Working Group "ISAR"
TITAN – Tisza, Transmission and Innovation: An Innovative Bottom-up Model for Transmission and Promotion of Tisza Cultural Heritage

ABSTRACT

The project aims to promote and preserve both tangible and intangible cultural heritage in a particular region of the Danube river basin, Tisza Region (TR). The TR cultural heritage is less-well-known in the rest of Europe and is at risk of being lost or forgotten if not preserved and supported. In this project is presented an innovative and strategic bottom-up model which allows local people to manage how their heritage is disseminated through transmission and promotion of their own culture by video and interactive performances. Anthropological and historical research is required in order to show traditions, cultures and art history, and to create a database of cultural heritage of TR which will be enriched also by the videos that the local people will produce. The expected impact of this proposal is not only limited to the transmission of a self-constructed cultural identity, but also materializes into significant economic benefits for the preservation of the cultural heritage and for the sustainable development of this region.

KEYWORDS

Tisza region
Cultural heritage
Bottom-up approach
Promotion
Video-media

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PROBLEM STATEMENT AND BACKGROUND

European cultural heritage, as a rich mosaic of different cultures, history and traditions, enriches the individual lives of citizens and plays a key role in improving the social capital. It is part of our past, our present and our future, and has to be supported, safeguarded and promoted. In this respect, preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage is needed, otherwise it will disappear. Promotion and valorisation of cultural heritage can be also considered as an important resource for economic growth, employment and social cohesion, offering the potential to revitalize European areas non-well-known and to improve sustainable tourism.

The Danube Region as a part of Europe, not only has a rich natural heritage (for which it is famous), but also a cultural one, and not all of its areas are equally known. In this respect, Tisza River Basin could be mentioned as a specific case, as it has been mostly studied in the context of its environmental resources and problems, lacking the cultural aspects that also give to the region an identity and are necessary to develop a sustainable future.

The *Tisza River Basin or Tisza Region (TR)*, shown in Fig.1, is one of the most picturesque regions in Europe, including: unique cultures, rare flora and

FIGURE 1 – Map of Tisza River Basin
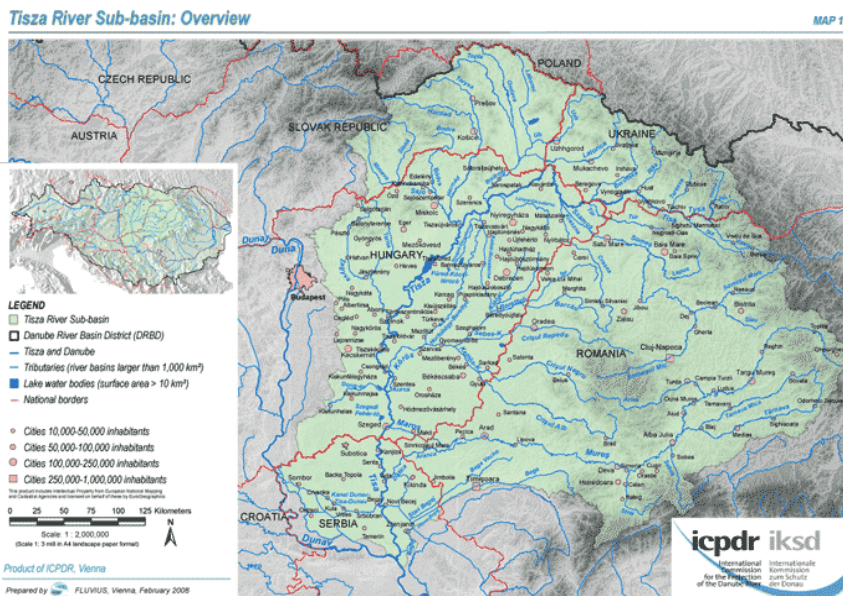
SOURCE: ICPDR (2011). UNDP/GEF Tisza Project. Integrated Tisza River Basin Management Plan

fauna, a rich supply of natural resources and the waters of the Tisza River itself. This river is the longest tributary of the Danube River, which flows through five countries: Ukraine, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and Serbia. The drainage area of the TRB is 157,186 km², it is the largest sub-basin of the Danube River Basin (801,463 km²) and it is the home of approximately 14 million people (IP-CDR, 2011).

Even though this particular region is full of art monuments and history, local customs and traditions, very little of its cultural heritage is well-known among local people and the rest of European citizens. Citing some significant examples of the most famous cultural heritage in this area, several examples can be mentioned: the wooden churches of Maramureş "which are outstanding examples of vernacular religious wooden architecture" (http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/904); the Merry Cemetery of Săpânța, with its lively colours and amusing rhymes on headstones; the Hortobágy National Park – the *Puszta* "where specific land-use practices adapted to the natural conditions of alkaline pastures, steppes, meadows and wetlands" (http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/474).

On the other hand, there is plenty of cultural heritage in this region which is less-well-known in the rest of Europe and at risk of being lost or forgotten if it is not preserved and not supported. For instance, folk songs (e.g. "Multe rele m-o mâncat", "Du-te supărare-n codru"), legends (e.g. the tomb of the Attila the Hun is allegedly somewhere in the Tisza riverbed near the confluence of the Tisza into the Danube), history (the famous Battle of Senta between austro-hungarian and turkish armies), poems (e.g. Sándor Petőfi: The Tisza), archaeological sites, castles, summer and manor houses (e.g. the manor-house known as Fantast, i.e. Dundjerski Castle).

Given these examples, it becomes obvious that, should this heritage mentioned above and many others continue to be ignored, an essential part of not only regional, but also European identity will fade into the historical background, with more well-known symbols of the continent becoming the sole, incomplete image of Europe. On the other hand, by bringing the value of the Tisza region and other similar regions into focus, it becomes possible and even likely to create a more inclusive identity that every European citizen can relate to.

In what concerns the issue of sustainability, one industry that can ensure this type of development by involving cultural heritage from the Tisza river region is tourism, which has mostly shown a tentative growth in three of the four regions (Fig. 2) which together encompass the largest part of the basin. Moreover, according to The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) *Tourism Towards 2030*, international tourist arrivals in the emerging economy destinations including Central and Eastern Europe will grow at double the rate (+4.4% a year) of that in advanced economy destinations. As a result, arrivals

in emerging economies are expected to exceed those in advanced economies before 2020 (UNWTO, 2014). For this reason, one key impact of the successful implementation of the current project is ensuring a more consistent growth for this particular industry by making the region more visible, as well as better integrated.

The aim of this project in the Tisza region as a pilot area is to create an innovative and strategic bottom-up model which allows local people to manage how their heritage is disseminated through transmission and promotion of their own culture by video and interactive performances. For this purpose, connections between academic and research institutions, authorities and local communities will also be encouraged. Through the establishment of such communication channels, the cultural "messages" that the people wish to convey will be transmitted much more efficiently and will therefore have a much better chance of reaching the regional, national and also European level. The expected impact of this proposal is not only the transmission of a self-constructed cultural identity, but also materializes into significant economic benefits. The new influx of tourists and researchers interested in the area will provide an increase of its revenue, which will be useful for the preservation of the cultural heritage and for the sustainable development of this region.

FIGURE 2 – Arrivals at tourist accommodation establishments by NUTS 2 regions
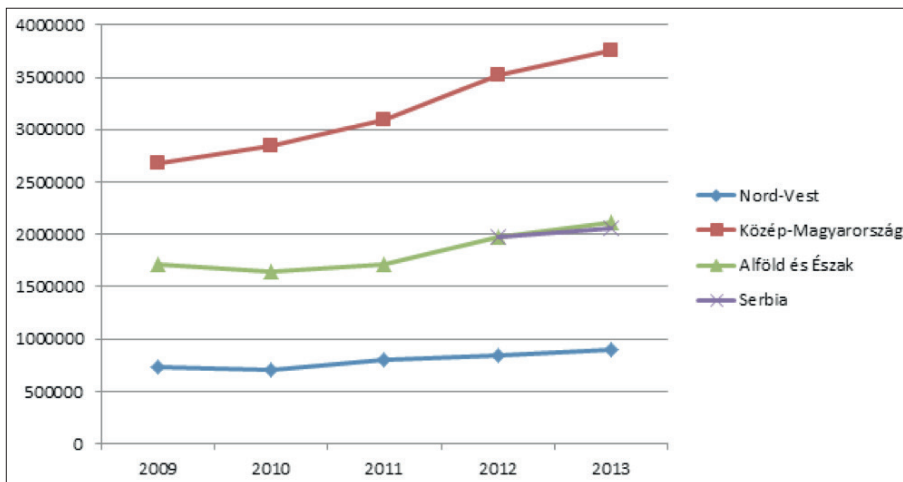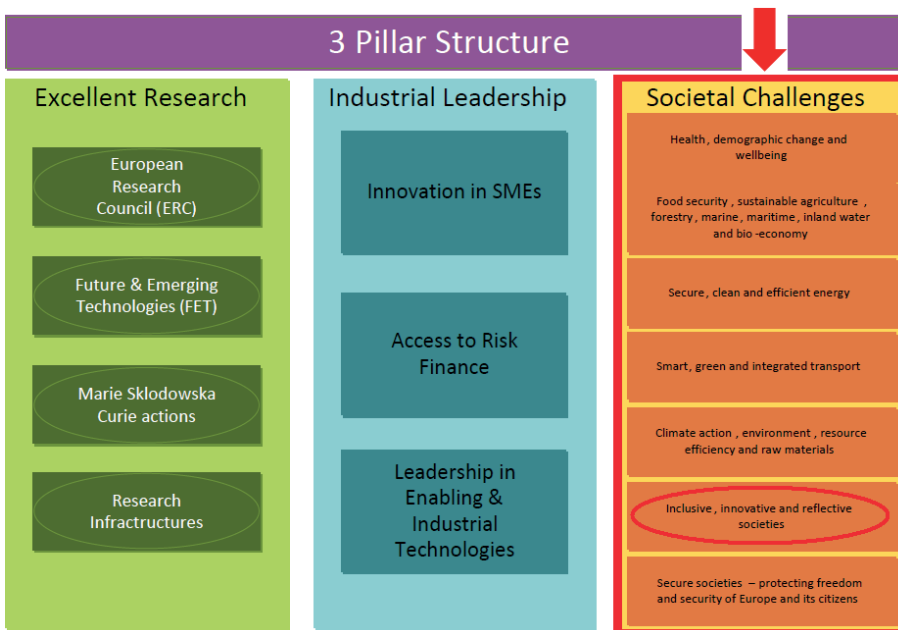

SOURCE: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=tour_occ_arn2&lang=en

LINKS TO EUSDR AND HORIZON 2020 CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

The Societal Challenge pillar of the Horizon 2020 programme targeting fostering a greater understanding of Europe, by providing solutions and supporting inclusive, innovative and reflective European societies. This consideration is supported by strong multidisciplinary approaches, which include social sciences and humanities, information and communication technologies. We would like to initiate innovative links between different parties from the Tisza river basin in order to enhance protection of its tangible and intangible heritage. (http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/europe-

Key future research and innovation actions for 2015 within Horizon 2020 (Fig. 3) that the overall goal of our project for the Tisza region particularly focuses on and complies with are: *transmission of European cultural heritage, uses of the past, EU eastern partnership and other third countries and new forms of innovation in the public sector*. (http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/europe-changing-world-inclusive-innovative-and-reflective-societies#Article).

FIGURE 3 – **Horizon 2020 Pillar Structure**

SOURCE: http://www.unive.it/media/allegato/CFInternational/Pillar.png

Furthermore, according to EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) it is emphasized that the heterogeneous Danube macro-region can develop its potential, especially through strengthening the cooperation within it. From four Pillars of EUSDR (Fig. 3) which address the major issues, our project proposal which explores the feasibility for the implementation of new means for transfrontier heritage protection corresponds to three of them: *Connecting the Danube Region (1), Building Prosperity in the Danube Region (3) and Strengthening the Danube Region (4).* Each comprises Priority Areas and distinct fields of action (EUSDR, 2010), with our own focus highlighted in the figure below (Fig. 4).

Figure 4 – **Main Pillars of the Danube strategy**

Source: http://wbc-inco.net/object/link/10305/attach/4-pillars_graph_reduced.jpg

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

For this project, a transdisciplinary approach which consists of several techniques coming from the social sciences and technological knowledge will be used. On the one hand, a bottom-up model which allows local people to manage their heritage for dissemination will be developed; this model can be used at first in this pilot region, and then applied to other particular regions that need to encourage the valorisation of their assets. In order to promote and to preserve both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, the transmission of artistic and historical events, customs and traditions of the Tisza basin region through video and interactive performances is proposed.

In both the preparatory study and the innovative bottom-up model, different expertises like art-historical and historical, sociological, anthropological and archaeological, as well as artistic, architectural and ICT scientific knowledge will be applied.

BOTTOM-UP APPROACH

Local citizens will participate in decision-making and in this case they will be engaged in: the selection of the cultural heritage that will be involved, the development of appropriate strategy and actions in order to promote their local area and to have opportunities to improve the tourism, visibility and economy in this area.

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

(www.elard.eu) has shown that the bottom-up approach should be considered as combining and interacting with national and/or regional authorities to achieve better overall results. In this project, workshops and seminars will be organized in order to improve the awareness, participation and mobilization of the local population to identify the strengths and the weaknesses of the Tisza river area, with special consideration given to the meaning of traditions and cultural heritage at risk of going missing. During this first stage, different governmental, private and third-sector stakeholders will participate in forum discussions to make people more sensitive about the role of culture in their life. Local people participation should not be limited to the initial phase but should extend throughout the promoting process: they will be the main characters of the activities, which will give them the possibilities to transmit their memories and impressions, and to showcase their art and culture.

ART AND CULTURE TRANSMISSION BY INTERACTIVE ACTING

Capturing cultural heritage on video using current technologies and organizing regional festivals offer exciting opportunities to involve local people in valorising their own culture and promoting them in different countries in Europe. The cultural transmission of art, memories and storytelling will be recorded, documented and safeguarded developing a multimedia interface as a valuable archive of photographs, audio and video materials collected, produced and published by local people in collaboration with experts. In order to ensure a proper multidisciplinary approach, anthropological and historical research, as well as video media and public relation knowledge are required and involved. The video performance and interactive activities can offer a contemporary way of communication by combining pictures, narration, and text in order to transmit a message and promote culture as well as one's own language. Moreover, in the last twenty-five years, advances in technology, software and data storage are more widely available and have made video technology accessible for broad applications (Dold, 2014).

Additionally, considering the promotion of the region and the valorisation of intangible and tangible cultural heritage, festivals will be performed during the

project. Events and folk festivals will be organized by the university partners in collaboration with local communities, in order to create opportunities to share traditions, to enhance social cohesion and to promote social inclusion through art performance.

PROJECT CONSORTIUM

A cross-sectorial group of corporations from the different countries involved in this Tisza region project will take part in this consortium, defined by both international and transdisciplinary characteristics. Each partner has a particular role in this proposal, as is shown in the WP structure, and it will contribute actively throughout all planned objectives and activities.

Our leading partner is the University of Debrecen in Hungary (*) and the consortium is composed of different partners coming from the Tisza region and other countries mostly, but not exclusively from the European Union, in order to take advantage of the expertise and to promote this model in other parts of Europe.

The partners of the consortium are:

- Universities and Research Centers oriented towards the research part of the project:
  - Center for Sustainable and Environmental Development, University of Novi Sad, Serbia
  - Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Debrecen, Hungary (*)
  - Faculty of Geography, Tourism and Sport, University of Oradea, Romania
  - Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Information Technology, University of Oradea, Romania
  - Faculty of Electronics, Telecommunications and Information Technology, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania
  - Faculty of Theater and Television, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
  - Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
  - Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania
  - Center of Urban, Territorial and Environmental Research, University of Ferrara, Italy
  - Economy and Cultural Activity Management Centre (EGArt), University Ca' Foscari of Venice, Italy

- Regional Agencies for Cooperation and Territorial Management
  - The Council of Danube Cities and Regions
  - Danube Cultural Cluster
  - European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)

- Local and National Governments:
  - Ministry of National Development, Hungary
  - Ministry of Culture and National Cultural Heritage, Romania
  - Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Serbia
  - Municipality of Kosice, Slovakia
  - Municipality of Baia Mare, Romania
  - Municipality of Uzhorod, Ukraine
  - Municipality of Miskolc, Hungary
  - Municipality of Szolnok, Hungary

- Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)
  - 3 NGOs in the field of Sustainable Local Development and Social Inclusion from Romania, Hungary and Serbia

Moreover, a wide group of stakeholders will take part in and benefit from the implementation of this project: local communities in the territory, tourism operators (hotels, restaurants and museums), non-governmental organizations (environmental and social ones), small and medium enterprises and industries based in the basin (private sector). Different experts are needed to achieve the objectives and the research activities of the project, such as: anthropologists, sociologists, historians, art scientists, IT scientists, media-developers, territorial planners and environmental managers. All of these experts come from the Partner Universities in order to develop local knowledge and expertise and, at the same time, to encourage regular knowledge and best-practices sharing between them.

OBJECTIVES

As illustrated in the background description, tourism is one industry of the region whose growth can be significantly improved. The development of tourism has been worldwide identified as an effective way to revitalize the economy of a destination, whether it is rural or urban, bearing in mind wellbeing of local communities. Cultural values and their elements occupy a significant place in tourism due to the possibility of their valorization and enrichment of the tour-

ist offer (Berić et al., 2012). Most of contemporary tourist visits are based on cultural attractions and cultural heritage, whereby the Tisza river basin could also generate significant increase in tourist arrivals (Božić, Berić, 2014).

There is a mutual benefit: for locals, tourism activities bring increased economic activity, hotels' occupancy rates, shops and restaurants' revenues. For the tourist, it is an opportunuty to enjoy good deals, discounts and promotions. If this proposal is to be implemented, it could develop synergies with other sectors and branches of the economy, ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities (UNWTO, 2013)

The proposed approach in this project has all the assets to ensure a good result by creating and popularizing a multimedia interface with locally produced promotional materials: the area becomes more well-known and more interesting due to the "stories" that become accessible to the public and, as a consequence, a more consistent influx of tourists can be expected. The main impact could be clearly identified as the increasing revenue of the region, which results from the following cycle: firstly, the incoming tourists will spend more money in local industries and, secondly, the increased demand for services is likely to create additional jobs within the region.
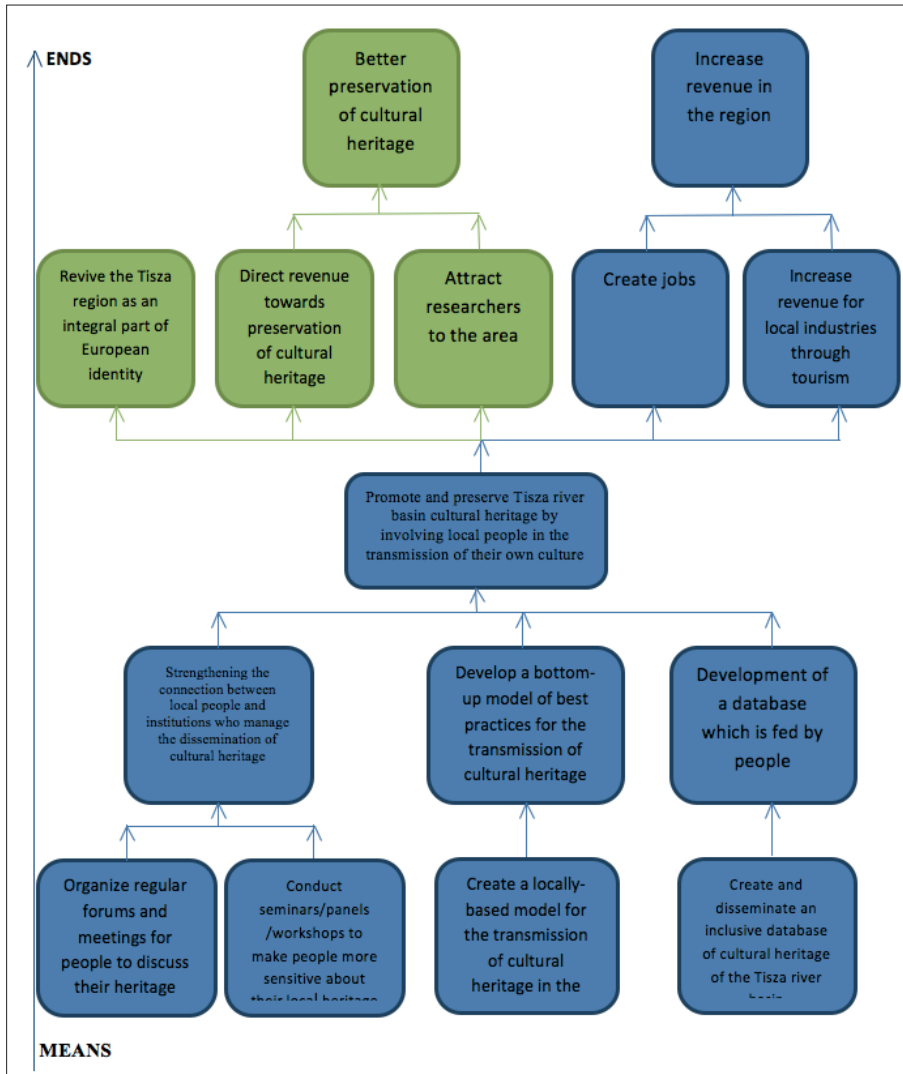
Additionally, two impacts that fall outside the scope of the project proposal could be identified: 1) the revival of the Tisza region as an integral part of European identity: 2) the better preservation of cultural heritage. This is anticipated to occur as a result of the increased interest and presence of researchers in the area, who would contribute towards the improved cataloguing of the region and would also stimulate academic interest in the region. Moreover, the new revenue generated by visiting tourists and researchers could be directed towards cultural heritage preservation and development. Tourism is sometimes seen as a threat to culture, by putting pressure on cultural sites and resources and a tendency to modify the intrinsic value of the living heritage and traditions of an area. However, handled sensitively it can bring benefit by raising awareness and generating income, thereby helping to safeguard historic sites and intangible heritage (UNWTO, 2013). The global trend of cooperation between tourism and culture sectors is in progress, in which such communication simultaneously allows the protection of the public good and achieving economic success, and cultural heritage that Tisza region possesses can definitely be incorporated in these trends (Beneton, 2011).

The goal of this project is to promote and preserve cultural heritage by involving local people in the transmission of their own culture. In order to achieve this goal, some specific objectives have been identified:

1. Develop a multi-media interface which is continuously and dynamically fed by people
2. Develop a bottom-up model of best practices for the transmission of cultural heritage
3. Strengthen the connection between local people and institutions who manage the dissemination of cultural heritage.

Bearing in mind all aforementioned, individual segments of presented Model for Transmission and Promotion of Tisza Cultural Heritage should serve as a framework for further action for the presentation of European cultural heritage in Tisza river basin, within the capabilities and limitations that come from internal and external social, economic and cultural forces.

Figure 5 – Objective tree

		ACTIONS	RESULTS	PARTNERS
WP1	**Project management**	This WP encompasses all the activities needed in order to ensure that the project is implemented according to the initial plan.		
		1.1. Constitute the project management team 1.2. Coordinate and monitor the project 1.3. Evaluate the project	Project runs smoothly and all activities take place at the scheduled time. Timing: 24 months.	University of Debrecen, Hungary
WP2	**Preparatory Package**	This WP covers all of the activities needed in order to have a reliable basis (initial diagnosis of regional cultural heritage status) for the creation of the multi-media interface.		
		2.1. Gather preliminary research related to the cultural heritage present in the territory in order to create a base for the multi-media interface and the bottom-up model. 2.2. Participate in different initiatives that could involve stakeholders for the project 2.3 Define the operative program	Necessary tools to create the basic framework of the multi-media interface are available. Timing: 6 months.	Leading Institution: Center for Sustainable and Environmental Development, University of Novi Sad, Serbia. Center of Urban, Territorial and Environmental Research, University of Ferrara, Italy. The Council of Danube Cities and Regions (CDCR). Danube Cultural Cluster (DCC). European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).
WP3	**Creating a multimedia interface for the transmission of Cultural Heritage**	This package targets the actual establishment of the multimedia interface and implies detailed research to catalogue the existing cultural heritage so that sections on the interface for each potential video material that is to be uploaded can be created.		
		3.1. Create a catalogue of tangible cultural heritage; 3.2. Gather multidisciplinary research to have an authentic picture of people's traditions, customs, values, way of life, which comprise their intangible heritage; 3.3. Create a multimedia platform where people can upload what they produce or advertise their festivals or other events; 3.4. Utilize locally produced materials and manifestations to constantly update the multimedia interface.	Functional multi-media interface after the two years of the project, which is constantly updated even after the implementation period is over. Timing: 18 months.	Leading Institution: Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania. University of Novi Sad, Serbia. University of Debrecen, Hungary University of Oradea, Romania. University Babes-Bolyai Cluj-Napoca, Romania. University of Venice, Italy

WP4 — Development of a new locally-based model for the revalorization of Cultural Heritage	The most consistent work package of this project, WP4 involves creating bridges which connect local people with local institutions and authorities and, at the same time, it requires the physical production of local videos, festival and events which will be logistically supported by the partners.		
	4.1. Conduct seminars, panels and workshops to make people more sensitive about their local heritage 4.2. Provide logistic, technical and artistic support for citizens to create and distribute videos which promote their own cultural heritage in the form of "stories"; 4.3. The people create locally-based videos, festivals and events, which are uploaded to the multi-media interface 4.4. Organize regular forums and meetings where people can discuss about cultural heritage (supporting activity to the media methodology proposal).	Fully developed model of best practices for the transmission of cultural heritage and strengthening of the regular contact between locals and institutions. Timing: 18 months.	Leading Institution: University Babes-Bolyai Cluj-Napoca, Romania. University of Novi Sad, Serbia. University of Debrecen, Hungary University of Oradea, Romania. University of Shkoder, Albania University of Ferrara, Italy. Ministry of National Development, Hungary. (MND) Ministry of Culture and National Cultural Heritage, Romania. (MCNCH) All Local Governments (6 governments representatives) NGO's (3 representatives)
WP5 — Communication and Promotion	This WP is aimed at disseminating information about the project itself and its development, as well as about the multimedia interface which contains the videos, festivals and events described in WP4.		
	5.1. Develop clear communication channels by creating a project web-site (which links to the multi-media interface) and post regular updates to the web-site. 5.2. Create promotional printed materials to be distributed to stakeholders. 5.3. Create a final best practices report to be posted on the web-site and published.	Final report whose results can be implemented as a best-practices model for other similar cases. Timing: 24 months.	Leading Institution: University of Novi Sad, Serbia. University of Oradea, Romania. Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania. University of Venice, Italy.

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