



## Zemplén Régió Fejlesztése Sorozat



# ÖRÖKSÉGÉRTÉKEK ÉS TURIZMUSFEJLESZTÉS

a Tokaj-hegyalja - Zemplén örökségértékei és az ezekre alapozható gazdaság-és turizmusfejlesztés témakörében szervezett tudományos szimpózium tanulmányai

Sárospatak, 2011. május 20.-21.





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**a**

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**Sárospatak, 2011. május 20.-21.**

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*A szabadság vidéke ...*



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## Tartalomjegyzék

Bevezető.....	7
<i>Bartha Eszter-Sipos Adrienn:</i> A világörökségi cím és térségfejlesztési hatásainak összefüggései a tokaj-hegyaljai borvidéken.....	9
<i>Dankó László:</i> Közösségi turizmusfejlesztés Tokaj-hegyalján.....	22
<i>Dankó László:</i> Tokaj-hegyalja örökségturisztikai koncepciója.....	44
<i>Dankó László:</i> Képzett fiatalok megtartása Tokaj-hegyalján a társadalmi marketing eszközeivel.....	96
<i>Dávid Anikó:</i> Sárospatak turisztikai szemléletű városmarketing programja. „Sárospatak, a virágzó város” 2011-2018.....	116
<i>Dávid Loránt - Tóth Géza – Benkő Béla:</i> A Bodrog mente társadalmi-gazdasági helyzete, különös tekintettel a turizmusra.....	138
<i>Dienes Dénes:</i> A tokaji bor és a régi pataki diákok.....	148
<i>Dienes Dénes:</i> Sárospatak reformációja.....	151
<i>Gergely Miklós – Nagy Júlia:</i> A Tokaji történelmi borvidék turisztikai fejlesztései.....	160
<i>G. Fekete Éva:</i> A kistérségi együttműködés terepe és szerepe a vidéki örökség védelmében és hasznosításában.....	174
<i>Győri István:</i> A Sárospataki Református Főiskola vándorkönyvtári mozgalma 1936 és 1950 között.	185
<i>Hegedűs László:</i> A Sárospataki Főiskola szerepvállalási lehetőségei az örökségturisztika fejlesztésében.....	198
<i>Hörccsik Richard:</i> Sárospatak szerepe a Tokaj-hegyaljai történelmi borvidék kulturtáj világörökség fejlesztésében.....	200
<i>Karajz Sándor:</i> Világörökségi területek környezet-gazdaságtani szemléletű fejlesztési lehetőségei	212
<i>Kajati Mónika – Dr. Dankó László:</i> Carpathian region as an attractive tourist destination.....	223
<i>Koncz Gábor:</i> A kultúra mai finanszírozási szisztémája Magyarországon.....	233
<i>Nagy Katalin:</i> Az örökségturisztikai termékfejlesztés módszertana – a tematikus utak, mint új és speciális lehetőségek Tokaj-hegyalja számára	252
<i>Piskóti István:</i> A megoldás, vagy csak divat? A turisztikai desztinációmenedzsment rendszer elvei és gyakorlati feladatai.....	275
<i>Soós Gábor:</i> Tourism as a support of sustainable use of heritage: the special case of cultural landscapes.....	289
<i>Szabó Anett Ibolya:</i> A világörökségi státusz hasznosítása a Tokaj-hegyaljai borvidék marketingjében.....	296
<i>Szabó Irén:</i> Árpád-házi Szent Erzsébet jelenkori tisztelete Sárospatakon.....	313
<i>Takács András:</i> A Tokaj-hegyalja Fejlődéséért Szövetség és szerepe a borvidék térség- és gazdaságfejlesztésében	320



## CARPATHIAN REGION AS AN ATTRACTIVE TOURIST DESTINATION<sup>135</sup>

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### 1. OBJECTIVES

To positively influence the tourism market to increase the number of visitors to the border area through the establishment of an unofficial international tourism cluster and the implementation of partnership-based development projects that will serve the future development of the tourist product of the area.

There are new trends in various fields of economy that are being effectively applied in western part of Europe which help to increase regions attractiveness and enhance their economic development. At the moment the new trends are being widely discussed to help to restart the world's economy and social development.

The objective of the Action is to transfer knowledge, to share best - practice and initiate cross-border cooperation in adapting new trends in regional tourism management and development. One of the main focuses will be laid on initiating partnerships between private and public actors dealing with tourism in the cross-border area.

The role of governance in tourism is currently undergoing shift from traditional public sector model to one of a more corporate nature emphasising efficiency, return on investments, the role of market and thus partnership between public and private sector.

This cooperation will be facilitated by the nongovernmental organisations dealing with general regional development such as the partners involved in this project. Implementation of the projects work plan and its individual activities will help the participating regions to identify their competitive advantages, unique selling points, the right markets and its segments effectively utilize their touristic potential and using joint marketing strategy to promote the products, offers within the domestic market, and also to identified target markets abroad.

The change is needed in business models in destinations and identification of new directions and new ways of tourism development, especially innovation in tourism products in today's competitive market, identification of new tourism channels (trend main focus on e-tourism, e-marketing, thus e-commerce), which is more effective, cost less and essential.

Transfer of the best European practice in tourism management and the exploitation of economic opportunities based on cooperation will directly improve economic and social relations which will result in a long term improvement of stability in the programme area.

An emphasis will be put on showing the way how to exploit the unique opportunities for the tourism industry to support local economic development as such and on the other hand the specifically strong contribution of tourism to mutual understanding and cooperation within the area, across the borders.

#### ***1.1 Specific objectives***

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<sup>135</sup> Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine ENPI CBC Programme 2007-2013. Ref. No. HUSKROUA/0901/026  
The Programme is co-financed by the European Union.

1. To develop a cooperation platform for the individual project partners and local stakeholders within the tourism area of the border region to develop an efficient tourist destination strategy.
2. To elaborate a joint tourism destination strategy and action plan to be further implemented on the local level by individual project partners.
3. To create a joint promotion and marketing study including branding and image for the development of tourism and on its basis develop a training programme for identified local stakeholders.
4. To initiate the establishment of an unofficial cross-border tourism cluster by the tourism destinations identified in the strategy.

Specific objectives will be fulfilled by successful implementation of the individual activities of the Action. One of the most important issues that the project deals with is the completely different structure and goals of the tourism development strategies of the participating regions.

Therefore is important to develop common methodology and framework for destination management plan and its delivery within the regions. Its also important to identify and follow the stages starting with local destination audit, then planning, development, monitoring and evaluating. And to carry on this process through the collective partnerships to create destination management plan which welcomes, involves and satisfies Visitors, achieves a profitable and prosperous Industry, engages and benefits host Communities, protects and enhances the local Environment.

The necessary data collecting will be used to compare actual conditions and opportunities in every region and thus to conduct joint strategy reflecting the individuality of every participating area on one hand and on the other hand to show new trends in build an attractive cross border tourism destination. To gather the necessary research and intelligence, the current as well as into the future will enable to plan all activities effectively. Thus, to investigate the supply and demand side of destination in each country, asses individual positions, conditions, policies, existing strategies and to conduct secondary research, and primary qualitative and quantitative research is one of the most important starting point to collect data and analyse each destination.

The efficient cooperation and understanding of the set vision, objectives and action plans must be adopted by EACH of the cooperating stakeholders. Only this way it s possible to develop sustainable tourism destinations and products. The efficient cooperation is the major condition for implementing the whole proposed Action. The Action itself is focused on introducing new ways in cooperation within the tourism industry, ensuring the continued and growing engagement of industry, but also local, regional and/or national bodies and politicians. To compete effectively destinations have to deliver excellent value to visitors.

This depends how it is worked together in unity. From time the visitor plan, arrives, until he/she leaves the destination, visitor value is affected by many services and experiences. It is therefore very important that all components of visitor's stay are managed and coordinated effectively. And effective destination management allows destinations to maximize the tourism value for visitors and ensuring local benefits and sustainability.

## 2. PROJECT RESULTS

The end result of the action will be a structure and gained knowledge which will allow to deliver the local and regional agendas and plans more efficiently to improve the tourism regions that will be attractive for tourists and new investments, deliver efficient marketing, and that will speak with one voice and compete against international competition on a high level.

The effective tourism management begins and ends up at local destination level where most of tourism businesses have their natural affinity. The local destination is also one of the most meaningful building blocks of consumer recognition. The Action will result in that target groups and beneficiaries will start building this solid foundation and later building on it.

In terms of marketing and promotion and consumer behaviour, it has changed. The current studies suggest a massively important shift from only supply-driven approach to customer/demand driven-approach. This will be the future of successfully managed destinations, but only when at first place the decision makers will adopt and understand these important shifts in trends and behaviours on the tourism market.

### **Activity 1 Cooperation platform development within the tourism area of the border region**

*Result 1.1 Developed tourism cooperation platforms at the individual partners level*

#### **Outputs:**

1. Seminar for the partners representatives to instruct on how to realize the situation analyses and communicate with the tourism actors
  - Lead partner organizes 1 seminar
2. Questionnaires distributed on the local level to analyze the interest of the tourism actors in cooperating together. (2 types of questionnaires – Public/ Private sector)
  - Each partner to receive min.: 20 filled out questionnaires back (80 in total)
3. Locally organized workshops for tourism professionals to explain the goals of the project
  - Each partner to organize 1 workshop (4 in total)
4. Evaluation study of the local potential for creating a cooperation platform focused on destination management.
  - Each partner to conduct 1 study (4 in total)

#### **Core output:**

Joint evaluation study of the cross-border potential for creating a destination management organisation

### **Activity 2 Joint tourism destination strategy and action plan elaboration**

*Result 2.1 Efficient implementation of the developed tourism destination strategy and its action plan on the individual partners local level*

#### **Outputs:**

1. Analyse of the tourism potential of the border region
  - Each partner to conduct 1 analyse (4 in total)
2. Comparative study of the tourism potential
  - 1 joint comparative study
3. Joint partners workshop in Košice
  - 1 international workshop

#### **Core output:**

Joint destination management strategy (individual action plans with evaluation measures)

- 1 destination management strategy

### **Activity 3 Joint promotion and marketing study elaboration**

*Result 3.1 Innovative methods of realizing regional marketing and promotion within and outside the eligible region*

**Core output:**

Joint promotion and marketing study

- 1 promotion and marketing study

**Activity 4 Training programme development and implementation**

*Result 4.1 Tourism actors able to implement the developed promotion and marketing study*

**Outputs:**

1. Prepared training program for tourism professionals

- 1 training program

**Core output:**

Individual training seminars

- 4 training seminars

**Activity 5 International conference focused on innovations in tourism destinations development**

*Result 5.1 Tourism actors informed about the innovations in tourism and the project outputs are visible on national levels of the participating countries*

**Outputs:**

1. International conference for tourism operators

- 1 international conference

2. Brochure: New Trends in Tourism and Destination Management

- 1 brochure (publication)

**Core output:**

Partnership agreement – unofficial international tourism cluster

- 1 partnership agreement

**Activity 6 Interactive Cross-border web platform development focused on sustainability of the established cooperation platform**

*Result 6.1 Interactive cross-border web platform to monitor and evaluate project sustainability used by the tourism operators on international level*

**Core Output:**

Interactive information web platform

- 1 internet application.

**3. METHODOLOGY**

**3.1 Supporting activity**

**Supporting activity 1: Project administration and implementation**

The Lead applicant as the beneficiary signs a Grant Contract with the Contracting Authority and which assumes full legal and financial responsibility for project implementation. It receives the financial contribution from the Contracting Authority and ensures it is managed and, distributed in accordance with the agreements drawn up with its partners. The Beneficiary is directly accountable to the Contracting Authority for the operational and financial progress of activities.

The beneficiary will act as the only direct contact between the project and the joint management bodies of the Programme. It is the responsibility of the Beneficiary to create a

well working partnership and lawful connection between the project partners ensuring the proper and sound implementation of the project.

The Beneficiary will have following responsibilities:

- lay down the arrangements for its relations with the Partners participating in the Action in an agreement (Partnership Agreement) comprising, inter alia, provisions guaranteeing the sound financial management of the funds allocated to the Action, including the arrangements for recovering amounts unduly paid;
- responsible for ensuring the implementation of the entire Action;
- ensures that the expenditure presented by the Partners participating in the Action has been paid for the purpose of implementing the Action and corresponds to the activities agreed between the Partners participating in the Action;
- responsible for the verification of project's expenditures by an approved auditor/national controller in accordance with PRAG and submission of requests for payment to the Joint Technical Secretariat on the basis of the Grant Contract;
- responsible for transferring the ENPI contribution to the Partners participating in the Action.

Project partners are responsible for implementing the project activities and their parts in their regions and communicate them with the lead applicants project manager. Activities must be realized according to the project proposal.

#### **Project implementation:**

Lead applicant will organize partner meetings 2 times a year in Kosice to discuss the necessary administrative issues and project plan. Partners will offer their feedbacks and will be informed about all the technical issues regarding financing and time schedule.

The project manager or the project coordinator of the lead partner will personally visit every partner two times during the project implementation before the end of the first 12 months and before the project will end to advice and monitor the admin. issues in partners organisations.

#### **Financial evaluation:**

Lead applicant will arrange the total project financial evaluation 2 times during the project implementation. First financial evaluation will be realized after the first year and the second just before the project will end. This will be realized by an independent body (external supplier).

#### **Supporting activity 2: Project publicity**

This will be realized according to the publicity manual of the HUSKROUA programme. Under the visibility actions in budget is included also the Main Activity 6: web platform development, but since this activity builds one of the major outputs it is further described individually.

### **3.2 Main project activities**

For coordination and implementation of every proposed MAIN activity is responsible the lead partner: Košice – European capital of culture 2013, n.o. with assistance of every partner.

Main reason is that the lead partner will have the best access for getting the appropriate expertise from the EU sources later to be identified during the project identification. The project manager and project coordinator of the lead applicant have several experiences in

tourism destination management strategies and tourism marketing from their previous occupations. Their experience with case studies dealing with destination management development was also a source of the project idea development. On the other hand there is the fact that the city of Košice won the title of European capital of culture 2013.

This offers a perfect start point for developing tourism destination of the city itself, of the Košice region and since the ECOC project focuses on intensive international cooperation in the nearby Carpathian region this would be a perfect position for spreading new trends in tourism development as well and help the whole crossborder region to build an image of an attractive tourism destination. Strong contacts of the Košice – ECOC in the whole EU is one of the most important points in this project.

The get the best possible results of the project implementation following procedures are being proposed: There will be one supplier chosen for conducting the main outputs of the project. This is very important since the outputs are very much consistent and must follow the same methodology and structure. This supplier will be chosen according the public procurement rules. Conditions that the supplier must fulfil are described in the Annex C of the application form. One of the most important conditions will be that the supplier must have personal contacts with European experts in developing destination management strategies and consult the whole strategy with them during the elaboration process.

### **Activity 1: Cooperation platform development within the tourism area of the border region**

To work effectively during the project implementation the individual stakeholders (tourism actors) that will be involved in the project implementation must be defined. There must be a research conducted on every partner level and to get relevant information the research (situation analyse) must have the same methodology and evaluation procedure. This will be the first task for the lead applicant and its supplier:

**Step 1:** Conduct a joint methodology and questionnaire for the situation analyse realisation – to be able to collect relevant data from each region.

Project partners will attend a common seminar in Košice where they will be instructed how to use the methodology and how to communicate the whole idea of the project to the potential tourism actors joining the cooperation platforms on their local level. Partners will be instructed how to explain the importance of the tourism destination management and innovations in the region for the effective and coordinated tourism development.

**Step 2.** Seminar for project partners in Košice to explain the methods and importance of the whole project – instructions for communication methods with the possible tourism actors joining the cooperation platforms will be presented.

To be more specific every partner will define a smaller locality that is in general being seen as an attractive and potential locality for tourism development. This will be on the partners' decision. It is not required to concentrate on the already known regions. But the identified regions must have human potential and the local tourism actors should be interested in cooperating with each other and with the public sector.

**Step 3:** Partners will identify the most potential localities or smaller regions generally attractive for tourism development.

The methodology will be distributed to the individual project partners who will translate it to their native languages and further distribute it to the identified stakeholders. Different questionnaires will be prepared for the tourism actors from the PUBLIC and different for the

PRIVATE sector. Where necessary local meetings with the tourism actors will be held since personal contact makes the initiative more credible.

**Step 4:** Situation analyse realisation in every partner region which will include local meetings with identified tourism actors (public and private).

After the questionnaires will be collected every partner will evaluate them according to the evaluation conditions defined in the methodology and realize one workshop where the questioned tourism actors will be invited. The whole project and further plans will be presented to the participants.

**Step 5:** Local workshops realisation to discuss the relevance of the collected data, collect feedbacks and participant's expectations, the establishment of a cooperation platform of the interested participants will be initiated.

Every partner will the workshop results involve in the evaluation study translate it in to English and forward it to the lead applicants supplier. The result of the evaluation studies should be the information how big is the interest of the local stakeholders in establishing local cooperation platforms focused on tourism destination management.

**Step 6:** Conduct an evaluation study of the local potential for creating a destination management organisation in every partner region

The applicants' supplier will then collect all the local situation analyses and evaluation studies and conduct a joint study reflecting the motivation of every particular region.

**Step 7:** Conduct joint situation and evaluation study to identify the potential of creating cooperation platforms on local levels of the partner regions

## **Activity 2: Joint tourism destination strategy and action plan elaboration**

Developing an effective and relevant strategy will need to collect various data this activity will already start at the beginning of the project and will be finished approximately at the same time as the activity nr.

1. The results of the activity 1. will be involved in the strategy as well but beforehand several other steps will be necessary to realize.

Every partner will need an own supplier for delivering the tourism potential analyse of the regions, but the common methodology must be applied in this case too. This methodology will provide the applicants supplier as well since the analyzed data of every region must be the same and the structure of the local analyses as well. The methodology will inter alia define which ecological aspects must be taken in to consideration while examining the regions tourism potential.

**Step 1:** Tourism potential analyse methodology development – to be able to collect relevant data from each region later to be used for the joint strategy

Every partner will then conduct their own tourism potential analyses. These analyses will be than translated in to English by every partner individually and distributed to the lead partners supplier.

**Step 2:** Analyse the tourism potential of the border region – each partner separately

The lead partners supplier will according to the individual analyses carry out a comparative study of the common tourism potential of the cross-border region and identify the most potential localities or smaller regions within every region that would be potential becoming an attractive tourism destination.

**Step 3:** Carry out a comparative study of the common tourism potential of the cross-border region

Lead partner will then organize a joint workshop for the project partners representatives to evaluate the comparative study. During this workshop a financial models of the strategy implementation will be proposed and discussed as well.

**Step 4:** Conduct a joint workshop for the preparation of the strategy to identify the most important destinations within the partners region and its potential

The supplier will then according to the workshop results and discussions with project partners representatives elaborate a joint destination management strategy which will include the proposed financial model of financing the common activities of the cooperation platforms and environmental aspects of the proposed strategy. The strategy will identify the most perspective regions and localities, their highlights and suggest possible types of complex tourism packages that would be attractive for specific target groups at the also specified tourism markets within and outside the programming area. The environmental aspects will be taken in to consideration as well and rules for sustainable utilizing of natural areas specified.

**Step 5:** Elaborate a joint destination management strategy

Reflecting the individual specification of every participating region the supplier will also elaborate individual destination management plans. The strategy and action plans will be than distributed to every partner who will translate it in to their native languages and further disseminate it to the already identified tourism actors involved in the cooperation platforms and other stakeholders (national, regional and local public administration - governments)

**Step 6:** Elaborate individual destination management action plans

To make the Strategy and action plans effective the evaluation measures will be developed.

**Step 7:** Development of evaluation measures for monitoring the implementation of the strategy and individual action plans

### **Activity 3: Joint promotion and marketing study elaboration**

As a follow up and an advanced level of the destination management strategy a promotion and marketing strategy for the individual identified regions will be developed by the lead applicants supplier. Tourism destination management based on cooperation between the public and private bodies serves especially the better promotion, identifying target markets and segments, create branding, positioning the destination and effective marketing of the regions where the destination management strategy is being implemented.

This promotion and marketing study will be conducted again by the lead partners supplier reflecting the situation, product development, possibilities and needs of every partner region. Financing issues on the proposed marketing activities will be identified as well. The study should be based on region branding, should identify specific tourism products and packages and the best possible way of promoting them within and outside the programming area.

### **Activity 4: Training programme development and implementation**

The actual implementation of the already developed promotion and marketing study will be efficient only if the individual tourism actors are prepared and skilled enough to realize it personally. The tourism destination strategy will be also introduced and its importance highlighted especially to the public tourism actors. This will be ensured by the 3 days seminar organized in every partners region dedicated to the explanation and practical exercises of the promotion and marketing activities that will be identified as best suitable for the individual

regions. First of all the training program and training materials will be elaborated for the following seminars.

**Step 1:** Prepare a training program for individual tourism actors taking part in the created cooperation platforms

The training program will be translated individually by every partner in to their native language. To ensure the quality and the coherence with the whole project outputs the lead applicants major supplier will be responsible to provide relevant experts who will deliver the training programs in the individual regions. Methodology for the seminars: Lectured trainings in every partners region: 4 regions; 3 day workshop/seminar of min. 10 attendants.

**Step 2:** Implement the training program in the partners region

#### **Activity 5: International conference focused on innovations in tourism destinations development**

This activity will be mainly focused on motivating, inform and initiate the important stakeholders to consider the projects main outputs and results as relevant and necessary for developing and innovating the tourism industry within their countries. International and national experts will be invited to present their experience and case studies and motivate the national, regional and local policymakers to enhance the process of developing efficient destination management.

The conference will be held in Košice, will last one whole day and present the project results. A brochure focused on New trends and innovations in tourism industry will be issued and hand out during the conference.

#### **Activity 6: Interactive Cross-border web platform development focused on sustainability of the established cooperation platform**

To keep the project results sustainable a web platform will be designed and run during the project implementation and after its finalisation as well. The lead applicant will be responsible for maintaining the internet application which will serve also as an E-learning tool and partner search forum for the interested tourism actors even after the project finalisation.

#### **Simmilar actions in the region:**

Similar actions haven't yet been realized in the eligible cross-border area of HU-SK-RO-UA. But the project will capitalize on similar actions already implemented in the old EU member states. There are various types of destination management implementation across the whole Europe but only few of them are really efficient. As a non efficient destination management strategy can be seen the one in Czech Republic. This model can serve as an example how the destination management won't work in the new member states and Ukraine. On the other hand the one in the United Kingdom is being seen as very efficient. It is important to keep the natural borders of the individual regions and at the beginning focus on the most attractive smaller regions and localities. Promotion of too big areas won't be successful. But also it must be considered that the individual top localities must be promoted as a part of the specific countries. One of the projects multiplier effect will be the initiation of the redevelopment of the national and regional tourism strategies. This will be reached by involving the important national stakeholders in the project implementation.

## **4. BENEFICIARY AND PARTNERS**

**Beneficiary:** Košice – European capital of culture 2013, n.o. – Slovakia

**Partners:**

- Sárospatak Város Önkormányzata (subcontractor: Sárospatak és Környéke Turizmusáért Egyesület) – Hungary,
- Fondul de Dezvoltare Euroregiunii Carpatice Filiale Baia Mare – FDEC Baia Mare – Romania,
- Hromadska Organizatsija „Karpatska Fundatsija” – Ukraine.



**Figure 1.:**Beneficiary and partners in the Carpathian Tourist Destination

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