



Action Plan for the Danube Delta Area





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INTRODUCTION

Floating Cultures in River Deltas – Delta Lady

The **Delta Lady** project financed through **Interreg Europe** programme focuses on **river deltas in Europe** and their potential to **develop innovative activities** aiming at **utilization of local natural and cultural heritage**.

As delta regions around the world are rich in biodiversity but economically poor, the aim of the project is to improve the regional policy instruments that foster the capabilities of using ecosystem services in river deltas to strengthen regional economy.

The project is based on a continuous **interregional learning** and cooperation process facilitating **exchange of knowledge** between participating regions, exchange of **good practices** and **ideas** for **regional development** based on common challenges but also on competitive advantages related to local natural and cultural qualities.

In order to reach the project goals, **6 delta regions** have come together to work on possibilities to develop new experiences based on ecosystem services to boost regional economy:

- Rijn delta (the Netherlands)
- Danube Delta (Romania)
- Camargue Delta (France)
- Albufera Delta (Spain)
- Po Delta (Italy)
- River Blackwater Delta (Ireland)

The 6 delta regions are represented by 9 partners, some being regional public authorities, others coming from academia and research backgrounds.

The joint and individual work carried out during the first 6 semesters of the project (Phase 1: 2018 – 2021) have as main goal the interregional learning process and the development of Action Plans for each region to improve a targeted regional policy instrument.

Phase 2 of the project (2021-2023) is dedicated to implementation of the Action Plans developed in Phase 1.



Part I – General information

Project: Delta Lady – Floating Cultures in River Deltas
Partner organisation: Danube Delta National Institute for Research and Development

Country: Romania

NUTS2 region: RO22 Sud-Est

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Part II – Policy context

- The Action Plan aims to impact:
- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
 - European Territorial Cooperation programme
 - Other regional development policy instrument

1. Policy Instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed:

ERDF Regional Operational Programme (ROP) 2021-2027.

Further details on the policy context and the way the action plan should contribute to improve the policy instrument:

The policy instrument targeted by the Romanian partner is the **Romanian Regional Operational Programme (ROP)**, financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), that in 2021-2027 aims to enable investments in a smarter, greener, more connected and more social Europe that is closer to its citizens.

The Regional Operational Programme (ROP) aims at promoting smart sustainable and inclusive growth in all regions in Romania making them more attractive places in which to live and work. The programme addresses the major development challenges for Romania: regional competitiveness, sustainable urban development, the low-carbon economy, and economic and social infrastructure at regional and local level

Our proposed actions aim at addressing the axis/measures of ROP that benefit of separate financial allocation for the Danube Delta area, through the Integrated Territorial Investments Instrument, in accordance with the Danube Delta Integrated Development Strategy (DDIDS). In the specific context of a territory with a multiple protection status (UNESCO site, Ramsar site and Natura 2000 networks), innovative approaches regarding sustainable economic development through valorisation and efficient management of natural and cultural resources are needed.

Although ROP provides funding for improving the urban environment and preserving and valorising cultural heritage, there is no specific reference to the use of ecosystem services to reach the programme's objectives, and ways through which innovative projects that promote different uses of ecosystem services could contribute to regional development.

Moreover, although POR has separate Applicant's Guides and specific criteria of evaluation for projects financed in the Danube Delta area, the actions of ROP focused on the Danube Delta Area still has place for improvement



taking into account more specific aspects of deltaic ecosystems and needs of local communities, with the help of the lessons learnt through exchanges of experience with other similar areas of Europe.

When the Delta Lady project was initiated, DDNI had its focus on the Regional Operational Programme 2014 – 2020, namely on Thematic Objective 6 of ROP - Environment and resource efficiency, especially throughout the axis/measures of ROP with separate ITI financial allocation for the Danube Delta area.

The axes of the programme that were initially tackled were:

Priority Axis 5, Investment priority 5.1: “Preservation, protection, promotion and development of the natural and cultural heritage

Priority Axis 7: Diversifying local economies through sustainable tourism development

However, considering the timing of the project corroborated with the calendar of ROP 2014-2020, work meetings with the Managing Authority for ROP within the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration (AM POR within MDLPA), revealed that it is not a realistic target to bring changes to the 2014-2020 programming period of ROP.

The ROP 2014-2020 program is ending, projects have already been financed making it unlikely to demonstrate policy improvement with the implementation of the Action Plan in 2021-2023.

As there are no future calls for the Axes 7 and 5 of ROP 2014-2020 that would be compatible with the Delta Lady aims. consultations with AM POR and the Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) led to the solution of re-orienting the current Action Plan for the future programming period of the Regional Operational Programme, ROP 2021-2027.

The managing authority of ROP 2021-2027 is the Regional Development Agency for the South-East of Romania (ADR – SE), that is part of the Delta Lady Romanian Regional Stakeholder Group. ADR-SE will work closely with the Danube Delta National Institute to implement the provisions of the Action Plan and bring improvements to the new ROP which is in course of development.

The Action Plan consists of the development of a support material for the use of future ROP applicants, in order to achieve a higher number of “greener” and culturally appropriate projects to be financed through ROP 2017-2021.

The action will help more applicants come up with projects that score higher at the Sustainable Development set of criteria and thus make funding accessible to more projects that valorize natural and cultural heritage in the Danube Delta in a sustainable way.



The improvement envisaged is the guidance offered leading to increased capacity of applicants to deliver better, more sustainable projects financed through ROP, with the help of the lessons learned and ideas that emerged from the exchange of experience that was carried out during the Delta Lady project.

2. Territorial Context

As confirmed by its multiple international protection status (UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme, Ramsar site – wetland of international importance and Natura 2000), Danube Delta is an area with an inestimable natural capital and a very specific cultural landscape derived from the multi-ethnic structure of the local communities.



Fig 1. Danube Delta - Territorial Context

Main economic activities in the Danube Delta are agriculture, aquaculture (fishing and fish farming) and tourism. The area presents one of the lowest population densities in Romania, with insufficient access to basic services, accessibility issues, deficit in connectivity with important markets, but with an immense touristic potential.

The Danube Delta region is an ecologically rich but economically challenged region of the south-eastern part of Romania.

As identified in the DDIDS Diagnostic Report, many stakeholders in the Delta, including those engaged in tourism, have limited understanding of the type of economic activities that are usually developed in natural areas such as the Danube Delta.

There is poor understanding of the demand for nature-based activities as well as the corresponding nature of the supply that should be developed to meet the needs and wants of the target consumer.

There is an obvious need for expanding the portfolio of nature-based activities and products and the potential to expand the cultural heritage offerings.



Protection regimes and policies guiding economic activities in the region do not secure any exclusive benefits for local stakeholders. The lack of exclusive benefits for local players makes it more appealing for them to try to evade restrictions and utilize natural resources illicitly rather than feel ownership and be partners in the protection of the Delta.

Furthermore, as in other areas of the country, young generations are leaving for better opportunities and traditional crafts are endangered.

The main challenge for sustainable development of the Danube Delta area still remains standing: on one hand, there is the need of preserving the ecological values, on the other hand, there are necessary actions to be taken for the improvement of the local communities' livelihoods. Considering the diversity of needs for development and the challenges that the Danube Delta area faces, there is a need for an integrated approach regarding the use of funding that support sustainable development in the area, without endangering sensitive protected areas.

We believe that improvement of the use of the ecosystem services provided by natural resources of the Danube Delta, exploring ways to valorise cultural heritage, as well as transferring knowledge from other areas will lead to development of new economic and ecological activities to boost the economy of the area.

3. Exchange of Experience Process and Interregional Learning

3.1. Good Practices

During implementation of Phase 1 of the project, a number of 12 Good Practices collected by partners have been published on the project website as examples for innovative and sustainable valorization of natural and cultural assets in each delta region.

All partners and local stakeholders have presented several examples of good practices relevant for the project during the interregional learning events so that partners have a good opportunity to identify common challenges and get inspiration for potential action.

From the Good Practices repository, the most relevant in the learning process for the preparation of this Action Plan were the details of the practices identified by our partners in Spain and the Netherlands:

- Asociación de Guías de Birding de la Comunitat Valenciana, which is a union of companies linked to nature and ornithological tourism that carry out a large part of their activity in the Natural Park of l'Albufera (activity that is transferrable to our Delta and represents a commendable way of utilizing local ecosystem services for shaping sustainable tourism offers); This Good practice links well with one we



have identified in our delta: Jurilotca – a good example of a nature and culture based touristic offer, by organizing guided tours with kayaks, bikes and traditional sailboats in the Danube Delta.

- Fryske Trui @ Vest in Fryslan, developing of a new locally sourced product that is part of a circular type of economy based on local resources and local know-how (the practice links well with one of the good practices identified in our delta, the DeltaCraft project and several exchanges of ideas took place during the interregional learning sessions where these good practices have been presented)

All the selected Good Practices are available at <https://www.interregeurope.eu/deltalady/good-practices/>.

3.2. Case Study

Case studies for each participating delta region were instruments used during the project to analyze challenges and identify opportunities for better use of ecosystem services in the respective deltas, in order to improve the balance between the need for nature conservation and economic development of local communities.

The DDNI Case Study took into consideration potential shifts in the way natural resources are exploited, focusing on the case of reed.

Analyzing the current situation in the Danube Delta, the Case Study discusses the way reedbeds as an essential asset of the Delta are administered, harvested and utilized as a natural resource.

Based on the status quo and challenges identified, proposals have been formulated regarding:

- Shifts in the way reedbeds of the Danube Delta are exploited by offering alternatives of the actual leasing procedure for reedbed parcels;
- Conservation of reed beds by stopping land reclamation in order for improved mitigation of GHG emissions;
- Diversifying reed products and developing reed-based business models

The development of the Case Study, as well as the Action Plan, has benefitted from the interregional learning, from the good practices collected in other deltas and innovative approaches identified during the project.

3.3. Interregional Learning Sessions

The backbone of the Delta Lady project is represented by the interregional learning and exchange of experience processes that were continuously carried out during Phase 1 of the project.



6 Partner Meetings and Interregional Learning Events have been organized by each participating region, each with a different thematic focus, in order to support the exchange of knowledge between partners and regional stakeholders and to provide feedback on the proposed actions of the Regional Action Plans.

The partners and stakeholders have thus had the opportunity to get familiarized with other delta regions facing similar challenges, to share successful and not so successful practices related to nature conservation, culture valorization and social and economic development and identify concepts and ideas that are transferrable and adaptable in between the participating delta regions.

The site visits, partners presentations and fruitful discussion enabled us to observe and be inspired by remarkable examples of heritage revitalization and refunctionalization of old structures (Torre Rosa, Fish collecting points or Manifattura dei Marinati in Comacchio, Italy), glimpsing on traditional activities that may no longer exist in the same form but are presented for educational and tourism purposes (Saltworks of Comacchio), using provisioning and cultural ecosystem services for developing touristic offers (birdwatching associations in Spain, mushroom picking in Delta Po Natural Park area etc.) or ensuring infrastructure for sustainable mobility and cycle tourism (E-boats in Fryslan and cycling signposting and marked routes in Comacchio Valleys).

3.4. Regional Stakeholders Group

The participating delta regions have each set up Regional Stakeholders Groups (RSG) to support reaching the aims of the projects, to participate in the interregional learning and to contribute to the development of the Regional Action Plans.

Stakeholder groups have been set up reflecting the quadruple helix innovation framework.

In the case of the Danube Delta, the RSG comprises organisations and individuals representing:

- **Government:** Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration (Management Authority for ROP 2014-2020), Regional Development Agency - South East Region, Romania (ADR-SE) – the Intermediate Body for ROP 2014-2020 and Management Authority for ROP 2021-2027, for the South-East area of Romania; Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority, Environmental Protection Agency Tulcea, Tulcea County Council, Municipalities in the ITI Danube Delta area etc);
- **Academia** (“Ion Mincu” University of Architecture and Urbanism, “Lower Danube” University of Galati, “Ovidius” University of Constanta etc)
- **Industry and Business** (Danube Delta Tourist Management Association, Association of Tourism Patronage in the Danube Delta, crafts artisans and farmers, reed exploitation businesses, associations etc.),
- **Community** (Intercommunity Development Association (IDA) for ITI Danube Delta; ANTREC - National Association for Rural, Ecological and Cultural Tourism, Tulcea branch; FLAG Delta – Local Action Group for Sustainable Fisheries in the Danube Delta; The Ivan Patzaichin – Mila 23 Association; Local Action Group (LAG) Danube Delta, LAG Danube Delta’s People etc).



DDNI is involved in implementation of the action plan to help and advice local entrepreneurs/business developers from the Danube Delta region to seek funding for their innovation ideas and to help improve the programme that offers support for regional development in the Danube Delta area.

The first two listed government stakeholders are directly responsible for drafting and implementing ROP. All of the stakeholders in the indicative list were part of consultative groups that contributed to the elaboration of Danube Delta Integrated Development Strategy and are also in the consultative groups for elaborating Tulcea County Territorial Arrangement Plan and Danube Delta Management Plan, strategic documents that are of utmost importance regarding future projects to be implemented in the area.

The LAGs act as promoters of local development, elaborate and implement development strategies for the territory, conduct information and awareness-raising campaigns for local population and provide funding for implementing economic development projects in the Danube Delta area.

The stakeholder group is an active group, developing ideas, sharing the knowledge with others and discussing how to transfer the knowledge and good practices from the project study trips and interregional learning sessions, and feeding it back to the policy makers in the region.

6 RSG Meetings were carried out in Tulcea during Phase 1 of the project and relevant project stakeholders and members of the Regional Stakeholders Group were also present in some of the interregional learning events, a representative of MDLPA in the first meeting in Camargue Delta and a representative of ADR SE in the 3rd partner meeting in Comacchio, Italy.



Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

As the Action Plan evolved and changed during the elaboration process, after the consultations carried out during the Regional Stakeholder Group Meetings and during the bilateral consultations with the main responsible bodies for ROP: MLDPA and ADR SE, the final proposed Action Plan includes only one complex Action that integrates the multiple actions initially proposed.

Name of the action:

Preparing a guide in support of ROP applicants in implementing sustainable and context-appropriate solutions into their tourism development projects

Subtitle of the Action:

Integrating environmentally-friendly and local specificity elements in tourism infrastructure and associated activities development

1. Relevance to the project

Throughout the course of Phase 1 of Delta Lady, partners meetings were carried out hosted by each partner (either on-site or virtual) and a continuous process of knowledge and experience exchange was carried out between participating regions.

The idea to develop a Guide emerged after acquiring knowledge on a collection of inspirational good practices in tourism and heritage valorisation, learnings from partners and stakeholders in France, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and Romania.

The guide will include and build on several examples of valorising cultural and natural heritage, many of which presented by partners in the project meetings and site visits. Best practices will be included as references in the guide. Conclusions and suggestions of the Regional Stakeholder Groups are also integrated.

The specific references that inspired the action are given in section 2 of Part III, together with the details related to the content of the Action.

2. Nature of the action

The proposed Action refers to developing a GUIDE that will support ROP applicants in implementing sustainable and culturally appropriate solutions in their tourism development projects submitted to be financed through ROP 2021-2027, under the umbrella of Strategic Regional Objective 6 – Economic and Social



Development of South-East Region, through valorising tourism resources and cultural, historic and natural patrimony and through actions of urban regeneration.

The Policy Objective targeted is PO 5 – Europe closer to citizens through promoting sustainable integrated development of all types of territories and local initiatives, with both Specific Objectives: SO (i) *Promotion of integrated and inclusive development in the fields of social, economy and environment as well as culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security in urban areas*; and SO (ii) *Promotion of integrated and inclusive development in the fields of social, economy and environment as well as culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security in other areas than urban*.

The scope is to obtain better tourism projects / businesses to be financed through ROP, by integrating environmentally friendly and local specificity elements in tourism infrastructure and associated activities development projects / businesses.

2.1. Guide Content Framework

The Framework of the Guide has been drafted out during Action Plan Development phase, with the support of the ROP Management Authority and Intermediate Body and with the support of all members of the Regional Stakeholder Group.

The guide will be supporting elaboration and implementation of tourism projects with respect to:

- Sustainable Tourism infrastructure;
- Local Specificity of the built environment (vernacular references);
- Nature and Culture based touristic offer;
- Integration of ecosystem services through Nature Based Solutions and touristic activities offer development by tourism businesses;
- Sustainable Mobility;
- Traditional activities that can be revitalized/valorized;
- Linking with sustainable tourism platforms.

The Guide Content Framework is structured in 4 sections that will be developed and detailed during the Content Development taking place in the Implementation Phase.

❖ Tourism infrastructure development

Since infrastructure development is one of the most accessed type of tourism related projects category financed through ROP and also one of the most impactful type of projects, this section of the Guide will include several recommendations related to respect for nature, culture and local specificity.

- Placement of buildings**
 - in the village (with respect to urban/rural typology and neighbouring buildings)
 - outside the village (special attention to landscape integration)
- Constructive elements, volumes, finishes**
 - size; - proportion; - materials; - opaque vs. empty space; - façade decoration.
- Energy performance & other sustainability criteria**
 - (renewable energy systems, insulation systems, plumbing, NBS etc.)
- Site arrangements**
 - (signposting, pedestrian pavement, urban furniture, docks on waterbanks etc.)

GUIDELINES FOR BUILDINGS IN THE DANUBE DELTA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

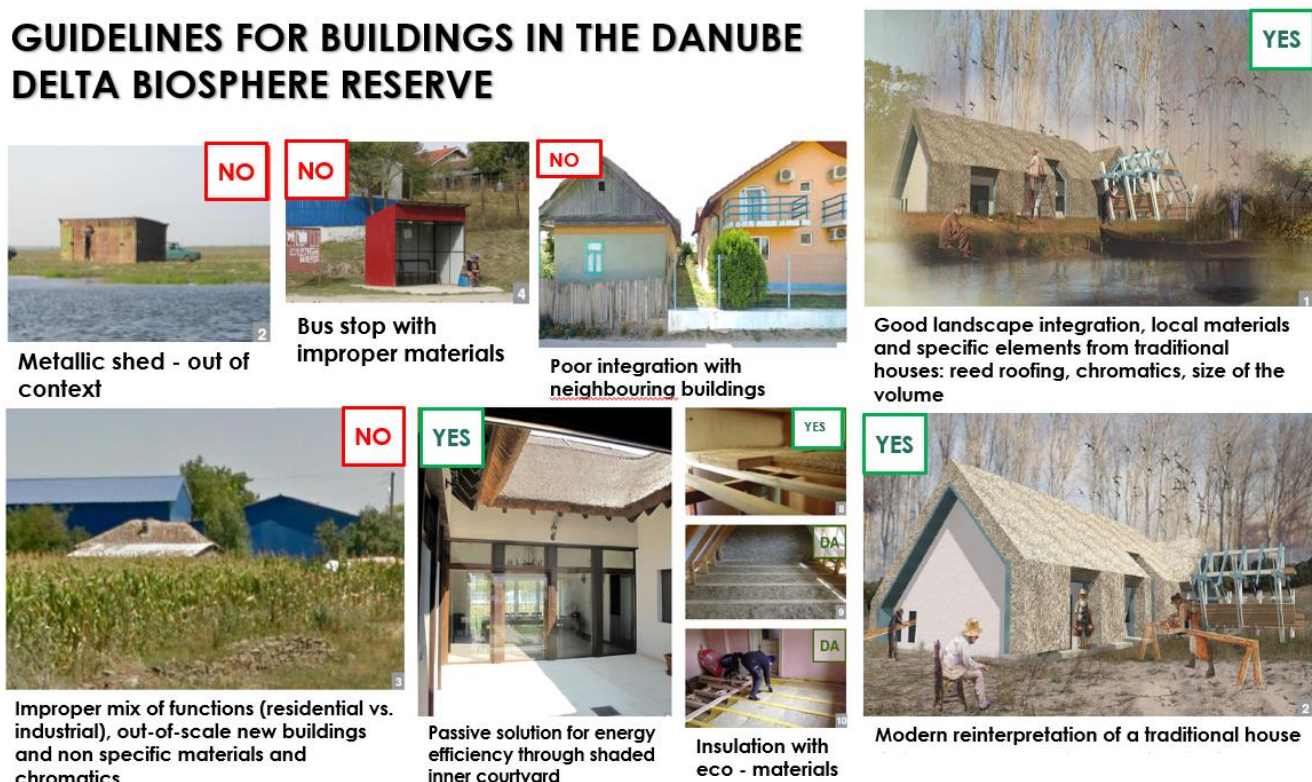


Fig. 2 – Examples of context appropriate or inappropriate interventions in the built environment of the Danube Delta

Source: Adapted from the *Architectural Guide for integrating in the local specificity of the rural environments. The Danube Delta Area*.

Available at: https://oar.archi/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/ghid_de_arhitectura_zona_deltei_dunarii_pdf_1510846597-1.pdf

Some of the projects already financed through ROP 2014-2020 can serve as good practice inspiration as well, like the restoration of the Lighthouse Museum in Sulina (cultural heritage valorization and tourism), the Refurbishment and modernising of the Ethnography and Folk Arts Museum in Tulcea or the renovation of



Panaghia House in Babadag, Tulcea county. All of these investments were funded through Priority Axis 5, Investment priority 5.1: “Preservation, protection, promotion and development of the natural and cultural heritage.



Fig. 3 – The Old Lighthouse Museum in Sulina, refurbished through ROP 2014-2020, Priority Axis 5, Investment priority 5.1: “Preservation, protection, promotion and development of the natural and cultural heritage



Fig 4 – Panaghia House, Babadag, Tulcea County, refurbished and modernized as a museum through ROP 2014-2020, Priority Axis 5, Investment priority 5.1: “Preservation, protection, promotion and development of the natural and cultural heritage.

❖ **Tourism services development**

The second section of the guide is related to development of touristic services that

- valorize underused heritage (either tangible or intangible)

Oftentimes important cultural resources are overlooked or underused (such as the industrial heritage of Romania, some of which is very present in the Danube Delta area, which have a huge potential for reconversion and increasing attractiveness)

Intangible heritage is also an element that is insufficiently valorized, here included all traditional activities that are now almost lost (such as reed roofing, reed and rush weaving etc), traditional cuisines of different ethnical minorities, legends and myths, the spiritual values, the vernacular ambiance etc

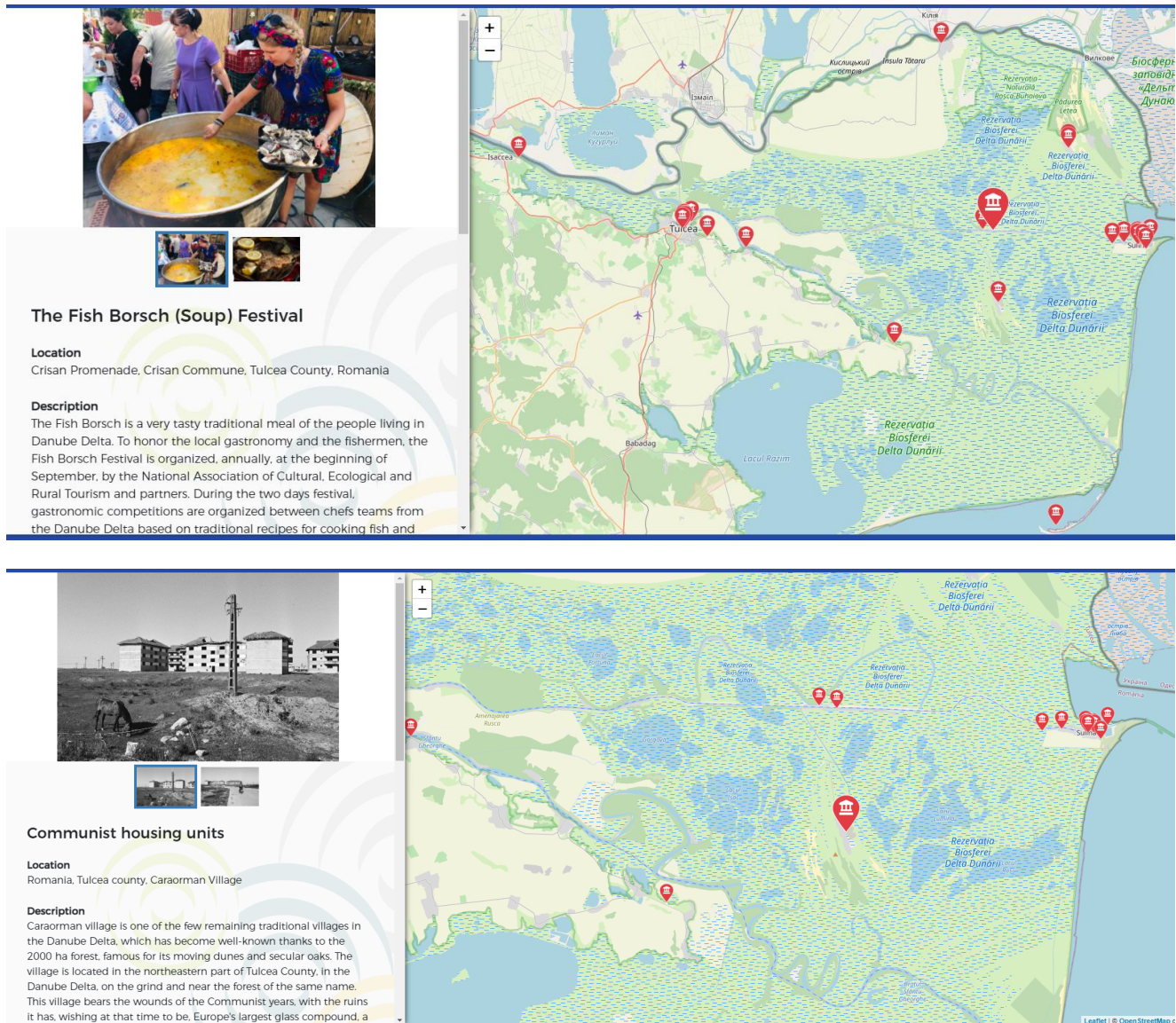


Fig 5 – Excerpt from the DANuB Online Platform developed in DANuB Project, Interreg Danube showcasing The Fish Borsch Festival in Crisan and the unfinished and abandoned communist housing units in the village of Caraorman, in the Danube Delta)

- are oriented towards thematic nature & culture-based tours and activities

Several new services can be offered by local businesses that include engaging with local communities and extending the stay in the destination (such as pesca tourism, thematic tours like industrial heritage tours etc)

- include a component of sustainable mobility and the concept of slow tourism

In order to preserve the fragile balance of ecosystems and also to increase the economic development of the area, such touristic offers need to be based on concepts like eco-tourism, slow tourism and include facilities / services for sustainable mobility such as e-vehicles or bicycles.

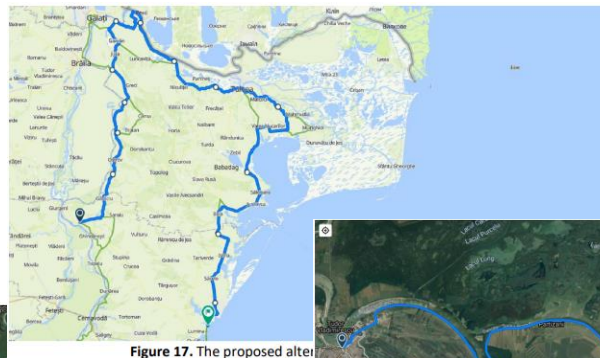


Figure 17. The proposed alternative route of the Danube Delta

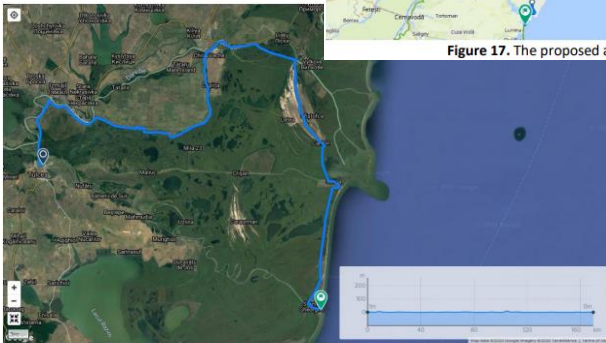


Figure 15. The perimeter route of the Danube Delta, 170 km length, 12 m elevation

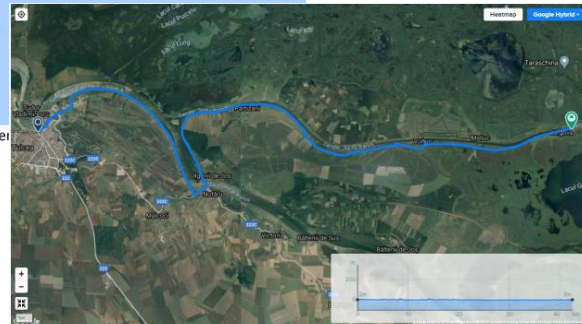


Figure 16. The central route of the Danube Delta, 42 km length 26 m elevation

Fig 6 – Proposed cycle tourism routes in the Danube Delta, excerpt from the Cycling Tourism Development Strategy in Tulcea County developed in 2021, EcoVeloTour Interreg Danube Project

❖ Connection with sustainable tourism platforms

This section of the Guide will provide several recommendations of how sustainable tourism businesses can connect with niche tourists that appreciate the sustainability features that are provided by the accommodation they visit.

There are booking platforms that are designed especially to link such sustainable businesses to their targeted customers, who generally are ecologically conscientious people that take into consideration the sustainability standards of an infrastructure or of a particular service.

In order to be able to enlist and be discoverable in such a platform, a touristic accommodation will need to meet certain standards of several sustainability criteria such as energy saving, locally sourced products, renewable energy, recycling, sustainable building practices etc.

These criteria are important to be taken into consideration from the project development phase, not only in order to be environmentally friendly as a building and as a business, but also to be appealing to environmentally friendly tourists.



Fig 7: Print screen from bookitgreen.com online platform

❖ **Good practices repository**

The final section of the guide includes selected relevant good practices from the project repository, from the study visits, but also from the Interreg Europe platform, with description, relevance and potential for transfer or adaption in the Danube Delta region.

Such a repository will serve to better understand the way some of the concepts presented in the previous sections are transferred into practice and also as actual inspiration for future projects to be developed in the area.

2.2. Inspiration from the interregional learning and exchange of experience

Several of the good practices, visited sites and successful projects presented by partners have influenced the shaping of our Action. During the entire exchange of experience and interregional learning process we have picked up ideas and concepts that have helped shape our Action Plan.

Inspiration from the interregional exchange of experience		
Ideas transferred	Origin	Link to Action Plan
Built Environment Respect to Local Specificity Vernacular references	The study visits to the Camargue Natural Park (01.10.2018) as well as Albufera Natural Park have shown villages / areas with well preserved traditional houses and with insertion of new buildings that maintain the same register of the vernacular / traditional.	Tourism Infrastructure Section of the Guide Respect to nature, culture and local specificity The relevance of referencing these study visits is related to the fact that most of the Danube Delta is also rural – so most of the tourism development happens in villages.



<p>Sustainable mobility</p> <p>Cycle tourism</p>	<p>Use of electric boats in Friesland region, presented by the Friesland partner during the 4th Interregional Learning Event organized by partners from Cork, Ireland on-line on 1-2 April 2020.</p> <p>Tour to Valli di Comacchio – Po Delta Park during 3rd Interregional Learning Event on September 17, 2019, have revealed a well-connected cycle path area, with routes and signposting for cycle tourism.</p>	<p>These references have inspired the sustainable mobility and cycle tourism recommendations that will be included in both Tourism infrastructure and associated tourism development services section of the Guide.</p>
<p>Use of ecosystem services to shape touristic activities / offers</p>	<p>Birdwatching in Albufera – Asociación de Guías de Birding de la Comunitat Valenciana (ornithological tourism as a good practice presented by Virgilio Beltran in 2nd Partners Meeting, Valencia, 06.03.2019.</p> <p>Visit of Salt production fields in Camargue in the 1st Interregional Learning Event (01.10.2018) extremely interesting landscapes with high aesthetic values and, thus, valorised touristic potential.</p>	<p>These references have inspired and helped shape the Tourism services development section of the Guide, related to Thematic nature / culture-based tours & services</p>
<p>Revitalization and reconversion of old structures</p>	<p>Visit to Torre Rosa, Valli di Comacchio – historical structure beautifully restored and transformed into a visitor centre / birdwatching tower / landscape observation point.</p> <p>Former fish collection points turned into museums, Valli di Comacchio</p> <p>Manifatura dei Marinati, Comacchio: former eel canning factory turned nowadays into museum / shop / conference / events venue</p> <p>All of these visits are part of the 3rd interregional Learning Event and Partner Meeting in Comacchio, September 17-18 2019.</p>	<p>Use of cultural heritage and old structures for educational and tourism purposes (the parallel with industrial heritage in the Delta area that can be reconverted and re-functionalized, former fishermen shelters that can be reconverted etc)</p>



Referencing of traditional activities	<p>Study tour to the Camargue Delta, 01.10.2018 to a local rice farm with bulls raising activities, that is also an agritourism establishment that displayed excellent combination of ecological and economical activities</p> <p>Guided tour to the Saltworks of Comacchio, 17.09.2019 have been inspirational for how well a former production area can be reused for education and tourism purposes.</p> <p>Pesca tourism presentation of Quentin le Bras for Camargue, on 14.09.2021 during the 6th Partner Meeting and Interregional Learning Event, online.</p>	<p>These references have helped shape the recommendations for the culture based touristic offer that can be developed similarly in the Danube Delta</p> <p>(such as local farms that offer accommodation and provide touristic offers related to traditional activities, pesca tourism – going fishing with locals etc)</p>
Good Practices	Tourism related or tourism relevant good practices – from the Delta Lady Repository, from the Interreg Europe Repository or noted during Delta Lady project International Learning Events	Included with each Practice Description in the Good Practices Repository of the Guide, with notes and recommendations on potential transferability and adaptability for sustainable tourism projects / businesses in our area

2.3. Activities

1) Content development (December 2021 – December 2022)

The Content development activity refers to the actual development of the content of the Guide, detailing the four sections identified in the Content Framework and briefly presented in the Action Plan.

It will include a documentation phase, mapping of unlisted and underused heritage items in the Danube Delta area and compilation of the data in the recommendations provided for tourism infrastructure and services to be included in ROP funded projects.

Following the proposed structures, the recommendations for tourism infrastructure and services will include ecosystem services integration through nature-based solutions for buildings and site solutions, experience-based tourism services, making use of local cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible) and other sustainability indicators (eco-branding, sustainable mobility etc).



2) Consultations with Management Authority and Regional Stakeholder Group

(December 2021 – November 2022)

Similar to the Action Plan development phase, the actual development of the content will not be carried out unilaterally, but in close cooperation with the relevant authorities for ROP and also the stakeholders involved in different aspects of tourism related regional development of the Danube Delta Area.

During Implementation Phase, at least 3 consultations with the RSG will be carried out in order to obtain and incorporate feedback in the final materials that will be Additional Documents / Supporting documents for ROP 2021-2027 applicants.

3) Linking the Guide to ROP as a document to be included in Supporting documents, in support of tourism project proposals development (March 2022 – December 2022)

During the work carried out in a close relationship with the Managing Authority of ROP 2021-2027, the best way to bring improvement to the policy by increasing applicants' capacity to bring forward better quality projects will be decided in parallel with the development of the ROP documents and Applicants Guide.

At the moment, following the consultations carried out during the Action Plan development phase, the most favourable way to utilize the Guide in order to strengthen the policy instrument is to include it as Supporting Document in the Additional Documents section of ROP materials for applicants.

4) Disseminating to all stakeholders and potential applicants (October 2022 – May 2023)

The final action after developing the Guide and linking it to the policy instrument is to disseminate it to all stakeholders and potential applicants of ROP, so that they are aware and able to utilize it as an instrument to support the development of better tourism projects to be financed through ROP.

The dissemination will be carried out by presentations of the Guide in at least one event organized locally by DDNI, as well as in events related to the consultation and information sessions to be carried out by ADR SE for the new ROP 2021-2027.

3. Stakeholders involved

The most important two organisations that are involved in the development of the Guide and its actual utilization by applicants are the Regional Development Agency for South -East of Romania (Managing Authority for ROP 2021-2027) and Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration (Managing Authority for ROP 2014-2020).



As stated in the Activities section, all members of the Regional Stakeholder Group will continue to be involved during the content development phase, especially the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (which is the management authority of our focus area), tourism businesses and associations and as many as possible of municipalities in the Danube Delta Region, that can be as well potential applicants to use the Guide developed in Delta Lady.

4. Timeframe envisaged for the action

The preparatory activities of the Action have already started during the development phase of the Action Plan, when based on the interregional learning process and on consultation with relevant bodies for ROP and members of the Regional Stakeholder Group have shaped the Guide Content Framework to be later detailed / developed and disseminated to ROP applicants in Phase 2 of the Delta Lady Project.

Action 1 is envisaged to be implemented during the entire time allocated for Phase 2 of Delta Lady (01.12.2021 – 31.05.2023).

Content development phase is envisaged to be finalised by the end of 2022 overlapping with stakeholder consultations to incorporate feedback and suggestions, while 2023 is used mostly for publication and dissemination.



Fig. 8. Proposed Gantt chart for Action Plan Implementation



5. Indicative costs

The indicative costs for the development of the Guide are estimated at 10.000 euro. These costs are associated mostly with the work carried out for content development, but also takes into consideration costs for publishing and dissemination.

6. Funding sources

In order to obtain the necessary funding to carry out the implementation of the Action Plan, the DDNI Delta Lady team has partnered with the #BetterTulcea initiative that has a strong involvement in responsible and inclusive development of Tulcea county, in order to access funding through the Romanian Order of Architects competition calls that will be open in 2022.

The partnership will also allow the project team to tap on sponsorships from private partners that support #BetterTulcea to complete, if necessary, the steps needed for a successful implementation of the Action Plan in Phase 2 of the Delta Lady project.