



## **PROJECT RELATED TO THE COMMON CULTURAL WEALTH (HERITAGE)**

In execution of Project “Creativity on the Rise”, Ref №: 2007CB16IPO006 – 2011 – 2 – 85, financed under Second Call in the framework of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) Bulgaria-Serbia

The project, related to the common cultural wealth (heritage) of the region Sofia-Montana – Niš (Mediana)-Leskovac is part of the documents related to Project “Creativity on the Rise” financed under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance Bulgaria-Serbia 2007-2013. This document and the Project “Creativity on the Rise” fully meet objectives and the strategy of the Programme for strengthening the territorial cohesion, competitiveness and sustainable development by working out a joint cross-border cooperation model, for taking advantage of the cultural and creative resources of the region, in accordance with priority axis 2 “Improving capacity of joint planning, problem solving and development and a key region”, point 2.2 “Sustainable development through efficient use of the regional resources”.

The project, related to the common cultural wealth (heritage) of the region Sofia-Montana – Niš (Mediana)-Leskovac would meet the four specific aims of the Project “Creativity on the Rise”: 1. Strengthening institutional and cultural structures in order to enhance the region attractiveness by developing a joint collaboration model focused on creativity and artistic expressions as drivers of growth and regional prosperity; 2. Economic growth of the cross-border zones of the region supporting human capital, in particular youth and students to develop their creativity and young artists in their career; 3. Promoting traditional and contemporary cultural and creative industry as an asset to the cross-border region and in terms of tourism attractiveness and sustainable economy; 4. Sensitivity of the institutions regarding the connection between artistic expression and economic development of the region, especially with regard to the employment and entrepreneurship in the creative sector and the related sectors such as tourism.

In the meantime, the project, related to the common cultural wealth (heritage) of the region Sofia-Montana – Niš (Mediana)-Leskovac is in a very close relationship and complementarity with the tourism product worked out under the Project “Creativity on the Rise”. The project as well as the tourism product would create a model based on international good practices and working methods, for appreciation of the rich cultural heritage and contemporary local creative potential and therefore contribute to limiting brain-drain among younger generations in the cross-border region; the overall growth and strengthening and further developing the capacity of the target groups (local authorities and cultural organizations, in addition to young people); to enhance the tourism attractiveness.

The tourism product under this project is called “Creativity on the Rise” (after the project’s title). The project, related to the common cultural wealth (heritage) of the region Sofia-Montana-Niš (Mediana)-Leskovac will be called “Cultural Wealth and Creativity on the Rise”. Thus symbiosis would be achieved between the promotion of creativity as a leading focus for enhancing tourism attractiveness and the great cultural and historical wealth



Project “CROSS BORDER CREATIVITY ON THE RISE”,  
Number of project: 2007CB16IPO006 – 2011 – 2 – 85,  
financed by Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-Border Programme,  
CCI Number 2007CB16IPO006



(heritage) of the four municipalities involved in the project in order to generate sustainable and long lasting product after the completion of the actions under the Project “Creativity on the Rise”.

The target groups of the project “Cultural Heritage and Creativity on the Rise” are set out in the main project “Creativity on the Rise” but after the realization of activities for marketing and establishing the project and the tourism product in close connection with it, other communities would be covered: youth, local authorities, educational and cultural institutions, tourist agencies and tour operators, local representatives of the tourism business, branch organizations in the tourism field, state institutions and the media.

The direct relation between the tourism product and the project, related to the common cultural wealth (heritage) of the region Sofia-Montana-Niš (Mediana)-Leskovac would generate an increased interest in touristic resources in the cultural-historical heritage and the creative potential of young people by Bulgarian, Serbian and foreign tourists stressing on the intangible culture; enhanced region attractiveness; a favorable impact on the local economy, that would contribute to decreasing unemployment mainly among younger people and brain-drain abroad; achieving constant more even distribution of the tourism benefits and raising the revenues from tourism in the local economy; Bulgaria and Serbia would be better promoted as countries interesting, attractive and rich in tangible and intangible cultural resources.

The available resources in the four municipalities in the region Sofia-Montana-Niš (Mediana)-Leskovac are the basis for the successful implementation of the project related to the common cultural wealth (heritage). The available resources are as follows:

**Sofia** –is the city with the most temples in Bulgaria (including the biggest one on the Balkans – St. Aleksander Nevski Cathedral), museums, libraries, galleries, history is literally at every step in the capital due to its rich past. Since the Neolithic period, throughout the Thracian and Roman Serdika, the medieval Bulgarian Sredets, the ottoman and post-liberation Sofia, in the present Bulgarian capital new archaeological, historical and cultural artifacts and monuments are discovered constantly. Whilst in Sofia there is an extremely rich cultural life, and activities of young people (school and university students) encouraged by institutions and organizations, including the Metropolitan Library (Project partner).

**Montana** – is a town rich in historical and cultural heritage, dating back to the establishment of the town by the Romans (Montanesium) the Slavic period of Kutlovitsa, the post-liberation Ferdinand and the socialist town of Mihaylovgrad. Today Montana has a Roman villa, Roman ruins and medieval Bulgarian fortress, a historical museum with Lapidarium. The cultural life in the town is complemented by a drama theater, art gallery, a community center. Work with young people is well developed as both the local authority and the NGO sector, including the beneficiary of the Project “Creativity on the Rise” - Youth Impulse in the Future Association are working in this direction.

**Niš** - With a view of its historical roots - back in time and that it was part of the Medieval Bulgarian State and the Ottoman Empire, the Kingdom of Serbia and Yugoslavia, Niš has a rich cultural-historical heritage. Birthplace of the Emperor Constantine the Great and a center of imperial residence, nowadays Niš boasts of the remains of the Roman fortress Mediana, with its walls, villas, mosaics, plumbing, baths, granary, sacred sites and necropolis. The



remains of the early medieval fortress Celle Tower built by the Ottomans from the heads of the rebels, the Renaissance architecture of XIX century, Holy Trinity Church - main temple of Niš Diocese, the Royal Court, Banovina etc. have been witnesses of time. Niš is rich in cultural events supported by many institutions and organizations such as the National Library, the National Theatre, the gallery, historical archives, etc.

**Mediana** – is one of the town municipalities of the Serbian town of Niš. Mediana is the municipality with the leading cultural and historical sites in Niš – the Roman fortress Mediana, Celle Tower, the Cathedral church of Niš, the National Theatre, the National Museum, etc. The municipality is actively working with young people. Its participation as a partner in the Project “Creativity on the Rise” is an upgrade of its policy.

**Leskovac** - has a rich history, as the place where the town is located now had been inhabited by the tribe Dardanians; it had been within the Medieval Bulgarian State, as it was first mentioned as a settlement (village) during the reign of the Serbian King Milutin and King Dusan (14<sup>th</sup> c.). During the Ottoman rule the town was the center of Nahia (region) Dubochitsa. Under the Berlin Treaty of 1878 Leskovac became part of the Kingdom of Serbia. Because of its 13 textile mills of that period the town was called Serbian Manchester. In addition to the Museum of the Textile Industry, Leskovac is famous for its archaeological site Hissar, Tsarichina City, Renaissance houses, interesting temples and monasteries, folk museum, monuments, etc. The town boasts its diverse cultural life, according to the local population - the richest in the whole of Serbia - with many events. The annual feast Roshtiliada - a celebration of Leskovac's grill, is quite famous and popular as it is visited by about 300000 people every August as the festival is accompanied with a rich cultural program. One of the distinguishing symbols of the municipality of Leskovac is Holy Trinity Cathedral. The activities with the young people, including the promotion of their creative and cultural cravings, are actively supported by the project partner - Educational Center, Leskovac.

With the available resources of the four municipalities in the region Sofia-Montana- Niš (Medians) –Leskovac and so that the project related to the common cultural wealth (heritage) to be meaningful and implemented, the partners Youth Impulse in the Future Association (Montana, Bulgaria), Metropolitan Library (Sofia, Bulgaria), Mediana Municipality (Niš, Serbia) and Educational Center, Leskovac (Leskovac, Serbia) should direct their efforts to the promotion and imposing the main cultural-historical sites, bringing them together in a logical link for finding a permanent place for the youth creative endeavors. The combination of tangible and intangible culture in the project related to the common cultural wealth (heritage) would achieve better tourist offering and therefore greater economic benefits and imposing and implementation of the tourism product “Creativity on the Rise” related to the project - the first cross-border product between Bulgaria and Serbia, which will be based on the combination between cultural heritage, cultural events and creative endeavors of young people.

Just like the tourism product “Creativity on the Rise”, the project, related to the common cultural wealth (heritage) of the region Sofia-Montana -Niš(Mediana)-Leskovac would be implemented with the participation of youth artistic contributions (acting, music, dance, art, film, etc.) in the cultural events highlighting the rich cultural-historical heritage in the towns. The combination of the events in the separate municipalities, regions and countries, the



principle of the tourism product, would be the key emphasis also for the project “Cultural Wealth and Creativity on the Rise”.

In the meantime, the project, related to the common cultural wealth (heritage) of the region Sofia-Montana-Niš (Mediana)-Leskovac would not be based on a specific fixed tourist route but on a system of topical sub-routes; it would not be limited in time but it would be open to new happenings and events with emphasis on the cultural-creative performances, which in turn would serve as a bridge to the cultural-historical and natural tourism. The project, related to the common cultural wealth (heritage) of the region Sofia-Montana-Niš (Mediana)-Leskovac would be based on the following main topics that are sub-routes of the tourism product “Creativity on the Rise”:

**1. Spirituality that connects us** – The common religious values and faith combined with the rich spiritual heritage in all four settlements. Promoting the magnificent Orthodox churches in Sofia, Montana, Nis and Leskovac will be in line with cultural events and opportunities for youth creativity in them, such as:

- Annually, January 8, Niš, Christmas concert - organized by the local Orthodox diocese of Niš. The concert is a great opportunity to promote religious tourism, based on common Orthodox faith of the Bulgarian and the Serbian people and the possibility of religious young people from both sides of the border to show their creative vision of their faith - through music, speech and art;
- Annually, February 14, Leskovac - a celebration of St. Trifon’s Day, as tourists have the opportunity to choose where to be on that holiday - in Serbia or in Bulgaria and to compare them, one year visiting Montana, the next year – being in Leskovac. That comparison will be especially fascinating for the western tourists, for whom February, 14 is St. Valentine’s and Love Day;
- Annually March /April/May, Montana – “Dyed Eggs, Painted” - traditional Easter exhibition;
- Annually May 24, Sofia/Montana - Day of Bulgarian Education and Culture and Slavonic Literature – the only opportunity for foreign tourists to see holiday parades and the events during the Bulgarian spiritual celebration;
- December, Sofia - Traditional concert dedicated to the Nativity.

**2. Roman culture - a bridge over the centuries** - the ruins of the Roman Empire and civilization are everywhere in the four cities. Promotion of this magnificent architecture, fascinating culture and civilization as though still alive could be achieved by conducting various cultural events with the creative involvement of young people – for example in the archaeological sites of Roman Serdica in Sofia, the Roman fortress or the Historical Museum with Lapidarium in Montana, among the ruins of the Roman fortress Mediana in Niš, or the archeological sites in Leskovac. An opportunity for the promotion of these sites through the performances of young people can be found in the cultural events underlying the route of the tourism product “Creativity on the Rise”:



- Annually January 13, Niš, Mediana Park; Leskovac - celebration of the Serbian New Year (Orthodox New Year in the old calendar style) - a great opportunity for young people - individually or as groups to participate in the organized events as some of them could be organized at the historical sites from the Roman epoch;

- Annually February/March, Sofia - National Poetry Contest “At the Foot of Vitosha” - young poets from Serbia and neighboring countries can visit the contest and possibly be involved in it because one of the special prizes is for young artists. Visiting the historical sites from the Roman Empire would be a real inspiration for the young artists;

- Annually March/November, Sofia - Galleries in the Open - a great opportunity for young Bulgarian and Serbian artists to show their art to the public, as well as to the numerous tourists in Sofia. With the exhibitions displayed among the Roman ruins it would be achieved the combination of promoting the cultural-historical heritage, cultural event and creative participation of young people in the event;

- Annually June/July, Leskovac - Leskovac Summer - traditional multimedia outdoor festival consisting of three components - sport events, children’s events and art shows. The combination of these events of spirit and youth creativity would be based on the rich archaeological and historical-cultural wealth of Leskovac.

**3. You can’t stifle the ever-burning!** - Centuries of Ottoman rule over the Bulgarian and Serbian lands left its architectural and cultural footprint in all four cities included in the Project “Creativity on the Rise” - Sofia, Montana, Niš and Leskovac. However the National Revival period left to the generations beautiful temples and monasteries, public buildings and homes that are still the pride for both Bulgarians and Serbs. Regardless the slavery, the spirit of the two Slavic people was not stifled just on the contrary it revealed that the cultural and spiritual potential was the basis for the strong liberation movement and its significant contribution for the freedom of Bulgarians and Serbs. The promotion of the rich cultural heritage from the first centuries of the Ottoman rule and the National Revival, combined with artistic performances would attract young people tremendously. Events that might contribute to that are:

- Annually March 3, Sofia - Formal events for the anniversary of the Liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman rule, a national holiday of Republic of Bulgaria. It is an opportunity for participation of young people in the different events on the occasion of the national holiday;

- Annually April, Niš - International Fair of Tourism and Recreation - a great opportunity for exchange of experiences, best practices and promoting the creativity of young people in combination with presentation of architectural and cultural achievements from the period of the Ottoman rule and the National Revival;

- Annually May, Sofia/Montana - Night at the Museum, all museums in Bulgaria are open at night, admission is free and it is traditionally accompanied with cultural program;

- Annually August, Niš – “Nišville Jazz Festival” - held in Niš Fortress;





- Annually September 17, Sofia - Sofia Day. On the Day of the Bulgarian capital the Metropolitan Library – partner to Project “Creativity on the Rise” traditionally organizes exhibitions and other cultural events. They could be held at the background of any of the numerous buildings from the Ottoman and National Revival period, inside them (e. g. the building of the Archaeological Museum, remained from the Ottoman period) or in any of the temples in Sofia built during the years of the foreign domination;

- “We remember, we are proud!” - In each of the four cities it could be held commemorative cultural events with the participation of young people, to remind of the tragic past events, regardless of which the human spirit reached great achievements in lifestyle, culture and architecture. Such events may be held in front of the tragic Celle Tower in Niš, but also in front of all sites of the Ottoman architecture, not connected with violence, because after the collapse of the empire, its heritage is our heritage, and young people should not only appreciate it, but also actively promoted it because it was created with the efforts of their ancestors. Similar events will be a combination of the national pride and the European approach to the assessment of the past and past events for separate settlements, regions, countries, communities and nations.

4. **Folklore on the Rise** – that main theme of the project related to the common cultural wealth (heritage) which is a sub-route of the tourism product “Creativity on the Rise” covers cultural events related to traditional folk art (folklore, music, dance). These events involving young people provide an opportunity for combining cultural events and visiting the sights of the historical heritage in the region of Sofia-Montana-Niš (Mediana)-Leskovac:

- Annually May, Montana - International children's drawing contest “Drum Beats, Horo is Danced”;

- Annually May, Montana - Festival of Brass Bands “Diko Iliev” - one of the emblems of the cultural program of Montana - an opportunity for foreign tourists to enjoy the rich Bulgarian folk traditions;

- Annually June, Leskovac – “Dum Drum Fest” - the only Balkan Festival of drums and percussion instruments. The festival aims to encourage young people both through meetings and demonstration of skills;

- Annually June, Montana - International Folklore Festival – Montana;

- Annually July, Niš - International Folklore Festival;

- Annually July - August, Mediana Municipality, Niš – “Mediana Fest” - concerts of all styles - from opera, pop and rock to folk music, and a lot of fun for the children.

5. **We are young, we have a lot to show, we have inherited a rich culture** - the objective of this component is to combine the creative endeavors of young people implemented in significant and leading cultural events in the cities of Sofia-Montana-Niš (Mediana)-Leskovac, as it is promoted, i.e. the cultural-historical heritage is included in the tourism product. Events that would contribute this to be achieved are:



**Project “CROSS BORDER CREATIVITY ON THE RISE”,  
Number of project: 2007CB16IPO006 – 2011 – 2 – 85,  
financed by Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-Border Programme,  
CCI Number 2007CB16IPO006**



- Annually March – June, Sofia - European Music Festival (for connoisseurs of classical music) and Sofia Jazz Peak – of world renown international festival;
- Annually March, Leskovac - Traditional guitar festival with the participation of students from primary and secondary schools in Serbia and abroad, as well as famous guitar players. It provides a great opportunity for the expression of young people and a real “creativity on the rise” for them because they learn from and touch to the art of virtuosos;
- Annually March, Sofia - Young Virtuosos International Competition - lovers of classical music from around the world could enjoy the performances of the young talents - participants in the competition;
- Annually May, Niš - International Art Photography Colony “Sićevo”;
- Annually June, Leskovac - Balkan Festival of Young Cartoonists - a traditional event, held for many years, enabling young artists from the Balkan countries to express themselves and make the event, part of the route of the tourist product “Creativity on the Rise” and the project, related to the common cultural wealth (heritage);
- Annually July, Leskovac - International Carnival, a combination of traditions and innovations in the carnival art. Children fancy-dress ball takes place together with the carnival. That’s a real attraction for young and old, delight to the senses of tourists;
- Annually July, Sofia - Outdoor Festival “Opera in the Park”, organized by the Sofia Opera and Ballet;
- Annually August, Leskovac - Festival of Meat, Barbeque and Grill “Rotshiliada”. It is held in the last week of August and is visited by nearly 300000 people, mostly young people. It is one of the biggest tourist events in Serbia and the largest festival of this type in this part of Europe. It is accompanied with a rich cultural program - concerts, fashion shows, carnivals and competitions. That’s a real opportunity for tourists to enjoy delicious food and various cultural events but also to visit the numerous cultural-historical sites in Leskovac;
- Annually August, Sofia - Festival “Sofia Breathes” – an event dedicated to environmental protection, with the participation of many young people;
- Annually September, Sofia - International Biennial Festival for Street and Puppet Theatre “Puppet Fair” - non-competitive event, a great opportunity for young artists, especially since 2010 it has been relied on puppet art demonstrated in open spaces (gardens, parks, squares). It is an opportunity for promoting the cultural-historical heritage by organizing cultural events in or in front of historical or cultural sites;
- Annually October, Mediana Municipality, Niš – “Mediana Balkan Rock Festival” - the event is a music festival - competition for young and not so famous rock bands. The grand prize for the winner is a studio recording of an album;
- Annually October, Montana – Radichkov’s Days dedicated to the works of the greatest connoisseur of Bulgarian northwest Radichkov;



**Project “CROSS BORDER CREATIVITY ON THE RISE”,**  
**Number of project: 2007CB16IPO006 – 2011 – 2 – 85,**  
financed by Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-Border Programme,  
CCI Number 2007CB16IPO006



- Annually October/November, Niš – “NIMUS” - classical music festival with an international reputation that had been organized more than three decades;
- Annually December, Sofia - Sofia International Literature Festival - a place where artists from around the world could meet. It is an opportunity for promoting and establishing the cultural-historical wealth of the Bulgarian capital.

With the implementation and practical application of the project, related to the common cultural wealth (heritage) the following results would be achieved:

- Ensuring the sustainability of the actions under the Project “Creativity on the Rise” after completion the financing of the project by Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-Border Programme 2007-2013;
- Establishment of sustainable, attractive and profitable package of actions and respectively tourism product;
- Increased growth of tourism and tourist supply in the region Sofia-Montana-Niš (Mediana)-Leskovac according to the indicators such as number of stays for the night, employment, length of stay. It would be increased the number of tourists outside the high season; the number of tourists – young people will go up significantly;
- Active development of culture (in all its forms) and youth creativity would be greatly encouraged;
- Local authorities, government bodies, cultural and educational institutions, youth organizations, tourist business and the media would be much more committed in making popular and promoting the cultural heritage and youth creative works and art in the region;
- Turning region Sofia-Montana-Niš (Mediana)-Leskovac into preferred cultural destination on the Balkans and a leading one in Europe, mainly for young people and artists;
- Increasing the image of the region Sofia-Montana-Niš(Mediana)-Leskovac and generally of Bulgaria and Serbia as destinations offering innovative tourism product “Creativity on the Rise” and places where tangible and intangible culture is developed and complemented in combination with youth creativity;
- It will be set up the main trends of a project related to the development of the model “Creativity on the Rise” and its exchange as a know-how. Therefore it would be increased the image and the public significance and project activity of the beneficiaries of the project “Creativity on the Rise”: Youth Impulse in the Future Association (Montana, Bulgaria), Metropolitan Library (Sofia, Bulgaria), Mediana Municipality (Niš, Serbia) and Educational Center, Leskovac (Leskovac, Serbia)