



The International Conference
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MOUNTAIN AREAS - Experiences, challenges and perspectives
Žabljak, September 14-16, 2016, MONTENEGRO

The conference declaration

FUTURE OF MOUNTAIN PASTURE AREAS – KATUNS
Where should we go?

After three days of productive work in the specific ambient of Durmitor mountains

Building on the project “Valorizing the Montenegrin Katuns through sustainable development of agriculture and tourism - KATUN”;

Considering the **Conference aim** to improve understanding of the challenges in development of mountain areas by bringing together the experts with different experiences;

Expecting that the Conference, as an important milestone, contributes in achieving the project aims (knowledge & innovations transfer, generate entrepreneurship to mountainous agriculture and agro-tourism, and achieve sustainable protection of cultural heritage);

Acknowledging that the event is focused on the social and business environment for development of mountain areas - katuns (entrepreneurship; promotion and protection of traditional products; ecosystem services; rural tourism; cultural-historical heritage);

Mindful that the conference is intended for researchers and professionals involved in different aspects of development of rural areas and cultural-historical heritage;

Recognising that multi-level governance and multi-stakeholder approaches should be integrated and implemented via bringing diverse stakeholders around the table;

Emphasizing that balance between development and conservation is extremely important (katuns history is full of controversies - some national policies have supported the shift of communities towards ‘modernity’, the others aiming to preserve the cultural heritage are in a shadow or still very weak);

Convinced that using experiences and best practices of the other regions, e.i. Alpine territories face similar problems, Montenegrin katuns can benefit from exchanging their experiences about approaches and initiatives aiming towards sustainable development;

Fully aware of the importance of katuns for Montenegrin society, they have to be treated in a broader sense, not only to produce authentic food but also to provide ecosystem services through maintaining landscapes, conserving biodiversity, protecting against natural hazards, and providing a setting for tourism;

Entirely devoted to achieving the main goals of the KATUN project - to provide knowledge bases for sustainability of the mountain agriculture and to enhance its competitiveness, to preserve the cultural heritage of rural areas and boost the agro-tourism at the *katuns*;

We, the conference participants, agree to conclude:

A) OPEN ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENT BARRIERS AT THE KATUNS

- Infrastructure - bad roads, lack of electricity and water supply, living conditions are at low level, problems in telecommunication, weak social services;
- Human resources – aging population, young generation is not interesting to inherit and continue, lack of networking and communication with others, difficult position of women;
- Production - a plenty of non-used pasture resources, low livestock performances, facilities for making dairy products are still traditional and poor, problems in selling the products;
- Diversification – non agriculture activities, including tourism, are not performed due to bad infrastructure, lack of entrepreneurship skills and institutional support;
- Legal status – not clear and it is a barrier for the investments at katuns, dissonance between the traditional and current legal norms resulting in devastating the katuns' area;
- Cultural-historical heritage – non-existence of all-inclusive data base, lack of awareness at local community and institutional level, lack of strategy and formal/ informal education;
- Recognition by society and support policies – public knowledge about katuns is low, no clear state policies for katuns, lack of capacities at local level.

B) THE DRIVERS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN DEVELOPMENT OF THE KATUNS

- ✓ Development of the livestock sector in the valleys and villages;
- ✓ Improvement of hygienic standards for making dairy products;
- ✓ Stable and reliable channels for marketing of products;
- ✓ Selling the most of the katun produce 'on the plate' (on the spot, or locally);
- ✓ Launching new activities: tourism, inclusion in local economy;
- ✓ Readiness of farmers to collaborate and to form producers organizations;
- ✓ Adequate support from government and local administration
- ✓ Preserving tradition, customs and rural heritage through establishing rules for architectural and constructional solutions within traditional katuns' area

C) SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (3 x 5)

1. *The issues addressed to the PRODUCERS*

- Minimum investments to improve hygienic conditions
- To keep authenticity and originality in breeds of livestock, type of production, buildings;
- Try to sell the most of the katun production 'on the plate';
- Young generation – to provide social life;
- Initiatives and collective actions in production, promotion, in finding different ways of support

2. *The issues addressed to the DECISION MAKERS*

- KATUN infrastructure and equipment – unavoidable priority in developmental strategy;
- To increase support for using mountain pastures, including operational costs, trainings;
- Setting up positive legal frame for katuns use and transfer legal rights of using katuns
- Changing in policy of protection of Cultural Monuments with evidencing, mapping, creating a data base and legal framework, branding, promotion
- Creating specific entrepreneurship and financial schemes to foster tourism at katuns;

3. *The issues addressed to the RESEARCHERS AND EXTENSIONISTS*

- ✓ To raise awareness and promotion of katuns through formal/informal education
- ✓ Authenticity (traditional manufacture, native breeds, ecosystem services) is a priority in the research agenda;
- ✓ To include mountain livestock production to programs of high schools and faculties;
- ✓ Knowledge exchange and innovation via different channels, primarily on spot trainings;
- ✓ Comparative study on best practices and ways of support in other countries.