

Call for submission of business ideas for increasing the sustainability of the Ulcinj Salina Nature Park

As part of the *Nature Returns* project, the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development is announcing a **Call for submission of business ideas for increasing the sustainability of the Ulcinj Salina Nature Park area** (hereinafter: Call).

Do you have an idea that can contribute to nature conservation? We are looking for you!

If you have a passion for nature conservation and an innovative business idea that can contribute to the sustainable development of the Ulcinj Salina Nature Park, this is the opportunity for you! Your ideas can help preserve this unique conservation site while supporting the local community and economy.

Who conducts this Call?

Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development, Podgorica, Montenegro

What kind of ideas are we looking for?

We invite you to propose innovative ideas that will contribute to:

- promoting the production of salt and by-products in the traditional way
- promoting the diversification of local products related to salt production
- promoting other types of production complementary to salt production (using sea water and evaporation pools)
- preventing the spread of invasive plant and animal species, as well as their exploitation for economic purposes, such as the blue crab, reed and tamarix.
- preservation of halophytes, e.g. *Salicornia* – marsh samphire
- improvement of the existing industrial infrastructure
- development of new content in order to reuse the industrial infrastructure
- restoration and maintenance of the supply channel from Cape Đeran to the salina
- application of renewable and alternative energy sources in order to improve the efficiency of the salt works pumps
- development of sustainable offers to visitors based on interpretation of natural and cultural values of the site
- preservation and restoration of cultural heritage, landscape attributes (e.g. kalimera) and traditional local skills
- use of peloid (medicinal mud) for medical, therapeutic and cosmetic purposes
- preservation of the ecosystem, protected species and habitats of the Nature Park
- education on nature conservation and biological diversity

- mitigating the impact of climate change on the environment

NOTE: *The list of ideas is not final, other ideas that contribute to the sustainable management of this area are also acceptable.*

Ulcinj Salina Nature Park

Ulcinj Salina Nature Park is located on a former lagoon and swamp in the delta of the Bojana river. Today, that area is important because of its rich biodiversity – many species and groups of waterfowl and salt-dominated habitats with rare halophytes. AD Saltworks Bajo Sekulic began operating in 1934, and salt production existed until 2013. The cessation of salt production, i.e. the cessation of regulation of the water regime in the saltworks threatens the entire ecosystem.

The protected area comprises some 14.5 km² of salt pans. Its total size is 14.77 km². It is surrounded by a channel that drains the adjacent swamps and "knetes", not allowing their water to mix with the salt water. It is connected to the sea via the Port Milena channel, the pumping station on Cape Đerane and the supply channel.

The salt marsh is an important area for migrating birds, especially waterfowl and ducks. It is estimated that over 100,000 waterfowl visit this area in the spring and autumn at least for a day, for feeding and rest. During winter, over 15,000 birds are present in this area every day. In addition to the area being extremely important as a resting site for migratory birds, numerous nesting birds - waterfowl, waders, reed birds and grassland birds - live on salina.

The halophytic vegetation of salina (*Salicornia* and other species) is very specific due to the salty conditions in which it survives and is very rare in Montenegro.

Objectives of the Call:

Due to the various pressures and threats and the costs of maintaining a favorable state of biodiversity and habitats in Ulcinj Salina Nature Park, we need innovative approaches in the management of the area. That is why we want to strengthen cooperation with local communities and other actors in order to develop innovative solutions for sustainable resource management.

The call is divided into two categories:

- **Priority ideas** that can alleviate the main threats (expensive maintenance of the water regime of the salt works, invasive species, demanding reconstruction of the salt pan infrastructure, weak tourist offer) and generate new sources of income;
- **Other ideas** that contribute to the well-being of nature or the improvement of biodiversity, without necessarily generating income.

Who can participate?

The call is open to individuals and legal entities in the country and abroad. We encourage applications from various fields!

How to apply?

Each idea must be submitted separately in Montenegrin or English language using the application form via email to sanja.scepanovic@mers.gov.me. The application deadline is 25.01.2025, and the selected ideas will be announced on 01.03.2025.

It is important to note that submitting applications does not entail any financial costs or rewards.

Additional benefits

Selected ideas will be invited to join the *Nature Returns* project, where they will be further developed in cooperation with experts in the field of nature protection and business development in order to encourage entrepreneurs and help launch the selected business ideas.

For the selected ideas, the opportunity for their co-financing will be opened through a second call.

In addition, interested bidders will be invited to the "Entrepreneurial Academy" where they will have the opportunity to connect with each other and learn how to run their business.

Contact

For more information, contact us at: sanja.scepanovic@mers.gov.me