



**WaVE**  
Interreg Europe



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

# Action Plan

**Ister-Granum European  
Grouping of Territorial  
Cooperation (HU)**

## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

**Project:**

WaVE - WAter-linked heritage Valorization by developing an Ecosystemic approach

**Partner organisation:**

Ister-Granum European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (*EGTC is an European legal instrument designed to facilitate and promote cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation.*)

**Country:**

Hungary

**NUTS2 region:**

Közép-Dunántúl

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The Action Plan aims to impact: European Territorial Cooperation programme

## 2. BASELINE SITUATION IN THE REGION

### A. MAIN FEATURES AND ENVISAGED IMPROVEMENT OF THE POLICY INSTRUMENT

#### Policy instrument(s) addressed:

Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme 2021-27

According to the Application Form, the targeted policy instrument by PP4 in WaVE is the Slovakia-Hungary INTERREG V-A programme (HU-SK) 2014-20. As its programming period closed in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of phase 1, it was concluded that unfortunately there was no opportunity to target the HU-SK 2014-20 program. However, opportunities emerged to influence the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme 2021-27 through 3 official channels:

- 1) The Managing Authority of the Programme is operating at the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, where a separate department is working on the cross-border developments. The Ister-Granum EGTC is basically an outsourced unit of this department having the task to follow and boost cross-border developments in the region. It means that there is a very intensive working relationship and strong cooperation with the Managing Authority which allows us to consult with them the suggestions stemming from the conclusion of the pilot.
- 2) The content of the Programme and the calls are elaborated by the Managing Authority but the final decisions are made by the Monitoring Committee of the Programme. Ister-Granum EGTC is member of this committee, the Managing Authority itself delegated the EGTC to the Committee. However, the EGTC has only an advisory role, not having right to vote. The right for voting is at the councils of the counties of the Programme area. The HU-SK Programme 2021-2027 and the new calls will be discussed during Monitoring Committee meetings where Ister-Granum EGTC can share the suggestions regarding the improvements of the TAPE type of measure.
- 3) Finally, Ister-Granum EGTC is member of a cross-border organization called CESCO (Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives). The experts of this organization were in charge of elaborating the Territorial Analyses of the programme area of the Interreg Programme 2021-2027 in Hungary and Slovak Republic. Ister-Granum EGTC as member of this organization also contributed to the analyses which include suggestions for the Managing Authority how, along which priority areas the new Programme should be developed. Even though this analysis has been already finalized, CESCO will be kept involved in the development of the Programme in an advisory role, so as the EGTC as member of CESCO.

#### Institution responsible for addressed policy(ies):

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

#### Proposed self-defined performance indicator(s):

- a) Number of water-linked heritage projects receive fund.

- b) Interreg Europe pilot action implemented testing lessons learnt from partners

**Target value of the indicator(s):**

- a) at least 1 (possibly TAPE type of) project
- b) 1 pilot

**Evaluation of the current operation of the policy(ies):**

The addressed policy instrument is the INTERREG V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme which is listed among the 60 cross-border European Territorial Cooperation programmes of the EU's Cohesion Policy (CP). Similarly to other CBC programmes, the INTERREG V-A SK HU provides a frame for cross-border cooperation.

The programme area covers the adjacent NUTS III level territorial units of the two neighbouring countries including the entire territory of the Ister-Granum Euroregion.

Influence capacity of Ister-Granum EGTC

The Managing Authority of the programme is operating at the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the National Authority is the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic. The Monitoring Committee (MC) includes the representatives of the relevant NUTS III level municipalities and ministries affected by the priorities of the CP. The representative of the EGTCs located along the shared border is also a member of the MC with observer status. Ister-Granum EGTC can influence the shaping of the programme through this representative. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade operates the Hungarian EGTC platform convened three times a year. The representatives of the Managing Authority are regular participants of these professional events where the groupings are informed on the most recent achievements and have the opportunity to make recommendations on programme implementation. Finally, the next Slovakia-Hungary INTERREG-A programme is in preparation with the involvement of local and regional stakeholders, in compliance with the partnership principles of the draft CPR Regulation and the Code of conduct on partnership (2014).

Evaluation of the programme

The programme is realised by joint projects of Slovak and Hungarian beneficiaries whose responsibility is to create project partnerships, to name the Lead Beneficiary of the project, and to implement it in a joint (integrated) way. The programme's specific feature is its cross-border character what means that the interventions have to have a clear cross-border character:

- the projects should not be implemented as separated measures: the interventions of one side of the border should be impossible to realise without the implementation of the interventions on the other side;
- the projects have to be designed, realised, staffed and financed jointly by the partners coming from different sides of the border;
- the results of the projects should have a real cross-border character (i.e. one joint cross-border cycle path instead of two cycle paths in the neighbouring countries; integrated cross-border services instead of the development of parallel services along the border, etc.).

However, in reality, the last criterion is met very rarely. This can be a point where WaVE can make positive influence on the policy by developing integrated and real cross-border projects based on the actions in the action plan developed jointly with stakeholders coming from both sides of the border. The realisation of the actions would create an integrated cross-border narrative built around the water and water-related cultural and natural heritage sites, which in turn then could be used as a basis for closer cross-border cooperation which is the main aim of the Programme.

### Evaluation of the measures

The cross-border programmes are realised within quite strictly designed frames. The Common Provision Regulation (CPR), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) Regulations define the room for manoeuvring. Within these frames, the Slovakia-Hungary INTERREG V. A programme represents one of the most innovative cooperation programmes by applying solutions considered as models:

- like the Territorial Action Plans (TAPE) integrating several synergic projects;
- or the management of the small project fund through two EGTCs;
- and the involvement of the EGTCs in the work of the Monitoring Committee.

Regarding the TAPE solution, based both on the lessons learnt from partners and the experiences of the previous programming period's TAPE projects, Ister-Granum concluded that changes would be necessary in the design and implementation of TAPes.

### Evaluation of the calls

Water-based heritage management is addressed by the PA1 (Nature and culture) of the SK-HU 2014-20 Program, within the framework of the Specific Objective (SO) 11: "To increase the attractiveness of the border area". Under PA1, a few projects were selected for funding related to water-based cultural heritage in the last years, therefore calls were open to support water related heritage valorisation. However, both the quantity and the quality of these projects should be improved.

## **Change to be achieved in the addressed policy(ies):**

### **Improving the management of the policy**

So far, we have identified some necessary policy changes to be implemented in the TAPE type of measure of the new SK-HU Programme:

TAPE (Territorial Action Plan for Employment) was developed in 2014 as a new measure of the Slovakia-Hungary INTERREG V-A programme. This novel solution aims to help the implementation of cross-border integrated developments by bringing actors of the two sides of the border together to jointly work out an integrated plan with the maximum of 8 projects and with the aim of improving employment situation and cross-border labour mobility. This measure – which is identified as a good practice by the Interact Secretariat – makes it possible that instead of one-off, random developments, the cross-border regions can work together in the long run along well-defined strategic goals.

In line with the two-step application procedure, applicants need to submit a comprehensive development plan (TAPE) describing their main objectives and activities. After the selection of the best TAPes is made, the project promoters are invited to divide and detail their ideas into 3-8 project proposals complementing or strengthening each other. One of the projects has to be dedicated to coordination and communication activities related to the implementation of the projects by the project partners within a 4-year period. Due to the thematic focus of the TAPE, besides public authorities, EGTCs and NGOs, SMEs seated in the particular border area are also eligible for ERDF funding. The thematic focus of the action plans was quite diverse, including the branding of local products, setting-up short supply chains, development of SMEs as suppliers of multinational companies, SME and educational developments in the field of metal-processing, etc.

According to the latest communication of the MA, if not exactly TAPE then a TAPE-type of measure is planned to be applied also in the new Programme.

Based on the lessons learnt from partners in WaVE and the experiences of the MA, it was concluded that with a view to implementing integrated heritage valorisation projects where the development of separate heritage sites could not make significant changes in the region, it is necessary:

- enhance the participatory aspect of the tool - redesign the partnership structure of TAPE projects to involve more stakeholders in the design and implementation from both sides of the border,
- to prolong and deepen the preparation phase of TAPes, therefore more time should be provided for planning the Territorial Action Plans making a well-elaborated document based on thorough research and having strong commitment from stakeholders' side. It might require the prolongation of the action plan design phase and the eligibility of preparation cost for this period.

### **New project type of change**

Besides making these changes in the TAPE measure, Ister-Granum EGTC plans to submit at least one Territorial Action Plan (TAPE project) targeting water-based cultural heritage valorisation as Lead Partner, based on the lessons learnt from WaVE.

## B. BASELINE SITUATION AND VISION BASED ON THE REGIONAL STATUS QUO

### STARTING POINT

In the RSQ, jointly with stakeholders, water related heritage sites of the Euroregion have been identified and presented.

The heritage sites and values were grouped into 3 themes:



Figure 1. Map of the water-related heritage sites of the region identified in the RSQ – Source: RSQ

#### 1) The Face of Water

The heritage sites grouped under the first theme refer to the humanised representation of water as a natural resource. These are urban riversides bearing the traces of time, different human generations' interventions shaping the cultural landscape, re-designing the relationship of these generations with water. The related project plans contain the further development of riverside promenades, esplanades in 3 settlements in the region: Esztergom, Štúrovo and Szob.

The development of the three promenades envisages the creation of modern and friendly environment along the riverside. In the case of Szob, the interventions include the completion of a sport hall, the construction of a beach, a port for pleasure boats and the extension of the narrow-gauge railway until the port. This way, the municipality intends to create a cultivated

urban space attracting dwellers and tourists. However, there are no ready official plans, it is still in the idea formation phase regardless of the intention to complete the realization on the short run (1-3 years).

In Esztergom the main emphasis is put on creating a recreational area where local, small communities can meet and interact and thus the area would be planned to serve these functions with providing space for recreational events. The interventions are in the planning phase, the development concept and the feasibility study are ready, it is expected to be realised in the short term.



Figure 2. The promenade in Esztergom (HU) – source: RSQ

The third promenade, the one in Štúrovo is in a better state as it was redeveloped in 2007. However, following the interventions its function would be extended with the cultural aspects as it would be more closely linked to the Bridge Guard project (included in the WaVE

catalogue of good practices: <http://www.interregeurope.eu/wave/library/#folder=2689>). This would also mean infrastructural improvements, since with the building of the bridge guard's house also a leading pathway going down to the river can be constructed providing accessibility for cyclists, wheelchair users or families with small children in prams. The state of the intervention is ready to invest as the technical plans are available, consequently the time frame is set to be short term (1-3 years).

## 2) The Force of Water

While the first theme reflects water as the component of cultural landscape, the second one concentrates on the cultural representation of the forging and destroying power of water. Here, water is considered as an energy source, while the heritage sites unfold the positive and negative role of water. One group of the heritage sites includes mills in Nagyörzsöny, Zalaba and Sikenčka, all in need of reconstruction and revitalisation.

For the renovation of the water mill in Nagyörzsöny technical plans are already available that could be carried out in 4-6 years. If the original stone wheel could be set into motion again (for which the creek also needs to be adjusted) it would serve as a unique, interactive exhibition room where visitors can follow the whole grinding process from the start to the end with taking a small portion of flour with them as a souvenir at the end. The mill was privately owned, but due to the inspiration of WaVE, the Municipality recently bought it to implement developments.



*Figure 3. Water mill in Nagyörzsöny (HU)*

The watermill in Zalaba could be utilised as an exhibition and event centre with the potential modernisation through which the mill would generate its own electricity. The watermill in Sikenčka could serve the needs of rural tourism and cultural events by historic usage of the building will be presented through a permanent exhibition. In either case, the plans are still missing, and in case of Sikenčka the mill is privately owned.



*Figure 4. Water mill in Sikenička (SK)*

Beside mills, the Miller Street in Esztergom has heritage value having ideas about creating an exhibition presenting the streets past. Since the idea can be implemented only after the construction of the flood protecting dam and the promenade, its realisation is more likely on the long run (over 6 years).



*Figure 5. The Millers' street in Esztergom (HU) – source: RSQ*

The renaissance water machine in Esztergom in some sense is an odd-one-out since it is an already completed development. Nevertheless, its inclusion to the present narrative and thematic route is still something that needs to be outlined.



Figure 6. The renaissance water machine in Esztergom (HU) – source: RSQ

Finally, the historic flood signs in Esztergom and Štúrovo have significant but not well-known heritage value. Due to the nature of this heritage its redesign could be completed in short term.



Figure 7. Historic flood signs in Esztergom (HU) – source: RSQ

### 3) The Spirit of Water

The third theme focuses on the water-related spiritual products of the historic times. The central component is the unique Danube Museum in Esztergom designed to present this multifaceted heritage and to offer an encyclopaedic synthesis on the region's heritage.



Figure 8. Exhibition in the Danube Museum in Esztergom (HU) – source: RSQ

The second dimension of this theme relates to the heritage of the local people's way of life centred around water (fishing, reed cutting, shipping, etc.) which are presented in different parts of the Euroregion. Finally, the third dimension is represented by those festivals and spiritual events (Szikince Festival, Dim Lamp carnival, Aqua Phone festival) that are connected to the water.



Figure 8. AquaPhone performances – source: RSQ



Figure 9. Dim lamp water carnival in Esztergom in 2016 – source: RSQ

These water-related heritages grouped around the three themes were the bases of the work started in WaVE. Thanks to the pilot action several other heritages managed to be discovered and presented in the region.

## VISION

Based on the RSQ, the conclusions of the stakeholder meetings and meetings with partners, Ister-Granum formulated their vision statement:

*By 2030 the water-related heritage sites of the Ister-Granum Euroregion will become tools for recuperating people's (including local people and visitors') relationship with water.*



Figure 10. Land cover of the Ister-Granum region source: RSQ

## Justification for the vision

Water is present in the daily life of local people in the region even if a conscious reflection is missing. The biggest settlements locate next to the water (see the map above); country border is represented by water bodies (River Danube and Ipoly); several local traditional professions are related to water; significant country level flood management investments are implemented in the region; legends, stories, gastronomy all connected to water as intangible heritage. Even though people are traditionally connected to water with several threads, the tendency of losing connection with nature in general resulted in a missing consciousness about the importance of water in life and the values of water related heritages which symbolize this strong connection people used to have with water.

Through the implementation of the actions, we plan to discover and revitalize water-related cultural heritage sites in an integrated way and with the active involvement of several actors in the region. Following, strong efforts are dedicated to present and communicate these sites

and values to local people and visitors. Therefore, our specific objectives to realise the vision are:

- To make tools available for local people to discover water related heritage; in this way people can get to know very well their own heritage and its value, and consequently they can contribute to its preservation and protection;
- To make visitors and tourists attracted by the water-related heritage of the region even in the less visited part of the Euroregion (for instance in the Ipoly area) and able to understand the values of this heritage; consequently, they will learn to respect and preserve it;
- To make private enterprises participate in the maintenance of the heritage sites to make the implemented investments economically sustainable.

As a result, water linked heritages will become one of the vectors for wider transformation of the Euroregion into an environmentally and economically sustainable region, with a strong local identity built on heritage values.

The most relevant strategic document in this regard is the SK-HU INTERREG Programme 2021-27 which is going to provide funds for implementing our vision in the next 7+3 years.

## STRATEGY TO REALISE THE VISION

This vision will be achieved by implementing projects on storytelling, discovering, and promoting intangible heritage and by creating new rural tourism products with the connection of redesigned sites. In particular, historical values and landscape values will be used as a key driver of change.

As a first step of reaching our goals we have implemented a pilot action in phase 1 of WaVE and designed two other actions to be implemented in phase 2:

**PILOT ACTION:** Implementation of a research identifying tangible and intangible water-related heritages with a special focus on traditional water-related occupations and legends; and create thematic routes along these heritages applying storytelling.

**ACTION 1:** Improve the governance of the TAPE type of measure of the SK-HU CBC Program 2021-27

**ACTION 2:** Implementation of a scaled-up version of the pilot action completed by revitalisation or establishment of heritage sites

The concept of the pilot action is to systematically discover tangible and intangible heritage in the region by the practices learnt from the project partners and create thematic routes along heritage sites providing a strong communication campaign and promotion for the routes. Based on the pilot action, 2 actions were created: Action 1 is going to be implemented based on the pilot conclusions regarding the TAPE measure. While action 2 will be the extended version of the pilot into an integrated heritage valorisation project also including investment type of activities.

### 3. PILOT ACTION - Implementation of a research identifying tangible and intangible water-related heritages with a special focus on traditional water-related occupations and legends; and creating thematic routes along these heritage sites applying storytelling.

#### ORIGINAL GOOD PRACTICES AND TRANSFER JOURNEY OF THE GOOD PRACTICE

Due to the pandemic situation, the knowledge exchange in WaVE was implemented mainly online which resulted in a continuously intensive and focused work. By the 1<sup>st</sup> IKES meeting organised at the beginning of April 2020, all partners identified their good practices so we could get familiar with these practices during the 3-day long meeting. Still, it was not enough for the deep understanding of the practices, so we organised bilateral online meetings in April – May 2020 with Ravenna and Alicante whose practices were the most interesting for us. During these 2-hour meetings we could ask all our questions, understand better the success factor of the practices, we could directly ask even the invited stakeholder of Ravenna about a specific practice. Based on these meetings, we concluded several lessons learnt in our 1<sup>st</sup> draft action plan by July 2020. In June 2020, the main concept of our action plan was presented to our stakeholders during an online meeting. Following the meeting, all the targeted heritage sites and their owners were visited and interviewed which provided a very strong input for the 1<sup>st</sup> draft action plan. During the IKES2 online meeting in September 2020 we managed to further deepen our knowledge about partners' practices through the site visit videos partners prepared about their good practice and targeted heritage sites. Finally, in October 2020 we organised a peer review meeting addressing only the action plan of Ister-Granum where partners gave us the suggestion to focus on the 1<sup>st</sup> action of our action plan: discovering intangible heritages and apply storytelling as a tool for developing thematic routes, which has great, and so far, unexploited potential in the region of Ister-Granum. Thanks to the knowledge exchange process by January 2021, we managed to submit a pilot application which was approved, thus the testing of the lessons learnt could be started in March-April 2021 in the frame of a pilot action.

This pilot is based on the following lessons learnt from partners:

The main concept of the pilot was learnt from **the Blue routes** <sup>1</sup>**good practice of PP2- Alicante** which we will adapt and test. Like Blue routes, we have set up an expert panel to research the heritage values and create a heritage evaluation system which will enable people (not experts) to understand the value of the heritage site they visit. The outcome of the pilot, as also in Blue routes, is a guide document published on the Ister-Granum website and updated regularly.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/3798/blue-routes-alicante-s-hydrogeological-heritage/>

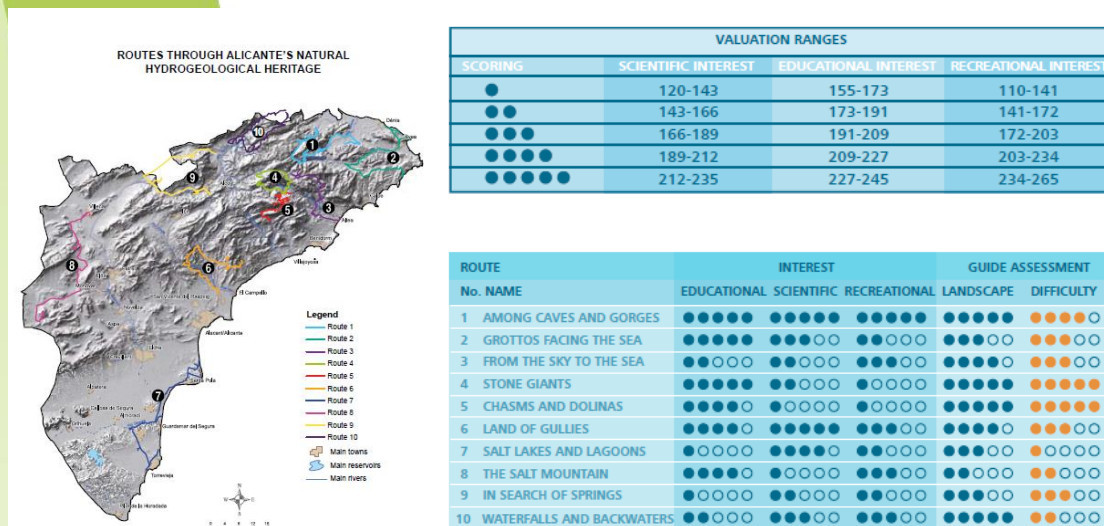


Figure 12. Route map and evaluation system of the Blue routes – source: Blue routes Guide

However, for the specific activities of the pilot, in the adaptation process of Blue routes we are going to apply also several lessons learnt from other partners:

Pilot activity 1: *Creating a **heritage inventory** with a special focus on **intangible heritage** collected through a **contest***

- Lessons learnt:** The idea of the contest was learnt from Ravenna, which had a **Cultural Covery** Central Europe Interreg project, in which a **video contest** was organised among children, who had to prepare a video about a tangible or intangible heritage (sites, legend, gastronomy, tradition). The method of collecting intangible heritage from civil society through a contest is going to be applied in our pilot. Another element of the **Cultural Covery** project was the **Ti racconto una cosa...** which is an initiative which organizes temporary exhibitions around topics related to intangible heritage. The exhibited objects and the related stories are donated by local people for the exhibition. This inspired us to not just look for tangible, but also to intangible heritage collected from inhabitants of the region.



Figure 12. Illustration of the Ti racconto una cosa...- source: ecomuseocervia.it

Pilot activity 2: **Videos about intangible heritage as traditional water-related professions and water-related legends.**

- **Lessons learnt:** For this activity we were significantly inspired by the **brabantremembers** practice of **Breda** where local people were interviewed who told stories about life during the world wars. The interviews were recorded, and videos were prepared and promoted on websites and through mobile applications.

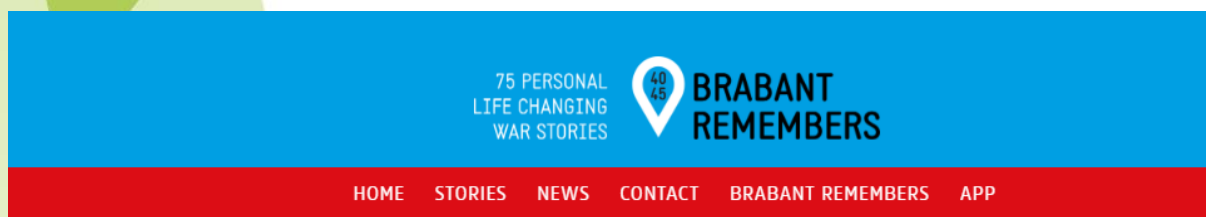


Figure 13. Logo of Brabant Remember - source: [www.brabantremembers.com](http://www.brabantremembers.com)

We plan to carry out interviews with local people having significant knowledge about legends and traditions about heritage being in thread of extinction. From the collected stories and memories, small videos will be created and published on the Ister-Granum EGTC website applying this Breda practice.

### Pilot activity 3. **KékUtak thematic routes** are created

- **Lessons learnt:** Beside the main idea learnt from Blue routes about creating thematic routes, we also learnt from Ravenna the **Immagina Cervia** mobile application, which is basically a tour guide application with a special character. Not the facts are presented about the sites, but personal stories of people who lived or worked at or around the heritage sites. In our routes, storytelling will have a special focus. We plan to design the routes in a way to tell stories as Ravenna did in the **Immagina Cervia** mobile application: not only pure facts about the sites.

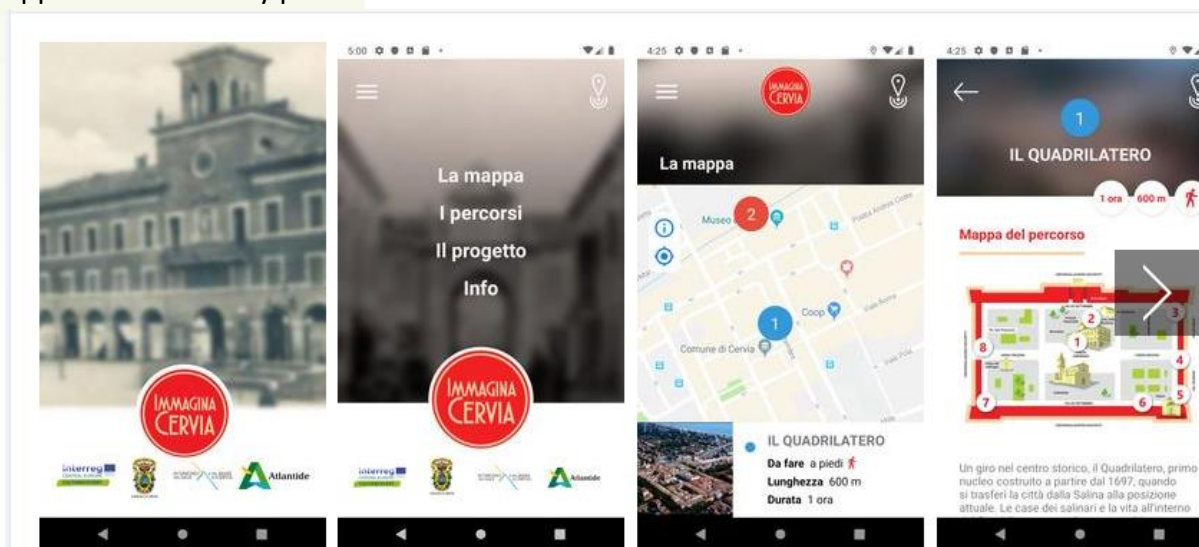


Figure 14. Printscreen of Immagina Cervia mobil app - source: *Immagina Cervia mobil app*

- We learnt from the **Arca Adriatica**<sup>2</sup> project of **Ravenna**, that for an integrated heritage valorisation project it is crucial to rely on local expertise, designing and implementing such project jointly.

The Arca Adriatica project of Ravenna is an integrated development project of the town of Cervia, where, based on the salt tradition and its built heritage, a complete urban regeneration project was implemented adapting to the new economic circumstances (tourism as a leader sector instead of salt production). In Arca Adriatica, a centre of excellence was set up which is a stakeholder group which participated in the development and implementation of the project.

We have set up our centre of excellence (or expert panel as so-called in the Blue routes) including local experts such as museum professionals, mill renovator experts, who are already active members of our LSG. Therefore, we relied on the locally available expertise when implementing our pilot action and developing integrated water-related heritage valorisation projects.

Besides, for the specific pilot activities, we also got inspiration from partners to improve the TAPE measure of HU-SK CBC, whose Programme will fund the extended version of the pilot:

- **Lessons learnt:** From **Breda** we learnt about the **Development in dialogue**<sup>3</sup> practice: Experience learned that strict protection of heritage is not always necessary. In general, most of the owners take good care of their heritage site. If they don't, it is mostly unintentional and because of a lack of knowledge on how to value and valorise the heritage they own. The focus thus should be on dialogue: providing knowledge that fits their needs and the needs of other stakeholders while preserving heritage values. This is what is called development in dialogue.

We realised that dialogue is necessary with civil society actors to develop the story together with stakeholders which provide the bases for an integrated heritage valorisation project(s), furthermore we need to work in dialogue with the private owners of the heritage sites (mills) we want to include into our project. Therefore, an extended partnership structure must be behind a successful TAPE project.

- **Lessons learnt:** From **Aarhus** we learnt about the huge investment of the **Uncovering of the River Aarhus**<sup>4</sup>. Parts of The River Aarhus was covered due to infrastructural changes between 1933-57. The decision to uncover and demolish the concrete road on top of the channelled river was initiated due to the desire of having better environmental and recreational surroundings in the historical centre of Aarhus.

We learnt about this practice that a long planning period was necessary for this investment, so we concluded for our case that we should also test long-term planning in our integrated project to reach success and real change in our region.

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<sup>2</sup><https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/3704/adriatico-mare-comune-the-adriatic-sea-a-shared-heritage/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/3683/development-in-dialogue/>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/3702/the-uncovering-of-the-river-aarhus-1992-2015/>

## ADAPTED GOOD PRACTICE - Action summary

The goal of the pilot action is to implement a research in selected settlements of the Ister-Granum region to collect tangible and intangible water-related heritage with a special focus on traditional water-related professions and legends; and create 5 thematic routes along selected heritage sites applying storytelling. The pilot was implemented on a small area, only for 15 settlements (from the 82 of the region) who have strong relation with water bodies and become committed to WaVE during the stakeholder meetings. The successful elements of the pilot will be extended to the whole region under the leadership of the Ister-Granum EGTC. Furthermore, the practice can be adapted by other regions of the HU-SK Program area.

The pilot was implemented under the leadership of Ister-Granum EGTC, with the active contribution of local experts and civil society. The pilot has 3 main activities:

### 1) Heritage inventory

In the first activity, a research has been conducted about water-related heritages of the 15 selected settlements. As the first step, a **secondary research** was conducted, meaning that the existing heritage documentation was collected and overviewed. This research was necessary as most of this documentation is about tangible/built heritage and it is not structured along a common methodology (like in the Blue routes where a new, common evaluation system was created and applied). Furthermore, these collections are outdated. Now it is necessary to establish an inventory with up-to-date information. Beside tangible heritage, the pilot has a special focus on intangible heritage, which is not yet systematically identified in the region. So, in the frame of the pilot, as primary research, a **contest** has been launched in local media inviting civil society to tell stories related to heritage and to give information about the not well-known, **intangible**, hidden heritage of the region. The video about the contest is available here: <http://istergranum.eu/2021/06/08/fedezd-fel-a-kornyek-legendait-es-kostold-meg-a-legfinomabb-helyi-termekeket/>



Figure 15. Starting view from the video

Based on the received information through the contest and following the secondary research, the selected settlements' sites have been visited; heritage documented on the spot; and interviews have been conducted with local experts, and story tellers.

The output of this activity is an **inventory of water-related heritage** and the related **stories** in a database format including a short description of the heritage and contact details of the owner of the heritage site. Furthermore, an online publication has been prepared as the summary of this inventory.

## 2) Videos about intangible heritage

Following, **12 short videos** were prepared in Hungarian with English subtitles about the discovered traditional water-related **livelihoods** and water-related **legends**. The videos are going to be published periodically on the recently improved website of Ister-Granum. The video links are included into the guide (3<sup>rd</sup> activity below) and presented in more detail and in a visual way, especially some of the stops of the thematic routes, which might not have physical representation due to its intangible character.

## 3) KékUtak (Blue routes in Hungarian)

Based on the inventory prepared in the first activity, **thematic routes** were created with intensive involvement of stakeholders. Three stakeholder meetings were organised where concrete routes are jointly created such as routes along mills and mill-related traditions. The storyline of the routes is generated from the collected stories of the inventory. Five routes were created which were described in an online publication, basically an **online guide** (like for the Blue routes) that was created.

The guide included information about the sites of the routes, also maps and other visual elements which helps the understanding of the value of the heritage sites. The guide will be published and regularly promoted on the website of Ister-Granum which is currently under development, funded by a HU-SK 2014-20 TAPE project. In this way, the pilot also contributes to the implementation of an existing HU-SK TAPE project, while this project provides a platform for the dissemination of the pilot outputs.

Maps from the online guide was also printed and distributed in a limited edition in a **leaflet** format. Moreover, for two from the five routes, **information boards** were placed to share information from the guide and direct visitors to visit the online guide and discover other routes of the region.

The successful elements of the pilot will be extended to all the 82 settlements of the region developing an **integrated water-related heritage valorisation project** completed also through the investment of activities to renovate the heritage sites. The project planned to be submitted to the SK-HU CBC Programme 21-27 by the leadership of Ister-Granum EGTC and in partnership with the stakeholder settlements.

### **Beneficiaries and stakeholders involved**

Beside the good practices learnt from partners, the pilot was also developed based on the inputs and suggestions of the LSG members who expressed their interest both during the LSG meetings and through bilateral consultations for a research on the tangible, but, especially, on the intangible heritage and an integrated heritage valorisation project.

The most direct beneficiaries of the pilot are the 15 selected municipalities which are LSG members in WaVE, such as the Municipality of Zalaba, owner of the Zalaba water-mill, the Municipality of Nagybörzsöny, key decision maker in the development of Nagybörzsöny mill, the Municipality of Stúrovo, host of the Bridge Guard and Aquaphone, the Municipality of Esztergom, host of the Danube Museum and owner of several historical water related heritage sites; and the Municipality of Karva, which has already implemented water-related heritage investments.

The selected municipalities were especially motivated to pilot these activities, as most of them are small villages of the region's rural areas. In these villages, most of their planned development projects address rural, slow, sport and gastro tourism. It is key for them to valorise their heritage for the purpose of attracting tourists.

As the Euroregion locates between two capital cities, Bratislava and Budapest, tourism has been already an important economic sector. National level infrastructure developments also support this sector by building cross-border cycling roads and cycling bridges connecting more and more villages into the tourism flow. However, nowadays tourists are still concentrated in specific destinations of the region, while it is necessary to attract tourists to the less visited rural areas. At the same time, the attractiveness of less visited areas is increasing nowadays due to the pandemic. The pilot could exploit the opportunity of this period and provide new tourism offer for visitors who are more willing to discover places off the beaten path.

Therefore, it is expected that the inhabitants of the selected settlements, including tourism entrepreneurs and service providers will benefit from the pilot project, as well as tourists coming to visit the region.

Moreover, the different kind of local experts benefitted from it working in the pilot implementation increasing their knowledge and improving their expertise on the field of water-related heritage such as an expert of water mills, the communication manager and the director of the Danube Museum; the director of Kultúrne združenie Štúrovo a okolie - Párkány és Vidéke Kulturális Társulás, who is the owner of Bridge Guard and Aqua Phone project, the representative of CESCO, an organisation which is responsible for preparing the draft of SK-HU 2021-2028.

If the pilot project's practice is successful, it can be applied by other cross-border areas where such comprehensive research and integrated valorisation of heritage is currently missing, even though the main goal of the cross-border policy instruments is to boost integrated cross border projects also on the field of heritage.

## PILOT ACTION STEPS

### Action steps

#### 1) Heritage inventory

In the 1<sup>st</sup> activity a research has been conducted about water-related heritage in the 15 selected settlements.

1.1. Expert panel set up: An external expert was contracted to lead and implement the research and for the preparation of the inventory. Other local experts were also identified and contacted, and a meeting was organised to support the work on the inventory.

Timeframe: At the beginning of the pilot, in March-April, 2021.

1.2. A secondary research was conducted by the external expert with the support of the Ister-Granum staff, and the expert panel. The existing heritage documentation was collected from the municipalities of the 15 settlements, to be evaluated and included into an excel database.

Timeframe: From middle of March to the end of July, 2021

1.3. A primer research was conducted: a contest was launched in local media by the Ister-Granum staff, inviting civil society to tell stories about and related to heritage sites and give information about not well-known intangible, hidden heritage of the region. For intangible heritage, we are especially looking for water-related occupations in danger of extinction, such as reed cutting, shipping, gold mining, miller traditions, as well as water-related legends and traditions. To launch and promote the contest a short video has been prepared which explains the details of the contest. It has been displayed in local media.

Timeframe: May, 2021

- 1.4. Based on the received information through the contest and following the secondary research, the selected settlements' sites were visited, heritage documented on the spot, and interviews conducted with local experts and story tellers.

Timeframe: June-August, 2021

- 1.5. The outcomes of the above research activities were included into the excel database and summarised in an online publication.

Timeframe: By the end of September, 2021

## **2) Videos about intangible heritage**

- 2.1 Twelve short videos, forming a video series, were prepared in Hungarian with English subtitles about the identified traditional water-related occupations and water-related legends. The videos are going to be published periodically on the website of Ister-Granum. The videos are connected to the KékUtak guide and present, in more detail and in a visual way, some of the stops of the routes which might not have physical representation on the sites due to their intangible character.

Timeframe: Created and published by the end of January 2022

## **3) KékUtak**

- 3.1. Two stakeholder meetings were organised to jointly create concrete routes, such as routes along mills and mill related traditions. The storyline of the routes was generated from the collected stories of the inventory.

Timeframe: In September, November 2021

- 3.2. Five routes were designed and described in an online publication, basically created as an online guide (like the Blureroutes). The guide includes information about the sites of the routes, also maps and other visual elements which helps the understanding of the value of the heritage. They are described in Hungarian, Slovakian and English. Timeframe: By the end of January 2022

- 3.3. The guide will be published and regularly promoted on the website of Ister-Granum, which is currently under development funded by a HU-SK TAPE project.

- 3.4. Route maps from the online guide were printed and distributed in a limited edition in a leaflet format. Timeframe: By the end of February 2022

- 3.5. In 2 of the 5 routes, information boards were placed to share information from the guide (through QR codes) and encourage visitors to open the guide online to discover other routes of the region. Timeframe: By the end of February 2022

## **4) Evaluation of the pilot activities**

- 4.1 Ister-Granum EGTC internally evaluated the quality of the produced materials (inventory, videos, guide, board, leaflet) selecting the ones which worth to be applied scaling up the pilot for the whole region; noting necessary modifications. Timeframe: By March 2022

- 4.2. One LSG meeting was organised to evaluate the results and identify the next steps in scaling up the pilot into an integrated heritage valorisation project. Timeframe: in January 2022
- 4.3. Collecting feedback from inhabitants, and tourists about the routes. Timeframe: by the end of the project.

| Action step  | Output(s)  | Timeframe  | Responsible person(s), organizations and stakeholders involved                                      | Strategy of the stakeholders' involvement  | Cost and Source of fund    |
|--|--|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| 1. HERITAGE INVENTORY  |  |  |   |  |                            |
| 1.1 Expert panel set up  | external expert contracted to lead and implement the research and for the preparation of the inventory | March-April, 2021                                | Ister-Granum EGTC   | -  | Pilot budget staff cost    |
| 1.2 Secondary research conducted   | heritage documentations included into an excel database  | From middle of March to the end of July, 2021    | Ister-Granum EGTC Expert responsible for the research 15 selected settlements                       | contacting the 15 settlements asking for online documentations   | Pilot budget external cost |
| 1.3 contest launched   | contest video stories collected from residents   | May, 2021  | Ister-Granum EGTC   | video published to invite inhabitants of the region to share water related stories                               | Pilot budget staff cost    |
| 1.4 Selected settlements' sites visited, heritage documented, interviews conducted | excel database and an online publication   | June-August, 2021                                | Expert responsible for the research 15 selected settlements   | selected settlements' sites visited, and interviews conducted with mayors, local experts, storytellers           | Pilot budget external cost |
| 1.5 heritage inventory created   |  | By the end of September, 2021                    | Expert responsible for the research   | -  | Pilot budget external cost |
| 2. VIDEOS ABOUT INTANGIBLE HERITAGE  |  |  |   |  |                            |
| 2.1 Short videos, forming a video series   | 12 videos about traditional water-related professions and water-related legends                        | Created and published by the end of January 2022 | Video maker expert team residents who published stories through the contest 15 selected settlements | Applying the content of the inventory collected from 15 settlements and the stories received through the contest | Pilot budget external cost |
| 3. KÉKUTAK   |  |  |   |  |                            |
| 3.1 LSG meetings organised   | 2 LSG meetings organised   | In September, November 2021                      | Ister-Granum EGTC Expert contracted for thematic routes pilot part                                  | LSG meetings to jointly create concrete routes   | Pilot budget staff and     |

|   |   |                                |  |   |                       |
|---|---|--------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------|
| 3.2 Online guidebook created  | 1 Online guidebook about the routes in Hungarian, Slovakian and English | By the end of January 2022     | expert contracted for thematic routes pilot part                   |   | external cost         |
| 3.3 Guide book published, promoted on the website of Ister-Granum       | publication of the guide on the website                                 | From January 2022 continuously | Ister-Granum EGTC  | publication of the guide on the website   | Pilot budget staff    |
| 3.4 Leaflet   | Route maps from the online guide printed                                | By the end of February 2022    | Ister-Granum EGTC expert contracted for thematic routes pilot part | leaflets distributed in a limited edition   | Pilot budget external |
| 3.5 Information boards  | In 2 of the 5 routes, information boards placed                         | By the end of February 2022    | Ister-Granum EGTC expert contracted for thematic routes pilot part | share information from the guide and encourage visitors to open the guide online to discover other routes of the region | Pilot budget external |
| <b>4. EVALUATION OF THE PILOT ACTIVITIES</b>                            |   |                                |  |   |                       |
| 4.1 Evaluate the quality of the produced pilot materials                | Notes about pilot conclusions   | March 2022                     | Ister-Granum EGTC  | conclusions applied for action 2  | Pilot budget staff    |
| 4.2 LSG meeting   | 1 LSG meeting organised   | January 2022                   | Ister-Granum EGTC  | sharing and evaluating pilot results with LSG members   |                       |
| 4.3 Collecting feedback from inhabitants, and tourists about the routes | Notes about pilot conclusions   | by the end of the project      | Ister-Granum EGTC  | not yet defined   |                       |

## RESULTS OF THE PILOT

All the above listed steps except steps have been implemented according to the plans. The online materials are available:

**Heritage inventory called *Our past is our future*:**

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/wave/library/#folder=3165>

**Videos:** [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCa\\_NkszUaDMhwhzaLLcPZ7w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCa_NkszUaDMhwhzaLLcPZ7w)

**Guidebook:** <https://wave.istergranum.eu/online-book/>

The guide is completed by online maps: <https://wave.istergranum.eu/online-map/>

Following the pilot implementation, based on the feedback of the stakeholders and experts involved in the pilot, we identified 8 specific recommendations for the TAPE tool of the policy instrument which we are going to share with the MA in the hope that they will consider them launching the first TAPE calls in 2022 Autumn:

Our recommendations can be grouped into two:

- a) As the programme has not been submitted yet to the Commission, the call for action plans is not expected to be published before autumn. Consequently, it is not known, which components of the TAPE will be transposed to the new, tourism-related AP model. Accordingly, the first set of recommendations targets those factors which should be kept.
- b) The second group of recommendations aims to identify modifications by which the tool can be further developed.

Factors to keep

- (1) Two-round selection procedure – The two-round selection procedure is a great added value of the tool because the partners are not obliged to allocate resources to the detailed development of interconnected projects from the very first moment of planning. First, a concept note is to be drafted. Once it is approved, the project owners can start developing their proposal with the certainty that the project has the green light.
- (2) Flexibility rules – Due to the complex and timely nature of the TAPE, the flexibility towards the partnership and even the content of the projects proved to be a great support for the stakeholders. On the one hand, if 20 partners cooperate within a TAPE, the possibility of failure is much higher and it may make necessary to modify the partnership. On the other hand, from the beginning of design until the closure of the TAPE nearly 6 years pass during which period the external and internal conditions may profoundly change. As a consequence, it can happen that the project which seemed to be appropriate at the beginning is not the good one anymore.
- (3) Consultation - The Joint Secretariat organised an information day and arranged consultation meetings with the coordinators of the selected TAPES between the two rounds which remarkably contributed to higher quality project proposals and less failures.
- (4) Coordination and Communication Project – The CCP is designed for keep the coordination and communication measures in one hand. The coordinator of the CCP is at the same time the coordinator of the whole TAPE. Taking into account that many partners have to cooperate according to a strict project implementation schedule, the CCP should be kept as it is now.

Factors to improve

- (1) Enhance the participatory aspect of the tool - redesign the partnership structure of TAPE projects – The territorial action plans of the programming period of 2014-2020 were rather elitist documents. It means that both the content and the partnership were developed by a limited number of people, and the partnership included the best-known partners of the initiators. The analysis of the territorial needs and challenges missed the engagement of the citizens and CSOs of the cross-border subregion in question. Both the

sustainability and the embeddedness of the action plan and its topic, as well as the general recognition of the EU subsidy could be enhanced through the involvement of the wide public in the designing process (e.g. by surveys, forums, community events, etc.).

(2) Prolong and deepen the preparation phase – One of the main lessons learnt from the application of the TAPE was that the partners had not enough time to profoundly design their actions which aimed at changing the employment conditions in the Slovak-Hungarian border area. Accordingly, the impact of these TAPes will also be weaker than expected. (Obviously, the weakness is partly a result of the pandemic.) If the design process includes the participatory methods, this will also require the prolongation of the designing phase. Contrary to the 3-month long period for drafting the concept notes (as it was now), at least half a year, or even one year would be needed for the design.

(3) Enlarge the pre-financing solution to Slovakia – The Hungarian authorities offer pre-financing solutions for their applicants. The local municipalities may get the total amount of the ERDF funding, SMEs and SCOs the half of it at the beginning of the project implementation phase. It means that the Hungarian partners can proceed with the project implementation faster than their Slovak counterparts who have to guarantee the pre-financing of the amount of the ERDF contribution by their own means or from a bank loan. It may cause difficulties to the timing of the action plan as the Hungarian projects can be completed much earlier than their Slovak counterparts.

(4) Launch a knowledge exchange platform – Taking into consideration that the tool is quite new and the experiences are very recent, the safe implementation of the future action plans could be ensured by the launch of a knowledge exchange platform where the project partners could share their experiences, collect their difficulties and be informed about the solutions applied.

To sum up, on the one hand, we have tested the pilot activities such as contest, videos, thematic routes' guide. We will extend the successful element of these activities for the whole region and submit them as an integrated water-related heritage valorisation project to the HU-SK 21-27. This is action 2. On the other hand, we have tested a longer, deeper and more participatory project development method in order to develop projects having real cross-border character and impact. We are going to propose to the MA our conclusions in this regard. This work on influencing the governance of the TAPE measure is action 1.

#### **4. ACTION 1: Improve the governance of the TAPE type of measure of the SK-HU CBC Program 2021-27**

##### **ORIGINAL GOOD PRACTICES AND TRANSFER JOURNEY OF THE GOOD PRACTICE**

The good practices and lessons learnt are explained in the chapter of Pilot action. Action 1 is based on the conclusions of the pilot action regarding the improvement of TAPE.

## ADAPTED GOOD PRACTICE - Action summary

In the pilot, we tested a participatory, long-term project development method for developing an integrated heritage valorisation project to ensure that this project has a real cross-border character and effectiveness. On top of testing this method and concluding that indeed *Enhancing the participatory aspect of the tool* and *Prolonging the preparation phase* are necessary, we concluded a list of additional recommendations for policy change which needs to be made in the governance of the TAPE type of measure of the Programme.

According to a recent consultation with the MA, not exactly a TAPE, but a TAPE-type of measure will be applied in the SK-HU CBC Programme 21-27. Most probably, the focus of this measure will be tourism instead of employment, which perfectly fits into our plans of scaling up our pilot in a TAPE-type of project.

As TAPE was a quite new measure in the previous period, and applied only in the HU-SK cross-border area, this will be almost the first time when major conclusions were made about the experiences of TAPE. Thus, both for the MA and the beneficiaries, this will be the time to make changes in TAPE, if necessary.

To sum up the recommendations:

- Two-round selection procedure should be applied
- Flexibility rules should be applied
- JS should provide consultation opportunities
- Include Coordination and Communication Project – The CCP is designed for keep the coordination and communication measures in one hand. as it is now.
- Enhance the participatory aspect of the tool
- Prolong the preparation phase
- Enlarge the pre-financing solution to Slovakia
- Launch a knowledge exchange platform

## ACTION STEPS

As the 1<sup>st</sup> step, we are going to send our recommendations to the MA by email asking them to take them into consideration drafting the HU-SK Programme 2021-2027. Time period: March-April 2022

Second, we will participate in so called info-days related to the HU-SK Programme 2021-2027 where we share our recommendations. Info-days are going to be organized by the MA to prepare beneficiaries for the new program period and share information about the new program. Time period: March-September 2022

Third, the content of the calls is elaborated by the Managing Authority but the final decisions are made by the Monitoring Committee of the Programme. Ister-Granum EGTC is member of this committee, the Managing Authority itself delegated the EGTC to the Committee. However, the EGTC has only an advisory role, not having right to vote. The right for voting is at the councils of the counties of the Programme area.

The HU-SK Programme 2021-2027 and the new calls will be discussed during Monitoring Committee meetings where Ister-Granum EGTC will try to share the suggestions regarding the improvements of the TAPE type of measure.

Finally, Ister-Granum EGTC is member of a cross-border organization called CESCO (Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives). The experts of this organization are involved in the pilot action and will be contracted to elaborate the new project proposal of action 2. In parallel, they are also involved as external consultants in the development of the new calls. Thus, we expect that the recommendations concluded from the pilot are going to be shared with the MA also on this channel.

Time period:

- consultation meetings with the Monitoring Committee organized by the MA in April - May 2022
- drafting the programme which includes TAPE type measures (policy change) by September 2022
- launching and approval of new calls in January – February 2023
- approval of the submitted project proposals - June 2023

Budget and resources needed for the implementation of the action:

- staff cost of the director of the EGTC who write the letter to the MA, participate in the info days and MC meetings. Its staff cost financed by the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and from other incomes of the EGTC gained from project works.
- experts contracted from CESCO for the implementation of action 2

## **POLICY CHANGE**

We are going to reach a type 2-governance policy change by influencing TAPE type of calls of the SK-HU CBC Programme 2021-27.

## **5. ACTION 2 - Implementation of a scaled-up version of the pilot action completed by revitalisation or establishment of heritage sites**

### **ORIGINAL GOOD PRACTICES AND TRANSFER JOURNEY OF THE GOOD PRACTICE**

The good practices and lessons learnt are explained in the chapter of Action 1. Action 2 is the scaled up/extended version of Action 1- pilot action completed by projects developed by LSG members.

### **ADAPTED GOOD PRACTICE - Action summary**

Action 2 is basically the development of a new integrated water-related heritage valorisation project. This integrated project includes several sub-projects with more beneficiaries involved from the region. The project is developed and coordinated by Ister-Granum EGTC. On top of their coordination role, Ister-Granum plans to include such sub-projects into the proposal which are the extended version of the successful pilot activities, specifically we plan to produce more videos about water-related heritages and extend the guide book with additional thematic routes from the whole region.

In addition, the project owners and experts who participated on the meeting of the local support group proposed that the content of the integrated project proposal to be submitted for the Slovakian-Hungarian call should be organised along the thematic routes identified under the WaVE PILOT.

In the CBC programme of 2021-27 and under priority axis 3, the specific relevant objective will most likely be the following: „Strengthening the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation”. In accordance, the intervention logic of the integrated project could be built up as follows.

|                           |  |  |   |
|---------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>General objective</b>  | To strengthen the economic development and societal roles of cultural tourism in the Ister-Granum Euroregion through the valorisation of water-linked cultural heritage  |  |   |
| <b>Specific objective</b> | To valorise water-linked cultural heritage in the Ister-Granum Euroregion through the expansion and integration of existing supply of attractions  |  |   |
| <b>Interventions</b>      | <b>Development of attractions</b>  | <b>Infrastructure development</b>  | <b>Visibility and marketing</b>   |
|                           | Public beach Esztergom<br>Coal loader Esztergom<br>Mattyasovszky Turkish bath<br>Landscape rehabilitation, Chľaba<br>Castle reconstruction in Ipolydamásd<br>Spring rehabilitation in Kóspallag<br>Castle reconstructions in Kóspallag<br>Public beach and water stage in Szob | Harbour of Esztergom<br>Water level rehabilitation in Small Danube<br>Mill inn in Kóspallag<br>Harbour and water stage in Lábatlan<br>Extension of the narrow-gauge railway in Szob<br>Mill inn in Zalaba<br>Multimodal tourist station in Zebegény<br>Public beach and camping in Želiezovce<br>Network of kayak-canoe points | Ethnographic Museum in Moča<br>Fishing exhibition in Obid<br>Development of the exhibition in the Danube Museum<br>Establishment of the Ipoly/Ipeľ Museum in Chľaba<br>Underwater archeological exhibition in Szob<br>Water-linked community centre in Zebegény<br>Mill Gallery in Verőce |

In accordance with the expected intervention logic of the programme, the integrated project should focus on cultural tourism and its effects on society and the development of the economy. Within this topic, the valorisation of water-linked cultural heritage could be identified as the specific objective, which would also match the objective of the WaVE project.

The identified project ideas can be linked to three areas: some projects focus on sights, some on tourism infrastructure, and others on the introduction and promotion of cultural heritage. Of course, the specific developments cannot be categorised in a straightforward manner in every case: the renovation of the mill in Zalaba is a sight development as well, and every project has a marketing effect too. However, in order to

integrate the projects, and to identify the intrinsic links, applying a similar logic will be necessary.

The project definitely has a cross-border character in terms of its composition. There are projects that can be paired up even within the thematic routes (in the case of the museum developments, and the 'From Xenodochiums to wellness centres' and 'the road of the waterwheel' routes).

The locations of the planned developments cover a significant part of the Euroregion, even with the preponderance on the Hungarian side.

However, the most important component will be the development of the thematic routes, since that is where the cross-border nature can most readily be strengthened. Therefore, we decided to develop a project aimed at the strategic design, signage and promotion of the thematic routes, which could make the synergy between the hereby proposed developments more visible.

The primary expectation regarding the implementation of the project is the expansion of tourism offers and, with proper promotion, the increased number of tourists in the Euroregion. Even though there were attempts to make the Euroregion acknowledged as an independent tourism destination, the tourism offers of the two border areas have not yet been integrated successfully. Significant changes can be expected in the conditions of integration in the near future, since the road bridge connecting Ipolydamásd and Chřába will be opened in 2022, thus making the Danube Bend directly accessible. This, already in itself, can be expected to facilitate a kind coalescence between the tourist flows of the two sides. Within two years, the same aspect will be strengthened by the EuroVelo 6 cycle route, also established with Slovakian-Hungarian support, in relation to which the Euroregion will create its first tourist package, with the signage of a regional cycle route network.

In the past years, the Ister-Granum EGTC put great effort into creating a brand out of the local products of the region, which could also help the integration procedure.

In other words, the current project could promote the development of the tourism integration already in progress by creating the first integrated tourist packages. It would be practical to support the achievement of that goal by creating and running professional platforms of tourism operators, which could be a further project activity.

If the integrated project would successfully be implemented, it could open the way for an independent destination development programme, with a special image and brand.

## **ACTION STEPS**

| Action step   | Output(s)  | Timeframe         | Responsible person(s), organizations and stakeholders involved                              | Strategy of the stakeholders' involvement                          | Cost and Source of fund  |
|---|--|-------------------|---|--|--|
| Extending the heritage inventory to the whole region  | New heritages discovered for the extension of the thematic routes and creating additional videos | 2021 Q4 – 2022 Q1 | Ister-Granum EGTC staff+external expert who implemented the heritage inventory in the pilot | all municipalities of the region involved in the research          | SK-HU CBC fund 2014-2020 already provided fund for the EGTC to implement a TAPE project. The project is ongoing and it was possible to integrate this action step into it. Cost: staff: 6000 euro, External: 5000 euro   |
| Contracting external expert to finalize the project development process started in the pilot and elaborate the application form | Expert available for the work until the project submission                                       | 2022 Q1           | Ister-Granum EGTC staff   |  | Cost:<br>1)staff cost of 2 person working part time on the action implementation, cost: 24 000 euro 2) external expert's cost:15-20.000 euro<br><br>Source of fund:<br>1)fund received regularly from the Hungarian Ministry of Trade and Affaires to finance the operation of the EGTC 2) regular incomes from project work of the EGTC |
| Consulting with project owners about investment type of project ideas collected in the pilot                                    | Plans and permissions elaborated for the investments   | 2022 Q1-Q2        | Ister-Granum EGTC staff+external expert   | WaVE LSG members proposed investment type of projects in the pilot |  |
| Contacting municipalities who did not submit project idea so far but has potential  | New project ideas included into the integrated project proposal                                  | 2022 Q1-Q2        | Ister-Granum EGTC staff+external expert   | stakeholders from the region contacted who was not active in WaVE  |  |
| Meetings with MA and other EGTCs to consult the integrated project proposal   | Draft project proposal formulated  | 2022 Q1 - Q2      | Ister-Granum EGTC staff+external expert   | MA and other EGTCs contacted                                       |  |

|   |                                  |         |   |   |   |
|---|----------------------------------|---------|---|---|---|
| Integrated project is developed in the application form and submitted | Final project proposal submitted | 2023 Q1 | Ister-Granum EGTC staff+external expert | beneficiaries involved who developed project idea for the integrated project proposal |   |
| Approval of the submitted application forms                           | Final Application Form approved  | 2023 Q2 | -                                       | -   | - |

### POLICY CHANGE

The pilot activities will be extended to all the 82 settlements of the region developing a **new integrated water-related heritage valorisation project** completed with investment-type of activities to renovate the heritage sites. The project will be submitted to the SK-HU CBC Programme 21-27 with the leadership of Ister-Granum EGTC and in partnership with the involved settlements.

According to the latest communication of the Managing Authority, the programme drafting including TAPE type measures will be finalised by September 2022 and the 1<sup>st</sup> calls will be launched in the January-February 2023. The approval of the submitted project proposals are expected until June 2023 the latest.