancient olives, recognising their importance as an agricultural crop but also as a cultural asset of landscape interest. It provides for the following:

- olive trees are acknowledged for having a variety of functions (productive, ecological, hydrogeological, cultural and landscape);
- a definition is given of "Monumental olive trees" (size ≥ 100 cm historical-anthropological value, sculpture-like trunk shape, proximity to cultural heritage) or "Monumental olive groves" (60% of monumental plants);
- monumental olive trees shall be recorded;

- “Extra virgin olive oil from ancient olive trees of Apulia” is recognized along with PDO and PGI;
- olive-growing landscapes shall be maintained and enhanced for recreational tourism, and shall be given priority in the funds provided for the implementation of the Regional Rural Development Plan;
- a Technical Committee for the protection of monumental trees shall be established.

Following the enactment of L.R. no. 14/2007, a special App has been created. “AppOLEA” is a regional application that allows for making a census of monumental olive trees on one’s own. Apulia Region will therefore protect and enhance monumental olive trees, even where they are isolated, in view of their productive, ecological and hydro-geological defence function, and also because they represent a distinctive and characteristic feature of the region’s history, culture and landscape.

Regional law no.30 of 2008 on the Agricultural Historical Olive Park of Venafrò

<http://www.regione.molise.it/web/crm/lr.nsf/0/389F0F94A956F4FC-C1257508003EB308>

The Regional Agricultural Historical Olive Park of Venafrò was established by Regional Law n.30 of 2008 issued by Molise Region.

The park area includes most of the old olive groves, whose botanical, natural and historical values and genetic heritage shall be preserved by Molise Region.


National Observatory of Rural Landscape (ONPR), Agricultural Practices and Traditional Knowledge established by Decree n. 17070 of 19 November 2012 of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies

<https://www.politicheagricole.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/5832>

ONPR's mission is taking stock of landscapes, preserved and enhanced agricultural practices and traditional knowledge. These complex systems are based on diverse and ingenious techniques, and also on local know-how developed by the rural civilization that has contributed significantly to shaping and maintaining the traditional landscapes. Research activities are promoted to explore the values related to rural landscapes, their preservation, management and planning, also aiming to preserve their bio-cultural diversity.

As of 1 January 2020, oil tourism is regulated by law, thanks to an amendment approved by the 2020 Finance Law, which places oil tourism and its related activities on the same footing as wine tourism. The activities that come under the heading of oil tourism include learning about olive oil in the place where it is produced, through visits to growing and production areas or display of tools

used in olive cultivation, tasting and marketing of the farm's olive oil produce, also offered with other foods, and educational and recreational initiatives in the growing and production areas.



5. COMMUNITY MAPS OF MONUMENTAL OLIVE GROVES

The Mediterranean geographical areas characterised by the presence of ancient olive trees represent a complex territorial system where history, nature and agriculture have intertwined over the millennia.

Today these contexts are not only closely related to the agricultural practice, but they represent one of the oldest 'cultural' landscapes in the Mediterranean. Therefore, the real value of these landscapes is not exclusively linked to olive oil production, but also to the appeal, the regional competitiveness, and tourist attractiveness that they may express. In the advanced tourist market which is dominated by the demand for "experientiality" and authenticity, the potential of the landscape and the historical and cultural richness of monumental olive groves, if managed optimally and effectively, offer to the economy of these agricultural areas interesting chances to reposition themselves on the new tourist market and can contribute to return to olive growers a satisfactory income to compensate more adequately their daily work as landscape maintainers. Bring-

ing out the richness of the cultural (tangible and intangible) heritage through the residents' perception of the historical olive landscape is the specific purpose of Community Maps that have been developed within "WP T2 Local planning on environment protection and sustainable tourism", in the framework of "Cross Border OL" Project. Traditionally used in eco-museum methodology as an effective tool to appreciate - first and foremost by the inhabitants - the richness of each place, strengthen local awareness of what each community possesses and has available, in the "Cross Border OL" Project, community maps have been interpreted as an exercise intended to bring to light the local heritage through community participation.

Thanks to the methodology developed and implemented in the project, each pilot area has drawn up a 'participatory inventory' of the local landscape heritage, both tangible and intangible, by depicting artistically a 'drawing of the ancient olive landscape and emphasising the elements of the tangible and intangible heritage that the stakeholders involved have perceived to be the most effective in representing the identity of places.

The project output consists in developing 6 Community Maps referring to the Albanian areas of Marikaj, Ndroqi and Prezë, the olive growing areas of Bar and Ulqin in Montenegro and the area of Venafro Regional Olive Park in Italy.

Although different in style and painting technique, the Community Maps portray 6 territories where, in the common and unifying matrix consisting of the historical olive grove, individual and collective memories emerge that recall environments, relationships, real and imaginary events which are elevated to values that have to do with

people, rather than with geography.

The six areas depicted in the Community Maps of the “Cross Border OL” project dilute the purely geographical connotations of the territories in favour of greater evidence to the signs of the cultural and social history of the people who inhabited and shaped them, of the ancient emotional interaction between the inhabitants and the surrounding environment. All traces, both tangible (e.g., changes in the landscape, historical architecture or building types) and intangible (such as legends or linguistic peculiarities) represent what is defined as the cultural heritage of a place, not necessarily of excellence, but also and above all daily life.

In the framework of the overall objectives, the six Community Maps created within the “Cross Border OL” project are effective and original tools for promoting tourism in the territories with historical olive groves. The “Maps” offer, in addition to the images, descriptions and information on various topics of interest to visitors, focusing on the elements that can support the most appropriate way of enjoying tourism in rural areas, which is undoubtedly that of experiential tourism.

This form of tourism fuels a growing global movement involving visitors during the trip in a series of unforgettable activities with high emotional content, but with great attention to environmental impact and respect for nature and the local community. These experiential activities have the peculiarities of stimulating all the senses and creating connections on a physical, emotional, spiritual, social, and intellectual level. During these experiences, tourists interact with people (the local community), history and traditions of

the place. In conclusion, the six Community Maps of the “Cross Border OL” Project enrich the way we communicate and promote the cross-border experiential tourism offer that territories wish to propose to the market, thereby contributing to meet 3 basic requirements of experiences:


- Be authentic by offering tourists true and genuine experiences,
- Be sensory by making people experience and perceive the destination through all five senses,
- Be immersive by inducing visitors to immerse themselves totally in the place and the local culture and stimulating the desire to merge with it.

6. THE MAP OF THE ACTORS INVOLVED

In Albania 63 actors were identified and grouped into 4 categories related to the management of ancient olive groves, i.e., olive growers, oil-millers, craft organisations and other entities including NGOs, representatives of olive-growing organizations, tourist agencies and individual guides, state institutions, local government authorities supporting the development of olive growing, or to the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. All identified stakeholders are specifically linked to the three selected sites: Marikaj, Preza and Ndroq.

Among the various actors, those who deal specifically with tourism in Albania and represent important interlocutors to launch new tourism services, or consolidate the existing ones, related to the enhancement of ancient olive groves, are:

- **Visit-Tirana.com**, a portal that offers information on sites of tourist interest, various attractions, including olive groves, ac-



commodation facilities and services for the visitors who have chosen to stay in Tirana and in nearby areas;

- **Agritour Albania**, a travel agency that operates in the field of agritourism in Albania. It offers daily packages for individuals, families and groups who wish to experience alternative and little-known natural and cultural sites. It offers hiking programmes and tastings of organic products with the aim of spreading the knowledge of the lifestyle of Albanian families, by favouring the direct relationship with the farmers or organizing tours to learn about traditional cuisine, harvesting of grapes and olives, drying of fruits, artisanal production of honey, wine, olive oil, etc. The agency can create special packages according to special needs for individuals or travel agencies.
- **Discover Albania**, a travel agency that operates in the field of promotion and organization of visits throughout Albania. They propose daily visits in tourist places in the region of Tirana so they might be involved in proposing tourist guides in the sites selected by the project. Several guides in fact know the sites and tourist itineraries of the area and are willing to promote a type of tourism linked to the enhancement of centuries-old olive groves.
- **The Albanian Olive Association** promotes new activities in the field of the production and marketing of olive oil. It publishes the Agro-Business Journal, a quarterly magazine with articles on in-

dustry performance, commercials, technology information.

- **Albanian Tourist Association (ATA)** is an NGO that acts as an umbrella organization to represent the interests of tourist agencies, guides and tour operators. ATA has an extensive partnership network of tour operators and agencies.
- **The Subashi family** in Marikaj is very active in the olive and oil sector and in the eno-gastronomic and cultural promotion of the tregion. They own an olive grove called “the orchard of Scanderbeg” with 1200 plants of the White Olive of Tirana (Ulliri i Bardhë i Tiranës) variety, 500 years old. They also produce aromatic soaps based on olive oil, various seasoned and packaged spices, local tea, olive-wood souvenirs, and different varieties of olive oils flavoured with spices.

In Venafro the stakeholders engaged in the management of olive groves and supply of new tourism services related to the enhancement of ancient olive groves, are the following:

- **Venafro’s Regional Agricultural Historical Olive Park Authority**, established by regional law no.30 of 2008 to protect and enhance olive growing in Venafro as an identity-making element of the historical landscape, ensure proper land use for agricultural, scientific educational, cultural, social and recreational purposes, enhance and promote the oil produced in the area

in collaboration with farmers, either single or associated, promote the historical identity of Venafrò olive oil cultivation as a characteristic and priority element of the park, through initiatives, agreements and regional, national and international programmes with institutions, administrations, foundations, associations, cooperatives, religious and other bodies.

- **Francesco Tomasso**, organizer of events and oil tourism experiences
- **Guglielmo Ruggiero**, environmental hiking guide based in Campobasso
- **Parco da Viaggi dell'Origano**, an agency in Bonefro (CB)
- **Associazione ME.MO Cantieri Culturali** (Cultural Worksites) to which the Mibact (Ministry for Cultural and Environmental Assets) has entrusted the guiding service to the main monuments of Venafrò
- **Info point** at Palazzo Liberty
- **Cooperativa Colonia Julia Venafrana**, produces olive oil with the park label "Terre degli olivi di Orazio" obtained from olive trees sited in the Regional Olive Park of Venafrò. The company had been recognised as a Slowfood Presidium. Currently the cooperative has reduced the number of members and has broken up

- **Luca Del Prete** Farm with organic extra virgin PDO Molise, and Colonia Julia in its new format.

In Montenegro, the stakeholders engaged in the management of olive groves and tourism services that could be involved are the following:

- **Local community**
- **Olive growers / olive grove owners and oil-millers**
- **Olive growers' associations**, association for olive oil of Montenegro
- **Ulcinj business association**
- **Local community** of Bar old town and Ulqin tourism organisation
- **Tourist agencies, hiking associations and local tourist guides**
- **Restaurants, hotels and B&B, craftsmen and beach operators**
- **National Tourism Organization of Montenegro**
- **Cultural Center**

- Faculty of Biotechnology
- Agricultural Secondary School of Bar
- Municipality of Bar and Ulcinj
- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Ministry of Tourism and Sustainable Development
- Public undertaking "Centre for Culture " Ulcinj
- Ulcinj Museum
- Montenegro public enterprise for the management of coastal areas
- Environmental Protection Agency of Montenegro
- MogUL and Green Home NGOs.




7. THE PLAN'S SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Monumental olive groves in the study areas in Albania, Montenegro and Molise Region represent an identity-making element of these territories, inextricably linked to the history and culture of the Mediterranean region, its landscapes, its eating habits, even its lifestyle. Apart from their important ecological role, the areas occupied by olive groves have always represented a fundamental element in the economy of those territories, both in absolute values and in terms of employment.

At present, the ageing of agricultural workers together with the low rate of generational turnover, land fragmentation and the low propensity for innovation are conditions found in all the sites involved in the project as well as in other marginal areas in the Mediterranean region.

Despite the low profitability of ancient olive groves cultivated using traditional methods, the cultural and natural components contained therein are fundamental not only to ensure the agro-ecosystem complexity and resilience of olive groves against adversity, but



also to maintain high landscape standards and tourist attractiveness of the whole territory.

The multiple suitability of a marginal agricultural area for landscape, historical, archaeological, and natural uses represent an opportunity for those olive groves that can no longer be profitable and can only find a way out through alternative solutions aimed at enhancing the agricultural and environmental context with the support of innovative public-private initiatives. The uniqueness of the historical olive landscape represents a 'ram's head' for promoting the entire cultural heritage system and enhancing the inland rural areas of the three sites of the *"Cross Border OL"* Project.

To this end, the strategy of this Plan has resulted from the synergistic intersection of the outcomes of different Local Environmental Tourist and Economic Development Plans (LEETDP) drawn up for olive-growing areas in Montenegro, Albania, and Italy.

One condition common to all three sites is that the integrity of the olive-growing landscape is today under the worrying threat of abandonment of monumental olive cultivation due to high running costs and low profitability. Additionally, the Montenegrin areas suffer from aggressive and uncontrolled tourist-residential construction, so it becomes necessary to act on information, education, and training and raise awareness of farmers, tourism operators, public institutions, and the entire community to define shared rules for proper management and enhancement of olive groves of landscape interest.

The predominant need emerging from the plans drawn up in the areas under study is to **protect the landscape of ancient olive groves, through sustainable forms of management integrated with an offer of innovative tourism services capable of enhancing cultural and environmental values and ensuring added value to the oil product.**

It becomes necessary to support a soft or low environmental impact tourist offer for those wishing to visit olive-growing areas to enjoy their landscapes in periods of the year other than summer.

This offer is also part of the latest trends in Experiential Tourism that means using the territory consciously to get to know, in a more intimate dimension, the widespread environmental and cultural assets and the human resources that preserve this enormous heritage with their work.

Therefore, in inland marginal areas, amidst many difficulties, the tourist offer must be exclusive and innovative – if it is to be competitive – and linked to the presence of **unique and exclusive rural landscapes** on the international scene, with reception models that respect the history and nature of the places and people who live there.

The strategy of the Plan is based on the key idea of “protection and enhancement of the historical rural landscape of monumental olive groves by initiating and/or consolidating models of smart and sustainable tourism development”.

The plan is therefore intended to enhance the value of the heritage of territorial identity-making resources, around which recent successful experiences have been implemented with a view to proper management of the historical rural landscape, which is the real

attraction of the area. This is confirmed by the positive outcomes of good practices implemented in recent years in the olive-growing areas of Venafrò, Bar, Džidžarin and Mirovica in Montenegro as well as in other sites in Italy, mentioned in previous chapters. These cases of excellence can play a driving role for the local economy only if they are able to relate to other tourist attractions and to the rest of the economic operators in the study areas.

For this reason, it is appropriate to *“stimulate the emergence of a new entrepreneurship for the use of olive-growing areas willing to network with private operators (in the fields of tourist accommodation, catering, services, etc..) and public entities, to generate local development models related to proper landscape management of monumental olive groves”*.

A crucial role shall be played by mentoring activities aimed at young people who want to transform their creativity in a company operating in the field of tourism services to enjoy the landscape of monumental olive groves. Thus, it will be essential to *“develop training actions aimed at enhancing skills in landscape protection and management and on aspects related to farm multifunctionality and territorial marketing”*.

While we need to work on a new tourism product, it is also necessary to stimulate demand by promoting this offer on national and international markets.

The Plan is therefore based on a strategy which aims to:

- support effective management of ancient olive groves
- restore and revitalize anthropic and natural components in olive-growing areas
- add value to cultural and landscape assets, and food and wine products, included in a new integrated tourist offer
- fuel human capital growth and enhance the business system to provide alternative and “experiential” tourist services
- strengthen intersectoral connections for a more competitive offer of tourism services related to historic rural landscapes characterized by ancient olive groves.

The Local Environmental Tourist and Economic Development Plans (LEETDP) drawn up by the project partners for olive-growing areas in Montenegro, Albania and Italy helped highlight the following **criticalities**:

- High risk of olive groves neglect, overgrowth of spontaneous flora and therefore, potential fires in the summer time
- Problems in handling olive harvesting from ancient trees
- Lack of professional expertise and appropriate equipment required to prune large olive trees
- Technical assistance not available to farmers for accessing aid to certify and enhance olive and olive oil production
- Lack of planning tools to preserve monumental olive groves where the integrity of the landscape is threatened by illegal buildings (especially in Montenegro)

- Small family-run businesses in marginal areas which cannot organise processing and packaging of the product on their own
- No planning to process and package oil produced from ancient olive groves
- Little knowledge of the historical, cultural and natural value of ancient olive groves among visitors travelling to the coastal area during the summer period
- Lack of, or incomplete, trails (bridleways, equipped cycling and walking routes) in farming areas with ancient olive groves
- Shortage of initiatives for sustainable enjoyment (excursions, guided tours, etc.) of ancient olive groves throughout the year
- Buildings of great architectural interest scattered in rural areas and in a state of neglect
- Lack of reception facilities in rural areas
- Limited diversification of accommodation offer for pilgrims, walkers and cycle tourists
- Limited farms' multifunctionality (agritourism, sale of farm produce, rural crafts, social farming, educational farms, etc.)
- Poor knowledge among farmers about olive grove management to improve the quality of olive and oil production
- Loss of know-how, owing to the lack of intergenerational hand-over, in the management of olive groves, especially for the restoration of drystone walls in land terraces and for pruning
- Lack of specific skills for tourist reception in rural areas
- Limited number of authorised environmental guides
- Lack of awareness of the historical and natural value of the areas with ancient olive groves

- Limited knowledge among consumers (local community and tourists) about the qualitative traits of olive oil from cultivars that can be found in ancient olive groves
- Lack of awareness among the population about the environmental and cultural importance of historic rural landscapes
- Inland marginal areas with their tourist services and agri-food production still linked to a purely niche market
- Shortage of initiatives and cultural events organized within the olive groves to promote their value and beauty
- Limited promotion of olive-growing areas by public bodies through various tourism promotional channels at both local and national level
- Poor relations with tour operators and incoming agencies.

To implement the Plan's integrated approach outlined in the strategy, a number of **strategic short, medium and long term objectives** shall be identified to help set action priorities.

These objectives, which are closely related to the fulfilment of the Smart and Sustainable Cross-border Tourism Plan's overall vision, are based on the results of a survey on the olive growing areas and the requests of local players and stakeholders involved, the identification of potential and critical issues, as well as the on the needs analysis included in the Local Environmental Tourist and Economic Development Plans (LEETDP) developed in these target areas.

Therefore, the **short-term objectives** shall be the following:

- a. encourage restoration and efficient management of neglected olive groves to preserve their landscape and production value**
- b. foster initiatives bringing together farmers involved in the management of olive groves and businesses providing services related to the use of olive groves in order to offer an integrated range of services**
- c. fuel human capital growth and enhance the business system**
- d. develop environmental and food education activities related to school tourism**
- e. improve the promotion of tourist services** related to the knowledge and recreational use of environmental and cultural resources in olive-growing areas in order to increase the demand for slow and sustainable tourism.

The **medium and long-term term** objectives instead shall aim to:

- a. help olive growers diversify their income** through olive growing related activities, considering the tourist vocation of the target areas
- b. identify clearly and distinctly the oil obtained from ancient olive groves**
- c. strengthen the connections between olive-growing areas and the surrounding environment** by creating a network of historical-cultural, natural and culinary assets, restoring and improving the network of paths crossing the area, services for its use and quality handicraft
- d. identify long-distance routes through which soft tourism travels** that shall be connected with olive-growing areas, villages

and residential areas, and also with the environmental and cultural assets scattered in the target areas

- e. support activities that provide sustainable tourism** services and stimulate the creation of new experiential tourism linked to olive and oil culture, adapted to the area's history and environment, and based on its effective potential
- f. bring international recognition to the landscape, cultural, environmental and productive qualities of ancient olive groves**
- g. stimulate local community and institutional commitment to maintain the historical and natural value** of ancient olive groves.

For a successful exploitation of olive-growing areas, local stakeholders shall be actively involved, fostering their participation in decision-making processes, exchange of expertise, creation of innovative businesses to help preserve and enhance monumental olive groves.

Local communities' participation is also key to creating a system of scattered accommodation around the area, for new visitors and users (pilgrims, walkers and wayfarers, cycle travellers and cycle tourists) who travel to these areas through long-distance routes (Via Dinarica, Via Francigena of the South , Eurovelo cycle route).

8. AN ACTION PLAN FOR ANCIENT OLIVE GROVES

As pointed out earlier, the Smart and Sustainable Cross-border Tourism Plan intends to combine protection and conservation of ancient olive groves' historical, cultural, and environmental heritage with socio-economic development of the area.

The "Cross Border OL" project is an opportunity to provide guidance to Local Authorities, political decision-makers and economic operators and help invest in innovative and sustainable tourism models capitalising on historic rural landscape resources. A type of tourism that aims to encourage new tourist services integrated with olive groves management and agricultural production, slow mobility and food and wine, scattered accommodation, and close relationship with the local community. A highly seasonally adjusted tourism, not limited to sun and beach holidays, which can improve the accommodation occupancy rate without increasing the number of beds and without creating new buildings, and above all, value the marginal inland areas with ancient olive groves.

The Smart and Sustainable Cross-border Tourism Plan is based on

4 action lines and 11 strategic objectives to address the main challenges that have been identified:

- **Action line 1: ancient olive groves, natural and cultural resources and their sustainable management**
- **Action line 2: development of a new tourist offer for the sustainable enjoyment of olive groves**
- **Action line 3: training and professional development of operators and environmental and food education**
- **Action line 4: promotion of the area and of tourist services.**

ACTION LINE 1:

ANCIENT OLIVE GROVES, NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES AND THEIR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

Criticalities	Strategic objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High risk of olive groves neglect leading to overgrowth of spontaneous flora and therefore to potential fires in the summer time • Problems in handling olive harvesting from ancient trees • Lack of professional expertise and appropriate equipment required to prune large olive trees • Technical assistance not available to farmers for accessing aid needed to certify and enhance olive and olive oil production 	<p>Encourage the restoration and efficient management of neglected olive groves to preserve their landscape and production value</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of planning tools to preserve monumental olive groves where the integrity of the landscape is threatened by illegal buildings (especially in Montenegro) 	<p>Call on the community and local entities to engage in maintaining the historical and natural value of ancient olive groves.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small family-run businesses in marginal areas which cannot organise processing and packaging of the product on their own • No planning to process and package oil produced from ancient olive groves 	<p>Identify clearly and distinctly the oil obtained from ancient olive groves.</p>

ACTION LINE 2:

DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW TOURIST OFFER FOR THE SUSTAINABLE ENJOYMENT OF OLIVE GROVES

Criticalities	Strategic objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little knowledge of the historical, cultural and natural value of ancient olive groves among visitors travelling to the coastal area during the summer period • Limited initiatives for sustainable recreation (excursions, guided tours, etc.) in ancient olive groves throughout the year 	<p>Support providers of sustainable tourism services and stimulate the creation of new experiential tourism services.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited farms' multifunctionality (agritourism, sale of farm produce, etc.) • Buildings of great architectural interest scattered in rural areas and in a state of neglect. 	<p>Assist olive farms in diversifying their income.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of, or incomplete, trails (bridleways, equipped cycling and walking routes) in farming areas with ancient olive groves. • Limited diversification of accommodation offer for pilgrims, walkers and cycle tourists • Lack of reception facilities in rural areas 	<p>Strengthen the connections between olive-growing areas and the surrounding environment.</p> <p>Identify long-distance routes through which soft tourism travels that can be connected with olive-growing areas.</p>

ACTION LINE 3:

**TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OF OPERATORS AND ENVIRONMENTAL AND FOOD EDUCATION**

Criticalities

- Poor knowledge among farmers about olive grove management to improve the quality of olive and oil production.
- Loss of know-how, owing to the lack of intergenerational hand-over, in the management of olive groves, especially for the restoration of drystone walls in land terraces and for pruning
- Lack of specific skills for tourist reception in rural areas
- Limited number of authorised environmental guides

Strategic objectives

Fuel human capital growth and enhance the business system.

- Lack of awareness of the historical and natural value of the areas with ancient olive groves
- Limited knowledge among consumers (local community and tourists) about the qualitative traits of olive oil from cultivars that can be found in ancient olive groves

Promote activities in the field of environmental and food education.

ACTION LINE 4: PROMOTION OF THE AREA AND OF TOURIST SERVICES.

Criticalities	Strategic objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness among the population about the environmental and cultural importance of historic rural landscapes 	<p>Strengthen the promotion of tourist services.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inland marginal areas with their tourist services and agri-food production still linked to a purely niche market 	<p>Encourage initiatives bringing together farmers involved in the management of olive groves and providers of services related to the recreational use of olive groves for an integrated offer.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of initiatives and cultural events organized within the olive groves to promote their value and beauty • Limited promotion of olive-growing areas by public bodies through various tourism promotion channels at both local and national level • Poor relations with tour operators and incoming agencies 	<p>Bring international recognition to the landscape, cultural, environmental and productive value of ancient olive groves.</p>

The 11 strategic objectives of the Plan are broken down into operational objectives that shall be achieved through a number of specific actions.

8.1 The relationship of ancient olive groves with the natural system, and their sustainable management

Concerning the relationship between ancient olive groves and the natural system, where sustainable management ensures that these areas will become attractive to tourists, the following objectives are to be pursued:

- encourage the restoration and efficient management of neglected olive groves to maintain their landscape and production value
- stimulate local community and institutional commitment to maintaining the historical and natural value of ancient olive groves
- identify clearly and distinctly the oil obtained from ancient olive groves.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
ENCOURAGE THE RESTORATION AND EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT
OF NEGLECTED OLIVE GROVES TO MAINTAIN THEIR LANDSCAPE AND
PRODUCTION VALUE

Operational objectives

- Maintain connections between olive groves and nature value areas
- Spread agricultural practices aimed at protecting the natural components of olive groves
- Create a system of incentives for the preservation of traditional olive growing
- Rationalize cultural practices and reduce management costs

Actions

- Maintain Mediterranean trees and hedges along the olive groves edges to connect the grown areas with remarkable natural sites and provide a shelter and a food source for the wildlife.
- Restore the drystone walls along the edges of olive groves and drystone terraces to provide a shelter for small vertebrates and insects.
- Multiply plant materials collected from selected ancient olive trees and reproduce them in an approved nursery by establishing a catalogue field with local native cultivars and Molise's cultivars in the Park of Venafrò.
- Promote good soil management practices through the control of wild plants (controlled cover crop) in ancient olive groves to increase floral biodiversity and reduce erosion.
- Bring into production native varieties which are no longer marketable, but are fundamental to preserve the agro-environmental biological diversity in the Park of Venafrò; deliver olive plants for free to farmers.

- Propose the annual award for the best ten olive groves of the Park of Venafrò, which shall be selected based on soil management, drystone wall maintenance, proper pruning.
- Hold the “golden scissors” contest to reward the best workers for olive pruning, to encourage the restoration of abandoned olive groves by proper pruning, considering that olive trees are nowadays pruned severely, in line with the Albanian saying “the axe corrects the olive tree”.
- Purchase a flock of sheep that will be given to a breeder who will control wild plants in the olive groves owned by those who will join the initiative in the Park of Venafrò.
- Set up an information desk to keep olive growers up to date about the incentives available to promote organic farming
- Introduce new forms of technical assistance through information meetings held on a regular basis or at the request of olive growers in collaboration with training and research facilities (University, Agricultural Schools, ...), in order to disseminate the soundest agricultural practices for the sustainable management of ancient olive groves.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve collective services for the management of olive groves (soil tillage, pruning, olive harvesting) in addition to olive processing in the mill.• Encourage olive growers to join in consortia so as to purchase collectively and at competitive prices, machines to aid in harvesting olives from the plant or in mowing and chopping spontaneous flora.
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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
STIMULATE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT
TO MAINTAINING THE HISTORICAL AND NATURAL VALUE
OF ANCIENT OLIVE GROVES

Operational objectives	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include the olive groves in spatial planning as landscape value areas that should be preserved and protected• Grant a premium to businesses that contribute to the preservation of historic rural landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish partnerships between public (local authorities, parks, Puglia Region, ...) and private entities (banks, cultural, environmental, and producer associations, ...) to undertake the recognition of a homogeneous area with ancient olive groves that should be protected (e.g. the Ancient Olive Park of Venafro).

- Award to the businesses that participate in landscape preservation, the Historic Rural Landscapes Trademark, issued by the Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies, which will allow them to obtain tax relief or grants, or rewards for access to RDP measures or other public tenders
- Apply for inclusion of the olive groves of Venafro in FAO's GIHAS global programme, (a support programme for farmers who ensure biodiversity, food security and social cohesion in the territories with their economic activities). The goal of this initiative is to identify some landscapes which are rich in globally significant biological diversity evolving from the co-adaptation of a human community with its environment.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
IDENTIFY IN A CLEAR AND DISTINCT WAY
THE OIL OBTAINED FROM ANCIENT OLIVE TREES

Operational objectives	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the oil produced from ancient olive trees by creating a trademark that distinguishes the production area • Support the rural area through access to credit and streamlined procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a mark of origin for the oil obtained from ancient olive groves to confer legal personality and recognition to the "Oil of Bar" and also to the green and black olive of Bar (e.g. Terra degli Olivi di Orazio trademark in Venafrò). • Provide technical assistance to farmers under the RDP and Molise Rural LAG calls. • Urge regional institutions to include specific measures in the Rural Development Plan for historic rural landscapes. • Support the creation of olive growers' associations and consortia for the promotion and marketing of olive oil produced from ancient olive trees. • Encourage the production of food products linked to the oil produced from ancient olives: flavoured oils, olive pâté, table olives, etc. to be promoted under the Ancient olives Trademark. • Use olive growing by-products for the artisanal production of soaps, cosmetics, or value the wood obtained from olive trees pruning that shall be promoted under the Ancient Olives Trademark.

8.2

The sustainable use of olive groves and the creation of a new tourism product

Coming to the sustainable use of ancient olive groves to offer a new type of sustainable tourism linked to food and wine, walking, trekking, cycling and direct experiences with olive growers and millers, the following strategic objectives shall be sought:

- **support activities that provide sustainable tourism services and stimulate the creation of new experiential tourism** linked to olive and oil culture, adapted to the area's history and environment, and based on its effective potential
- **help olive growers diversify their income** through olive growing related activities
- **strengthen the connections between olive-growing areas and the surrounding environment** by creating a network of historical-cultural, natural and culinary assets, restoring and improving the network of paths across the area
- **identify long-distance routes through which soft tourism travels** across Italy, Montenegro, and Albania that shall be connected with olive-growing areas, villages and residential areas, and also with the environmental and cultural assets scattered around the target areas.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

SUPPORT ACTIVITIES THAT PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM SERVICES AND STIMULATE THE CREATION OF NEW EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM SERVICES

Operational objectives	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer experiential activities related to olive oil production throughout the year • Propose recreational information services organised by the local body. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network services and coordinate guides to offer tours to places of interest in the area around olive groves. • Design plans jointly with local guides including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trips to explore and learn about traditional olive growing and visit oil mills • laboratory sessions with educational activities related to olive growing and the Mediterranean diet, and creative workshops for video storytelling. • Enhance bike rental service for recreational use of olive-growing areas. • Organise experiential sessions for extra virgin olive oil tasting and sensory testing through group learning (learning by doing), aimed at developing personal skills. • Establish a Mediterranean Garden of Green Patriarchs in all olive-growing target areas, by graft-propagating the oldest and most representative Mediterranean olive trees.

- Organise rest areas for visitors around the two water springs of Dabanovo and Marijala, which are home to some of the largest olive groves in Montenegro.
- Adapt the existing Service Centre by improving its tourist InfoPoint and create an exhibition area dedicated to rural historical landscape customs and traditions in Venafro (and in all other project areas with similar features).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

HELP OLIVE GROWERS DIVERSIFY THEIR INCOME

Operational objectives

- Enhance hospitality and services that can be provided by farmers for visiting and discovering rural areas with ancient olive groves
- Promote multifunctional agriculture by encouraging rural tourism and the creation of educational farms.

Actions

- Organize excursions packages and learning days to be held during olive harvesting and milling.
- Create tourist itineraries involving farms and mills that produce oil from ancient olive groves (e.g. the Ancient Olives Route).
- Restore the existing buildings and historical works in rural areas to offer hospitality or create selling points for the products obtained from the olive groves.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

STRENGTHEN THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN OLIVE-GROWING AREAS AND THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

Operational objectives	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the accessibility and the slow and sustainable walkability of olive-growing areas • Interconnect tourist attractions in the area surrounding the olive groves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create routes linking historical and cultural assets, areas of natural interest (lakes, forests) and sites of landscape quality (scenic view-points) integrated with ancient olive groves that connect oil mills and places of culinary interest. • Restore the paths especially along the historic roads (white, or paved, or cobbled) creating rest areas and signposting near sites of tourist interest. • Complete the trail network in the Regional Olive Park of Venafrò (and in all other project areas with similar environmental conditions). • Improve the activity of the information point in the Regional Olive Park of Venafrò with products on display and a dedicated website (as well as in all other project areas with similar environmental conditions) • Develop a network of educational and tourist trails (walking, cycling and horse riding) providing useful information (equipped paths, explanatory signs, etc..) for the recreational use of ancient olive groves.

- Create information desks to promote experiential activities among beach tourists to take place in ancient olive groves.
- Complete the establishment of a service centre to provide information about tourist activities in the area (e.g. the "House of olives" in the Old Town of Bar).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

IDENTIFY LONG-DISTANCE ROUTES THROUGH WHICH SOFT TOURISM TRAVELS THAT SHALL BE CONNECTED WITH OLIVE-GROWING AREAS

Operational objectives

- Take the opportunity to Join the network of national and European Ways and Cycle routes to enhance inland marginal areas

Actions

- Install conventional signage and equipped rest areas along the following paths:
 - Via Francigena of the South that crosses Venafrò with one stop leading to San Vittore.
 - Cammino di San Timoteo, which starts in Venafrò and ends in Termoli with 18 stops that can be covered by walking, biking and horse riding.
 - Via Dinarica, a European hiking trail which stretches over 2,000 km through the coast of Montenegro and Albania.

- Instal conventional signage and equipped rest areas along the following cycle routes:
 - Bicalitia's Francigena (route BI3) crossing Venafrò with its Volturno section
 - Eurovelo 8 with its section crossing Montenegro and Albania.
- Restore abandoned public buildings to serve as bike maintenance stores, hostels for hikers and cyclists, etc.

8.3

Operators' training and professional development and environmental and food education

Training and professional development of olive growers, oil millers, tour operators and hiking guides, intended to improve the quality standards of the new tourist offer on the market, shall also consider demand awareness in the purchase of services or products that can be obtained only through regular environmental and food education of tourists and residents. Therefore, the strategic objectives

sought in this action line are the following:

- fuel human capital growth and enhance the business system
- develop activities related to environmental and food education.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

FUEL HUMAN CAPITAL GROWTH AND ENHANCE THE BUSINESS SYSTEM

Operational objectives	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support transfer of innovation to olive growers for the sustainable management of olive groves • Inform olive-growers and tour operators about the landscape qualities of ancient olive groves and the possible services to provide • Strengthen the exchange of best practices with other olive-growing areas with similar features • Train new environmental and hiking guides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up training programmes for olive-growing operators to promote sustainable agricultural practices that support biodiversity, through guided tours and one-day field trips. • Deliver basic courses for maintenance and restoration of drystone walls. • Organize training on pruning and management of ancient olive groves jointly with technical advisory services. • Inform farmers about how to access incentives for certification (origin and organic) and enhancement of sustainable and quality agricultural products. • Deliver training for public and private operators (olive growers, service providers, etc.) on tourism planning and management.

- Run training courses to accredit environmental and hiking guides approved by regional authorities.
- Improve the capacity of operators in the field of tourism and agritourism concerning innovative reception services:
 - to certify their facilities as Cycle Hotel or Hostel for pilgrims and walkers
 - to learn about the services available for the recreational use of the territory
 - to improve their English language skills
 - to be informed about marketing and promotion strategies of the area and the services offered.
- Train local craftspeople in design, packaging, marketing so as to make handicrafts and souvenirs more attractive and marketable.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES: DEVELOP ACTIVITIES RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL AND FOOD EDUCATION

Operational objectives	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform growers about the quality distinctive features of oil from ancient olive groves • Encourage initiatives for environmental and food education of tourists and local communities to support consumption of local and organic products • Promote dissemination and knowledge of healthy eating starting from the schools • Add value to ancient olive groves to support biodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train tour operators and operators in agritourism and food services about how to recognize qualities and defects of olive oil produced from ancient trees, landscape quality and environmental value of the production areas. • Enter into agreements with schools to deliver programmes on food education and the relationship between food, farming landscape and biodiversity by training on tasting the oils produced from ancient olive trees. • Get local schools on board by organizing one-day field trips to study the agri-environmental system in ancient olive groves. • Place explanatory boards inside an ancient olive grove to describe its floral species richness and illustrate how these species can be used in cooking. • Run short tasting sessions for tourists to learn about the oil produced from cultivars that can be identified with ancient trees and compared with other commercial oils. • Organize periodic events focused on knowing ancient olive groves (e.g.: Walk through the olives).

8.4

Promotion of the area, of tourism products and services

The promotion of landscape, cultural and environmental qualities of the areas with ancient olive groves is vital to add value to the services offered for the enjoyment and knowledge of these areas, and to the oil produce and also to the work of olive growers who maintain this landscape through their daily practices. Accordingly, the strategic objectives for this action line shall be as follows:

- **improve the promotion of tourist services** related to the knowledge and enjoyment of environmental and cultural resources in olive-growing areas in order to increase the demand for slow and sustainable tourism,
- **encourage joint efforts between farmers directly involved in the management of olive groves and providers of services for the use of olive groves** to coordinate their offer, improve tourist reception and the quality of the tourist product to be proposed through an integrated offer,
- **bring international recognition to the landscape, cultural, environmental and productive qualities of ancient olive groves.**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES: IMPROVE THE PROMOTION OF TOURIST SERVICES

Operational objectives	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness among tourists and residents of the environmental and cultural interest of the ancient olive grove landscape and of the experiential activities offered • Propose integrated tourist packages related to olive groves and olive oil • Define a new narrative for telling the oil product and its history and add value to oil trade and promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote jointly with local and national bodies the oil produced from ancient olives at tourist information desks, airports, railway stations, visitor centres in parks and museums, info points along the coast, ...). • Promote with thematic maps, boards and road signs, tourist routes across farms and mills that produce olive oil from ancient olive groves (e.g. the Ancient Olives Route). • Encourage the restoration of abandoned historic rural buildings along the network of trails, to be used as points for the promotion and sale of olive oil from ancient trees. • Install an information stand to promote traditional culinary products, crafts souvenirs etc. (an initiative of the Municipality of Bar, in collaboration with Bar tourist organization and local olive and craft producer associations).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
ENCOURAGE JOINT EFFORTS BETWEEN
FARMERS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF OLIVE GROVES
AND PROVIDERS OF SERVICES FOR THE USE OF OLIVE GROVES

Operational objectives	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Propose integrated tourist packages related to olive groves and olive oil	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conclude agreements with olive growers' associations and local food services to promote olive oil bearing the 'From ancient olive groves' trademark both in cooking and in serving the meals (A menu featuring oils produced from ancient olives, olive oils trolleys).• Promote tourist packages including for the weekend (linked to special events or experiences in the groves during harvesting and in the mill during olive pressing) for tour operators and incoming agencies.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
BRING INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION TO THE LANDSCAPE,
CULTURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL
AND PRODUCTIVE QUALITIES OF ANCIENT OLIVE GROVES

Criticalities

- Define a new narrative for telling the oil product and its history and add value to oil promotion and trade

Strategic objectives

- Strengthen information desks in the area and media communication (Web, social networks) stimulating story telling of olive oil and tourism services.
- Create an award dedicated to landscape custodian farmers.
- Organize the Plinius, Beyond Time, Award which tests the oils one year after pressing, to find out which ones have preserved the best organoleptic qualities.
- Organize photography and/or art contests to bring to a wider audience the heritage value of the ancient olives.
- Establish collaboration agreements between the Regional Olive Park of Venafrò and the Biblical Village of Nazareth that preserves an untouched site dating back to Jesus time, where an edition of the Passion play is staged.

- Support the organization of promotional events of the area all year round
- Organize the Venolea annual event, which attracts visitors fitting the local offer.
- Hold international initiatives and events during the year in the setting of ancient olive groves (performances, temporary art exhibitions, concerts, events, e.g.: The passion among the olive trees of the Regional Olive Park of Venafro) to promote a tourism offer related to ancient olive groves.
- Join the National Association of Olive Oil Towns with over thirty years' experience in promoting olive growing with its linked economic and cultural activities, by supporting events and initiatives that generate a positive return on the area.
- Renew tourist packages with travel agencies for a sight-seeing tour of Venafro, including tastings and a mini-course of oil tasting.

Note: The actions outlined for each site may be replicated in other project areas, provided that they are adapted to local conditions.

9. CONCLUSIONS

This document, prepared with all project partners' contribution, offers an effective tool to enhance tourism in areas with historic olive groves covered by the project. It is intended as an aid to support Decision Makers in the cross-border areas to elaborate policies or local development plans that will not affect the sustainability of these processes and will improve instead local people's quality of life. It has been strategically designed to meet the needs of modern tourism, which is moving towards an "experiential" use of local areas, and which encourages "sustainable approaches".

It is a streamlined planning tool, which offers valuable insights into how to combine the conservation of the historical, cultural and environmental heritage of ancient olive groves with the socio-economic development needs of the area. The aim is to enhance the olive groves by promoting soft tourism based on innovative services for enjoyment and knowledge of the ancient olive groves, where slow mobility, food and wine offer, scattered accommodation and the relationship with the local community become an opportunity

to add value to the agricultural production of the area.

The Plan identifies a series of measures within four action lines, where priority is given to the sustainable management of ancient olive groves and the creation of innovative services for their use. Training of operators and environmental and food education for local communities and tourists are also fundamental. These actions should be accompanied by promotion of both the area and the services available.

A significant move towards future collaboration would be the set-up of a network bringing together local administrations / tourist agencies in the project areas and the mutual exchange of relevant information.

A further step could be a special programme for collaboration of tourist operators in the framework of public and private initiatives. The indications provided in the plan could also be extended to other project areas and could also be useful in other Mediterranean olive-growing areas, taking into account, however, local conditions and adaptation potential.

THE COMMUNITY MAPS



Ndroq - Albania



1. Varoshi Castle

Varoshi Castle (a pre-Illyrian/Illyrian fortress) is a symbol of the ancient civilisation centres where many of the most ancient olive trees can be found. This suggests that the ancient civilisation centres were the oldest areas for olive tree distribution.

2.Olive Oil Factory

The olive oil factory is the first destination where you can get all the necessary information about the itinerary for visiting Ndroq. Oil-marinated olives, oil tasting accompanied by various locally sourced fruit jams or honey produced by beekeepers of the area create here a special feeling.

3.Erzen river

The Erzen is a mountain river which reaches the highest flow intensity in its upper part. After crossing the Skorana Strait, the river passes through a hilly and a plane area around the village of Ndroqi and eventually flows into the sea. Various services for recreation, sports and study activities are offered.

4. Ashik's Grave

"A young boy worked as a servant to a bojar. When the servant revealed to the bojar that he loved his daughter, the bojar promised her to another boy. The servant discovered that his girlfriend was getting married and he asked for her hand in marriage. The bojar rejected the servant's request and chased him away even though the servant warned him that they would rather prefer to die than

abandon each other. When the wedding day came and the groom took the bride, a lovely boy appeared along the way and told the groom: "Oh good groom. The bride you have on the horseback is my girlfriend. "We have promised each other never to part." The bride raised her veil and said, "Brave men. I am not your bride, but the bride of this brave boy. The bride and the groom were surprised but they did not back down, because the custom was to take the bride to the groom's house where the wedding had begun. But when the groom left, the boy shot at the bride and she fell dead on the ground. Then the boy said: "Now we are getting married here, and he shot himself". The parents buried the two youngsters together in the same grave. And the story says that on the right of the carriageway road to Kavaja, near Ndroq, there is still a grave known as Ashik's Grave (The Lover's Tomb), under the shadow of a centuries-old plane tree.

5. Ndroqi Mosque

The mosque of Sauqet village is in the area of Ndroqi, near Tirana. This mosque was built on the Land donated by the believer Adem Taka.

6. Ndroq Maple Tree

The tree is located in the village centre. As early as the 1920s, a bazaar day was organised in the surrounding area for the whole province of Ndroq. Therefore, it is also known as the Rrapi i Pazarit. This 400-year-old maple tree is about 17 m high. It has been struck several times by a lightning bolt, leading to crown damage, burning and breaking of main branches.

7. Ndroqi Bazaar

Ndroq's old bazaar was located at the heart of the residential area and stretched along the former pedestrian street, with caravans and carriages. The Bazaar Quarter was one of the most important areas along with the house of Ibrahim Bey (Mansak Hahn's works prove that the Bazaar was an important economic centre before 1863).

8. Old Oil Mill

This is an old mill for the production of olive oil and made of *Ulmus campestris* wood (Alb: Dru Vidhi). It started to be used by the Pasmaçiu family in Ndroq, in 1815. The Olive Oil Factory in Ndroq is open to visitors.

9. Ndroqi Fest

On September 8th, the "Vera n'Shesh" festival is held in Ndroq, offering the opportunity to promote traditional events which feature culinary, cultural, religious, and historical activities.

Marikaj - Albania



10. The Hamit Toptani Inn

The Hamit Toptani Inn is located in the garden of the Topani family house in the eastern part of Marikaj town centre. It can now be accessed through the old Marikaj street. Hamit Toptani was one of the signatories and organisers of the raising of the flag of independence in Durres in 1912. Being a representative of the Toptani family from the area of Vore-Shijak, he was buried in a grave near Marikaj.

11. Bio Farm

East of Marikaj village, this farm gathers a wealth of natural elements and is truly an oasis of calm and pleasure, featuring the concept known as “from farm to fork”: bio-organic environment, livestock, vineyards, olives, greenhouses, fields, pomegranates, bees, lake, and forest. Delicious cuisine is offered here, and the ingredients are fresh. There is also an incubator of organic and rare products.

12. Dramxhiku Natural water source

This spring is located east of the Marikaj Hills and was used in the past for drinking, irrigation, and bathing. There is a stone by the source that was used as a bowl for washing clothes. Near the springs, mud was once available for washing clothes whereas today it is used for cosmetic skin treatment.

13. Kecje natural water source

This spring is located east of the Dramxhik spring and was once used for drinking and washing clothes. Nowadays, this place is used for livestock drinking and also to organize tours travelling by bicycle

or hiking along the path surrounding the hills.

14. Ancient olives

The AOO is located near the village of Mal Subash in the hilly area of the administrative unit of Marikaj. This is an olive grove with a density of 140-150 plants/hectare. It includes 70 trees. The trees are about 550-600 years old. Outdoor walking and cycling, motorbike and contemplation, are the main activities organized in the olive grove and along the hills. Camping in the olive grove is another activity that can be offered, both as part of guided tours and for individual visitors who are eager to embark on adventure tourism.

15. Lake of Gjokë

Gjoka Lake is located about 17 km from Tirana, in the eastern part of the hills of Marikaj, Gjoka village. The hills around Gjoka lake feature memorable reliefs and in a stunning landscape you can ride your bike. The lake surrounds a number of mini-islands.

Preza - Albania



16. Preza Castle

Preza Castle, built at the beginning of the XVth century, is one of the most important cultural monuments on Preza hill. This castle was used as a strategic watchpoint. Residents say that Mamica Kastriot's wedding was celebrated inside the castle. According to many scholars and residents, the square in front of the castle which includes the village centre, the school, the administrative unit, and the former two-storey school/shop (which is thought to date back to the period of King Zog) was once the Bazaar Square, where besides permanent shops, the bazaar was held on some days of the week. Today, this is the place where the "Preza Festival" takes place on April 23, featuring a variety of handicraft fairs, area services, events focussing on gastronomic values and olive oil by-products, environmental qualities, and biodiversity.

17. Prezë Mosque

This mosque is located inside Preza Castle and dates back to the XVIth century. It bears testimony to the values and the way the Albanians went along to change their religion. One specialty is that unlike other mosques, the mihrab i.e., the niche-like area, is not on the bottom here, but in the centre.

18. Well with a dome!

The well, located near the castle, is part of the historical attractions offered by the village. The folk legend makes it even more appealing. This well is known for its antiquity and dates back to the time of Osmane Empire. Today, the well is acknowledged as "Cultural Mon-

ument of Category I", as declared on the sign placed on the walls of the building where it is located. The well water has traditionally been considered unfit for human consumption because a popular legend says that a girl was drowned there not to fall alive in the hands of the Turks. Until the 1960s the well water was used but never for drinking.

19. Eco – tourism

Around Preza castle some agritourism services are available to visitors. They can have the opportunity to taste traditional recipes of the region such as Tirana frying pan, earthen casserole, village bird, etc. Locally sourced products are also offered such as the wine coming from a well-known winery of the area, olive oil, especially the highest quality known as the White Olive of Tirana, processed products from wild plants and also from medicinal plants such as pomegranate, manna, raspberry, cornel (*Cornus mas L.*), rose, etc.

20. Lake of Shargë

The lake is located to the north-west of Preza Castle and features a special ecosystem. It combines a hilly landscape and a scenic view of the bay of Durres and offers recreation services, bicycle trips and hiking.

21. Old Oil Mills

In Preza (hilly area) there are old mills for artisanal olive oil processing: the (Hysen) Kaziu operational mill, (Isuf Kaziu stated that he had learnt from his grandfather that this mill was 400 years old,

and that it was among the oldest mills in the area). Another ancient mill was that of Mahmut Demirxhiu (on Preza hill), known to be 350 years old. Beqir Brusha Mill (in Palaq) is 300 years old; Sul Alushi (in Palaq) is so old that the great-grandchildren maintain that the exact building date cannot be determined. Even today, the very old mill of Murat Terziu in the village of Palaq is still working. Some other very old mills, aged more than 200 years, are the following: Sure Huqi (still operational), Hajdar Mullah (only a stone left as a testimony). The mill of Sul Shamku (still running) and the mill of Rexhep Vrana (in operation until 4 years ago) are very close to each other. On the hill around Preza, there is the mill of Bajram Axha (today, only the millstone is left). Very close to this mill there was also that of Xhepi (Rexhepi) Hoke Vajes, Sadik Kepi, where the stones are the only remain. Xhemali Kurti mill was built 200 m below the castle, across the olive groves, on the eastern side of Preza hill, where the mill owner also had his house.

Artisanal olive oil grinding mills are located in private apartments and can be accessed only through guided tours organized in the area by tourist agencies of the area or in Tirana.

22. Typical Olive Oil Vases

In Preza and also in all villages around Tirana, olive oil was preserved in olive oil vases handcrafted by potters in the area of Vora who were also known as skilled producers of clay pots. This artwork is now continued by the young generations and personalized to produce souvenirs sold in Preza old town.

Venafro - Italy





1. Le Noci Terraces

A path leads off from the hamlet of Le Noci, stretching over the first two hundred metres through perfectly preserved terraces, in a rugged rocky landscape. The olive groves are intersected with at least two large clearings, bordered by drystone walls, which once helped move the herds.

2. Torricella

At an altitude of 437 metres above sea level, Torricella stands on a rocky spur overlooking Venafrò. The Roman walls from the 1st century BC extended as far as that point to surround the rocky spur. Only in the Lombard times, around the year 1000, Torricella became an important checkpoint for the area.

3. Cyclopean wall

In the area of Madonna della Libera, there is a complex system of cyclopean terraces of polygonal stones, which is considered by most authors to be the basis villae of a republican villa rustica of the 1st century B.C. A concrete cistern is located in the overlying area.

4. Mule tracks

Two mule tracks branch off from the old town of Venafrò and the Cathedral and were the only way connecting Venafrò and Conca Casale until the 1950s. The path climbs along the remains of Roman walls, including polygonal ones, and up the ancient terraces amidst ancient olive trees.

5. Garden of the Green Patriarchs of Italy

The Garden of the Green Patriarchs of Italy gathers twenty genetically twin trees of the most ancient olives in Italy. A true gene collection of Italian ancient olive-growing tradition, featured in a specially signposted area with educational tables and trails.

6. Winterline Museum

In 1943, during the winter time, the Allied troops reached and crossed with great sacrifice the Winterline, a German defensive line. The important military history museum dedicated to these extraordinary events is housed in a building in De Utris street, bearing the same name, in the old town of Venafro.

7. Roman theatre and amphitheatre

The Roman theatre, built between the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, is, along with the amphitheatre, the most representative Roman vestige in the area. The enlargement in the 1st century, with the construction of the tribunalia and the summa cavea, turned it into one of the biggest existing Roman theatres. The Amphitheatre, the Perilasium, lies further down in the outer part of the Roman town.

8. Venafro Archaeological Museum

The 18th-century Convent of Santa Chiara is home to Venafro Archaeological Museum. The exhibits include the admirable Venus of Venafro, a Hellenistic copy from the 2nd century AD, the aquarium table from the Augustan aqueduct (11 AD) and the oldest chess pieces in Europe dating back to the 10th century AD.

9. Pandone Castle

The Castle originates from a megalithic fortification transformed into a Lombard keep in the 10th century. Enlarged in the 14th century with the addition of circular towers, it was completely transformed in the 14th century by the Pandone family. Count Enrico turned it into a Renaissance residence which today is home to the National Museum of Molise.

10. The Passion Olive groves

The Cathedral's ancient olive groves are the venue for the "The Passion" performance, which is staged in the scenic setting of Campaglione olive groves. Impressive scenic views follow in the darkness, through lighting effects using modern technology.

11. Ancient olives of Venafro

There are many ancient, large olive trees growing around the foothills. The best-known variety is Aurina, the ancient 'Licinia' praised by the Romans for its oil. Other typical varieties are the straight and short Olivastro, Sperone di Gallo, Rossuola and Lagrimella.

12. Villae Rusticae and cisterns

The Park includes a number of sites of archaeological interest, many of which are brick vaulted masonry, mostly underground, dating back to Roman times, such as cisterns used to collect rainwater, cryptoporticus or areas intended for farming activities.

13. Exhibition of the Historic Rural Landscape of the Olive Trees of Venafro

The lower floor of the 'Art Nouveau building', the town's multifunctional and tourist centre, is home to an exhibition dedicated to the historic rural landscape of the Regional Olive Park of Venafro, which features dioramas and objects linked to the traditional customs of the area.

14. "The law is the law" with Totò and Fernandel

The harsh mountains overlooking Venafro were the proper setting for the film "The Law is the Law" by Christian Jaque, starring Totò and Fernandel and shot entirely in Venafro in 1957. The town was turned into a film set and called Assola, an imaginary Alpine village halfway between Italy and France.

Bar - Montenegro





A. Port of Bar

B. Marina Bar

C. Remains of Bar Triconch Church

D. Promenade

E. King Nikola's Palace

F. St. Jovan Vladimir square

G. Sport Hall Tapolica

H. Sport fields

J. Old City of Bar

K. Old Olive tree

L. Ortodox temple of St. Jovan Vladimir

M. Co-cathedral of St. Peter the Apostle

N. Selimye Mosque

O. Olive orchad Džidžarin



A. Old City of Bar

Raised and isolated on the high rocks in order to control and defend the area throughout the turbulent history, surrounded by gigantic mountains, the Old City of Bar is an exceptional cultural landscape that has historical, archaeological, artistic and ambient features. The walls are surrounding the remains of about 400 buildings, thus representing an open-air museum, as well as the largest unique medieval archaeological site in the Balkans. It testifies to the continuity of life in this area for almost 2500 years.

B. Remains of Saint Urban's Church

Remains of the Catholic Church – chapel of St. Urban's are located at the fork of two main directions within Džidžarin olive orchard. The remains were excavated in 2016, during the road construction. This cultural-historical asset of great importance, estimated that dates back from the XIII century, was professionally conserved and an adequate informative table was placed. Today, it is often a resting point for tourists and local visitors.

C. Old mill – Hostel "The grove"

One of the greatest attractions within Džidžarin is the Old mill of Duke Maša Vrbica, historically known as the first mill with iron presses in Bar olive sub-region. This mill started processing in 1882, while in 1888 the first soap and flower factory "Soaps from Bar" was established within the complex and supplied Montenegrin royal family with their cosmetic products. Nowadays, it operates as an attractive hostel, owned by the group of young entrepreneurs from

the Great Britain and Australia.

D. Newly renovated ancient stone bridge

One of the most attractive spots in Džidžarin is the ancient bridge situated at the estuary of Suva to Bunar river dating back from the XIX century. Fruitful collaboration between the Association of olive growers of Bar and Tourist organization of Bar in 2017 enabled professional restoration and conservation of the bridge. The bridge provides a stunning view to the ancient olive trees and the old mill – ex soap factory.

E. Ancient stone bridge next to the mill

The ancient stone bridge situated next to the mill is the most attractive from the tourist point of view. It is part of the hiking trail and connects Kajnak watercourse with Džidžarin olive orchard. Standing on this bridge, tourists can enjoy the river canyon, grandiose hills and mountains, stone walls of the Old town, the olive groves and mills as well as the other cultural treasures and natural pearls of the area.

F. Hiking trail

The local mountaineering association has marked and arranged hiking trails that lead from the olive groves in Bartula and Džidžarin to the villages Menke and Mikulići, which abound in natural attractions, such as the amazing waterfalls. The main ancient trail originates from the Roman period and represent itself a cultural treasure.

G. Remains of old skin tannery

Nearby the secret cave passage, there are remains of the tannery. Those were simple stone structures used for treating animal skin in order to produce leather. The process included degreasing, de-salting and soaking in water as well as applying an acidic compound called tannin. These remains reveal commercial character of local farmers that used to combine agricultural and livestock activities.

H. Aqueduct

One of the most stunning objects in this area is an aqueduct built during the 16th and 17th centuries, which supplied inhabitants with water from a spring three kilometers away. Settled on the northern side of the Old City of Bar, it is the only preserved object of this type in Montenegro and it is functional even nowadays.

J. Clock tower

Clock Towers is a dominant building in the Old Town of Bar and it represents the left marks of the Ottoman architecture. The building originates from the late Middle Ages and it leans on the wall of the medieval gate. It suffered damages during the turbulent events throughout the history; however, it was restored and remained a recognizable symbol of Bar.

K. House of olives

House of Olives is newly constructed facility located nearby Old City of Bar that serves as a mill, exhibition area, olive museum, hall for presentations etc. It is foreseen to be gathering place for local and

national olive producers, as well as the head office for the future National Association of Olive growers. Furthermore, by visiting the House of Olives, the tourist have a chance to experience why Bar is known as “the olive town”.

L. Watercourse Kajnak

Watercourse Kajnak is located in the foothill of the Old city of Bar grandiose walls. Watercourse Kajnak and Džidžarin olive orchard are connected by the well-known legend about local young man who was growing olives; however, due to the water scarcity, the trees yielded very low. He was disappointed and threw the tool from the stone walls, when the inexhaustible drinking water started flowing from the five sources and therefore Kajnak is nowadays also known as “The five wheels” spring.

M. View Point

Few attractive viewpoints are located in Džidžarin olive orchard. Those places provide spectacular views to the ancient olive forests and other typical Mediterranean landscapes, the Old city of Bar and Clock tower, the Adriatic sea and Port of Bar, Selimye Mosque and to the other cultural and tourist attractions in Bar.



- 1.** The legend says that a fisherman trapped the mermaid within his fishing net and fell in love with her, took the fabric off her, thus turning her into a human. They married and had children. The mermaid eventually found the fabric, went back into sea and never came back.
- 2.** Sailors' Well - located on the western part of Valdanos Bay shore. Used by sailors in the rich and vibrant maritime past of Ulcinj.
- 3.** Valdanos Beach - a unique pebble beach on the shores of this bay, about 150 meters long. The beach is lined by pine trees and surrounded by ancient olive groves. It is known for its peaceful ambience and fresh air, even on hot summer days.
- 4.** Gusharaveli, also known as Dumsharaveli, is an Afro-Albanian dance performed only in Ulcinj during festivals or local holidays. It is believed that the dance originates from a combination of African rhythm and a bit of local Albanian rhythm.
- 5.** Leopold de Wenzel (1847-1923), a well-known Italian composer, inspired by Ulcinj traditional dances such as Gusharaveli, wrote the Dulcigno Polka for piano around 1880.
- 6.** The yellow dotted line depicts the frontier of the military zone, which was claimed 40 years ago by the military authorities with the purpose of building a military base. The military base was never built, and thousands of trapped olive trees were left unattended, with the area turning into almost a forest.

7. A belvedere constructed right above Valdanos Bay. Best time to visit is at dawn or dusk, with magnificent views. We depicted a painter there to give an idea of how this space could be used to benefit tourism and the arts.

8. The legend of a pregnant fairy who sent for the local midwife to assist her in giving birth.

9. Once an important trade route port, Ulcinj was famous for sailing, piracy, and shipbuilding. It was also a battleground. Left – Liburna, an Illyrian ship.

Right – British and French ships at battle with Dulcignottes (Ulcinj pirates) in 1772. On the ship: the legendary pirate LikaCeni (Ali Kaceni) and sea captain Haxhi Aliu.

10. The Mendra Lighthouse. Known as the oldest lighthouse in Montenegro.

11. Location where it is believed there used to be a small church. A local brave man, the legend goes, made a bet that he would plunge a knife in front of the ruins of this church in the middle of the night. He ended up losing his bet and life, as he had plunged the knife on his own coat and died of a heart attack.

12. Ymer Agë Ulqini and his wife. He was a prisoner of war and asked his wife to wait for him for 9 years. He was released from prison in order not to lose his wife, by promising the daughter of the king

that he would return to prison. He returned and because he kept his "Besa", the king set him free.

13. Related to the legend mentioned in n.9. The local midwife being led in the middle of the night to the pregnant fairy, to assist her in giving birth.

14. The Fountain of the Beg, built in the 1800s, showing the cult of providing water to others, so that your good deeds continue even after death.

15. Wall steps which are very common within the olive orchards of Ulcinj. An ancient technique used for accessing olive terraces.

16. An interesting natural phenomenon, whereas olive tree roots are used as steps.

17. The "Hug me olive tree". A tree which is leaned over the path, as if it needs a hug from the passersby.

18. Arnold von Harff - a German traveler of the 15th century. He went on pilgrimage to many countries, collecting languages and cultural information. His lexicon of words collected around the area of Ulcinj is the second oldest known document in the Albanian language.

19. On the map, a local communicating with a German traveler, whereas he learns the word "mish" (meat). The local girl shown

carrying a basket with "Kafërma meat", a special preparation technique with olive oil and salt, used for preserving the meat on long sea journeys.

20. The old way of harvesting olives, by picking them directly from the ground. As seen on the illustration, it used to require a lot of physical strain and effort, yet people of all ages used to do it with passion.

21. A traditional way of hiding working tools, whereas the locals used to fit them inside the olive trees.

22. The legend of Bego Boboti. Shown helping fairies untangle their hair. Afterwards, he would gain great strength and become a famous sailor.

23. The old plane tree, estimated to be around 300 years old, located near the well and an old laundry tub, is in the middle of a crossroad that leads to olive groves and remains of an old bridge. Illustrated is a woman doing laundry in the traditional way.

24. An old fountain. Located at the intersection of the paths with one leading to Valdanos, while the other leads to the city. The fountains were placed on the most frequented paths, in order to serve as many people as possible.

25. Bashbylyk fountain, which has an engraving in old Ottoman - “In honor of Osmanag Manola, built by Osman Lazoja”.

26. Orthodox Church of St. Nicolas, built in 1890.

27. The Museum of Ulcinj is situated in the northern part of the Old Town and it comprises several buildings: the church-mosque which hosts the archaeological museum, the BalshajKulla (tower) which is used as an art gallery, the Ethnographic Museum, and the museum office, the ground floor of which used to be a customs office and prior to that a seamen’s bar.

28. Pasha’s Mosque built in 1719. This mosque also has a hammam, built before the mosque was completed and is the only hammam of this type in Montenegro.

29. The City Center Roundabout - Three olives and an old rock olive mill are located in the middle of the roundabout, as a testimony of the city’s connection to the olive.

30. Lami’s Mosque, built in 1689.

31. Located next to the museum premises - the Cyclopean Illyrian wall, dating back 2500 years ago. Also interesting as a common point with our project partners from Venafro.

32. Mujo Ulqinaku (Cakuli), born in Ulcinj in 1896, went on to become a sergeant of the Royal Albanian Navy and a People's Hero.

33. Xhefko Kashoxha, one of the most skilled craftsmen in Ulcinj, has been making models of ancient ships and boats for more than 30 years in his workshop.

34. Riza Shurdha, the first photographer in Ulcinj. He belonged to the Afro-Albanian community of Ulcinj. Africans were brought in as slaves in the 18th century but gained their freedom in the 19th century and integrated in the local community.

35. The golden weapons of a brave local man, as portrayed in the song "O ti Tahir", where he says that he has hanged his golden weapons on an olive branch in order to shine bright on the whole city.

36. Bottle of "miracle liquid" that is proven to be very efficient against burns, also containing locally produced olive oil. It is applied on skin using a feather soaked in the liquid.

37. Drywalls are present in most of the olive groves, featuring an ancient technique of building olive grove terraces without using concrete, by laying stone over stone.

38. A sophisticated ancient drainage system is incorporated within the olive groves, providing perfect balance in watering the olive trees, also securing ways of escape for large quantities of water.

39. Remains of old stone routes are still present and visible in a few places, but badly preserved and affected by the new wave of real estate construction throughout the olive groves.

40. The Old Town in Ulcinj is one of the oldest urban architectural complexes along the Adriatic Sea. In this enchanting citadel resembling a stranded ship, life has been booming for 25 centuries, civilizations have been exchanging, each leaving vivid traces still visible today.

The Old Town represents a cultural-historical monument of invaluable significance due to its Illyrian walls, its citadel, the street net, the markets and squares, some house blocks and valuable architectural edifices, and especially due to its town landscape and silhouette.



Presumed to be an ancient olive tree, older than 400 years.



Ancient olive tree, whose age was determined through scientific measurement, number indicating estimated higher age.



Ancient olive tree, whose age was determined by scientific measurement, receiving the title of the oldest tree within Ulcinj Olive Orchards.



Location of selling point where olive derived products and souvenirs alike are sold.



Location of olive oil production facility.



Location of selling point where local traditional and culture-related products or souvenirs are sold.



Itinerary route direction, start or detour point, with corresponding route number, as defined within this map.



Location of the beach bar, serving drinks and alike.



Location of restaurant, takeaways, i.e., food selling points.



Location of a public City beach.



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TRAVEL NOTES AND SKETCHES

