



*THEmatic Transnational
church Route development
with the Involvement of
local Society*



**CENTRAL
EUROPE**
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND

WP3 - TARGETED ANALYSIS OF TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

REVIEW REPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS Output 3.5.5

Peer Review in GRAZ-SECKAU (AT)
October 2nd – 4th, 2013



*THEmatic Transnational
church Route development
with the Involvement of
local Society*



**CENTRAL
EUROPE**
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND

Index

<i>Introduction</i>	3
<i>Section A: Socio-Economic Background</i>	7
<i>Section B: Routes and Accessibility</i>	10
<i>Section C: Heritage & Conservation</i>	12
<i>Section D: Local Identity and Commitment</i>	14



*THEmatic Transnational
church Route development
with the Involvement of
local Society*



**CENTRAL
EUROPE**
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND

Introduction

This output is realised in the framework of the THETRIS project - <http://www.thetris.eu/> - implemented through the Central Europe Programme co-financed by the ERDF.

The overall objective of the THETRIS project is the preservation and the sustainable exploitation of cultural heritage based on churches in the regions of eleven project partners, through the implementation of specific management strategies. The specific objectives of the project are the increasing of the competitiveness of the different regions by the capitalization of cultural heritage, the development of long-term strategies for the preservation and the sustainable exploitation of churches, and the reinforcement of awareness for the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

During the implementation of the project, ideas, suggestions and recommendations to manage heritage sites and heritage have been characterized and shared, with the aim to generate income for local communities and create stronger regional identities. Eleven regional church routes and a transnational church route, have been identified in order to raise awareness on the importance of preserving cultural heritage and to manage cultural sites by making them accessible to different target groups. Additionally, the project sustainability is being constantly pursued through the commitment and involvement of decision makers and local stakeholders.

In this framework of transnational cooperation and commitment, transnational reviews are meant to be a support in the regional strategies making process. The rationale of having transnational reviews activities is to acquire knowledge and experience from external experts and to throw an external point of view on the regional assets. The THETRIS project foresees a total of five transnational reviews that were implemented from September to October 2013. Each partner has been paired to a host region to visit, in couple with another partner, in the frame of a 3 day review organized by the hosts.



*THEmatic Transnational
church Route development
with the Involvement of
local Society*



**CENTRAL
EUROPE**
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND

After the visits, the peers prepared the review reports with recommendations which provide information on the following topics: gained experiences, lessons learnt, highlights, missed links, steps for further activities, suggestion and recommendations. These five reports (one for each peer activity) focus on regional existing strengths and make recommendations for elaborating regional strategies. Each report examines four different aspects: socio-economic background, routes and accessibility, heritage and conservation, identity and local commitment, providing for each the main key findings and the recommendations. These reports are closely related to the SWOT Analyses developed by each partner at the beginning of the THETRIS project. In fact, each partner was called to identify and analyse strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats concerning their regions in relation to the same four key topics for which experts now provide findings and suggestions in the review reports with recommendations. It's a logical process with the aim to help partners to elaborate innovative and sustainable regional strategies for the valorisation of cultural heritage based on churches.



*THEmatic Transnational
church Route development
with the Involvement of
local Society*



**CENTRAL
EUROPE**
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.



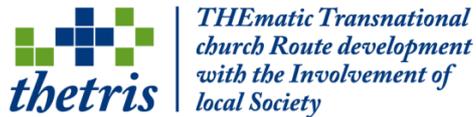
EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND

General information about the Review Team

Host Region	Diocese Graz-Seckau
Contact person	Mag. Martina Maria Linzer
Address	Bischofplatz 4, A-8010 Graz
Telephone number	+43 (0) 676 8742 2825
Email	martina.linzer@graz-seckau.at
Fax number	
Date of Review	2-4 October 2013
Date of delivery of final report	08 / 01 / 2014

Transnational Review Coordinator

Name	Luca Barello
Region	LAMORO Development Agency
Position	external expert
Address	Via Leopardi 4, - 14100 Asti (AT)
Telephone number	+ 39 0141 532516
Fax number	+ 39 0141 532228
Email	sonia@lamoro.it , barello@inwind.it



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND

Peer expert 1

Name Katja Grašič
Region Regional Development Agency of Gorenjska
BSC, Business Support Centre Ltd, Kranj
Position project coordinator
Address Cesta Staneta Žagarja 37, 4000 Kranj, Slovenija
Telephone number + 386 4 777 72 50
Fax number + 386 4 28 17 249
Email katja.grasic@bsc-kranj.si

Peer expert 2

Name Helena Cvenkel
Region Regional Development Agency of Gorenjska
BSC, Business Support Centre Ltd, Kranj
Position project leader
Address Cesta Staneta Žagarja 37, 4000 Kranj, Slovenija
Telephone number + 386 4 777 72 30/39
Fax number + 386 4 28 17 249
Email helena.cvenkel@bsc-kranj.si



*THEmatic Transnational
church Route development
with the Involvement of
local Society*



**CENTRAL
EUROPE**
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND

Section A: Socio-Economic Background

a) Key Findings

Steiermark (Styria) with its capital city Graz is an economically rather well developed region. Beside good innovative companies and good level of services it can offer a wide variety of natural and cultural attractions and has good tourism offer (in cities and in countryside) and good tourism marketing. The sacral heritage is well presented also via modern approaches (web,smartphone-applications...etc.)

It was a great pleasure to see that Diocese Graz-Seckau has decided to include a part of Steiermark that is located in a more remote geographical position from the main crossroads in Steiermark and Carinthia and therefore also has drawbacks; far away from bigger employment centres (Graz, Klagenfurt), low density of population, not so much good challenging employment opportunities for young people. Despite of rather pressing economic problems (e.g. emigration of young and educated people, the low percentage of employed women...), the region shows a fairly good capacity of creating initiatives in different fields trying to involve also young and disadvantaged people.

The positive attitude, energy and passion of the people to move forward, to stay in the region and develop it with their own resources are remarkable. We have also seen the determination to change challenges into opportunities and that networking really works and can bring excellent results (e. g. like in renovation of church and establishment of the museum in St. Georgen and the renovation of monasteries with effective and good combination of different kinds of activities (e.g. Monastery in St. Lambrecht with tourist office, place for meetings, events in the garden, museum,..), Abbey in Seckau with museum, secondary school, production of different kind of herbal likers.....).



*THEmatic Transnational
church Route development
with the Involvement of
local Society*



**CENTRAL
EUROPE**
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND

It was a great pleasure to see how innovative people can be in finding the solutions and new opportunities e. g. innovative approach in presenting and understanding the heritage of wood that is essential for this region.

We were impressed by meeting the excellent and devoted “developers” that come from the region like Mrs. Maria Auer (Holzwelt Murau) and Dr. Bibiane Puhl (Regional Manager) as well as people from the church that know how to combine spiritual and “common” world like Father Gerwig Romirer (Abbey St. Lambrecht). With this passion and determination together with the region’s people they can find strategies, work on ideas and achieve very good results with combination and integration of different activities, resources, different approaches, steps and ways of going forward. Open minded actions like spreading information, know-how and networking (as the wood ambassadors), educational activities (as in Seckau Abbey) and new ways of promoting heritage (e.g. IT-pilot project Diocese Graz-Seckau) are fundamental to convince the new generations to stay living in the area.



Natural materials and related craftsmanship and skills, like the woodwork in this region, can link tradition and contemporary world, when it is given value to experimental work on products and technologies on one side, and to the traditional works and places as tourist attractors on the other side. The wood and related activities represent a wealth and treasure that the region was able to keep and to widen. Additionally we have to compliment the region Obersteiermark for being well organised with a professional network of guides (e.g. Maria Buch, Cäcilienkirche, St. Georgen) which is of great importance and shows how proud people are of their own heritage. Due to the professional presentations we learned a lot about the historical roots of the churches, their monuments and the connection of churches with everyday life of villages, which was an additional “good point” from the eyes of visitors.



*THEmatic Transnational
church Route development
with the Involvement of
local Society*



**CENTRAL
EUROPE**
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND

b) Recommendations



The main heritage sites, the two Abbeys of St. Lambrecht and Seckau have important potentials to involve in their activities larger areas and, on the other hand, they can motivate visitors to discover the area, the smaller villages and most hidden sites along the church route. Additionally the regional management and other support institutions that have good innovative ideas and networks with local inhabitants, could develop further ways of promoting and developing “tourist products” that will connect sacral and non sacral attractions (e.g. wood attractions, water attractions,..). We would also recommend that storytelling must be more vividly seen; there lies a big potential for further development of sites- in connection with good marketing. Especially the sights of St. Georgen, Maria Buch and Cäcilienkirche, are by our opinion too little connected to bigger attractions (Abbeys) but have very big potential (stories, museums, customs,.....). We would also recommend that this “less discovered” part of the Steiermark should be put in the centre of promotion of the “touristic region” Steiermark with specific day trips to these hidden treasures.

We also recommend that modern approaches that are already being used by the Diocese Graz-Seckau to involve especially the young generation should be upgraded and include also other networking opportunities (e.g. customs, stories.....). The planned IT application for the Thetris route is very attractive with its strong playful incentives and can be a good way to attract young users.



THEmatic Transnational
church Route development
with the Involvement of
local Society



**CENTRAL
EUROPE**
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND

Section B: Routes and Accessibility

a) Key Findings

The area has good connections: the international airport of Graz can be reached by car in around 1 hour, a railway is going along the Mur river valley, several bike routes and hiking trails are crossing



the region and Seckau Abbey is the crossing point of four Pilgrimage routes.

There is the chance to create a ring route linking the religious buildings selected for Thetris project, a route that will be also an easy way to reach over 60 other churches and religious buildings around the area.

The link between spirituality and nature is very clear. The surrounding landscape and wide range of trails invite visitors to deeply experience the area. A key location is St.

Lambrecht Abbey, along the Via Natura trail in the Natural park Zirbitzkogel-Grebenzen, that is an active institution that organizes a wide range of activities.

Accessibility for disabled and people with motion limitations is very well provided in Maria Buch church and also in a more articulated structure as Seckau Abbey with its range of inner and outer ramps. Alternative means of transport as Electric cars and bikes are available in the area.



*THEmatic Transnational
church Route development
with the Involvement of
local Society*



**CENTRAL
EUROPE**
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND

b) Recommendations

To carry on with the development of sacral heritage “packages” a shuttle bus along the Thetris ring route is recommended. The program should give the chance not only to reach the selected religious buildings but also to explore the area. Special programs should be offered in which rich landscape and sacral buildings are included; connection with new “modern” treasure searching such as Geocaching should be part of the promotion actions. The chance to use E-transport means should be widely communicated and included in daily itineraries of the guests.

The two monasteries with their accommodation facilities might represent the starting points for smaller day programs that would attract people also from bigger cities (e.g. Graz,...). Additional sign posting (might be also virtually connected to tourism of Steiermark) showing the beauty of this special part of the Steiermark, should be developed and also special places where you can stay and eat should be promoted more (e.g. restaurant in Seckau...).



THEmatic Transnational
church Route development
with the Involvement of
local Society



**CENTRAL
EUROPE**
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND

Section C: Heritage & Conservation

a) Key Findings

Steiermark is very rich regarding heritage. Austria and Steiermark put a lot of attention to preservation of heritage (special system of financing for restoration of cities and other historically important buildings). Another important issue is that additional activities are added to monasteries and networking with different layers of society is vivid, as we saw in the example of both Benedictine Abbeys.



Therefore also lobbying for restoration (as seen in St. Georgen) and new integrative activities can be effective and bring results. As we could see there is a little bit of difference between the ways of obtaining funds for restoration (e.g. Abbeys) and how separate parishes can receive the funds for improvement of churches.

We especially could admire the determination and positive spirit of people in St. Georgen that did the first steps of restoration by themselves, later on public support followed. At Seckau we could admire also how “new and old” (traditional and modern) can be beautifully joined into one whole (e.g. modern inspirations for presentation of certain aspects of holy bible in Seckau). Also the wood initiative brought together old, traditional knowledge and connected it with challenges of how to use wood nowadays and how important it is to preserve wood heritage, wood crafts and customs connected to wood.



*THEmatic Transnational
church Route development
with the Involvement of
local Society*



**CENTRAL
EUROPE**
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND

The selected heritage buildings, all Roman catholic, have different histories, dimensions and locations. All founded in the Middle Ages, they present layers of various historical periods easy to be seen and understood. The two Abbeys influence the region's development and have strong influence due to different activities connected to inhabitants of the region (school, farming, tourist office, museums,...). The conservation is mainly good, some of the churches suffer of humidity problems, that were brilliantly solved in the church of St. Georgen ob Judenburg, still to be faced in the church of Maria Buch. There is a rich heritage of legends and popular stories about the foundation of the religious buildings, about their history or related to the artworks they host (like frescos and altars) that the local tourist guides can tell and explain.

b) Recommendations

A strong relation between settlements and territories is essential: strengthen the existing links between sites and buildings and between material and immaterial heritage could give the chance to widen the visitors' experience, not limiting it to the visits of buildings.



THEmatic Transnational
church Route development
with the Involvement of
local Society



**CENTRAL
EUROPE**
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND

Section D: Local Identity and Commitment

a) Key Findings

A strong local identity is preserved by individuals presenting a bright capacity of carrying on innovative ideas for a long time and to overcome difficult moments. They are able to involve and attract other people from the community they belong to. Being part of the community gave them the advantage of an easier communication and reliability by their fellows.



Local people are open to new projects, they pursue their objectives spreading information and connecting different sub-areas, they are able to widen and to share experiences. They believe in their ideas and are capable to act.

The school hosted in Seckau Abbey, beside working places, is a key activity to keep the youth in the region.

The involvement of people having working difficulties in the Domenico project in St.Lambrecht is a positive action for the community's stability that shows how you can do a lot with little money if the project has a strong ethic value.

b) Recommendations

The involvement of local people and their associations is essential to the preservation of places and memories and should be integrated and connected with programs and organizations at a larger geographical and administrative level. Additionally innovative tourist programs for special groups in which local initiatives and ideas of local people are included, are recommended. Also new ways of marketing (via ICT) might be also away how to include local people and attract more guests.