Exploral

Exploring the cultural heritage of the cross border region through a digital library and oral sources

Interreg – IPA CBC
Greece - Albania

- Kick-off meeting

June 15, 2018

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Exploral partners

- Department of Computer Science and Engineering, University of Ioannina

- Central Public Library of Konitsa

- Municipality of Gjirokastra

- Mubicipality of Permet

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The cross border region of Greece and Albania was an important commercial caravan route.

Through the centuries:
cradle of all kinds of craftsmen
major producer of livestock and agricultural products

In a few years the region will be a major tourist route connecting Central Europe to Greece and southern Albania

Exploral will provide engaging means to offer tourists the opportunity to:

- *experience a unique personalized tour of this rich in culture, traditions, arts and natural beauty area and*

- *visit multiple urban and rural points of interest*

Exploral in a nut shell (1)

The project EXPLORAL builds on the successful project Balkaneana funded under the IPA Cross-Border PROGRAMME "Greece - Albania 2007-2013" that delivered a multimodal digital library with content from the Central Public Library of Konitsa and the Municipal Library of Gjirokastra.

The overall objective is twofold:

- **(i) to transform libraries into a reference point for all tourists visiting the cross-border area and**
- **(ii) identify and promote the common heritage of the cross-border region through the study and analysis of the oral history and tradition and their interconnection to the written sources.**

Exploral in a nut shell (2)

- EXPLORAL addresses the programme's overall objective and the Specific Objective 2.1.

- The content of those oral sources have an inherent additional social value by contributing to the social cohesion, dynamic evolution, and durability of the cultural heritage.

- There is a significant interest, from an ethnographic, cultural and historical perspective, to record testimonies from oral sources in the cross-border area of interest.

Exploral in a nut shell (3)

- In the regions of Permet, Gjirokastra and Konitsa we can discover different sides of history and traditions and identify and promote common cultural characteristics that are associated with the areas of interest.

- To this end, testimonies will be recorded and connected to the digital content that is already stored in the Balkaneana digital library and the new Exploral digital repository will be an enriched version of Balkaneana in terms of content and functionality.

- Finally, EXPLORAL includes the development of an application for mobile devices (mobile app) that includes interactive information on a map of the wider border area. The interactive map will be interconnected with the content from oral sources and the digitized material of Balkaneana in the form of a customized documentary.

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Exploral in a nut shell (4)

- Thus, this connection of the touristic information with valuable information acquired from oral and written sources, would result to transforming the Library, in its physical or digital form, to a reference point for all tourists in the area.

- The project also entails the digitization of a large portion of the Premet municipal library books and the extension of the digitized collection of books, documents and archives for the other two libraries.

- Last but not least Exlporal will implement three additional infrastructure activities: the reconstruction of the Premet and Gjirokastra municipal libraries and the creation of a tourist helpdesk at the public library of Konitsa.

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Specific project output (1)

1. Publicity material development (leaflets and a website with translations in Greek, Albanian and English).

2. Organization of 2 Information Days (one Greece and one in Albania) to inform citizens, tourists and professionals in the tourism sector (i.e. hoteliers, tour operators, touristic agents) on the benefits of the Exploral Digital Repository and the EXPLORAL mobile app that will be connected to the content of the library.

Specific project output (2)

3. A 2nd release of the digital library (v2.0) including enriched content (i.e. applying optical character recognition analysis on existing content) and increased functionalities. It will include a crowdsourcing functionality and a recommender mechanism resulting to the implementation of an innovative recommending mechanism for users to receive suggestions for similar content based on their searches, their interests and profile.
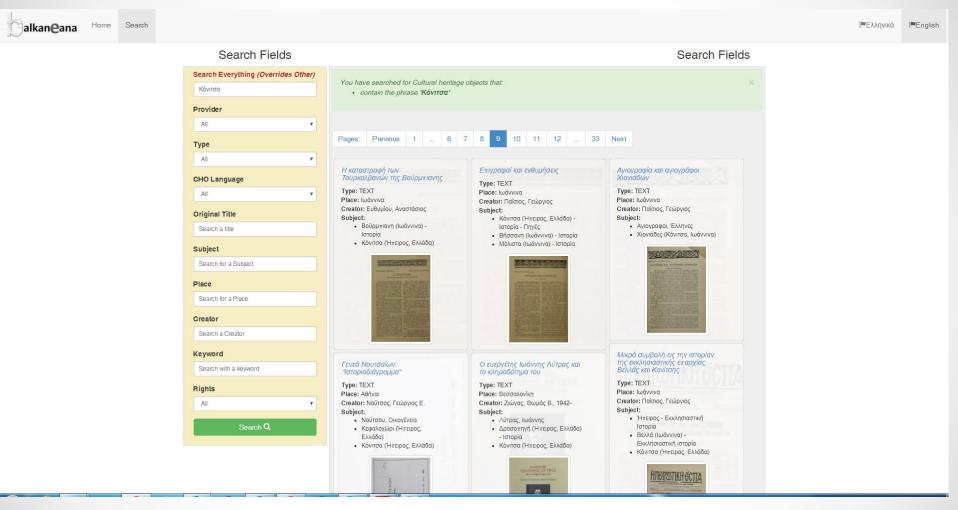
Specific project output (3)

4. Recorded testimonies from residents of the border region and connection with historical and cultural elements and events that would be a valuable asset of the Balkaneana and could be exploited in future initiatives.

5. A mobile application for Android and iOS that includes interactive information projected on a map of the cross border area. The map will be connected to the recorded testimonies and the already digitized material of Balkaneana Library.
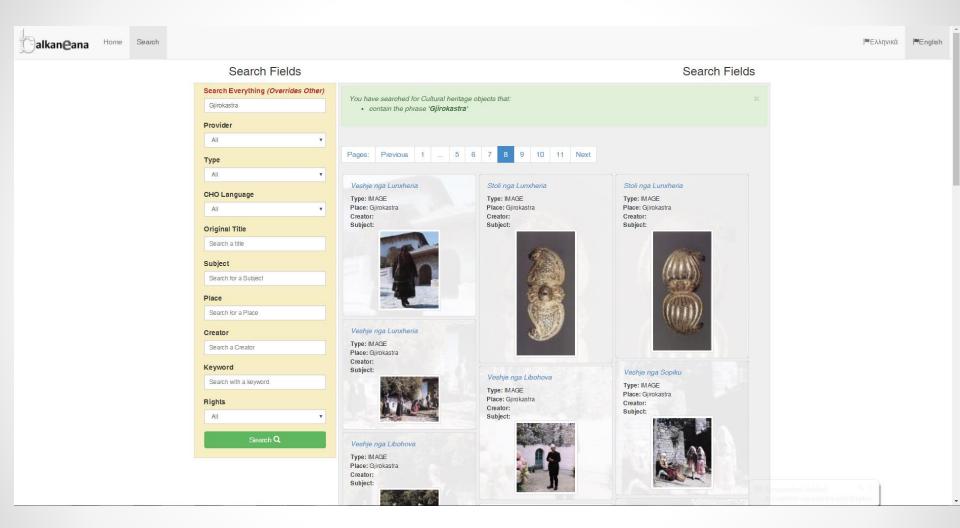
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Specific project output (4)

6. An improved and enhanced Balkaneana Network of Libraries including additional members (Municipal Library of Permet and other Libraries that will be invited and joined during the program) and capabilities (i.e. cataloguing of the Albanian Libraries' in order to have easy access to the content and facilitate the cross-rental service that EXPLORAL will incorporate).

7. Renovated Libraries, including major renovation activities (i.e. Municipal Library of Gjirokastra to address the standards specified by UNESCO and Municipal Library of Permet, since the building is too old) or minor interior renovation activities (i.e. Central Public Library of Konitsa).
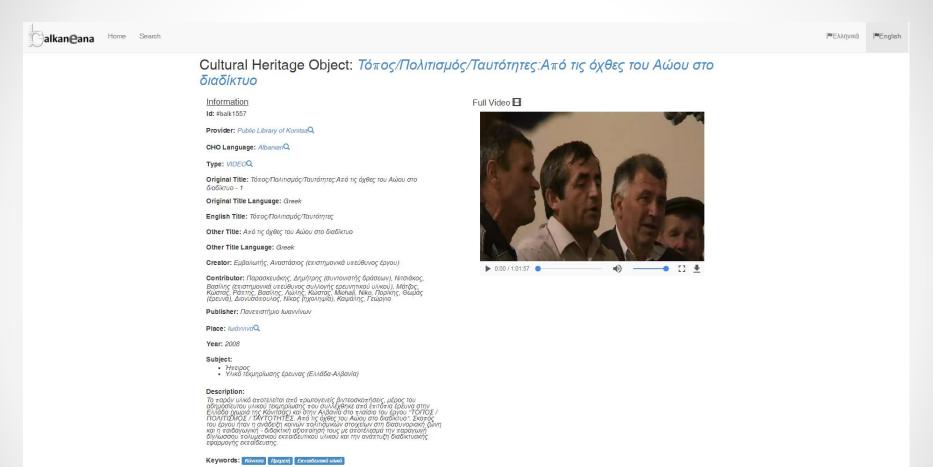
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Building on Balkaneana -efficient search (1)

Building on Balkaneana – multimodal content (2)

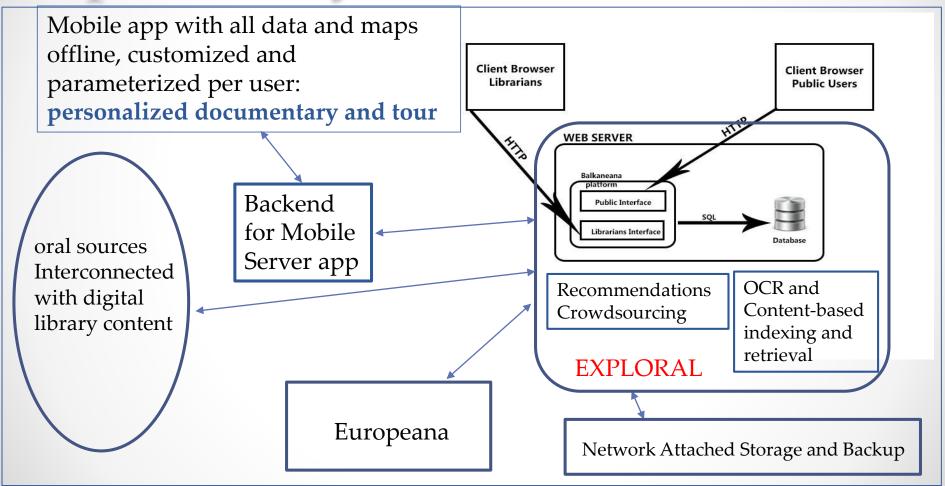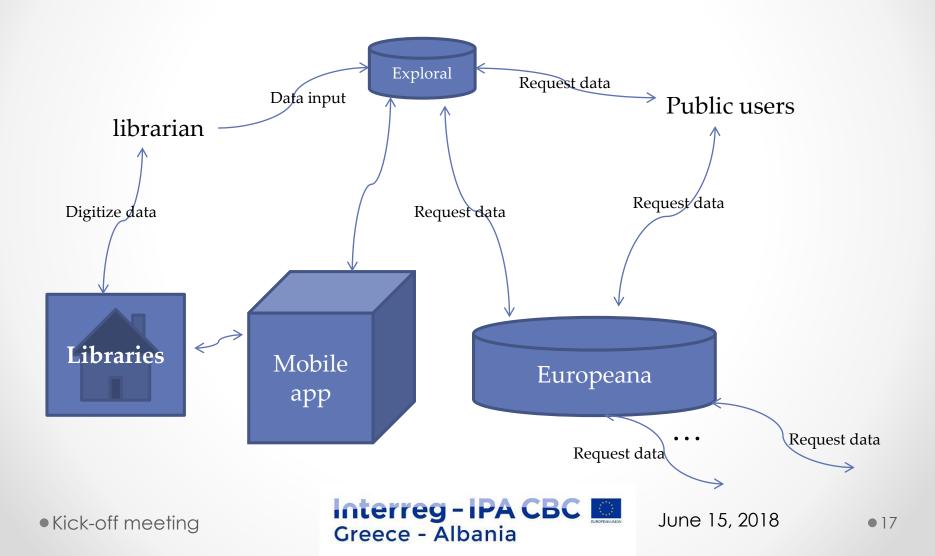# *Building on Balkaneana – audio/video material (3)*

Building on Balkaneana –interconnected to Europeana (4)

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Exploral System Architecture

Mobile app with all data and maps offline, customized and parameterized per user: **personalized documentary and tour**

oral sources Interconnected with digital library content

Backend for Mobile Server app

Client Browser Librarians

Client Browser Public Users

HTTP

HTTP

WEB SERVER

Balkaneana platform

Public Interface

Librarians Interface

SQL

Database

Recommendations Crowdsourcing

OCR and Content-based indexing and retrieval

EXPLORAL

Europeana

Network Attached Storage and Backup

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Information flow

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Activities per partner (LB1)

- Overall Project Management (WP1)
- Organize the kick-off meeting, participation to all meetings, participation to Information Days, leaflet preparation, media and press (WP1 and WP2)
- Coordination and participation to the development of Exploral by adding additional functionality to Balkaneana (crowdsourcing support, recommendation system, OCR and content based retrieval tool) (WP3)
- Acquisition of material from oral sources from all the cross-border region: joint team with experts from BP2 with assistance from BP3 and BP4 for local arrangements and transport (WP4)

Activities per partner (LB1)

- Enhancement of platform to fully integrate oral sources using ontologies so as to provide effective interconnection with related documents (WP4)

- Mobile app: customized guides/documentaries produced automatically from libraries with user/tourist input (added value for tourism) (WP5)

- Training of staff of the Libraries on cross border ethnography and culture, related literature and archives (WP6)

- Integrate cross references to the content of other libraries (WP6)

Activities per partner (PB2)

- Organize the final meeting, participation to all meetings, organize one Information Day (towards the end of the project), participation to Information Days, media and press (WP1 and WP2)

- Provide input and cooperate with LB1 to determine user requirements (WP3)

- Perform OCR to documents by using the tool provided by LB1 (WP3)

- Jointly with the LB1 Ethnography team conduct interviews to all cross border region (WP4)

- Convert audio/video files from interviews in Konitsa area, document and provide description and cross references to already digitized documents (content from entire cross-border region) (WP4)

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Activities per partner (PB2)

- Contribute to the layout of user requirement for the mobile app (WP5)
- Network of libraries: joint events, cross border inter-loan of books and documents through Exploral platform, extension of network to other libraries of Greece and Albania (WP6)
- Port location-within-the-library information to the Exploral Platform, and include entries that are on Exploral and have not been included in the library's electronic catalogue (WP6)
- Equipment and renovation (WP6)

Activities per partner (PB3)

- Organize the 1st intermediate meeting, participation to all meetings, organize one Information Day, participation to Information Days, leaflets, media and press (WP1 and WP2)

- Provide input and cooperate with LB1 to determine user requirements (WP3)

- Perform OCR to documents by using the tool provided by LB1 (WP3)

- Assist LB1-PB2 Ethnography team conduct interviews to regions around Gjirokastra (WP4)

- Convert audio/video files from interviews in Albania regions (WP4)

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Activities per partner (PB3)

- Contribute to the layout of user requirement for the mobile app, contribute to translation of interfaces (WP5)

- Training of libraries' staff (organized by PB3, contribution by all partners)

- Network of libraries: joint events, cross border inter-loan of books and documents through Exploral platform, extension of network to other libraries of Greece and Albania (WP6)

- Electronic cataloguing system for Municipal Library of Gjirokastra (WP6)

- Equipment and renovation (WP6)

Activities per partner (PB4)

- Organize the 2nd intermediate meeting, participation to all meetings, participation to Information Days, media and press (WP1 and WP2)

- Provide input and cooperate with LB1 to determine user requirements (WP3)

- Perform scanning of documents of the library and upload them to the Exploral platform, perform OCR to documents by using the tool provided by LB1 (WP3)

- Assist LB1-PB2 Ethnography team conduct interviews to regions around Permet (WP4)

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Activities per partner (PB4)

- Contribute to the layout of user requirement for the mobile app, contribute to translation of interfaces (WP5)

- Network of libraries: joint events, cross border inter-loan of books and documents through Exploral platform, extension of network to other libraries of Greece and Albania (WP6)

- Electronic cataloguing system for Municipal Library of Permet (WP6)

- Equipment and renovation (WP6)

Administrative issues

Register to the MIS and open an account

Prefinancing for Albanian partners (waiting for the actions to follow)

Small relocation of budget from staff to external expertise and services (accepted by the partnership)

Procurements

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Thank you!

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