



EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION
LANDSCAPE AWARD OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

5th Session – 2016-2017

APPLICATION FORM

Presentation

The European Landscape Convention aims to promote the protection, management and planning of landscapes and to bring together European co-operation in this field. It is the first international treaty exclusively devoted to all dimensions of European landscape. Taking into account the landscape, natural and cultural values of the territory, it contributes to promoting the quality of life and well-being of Europeans.

The Resolution on the Rules governing the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008 at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, draws attention to the fact that Article 11 of the Convention institutes the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe and that it is in keeping with the work carried out by the Council of Europe concerning human rights, democracy and sustainable development. It effectively promotes the territorial dimension of human rights and democracy by acknowledging the importance of measures taken to improve the landscape for people's living conditions.

Opened to the Parties to the Convention, the Award is intended to raise civil society's awareness of the value of landscapes, of their role and of changes to them. Its objective is to reward exemplary practical initiatives aimed at successful landscape quality objectives on the territories of the Parties to the Convention. The Award is conferred every two years and the files presenting applications must reach the Secretariat General of the Council of Europe.

At its meeting held in Strasbourg on 28-29 April 2008, the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP) decided that applications should be submitted to the Council of Europe Secretariat through the Permanent Representations of the Parties to the Convention.

*I would be very grateful if you could send no later than **30 January 2017** the following elements of the candidature file (10 pages maximum) established for your country on the basis of the proposals forwarded to you by the Ministries:*

- 1) by E-mail, the Application form completed to: maguelonne.dejeant-pons@coe.int ;*
- 2) by post, a copy of the Application form completed together with a CD-Rom or DVD containing the all the additional material to: Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons, Executive Secretary of the European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe, Agora (A3-32C), F- 67075 STRASBOURG Cedex.*

* * *

- Participation to the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe is only open to local and regional authorities and their groupings and non-governmental organisations, as stated in the Resolution CM/Res (2008)3, Appendix, Article 2.*
- The application form must be completed in all its parts, in one of the two official languages of the Council of Europe (English or French).*
- The materials submitted must be copyright-free, for use by the Council of Europe in communications aimed at promoting the award or any other publications or activities relating to the Convention. The Council of Europe undertakes to cite the author's names.*
- Files that are incomplete or fail to comply with the rules will not be taken into consideration.*

For further information please visit the Landscape Award section of the Council of Europe website: <http://www.coe.int/EuropeanLandscapeConvention>

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I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

1. State

Slovak Republic

Represented by

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2. Applicant

*Name of the local,
regional authority (ies)
or NGO(s)*

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Represented by

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II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT

3. Name of the Project

Hriňovské lazy – Landscape of Values

4. Location of the Project

Slovak Republic, Banská Bystrica Self-governing Region, Detva District, Town of Hriňová

5. Summary of the Project (10 lines)

The unique Hriňová landscape complex is an example of the interaction between man and landscape in the spirit of the European Landscape Convention. The project is aimed at preserving the traditional way of life of people living in harmony with the landscape in specific scattered settlement and creating the conditions for all stakeholders to cooperate in land management and local development. Toward this end, the town of Hriňová has taken various steps and implemented certain measures to conserve this unique landscape, to preserve both its cultural and historical values and characteristic features with a system of agrarian historic landscape structures, and for people to remain a part of the landscape, which is a precondition for the preservation of a lively, functional, authentic, identical, and prosperous landscape.

6. Photo representing the Project (high definition – JPEG 350 dpi) and name of the author of the photo please



Author: Štefan Kordoš

III. CONTENT OF THE PROJECT

7. **Start of the Project** month year
The project must have been completed three years previously

8. **Partners**

Local Action Group Podpoľanie (LEADER approach, community-led local development CLLD), State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic - Poľana Protected Landscape Area Administration, Coordination Council of the Poľana Biosphere Reserve, Countryside Platform, municipalities of the Detva District, Novohrad and Podpoľanie Regional Tourism Organisations, Svojpomocné družstvo jednotlivu hospodáriacich roľníkov Hriňová (Hriňová Self-supporting Association of Individual Farmers), Forests of the Slovak Republic, European Second Generation Department, Slovak Tourist Club - Hriňová, Slovak Tourist Board, businesses, residents of the town engaged in agriculture, volunteers
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9. **Financing bodies**

Directly by the Town of Hriňová; subsidies allocated from the national budget, international projects, foundations, sponsorships
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10. **Central aims of the Project**

The town's primary aim has been to create the conditions for maintaining the traditional farming way of life in the scattered settlement, to develop the local market, utilise its tourism potential and to preserve cultural heritage and economically develop countryside, all while retaining its identity and diversity.

Long-term farming in the territory resulted in a system of terraced small agricultural plots in the landscape which represent historic agrarian landscape structures. This system together with a specific system of scattered settlements formed a unique landscape element.

The local government considers the historic landscape structures to be a functional and living heritage of their ancestors. For this reason, they have taken steps, implemented measures and cooperated with stakeholders and residents to keep Hriňová's scattered settlement sustainable, prosperous and inspirational for all rural areas in Slovakia and Europe.

Hriňová is located in the Detva District, Podpoľanie Region. The population of Hriňová is 7 482 residents and its area is 126.49 km².

Historical aspects of the present arrangement and quality of the Hriňová landscape

Hriňová's current landscape was formed in the 17th and 18th centuries when primeval forests were cut and the land on the southern slopes of the volcanic Poľana mountain range was cultivated for agricultural purposes and as arable land, grassland and pastures. The area's deforestation was partly due to the emerging glass industry in the 18th century and the burning of charcoal.

The character of the landscape and composition of the structures developed gradually. The land was parcelled into settlements covering certain areas and dwellings were built on these lots. Agricultural land was segmented into smaller parts so that for each owner to have fields and meadows at different locations in the cadastre based on soil quality (fertility). These lots were later fragmented into smaller parts, due to old Hungarian law of inheritance. According to this law each descendant inherits equal part of land, thus, the number of children in each family was reflected in the structure of the country.

It is important to realise that several major land reforms took place in Slovakia. In the 1950s landscapes with micro structures in submontane areas of Slovakia was typical. Social changes after 1948 resulted in nationalisation of the land and collectivisation (transformation of individual private farming into collectives). Most of Slovakia's landscapes changed significantly when land was consolidated during socialism and the original narrow fields were replaced by large tracts (blocks, strips) of fields. Only very few communities in Slovakia successfully resisted this process and Hriňová was one of them. No agricultural cooperative was ever established in this area. Natural conditions, particularly the rugged terrain, helped as well.

After 1989, there was further restructuring of land with the partial return in many areas of the holding and dividing of land according to historical arrangements. In Hriňová, however, the arrangement of small fields, meadows, pastures and also traditional farming methods were maintained.

In the past, a sophisticated and unique system of irrigation using channels was created on the deforested land, consisting of a man-made system of shallow canals that led water from the watercourse along the level line to hay meadows and pastures even in more distant areas. The system of channels is still maintained.

Main project objectives :

- **Preserve cultural and historical values of the landscape**
The local government's objective has been to maintain a specific arrangement of agrarian historical landscape structures, its function and the appearance of the original landscape through regular maintenance using traditional methods. At the same time, the specific system of the scattered settlement and authenticity of the landscape is being maintained. In the forefront is the effort to balance out economic activity while maintaining the landscape's characteristic features.
- **Conserving the arrangement of land cover components**
The objective has been to maintain the landscape's structural diversity and heterogeneity, keep the mosaic arrangement of structures, preserve biodiversity and functionality of the landscape.
- **Maintaining the productive capacity of traditional agriculture**
The landscape is currently being farmed using traditional farming methods. The local government's objective has been to support primary agricultural production and traditional forms of land use while respecting the landscape's limits in term of capacity, to support the granting of the Podpoľanie Regional Product trademark for manufacturers and farmers and to prevent succession vegetation growth and the disappearance of agricultural land.
- **Letting people remain in the landscape and ensuring an adequate standard of living for the population in the scattered settlements**
The objective of the project has been to create such conditions that people living in scattered settlement could live a decent life (including the social conditions).
- **Supporting measures to adapt to climate change**
A system of irrigation channels in the landscape has been historically preserved, with the objective of maintaining and renovating them and to gradually recover the functionality of the blocked canals and restore their flow capacity.
- **Creating conditions for all stakeholders to cooperate in the development of the area**
The objective has been for all stakeholders, namely state environmental protection, civic associations, farmers, stakeholders, residents etc., to cooperate in the management of the landscape while maintaining its utility and value.
- **Sustaining of the human and landscape identity, local culture and authenticity**
The objective has been to raise awareness of the landscape and its value among residents through various educational activities, support for human and landscape identity and for local culture, and by maintaining the traditional crafts, culture and folklore of the Podpoľanie region. One form of doing so is by organising events to promote traditional methods of farming of land and old crafts and to preserve folklore.
- **Utilising the natural and cultural values of the landscape in tourism development.**

11. Outcome

Results/outcome of the project:

- Sustaining of the traditional way of life among residents of Hriňová and of farming on terraced small agricultural plots and meadows;
- Conservation of the characteristic features of the landscape and the unique type of the Carpathian mountain landscape by preserving the traditional management of landscape structures;
- Preservation of the terraced fields - agrarian historic landscape structures that are unique due to their geometric arrangement and position on the wavy terrain;
- Maintenance of the specific arrangement of buildings - scattered settlement, i.e. isolated settlements without streets;
- Preservation of cultural and historical, natural values of the landscape;
- Developed cooperation between the local government and all stakeholders in achieving the project objectives: State Nature Conservancy, individually farmers, associations, residents, etc.;
- Exemplar cooperation between local government and stakeholders in the management of the landscape and likewise in the Coordinating Council of the Poľana Biosphere Reserve on expanding the area of the biosphere reserve by incorporating the Hriňová scattered settlement;
- Support for granting the Regional Product trademark to local manufacturers, growers and producers;
- Cooperation with the Podpoľanie Local Action Group (LEADER approach) in the implementation of area development projects; building of the Tourist Information Centre, educational trails, information points and tourist accommodation;
- Promotion of tourism and cooperation with the Regional Tourism Organisation of Podpoľanie and Novohrad in promoting the region and creating conditions for the formation of integrated tourism products and encouragement toward developing accommodation services in the region;
- Sustained and boosting of ecological stability and biodiversity, conservation of favourable landscape heterogeneity and structural diversity in the landscape;
- Maintenance of the landscape's functionality, prevention secondary succession in order to prevent deterioration and destruction of agricultural land;
- Keeping in place the unique irrigation system of channels which has positive impact on water distribution in the drainage area. These channels are also increasing retention capacity and slowing down in runoff, which makes them an important climate change adaption measure;
- Eco-stabilisation as a effect of farming – keeping the arrangement of fields along the contour line and ploughing along the contour line together with regular care as a measure to prevent erosion and too improve soil moisture regime, with a positive impact on distribution of water in the area;
- Keeping adequate standard of living for all residents of the scattered settlement, e.g. local transport links to remote areas, maintenance and rebuilding of local roads , various measures introduced in the social area;
- Deepening of human and landscape identity, raising awareness among

residents of the value of and benefits from the landscape; preservation of the culture in the Podpoľanie region and of its traditions, folklore and crafts such as specific musical instruments (fujara - Slovak overtone flute) and typical carved wooden crosses; educational activities, regional education;

- Organisation of events: “Farming at the Hriňová scattered settlement” with demonstrations of traditional farming methods and old crafts, the "Folklore and Traditions" Film Festival, “Winter Draft Horse Competition”, “Sts. Peter and Paul Fair”, “Music under Poľana International Folk Music Festival”, the "Children under Poľana" children's folklore festival, “Traditional Taste of Podpoľanie” Food Festival”, etc.;
- Implementation of a number of community activities over a 14-year period in cooperation with the European Second Generation Department, and with the participation of volunteers from around the world (Australia, New Zealand, United States, Germany): rebuilding of an old shepherd's hut and turning it into a tourist accommodation, reconstruction of the bell tower, cleaning of wells, maintaining children's playgrounds, etc.

IV. RESPECT OF THE CRITERIA OF THE ATTRIBUTION OF THE AWARD

12. Sustainable territorial development

Is the project part of a sustainable development policy?

Does it contribute to the enhancement of environmental, social, economic, cultural or aesthetic values of the landscape? How?

Has it successfully countered or posed a remedy to any pre-existing environmental damage or urban blight? How?

Yes, the project is part of a sustainable development policy.

The project is based on policy of sustainable land use and maintaining harmony between people and the landscape, respecting the landscape's limits in term of capacity and the principles of nature conservation while preserving the landscape's cultural and historical values. The aim of this policy is to maintain the landscape's characteristic features, functionality and prosperity.

The result is a balanced cultural landscape where human economic activities develop in accordance with natural conditions while retaining the landscape's functions.

The implemented project activities are based on all stakeholders participating and contributing toward stable and sustainable development in the town. An example is the cooperation of the local government with representatives of the State Nature Conservancy, individually farmers and other stakeholders on the expansion of the area of the biosphere reserve to incorporate the Hriňová scattered settlement.

The local government has transformed its aims and objectives towards environmental, social, economic, cultural and aesthetic sustainability into strategic and conceptual materials, Spatial Plan of the town Hriňová and a Economic and Social Development Plan of the town Hriňová.

Environmental aspects

The project activities have a significant impact on the good condition of the environment and they comply with the environmental policy at the national and regional level. The quality of the environment in the town can be defined as follows:

- According to the concept of green infrastructure (at the national level, it is a document covering the regional territorial system of ecological stability of the Detva District), the town of Hriňová was largely included in the biocentre of regional importance. The diversity of the landscape and heterogeneity of land cover alongside with extensive farming is also reflected in the diversity of plant and animal species. It is evident that the area is managed in a way ensuring a high proportion of natural and semi-natural habitats as well as biodiversity (herbal, hydric, forest communities with the occurrence of a number of protected plant and animal species). There are few NATURA 2000 sites located in the area. Four Sites of importance on European level and one bird protected area (The Bird Protected Area, SKCHVU022) spread around the Hriňová scattered settlement. The Poľana Protected Landscape Area - a national level protected area - also stretches into the scattered settlement area;
- The way how of land is managed eliminates soil erosion and the terracing itself is an anti-erosion measure;
- Careful management of the landscape, organic fertilisers without chemicals are used in most areas;
- Preserving the sophisticated and unique system of irrigation using channels consisting of a man-made system of shallow ditches that lead water from the watercourse along a contour line to hay meadows and pastures even in more distant areas. This system positively affects the area's hydrological cycle by slowing down the runoff and increasing water retention capacity of the landscape, thereby improving the micro climate and facilitating the formation of ground water reserves and drinking water sufficiency, so water is available even in drought conditions. Greater yields from meadows and pastures are ensured. By slowing down the runoff and providing regular land management, the project also fulfils an important role in flood protection of the area;
- Maintaining and cultivating the terraced micro structures also has a significant impact on how water is distributed throughout the landscape and it also slows down the runoff, which is important for protecting the area from flooding;
- The cultivation of agricultural land and maintaining the natural boundaries of the forest zone prevents the spread of airborne and invasive plant species.

Social aspects

The residents of Hriňová have a very deep relationship with their landscape and soil. They are well aware of the value of the environment created in the past by their ancestors and are now taking care of it. People who came to the landscape re-created it and lived in harmony with it, and so becoming their livelihood. This relationship is maintained by the current project activities, deepening the identity of people and the landscape.

The project supports the development of local communities and creates a suitable environment for cooperation, which is very beneficial for the landscape, in maintaining it and for life in it. An example of the very good relationships is the organising of "Gazdovanie na hriňovských lazoch" ("Farming at the Hriňová scattered settlement"), where the farmers present their skills in cultivating the landscape, traditional crafts and open their farms to visitors for two days. The event is organised directly in the countryside.

The social aspect of the project is also important. The local government puts great emphasis

on social policy and ensuring a decent life for its residents. Social measures include the construction of flats for young families, creating jobs for those who are long-term unemployed and providing nursing care to the elderly (20 caregivers are employed by the town) as well as food delivery. The local government enables people in the scattered settlement to continue living there, often in remote areas of the town. Of the total population, 41% (3,060 residents) live in the scattered settlement. These measures include maintaining and reconstructing local roads (the towns manages up to 178 km of roads), subsidising regular transport links for residents of the scattered settlement through public bus transport (to keep the line profitable, the town subsidises the bus line operator with a contribution of €50,000 each year). Funding of these measures is expensive because the town's area, the layout of the settlements and the length of local roads are not taken into account in national legislation when redistributing shared taxes.

Economic aspects

The economic aspect of the project has two levels, maintaining traditional farming way of life has both direct and indirect effects.

1. Direct effect. Cultivating the land benefits residents. The use of pastures, arable land, gardens and orchards has an impact on the degree of food independence for the residents while helping to develop local food and agricultural tourism markets, which the local government supports. The key is to produce local crops and food by cultivating cereals, vegetables and fruit and raising sheep, pigs and cattle on local pastures.

As part of the local government's support of primary agricultural production, it cooperates with the Svojpomocné družstvo jednotlivo hospodáriacich roľníkov Hriňová (Hriňová Self-supporting Association of Individual Farmers), which brings together farmers and landowners from the town. As part of the cooperation, the town provides places for selling during major cultural events and space in market areas on ordinary days during the year.

Several manufacturers, growers and producers from Hriňová have been awarded the Podpoľanie Regional Product trademark guaranteeing the regional origin of the marked product or service, its quality and a direct tie to the region's tradition, and of the environmentally friendly nature of the manufacturer, service and product.

2. Indirect effect. An important part of the town's activities is the management of its natural and cultural heritage and utilisation in tourism. The unique and alive farmed landscape and its remarkable pattern is very important in terms of the supply of tourism products. At the same time, it forms a suitable basis for agricultural tourism and offers excellent conditions for hiking and cycling.

Cooperation with the Novohrad and Podpoľanie Regional Tourism Organisations is aimed at creating conditions for development of integrated tourism products and promotion of the region.

An important element is the cooperation of the town of Hriňová with the PODPOĽANIE civic association, which has received the status of a local action group (LEADER approach) and creates favourable conditions for mutual communication, cooperation and development of conditions for the implementation of projects that contribute to regional development. The civic association secured funds for Podpoľanie to implement projects aimed at revitalising and developing municipalities, strengthening tourism marketing, encouraging low-capacity lodging, providing services for rural populations and more. In cooperation with the civic association, the town has built its Tourist Information Centre, educational trails, information points and tourist accommodation (examples include a educational trail to the Bystrô waterfall in 2012). Private accommodation is promoted at the town website, in the Tourist Information Centre, at events and in other ways.

The project is important also in terms of increasing the value of ecosystem services. The increase in the value of ecosystems in terms of supply services is related mainly to primary production, benefits from growing crops and breeding livestock. Regulatory services in the ecosystems increase mainly through eco-stabilising measures in the landscape, the ability of the terraced small agricultural plots to combat erosion, slowing runoff and raising the retention capacity of the landscape through a system of channels, with a significant impact on flood protection in the area. Increasing cultural services of the ecosystems in the landscape lies in preserving the landscape's cultural and historical values and its characteristic features.

Cultural aspects

The value of the local landscape results from the relationship between the people and the landscape, and people's identity. Residents of the town are aware of their culture and are proud of it.

Humans transformed the landscape, and the landscape shaped the humans. The local cultural individuality demonstrates the originality of the environment, the identity of the people and the landscape. People living in this landscape translated the landscape and their lives into folk art, traditions, songs, dances, costumes, and dialect.

The local government aims to maintain the traditional crafts, traditions, culture and folklore of the specific Podpoľanie region. Through its activities, it maintains a location-specific awareness and creates conditions for preserving the cultural heritage of the town by organising various cultural events of local, regional and national importance.

The largest event is the annual "Gazdovanie na hriňovských lazoch" ("Farming at the Hriňová scattered settlement"), the main organiser of which is the town of Hriňová. It is a festival featuring demonstrations of traditional land cultivation and old crafts which take place directly in the landscape. The residents open their farms, present their skills, crafts, traditional manufacturing processes, and offer various meals and foods to the visitors. The event is an example of the very close cooperation between the town and its residents.

Some of the other major events organised by the town include the "Folklore and Traditions" Film Festival, "Winter Draft Horse Competition", "Sts. Peter and Paul Fair" and the "Music under Poľana International Folk Music Festival", the "Children under Poľana" children's folklore festival and the "Traditional Taste of Podpoľanie" food festival.

Several folklore groups operating in Hriňová also contribute toward preserving the local folk culture. The regional education provided by the local primary school gives children a sense of the municipality's identity and landscape.

Important activities also include the town's own educational activities and cooperation in the issue of several publications about the history, culture and landscape of Hriňová.

Aesthetic aspects

The project clearly contributes to maintaining the landscape's value, characteristic features of the landscape and functionality, too.

The agrarian historical structures of the Hriňová landscape are unique due to their formation, size, good condition and **viability**. Their arrangement on the specific relief creates a unrepeatable combination of features that make up the landscape visual appearance. It is a mosaic arrangement of structures with an average area of about 0.2 hectares and of regularly alternating terraced small agricultural plots, meadows, pastures and non-forested woody vegetation where houses surrounded by gardens are scattered.

One of the objectives of the project is to preserve the characteristic features of the landscape under the European Landscape Convention. These structures make up the cultural and historical profile of the landscape.

The landscape of Hriňová was created as useful land. The landscape created by man is

similar to land art. The land cover is reminiscent of a decorated "embroidered tablecloth". The Hriňová scattered settlement are proof that creating harmony between man and nature in a landscape through a sustainable way of life will be also reflected in its value.

The landscape of Hriňová is increasingly gaining in value, both in terms of originality as well as rarity. It is a proof of history. In the 1950s, this type of landscape was prevalent in the submontane areas of Slovakia. The land cover of Slovakia gradually underwent a considerable change due to social changes. Currently, there is no equivalent to the Hriňová landscape in Slovakia with such an extensive system of historical agrarian landscape structures.

The Hriňová scattered settlement are unique in the specific landscape of the Carpathian mountain range as well as in the European context.

Elimination the risk of the landscape disappearing

Implementation of the project is clearly preventing environmental damage. It is keeping the landscape from being abandoned and degraded and its remarkable structures built in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries and its represent the historical landscape memory.

Through exemplary cooperation between all stakeholders, the landscape has remained alive, maintaining the value of the land. The residents remaining in the scattered settlement and maintaining the traditional farming way of life, regularly cultivating the fields and permanent grass cover to prevent the occurrence of undesirable phenomena and processes in the landscape and especially eliminating succession vegetation of rare micro structures. The maintenance of the landscape structures has an impact on the preservation of biodiversity and varied plant communities.

Unlike this landscape, other locations in Slovakia have already experienced the disappearance of agrarian historical landscape structures or are facing them irretrievably disappearing in remote submontane areas due to advancing succession vegetation.

The formulated regulations mentioned in Hriňová's policy documents, particularly in the Hriňová Local Development Plan, are essential for maintaining specific forms of settlement, while preserving the settlements and without any undesirable street development.

Despite the rough natural conditions and remoteness, the Hriňová scattered settlement is still alive and remain an extraordinary landscape.

13. Exemplary value

Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?

Which are the good practices that it implemented?

The project is a model for all local governments in Slovakia and abroad in several respects:

- **In terms of the comprehensive and systematic approach taken toward preserving landscape values and the identity of the landscape and people.**

Exemplary care for the landscape and its characteristic features that people have created over centuries with their work. Constant cultivation of the landscape by people preserves the historical memory of the landscape, its diversity and the authenticity of the environment, while eliminating undesirable processes (succession vegetation, abandonment, degradation) and it also has a significant eco-stabilising effect.

The project aims to preserve identity of people and the landscape, respecting the way of life of its residents. The local government uses all possibilities to maintain life in the scattered settlement and ensure a decent life for them. At the same time, it creates conditions for the development of various activities, the local market, tourism and the overall prosperity of the city.

- **In terms of maintaining cooperation among the main project partners.**

Exemplary cooperation of all stakeholders in maintaining the traditional way of life. The cooperation also concerns the local government, representatives of the State Nature Conservancy, residents and other cooperating organisations who seek to have the people living in the landscape remain there while preserving their values in the landscape associated with the work they have done over time.

- **In terms of time, a long-term, continuous effort to maintain landscape values.**

14. **Public participation**

Does the project actively encourage the public's participation in the decision-making process? How?

Is the project in line with the wider policies implemented by national, regional or local authorities?

The project promotes public participation in the decision-making process.

The key to the project's success is the participation of all stakeholders, including residents and various civic associations. The project is based on the needs of the public in many respects. The local government operates based on the assumption that the way the landscape is managed and the preservation of the characteristic appearance of the landscape is the result reached by all stakeholders, but the residents play the main role.

The close cooperation between the local government and the residents is reflected in the local development planning process, the participation of the public is ensured even in the approval process of the Local Spatial Plan of the town Hriňová, while other planning documents at the town level are created with the active participation of the public, such as the Social Services Community Plan for the Town of Hriňová and Local Agenda 21.

The local government actively cooperates with the Svojpomocné družstvo jednotlivu hospodáriacich roľníkov Hriňová (Hriňová Independent Association of Individual Farmers), which covers farmers.

The project is in line with national, regional and local policies. The local government transforms landscape care principles in the meaning of the European Landscape Convention from all strategic and conceptual documents at the national and regional level to the local level. Several of them are also directly applied in the landscape.

Compliance with policies and plans at the following levels:

National level:

- Slovak Spatial Development Perspectives (2001, amendment No.1, 2014), binding part:
 - In terms of the layout in regard to ecological aspects, nature conservation, natural resources, mineral resources and landscape management and landscape formation, the project complies with section 5.13: "Ensure the permanent protection of landscape under the European Landscape Convention aimed at preserving and maintaining significant or characteristic features of the landscape resulting from its historical heritage and natural arrangement or human activity";
 - In terms of rural development and the relationship between the town and the rural areas, the project complies with section 3.2: "Maintain the original specific nature of rural areas, work with the original nature of the built-up areas and the historically formed surrounding landscape; preserve the historically formed type of built-up area and take into account the ethnographic specificities of individual regions";
 - In terms of preservation, assessment and use of the area's cultural heritage, the project complies with section 4.2.9 "Take into account and revitalise historic landscape structures, including areas of dispersed settlement, in zoning development";
- National Strategy of Sustainable Development of the Slovak Republic (2001);
- National Strategy of Regional Development of the Slovak Republic, 2010;
- National Green Infrastructure Policy – General Plan of the Supra-Regional Territorial System of Ecological Stability, 2001;

Regional level:

- Regional Spatial Plan of the Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region (1998, as amended in 2014);
- Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan of the Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region for the period 2007-2013;
- Regional Green Infrastructure Policy - Regional Territorial System of Ecological Stability of the Zvolen District (1994) and the Detva District (2013).

Local level:

- Spatial Plan of the town Hriňová, 2012;
- Economic and Social Development Plan of the town Hriňová for the period of 2007 - 2013;
- Hriňová Community Plan of Social Services, 2010 (analysis of the town's social situation, defining vulnerable groups of residents and the method of handling the risk of their social exclusion);
- Local Agenda 21, 2003.

15. Awareness-raising

Is the project effectively increasing the public's awareness of the importance of landscape in terms of human development, consolidation of European identity, or individual and collective well-being? How?

Maintaining the diversity of European landscapes and their cultures is our common value. The landscape of Hriňová represents the type of Carpathian submontane to mountainous landscape. It is unique due to its landscape terrain, and the geometrical arrangement of the

narrow small agricultural plots on the varied relief.

Preserving its authenticity and character is also significant from the European perspective. In this sense, the concept of the European Landscape Convention is fulfilled. The landscape of Hriňová is an example of how to find harmony between people and the landscape and create a culture that is attractive for domestic and foreign visitors.

It is important for the residents of Hriňová as well as for the greater region to remain and live in a landscape that poses great demands on making a living. The project allows the town to maintain the traditional way of life of its residents, keep the landscape alive and functional, while preserving the characteristic features of the landscape.

People living in the scattered settlement have a relationship to the land and to the landscape. They have lived in harmony with it for nearly three centuries. The local government respects the relationship of the people living in the scattered settlement to the landscape and the traditional way of life and its activities are creating the conditions for conserving it and strengthening the identity of the people and the landscape. The traditional way of life also includes preserving crafts, skills of its residents, local culture, living folklore, folk songs, musical instruments, dances, and costumes.

The Hriňová scattered settlement are historically unique in Slovakia. In other areas of Slovakia, the landscape has undergone a dramatic change due to collectivisation and social changes, turning historical agrarian landscape structures into large-scale arable land. Hriňová's landscape managed to withstand such various influences and remains with its specific nature unique, original, and extraordinary both in a Slovak and European context.

V. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Together with the printed version of the Application form, additional material in digital format should be included in one CD-Rom or DVD and returned by post or courier to:

Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons

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- Text (3 pages): *PDF format*
- Photos (10): *JPEG format*
- Poster (1): *PDF format*
- Video: *mpeg 2 format*
- Book: *“Hriňovské lazy. De luxe”*.