

# Strategic orientations for sustainable tourism development of the Municipality of Neum



UNEP/MAP PAP/RAC  
November 2021



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Activity: "Sustainable tourism: coastal - hinterland" as a  
Part of Coastal Area Management Programme  
(CAMP) for Bosnia and Herzegovina

Expert service: **Strategic orientations for  
sustainable tourism development  
of the Municipality of Neum**

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Place and date: Zagreb, November 2021

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The document 'Strategic Orientations for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Municipality of Neum' is part of the Coastal Area Management Program (CAMP) for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The preparation of the document was contracted on 12 February 2016 and signed on 29 June 2020, based on a Feasibility Study prepared in the period from January 2017 to July 2018. The Project 'Strategic Orientations for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Municipality of Neum' includes also work with the local stakeholders in the form of education on the topic of sustainable tourism development. Based on the findings of the workshops and consultation with the stakeholders, the document should be supplemented with proposals for specific projects in a form that meets the requirements of applications for EU pre-accession funds and other sources.

CAMP Bosnia and Herzegovina is an activity of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), which has been operating as part of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) since 1989 and has already implemented CAMP projects in almost all Mediterranean countries. The main objective of the MAP CAMP's is to help the Mediterranean countries in solving urgent environmental problems, and to introduce the integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) as the basic tool to achieve sustainable development at the selected sites in coastal regions. In accordance with the main objectives of the project, this document also contains proposals for the establishment of a destination management organization in the Municipality of Neum, definition of the main tasks aimed at sustainable development, as well as specific project proposals aimed at implementing previously defined strategic orientations.

The document 'Strategic Orientations for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Municipality of Neum' consists of four basic parts:

- Analysis of general characteristics and current state of tourism in the Municipality of Neum as the only coastal municipality in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including a critical review of the main problems and potentials with emphasis on differences between the developed part of the municipality by the sea and undeveloped and sparsely populated hinterland.
- Proposals on the possibilities of diversifying the tourist supply of the Municipality of Neum from almost exclusive orientation on 'sun & sea' tourism in the coastal part to diverse and ecologically desirable types of tourist supply that can be developed in the hinterland as connecting points with coastal tourism.
- A set of recommendations regarding linkages with other economic activities, particularly agriculture, and those related to the development of tourism as a tool aimed at better use of the potentials of cultural heritage and natural values to create additional economic values and new jobs in the hinterland.
- A proposal of strategic orientations including a portfolio of project proposals presented in the form of an Action Plan as a basic form of implementation of the sustainable



development strategy, including a proposal for setting up a Destination Management Organization.

The methodology of the work includes analysis of available documents and sources related to the Municipality of Neum, such as statistical data about the general characteristics of the Municipality, attractions and tourism, current development and planning documents, Internet sources and all other relevant available information. In addition to desk research, the work on the Project included a detailed tour of the Municipality of Neum during March 2021, accompanied by a national coordinator, and a workshop with the main stakeholders in tourism in the Municipality. Comparisons with surrounding destinations and similar successful destinations in the world served also as important sources.

The experiences of the author on numerous other projects of a similar type produced for PAP-RAC and other clients also played an important role in formulating strategic directions and projects for the Municipality of Neum. These experiences include preparation of tourism carrying capacity studies for the City of Dubrovnik, Split-Dalmatia County and Šibenik-Knin County in Croatia, Larnaca District in Cyprus, Marsa Matrouh-Fuka area in Egypt and the most recent for the Montenegrin coastal area. Workshops on carrying capacity assessment held by the author in Tartous in Syria, Beirut in Lebanon, and the author's experience with the Municipality of Neum through work on the Project of interpretation of tourist attractions of Herzegovina-Neretva County also played an important role.

Having in mind the importance of cycling tourism for the hinterland of the Municipality of Neum, the authors' experiences in drafting the Cycling tourism Action Plan of the Republic of Croatia in 2014 and operational cycling tourism development plans for six Croatian counties in 2017 also played an important role. Considering the recent opening for traffic of the Pelješac Bridge with access roads, the authors' experiences in drafting the Tourism Development Plan of the Pelješac Peninsula in the context of the construction of the Pelješac Bridge in 2019 were also useful.

In the terms of reference for the activity on this project it was pointed out that Neum is the only municipal centre and the only coastal tourist destination in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Also, according to the number of overnights Neum is the second strongest tourist destination in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the capital Sarajevo. However, it was pointed out that tourism as the main activity is limited almost exclusively to the narrow coastal strip and the main settlement of Neum exposed to excessive construction and pressures on transport and communal infrastructure. At the same time the sparsely populated hinterland is economically almost completely unused and exposed to strong depopulation.

The construction of a new road from Neum to Stolac, which in the Municipality of Neum is almost finished and should be fully completed by the summer of 2022, opens numerous opportunities to start the development of tourism and other activities in the hinterland of Neum. The new road enables the creation of a basis for the balanced growth of the economy

in the entire area of the Municipality and thus contributes to reducing the pressure on the narrow coastal area. New circumstances and trends in the global tourism market require a strategic approach to future tourism development through the development of rural, cultural, active and other forms of sustainable tourism. Such development can activate the neglected hinterland, raise the overall level of quality of the tourist supply of the whole Municipality of Neum, and contribute to the balance of development between the coast and the hinterland.

Therefore, this document should serve as a basis for master plans and marketing plans for the Municipality of Neum, and as an instrument for building partnerships and initiating concrete project proposals that could be financed from EU pre-accession funds and other sources. The ICZM protocol as the main management tool aimed at improving the sustainability of tourism activities should serve as a starting point for defining strategic directions in projects of this type. That applies not only to the Municipality of Neum, but also to the Herzegovina-Neretva County, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as to special regional spatial units that would include parts of the surrounding states, primarily neighboring Croatia. Accordingly, the work on this project is based on a participatory process that includes all relevant stakeholders and includes a proposal to establish a destination management organization and a definition of its missions.

## 2. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEUM

### 2.1. Spatial and geographical features

The Municipality of Neum is located in the south of Bosnia and Herzegovina along the border with Croatia in the Herzegovina-Neretva County and covers an area of 225 square kilometers. According to the 2013 Census, there were 4,653 inhabitants, and according to estimates for the year 2020 from the Municipality of Neum 3,426 inhabitants in 27 statistically registered settlements. In Neum as the only settlement on the coast and with urban characteristics there were 3,013 inhabitants in 2013 and 2,800 inhabitants according to the estimate for 2020, while all the remaining 26 rural settlements refer to the interior of the Municipality.<sup>1</sup>

Out of a total of nine municipalities in the Herzegovina-Neretva County the Municipality of Neum is the second smallest in terms of area and population - only the Municipality of Čitluk is smaller with an area of 181 square kilometers, and only the municipality of Ravno had fewer inhabitants according to the 2013 Census (3,249). The Municipality of Neum covers 5.1% of the area and only 2.1% of the population of Herzegovina-Neretva County in 2013. This results in its very sparse population of only 20.7 inhabitants per square kilometers in 2013 and 15.2 inhabitants per square kilometer in 2020. Only the municipality of Ravno was less populated, with 11.4 inhabitants per square kilometer in 2013.

The area of the Municipality of Neum is elongated in the west-east direction, with the distance from the westernmost point on Cape Rep Klek on the Klek peninsula to the easternmost point in Gornje Hrasno being 33 kilometers. Between the northernmost point on Kolojanj hill and the southernmost near Zaton Doli border crossing on the Adriatic coastal road is 15 kilometers, while in the narrowest part the Municipality of Neum near Dobrovo and Moševići the width between the western and eastern border with Croatia is only 4.5 kilometers.

The length of the coastline in the Municipality of Neum, and thus in the whole Bosnia and Herzegovina is 26.1 kilometers, and the surface of the territorial sea 15.4 square kilometers.<sup>2</sup> Within the coastline, the Klek peninsula stands out 6.4 kilometers long and 500 meters wide

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<sup>1</sup> Statistical sources include a total of 27 settlements, but many other sources include some other settlements, which are in fact parts of official settlements such as Vranjevo Selo included in Neum or Mramor included in Brštanica. To avoid confusion, only the official names of settlements from statistical sources were used - Donji Drijen and Donji Zelenikovac instead of unofficial toponyms Drijen and Zelenikovac, and Cerovica instead of Donje Hrasno.

<sup>2</sup> The length of the coastline was taken from the publication 'Monitoring of the marine and coastal environment - monitoring of indicator 16' by Jerko Leventić from 2021. In this material the length of the coastline in the Municipality of Neum was precisely calculated using aerial images by drones at mid-sea level. The area of the territorial sea of the Municipality was calculated based on the GIS base Adria TOPOv4 PRO. Different data appear in statistical publications of Bosnia and Herzegovina and other sources, with the length of the coastline ranging from 21 to 24 kilometers, and the surface of the territorial sea from 14 to 16 square kilometers.

on average, so that the air distance from the westernmost to the easternmost point of the coast belonging to Neum along the border with Croatia is only 7.8 kilometers. Neum-Klek Bay is about seven kilometers long and a little less than a kilometer wide (on the connection with Malostonski Bay only 800 meters). In the Mali Ston Bay, which surrounds the territorial sea of the municipality Municipality of Neum there is small islet Veliki školj with an area of 0.65 hectares and Mali školj rock with an area of 0.07 hectares, and near Cape Rep Kleka Lopata rock with an area of 0.03 hectares. The islet and both rocks are the subject of a border dispute with the Republic of Croatia.

Figure 1. VIEW OF NEUM FROM THE KLEK PENINSULA



Photo: Zoran Klarić

The Municipality of Neum borders on the north with the municipalities of Čapljina and Stolac, on the east with the Municipality of Ravno in the Herzegovina-Neretva County and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in the far east with the municipality of Ljubinje in Republic of Srpska. In the west and southeast, the Municipality of Neum borders the territory of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County in Croatia: on the west with the municipality of Slivno, on the southeast with the Municipality of Dubrovačko primorje, and in the south on the other side of the Malostonski Bay with the municipality of Ston. The coast in the Municipality of Neum is mostly steep, so that majority of the Neum settlement is located at altitudes of 60 meters above sea level or more, and a significant part on more than 100 meters above sea level.

The hinterland of the Municipality is mostly hilly with two larger karst fields around two most important settlements - Gradac closer to Neum and Hutovo deeper in the interior along the river Trebišnjica and Popovo polje karst field. The karst field around Gradac is located at altitudes of 100 to 150 meters, and Popovo polje around Hutovo at altitudes of 250 to 300 meters above sea level. Between these karst fields there is mountain Žaba with the highest peak of the Municipality Crkvina 954 meters above sea level. There are elevations at altitudes of 700 meters above sea level in the east of the Municipality, while the hills in the north and in the immediate vicinity of Neum are under 500 meters above sea level. Most of the settlements in the interior of the Municipality are located at altitudes of 200 to 400 meters above sea level, and the highest is Previš near Hutovo at 540 meters above sea level.

The Municipality of Neum is not rich in water. The only river Trebišnjica flows through the northern part of the municipality with a length of three kilometers, and with a total length of 96.5 kilometers is known as the longest sinking river in Europe. Along the course of Trebišnjica an artificial lake Vrutak with an area of 620 hectares was built for the needs of the hydropower system. There are no other permanent watercourses or lake areas in the municipality, and no protected natural areas at the national or regional level. Only the Klek peninsula is protected as a special protection area (SPA) within the ecological network NATURA 2000, covering an area of 1,934 hectares of land and 72 hectares in the sea.

In the Municipality of Neum the climate is Mediterranean or 'moderately warm humid climate with dry and hot summers' according to Köppen's classification. The average annual temperature is around 17° C, and the annual rainfall around 750 mm. On average, there are about 140 clear days and about 50 cloudy days. The warmest months are July and August with an average temperature of 27° C, and the coldest December and January with an average temperature of about 8° C. In the period from mid-April to mid-October the temperature rarely drops below 15° C, while on average it is lower than 10° C only during December and January. Precipitation is higher in the colder part of the year from November to February, when it can exceed 100 mm, while there is less than 30 mm of precipitation in the period from June to August.<sup>3</sup> In the interior of the Municipality, especially in the higher parts, the temperatures are slightly lower, and the amount of precipitation slightly higher.

## 2.2. Demographic characteristics and economy

Despite the developed tourism and favorable population trends in the recent past, the Municipality of Neum is exposed to depopulation, as is most of Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the 1991 Census of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the population of

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<sup>3</sup> Office of Statistics of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not provide climate data for Neum. Therefore, the basic climate indicators were estimated from the data for Ploče and Dubrovnik in Croatia provided by the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Croatia.



the Municipality was 4,325 inhabitants, according to the 2013 Census 4,653 inhabitants, and according to the estimate of the Municipality of Neum for 2020 only 3,426 inhabitants. The data from the 2013 Census are not completely reliable, since according to information from the Municipality a significant number of inhabitants were present in the Municipality of Neum only at the time of the census, although they really live elsewhere. This is particularly a case for the people owning property in the hinterland, who were present in the houses they own in the villages in the interior of the Municipality only at the time of the Census, although they really live in the settlement of Neum, in other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina or in Croatia due to the possibility of dual citizenship.

Table 1. POPULATION BY SETTLEMENTS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEUM IN 1991, 2013 AND 2020

settlement	Census 1991	Census 2013	Estimate 2020	The difference between 1991 and 2020
Neum	1,651	3,013	2,800	69.6
Brestica	48	8	2	-95.8
Duži	105	42	30	-71.4
Kiševo	11	12	0	-100.0
Babin Do	77	66	30	-61.0
Moševići	114	83	29	-74.6
Dobrovo	144	114	37	-74.3
Gradac	345	234	180	-47.8
Dubravica	67	63	10	-85.1
Hotanj Hutovski	68	100	9	-86.8
Žukovica	53	27	10	-81.1
Donji Drijen	25	20	0	-100.0
Broćanac	84	74	16	-81.0
Prapratnica	83	52	20	-75.9
Hutovo	319	201	104	-67.4
Previš	13	32	2	-84.6
Glumina	58	51	4	-93.1
Donji Zelenikovac	89	43	15	-83.1
Dobri Do	55	42	13	-76.4
Brštanica	112	65	41	-63.4
Cerovo	107	30	12	-88.8
Borut	70	21	4	-94.3
Cerovica	165	88	16	-90.3
Vinine	98	49	16	-83.7
Crnoglav	67	24	8	-88.1
Rabrani	111	46	12	-89.2
Gornje Hrasno	186	53	6	-96.8
TOTAL	4,325	4,653	3,426	-20.8

Sources: Federal Office of Statistics, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the years 1991 and 2013 and estimation from the Municipality of Neum for the year 2020

Therefore, despite a 7% decline in the period from 2013 to 2020 according to the available data, Neum as the only urban settlement is likely to have some population growth, in contrast to the settlements in the hinterland whose population is declining rapidly. The settlement of Neum had a particularly large growth between the 1991 and 2013 censuses, when its number increased from only 1,651 to as many as 3,013 inhabitants. Therefore, the entire Municipality of Neum has had significantly more favorable demographic trends than the rest of the country since the establishment of the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Between the two censuses in 1991 and 2013 only 12 out of a total of 142 municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina had better demographic trends than the Municipality of Neum, and in the Herzegovina-Neretva County only the municipalities of Ravno and Čitluk.

The settlement of Neum with 3,013 inhabitants according to the 2013 Census and about 2,800 inhabitants according to estimates for 2020 ranks 11<sup>th</sup> in the Herzegovina-Neretva County. All other municipal centres except Ravno and the suburbs of the city of Mostar Gnojnice, Vrapčići and Rodoč had more inhabitants than Neum. In Neum there is one primary school, one secondary school focused on occupations in tourism, post office and small clinic, which makes Neum a significant local centre in the Herzegovina-Neretva County. The urban zone of the settlement of Neum covers 8% of the area and as much as 82% of the population of the Municipality. The area of all other 26 settlements covers as much as 92% of the area of the Municipality, but only 18% of the population according to 2020 estimates.

Table 2. POPULATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEUM BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYED LEGAL ENTITIES AND CRAFTSMEN IN 2020

		Total	Agriculture, fishing, and forestry		Industry, construction, mining, energy, and water management		Trade, transportation, and other services except tourism		Tourism		Health, education, culture, and public administration	
			total	%	total	%	total	%	total	%	total	%
Municipality of Neum	legal entities	143	4	2.8	22	15.4	75	52.4	15	10.5	27	18.9
	craftsmen	300	3	1.0	19	6.3	49	16.3	226	75.3	3	1.0
HERCEGOVINA-NERETVA COUNTY	legal entities	7,267	179	2.5	1,196	16.5	4,494	61.8	233	3.2	1,165	16.0
	craftsmen	6,933	473	6.8	1,024	14.8	3,173	45.8	2,065	29.8	198	2.9
FEDERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	legal entities	60,794	1,286	2.1	10,142	16.7	38,042	62.6	1,614	2.7	9,710	16.0
	craftsmen	52,161	5,060	9.7	9,195	17.6	26,464	50.7	9,678	18.6	1,764	3.4

Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2020

Of the other settlements in the Municipality, only Gradac with 180 and Hutovo with 104 inhabitants according to the estimate for 2020 have a certain significance. In both settlements operate the departments of Neum primary school, and in Hutovo a post office. All other settlements had less than 50 inhabitants, with no permanent residents in Kiševo and Donji

Drijen. If we consider that in 1991 in 26 settlements in the interior of the Municipality of Neum lived 2,674 inhabitants, in 2013 1,640, and according to estimates for 2020 only 626 mostly elderly people, it is obvious that this area is on the brink of extinction.

From the demographic picture it can be concluded that the Municipality of Neum is oriented almost exclusively to 'sun & sea' tourism along the Adriatic coast. Other activities are poorly represented or in the function of tourism, which is confirmed by the data on the number of legal entities and craftsmen by activities from 2019. The share of legal entities in tourism in the Municipality of Neum is three times bigger than in the Herzegovina-Neretva County and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and as many as 75% of registered craftsmen are related to tourism, which is by far the highest in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The small role of agriculture can be seen from the fact that out of a total of 865 hectares of arable land, only 58 hectares or 7% is cultivated, most of which is the production of hay. In contrast, the share of cultivated areas in the Herzegovina-Neretva County was 33%, of which 14% related to vegetable crops. As there is no industry in the Municipality of Neum, it can be assumed that large part of the unemployed and retired persons is also engaged in tourism.

Despite the perception of the high level of overall development of the Municipality of Neum due to high degree of urbanization and good infrastructure compared to the rest of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the average net salary was only 885 KM. That is much lower than the average of the Herzegovina-Neretva County (1,011 KM) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (928 KM). Even though tourism is an activity characterized by relatively low average wages, it is estimated that real wages in the tourism sector are still higher, because a significant part of income is not officially registered. However, the Municipality of Neum had a significantly lower unemployment rate (23%) than the Herzegovina-Neretva County (35%) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (37%).

## 2.3. Transport and communal infrastructure

### **General characteristics of the traffic position**

Neum has relatively good traffic position in the south of Bosnia and Herzegovina surrounded by Southern Dalmatia in Croatia on the Adriatic coastal road ('Jadranska magistrala'). From Neum there is 30 kilometers and half an hour drive to the second most important Croatian trading port Ploče with Čeveljuša junction leading to the 'Dalmatina' highway on the Adriatic-Ionian corridor to Zagreb. At about 80 kilometers from Neum and one hour drive there is busy Dubrovnik airport in Croatia, and about one hour drive is to the less important Mostar airport in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is 175 kilometers and less than two hours' drive to the very important Split airport in Croatia, and 130 kilometers and two-and-a-half-hour drive to the Tivat airport on the Coast of Montenegro. Such a position makes the Municipality of Neum easily accessible to many tourists having holiday in the South Adriatic.

Figure 2. THE POSITION OF NEUM IN RELATION TO MAIN TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN THE SURROUNDING AREAS



Author: Zoran Klarić

Table 3. DISTANCE AND ESTIMATED DRIVING DURATION FROM NEUM TO THE MOST IMPORTANT LOCATIONS AND TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN THE SURROUNDING AREAS

country	location / destination	distance	time
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Stolac	50 km <sup>*)</sup>	49 min
	Čapljina	43 km <sup>**) </sup>	46 min
	Kravica waterfall	51 km	1h 03 min
	Počitelj	46 km <sup>**) </sup>	48 min
	Međugorje	57 km	1 h 1 min
	Mostar Airport	68 km <sup>**) </sup>	1h 14 min
	The city of Mostar	75 km <sup>**) </sup>	1h 23 min
	Vjetrenica cave	46 km	44 min
Croatia	Ston	22 km	18 min
	Ploče (Čeveljuša junction)	31 km	24 min
	Mljet National Park	65 km <sup>***)</sup>	1h 41 min
	The city of Dubrovnik	65 km	57 min
	Dubrovnik Airport	83 km	1h 12 min
	Korčula	87 km <sup>***)</sup>	1h 42 min
	Hvar	141 km <sup>***)</sup>	1h 31 min
	Biokovo Nature Park - 'Skywalk'	96 km	1 h 30 min
	The city of Split	163 km	1 h 51 min
	Split Airport	175 km	2h 1 min
Montenegro	Tivat Airport	133 km <sup>***)</sup>	2h 35 min
	Kotor	153 km	2h 38 min

<sup>\*)</sup> The distance and travel duration to Stolac refers to the route that leads from Neum to Hutovo on the new road, and from Hutovo to Stolac on the old one. Upon completion of the entire new road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac, the distance to Stolac will be further reduced by about five kilometers, and travel duration by about ten minutes.

<sup>\*\*)</sup> The distances and travel duration to Čapljina, Počitelj and Mostar refer to the routes through Croatia as the fastest at this moment, assuming that there is no waiting at border crossings. That means the actual duration of the trip in practice can be much longer. After the completion of the entire new road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac, the most favorable connections of Neum with Čapljina, Počitelj and Mostar will become those on that road, although the distances and travel duration without waiting at the border crossings will remain approximately the same as on routes through Croatia.

<sup>\*\*\*)</sup> Distances include the ferry line Prapatna - Sobra (9.8 km) for Mljet National Park, Orebić - Dominče (3.5 km) for Korčula, Drvenik - Sućuraj (6.3 km) for Hvar and Kamenari - Lepetane (1, 0 km) in the Bay of Kotor for Tivat. The duration of the journey implies a ferry ride on the assumption that there is no waiting to enter and disembark from the ferry.

Source: <https://map.hak.hr>



A particularly favorable issue for the development of tourism in Neum is its proximity to top tourist attractions in the surrounding areas. At distances of about 70 kilometers there are UNESCO World Heritage Sites the Old Town of Dubrovnik and the Old Town of Mostar with the famous bridge, and at about 170 kilometers Split with Diocletian's Palace in Croatia and the Bay of Kotor in Montenegro, also protected by UNESCO. At fifty kilometers from Neum in Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the world's largest Catholic pilgrimage centres Međugorje, Radimlja necropolis in Stolac as the central site of complex UNESCO protected area 'Stećci Medieval Tombstone Graveyards', the most attractive waterfall in Bosnia and Herzegovina Kravica and the largest and most beautiful cave in Bosnia and Herzegovina Vjetrenica.

Only twenty kilometers east from Neum on the Pelješac peninsula in Croatia is Ston with its monumental medieval walls and next to it the famous Pelješac vineyards. On the other side of the border to the west lies the picturesque Neretva area with the Neretva delta and the archaeological site of Naron, and about fifty kilometers in the direction of Mostar one of the most beautiful preserved medieval towns in Bosnia and Herzegovina Počitelj. Close to Neum is also magnificent Makarska Riviera in Croatia with the Biokovo Nature Park and the famous 'skywalk', and the most beautiful Croatian islands - nearby Mljet with its national park, and a little further Korčula and Hvar with the picturesque old towns of the same name.

There are also several attractive towns and cities in neighboring parts of Herzegovina such as Blagaj with the famous Tekija, Široki Brijeg with the imposing monastery, and Trebinje with the preserved old town and beautiful Arslanagića bridge. In neighboring Croatia there are many other attractive towns such as Makarska, Omiš and Stari Grad on the island of Hvar with the Stari Grad Plain under UNESCO protection, as well as picturesque smaller towns and villages such as Cavtat near Dubrovnik, Blato on the island of Korčula, Jelsa on the island of Hvar, Lastovo on the island of the same name and many others. If we add the not-so-distant towns of Herceg Novi, Tivat, Budva and Cetinje in Montenegro and attractive natural sights such as nature parks Hutovo Blato and Blidinje in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lastovo archipelago in Croatia and the national park Lovćen in Montenegro, it turns out that Neum is in the center of one of the most attractive parts of the entire Mediterranean.

### **Road network**

In contrast to the general traffic position of Neum, which is very favorable from a tourist point of view, until recently a major problem was the poor condition of the local road network. This was particularly true in case of the connections with the rest of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which took place on a narrow and winding road, making it difficult for buses and trucks to travel. Therefore, it was easier to reach Čapljina, Počitelj and Mostar from Neum via Croatia, because the distances are shorter, and the roads are relatively wide with good driving characteristics. However, due to the need to cross twice the state border with Croatia under the Schengen regime, this journey often took a long time, especially during the summer tourist season.

Figure 3. SPATIAL ORGANIZATION, SETTLEMENTS AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEUM



Author: Zoran Klarić

The situation significantly improved during the preparation of this study because the new road Neum - Stolac finally began to be built more intensively. Unlike the old narrow road with many hairpin bends the new road is wide and with good driving characteristics, and because many parts are in tunnels and viaducts the distance between Neum and Stolac will be about ten kilometers shorter than on the old road. In the Municipality of Neum the new road is almost finished, and the remaining section should be fully completed by the summer of 2022. This would significantly ease the connection of Neum with Stolac, Čapljina, Počitelj and further to Mostar and Sarajevo. Although the distance between Neum and Međugorje, Čapljina, Blidinje Nature Park and other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the west would remain shorter via Croatia, the accessibility of these sites will also improve, as there would be no need for double crossing the state border between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

Simultaneously with the construction of the new road Neum - Stolac, in progress is also the construction of the Pelješac Bridge with access roads and the Ston bypass in the immediate vicinity in Croatia. The Pelješac bridge is already structurally completed, and its opening for traffic is expected in summer 2022. Access roads should be completed by the end of 2022, so transit traffic between Dubrovnik and the rest of Croatia, which has so far passed through Neum with a double border crossing between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, should take place across the Pelješac peninsula without crossing borders. This will significantly reduce the traffic pressure on the center of Neum, where the daily traffic between Dubrovnik and the rest of Croatia in the summer was more than 10,000 vehicles with many trucks and buses.

Figure 4. NEW ROAD M-17.3 NEUM - HUTOVO - STOLAC NEAR BROČANAC



Photo: Zoran Klarić



The average annual daily traffic at the western entrance to Neum on the Adriatic coastal road M-2 ('Jadranska magistrala') in 2019 was 5,686 vehicles, and during July and August 10,093 vehicles.<sup>4</sup> According to data from the same year for Adriatic coastal road in Croatia (the state road D-8) at the Klek counter near the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina, the average annual daily traffic was 5,930 vehicles, and at the Zaton Doli counter 5,534 vehicles. During July and August, 11,048 vehicles daily were registered at the Klek counter and 10,167 vehicles at the Zaton Doli counter.<sup>5</sup> From the small difference in the number of vehicles between these two locations, it can be concluded that most of the traffic on the Adriatic coastal road through Neum was related to transit between the two parts of Croatia.

However, data on the average annual daily traffic on the road M-17.3 Neum - Hutovo - Stolac from 2019 of 3,003 vehicles at the entrance to Neum from the direction of Stolac and 1,268 vehicles at the entrance to Stolac from the direction of Neum indicate that significant traffic took place also on the old technically unfavorable road. Having in mind the small number of inhabitants of the hinterland of the Municipality of Neum, a large part of that traffic is most likely related to the connection of Neum with Čapljina and Mostar via the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina instead of better from the technical point of view, but due to long waits at the border much less acceptable connection across the territory of Croatia.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, it can be expected that after the new road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac will be finished there will be no need for travelling from Neum to Čapljina and Mostar through the territory of Croatia.

The absence of transit traffic through Neum will at the same time lead to a certain negative impact on economy in the Municipality of Neum, especially for shops and restaurants located along the Adriatic coastal road. However, it is estimated that these losses will not be large, while the possible positive impacts are even greater. The reason for that is the fact that the road distance from Komarna to Zaton Doli on Ploče - Dubrovnik section of the Adriatic coastal road will remain three kilometers shorter via Neum than via the Pelješac Bridge even after the Pelješac Bridge and access roads will be finished. As the number of vehicles at the border will be significantly reduced, it can also be expected that some drivers will continue to pass through Neum to use its affordable shopping and catering services.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, Neum

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<sup>4</sup> 'Traffic counting on the main roads of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2019', Public Enterprise Roads of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo 2021

<sup>5</sup> 'Traffic counting on the roads of the Republic of Croatia in 2019', Public Enterprise Croatian roads, Zagreb 2020

<sup>6</sup> The source is the same as under footnote 4 ('Traffic counting on the main roads of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2019'), but there are no data for other locations on the road M-17.3 in the municipality of Neum or for the average daily traffic in July and August. However, from a comparison with other locations in the surrounding areas, it can be assumed that the difference between the average summer and average annual daily traffic on this road is significantly smaller than on the Adriatic coastal road.

<sup>7</sup> In the study 'Tourism development plan for Pelješac peninsula in the context of the construction of the Pelješac Bridge' (Institute for Tourism, 2019), in which the author of this material participated, it is estimated that about 20% of vehicles from the Neretva Delta to Dubrovnik will continue to travel through Neum.

could function better as a town, as the noise and air pollution caused by intense motor traffic passing through its centre will be significantly reduced, especially by large trucks and buses.

As the construction of the Pelješac Bridge with access roads will result in the relocation of the Adriatic coastal road between Komarna and Zaton Doli to the route across Pelješac Peninsula, the Croatian state road D-8 and the Bosnian main road M-2 on the route Komarna - Neum - Zaton Doli will become roads of regional importance. The traffic importance of the old narrow road between Neum and Stolac will be further reduced, because after the completion of the new road, it will become a road of only local importance.<sup>8</sup> Redirection of traffic between Ploče and Dubrovnik on the route over the Pelješac Bridge will also significantly reduce public bus connections for Neum, because it is to be expected that buses that connect Dubrovnik with the other parts of Croatia will no longer run via Neum, except in case of rare exceptions.

Table 4. MAIN ('MAGISTRALNE') AND REGIONAL ROADS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEUM

road number		road description	length in km	
old label	new label		total	Municipality of Neum
<b>M-2 (E65)</b>	<b>M-121</b>	<b>Croatian border - Neum - Croatian border</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>9.3</b>
<b>M-17.3</b>	<b>M-232</b>	<b>Mostar (Buna) - Masline and Stolac - Cerovica - Hutovo - Neum<sup>*)</sup></b>	<b>72.4</b>	<b>36.7</b>
R-426	<b>M-233</b>	Dračevo - Cerovica	15.6	3.9
R-426	R-707	Hutovo - Ravno (M-6)	22.0	6.7

<sup>\*)</sup> The length of the road M-17.3 / M-232 refers to the old route, while the new road should be shorter by 8 kilometers. Masline - Stolac section with a length of 5.7 kilometers overlaps with the route on the road M-6 (future M-225), so it is not included in the total length of the road M-17.3 / M-232.

Source: Official Gazette of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina" from 15 November 2014 (V number 464/2014) and <https://map.hak.hr>

In addition to the M-2 and M-17.3 roads as the only two roads in the Municipality of Neum with a wide carriageway and good driving characteristics, the status of the main road should be given also to the connection of the Cerovica junction on the road M-17.3 with Dračevo near Čapljina in Neretva valley. Unlike the M-2 and M-17.3 roads, this road is narrow and with many hairpin bends, which is why its upgrade is planned. Actual plans also envisage the construction of the Neum bypass instead of the current route of the Adriatic coastal road, but this is not realistic given the expected decline in traffic after the Pelješac Bridge is opened to traffic. Of the other roads in the Municipality of Neum, only the connection of Hutovo and Ravno has the status of a regional road. It is a narrow but very picturesque road that mainly uses the

<sup>8</sup> According to the "Official Gazette of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina" from 15 November 2014. (V No. 464/2014) the main road with the label M-2 Croatian border - Neum - Croatian border should become the main road M-121, and the main road with the label M-17.3 Mostar (Buna) - Masline and Stolac - Cerovica - Hutovo - Neum on the new route should become road M-232.



route of the former narrow-gauge railway 'Ćiro'.<sup>9</sup> Two local roads to Croatia from the upper part of Neum settlement in the direction of Mlinište and Imotica are also of relatively good quality, but the border crossing is only allowed for the local population.

The remaining roads in the Municipality of Neum are only of local importance and mainly relate to the connections of more distant villages with the main road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac. The longest and most important are Gradac - Gornji Drijen (10 km), Cerovica - Cerovo (7 km) and Rabrani - Gornje Hrasno - Velja Međa in the Municipality of Ravno (11 km). Although almost all roads leading to the villages that are not located along the road M-17.3 have an asphalt surface, they are mostly very narrow with many hairpin bends, and the quality of the surface is often poor. Only some roads leading to small remote hamlets and roads of local importance leading to neighboring municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and towards Croatia are unpaved. Unfortunately, on many local unpaved roads the surface is due to poor maintenance in such a bad condition that driving is possible only with off-road vehicles and tractors, and on some roads driving is impossible because they are overgrown with bushes.

The only relatively well-maintained unpaved road is the one leading to the Klek peninsula and its mariculture facilities and is important for access to the protected area of the Klek peninsula and its shores. Unpaved surface has the old direct road connecting Brštanica and Hutovo and a section of the local road Rabrani - Gornje Hrasno - Velja Međa connecting the northeastern part of the Municipality of Neum with the Municipality of Ravno and Popovo polje karst field. This road, as well as the road connecting Cerovica with Gornje Hrasno south of the villages Vinine, Crnoglav and Rabrani is important as a potential cycling route and for providing access to the attractive Toplica necropolis. This road is currently in a very poor condition, which is why it would be advisable to at least upgrade its quality or, if possible, to pave the road.

### **Other forms of transport**

Apart from road transport, there are no other forms of transport in the Municipality of Neum, but access to them is possible in the immediate vicinity in the Republic of Croatia. The port and railway station Ploče as the end point of the most important railway in Bosnia and Herzegovina Šamac - Doboј - Sarajevo - Mostar - Ploče is half an hour away by car, and to the nearest airports Dubrovnik and Mostar is about an hour. But neither railway nor sea traffic has almost any importance for Neum.

Although it is the only coastal settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Neum does not function as a port. Apart from the fact that only thirty kilometers away in Croatia there is main trading

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<sup>9</sup> According to the data from the Public Company 'Roads of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina' ('Javno poduzeće Ceste Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine') the Cerovica - Dračevo road section currently has the status of a regional road of the first order under number R-426, but it should be upgraded into a main ('magistralna') road under number M-233. The remaining section of the regional road R-426 from Hutovo to Ravno should retain the status of the regional road of the first order with the label R-707.

port for Bosnia and Herzegovina Ploče with good traffic access, in Neum is almost impossible to build port due to lack of space caused by the steep coast and restricted navigation in Mali Ston Bay, protected as marine reserve. Due to the steep terrain and lack of space in Neum there are no marked cycling paths nor are bicycles significantly used as a means of transport. Currently there are no funiculars or urban elevators in Neum, although their introduction would be very advisable given the configuration of the terrain and traffic conditions.

### **Communal infrastructure**

The communal infrastructure in the Municipality of Neum is generally good, because all settlements have electricity, most villages also public water supply network, and Neum settlement, which accounts for 82% of the population of the municipality, the sewerage network. Due to the status of Malostonski Bay in Croatia as a marine reserve, Neum wastewater is transported by tunnel across the territory of Croatia to the south side of the Pelješac peninsula into the open sea, so Neum and its shores are not exposed to sea pollution.

However, about 10% of households in the Municipality of Neum do not have a connection to the public water supply, which refers to most villages in the hinterland. According to data from the Municipality, in addition to Neum there are only ten settlements connected to the public water supply network. This applies mainly to villages along the M-17.3 road (Duži, Babin Do, Moševići, Gradac, Broćanac, Prapratnica, Hutovo, Zelenikovac, Dobri Do and Brštanica), while in the remaining 16 villages residents are supplied with water from local systems or from cisterns. These are mainly villages at higher altitudes exposed to strong depopulation, in which, according to estimates for 2020, there were only 148 inhabitants or less than 5% of the total population of the Municipality of Neum. This fact significantly limits the possibilities of tourist development of these settlements, especially when it comes to accommodation for demanding guests with higher purchasing power.

Probably the most important communal problem for the Municipality is waste disposal, because the existing municipal landfill Klepovica, located between Duži and Moševići on the old road Neum - Hutovo eight kilometers from the sea, is completely unregulated. In addition, waste is transported to Klepovica not only from the Municipality of Neum, but also from the Pelješac peninsula in Croatia. Since inappropriate waste disposal due to the porosity of the karst soil could become a major environmental problem, there is a plan to rehabilitate the landfill. A management plan and a feasibility study with a preliminary plan for recovery of the landfill have already been produced, but there is no progress towards implementation. In addition to the low level of waste separation and recycling, a problem is also the general level of cleanliness, which could be a problem when raising the tourist supply in the Municipality of Neum to the desired higher level.

### 3. THE CURRENT STATE OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

#### 3.1. Tourist resources and attractions

The Municipality of Neum is known as the only part of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Adriatic Sea, which cuts the area of Croatia into two parts. This situation is a consequence of the cease of the area around Neum to the Ottoman Empire in 1718 by the Republic of Dubrovnik so as not to have a direct land border with the Venetian Republic as its main rival in the Mediterranean. After the abolition of the Republic of Dubrovnik by the French troops in 1808 and the Austro-Hungarian takeover in 1814, Neum remained part of the Ottoman Empire. After the Austro-Hungarian occupation of the Bosnian eyalet at the expense of the Ottomans in 1878, Neum became part of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a separate territorial unit within Austro-Hungary until its collapse in the First World War in 1918. Within these borders, Bosnia and Herzegovina became one of the components of the Socialist Federal Yugoslavia in 1943, and after 1992 an independent state.

Since the area of the Municipality of Neum was originally part of the Republic of Dubrovnik, the basic characteristics of the landscape are almost identical to those in the neighboring Municipality of Dubrovačko primorje in Croatia, and the population is almost exclusively Croatian.<sup>10</sup> The coastal part of the municipality consists of a 26-kilometer-long indented and mostly steep coast, within which the Klek peninsula and the Neum-Klek bay stand out as part of the larger Malostonski Bay in neighboring Croatia. The interior of the Municipality is a picturesque hilly area with karst fields, including one of the largest karst fields in Bosnia and Herzegovina Popovo field along the river Trebišnjica.

Despite the picturesque landscape in the Municipality of Neum there is no protected natural area at the state level, only the Klek peninsula is protected as a site within the ecological network of NATURA 2000 protected areas under number BA8200061. The main reason for protection is not the picturesqueness of the peninsula itself, but the protection of several species of bats, snakes and turtles that live on the rocks of the peninsula, and endemic type of Adriatic sturgeon in the sea around the peninsula. The waters that belong to the Municipality are surrounded by a marine reserve Malostonski bay and Malo more in Croatia, which is known for shellfish production and stands out for the picturesqueness of its indented coasts. The waters around Klek peninsula include small islet Veliki školj and Mali školj and Lopata rocks, which are the subject of a border dispute between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

In the Municipality of Neum there are no cultural monuments of international importance such as in Dubrovnik or Mostar, or in the immediate vicinity in Ston. There are only five sites on the list of national monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and three more on the tentative list. Out

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<sup>10</sup> According to the Census of the population of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2013, out of a total of 4,653 inhabitants of the Municipality of Neum, 4,543 or 97.6% were Croats. They make up most of the population in all settlements except Rabrani in the extreme northeast of the Municipality, where out of 46 inhabitants there were 27 Bosniaks and 19 Croats.

of those, as many as five refer to the necropolis of 'stećci' medieval tombstones, one to the protected complex (old fortress), on to the sacral heritage (church), and one to the old carved stone slab.

The list of national monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina includes the necropolises of 'stećci' tombstones in Brštanica and Glumina, in some materials also the Crkvina necropolis near Hutovo, and on the tentative list the Toplica necropolis near the village of Vinine and the Vranjevo selo necropolis on the northeastern outskirt of Neum. All five necropolises have only local significance, which is confirmed by the fact that none of them is included in the complex UNESCO protected area 'Stećci Medieval Tombstone Graveyards', protecting a total of 22 'stećci' necropolises in Bosnia and Herzegovina, three in Montenegro three in Serbia and two in Croatia.

Table 5. MAIN TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEUM

NAME OF ATTRACTION	TYPE OF ATTRACTION	IMPORTANCE	READY TO ENTER THE MARKET
Klek peninsula	natural - coastline	local	partially ready
Mount Žaba (Crkvina 954 m)	natural - mountain	regional	partially ready
Trebišnjica river	natural - river	local	partially ready
Vrutak lake	natural - lake	local	partially ready
Hutovo fortress	cultural - fortress	national	partially ready
Kolojanj archeological site	cultural - arch. site	regional	not ready
Međugorje necropolis near Glumina	cultural - 'stećci'	regional	partially ready
Toplica necropolis near Vinine	cultural - 'stećci'	regional	not ready
Brštanica necropolis	cultural - 'stećci'	local	partially ready
Vranjevo Selo necropolis near Neum	cultural - 'stećci'	local	not ready
Crkvina necropolis near Hutovo	cultural - 'stećci'	local	not ready
Queen of Peace (Kraljica mira) Hrasno pilgrimage site in Cerovica	cultural - pilgrimage site	national	ready
Church of St. Anne in Gradac	cultural - church	local	partially ready
Church of St. Luke, St. John and the The Lady of Lourdes in Hutovo	cultural - church	local	mostly ready
Heritage house in Hutovo with the lapidary and R. Vukanović inscription	cultural - museum	local	mostly ready
Museum of antiquities in Cerovica	cultural - museum	local	mostly ready
Municipal museum and gallery Neum	cultural - museum	local	mostly ready
Cycling route 'Ćiro'	cycling route	international	mostly ready
EuroVelo 8 cycling route	cycling route	international	not ready
Neum - Hutovo - Cerovica cycling route with branches towards Drijen, Cerovo and Gornje Hrasno	cycling routes	regional	mostly ready
Hiking trail to Mt. Žaba from Broćanac	hiking trail	regional	mostly ready

The remaining sites on the list of national monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina include the Complex of the Hutovo fortress, the carved Inscription of Radovan Vukanović in the village of Hutovo and small Church of St. Anne in Gradac from 17<sup>th</sup> century. However, due to the poor maintenance and accessibility, these monuments do not attract many tourists. The same applies to the almost inaccessible Kolojanj archeological site on the hill of the same name in the far north of the Municipality, which, given its historical importance, also has the potential to obtain the status of a national monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Figure 5. QUEEN OF PEACE PILGRIMAGE SITE (SVETIŠTE KRALJICE MIRA) HRASNO IN CEROVICA



Photo: Zoran Klarić

Therefore, the Sanctuary of the Queen of Peace Hrasno in the village of Cerovica stands out as the only attraction in the interior of Municipality of Neum which is ready to enter the tourist market. Since the locality is fully equipped with the necessary tourist facilities and is already relatively well visited as the most important Catholic pilgrimage site in eastern Herzegovina it can be considered an attraction of national importance. Small Museum of Antiquities located within the location of the sanctuary also contributes to the popularity of the site, as well as the attractive Way of the Cross leading to the statue of the Queen of Peace on Gradina hill.

The Heritage house in Hutovo located next to the church of St. Luke, St. John and Our Lady of Lourdes can also be included in the cultural attractions which are ready for tourist market, but of local significance. Within this site there is a small lapidary and inscription by Radovan Vukanović carved in stone from 15<sup>th</sup> century, protected as monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Municipal museum in Neum containing numerous valuable archaeological artifacts from the surrounding area and a gallery with paintings by local artists can also be considered as an attraction of local significance. However, even these localities are not fully ready for tourist market due to low level



of interpretation, inadequate maintenance and access considering the needs of modern tourists, as well as lack of additional facilities such as souvenir shops, cafe bars and the like.

The potential for becoming attractions of a higher level exists only in the case of the Hutovo fortress and the necropolis of the 'stećci' tombstones Medjugorje near the village of Glumina, which stands out from other necropolises in the Municipality of Neum by the attractiveness of the location and the monumentality of the tombstones themselves. The Hutovo fortress could even become an attraction of national importance in case of some investments in its restoration, access, and interpretation. Better landscaping and the addition of attractive interpretive content could contribute to better tourist valorization of the most easily accessible Brštanica 'stećci' necropolis, while due to the largest number of 'stećci' tombstones potentially the most attractive necropolis Toplica near the village of Vinine could become more popular only after solving the currently poor road access. The same is true for the smaller and therefore less attractive necropolis in Vranjevo selo near Neum, which is easier to access, but there is no appropriate path to it and the only approach leads across shrubbery and private property.

Figure 6. MEĐUGORJE NECROPOLIS NEAR VILLAGE OF GLUMINA



Photo: Zoran Klarić

However, in the interior of the Municipality near the village of Hutovo there is already one tourist attraction of international importance, and that is the cycling route 'Ćiro' following the former narrow-gauge railway Gabela - Dubrovnik. This route has already established itself as one of the most attractive cycling routes in Southeast Europe, alongside the much better-known similar route 'Parenzana' on Istria peninsula in Croatia following the former Trieste - Poreč narrow-gauge

railway. An even more important EuroVelo 8 Mediterranean route could soon pass through Neum. The reason is a fact that after the opening of the Pelješac Bridge for traffic it is very likely that the ferry line Ploče - Trpanj will stop operating, causing a necessity to move EV8 from the route across the Pelješac peninsula to the route via Neum. Such a development gives Neum the opportunity to be included in the network of the most attractive cycling routes in Europe.

In addition, the great potential of cycling tourism in the Municipality of Neum is affected by the fact that after the completion of the new road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac the old narrow asphalt road will have very little motor traffic and thus become very attractive to cyclists. Considering that the surrounding areas in the Dubrovnik-Neretva County along the Adriatic coastal road are not suitable for cycling, the Municipality of Neum has a chance to become a kind of 'cycling paradise' for fans of this type of tourism staying in Dubrovnik and other Croatian coastal destinations. This is further helped by the fact that in the Municipality of Neum there are other local paved roads with minimal motor traffic attractive for cyclists, particularly the three longest local roads Gradac - Donji Drijen, Cerovica - Cerovo and Cerovica - Rabrani - Gornje Hrasno - Velja Međa as an alternative to the route 'Ćiro' between Brštanica and Ravno.

Figure 7. FORMER HRASNO RAILWAY STATION IN BRŠTANICA



Photo: Zoran Klarić

The attractiveness of Neum for cycling tourism will certainly be affected by the expected large drop in the number of vehicles on the Komarna - Zaton Doli section of the Adriatic coastal road, which could therefore become more attractive for cyclists. However, from the aspect of safety



and attractiveness it is advisable to relocate the international cycling route EuroVelo 8 from the Adriatic coastal road to the coastal part of Neum. A prerequisite for this is providing an access for cyclists coming from the direction of Komarna via Adriatic coastal road to the local coastal road in Neum next to the border crossing with Croatia, and from the direction of Zaton Doli near Jazina Street and Klek peninsula. In the Municipality of Neum there are opportunities for mountain biking too, although they are relatively limited due to the low quality of local unpaved roads, because many of them have lost their macadam surface and are overgrown with shrubbery.

However, in the case of general growth in cycling tourism, the situation regarding the network of roads in the Municipality of Neum suitable for mountain biking can be improved, similarly as the attractiveness of the Municipality of Neum for hiking improved after the recent hiking trail from Broćanac to Mount Žaba was built. In case of building additional hiking paths to Mount Žaba from Cerovo and/or Hutovo, some climbing areas and attractive rest areas and lookouts, Mount Žaba could gain regional significance as a mountaineering destination and the Municipality of Neum as a desirable destination for hiking and climbing.

Figure 8. CYCLING ROUTE 'ĆIRO' ALONG THE FORMER NARROW-GAUGE RAILWAY ČAPLJINA – DUBROVNIK NEAR HUTOVO



Photo: Zoran Klarić

Besides hiking on Mount Žaba in the Municipality of Neum there are good opportunities also for 'soft' types of hiking and walking in the rural countryside. This is caused by the fact that, unlike in the coastal part of the Municipality, the rural countryside in the hinterland is not architecturally devastated and is rich with many examples of preserved old stone rural architecture. The village of Glumina with beautiful stone houses in a picturesque karst valley, Brštanica with preserved

buildings related to the former railway 'Ćiro', Gornje Hrasno nested in wild natural environment high above Popovo polje karst field, Žukovica and Donji Drijen located in beautiful hilly countryside stand out as particularly attractive. Although it is an artificial lake, it is worth considering the use of Lake Vrutak as the only lake in the Municipality for fishing tourism.

Investments in landscaping and interpretation could raise the level of attractiveness of many other attractions, both those with the status of national monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and those that are not. This includes numerous village churches, old stone houses, and particularly buildings along the former narrow-gauge railway 'Ćiro' such as bridges, viaducts, old railway stations, water tanks, etc. Good interpretation and landscaping could especially raise the attractiveness of the Hutovo fortress, which under the assumption of restoration of particularly important parts such as the mosque and the tower of Hadžibeg Rizvanbegović could grow into an attraction of wider importance.

Investments in better signalization and maintenance of cycling routes and hiking trails through the improvement of the ground surface and safety on dangerous sections, as well as the construction of rest areas, lookouts, and other additional facilities, could have particularly great importance. Having in mind the attractiveness and networking potential of EuroVelo and national cycling routes, the Municipality of Neum can become one of the most attractive zones for cycling and hiking in South Dalmatia and Herzegovina.

However, the key reasons for the arrival of tourists in the Municipality of Neum will remain 'sun & sea' tourism and its extremely favorable position in relation to major tourist attractions in the area, primarily the old cities of Dubrovnik and Mostar under UNESCO protection, and the National Park Mljet and Ston with its walls as key attractions in the immediate vicinity. Considering the competitiveness of prices of accommodation and catering services compared to those in Dubrovnik and the surrounding areas, Neum and its preserved hinterland has great opportunity of functioning as a kind of base for the exploration of many exceptionally attractive destinations in the wider region of the Southern Adriatic.

### 3.2. Tourist supply and demand

According to the number of beds, tourists and overnights, the Municipality of Neum is the second largest tourist destination in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the capital Sarajevo. Given the data from the Municipality in the year 2019 in Neum there were 30 hotels and similar establishments, among which stand out three larger hotels with a capacity of about 200 beds, and 198 facilities that offer accommodation in households. The number of beds in hotels and similar establishments was 3,186, and in households 1,970, while there is no data for other accommodation capacities. Among the hotels, 7 of them with 1,379 beds had four stars, 11 of them with 1,425 beds had three stars, and the remaining 12 hotels and similar establishments with only 326 beds two stars or less.

Such a structure of accommodation is better than in all neighboring coastal destinations in Croatia, where the share of accommodation in hotels and similar establishments is much smaller, but worse than in the city of Dubrovnik, where most hotels are four and five star and prices are significantly higher.<sup>11</sup> However, as it is estimated that a large number of beds in households are not registered, the share of accommodation in hotels and similar establishments in Neum is in reality under than 50%. A total of 4,318 beds were registered in the Municipality of Neum, compared to 5,158 in 1988, which is slightly less than today, and the share of hotel-type facilities was less than 50%.

Table 6. THE NUMBER OF ARRIVALS AND OVERNIGHTS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEUM FROM 2015 TO 2019

year	number of arrivals		number of overnights		foreign tourists %		average length of stay days	
	total	foreign	total	foreign	arrivals	overnights	total	foreign
2015	81,000	68,000	218,000	181,000	84.0	83.0	2.8	2.7
2016	96,000	81,000	228,000	190,000	84.4	83.3	2.5	2.3
2017	113,000	97,000	265,000	223,000	85.8	84.2	2.6	2.3
2018	118,000	102,000	288,000	245,000	86.4	85.1	2.7	2.4
2019	132,760	115,913	292,773	247,976	87.3	84.7	2.7	2.1
2015-2018%	63.9	70.5	34.3	37.0				

Sources: For 2015-2018 Federal Bureau of Statistics, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and for 2019 Report on the work of the Tourist Board of the Herzegovina-Neretva County for 2021

If we consider that in the last thirty years there has been a significant increase in the number of accommodation capacities in households in Neum, what is obvious by visual observation, the official data do not show the real situation. The quality of accommodation is in reality significantly lower, what is approved by the much lower average prices of accommodation in Neum than for the similar type of accommodation in neighboring parts of Croatia.

Apart from the slightly lower quality of accommodation capacities, Neum is characterized also by a significantly less favorable structure of tourist demand. It is manifested with much larger share of tourists from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia with lower purchasing power compared to tourists from developed European countries and non-European countries dominating in neighboring destinations in Croatia. The smaller attractiveness of the settlement of Neum as a destination due to the urban disorder, improper waste management and overcrowded beaches in relation to the tourist destinations in the neighboring Dubrovnik-Neretva County certainly played a big role in those differences.

<sup>11</sup> According to the data from the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Croatia for 2019 in the municipalities of Ston, Janjina and Orebić the share of beds in hotels and similar establishments was less than 10%, in the municipalities of Slivno and Trpanj 16-17%, and more than 30% only in the Municipality of Dubrovačko primorje and in the City of Dubrovnik.



Data on the number of overnights are even less reliable than data on the number of accommodation capacities and arrivals. The total number of overnights was 292,773 in the year 2019 according to data from the Tourist Board of Herzegovina-Neretva County, what is unrealistically small considering the registered accommodation capacity this number. More than 300,000 overnights were realized in many Croatian coastal municipalities in Dalmatia with less than 3,000 beds and with a lower share of hotel accommodation - for example, in the Municipality of Konavle in Dubrovnik-Neretva County in 2019 there were 750,000 overnights with less than 6,000 total beds.

The fact that the actual number of overnights in the Municipality of Neum is significantly higher than shown in the official statistics can be documented with the comparison with the internal data of the ten most important hotels in Neum. Only those hotels in 2019 have 161,381 overnights, what is more than half of overnights recorded by official statistics.<sup>12</sup>

The unreality of official statistical data for arrivals and overnights can also be indicated by a comparison with the data from the period before the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to these data, in the Municipality of Neum in 1989 were a total of 91,000 arrivals and as many as 599,000 total overnights, which is twice as many as today. If we consider that in the years before the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina the number of registered beds was only slightly lower than today, it can be concluded that the actual number of overnights in the Municipality of Neum is at least twice, if not three times higher than official statistics. So, for 2019, it can be estimated minimum 800,000 overnights, although it is very likely that this number is higher than 900,000 overnights.<sup>13</sup>

As the statistical data on the total number of overnights and business reports of Neum hotels in the last four years refer to the same accommodation capacities, the data on the number of tourists and overnights despite the unreliability indicate certain trends. The main trend is the large increase in the number of overnights and even larger increase in the number of arrivals, confirmed by the fact that the total number of overnights in all accommodation capacities registered by official statistics increased by 34% and the number of arrivals by 64%. According to statistical data in the period from 2015 to 2019 the increase is particularly high in case of foreign tourists - the number of overnights by 37%, and arrivals by as much as 70%. According to the data for ten Neum hotels, the total number of overnights increased by 26% in the same period, and the number of overnights of domestic tourists by 45%.

The current state of Neum's tourism is also characterized by the reorientation from predominantly domestic demand from the former Yugoslavia to predominantly foreign

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<sup>12</sup> The data were provided by the Municipality of Neum, and refer to the hotels Neum, Sunce, Zenit, Stella, Adria, Luna, Nova, Porat, Orka and Jadran.

<sup>13</sup> In the publication "B&H Draft Post-2020 SAP Bio National contribution document on Mediterranean marine and coastal biodiversity preservation beyond 2030" the number of overnights in the Municipality of Neum is estimated at 700,000, but the author of this material and sources in the Municipality of Neum estimate that this number is much higher.

demand in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Before 1990 the share of foreign tourists and overnights was less than 30%, while in 2019 the share of foreign tourists in overnights in registered facilities was 84%, and in arrivals 87%.<sup>14</sup> However, the share of domestic tourists and from the countries of the former Yugoslavia would probably be higher if all accommodation capacities were included and all realized overnights were registered, since it is estimated that in their case, due to the easier language understanding and the higher share of guests who come to the same facility for several years in a row, the share of overnight stays not recorded by statistics is significantly higher.

Figure 9. THE COASTLINE IN NEUM NEAR HOTEL 'VAPORE'



Photo: Zoran Klarić

Despite the differences in the structure of demand, general tourist trends in the Municipality of Neum are like those in neighboring areas in Croatia, which are also characterized by a large increase in the number of overnights and an even greater increase in the number of arrivals. The consequence is a significant reduction in the average length of stay of tourists, which in the Municipality of Neum, according to official statistical data, decreased from 2.7 days in 2015 to only 2.2 days in 2019. However, it should be borne in mind that the average length of stay of tourists in Neum is in reality much longer, as a significant number of overnights have not been officially reported.

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<sup>14</sup> Prior to 1990, all tourists from the countries of the former Yugoslavia were recorded as domestic tourists, while after 1992 this applied only to tourists from Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, from the official statistical data it is obvious that today in the Municipality of Neum there are significantly less tourists who come from all the countries of the former Yugoslavia together, than from other countries in Europe and the world.

Based on these data, it can be concluded that even though Neum still functions as a classic 'sun & sea' destination, it increasingly plays the role of a kind of 'base' for visiting many 'top' attractions in the surrounding areas due to its traffic position and more affordable prices compared to neighboring parts of Croatia. This is particularly a case with foreign tourists, whose average length of stay in 2019 of 2.1 days was significantly shorter than the length of stay of domestic tourists of 2.7 days in average according to the data by official statistics. However, the real average length of stay of domestic tourists is even longer, because in their case the share of unregistered overnights is much higher than in the case of foreign tourists. This is a major change compared to the period before the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, when the average length of stay of all tourists in Neum was longer than six days.

Despite a significant reduction in the average length of stay and an increase in the share of foreign tourists, the basic concept of tourism in Neum has not changed and it is still based on 'sun & sea' concept and the short summer season. This is confirmed by the fact that in ten hotels in Neum in 2019 as many as 60% of all overnights were realized during July and August, 27% during June and September, and only 13% in other periods of the year. If we consider that the seasonality of business in households that are not registered by official statistics is much higher, the real situation regarding the seasonality of tourism in Neum is even more unfavorable. An additional problem is the fact that practically all accommodation capacities and catering facilities are concentrated along the coast. At the same time in the hinterland of the Municipality there is only one object of rural tourism, a couple of holiday homes for rent and only one permanently open object that provides food.

From the above it can be concluded that the main problems of the current state of tourism development in the Municipality of Neum are the lack of tourism business that is not related to the beaches and the lack of incentive that would stimulate tourists to stay longer. This is caused not only due the lack of tourist demand and attractions in the hinterland, but also in Neum itself as a relatively new settlement without proper urban characteristics. The Municipality of Neum was founded in 1977 by separation from the municipality of Čapljina, and the settlement of Neum began to acquire urban features in the early 1980s. Before that, Neum was a rural settlement with only 360 inhabitants in the year 1971, with most of the houses concentrated along the Adriatic coastal road and deeper inland away from the sea.

The expansion of the settlement towards the coast primarily included the construction of tourist accommodation capacities in a previously unbuilt area, and not the construction of residential buildings or the facilities intended for permanent residents. Therefore, in the coastal part of Neum there is no urban centre or basic urban features like in most coastal settlements in neighboring parts of Croatia. This makes Neum a less pleasant place to stay than most other coastal tourist destinations and makes difficult to extend the average length of stay of tourists. Therefore, together with the development of the neglected rural hinterland of the Municipality of Neum, it is necessary to work on improving the situation in Neum itself to transform it into a real urban settlement.

## 4. PROPOSALS RELATED TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEUM WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE INTERIOR OF THE MUNICIPALITY

### 4.1. Diversification of the tourist supply

The need to redefine the general and tourist development of the Municipality of Neum arises from several new circumstances, which change the development perspective of the Municipality. Among these circumstances, the following stand out in particular:

- significant improvement of the accessibility of the entire Municipality of Neum and especially its interior after the completion of the new road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac;
- relieving the central part of Neum from excessive transit motor traffic followed by reducing the income from trade enterprises and decline in the number of tourists from developed European and non-European countries after the relocation of transit traffic between Dubrovnik and other parts of Croatia to a new road over the Pelješac Bridge; and
- major changes in the behavior of tourists in recent years, including those caused by the COVID-19 virus pandemic.

As two key actions necessary for the new approach to the development of the Municipality of Neum considering the new circumstances and the need for optimizing its new traffic position, the following stand out:

1. Optimizing the use of all the tourist resources in the Municipality, especially the unspoiled nature and rich cultural heritage of the attractive, but demographically and developmentally extremely neglected hinterland; and
2. Redesigning the settlement of Neum into a functional urban centre attractive to tourists and its inhabitants.

The proposed actions should result in upgrading the quality of tourism in the whole Municipality of Neum as a basis for general economic growth and as a tool for diminishing the huge differences between the developed, overbuilt and architecturally devastated coastal part and undeveloped rural interior on the brink of demographic extinction. In this context, the relieving of Neum from the pressure of transit traffic could serve as an incentive to finally start with the process of the real revitalization of the hinterland, and the process of redesigning Neum into a real town with all the necessary functions and facilities.

The diversification of the tourist supply in which rural, active, and cultural tourism should play more important role is particularly important. Preserved picturesque countryside and many cultural sights represent a good basis for creating high quality accommodation capacities in the interior of the Municipality to attract more tourists with high purchasing power from developed European countries and non-European countries who want to visit Dubrovnik,



Mostar and other attractive destinations in the Southern Adriatic region. At the same time, activities intended to upgrade the attractiveness of Neum as a town through better urban planning, development of central functions and creation of attractive catering, shopping and service facilities that are not exclusively focused on the coast could reduce the pressure on crowded beach areas in summer.

Good opportunities for the development of high-quality rural tourism in the interior of the Municipality of Neum are based not only on improved accessibility caused by the opening to traffic the new road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac, but also on the fact that the interior of the Municipality was not exposed to architectural devastation and overbuilding as the coastal part. Due to long-term depopulation, most villages in the interior have managed to preserve the original local rural architecture, and since almost all are connected by paved roads and have a water supply network, the basic infrastructural prerequisites for the introduction of necessary tourist facilities are already met.

Figure 10. EXAMPLE OF AN AUTOHTONOUS LUXURY RURAL HOUSE FOR RENT WITH POOL IN LOVORNO, KONAVLE AREA NEAR DUBROVNIK



Photo: [www.holiday-village-konavle.com](http://www.holiday-village-konavle.com)

However, for more intensive development of rural tourism in the interior of the Municipality of Neum it is necessary to build more accommodation capacities and to ensure that at least two restaurants or other objects offering food are permanently opened. It is also necessary to create additional facilities such as wine and cheese tasting rooms, marked cycling routes, hiking trails and other facilities for active tourism, and to equip the main natural and cultural attractions with interpretive and infrastructural facilities. The organization of the Bullfight in



the village of Vinine, which in 2019 as the first year of its organization attracted many visitors, confirm that the Neum hinterland can attract a significant number of tourists if inventive entrepreneurial initiatives are undertaken.

Having in mind the experiences on the neighboring Pelješac peninsula, in the vicinity of Imotski and especially in the interior of Istria as an area with the most developed rural tourism in Croatia, Neum hinterland stands out as very suitable for the construction of attractive luxury holiday homes with swimming pools for tourists. Due to the proximity of Dubrovnik, Mostar, Korčula, Hvar and easy access to tourists by booking.com, airbnb.com and similar WEB pages, such potential guests can be reached without intensive promotional efforts, especially since due to high accommodation prices in the neighboring Dubrovnik-Neretva County the Municipality of Neum can be very competitive.

The current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic favors the development of this type of objects, as the popularity of accommodation that provide guests with privacy and without intensive contact with other people is growing. This is confirmed by recent experiences from Croatia, where during 2020 and 2021 luxury houses for rent in the hinterland of the main tourist areas offering guests privacy and isolation were especially popular. However, when creating such an offer it is necessary that the houses are built in accordance with the local architecture and environment, because the tourists are willing to pay more for it. Since the environment in the hinterland of the Municipality of Neum is still in good condition, the possibilities for the development of such an offer are very good, but it is important to avoid mistakes that have occurred in the coastal part of the Municipality and in some other rural areas in the Southern Adriatic devastated by architecturally inappropriate construction.

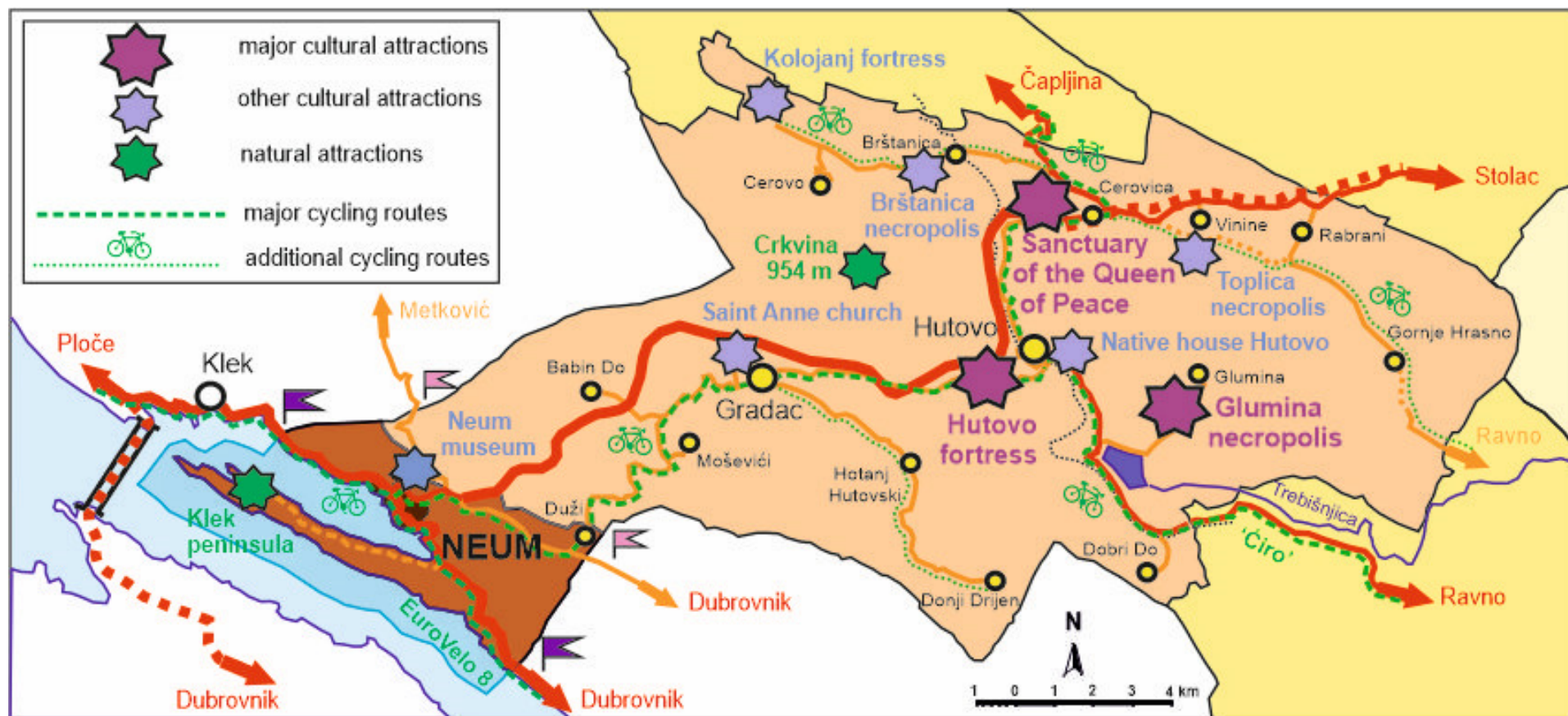
The hinterland of the Municipality of Neum have great opportunities also for development of active tourism, particularly cycling tourism. Apart from the to some extent established cycling route 'Ćiro' along the former narrow-gauge railway in the north of the Municipality, there is a big potential of using the old narrow asphalt road Neum - Hutovo for cycling. This road could thus become the backbone of the cycling route network in the whole Municipality of Neum and the ideal connection of the EuroVelo 8 'Mediterranean' cycling route along the Adriatic coast with the route 'Ćiro'. If we add other local asphalt roads in the Municipality of Neum with minimal motor vehicle traffic suitable for cyclists, especially the roads Gradac - Donji Drijen, Cerovica - Cerovo and Cerovica - Gornje Hrasno - Velja Međa, Neum could become one of the most important cycling tourism destinations in the South Adriatic region.

However, the development of cycling tourism requires certain investments, primarily in attractive and continuous signalization of routes as on the successful model of 'Ćiro' cycling route.<sup>15</sup> It is also recommended to build a few nice and well-equipped rest areas for cyclists, as well as to develop additional facilities such as accommodation that meet 'bike & bed' standards, catering facilities along the routes, bicycle repair services, etc.

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<sup>15</sup> On the old road Neum - Stolac near the village of Duži there is one signpost for the cycling route to Hutovo, but after that there are no more signposts.

Figure 11. MAIN TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEUM



Author: Zoran Klarić

Besides cycling routes in the interior of the Municipality of Neum, the development of cycling tourism includes tracing the EuroVelo 8 route through Neum along the coast instead along the Adriatic coastal road. Such intervention implies some investments in road infrastructure, primarily in building an access from the Adriatic coastal road to the Neum coastal promenade and marking the cycling lanes with appropriate signalization, as well as more intensive promotion. Without those actions the larger growth of cycling tourism cannot be expected, what can be confirmed by the relatively small use of the cycling route 'Ćiro' compared to similar and equally attractive, but much more popular cycling route 'Parenzana' in Istria in Croatia.

Similarly, the development of hiking implies the expansion of the network of hiking trails and their equipment. The ascent to Mount Žaba can serve as the backbone of the hiking network, and the village of Broćanac next to the new road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac as a focal point for hiking tourism in the Municipality. To attract this market segment and provide guests in rural accommodation in the interior of the Municipality with additional opportunities for outdoor activities, the trails should be better marked and safer for walking. It implies interventions in the dangerous parts of the most important trails so that they will be easy to pass and safe for people with limited hiking experience, and to expand the network of marked paths to other locations in the interior of the Municipality.

In addition to cycling, hiking, and mountaineering, the hinterland of the Municipality of Neum has good opportunities for other forms of active tourism, which should be previously explored given the current underdevelopment. This includes equestrian tourism, enduro rides on selected roads, as well as using Mount Žaba and other steep hills for climbing or paragliding. To attract the market of active tourism, it would be advisable to use the currently in tourist terms almost unused peninsula Klek close to Neum by investing in hiking trails and other forms of active tourism infrastructure.

The Municipality of Neum is suitable also for the development of cultural tourism based on a few cultural attractions of regional and potentially national importance, and many attractions of local importance in the hinterland. Among those of a higher importance, the Shrine of the Queen of Peace in Cerovica has a key role as the only functional attraction of national importance thanks to the attractive Way of the Cross and the nice small Museum of Antiquities. The Hutovo fortress has great potential as one of the most attractive fortresses in Herzegovina, and the Necropolis of Medjugorje near the village of Glumina as from a tourist point of view the most attractive of several necropolises of 'stećci' tombstones in the Municipality. The Heritage House in Hutovo village with a lapidary and carved inscription by Radovan Vukanović is important as it is already functional, what is not a case with 'stećci' necropolis of Toplica near Vinine and the Kolojanj archeological site. Those two sites also have great potential as cultural attractions but are at moment without appropriate access and are not equipped with the necessary interpretative and information facilities.

Afore mentioned and other cultural attractions can be easily used as a part of organized tours, but it is more important that they are attractive also for the individual tourists accommodated in the

Municipality of Neum, for whom it can be assumed that they could be more interested in independent research. In addition to the appropriate tourist signalization, which has already been done in part, it is also necessary to equip the main attractions with the interpretation and information facilities. This includes the installation of interpretation boards with basic information about a particular site, and in the case of museums and similar establishments information about working hours, also in English.

The cultural heritage of the Municipality of Neum provides numerous opportunities for organizing thematic tours. Among them, the 'Tour of Stećci tombstones' stands out as potentially the most interesting, because in addition to the most attractive necropolis near the village of Glumina it can include the easily accessible necropolis in Brštanica, and in the future temporarily less accessible necropolises of Toplica, Vranjevo selo and Crkvina. A similar 'Heritage Tour' can be offered, which would include museum facilities in Cerovica, Hutovo and Neum, or a 'Church Tour' which would focus on the sacral heritage of the Municipality. Along with the Shrine of the Queen of Peace and the particularly valuable church of St. Anne in Gradac such tour could include some other attractive churches in the Municipality and the churches located in the attractive countryside.

In the future, it is possible to create a tour that will be focused to the old fortifications, but this implies certain investments in access and interpretation of the Hutovo fortress as key attraction, as well as in access and basic interpretative facilities for the currently almost inaccessible Kolojanj archeological site. Since the cultural heritage of the Municipality of Neum is objectively not attractive enough for the organization of tours that will include only the attractions in the Municipality, it is advisable to cooperate with the neighboring municipalities. This is particularly a case with the Municipality of Stolac, where the Radimlja necropolis as the central site of complex UNESCO protected area 'Stećci Medieval Tombstone Graveyards' is located. In a similar way, a tour that can be focused on the picturesque villages of the Neum hinterland could include the neighboring municipalities of Ravno and Čapljina with beautiful rural countryside and important natural attractions such as Vjetrenica Cave and Hutovo Blato Nature Park.

Investments in attractions and cooperation with the surrounding areas are also important in case of hiking and especially cycling tourism, since the area of the Municipality of Neum is too small for organizing longer cycling tours. Cooperation in cycling tourism is particularly advisable in case of the neighboring municipalities of Ravno and Čapljina in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the cycling route 'Ćiro', and with the municipalities of Dubrovačko primorje and Zadar in Croatia and other municipalities on the EuroVelo 8 Mediterranean route. Regarding the organization of cross-border cycling tours, the possibility of using the local border crossings Brestica and Duži and the currently closed border crossing near Donji Drijen for organized groups of cyclists should be considered.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Free movement of organized groups of tourists between countries in areas where there are no border crossings or crossing is possible only for the local population is a common practice in Europe. It works very well also on Dinara mountain on the famous Via Dinarica hiking route between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.



Figure 12. EXAMPLES OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARTS OF A CITY WITH A LARGE DIFFERENCES IN ALTITUDE - OUTDOOR ELEVATOR IN ALBUFEIRA, PORTUGAL AND URBAN ESCALATOR IN BARCELONA, SPAIN



Photo: Jean-Philippe Hebrard and John Borwick

One of the main reasons why Neum does not attract more tourists with higher purchasing power is the unattractive appearance of the town itself. It is caused by overbuilding, traffic congestion of the coastal area, inappropriate architecture that does not respect the Mediterranean building tradition, overcrowded beaches and the lack of a functional town centre that could provide guests with a higher level of catering, shopping and other services. A particular problem is the connection between the part of Neum along the Adriatic coastal road and along the coast, which is very inconvenient due to the steep terrain and large difference in altitude. The problem is aggravated by the fact that due to difficult pedestrian access to the coast from the Adriatic coastal road and vice versa it is temporarily not possible to completely ban car traffic in the coastal zone, which further reduces the quality of tourists' stay in Neum as a tourist destination.

Following the example of many cities in Europe and the world with a similar problem, the solution could be to build an outdoor elevator or escalator in the central part of Neum that would connect the Adriatic coastal road with the coast and thus create simple and pleasant communication for tourists and locals. This would create the preconditions for a ban on the movement of motor vehicles in the coastal zone, and thus encourage the creation of an attractive central area with



attractive restaurants, bars and other facilities. If such an elevator or escalator is built in a visually attractive way, it could function as an independent attraction that would contribute to the attractiveness of Neum as a town and thus raise the quality of its tourist supply.

Such solutions are not particularly expensive, so they are quite common in the world. The most well-known examples of Mediterranean cities with many urban escalators in opened space are Barcelona in Spain and Perugia in Italy. Urban outdoor elevators can be found in Cartagena in Spain, Albufeira in Portugal, Antalya in Turkey, and in many other cities, but also in small towns and villages. Numerous escalators, elevators and cable cars can be found in many cities in non-European countries too, especially in China and Japan, and in most big cities in Latin American located on steep terrain, particularly in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil and Medellín in Colombia.

#### 4.2. Recommendations related to the relationship of tourism with other activities and the protection of natural and cultural heritage

The current COVID-19 pandemic has indicated that tourism monoculture can have catastrophic consequences for the economy, especially for air-oriented destinations. The Southern Adriatic and its main destination, Dubrovnik, suffered particularly great damage because of the pandemic. In 2019, with 4,300,003 overnights, Dubrovnik was by far the first Croatian tourist destination, while in the year 2020 affected with coronavirus, it was in twelfth place with only 782,308 overnights. In contrast, the region of Istria in the north of Croatia suffered significantly less damage due to orientation towards tourists coming by car and the first three destinations according to the number of overnights in 2020 were Rovinj, Medulin and Poreč with more than a million overnights. Although the tourism of the Municipality of Neum in 2020 suffered significantly less damage than Dubrovnik due to the reorientation to tourists from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, the revenues from tourism were still significantly lower than in 2019.

That is why Neum should develop other activities besides tourism, especially Mediterranean agriculture. For such development there are good preconditions in the fertile but neglected Neum hinterland, as evidenced by the olive production in the Radež area on the outskirts of Neum and near the village of Broćanac. The development of agriculture is compatible with tourism due to the possibility of the affordable sale of products on the spot in the objects of rural tourism in the hinterland, as well as for hotels and restaurants in Neum. The availability of quality local products such as olive oil, wine, honey, cheese, aromatic herbs, vegetables and fruits contributes to the quality of the entire destination, because instead of unified food products, tourists can consume natural local food. In line with the increased environmental awareness and growth of demand for local food, the number of tourists who appreciate such an offer is

increasing. This is particularly a case with tourists participating in rural, cultural and cycling tourism, which is an additional incentive to the development of such an offer.

Tourists interested in autochthonous products and local food are also inclined to buy indigenous souvenirs and works of art, which opens the possibility of creating new jobs in the hinterland of the Municipality of Neum. Given the improved accessibility of the due to a new road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac, these opportunities are better today than in previous years, which provides opportunities to create a larger market for indigenous products. Such processes could give an additional incentive to the activation of neglected agricultural areas and the development of other activities, which would create alternative sources of income in conditions where the recurrence of a coronavirus pandemic or other health threats is not excluded.

Figure 13. HUTOVO FORTRESS - POTENTIAL ATTRACTION OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE



Photo: Zoran Klarić

Besides its direct benefits, tourism can serve as a tool aimed at better protection of natural and cultural heritage of the Municipality of Neum, because investments in restauration and interpretation of the sites can further encourage tourism. Consequently, more interest in heritage can encourage investments in their preservation and restoration, and better interpretation can raise awareness of its value among the local population. This is additionally important because many inhabitants of the Municipality of Neum are not aware of all the resources they have, especially in the hinterland.

In addition to interpretation as a basic tool aimed at better valorization of heritage, in the case of some particularly valuable attractions larger investments are needed to make them more attractive to tourists. This is especially a case with Hutovo fortress, which could grow into an attraction of national importance in case of larger investments in landscaping and restoration. That could be understood as an investment in future, because through increased visits to the fortress as potentially the most important attraction in the interior of the Municipality of Neum, the investments could be partially returned. The fortress of Herceg Stjepan in Ljubuški in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Soko grad in Konavle near Dubrovnik in Croatia stand out as positive examples of such interventions, and there are even more such examples in developed European countries.

Although the Hutovo fortress cannot be compared to much more attractive Ston walls in the immediate vicinity of Neum in Dubrovnik-Neretva County, the case of investing in the restoration of Ston walls is a good example of restoration of historical heritage as a tool for the increase in tourism revenues. Besides direct income through ticket sales and parking fees, the Municipality of Ston has even larger indirect benefits through new job creation, better utilization of its accommodation and catering facilities, increased sales of autochthonous food products and souvenirs, better visitation of other attractions in Ston (especially old salt pans), etc.

Similarly, better valorization of natural and cultural attractions of the Neum hinterland and the development of special types of tourism such as cycling and hiking can create additional income and jobs for many residents in the Municipality. In addition to jobs provided in accommodation and catering services, there are opportunities for locals to work as cycling and hiking guides, cultural tour operators, as well as in bicycle repair services or in companies responsible for cleaning and maintenance of luxury holiday homes and swimming pools etc. It is to be assumed that the increased traffic on the new road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac will contribute to the opening of new shops and other services for an increasing number of tourists and transit passengers.

#### 4.3. Integrated planning approach on the principles of sustainable development

The analysis of the economy in the Municipality of Neum shows that the basic problem is a huge disproportion between the coastal area, which is overconstructed and oriented almost exclusively to 'sun & sea' tourism, and the preserved but neglected hinterland exposed to strong depopulation. There is a lot of space for the growth of tourism and other activities also in the coastal part of the Municipality. It can be achieved through better seasonal distribution of tourist demand and through the upgrade of the tourism supply by some physical interventions in space and by introduction of a new high-quality trade and service facilities.

Insufficient financial capacity and administrative efficiency of the Municipality of Neum make the realization of these goals difficult, because due to limited funds on Municipality's disposal it is almost impossible to undertake any major intervention. In addition, although Neum is the second biggest tourist destination in Bosnia and Herzegovina it does not have a tourist board but is part of the tourist board of Herzegovina-Neretva County. Therefore, it is difficult to undertake effective management on the principles of sustainable tourism development and to take actions aimed at ensuring the long-term competitiveness of the destination in the tourism market.

In addition to the specific actions and projects proposed below, the implementation of a sustainable development strategy includes the adoption of certain policies that are consistent with such a development concept. Such policies usually do not require additional funding, but it is important to undertake them to upgrade the level of tourism quality to a higher level. The most important policies include:

- Sustainable approach regarding construction in the coastal part of Neum, which implies urgent adoption of effective fiscal and repressive measures that would limit the construction of tourist apartments and similar objects. In the interior of the Municipality those measures imply dimensions of objects and architectural solutions that consider Mediterranean building traditions. At the same time necessary measures should be taken to rehabilitate devastated built-up areas in the coastal part of Neum through the widening of roads and construction of sidewalks where possible, and where not through the introduction of one-way traffic and limited traffic only for residents and their guests.
- Sustainable approach to the problem of traffic infrastructure in the town of Neum, which includes the expansion of zones only for pedestrians and cyclists and the construction of parking spaces and garages near the Adriatic coastal road with easy pedestrian access to the coast. This approach also includes stimulating the use of environmentally friendly vehicles, such as gas-powered vehicles and electric cars, including the construction of currently non-existent charging stations.
- Environmentally friendly approach in the field of communal infrastructure, which includes the replacement of old water and sewage pipes with new ones made of harmless materials and the expansion of sewage systems in the outskirts of Neum instead of using septic tanks. The ecological approach implies the rehabilitation of the existing unregulated landfill Klepovica, the improvement of waste management based on separation and recycling, as well as taking educational actions aimed at raising awareness of local people and tourists about the importance of environmental protection.
- Removal of all shopping, entertainment, service, sports and recreational facilities that are not necessary in the coastal zone to the part of the settlement along the Adriatic coastal road and

to the hinterland. Measures intended to alleviate the pressure on the coastal zone also include a wide range of trips to the surrounding areas.

- Sustainable approach to beach management, which means equipping all beaches with quality equipment, beach guards and cleaning service. Given the limited beach space, in the areas where it would not cause environmental damage should be considered the expansion of the beach areas by beach nourishment with sand or cobble, or by setting up temporary pontoons. Some measures intended to discourage the use of beaches by one-day excursionists from the interior of Bosnia and Herzegovina through introducing additional taxes for buses that bring them to Neum should also be considered, but the fees for using beaches should not apply to locals and tourists staying in registered accommodation capacities in Neum.

Although this material is not a legal planning document, it represents guidelines for the implementation of a sustainable development strategy. Therefore, the guidelines are formulated so that they can be incorporated into legal planning documents such as spatial and traffic plans. This material also contains inputs that should be used in the development of master plans for tourism development, work plans of tourist boards and similar documents. Besides the Municipality of Neum as the main beneficiary of this plan there are other entities that could implement the proposed solutions. Therefore, this document is harmonized with the institutional framework for the realization and adoption of the Development Strategy of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as with the accompanying development strategies for counties and municipalities.

The document 'Strategic Orientations for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Municipality of Neum' fits into the projects envisaged by measure 1.3.4. 'Support the development of entrepreneurship in the tourism sector' under priority 1.3. 'Support the development of the private sector in businesses'. This priority is part of strategic goal no. 1. 'Accelerated economic development' within the Development Strategy of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Development Strategy of the Herzegovina-Neretva County, prescribed by the 'Decree on the development of strategic documents in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina'.

As particularly important points within measure 1.3.4. this document emphasizes the raising awareness of the population in rural areas about the possibilities of working in tourism sector, the need to preserve natural and cultural heritage, and the need for the functioning of tourist boards as destination management organizations. Especially important issues in this document are the recommendations to revitalize traditional houses in rural areas exposed to depopulation through their use for tourism, to mark the tourist attractions with 'brown' tourist signs, and to establish a system of support for tourism development in rural areas through favorable loans from the Federation Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



## 5. ACTION PLAN

The action plan that follows is a result of the previously identified needs and is based on an integrated approach and on the principles of sustainable development. Considering the different level of complexity and priority, the proposed projects are divided into three groups:

- a) The first group include simple actions that do not require large financial resources and long duration of implementation but could have significant effects. They mostly refer to the signalization and interpretation of tourist attractions and to the improvement of the traffic situation without undertaking major construction works.
- b) The second group include bigger interventions that require longer preparation and larger funding. Those projects mainly refer to investments in transport infrastructure and more complex interventions related to the landscaping and restoration of cultural heritage. Since the selection of priorities depends on the political decisions yet to be made and stakeholders that are not under the direct competence of the Municipality of Neum, here can be found only the suggestions of priorities according to the opinion of the author of this document. Since no funds have been yet provided for these interventions, the deadlines for their implementation cannot be defined.
- c) The third group refers to actions related to the destination management, promotion of environmentally friendly policies and other educational activities aimed at sustainable use of tourist resources, which should be mainly carried out continuously. As these actions are financially less demanding and under the jurisdiction of the Municipality, institutions responsible for heritage protection, the Tourist Board of the Herzegovina-Neretva County, the High School in Neum and other local actors, the deadline for their realization is mostly short.

If we consider the different levels of complexity of individual actions, unknown financial frameworks, various stakeholders and several other unknown issues, the financial and time framework for their implementation cannot be precisely determined. The approximate prices for the implementation of individual projects are based on rough estimates but are still suggested as a help in the planning of the municipal budget and other sources of funding for individual projects. It is also understood that when taking concrete actions, more precise estimates of the required resources will be made based on a more detailed input data, and, if necessary, prefeasibility and feasibility studies. For some more complex and financially demanding actions, public tenders, including international ones, are also implied.

Different levels of complexity of individual projects and different levels of priorities imply differences in the proposed deadlines for their implementation. Three basic types of deadlines are highlighted: short-term, medium-term, and long-term, with short-term deadlines generally

referring to 2022, medium-term deadlines to the period from 2023 to 2026, and long-term to the period after that. Short-term deadlines mainly refer to financially less demanding and simple actions for which is primarily responsible the Municipality of Neum and medium-term to more demanding but important interventions that may involve other stakeholders. Long-term deadlines refer mainly to expensive and complex projects which are not under jurisdiction of the Municipality of Neum and in which financing the pre-accession funds of the European Union for Bosnia and Herzegovina and other external sources should play a significant role.

## 5.1. Simple actions that do not require large financial resources

### Project 1. SIGNALIZATION OF THE MAIN TOURIST ATTRACTIONS WITH 'BROWN' SIGNPOSTS

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of tourist supply in the destination</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of the hinterland of the Municipality of Neum</li> <li>Reducing tourist pressure on the coastal area</li> <li>Extension of the tourist season</li> <li>Diversification of tourist demand</li> </ul>
Description	<p>Although some attractions in the Municipality of Neum are already marked with 'brown' tourist signalization, primarily the Shrine of the Queen of Peace Hrasno, the signposts are not placed continuously from the main road approaches to the attractions and are different regarding their design. Also, the new road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac as a key road in the Municipality is still not covered by 'brown' signalization. Therefore, it is recommended to install uniform brown signposts primarily for the most important and developed attractions, and later for the others. The priorities are signalization for the Shrine of the Queen of Peace on the new road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac, and, under the assumption of minimal landscaping and interpretation, the Hutovo fortress and the necropolis of 'stećci' tombstones Međugorje near village of Glumina.</p> <p>Developed or partially developed smaller attractions such as the necropolis of 'stećci' tombstones in Brštanica, the Heritage house in Hutovo and the Municipal Museum with gallery in Neum should be signposted only on closer approaches to these locations, while currently undeveloped attractions such as the necropolis of Toplica or the Kolojanj archeological site should not be signposted until there is adequate access to them. In the case of a possible significant investments in the restoration of the Hutovo fortress, which would lead to its upgrade to the status of an attraction of national importance, it should be signposted with 'brown' signs when turning onto the road M-17.3 road in Neum, like the Shrine of the Queen of Peace.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public company 'Roads of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina'</li> <li>Road Administration of Herzegovina-Neretva County</li> <li>Herzegovina-Neretva County Tourist Board</li> </ul>
Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5,000 KM for the production and installation of ten brown signposts</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short-term for major developed attractions</li> <li>Medium-term for other developed attractions</li> <li>Long-term for attractions where large investments are needed for their landscaping, development and traffic access</li> </ul>

## Project 2. INTERPRETATION AND BASIC LANDSCAPING OF TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of tourist supply in the destination</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the hinterland of the Municipality of Neum</li> <li>• Reducing tourist pressure on the coastal area</li> <li>• Extension of the tourist season</li> <li>• Diversification of tourist demand</li> </ul>
Description	<p>Apart from the Shrine of the Queen of Peace in Cerovica, in the Municipality of Neum there is no attraction of regional and national importance that is adequately developed and attractive to receive larger number of tourists. Therefore, guests staying in the Municipality of Neum and even the residents of Neum do not perceive the interior of the Municipality as an interesting tourist area, although there are many attractions with great potential such as Hutovo fortress and numerous necropolises of 'stećci' tombstones. Therefore, priority should be given to the Hutovo fortress and the necropolis of Medjugorje near Glumina as the most attractive from a tourist point of view, and then to the other significant necropolises of 'stećci' tombstones in Brštanica, Toplica near Vinine, Vranjevo selo and Crkvina. It is also recommended to equip the church of Sv. Ana in Gradac as the only church in the Municipality protected at the national level with attractive interpretation boards, and to build a path to the currently inaccessible, but potentially interesting Kolojanj archeological site.</p> <p>In similar way it is recommended to set up more attractive interpretation boards with basic information and do the basic landscaping around other attractions in the Municipality. The installation of additional interpretation and information boards is recommended also in case of developed attractions such as the Heritage house in Hutovo, as well as in case of other attractive built heritage of local significance, especially beautiful local churches in picturesque locations.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality of Neum</li> <li>• Herzegovina-Neretva County Tourist Board</li> <li>• Institute for the Protection of the Cultural and Historical Heritage of the Herzegovina-Neretva County</li> </ul>
Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40,000 KM for the first phase - Hutovo fortress and Glumina necropolis (20,000 KM study, 20,000 KM design, production and installation of interpretation panels)</li> <li>• 40,000 KM for the second phase (interpretation panels for other localities)</li> </ul>



Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term for minimal interventions on the most important sites</li> <li>• Medium-term for larger investments in landscaping of main attractions</li> <li>• Long-term for landscaping and development of other tourist attractions</li> </ul>
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### Project 3. EXPANSION OF THE PEDESTRIAN ZONE AND THE ZONE OF LIMITED TRAFFIC IN THE COASTAL PART OF NEUM

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving the traffic situation</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing traffic congestion</li> <li>Raising air quality</li> <li>Raising the quality of the tourist experience</li> </ul>
Description	<p>Overcrowding with motor vehicles reduces the quality of stay of guests in Neum, but also the everyday life of its residents. Therefore, in the coastal part of Neum it is recommended to expand the pedestrian zone, i.e., to allow the movement of motor vehicles only for guests of accommodation capacities and for other users with special permits, as well as to introduce one-way traffic where conditions allow. The full implementation of these measures implies the provision of a sufficient number of parking lots or garages near the Adriatic coastal road and the provision of access to the sea for pedestrians by external elevators or escalators.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipality of Neum</li> <li>Road Administration of Herzegovina-Neretva County</li> </ul>
Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15,000 KM for the construction of parking area across the church of Sv. John in Ruđer Bošković Street</li> <li>5,000 KM for horizontal and vertical signalization of the pedestrian zone (ten traffic signs and two automatic retractable bollards for traffic restriction)</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short-term for the first phase, which includes only a partial ban on motor traffic in the coastal zone</li> <li>Medium-term for the second phase, which includes the expansion of the pedestrian zone to most of the coast in the built-up part of Neum after the construction of large parking facilities and garages near the Adriatic coastal road and access to the sea by external elevator or escalator</li> </ul>

#### Project 4. DEVELOPMENT OF 'NEUM' CYCLING ROUTE AND LOCAL CYCLING ROUTES IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEUM

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of tourist supply in the destination</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the hinterland of the Municipality of Neum</li> <li>• Reducing tourist pressure on the coastal area</li> <li>• Extension of the tourist season</li> <li>• Diversification of tourist demand</li> <li>• Raising the quality of the tourist experience</li> </ul>
Description	<p>The construction of the new road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac, to which most of the car traffic will be transferred, enables the use of the old narrow asphalt road Neum - Hutovo for cycling tourism. The cycling route, which could simply be called 'Neum Route' due to the connection of most of the main settlements of the Municipality of Neum, is additionally important as a link between the future EuroVelo 8 route and the already developed 'Ćiro' route along the former narrow-gauge railway line Dračevo (Čapljina) - Hutovo - Ravno - Ivanica. Since this route due to the paved surface and minimal car traffic already meets the basic requirements of cycling routes according to EuroVelo standards, it is only necessary to mark it with cycling signposts from the Adriatic coastal road in Neum to the junction with the route 'Ćiro' in Hutovo and further on to Cerovica.</p> <p>As other local asphalt roads in the Municipality of Neum are suitable for cycling tourism due to the attractive landscape and minimal car traffic, it is recommended to mark them with cycling signalization too. This primarily refers to the route Cerovica - Gornje Hrasno - Velja Međa as an alternative to the route 'Ćiro' between Cerovica and Ravno and to the remaining two longer paved roads Gradac - Donji Drijen and Cerovica - Cerovo. The signalization includes placing distance marks on key locations on the routes and their promotion in Neum's tourist brochures and other promotional materials. It can be done relatively quickly, since it does not include large investments.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality of Neum</li> <li>• Road Administration of Herzegovina-Neretva County</li> <li>• Development agencies 'Nera' and 'REDAH'</li> </ul>
Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45,000 KM for the first phase (15,000 KM the study, 20,000 KM one rest area, 10,000 KM signalization)</li> <li>• 35,000 KM for the second phase (20,000 KM another rest area, 15,000 KM signalization)</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term</li> </ul>

## Project 5. INTRODUCTION OF BIKE SHARE SYSTEM IN NEUM

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving the traffic situation</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising the quality of the tourist experience</li> <li>Raising the quality of life of the local population</li> <li>Reducing traffic congestion</li> </ul>
Description	<p>Bike share system is widespread in many countries in Europe and the world, and in neighboring Croatia it is functional in more than twenty cities and municipalities. Given the increased attractiveness of the Municipality of Neum for the use of bicycles due to the potential inclusion of the international cycling route EuroVelo 8 'Mediterranean route' and the use of the old road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac for cycling, such an offer would stimulate the development of cycling in the Municipality and reduce traffic pressure by motor vehicles. However, for the implementation of bike share system it is necessary to provide cyclists with access to the coastal part of Neum from the Adriatic coastal road on the west side near the hotel 'Porat', and on the east side near Jazina Street with the possibility of direct access for cyclists to the road leading to the Klek peninsula. Given the characteristics of the terrain in the Municipality of Neum, the offer must include electric bicycles too.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipality of Neum</li> <li>Bike share operators</li> </ul>
Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50,000 KM for the first phase (two stations, ten bicycles)</li> <li>70,000 KM for the second phase (two more stations and ten more bicycles, including E-bikes)</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short-term</li> </ul>



## Project 6. INTRODUCTION OF DIFFERENT GARBAGE BINS FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF WASTE

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving the condition of communal infrastructure</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing the amount of garbage</li> <li>Raising the quality of the tourist experience</li> <li>Raising the quality of life of the local population</li> </ul>
Description	<p>The growing environmental awareness of modern tourists, especially those from developed European countries, as well as the need to promote Neum as an environmentally friendly destination, imposes the need to remove classic waste bins and instead introduce selective recycling containers and garbage bins for different types of waste. New visually attractive containers and garbage bins should be introduced also in the interior of the Municipality, especially along the new road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public company 'Komunalno' Neum</li> </ul>
Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10,000 KM for the replacement of existing recycling containers for mixed waste with about twenty different different containers for each type of waste</li> <li>10,000 KM for the purchase and installation of about fifty visually attractive garbage bins in the same number of locations</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medium-term</li> </ul>

## Project 7. DESTIMULATION OF THE USE OF CERTAIN BEACHES BY ONE-DAY VISITORS

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beach management</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing the pressure on the beach area</li> <li>Raising the quality of the tourist experience</li> <li>Raising the quality of life of the local population</li> </ul>
Description	<p>One of the main obstacles that make it difficult to upgrade the quality of tourism in Neum to a higher level and to attract more demanding tourists from developed countries is the congestion of beach areas combined with the low level of cleanliness of most beaches. This is caused mainly by the large number of one-day excursionists from the interior of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who come to Neum just for swimming, especially during 2020 and 2021 due to difficult crossing of state borders caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since such guests in addition to occupying the already overcrowded beaches, consume almost nothing in the destination and produce high amount of waste, it is recommended to take certain measures to discourage their arrival in Neum. These measures should primarily refer to limiting the possibility of parking buses that bring one-day excursionists in the immediate vicinity of these beaches, i.e. south of the Adriatic coastal road, as well as increasing the price of parking for those buses.</p> <p>More rigorous penalization for inappropriate behavior on beaches should also be considered, especially regarding waste disposal. In addition, on certain parts of the beaches that can be easily fenced, it is recommended to introduce mandatory use of beach equipment (beach chairs and umbrellas), and obligatory fee that would not apply to residents of Neum and persons staying in registered accommodation capacities in Neum. To attract more demanding tourists, in agreement with the management of the best Neum hotels it is advisable to consider the possibility of using smaller fenced parts of the beach free for guests of these hotels, and at an additional cost for other users.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipality of Neum in agreement with the beach operators</li> <li>Herzegovina-Neretva County</li> <li>Hotel companies in Neum</li> </ul>
Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5,000 KM (installation of necessary notification boards and traffic signs)</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short-term</li> </ul>

## 5.2. Proposal of priority major interventions in transport infrastructure and protection of cultural heritage

### Project 8. CONSTRUCTION OF URBAN ELEVATOR OR ESCALATOR BETWEEN THE PART OF NEUM ALONG THE ADRIATIC COASTAL ROAD AND THE COASTAL PROMENADE

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving the traffic situation</li> <li>Development of tourist supply in the destination</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising the quality of the tourist experience</li> <li>Raising the quality of life of the local population</li> <li>Reducing traffic congestion</li> <li>Creating new tourist attractions</li> </ul>
Description	<p>The movement of pedestrians between the Adriatic coastal road and the coast in Neum is very difficult due to the steepness of the coast and large difference in altitude and is making impossible the introduction of a ban on motor traffic along the coast. The most efficient solution for this problem is a construction of an outdoor urban elevator or escalator on the previously determined most suitable position in the central part of Neum near the hotel 'Sunce'. To achieve an optimal solution that would be satisfactory both in terms of price and aesthetics, it is advisable to announce a public tender to which global companies dealing with such projects would be invited. Due to the significant impact of this project on the improvement of the environmental sustainability, its candidacy for the use of pre-accession funds of the European Union and other sources is recommended.</p> <p>Bearing in mind that open air elevators and escalators are attractive to tourists, such project could significantly increase the attractiveness of Neum as a destination. The project is important also as a tool for raising the quality of life of the residents of Neum, as it would enable relatively easy pedestrian communication instead of the use of the steep Kralja Tomislava Street exposed to car traffic. If the project proves successful, it is possible that another urban elevator or escalator could be built in future east of the Grand Hotel 'Neum', where there is also a free space for its construction.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipality of Neum</li> <li>Development agencies 'Nera' and 'REDAH'</li> </ul>
Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2,000,000 KM for the construction of an 80 m high open-air elevator with an access ramp of 100 m in length</li> <li>200,000 KM for the purchase and conversion of land at the upper and lower station of the elevator (near villa 'Adria' and Snack bar 'Bonita')</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medium term for the first urban elevator / escalator</li> <li>Long-term for an additional urban escalator</li> </ul>

Project 9. DEVELOPMENT OF THE COASTAL PROMENADE ALONG THE ENTIRE COASTLINE IN THE BUILT-UP AREA OF THE TOWN OF NEUM

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving the traffic situation</li> <li>Development of tourist supply in the destination</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising the quality of the tourist experience</li> <li>Raising the quality of life of the local population</li> <li>Creating new tourist attractions</li> </ul>
Description	<p>Despite the overbuilding and architecturally inappropriate construction, the immediate coastal zone of Neum is pleasant to stay with a lot of green areas. The main reason is a fact the 1.6 km long (1.2 km west and 0.4 km east of the centre of Neum) coastal promenade is separated from motor traffic, well landscaped and paved. From the tourist point of view that is more pleasant than the situation in most destinations in neighboring Croatia, where the movement of motor vehicles is mostly allowed in the immediate coastal zone. An additional 1.0 km of coastal promenade in the central part of Neum between the hotel 'Sunce' and 'Grand hotel Neum' is separated from motor traffic, but that part is relatively narrow and in poor condition. The remaining 2.5 km of coastline in the built-up part of Neum includes 1.7 km of paved streets where motor traffic is allowed (1.1 km in the central part and 0.6 km on the western edge of Neum), and 0.8 km to the coastline without pavement in the southeast to Jazina beach. If we add to this 0.9 km of coast along the road to the tunnel 'Orlov kuk,' which goes to the south side of the Klek peninsula, we get the total length of the coastal promenade of 6.0 km.</p> <p>Since the existence of a continuous coastal promenade would significantly improve the quality of tourist stay in Neum, it is advisable to extend it in the first phase to the most critical 1.1 km of coastline between Copacabana Beach and the existing parking lot in poor condition, where motor traffic is now allowed. After that, it is recommended to extend and pave the coastal promenade on the eastern edge of Neum to the beach Jazina in the length of 800 meters and to improve the parts of the promenade in the central part between the hotel 'Sun' and 'Grand hotel Neum' in poor condition. After the presumed introduction of one-way traffic on Primorska and Mimoza Street and the construction of the necessary road connections, it is recommended to construct the sidewalk or pedestrian-cycle path on the remaining western part of the promenade, as well as to the southernmost point along Jazine beach.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipality of Neum</li> <li>Development agencies 'Nera' and 'REDAH'</li> </ul>



Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,100,000 KM for paving and landscaping of 1,100 m of coastal promenade between Copacabana Beach and the existing car park</li> <li>• 200,000 KM for the construction and paving of the promenade in the length of 800 m from the Beach in Mimoza Street to Jazina Beach</li> <li>• 200,000 for paving and landscaping of the 1,000 m long promenade between the Sunce Hotel and the Grand Hotel Neum, currently in poor condition</li> <li>• 150,000 KM for the construction of walkways on the remaining end parts of the coastal promenade in the west (600 m) and from the beach Jazine to the tunnel (900 m).</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term for landscaping and development of the coastal promenade in the central part of Neum</li> <li>• Medium and long term for development of the coastal promenade along the whole coastal zone in the built-up area of Neum</li> </ul>

Project 10. DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW URBAN CENTRE OF NEUM IN TWO LEVELS AT THE PROPOSED UPPER AND LOWER POINT OF THE URBAN ELEVATOR / ESCALATOR

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of tourist supply in the destination</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing traffic congestion</li> <li>• Raising the quality of the tourist experience</li> <li>• Raising the quality of life of the local population</li> </ul>
Description	<p>The proposed construction of an urban elevator or escalator between the part of Neum along the Adriatic coastal road and the coastal zone gives Neum a chance to create a new central area that could transform Neum into a real town. In the part of Neum between the Adriatic coastal road and the Church of St. John there is enough space for the construction of a parking lot or garage, and in the surrounding area for development of central functions such as administrative buildings of the Municipality and attractive shopping facilities. In the lower part of the new centre by the sea around the existing parking lot, which would lose its function, attractive restaurants, bars and other facilities could be developed, which could make Neum an attractive destination for more demanding tourists.</p> <p>To stimulate tourists to use a new parking lot or garage, parking should be free or with a minimal fee, while in the part near the sea it should be expensive and therefore interesting only for limited number of users. In the upper part of the future urban centre, it is recommended to develop an attractive shopping mall, aimed primarily at tourists and residents of Neum, unlike the existing unattractive shops intended mainly for people in transit and local demand from neighboring Croatia. In this way, the image of Neum as a quality tourist destination would be further improved.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality of Neum</li> </ul>
Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,000,000 KM for the purchase and conversion of land in the area of the current parking lot and next to the facilities of the former resort and police station currently in poor condition</li> <li>• 2,700,000 KM for the construction of the new administrative building of the Municipality of Neum</li> <li>• 500,000 KM for the construction of a public garage</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• • Medium-term for basic interventions</li> <li>• • Long-term for projects requiring larger investments</li> </ul>

## Project 11. PARTIAL RESTORATION OF HUTOVO FORTRESS AND LANDSCAPING OF THE AREA AROUND THE FORTRESS

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of tourist supply in the destination</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the hinterland of the Municipality of Neum</li> <li>• Reducing tourist pressure on the coastal area</li> <li>• Extension of the tourist season</li> <li>• Better use of tourist attractions</li> </ul>
Description	<p>The Hutovo fortress has the prospect of becoming an attraction of national importance considering its attractive appearance and position. It also stands out with its attractive interior, which due to its acoustics is suitable for holding outdoor theater and folklore performances, for which it was used in the past. However, to put the Hutovo fortress into tourist function it is necessary to invest more in access (parking and safe pedestrian approach), but also in the restoration of the most important parts of the ruin. In the first phase it is necessary to clean the area of overgrown weeds, to develop an access to the interior of the fortress which is safe for visitors, and to construct a parking for buses along the old road Neum - Hutovo. The second phase should include the restoration of the most important parts of the fortress, primarily the central tower and the four turrets. Due to the complexity of these interventions, it is recommended to apply for the pre-accession funds of the European Union and other sources.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road Administration of Herzegovina-Neretva County</li> <li>• Municipality of Neum</li> <li>• Development agencies 'Nera' and 'REDAH'</li> <li>• Institute for the Protection of the Cultural and Historical Heritage of the Herzegovina-Neretva County</li> </ul>
Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 200,000 KM for the minimum development of the site for the reception of a larger number of tourists (parking for buses, cleaning of the terrain, safe pedestrian access to the interior of the fortress and securing parts of the tower from demolition)</li> <li>• 5,000,000 KM for the restoration of the tower and turrets with the preparation of the showplace for performances</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term for development of the basic access to the Hutovo fortress, including parking for buses</li> <li>• Medium-term and long-term for complex investments in the restoration of the fortress</li> </ul>

Project 12. DEVELOPMENT OF THE CYCLING ROUTE EUROVELO 8 'MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE' IN THE COASTAL PART OF NEUM

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving the traffic situation</li> <li>Development of tourist supply in the destination</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extension of the tourist season</li> <li>Diversification of tourist demand</li> <li>Raising the quality of the tourist experience</li> </ul>
Description	<p>Among the obstacles that make it difficult to upgrade the quality of tourism demand in Neum and extend its season stands out the insufficient cycling infrastructure. This problem is particularly pronounced since after the opening for traffic the Pelješac Bridge with access roads, the ferry line Ploče - Trpanj could be canceled resulting in the relocation of the international EuroVelo cycling route EV8 'Mediterranean Route' to the Municipality of Neum. As in accordance with the rules of EuroVelo such routes should avoid roads with intensive motor traffic, the route should pass through the coastal part of Neum instead on Adriatic coastal road.</p> <p>In addition to the construction of access for cyclists to the coastal part of Neum from the Adriatic coastal road on the western and eastern edge of Neum, the cycling path should be marked on the road with a characteristic dark red color, and after the expected official relocation of the EuroVelo 8 route also with appropriate cycling signposts. Given the limited width of existing streets in the coastal part of Neum, the construction of direct connections between Primorska and Mimoza Streets and Jazina Street with the Adriatic coastal road and the introduction of one-way traffic on these roads should be considered. Due to the international importance of the EuroVelo 8 route, it is recommended to apply for the project from European Union funds and other available external sources.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipality of Neum</li> <li>Development agencies 'Nera' and 'REDAH'</li> </ul>

Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,000,000 KM for the construction of the junction of Primorska Street with the Adriatic coastal road at the location Surdup for motor vehicles, and 50,000 KM only for the construction of easy access for cyclists</li> <li>• 500,000 KM for the construction of 400 meters long connection of Mimoza Street across Jazina Street with the Adriatic coastal road, and 100,000 KM only for the construction of a cycling path from Mimoza Street to Jazina Beach</li> <li>• 20,000 KM for the introduction of one-way traffic and for the drawing of a cycling path on Primorska Street and in Mimoza Street</li> <li>• 80,000 KM for the construction of a bike park</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term for the construction of basic access for cyclists to the coastal zone from the Adriatic coastal road on the western (Primorska street - 'Surdup') and on the eastern edge of Neum (junction of Mimoza and Jazina streets), including the basic signalization of the route</li> <li>• Medium-term for the construction of the bike park, construction of road access for all vehicles from the Adriatic coastal road to the coastal zone on both sides of Neum, introduction of one-way traffic on Primorska and Mimoza Street and the marking of the bicycle path on the street in characteristic dark red color</li> </ul>



Project 13. INTERVENTIONS IN TRAFFIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCESS TO MAIN TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN THE HINTERLAND OF THE MUNICIPALITY

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving transport infrastructure</li> <li>Development of tourist supply in the destination</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of the hinterland of the Municipality of Neum</li> <li>Reducing tourist pressure on the coastal area</li> <li>Extension of the tourist season</li> <li>Better use of tourist attractions</li> </ul>
Description	<p>Inadequate access is one of the main obstacles for better tourist valorization of numerous attractions in the hinterland of the Municipality of Neum. This is particularly a case with the necropolis of Toplica, which stands out with the largest number of 'stećci' tombstones in the Municipality, and in the case of the temporarily inaccessible Kolojanj archeological site. The access to the necropolis of Medjugorje near Glumina, Vranjevo selo and Crkvina is also problematic. Therefore, it is recommended to put at least better macadam surface on the road connecting Cerovica and Gornje Hrasno below the villages of Vinine, Crnoglav and Rabrani. The improvement or possible asphaltting of this road is important not only for access to the Toplica necropolis, but also as this road is important part of the cycling route Cerovica - Gornje Hrasno - Velja Medja (Ravno).</p> <p>The improvement of access is also important in a case of the most attractive necropolis of Medjugorje, because the existing road Hutovo - Glumina is not passable for buses due to the narrowness and hairpin bends. In the case of Crkvina necropolis and Kolojanj archeological site it is necessary to construct a hiking path, as well as in the case of Vranjevo selo necropolis near Neum, with access leading across shrubbery and private property.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Road Administration of Herzegovina-Neretva County</li> <li>Croatian Mountaineering Association 'Prenj' Mostar</li> <li>Municipality of Neum</li> </ul>
Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>200,000 KM for asphaltting 3.5 km of the 'lower' road Cerovica - Gornje Hrasno, and 50,000 KM only for a better macadam surface</li> <li>30,000 KM for the widening of the road Hutovo - Glumina on the hairpin bend at the ascent above Lake Vrutak, construction of two areas on the road for passing the vehicles and a parking area for buses near the Necropolis</li> <li>15,000 KM for the construction of a hiking path from the hamlet of Kolojanj to the Kolojanj archeological site</li> <li>10,000 KM for the pedestrian access to the necropolises of Vranjevo Selo and Crkvina</li> </ul>

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Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term for the improvement of the existing unpaved 'lower' road Cerovica - Gornje Hrasno in bad condition and pedestrian access to the necropolis of 'stećci' tombstones in Vranjevo selo</li> <li>• Medium and long-term for asphaltting the road Cerovica - Toplica necropolis - Gornje Hrasno, widening of the road Hutovo - Glumina and construction of pedestrian access to the Kolojanj archeological site and Crkvina necropolis.</li> </ul>
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Project 14. IMPROVEMENT OF THE EXISTING HIKING TRAIL TO MOUNT ŽABA AND DEVELOPMENT OF HIKING TRAILS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEUM

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of tourist supply in the destination</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the hinterland of the Municipality of Neum</li> <li>• Extension of the tourist season</li> <li>• Diversification of tourist demand</li> </ul>
Description	<p>The construction of the hiking trail to Mount Žaba from Broćanac promoted Neum as a potential hiking destination. Therefore, it is recommended to improve the surface and signalization of the path so it would be suitable also to tourists without larger hiking experiences. It would be also advisable to develop some rest areas and interpretive facilities along the trail, and at least one climbing area ('ferrata') on Mount Žaba where it is possible to do it. It would be nice to develop a hiking trail to Mount Žaba also from the directions of Hutovo and Brštanica, and to develop additional hiking trails in other parts of the interior of the Municipality of Neum and on the Klek peninsula.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Croatian Mountaineering Association 'Prenj' Mostar</li> <li>• Municipality of Neum</li> </ul>
Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20,000 KM for the improvement of approximately 2 km of the existing hiking trail to Mount Žaba from Broćanac</li> <li>• 40,000 KM for the construction of approximately 4 km long hiking trail to Mount Žaba from Hutovo</li> <li>• 10,000 km for the signalization of hiking routes on approximately ten kilometers of existing hiking trails partially in poor condition in the interior of the Municipality and on the Klek Peninsula</li> <li>• 10,000 KM for the construction of one climbing area ('ferrata')</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term for the improvement of the existing hiking trail Broćanac - Mount Žaba</li> <li>• Medium and long term for the construction and improvement of other hiking and walking trails</li> </ul>

### 5.3. Destination management and actions focused on education and sustainable use of resources

#### Project 15. DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM AND OTHER FORMS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE HINTERLAND OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEUM

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of tourist supply in the destination</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the hinterland of the Municipality of Neum</li> <li>• Extension of the tourist season</li> <li>• Diversification of tourist demand</li> </ul>
Description	<p>So far, Neum has developed almost exclusively as a 'sun &amp; sea' destination, while the hinterland was almost completely neglected as a tourist destination. The possibilities for tourism development of the hinterland are now much better due to the improvement of traffic accessibility thanks to the new road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac, preserved environment, growing environmental awareness and positive experiences in development of rural tourism on the Pelješac peninsula, Dalmatian Zagora, and Istria in Croatia. Therefore, accommodation capacities in rural tourism and luxury holiday homes should, as far as possible, be related to the refurbishment of existing abandoned residential houses, and new ones should be built in accordance with the Mediterranean tradition. In addition to the rural tourism based on the autochthonous gastronomic offer, cycling tourism, hiking, cultural tourism and other forms of sustainable tourism are also important.</p> <p>Incentive for these types of tourism should include the training of cycling and hiking guides and support for the organization of events that promote tourism in the hinterland, such as Bullfighting in Vinine. Some additional investments in infrastructure are necessary for the promotion of such development, primarily in developing cycling routes and hiking trails and interpretation of tourist attractions. It is also important to support opening at least two objects offering local food in the hinterland of the Municipality that would be constantly open, at least during the extended summer season. Considering favorable effects of the conversion of abandoned rural houses into accommodation capacities for tourists as a tool to revitalize the rural areas, for these actions it would be advisable to apply for the use of pre-accession funds of the European Union and other sources.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality of Neum</li> <li>• Development agencies 'Nera' and 'REDAH'</li> </ul>

Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10,000 KM for one training course for cycling or hiking guides</li> <li>• 30,000 KM for promotion and incentive for organizing events</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuously</li> </ul>



## Project 16. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TOURIST BOARD OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEUM

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic destination management</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating conditions for effective strategic tourism management in Neum</li> <li>Higher participation of Neum citizens in the decision-making process</li> <li>Raising the quality of life of the local population</li> </ul>
Description	<p>Neum is the second strongest destination in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the capital Sarajevo in terms of the number of overnights, but it does not have its own tourist board - it is under the jurisdiction of the Herzegovina-Neretva County Tourist Board. This situation disables the effective strategic management of the destination because revenues from tourism generated in the Municipality cannot be used for its development. As municipalities in the Republic of Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in neighboring Montenegro have independent tourist boards, as well as significantly smaller municipalities in Croatia, there is no reason why Neum should not get an independent tourist board. An additional argument is that independent tourist boards are functional in the municipalities of Bihać, Tuzla, Olovo, Široki Brijeg and Ljubuški, which are much less important in tourist terms than Neum, and there are initiatives to establish independent municipal tourist boards also in other parts of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.</p> <p>Although the current model of tourist organization in the Herzegovina-Neretva County makes the establishment of an independent tourist board of the Municipality of Neum not legally possible, amendments to these regulations are underway and Neum as a unique and strong tourist destination should use it. Other municipalities in the Herzegovina-Neretva County should be also interested in changing these regulations, especially the municipality of Čitluk, which includes Medjugorje as the third, and the city of Mostar as the fourth strongest tourist destination in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The independent functioning of the tourist board of the Municipality of Neum could be especially helpful regarding accurate counting of the number of tourist arrivals and overnights, which would contribute to the municipal budget. Having in mind the function of the tourist board as a destination management organization responsible for the tourist development in general and strategic planning of tourism, it is very important for it to have highly professional staff. This is crucial prerequisite for rational spending of potentially large revenues from tourism for raising the quality of life in the whole Municipality of Neum.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipality of Neum</li> <li>Herzegovina-Neretva County</li> <li>Herzegovina-Neretva County Tourist Board</li> </ul>
Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100,000 KM (based on two employees)</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short-term</li> </ul>

## Project 17. TAKING ACTIONS AIMED AT POSITIONING NEUM AS A SAFE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY DESTINATION

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic destination management</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of Neum as a safe and environmentally friendly destination</li> <li>Minimizing the negative effects of the decline in transit traffic in Neum after the opening of the Pelješac Bridge with access roads</li> <li>Raising the quality of the tourist experience</li> </ul>
Description	<p>Despite certain positive effects, the opening for traffic of the Pelješac Bridge with access roads will reduce trade revenues in Neum from people in transit. It will also cause a certain decrease in the number of tourists from the European Union and other developed countries, who will no longer have reason to travel through Neum on their way to Dubrovnik. Since Bosnia and Herzegovina is in many developed countries still perceived as a less safe and environmentally less friendly destination than neighboring Croatia, which is partially caused by the urban disorder of Neum and lower level of tourist experience, it is necessary to take promotional activities in these countries to present Neum as safe and environmentally friendly destination.</p> <p>At the same time, it should be ensured that on the border with Croatia there will be no long queues and that some public bus lines travelling from Neretva valley towards Dubrovnik will continue to pass through Neum instead over Pelješac peninsula. In addition to producing various promotional materials in print and online, these actions include promotion on social networks and an accentuation on favorable prices in Neum compared to those in Dubrovnik-Neretva County. The promotional materials should also strongly emphasize the improvement of the traffic position of Neum in relation to Mostar, Medjugorje and other destinations in Bosnia and Herzegovina thanks to the new road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipality of Neum</li> <li>Herzegovina-Neretva County Tourist Board</li> </ul>
Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15,000 KM for one promotional campaign</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short-term</li> </ul>

## Project 18. PRODUCTION OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEUM

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic destination management</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating expert background for strategic tourism management</li> <li>• Adaptation to new development circumstances</li> </ul>
Description	<p>The existing planning documents related to the Municipality of Neum have already expired, which is why it is necessary to adopt new ones as soon as possible. This especially refers to the Tourism Development Strategy of the Municipality of Neum, since tourism is the basic activity on which the overall development of the Municipality is based, and the circumstances have changed so much in the last few years that a new development approach is needed. These circumstances primarily refer to the construction of the new road Neum - Hutovo - Stolac and the construction of the Pelješac Bridge with access roads, but also the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to major changes in the structure and behavior of tourists. Due to the great importance of this strategy for the development prospects of the Municipality, the study should be done by professional institutions with great experience in drafting this type of document, which includes announcing an international public tender.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality of Neum</li> <li>• Herzegovina-Neretva County Tourist Board</li> </ul>
Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30.000 KM</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term</li> </ul>

Project 19. RESEARCH AND SURVEYS ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF TOURISM ON THE LOCAL POPULATION AND THE ECONOMY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEUM

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic destination management</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating expert background for strategic tourism management</li> <li>• Higher level of participation of Neum citizens in the decision-making process</li> </ul>
Description	Given the different effects of certain types of tourism activities on the Municipality of Neum (stationary tourists, holiday home users, excursionists, cyclists, hikers, cultural tourism) it is recommended to undertake deeper research that would include a comprehensive analysis of benefits and costs of certain types of tourism. Therefore, such research should include surveys of local population to create a quality basis for future actions.
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality of Neum</li> <li>• High school in Neum</li> <li>• University of Mostar</li> </ul>
Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15.000 KM for one survey</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuously</li> </ul>

Project 20. EDUCATIONAL ACTIONS AIMED AT RAISING AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM AND PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Project type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic destination management</li> </ul>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising awareness of the population in the Municipality of of Neum about the importance of sustainable tourism development</li> <li>• Higher level of participation of Neum citizens in the decision-making process</li> <li>• Raising the quality of life of the local population</li> </ul>
Description	<p>In order to promote selective types of tourism in the hinterland of the Municipality of Neum and develop a specific accommodation supply in rural tourism and luxury holiday homes, it is necessary to educate tourism staff and other residents of Neum about the specifics of the particular forms of tourism and the importance of strategic approach to tourism development. At the same time, the organization of meetings and public forums should encourage direct participation of the citizens of Neum in key decisions related to tourism management, development of special types of tourism, environmental protection, etc. These actions include educational workshops for participatory management processes as prerequisites for effective decision-making and implementation of proposed measures.</p>
Responsible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality of Neum</li> <li>• Herzegovina-Neretva County Tourist Board</li> <li>• High school in Neum</li> <li>• University of Mostar</li> </ul>
Cost (estimate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4,000 KM for one training lasting three days</li> </ul>
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuously</li> </ul>