



COUNCIL OF EUROPE LANDSCAPE CONVENTION
LANDSCAPE AWARD OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

8th Session – 2022-2023

APPLICATION FORM

Presentation

The Council of Europe Landscape Convention is the first international treaty to be exclusively concerned with all aspects of landscape: natural, rural, urban and peri-urban. It represents an important contribution to the implementation of the Council of Europe's objectives. By taking into account the value of landscapes, with their natural and human components, the Council of Europe acknowledges that the landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas.

Article 11 of the Convention establishes the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe. The Resolution [CM/Res\(2008\)3](#) 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 Award and that it is in keeping with the work carried out by the Council of Europe concerning human rights, democracy and sustainable development.

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.

Each State Party to the Convention is thus invited to send by post to the Secretariat General of the Council of Europe (Council of Europe Landscape Convention), before 31 January 2023, via its Permanent Representation to the Council of Europe, a completed application form in paper format, together with a digital copy on a USB key of the form and additional material.

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Please note that:

- 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 authors' 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:

[Convention du Conseil de l'Europe sur le paysage / Site web officiel \(coe.int\)](#)
[Council of Europe Landscape Convention / Official website \(coe.int\)](#)

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I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

1. State	Slovak Republic
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<i>Name of the local, regional authority(ies) or NGO(s)</i>	
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II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJET

3. Name of the Project

Back to the Roots

4. Location of the Project

Slovak Republic, The Nitra Self-governing Region,
Topoľčany District

5. Summary of the Project (10-12 lines)

The project is a conceptual set of targeted development activities aimed at enhancing the cultural and historical potential of the municipality of Bojná, linked to an important power and economic centre and one of the best-preserved Slavic fortification sites of Great Moravia in the municipality of Bojná, where unique archaeological findings from the 9th century AD have been discovered, documenting the life of the ancestors of the Slovaks and the beginnings of Christianity in Slovakia. The activities were carried out over a long period of time in different areas to connect and complement each other. They are based on the mutual efforts and cooperation of the municipality of Bojná, the Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Nitra, the civic associations, the residents of the municipality and the general public. The outputs of the project include the construction of a permanent open-air exhibition with model reconstructions of objects in the territory of the archaeological site of the Valy hillfort and its sensitive restoration, the establishment of a museum exhibition in the municipality, the application of innovative forms of education and the purposeful increase of public awareness of the value of the land through experiential learning of the national cultural heritage.

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



Model reconstruction of the Eastern Gate on the Valy hillfort, the Municipality of Bojná archives.

7. **Website of the Project** (*if exists*)

www.bojna.sk
www.hradiskovaly.sk

III. CONTENT OF THE PROJECT

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

9. **Partners**

Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences
Velkomoravané, z. s. (Czech Republic)
Municipality of Modrá (Czech Republic)
Nitra Tourist Board
Nitra Self-Governing Region
Tribeč Awareness-Raising Centre in Topolčany
Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, Cyril and Metohodius Route

10. **Financing bodies**

Financial donations from the public, sponsor contributions
Subsidies of the Nitra Region
Subsidies of the Nitra Tourist Board
Grant from the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic

11. **Central aims of the Project**

The main objective of the project was the systematic and long-term application of the concept “Back to the Roots”, which consisted in the protection, evaluation and promotion of cultural and historical phenomena of the municipality of Bojná, which were uncovered by archaeological research.

The exceptional and rare findings from Bojná are of transnational importance and fundamentally complement the knowledge of European history in the 8th and 9th century.

The partial objectives of the project were:

- protection and care of the archaeological sites and the precious heritage of the ancestors, the sensitive cultivation of the monument area,
- enhancing the quality of the land, preserving and developing unique landscape features, increasing the attractiveness of the area,
- evaluation of the unique cultural and historical heritage of the ancestors from the times of Great Moravia in the development of tourism in the municipality and the region,

- presentation of the results of research and the uniqueness of the findings from Bojná, which - in an exceptional way - document the beginnings of national history and the beginnings of Christianity in Slovakia,
- popularisation and promotion of the results of the archaeological research ongoing since 2003 and making them available to the general public in different forms,
- application of a system of various experiential forms of learning about history and national cultural heritage in the search for the “roots” of the national identity of the Slovaks,
- awareness-raising activities - raising awareness of the value of the Bojná region among the general public in preserving our common European cultural heritage,
- implementation of innovative forms of education, creation of conditions for education and learning about the history and cultural-historical heritage of the monuments of Bojná,
- networking and participation of all interested parties.

12. Outcome

The main outputs of the project are:

1. Establishment of the Archaeological Museum of Great Moravia

The municipality of Bojná, being aware of the extraordinary value of the unique archaeological discoveries and the land it manages, decided to build a museum in cooperation with the Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Nitra for a decent presentation of the results of the archaeological research to the general public.

Its aim was to popularize the important archaeological discoveries and the results of systematic research since 2003 through investment activities - by building a museum in the municipality and expanding it with a permanent open-air exhibition directly at the archaeological site of Valy (Bojná1).

The predecessor of museum was the permanent exhibition of archaeological findings established in 2007 in the premises of the cultural centre. The Archaeological Museum of Great Moravia has been in the current premises since 2012. Since the state did not provide subsidies in the given period, the municipality decided to approach the residents, business entities and enthusiasts who appreciate their own history with a request for help. The museum was built from financial donations and collections.

Thanks to the support of the Nitra Self-Governing Region, the museum underwent a change of its visual concept and an expansion of the collection in 2020. The activities in the museum did not end with its opening to the public. It is constantly being modernised and is visited by several thousand visitors a year. The museum is open all year round and there is also a tourist information centre. The museum has become a destination not only for the professional public, but also for schools and families.

Its main task is to present the results of research at five archaeological sites located in the cadastral territory of the municipality of Bojná, which formed a single unique settlement and defensive agglomeration in the past, as well as of the surrounding neighbouring research sites.

During the research, a lot of ceramics and 800 inventory numbers of historical objects were found. The most significant discovery presented in the museum is the unique Bojná bronze bell with an iron heart, which is one of the 3 oldest cast Christian bells in the

world.

Another rare find is a unique set of relief decorated plaques with figural motifs of Christ and angels. The set of six gilded plaques represents the most complex collection of Christian relics in the West Slavic world from the early medieval period - the 9th century. They are made of thin gilded copper sheet and decorated by hammering and modelling according to a unified artistic concept.

The rare findings also include “hrivna” (means of payment), jewellery, weapons and parts of equipment, remains of blacksmith workshops, utility items, agricultural tools, etc.

2. Building an exhibition in the open air

The next step in the presentation of the newly discovered finds, which began to change the view of the origins of our national history, was the expansion of the museum with a permanent open-air exhibition, located directly at the archaeological site of Bojná1 - the Valy hill-fort. The municipality of Bojná, being aware of the importance of this unique site, leased the area of the hill-fort from its landowner, a land association, for the purpose of managing, protecting and developing the site.

This large Slavic hill-fort, a centre of crafts, trade and culture, was probably founded at the beginning of the 9th century and disappeared at the turn of the 9th and 10th century. After the destruction of the hill-fort, its original settlement did not continue and nothing was built on its foundations, thus the original foundations and the wealth of the fort were preserved. The area of the inner fortification is approximately 11 hectares.

The uniqueness of this monument in terms of its historical and social significance is supported by archaeological surveys which have been ongoing at the hill-fort since 2003.

The early medieval fortification of Valy (Bojná1) is one of the most important immovable national cultural monuments from the period of Great Moravia in Slovakia. Great Moravia (Magna Moravia) was a West Slavic state existing in the 9th century whose central territory corresponded to the present-day Moravia (Czech Republic) and Slovakia. It was the first state unit of the Slavs.

The site has become a new symbol of the earliest history of the Slovaks. The monument collection is of extraordinary value for the entire Central European area and has brought new knowledge for the interpretation of its history.

The hill-fort is located on a mountain ridge and on an important long-distance road. The fort was not only defensive object but also had craft structures. The economic mission of the centre is evoked by its location directly on the road through the mountains, which passed through both gates of the fort, as well as by its proximity to ore resources and gold deposits.

The fort is kidney-shaped, the longitudinal axis is about 600 m long, and the transverse axes are between 200 and 300 m long. The total area of the acropolis and the forecourt is almost 14 hectares. There is a very well-preserved wall around the entire area, which reaches a height of 3 to 5 m on the inner side and 10 m on the outer side, with a base about 18.5 m wide. The main wall was built with a lattice structure and lined on the outside with a dry-laid stone lining. Due to its unique preservation, it has been declared a national cultural monument.

The walls, together with the ditches, were part of a complex and sophisticated monumental fortification system, which also connected other fortifications in Bojná.

The aim of the municipality was to promote experiential forms of learning about history through model reconstructions of the discovered objects, which are supplemented by text interpretation and during the summer tourist season by regular interpretation by a guide.

Since 2012, gradually, we have built hypothetical reconstructions of the discovered Slavic half-timbered houses (dwellings partially sunken, with walls above the ground level), food storage tanks and a dome furnace at the hill-fort from various finance sources.

The largest reconstructed object was the hypothetical reconstruction of the Eastern Gate of the hill-fort, carried out in 2018, with the financial support of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic.

The aim was the complete restoration of the entrance gate to the fortification of the hill-fort in accordance with the decision of the Regional Monuments Office in Nitra, which has become one of the largest early medieval reconstructions in Central Europe.

When designing the reconstruction of this gate, a suitable technical solution was sought to prevent the massive erosive landslide that had devastated the national cultural monument. The structure itself is designed to stabilise the embankment and protect the monument against the massive erosion at the site.

The Eastern Gate is a model reconstruction according to the findings - in situ. It consists of a wooden carpentry construction. The lower part consists of two pylons of log construction. The space formed by the log frame is filled with aggregate. In the corners, there are the supporting pylons/columns of the tower. The latter is made up of a frame and column structure with a timber truss. The perimeter shell is made of half-logs. The roof covering is wooden - shingle or flake thatching. The wood is oak, hand-worked by a carpenter, smoothed with hand tools.

As part of the reconstruction, an exhibition area was created directly in the gate, which is open to visitors free of charge all year round.

After the implementation of this project, the number of visitors to the archaeological site increased substantially and it is one of the most attractive and sought-after tourist sites in the region today.

After the implementation of this project, the intention of the municipality was to create a hypothetical reconstruction that can be used for educational and presentation activities so that - thanks to personal experience at the site - it is possible to more effectively explain and understand the realities of the time with the aim of evoke greater sensitivity and respect for the land and cultural heritage among the visitors.

3. Bojná archaeological open-air museum

The third phase of the development, evaluation and promotion of the cultural heritage of our ancestors, which is being uncovered by archaeological research, is the preparation of the Bojná archaeological open-air museum, alongside with the museum and the permanent exhibition in the open air at the Valy hill-fort.

The municipality has been preparing this investment plan for almost 10 years. After processing the conceptual study, a plot of land of approximately 8 hectares was settled and purchased, which is located between the archaeological museum and archaeological sites located in a mountainous environment. Recently, a legally valid land-use decision on construction has been issued, and the municipality has been continuously preparing the building permit process.

Through this project, the municipality can present the uniqueness of the finds discovered

in Bojná at a higher level, appropriate to international standards for monuments of this importance.

By implementing and operating the archaeological site, the municipality will provide entire necessary tourist infrastructure, while offering a historically faithful insight into life and times when the national identity of the Slovaks was beginning to take shape. The complex will enable the application of a wide range of museum pedagogy, including interactive participation of visitors in planned educational and experimental programmes under the supervision of experts from the Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, even for physically and medically handicapped visitors, which is not possible in the case of activities organised at the original sites due to difficult to access.

The income generated by the operation of the open-air museum will help the municipality to ensure the sustainability of the access to and protection of the archaeological site, which is already extremely difficult at the moment. At the same time, as part of the rapidly developing cultural tourism, we will gradually make available the four other attractive archaeological sites in the cadastral territory of the municipality, which formed a single unique settlement and defensive agglomeration in the past.

4. Educational area

Part of the concept of the Back to the Roots concept is also an educational area aimed at educating all age categories.

As this is a long-term process, the municipality has purposefully promoted this topic in simple and playful ways for children already in kindergartens. The topic is developed in the first stage of primary school through a specially created subject called regional education and further into activities focusing on arts and crafts for young people and adults.

Regional education

The aim of creating the subject of regional education was to help pupils become aware of the natural beauty and historical sites of their region in order to cultivate respect for their homeland, their country and themselves. This approach creates the prerequisites for pupils to cultivate and develop a feeling for the beauty of arts, history and the preservation of our common European cultural heritage.

Art competitions for primary and secondary school pupils

Since 2013, the municipality - in cooperation with the Tribeč Awareness-Raising Centre has been organising annual art competitions for primary and secondary school pupils. The aim of organising these art competitions is to evoke curiosity about the topic of the Bojná findings also among primary and secondary school pupils from the wider surroundings.

At these events, pupils and students present not only their artistic feeling, but also how sensitively they perceive the heritage of our ancestors. The competition at the schools of the region has been more and more popular every year, e.g., in 2017 the jury evaluated almost 150 works of art, which were presented by the authors after the evaluation directly at the Valy hill-fort during the Cyril and Methodius Festival. The very fact of presentation at the sacred places of our ancestors, where there was an important centre of trade and culture 1,200 years ago, enhanced the educational purpose of this activity.

Bojná carving plain-air

Another event connecting the public, artistic work and cultural heritage is the Bojná carving plain-air workshop.

During the construction of the open-air exhibition, which is located directly at the Valy hill-fort, there was a need to improve the quality of the area so that the visitors could have a more comprehensive idea of the life of our ancestors when viewing the archaeological reconstructions. The municipality was looking for solutions that would not introduce foreign material constructions into this area with the need for anchoring or other structural interventions during installation at the site. The aim of this approach was to interfere as little as possible with the conservation area of the hill-fort.

On the basis of these needs, the idea of organising a carving plain-air workshop for amateur artistic carvers was born. It has been prepared since 2019 by the Tribeč Awareness-Raising Centre in cooperation with the municipality of Bojná with focus on carving art, mainly with Great Moravian themes. During several years, wooden sculptures (statues) made of oak and linden wood have been created, which complete the atmosphere of for the visitors to the hill-fort as well as beautify the public areas of the municipality of Bojná.

5. Experiential learning about history

Experiential learning about history is an innovative and the most effective way of educating all ages. This way of getting to know the unique archaeological findings from Bojná, in the context of the noted history of Great Moravia, which is also referred to in the preamble of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, is extremely attractive and engaging for the general public and different age groups.

The municipality started to apply this approach directly on the archaeological site of the Valy fort-hill in Bojná in 2013 through the Cyril and Methodius Festival.

The visitors to the festival have the opportunity to go back 1,200 years to the times of Great Moravia to the residence of an unknown prince and to experience the noted history of Great Moravia through a school of writing in Glagolitic script, period crafts, presentations of the cuisine of our ancestors, demonstrations of the martial arts of the Great Moravian army, or presentations of the results of research of the Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Nitra. At the event, children can also experience the Middle Ages through a number of historical attractions, falconry demonstrations, forest pedagogy or horse riding. The event also includes a presentation of the results of the carving symposium, as well as a demonstration of period bee-keeping and bee products, which were a precious commodity for Slavic merchants. The celebration of a Solemn Mass directly at the sites of the oldest Christian monuments cannot be missed.

Despite the fact that the organisation of this day-long event is extremely demanding, as the hill-fort is located 5 km from the settlement in the difficult terrain of the Bojná forests, thousands of visitors visit it per day.

6. Exhibitions of archaeological finds

The public began to learn about the results of the research and the significance of the finds not only through the permanent museum exhibition in Bojná, but also through exhibitions organized by the Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Archaeological Academy in Nitra in Slovakia and abroad (Czech Republic: Prague, 2013, 2015, Brno, 2013, 2014).

Their uniqueness, artistic and historical value was also admired by the international public in the Vatican Museums (Viale Vaticano 2), in November 2013 at the exhibition “Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius - Patrons of Europe, the earliest evidence of the origins of Christianity in Slovakia”, prepared by the Slovak National Museum in cooperation with

the Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Archaeological Society.

7. Musical work - Psalms from Bojná

The systematic promotion and organisation of exhibitions and the above-mentioned experiential activities have been gradually attracting more and more interest from the public, which is a sign of the viability of municipality of Bojná and its journey in discovering its own roots and identity.

The history of Bojná and its unique findings have become an inspiration for the composer Lubomír Horňák, who composed the musical work Psalms from Bojná. The première of this work was in 2017 on the occasion of the Cyril and Methodius Festival in the Basilica of Saint Praxedes in Rome. This ancient place is closely linked to the Roman residence of Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius.

The event was organised in Rome by the Embassy of the Slovak Republic at the Holy See. The concert was held under the auspices of the then Minister of Culture of the Slovak Republic.

8. Courses on the sustainability of monuments

By working closely with volunteers from Bojná and the surrounding area, civic associations from Slovakia and abroad, the municipality has been ensuring the sustainability of the outdoor exhibitions for many years. This active work builds and develops an important human potential and relationship to the land, its protection and the preservation of our cultural heritage.

These activities include thematic courses on historical carpentry techniques.

These events are aimed at learning traditional working methods and techniques, which the participants can learn free of charge during the two- to three-day courses. The activities are carried out directly at the archaeological site, which enhances and directly evokes the atmosphere of the place. The aim is to develop not only manual skills, but also a sensitive approach to the restoration of historical sites among the participants.

In this form of proactive cooperation with volunteers, the municipality maintains the area of the implemented reconstruction and the area of the hill-fort.

9. Publication activities and the implementation of various media information and promotional activities:

- The brochure “Bojná - new finds from the beginnings of Slovak history”, 2009, published for the municipality of Bojná (Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences),
- creation and updating of the website www.hradiskovaly.sk,
- preparation and publication of videos (local TV, youtube, etc.).

10. Cooperation, networking, partnership building

The main partner of the project is the Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Nitra, which provided professional background during the development of the entire project. The municipality also established cooperation with representatives of the professional public (archaeologists, historians), local government (Nitra Self-Government Region), state administration (Regional Monuments Office), the Tribeč Awareness-Raising Centre, non-profit organizations from Slovakia and abroad.

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

13. 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?

The project “Back to the Roots” is part of the sustainable development policy. The quality of the land has been improved by the proper management of the territory during the implementation of the project.

The project is based on the sustainable use of the land with a focus on preserving the cultural and historical values of the landscape, respecting the limits of the carrying capacity of the landscape in its use, respecting the principles of nature conservation. This policy is evidenced by the preservation of the characteristic features of the land, the functionality and prosperity of the landscape.

The municipality has transformed its intentions and objectives towards environmental, social, economic, cultural and aesthetic sustainability into strategic and conceptual materials, the spatial plan and the economic and social development plan of the municipality.

The project activities were based on the participation of all interested parties, contributing to the stable and sustainable development of the municipality.

One of the objectives of the project was the purposeful protection and popularisation of the special characteristics of the historic land of Bojná through a variety of activities aimed at raising awareness and creating a positive relationship with the cultural, historical and natural phenomena of the region. By organising various forms of creative, cultural, social and educational events, the municipality has long been trying to reach the widest possible age spectrum.

By implementing the project, the municipality has contributed to enhancing the value of the land from various aspects.

Environmental aspect

The activities of the project have a significant impact on the favourable state of the environment and are in line with the environmental policy at national and regional levels.

To ensure the protection and management of the hill-fort site and the construction of a permanent outdoor exhibition, the municipality has leased the site from its owner. The municipality has also initiated a change in the management of the land, which has led to its reclassification from an economic forest to a special-purpose forest under the Forestry Act.

When the largest object on the Valy hill-fort, the Eastern Gate, was being constructed, a suitable technical solution was sought to prevent the massive erosive landslide that had devastated the national cultural monument. The main function of the proposed construction of the Eastern Gate was the necessary stabilization of the unique preserved wall from the 9th century and its protection against the emerging massive erosive degradation of the wall at the site.

The reconstruction of the Eastern Gate of the hill-fort is the last major reconstruction at this

site due to the sustainability and protection of the area.

Due to the sustainability of the site and to ensure suitable conditions for further research, the municipality of Bojná has been working on a project for an archaeological site located outside the conservation area for almost ten years.

Social aspect

The social aspect of the project is also important. The project activities in protecting and enhancing the cultural and historical heritage create a sense of belonging among the population to the area in which they live. Unique discoveries have brought the Slovaks a whole new knowledge of where their roots go back to.

The residents of the municipality are aware of the value of their culture and the historical land in which they live and are proud of it. It becomes part of their identity.

The project promotes the development of local communities and creates a suitable environment for cooperation, which is very beneficial for the improvement of the region.

The evidence of how the project has brought people closer together is the financial support from the residents of the municipality, businesses and the general public to build the museum.

The organisation of unique cultural, social and artistic events enables the active involvement of the residents in the activities of the municipality. An example of working cooperation is the organisation of the Cyril and Methodius Festival, which is extremely popular with the general public.

After the implementation of this project, the number of visitors to the archaeological site increased substantially and it is one of the most attractive and sought-after tourist sites in the region today.

The development of social infrastructure improves living conditions and increases the level of well-being of the residents.

Economic aspect

An important part of the activities of the municipality is the evaluation of its attractions in terms of tourism development. Authentic, original, well-maintained land with its uniqueness is very important in terms of offering tourism products.

Increasing the attractiveness of the municipality with the preservation and presentation of cultural and historical heritage has a significant impact on the development of tourism products in the region. The museum and permanent open-air exhibition at the Valy hill-fort are attracting an increasing number of visitors to Bojná. The Tourist Information Centre (TIC) operates directly at the museum. There is an information system, a nature trail, and a system of cycle paths linking the centre of the municipality with the hill-fort. The largest number of visitors during the year comes there during the Cyril and Methodius Festival.

The improvement of the infrastructure in the municipality contributes to the activation of entrepreneurship and employment of the residents of the municipality and the surrounding area, thus improving the living conditions and increasing the level of well-being of the population.

Popularisation of the cultural and historical values of the municipality at national and world levels improves the image of the municipality. Bojná has become part of the pilgrimage route linking the Great Moravian hill-forts. The pilgrimage starts in Velehrad in Moravia (Czech Republic) and passes through Bojná to Nitra (Slovak Republic).

The sustainability of the activities carried out is ensured financially by the municipality through grant schemes, its own resources, profits from the operation of the archaeological

museum, and the rental of premises for a documentary film production.

Cultural and aesthetic aspects

The project has clearly contributed to preserving the value and the functionality of the region. One of the objectives of the project was to preserve the characteristic features of the region as defined by the Council of Europe Landscape Convention.

The municipality has been creating conditions for the preservation of cultural and historical heritage and increasing the presentation possibilities of the historic land and the results of research, as well as organising experiential forms of learning about history, cultural and social events of supra-regional significance, and also events focused on artistic work.

The municipality has enhanced the values of its territory by improving its public infrastructure. In the museum, it presents unique finds found directly in the territory of the municipality, thus building on archaeological research.

The National Cultural Monument - the Valy hill-fort reveals one of the most significant stages of the cultural and historical profile of this region. The sensitive approach of the municipality to the historic land preserves the genius loci of the hill-fort. The atmosphere of the unrepeatable, unique land of the hill-fort, which is full of history, was emphasized by building model archaeological reconstructions of several objects.

The sensitive approach to the land is also reflected in the organisation of the annual Cyril and Methodius Festival in the area of the hill-fort. Historical crafts, the cuisine of our ancestors and other activities and attractions related to the historical period are presented during the event. Emphasis is placed on authenticity and at the same time on the elimination of disturbing modern elements on the hill-fort. The event also includes a presentation of the results of the carving symposium; several wooden sculptures remain directly at the hill-fort and add to its atmosphere.

Other activities aimed at education and artistic creation teach the youngest generation and the general public about the relationship to the values of the land, history, and aesthetic perception.

The educational activities of the municipality, the creation of multimedia documents, and cooperation in the creation of publications on the historical heritage of the region are also important.

Eliminating the risks of extinction

The implementation of the project has prevented the irreversible disappearance of the unique, unrepeatable values of the region. At a time when information about the cultural and historical value of the Bojná hill-forts had not been known, i.e. before the archaeological research began, precious artefacts from Bojná were being offered on the black market for antiquities and archaeological excavations by illegal seekers. They used metal detectors to heavily disturb the sites at the fort-hills.

Thanks to the experts, it was discovered that they came from the hill-fort from the municipality of Bojná. A significant part of these objects was managed to be recovered and placed in museums. These facts activated archaeologists, who started an intensive archaeological survey of the hill-forts in Bojná in 2003.

The implementation of the project and the care of the hill-forts of the municipality in cooperation with the Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences prevented the occurrence of further damage to this historical area. The value of the land has been maintained by the exemplary cooperation of all interested parties (management).

14. Exemplary value

Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?

Which are the good practices that it implemented?

The project is exemplary for all municipalities in Slovakia and beyond in several aspects:

- in terms of complexity and systematic approach to the preservation of landscape values and the identity of the land and people, preserving the authenticity of the land;
- a conceptual set of targeted development activities aimed at the evaluation of the cultural and historical potential of the municipality of Bojná has been implemented over a long period of time in different areas, so that they are interconnected and complement each other;
- in terms of exemplary care for the land, protection of our common European cultural heritage, sensitive restoration of the conservation area, preservation of the authenticity of the historic landscape;
- the implementation of innovative forms of education in learning about one's own identity and in building a positive relationship with the region and its values;
- in terms of building and developing cooperation between project partners. The results of the project are an example of building partnerships. They are based on the mutual efforts and cooperation of the municipality of Bojná, the Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Nitra, the civic associations, the residents of the municipality and the general public. At the same time, they are evidence of exemplary cooperation of all interested parties - state administration, public administration, professional public, municipality, etc. The municipality has established cooperation with partners from Moravia (Czech Republic), as Slovakia and the Czech Republic are connected by common municipalities from the 9th century.

The extent of the application of the Back to the Roots concept, with the aim of evaluating the cultural and historical phenomena of the region, is a unique example of good practice in Slovakia in the municipal environment.

The fact that the municipality enjoys growing interest from visitors as well as opportunities to represent the Slovak Republic at international forums, where it presents the cultural and historical heritage of its ancestors, is proof of the right direction.

The activities and efforts of the municipality towards the protection, preservation and development of the national cultural heritage, which testifies to the origins of Christianity in Slovakia, were symbolically rewarded in 2021 with the opportunity to participate in an audience, thanking to the Pope for his visit to Slovakia and presenting him with a gift of a bronze copy of the Bojná bell.

15. 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 activities are firmly anchored in all development and strategic documents at local, regional and national levels, which has a major impact on the sustainability and continuation of the project.

The archaeological site of the Valy hill-fort (Bojná 1) has been declared a national cultural monument, which increases the protection of the site at the national level.

The project activities are in line with planning and strategic documents:

- Slovak Spatial Development Perspectives 2001, amended 2011,
- Regional Spatial plan of the Nitra Self-Governing Region, 2012,
- Spatial plan of the municipality of Bojná, 2011,
- Integrated spatial strategy of the Nitra Self-Governing Region for the years 2021-2027,
- Economic and social Development Plan of the Nitra Self-Governing Region by 2030,
- Economic and social Development Plan of the municipality of the municipality of Bojná 2015-2020.

The residents of the municipality were involved in the planning, decision-making and implementation process, as they participated in the elaboration of the spatial development documents of the municipality (spatial planning, economic and social development programme).

The process of approval of strategic documents at the local level allows the public to actively participate in their agreement through the following process:

- the preparation of these documents includes public meetings with residents, which serve to identify their needs and opinions on upcoming projects;
- the draft documents are subsequently made public and the public comments on them. These are then evaluated and incorporated into the content;
- the final approval of these documents takes place at public meetings where the public also has the opportunity to express their views or comments or reservations on the documents to be approved;
- the approved documents become valid after a vote of the elected representatives of the public and are, according to the law, available to the public at websites or on request in printed form.

The sustainability of the activities carried out is ensured financially by the municipality through grant schemes, its own resources, profits from the operation of the archaeological museum and the rental of premises for a documentary film production.

The residents of Bojná have also expressed their agreement with the development goals and priorities of the municipality through a petition for the planned archaeological museum project in Bojná in 2019. The result of the petition can be considered as the greatest expression of public interest and participation in the processes of evaluation of cultural and historical phenomena of the region.

The residents of the municipality have an extremely positive attitude towards the implementation of the project. They actively participate in various educational, cultural and social events at the hill-fort. At the same time, they actively participate in their organisation. The municipality organizes awareness-raising activities, which give the opportunity to participate in the individual activities of the project aimed at the protection and enhancement of the historic land for everyone.

The residents and business entities from Bojná and the surrounding area expressed their unambiguous attitude in the implementation of the collection for the construction of the Archaeological Museum of Great Moravia in Bojná, which was opened in 2012.

16. Awareness-raising

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

Raising public awareness of the value of the region is one of the objectives of this project. The project and its results highlight the importance of preserving the identity of people and the region. They are proof that the region in which indigenous elements are preserved is attractive to visitors from near and far.

The municipality of Bojná, by implementing this project, has long and systematically raised the awareness of the general public of the value of the region through various forms of activity.

At the same time, it has created conditions supporting the interest in the region and its values, so as to promote the sustainability of activities to protect and enhance the shared European values. The municipality has continuously and purposefully made the significance of the monuments discovered in Bojná known to the public to evoke interest and pride of the heritage of their ancestors in a broader context and in the widest possible age spectrum of the population.

V. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Together with the printed version of the Application form, additional material in digital format should be included in one USB key, and returned by post to:

Secretariat General of the Council of Europe

Council of Europe Landscape Convention

8th Session of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe

F-67075 STRASBOURG, Cedex

- Text (20 pages max.): *PDF format*
- Photos (10 max.): *JPEG 350 dpi high definition*
- Posters (2 max.): *PDF format high definition or JPEG 350 dpi high definition*
- Video (15 min max.): *mpeg 2 format - It is recommended to present a video (even of amateur quality).*

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