

# PRESS RELEASE



United Nations Development Programme

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## Rafting in Accordance with International Standards

Between 13th and 20th May in Šcepan polje (Sastavci camp), a training for whitewater river raft skippers will be conducted within the project «Unleashing Sustainable Tourism Entrepreneurship in the Area of National Park Durmitor», with an aim to enable trainees for a good quality performing of raft skipper duties and gaining competences for safe boat/raft steering. This training is conceived according to the International Rafting Federation standards and it is adjusted to the whitewater river rafting conditions in Montenegro.

The Project «Unleashing Sustainable Tourism Entrepreneurship in the Area of NP Durmitor» was developed by United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Liaison Office Podgorica, with active participation of Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Physical Planning and PI National Parks.

**«This is a perfect example of economic growth through improved quality of a tourism experience which reinforces the notion of «wild beauty» without threatening the exceptional biodiversity of Montenegrin Canyons,»** said Mr Garret Tankosic-Kelly, Head of Office UNDP Podgorica.

However, there has not been a clear legal frame so far to define trainings for raft skippers in order to ensure the sustainability and quality of this tourism attraction from a longer term prospective. Based on the conclusions of the Rafting Working Group established in 2005, UNDP engaged the Center for Vocational Education and, with participation of raft skippers themselves, started producing standards of the profession and a training program.

UNDP started the activities in the domain of whitewater river rafting early in 2005, through an exchange of experiences with the raft skippers from Slovenia, through interactive training programs in communication with tourists and using the environmental protection knowledge. Given that the strategic determination of the Government of the Republic of Montenegro is planning within sustainable development framework, this activity comes to full harmony with the UN Millennium Development Goals. Training for raft skippers should contribute to improving of service quality, inducing of entrepreneurship and increase in income. Mr Tomica

Paovic, UNDP LO Podgorica Tourism and Entrepreneurship Coordinator, says: «**In 2005, only within NP Durmitor borders, over 3.000 tourists used rafting services and between 12 and 15 thousand tourists who rafted the year before along the entire Tara river course directly or indirectly brought over 1 Million Euros profit**».

The Project «Unleashing Sustainable Tourism Entrepreneurship in the Area of NP Durmitor» is a concrete step towards implementation of the Program “Strategic Framework for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Northern and Central Parts of Montenegro”, adopted by the Montenegrin Government in September 2004 and financially supported by UNDP in partnership with the American philanthropic organization “Rockefeller Brother Fund”. Implementation of this Project linked local stakeholders and donors for the first time, creating thus a basis for the *network* of future initiatives for starting business activities in the domain of sustainable tourism, protection of biodiversity and reduction of poverty in the Northern and Central parts of Montenegro.

During the training for whitewater river raft skippers from 13th until 20th May in Šcepan polje (Sastavci kamp) a press conference will be held that we will inform you accordingly about.

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**UNDP in Montenegro promotes sustainable development, which is economically viable, socially inclusive and environmentally friendly.**