

**Data Template HAMLET** Version n. 1.0

**Territorial Mapping Activity**

**![Description: C:\Users\PC-3\Desktop\HAMLET Interreg\Logo Project Partners\[1]Min. kulture Montenegro logo ENGL.jpg]()** **** 

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# Location

**Skadar Lake**

The territory of Skadar lake covers three municipalities: Podgorica, Bar and Cetinje (coordinates: 42°10′N 19°19′E).

# Data regarding historical traditions

The rich legacy of material culture: archaeological sites, fortifications, medieval monasteries, churches, traditional village architecture, as well as spiritually significant accomplishments indicate that the area of Skadar Lake over time was an important historical and cultural centre; it also shows that this was a battle site in certain times in history, but most of all an important cultural centre. Numerous civilizations have come to this region one after the other and left their traces – Illyrian, Hellenic, Roman. Powerful dynasties, such as Vojislavljevic, Balsic, Nemanjic, Crnojevic, as well as the last one – Petrovic dynasties have left important statehood and architectural traces from the times of their independent rule over this region.

One of the most important historical traditions related to Skadar Lake is connected to navigation and production of rafts. The first written information on navigation on Lake Skadar dates back to 167 B.C., when this region was ruled by the Illyrian King Gence. In ancient times, primitive dugouts made out of a single thick tree-trunk, suljice and canoes with oars and, later on, large dinghies with sailing spars were used to navigate the lake. The boats used for navigating on the lake and on the River Bojana were made by skilful local craftsmen, in particular from Krajina and Široča, who used wood from locally growing chestnut, mulberry and oak trees. They were used by locals not only for transporting cargo, travel and fishing, but also for defending the area from the numerous invaders. The emergence of steamboats during the first half of the 19th century and the development of merchant shipping on the lake caused a reduction in and the gradual disappearance of smaller boats. At the end of the 19th century, the first Montenegrin yachts and steamboats of the Petrović royal family began to sail. The main ports were at Virpazar, Lipovik, Plavnica and Shkodra. The first regular passenger and cargo route on the lake started up with the steamboat Žabljak in 1885. In order to set up regular passenger and cargo traffic on Lake Skadar, in the 1880s joint stock companies and shipping companies were established and operated on the lake. Their fleet consisted of steamboats and various motorised vessels suitable for navigation on the lake. The construction of a road and railway through the lake region in the 1960s gradually caused a reduction in passenger traffic on the lake. Soon after the closing down of the shipping company “Galeb” in 1981, after 96 years of service, regular passenger and freight traffic on Lake Skadar closed down.

The diverse and unique rural architecture is a particularly important feature of the traditional architectural heritage of the lake area. The authentic residential architecture is characterised by stone houses of a compact and scattered type. These are: ground-level houses, with gabled roofs, made up of one or two rooms, then two-storey houses with an upper floor and a basement room, elongated vaulted structures with a basement and a spacious paved terrace. There are also numerous fishing villages on the lake shore, with houses that were used for storing fishing tools and salting the day’s catch, complexes made up of mills and stone bridges on river watercourses, paved country paths and individual examples of threshing floors, water troughs and wells, scattered throughout the areas of Crmnica and Rijeka.

# Data regarding monuments and other historical and cultural objects

Among the immovable cultural properties within the boundaries of the national park protected by law, there are six monasteries, four fortresses and three secular monuments. The monastery complexes are the most important religious units, built in the period from the 11th to 19th century. The oldest ones are the Monastery of the Mother of God of Krajina near Ostros from the 11th century from the time of the Vojislavljevićes, and the Nemanjić Monastery of St. Nicholas in Vranjina from the 13th century. On the islands along the shore of Krajina, the Balšićes erected the monasteries of Starčevo, Beška and Moračnik with modest graveyard churches at the end of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th century, with trefoil churches. The architectural complexes of the Crnojevićes, dating from the second half of the 15th century, are composed of the fortified town of Žabljak Crnojevića, Kom Monastery and Obod-Riječki grad. There are three monasteries that are worth of note due to their spatial, spiritual and historical connections in Crmnica in the hinterland of the lake at Orahovo, Donji Brčeli and Gornji Brčeli, which were built in the period from the 15th to the 18th century. All the monasteries in the region of Lake Skadar are now active spiritual centres, except for the Monastery of the Mother of God of Krajina, which is in ruins. The towers and fortresses on Lake Skadar were erected in the period from the 14th to 19th century. With mighty ramparts and towers situated on rocky hills, they had a formidable strategic position. In the battles between the Montenegrins and the Ottomans, they formed a connected lake defence system.

* **Fortress Besac** is located on a hill high around 50 meters above sea level, emerging from Virsko fields and Kruse bare, just above the village of Virpazar. Considering its imposing position and the building techniques, it can be assumed that the Fortress with its round towers is the oldest building in the fort complex, built during the first half of the fifteenth century, at the period of medieval Zeta. It is known that the Ottomans simultaneously formed the Fortress as a whole, immediately after the fall of Lower Zeta in 1478. As an important strategic stronghold, Fortress Besac was in operation at all times during the Ottoman presence in this area. It had a significant role in the system of fortifications in the Skadar lake area - Besac, Lesendro, Zabljak. Between the two World Wars Fortress was used as the gendarmerie station. During the Italian occupation in 1941 and 1943 the Fortress was converted into a prison. After the World War Two it was abandoned and ever since no specific actions for its revitalization were taken. Fortress Besac was fully restored in the period between 2013 and 2016.
* The medieval fortified town of **Zabljak Crnojevica** was built on a hill in the North Western part of Lake Skadar. It was first mentioned in the 15th century as capital of the Crnojevic dynasty. Throughout its long and turbulent history Zabljak has frequently changed its features and use. During the Crnojevic dynasty, it resembled a Venetian fortification, unique in the region. During the period of Ottoman rule it was one of the most important strongholds of the area, around which fierce battles took place. The town has tall walls with towers, as well as one gate. Within the walls one can find: Ivan Crnojević's court, the Church of Saint George (that was turned into a mosque during the Ottoman rule), housing and military facilities, a warehouse for clothes and a water tank, most of which are preserved. Because of its historical significance and its unique architecture, Zabljak Crnojevica is one of the most important cultural monuments in the Skadar Lake basin. The local authorities envision tourism and eco-tourism based activities, in line with the specificities of the town.
* On a former island, near Vranjina village, in 1843, the Montenegrin ruler Petar II Petrovic Njegos built the famous **Lesendro fortress**, on a 3000 m² area. The position of the island is of great historical and strategic significance, which could be capitalized on. The area where Lesendro is located is the only water passage, a very narrow one, between the two parts of Skadar Lake. This is why this important place has been called the ‘key of Skadar Lake’.
* The village of **Godinje i**s located in the Crmnica region, an area with a five century old vineyards and famous wines tradition. It was mentioned for the first time in the 13th century. Traces of the Balsic Dynasty (the 15th century) can still be found in the village. Nowadays, Godinje is one of the best preserved rural entities of historical importance. Traditional architecture, stone houses with arched doorways and inns, as well as structures that are typical for the traditional way of life, such as threshing floors and mills, are prevalent here.
* The Island of **Grmozur** is situated in the Godinje Bay, in the Southwestern part of the Skadar Lake. The fortress was built in 1843 by the Turks, in the border area between the Montenegrin and Turk territories. During the liberation wars, in 1876–1878, under the leadership of Duke Nikola Petrovic, Grmozur was occupied by the Montenegrins. Starting with this period, the fortress was transformed into a dungeon for convicted criminals and political prisoners.
* The oldest preserved monument in Karuc is the **St. Peter tower**, built on the highest point of a conical hill. It is also known as Bishop Petar I Petrovic winter house; he built it in the first half of the 19th century. Ever since, this settlement has begun to expand and houses were built in lower points, closer to Skadar Lake. A series of loopholes are visible on the tower facade witnessing its use for defensive purposes. After the death of Peter, the building was used as a school; the first one is mentioned in 1871.

# Data regarding businesses (or workshops) related to artisanal products

Main businesses and workshops related to artisanal products are:

* Production of traditional rafts, protected by the Low as intangible cultural property of Montenegro (families Brnovic and Čelebic from Skadar Lake)
* Wicker knitting (“pletenje prućem”) – family Vukotić
* Production of “Crmnica” vine

# Data regarding associations or NGO´s in the project area

Most active NGOs on Skadar Lake are:

* Vinery association;
* Fishermen's associations (In the area of the National park there are five fishing associations „Vranjina“ - Vranjina; „Crmica“ - Virpazar–Bar; „Krajina“ – Bar-Ostros; „Izvor“ – Tuzi i „Zeta“ – Golubovci);
* Olive three associations;
* NGO Expedicio
* NGO Centre for the protection and research of birds
* NGO Green home
* ADP ZID (Association for the democratic prosperity ZID)
* [IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature](https://www.iucn.org/)

# Data regarding the main businesses in the project area

In Municipality of Bar there are 40 natural persons and 189 legal persons registered in the field of production, manufacturing, tourism and arts. In Cetinje there are 12 natural persons and 96 legal persons, while in Podgorica there are 125 natural and 743 legal persons (also in the field of production, manufacturing, tourism and arts).

"Plantaže" are the largest wine-growing company in Montenegro and their vineyard “Cemovsko polje”, which is the largest in Europe, on 2,310 ha of land, is situated in the vicinity of Skadar Lake.

# Data regarding geographical characteristics in the project area

Skadar Lake is located in Zeta-Skadar valley, at 6m above sea level. In the low water level it covers 412 m² and it is the largest on the Balkan Peninsula. About 254 km² (62%) of the lake belongs to Montenegro and 158 km2 (38%) to Albania. The lake is 44 km long and its maximum width is 13 km. Water surface consists of free water (91%) and floating vegetation in the shallow area (9%), while a strip of wetlands continues along the northern shallow shore. Skadar Lake is one of the largest bird [reserves](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nature_reserve) in Europe, having 270 bird species, among which are some of the last [pelicans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pelican) in Europe. The lake also contains habitats of [seagulls](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gull) and [herons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heron). It is abundant in fish, especially in [carp](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carp), [bleak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alburnus) and [eel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eel). Of the 34 native fish species, 7 are [endemic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endemism) to Lake Skadar. In addition, there are 17 [amphipod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amphipod) species for the Lake Skadar watershed, 10 of them being endemic (mainly from the subterranean habitat).

Skadar Lake was declared a national park in 1983, while in 1989 it receives IBA status (Area of international importance for birds). Since 1995 the lake was enlisted in the list of Wetlands of International Importance - Ramsar list.

# Demographic data in the project area

There are 12,474 inhabitants in 41 settlements belonging to the Skadar Lake National Park. Settlements belonging to Podgorica have the highest number of inhabitants (10.288). There are 1.668 inhabitants in the settlements within Municipality of Bar and 518 in Old Royal Capital Cetinje.

# Data regarding other projects which have been already implemented, are undergoing implementation, or will be implemented in the future in the project area

National park Skadar Lake is involved in project “Strengthening cross-border cooperation and integrated water resources management in the extended Drim river basin”, through which first phase of management of the vegetation on Skadar Lake is realized. Projects implementation started in 2015. Partners are UNDP, GWP, GWP Mediteran’, UNECE and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Montenegro.

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