

The synergy of culture and tourism for the development of rural areas



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CULTour
Synergy of culture and tourism

The synergy of culture and tourism for the development of rural areas

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Project manager: David Bole

Lead partner: Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute

Editors: David Bole, Mateja Šmid Hribar, Jani Kozina

Translator: Živa Malovrh

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Layout: Marijan Pečar, self-employed professional in the field of culture, Bachelor of Science in Design, and illustrator

Texts written by: David Bole, Mateja Šmid Hribar, Primož Pipan (Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute), Federico Bigaran, Silvia Corrado (Autonomous Province of Trento, Division Agriculture), Angela Santilli, Assuntina Fasciani (Mountain Community Sirentina), Nikos Mandrekas (Region of Thessaly), Vera Djurić Drozdek (Municipality of Jesenice), Lina Pavletič (Alianta d.o.o.) Urška Železnikar (Development Agency for Upper Gorenjska), Georgia Papadaki (Heraklion Chamber of Commerce and Industry), Lyubov Trenkova, Gergana Kaloyanova (Pazardzhik Regional Administration), Erika Tóth (Central Transdanubian Regional Innovation Agency Nonprofit Ltd.), Jasmina Đorđević, Igor Stamenković, Kristina Košič, Tatjana Pivac, Ivana Blešić (University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Sciences)

Photographs: Argentario Ecomuseum, Urška Bajec Rupnik, David Bole, Iztok Bončina, Bogdan Bricelj, Miran Dolar, Bojan Erhartič, Heraklion Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Aljaž Hrvatin, Judicaria Ecomuseum, Michael Kalafatas, Vladimir Kamčević, Lagorai Ecomuseum, Lazar Lazić, Špela Ledinek Lozej, Matej Lipar, Nikos Mandrekas, Saša Manojlovič, Matjaž Marc, Municipality of Jesenice, Municipality of Strelcha, Pazardzhik regional administration, Peio Ecomuseum, Primož Pipan, Tatjana Pivac, Giovanni Pizzocchia, Miro Podgoršek, Michael Pornalis, Efi Psilaki, Region of Thessaly, Roman Rupnik, Lamberto Anfolsi Schiavitti, Aleš Smrekar, Vladimir Stojanović, Mateja Šmid Hribar, Tadeja Šubic, Tesino Ecomuseum, Erika Tóth, Tourism Organisation of the City of Sombor, Trentino Ecomuseum, Vanoi Ecomuseum, Aljoša Videntič, Manca Volk Bahun

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0 Executive summary

Text written by: David Bole

The rural areas of Europe are experiencing turbulent times. They are still largely dependent on traditional economic activities (exploiting natural resources, agriculture, forestry, etc.), which remain the main source of income and employment opportunities. They are left vulnerable in these times of climate instability and are often dependent on financial aid from the EU or the domestic support policies. At the same time, these are also areas where the locals are holders of a rich culture and cultural heritage, deeply rooted and expressed in a rich territorial capital. Consequently, the cultural values have the potential to become a successful tool for the social and economic development of the rural communities. The main goal of this publication is to present the ways of cultural value management that involves the local community and invites new development impulses, while contributing to the preservation of their culture and their empowerment.

This publication puts emphasis on the “bottom-up” approach, in which the local stakeholders are the main initiators, the contractors, as well as the end-users of the entire process of creating new or additional tourist products derived from their own culture. For this reason, the introductory part includes a short chapter on the meaning of participative planning, including tips and useful advice.

The main part of the publication reveals the methodology entitled “Guidelines for the Management of Cultural Values in Rural Areas”, presented in second chapter. The guidelines try to illustrate in a practical and concrete manner the steps that a local community must take to start discovering, conserving, and especially using their own cultural values for developmental purposes. These are written in the form of instructions in a simple and user-friendly way. This step-by-step manual will lead the reader through six steps from the first idea to the final realization, which might be a new product or service, an experience, or a story based on the cultural values with development potential. The guidelines are equipped with examples, tools, and other advice, making them suitable for anyone: any individual, institution, or private enterprise wishing so boost additional development by using cultural values as an aid.

The third chapter describes the stories and experiences of the project partners in the SY_CULTour project, who underwent the process of testing and meeting the Guidelines for the Management of Cultural Values in Rural Areas. These descriptions can serve as an example, a case of good practice, or as motivation for anyone else contemplating similar activities. Based on ten examples with illustrated cultural values and on the positive and negative experiences from developing them into tourist products, we may confidently state that the methodology creates positive effects and is suitable for use anywhere in the European countryside.

Lastly, the final thoughts are presented, focusing on the future of European rural areas. The 17 participating partners from six countries are also introduced, as they managed to develop and test the methodology of cultural value management with the help of co-financing by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the framework of the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme.

1 Introduction

Text written by: David Bole and Federico Bigaran

1.1 SY_CULTour project – concept and goals

SY_CULTour (*Synergy of culture and tourism: utilisation of cultural potentials in less favored rural regions*) is a project organized within the framework of the Transnational Cooperation Programme area South East Europe with 17 partners from six countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Slovenia, and Serbia). The aim of the project was to address the problems of the ever more globalized European countryside that is less and less dependent on the traditional economic activities such as agriculture and is increasingly more oriented toward the service sector of the economy, in which tourism plays an important role.

Why the synergy of culture and tourism?

The SY_CULTour project determines the typical culture of a certain rural area as a development source, since it is locally defined and most often connected to the area's natural characteristics and can therefore offer an expressed competitive advantage over other areas. Tourism attracts visitors and creates positive **economic effects**, which are directly reflected in creating a revenue stream from tourist culture marketing, as well as new job opportunities, an additional income for the households, societies, entrepreneurs, tourism operators, and other aspects.

In addition to the economic, the **positive social and environmental effects** of tourism on the local communities are also of great importance. Tourism is more than simply an economic opportunity: it is a means for enriching the quality of life and empowering the local inhabitants. The concept of empowerment is especially important, because it is a tool for encouraging local community development, spurring the local community and local tourism operators to create development according to their own ideas and at their own pace. In this way, the local community is involved in the development process and tourist product management process and is able to recognize the benefits of this for them as well. Positive environmental effects are achieved when the management and marketing of the cultural values for tourism

purposes effects the preservation of the traditional cultural landscape or the biodiversity. Secondly, tourism can also serve as an element of protection, such as restoration, maintenance, and material or immaterial cultural heritage protection. The creative potential is especially expressed through channels where renewing certain cultural traditions for tourist purposes encourages the individual's own creativity, artistic creation, and a completely immersed identification with one's environment and its history.

With this in mind, the culture and cultural heritage in the SY_CULTour project was defined based on its economic, social, environmental and creative developmental potential and its value was determined: thus the term definition "cultural value", which is intended for emphasizing the developmental potential of different forms of culture and cultural heritage in a certain area (Šmid Hribar and Ledinek Lozej 2013). Cultural values are therefore some kind of territorial capital or a developmental source, to be experienced and enjoyed not only by the tourists, but also by the local inhabitants and can bring positive economic, social and environmental effects. At the same time, the development of tourism can pose a threat to the local inhabitants, especially if the activities and the investors "come from outside" and are merely interested in creating a profit, while regarding the local communities as more of a nuisance than a benefit.

Based on this, it may be concluded that the long-term aspect and success of cultural tourism development depends on establishing a partnership between the investors and the local community or in cases where the cultural tourism investors and operators are also locals. Consequently, the local community is the most important stakeholder and its general development should be the main principle for the entire process. This is a diverse group of people, households, local entrepreneurs and more or less influential individuals in the community. Their role is of the utmost importance, as they are the holders of the local culture and the end tourism product depends on their cooperation.

Author: Miro Podgoršek



Source: Municipality of Strelcha



Author: Lazar Lazic



What is the goal and how to reach it?

The local communities must be informed and must make their own decisions on what forms of tourism and what kind of products they want to offer the tourists, as well as what will be the estimated benefits and costs for the entire community. This is precisely the general motto of the SY_CULTour project. **The main goal is to demonstrate a way of cultural value management in rural areas that creates positive economic, social, and environmental effects. The project carried out testings in the pilot areas to create a methodology for cultural value management, which is based on participative methods, because we believe that it is absolutely imperative and the only sustainable option to view the local community as the main stakeholder in the entire process.** This methodology called “Guidelines for the Management of Cultural Values in Rural Areas” and is presented in more detail in the second chapter.

The main point of the Guidelines is to illustrate in a practical and concrete manner the steps that a local community must take to start the “wheel” of discovery, conservation, and especially using their own cultural values for developmental purposes. These are written in the form of instructions in a simple and user-friendly way. The guidelines are the result of several years of testing its steps in nine pilot areas in south-east Europe. They illustrate that systematic and focused effort, which includes and encourages the local community in its entirety to manage and market their own cultural values, can lead to positive economic/social/environmental effects. This process is described in more detail on the example of the experience we gained from the pilot areas in the third chapter of this book.

We can proudly state that every local community in Europe can expect at least minimal positive results if it chooses to follow the basic steps of our Guidelines for the Management of Cultural Values in Rural Areas.

1.2 Methodology – participative methods and planning

Introduction

The development of good relationships between the different organizations of the local community and between the public and private sectors is considered a pivotal factor for ensuring better and long lasting results of the SY_CULTour project activities. For this reason, it has become evident that in order to improve the networking, it is important to apply communication, the involvement of the local partnership, and a participative planning method into the management of the project and when writing and testing the Guidelines for the Management of Cultural Values in Rural Areas.

In order to disseminate the culture of **participative planning** among the partners and to facilitate the relationships among the local and regional public bodies, associations, tourism providers, and organizations, special focus was put on **facilitating social participation** in the local communities. In recent years, the use of a **participatory approach** in the decision-making process has increased more and more, meaning the involvement of the stakeholders who are interested by the decisions or have useful knowledge to share.

The term “participation” can be associated with different meanings, going from a simple transfer of information (unidirectional) to an active participation, based on a partnership involving many actors, such as politicians, citizens, experts, stakeholders. By *active participation* we mean “involving different stakeholders”, giving them the possibility not just to listen and watch, but giving them the power to interact with the processes, accepting the possibility that they could be changed by them.

Choosing the “participation way” essentially means putting together different points of view as a means to produce **innovation**. This approach has proved to be effective, because it tends to create links between subjects that usually do not communicate, giving them a possibility for familiarizing themselves with different perspectives and, in this way, opening a space for discovering new ways of seeing and solving problems.

The adopted participatory approach was used for obtaining:

- Conflict resolution;
- Knowledge creation;
- Knowledge sharing between different stakeholders;
- Rule sharing;
- Communication improvement;
- Quality improvement.

In order to reach all the potential stakeholders, the approach is usually based on informality and active listening, “to be able to set aside one's own ideas and perspective and be willing to give a chance to the other participants to convince one of their ideas”. The quality of a participatory process can be influenced by many different elements: the **contents** are very important, of course, but so are the **procedures** and **atmosphere**. An important role is played by the facilitator: the person who must lead the process without influencing the decisions. They must pay attention to their own conduct, being conscious that



Author: Mateja Šmid Hribar

Author: David Bole



³See more details at Šmid Hribar, M., Ledinek Lozej, Š. 2013: The Role of Identification and Management of Cultural Values at Development of Rural Areas. Acta Geographica Slovenica 53-2. Internet: <http://gjam.zrc-sazu.si/sites/default/files/ags53402.pdf> (20. 8. 2013).

they have an important and delicate role. A good facilitator can have a great influence on the other subjects and must pay attention to only “facilitate without forcing”. The skills of a good facilitator are:

- To be neutral;
- To pay great attention to the process;
- To help the group to progress;
- To use open questions in order to stimulate the discussion;
- To summarize the discussions and help the group to get to the conclusions;
- To use the “parroting” technique: use the words of the participants to reformulate concepts and phrases, to open the discussion or make it converge to specific objectives.

The work of the facilitator can be quite challenging because people often have very high expectations about the participatory processes, but invest relatively little energy and time in them. Sometimes, participation is not necessary. The solution of certain kinds of problems can be discovered quite easily without a participatory process. Participation is needed and recommended when a problem is “open ended” and does not offer a definite solution.

Participatory techniques

In order to answer to the different needs and respond to the different approaches, various participatory techniques have been developed.

In general, two main approaches in the participative techniques can be distinguished:

- A **more direct**, establishing specific working rules and phases (e.g. Project Cycle Management);
- A **more cooperative** and less direct one, focusing on the process and the relationships and aiming at creating a creative group that will be able to face the change (e.g. World Café and Open Space Technology).

The most used participatory techniques are:

- Project Cycle Management (PCM) – a set of project design and management tools based on the Logical Framework Approach (LFA);
- Open Space Technology (OST);
- Goal-Oriented Project Planning (GOPP);
- European Awareness Scenario Workshop (EASW);
- Technology of Participation (ToP);
- Creative Problem Solving;
- Focus Group;
- Brainstorming;
- World Café.

The participatory methods used within the SY_CULTour project

The partners of the SY_CULTour project used “World Café”, “Open Space Technology” (OST), and “European Awareness Scenario Workshop” (EASW) in their activities. The partners were introduced to **participatory planning** during a learning workshop, held by expert Gerardo de Luzenberger. The workshop was intended for educating the partners on how to design and develop a participatory process in the framework of each pilot project. The participants were invited to discuss and share the different experiences they were facing in each pilot area, by using the World Café and OST techniques.

The second training focused on some of the critical aspects that the participants were going to deal with during the action planning phase in each pilot project, specifically: the action planning design and the stakeholders' involvement; conflict management. The partners learned the EASW that can be applied to promote the dialogue and participation of different stakeholders in the problem-solving process and in defining a common vision and proposing ideas.

Later on, when drafting and testing the guidelines, the partners used the newly gained knowledge to activate the stakeholders and to create innovative tourist packages that fit their visions and expectations.

²Internet 1: <http://www.theworldcafe.com> (23. 7. 2013).

³Internet 2: <http://www.openspaceworld.org> (23. 7. 2013).

⁴Internet 3: <http://cordis.europa.eu/easw/src/intro.htm> (18. 7. 2013).



Author: Primož Pipan

NEBO NAD JAVORNIKOM

CILJI (cca. 2urn), do 40 ljudi

- v javni delavnici organizirati obiske
- da se znajo obrniti proti vzhodu, varno opazovati sonce
- orientacija panorame (Velika vas, Kasiopoj)....
- prikaz različnih objektov v vesolju
- razlaga o nastanku vesolja

REZULTATI + pomembnost obhajanja temnega neba

- osveščenost publike/javnosti
- ponudba "delavnice"

NALOGE

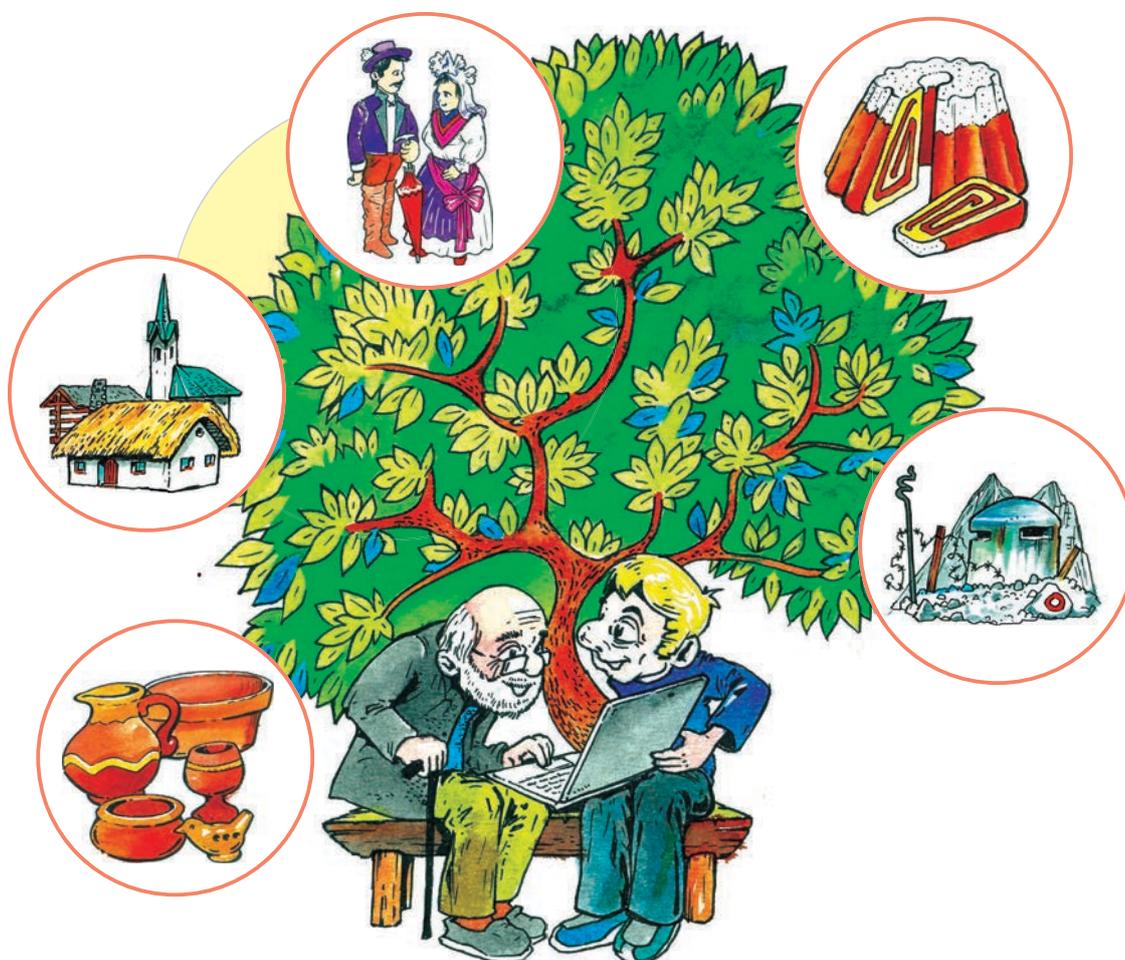
- obnovitev astronomske učne poti (odvisnost predaj, mape, JAVNI)
- trasirati "AARR, MAA" - iz Omega Vihra
- zbrskati kontakte na spletno stran Wijnja
- pripraviti kartice, pripomočke

2 The guidelines for the management of cultural values in rural areas

Text written by: Mateja Šmid Hribar

The following chapter presents a short manual for the management of cultural values. Its purpose is to help the people who want to contribute to the development of rural areas by utilizing its cultural values. This step by step manual will lead the reader through the key phases from the first idea to the final realization, which could be a new product or service, an experience, or a story based on the cultural values with development potential. The first two steps of the manual are aimed towards shaping a clear idea and present an overview of the existing state of a certain area, its cultural values, and the stakeholders. The third and fourth steps delineate the path for strategic planning and the preparation of the action plan. The fifth and sixth steps of the manual include the general guidelines for implementation and for evaluating the results. The SY_CULTour methodology provides a combination of the top-down and bottom-up approach.

Successful and effective management of cultural values depends on the people who must be able to identify the appropriate cultural values and key stakeholders. They need to connect the two into a whole and improve the marketed product or service.



Step 1 – From the vision to a clearly formed and structured idea

Usually, the individual or a group of individuals are first inspired or have a vision on how to develop a certain rural area using cultural values. The initiators are motivated by the vision and have enough energy to carry it through, so they start collaborating and discussing about the idea. This is the moment of “moulding” and shaping the vision, which will produce a well-structured idea with clear goals and results.

Goals: - To create a general idea on how to implement the original vision in the pilot area.

Methods: - Creative brainstorming;
- Review of good practices, similar attempts in similar territories.

Activities: - To designate a work team of initiators;
- To reach a common understanding on a vision;
- To form an easily understandable idea with clear objectives and results.

Activity 1.1 – To designate a work team of initiators who will start and lead the entire process from your side

The first activity is to form a team of people who wish to carry out a given idea in a certain area. The work team should consist of **initiators** who may be locals and experts; however, this is not imperative. In the case of the project, the work team might be composed of the partners themselves. It is a good idea to include a representative of the local authorities into the work team from the very start of the process, someone who warms to the idea, as well as at least one expert who has dealt with culture or heritage and can provide their knowledge to consult the team in key moments. The work team should also connect with the main local stakeholders to form a common vision.

It is very important that there are people who will follow the entire project through. Members of this work team will have to know the project contents but will also have to know the local stakeholders and attend the workshops, meetings, etc. So, if you subcontract an organization or a person, it is extremely important that this person is involved from the very beginning. Another important point is that someone in the team must take on the role of **coordinator** from the very start, as this will be very beneficial when carrying out the next steps (4, 5, and 6).



Activity 1.2 – To reach a common understanding on a given vision

The vision is usually quite abstract and tells us “what we want to achieve in general” in our territory. Since the work team members may have slightly different points of view, it is important that they coordinate between themselves first so that they can reach a common consensus on the vision. For example, the SY_CULTour project follows the vision of promoting cultural values in rural areas in order to promote sustainable local development. Another example of a vision could be promoting multiethnicity and the culture of peace for younger generations or promote cultural values in order to bring new economic development, etc.

Activity 1.3 – To form a clear idea and write it down on paper

The expected abstract vision must be shaped and formulated into a short, concise and well-structured idea that clearly defines and focusses:

- **What** we want to achieve (goals);
- The **main activities** we will use to reach the goal;
- The **results** of these activities;
- The **indicators**, with which we will determine if we are reaching the goals;
- The potential **transfer of good practices** from other areas.

It is important to write down the thoroughly elaborated idea, so that it will serve as an orientation during the rest of the process. We will need it in Step 4 during the preparation of the action plan and it will also be of great assistance in Step 6 during the monitoring and evaluation. An especially important factor is the indicators, with which we measure if we have reached the project goals. If possible, at least some of the indicators should be in a measurable form: for example, the number of visitors, lodgings, newly created jobs, or temporary employments. An indicator could also represent the number of new tourist offers in a selected areas or similar factors. The idea should be in-line with the main vision (see Activity 1.2); it should be short and define the territory.



Example

Vision

To improve the management of the cultural values in Črni Vrh and promote sustainable local development which includes connecting providers and existing trails/routes/paths, connecting the cultural and natural heritage, etc.

Idea

In order to revitalize the area of Črni Vrh, the key issue is to identify the potential content, on which tourist packages for diverse target teams and diverse weather conditions can be based.

- **Objectives:** revitalize the area and to create a valuable tourist offer in Črni Vrh.
- **Activities:** identifying and describing the cultural values with development potential, identifying other interesting topics, and stories and try to connect them with the existing cultural values, etc.
- **Envisioned results:** new tourist products and services in Črni Vrh, a brochure with descriptions, a map, and other useful tourist information, new equipped trails, etc.
- **Indicators:** 6 new tourist packages in Črni Vrh, 5000 brochures about Črni Vrh, 1 information board on trails and cultural values, etc.
- **Potential transfer of good practices:** flax farming and processing (from PAT, Trento).



Author: Michael Pernalis

Author: Vladimir Kamčević



Step 2 – Basic overview

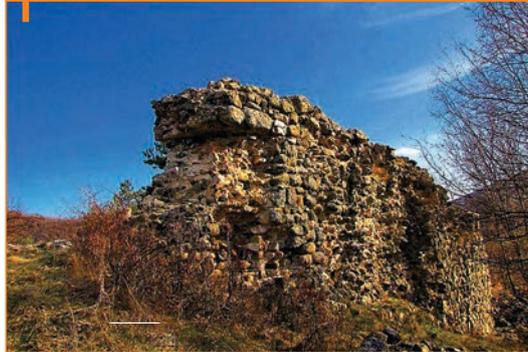
During this extensive step, the work team produces a general overview of (1) the area, (2) the existing cultural heritage or the cultural values with development potential, and (3) the stakeholders. This is the time to make a literature overview, archive searches, online searches, as well as a field research. All these activities are connected and are carried out at relatively the same time. At the end, you should have a clear analysis of the territory.

- Goals:**
- To provide a basic overview and SWOT analysis of the study area;
 - To obtain an initial list of the cultural values with development potential;
 - To identify and contact the relevant stakeholders.
- Methods:**
- Study of the literature;
 - Review of the existing documents and legislation;
 - Study the previous attempts/initiatives for utilizing the specific local cultural values;
 - Field work (also includes work with individual stakeholders);
 - Work with experts;
 - Survey of the development potential of the cultural values.
- Activities:**
- To obtain the basic territorial context;
 - To prepare a list of the cultural values with development potential;
 - To prepare a list of all the inclusive stakeholders.



Source: Municipality of Strelcha

Author: Aleš Smrekar



Activity 2.1 – To obtain the basic territorial context

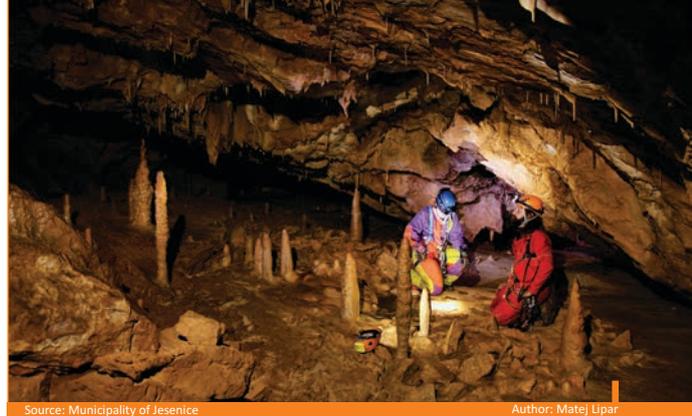
The work team should obtain a basic overview of the existing situation in the pilot area. The short overview should include general information on the:

- Geographical;
- Demographical;
- Social;
- Environmental;
- Economic;
- Political;
- Cultural features of the territory.

All this data is important so that the team can recognize the different aspects of the territory and especially get familiarized with the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of the pilot area. The data should be taken into account further on for the implementation of your idea. After collecting this information, prepare a short data analysis, for example the SWOT analysis (max. 1 page).

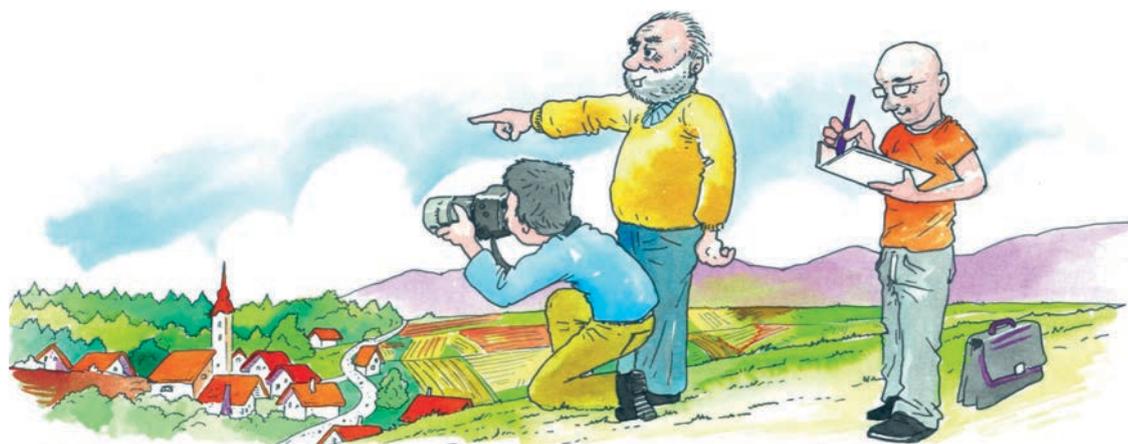
A proposed way of collecting data might be the following:

- A study of the literature about the pilot area (scientific, expert, and popular literature as well as websites connected to the pilot area; different existing maps providing spatial aspects of the pilot area);
- A study of previous attempts/initiatives for the utilization of the local cultural values and especially failures in order to examine the possible causes and eventually avoid them in future planning operations;
- A review of the existing documents and legislation (national, regional, and local legal provisions as well as mandatory instructions, rules, recommendations, and guidelines providing institutional framework in the pilot area);
- Field work (meetings with representatives and individuals who might influence the development of the idea you had chosen in Activity 1.3; visit the main town and a few villages in the countryside, get in contact with the local people you meet outside, etc.).



Source: Municipality of Jesenice

Author: Matej Lipar



Activity 2.2 – Identification of the cultural values with development potential

The main idea is to find cultural values that will bring sustainable development into the pilot areas. First, it is important to get familiarized with the existing cultural heritage and values. In order to do this, the work team should first:

- Check:
 - The official and unofficial databases of the cultural values;
 - The tourist guides and brochures;
 - The existing studies, initiatives, and expertise for the pilot area;
 - Websites related to the pilot area.
- Identify and contact the local official and unofficial organizations (e.g. the Institute for cultural heritage protection) and associations dealing with cultural heritage; if possible, contact them about additional potential cultural values.
- Do the field work where it is possible to find more interesting objects and topics that had not yet been recognized as values.
- Contact different stakeholders and diverse local experts: they might point out not yet officially recognized cultural values, especially for intangible ones such as old knowledge, economic practices, etc.

After this detailed review, it is time to start creating your own list of cultural values. The SY_CULTour taxonomy might be a help in giving you some ideas on what could be a cultural value. List all the cultural values you have found. Once the cultural values are gathered, the work team should test them to see which of them have development potential. You can use the SY_CULTour evaluation check-list to see (1) if the cultural values have development potential and if the answer is positive, (2) in which aspect the development potential lies. This evaluation will give you ideas about the cultural values' using ability, connectivity with other values, their spatial aspects, potential managers and users, etc. Put the cultural values with a development potential on the map and see if you can group them into completed stories (e.g. a field or roses, a rose festival, knowledge of rose picking and making products out of it, etc.).

This list will serve as your orientation. However, be prepared that the list of the cultural values with development potential may be significantly altered in Step 3, where the participation of the locals will be in the main focus.



Author: Lazar Lazić

Activity 2.3 – Identification of the relevant stakeholders

Once you get familiarized with a territory and its cultural values, it is crucial to identify the most relevant stakeholders. First, the work team should prepare a list of all the potential stakeholders in the pilot area and check the ongoing projects and activities. A careful selection of the stakeholders is the basis for further steps, because they will be implementing your idea. The stakeholders can be found through:

- Studying documents, initiatives, and expertise related to cultural values, culture, art, and tourism (databases of cultural values, best practices, completed field work);
- Conversations with individuals and representatives of various organizations (institutions, ministries, associations, societies at chambers of economy, enterprises, professionals, specialists, etc.);
- Browsing websites connected to the pilot area to see the local offers, masters, etc.;
- Field work (interviews).

After that, group the stakeholders into smaller teams according to their:

- Spatial authorities (local, regional, national);
- Formality and expert knowledge (formal organizations, informal associations);
- Status and type of organizing (public/private, groups/individuals).

⁵Internet 4: <http://www.sycultour.eu/documents/joint-institutional-framework-analysis/joint-survey-of-cultural-values> (29. 8. 2013).

⁶Internet 5: <http://www.sycultour.eu/vprasaInik> (29. 8. 2013).

Author: Špela Ledinek Lozej



Author: David Bole



Some examples of potential stakeholders:

- Local communities, municipalities, county, province;
 - Local tourist organizations and associations or centres;
 - Government institutions for natural and cultural heritage protection;
 - Regional and local museums that may be a significant source of information on heritage, tradition, and culture;
 - Cultural and artistic associations and organizations involved in preservation of the local customs, heritage, and tradition;
 - Agricultural households and individuals offering services or intending to be involved in rural tourism;
 - Countryside and small hotels or motels;
 - Experts and professionals from the university or development centres, not necessarily from the region where tourism is being developed.
- Etc.

Find out which stakeholders might help you to develop your idea and how, detect their needs and aims and mark the already existing cooperation or networks between them. By the end of this activity, the work team should come up with several groups of relevant stakeholders with indicated relations among them. The list will need to be constantly updated during further steps.

If possible, it is wise to try to develop and implement your idea within the already existing activities/projects in the pilot area (e.g. in Črni Vrh, we will try to implement our idea within the activities related to establishing and promoting the Geopark).

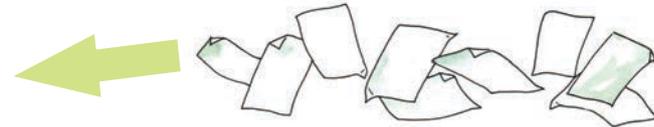
Source: Lagorai Ecomuseum



Step 3 – Strategic plan making

The general area overview and the data on the cultural values as well as the stakeholders is collected; now it is time to meet the local stakeholders who will select the most relevant cultural values from the initial idea. The work team and the stakeholders decide together on how to carry out the initially formed idea from Step 1. During this step, there will be several workshops with the stakeholders. Useful material and information on how to invite the stakeholders and carry out a workshop are provided in chapter 1.2. This step should begin with a workshop with the local stakeholders.

- Goals:**
- To check the feasibility of the idea chosen in Step 1;
 - To adjust, rank, and select the list of the cultural values with development potential;
 - To define clear and specific objectives of the selected cultural values;
 - To adjust the list of stakeholders/participants;
 - To form work teams.
- Methods:**
- Work with the stakeholders (participative methods);
 - Work with the experts (if needed).
- Activities:**
- To check the feasibility of the idea and to define and verify the priorities;
 - To select and clearly define the specific objectives;
 - To adjust the list of the cultural values with development potential;
 - To adjust the list of the stakeholders/participants.



Activity 3.1 – Check the feasibility and Defining and verifying priorities – 1st workshop

We propose that in the first workshop, the work team tries to find out through a discussion, if the stakeholders agree with the idea from Step 1 and, if necessary, tailors the chosen idea according to the stakeholders' needs and aims. Ask the stakeholders for assistance in identifying what in their living environment they recognize as cultural values with development potential. Gently lead and focus the discussion, but allow the stakeholders to start talking amongst themselves about the cultural values and development potential. Please, do not show them your inventory list of cultural values, since it is very important that this activity is taken with the bottom-up approach. You can mention some objects of cultural heritage you found during the discussion or you can show them a database of cultural values and good practices. This might influence the team to 1) give them an idea on what else could be treated as a cultural value and 2) think of any good practices that would be useful for your pilot area and could be transferred to it. Do not be distressed if the proposed elements actually fall under cultural heritage or not: this will be determined later by the experts. Do not worry even if you receive a completely new list of cultural values. At this moment, the most important thing is that the local stakeholders select the things/values they find important and relevant. While discussing the local cultural values, try to create an atmosphere where each stakeholder feels free and "safe" to talk and express their opinion. The easiest way to make a new list of cultural values with development potential is to write them on a panel.

After the new list is completed, rank the cultural values according to the stakeholders' priorities. Here, try to follow the main idea developed in Activity 1.3. Remember, the goal of this workshop is to get the local stakeholders to rank the cultural values. This process of ranking the cultural values should "clear up" and highlight the priorities of the local stakeholders. The cultural values should be ranked through a participatory process. You can advise and raise awareness, but you must not impose or insist on your opinion. Taking into account the gained priorities, the whole team should decide on which cultural values they would like to further develop into "tourist packages". It is better to select fewer values and concentrate on them, developing them into an offer that exhibits quality.

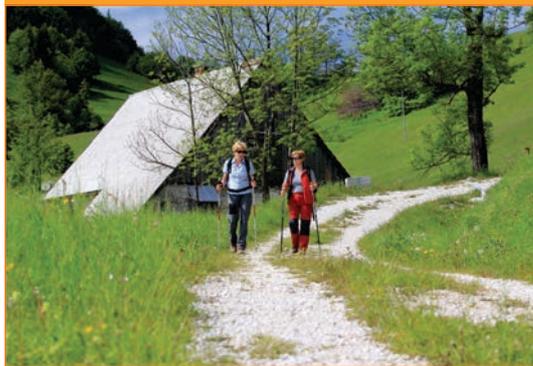
This way, it will be easier to achieve tangible results that will positively affect all the involved parties.

Before closing the session, the entire group of stakeholders should choose one **contact person** who will help with the communication and the coordination of future workshops.

Example

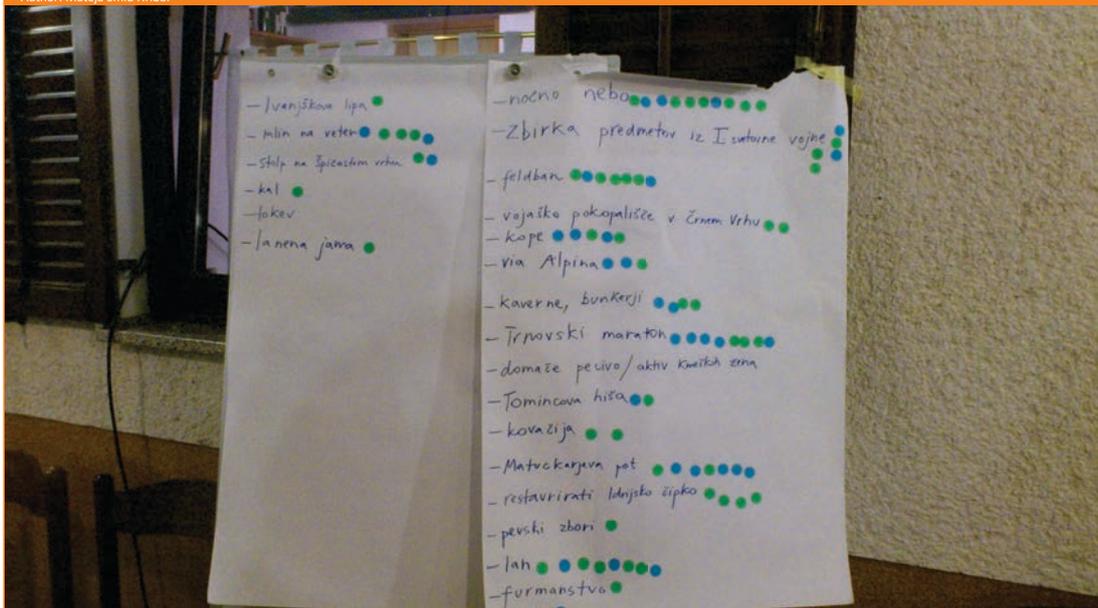
One way of ranking cultural values is giving each stakeholder stickers and asking them to stick them to the cultural values they most prefer or want to work on their development into a product or service. Example of the ranked cultural values with development potential in Črni Vrh in Idrija that were chosen by the locals to be further developed and included in the action plan:

- Observing the dark night sky in the Javornik Astronomical Observatory;
- Flax production and processing;
- The Trnovski cross-country ski marathon;
- The Matuckar Path;
- The Feldbahn (rail route) in connection with hiking;
- The collection of objects from World War I.



Author: Bojan Erhartič

Author: Mateja Smid Hribar





Source: Judicaria Ecomuseum

Activity 3.2 – Defining clear and specific objectives – 2nd workshop

This activity is intended to be done in the 2nd workshop or after a list of ranked cultural values is already obtained (in case you need more than one workshop to get a ranked list of the cultural values). Each cultural value that will be further developed into tourist packages should be equipped with clear objectives and goals. In this workshop, all the participants should try to define each selected tourist package with concrete goals, activities, results. We advise you to use the forms below, because the data will be of great help to you when preparing the action plan. Copy the form onto a panel and fill it in together with the participants for each selected package individually.

Filling in the application will help you realize what has to be done to implement the package and to find out who will manage the tourist package and how.

Tourist package information	
Time frame	Time, in which you will develop the cultural value into a package or service.
Responsible person (coordinator of the tourist package)	The responsible person is the one who proposed the selected cultural value or the person who most wants to develop it into a product and manage it.
Description of the activity	Short description (1–2 sentences) on WHAT is the main offer/content of the package and what will be the benefits for the end user.
Target user	The end user who will most likely use the package.
Short-term objectives	Goals you want to achieve within 1 year (e.g. to mark the trail, to place the boards, to organize an event, etc.).
Long-term objectives	Goals you want to achieve within 3–5 years (e.g. to educate tour guides, to organize an annual tour, etc.).
Expected results	Concrete outcomes you would like to achieve in the process of the package development (e.g. descriptions for the promotion in a new brochure, a marked trail, guided tours for organized groups, etc.).
Indicators	Concrete measurable indicators that will help us to evaluate if the objectives and results have been achieved (e.g. 10 accommodations per month, 1000 brochures delivered, etc.).
Key stakeholders	Stakeholders who can complement the package with their offer (e.g. accommodation providers, transfer services, local restaurants, etc.).
Connectivity	Other cultural values that could be connected together to create a story.
Feasibility	Check the feasibility of the package implementation (e.g. owners' rights, access, possible barriers on the trails such as pastures, etc.).
Proposed resources: (economic, sustainability, etc.)	Different investments (financial, social capital, etc.) that you will need to implement the package.
Potential transfer of good practices/cultural values	Any good practice that you can refer to and use while implementing the package.
Participants	Volunteers who will help you to implement the package.

Activity 3.3 – Defining the work teams – 2nd workshop

This activity is intended to be done in the 2nd workshop as well. Once each tourist package is defined, all the stakeholders who care about the implementation of the idea in general should be divided into smaller work teams, each in charge of a specific task(s). The participants volunteer for the package they want to work on by signing themselves up on the form under the Participants section at the end of the workshop. This gives us smaller work teams to work with.

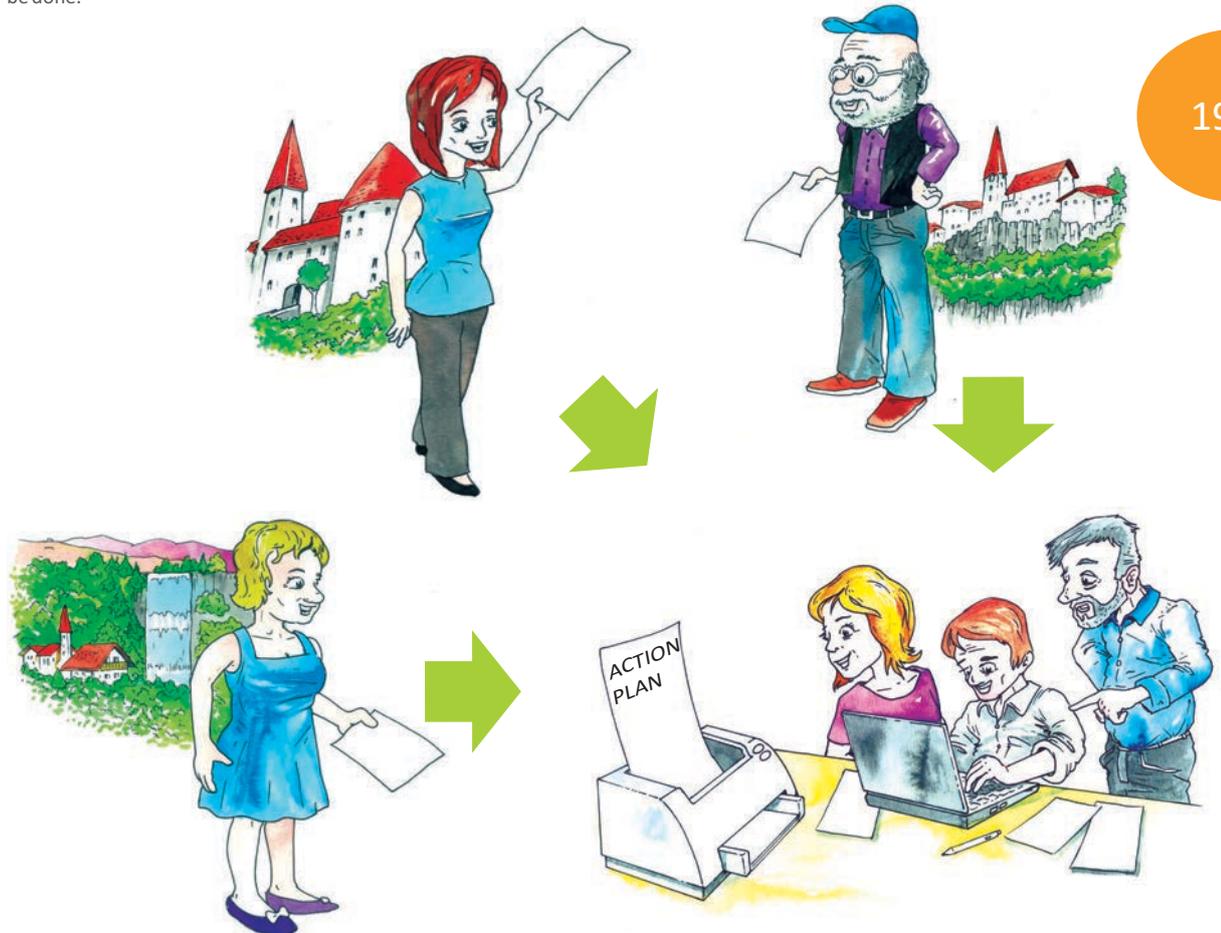
It is recommended that the teams are not too big and that each participant is willing to work and has their own role and responsibilities. Also, make sure you have as many relevant participants who will be actually able to implement individual actions within each project as possible (e.g. that they have the

knowledge or authority, etc.). Try to motivate the participants for active participation by telling them about the benefits that will come from the actions for them and the entire territory. It is important that they realize the implementation of the idea depends largely on them and that they are an important link in the process of co-creating their local offer as well as their potential common future. It might happen that some participants who do not really know what to do will “be lost” in this activity. However, the most important result of this activity is to define some effective work teams with people who care about this idea being implemented.

Step 4 – Preparing the action plan

The goal of this step is to write a concrete and clear action plan, with which to implement the original idea from Activity 1.3. Each work team prepares a **list of tasks** for their tourist package using the form. Then, they define the tasks further and the coordinator fills in the **action plan** form with the help of the filled out tables and data that had been collected in the previous steps. The work team collaborates with the local stakeholders to arrange how the **communication** will be carried out and who will oversee the development and implementation of the action plan and in what manner this will be done.

- Goals:** - To get an action plan.
- Methods:** - Work with the focus groups (participative approach);
- Work with the experts (if needed);
- Consensus decision-making.
- Activities:** - To define the detailed tasks for each cultural value/package;
- To prepare a communication strategy;
- To compile the action plan.



Activity 4.1 – Defining the detailed tasks for each tourist package – 3rd workshop

The third workshop will be divided into a series of smaller workshops, held with the smaller teams that had been formed in the previous step. Now, each work team must complete the following:

- Verify and, if necessary, update the data on the form for the tourist package they had selected in the previous step;
- Clearly define the tasks for reaching the goals within that tourist package in the **Detailed description of tasks** table;
- Determine a timeframe, also predicting a time frame for carrying out each task.

Detailed description of tasks	
Task 1	Name of the task
	Short description of the task
	Responsible person
Task 2	Name of the task
	Short description of the task
	Responsible person
...	...

Time frame for developing an individual tourist package: 2013–2014														
Month/ Task	Jan '13	Feb '13	Mar '13	Apr '13	May '13	Jun '13	Jul '13	Aug '13	Sep '13	Oct '13	Nov '13	Dec '13	Jan '14	...
Task 1														
Task 2														
...														

Activity 4.2 – Preparing a communication strategy

To guarantee a structured and effective communication, it is necessary to set up a communication strategy that aims at informing and involving the most important stakeholders in the action plan. The communication strategy should take into account internal (among all the involved actors) as well as external communication. To reach this task, it is crucial to identify a **communicator**; this could be anyone from the team who will take care of the overall communication, especially for:

- The press releases and social networks;
- Contact individual teams of participants;
- Inform all the participants about the events, progress, or problems.

External communication

Another important part of the project is distributing the findings and results to the public in order to raise awareness and support the implementation. A communicator should constantly publish short news accompanied by pictures and short videos in the local media (newspapers, websites, radio, TV). Publishing news via the social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) is also gaining in importance.

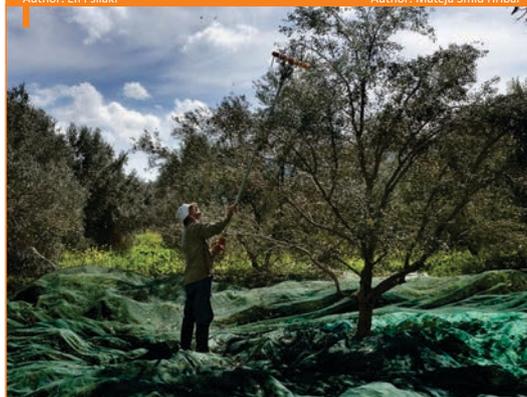
Since the entire project is based on a bottom-up approach, it represents a good foundation for preventing possible conflicts among the different stakeholders within the community. Therefore, conflicts may potentially emerge only in a relationship between the local community and the local government. It is essential that the local community keeps a high level of regular communication with the local authorities.

Communication among all the involved stakeholders (the community, municipality, enterprises, interest groups, and individuals) is a key success factor, also known as the participatory approach to planning.



Author: Efi Pšilaki

Author: Mateja Šmid Hribar



Activity 4.3 – Compiling the action plan (AP)

The coordinator gathers the individual forms for each tourist package using the data that had been collected in the previous activities and fills in the **action plan** form. The action plans must be prepared in accordance with the local, regional, and national strategies. The action plan designed for SY_CULTour is formed by 4 sections: a) a basic overview and goals, b) the proposed actions, c) the communication, and d) monitoring. The required data should be collected in collaboration with the local stakeholders in the workshops.

Part a – Basic overview and goals

Summary

- **Title:** a title for the AP;
- **Country:** the country, where the AP will be carried out;
- **Involved areas:** areas involved in the AP;
- **Foreseen duration:** time duration of all the involved activities;
- **Contact persons:** name of the coordinator (a representative from the initiators, chosen in Activity 1.1) and name of the contact person from the local community or the stakeholders (chosen in Activity 3.1).

Vision, Objectives, and Results

- **Vision:** the main vision that should be achieved by the implemented AP (see Activity 1.2);
- **Objectives:** the concrete objectives of the well-developed and structured idea (see Activity 1.3);
- **Results of the action plan:** the desired results on a general level that will be contributed by the AP (see Activity 1.3);
- **Possible transfer of a good practice from other territories:** if possible, apply lessons, learnt by the others (see Activity 1.3).

Territorial context

- **Short description of the territory:** a clear overview of the actual situation in the involved territory (see Activity 2.1);
- **List of the cultural values with development potential:** the identified cultural values that can bring sustainable development to the local communities (see Activity 2.2);
- **List of the involved stakeholders and their involvement:** the identified stakeholders who will grant a successful implementation of the AP and its sustainability (see Activity 2.3).

Part b – Proposed tourist packages (actions)

List of tourist packages: make a list of the proposed tourist packages that were selected by the locals (see Activity 3.1).

Detailed overview of the tourist packages and tasks: Once the list is done, provide detailed data on the selected tourist packages. Join the following 3 filled in applications for each tourist package (see Activities 3.2 and 3.3):

- Tourist package information;
- Description of the tasks;
- Time frame for developing an individual tourist package.

Overview of the time frame: In the end, when all the tourist packages (TP) are described, provide a summary of the time references for all the tourist packages included in the AP.



Author: Vladimir Stojanović

Source: Region of Thessaly



Time frame for the action plan													
Month/	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	...
Tourist package													
Tourist package 1													
Tourist package 2													
...													

Part c – Communication

Structure of the involved stakeholders and a work team formation: a mailing list of people and groups who should be constantly informed on the development of the planned tourist packages. Also provide a person responsible for the communication (see Activity 4.2).

Potential conflict resolving: a short description on finding the proper solutions to problems that could arise amongst the involved actors during the implementation of the AP.

Part d – Monitoring

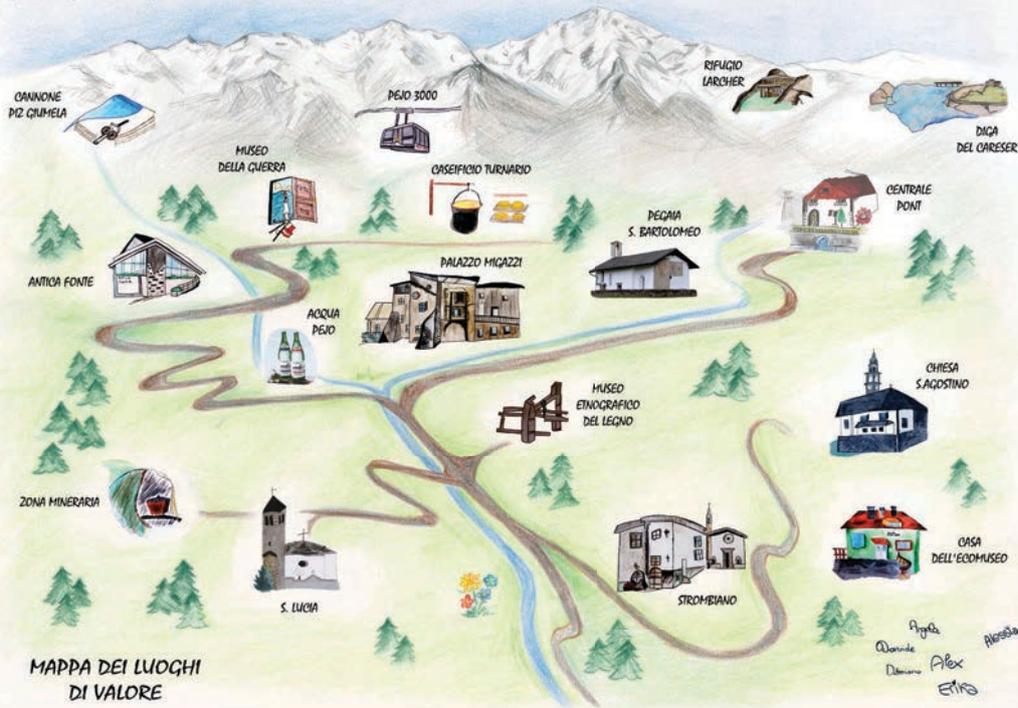
The data in this section is needed to check on the state of the action plan. Identify the persons, modality, and tools to control the progress of the action plan. Usually, the coordinator should take care of the overall action plan (see Activity 1.1). However, each tourist package has its own coordinator who should be responsible for implementing that individual tourist package.



Author: Efi Psilaki

Source: Peio Ecomuseum

LA VALETA



Step 5 – Managing and implementation

Let us start up the action plan! The actual tasks start being carried out, the process is in progress. The carrier coordinates the tourist packages and reports to the coordinator on the completed work and achieved results. The coordinator coordinates the entire action plan implementation.

Goals:

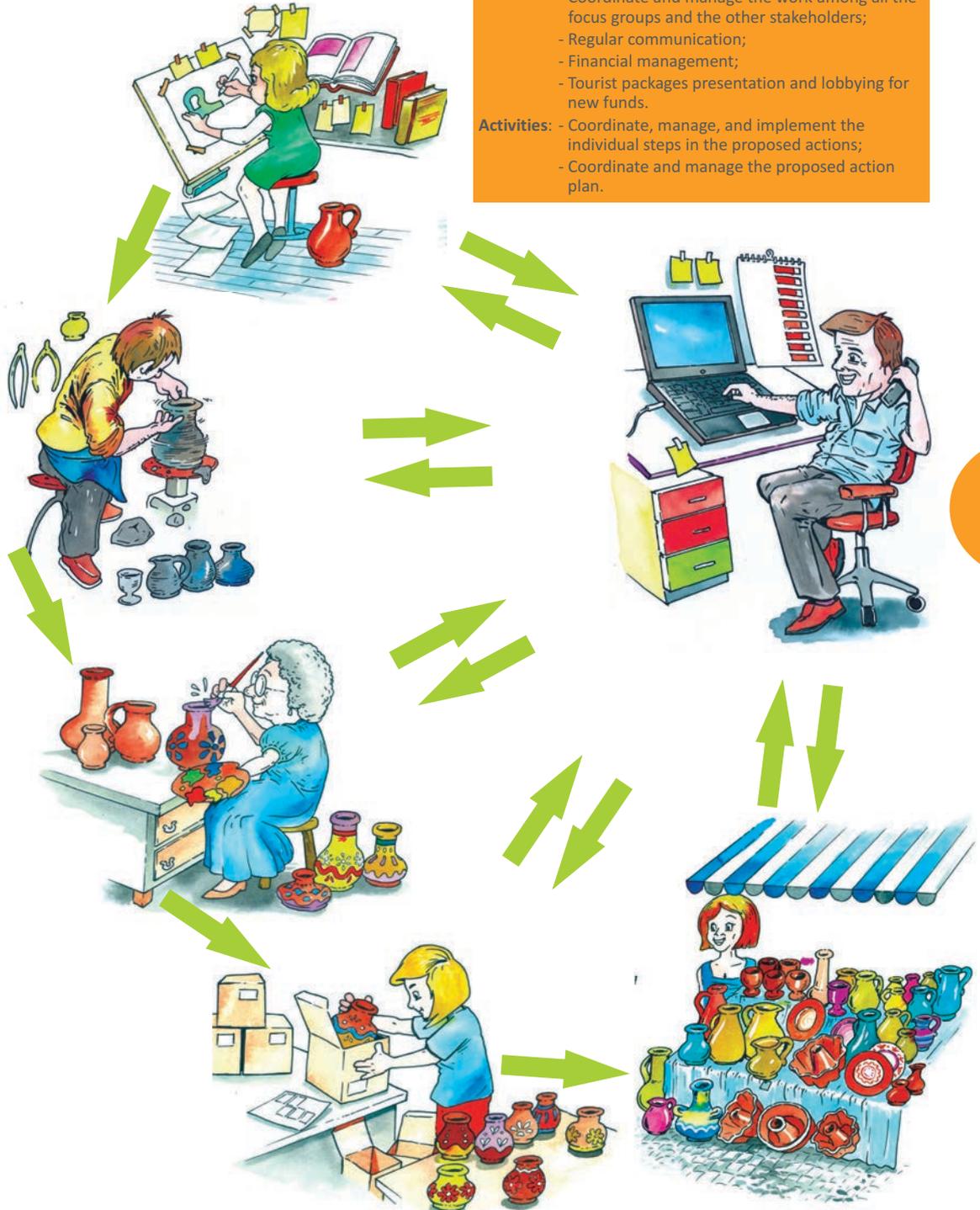
- Manage individual actions in order to implement the action plan;
- Institutionalization.

Methods:

- Coordinate and manage the work within the individual focus groups;
- Coordinate and manage the work among all the focus groups and the other stakeholders;
- Regular communication;
- Financial management;
- Tourist packages presentation and lobbying for new funds.

Activities:

- Coordinate, manage, and implement the individual steps in the proposed actions;
- Coordinate and manage the proposed action plan.



Activity 5.1 – To implement the individual steps in the proposed tourist packages

Each work team starts implementing its own tourist package. The coordinator of the tourist package directs and coordinates the implementation using the detailed task description and the time frame. If necessary, the coordinator modifies individual tasks in collaboration with the other participants in order to improve the results. If the funds are insufficient, the team must find extra funds through various tenders. When the team achieves a certain result (e.g. brochure publication, trail marking, etc.), they must inform the coordinator and communicator about this; they forward the news in accordance with the communication strategy (see Activity 4.2).

Activity 5.2 – To coordinate and manage the proposed action plan

The coordinator coordinates the individual tourist packages and tasks and gives advice to focus the work, if necessary. The communicator periodically informs the entire team on the work progress and the achievements. After the tourist packages are developed, they need to be formulated into an attractive offer for the domestic and foreign guests. The offer should be accessible in printed and digital form, in the native and at least one more foreign language.

Ideally, the individual tourist package should be integrated into middle and long-term plans by the local communities and developed to be institutionalized, like, for example, connecting the local museums into the Ecomuseums network, establishing a name brand, and other ways. Only this step can substantially aid to creating new job opportunities and lead to direct economic effects.

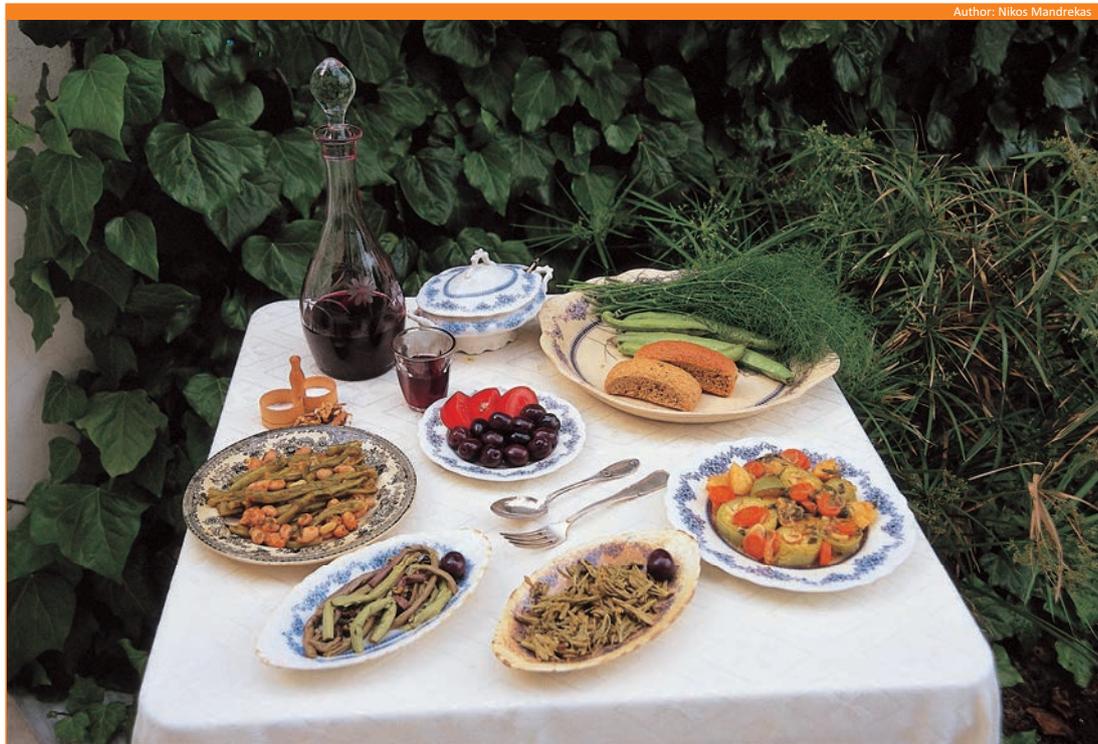
In addition to a successful implementation, the success of the entire idea also depends on the marketing, which is not a subject of these guidelines because of its complexity.



Author: Matjaz Marc



Author: Nikos Mandrekas



Step 6 – Monitoring and evaluation

One of the most important aspects of the work is verifying and evaluating the work during the implementation of the individual tasks as well as, and especially, after the work has been completed. This is a process, during which the participants inspect whether the goals had been achieved and evaluate the results. The participants establish what kind of effects were brought on by the results, what could be improved, what new opportunities have arisen. The evaluation goal is to shape the conclusions and propose measures and recommendations that will contribute to improving the future work or even influence the transfer of knowledge and practices in other areas. The monitoring and evaluation is headed by the coordinator.

- Goals:**
- To present the progress of the project;
 - To provide measures and recommendations for the improvement of the final results.
- Methods:**
- Assessment;
 - Regular project analysis and its improvement.
- Activities:**
- To evaluate the implementation of the proposed project.



Activity 6.1 – Evaluation of the implementation of the proposed tourist packages

The evaluation is carried out in the end and intermediate evaluations are recommended during the work for ensuring greater effectiveness and a smooth process. The goals, results, and indicators that were defined in Activity 1.3 can be of help here. In the case of intermediary evaluations, it is necessary to set certain milestones that will help us monitor how the executed activities align with the planned ones. This will help us to determine possible deviations and how they can be mended in time. Whether it is intermediary or final, the evaluation purpose is to illustrate and get a good idea about the work progress and its individual activities.

In addition to the indicators and milestones, the following questions can help us with the evaluation:

- Did we achieve the planned goals and results of the project? If not, why not?
- Did the individual tasks go as planned and did they evolve into the desired package? If not, why not?
- What useful things did we learn from carrying out individual tasks? What recommendations can we make for improving a certain package?

- Why do we believe a certain tourist package can serve as good practice and what can we recommend to others who want to implement it in another area (transfer of good practice)?

- What new opportunities arose on the local and national level?

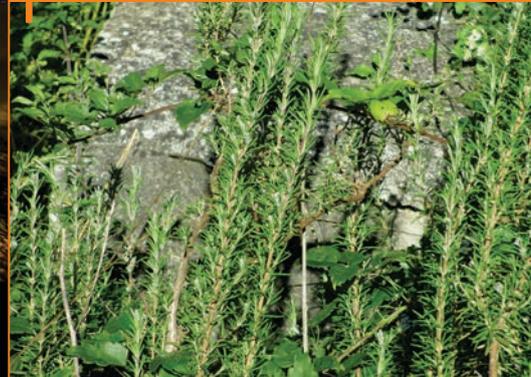
The tourist package carriers perform the evaluations of their activities. The coordinator gathers the evaluation findings and presents them to all the participants. The more prominent achievements (brochure publication, trail marking, etc.) should be used to present the project results to the general public through the media at least twice a year. We can use these opportunities to get new participants involved and implement the evaluation and brainstorming results to improve the individual packages, generate possible additional tasks and perhaps even ideas for new tourist packages. These fresh ideas can start the entire circle all over again.



Author: Iztok Bončina

Author: Giovanni Pizzocchia

Source: Argentario Ecomuseum



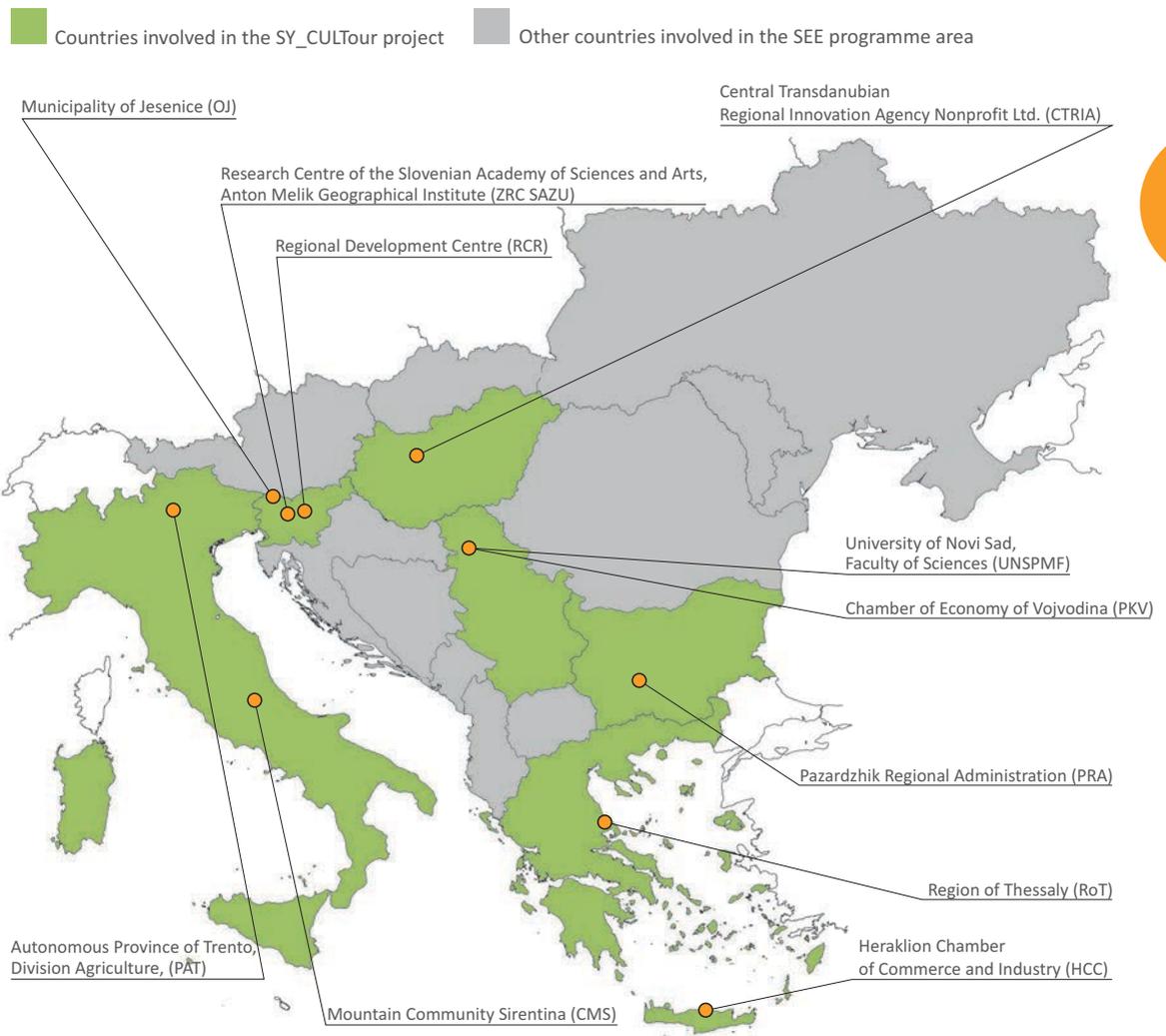
3 Implementation of guidelines in pilot areas

Text written by: David Bole

SY_CULTour partnership on a horizontal axis enabled the development and implementation of the common methodology for management of cultural values in rural areas. Since the project has built on pilot areas it was important to have local and regional players involved – the partners in the project were therefore local and regional administrations, a training centre, a local branch of a chamber of commerce, a university that has cooperated with a regional chamber of commerce and an institute which has cooperated with a municipality when implementing its pilot action. Partners were capable of involving and attracting relevant stakeholders to participate at project events and to implement successful pilot actions which have consequently attracted other institutions to join the activities. Furthermore, they came from relevant sectors such as local/regional administration,

entrepreneurship and regional development. In relation to the geographical mix of countries and regions the partnership involved partners from 2 old member states that had experience with utilisation of cultural values in tourism (Italy and Greece) and partners from 3 new member states (Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovenia) as well as IPA partner (Serbia). As the project has built on a bottom-up approach national authorities and advisory bodies on national level were not involved as financing partners but were involved as Associated Strategic Partners to ensure policy enforcement of project results. This means that the project on a vertical axis had local, regional and national support. Indirectly it also involved transnational and international actors since most of the Associated Strategic Partners are members of different international networks and associations with an influence in the programme area.

Author: Manca Volk Bahun



Pilot area 1 – Idrija

Text written by: Primož Pipan



Idrija is a hilly municipality in the Slovenian Alps. The majority of 12,000 inhabitants live in two towns in the valley, while surrounding hills are rural. The pilot area is represented by Črni Vrh Plateau. This rural area is well-known for the harsh, but also unique living conditions people must face there. In the past, the area was renowned for its handicrafts, especially carpentry, wooden pail-making, weaving, rake-making, linen-making, shoemaking, and lace-making, as well as tourism in the period between the wars. Even though this is a rural area, most of its inhabitants are employed in industrial fields. The Črni Vrh Plateau falls under the Idrija Geopark and serves as the nearby hinterland of the Idrija Mercury Mine, which is listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The Municipality of Idrija, along with the Črni Vrh local community, is currently practically free of unemployment. Despite this, its long-term vision is to diversify the predominant industrial sector by encouraging the development of other economic areas. Here, they see opportunities especially in rural tourism development combined with the Idrija Mercury Mine.

However, in addition to the lacking communication between the municipality and the local community, there is an expressed lack of motivation for a systematic approach to the development of cultural tourism. The lack of trained staff for work in hospitality and tourism remains an important challenge for the locals when dealing with the use and management of the cultural values. All the adequately trained people continue to work in the industry to this point.

The SY_CULTour project vision is to motivate the locals to collaborate more actively in combining the yet unconnected individual initiatives in the area of rural development. The long-term goals remain rural development by using the cultural values, creating additional income, perhaps even some newly created job positions.

The list of cultural values with developmental potential in the Črni Vrh local community includes:

- Observing the night sky at the Javornik observatory;
- Flax production and processing;
- The cross-country Trnovski marathon;
- The Matuckar Path;
- The narrow gauge railway line in connection with hiking;
- The collection of World War I items.

At the first workshop, the participants identified and categorized the cultural values with development potential; at the second workshop, they continued with in-depth work on six selected cultural values that were chosen based on their development potential. The goal for the future is to shape the selected values into an attractive offer for domestic and foreign visitors.



The workshops in Črni Vrh were attended by representatives of:

- The municipal authorities;
- The tourist program developers and operators;
- The local public societies;
- The local stakeholders of the cultural values;
- Interested individuals.

The stakeholders were very motivated and collaborated quite well together. One of the problems that may arise in the future is that those from the local public societies, the local stakeholders of the cultural values and the interested individuals regard this as a leisure time hobby and could consequently run out of the will and time for realizing the ideas. Due to their remote geographic location and municipal stakeholders' orientation towards the development of Idrija in connection to the candidacy of the UNESCO World Heritage, many of the local stakeholders were completely unfamiliar with them until the workshops. One of the crucial results of the workshops was therefore bridging the gaps between the individuals, the local, and the municipal stakeholders.

The initiative groups that were organized in order to rekindle some of the cultural values set new job opportunities as their long-term goal. During the process of rekindling the heritage, the participants realized that, at least at first, the contentment of the participating individuals, the integration in the intergenerational knowledge transfer from older to younger people, and the stronger connection of the locals will take precedence over creating new job opportunities or more income. In the future, the initiative groups should carry out the activities that can be organized within their current financial means and try to attract additional funds for realizing the rest of the plans.



Author: Bojan Erhartič



Author: Roman Rupnik

Author: Urška Bajec Rupnik



Author: Špela Ledinek Lozej



Author: Bojan Erhartič



Pilot area 2 – Trentino

Text written by: Federico Bigaran and Silvia Corrado

Trentino is a north-western Italian province covering a surface of 6200 km² and has a population of 525,000 inhabitants. It is an entirely mountainous province, as it falls in the alpine area with rocks, forests and pastures. The pilot area is represented by the Trentino Ecomuseums territories, because they are considered to be some of Trentino's less favored areas; at the same time, they exhibit a good potential for cultural development. The seven Trentino Ecomuseums cover an area of 1450 km² (about 23% of the entire Trentino territory).

The main obstacles on how to best use the cultural potentials and cultural values in our pilot area included insufficient cooperation among the agriculture, tourism, handicraft and cultural associations towards defining a common strategy and market opportunities; the small and fragmented dimensions of the local farms; a lack of common structures for preparing, conserving and commercializing the local products; a lack of technical assistance and training courses dedicated to the local production; insufficient promotional activities; and a lack of entrepreneurial abilities.

The Province of Trento supports the development of the local communities by means of the Provincial Development Plan, which is based on an integrated approach. According to its vision, agriculture, tourism, and innovation should all collaborate in order to improve the sustainable development and quality of life. The main ingredients for developing sustainable and cultural tourism seem to be the quality of the agricultural territorial products and a high level of



hospitality. The Ecomuseums Network could act within this framework as a promoter of a kind of sustainable tourism that is strictly connected with the territory and its local products. The external projects, such as the European Interreg projects, which make funds available for sustaining local development, could foster the already existing initiatives for enhancing the local resources and introduce them into a European context. The main instruments for territorial development are education, training, and enhancing the activities of the volunteer associations.



Source: Tesino Ecomuseum

Source: Judicaria Ecomuseum



The cultural values included in our pilot activities were:

- The Argentario Ecomuseum (the Dorigoni Mill, the Albiano Chestnut Festival, the Mount Calisio silver mines, the Salvadori-Zanatta Villa);
- The Judicaria Ecomuseum (The barn bridge, Balbido: the painted hamlet, donkey milk, the healing water and officinal herbs, Campo Castle and Pacomio Maso);
- The Chiese Ecomuseum (the Caino River Ethnographic path, the Lardaro Barrier, the Chiese Valley botanical gardens);
- The Lagorai Ecomuseum (Reati: nets for carrying hay, the Telve di Sopra Ethnographic Museum dedicated to the Cultural and Historical Memory: the Tarcisio Trentin Collection, the G.C. Franco Furlan nature path);
- The Peio Ecomuseum (Flax farming and processing, Grazioli, or La Bega, Hall, Edelweiss products);
- The Vanoi Ecomuseum (the Vanoi Ethnographic path, Maize "Dorotea" farming, Erbarium "Recognizing and handling herbs, walking through the paths of Ronc");
- The Tesino Ecomuseum (Publication "From the Memory to the Production: Wild Plants and Officinal Herbs in Traditional Use", "Le Verde", a kind of Sauerkraut characteristic for the Tesino plateau, the Tesino Arboretum).

The main partner of the pilot project was the Trentino Ecomuseums Network. It collaborated actively in projecting the pilot actions and implementing them in the seven Ecomuseum territories. The other actors involved in the pilot actions on different levels were:

- The provincial producers of medicinal and aromatic plants using the TRENTINERBE brand;
- Agencies for tourism promotion;
- Associations and foundations for the availability of the site for the realization of herbal garden, events, and for technical assistance;
- Selected wellness centres;
- Local authorities (Municipalities);
- The local population;
- Tourists visiting the pilot areas;
- Researchers, consultants and advisors.

Source: Peio Ecomuseum



The Trentino Ecomuseums Network played a strategic role in the project, acting as the connecting link between all the actors and fostering the communication activities. The active participation of the local population within the associations has been frequently ensured with the added value of traditional knowledge and personal experience. The main weakness has been observed in the relation between the local associations and the tourism organization. While the former are more interested in preserving the authenticity of the local culture, the latter is more oriented towards mass tourism and profit, which overlooks the cultural aspects. A wide presence of associations, foundations, NGOs, professional organizations, and local brands such as TRENTINERBE alongside the assistance of researchers, consultants, and advisors in the Trentino area are important factors that can create new opportunities for the promotion of territorial cultural values. Mass tourism, abandoning the mountain territory, an intensive exploitation of the agricultural areas, the loss of biodiversity, and the increase in infrastructure represent the main threats for the conservation of the local cultural tradition.



Source: Peio Ecomuseum

Source: Tesino Ecomuseum



Source: Vanoi Ecomuseum



The main results of the project are:

- The important role of Ecomuseums as a volunteer association that has a deep connection with the territory and an in-depth knowledge of its culture and history;
- The development of initiatives founded on the existing cultural values and networks for the promotion of medicinal and aromatic plants, both cultivated and wild by the integrating agriculture, tourism and handicrafts;
- A good level of participation at all the events on medicinal and aromatic plants;
- The preservation and enhancement of rural culture in connection with the use of cultivated and wild medicinal and aromatic plants;
- Enhancing the existing cultural values, good practices, networks, and initiatives by networking them;
- The development of partnerships among the Ecomuseums, research institutes, extension services, local farms,

associations, cooperatives, tourism agencies;

- The transfer of good practices from other territories made possible with bilateral-exchanges and sharing experiences among the pilot action partners;
- Innovation in the production process by founding start-up companies that deal in medicinal and aromatic plants (SMEs, agriculture, forestry, tourism, and handicraft).

The next possible steps in our pilot area could involve:

- Networking activities with various European partners, in particular those taking part in the SY_CULTour project;
- Strengthening the tourist network by creating seven tourist guidebooks on the official and medicinal plant routes, one for each Ecomuseum;
- Supporting the local stakeholders in the pilot area in their active networking for the preservation and enhancement of their territory.



Source: Peio Ecomuseum



Source: Tesino Ecomuseum

Source: Vanoi Ecomuseum

Progetto Mappa Comunità di Ronca: La Strada del Fen

Un gruppo di comitati vogliono esprimere il modo in cui gli abitanti percepiscono il proprio ambiente di vita. Il nostro gruppo di lavoro ha individuato l'esperienza del proprio ambiente in un paesaggio particolare: la Valisole.

Il gruppo

Ricerca

Il progetto

Le Valisole

Progetto

La strada del Fen

Cainari Minei Ronca Nicolodi Busini Gasperi Grave del Re Brut Cason Valisole Le aie Chiesa Pieroi Bortolini Fosse Giaroni Masi della Viosa Menador

Pilot area 3 – Mountain Community Sirentina

Text written by: Angela Santilli and Assuntina Fasciani

Mountain Community Sirentina is located in the Region of Abruzzo, in the province of Aquila, close to the cities of Avezzano and Sulmona. It expands to the north-east of Sirente Mountain (2340 meters) and its area covers about 425 km². Mountain Community Sirentina, whose territory is included in the Regional Park Sirente Velino is formed by 16 municipalities: Acciano, Castel di Ieri, Castelvecchio Subequo, Fagnano Alto, Fontecchio, Gagliano Aterno, Goriano Sicoli, Molina Aterno, Ovindoli, Rocca di Cambio, Rocca di Mezzo, San Demetrio Ne' Vestini, Secinaro, Tione degli Abruzzi, and Ocre e San Benedetto in Perillis. The Mountain Community is located in quite an isolated area; this may be regarded as its strength as well as its weakness, since it allows the natural and cultural preservation of the local resources, but makes the establishment of long lasting development actions more difficult at the same time.



The listed cultural values were considered to be fundamental for enhancing the sustainable development of the Sirentina Mountain Community:

- The traditional preparation of the local food and dishes;
- The archeological ruins and evidences;
- The local churches and museums.



Authors: Giovanni Pizzocchia and Lamberto Anfolsi Schiavitti



Authors: Giovanni Pizzocchia and Lamberto Anfolsi Schiavitti

These cultural values were selected together with the local key actors and stakeholders. They were chosen since practically all of them are widely spread and felt as relevant in the Sirentina territory. Finding cultural values available to the majority of the involved municipalities therefore included a shared need and a condition to allow the establishment of a positive and long lasting cooperation.





Authors: Giovanni Pizzocchia and Lamberto Anfolsi Schiavitti



The following stakeholders actively participated in the implementation of the project activities:

- The municipalities that form the Sirentina Mountain Community;
- The local associations dedicated to the promotion of the territories;
- The tourism organizations (B&Bs and farmhouses owners, the association of tourism guides).

Representatives of these organizations participated in the organized local events during which they had the opportunity to share their experiences and ideas about the promotion of the local cultural values. It was extremely important to have them working together in small groups to identify the relevant actions that will be implemented locally. The establishment of such small groups also facilitated their interaction and the opportunity to talk and to understand each other's points of view. The main limitation was the number of the organized local events. The organizations that took part in the workshops in the territory felt the need to keep working together. In order to do so, additional exchanges were made via e-mail and telephone, but the most relevant result was the common decision to establish a permanent local tourism committee in the action plan.

The idea of the committee is to “empower” the local key actors and stakeholders, which is the most important achieved goal. In fact, the main discovery during the project was that the local communities were aware of the value of the cultural resources, but they kept being neglected since it was always considered very difficult to ensure and foresee the continuity of any kind of proposal and established cooperation.

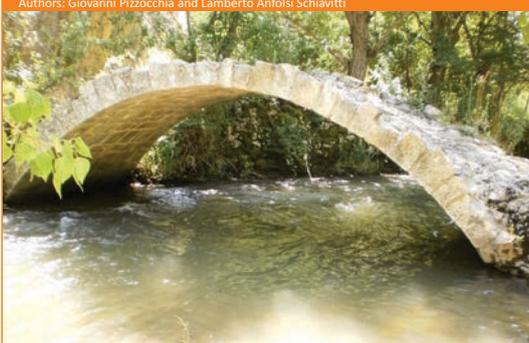
Thanks to the tourism committee in the territory of the Sirentina Mountain Community, the local interested actors and stakeholders will be able to keep working together to facilitate the development of a new identity for the community as sustainable tourism destination. This image perfectly suits the geographical and natural features of the territory.



Authors: Giovanni Pizzocchia and Lamberto Anfolsi Schiavitti



Authors: Giovanni Pizzocchia and Lamberto Anfolsi Schiavitti



Pilot area 4 – Pelion

Text written by: Nikos Mandrekas

Pelion is one of the greatest and known mountains in Greece and the most populous, with its twenty four villages around it. The pilot area is represented by the villages Milies, Vizitsa, and Makrinita. Milies is a village with traditional stone houses and cobbled roads, 28 km from Volos. Vizitsa is one of the most beautiful villages of Pelion and the most well-preserved traditional settlement, 28 km from Volos. Makrinita, nicknamed “the balcony of Mt Pelion”, is a village, situated in the north-western part of the Pelion Mountain, 6 km north-east of Volos.

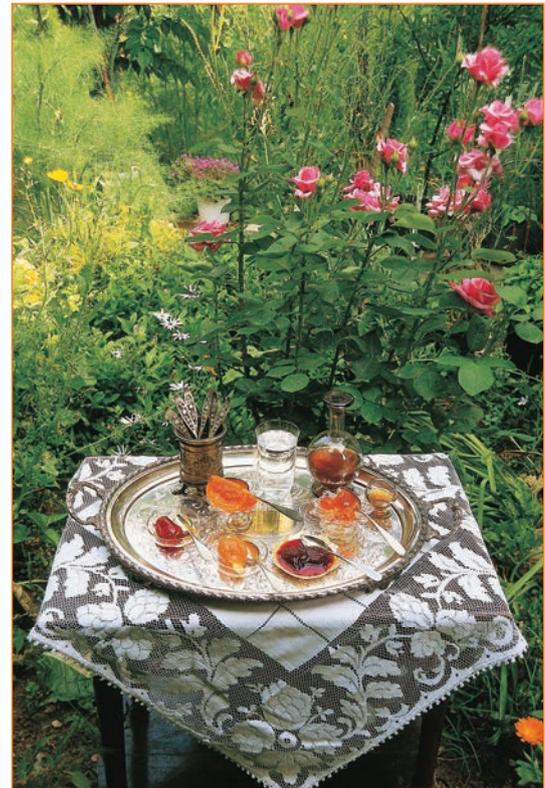
The main problem regarding the usage of the cultural potentials and cultural values in the pilot area was that there had been no previous experience with the concept of cultural values. At the initial stage of the project, the local stakeholders suggested a list of several cultural values, the selection of which became a point of controversy. They were also sceptical as to whether the adoption of certain cultural values would compromise the identity of the region.

The first step in solving the problem was to achieve an understanding of the local communities about the concept of cultural values and their importance as a means of development. Equally important was for them to understand that without their participation it was not possible to provide a list of cultural values or to create a pilot action plan. This was done by organizing trainings for the local and regional public bodies and workshops for the tourism industry and organizations. By doing this, they were able to express their views through a participatory discussion, participate in the formation of the cultural values list and in the mapping the actions for the subsequent development of the pilot action plan.



The cultural values included in our pilot activities were:

- The Pelion Train;
- The Firiki apple;
- Vizitsa;
- The local cuisine and herbs.



Author: Michael Pornalis



Source: Region of Thessaly

Author: Nikos Mandrekas

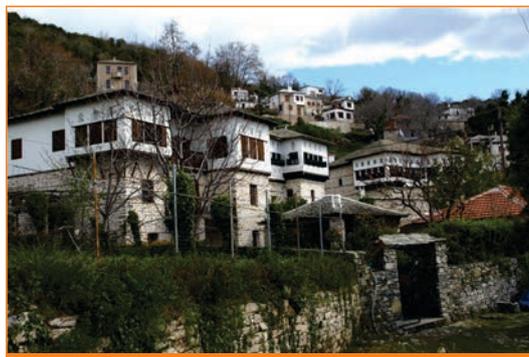
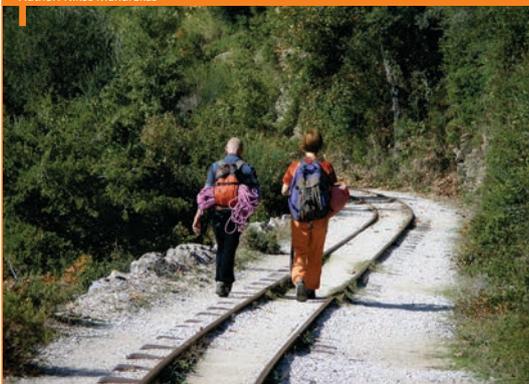


The steam train of Pelion along with the bridges and the rail track is an inspired work, perfectly blended in with the surrounding environment. It was the project of Evaristo de Kirico, an Italian engineer, whose father was the famous artist Giorgio de Kirico. Today, the train of Pelion passes through numerous scenes of natural beauty and over impressive bridges. Taking a ride on the train is an unforgettable experience. The Firiki apple is a local variety that thrives in the region and plays an important role in the economic and cultural activity in the region. Vyzitsa is a village with a unique architecture. It represents one of the most beautiful villages of Pelion and one of the most well-preserved traditional settlements in Greece. The pilot area has also been renowned since ancient times for its herbs and aromatic plants, which are used for their therapeutic power, aroma, and beauty. It is also known for its excellent local cuisine with traditional specialties.

The involved stakeholders from the public and private sector in our pilot activities were:

- The Region of Thessaly and the Regional Unity of Magnesia;
- The Municipality of Volos;
- The Municipality of Southern Pelion;
- The Makrinitza Association of Professionals in Tourism;
- The South Pelion Association of Professionals in Tourism;
- The Vizitsa Women's Cooperative;
- The local tourism businesses active in the hospitality sector such as hotels, restaurants, B&B, farmhouse owners, etc.;
- Private citizens, individuals, volunteers, etc.

Author: Nikos Mandrekas



Author: Michael Kalafatas

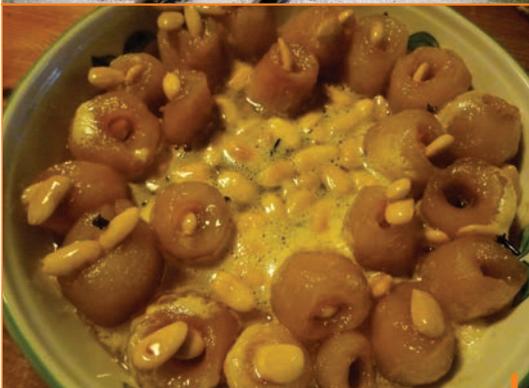
The Region of Thessaly with the Regional Unity of Magnesia had the responsibility of coordinating the project activities, since they had previous experience in implementing similar projects. The local associations of professionals and local cooperatives participated in a joint configuration of cultural values with the financial and human resources and were involved in the implementation of the pilot action plan in coordination with volunteers from the local community.

During the project activities, the participation of the local stakeholders was encouraging and showed that local actors interested in the development of their region were valuable, as were their input and suggestions. All the parties worked in small groups during the training and workshops and they understood the importance of the cultural values and their proper management for the local development. The major outcomes of the project include: awareness by the local communities on sustainable local development, a joint formation with the local stakeholders, a list of the cultural values in the pilot area, and the development of the pilot action plan. However, the main result was the realization that before any action is taken, it is important to have the input and views of the local communities.

The next step was to implement all the activities of the pilot action plan that was developed in cooperation with the local authorities. People from the Region of Thessaly and the involved members of the local stakeholders will collaborate in monitoring the implementation of the action plan activities. Having gained expertise on cultural values and their management through the project, we will try to apply them to other areas of the Region of Thessaly, either through similar programs or as actions in projects of tourism promotion funding from the European Union. We also plan to make the methodology for the management of cultural values available to the local stakeholders and the organizations in the entire Region of Thessaly so that they can use it in other projects for sustainable local development.

Author: Michael Kalafatas

Source: Region of Thessaly



Pilot area 5 – Jesenice

Text written by: Vera Djurić Drozdek, Lina Pavletič and Urška Železnikar



The pilot area encompasses the entire territory of the Municipality of Jesenice, which is situated in north-western Slovenia. The center of the pilot area is the town of Jesenice along with the southern slopes of the Karavanke Range. The town is known as “the city of steel and flowers” because of its rich iron tradition and white daffodils. The so-called Old Ore Path along which cart drivers once transported iron ore from the mines at Sava Caves to the foundries in Jesenice runs through the villages of Planina pod Golico, Plavški Rovt, and Prihodi. This route is the most apparent symbol of the rich iron tradition.

The locals in the municipality who cooperated in the process of identifying the cultural values that have some development potential identified three crucial obstacles for the utilization of these cultural values for tourism purposes. Almost every participant recognized a lack of the promotion the existing products, services, and events that focus on steel and flowers. Furthermore, a lack of products and services as such and various bureaucratic obstacles for registering a complementary farm activity were mentioned as one of the main obstacles.

In order to overcome these obstacles, the local inhabitants decided to proceed with three pilot actions: (1) the development of the Old Ore Path so that it is open to tourists, (2) a better promotion of the existing and new products, services and, events, and (3) the preparation of an inventory of the bureaucratic obstacles that will be handed to the responsible institutions.



Author: Saša Manojlović

Author: Tadeja Šubić



Before identifying the obstacles and defining the pilot actions, the local inhabitants were asked to identify the cultural values in the territory of Jesenice. The technique to do this was working in groups, where each group received a map of Jesenice and had to mark all the cultural values they could think of. There were many cultural values located and these were further discussed at subsequent workshops. The final list of the cultural values, which are mostly situated along the Old Ore Path and are therefore part of the first pilot action, selected for further usage was determined to be:

- White daffodils;
- The nature and mining educational trail;
- Mount Golica;
- The mines at the Sava Caves;
- The Mirca-Hrušica narrow gauge railway;
- The Murova area of Jesenice as a starting point for the Old Ore Path;
- The Kos Manor;
- The Stara Sava area and the museum;
- Ruard Manor;
- Kasarna – the old settlement;
- The Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and St Roch at Stara Sava;
- Kolpern – the carbon storage at Stara Sava;
- The ironworks;
- The blast furnace at Stara Sava;

There were two meetings with the key institutions from the territory of Jesenice about the cultural values and three workshops with the stakeholders (local inhabitants). At the two meetings, the representatives of the key institutions made a list of the stakeholders who should be involved in the process of finding synergies between culture and tourism. The following institutions were present at the meetings:

- The Municipality of Jesenice;
- The Development Agency for Upper Carniola;
- The Upper Sava Valley Museum;
- The Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation;
- The Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia;
- The Golica Tourist Association.



Author: Aljoša Videntič

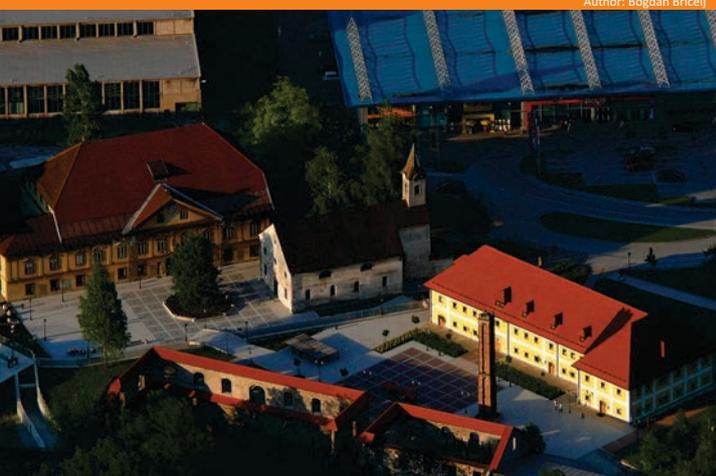
In the case of the three workshops, the stakeholders were invited via announcements in the local newspaper Jeseniške novice and local radio Triglav; some of them received e-mails or written invitations. Different stakeholders responded to the invitation and there were around 20 to 25 participants at each workshop, mostly individuals. There, they created a Vision of Jesenice for the year 2030, identified all the existing cultural values in the area and collected ideas for their development and integration. Then, they worked in groups for the three pilot actions according to their own interests and gathered at additional meetings to discuss the actions in more detail. An action plan was prepared at the last workshop, which will be further elaborated by the end of the project in order to be useful for the local community even after the project end. This will enable the stakeholders to proceed with the implementation of the pilot actions since there will be clear set tasks, responsibilities and defined deadlines.

The stakeholders' involvement and their active engagement in the development of the cultural values is regarded to be the only way to enable long-term development of an area. Such a principle of work may be more demanding at certain times because conflicts can arise. But on the other hand, these conflicts can also be turned into a consensus at a very early stage and do not need to escalate in the future if the decisions are already made or the activities already implemented.

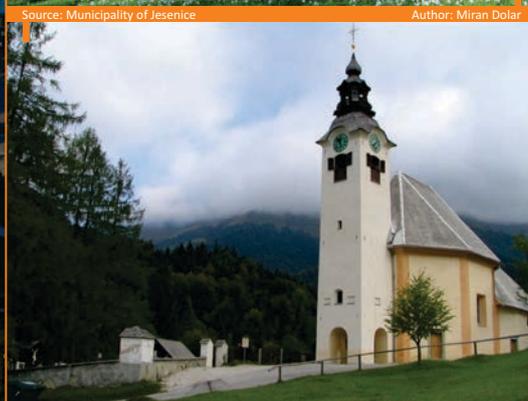


Source: Municipality of Jesenice

Author: Miran Dolar



Author: Bogdan Bricelj



Pilot area 6 – Crete

Text written by: Georgia Papadaki

Crete is the largest and most popular island in Greece. It forms a significant part of the economy and cultural heritage of Greece, while retaining its own local cultural traits such as its own dialect, dance, and music. The main sectors of economic activity in the Region of Crete are agriculture/stock-breeding and tourism. The biggest cities and the most popular tourist destinations are located in the northern part of Crete, while the rural and less developed areas are located in the southern part of Crete and also in the centre of the island. The pilot area is represented by Palliani and Agios Thomas, which offer a diversity of cultural values, natural sources, religious, and archaeological treasures, but they completely lack tourism infrastructure.

The main obstacles for using the cultural potential and the managing the cultural values are related to conflicts that arose amongst the involved stakeholders during the implementation of the action plan and the extent so that local communities could realize the results of such an initiative.

Carrying out the workshops in the area itself helped us to overcome the perceived problems, as the local communities of the pilot areas participated more actively and felt more comfortable.



The cultural values included in the action plan in the pilot areas were:

- The Cretan Diet;
- Cretan Kafeneia (coffee houses);
- Olive cultivation;
- The wall-painted churches of Crete.



Source: Heraklion Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Author: Efi Psilaki



The idea is to create a path in the pilot area that will incorporate the cultural values and will be accompanied by tourist packages for all the target groups and for an all-year-round tourism, where the visitor can see the cultural and natural identity and how it differs from any other region of the country. The pilot cultural paths in Palliani and Agios Thomas will be the first in the Network of Cultural Routes in the Region of Crete.

A number of local stakeholders were involved in the pilot area:

- Tourist guides;
- The Association of Cretan Tourist Agencies;
- Municipalities and other local authorities;
- Cultural Organizations and Youth Clubs;
- Local entrepreneurs and SMEs;
- The university and other institutes.

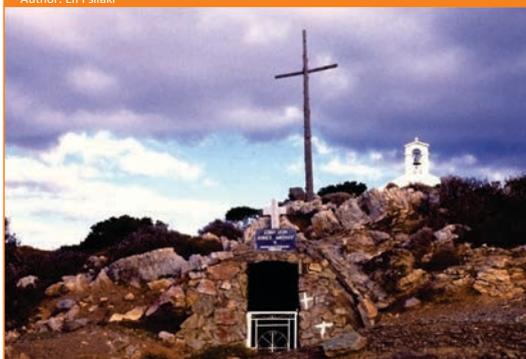
Local tourist guides are professionals who are able to describe and promote an area as a tourist destination. They have expert knowledge of the ancient and modern history, of the cultural and natural heritage, and they really helped design the network of the cultural paths as a tourism product. Cretan tourist agencies have a close contact with thousands of tourists every year before and after they visit Crete. They were more than interested to offer the cultural paths prepared in the framework of the project as a tourist product. Municipalities and other local authorities are interested in supporting their areas in every way, especially for their local sustainable development. They were very active during the preparation and implementation of the action plan, especially in the infrastructure development. The local cultural organizations and youth clubs consist of people who love their origins. They participated in the workshops and all the activities, because they were interested in offering their services to their villages. Local entrepreneurs and SMEs were very interested in the development of the project action plan and in the enhancement of the tourism sector in the pilot areas, as they were in a very difficult situation because of the economic crisis and they supported the project activities as a possible chance for ensuring the survival of their businesses. The university and other institutes were actively involved in the pilot activities as professional consultants.

During the workshops, a lot of discussions regarding the local development potential took place. The lessons learnt through these initiatives make up the variety of the different opinions and suggestions that people can propose on the same issue. For example, the local residents were not interested in making the necessary changes in their villages, but the tourist guides and the travel agencies could not accept this. The Heraklion Chamber of Commerce and Industry played the role of the intermediary and the working teams tried to find solutions that would make both sides satisfied and the action plan to be successfully implemented towards sustainable development.

The next possible steps regarding the project activities will be to make all the necessary changes in order to make the places with the cultural values accessible and attractive (e.g. cleaning, reconstruction), organize seminars and training courses for new businessmen in the pilot areas, create promotional booklets, leaflets about the cultural path and the history of the area, produce and disseminate maps of the Crete Region and its cultural values, and add activities like cultural paths in the network, thus covering the majority of the island.



Author: Efi Psilaki



Pilot area 7 – Region of Pazardzhik

Text written by: Lyubov Trenkova and Gergana Kaloyanova

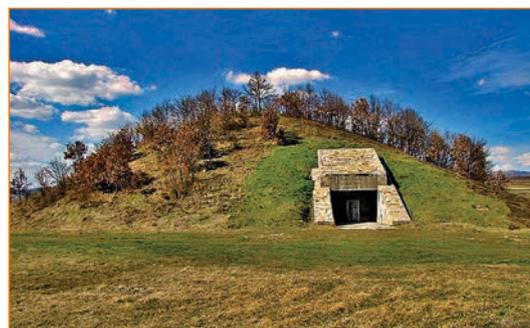
Region of Pazardzhik is a province in Southern Bulgaria, named after its administrative and industrial centre – the city of Pazardzhik. The pilot area is represented by the Municipality of Strelcha that covers 224 km² and is situated at an altitude of 475 m. It has the characteristics of a low mountainous area. Its predominantly rural economy is based on agriculture and forestry, tourism and some specific economic activities such as ethereal rose oil and herb production, optical lens production, the production of greenhouse fruits and vegetables. The geothermal springs have traditionally been used for spa and wellness tourism. Its rich cultural and historical heritage, vast forest areas with hunting and fishing zones, and unique rock formations present additional tourism potential. The majority of the approximately 5000 inhabitants and the economic activities are concentrated in the Strelcha municipal center. However, the area is experiencing a large-scale migration of workers; in addition, the infrastructure is insufficient due to the decline of investments into the transportation and communication, making it unattractive for potential tourists.

Rose oil production is a very typical local activity and specific cultural traditions have evolved from this that played a vital role in shaping the area's identity. However, many other cultural values have been greatly underdeveloped due to unstudied potential and a low management capacity among the local stakeholders as well as poor promotion. The methodology for managing the cultural values developed within the SY_CULTour project is perceived as a tool to help overcome these problems.



The cultural values included in the implementation of the project methodology were both tangible and intangible:

- The Thracian cult complex – Heroon;
- The Megalithic complexes: Kachulata, Kulata, Skumsale;
- The “Bancheto” mineral spring and mineral bath with pool;
- The Museum complex at the Historical Museum;
- The “Strelcha grandmothers” Amateur performers;
- The traditional local cuisine.



Source: Pazardzhik regional administration



Cultural values were divided into three activities: the “Srednogie” Ethnographic Festival, performances by the amateurs from the “Enlightenment” Community Center at the request of the tourist operators, and the restoration of the first monastery school in Strelcha as part of the exhibition of the Historical Museum. The selection of the cultural values was made by the participants in trainings and workshops organized for the local stakeholders.

The major stakeholders involved in the implementation of the pilot activities were:

- The municipal administration;
- The local cultural center;
- The tourist info center;
- The historical museum;
- The advisory council on culture and education;
- The LEADER Local Action Group.

The participatory bottom-up approach ensured that the local stakeholders were actively involved and enabled selected activities to be prioritized based on the common interests and needs. However, mostly institutional and NGO representatives were active and it was difficult to involve many business stakeholders to provide input except those who were also members of the municipal council and tourism NGOs. The involvement of the representatives of the LEADER Local Action Group opened an opportunity for securing funding to the actions elaborated in the action plan, thus ensuring the



Source: Pazardzhik regional administration



practical realization in the medium term. However, a threat exists that when the SY_CULTour project events end, the local stakeholders will not continue to co-operate further since they will not be animated to have common meetings. Thus, some of the actions may be implemented by a single stakeholder with no steering or monitoring by all the interested stakeholders.

A significant outcome of the SY_CULTour project activities is the animation of the local stakeholders to seek common solutions to the local needs and to recognize the significance of the local cultural values as factors for development and a better life. Also, the awareness of the stakeholders was increased by determining the development potential of particular local cultural values and elaborating step-by-step action plans for the utilization of such potential. As a follow-up to the project activities, the local implementation teams are preparing applications for funding each of the actions in the action plan. Each action has started with the first activity on the list: usually as a preparatory measure for the steps to follow.



Source: Pazardzhik regional administration



Source: Pazardzhik regional administration

Pilot area 8 – Central Transdanubia

Text written by: Erika Tóth

The Central Transdanubian Region covers the surface of 11,117 km² on the north-east side of Transdanubia. Administratively, it consists of three counties (Fejér, Komárom-Esztergom, and Veszprém) and 26 subregions. The region is the third most developed and industrialized region in the country and well-known by foreign investors. It has strong innovation potential; the local products and local traditions are getting a more significant role and the villages are located close to each other and have strong contacts. The pilot area is represented by the Tapolca subregion, which is located in the southern part of the region, where agriculture and industry have a prominent role in the economic life. At the present, wine-growing, winery, and forestry are the most developed sectors.

The main obstacles in addressing the utilization of the cultural potentials and the management of the cultural values in the pilot area are the lack of a good network and the poor communication between the agencies and the stakeholders working in the area of tourism and development. There is no clear vision or goal on what the cultural values are and what should be done with them. The region lacks a plan for defining the cultural values or maintaining the values that require support.

In order to solve this problem, the Central Transdanubian Regional Innovation Agency attempted to bring them together by organizing two trainings, where the participants were the

policy makers as well as the stakeholders. In our opinion, there should be one person, group or agency that would be in charge of the platform for the policy makers and stakeholders to gather their ideas, enable cooperation, or organize meetings. These should meet regularly in order to discuss the potential cooperation and other possibilities.

The cultural values included in our pilot activities were:

- The Arboretum of Zirc;
- The Tapolca Cave;
- The castles;
- The local products.



Author: Erika Tóth



The Arboretum of Zirc with its English garden is very famous among visitors. It is located in the garden of the Cistercian Abbey of Zirc. The botanical gardens cover an area of 20 hectares. The Arboretum of Zirc carries a regional importance. Many of the plants are very rare. Many of them come from other continents. There are more than 600 tree species in the area. The Tapolca Cave is a unique attraction located in the heart of the city. The therapeutic effects of the cave are well-known. Some castles are in use and have a regional importance, while some of them do not attract much interest. Numerous events, community programs, castle games, and wine days are arranged throughout the year in and around the castles and towns depending on the season. These events and historical monuments attract the tourists and create the need for different kinds of employment. The local products carry the features of the locality or of the landscapes as well as point to the local people who are involved in their creation. The methods and tools used in this creation are mostly produced locally. The income from the sale of the local products is aimed toward enriching the local community. We included local products and local services in the project such as fruits, vegetables, eggs, cheese, marmalade, honey, syrup, wine, cakes, tea, ceramics, catering, etc. The reason why we turned to this solution is that stakeholders are currently attempting to encourage the consumers to buy more locally produced food. We hope that this will provide economic, environmental, and social benefits to the local areas, which will lead to more sustainable patterns of consumption.



Author: Erika Tóth

We addressed all the stakeholders in the region and we included those who showed interest in the project activities:

- Hungarian Tourism Ltd;
- Association for the Bakony Mountains;
- Association for the Balaton Upland;
- The Valley of Arts.



Author: Erika Tóth



Author: Erika Tóth



Hungarian Tourism Ltd and the Association for the Bakony Mountains have an extensive network of touristic institutions; taking care of the management of the cultural values is in their interest as well. The Association for the Balaton Upland and the organizers of the Valley of Arts have a plan to create a brand for all the services and products produced and made by locals in the region. The work with the stakeholders was very easy and efficient. The problem is that the network of stakeholders lacks some real, live contact between each other. The opportunity that they have in the future will be to strengthen their connections in the area of tourism development. Most of them think that local products are the key elements in the region and that more focus should be put on them.



Author: Erika Tóth

Pilot area 9 – Vojvodina

Text written by: Jasmina Đorđević, Igor Stamenković, Kristina Košić, Tatjana Pivac and Ivana Blešić



Vojvodina is an autonomous province of Serbia, located in the northern part of the country, in the Pannonian Plain of Central Europe. It has a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural identity, with a number of mechanisms for the promotion of minority rights; there are more than 26 ethnic groups in the province, which has six official languages. The pilot area is represented by the municipalities of Sombor and Apatin that are situated in the north-western part of the Vojvodina Province (West Bačka District). The area's authentic rural architectural values, preserved farms, green oases, proximity to the Danube River, churches, and the culture of the different ethnic groups living here are the reasons for its great potential and the driving force for tourism development.

The rural areas in the municipalities of Sombor and Apatin have been neglected over the decades. The development of rural tourism has been carried out by individuals who lack adequate training, while the cultural heritage, the authentic rural ambience, and the protected nature in this area have not been used and promoted enough in the context of tourism development, though these resources represent a great opportunity for rural-cultural-eco tourism development.

In view of the listed problems, the objectives during the project were: a better promotion of the cultural heritage (website, social networks, brochures, leaflets, etc.), an improvement of the employment possibilities in tourism and on farms (animating locals to make use of their potential), the

preservation of tradition, traditional crafts and handicrafts, the preservation and presentation of un(der)used cultural values, building the stakeholders' capacity in managing the cultural values in rural areas, and a partnership between the private and public sectors.

The listed cultural values were recognized as important for enhancing the sustainable development of Vojvodina:

- The walk along the Danube in baroque style;
- The town life at the turn of the 20th century;
- The urban household in German style;
- The Old Danube cycle/bike track;
- The Bodrog Fest: Festival of food, beverage and arts and crafts;
- The tobacco museum;
- The Milan Konjovic Gallery, the Prefecture Building, the City Museum of Sombor;
- Sombor cheese in a wooden van from Stapar;
- The Museum-ethnological collection in Kupusina;
- The Dida Hornjak salas farm.

Author: Vladimir Kamčević



The walk along the Danube in baroque style will be set up as a tourist map and tourist route. The area is remarkable for its domineering baroque church steeples. The town life at the turn of the 20th century presents the architectural values in Apatin and Sombor. The urban household in German style depicts the spirit of the urban social life in Apatin in the late 1930s. The Old Danube cycle/bike track is designed so that it extends along the border of the Gornje Podunavlje Special Nature Reserve. The Bodrog Fest: Festival of food, beverage and arts and crafts hosts events that promote the folklore and customs of the peoples who live in the pilot area. The tobacco museum promotes the agricultural production and preservation of the tobacco production tradition that has been nurtured in this area for over 120 years. The Milan Konjovic Gallery, the Prefecture Building and the City Museum of Sombor illustrate the architectural values. The Sombor cheese in a wooden van from Stapar marks one of the significant elements of the gastronomic offer in the territory of the Sombor municipality. The museum-ethnological collection in Kupusina is responsible for preserving and illustrating the tradition and cultural heritage of this area. The Dida Hornjak salas farm illustrates the traditional way of life among the Bunjevci population.



Author: Lazar Lazic



The following stakeholders actively participated in the implementation of the project activities:

- National and local governments and other relevant public bodies with sufficient influence, power and resources in the field of cultural values and rural tourism;
- Regional/local tourism providers (SMEs in tourism, farmers, land owners, and supporting services);
- Transnational bodies, especially representatives of international non-governmental organizations in the field of cultural values and cultural tourism;
- The general public.

Through the project activities, we achieved an affirmation of the cultural values and a partnership between the public and private sectors, an improvement in communication between the professionals and individuals, and a better understanding of the importance of tourism development. The project also influenced the decision for a better protection and promotion of the cultural assets through their usage in the development of certain non-mass forms of tourism movements. The increase in tourism turnover shall influence the creation of new workplaces intended primarily for women, young well-educated people, people with special needs, and others. In the future, it will be important to identify the staff with the necessary skills in the field of tourism that will be able to provide professional support to relevant institutions.



Author: Lazar Lazic



Author: Lazar Lazic

Author: Tatjana Pivac



4 Conclusion – The Road Ahead

Text written by: David Bole

The proposed methodology and the guidelines for the management of cultural values in rural areas is only one of the ways on how to develop, empower, and revitalize less favoured rural areas. Tests of the mentioned guidelines in the ten pilot areas as part of the SY_CULTour project indicated some optimistic trends. The most optimistic are the positive social results that arose from actualizing the guidelines in the pilot areas: the local communities began developing cultural products for the benefit of a general social area revitalization as well as for their own benefit, enabling them quality leisure time activities, humanitarian activities, integration into the community or to increase their personal interest. The additional positive results include the preservation of the cultural heritage and strengthening the individual's own internal and external identity as well as community representation. The partners' experiences from the project indicate that the economic benefits are not instantaneous and that more time will be necessary for the tourist product to start generating some added value and additional employment opportunities. The partners also came to the conclusion that the process of activating the cultural values as a territorial capital is quite lengthy and demands the inclusion of all the local stakeholders, private as well as public.

The main recommendations for everyone tackling this demanding but rewarding process may be summarized in these points:

- The cultural values represent a territorial capital and are therefore a “source” for the creation of cultural-tourist product;
- Mere cultural values are not enough; it is necessary to possess the knowledge and to invest plenty of human capital (creativity, experience, etc.) into the creation of the tourist product;
- Sustainable development can be achieved only through participative tourism planning, where the community is not simply one of the stakeholders, but is included in all the planning stages; this is something that should be taken into account in all future plans;
- The local community's cooperation from the very beginning to the execution of the activity and including predominantly local capital will minimize the possibility of a conflict and the negative effects of tourism; it is also a possibility for revitalizing and empowering the local community;
- Public institutions such as municipalities, institutes, and similar must only have the role of steering and advising during the process; they must not overtake the process or force their opinion on the local community.

Our gained experience allows us to map out the route we believe the national and international institutions need to take if they plan to deal with development, tourism, and culture in rural areas. The overall interpretation can often be hindered by the sectorial organizations of the ministries and European institutions. The divide between the economic-development aspects and the predominantly cultural-protection aspects of

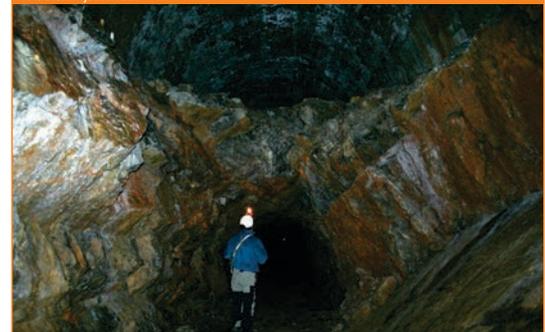
rural areas is also visible on the level of non-government organization and societies. For this reason, the SY_CULTour project partners believe that European rural areas needs a forum, where the conflicting opinions can be confronted and where the different stakeholders, from individuals, societies and non-government organizations, to public institutions and the scientific community, can collaborate to find the appropriate solutions.

A further problem seems to be the communication and the lack of information. The local communities are not usually organized in a way that would enable them to follow new developments, tenders for funds, or even cases of good practices, all of which could help them execute actions, develop cultural tourist products, or preserve their own cultural heritage. The SY_CULTour project has gained extremely positive experience of organizing the “study” exchange between individual local communities in the pilot areas. Only two visits were necessary for the local communities to acquire new knowledge, new ideas, and the drive for managing their own cultural values.

We believe that the problem of excessively sectorized approaches to rural development using cultural values and the problems of the communication and the lack of information can be solved by establishing an information source or portal. This portal would enable information sources, the exchange of ideas and practices for the local stakeholders and the local communities; at the same time, it would be a platform for opinions and discussions between the experts, the policy-makers, NGOs, and other involved individuals and groups.



Author: Aljāž Hrvatin



5 Partnership

Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute (ZRC SAZU)
Novi trg 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
<http://giam2.zrc-sazu.si/en/predstavitev#v>
Contact person: David Bole, david.bole@zrc-sazu.si



ZRC SAZU is the leading Slovenian research institution in social sciences and humanities and has abundant experience in studying less favoured areas, the marginalization of regions, rural cultural heritage and regional development. From a regional development perspective, it has a strong team of researchers dealing with development issues of less favoured areas with many national references in applied research. Furthermore, it is the national coordinator of the Cultural Intangible Heritage of Slovenia and is therefore responsible for the preparation of the recommendations for the Register of Intangible Heritage and for the implementation of the UNESCO convention. Through its membership in different national and international associations and working groups, ZRC SAZU recognises the problems in the management of the cultural values in rural areas and has therefore attempted to find solutions and tackle them within the SY_CULTour project. As a member of the government working group for changes to the law on regional development, it enforced the methodology for the management of cultural values to be a factor of sustainable regional development of rural areas.

Autonomous Province of Trento, Division Agriculture (PAT)
Via G. B. Trener 3, 38121 Trento, Italy
<http://www.provincia.tn.it/>
Contact person: Federico Bigaran, federico.bigaran@provincia.tn.it



PAT is a regional public body, which has the authority to issue its own laws on a wide number of subjects and to carry out administrative functions. The areas of competence of the agricultural division are strategic planning in agriculture, the protection and promotion of the agricultural productions, monitoring, and control. In particular, the Organic Production Office promotes, coordinates, and implements initiatives in the field of organic agriculture and biotechnology, in accordance with EU regulations and national and provincial regulations. The province recently developed criteria for the qualification of the local tourist products, guaranteeing authenticity and a transfer of knowledge between generations, focusing on good practice examples of certifying cultural values based on their authenticity and the transfer of knowledge. The Organic Production Office promotes and participates in initiatives of associations and other public authorities operating in the sector of organic products, biotechnology, and environmental protection by providing their expertise. Furthermore, the office supports all the local projects dealing with the sustainable use of officinal herbs and wild plants in the framework of the rural tourism offers.

Regional Development Centre (RCR)
Podvine 36, 1410 Zagorje ob Savi, Slovenia
<http://www.rcr-zasavje.si/en/>
Contact person: Dejan Zupanc, dejan.zupanc@rcr-zasavje.si



Regional Development Centre is a non-profit and non-government business organisation whose main objective is to achieve an overall development of the Zasavje region. It accelerates business and economic development, links and balances ambitions from the field of regional development, economy, human resources and environment protection. It established a contemporary development environment upgraded with an efficient network of contacts within and beyond the region's borders. Its aim is to co-create an open and modern Zasavje, kind to its dwellers and attractive for the visitors from elsewhere.

Mountain Community Sirentina (CMS)
S.P. n. 11 Sirentina 14, 67029 Secinaro, Italy
<http://www.comunitamontanasirentina.it>
Contact person: Angela Santilli, a.santilli@sirentina.it



The Mountain Community Sirentina is a local government body that is engaged in the achievement of municipal functions through the establishment of partnerships as well as in the supply of fundamental services to the local population for a better implementation of the duties assigned to local governments under a profile of efficiency, efficacy, inexpensiveness, and adherence to social and territorial condition. The Mountain Community Sirentina gained relevant expertise in the promotion and maximization of the local resources to improve conditions of the local rural and mountain communities. Due to the presence of a high number of small and micro enterprises characterized by isolation, low visibility, and a lack of services within its territory, the community developed strategies to implement the actions capable of improving the local situation. Special attention has been dedicated to the enhancement of local handicraft, tourism, and environmentally engaged micro and small enterprises.

Region of Thessaly (RoT)
Plateia Koumoundourou & Papanastasiou, 41110 Larissa, Greece
<http://www.thessaly.gov.gr>
Contact person: Mata Papadimopoulou, s.papadimopoulou@thessaly.gov.gr



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΙΑΣ

The Region of Thessaly is one of the thirteen administrative regions of Greece and includes the Regional Unities of Larissa, Magnesia, Trikala, and Karditsa. It occupies the central eastern part of continental Greece and extends over 14,036 km². It is characterized by a highly varied landscape and contains some of the most fertile agricultural plains in the country, surrounded by tall mountains and an island complex in its eastern outmost administrative boundaries. The capital is Larissa. The activities of the Region of Thessaly are focused mainly on sustainable rural development, economic growth through the improvement of the competitiveness of the products and services, employment, the development of cultural cooperation and further promotion of sustainable and alternative tourism and the improvement of the region's infrastructure. Through its membership in different national and international associations, EU initiatives, programs and working groups, the Region of Thessaly has gained a lot of experience and know-how, adapting it to the development of the entire region.

Municipality of Jesenice (OJ)

Cesta železarjev 6, 4270 Jesenice, Slovenia

<http://www.jesenice.si>

Contact person: Vera Djurić Drozdek, vera.djuric-drozdek@jesenice.si



OBČINA JESENICE

The Municipality of Jesenice is responsible for the implementation of the activities of the local self-government with an emphasis on economic development of the area in north-western Slovenia. The town is best known for its ironworks, once being an ice-hockey powerhouse, as well as the white daffodils, called "ključavnice", that grow wildly in the surrounding valley each May. The history of Jesenice revolves around the ironworks, which are still situated in the town today. In addition to mining and ironworking, the inhabitants made a living with agriculture and stockbreeding. Following the collapse of Yugoslavia, the importance of the ironworks began to wane, with the plant now employing only approximately 1250 people. The iron tradition and natural heritage were both dealt with within the SY_CULTour project. The municipality is focused on creating and developing new tourist products and services in order to stimulate the investments in the cultural heritage and to develop Jesenice as a cultural tourism destination, which had been more or less neglected in the past.

Heraklion Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCC)

Koronaίου 9, 71202 Heraklion, Greece

www.ebeh.gr

Contact person: Michael Kataharakis, katharak@katartisi.gr



Επιμελητήριο Ηρακλείου

Heraklion Chamber of Commerce & Industry

HCCI is among the largest chambers of commerce in Greece with more than 20,000 members from all sectors of the economy. However, what characterizes the Chamber is not its size but its extraordinary dynamics and the initiatives it takes in order to accomplish its two-fold role: to provide advice to the state and to develop a network of services to directly assist enterprises. The Heraklion Chamber assists groups of businessmen with particular needs via the creation of specialized bureaus such as: the Young Entrepreneurs Centre; the Female Enterprise Office; the public relations office, which presents the Chamber's work and provides updates to members on activities, development issues, and other operational matters; the Enterprise Europe Network, which informs enterprises about developments in Europe, specifically about support for small-medium sized enterprises, European law, fairs, European programs, the demand for products, databases, etc.; a separate Development Department, which deals with infrastructure matters for soft actions and other forms of support for businesses and which puts forward proposals on the improvement of conditions for enterprises.

Pazardzhik Regional Administration (PRA)

Ekzarh Yosif Str 2, 4400 Pazardzhik, Bulgaria

www.pz.government.bg

Contact person: Gergana Kaloyanova, otdeleirr@abv.bg



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
Regional Administration
Pazardzhik

PRA is a NUTS3 level public authority and represents the administrative and territorial unit responsible for the implementation of the regional policy. It is mostly a rural region and in this respect, the SY_CULTour project is perceived as a support for our efforts in formulating effective and innovative rural development policies to foster economic diversification. The successful implementation of the common methodology for managing the cultural values elaborated within the SY_CULTour project will contribute to improving the rural economy by utilizing the local potential. The selected actions are in line with the regional development priorities of the PRA's development strategy. As a public body involved in the regional governance, PRA has the competences and experience necessary to contribute to the formulation of policy recommendations for different levels of the decision-making process and for presenting these policy recommendations to local, regional and national decision-makers.

Central Transdanubian Regional Innovation Agency Nonprofit Ltd. (CTRIA)
Seregélyesi út 113, 8000 Székesfehérvár, Hungary
www.kdriu.hu
Contact person: Ákos Szépvölgyi, szepvol@kdriu.hu



CTRIA is a regional-level agency, member of a nationwide network established by the decision of the government with the involvement of 6 public and semi-public partners in the region. It receives an annual national funding of approx. 0.5 million euro to deal with innovation planning, project development, the enhancement of innovation services, marketing and network management. Its core focus is to establish and maintain a network of services via the establishment and operation of a strong cooperation network with other service providers, universities and the business sector, as well as the general community through national and international partnerships. It has a full staff of 4 experienced employees and 5 permanent external experts, who have been involved in a wide range of regional, national, and international projects. It also has a network of cooperating institutions and experts who can provide the special knowledge necessary to design and implement specific tasks. This strong regional, national, and international partnership and the portfolio of expertise enable the CTRIA to target different levels of the regional community and business sector. CTRIA manages several projects concerning innovation practices, innovation management, knowledge transfer, service development, and innovation trainings, which involve national and international knowledge and innovation agents.

University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Sciences (UNSPMF)
Trg Dositeja Obradovića 3, 21000 Novi Sad, Serbia
www.pmf.uns.ac.rs
Contact person: Jasmina Đorđević, jasminadjordjevic@live.com



UNSPMF is an educational and scientific institution that provides teaching and research in five departments. There are over 500 employees, with almost 300 of these being teaching and research staff. The Department of Geography, Tourism, and Hotel Management has demonstrated a high level of teaching, scientific, and research work in the fields of geography and tourism. The department has taken part in a number of national/local projects and several projects in cooperation with foreign partners. There are a number of research centres at the Department: the GIS center, the Center for Climatic and Hydrologic Research, the Center for Foreign Languages for Specific Purposes, the Center for Regional Information, while the Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education is in the process of being established. The university supports international cooperation with numerous universities and institutions in various projects and within a number of programs (CAMPUS EUROPAE (student mobility), TEMPUS projects, CEEPUS, DAAD, WUS Austria, COST, NATO SfP, FP 7, IPA Cross Border Cooperation, SCOPES, SEERA NET, SEE, and several university agreements, bilateral and multilateral scientific cooperation promoting student and staff mobility, and exchange of research know-how).

Chamber of Economy of Vojvodina (PKV)
Hajduk Veljkova 11, 21000 Novi Sad, Serbia
<http://www.pkv.rs>
Contact person: Dragica Samardžić, dragica.samardzic@pkv.rs



The Chamber of economy of Vojvodina has a long tradition. It was founded in 1919. The Chamber is an independent, economic interest and professional representation of enterprises and entrepreneurs as well as of all other types of businesses and professional organisation and associations registered on the area of Autonomous province of Vojvodina. All the activities at the Chamber are conducted through associations.

Associations gather member companies and enterprises in branches based on similar economic interests. Their main activity is to articulate needs and problems of different economy areas. The Chamber provides non-financial support and services to entrepreneurs in relation to business information, economic policy, finance, insurance, foreign economic relations (including fair and exhibition participation), market opportunity, quality management, professional training and education, technological innovation, information and communication technologies. The Chambers has 50 employees. It is part of the Serbian chamber system and the member of Eurochambers, European chambers network. It participated in many project within CARDS and IPA Programmes.

Associated partners

- Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment, Slovenia
- Greek Union of New Farmers, Greece
- Open Synergy for Tourism Development, Greece
- Institute of Agricultural Economics, Bulgaria
- Association of Tourism Consultants, Hungary
- National Institute of Agricultural Economics, Italy

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