



Interreg



Danube Transnational Programme

ISTER

ISTER Policy Handbook

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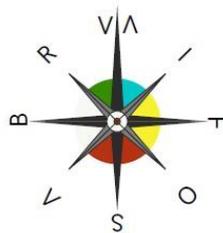


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Concept of the Process

Executive Summary

I. Policy Integration.....7

1.1. Horizontally

1.2. Vertically

1.3 Territorially

II. Policy Design.....12

2.1. Challenges and Opportunities in protection, preservation, management, and sustainable use of Roman Heritage legacy in ISTER countries

2.1.1 Romania

2.1.2 Bulgaria

2.1.3 Hungary

2.1.4 Serbia

2.1.5 Bosnia and Herzegovina

2.1.6 Austria

2.1.7 Slovenia

2.1.8 Germany

2.2. Common Challenges and Opportunities. Danube Region Context

2.2.1. Challenges in protection and preservation, management and sustainable use and promotion of Roman Heritage legacy in the Danube Region

2.2.2. Opportunities for the protection, preservation, management, and sustainable use of Roman Heritage legacy in the Danube Region

2.3. Guidelines for successful practices in ISTER countries

2.3.1 Romania

2.3.2 Bulgaria

2.3.3 Hungary

2.3.4 Serbia

2.3.5 Bosnia and Herzegovina

2.3.6 Austria

2.3.7 Slovenia

2.3.8 Germany

2.4. Roadmap for effective policy design for the valorization of Roman Heritage legacy within EU transnational cooperation. Sustaining a transnational Cultural Route

III. Policy Communication Toolkit.....25

3.1 Stakeholders' engagement

3.1.1 Identify your stakeholders (Step 1)

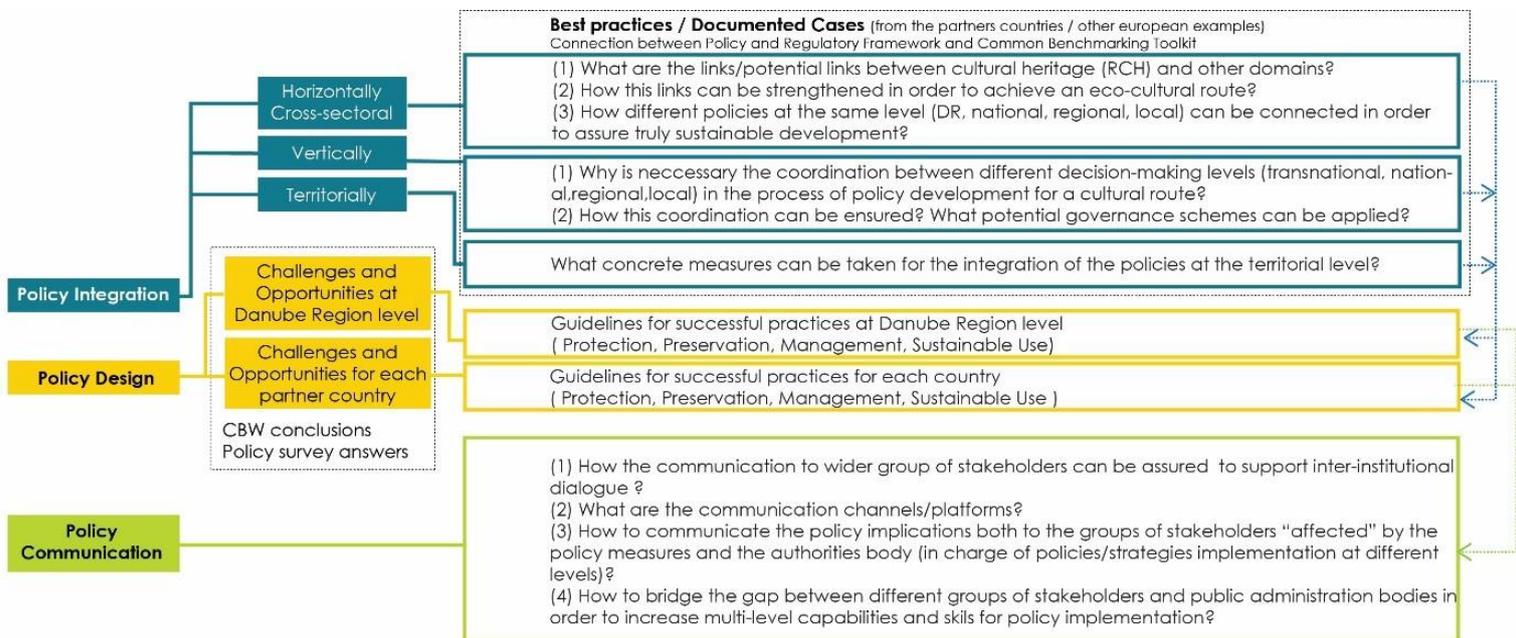
3.1.2 Assess and prioritize relevant stakeholders (Step 2)

3.1.3 Understand your stakeholders (Step 3)

3.1.4 Key points of the successful stakeholder engagement

3.2 Future perspectives - ISTER association

Concept of the Process



Executive summary

The aim of the ISTER Policy Handbook is to allow the sharing of the project's findings to Danube Region similar territories, as well as to wider interested communities at the EU level. The lessons learned are formulated in such a manner to cover the following sectors: (1) Policy integration, (2) Policy design, and (3) Policy Communication.

Policy Integration. In order to achieve the envisioned objective and set the ground for defining the final roadmap, was essential to review the regulatory environment and existing good practices in the partner countries as well as at the European level. In this chapter, the main findings of the desk-research activity within the ISTER project are presented, highlighting the importance of cooperation between different sectors and decision-making levels and their potential territorial effects.

Policy Design. This chapter identifies specific challenges and opportunities in the protection, preservation, management, and sustainable use of RCH legacy in each ISTER country, the basis on which a specific set of policies was formulated together with the general overview of the current situation in the Danube Region.

Starting from defining the main characteristics and the envisioned impact of a Cultural Route, the proposed roadmap at the end of the chapter provides step-by-step guidance on how they can be supported effectively through policy design, namely by considering vertical, horizontal, and territorial policy integration in all the stages for CH protection and valorization. Having this in mind, and by leveraging also on the in-depth context analysis conducted in each partner country, the chapter ends by proposing 7 policies at the DR level, related to more effective governance, better accessibility, and visibility of RCH, a harmonized legal environment, multi-disciplinary cooperation, integrated approaches for the route development and financial sustainability of the route.

Policy Communication. Last but not least, the Policy Communication toolkit elaborates on the stakeholder engagement and endorsement of policy recommendations of the ISTER project, as well as on future steps for a more in-depth collaboration at the DR level, which could be achieved through the establishment of a transnational association. The chapter presents the key steps to be followed for a successful engagement in further policy elaboration, as well as the vision, main goals, and potential transnational and national governance structure of the ISTER association.

I. Policy Integration

1.1. Horizontally

The concept of heritage has been defined more and more precisely in recent decades and can typically be divided into two parts: **Cultural heritage** and **Natural heritage**. From the perspective of project ISTER, cultural heritage is the determining factor, which is defined by UNSECO as follows: "cultural heritage may be defined as the entire corpus of material signs – either artistic or symbolic – handed on by the past to each culture and, therefore, to the whole of mankind. As a constituent part of the affirmation and enrichment of cultural identities, as a legacy belonging to all mankind, the cultural heritage gives each particular place its recognizable features and is the storehouse of human experience". Cultural heritage can be intangible and tangible, including (1) monuments (architectural works, archaeological elements, inscriptions, paintings, cave dwellings), (2) groups of buildings (separate or connected buildings characterized by homogeneity or peculiar place in landscape), and (3) sites (areas with works of man or combined works of nature and man, including archaeological sites).

Since the ISTER project focuses on the tangible cultural heritage and the connection of its elements, it is important to understand how extensive the regulatory environment is that can ensure the successful implementation of the project. Cultural heritage protection, the tourism sector, and regional development are all affected, but of course, it is also essential to take into account the principles of sustainability.

It is worth reviewing some strategic or operational regulatory documents that can be decisive in maintaining the results of the project:

In 2015, UNESCO developed a document (***Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention***) that emphasizes sustainability aspects for the elements of the World Heritage List and in the nomination process. As part of the clear statement of UNESCO regarding the crucial importance of blending cultural heritage management with sustainable development principles, the Policy document strongly advises state parties to "reinforce their governance frameworks" and include more participatory approaches, which takes into consideration local communities and other interested parties views

The ***New European Agenda for Culture*** published by the European Commission (2018) examines the issue of cultural heritage in a very complex manner and, in addition to its preservation, focuses on its sustainable economic utilization. Furthermore brings into discussion new and more specific dimensions, highlighting Cultural Heritage role for:

- assuring social and territorial cohesion and well-being (including topics like territorial development, mobility, migrants inclusion, gender, and cultural participation);
- supporting creativity, education, innovation and job creation;
- strengthening international cultural relations.

In addition to the international and European Union recommendations, we can also find best practices in the countries of the Danube region, which we review in the next chapter.

1.2. Vertically

As we have seen before, the preservation of cultural heritage is a very broad and complex process, moreover, the decision-making in the case of the ISTER route affects quite a few countries, in which the decision-making levels and competencies are quite mixed. In the framework of the project, the partners examined the regulatory environment in each partner country among the first activities. The main operating models to be highlighted in each country are as follows:

The Federal Act on the Protection of Monuments Due to Their Historic, Artistic or Other Cultural Significance or Monument Protection Act provides essential information and guidelines regarding issues of preservation and protection, permission, investigation, ownership, and signage in **Austria**. The Federal Monuments Authority is a public authority bound by instructions from the federal ministry and tasked with executing federal laws and regulations in this field as well as overseeing matters relating to material cultural heritage in general. The Monument Advisory Council is a body to advise the Federal Monument Office (or the Federal Ministers for Education, Art, and Culture) on the solution to questions of monument protection and preservation. The Monuments Advisory Council recommends experts in spatial planning for the composition of the committee. Most museums and collections are within the competencies of the individual provinces, except for a small group of designated Federal Museums.

The main act for cultural heritage conservation in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** is the Law on Implementation of Decisions of the Commission/ Commission for the Protection of National Monuments established pursuant to Annex 8 of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The act regulating building activities outside national monuments is the Law on approving construction outside the borders of national monuments or outside temporary borders and implementation of protection measures from 2008. In Republika Srpska the Ministry of Trade and Tourism of Republika Srpska has jurisdiction over the matter.

The Cultural Heritage Act in **Bulgaria** is from 2009, with some later changes. General principles of protection and conservation are exposed in article 3 (1): "This law has the aim of creating a suitable environment in order to preserve and protect the cultural heritage, sustainably develop a policy for its preservation and guarantee equal access of citizens to cultural heritage. Conditions for executors of archaeological research and restoration works are in the Bulgarian Cultural Heritage Act defined as follows:"Article 164. (1) Conservation and restoration actions, as well as actions for adapting cultural heritage are to be undertaken by experts, or under the supervision of experts, registered in the registry outlined in Article 165. With regards to cultural heritage protection within spatial planning ,there are additional regulations and clarifications of the Law on Cultural Heritage state: [...] 10. "Integrated conservation" includes a range of measures, aiming to eternalize the cultural heritage as a part of the respective environment, crafted by people and nature, and the usage and adaptation of the sites for the needs of the society.

Due to the federal structure of **Germany** the responsibility for culture and cultural heritage is not on a national but on a regional level, which means that respective laws are developed and executed on the level of 16 Bundesländer or federal states. There is only one law available that has binding authority to all federal states, that is the Act on the Protection of Cultural Property from 2016, related to movable cultural property. The law defines the conditions for interventions in cases of import, duties of care, return mechanisms, nationally valuable cultural property, national cultural property and export regulations. The law also defines archaeological artifacts, their ownership, and the responsible authorities.

Heritage protection activities in **Hungary** are carried out in a centralized system. Legislation and regulation are a state task, covering the entire country and is enforced locally through the Departments of Construction and Heritage Protection of the County Government Offices. Archaeological heritage is protected by Act LXIV. 2001, regulated by the governmental implementation decrees.

In **Romania** there are four main guiding instruments developed at the national level, which deal with the protection and valorization of Cultural Heritage. Both laws and the strategy were in the responsibility of the same major institutions such as the main ministries responsible for the topic (Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration) in collaboration with the National Commission for Archaeology. Yet, for the Strategy for Culture and National Heritage (2016-2020) the process was more transparent and collaborative, and additional stakeholders were invited to participate, such as local public administrations (which were invited to integrate specific objectives for archaeological heritage protection in the socio-economic and urban development programs), non-governmental organizations and SMEs which are active in the field, as well as public cultural institutions from national/regional and local level.

The protection and valorization of Cultural Heritage in the Republic of **Serbia** is managed at three different levels: national, provincial and local. Ministry of Culture and Information is in charge of preparing regulations and implementing policies pertaining to the protection of movable, immovable and intangible cultural heritage at the national level. Within the ministry, the Sector for Cultural Heritage Protection and Digitalization is responsible for analyzing and monitoring the situation in the cultural heritage protection and preservation field and for proposing strategies and measures aimed at its development and improvement. Support in the development of cultural policies and strategies comes from The National Council for Culture and The Institute for Studying Cultural Development, while responsibility for the implementation of these policies at the national level lies with 21 institutions for cultural heritage protection.

The main law in the concerning field in **Slovenia** is the Cultural Heritage Protection Act from 2008 with subsequent changes. Protection is established through different procedures and with different gradations:

- registered cultural heritage is acknowledged by the entry in the Register of immovable cultural heritage,
- monuments of local importance are acknowledged by the proclamation act of the municipality,
- monuments of national importance are acknowledged by proclamation act of the government

When examined from a transnational perspective, it is primarily worth reviewing the relevant strategic documents and directives of the EU. The EC's defined priorities for 2019-2024 are highly relevant for policymaking in the field of culture at the EU level and for the following key themes of European cultural cooperation.

- Supporting cultural heritage
- The socio-economic value of culture
- Boosting gender equality and diversity
- Measuring the positive impact of culture

These priorities are part of the overall political strategy of the European Union. The defined priorities remain highly relevant for policymaking in the field of culture at the EU level and for the key themes of European cultural cooperation. The new Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 document – which is in the development phase - will constitute the roadmap to coordinate cultural policies at the EU level on the basis of the priorities that have been identified.

The European Commission closely cooperates with Member States, at the Council of the European Union, in particular the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (EYCS) and the Cultural Affairs Committee (CAC). Aside from political meetings, part of this cooperation is also accomplished at the expert level through the Open Method of Coordination.

1.3. Territorially

As the 'Policy And Regulatory Framework' document prepared during the project points out "territorial dimension is important to be considered in a cultural heritage/route project, because of potential synergies which it can generate on local, regional and national levels through an integrated approach between peculiar qualities of the physical environment, built environment and anthropic environment". From the point of view of the topic, five best practices were highlighted on EU level, namely:

- Wooden Architecture Route – WA (Poland)
- Act No. 49/2002 on the protection of monuments and historic sites of Slovak Republic (Slovakia)
- Puglia Region Operational Program 2014-2020 (Italy)
- The Management Plan of the Historic Centre of Florence 2016. (Italy)
- Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe program at the example of Iter Vitis

The **Wooden Architecture Route** in Malopolska Province Poland, stretching over 1.500 km, includes 237 architectural examples. Along the trail are picturesque Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic and Orthodox churches, tall bell-towers, Old Polish manor and detached houses, heritage parks, all of which are considered invaluable legacies of folk culture that stood the test of time. The Wooden Architecture Route came into existence in 2001 and in n 2003 four wooden churches in Małopolska were entered onto the UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage List. The different elements (information tables, signs etc.) of the route are continuously renewed. The road is a good example of how a large number of monuments can be forged into a unified tourist product in a relatively large geographical area.

The purpose of **Act No. 49/2002 the protection of cultural heritage monuments and historic sites**, archaeological finds and archaeological sites in accordance with scientific knowledge and in accordance with international conventions concerning

European and world cultural heritage to which the Slovak Republic has acceded. The act regulates the organization and competence of state administration authorities and territorial self-government authorities and the rights and duties of owners and other legal entities and natural persons and the imposition of fines for unlawful conduct relating to the protection of monuments which form an important part of cultural heritage and whose conservation is in the public interest. The Slovak legislation pays particular attention to the cooperation mechanism of the actors involved in the protection of cultural heritage, be it the individual state or sectoral institutions or the owners of the affected properties.

Since Italy is extremely rich in cultural heritage from different ages, it is worth presenting a regional example from there. The ***Puglia Region Operational Program 2014-2020*** is co-funded by the EU ERDF for less developed regions and thus aims to contribute to the EU2020 Strategy. Puglia Region expected ROP Puglia 2014-2020 to better focus on cultural route development in order to put in place targeted territorial projects on the ground. Puglia Region policy is also expected to have the opportunity to achieve a comprehensive Action Plan on this issue, in cooperation with all stakeholders. F.e. the Green Pilgrimage project fostered better governance of natural and cultural heritage along the pilgrimage route through a public-private partnership, improved infrastructure and cultural tourism offered along the route. MAYBE WE CAN CHANGE THIS ONE TO A 2021-2027 example. or check if they have an ex post analysis of ROP Puglia.

Another Italian example is the ***Management Plan of the Historic Centre of Florence*** which describes how to preserve its Outstanding Universal Value over time of the UNESCO site. The plan was proposed as a strategic and operational tool that can bring together the numerous territorial dimensions involved and identify objectives and concrete actions to address the threats to the preservation of the OUV. Is an instrument that can foster projects for protection and development that are agreed and coordinated by the various subjects and entities operating within the territory, which contribute to safeguarding the site and favouring the optimization of the resources and the rrationalizationof the economic investments.

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe program was launched by the Council in 1987. The prprogramcts as a channel for intercultural dialogue and promotes better knowledge and understanding of European cultural identity while preserving and enhancing natural and cultural heritage. Currently 48 Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe provide a wealth of leisure and educational activities for all citizens across Europe and beyond and are key resources for responsible tourism and sustainable development. One of them ***Iter Vitis Route***, which has been certified in 2009, focuses on the culture of the vine, winemaking and viticultural landscapes. The example of Iter Vitis Route shows very well that networking and cooperation have created a worldwide active federation that is dedicated to a wide variety of topics.

Main points which emerge from the best practice analysis when taking into account territorial dimension are:

- the importance of developing an integrated approach/ management of the territory in terms of tourism infrastructure, transportation and commerce in relation to CH values;
- cooperation with different bodies, consultation with citizens and other interested actors;
- improving the conditions of the surrounding areas;

- sustain green travel through regional landscapes and support the connectivity of rural and urban areas;
- support the development of an integrated tourism offer (food, traditions etc) around the CH assets;
- assure a long-term and quality development of local activities through selection criteria of operations that support the tourism system/cultural route connectivity at the macro level.

II. Policy Design

2.1. Challenges and Opportunities in protection, preservation, management, and sustainable use of Roman Heritage legacy in ISTER countries

2.1.1 Romania

Challenges

- Different land ownership: the difficulties in implementing the route where the road crosses private lands (e.g the increased time for approval of legal documentation and land use plans);
- Finding additional tourist attractions connected to the route and ensuring economic development of the areas through which the route passes;
- Need for funds and partnerships to ensure the preservation of the existing heritage and landscapes;
- Practical implementation of the route: different obstacles exist in several areas such as the elevation, use or position of the terrains (e.g forests or remote areas that are not as easily accesible as corn fields);
- Lack of vision, interest and knowledge of the existing resources at local level (e.g tourist valorization of the existing resources as a future benefit for the community, an integrated methodology: inventory/research, evaluation and management, poor preservation and promotion of assets: maintenance, signaling, information);
- Lack of involvement/inclusion of different stakeholders of interest: specific administrative and specialized structures from each county, decision-makers, community (in the asset management process), NGOs (awareness raising) and historians (to be included in the management process within municipal or local structures);
- Deficient legislation (e.g for valuable sites to enter the management of specialists);
- Lack of concrete adequate solutions;
- Absence of a specialized department consisting of interdisciplinary teams, in obtaining financing for the heritage in each municipality (institutions can not access funds directly, but only through CJ);

Opportunities

- Connections with other related thematic Romanian routes (e.g gastronomic or cultural routes);
- Create mini-vacations across the route (touristic packages which can include the main cultural attractions in an area: e.g Turda-salt mine, the Potaissa fort,

as well as clear information and opportunities for the visitors: restaurants, accommodation, museums and festivals);

- Register for the Ministry of Tourism financing programs;
- Implementation of velo trails between localities following the course of the Roman road;
- Include other touristic attractions in the overall management and promotion plan;
- The formation of an identity based on roman heritage history and the creation of a “niche” tourism;
- Extended knowledge of the existing roman heritage could bring benefits to the academic environment;

2.1.2 Bulgaria

Challenges

- The expectations toward the implementation of a state policy are related to funds facilities and grant schemes for the development of culture and tourism in the region;
- Institutional capacity for managing the route;

Opportunities

- Raising awareness and increasing knowledge through launching a series of radio broadcasts related to the local Roman heritage;
- Finding common ground and new business initiatives to promote the region and attract more tourists;
- Form a motivated union around a clear branding strategy based on the Roman cultural heritage (regional and municipal administrations);
- Readiness of the regional and local authorities for assistance, support and collaboration for the further development of the route;

2.1.3 Hungary

Challenges

- Poor spatial planning: no harmonized legal environment, unilateral decision making, bad quality of designs and reconstruction plans;
- Lack of best practices/models for future operation;
- Lack of cooperation between different stakeholders: municipalities, museums, decision-makers, CH protection institutes and citizens;
- Lack of archaeological preparation documents (excavations, restoration plans etc.);
- Poor management/implementation process which causes problems later on;
- Protected areas are hard to maintain;
- Decaying historical environment, improper treatment of monuments and little attention/interest from society;

Opportunities

- Create a marketing campaign for the roman cultural activities run by the Museum of Paks (Lussonium days, feasts, programs for children and family, teambuilding activities) for reaching wider public not only the locals;

- Increasing the attractiveness of existing roman cultural events (Lussonium days) through infrastructure development and extension;
- Increasing touristic offers with additional events and activities (e.g. water tours along the Danube, Paks Rock festival);

2.1.4 Serbia

Challenges

- Insufficient funds and investment in the cultural sector;
- Lack of thematic events, festivals and interesting ways of promoting heritage;
- Need and importance of connecting the route with outdoor activities (considering post-COVID trends in tourism which will be mainly focused more on this type of travel);

Opportunities

- Connection with other cultural routes for better visibility and promotion;
- Make Cultural Heritage accessible through technology: Digital tools for better presentation and promotion of the Roman cultural heritage, especially the less known settlements and remains;
- Engagement of local organizations and institutions ;
- Raising awareness of the Roman heritage, culture, tourism and territorial development: " Culture in the service of tourism but also the tourism in the service of the culture!";
- Collaboration with other similar projects and initiatives will lead to greater results and will provide sustainability over time;
- Implementation of modern techniques and digital methods for the presentation of Roman cultural heritage using augmented and virtual reality for successful interpretation of cultural heritage in the new digital era.

2.1.5 Bosnia and Herzegovina

Challenges

- Poor spatial planning (lack of archeological / conservation plans or development strategies) which could lead to heritage deterioration, destruction, and loss of identity;
- Lack of visibility and accessibility of the monuments and cultural heritage;
- Lack of funds and investment in monuments and cultural heritage;
- Ownership problems;
- Poor touristic offer;
- Lack of knowledge in what concern monuments and cultural heritage (research needed);

Opportunities

- Creation of biking tours (connecting two roads where milestones will be placed with waterfalls Štrbački buk and Old towns Sokolac and Ostrovica);
- Connection with other existing cultural routes and similar projects;
- Presentation of Roman Heritage in Una-Sana Canton in the Museum of USC;
- Sharing experiences and promotion;

- Organization of workshops for raising awareness;

2.1.6. Austria

Challenges

- Maintenance of cultural heritage assets (short-live excavation projects with no provision for maintenance) due to lack of funds, workforce, organizational capacity for smaller sites, and low awareness of locals and visitors; This leads to physical deterioration of sites, loss of attractiveness for researchers, tourists, and locals;
- Lack of cooperation and integration (willingness to cooperate - cooperation is seen as too time-consuming or difficult): division of responsibility and tasks between local, regional, and federal levels of government, concentration on small-scale interventions;
- Activities related to touristic development are often outsourced or have low priority for local authorities or scientific institutions which leads to a lack of awareness of ongoing projects/efforts;

Opportunities

- Link the project to existing cycling routes;
- Develop soft infrastructure for the travelers close to the milestones (benches, shadowed areas, charging points);
- Need for multi-sensorial experiences;
- Need for networking and exchange among smaller institutions and knowledge transfer;
- Need to collaborate with similar projects;

2.1.8. Slovenia

Challenges

- Poor spatial and strategic planning (lack of conservation and management plans and documents: e.g a long-term vision with short-term goals for interpreting, the whole cultural heritage of Ptuj; activity plan according to the vision);
- Insufficient funds for the preservation and management of archeological heritage;
- Recognition of the importance of local roman cultural heritage (being perceived as less spectacular than the one in Rome);
- Lack or few measures to preserve roman cultural heritage;
- The national identity lost its connections with roman culture due to a broken historical thread between antiquity and the Middle Ages - Slavic influence being more closely within the national identity in the present;
- Inclusion of the roman heritage culture within the educational and media environment;
- Unrecognized value of roman resources could lead to destruction and vandalism over time;

Opportunities

- Making Roman cultural heritage interesting and exciting for various types of visitors through different engaging methods
 - Immersive storytelling;
 - e.g The Roman day: treasure hunt through the city and museum (for families), Theatrical performance in the archaeological park, public lectures in the museum: “History on a plate” and “History in glass” (discussion about Roman food and drink culture);
 - Thematical guided tours through the Emonan ruins (themes: erotica in the Roman era; food and drink; slaves and its way of life; architectural aspect);
 - Presentation of archaeological finds in the Museum Treasury (presentation of Roman findings during recent excavation in Ljubljana);
 - VR glasses on the archaeological sites and augmented reality app with Emonan character;
- Support the cooperation with the local community, professional institutions, and other actors of interest;
- Raising awareness of the Roman heritage through the implementation of games;
- Cooperation with the regional museum Ptuj Ormož (special emphasis to authenticity and correct presentation) as well as with other related projects;

2.1.9 Germany

Challenges

- Poor visibility and accessibility of Roman routes in East Wuerttemberg (difficult to experience);
- Lack of integrated multi-thematic strategies supported financially, beyond the development of particular sites and topics;
- Principles and mechanisms of guidance/management and information for visitors (e.g to prolong the duration of stay);
- Experience-oriented marketing strategies for larger-scale development and integration;
- Need for touristic activities focused on active experiences (e.g. excursions, guided hiking tours) in connection with cultural heritage assets;
- International touristic activities coordinated at the federal-state level (high-level communication);
- Finding methods for visitors to experience the cultural heritage / archeological assets which are not visible;
- Hard to integrate into the touristic field/marketing the results of scientific knowledge;
- Establishing a methodology for the classification of Roman heritage sites (e.g Römerkeller Oberkochen);
- Increased timelines for the development of small and effective projects and measures;
- Poor funding of intercommunal/ interregional cooperation projects/ programs;
- Staff shortages within different governance structures;
- Low prioritization of tourism funding in times of economic recession;

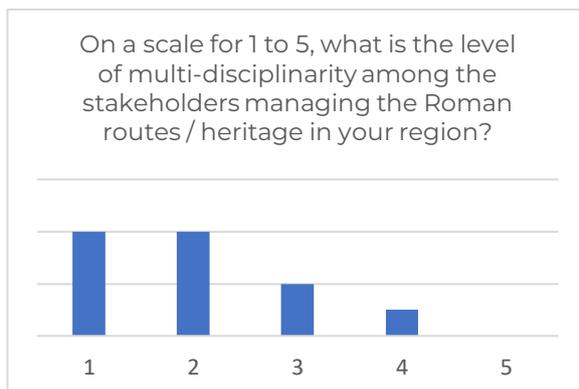
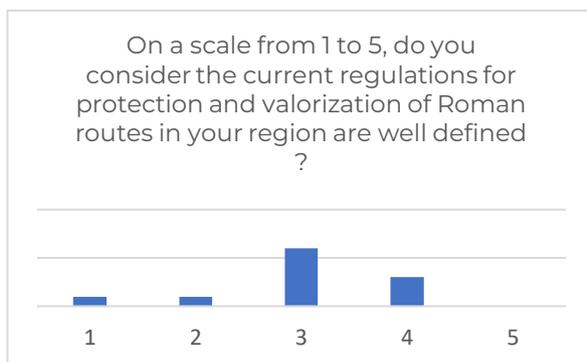
- Emphasizing unique characteristics of cultural heritage instead of a “to have it all” approach;
- Reviving both public and scientific interest in the topic of Roman cultural routes;
- Long-lasting/sustainable involvement and engagement of assertive creators and enthusiasts;
- Sound methods for evaluating inter-community/inter-regional cooperation;
- Scientists struggle against misinterpretation of historical facts/assets while local tourism/marketing managers leave too much room for interpretation;
- Partly volatile communal structures regarding tourism and cultural heritage;
- Low interest of visitors to visit all the cultural assets within the large-scale archeological parks;
- Saturated market within the region regarding the touristic sector;
- Need for the institutionalization of networks and cooperation within cultural heritage valorization initiatives;

Opportunities

- Rich Roman cultural heritage which can be valorized;
- Possible cooperation with other projects: UNESCO World Cultural Heritage: Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Upper German-Raetian Limes) and UNESCO World Heritage: Caves and Ice Age Art;
- Recognition of importance and support for archaeology and history topics at the district’s highest administrative level (Ostalbkreis);
- Roman heritage as a source of reflection on current social and political trends;
- Access to international experience related to touristic use and archaeological protection of Roman heritage;
- Linking VIA ISTER with existing hiking/biking routes (updates to be followed in time);
- Roman heritage as a cross-cutting topic in different projects;
- Huge scientific knowledge about the Roman heritage and Roman routes in particular in the region of East Wuerttemberg;
- Recognized and scientifically well-proven Roman routes in the region between Bopfingen, Heidenheim, and Faimingen;
- Existence of several best practices in the federal state of Baden-Wuerttemberg such as Römerstraße Neckar-Alb-Aare association;
- Need to develop education programs for Roman Routes Guides;
- Long-term sustainability of ISTER project in the region of East Wuerttemberg;
- Complete touristic concept in the district of Heidenheim with a focus on geology, archaeology, and history, backed by strong marketing activity;
- Cooperation between archaeologists and tourism managers on site to valorize and promote cultural heritage;
- Sound archaeological methods to be used during explorative field works;
- Practice of cooperation with scientific advisors;
- Existing thematic networks (for example among museums);
- Assertive makers and enthusiasts who may offer different aspects of Roman life (i.e gastronomy, craftsmanship, dressing , fighting)

- Combination of natural-cultural conditions and committed engagement from local stakeholders;
- Conviction of labels like “vocation route”, “cultural route” on the administrative level;
- Extension of guided hiking tours i. e. with help of Limes Cicerone's association;
- Transform existing roman cultural knowledge within the region into a touristic experience despite the punctual / imperceptible archaeological assets;
- Comprehensive summarising of all current activities in the region of East Wuerttemberg within a databases;
- Cooperation with scientific advisors;
- More intensive involvement of the Limes museum as the competence center N1. Closer cooperation with experienced museums always allows direct contact with end-users.

2.2. Common Challenges and Opportunities. Danube Region Context



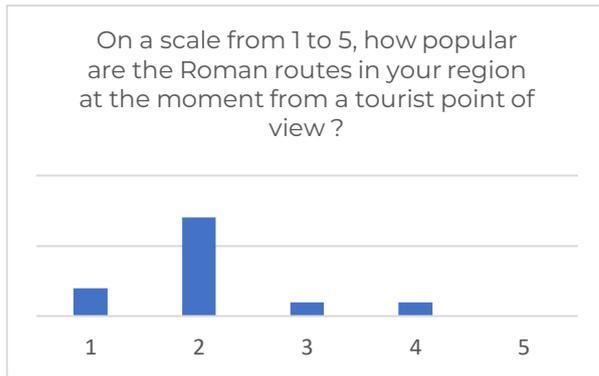
2.2.1. Challenges in protection, preservation, management and sustainable use of Roman Heritage legacy in the Danube Region

Among the list¹ of **weaknesses for sustaining a transnational cultural route** provided for the partners within the Policy Handbook survey, several weaknesses were highlighted: the institutional capacity to manage the route in my country, promotion, financing and regulations related to cultural heritage and regulations for sustaining the integrity of the territorial development.

Other **main issues highlighted** within the Policy survey were: the poor popularity of the Roman routes in the regions of the partner countries (from a tourist point of view) as well as the low level of multi-disciplinarity among the

stakeholders managing the Roman routes/heritage. On a scale from 1 to 5, Current regulations for the protection and valorization of Roman routes were mostly considered well-defined, although in some DR countries were considered not so well determined (Bulgaria and Romania) Taking into consideration both the

¹ Financing, Promotion, National cooperation, Transnational cooperation, Institutional capacity to manage the route in my country, Regulations related to heritage, Regulations which sustain the integrity of the territorial development, Proper infrastructure for sustaining an eco-cultural route (non-motorized transport), Infrastructure for tourists: info points, hotels, restaurants along the route



conclusions from the capacity building workshops (CBWs) organized with local stakeholders in each country and the Policy Handbook survey answers, there are several **main challenges** related to the protection, preservation, management and sustainable use of the Roman Heritage legacy in the Danube Region, as follows:

1. **Ownership issues;**
2. **Poor spatial and strategic planning** (lack of archeological/conservation and management plans/documents, visions and action plans);
3. **No harmonized legal environment or deficient legislation** (regulations related to cultural heritage and regulations for sustaining the integrity of the territorial development);
4. **Lack of interest and knowledge** of the existing monuments and (roman) cultural heritage assets and their potential valorization;
5. **Lack of an integrated methodology:** inventory/research, evaluation and management, preservation and promotion of assets (maintenance, signaling, information);
6. **Insufficient funds and investment** in monuments, cultural heritage sector and touristic development;
7. **Lack or poor visibility and accessibility** of the monuments and cultural heritage;
8. Unilateral decision-making: **lack of cooperation and integration between different stakeholders** on 2 levels: (1) between municipalities, museums, historians, decision-makers, CH protection institutes, citizens, and NGOs and (2) between local, regional, and national decision-making stakeholders;
9. **Reviving of both public and scientific interest** in the topic of Roman cultural heritage;
10. **Lack of interest from society and long-lasting involvement** and engagement of potential interest persons;
11. Need and importance **of connecting the route with additional tourist attractions** and outdoor activities (active experiences activities)
12. **Integrate into the tourist field the results of scientific knowledge** in the field of (roman) cultural heritage;
13. **Institutional capacity to manage the cultural route;**
14. **Poor promotion** of the roman cultural assets & poor popularity of the Roman routes;

STRATEGIC ACTION		Romania	Hungary	Serbia	Bosnia and Hertzegovina	Slovenia	Germany	Austria
SOCIAL	Promote the use of CH for education, research and lifelong training	30	60	17	39	54	17	12
	Strengthen regional and international cultural relations	27	57	16	39	40	23	8
	Foster social cohesion through shared responsibility towards CH	28	63	16	36	46	19	3
	Develop and promote participatory heritage identification programmes	29	57	18	33	38	14	12
	Increase citizen knowledge of and information on heritage	30	60	20	38	51	23	7
	Empower local communities and authorities to support CH rehabilitation	31	65	19	39	42	19	8
	Encourage and facilitate public-private collaborations in CH valorization	36	61	15	38	41	16	10
TERRITORIAL & ECONOMIC	Give CH a function in the life of the community	34	68	14	39	45	14	7
	Make CH more accessible	35	59	20	39	49	17	11
	Promote cultural heritage as a resource and facilitate financial investment	33	59	20	39	50	27	10
	Support the region in forming an identity and to increase its attractiveness through CH	33	70	15	39	46	20	10
	Support creativity, innovation, business opportunities and job creation	30	60	21	39	46	22	8
	Promote synergies between tourism and cultural and creative industries	29	63	16	39	45	21	10
	Encourage the reuse of cultural heritage for new purposes	28	51	16	39	45	18	11
ENVIRONMENTAL	Take into consideration alternative funding mechanisms	25	54	15	39	42	26	7
	Blend CH management with sustainable development principles	31	62	19	39	34	23	10
	Integrate slow and sustainable tourism products to attract walking, cycling etc	28	68	16	38	48	23	12
	Identify and support initiatives where tourism activity can support ecological restoration	26	72	16	39	39	21	4
	Encourage locally-driven tourism management around CH values.	31	69	19	35	46	21	10
	Promote sustainable economic activities related to arts & crafts in relation with CH conservation	27	60	17	37	38	21	4
	Maintain the integrity of socio-ecological systems surrounding the CH assets	28	55	15	35	35	12	9

Number of responses per country

Romania- 12 (LP+AIM)
 Slovenia - 18 (BISTRA +MGML)
 Hungary - 25 (VMJV+DDTG)
 Bosnia and Hertzegovina -13
 Austria - 4
 Serbia - 7
 Germany - 9

Level of priority

low priority
 medium priority
 high priority

2.2.2. Opportunities for the protection, preservation, management, and sustainable use of Roman Heritage legacy in the Danube Region Taking into consideration both the conclusions from the capacity building workshops (CBWs) organized with local stakeholders in each country and the Strategic actions prioritized within the practical exercise from above (2nd CBW) by the participants, there are several **main opportunities** related to the protection, preservation, management, and sustainable use of the Roman Heritage legacy in the Danube Region, as follow:

1. **Establish connections with other thematic, cultural, and biking routes and/or similar projects** for better visibility and promotion;
2. **Integrate slow and sustainable tourism** products to attract walking, cycling etc;
3. **Increase touristic offer and attractiveness** by including other touristic attractions, events, activities, and business initiatives in the overall management and promotion plan of the Roman Cultural Routes;
4. **Cooperation between fields** (geology, archeology, history, and tourism) in order to define a strong **marketing strategy**;
5. **Make Cultural Heritage accessible through technology** (modern techniques and methods for preservation, presentation, and promotion of RCH);
6. **Raising awareness and knowledge** of (roman) cultural heritage through different methods (workshops, radio broadcasts, games);
7. **Support creativity, innovation, business opportunities, and job creation**;
8. **Make Roman Cultural Heritage more accessible**;
9. **Promote the use of CH for education, research, and lifelong training**;
10. **Encourage the reuse of cultural heritage for new purposes**;
11. **Give Roman Cultural Heritage a function in the life of the community**;
12. **Support multi-disciplinary cooperation, assistance, and support** (local/regional authorities, community, professional institutions, archeologists, tourism managers, and other actors of interest) to valorize and promote the development of the route;
13. **Find various engagement and involvement methods** for visitors, local organizations/institutions, and other people interested;

2.3. Guidelines for successful practices in ISTER countries

2.3.1 Romania

- **Policy 1:** Ensure sustainable regional development through integrated planning, promotion, and management between roman cultural heritage resources, tourist attractions, and slow mobility opportunities;
- **Policy 2:** Facilitate the implementation of adequate processes/methodologies and a coherent legal planning environment for research, protection, management, and valorization of roman cultural heritage assets and the surrounding landscapes and territories;
- **Policy 3:** Support the creation of interdisciplinary teams of specialists and partnerships within the multi-level administrative structures, as a basis for attracting funds and investments to ensure cultural heritage preservation;

2.3.2 Bulgaria

- **Policy 1:** Support the attraction of funds and investment in culture and tourism development within the region;
- **Policy 2:** Promote and increase regional attractivity for tourists, through clear branding development around culture, tourism, and business environment;
- **Policy 3:** Support the definition of a strong multi-level union within the administrative structures of regions and cities, as a basis for collaboration and support in the development of the route;

2.3.3 Hungary

- **Policy 1:** Support the definition of a clear and appropriate spatial planning legal environment and methodologies for the protection, management, and implementation of cultural heritage projects, based on the interdisciplinary cooperation of stakeholders and a just decision-making process;
- **Policy 2:** Give cultural heritage a function in the life of the community, while increasing the attractivity of roman cultural heritage resources and tourist offers for a wider public;

2.3.4 Serbia

- **Policy 1:** Increase accessibility, visibility, and promotion of roman cultural heritage and tourism, by expanding the offer of experimentation opportunities and collaboration for ensuring sustainability over time;
- **Policy 2:** Support raising awareness and increasing knowledge and engagement on the cultural heritage, tourism, and territorial development of both citizens and local organizations and institutions;
- **Policy 3:** Facilitate the attraction of funds and investment in the cultural sector;

2.3.5 Bosnia and Herzegovina

- **Policy 1:** Support appropriate spatial and strategical planning for the protection, preservation, management, and valorization of monuments and cultural heritage assets;
- **Policy 2:** Support integrated territorial development of cultural, touristic, and slow mobility fields and projects;

- **Policy 3:** Increase both accessibility, visibility, awareness and promotion of monuments and cultural heritage assets within the region, as a basis for building an identity and increasing attractiveness;
- **Policy 4:** Facilitate the attraction of funds and investment in monuments and cultural heritage;

2.3.6 Austria

- **Policy 1:** Facilitate the implementation of adequate processes and methodologies for research, protection, management, and valorization of roman cultural heritage assets, that take into consideration organizational capacity, multi-level cooperation, and integration, as well as sustainability over time;
- **Policy 2:** Increase awareness and engagement, support knowledge transfer, and institutional and scientific exchange for the development of cultural heritage and touristic sectors and expanding collaboration on linked initiatives and projects;
- **Policy 3:** Facilitate the attraction of funds and investments in the maintenance and valorization of cultural heritage assets;

2.3.7 Slovenia

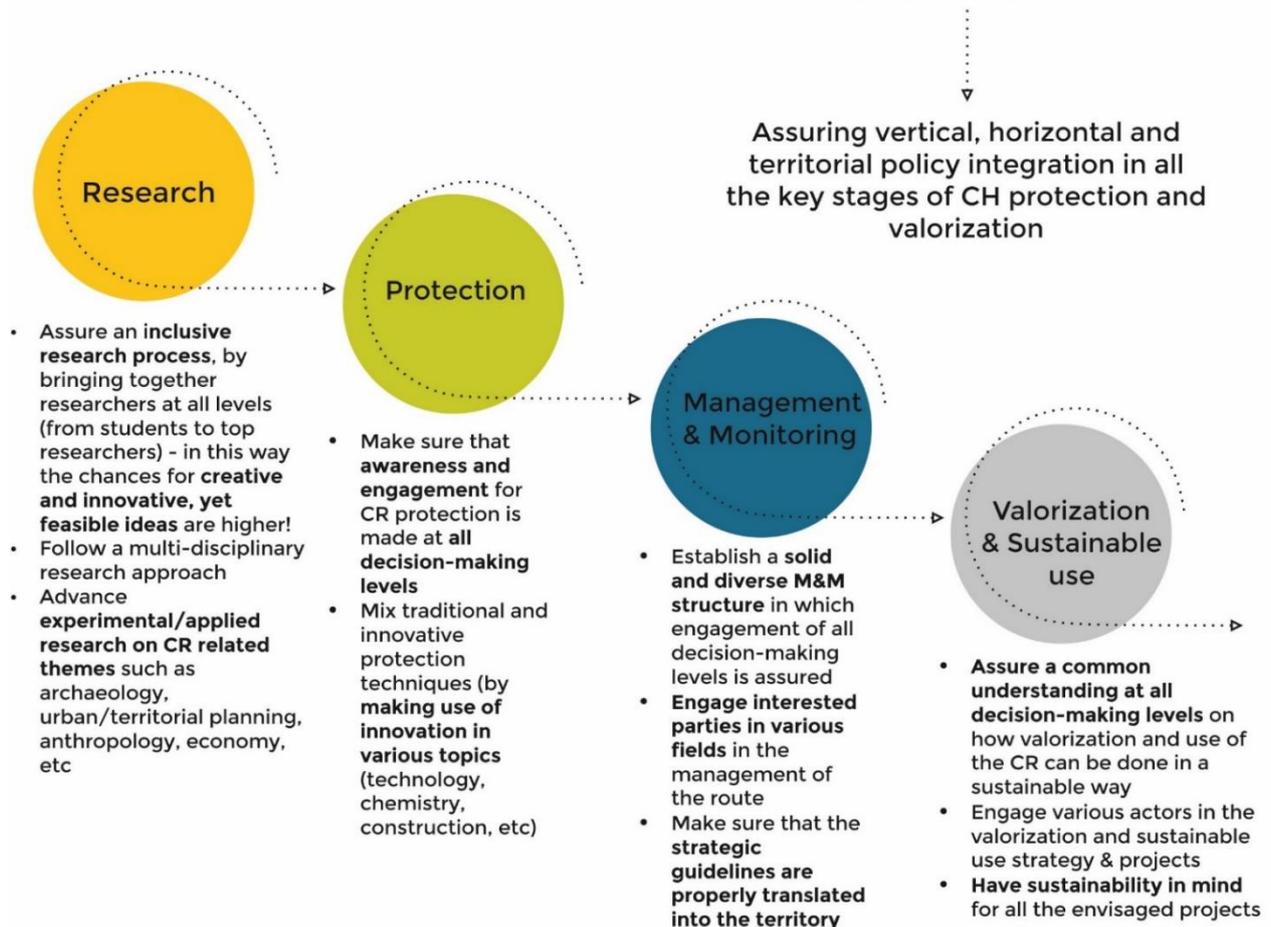
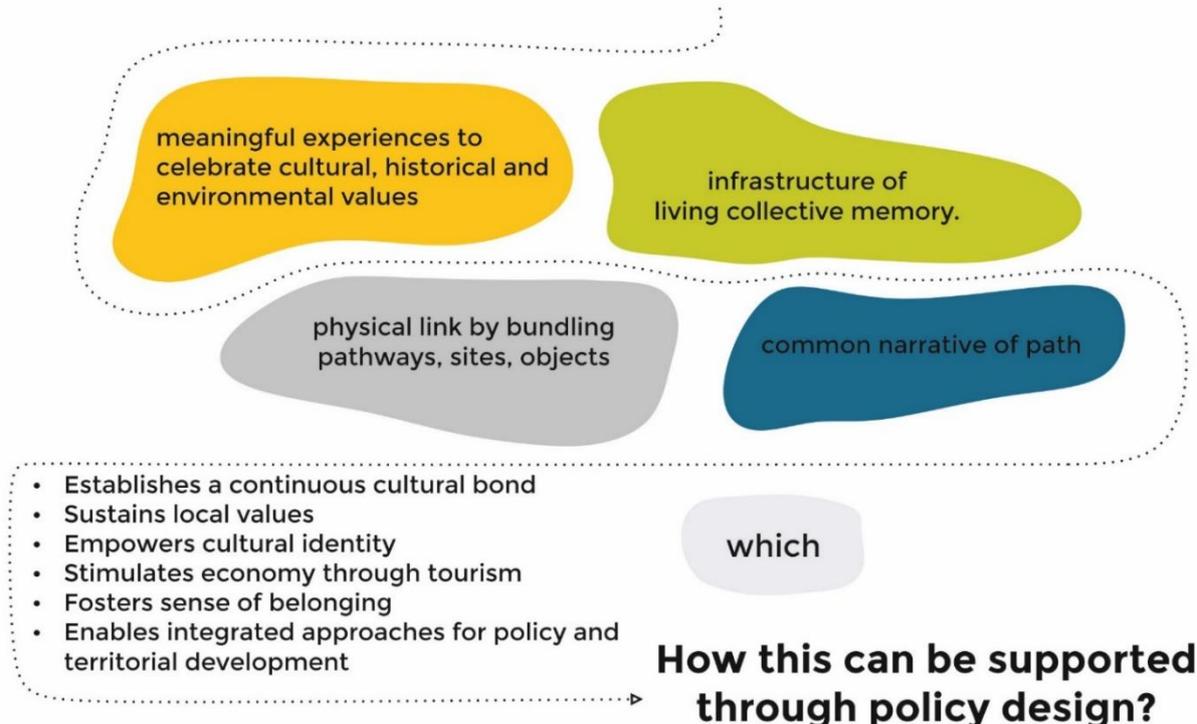
- **Policy 1:** Define clear and adequate spatial and strategic planning action plans that support the implementation of concrete and efficient measures for the preservation, management, and valorization of cultural heritage assets;
- **Policy 2:** Support the national reconnection with the roman culture and identity by recognizing the importance and values of roman heritage resources and increasing knowledge and awareness;
- **Policy 3:** Facilitate the promotion and presentation of roman heritage culture within the educational, media, research, and touristic sectors through sustained cooperation between different stakeholders;

2.3.8 Germany

- **Policy 1:** Integrate roman cultural heritage in multi-thematic strategies supported financially as well as in large-scale cross-cutting projects and initiatives;
- **Policy 2:** Define sound and adequate methods and methodologies for the research, protection, preservation, and valorization of roman cultural heritage assets;
- **Policy 3:** Support multi-layered stakeholders' cooperation and knowledge integration within the scientific, cultural and touristic sectors;
- **Policy 4:** Define an integrated and well-managed touristic concept that takes into consideration finding and applying different methods and activities for visitors to experience the Roman CH, gathers international experience and provide different mechanisms and principles for visitors guidance.

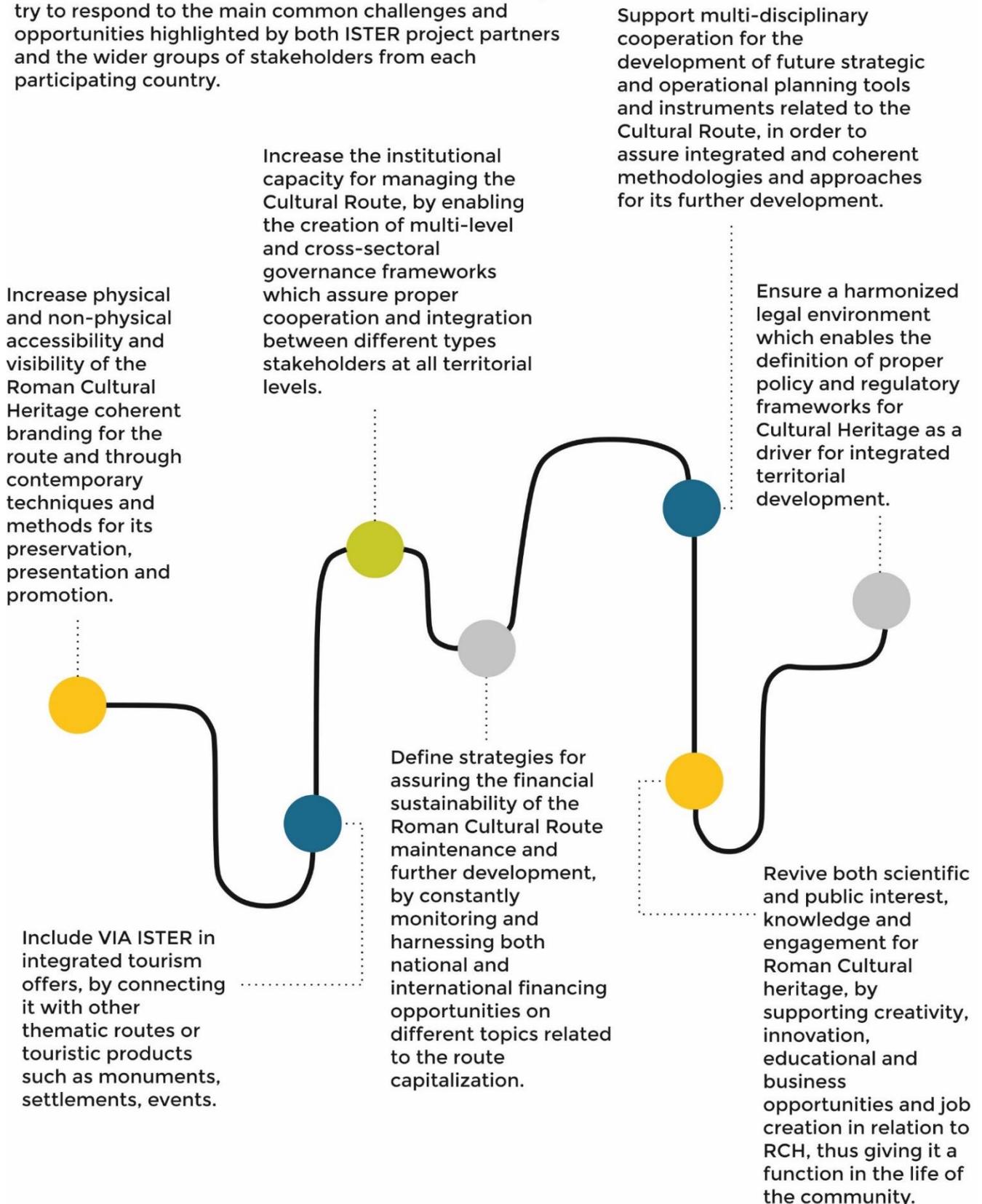
2.4. Roadmap for effective policy design for the valorization of Roman Heritage legacy within EU transnational cooperation. Sustaining a transnational Cultural Route

What is a Cultural Route?



VIA ISTER Cultural Route - Policy recommendations at Danube Region level

The following policy recommendations at Danube Region try to respond to the main common challenges and opportunities highlighted by both ISTER project partners and the wider groups of stakeholders from each participating country.



III. Policy Communication Toolkit

3.1 Stakeholders' engagement

The process of stakeholder engagement and endorsement of policy recommendations and suggestions of the project ISTER.

When planning a stakeholder endorsement process, ISTER partners and their associated partners have to bear in mind that there is no single best way and many things depend on the specific context, issues and needs. In reality, the various steps and decisions are greatly interlinked. Therefore it will always be a repeating process, allowing a number of feedback points in the course of progression.

Having established clear reasons for engagement, the next step in the stakeholder engagement process is to identify which stakeholders need to be engaged. The 3 steps of this process are:

- Step 1: Identify all potential stakeholders and stakeholder groups.
- Step 2: Assess and prioritize them.
- Step 3: Develop an understanding of your stakeholders.

3.1.1 Identify your stakeholders (Step 1)

Identifying who should be involved or consulted in the engagement process is perhaps one of the most difficult parts. Finding the right mix of participants, and ensuring that no group is unintentionally (or perhaps, deliberately) excluded, is essential to providing legitimacy and credibility to the engagement process. In the context of public participation, a stakeholder can be defined as any person with an interest in the project or anyone that could be potentially affected by its delivery or outputs. It is sensible to identify the broadest pool of stakeholders, so that all affected parties and fields can have a chance to be represented, and later on there can be no accusation of being left out.

Potential stakeholders are (if applicable):

- national and local authorities, cultural heritage associations, ..
- local/regional hotel/tourist associations,
- municipality workers and experts,
- protected areas,
- civil society organizations,
- economic leaders, analyzers, experts,
- educational institutions,
- transportation companies (local bus, train,...), public roads administration,
- public utilities
- social institutions, consumer protection organizations,
- journalists, media contacts,
- the broader lay public, local residents, and young people.

These institutions, companies, organizations, and individuals should be mapped and contacted, and a short written introduction of the project should be communicated to them, as well as the possibility for further participation. If the aim

is to be inclusive and open to whoever wants to be involved, the best approach is often to identify an initial list of relevant stakeholders and then ask them who else they think should be involved. In this first step, it is important to consider not only what they may be able to contribute to the project but also what will motivate them to become involved. Stakeholder identification may be done by the partner level project team alone, or in collaboration with other colleagues, organizations and cross-sectoral stakeholders, to ensure key groups are not missed.

Although it is important to try to include all relevant stakeholders, it has to be emphasized that it is not necessary to include them to the same extent. Not all stakeholders are equally interested in and affected by the project. It has to be decided in advance what the purpose is with each stakeholder: whether we would like to get information/data, technical or professional assistance, just general contributions, or just would like to provide the opportunity to express their concerns (which is usually the case with the broader public of local residents). With good planning different people can be involved only in those parts of the process which are most relevant to them. The reason for defining the scope of stakeholder involvement is to clarify exactly what the boundaries is, i.e. what can really be achieved in practice.

It is useful to identify stakeholders by considering all aspects of the ISTER I area of influence throughout the entire cycle. There are a number of ways to identify all stakeholders, just to name a few:

- Consulting with colleagues to share knowledge about who may have an interest.
- Brainstorming with other organizations that have been involved in similar activities or those working in similar topics.
- Advertising, promoting the ISTER I project and the engagement process (e.g. press releases about the project, leaflet, newsletter about the project, social media, website) and encouraging local organizations with an interest to come forward.
- Using 'snowball sampling' techniques: one stakeholder identifies further stakeholders until no additional new stakeholders are identified.
- Using existing partner networks: pre-existing networks are hugely valuable for beginning the process. It is one of the fastest and easiest ways of stakeholder involvement.
- Thematic research based on professional areas/disciplines touched by the project.

Please note that suggested techniques are only effective if you can combine them and use their strengths while eliminating their weaknesses. E.g. using the existing network maybe lead to quick coming too fast results, however, it is likely to miss out on some key players, who might have been undetected seen earlier by the project partner, but they are/were active in the given natural health discipline topic. On the other hand, desktop research and/or brainstorming can produce new stakeholder contacts.

At the end of Step 1 you will probably have a complex list of potential stakeholders from different levels, whom your organization may never have the capacity to

engage fully. That's why in Step 2 we need to assess, analyze and prioritize relevant stakeholders.

3.1.2 Assess and prioritize relevant stakeholders (Step 2)

There are many ways of analyzing, grouping or mapping stakeholders. If you want to identify stakeholders by sectors and their roles in the project the best way to approach this is with the Quadruple helix framework. The approach is to classify stakeholders based on their relevance and significance to the ISTER 1 project. Power mapping is a conceptual way of determining who needs to be influenced in the project, who can influence project target results, and who can be actually influenced to promote the broad adaptation of the project results.

One way to categorize stakeholders is by their relationship to the effort in question:

- Primary stakeholders - people/groups that are directly affected, either positively or negatively, by an effort or the actions of an agency, institution, or organization. In some cases, there are primary stakeholders on both sides of the equation: a regulation that benefits one group may have a negative effect on another. A rent control policy, for example, benefits tenants, but may hurt landlords.
- Secondary stakeholders - people/groups that are indirectly affected, also either positively or negatively, by an effort or the actions of an agency, institution, or organization, but are not regularly engaged in transactions with the projects and may not be essential for projects survival.
- Key stakeholders - might belong to either or none of the first two groups, are those who can have a positive or negative effect on an effort, or who are important within or to an organization, agency, or institution engaged in an effort.

PP-s need to identify not only the primary stakeholders in each of the regions but more specifically the key stakeholders and stakeholder groups who will benefit from and therefore contribute and be committed to the ISTER 1 effort.

3.1.3 Understand your stakeholders (Step 3)

In a multi-stakeholder environment, there are always conflicting interests when different stakeholder entities are involved with planning and implementation. This could be due to the underlying personal and organizational values which are conflicting by nature anyway. Therefore, when engaging with different stakeholders in a given region, such as during a workshop or conference, it is important to understand the views of individual stakeholders and their relationships with each other.

Please keep in mind that each stakeholder has its own set of goals and objectives and is often driven by a different set of needs. Failing to recognize this nuance can result in negative influences on the outcome of the engagement. Therefore, having begun to prioritize the relevant stakeholders, it is helpful to understand them.

There are some key questions that should be considered during this stage:

- Is there an existing relationship between the project and the stakeholder? Is there and the existing relationship between the stakeholders?
- What knowledge do the different stakeholders have, that may be relevant to the project?
- What views are the stakeholders likely to have about the project and its outcomes? Will these views be positive or negative?
- Is there a potential for any conflict among stakeholders? Or between stakeholders and the project?
- What are the appropriate means of communication? Will they need to be adapted in order to reach certain groups or individuals?
- Is there a willingness to engage? If not, why not and how could this be overcome?
- Are there any barriers to participation and engagement (e.g. technical, physical, linguistic, geographical, political, time, information or knowledge)?

3.1.4 Key points of the successful stakeholder engagement

Once all 3 suggested steps are done, the possibility to participate should be directly communicated to the identified stakeholders (via regular mail, electronic mail, telephone, or in any other channels of accessibility), as well as publicized to local residents on homepages, in local newspapers and on the notice board of the municipality. The information should contain the fundamental details of the project as well as the main stages of participation.

However, during the engagement process, we have to know why we want to involve selected stakeholders. It helps to have clear aims for stakeholder engagement in the project, to identify the benefits for stakeholders who engage with you, and to determine and understand the motivations of stakeholders to be involved in the project.

Every engagement process is different and needs to be properly funded and managed. Each PPP should plan their engagement and adapt the process to suit the needs of both PPP and stakeholders alike.

Here are a few key points to successful engagements:

- engage in dialogue with stakeholders as equals and value their knowledge;
- give stakeholders the opportunity to help plan their own engagement;
- use 'knowledge brokers' (who are connected to, and trusted by, different stakeholder groups) and experts in stakeholder engagement (including professional facilitators) if project teams do not have the expertise or experience;
- be prepared to be flexible and adaptable, tailoring project activities and communication of findings;
- ensure communication can be easily understood by all stakeholders – do not use complex or technical language unless this is asked for by the stakeholder;
- tailor engagement to the practical and cultural needs of stakeholders, bringing the project to where they are, at times of the day and year that are suitable for them;

- do not forget to provide feedback to stakeholders as soon as possible/in a timely manner.

Factors like trust, openness, and commitment play an important role in working with the stakeholders. Once engagement has been achieved, it is important to maintain that engagement by following certain actions that can support continued engagement. During the stakeholder activities, the following factors should be taken into account:

- Clarity - it is very important to clarify the objectives and goals of the engagement and to evaluate the appropriateness of the techniques.
- Management of information - stakeholders need to be persuaded of the benefits of sharing information. It may be necessary to present information in different ways as the attitudes and the way the information is processed by the stakeholders needs to be taken into account.
- Support and capacity development - the knowledge the stakeholders possess about the project varies depending on the different levels of their involvement. In order to enable them to contribute ideas and visions, each stakeholder needs to be on the same level of understanding as the rest of the stakeholders.
- Transparency - each stakeholder needs to be up-to-date on the actions and opinions. They need to be assured that their concerns, requests and expectations are addressed in a clear, open and transparent manner.
- Trust-building - letting the stakeholders know that every stakeholder's view is valued and respected in the engagement process will give the assurance that their opinions are heard. This will build trust.

3.2 Future perspectives - ISTER association

Achieving ISTER vision requires strong transnational cooperation, due to its character defined by the spatial complexity of an integrated and contiguous pathway that crosses different Danube Region countries with different contexts and territorial challenges. European Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century acknowledges the need for transnational cooperation that could be enhanced for heritage assets that go beyond borders through a strong connection between cultural heritage and communities around it and a territorial-based approach that should contribute to a sense of identity and belonging to a territory. The importance and need for strong transnational cooperation come also from an environmental concern addressed by the EU Green Deal, which stated that environmental ambition will be achieved neither by regions nor nations alone.

Assuring coherent governance that enables synergies between multi-disciplinary national, regional and local stakeholders which support the physical definition and promotion of the route can be reached only with the support of transnational cooperation. It enables the exchange of experience and knowledge, and the potential to replicate methodologies, principles and solutions applied somewhere else and it enhances capacities and puts the basis for new development opportunities and initiatives.

VIA ISTER route represents a network of the most important RCH settlements in DR. In order to make assure the sustainability and development of the route and by taking inspiration from other successful CR, it is recommended to ISTER partners and their already-established groups of stakeholders establish a transnational legal body of VIA ISTER which will be responsible for the transnational management of the route.

The core team should be responsible for the overall coordination and coherence of the route development and should make sure that the overall vision is followed within individual projects developed at the national level, by collaborating with tourism organizations and the local communities. The association should be responsible for defining specific common tasks and long-term mechanisms and should have an organizational, communication, research and lobbying role.

In this regard, creating the ISTER association in the future can become a reference point for transnational and interdisciplinary cooperation and take the first steps in applying for the Cultural Route Certification of the Council of Europe.

Another added value of transnational cooperation is supporting the coherence and harmonization of (1) the narrative developed and followed within the first ISTER project, (2) the spatial and strategic local/regional planning and development through methodologies and principles for adequate interventions and (3) the products, tools and models developed jointly by the relevant stakeholders in the future.

The creation of synergies and agreements with relevant international and national projects, networks and experts is considered one of the key ingredients for assuring the long-term sustainability of ISTER. In this regard, and considering also considering the aspiration to become a certified Cultural Route of CoE in the future, synergies and exchanges with already established thematic routes should be explored by the ISTER association members (e.g. Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route, Transromanica, etc). Furthermore, external experts should be invited to join the ISTER Association and interdisciplinary clusters of experts should be defined in each pilot country. In what concerns the anchor points established at national level, collaboration with relevant regional networks, experts in communication (influencers, thematic magazines) and relevant economic actors (hiking shops, tourism agencies, etc) should be explored.

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Monitoring of the 2016 Management Plan



Interreg 
EUROPEAN UNION
Danube Transnational Programme
ISTER

Project co-funded by European Union funds (ERDF, IPA)