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WP3 - TARGETED ANALYSIS OF TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

REVIEW REPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS Output 3.5.5

Peer Review in Kranj (SI)
October 9th-11th, 2013



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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.

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



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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.

General Information about the Review Team

Host Region	BSC, Ltd., Kranj
Contact Person	Helena Cvenkel
Address	Cesta Staneta Žagarja 37
Telephone number	00386 4 28 17 239 00386 31 302 382
Email	Helena.cvenkel@bsc-kranj.si
Fax number	
Date of Review	9.-11.10.2013
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Transnational Review Coordinator:

Name	Lukasz Gawel
Region	Malopolska
Position	External Expert
Address	
Telephone number	
Fax number	
Email	lukasz.gawel@uj.edu.pl

Peer Expert 1:

Name	Anna Goral
Region	Poland/Malopolska
Position	Ul. Grodzka 15/2, 31-006 Krakow
Address	+48 12 421 74 65/ +48 888 907 578
Telephone number	a.goral@reiony.org.pl
Fax number	+48 12 421 74 65
Email	25.-27.09.2013



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Peer Expert 2:

Name	Martina Maria Linzer
Region	Styria/ Austria
Position	Project manager at Diocese Graz-Seckau
Address	Bischofplatz 4, 8010 Graz, Austria
Telephone number	0043 676 8742 2825
Fax number	-
Email	Martina.linzer@graz-seckau.at

Peer Expert 3:

Name	Pawel Mierniczak
Region	Malopolska/Poland
Position	
Address	
Telephone number	
Fax number	
Email	pawelm@mot.krakow.pl



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Introduction to Gorenjska Region

Gorenjska Region is located on the Alpine area, north-western part of Slovenia. The main attractions of the region are:

1. Triglav, Slovenia's highest mountain that lies at the heart of the Triglav National Park, an area of high, rocky mountains and deep river gorges, karst chasms and sunny Alpine pastures which offers protection to many endemic animal and plant species and the traditions of the former way of life of rugged mountain-dwellers and Alpine dairy farmers.
2. On the northern side of the kingdom of Triglav is the Upper Sava Valley. In nearby Planica, in the shelter of two-thousand-metre peaks, the world's best ski jumpers come to compete every year.
3. The area of the Julian Alps, that surrounds the Region is enclosed by two lakes. The resort town of Bled, with its island in the middle of the lake and its cliff top castle, is one of the most attractive places in Slovenia. Not far from the lake is Blejski Vintgar, the natural gorge of the river Radovna.
4. The most important river in this area is the Sava. At the point where the river begins to be invigorated by tributaries from left and right, the valley gradually widens. Cities and towns with venerable traditions, together with the villages scattered across the high Alps and softly rounded hills, create a land of new experiences not far from the national capital.
5. The centre of Gorenjska is Kranj, with its surprising industrial, commercial and cultural traditions.
6. Škofja Loka has the most beautifully preserved medieval town center in Slovenia. The rooms of Loka Castle contain various museum collections, while the former castle garden has become an open-air museum.
7. To the north, near the border with Austria, is Jezersko, an attractive area with its own autochthonous breed of sheep, Planšarsko Jezero (a man-made lake), Čedca Waterfall (the highest in Slovenia), ancient farmhouses and granaries, and unspoilt mountain scenery. Not far from Tržič, a town with a long shoemaking tradition, is the world-famous Dovžan Gorge, where several interesting geological phenomena



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may be observed. The Kamnik-Savinja Alps also contain one of the most popular ski resorts in Slovenia: Krvavec¹.

Objects included in THETRIS project, visited during the peer review

Location:	Podbrezje (Fortified Church)
Contact:	Church caretaker Janko Jeglic matijovc@siol.net
What we saw?	Stations of the Cross, Church, Altars, Frescos,...
Plans for future:	Integration of tourism with sacral heritage
Picture:	

¹ Information about the Region comes after: <http://www.slovenia.info>



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Location:	Brezje (Basilica of St. Mary Help of Christians)
Contact:	Father Robert Bahčič robert.bahcic@rkc.si
What we saw?	Museum of Christmas crib, Basilica, Altars, Frescos, Gift shop,...
Plans for future:	Arrangement of outdoor space for Masses and prayers
Picture:	

Location:	Bled (Church of the Mother of God on the Lake)
Contact:	Priest Janez Ferkolj janez.ferkolj@rkc.si
What we saw?	Southern Stone Steps, Bell Tower with a View, The Wishing Bell, Altars, Frescos, Shop Potičnica,...
Plans for future:	Arrangement of surroundings and renewal of the buildings on island
Picture:	



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Location:	Sveti Duh (Ursuline convent)
Contact:	Sister Judita Mihelčič judita.mihelcic@rkc.si
What we saw?	Halls, Chat rooms, Chapels, Rooms,...
Plans for future:	Development of new programs for people and groups, collaboration on different projects with other countries
Picture:	



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Location:	Adergas (Church of the Annunciation)
Contact:	Priest Slavko Kalan slavko.kalan@rkc.si
What we saw?	Church, Altars, Frescos,...
Plans for future:	promotion, collaboration with local people, development of new services,...
Picture:	



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Section A: Socio-Economic Background

a) Key Findings

Gorenjska is a Slovenian region with very diverse cultural landscape, which is made of amazing natural landscapes (dominated by Alps) and cultural heritage resources (small historic towns with traditional spatial planning and buildings).

They are accompanied by tourist infrastructure (hotels, gastronomy, spa & wellness) and recreation (possibility of doing various sport activities). Because of this tourism is becoming a dominating sector of national economy of Slovenia with increasing importance, which is visited by many foreign tourists (mainly from Italy, Austria and Germany). The development of tourism sector is accompanied by well build and all the time developed infrastructure (hotels and gastronomy). A great importance is given to traditional products, mechanisms of their promotion and distribution. What is furthermore remarkable is the positive commitment of the churches and parishes to local tourism; the best practice example is the church of Bled island, that is very well prepared (spiritually and economically spoken) and open for tourists from all over the world.

b) Recommendations

– The richness of small centers of cultural heritage leads us to development of better system which would like them (e.g. guides, folders presenting local attractions connected with visible communication routes), which would help to reach an effect of synergy, both in the promotional dimension and also from cultural perspective. A good way for building such a system/network is obviously the creation of a cultural route, which links single attractions in bigger structures with broader scope. The above mentioned system should be based on clear rules, including the certification process, based on authenticity of the objects (different classes of objects), their accessibility (e.g. presence of the guide), availability of other services of tourists (not only in the cultural heritage objects, but also in its surroundings).



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– There is a necessity for better signposting of cultural attractions that would be placed on the roads, and also for broader information for tourists (e.g. tables with maps of micro regions which would show also neighbor objects/places). At the moment there are not enough brochures and information leaflets, especially in English. It would be good to create a set of information materials for all of those objects.

– We were impressed by the ability to create modern tourist products. E.g. Bled, where was created a very complex tourist offer: the tourists are coming to the island by a special boat, then they can visit the church and the tower, and after they can visit the local shop and café, where they can taste local products and buy locally made handicraft products. However it seems that the potential of those places could be used better. Those places could become 'anchors' on the maps of local heritage and then they could be used as a main promotion tools of the whole region indicating at the same time unique character of other small towns and objects settled around. It would be good to link them with nearby places and then 'sell' them to tourist as a 'one day' trip.

- The promotional material in various languages is sometimes missing due to lack of funds, so collaboration with local tourist agencies and/ or ministry of tourism is recommended and also better appearance on the internet- this could be managed by the THETRIS project partners concerning the main sights of the church-route.

Slovenia with its favorable geographic location and a variety of natural conditions and cultural points of interest provides excellent opportunities for the development of tourist activity. Especially in the area of religious tourism, Slovenia has a huge potential for development because it is known for its churches, chapels and character that is found on every hill. We propose that the organization of the "pilgrimage" tourism would improve with closer involvement with other cities and regions and with similar cultural organizations. Priority is to integrate local cultural institutions, locations, and vendor or



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carrier of cultural tourism of sacred heritage. The Slovenian Tourism Organisation as one of the most important national tourist organizations , which is responsible for the design and implementation of the promotion of the country as a tourist destination in Slovenia and abroad, should include in its Program offering the pilgrimage and religious travel intensive.

It must be cultural tourism products are marketed, where the visit of Slovenia and the neighboring countries should be included. In the immediate vicinity are the most popular European cities like Venice, Budapest and Graz. Similarly, one should dedicate more attention to maintain old skills related to people and traditions of arts and crafts in this area, as some Slovenian churches are known for their artistic values.

For larger events like anniversaries and religious holidays should be organized exhibitions along the church route, which attract a large number of domestic and foreign visitors . In addition, we propose a special promotion of the Slovenian cultural heritage , with a focus on religious culture. Especially travel agencies should incorporate more cultural arrangements and religious content in their offerings. This would require more advertising and a powerful advertising medium. The catalogue should combine the information of travel agencies , cultural and religious institutions , gas stations and be available in tourist information offices.



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Section B: Routes and Accessibility

a) Key Findings

Through the region there are passing many well-built and preserved roads. The character of this infrastructure is determined by the mountains dominating the landscape. The objects included in the THETRIS route are settled quite close to each other and they are easily reachable. The hosts of the objects are always ready to host tourists, they are friendly and easy-going, also most of the objects have prepared presentations about their local heritage in form of interesting exhibitions (it was noted that a big importance is given to the past, presentation of old iconography and photos).

The objects visited during the peer review are containing high historical and artistic value. They are presenting a big diversity when it comes to settlement, surroundings and accompanying infrastructure – though all of them present at the same time high level of accessibility and are prepared for hosting tourists.

When it comes to professionalism in management of modern tourism products we have no doubts that Bled is a best practice: with its unique church of St. Martin on the island (Blejski Otok). This historic object is surrounded with tourism infrastructure which was made to serve tourists coming to the island. It is a perfect example on how to create a brand in tourism, that is built consequently with an aware choice of components creating the complementary offer. An opposite character has a Sanctuary in Brezje. The traditional pilgrimage center for obvious reasons is mainly a center for religious cult. But it has also some tourism offer, which guarantees a basic comfort for tourists (gastronomy, lavatories), exposition which shows gifts given to the Sanctuary (it lacks only with historical exposition) and shopping points (souvenirs and devotional articles).

In this way not only the safety of the object is ensured and its full accessibility, but also the level of services available for tourists was increased (the owner of the farm runs an agro tourism activity and sells its own regional products).



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It is worth underlining that tourists coming to Gorenjska have a chance to participate in various forms of presentation of local cultural heritage: in the region there are many small centers with valuable monuments; however the tourism flow of course concentrates in bigger places, such as:

- Radovljica – the historical town, which history goes back to middle ages, with a castle, traditional buildings and many museums (e.g. a unique Museum of Beekeeping) and galleries
- Skofja Loka – the historical town with very well preserved spatial arrangement and traditional buildings, castle and Capuchins monastery. With the monastery there is connected very big and well known event: Skofja Loka Passion Play.
- Kranj – a quite big city, comparing with other cities in Slovenia, with historical buildings and rich offer of museums and galleries presenting local cultural heritage and with rich cultural offer. There is a theatre in the city and there are organized many cultural events, especially in summer time.

b) Recommendations

There was noticed a lack of promotional materials on the same quality level, prepared in similar graphic style that would present all the objects. It is important to prepare those materials in various language versions, so they could be available for tourists coming from different places.

Although many places impressed us with their link to traditions and past, it seems that it would be good to prepare some visually attractive exhibitions presenting the past of the monuments, that would explain the history of the place and meanings of certain traditions.

The visual information system for tourists needs to be improved, that would make the objects more accessible for tourists. Often there is no barrier free access for wheelchair-drivers etc. it is important to give the information about the opening hours, available services and prices.



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Section C: Heritage & Conservation

a) Key Findings

Gorenskaja impresses with the richness of its cultural heritage. In the region there are institutions concentrated on preservation and conservation of cultural heritage, but as it was found out during the visit in the local center in Kranj, there is a huge lack of finances for this sector in Slovenia. It is an ambivalent situation: on the one hand historical heritage should be protected and certified, on the other hand the owners of the cultural heritage fear the costs that are related with the professional conservation and protection of the buildings.

On some objects we could see a characteristic white-blue sign indicating that those objects are of historical value, and under it an information board about the past of the object, but it is not a coherent system. The level of preservation of the objects depends of the localization: the objects settled in most important tourist places (Bled) or visited by pilgrims (Brezje) are in very good shape. But the objects placed in more isolated locations are out of constant protection and care, but they receive only ad hoc help (which is caused by the above mentioned Slovenian financial system for monuments).

b) Recommendations

Creation of route linking selected objects should facilitate application for EU funding dedicated to development of infrastructure and conservation of cultural heritage offered as a tourism attraction.

There should be more importance placed on the elaboration of professional information folders (available in English) presenting history of monuments placed outside of main tourist trails. About the immaterial cultural heritage we did not find a lot of written information, but we were told about old traditions, so it would be nice to focus more on the awareness-raising about this topic as well.



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Section D: Identity and Local Commitment

a) Key Findings

People living in Gorenskaja are very friendly and easy-going; they present a clear attitude towards respect and link to local cultural heritage (tangible and intangible). We could also observe many local initiatives connected with presentation, creative reception (galleries) of local heritage, priceless in this dimension is also the broad and rich offer of various regional products.

The church in Podbrezje is of unique character. The church that is located there The picturesque fortified Tabor Church on a rock above the motorway from Ljubljana to the Karawanken Tunnel. The local farmer, whose farm is located just next to the church is taking care of it. The farmer is also a member of local Parish Council and he is actively involved in preservation of that church. Some years ago he decided to link his activities towards preservation of the church with the activities that he runs on his apple farm. On the farm apart from the obvious apple production the is an agro tourism. The farmer decided to improve his touristic offer and link the church with the farm: the tourists coming to his premises may also visit the fortified church as one of the local attractions. Such solution can be with no doubts treated as a 'good practice' for cultural heritage objects in small villages in other regions in Europe.

b) Recommendations

From the point of view of tourists it would be great to prepare information folders presenting not only local cultural heritage products but also to indicate places where they could try and purchase them. At the moment most of the information are in Slovenian language or they present only the most important touristic attractions, while it would be useful to focus also on smaller and less-known places. Maybe useful would be also a certification system for the places with the highest value (authenticity) and those which



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provide the bigger number of services for tourists. This could be another motivation factor for the local people in order to develop business ideas related to the cultural heritage, which is an important part of a sustainable valorization strategy after the lifetime of the THETRIS-project. Such an initiative should be started by the local government (and financed from public money), but later, when local entrepreneurs would see the benefits coming from that they would be interested in participating in the initiative (also financially).

Also, in order to increase the awareness of local people about the value of cultural heritage they have it is important to organize meeting with them and to show them the possible ways for development. Also such an approach should be undertaken during the educational activities for children and youth, so they could get interested in heritage industries in future.



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Good practices – branded tourist product



Žródlo: slovenia.info



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Recommended literature related to religious tourism in Slovenia:

1. Dolenc, Jože. 1987. Slovenski romar (Slowenischer Pilger). Celje: Mohorjeva družba.
2. Dolinar, France. 1996. Romanja kot oblika verskega turizma.
3. Blanka, Ravnikar. 2005. Vkljuèevanje romarskega turizma v kulturno turistièno ponudbo Slovenije. Diplomaska naloga.
4. Maja, Šorn. 2009. Romanje in romarska središèa v Sloveniji. Diplomsko delo.
5. Marijina romarska pot. Zbornik 2011. Kozjanski park v okviru projekta Marijina romarska pot.
6. Romarski vodnik. Emina romarska pot. 2007. Kozjanski park v okviru projekta Emina romarska pot.
7. http://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seznam_osrednjih_romarskih_sredi%C5%A1%C4%8D_v_Sloveniji
8. Dežman, Jože. 1999. Mariji: brezjanski romarji. Radovljica: Skriptorij KA.
9. Iskalci izgubljenega raja, Barbara Trnovec, èlanek Dnevnik, 11.8.2007
10. Jubilejno Jakobovo leto, Radio Ognjišèe, Nataša Lièen, èlanek 5.3.2012.
11. Romanja, Revija Družina, èlanek,