



Strasbourg, 16 April 2024

T-FC (2024) AWARD 3 E (English only)

**COUNCIL OF EUROPE LANDSCAPE CONVENTION**  
**COUNCIL OF EUROPE LANDSCAPE AWARD**

***8<sup>th</sup> Session 2022-2024***

**Meeting of the International Jury**

**APPLICATION FORMS**

Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 14-15 May 2024

*Palais de l'Europe, Room 16*

Document prepared by the Secretariat of  
the Council of Europe Landscape Convention

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

*8th Session – 2022-2023*

APPLICATION FORM

CROATIA

## **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 \(coe.int\)](#)

\*

## I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

<b>1. State</b>	Republic of Croatia
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<b>2. Applicant</b>	Town of Cres
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## II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJET

### 3. Name of the Project

Local Development Pilot Project (LDPP) Island of Cres

### 4. Location of the Project

Island of Cres

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

The island of Cres, located in the north of the Adriatic Sea, is characterised by typical karst topography and covered by a dense net of dry stone wall structures. Although it is evident that part of traditional island agriculture is gradually vanishing, terraces lying on the slopes around the town of Cres, are still home of active agriculture.

Island's landscape, rich in natural and cultural heritage, is exposed to risk of uncontrolled development which could jeopardise its valuable resources. For that reason it was selected as pilot area for the implementation of the Local Development Pilot Project, carried out in the framework of the Regional Programme on Cultural and Natural Heritage in South-East Europe and jointly implemented by the Council of Europe, the Republic of Croatia Ministry of Culture and the Town of Cres.

The LDPP implemented the principles of the *Framework Convention on the value of cultural heritage for society* and those of the *European Landscape Convention*.

The project was community-led and place-based and was centred on some key principles: the local population as a main player in development, heritage as an asset, synergies created for a common project.

The first step to preserve and valorise the ordinary island landscapes was done within the project.

### 6. Photo representing the Project *Landscape of Island Cres, author Ugo Toić*



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

<https://www.pplr-otokcres.info/>

### 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**

Council of Europe  
Ministry of Culture and Media Republic of Croatia  
Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection  
Ministry of Construction and Spatial Planning  
Ministry of Regional Development  
Primorsko-Goranska County  
Town of Cres  
Town of Mali Lošinj

**10. Financing bodies**

Council of Europe  
Ministry of Culture Republic of Croatia  
Primorsko-Goranska County  
Town of Cres

**11. Central aims of the Project**

The aims of the project were: to promote and manage local cultural and natural heritage together with landscape values as sustainable resources and a common good; to plan and develop territories both socially and economically, while respecting their specificities; to elaborate innovative projects which can generate investments that are better adapted to local resources and integrated into the public action; to have new procedures and methods of action validated that can be used in other territories at national or international level. In other words, the objective of the project was to set up a wide debate and involve not only local community, but also regional and national stakeholders, on finding new ways of preserving and valorising the island natural and cultural heritage by using it as the main resource and driving force for future development. A very important aspect of the project was ensuring the sustainability of its activities after the project ends by ensuring the future financial sustainability of the Project Implementation Unit.

## 12. Outcome

The main outcomes of the project are the following documents:

- Island of Cres Territorial Diagnosis;
- Island of Cres Territorial Strategy;
- GIS database of the architectural heritage of the Island of Cres;
- Landscape study of the Island of Cres; [Landscape Study of the Island Cres](#)
- Island of Cres Development Charter.

The Charter was adopted by the Town of Cres Council.

Besides the abovementioned documents, which can be considered as physical outcome of the project, the most important outcome of the project was the long-lasting process of dialogue, collaboration and increased cohesion among the key island stakeholders as well as among them and the regional and national stakeholders.

In the documents were written the findings and agreements reached by the stakeholder about the vision and future development goals of the island community, where the numerous workshops and meetings facilitated the establishment of trust and personal relations among participants that come up with interesting new joint local development initiatives.

A very important outcome was the increased capacity of the Island Development Agency to prepare and implement development projects funded by local, regional national and EU funds, covering many topics identified in the strategic documents elaborated within the project. The legacy of the project is certainly also the attention the Town of Cres, the Island Development Agency and the island stakeholders pay to respect the principles of the sustainable development in all development initiatives they implement, with particular attention to the principles of the *Framework Convention on the value of cultural heritage for society* and those of the *European Landscape Convention*. All projects are implemented by using the participatory approach, trying to involve as many as possible relevant stakeholders.



## 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 has elaborated a sustainable development strategy for the island of Cres, emphasising the role, value and importance of the landscape as a resource for both, social and economic development.

In order to gain a comprehensive picture of the island's landscape situation and its specifics, a rapid survey was carried out. The general objective of the Landscape Survey was to provide the stakeholders engaged into the island development process with technical support for identifying and recognising the landscape features in the territory, but also with facts to assess the values of the landscape in order to clarify its potential role toward long-term development policies. The findings of the survey and the analysis of the gathered data were presented together with Measures for landscape management on the island of Cres in the Landscape study of the Island of Cres.

The study raised awareness in the island community about the importance of the landscape and served as a base for the development of other projects. For example, the "Trail of centuries old olive groves" which goes through the drystone terraces around the town of Cres, or the VALUE project (Interreg cross-border programme Italy-Croatia) which created a long-distance trail "Via Apsyrtides" along the islands of Cres, Lošinj and Ilovik, valorising, first of all, their beautiful landscapes.

The two abovementioned projects were the result of the initiatives promoted by the Island Development Agency, but involved many local stakeholders in their implementation, and today are intensively promoted and used by the tourism industry as a tool for developing new tourism products, attracting new types of tourists and extending the tourist season. Both projects are based on exploitation, preservation, valorisation and promotion of the island's unique landscape.

#### **14. Exemplary value**

*Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?  
Which are the good practices that it implemented?*

Based on the PPLP project, a detailed inventory of natural and cultural heritage as well as other spatial values was carried out using modern methods and GIS tools. The resulting foundations were the starting point for the creation of the Cres Island Development Strategy with the participation of a wide range of interested stakeholders. In the process of creating a landscape study, a group of landscape architecture students was involved, which contributed to professional education on landscape. The basis created in this way is an incentive for the implementation of numerous new projects for the sustainable development of the island, some of which have already been implemented.

The project has triggered a new way of promoting and moderating local development initiatives, which has been carried out through the local development agency. Namely, the Island Development Agency (funded and owned by the Town of Cres and the Town of Mali Lošinj) has progressively developed its competences and human capacities and has gained importance along the implementation of the project.

The development principles used within the project, and the local community dynamic that was created and further developed after the end of the project is a sort of success story and good case study that is promoted and transferred to other local communities, particularly those on other Adriatic islands. In that sense, a very good collaboration has been established with the Island Movement, an association that promote responsible and sustainable development of Croatian islands.

#### **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 outlined a framework for consultations and the exchange of opinions by incorporating a wide spectre of public and private subjects in a debate on the future of the island of Cres that afterwards led to cooperation and partnership among local stakeholders, public administrations, private businesses and national or international partners. The result of this participative process was set out in a document called The Development Charter for the Island of Cres.

The positive momentum was maintained in the following years – ever since the project beginning, the Island Development Agency have always been applied the participatory principles when implemented development projects and the stakeholders got used to join the workshops, meetings and public debates carried out within various initiatives and to bring their contributions and ideas to the debate.

The project was in line with the wider policies implemented by national, regional and local authorities. Produced Island of Cres Territorial Strategy 2016-2025 is consistent with the Primorsko-Goranska County Development Strategy 2016-2020 (published in October 2015), sectorial national strategies and the Europe 2020 strategy.

The wide and intensive participation of stakeholders coming from different sectors (public, business and civil) has improved collaboration and strengthened the community cohesion which facilitated the development of a new initiatives outside the project framework.

## 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?*

Through the elaboration of the key strategic development documents and particularly the Island of Cres Development Charter that was adopted by the Town of Cres council and key stakeholders, the project laid the bases and set the direction and main principles of the future development of the island. Today, all the stakeholders and the whole island community are aware of the importance not only of landscape, but also of the whole natural and cultural heritage and other island resources that must be protected, as well as valorised and activated in development.

The island economy is based on the tourism and it has become obvious to all islanders that the main competitive advantage they have and can offer to the visitors is the preserved and maintained landscape, cultural heritage, traditions and local identity.

The Town of Cres promotes in media local initiatives and projects, always highlighting the importance of applying the principles of sustainable development, not only regarding the environmental aspects but also the economic and social.

Besides the direct involvement of the local stakeholders in the implementation of various projects, the promotion of sustainable aspects of the development initiatives on local, but particularly on regional and national media, has contributed to the enhancement of the feeling of belonging, place attachment and community sentiment as well as the importance of protection the island resources.

## 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).*

### **Publications**

[Publications of Pilot Project Island Cres](#)

<https://www.otoci.net/index.php/turizam/15375-stazama-stoljetnih-maslinika-hodalo-30-ak-zainteresiranih>

<https://www.novilist.hr/rijeka-regija/otoci/kampanja-upoznaj-svoju-zemlju-organizirano-razgledavanje-starih-creskih-maslinika/>

<https://www.novilist.hr/rijeka-regija/na-cresu-i-losinju-pocelo-oznacavanje-povijesnih-staza-via-apsyrtides/>

<https://www.novilist.hr/rijeka-regija/otoci/sedamnaestero-cresana-polozilo-za-turisticke-vodice-u-prirodi/>

### **VIDEO**

<https://www.pplr-otokcres.info/?p=476>

<https://www.pplr-otokcres.info/?p=472>

<https://www.pplr-otokcres.info/?p=444>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wj9gfb3z2eY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBaGruIPcE>



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

*8th Session – 2022-2023*

APPLICATION FORM

FINLAND

## **Presentation**

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[Council of Europe Landscape Convention / Official website \(coe.int\)](#)

\*

## I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

<b>1. State</b>	Finland
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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

Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands

### 4. Location of the Project

Pirkanmaa region

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

The Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project brought a new dimension to landscape management, as the special needs of species were taken into account in an exceptionally diverse manner as a central part of landscape management. The project examined multi-level natural values of traditional rural biotopes on the selected farms, while developing management methods for them through cooperation between officials, advisers, researchers, and landowners. Through the project, more than 4,000 species were identified. The information was used to implement favourable management at each site. The project's service design work package developed the environmental communications of the farms and services offered to consumers. The project increased farmers' competence and motivation for management of traditional rural biotopes as well as researchers' understanding of issues affecting the management and development of cultural landscapes. The project increased public awareness of landscapes through various communications and museum cooperation.

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



Photo: Laura Puolamäki

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

<https://www.maajakotitalousnaiset.fi/hankkeet/lumolaidunverkosto>



### 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**
- The 8 network farms of the project, Entomological Society of Tampere, Natural Resources Institute Finland, the nature surveying company Tmi Luonto-Lasse, and electricity grid company Elenia Oy. Sarka Finnish Museum of Agriculture participated as a communications partner.

10. **Financing bodies**
- Center for Economic development, Transport and the Environment, Pirkanmaa

#### 11. **Central aims of the Project**

From the nature perspective, traditional rural biotopes are the most important part of the cultural landscape. They are unique landscapes whose emergence was facilitated by traditional agriculture, and preserving them requires effective management. In Finland's 2018 national assessment of threatened habitat types, all traditional rural biotopes were assessed as endangered, and most of them as critically endangered. The surface area of most traditional rural biotopes has decreased by more than 90% over the past 50 years. The end of management means for traditional rural biotopes a significant change in the habitat type and landscape, a loss of species, and often also a gradual loss of the habitat type through overgrowth. Managing such biotopes involves the landscape itself, the vulnerable habitat types, and the area's species.

Due to centuries of management, traditional rural biotopes have developed a unique and rich range of species that require the habitat provided by the biotopes. Conserving traditional rural biotopes and their species is essential in efforts to prevent biodiversity loss, but landscape management does not always succeed in taking into account the small needs of different species. The aim of the project was to get a better understanding of local biodiversity interconnections in traditional rural biotopes in relation to both natural species and pasture animals.

The main objectives of the Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project were:

- 1) Set up a network of farms that want to develop their semi-natural grasslands and preserve biodiversity. The aim was to establish a network of farms that serve as a peer group, as producers of grazing services that support biodiversity, and as a developer of biodiversity-supporting grazing and public services related to this.

- 2) Find out about the multilevel nature values of traditional rural biotopes on the selected farms and thus accumulate research-based information for landowners and other people working with traditional rural biotopes.
- 3) Develop site-specific management methods for traditional rural biotopes and plan site management through broad-based cooperation between various actors, including authorities, advisory services, researchers and landowners.
- 4) Plan the landscape management of sites to be favourable to the species found there and to maintain the landscape and biotic communities.
- 5) Support the continuity of the management of these unique landscapes by motivating and engaging the farmers involved in the project to continue and expand natural grazing.
- 6) Develop farm-specific services and environmental communications related to semi-natural grasslands so that the conservation work and care of local natural species can be presented to the public. This objective was aimed at supporting the economic viability of the farms and continuation of natural grazing.
- 7) Encourage other livestock owners to utilise and manage semi-natural grasslands by making farmers and other professionals aware of the benefits of natural grazing in terms of agriculture, landscape and biodiversity. Disseminate among farms that manage pastures the information and lessons learned in the project in order to promote good grazing practices.
- 8) Increase researchers' expertise and understanding of the agricultural environment and of the factors affecting the management of traditional rural biotopes and development of cultural landscapes.
- 9) Provide citizens with information on the value, significance and management of cultural landscapes in order to encourage consumption choices that support biodiversity, landscape management and sustainability.
- 10) Utilise diverse communications and the project's farm network in order to raise public awareness of the importance of the agricultural environment for maintaining biodiversity.
- 11) Implement museum cooperation by organising an exhibition in the premises of Sarka, the Finnish Museum of Agriculture.
- 12) Enrich the landscape through the use of grazing animals.

## 12. Outcome

The central aims of the project have been achieved brilliantly. The project brought a new dimension to landscape management, as the special needs of local species were taken into account in an exceptionally diverse manner as a central part of landscape management. The project examined multi-level natural values of traditional rural biotopes on the selected farms, while developing management methods for them through cooperation between officials, advisers, researchers, and landowners. The project increased the understanding and expertise of the network's farms, the general public and researchers on the topics of biodiversity and its diverse interconnections.

The sites of the Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project are traditional rural biotopes mainly on private farms. The farms registered to participate out of interest in the topic. The project involved eight farms, four of which are sheep farms, while the rest raise beef cattle. Also participating was one nature reserve located outside of the farms.

The sites include different types of semi-natural grassland, meadows, pastures and woodland pastures. Some of the pastures have been under management for a very long time, while others have been recently restored, with management only restarting a few years ago. All sites included in the project were inventoried in 2017–2019 in the traditional rural biotope inventories by the Center for Economic development, Transport and the Environment, Pirkanmaa. Some of the sites involved in the project are areas of national and regional value.

Key results (corresponding to the numbered items in the Central aims of the Project section):

- 1) The project brought together a network of eight farms through which the project was then implemented. With the help of this farm network, the results of the project and the significance of traditional rural biotopes as part of the cultural landscape can also be presented in concrete terms to both consumers and to other farmers.
- 2) The multilevel nature values of traditional rural biotopes in the participating farms were examined through a range of surveys. Insects, birds, fungi, and plant species were examined in the traditional rural biotope areas of the participating farms. As part of the surveys, assessment was also made of soil biodiversity. A more detailed study of soil biodiversity was performed at some of the locations. The surveyed area totalled more than 100 hectares, and the observed and identified species included over 1500 insect species, 131 bird species, 872 fungus species and 1124 vascular plant species. These species included several dozen endangered species and other species from the Red List of Finnish Species. The results were used both to develop the management of the sites and to obtain research data on the impact of semi-natural grasslands on biodiversity. The farms participating in the project received valuable information on their own biodiversity.
- 3) The project was implemented through cooperation between authorities, landowners, farmers and researchers. It increased dialogue and understanding between the different actors. The cooperation between these parties enabled the development of site-specific management methods for traditional rural biotopes. In the development of the management methods for traditional rural biotopes, efforts were made to take into account various factors that influence and limit the management process, such as species, animal needs, the impact of agricultural subsidies, and the profitability of the farm. Traditional rural biotopes are part of a comprehensive cultural environment, but their management is guided by the terms of the agricultural support system. This

sometimes causes conflicts in decisions on landscape management. These challenges were raised constructively in discussions between the project actors. In addition, as a result of the networking that took place within the project, new forms of cooperation have continued in many respects even after the project's completion.

- 4) Using the results of the surveys carried out, landscape management was designed to be favourable to the species present at each site. Management of traditional rural biotopes in a manner that favours the species found there does not always require the farm to make either investments or large changes to grazing practices. When learning about the habitat needed by different species, it was often enough to be able to ensure the presence of an important tree or to set the grazing pressure at the right level. The results can also be applied to planning ways to manage other similar habitats. The research methods and results of the project have been presented in various places, including blogs and websites which are available to everyone. The experiences and lessons learned from the project have also been shared during theme days aimed at professionals.
- 5) The results of the project and the discussions that were held motivated farmers to continue and to increase grazing on semi-natural grassland. The project increased farmers' skills and knowledge in matters of biodiversity as well as their motivation to conserve traditional rural biotopes and landscapes. Farmers expertise increased through meetings with those conducting the surveys and participation in study trips. Thanks to the surveys and coffee table discussions, the farms have better capabilities for perceiving the landscape processes on their own farm and the diverse interconnections. Increasing this type of expertise produces results, as farmers have the opportunity to implement landscape-level solutions. They are not only landscape actors, but also landowners in large, continuous areas.
- 6) The project's service design work package helped farms to develop their environmental communications and to productise service types that can be used for engaging with the general public. The excursions, flyers, and information boards designed in the project help the farms promote their conservation work and care of local natural species to the public. The flyers can be included in the farms' online shop orders, so consumers who do not visit the farm can also receive information. In this way, biodiversity work carried out on private land also becomes visible to consumers and decision-makers.
- 7) The project's farms have helped to raise other farmers' awareness of the benefits of natural grazing from both the agricultural and biodiversity perspective. With the help of these participating farms, new farmers have been able to familiarise themselves with and become interested in the management of traditional rural biotopes and landscapes through the positive experiences of others.
- 8) Plenty of direct interaction between farmers and researchers took place through the project's survey work. This interaction also increased researchers' expertise and understanding of agricultural nature and the guiding mechanisms that have a large impact on the management of traditional rural biotopes and development of the cultural landscape.
- 9) The general communications for the project and the information boards, flyers and public excursions developed within the project's service design work package have provided citizens with information on the value, significance and management of cultural landscapes. The objective for the information offered to the public has been to incentivise consumer choices that benefit biodiversity, cultural landscapes, and

sustainable development. By buying products from farms that use semi-natural grassland for grazing, consumers can support the preservation of landscapes and biodiversity.

- 10) The project published several newspaper articles and blog posts. In addition, a website was set up for the project's network farms. Through these channels, the value and significance of agriculture and semi-natural grasslands for maintaining both landscapes and biodiversity were highlighted both at the general and the farm-specific level.
- 11) The project and its network farms produced, in cooperation with Sarka Finnish Museum of Agriculture, an exhibition entitled "Lumoavat laitumet (enchanted pastures)", which was on display in the museum's premises in Loimaa from 18 February 2022 to 9 January 2023. The exhibition presented the significance of biodiversity in agricultural environments and introduced visitors to landscape workers and the history of grazing. Presenting the results at the museum exhibition provided an opportunity to explore the cultural landscape also to those who could not visit the farms. The professionally produced museum exhibition also spoke to its viewers in a way that the farmers and experts involved in the project would not have had the expertise to bring about.
- 12) Grazing animals revitalise the landscape and are an enriching element in the landscape. Learning about grazing animals also increases positive attitudes towards agriculture and the countryside.

## 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 measures of the Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project are in line with sustainable development policy and implemented in harmony with the regional organisation.

The project's monitoring group included representatives from the Center for Economic development, Transport and the Environment Pirkanmaa and Metsähallitus. Participating in the work of the monitoring group and in study trips aimed at professionals furthered the expertise of these actors, who have important roles in cultural landscape matters.

Traditional rural biotopes are part of a comprehensive cultural environment, but their management is guided by the terms of the agricultural support system. This sometimes causes conflicts in decisions on landscape management. These challenges were raised constructively in discussions between the project actors.

The project has contributed to the enhancement of environmental, social, economic, cultural and aesthetic values of the landscape in the following ways:

#### **Environmental sustainability:**

The nature types in Finland that are typical to the cultural landscape, also known as traditional rural biotopes, have all been assessed as endangered. If a habitat type is lost, a large amount of Finnish species will also disappear, leading to a severe loss of biodiversity. The project brought a new dimension to landscape management, as the special needs of local species were taken into account in an exceptionally diverse manner as a central part of landscape management. The project also supported the continuation of traditional rural biotope management.

Traditional rural biotopes are typically open and low in nutrients, and the grazing of these areas enables their unique species to thrive. In terms of their habitat, the species have varying needs. This means that they benefit from a diverse and mosaic-like landscape. Correctly implemented grazing promotes the biodiversity of all species in traditional rural biotopes. Host plants, edible plants, manure piles, soil churned up by hooves and patches that have been grazed bare all have their place.

The project examined multi-level natural values of traditional rural biotopes on the selected farms, while developing management methods for them through cooperation between officials, advisers, researchers, and landowners. Extensive species surveys were a central part of the project. Insects, birds, fungi, and plant species were examined in the traditional rural biotope areas of the participating farms. Surveys of soil biodiversity was also carried out. The surveyed area totalled more than 100 hectares, and the observed and identified species



included over 1500 insect species, 131 bird species, 872 fungus species and 1124 vascular plant species. These species included several dozen endangered species and other species from the Red List of Finnish Species. Based on the soil biodiversity assessments, it can also be said that the biodiversity of pastures extends all the way down into the soil.

The results of the project were used to implement site management that was favourable to the species present. The results can also be applied to planning ways to manage other similar habitats.

Managing traditional rural biotopes in a manner that favours the species found there does not always require the farm to make either investments or large changes to grazing practices. When learning about the habitat needed by different species, it is often enough to be able, for example, to ensure the presence of an important tree or to set the grazing pressure at the right level.

Project's surveys discovered *Chlaenius nigricornis* beetles, which are classified as a vulnerable species, on the lakeside pastures of three farms, where they used standing water found in hoof prints as a habitat for one of their stages of development. This result can help farmers to implement management of lakeside pastures that allows this species to survive.

The surveys also found the beetle *Agrilus mendax* in a sheep pasture, where the grazing animals had rubbed themselves against the trunks of rowan trees, breaking their surface in a way that is beneficial for this beetle species. This discovery meant that the farms knew they should preserve the rowan trees in their grazing areas.

Results of the project indicate that lakeside grazing is of value both for cultural landscapes and biodiversity. Lakeside grazing is also a cost-effective way to clean water systems, and the management of traditional rural biotopes thus also supports the protection of the lakes and the Baltic Sea. The vegetation along the shoreline collects large amounts of nutrients from the water and sediment. When the livestock eats the plants along the shoreline and within the water, the nutrients are transported back to dry land.

Natural grazing adds economically beneficial ecosystem services to a farm. The soil biodiversity assessments carried out in the project indicate that semi-natural grasslands generally have biodiverse soil, and that the ecosystem services that they provide also extend to adjacent arable land.

Using the public excursions, flyers and information boards designed in the project's service design work package, the nature management work and natural species of the farms can be presented to the public, thus increasing public awareness of the topic.

### **Cultural sustainability:**

Traditional rural biotopes, which include grass fields, meadows, pastures and forest pastures, are habitats shaped by traditional livestock farming which are usually rich in species. They have been used both for grazing livestock and for producing winter fodder. Traditional management of traditional rural biotopes has mainly involved mowing, grazing and post-harvest grazing. As agriculture has become more efficient, many old methods have been abandoned, and the surface area of most traditional rural biotopes has decreased by more than 90% over the past 50 years. As traditional rural biotopes decline, we risk the loss of a significant part of Finnish cultural history and identity as well as many beautiful rural

landscapes.

All sites included in the project were inventoried in 2017–2019 in the traditional rural biotope inventories by the Center for Economic development, Transport and the Environment, Pirkanmaa. Included are areas of both national and regional value. The results of the project and the discussions that were held motivated the farmers in the project sites to persevere and to increase grazing on semi-natural grassland.

Thanks to the management of traditional landscapes, the current generations will be able to familiarise themselves with how traditional agriculture has influenced the Finnish landscape and what the landscape has looked like. Understanding local cultural history helps towards better understanding the roots that affect the present. The management of the project sites is part of the maintenance of a diverse historical and cultural heritage.

In addition to the management of traditional landscapes and the maintenance of diverse species, grazing revitalises the rural landscape and increases positive attitudes towards agriculture and rural areas.

**Economic sustainability:**

In order for us to have the grazing animals essential for landscape management, there must be a sufficient number of cattle farms. The management of traditional rural biotopes is funded especially by agricultural subsidies, but farms do not get by solely on the subsidies received for the management of traditional rural biotopes – they need also profitable cattle farming.

The profitability of the farm and of natural grazing depends on whether consumers buy the farm's products, such as wool, meat and milk. The Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project included a service design work package to help farms to develop their environmental communications and develop services for public. The excursions, flyers, and information boards designed in the project help the farms to present to the public their conservation work and the natural species on their farms. The flyers can be included in the farms' online shop orders, so consumers who do not visit the farm can also receive information. Following the completion of the project, the farms are also free to utilise in their operations the two public excursion concepts developed in the project and the other materials produced. The service design work package supported the profitability of the farms as a whole and their continuation of natural grazing.

The development of environmental communications that was part of the service design work also aimed to raise consumer awareness and thus support consumers in making choices that promote biodiversity, cultural landscapes and sustainable development. By buying products from farms that use semi-natural grassland for grazing, consumers can support the preservation of landscapes and biodiversity.

Managing traditional rural biotopes in a manner that favours the species found there does not always require the farm to make investments or large changes to grazing practices. Knowledge of the habitat required by the species is often sufficient, and even small measures can help to take into account the habitat needs of different species. The information, for its part, can make it possible to save a tree that is especially valuable for a species, and to set the grazing pressure at the right level.



Agri-environmental payments for nature and landscape management are of particular economic importance to agricultural entrepreneurs that manage traditional rural biotopes, and they also have positive knock-on effects on the rest of the regional economy.

**Social sustainability:**

A key objective of the project has been to implement landscape management and landscape planning through broad-based cooperation between various actors, including authorities, landowners, farmers and researchers.

In addition to the species surveys, a key part of the project has been support the economic conditions and wellbeing of farmers that keep grazing animals, as this is a condition for the continuation of grazing and the farming of these animals.

The project highlighted the crucial importance of grazing for preserving the biodiversity of Finnish nature, which was important and empowering for the farmers. The project also provoked public discussion of the importance of agriculture for biodiversity. The results of the project and the discussions that were held motivated farmers to continue and to increase grazing on semi-natural grassland.

The project also included two study trips, one in Finland and one abroad. Through the study trips, farmers received practical examples from outside of their own farms of landscape management and natural grazing both in protected areas and on agricultural land in Finland and Estonia. These study trips also provided opportunities for networking more extensively and even internationally.

In the farmer-focused theme days, the farmers involved in the project told other farmers about their experiences and lessons learned in the management of traditional rural biotopes.

**Aesthetic sustainability:**

The Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project has motivated farmers to continue natural grazing and thus supported aesthetic sustainability by promoting the continued management of the unique landscapes of traditional rural biotopes.

The project and its network farms produced, in cooperation with Sarka Finnish Museum of Agriculture, an exhibition entitled “Lumoavat laitumet (enchanted pastures)”, which was on display in the museum’s premises in Loimaa from 18 February 2022 to 9 January 2023. The exhibition presented the significance of biodiversity in agricultural environments and introduced visitors to landscape workers and the history of grazing. Presenting the results at the museum exhibition provided an opportunity to explore the cultural landscape also to those who could not visit the farms.

The project has also repaired and prevented damage to the landscape and the environment and enriched the landscape. Structural changes in agriculture have caused a dramatic decrease in natural grazing, and many traditional rural biotopes became overgrown because of a lack of management. The project has supported the continuation of natural grazing and the addition of new natural grazing sites. Grazing animals are an enriching element in the landscape.

#### 14. Exemplary value

*Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?  
Which are the good practices that it implemented?*

The practical Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project can be considered of exemplary value. The project brought a new dimension to landscape management, as the special needs of local species were taken into account in an exceptionally diverse and broad manner as a central part of landscape management planning work. In many cases, the surveys and management planning of traditional rural biotopes focuses only on tubular plants, but the Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project also surveyed insects, birds and fungi and gave consideration to their needs. In addition, soil biodiversity was also assessed.

Extensive surveys of species were carried out at each site, and the results were used to design management measures that were beneficial for these species. The species surveys carried out on the project farms and the management recommendations based on them are applicable to other similar habitats. The lessons learned from the project bring benefits both to the project farms as well as to broader planning work for the management of semi-natural grasslands and traditional rural biotopes.

A central message of the project has been that managing traditional rural biotopes and landscapes in a manner that favours the species found there does not always require investments or large changes to grazing practices. It is often enough to get information on the habitat required by a species. Minor changes may nevertheless have a major impact on species welfare and thus on the prevention of biodiversity loss.

The direct contacts established in the project between researchers and farmers, as well as the sharing of varied expertise, bring a general increase in understanding and competence. Thanks to the project's surveys and coffee table discussions, the farms have better capabilities for perceiving the landscape processes on their own farm and the diverse interconnections. Increasing this kind of expertise brings results: farmers have the opportunity to implement landscape solutions because they are not only landscape operators but also landowners in large, continuous areas.

It was noted in the project that the management of traditional rural biotopes and landscapes is most sustainably secured if it is part of the profitable and/or everyday activities of farms. The place where the preservation of traditional rural biotopes is most likely is on the land of well-functioning cattle farms. Grazing that takes place as part of a farm's operations does not require special arrangements for the transport of animals and their daily welfare. Animals can also be easily moved to a new pasture after the previous one has been exhausted, as they can get there on their own feet. Continuity of grazing is important, as many species disappear quickly if grazing ends.

Maintaining biodiversity in the agricultural environment requires a continuous reconciliation of different needs. In addition to the needs of natural species, consideration must also be given to the needs of grazing cattle and economic profitability. The Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project aimed to take a broad approach to the factors influencing traditional rural biotopes and their interconnections, and efforts were made to find sustainable solutions.

The project sought to improve the profitability of landscape management by creating for farms new forms of services which are related to nature management and species, and by developing the farms' environmental communications. The project's service design work package involved development of public excursion concepts, information boards for contract

grazing sites and flyers that could be included in deliveries of online orders.

The project's service design work package and the project's communications as a whole increased public awareness of the landscape impacts of nature management and grazing. Increasing awareness also enables the public to make consumer choices that help to preserve biodiversity and cultural landscapes. By buying products from farms that use semi-natural grassland for grazing, consumers can support the preservation of landscapes and biodiversity.

Together with the Sarka Finnish Museum of Agriculture, the project and its network farms produced an exhibition called 'Lumoavat laitumet (Enchanting pastures)'. The exhibition was on display at the agricultural museum's premises in Loimaa from 18 February 2022 to 9 January 2023. The professionally produced museum exhibition also spoke to its viewers in a way that the farmers and experts involved in the project would not have had the expertise to bring about. Through the collaboration, the farmers were also able to participate in museum work. The exhibition presented the significance of biodiversity in agricultural environments and introduced visitors to landscape workers and the history of grazing. Presenting the results at the museum exhibition provided an opportunity to explore the cultural landscape also to those who could not visit the farms. The exhibition broadly increased public awareness of the landscape impacts of nature management and grazing.

Through the theme days held on the network farms, the species and landscape management expertise accumulated in the project were shared more broadly with other farmers and professionals.

The study trips organised by the project provided farmers with an opportunity to network more extensively and even internationally.

The project's monitoring group included representatives from the Center for Economic development, Transport and the Environment Pirkanmaa and Metsähallitus. Participating in the work of the monitoring group and in study trips furthered the expertise of these actors, who have important roles in cultural landscape matters. Although traditional rural biotopes are part of a comprehensive cultural environment, their management is guided by the terms of the agricultural support system. This means that the vegetation density, landscape structure and grazing pressure – as defined in the conditions of this support system – determine the development of the cultural landscape. The sensitivity required for good management of the landscape structure, biodiversity and local species cannot always be taken into account because of the threat of losing subsidies. These challenges were raised constructively in discussions between the project actors.

## 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?*

Farmers have the opportunity to implement landscape solutions because they are not only landscape actors but also landowners in large, continuous areas. The solutions implemented by farmers have a central impact on what happens to the landscape. The participation of farmers in landscape management as part of day-to-day farm activities was central to the project. Through their participation in the project, the farms now have better capabilities for perceiving the landscape processes on their own farm and the diverse interconnections. The project also motivated farmers to continue and to expand their natural grazing. In addition, their experiences and lessons learned from the project were shared with other farmers and professionals, thus further encouraging the management of the cultural environment through grazing.

By buying products from farms that use semi-natural grassland for grazing, consumers can support the preservation of landscapes and biodiversity. Awareness of the landscape impacts of nature management and grazing enables the public to make consumer choices that promote biodiversity and cultural landscapes. The project included a service design work package that developed the farms' environmental communications and services for the public. The service design work package developed two public excursion concepts for traditional rural biotopes. One concept was also tested, and the pilot excursion sold out. The service design work package also included development of flyers that could be included in deliveries from the farms' online stores. This way, the nature management work and the species and their importance can be presented also to people that do not themselves pay a visit to the farm. For the same reason, the project developed an information board to be displayed on the fencing of contract grazing sites. These sites are often located in places where many people come to view the grazing animals.

Together with the Sarka Finnish Museum of Agriculture, the project and its network farms produced an exhibition called 'Lumoavat laitumet (Enchanting pastures)'. This enabled the farmers to participate in museum work. The exhibition was on display at the agricultural museum's premises in Loimaa from 18 February 2022 to 9 January 2023. The exhibition presented the significance of biodiversity in agricultural environments and introduced visitors to landscape workers and to the changes that have taken place in the landscape since the end of traditional agriculture. The museum exhibition increased public awareness of the landscape impacts of nature management and grazing, which in turn will hopefully encourage responsible consumption choices.

As part of the soil biodiversity studies carried out in the project, 'tea bag tests' were carried out in order to assess the microbial activity in the soil. The tea bag test is part of an international citizen science project which has now also arrived in Pirkanmaa.

The project has been implemented in line with the landscape policies of national, regional and local authorities, including the Council of Europe Landscape Convention, the Finnish Land Use and Building Act and Finnish environmental legislation. The project is also in line with the Pirkanmaa's Regional Biodiversity Programme. This programme has been drawn up for the period 2022–2030, and its objectives include managing and restoring endangered habitats types and the habitats of endangered species, actively finding and experimenting

with new ways of maintaining biodiversity, and supporting the initiative and volunteering of all interested parties.

**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?*

The project increased both landowners' and other citizens' awareness of the value and role of traditional rural biotopes as part of the cultural landscape. The project also increased awareness of the changes that have taken place in the cultural landscape since the end of traditional agriculture as well as the possible changes to the landscape if the grazing of traditional rural biotopes comes to an end.

The value and significance of semi-natural grasslands for maintaining biodiversity were highlighted in the project's communications both at the general and the farm-specific level. The project published several newspaper articles and blog posts. For climate-related reasons, cattle farming is often seen only as a threat from the environmental point of view. The project's communications strongly highlighted the fact that cattle farming brings opportunities for the landscape and biodiversity, and that it is the only option for preserving traditional rural biotopes.

Together with the Sarka Finnish Museum of Agriculture, the project and its network farms produced an exhibition called 'Lumoavat laitumet (Enchanting pastures)', which was on display in the museum's premises in Loimaa from 18 February 2022 to 9 January 2023. The exhibition presented the significance of biodiversity in agricultural environments and introduced visitors to the history of grazing and to the changes that have taken place in the landscape since the end of traditional agriculture. The 'Enchanting pastures' exhibition also looked towards the future: The exhibition introduced visitors to the future outlooks of, among others, former Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Emma Kari, the poet Heli Laaksonen, and young people from Loimaa on topics such as agriculture, the cultural landscape, natural grazing and biodiversity.

Presenting the results at the museum exhibition provided an opportunity to explore the cultural landscape also to those who could not visit the network farms. The professionally produced museum exhibition also spoke to its viewers in a way that the farmers and experts involved in the project would not have had the expertise to bring about. Awareness of the landscape impacts of nature management and grazing enables the public to make consumer choices that promote biodiversity and cultural landscapes.

The project and the network farms participated in the Future Heritage workshop together with the Sarka Museum. This workshop was part of the Dynamo project of the University of Turku Research Centre for the Future, and was funded by Sitra.

In the project's service design work package, information boards, flyers and public excursions were developed to enable the public to learn about the natural species of the farms and about nature and landscape conservation work. These flyers can be included in the farms' online shop orders, so even consumers who do not visit the farms can learn about traditional rural biotopes.

The project's service design work package developed two public excursion concepts for traditional rural biotopes. One concept was also tested, and the pilot excursion sold out. During the excursion, a landscape expert guided participants through their experience of the landscape.

Handicraft enthusiasts were served in particular through communication cooperation with the international Laine Magazine, a knitting lifestyle publication. Magazine staff visited one network farm and wrote an article on the positive landscape impacts of Finnish wool. The article was published in both Finnish and English in autumn 2022.

The knowledge of the farmers involved in the project increased through meetings with those conducting the surveys and through participation in study trips. Plenty of direct interaction between farmers and researchers took place in connection with the project's survey work. This interaction also increased researchers' expertise and understanding of agricultural nature and the guiding mechanisms that have a large impact on the management of traditional rural biotopes and development of the cultural landscape.

In the farmer-focused theme days, the farmers involved in the project shared with other farmers their experiences and lessons learned in the management of traditional rural biotopes. The theme days also presented the inventory methods used in the project and the new information obtained. In this way, the results of the project and the accumulated expertise in landscape management was communicated more broadly to farmers and other professional groups. Other farmers and experts have been able to familiarise themselves with the management of traditional rural biotopes also in a concrete way through visits to the farms involved in the project.

The project also produced for professional use three 'quick advice cards' on good grazing practices for semi-natural grasslands:

- the 'Biodiversity benefits of grazing' card presents the benefits for soil, insects and fungi as well as vegetation.
- the 'Many grazing practices' card presents the key practices and principles for grazing.
- the 'Animal welfare' card advises on how to take animal welfare into account on semi-natural grasslands.

For the general public, separate 'Results from the semi-natural grasslands project' cards were produced. The content of the cards intended for the public is based on the survey reports and has been provided by a nonfiction writer.

A website was set up for the network farms. Through this, anyone can familiarise themselves with the farms and the survey results.



## 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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**COUNCIL OF EUROPE LANDSCAPE CONVENTION**  
**LANDSCAPE AWARD OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

*8<sup>e</sup> Session - 2022-2023*

APPLICATION FORM

FRANCE



## **Presentation**

*The Council of Europe Landscape Convention is the first international treaty devoted exclusively to 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. Resolution [CM/Res\(2008\)3](#) on the rules governing the Council of Europe Landscape Award, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008 at the 1018<sup>e</sup> 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.***

\*

*Please note that :*

- Participation in the Council of Europe Landscape Award is open only to local and regional authorities, their groupings and non-governmental organisations, as indicated in Article 2 of the appendix to Resolution [CM/Res \(2008\)3](#) ;*
- the application must be submitted in one of the two official languages of the Council of Europe (French or English);*
- the material submitted must be free of rights for use by the Council of Europe for communication on the promotion of the Prize or for any other publication or action connected with the Convention. The Council of Europe undertakes to mention the names of the authors;*
- Applications that are incomplete or do not comply with the rules will not be admitted to the competition.*

*For more details, see the Council of Europe's Landscape Award website at the following address:*

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

\*

## I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

**1. Status** FRANCE

<b>Represented by</b>	Mr Guillaume Poirier
<i>Address:</i>	Ministry of Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion Tour Séquoia 04.06, Place Carpeaux 92055 La Défense
<i>Telephone:</i>	0033 1 40 81 88 15
<i>E-mail:</i>	<a href="mailto:guillaume.poirier@developpement-durable.gouv.fr">guillaume.poirier@developpement-durable.gouv.fr</a>

**2. Candidates** Project sponsor: Conservatoire du littoral  
Project management: Alain Freytet, landscape designer

<b>Represented by</b>	<u>Project sponsor:</u> Agnès Vince, Director of the Conservatoire du Littoral Address: 4 Place Denfert-Rochereau, 75014 Paris, France Telephone: 01 44 63 56 60 or 01 44 63 56 62 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Secretariat.Paris@conservatoire-du-littoral.fr">Secretariat.Paris@conservatoire-du-littoral.fr</a>
	<u>Project manager</u> : M. Alain Freytet, landscape designer Address: Mazeimard, 23 150 Maisonnisses, France Telephone: 06 82 84 37 08 E-mail: <a href="mailto:alain@freytet.fr">alain@freytet.fr</a>

### Presentation of candidates

#### **Conservatoire du littoral landscapes**

A victim of its own success over the course of the 20th century, the coastline has been developed and built on to accommodate ever more people. As a corollary of its attractiveness, this development often leads to a trivialisation and privatisation of the area, which runs counter to the underlying reasons for its attractiveness. Aware of the ecological, social, economic and cultural value of its coastline, France has chosen to preserve a significant proportion of its natural coastal areas and make them accessible to all. In 1975, the French government decided to create the Conservatoire du littoral, a public body whose mission is to acquire plots of land threatened by urbanisation or degradation in order to

to make sites that are restored, developed and welcoming, while respecting the natural balance. The aim of this public policy is to ensure that France's coasts retain their "natural third" over the long term. By 2023, the Conservatoire du littoral will be working on more than 250,000 hectares spread over 811 sites, or 17% of the length of the French coastline.

The land acquired by the Conservatoire is used to protect natural environments, but also to open them up to the public by offering people the most beautiful landscapes, protected from land speculation and widespread urbanisation. This major project requires special engineering work, as well as landscape design, for which landscape architects receive training. Alain Freytet teaches at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Paysage de Versailles-Marseille. For over 30 years, he has worked regularly with the Conservatoire du Littoral on more than a hundred projects, some of which he has completed on site. His long-term collaboration with the Conservatoire has given him the opportunity, through the development of a shared culture, to co-construct large-scale projects that enhance the identity and specific qualities of the sites, and in turn feed into the Conservatoire's territorial strategy, as part of a 'project process'. This global vision, in close collaboration with local authorities, government departments and other local players, gives concrete shape to the coastal landscapes of the future and the way in which they will be experienced. Drawing on the experience gained from these projects and exchanges, in 2015 Alain Freytet wrote a methodological guide for the Conservatoire du littoral and its partners: *Landscapes - Conservatoire du littoral*. A second book, published in 2022, provides feedback on the landscape intentions scheme and the method used to draw it up.

Initiated by the Conservatoire du Littoral in 2017, the "Adapto" life programme is a project that explores solutions to the effects of climate change on the coast by advocating flexible management of the coastline. This innovative approach, which focuses on the mobility of the shoreline and the need to adapt to changes in the coastline, has given a great deal of space to the landscape, an approach that has been tried out by students from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Paysage de Versailles-Marseille as part of the Ateliers Pédagogiques Régionaux, commissioned by the Conservatoire du littoral and supervised by Alain Freytet and Romain Quesada, urban landscape architects.

### **Alain Freytet, the embodiment of the profession of landscape gardener**

Alain Freytet is a landscape designer. He carries out studies and project management for numerous projects in rural areas and large protected natural areas, for public and semi-public clients. Its projects involve several hundred sites in France and abroad. He is directly involved in all aspects of the project, from the detailed reconnaissance of the site to the co-construction of the project with the client and all the partners, from the definition of objectives to implementation. His vision of the project is based on the values of care for the spirit of the place, benevolence, sobriety and the preservation of biodiversity. Landscape design is a commitment to the beauty of the world and to ecological transition. For him, a successful project is one in which planning takes a back seat to the spectacle of landscape and nature, by creating the conditions for a landscape experience that is open to all and free of charge. Through his projects, courses and lectures, Alain strives to combat the standardisation and trivialisation of space. His long association with the Conservatoire

du littoral and the Grands Sites de France network, his participation from the outset in the "Paysages de l'après pétrole" collective and his work as a landscape architect advising the State, have enabled him to place this reflection and action within national guidelines. For Alain Freytet, sketching is more than just a daily practice; it is a necessity and a natural extension of his emotions, projections and thinking. Through the depth and singularity of his experience, the diversity of his work and the steadfastness of his commitment, Alain Freytet is trying to contribute to the recognition of the profession of landscape architect and to most of the facets that underpin the public policies on sites and landscapes promoted by the Ministry of Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion.

## II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT

### 3. Name of the Project

Enhancing the landscape and protecting Cap Fréhel

### 4. Location of the Project

Commune de Plévenon, Brittany, France

### 5. Summary of the Project

Like many protected natural sites that are very popular, Cap Fréhel has for years been the subject of tourist developments that have accumulated to the point of damaging the quality and value of its landscapes and natural environments. The project involves both protecting the natural environments and the animal and plant species that live there, and welcoming walkers by offering them an exceptional place to recharge their batteries and find inspiration. It removes far more features than it adds: it's a project by subtraction. On the basis of numerous discussions reflected in a scheme of shared landscape intentions, major work has been undertaken to deconstruct a restaurant, remove a car park, enhance the historic buildings and the ruins of old buildings, treat the pathways and encourage views of the sea and the shoreline. The project is discreetly designed. It is hardly visible and is not displayed as a new object or development, leaving the impression, very soon after construction, that it has always been like this. Here, innovation and creation are at the service of the landscape, to create the most beautiful of landscape emotions for visitors.

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



**Alain Freytet**

### III. CONTENT OF THE PROJECT

8. **Start of the Project:** month  year

*The project must be completed at least three years ago*

9. **Partners**

DREAL Bretagne  
10 rue Maurice Fabre, 35 065 Rennes Cedex, France  
M<sup>me</sup> Le Mao Camille, site inspector  
0033 2 99 33 43 21  
[camille.le-mao@developpement-durable.gouv.fr](mailto:camille.le-mao@developpement-durable.gouv.fr)

Syndicat mixte du Grand site cap d'Erquy - cap Fréhel  
18 rue Notre Dame, 22 240 Plévenon, France  
M<sup>me</sup> Cayatte Marie-Laure, Director 0033  
2 96 41 50 83 / 0033 7 56 06 00 52  
[direction@caperquyfrehel.fr](mailto:direction@caperquyfrehel.fr)

10. **Financing bodies**

- Coastal Conservatory  
- Europe (ERDF funds)  
- French State  
- Brittany Region  
- Department of Côtes-d'Armor  
- Municipality of Plévenon

## 11. Central aims of the Project

The two main objectives might appear to be contradictory: on the one hand, to welcome walkers and hikers and give them the best possible experience of the landscape and, on the other, to protect and promote biodiversity, particularly that of the Atlantic moorland and seabirds. The project shows that one objective does not exclude the other, and that it is possible to protect nature while allowing a large number of people to walk in it, without damaging it, and to find it beautiful. By seeking to move the land as little as possible or transform its relief, the project revives a posture in which Man is small compared to the scale of the world. In a land that has been transformed, altered and abused everywhere, a visit to Cap Fréhel will awaken the child's gaze on the threshold of a splendid immensity over which he has no control. Visiting natural sites, particularly those run by the Conservatoire du Littoral, is a necessary ritual today, one that can re-educate our attitudes of power and domination over nature.

The development was guided by objectives more directly linked to the site and its environment:

- Reinforcing the integrity and power of the moor and its relief
- Continuing to restore the moorland
- Enhance the structure of the relief, in particular by cutting through certain clumps of willow
- Hide the car park behind vegetation
- Rediscovering the moor at the foot of the lighthouse
- Remove most of the information and interpretation panels.
- Reclaiming certain areas of degraded heathland.

Giving the pathways the spirit of the Cape

- Continuing, repairing and simplifying protective furniture
- Create a few loops, avoiding road crossings
- Favour red sandstone steps and calades
- Design specific directional signage that conveys the image of Cap Fréhel headland

Giving new meaning to the lighthouse

- "Insularise" the lighthouse by eliminating the restaurant and parking lot at its foot
- Reinforcing the lighthouse's monumental character
- Restoring the Vauban Tower and its surroundings

Expressing the richness of the Cape

- Limit the number of panels and group the interpretation in a few selected locations.
- Developing a common vocabulary for interpretation
- Thematicise the locations :
- The foghorn with the sea and boats
- The falconry lookout with the birds
- The Pointe du Jas blockhouse with its war ruins

Reaching out to the region

- Promote the actions of the Grand Site de France Cap d'Erquy-Fréhel and make them more visible on the headland
- Continuing the momentum of a community-wide scheme for the headland (visitor reception, paid parking, etc.)
- Strengthening the tourist function of Plévenon-Cap-Fréhel: parking, services,

information, home of the Grand Site de France...  
- Providing a cycle link between Plévenon and Pointe du Cap

## 12. Outcome

Following the implementation of the landscape enhancement programme, visitors spent more time at the site, increasing from an average of one hour to almost an hour and a half. Visitors now seem calmer and their visit more serene. The quick consumption of viewpoints has given way to contemplation.

In 2022, a landscape perception survey showed that local stakeholders unanimously appreciate the work carried out. For the majority of those interviewed, the development of the site, combined with the actions of the site manager, plays an integral part in the attractiveness of the area.

Finally, to better understand the effects of the project on biodiversity, the site manager has set up a protocol for monitoring the state of the vegetation on the site. Botanical analyses will be carried out every three years on the summit plateau of the headland and in the area to the east of the lighthouse, to measure changes in the plant cover and its composition.

At this stage, observations suggest that the vegetation is resurfacing more or less dynamically, depending on the section. Generally speaking, species characteristic of heathland, such as heather and gorse, are resilient in the areas that have been cleared, thanks to the re-establishment of plant cover from the seed bank in the soil. Some areas, which had been completely stripped bare by trampling, are now home to numerous pioneer species and a new substrate is gradually emerging.



## IV. COMPLIANCE WITH THE AWARD CRITERIA

### 13. Sustainable territorial development

*Is the project part of a sustainable development policy?*

*Does it contribute to the enhancement of the 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 sobriety of the project is inspired by local know-how and techniques. It is a guarantee of durability and good management. A pathway, a low stone wall, a sea view never go out of fashion.

The visitor facilities have been designed on the scale of the site: you discover the site on foot, exposed to the elements and the space. This retreat along the landscape path is made up of a series of stages that graduate the intensity of the discovery. The aim is to rediscover the naturalness of the site, which conveys a message for today, by recreating the conditions for a powerful poetic vision that makes the visit a moment of inspiration and rejuvenation. The shared values that unite us around the landscape are expressed here with strength and clarity.

The very aim of the Conservatoire du Littoral is to limit the artificial development of natural coastal sites through the acquisition and sustainable management of sites. This vision of the Conservatoire du Littoral, which is global at the scale of the entire coastal unit of the Capes d'Erquy and Fréhel, is reflected in the institution's 2050 intervention strategy. This strategy has led to the identification of an area for land acquisition, approved by the local authorities, in which the Conservatoire can intervene to protect and enhance coastal landscapes. Within this perimeter, the State has acquired and allocated land, enabling a landscape project to be put in place.

On the Cap Fréhel site, the retreat of the car park, the reduction in the number of parking spaces and the incentives to leave from the town and, more generally, the actions taken by the Grand Site de France to enhance the sites near Cap Fréhel in Plévenon are helping to reduce visitor pressure on the site. The treatment of footpaths, the simplification of the network of footpaths, the development of safe and welcoming areas on the foundations of old buildings and the installation of bat cottages, for example, all help to make the presence of large numbers of visitors compatible with the development of biodiversity.



#### 14. Exemplary Value

*Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why? What good practice has been implemented?*

The use of local materials, the involvement of local companies and the involvement of local players in the design and implementation of the programme make this project an example of accessible know-how, quality and sobriety that could influence other projects in the region, as is already the case in several areas and sites where similar projects have been carried out. Here, innovation and creation mean serving the landscape to create some of the finest emotions for visitors. Even though it is not very large, this site brings together a large number of issues that can be found in the Conservatoire's other areas, and demonstrates the capitalisation of real know-how, which has since been a model for many managers of large sites and natural landscapes.

The originality of the approach also lies in the continuity of vision and project between the initial landscape and environmental intentions that underpin the programme and the actual implementation of the developments, drawing on the expertise and engineering specifically developed for this type of site, thanks in particular to the Conservatoire du Littoral.

The Conservatoire's ownership of the land, its protection as a listed site and its status as a Grand Site de France ensure that this landscape and these developments can be developed over the long term, with the necessary agility.

It is also worth noting the exemplary, long-term collaboration between the project team and the owner on this long-term project.

The virtuous constraints required to ensure the ecological transition have resulted in a project that is more sober, more harmonious and, as a result, likely to touch the hearts of those who come to stroll through it, contemplate its ambience and recharge their batteries. The project is based on practices that respect both visitors and the environment:

- Respecting short, energy-efficient supply chains, certain attractive materials or manufactured objects have been banned.
- Limit excavation and backfilling by reusing inert materials on site as much as possible
- Protect the soil during the worksite by avoiding the use of materials from outside the site that could disturb its biological balance
- Let the vegetation return on its own without sowing, planting, fertiliser, pesticide or watering.
- Avoid the use of mass-produced furniture made from materials that are costly in terms of energy and carbon emissions.
- To pay attention to the many uses of the site, so as to anticipate and optimise the management effort required to ensure that the site is well looked after and maintained.
- Limit signage as much as possible by integrating it into built features
- Install light protective furniture, often made of wood (sand fencing, single wire, etc.) to provide a discreet but explicit code for visitors, who can then be guided.
- Manage water carefully by ensuring that the soil is permeable, preventing gullying and avoiding planting that requires watering.

The design and simplicity of the proposed fittings will stand the test of time.

**15. Public participation**

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

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

The team in charge of the Landscape Intention Scheme, a sort of master plan for the project, included a heritage interpreter and sociologist. Many people were interviewed as part of the project, and their comments were translated into project elements. Visits to the site and then to the worksite were organised by the Conservatoire with the help of the municipality and the Grand Site de France, enabling the project to listen and adapt to local demands.

This project is part of the Grand Site de France Erquy Fréhel project, which is rolling out a heritage strategy across several municipalities and has helped to secure the label in 2019. This link ensures the close involvement of local public and private players through debates, events, interview films and a presence at local events.

The travel and interpretation plan will enable the whole of the Cap d'Erquy and Cap Fréhel area to benefit from the very strong attraction of Cap Fréhel, by reducing the number of parking spaces on the Cap itself, giving priority to paths and referring visitors to the heart of the villages and their services.

The lighthouse enhancement project currently underway will help to disperse visitor numbers to other sites of interest in the area by providing information and raising awareness.

**16. Raising awareness**

*Is the 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?*

Today, the many visitors to the Cap Fréhel site, whether tourists or locals, enjoy a real landscape experience. They leave their vehicles not at the foot of the lighthouse but some distance away. The few dozen metres that separate them from the monument, and then the paths along the headland, are experienced as a sensitive journey along paths that have been elaborately and invisibly staged, taking them out of the "ordinary" world and into an initiation. So it's the emotion of the landscape felt by everyone that generates interest and raises public awareness of the value of landscapes. Local residents, even if some of the older ones still regret that the lighthouse car park and restaurant are no longer there, are for the most part proud to show off a site which, despite being visited by over a million people a year, has managed to retain its power and beauty. Sites such as Cap Fréhel, and more generally all the Conservatoire's sites and natural areas, respond to people's need to find places to recharge their batteries, to feel good, to come into contact with the natural elements, to be inspired or even mobilised, without the signs of heavy visitor numbers altering the experience. These aspirations are all the more necessary in a world that constantly demands attention and in which it is rare to be able to take a break, to come face to face with the grandeur of the natural elements and to reconnect with nature and with oneself.

## V. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Together with the printed version of the Application form, additional material in the digital format should be included on a USB key, and returned by post to:  
*General Secretariat of the Council of Europe Council of Europe Landscape Convention*  
*8<sup>e</sup> Session of the Council of Europe Landscape Award F - 67075 STRASBOURG, Cedex*

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

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

*8th Session – 2022-2023*

APPLICATION FORM

GEORGIA

## **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 \(coe.int\)](#)

\*

## I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

<b>1. State</b>	Georgia
<b>Represented by</b>	Mr. Otar Shamugia
<i>Address:</i>	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia 6 Marshal Archil Gelovani Ave, Tbilisi 0159 Georgia
<i>Telephone:</i>	+ 995(32) 2 37 80 09
<i>E-mail:</i>	info@mepa.gov.ge
<b>2. Applicant</b>	Dedoplistskaro Municipality City Hall, Georgia
<i>Name of the local, regional authority(ies) or NGO(s)</i>	
<b>Represented by</b>	Mr. Nikoloz Janiashvili - Mayor
<i>Address:</i>	44 Kostava st, Dedoplistskaro, Georgia
<i>Telephone:</i>	+995 (0356) 2 2 -55-34
<i>E-mail:</i>	dedoplistskaro_region@yahoo.com

## II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJCT

### 3. Name of the Project

Improvement of Vashlovani landscape through the reintroduction of the Goitered Gazelle

### 4. Location of the Project

Vashlovani Protected Areas, Dedoplistskaro Municipality, Georgia

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

Historically, the Goitered Gazelle grazed the plains of Azerbaijan and Georgia in abundance, with populations in the Kura-Ara (k)s river lowlands reaching almost to Tbilisi in the early 1900s. Due to agricultural expansion and intense hunting, the species became extinct in Georgia in the 1990s and the total number of animals in Azerbaijan dramatically decreased as well. Today, the Goitered Gazelle is categorized in the IUCN Red List as Vulnerable (VU) and in the Red List of Georgia as well.

Being absolutely extinct, from 2012, Georgia started the Goitered Gazelle reintroduction activities. The main actors in this process was Dedoplistskaro Municipality, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture<sup>1</sup> (MEPA), Agency of Protected Areas (APA), Vashlovani National Park and World Wildlife Fund (WWF). The project "Improvement of ecosystem biodiversity in a transboundary Priority Conservation Area, Iori-Mingechauri" aimed to improve the ecosystem biodiversity in the Iori-Mingechauri transboundary priority conservation area through the rehabilitation of floodplain forest, improvement of Vashlovani protected areas landscape and reintroduction of extinct gazelles.

The Gazelle program was based on the reintroduction of individuals taken from healthy populations in Azerbaijan and released in Georgia – in total 10 Gazelles were transferred. Since the start of the Gazelle Reintroduction Programme, individuals have been translocated to Samukhi Steppe in Vashlovani Protected Areas.

Presently, the estimated number of Gazelles in Georgia is more than 250 individuals. The gazelle reintroduction in Vashlovani Protected Areas represents one of the best examples of biodiversity restoration in the region.

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

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<sup>1</sup> There was the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources by that time



Author: Lasha Gigauri - The Agency of Protected Areas of Georgia

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

<https://apa.gov.ge/en/media/News/djeirnebis-reintroduqciis-proeqti-saqartveloshi-.page>  
<https://nationalparks.ge/en/site/vashlovaninp>  
[https://www.wfcaucasus.org/our\\_work/all\\_initiatives/gazelle\\_reintroduction\\_programme/](https://www.wfcaucasus.org/our_work/all_initiatives/gazelle_reintroduction_programme/)  
<https://apa.gov.ge/ge/media/News/djeirnebi-vashlovanis-dacul-teritoriebze.page>  
<https://nationalgeographic.ge/story/qurcikis-dabruneba/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/WWFGeorgia/posts/274917768438052/>

## 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**

Dedoplistskaro Municipality, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA), Agency of Protected Areas (APA), Vashlovani National Park and World Wildlife Fund (WWF); BMZ, WWF Germany, Government of Azerbaijan
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10. **Financing bodies**

BMZ, WWF
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11. **Central aims of the Project**



The central aims of the Project are (1) the establishment of a healthy, genetically diverse, self-sustaining population of Gazelles in Vashlovani Protected Areas (2) improvement of the ecosystem biodiversity and restoration of the landscape, to be appropriate for Gazelles; (3) the rehabilitation of the floodplain forest (4) improvement of the ecological environment in the area (5) the enhancement of awareness among the local population and improvement of their social-economic conditions.

## **12. Outcome**

Project implementation contributed to the reintroduction of a species that became extinct many years ago in Georgia. Successful implementation of the project certifies that the landscape of Vashlovani Protected Areas has a high biological value and the areas are Gazelles' vital historical habitat since their population size increased significantly – from 10 individuals to almost 300, already.

The ecological environment in the area was improved.

Due to increased number of visitors at these areas, new working places were created, which lead to the improvement of the the socio-economic condition of the local population. Eco-friendly guest houses, local products, and local cafes have been developed there harmonized with the environment and nature. Consequently, visitors began to actively visit Vashlovani National Park and its surroundings, and tourists' motivation to stay in the areas increased as it is possible to monitor the Gazelles with binoculars at any time. Visiting these landscapes and its surrounding areas became more accessible and comfortable.

As a consequence of this successful project, in 2022 the new protected areas on 13 273.43 ha - The Samukhi Multiple-use Management Area (IUCN category VI) was established by Parliament of Georgia. This particular protected areas was established exactly due to the reason that it is the vital habitat for Gazelles and establishment of this protection system there ensures that landscape will be maintained untouched and the Gazelles will be protected safely.

These areas are part of Vashlovani National Park and Vashlovani National Park is considered to be one of the top 5 tourist destinations in Georgia.

## 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?*

Since Gazelles were absolutely disappeared from 1990s, the local population had already forgotten about these species. The Samukhi Steppe was under severe pressure of being damaged due to the fact that there was no Gazelles grazing at this areas. After the successful implementation of the Gazelle Reintroduction project the landscape became alive and returned its primary conditions.

After the successful implementation of the Gazelle Reintroduction project, awareness about the importance of Gazelle conservation has been enhanced among the local population which had a positive influence on the development of the Vashlovani Protected areas since illegal poaching and human irresponsibility have drastically decreased. The gazelle population has increased in their historical habitat underscoring the greatest importance and scenic value of Vashlovani Protected Areas. New eco-friendly infrastructure, a sustainable environment, and more opportunities translated to the local populations' social-economic conditions improvement. More international and local tourists started visiting the area because they had the possibility to stay there and observe the Gazelles all the time.

As restoration and protection of landscapes is one of the highest priorities for the country, this project was paid a crucial importance from the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture as well. It became the part of sustainable development policy, and consequently the Ministry created a new protected areas on 13 273.43 ha to ensure long-term presentation of these habitats.

### 14. Exemplary value

*Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?*

*Which are the good practices that it implemented?*

The gazelle reintroduction in Vashlovani Protected Areas represents one of the best examples of biodiversity restoration in the region. The project improved the ecosystem biodiversity in the Iori-Mingechauri transboundary priority conservation area through the rehabilitation of the floodplain forest, improved protected areas management system and reintroduced extinct gazelles.

The project played a crucial role in two conservational directions: (1) the landscape was restored as it was damaged due to no grazing; (2) the food chain of different species living in Vashlovani Protected Areas was restored.

Project implementation as its value is also distinguished due to the fact that its implementation totally changed the situation in the region. After the effective implementation of the reintroduction project, local and international visitors began to actively visit Vashlovani National Park and its surroundings, and tourists' motivation to stay in the areas increased since it is possible to spot the Gazelles with binoculars to watch at any time.

**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?*

Public participation is an integral component of protected area management. Most protected areas are a public asset and public participation is essential to ensuring they are properly managed and strongly supported by the public. Therefore, all levels of Government recognize the value of involving local communities in decision-making and to take a more active role in managing their local environments. State governments also now realize that community capacity building and enhancement of social capital can have significant flow-on effects in improving a State's environmental, social and economic well-being. The reintroduction project was primarily a communications project with an aim to raise awareness about the impact on the landscape and consequently – nature, therefore the society was directly and indirectly involved and engaged during all project.

While implementing the project, the Local Municipality and Agency of Protected Areas arranged consultation meetings with locals who expressed their opinion on how they saw the development of the area and how to tackle the obstacles coming up during the processes. All the involved parties had their role in this process: Ministry and Agency provided all the activities that were necessary for landscape restoration, on the other hand, the Municipality and local representation of the Agency of Protected Areas (Vashlovani National Park Authorities) made a great contribution in terms of communications with locals and making all the infrastructural facilities to make the road more accessible for visitors. Municipality also supported locals to start their ecotourism business activities and involve in the area revival process.

After the implementation of the project, eco-tourism has been developed in the mentioned area, in particular, family hotels, and shops have been developed, and various services have been introduced, for example, the visitor of Vashlovani Protected Areas has the opportunity to explore the off-road trails by jeep tours, experience a drive through breathtaking landscapes and observe the Gazelles at the same time.

Furthermore, along with the effective implementation of the project, additional human resources were needed for 24-hour monitoring of the Gazelles. Consequently, with the support of the local government new jobs were created employing local populations. They started working mainly as guides, rangers, etc.

Since the Vashlovani National Park area is a border region, the above project also promoted the establishment of a kind relationship between the border police and the local government, and the local population.

**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?*

The project was significant for awareness raising regarding the landscape and its role in nature conservation. The Municipality together with the Agency of Protected Areas introduced a number of awareness-raising campaigns for spreading the news to different stakeholders. The central element of the campaign were training programmes, printing materials, and making videos, that stressed the importance of the project for nature and also for personal well-being and national identity.

Securing official and public support for the restoration programme is essential to its long-term success, especially if the gazelle reintroduction is intended to serve as a model for other species. Good communications and awareness-raising are therefore vital. A simple communications strategy was also developed by Agency of Protected Areas to identify the different target audiences and the most effective ways to reach them, as well as allocate responsibility for its implementation. The principal audiences were the government, the public, young people, and local communities (dealt with above). The strategy explained the rationale and aims of the programme and encompassed the press, radio, TV and the internet including social media such as Facebook. The aesthetic and cultural appeal of gazelles made them an attractive subject and facilitates their acceptance by the media.

It should be noted that Gazelles became the symbol of reintroduction and the “public face” of the restoration programme that had a valuable role in raising awareness. WWF also produced toys of “Gazelles” and they were distributed to wide society to remember people that Gazelles are integral part of Georgia’s biodiversity.

In total, the project added significant level to the understanding of landscape but also showed that it is closely tied to esthetical, social, economic, and historical aspects. The project showed that the landscape of Vashlovani National park is important as it is part of how we are formed, and therefore our today's actions will impact the identities of future generations.

## 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).*



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

*8th Session – 2022-2023*

**APPLICATION FORM**

**GREECE**





## **Presentation**

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***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 \(coe.int\)](#)

\*

## I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

<b>1. State</b>	GREECE
<b>Represented by</b>	Ms Evgenia Lagiou
<i>Address:</i>	Ministry of Environment and Energy, -General Secretariat of Spatial Planning and Urban Environment, -Department of the National Spatial Planning Strategy
<i>Telephone:</i>	+302106475101 -103, +30213 1515331
<i>E-mail:</i>	gramchora@ypen.gr e.lagiou@prv.ypeka.gr
<b>2. Applicant</b>	IDAION NETWORK of Psiloritis' Municipalities (PSILORITIS GEOPARK)
<i>Name of the local, regional authority(ies) or NGO(s)</i>	
<b>Represented by</b>	Dr Charalampos Fassoulas, President
<i>Address:</i>	Psiloritis Geopark, AKOMM SA Building, Anogia, Crete, Greece
<i>Telephone:</i>	+306977881675
<i>E-mail:</i>	bfassoulas@gmail.com

## II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJET

### 3. Name of the Project

THE BROADER NIDA PLATEAU IN PSILORITIS  
MTS: A PERPETUAL INTERCHANGE BETWEEN  
HUMANS AND NATURE

### 4. Location of the Project

Anogia Municipality, Region of Crete, GREECE

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

The broader area of Nida plateau located at Psiloritis mts, in Crete, is an iconic landscape, a great landmark, at about 1500m high, formed by small and large karstic depressions (sinkholes, dolines, poljes and caves). It is the most emblematic geosite of Psiloritis UNESCO Global Geopark. Nida is a place visited by the Greek gods, the Minoans and the Dorians, where always lived shepherds and their sheep, partisans and then archaeologists, botanists, now by nature lovers and climbers, where the *pensée sauvage* created a perpetual dialogue between humans and nature.

Since 2015 and under the holistic Management Plan of the geopark, the Broader Nida plateau in parallel with the traditional activities, is developed as an exemplary geo-touristic and cultural destination. All efforts of the municipalities' network tend to coordinate the participants into enhancing the mythical and archaeological importance of the site, combining tradition and innovation, protection of the cultural landscape and sustainable development. Promotion of the local history, shepherds' life was achieved through leaflets, publications, and the geopark webpage. More recently story maps, 360° panoramas, VR and AR tours have been developed, whereas the Idaion Andron archaeological site has been appropriately arranged for visitors.

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



The Nida Plateau. Foto Credits A. Trichas.



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

www.psiloritisgeopark.gr

### 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**

REGION OF CRETE,  
ANOZIA MUNICIPALITY,  
UNIVERSITY OF CRETE-NATURAL HISTORY  
MUSEUM OF CRETE,  
AKOMM PSILORITIS SA,  
ANOZIA ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER,  
ANDROIDUS PROJECT TANK

10. **Financing bodies**

EU (LEADER +, INTERREG, HORIZON), REGION OF CRETE, MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY OF GREECE

11. **Central aims of the Project**

**The area**  
The project is applied at an extent of about 20 Km<sup>2</sup> in the broader area of Nida plateau in Psiloritis Mts, which is included as a whole, within the Anogia Municipality, in Crete, Greece. The project is part of the implementation of the Management Plan of Psiloritis UNESCO Global Geopark that initiated in 2015 with its nomination by UNESCO (<https://youtu.be/shx4wKFz6D8>). The geopark is a bottom-up approach developed in 2001 by the local municipalities and the Region of Crete. The local communities participate at its management structure through representatives in particular economic sectors, institutions and cooperations, as well as through the group of its partners where more than 40 local enterprises, institutions and associations are included.

The main aim of the geopark is the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, as well as the sustainable development for the life of the inhabitants and their settlements through the establishment of eco- and geo-touristic activities. Research, education and local promotion are also important aspects of the Management Plan. These perspectives have to respect the main form of farming the sheep and goat keeping. In the area of the broader Nida plateau exist about 50 family livestock farms with a total capacity of about 20000 animals. The most important target thought is to transform this territory into a place habitable for its own residents, a place to be proud of and happy to live in.

The “broader Nida plateau”, was highlighted as an area of important geological, environmental and cultural value in this plan and was labelled as an “emblematic geosite” of

the geopark. It is a mountainous landscape of extraordinary aesthetic value, including the Nida plateau (geologically, a polje) and the nearby area of Petradolakia where a system of dozens of small dolines and sinkholes exist. Low and high mountain tops place the boundary of this depression, which actually coincides exactly with the description of this territory found on a traditional song dated back to centuries, called the “Song of Nida”. Several geological sites of interest are included in the area: the plateaus and the dolines, the main sinkhole of Nida, the red-platy marble, a fossilised sponge assemblage in the marbles and several smaller caves. In respect to environmental values, a steno-endemic plant genus called *Horstrissea dolinicola*, appears to live only in two small dolines. Several aromatic and endemic plants are also present, together with the endangered *Gypaetus barbatus* (the bearded vulture).

Beyond the archaeological site of *Idaion Andron* cave, other important prehistoric sites and constructions are related to Nida: the minoan *Zominthos* palatial complex to the north and the Kamares cave on the south slopes of Psiloritis. The total area of Broader Nida Plateau is included in Nature 2000 Network (GR4330005)), while its northern part is a Wild Life Reserve. The area is being transected from east to the west by the European trekking route E4 which crosses the plateau leading to the highest peak of the island, the Timios Stavros in Psiloritis.

### **The history and culture**

The relation of humans with the place is dated back to several millennia. The King Minos of the Minoans, according to Plato, had to visit *Idaion Andron* cave every nine years to receive the commandments of the Gods. According to the Mythology it is the place where the newborn Zeus was hidden and grew up. *Idaion Andron* was probably the most important religious site of Eastern Mediterranean, operating temporary as an oracle, from the Mesolithic till the Roman times, explaining the reason of the so valuable and unique archaeological findings excavated there, by Greek and Italian archaeologists. Halfway between Nida and Anogia, the *Zominthos* building complex is under excavation since 1982. It is located at the highest point where building activity of the Minoans have been located in Crete.

In addition, the typical dry-stone buildings of the shepherds, circular *tholos*, called “mitàta” can be found in great numbers, totally adapted to the landscape and the environment. These are part of the UNESCO Intangible Heritage lists and several of them characterised as National Monuments by the Ministry of Culture. These are strongly connected with the particular nomadic way of the shepherd’s life in past times, recently inscribed at the National Intangible Heritage list.

Local summer fests are organised at the small family-owned chapels (three in this area) in which shepherds, their families and friends are invited to celebrate the name day of the Saint. Even land-art activities are occurring in this area, the most profound of them being a rock sculpture made by a German artist Ms Karina Reck and shepherds, the “Peace Rebel” dedicated to the friendship between the WW2 enemies.

In the wider area of Nida in 1986 is founded the Skinakas Observatory as research infrastructure of the University of Crete and the Foundation of Research and Technology - Hellas (FORTH), operated by the Institute of Astrophysics - FORTH. It is located at an altitude of 1750m on the homonymous peak.

### **Objective**

The project on the emblematic Nida geosite was aiming at **conserving, interpreting, promoting and enhancing the values** of the natural, cultural and the human landscape in this area and **the integration of services for a sustainable and responsible tourism** of superb quality. To achieve this, we invested in the collection of all relative information and

resources in the form of a geodatabase, the analysis of the values, threats and needs in this case, the setting of specific targets and the identification of potential resources and partners to implement several projects in a certain time span of a decade. The values identified were related with the breath-taking landscape of Nida polje, the rare and unique plants that exist in the area, the Idaion Andron cave with its millennia of history and treasures, the shepherd's life with their activities, houses and dairy products, and the living traditions and ethics related to this territory.

In addition, the municipalities network prioritises the need to **interpret and promote** these values with all modern and traditional means, to **manage** properly the mountainous landscape and the pasture land, and to develop the necessary **infrastructure** for the visitors. The necessary resources, human, and economic were foreseen at the geopark's stakeholders and partners, the local community, and the regional, national and especially, European founding opportunities.

The Region of Crete has promoted the establishment of its Landscape Observatory in collaboration with the Technical University of Crete. <https://www.ruralcrete.gr/> The wider Nida plateau area is considered an autonomous '*Landscape Unit*' as it is presented here. Its 'Landscape Book' is under construction.

## 12. Outcome

Tangible outcomes of this project which has been achieved during the period of 2015 till January 2020, are:

- Awareness raising activities on sustainability have been developed in collaboration with 'Anogia Environmental Education Center' and the Museum of Natural History (University of Crete). They were addressed to local society and groups of pupils from the regions of Heraklion and Rethimno.
- As a geopark, one of the first projects we implemented was the establishment of **interpretation panels** in most important geological sites, like the Nida polje, the Petradolakia sinkhole, the sponge's fossils, the Idaion Andron cave, and the Saint Fanourios spring and fault. Geological interpretation was also provided through the geopark's new webpage, a geopark field guide book and other publications that were developed. Most of these were implemented in 2015 and 2016 and were supported by regional and own geopark funds.
- Under an Interreg MED project addressed to the "**Emblematic mountains**" the main partner of geopark, the local Development Company named "AKOMM Psiloritis SA" developed in 2019 a **circular trail** in the Nida plateau accessing the main geological, natural and cultural sites, like the Idaion Andron cave, the main sinkhole, several mitata, and the chapel of Afentis Christos and land art. The trail was supported with info panels, proper signage, a leaflet, and is connected with the main E4 trail.
- Another Interreg Greece-Cyprus project titled "**GEOIN**" aiming to promote geotourism in the insular geoparks, resulted in 2019 in the development of digital outcomes such as an **interactive geopark map** and **360° panoramas**, either from earth or drone shots, and a virtual tour at Psiloritis geopark, promoting the area of Nida with 5 panoramas, and promotion of its main geosites.
- In 2016 the Municipality of Anogia, with the support of the Ministry of Environment, the Region of Crete and the Forest Service, received European funds to renovate and improve **visitor facilities at the Idaion Andron Cave**, by works of site arrangements in order to promote and open it to the public. The last four years the site is open to the visitors every summer (as in winter it is fully covered by snow) and the Ministry of Culture maintains the positions of two staff for its operation. In addition, a **scientific**

**congress** was organised in 2012 by the Anogia Municipality and the Archaeological service on the excavations at Idaion Andro, which resulted in a photo's Book and three scientific volumes with the proceedings.

- Furthermore, in the nearby Anogia village a **Digital Interpretation Center** of Idaion Andron cave and the nearby archaeological site of Zominthos was developed in 2013 by the Municipality with funds from the Region of Crete.
- Several **cultural** as well as **sport events**, organised by the Municipality, the geopark, the AKOMM and local stakeholders, find host at this area, like the celebration of the August full moon at Idaion Andron entrance, and the organization for several years of the annual mountain race called the "Psiloritis Race", with its starting point at Nida plateau.
- Regarding the **management of the landscape**, for many years the Geopark and the Anogia Municipality have foreseen the risk of soil degradation and erosion, especially in the dolines, and have developed an environmentally friendly **visitor's behavior**, that it is promoted through geopark's publications and on the interpretation panels, whereas the Municipality announces every spring **traffic regulation** in the dolines following the snow melting.
- In addition, in order to conserve and protect the so rare and endangered *Horstrissea dolinicola* (<https://top50.iucn-mpsg.org/species/41>), the Municipality of Anogia, the Forest Service of Rethimnon and the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania, developed a project for the study, management and conservation of the fragile ecotopes, which resulted in the protection of the dolines by the Decentralised Administration of Crete as "**Protected Natural Formations**" (Greek Government Gazette, D'250/18.05.2020), the rearrangement of nearby shepherd's activities, and the monitoring and study of these ecotopes for several years. An interpretation panel and several awareness raising activities were also developed.

For the local communities, the emblematic "Broader Nida Plateau" is an **ongoing project**. Thus, new projects and activities are designed and being implemented through the years which try to further promote the territory and **use modern technologies** for interpretation and promotion of the area, especially to **younger generations**, people with **mobile disabilities** and distant users.

- The Psiloritis geopark has developed with the support of Interreg (**GEOIN 2018-2020**) and Horizon (**RURITAGE 2020**) projects, **360° drone shotted panoramas** covering the broader Nida Plateau from 12 focus points (<https://tours.nhmc.uoc.gr/geo/psiloritis/en/>), a **story telling map** for the whole geopark, which refers to this site too (<https://tours.nhmc.uoc.gr/geoparks/map/idi/en/index.html>), a new **story map for Nida Plateau** interpretation (<https://storymaps.nhmc.uoc.gr/en/nida-plateau-2/>) and a **Virtual tour** in the area (<https://tours.nhmc.uoc.gr/geoparks/nida/>), which has been adapted for **VR devices**, accessed either through the web or the Geopark's info center at Anogia.
- With the support of the Ministry of Environment and Energy and the Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (NECCA) the geopark is planning to create a modern and well adapted to the landscape, new **view point** at the entrance of Nida Plateau.
- Anogia Municipality, Androidus project and several other local stakeholders contacted a study and applied successfully for the inscription in 2021 of pastoral life of shepherds at the **National Intangible Heritage List** (<https://ayla.culture.gr/i-voskiki-kai-o-kosmos-tou-voskou-ston-psiloreiti-2021/?fbclid=IwAR364wVg7XCHIoO->

[7oHoIaNiw\\_0Sms\\_aZNfWhxm4mU5xGvthab2kABuphfQ](#)).

- Several projects focused or related with cultural activities in the broader Nida Plateau are being performed by local stakeholders like the Androidus Project Tank (<http://www.androidus.gr/>), a pool of creativity, innovation and cultural management. **Shepherds and the Pastoral Life of Psiloritis** is a cultural proposal launched by Androidus and the FORTH institution, aiming at exploring an important part of human history of the highest mountain of Crete as “written” in the monuments, toponyms, historical springs and the natural environment, that has been recently registered into the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The research project **IDAology** is dealing with the exploration, recording, and promotion of pastoral life in the Psiloritis Geopark as a main element of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of the area, producing among others an AR book for children. Also, the **Metartum Project** uses the dry-stone Shepard’s establishments as art workshops/ laboratories for Modern Artists.

#### 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?*

##### **Sustainable development policy**

The enhancement, promotion and management of the “Broader Nida Plateau”, as it has been presented earlier, is an integral part of the **Management Plan** of Psiloritis UNESCO Global Geopark, that aims to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, and its transformation as a regeneration tool and locomotive for sustainable local development, through the establishment of eco- and geo-touristic activities. The Plan encompasses most of the SDGs as well as the provisions of local, regional and national sustainable and spatial planning. The ultimate goal of the Plan is to transform geopark territory into a place habitable for its own residents, a place to be proud of and happy to live in.

The development of the “Broader Nida Plateau” is in full agreement with the targets of **Anogia Municipality Land Use Plans**, to develop the area as a place for ecotourist and livestock raising activities. The **Regional Plan of the Region of Crete** (Greek Government Gazette 260/08.11.2017) sets several zones in order to apply in national and regional level the requirements of the “Landscape Convention”. Under the characterisation of the **"carrying capacity of natural and cultural capital"** zones it includes the E4 trail (crossing the entire area of Nida) as of international importance, whereas the whole Psiloritis mts (including the broader Nida plateau) as of National Importance. This Framework foresees for the broader Nida Plateau (Article 11) that “... a priority for the protection, preservation and promotion of the unified natural and cultural heritage is the creation and implementation of a program of targeted spatial actions by the operating institutions, regional and municipal, which highlights the inseparable relationship of the natural and the cultural identity of each place, as well as its timeless historical depth. All actions must have a synthetic character and be linked to productive reconstruction efforts of the mountainous massifs and the populous traditional



settlements”. **Consequently, the Management Plan of Psiloritis geopark in the Nida area is in full alignment with the Regional and National Spatial planning for the implementation to “Landscape Convention” and the achievement of the SDGs.**

#### **Enhancement of values of the landscape**

All the above projects and outcomes were scheduled to promote in a holistic manner the geo- and bio-diversity of the area. Combining in the enhancement products (trails, booklets, panels, digital outcomes etc.) local tales (like the Erotokritos poem), traditional songs (like the Nida song), the shepherd’s life (National Intangible Heritage), and the dry-stone constructions (UNESCO Intangible Heritage) we achieve the development of **coordinated actions** capable of reflecting the “genius loci” of this unique landscape. In addition, educational and training activities implemented by the geopark and the Anogia Environmental Education Center, through guided tours and two special programs on the “life of Shepherds” and the “Karstic landscapes of Psiloritis”, communicate further in younger ages the values and the tradition of the area, keeping them alive. The geopark tries to transform these into a geotouristic destination that promotes and supports in addition, the local diary and culture products, and thus local economy.

#### **Remedies to any pre-existing environmental damage**

- Under this common project the Municipality of Anogia and the Forest Service achieved the protection of the rare and endangered species of Horstrissea and the nomination of its ecotopes as “Protected Natural Formations” (Greek Government Gazette 250/18.5.2020).
- Through Regional Funds the Municipality implements also two projects, in order to regenerate and heal two ruined modern buildings: **1.** the restoration of the abandoned resort at the Nida plateau into a modern Info Center for the Interpretation of the Plateau and the Idaion Andron cave, **2.** the restoration of the old ski center to form an environmental research and education shelter.
- Furthermore, coordinated actions of the ‘Idaion Network” indirectly promotes the individual efforts for restoration of old Mitata (*tholoi*) by the owners during these last years, giving life and continuity to the traditional activities.

#### **14. Exemplary value**

*Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?*

*Which are the good practices that it implemented?*

### **Exemplary Value**

The project for the enhancement and management of the broader Nida Plateau under the Management Plan of Psiloritis UNESCO geopark and the IDAION NETWORK of Psiloritis' Municipalities gave the opportunity for a holistic promotion, interpretation and management of this cultural landscape in the Psiloritis mts, and to combine it with a charming geo-and eco-touristic destination for all target groups. It combines all aspects of natural and the Man-made landscape, including the written and oral narrations, the prehistoric myths and the ancient history and culture, as well as traditional activities, identifying and promoting the intrinsic interrelations and connections between them, using traditional and modern means and resources.

The wealthy and intact by tourism and human pressures natural environment, the long-lasting history and culture that ranges from paleolithic to modern times, and the superb quality of agricultural and livestock products are considered the strong merits of the territory. Between ancient times and our days, people continue to walk on Psiloritis in order to search transcendentalism, to graze sheep, to find refuge in war time, to research as botanist or an archaeologist, to be entertained. In this way the natural site has been transformed into cultural landscape. This landscape gains attention as all human interventions are related with the 'genius loci' and they enhance it.

The activities in the plateau engage present and traditional habits related with shepherd life and production – the main economic activity, in the area –in the development of sustainable and responsible tourism products. These activities aim at local regeneration, raise of local people's pride for their heritage and improvement of the well-being of local societies in nearby villages. Accomplishment of these goals is also way to achieve also conservation of natural and culture heritage for future generations.

### **Good practices**

- Combination of traditional (conventional) approaches for nature and culture interpretation with modern technologies and means (Story telling maps, VR and AR products for pcs and mobile devices).
- Promotion and maintenance of traditional shepherd's life through its integration in all outcomes and further support for its nomination as a National Intangible heritage.
- The intervention of all relative authorities, organizations, NGOs, associations and local communities under the UNESCO Global Geopark Initiative to establish the Nida area as an eco- and geo-touristic destination related to the European path E4 in its Cretan route.
- The Psiloritis Municipalities, the 'Anogia Environmental Education Center' in collaboration with the Psiloritis Geopark, the Idaion Andron Info Center and the Zominthos site by their combined activities raise the specific mountainous landscape as the palimpsest of universal values.

### **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?*

## Public Participation

- Psiloritis Geopark is a bottom-up initiative that was established in 2001 by the local Municipalities, the stakeholders of AKOMM Psiloritis Local Development Company and the natural History Museum of Crete. As a geopark Local communities are essential part of the geopark and according to the UNESCO Global Geoparks Operational Guidelines, they participate through their representatives at the Advisory Board of the geopark which develops its policy and the targets to achieve. This project was developed under the geopark's Management Plan and is implemented with the close collaboration of the shepherd's community of the area and the people of Anogia Municipality.
- Several workshops have been and are performed by the geopark and its stakeholders to support shepherds on modern marketing and promotional activities, the local people on the dry-stone constructions and the preservation of dry-stone wall and mitata technique, as well as the women for maintaining traditional weave products based on wool.
- The actions about Nida are in line with Geopark Management plan that has been developed in 2015 and is going to be updated during 2023. The Land Use plan for the Municipality of Anogia, respects the Regional Spatial Planning Framework, for the implementation of the Landscape National Policy (mapping Landscape Units).

### 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?*

The ongoing project since 2015, and particularly the outcomes of period between 2015-2020 of the Broader Nida plateau increased effectively public awareness and understanding of the landscape values through the combination of local sustainable development activities, conservation of natural and cultural heritage, maintaining local identity and finally local regeneration. These values are conveyed to both locals and visitors. These are achieved by:

- The development of **panels** and **info-boards** established at important sites of interest in the field, thematic digital and printed publications, **digital tools and means** like story maps, virtual tours, VR and AR products that aim to interpret the interventions between nature, culture, land art, human activities and products, as well as the shepherd's life.
- Several kinds of **publications** and **promotional material of the geopark** like thematic geotouristic and geological maps, trail and other thematic leaflets, booklets and field guides.
- Promotion of the **superb quality dairy products** through the participation in tourism and other thematic **fairs** (Tour Nature, ITB etc.), special **webpages** (business listing for the geopark's stakeholders (<https://storymaps.nhmc.uoc.gr/en/affiliated-businesses/>))
- Development and implementation of **special educational programs** and activities that are mainly addressed to pupils, but also to adults and teachers.
- Highlighting and promoting through the **participation** of the geopark at the UNESCO Global and European **Geoparks Networks** as an emblematic geosite.
- The promotion of the geopark in total, and the Nida individually through a big project supported by the Region of Crete, the UNESCO sites of the island and University of Crete, titled "**Branding and Promotion of UNESCO Sites in Crete**" which has a budget of about a Million €.



## 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 (22 pages max.): Additional Document Nida.pdf (Annex I)
- Photos (10 max.): check pages
  - Horstrissea Afrathianakis M.jpg
  - Idaion Andron entrance Fassoulas C.jpg
  - Local Fest St Fanourios Avramakis M.jpg
  - Mitato Varsamos Fassoulas C.jpg
  - Nida in winter Ntagiantas A.jpg
  - Nida Panorama Trichas A.jpg
  - Nida Plateau in Spring Fassoulas C
  - Nida shepherds Fassoulas C.jpg
  - Petradolakia and Nida Plateau from Skinakas Fassoulas C.jpg
  - The main sinkhole Fassoulas C.jpg
- Posters (2 max.): Nida Poster 2023\_1.jpg and Nida Poster 2023\_2.jpg
- Video (15 min max.): The broader Nida Plateau.mp4

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

*8th Session – 2022-2023*

APPLICATION FORM

ITALY

## **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.*

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*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

<b>1. State</b>	Italy
<b>Represented by</b>	Mr. Luigi La Rocca, General Director
<i>Address:</i>	Ministry of Culture Direzione generale archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio Servizio V Tutela del Paesaggio Via di S. Michele 22 00153 Roma
<i>Telephone:</i>	0039-0667234545
<i>E-mail:</i>	dg-abap@cultura.gov.it
<b>2. Applicant</b>	Orti Generali
<i>Name of the local, regional authority(ies) or NGO(s)</i>	
<b>Represented by</b>	Mr. Stefano Olivari
<i>Address:</i>	Strada del Castello di Mirafiori, 38/15 Torino, Torino 10135 ITALY
<i>Telephone:</i>	0039-3311370672
<i>E-mail:</i>	ortigenerali@gmail.com

## II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJET

### 3. Name of the Project

ORTI GENERALI. *The countryside comes to town*

### 4. Location of the Project

Turin's southern suburb of Mirafiori - City of Turin,  
Piedmont Region- Italy

### 5. Summary of the Project

Orti Generali was created with the aim of building a social enterprise model for the transformation and management of residual urban agricultural areas in the southern Mirafiori suburb in Turin. The name is inspired by the wholesale fruit and vegetable markets (*mercati generali*). Meant to be more than a gathering place, it is a meeting and sharing point for practices, experiences and skills related to urban cultivation, experimented directly in the field and in an inclusive way. Orti Generali stems from a community-based participatory process started in 2010. Over the years, this process has increasingly involved schools, associations, gardeners, disadvantaged groups and residents of the area. Thanks to its innovative social and technological components, it is supported by public and private funds and supervised by various universities. In 2018 it was officially entrusted by the City of Turin with 3 hectares of land to create a social enterprise model in the city park. Today it offers both groups and families the opportunity to cultivate gardens using organic methods exclusively.

### 6. Photo representing the Project

Author of the photo: Giuseppe Moccia



## 7. Website of the Project

<https://www.ortigenerali.it/>

### 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

- Mirafiori Community Foundation
- City of Turin
- Health Authority of the City of Turin (ASL)
- Parco del Nobile Association
- Amiat Iren Group

## 10. Financing bodies

Public funding: European Union Horizon 2020 *FUSILLI (Urban Food Planning)*, European Union Horizon 2020 proGReg (which promotes using nature for renewal), MIUR and Local Plan for the ASL of the City of Turin  
Private funding: Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation, Novacoop, Iren

## 11. Central aims of the Project

Orti Generali was established with the goal of building a social enterprise model promoting ecological sustainability and social equity for the transformation and management of residual agricultural areas in the Turin metropolitan area. Presently, its main objectives are to

- return to the community a city park that was previously characterised by degradation and squatting so that the local community can experience and participate in it;
- include in the regeneration process a diversity of participants, particularly those living in conditions of socio-economic fragility;
- propose a landscape structure that enhances traces of the pre-industrial agrarian landscape and that reintroduces the planting system of the Po Valley, characterised by willow and mulberry rows along the canals;
- not place a heavy economic burden for the management of green spaces on the public entity but rather provide scenic, economic and social value through co-partnership with a private, third-sector entity;
- integrate city gardens into green areas to avoid the traditional allotment model of repetitive honeycomb design and allocate a substantial portion of the park to shared spaces, preserving views and ensuring broad access to park users;
- encourage 250 families in the area to produce their own healthy, consciously grown, locally sourced food;
- pursue a scientific approach to landscape and vegetable garden management through

academic collaborations.

## 12. Outcome

Among its most relevant accomplishments, Orti Generali has

- renovated Cascina Piemonte as a refreshment area for gardeners and park goers and as an additional revenue stream for the project itself;
- created 170 vegetable gardens of 50, 75 and 100 square metres;
- established a community garden for social inclusion activities and an educational garden for schools and family workshops;
- created within the park a garden dedicated to pollinators and an apiary for honey production that may also be used for educational activities with schools;
- offered courses with 26 teachers in horticulture, pruning, beekeeping, permaculture, sustainability and green design;
- organised local activities, such as the *Social passata* (tomato passata production), cleaning of Piedmont Park and group cooking days with the University of Pollenzo.

## 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 Orti Generali project is part of a sustainable development policy because it has restored to the city of Turin (particularly the suburban neighbourhood of Mirafiori Sud) a park that was previously characterised by squatting and underuse, removing decades of waste from the banks of the Sangone River.

The new urban gardens follow the principles of organic farming, and events organised throughout the year raise awareness of environmental sustainability.

The aesthetic enhancement of the landscape preserves historical landscape features, particularly the *bealere* (irrigation canals) that have organised the historical agricultural landscape for over five centuries.

Although it has not been possible to restore their functioning, they have been enhanced as a distinctive landscape element by suitably orienting the layout of the vegetable garden plots, planting ancient apple and pear tree cultivars and leaving the grass unmown to nurture pollinating insects. The central drive of the vegetable gardens was planted with mulberry trees, an emblematic plant of the Po Valley.

### 14. Exemplary value

*Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?*

*Which are the good practices that it implemented?*

The project can be considered of exemplary value because it can be replicated in all residual agricultural areas, especially in suburban areas. The good practices implemented include participatory maintenance and bottom-up land transformation. The project was designed and articulated in collaboration with different stakeholders, and the transformation was achieved with the support of volunteers and active citizens in the neighbourhood.

This is also an exemplary project with regard to the materials used (chestnut wood cut and processed in the province of Turin, fixed furniture and fencing without concrete bases), the organic cultivation and maintenance of green areas and the digitisation of the automatic irrigation system, which reduces waste and copes with drought episodes.



**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 stems from a community-based participatory process started in 2010. This process has increasingly involved schools, associations, gardeners and residents of the area. In particular, the project's design emerged from a collaboration between a public entity, a community foundation and a third-sector entity. From the start, all phases of the conception and implementation were determined by consensus with the public entity, which for the first time defined ad hoc regulatory instruments for the creation of this unprecedented project.

The entire project is in line with the wider institutional policies. It was made possible thanks to the conspicuous contribution of a national initiative to support project about Smart Cities and Communities and Social Innovation, and several funding lines of European initiatives for the city of Turin.

Because of its innovative features, the project is being studied and used as an example in several cases of strategic planning for the management of residual agricultural areas, such as the city of Turin's strategic plan for green infrastructure.

Numerous delegations have visited from the rest of Europe and beyond, including France, Switzerland, Germany, Norway and South Korea.

**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?*

The process of transforming the park has inspired a renewed sense of community and environmental awareness among the citizens of the Mirafiori neighbourhood.

Many of the former squatter gardeners along the banks of the Sangone actively participated in cleaning up the area and creating Orti Generali, making the gardens available to various projects and workshops with schools and associations. Countless volunteers give their time to kiosk activities and routine park maintenance. Events organised throughout the year strengthen the sense of community, including the *Ortometraggi* (film festival) and the Gran Gala (an evening of culinary sharing featuring the gardeners' produce).

The landscape design of Orti Generali involved extensive research in the European field, producing a space that drew equal inspiration from the French *parc potager* and English urban farms. The European identity is strengthened by ongoing dissemination through the *FUSILLI (Urban Food Planning)* initiative, which involves the participation of other European projects located in various cities on the continent.

## 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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**COUNCIL OF EUROPE LANDSCAPE CONVENTION**  
**LANDSCAPE AWARD OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

*8th Session – 2022-2023*

APPLICATION FORM

LATVIA

## **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 \(coe.int\)](#)

\*

## I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

**1. State**

LATVIA

**Represented by**

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*Name of the local,  
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or NGO(s)*

**Represented by**

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## II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJET

### 3. Name of the Project

The heritage of the Southern Kurzeme coast through the centuries. Creation of the Alande river recreation complex

### 4. Location of the Project

Grobina,  
Dienvidkurzemes novads, Latvia  
(cadastre nr. 6409 006 0109)

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

Grobina is the first settlement in the Baltics that is mentioned in writings. It is named after “hornbeam forest” (from Curonian *gruobīn*). In the 7th century Viking merchants and artisans settled in Grobina, choosing Grobina (originally - Seeburg) because of its advantageous location - the Alande river which is less than 24km long and flows through Grobina, has a historical and strategic importance in the history of the settlement of North-Western Europe, as it served as one of key connections/hubs of the Baltic Sea Region. Now Grobina is a small town with 3500 inhabitants and with an area of 5,1 km<sup>2</sup>. The fact that third largest city of Latvia - Liepaja is only 11km away, equated Grobina to the status of a suburb during the Soviet time. After the regaining of Latvia’s independence, the rich presence of historical evidence, international interest and contacts stimulated discovery and development of the historical identities of Grobina, which is very important for both local residents and visitors. This has resulted in the inclusion of culturally significant objects in the national list of UNESCO heritage, emphasizing the unique, historically preserved values - Couronians mounds and ancient settlement places, ancient graves, Viking traditional culture, Middle age castle ruins and the importance of Alande river in shaping the character of the place. The highlighted identity has served as the basis for the idea and realization of the project.

The the project aims to preserve, restore and develop Grobina’s cultural - historical and nature heritage by creating a recreation complex of Alande river, which includes and unites cultural monuments - Grobina archaeological ensemble, the Middle age castle with bastions, Skabarzkalns, ancient town and Priediens ancient burial ground. The project contributes to the conservation, protection and restoration of natural and cultural-historical objects by cleaning up the banks and highlighting important local values. It improves the accessibility of the environment, promotes the organization of new events by creating a wide stage and a place for activities in the central part of the castle ruins. Additionally, it provides recreation areas - an oak cascade on the slope and a viewing platform opening up views of scenically valuable natural areas, thus opening the identity of Grobina to visitors and locals, as well as highlighting the historical shipping motifs in landscaping elements.

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



Photo: The Central Finance and Contracting Agency Republic of Latvia, 2022

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

Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJfrZn4FQvg>

### 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**

Grobina municipality participated in the project cycle "The heritage of the Southern Kurzeme coast through the centuries" implemented by five cooperation partners with the leading partner Liepaja city. Within this cycle Grobina developed its project idea "Creation of the Alande river recreation complex". A decisive role in the development of the idea was also played by local businesses, entrepreneurs and activists who have been strengthening the identity of Grobina for many years. One of them is the Active Tourism Center "Curonian Viking Settlement", a business that has participated in the



development of Grobiņa's identity substantively and practically.

## 10. Financing bodies

The project "Creation of the Alande river recreation complex" is implemented with European Regional Development Fund attracted by Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia and Ministry of Culture Republic of Latvia. The project also received municipal and state funding.

In order to promote the development of the territory, financial instruments were attracted even before implementation of the project "Alande River recreation complex", for example, information boards installed with the support of LEADER for the objects included in the national list of UNESCO heritage. The promotion of the development of the territory continues after the implementation of the project. New funding is being attracted for placement of new landscaping elements that complement the complex. For example, outdoor musical instruments were installed with financial support of Society Integration Foundation (SIF).

## 11. Central aims of the Project

The main goal of the project implementation is to highlight the key elements of Grobina's historical identity among residents and the visitors of the area, which can be achieved by:

- conducting construction work and construction supervision in accordance with developed construction projects for the entrance junction of the Alande river recreation complex and the creation of a walking trail;
- improving the functional and visual condition of the Grobina Middle age castle bastions, to ensure the preservation of the castle walls;
- providing access to the banks of the Alande river by creating a suitable walking route;
- creating landscaping that corresponds to the overall image of Grobina, to ensure the creation of well-thought-out recreation places that highlight natural and cultural-historical values;
- improving the quality of Alande river environment, to ensure the most effective river management options;
- informing the society about the goals set by the project, and involve the society to achieve the entire results.



## 12. Outcome

- The main project outcome is the creation of a common structure of significant local landscapes. There are combined monuments of the Grobina archaeological ensemble included in the Latvian national list of UNESCO World Heritage - Grobina castle hill and old town, the middle age castle with bastions, Skabarzkalns, ancient town and Priediens, Atkalnu, Smukums and Porans ancient burial ground.
- The created Alande river park trail is approximately 2,6 km long (one way) that stretches along the Alande River. There are a number of information signs along the route, each telling the history of Grobina. The park and the trail are suitable for walking, cycling, and is accessible for parents with baby-strollers and for people in wheelchairs with an assistant. Alande River Park may also be enjoyed and accessed by boat.
- Preservation of endangered elements. There is a gabion wall created that fulfils several functions - it protects the spectators from wind and other adverse weather conditions during events and protects the remaining walls from damage caused by various conditions.
- The historical identity of Grobina is emphasized by creating different motives of shipping and Viking period in landscaping elements (benches with boat elements, market roof as an overturned boat, playground elements inspired by ancient design motifs etc.), events (Viking festival, live history festival with creative workshops, performances about inhabitants of Courland, etc), information materials.

## 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 is related to the Activity and Development Strategy of the Grobina archaeological ensemble, the activities are also included in the Grobina Town Landscape Development and Management Plan, that outlines activities that would contribute to the improvement of local ecosystems, the creation of infrastructure for the improvement of the territory and public awareness. The plan contains solutions that affect the strengthening and maintenance of the river banks, the placement of walking paths and landscaping elements, which were later reflected in the implemented project results.

The project's activities are connected with the goals of Sustainable Development Strategy 2014-2030 of the former Grobina Municipality, that promote looking for new opportunities to preserve and maintain special natural and cultural heritage values and places.

In the long term the social and economic aspects are improved, because currently the territory serves as a sightseeing point for tourists and a place for walking, recreation for local residents as a walking route along the Alande river is now created.

There were 113,581 visits in 2020 when the project was first open to visitors after completion, according to automatic counter measurements. Alande river recreation complex was very popular during the Covid-19 pandemic when it was also visited by residents of other towns. There were 105,253 visits in 2022 (there were periods of time when the counting equipment did not work for technical reasons, so the number of visitors may have been underestimated), thus indicating that the object has not lost its original relevance. It continues to be a place for people to spend their free time, its design encouraging visitors to be active and get to know local history, natural values, stories and traditional and cultural-historical heritage.

The created Alande River walking path and the complex of castle ruins is perfectly complemented by the Active Tourism Center "Kuršu Vikingu Apmetne" created by the Tourism Center "Oga", which provides boating and other types of active recreation opportunities on the Alande River. The Tourism Center organizes various types of events related to the historical image of Grobina. Events such as the Balts days, provide opportunities to explore own skills in various types of Viking era activities, such as archery, spear throwing, and use of other fighting paraphernalia, these events usually also offer the opportunity to taste traditional foods.

The walking path is easily accessible from the nearby kindergarten, thus the implementation of the project has also had a positive impact on the smaller residents of Grobina, giving them the opportunity to meaningfully spend time in the fresh air, going for walks, learning and finding out about the history of Grobina, natural and cultural features, and discovering new territories that were not available until the project was implemented. Castle ruins and the territory of the Alande River are also actively used by school-aged children, providing an opportunity to spend part of the learning process outdoors.

The project has promoted the improvement of the spatial structure of the landscape by combining several archaeological monuments, forming a single complex and improving the visual and functional condition of the castle ruins. In accordance with the project of architect

Ugis Senbergs, a complex of castle ruins was created with a central stage, a convenient access road and access to the venue for disabled people or mothers with strollers, an observation tower and gabion walls instead of the lost walls. The preservation of the spatial structure and the formation of the overall image is ensured by added bastion walls in places where there castle walls do not continue.

In the restoration project of the castle ruins, the restored natural element – the central big tree – has been integrated into the project design to become a focal part of the complex.

On the slope, in front of the Dzirnavu pond, a wooden stage was built, which provides an access point to the water area and the interconnected area of the castle ruins from the walking path of the Alande River.

The environmental conditions are also improved by using ecological, nature-friendly materials in the newly added elements and for the creation of the walking path, which embody the local natural values and fit into the surrounding landscape. The created landscaping is based on environmental protection and preservation principles, the solutions for the creation of the walking path are adapted to the unique local situation, creating solutions suitable for the steep bank and harmless to the quality of nature.

Earlier threats are also prevented - overgrowth of the river, uncontrolled waste reaching the water and the coastal zone. The banks of Alande River are currently regularly managed, the banks are strengthened and safe access to the river is ensured.

#### 14. Exemplary value

*Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?*

*Which are the good practices that it implemented?*

The project can be evaluated as exemplary because it was able to combine elements characterizing the image of the place, emphasizing contemporary features and historically significant motifs in the historical identity of the overall urban environment. Proposed solutions echo the general goal of preserving and protecting local unique values, creating an opportunity to develop different types of territories that serve as a basis for strengthening the historical identity of the place.

It is possible to implement the project's ideas on a large scale, as it includes solutions for different types of territories:

- for ensuring the accessibility of river banks, providing an opportunity to highlight natural values;
- preservation and adjustment of cultural and historical objects to the needs of contemporary people without losing historical identity;
- for the creation of thought-out relaxation and active recreation places in the urban environment;
- in creating the image of the town, based on historical aspects;
- solutions in slopes - ensuring environmental accessibility;
- for the creation of visually aesthetic objects, walking routes, creating separate viewpoints along the trail, and for the development of a viewer tower, updating natural values and cultural - historical objects on the tourist route.

The included solutions allow them to use both - in territories with water bodies and in places with distinct terrain, in cultural and historical areas, in the outdoor space of the town or in intensively used public places.

**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 public was involved in the process of developing the object technical documentation (before the construction and construction supervision works) - public discussions were held on the issue of cutting down trees in the territory of the castle ruins. Initially, the project documentation envisaged cutting down the linden tree in the central part of the castle ruins. After the public discussions and inspection by the head of the National Heritage Board of Latvia the linden was included in the project design, thus preserving a unique natural value in Grobina.

Currently, the society is actively involved in the process of maintaining the project result-actively using the facilities provided by the object, which is proved by the visitor counter indicators. Locals and visitors are also popularizing the Alande river and castle ruins complex among family, friends and like-minded people, actively sharing impressions on social networks that ensures the sustainability of the project in the future.

Visitors are additionally attracted by organizing the "Seeburg" Live History Festival, introducing people with Viking and Curonian crafts, cultural features, customs. They conjure up scenes and allow contemporary people to experience Viking life practically in reality. The created stage in the central part of the castle ruins hosts events for people of different age groups, such as the opening concert of the South Kurzeme festival "Rimbenieks", where the string band of the Liepaja Symphony Orchestra provided musical enjoyment surrounded by the Alande River and historical heritage.

At the end of last year a sensory adventure in the form of a light festival in the castle ruins and near the Dzirnavu pond was organized, encouraging both children and adults to visit the area even in the dark. Additionally, the annual "Seeburg Bikerland" motorcycle festival brought together like-minded people in Grobina once again, continuing the promotion of the story of the beginnings of Grobina.

**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?*

The intention of the project is closely related to the unique nature and cultural history of Grobina, creating a walking path along the river, uncovering hitherto inaccessible views of the water area and carrying out improvement works in the castle ruins, highlighting especially important, natural monuments that until now visitors may have been completely unaware of. Access to the Alande river complex is ensured with modern and site-appropriate solutions, promoting local resident awareness of Grobina's scenic values, which they have lived next to all this time, but could not fully appreciate, due to inaccessibility. The implementation of the project has also attracted Latvian and foreign temporary users of the territory, using various methods to inform tourists about the importance of the river and the surrounding landscape in the context of the history and development of Grobina.

Cooperation with the University of Latvia, which ensures the archaeological research and popularization of the monuments included in the Grobiņa archaeological ensemble, continues. The aim is to obtain information about hitherto unregistered archaeological objects in Grobina, its surroundings and the oldest archaeological research places, which can be reflected in strengthening the historical identity of the place and educating the public, informing about unique values characterizing the place.

## V. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

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*Council of Europe Landscape Convention*

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

*F-67075 STRASBOURG, Cedex*

- Text: 1pages

- Photos:10

- Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJfrZn4FQvg>

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

*8th Session – 2022-2023*

APPLICATION FORM

NORWAY

## **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.*

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

[Council of Europe Landscape Convention / Official website \(coe.int\)](#)

\*



## I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

**1. State**

NORWAY

**Represented by**

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**2. Applicant**

Ørland Municipality

**Represented by**

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## II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJET

### 3. Name of the Project

Orland – FindingHome  
The Rusaset Project and the Austrått landscape

### 4. Location of the Project

Ørland, Trøndelag region, NORWAY

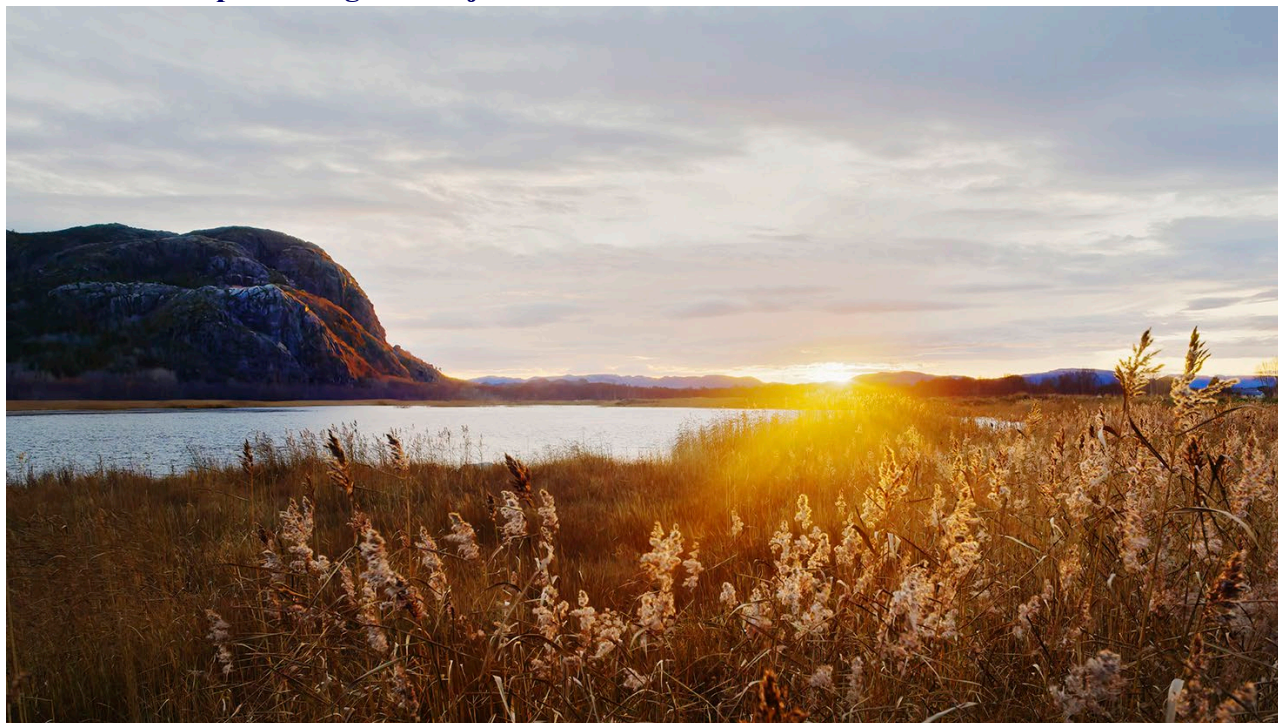
### 5. Summary of the Project

The project, which involved the rehabilitation of Rusasetvatnet lake on a site covering 24 ha. and the creation of both a habitat for birds and wildlife and an outdoor recreation area, was carried out in the period 2014–2017.

The project has resulted in several follow-up projects throughout the area referred to as the Austrått landscape, including the construction of hiking trails linking all nearby communities with the lake, along with the rehabilitation of marshes.

The project, which has opened up the landscape and made it accessible to the general public, has been carried out in close consultation with those who live in and use the area, in particular landowners.

### 6. Photo representing the Project



«Early morning by the lake»

Photo: Morten Warholm Haugen/BERRE

### 7. Website of the Project

There is no dedicated project website, but the Ørland Wetland Visitor Centre provides information about this and other projects: <https://vatmarkorland.no/> (Norwegian only)

### III. CONTENT OF THE PROJECT

8. **Start of the Project** month:  year:

9. **Partners**

10. **Financing bodies**

#### 11. Central aims of the Project

The key aims of the project were: 1) Rehabilitation of the Rusasetvatnet lake to improve the hydrotechnical conditions in the area 2) Nurturing and further development of the area's biodiversity 3) Development of the lake and surrounding land into an attractive outdoor recreation area 4) Imaginative dissemination of the area's natural and cultural history 5) Safeguarding of hunting interests in the area. All these aims have been achieved.

#### 12. Outcome

The project has resulted in the rehabilitation of a landscape for the future. A zoning plan has been prepared for the area and agreements have been entered into with landowners in order to secure public rights to use the area. The hiking trails that have been constructed are nationally protected outdoor recreation areas.

Rusasetvatnet has been part of Austrått's selected cultural agricultural landscape since 2019. It is part of the Ørland wetland system and is particularly important as it is the only fresh water in this area. The Ørland wetland system is an IPA (Important Plant Area), which is of importance for bird life and biodiversity. Extensive voluntary work has been performed and there has been a strong political will to provide significant funding for the project.

The outcome is a restored cultural landscape that is of major importance to many as a recreational area – in particular children and young people who use the area for nature-based play and outdoor education. Constructing hiking trails that bind the landscape together has given the general public access to previously inaccessible spaces. The landscape has been opened up, and extensive communication measures have been arranged to make the landscape's natural and cultural history more accessible to visitors.

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

### 13. Sustainable territorial development

All the landscape measures have contributed to an improvement in biodiversity in the Austrått landscape. The landscape now has now been designated an SCL (Selected Cultural Landscape), which forms the basis for the area management plan. This means that the local residents protect its biodiversity and cultural history, and farm the land, through both traditional and contemporary patterns of use. Support from the authorities will help ensure that these values are preserved for future generations.

The establishment of hiking trails in the area has opened up new recreational areas for the general public, which have proved popular with all age groups. This is of major importance from a public health perspective. The establishment of the new national combat aircraft base at the Ørland main air base exposed large areas of the municipality to high noise levels, which in turn created a need for new recreational areas. The measures carried out at Rusaset and in the Austrått landscape essentially addressed this challenge by facilitating the sustainable use of a landscape that was previously largely inaccessible to the general public.

### 14. Exemplary value

In a Norwegian context, this is a very large nature rehabilitation project, and many of those involved in the project have been invited to share their experiences with audiences across Norway. Ørland Municipality played an active role in the implementation of the Rusaset project in the period 2014–2017 and has been heavily involved in the management of the Austrått landscape for several decades. This has ensured broad local support, which is now being followed up through the administration of Austrått's status as a Selected Cultural Landscape (SCL).

The work has been carried out in accordance with the wishes of the local residents, and with a high degree of involvement from all affected parties. The successful creation of both a habitat to promote biodiversity and an outdoor recreation area has attracted the interest of several research communities. Many local residents have found that they can influence and help improve their local environment by contributing to the project. They feel that this engagement and the measures are effective, generating hope in a time of major challenges around the climate crisis and loss of nature.

### 15. Public participation

Neither the rehabilitation of the Rusasetvatnet lake nor the construction of the hiking trails in the Austrått landscape would have been possible without the participation and involvement of local residents. Initially, thorough planning processes were carried out, to which all local landowners were invited. Their contribution subsequently had a major impact on how the various measures were carried out.

The residents of Ørland have generally shown a great deal of interest in the project, which became increasingly positive as plans were drawn up and the outcome of the work became clear. When the rehabilitation of Rusaset was completed in 2017, as many as 700 of the municipality's 5,000 residents attended the opening ceremony. Extensive voluntary work has been performed on the various projects and there has been a strong political will to provide significant funding for the undertaking.

## 16. Awareness-raising

A wide-range of communication measures have been implemented in connection with the project. Prominent notice boards have been set up at all entrances and car parks providing information about the landscape, its history and the natural environment. Making the landscape visible and teaching people to read it were conscious aims of the project. Clearing areas to reveal cultural monuments (including old dam edges, stone walls and peat extraction sites) was one of the measures taken in this context.

Creative solutions for picnic areas and a service building contribute to a feeling of well-being and encourage visitors to stay longer in the landscape, including children and students from various educational establishments. Ørland Wetland Visitor Centre, located in Ørland Cultural Centre, is now responsible for following up the project and carries out extensive direct information activities in the local area, at the cultural centre and via the website.

## 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 in two different layouts on page view*

Orland – FindingHome\_Brochure\_Spreads

Orland – FindingHome\_Brochure\_Pages

- Photos representing the Project:

01: «Early morning by the lake» - Morten Warholm Haugen/BERRE

02: «Barley fields and the Austrått Manor» - Airphoto Fosen AS

03: «The Pyramid at Austrått» - Daniel Johansen

04: «Newly restored lake» - Airphoto Fosen AS

05: «Wetlands» - Airphoto Fosen AS

06: «Children in a snowy landscape» - Morten Warholm Haugen/BERRE

07: «Wintering Whooper Swans» - Harald Dahlby

08: «Biking trip» - Marius Rua

09: «Hiking trail at dusk» - Harald Dahlby

10: «Man and sheep by the fjord» - Morten Warholm Haugen/BERRE

- Posters: Orland – FindingHome\_Poster01

Orland – FindingHome\_Poster02

- Video: Orland - FindingHome

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

*8th Session – 2022-2023*

APPLICATION FORM

POLAND



## **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 \(coe.int\)](#)

\*



## I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

<b>1. State</b>	Poland
<b>Represented by</b>	Andrzej Szweda-Lewandowski
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<b>2. Applicant</b>	The Silesian Voivodeship – the Silesia Landscape Park Complex
<i>Name of the local, regional authority(ies) or NGO(s)</i>	
<b>Represented by</b>	Hanna Pompa – Obońska (Director of ZPKWŚ)
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<i>Telephone:</i>	(032) 267 44 82
<i>E-mail:</i>	biurozpk@zpk.com.pl

## II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJEC

3. **Name of the Project** Project no. LIFE12  
NAT/PL/000081 "Protection of the non-forest habitats in the area of Beskid's Landscape Parks" within the framework of Component I of the LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity
4. **Location of the Project** Beskid Żywiecki and Beskid Śląski, Silesian voivodeship

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

Gazing upon the expansive landscape of the Beskids we should bear in mind that its beauty is in a large part the result of work of the Wallachian shepherds who through their farming economy practices and flock tending infrastructure as well as the introduction of the flock tending traditions provided modern residents of the region with the conditions for developing a unique culture and a peculiar natural environment and who are an excellent example of the existence of a unique natural environment and human activity. However, it must be emphasized that the currently appearing semi-natural greenswards and mountain meadows require human attention and engaging in active preservation through appropriate use of these areas. The decline of the pastoral, flock tending culture largely resulting from the decrease in the demand for the products of ovine origin contributed to transformation and erosion of the natural non-forest communities. Increasing the awareness and knowledge of the local populace regarding active nature preservation and providing local residents with financial assistance present the opportunity for slowing down the process of this decline as evidenced by the already concluded LIFE+ project no. LIFE12 NAT/PL/000081 titled: "Protection of the non-forest habitats in the area of Beskid's Landscape Parks".

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



Pic. Arch. ZPKWŚ

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

<http://www.lifebeskidy.com.pl>

### 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**
- |   |
|---|
| Fundacja „Pasterstwo Transhumancyjne”, Stowarzyszenie Ekologiczno-Kulturalne, Klub Gaja, Śląski Ośrodek Doradztwa Rolniczego w Częstochowie, PGL LP Nadleśnictwo Ujsoły, Nadleśnictwo Ustroń, Nadleśnictwo Wisła, Gmina Brenna, Gmina Istebna, Gmina Ujsoły, Gmina Węgierska Górka, Gmina Radziechowy-Wieprz, Związek Podhalań Oddział Górali Śląskich, Regionalna Dyrekcja Ochrony Środowiska w Katowicach |
|---|

#### 10. **Financing bodies**

The total value of the Project was estimated at EUR 2 033 768 European Commission funds - up to 50% of the value The National Fund of Environmental Protection and Water Management - up to 45% of value ZPKWŚ own resources - up to 5% of value (in: WFOŚiGW in Katowice)
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#### 11. **Central aims of the Project**

<p>The primary goals of the project consist of preservation and complex protection of the habitats naturally valuable for the European Union through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- active protection of the mountainous Natura 2000 areas on the basis of the flock tending and pastoral economy, removing self-sown trees and bushes along with removal of biomass, mowing meadows' and greenswards' vegetation along with removal of biomass;</li><li>- regeneration of two types of natural habitats listed in the Attachment I to the Council Directive 92/43/EWG: 6230-2 West Carpathian matgrass swards and 6520 extensively used oatgrass and bentgrass mountain meadows Polygono-Trisetion and Arrhenatherion;</li><li>- covering habitats of the plants listed in Attachment II to the Council Directive 92/43/EWG with active protection: 4070* <i>Campanula serrata</i> and 4109 <i>Aconitum firmum</i>, <i>moravicum</i> subspecies;</li><li>- preservation and protection of the species of animals listed in Attachment II to the Council Directive 92/43/EWG related to the non-forest habitats: grey wolf <i>Canis lupus</i>, brown bear <i>Ursus arctos</i>, Tatra pine vole <i>Microtus tatricus</i>, capercaillie <i>Tetrao urogallus</i>, lesser spotted eagle <i>Clanga pomarina</i>, golden eagle <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>, horned owl <i>Bubo Bubo</i> and <i>Carabus variolosus</i>;</li><li>- implementing the agricultural and environmental programmes supported by the European Union in the Natura 2000 areas;</li><li>- environmental education and increasing social awareness as well as implementation of the good practices in the field of management of the Natura 2000 natural resources;</li><li>- surveillance of the natural habitats and vegetation species covered by the Project and monitoring the selected groups of animals.</li></ul>
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## 12. Outcome

Owing to taking a number of well coordinated actions in the long-term perspective implementation of the LIFE Project no. LIFE12 NAT/PL/000081 enabled restricting the succession processes and thus it significantly contributed to improving the conditions of habitats and landscape. Owing to the Project we can once again observe sheep grazing on the mountain meadows; the grazing sheep act as "natural lawnmowers" and thus contribute to improving condition of non-forest habitats and simultaneously support preservation of the traditional landscape which apart from the scenic properties such as expansive mountain skylines contains elements of the flock tending pastoral culture of the region such as the traditional regional architecture including shepherds' huts, wooden casernes and watering holes which fit in with the semi-natural character of the environmentally valuable habitats. All major actions within the Project were implemented and recognized by the European Commission as the eligible actions and the results of these actions are visible in the field. To maintain this state in the years following conclusion of the Project it was necessary to take a number of well-coordinated actions requiring involving not only the employees implementing the Project but also the local communities which made realizing all the actions possible and which were essential for reaching the environmental goals. Furthermore, the Project resulted in a number of positive changes related to biodiversity: during implementation of the Project and after its conclusion a gradual improvement of the preservation condition of the West Carpathian matgrass swards was discovered; this improvement was largely a result of the active natural environment protection actions taken under the Project. In the majority of the research areas the share of habitats in proper condition increased whereas the number of habitats in improper condition decreased. Proportionally the greatest change in the preservation state of the habitats occurred only in the second year of the Project. This indicates that implementing protection actions results in improvement of the preservation state only in the long-term perspective. In the case of the extensively used habitats of oatgrass and bentgrass mountain meadows the significant improvement in the preservation state was recorded as a result of implementation of active nature protection actions. Also in the case of these habitats the greatest change in the preservation state was discovered between the second and the third year of the Project. Presence of *Campanula Serrata* was recorded in 8 areas.

## 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?*

Flock tending was and still remains one of the more significant factors influencing the landscape and natural environment of Beskid Śląski and Beskid Żywiecki. Along with arrival of the Wallachian shepherds in this part of Beskids mountains in the XV century the existing manner of farming and the landscape in the upper regions of mountains changed significantly. The alpine tundras and the glades appearing in place of the cleared or burned forests added variety to the mountain ridges covered in forests whereas the methodical grazing of sheep contributed to enriching the species composition of the natural non-forest habitats and ensured their resilience.

The dense forest complexes of the Beskid Śląski Landscape Park and the Żywiecki Landscape Park are interspersed with the characteristic component of the local landscape - picturesque alpine tundras and glades located along mountain ridges. These alpine tundras and glades are still being used in the flock tending economy but, admittedly, not to such extent as in the past centuries; these alpine tundras and glades are not only a valuable element of the landscape appreciated by tourists due to their scenic properties but also serve as a stronghold of valuable natural habitats of numerous rare and protected species of plants. Protecting alpine tundras and glades against the decline resulting from discontinuation of flock tending operations is one of the more important tasks realized within the framework of the active protection of natural non-forest habitats and the biodiversity protection.

Mountain glades in the Beskids are an important component of the regional landscape and simultaneously serve as a backbone of biodiversity. The glades are a place where numerous rare species of plants and animals appear and their proper and efficient protection requires researching the plant habitats where these species appear and the mutual relations between them. Despite a rather uniform character of the extensive flock tending economy in the Beskids a number of diverse and interesting plant communities have developed in the glades. Numerous such communities are the so called semi-natural communities requiring constant human interference. The phrase "semi-natural" designates systems dominated by native species which, nevertheless, require a specific form of human activity such as grazing or mowing for their continued existence. Owing to this manner of economy the landscape of the Beskids enjoys unique character which constitutes the cultural heritage of the region.

#### 14. Exemplary value

*Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?  
Which are the good practices that it implemented?*

Within the framework of its actions the Project utilized adequate, cost-effective and proven techniques and methods with the characteristics of good practices. The primary actions related to active protection of habitats and species as well as to landscape protection covered the techniques until now utilized and widely recognized as proper; furthermore, these techniques were previously tested by the Beneficiaries within the framework of other projects, including other LIFE projects. As a result of work of numerous experts the actions carried out simultaneously met the individual environment-related needs of specific mountain habitats which developed in individual areas. Use of non-forest habitats proceeded consistently with the principles of traditional farming: the vegetation was mowed once in order to prepare the area for grazing, the mowed biomass was collected and moved to lawfully allowable location. The extensive sheep grazing proceeded under supervision of a scientific consultant, consistently with the grazing schedule determining the date of grazing, the approximate duration of herd's presence in the area and the maximum allowable number of animals; furthermore, the grazing schedule was adjusted to the current conditions in the field. The statements of the Beneficiaries indicate that mowing the leftover vegetation, in practice approx. 30% of the grazing areas, was necessary at the end of the grazing season in order to protect the areas against expansion of certain plant species, e.g. *Urtica dioica*. Such actions were also carried out. The self-sown trees and bushes were cleared at a date outside of the determined breeding season and under supervision of experts. Furthermore, due to the need for restricting the expansion of *Rumex alpinus* the Beneficiary indicated certain alpine tundras and glades where keeping sheep was impermissible due to sheep's influence on the process of soil fecundation. In order to minimize the damage caused by the grazing animals in the areas constituting a mosaic of habitats and wetlands the actions aimed at limiting animals' capacity for entering the restricted areas were carried out and the specially designated watering holes for sheep were established in the grazing centres. Furthermore, on the basis of the past experience and due to the recurrent periods of drought herds were provided with water in case of water shortage

## 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 LIFE project significantly contributed to improving awareness of the residents of the region concerning their role in shaping the regional landscape through various means, including involvement in actions related to traditional and extensive use of the land, and in care for the cultural heritage resulting from the pastoral and flock tending traditions; this increased awareness enabled displaying and emphasizing several traditional products related to sheep farming, e.g. regional cheese and dairy products, woollen goods and others. The Project also contributed to bolstering the structure of the community of the senior shepherds and the persons involved in traditional grazing due to establishing new relations between sheep herders from various areas through forming associations; the capabilities and benefits resulting from this manner of farming increased and this fact directly translated into improvement of the natural conditions and conservation of the landscape of the Beskids. Owing to involvement of private land owners and users in implementation of the Project (e.g. through grazing sheep, related promotion of regional products and pastoral/flock tending culture) the Project was realizing the goals of the "Europe 2020" strategy and the "Action Plan for nature, people and the economy" and thus influenced inhibition of the process of loss of biodiversity; the Project also influenced development of the ecosystem-related services, supporting the synergy with the common agricultural policy financing, including efficient use of the funds within the framework of Natura 2000 and the agriculture-environment-climate funds, and increasing awareness of the local community during workshops, training and through promotional materials. Through actions aimed at protection and preservation of the natural and cultural resources of the region the Project realized the premises of e.g. the biodiversity protection strategy, the natural environment protection programme for the Silesian voivodeship, the plans regarding protection of the Natura 2000 areas where the Project was implemented or the premises of the Framework Convention for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (the Carpathian Convention).



## 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?*

The LIFE+ Beskids Project contributed to growth of the social awareness through popularisation of the results of the conducted actions and a number of promotional and educational actions, including:

- Cooperation with various entities in the field of preparing the Project for realization. In the initial stage of the Project 20 meetings with the local community were organized in which more than 600 individuals participated. These meetings enabled presenting the premises, projected actions and results of the commencing Project among the local community;

- Project's promotional activity. A website has been established containing the information related to the Project: [www.lifebeskidy.com.pl](http://www.lifebeskidy.com.pl). Eleven information boards were set up in the areas covered with the Project. Fifteen press pieces on the subject of the Project and environmental issues were published in the local newspapers during realization of the Project.

- Promotional materials. Promotional materials were prepared for the Project. These materials consisted of: pen drives, cotton carrying bags, postcards, ball-pens, pencils, thermal mugs, t-shirts, notebooks, reflective tags, reflective bands and lanyards with engaging graphical designs depicting sheep. All materials bore the name of the Project and logos of the Beneficiaries and financing institutions;

- The information leaflet. Forty thousand copies of the information leaflet containing the information on the premises of the Project, its goals, scope of works and projected results were prepared. Furthermore, 5,000 copies of the information maps concerning actions under the Project were made. These materials were distributed during the partnership events organized within the framework of the Project and in: local bureaus, tourism institutions, mountain hostels, lodging houses, holiday farms etc.;

- Good Flock Tending Practices Manual. A manual of good flock tending practices was published with the volume of 3,000 copies in 2014 and 5,000 copies in 2017. The manual contains information on the characteristics of the Project, description of the features of the natural environment of Beskid Śląski and Beskid Żywiecki as well as the detailed information on the subject of the flock tending in the region.;

- The multimedia album. A multimedia album in the form a CD disc was published in the volume of 1000 copies at the beginning of the Project. The album demonstrates the goals and premises of the Project as well as the first stages of its implementation. In 2018 the second album was published in the form of a flash memory stick containing drone footage demonstrating the results of Project's influence in the field and depicting the folklore of the region and how the regional folklore developed owing to the infrastructure erected within the framework of the Project;

- Workshops for the local stakeholders. A series of 30 workshops in which approximately 900 individuals had participated was carried out within the framework of the Project. The workshops consisted of the stationary unit and the field unit. The workshops were open to anyone interested but children and the school youth were the most frequent recipients of this form of education;

- Actions popularising traditional flock tending. Seven flock tending events were organized within the framework of this task during which numerous exhibitions of the culture related to this traditional branch of economy were organized;

- Layman's report and the scientific report. Layman's report and the scientific report were published at the conclusion of the Project. These documents in the form of an abridged

scientific communication are to serve as a synthetic source of data on the subject of the Project, its implementation and results.

## V. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

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Council of Europe Landscape Convention  
8th Session of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe  
F-67075 STRASBOURG, Cedex*

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- 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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**COUNCIL OF EUROPE LANDSCAPE CONVENTION**  
**LANDSCAPE AWARD OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

*8th Session – 2022-2023*

APPLICATION FORM

PORTUGAL

## **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.*

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[Council of Europe Landscape Convention / Official website \(coe.int\)](#)

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## I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

<b>1. State</b>	PORTUGAL
<b>Represented by</b>	Mrs. Fernanda do Carmo
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<i>E-mail:</i>	fcarmo@dgterritorio.pt
<b>2. Applicant</b>	Municipality of Lousã
<i>Name of the local, regional authority(ies) or NGO(s)</i>	
<b>Represented by</b>	Mr. Luís Antunes
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<i>Telephone:</i>	(+351) 239990370
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## II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJET

### 3. Name of the Project

Villages of Serra da Lousã – Where Villages Sound Unique

### 4. Location of the Project

Serra da Lousã

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

The *Villages of Serra da Lousã – Where Villages Sound Unique* project consisted in recovering a mountain landscape, composed of five small traditional villages, including the recovery of their landscape in its different components, from traditional houses to endemic fauna and flora. The project began in 2002 and its implementation allowed to reverse a path of decline and abandonment, ensuring – through the adoption of planning, conservation and landscape management measures – the protection of heritage values and the revitalization of villages, giving them new purposes. Implemented by the municipality and was supported by various partners (regional entities, local associations, universities and the business sector), it is a project with a history of twenty years of work, marked by strong political and technical leadership. The typical constructions of the villages made with local materials were recovered, maintaining the characteristics of the traditional urban clusters. Access, public and circulation areas were recovered. The surrounding landscape was recovered with endemic species and, at the same time, awareness campaigns, public participation actions and landscape promotion activities were carried out. This had a strong impact on the local economy, converting a territory doomed to depopulation into a living and attractive landscape that now shows the intention of wanting to evolve toward the creation of a Protected Landscape at the Regional level, additional do the ecological value of Serra da Lousã, previously recognized in the context of Natura 2000 Network (Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 76/2000, of July 5th). This project is part of a policy of sustainable development based on a “balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment” (European Landscape Convention).

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



Author: Municipality of Lousã

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

<https://cm-lousa.pt/turismo/o-que-visitar/aldeias/>

### 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**

**Education, Research and Development Entities**

University of Coimbra  
University of Aveiro  
Coimbra Agriculture School

**Regional Entities**

Intermunicipal Community of Coimbra Region  
Tourism Centre of Portugal  
ADXTUR- Agência para o Desenvolvimento Turístico das Aldeias do Xisto

**Local Organisations**

Activar – Associação de Cooperação da Lousã  
DUECEIRA – Associação de Desenvolvimento do Ceira e Dueça  
Montanha Clube  
A.C.M.C – Associação de Convívio e Melhoramentos do Candal  
Associação de Recuperação do Talasnal – A.R.T.  
Associação de Recuperação do Casal Novo  
Association CVAC – Cerdeira Village Art & Craft

**Business sector**

Enjoy Adventure, Lda.  
Turislousã – Desporto Aventura, Lda.  
Naturelousã – Turismo e Aventura Unipessoal, Lda  
Veado Verde / Green Deer  
Paradigmo  
BLUEMOTION  
Tour In Village – Serra da Lousã  
Cerdeira Home for Creativity  
Among other companies (55 local housing units)



## 10. Financing bodies

Municipality of Lousã  
Regional Coordination and Development Commission of the Centre  
Ministry of Agriculture and Food  
Ministry of Environment and Climate Action  
European Commission (FEEL)  
Private Entities

The investment made between 2002 and 2022 is estimated to be around EUR 3.5 million, distributed by the following investment field: built heritage and infrastructures (road network, water supply, sanitation and electrification) and natural heritage (reforestation, recovery of faunistic species, self-protection measures, structural prevention actions concerning rural fire management).

## 11. Central aims of the Project

The Project aimed at the following objectives:

- Recover and revitalize the architectural, landscape and cultural heritage of the Schist; Villages of Serra da Lousã;
- Reverse the path of decline and abandonment of villages and give them a new dynamics of sustainability;
- Support the local economy and promote job creation;
- Preserve and improve the environmental quality of Serra da Lousã;
- Disseminate the landscape of the villages and its heritage;
- Safeguard and the enhance the tangible and intangible heritage of the landscape of Serra da Lousã;
- Preserve, recover and enhance the native fauna and flora;
- Promote the experience of the villages of Serra da Lousã, giving them new purposes that are up-to-date and have sustainable projection in the future ahead;
- Attract and involve local population, tourists and visitors.

## 12. Outcome

The following results can be identified from the implementation of the project:

### **Built Heritage**

- Restoration of the buildings (buildings and corrals) of the five mountain villages (Candal, Casal Novo, Cerdeira, Chiqueiro and Talasnal);

### **Nature Conservation**

- Revival of habitats with increased numbers of native animal species, some of which with protection status (red deer, which has been in extinction since the 19th century), roe deer, boar, fox, weasel, genet, rabbit, hare and otter;
- Growth of the forest area of Serra da Lousã populated by endemic species with emphasis on native foliage species (Portuguese oak, cork oak, chestnut tree, strawberry tree and several fragrant plants);
- Hunting activity management;
- Execution of the project “Área integrada de gestão da paisagem da Serra da Lousã”

(Integrated landscape management area of Serra da Lousã), intended to promote the valorisation of the territory through the landscape and the economic revitalisation of the low density forest territories, making them more resilient to risk, namely fire.

### **Appreciation and Valorisation of the Landscape**

- Creation of the “Marca Aldeias do Xisto” brand (Schist Villages Brand) as high quality landscape for visitors and new residents;
- Classification of villages in 2015 as “Conjuntos de Interesse Municipal” (Municipal Interest Sets)
- Average number of visitors between 2019 and 2022: 40,000 visitors.

### **Mobility**

- 70 km of approved, signposted walking routes, including identification, information and educational signs;
- 14,8 km of access routes to the villages restored through the public investment;
- 50 km of signposted cycling routes;
- Provision of electric car chargers in the parking area of the village of Cerdeira.

### **Raising Awareness**

- Creation of a dynamic landscape experience, with regular programmes of cultural activities centred on the values of heritage, the identity of the territory, and traditional habits and customs;
- Number of events and participants, per year, in the different social, cultural, religious and sports activities: 100 events / 15.000 participants;
- Promotion of Training Activities and Workshops such as Basketry with Vegetable Fibres; Chestnut Woodwork; Pottery Wheel Starter Course; Introduction to Natural Cosmetics and Handmade Soap Workshop;
- Holding Cultural Events according to the annual calendar such as Christmas at Candal, Fado at Talasnal; Fado at Candal; Schist Sounds; Xjazz – Jazz meetings in the Schist Villages; Seasonal Festival – Mother Nature Cycles;
- Promotion of Exhibitions of different types such as “Elements on the loose”, “Make a Kite”, “Uses of water in Serra da Lousã”;
- Food Promotion Actions such as Chanfana Gastronomy Festival; Craft Beer Festival; Meeting of Masters and Chefs – Ceramics and Gastronomic Experiences;
- Religious pilgrimages undertaken to enhance self-esteem and identity of the population;
- Creation of the brand «Isto é Lousã» (This is Lousã) by a group of young people from the municipality of Lousã;
- Holding of international sports events such as The European Downhill Championship, the Vodafone Rally of Portugal and the SkyRace (Trail) World Cup;
- Villages hosting of events of great national importance such as National Trail Championships; National Enduro Championships; Volta a Portugal (Tour of Portugal); National Paragliding Championships;
- Holding of leisure events such as motorcycle, bicycle and walking tours.

### **Economic Development**

- Revitalisation of the local economy with the emergence of 7 companies / associations in cultural and tourist activities;
- Creation of 50 new jobs, which bring sports activities, organized hikes, bike treks and other activities related to nature tourism (Geocaching, Birdwatching and Paragliding);
- Installation of catering and bar services and opening of accommodation units in schist houses (Candal – 12; Casal Novo – 5; Cerdeira – 6; Chiqueiro – 4; Talasnal – 29);

**Circular Economy**

- Promotion of the project “Aldeias Resíduos Zero” (Zero Waste Villages) that aims to valorise solid urban waste. Taking into account the type of residents and visitors population, bilingual awareness actions on composting and reuse of waste were developed.

## 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?*

#### **Integrating the Project in a Sustainable Development Policy**

The implementation of this Project is part of a municipal policy to promote the sustainable development of this region. This policy jointly outlined several measures, including the Intervention Plan called “Planos de Aldeia” (Village Plans), which served as the basis for this application and involved the revival of five schist villages (the Candal, Casal Novo, Cerdeira, Chiqueiro and Talasnal villages).

The same policy includes a wider universe of other Plans/Programms, namely: the *Programa de educação ambiental para o desenvolvimento sustentável da Serra da Lousã* (Environmental education programme for the sustainable development of the Serra da Lousã); the Creation of the *Agência para o desenvolvimento da Serra da Lousã* (Agency for the Development of Serra da Lousã); the *Programa Aldeia Segura, Pessoas Seguras* (Safe Village, Safe People Program) and the *Programa para Controlo/Erradicação da Flora Exótica Invasora para a Conservação de Habitats* (Control/Eradication of Invasive Alien Flora for Habitat Conservation).

The initiatives developed in these villages fall within the sustainable development strategy adopted by this Municipality, which incorporates the 17 objectives of the United Nations (UN) Resolution, published on January 1st, 2016, and intends to meet tourism demand and the reasonable and rational use of natural resources and the preservation of natural ecosystems. This strategy also includes the implementation of environmental education programs for sustainable development, the inclusion of environmental concerns in municipal policies, the development of local sustainability indicators and the implementation of the Agenda XXI Local.

#### **Enhancement of environmental, social, economic, cultural or aesthetic values of the landscape**

*The Schist Villages* of Serra da Lousã due to the implementation of this project – are now recognised and preserved as heritage of great value and scenic interest. Due to the implementation of the project these villages were classified, by Regulatory Decree, as “Conjuntos de Interesse Municipal” (Municipal Interest Sets). The project drew attention to the environmental values of the mountain landscape, enabling the recovery of habitats, but also raised awareness of the culture underlying the villages buildings, true examples of popular architecture.

The project also brought to light the ancestral past of its original inhabitants, their way of life, customs, culture and local traditions, values that today are the object of craft stalls, exhibitions and workshops. The restoration of the built heritage respects the original materials and techniques preserving that memory. The program and cultural activities allow visitors and new residents to learn about local traditions.

The quality objectives of the landscape were achieved (see field 12. Outcome).

#### **Posed a remedy to any pre-existing environmental damage**

The project reversed the trend of decline and abandonment to which the villages were condemned, with many of the dwellings in advanced state of degradation. The villages, which

were becoming abandoned, gained a new lease of life. The landscape has been recovered while maintaining its original aesthetic. The local economy that was in decline was recovered. The natural space surrounding this network of villages is part of the Natura 2000 Network, Sítio de Interesse Comunitário Serra da Lousã, PTCO0060 (Serra da Lousã Community Interest Site) which covers territories classified as Special Areas of Conservation (Zonas Especiais de Conservação, ZEC) and Special Protection Areas (Zonas de Proteção Especial, ZPE).

Despite the potential of this territory to rural fires, there are no records of large rural fires in Serra da Lousã, since 1998.

The improvement in environment and landscape quality and the successful sustainable development of the territory due to the implementation of this project led the municipality to propose to the Government the classification of this territory as a Protected Landscape at the regional level. This initiative, which starts from the local level, meets the European policy targets for 2030 in the field of nature conservation and biodiversity, doing so by revitalizing a landscape that was in decline.

#### 14. Exemplary value

*Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?*

*Which are the good practices that it implemented?*

##### **Exemplary value**

The project Villages of Serra da Lousã – Where Villages Sound Unique is a success story that has been replicated in other territories.

The interest in improving the mountain villages of Lousã, as part of the framework and with the participation of the owners and inhabitants, began in the late 80s, with the exhaustive diagnosis of the existing situation and with the definition of the courses of action to develop. The proposed interventions for the revival and preservation of the villages and surrounding areas considered the following guidelines: i) preserving the architectural features of the villages; (ii) creating and reinforcing basic infrastructure (water, sanitation, communications and electricity); (iii) paving existing roads and building new roads, in order to facilitate the connection between places; (iv) preserving local fauna and flora; (v) marking hunting areas; (vi) promoting sports support infrastructures.

Started in 2002, the project aimed at these five villages was pioneering in the revival of mountain landscapes with dwellings made exclusively from materials that could be obtained on site, such as stone (schist) and chestnut or oak wood. The landscape planning and management, along with the restoration of the heritage, improved the aesthetic and environmental quality of these places. The intangible cultural heritage has been an object of interest and study, and we are witnessing today the promotion of cultural tourism and ecotourism, revitalising the villages and supporting the local economy and job creation. This model of revitalisation was later adopted in other villages, resulting in the creation of *Rede das Aldeias de Xisto* (Schist Villages Network), which now includes a total of 27 villages (<https://www.aldeiasdoxisto.pt/en/villages/territory/>), spread across different territories, four of them inserted into classified areas. Many of these sites were abandoned, with no strategy or policy aimed at revitalising them. Pioneering and innovative, the project submitted in this application has already been replicated in many places. It is an inspiring example whose management model can provide a reference for other degraded, abandoned and devitalised landscapes. Its implementation generated know-how about the rehabilitation of the built heritage of schist villages that is now used in other contexts and locations.

##### **Good practices that it implemented**

There are several initiatives included in the development strategy and that constitute a set of best practices, from which the following stand out:

- Recovering housing buildings and corrals using original materials and preserving the original architecture and plan, still using traditional techniques;
- Restoring buildings and structures of great documentary value (mills and schools), converting

them into spaces of cultural interest and village activity (regional product shops, support point for sports activities, hosting space for people and entities that carry out activities in Serra da Lousã and in the region);

- Restoring village paths and public spaces using original materials;
- Involvement and awareness-raising actions among residents through their respective associations, created in the meantime, with a view to restoring the building, and promoting and enhancing the village;
- Organising sports, recreational and cultural events, at the local, regional, national and international level, only possible due to the unique characteristics of the landscape;
- Marketing and communication actions to disseminate the history, and the heritage, cultural and religious value of the villages;
- Reviving the native forest through the planting of endemic species;
- Awareness-raising for the recovery of urban solid waste – The “Zero Waste Villages” project was pioneering in Portugal, since Lousã was the first municipality to apply the integrated concept “Zero Waste” in a schist village;
- Boosting and promotion of environmental awareness actions directed to the school community, involving local associations (seed collection and consequent creation of nurseries and keepers; reforestation; cleaning of walking paths).

## 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?*

### **Public participation in the decision-making process**

The interest in improving the mountain villages of Lousã, as part of the framework counted on the participation of the owners and inhabitants from the beginning, who supported the municipal executive board by completing an exhaustive diagnosis of the existing situation and defining the main courses of action to be developed. These movements aimed at creating a project for the villages began in the late 80s. Currently, regarding the proposed interventions for the revival and preservation of the villages and surrounding areas, the owners and residents agreed the following guidelines with the executive board: i) preserving the architectural features of the villages; (ii) creating and reinforcing basic infrastructure (water, sanitation, communications and electricity); (iii) paving existing roads and building new roads, in order to facilitate the connection between places; (iv) preserving local fauna and flora; (v) marking hunting areas; vi) promoting sports support infrastructures. The Village Plans were approved and obtained financing for their implementation, integrating even more elements, particularly with regard to the enhancement of intangible heritage and cultural dynamism. Public participation was decisive for the success of the project.

The municipality of Lousã, as managing entity of the Urban Rehabilitation Strategy of Villages, promoted this project, through awareness-raising actions among local populations and agents, highlighting the importance of the restoration of this landscape for local economic development, the advantages of the restoration process of the built heritage for the quality of life and well-being of the populations and visitors to the villages. In addition to these awareness-raising actions that encouraged the populations to participate, incentives were given to urban restoration of a technical-administrative, financial and fiscal nature. As a result of this involvement, it was possible for the owners to adhere to the rehabilitation and revitalisation measures of this territory. The restoration of the villages also brought new residents (domestic and foreign), some of the houses were sold for second housing, other serve as accommodation for tourists, with a balanced diversity that allows the villages to be endowed with life and guarantee the economic sustainability of these territories.

Meanwhile, the residents of the villages organised resident associations with the purpose of defending landscape interests, implementing and proposing actions to preserve the cultural and natural heritage and alerting the municipal authorities to possible abusive practices.

The dynamics around the villages, at the social, environmental, cultural, religious and sporting level continues to deserve the interest and participation of permanent and temporary residents, owners, tourist agents, but also of the entire population of the municipality of Lousã. The villages are an excellent asset to preserve space to identify with the rural and local history.

#### **Alignment with the wider policies implemented by national, regional or local authorities**

The project is aligned with the intermunicipal strategy promoted by the Intermunicipal Community that this municipality is part of, called Agenda XXI local. This strategy, which in addition to the municipality of Lousã comprises 13 other municipalities, is built upon a participatory and dynamic process that aims to promote the sustainable development of the intermunicipal territory, through shared management actions that guarantee a sustainable future for that landscape.

The project is part of the Strategic Plan “Lousã Horizonte 2031”, which identifies as a strategic vision for the 2031 horizon to “Qualify the territory, Empower resources, Create opportunities and Mobilize networks”, recognising its dimension as “Lousã sustainable territory, of environmental reference for the enhancement of resources and the natural framework.”

#### **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?*

#### **Increasing Public Awareness**

It is understood that over time, the implementation of this project has been significantly contributing to awareness of the value of the landscape of Serra da Lousã, both in terms of the appreciation of its built heritage, as well as in the cultural issues, knowledge and appreciation of local traditions, as well as the natural heritage.

Much of this increasing awareness is owed to the activities developed by local associations and by the Municipality of Lousã that have been developing cultural programmes and implementing different activities, widely disseminating the culture of Serra da Lousã, its traditions, local products, gastronomy and crafts, from which the following stand out:

- Creation of a dynamic landscape experience, with regular programmes of cultural activities centred on the values of heritage, the identity of the territory, the traditional habits and customs;
- Promotion of Training Activities and Workshops such as Basketry with Vegetable Fibres; Chestnut Woodwork; Pottery Wheel Starter Course; Introduction to Natural Cosmetics and Handmade Soap Workshop;
- Holding Cultural Events according to the annual calendar such as Christmas at Candal, Fado at Talasnal; Fado at Candal; Schist Sounds; Xjazz – Jazz meetings in the Schist Villages; Seasonal Festival – Mother Nature Cycles;
- Promotion of Exhibitions of different types such as “Elements on the loose”, “Make a Kite”, “Uses of water in Serra da Lousã”;
- Food Promotion Actions such as Chanfana Gastronomy Festival; Craft Beer Festival; Meeting of Masters and *Chefs* – Ceramics and Gastronomic Experiences;
- Religious pilgrimages undertaken to enhance the identity and self-esteem of the population.

The activities referred to are part of a much wider and more comprehensive annual program of about 100 events, with an estimated participation of about 15,000 people per year.

The pedestrian and clickable routes networks totalling 120 km ensure safe access to the Serra



landscape, exposing its native flora and fauna. This landscape and intangible heritage is now the object of study in Universities and has a great recognition on a national context.

All these aspects contributed to the consolidation of the identity of the villages, to the recognition and identification with the territory by its residents who organise in associations and promote activities.

The increasing awareness of the importance of this landscape allowed to create conditions for the development of a proposal that aims to give this territory the classification of protected landscape, with the inclusion of Serra da Lousã in the National Network of Protected Areas, which will allow it to further reinforce the protection of its natural values.

## 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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**COUNCIL OF EUROPE LANDSCAPE CONVENTION**  
**LANDSCAPE AWARD OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

*8th Session – 2022-2023*

APPLICATION FORM

SLOVAKIA

## **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 \(coe.int\)](#)

\*

## I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

<b>1. State</b>	Slovak Republic
<b>Represented by</b>	Mrs. Michaela Seifertová Mrs. Ida Vanáková
<i>Address:</i>	Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic Námestie Ľ. Štúra 1 812 35 Bratislava Slovak Republic
<i>Telephone:</i>	00421 259 562 201 00421 259 562 476
<i>E-mail:</i>	<a href="mailto:Michaela.Seifertova@enviro.gov.sk">Michaela.Seifertova@enviro.gov.sk</a> <a href="mailto:Ida.Vanakova@enviro.gov.sk">Ida.Vanakova@enviro.gov.sk</a>
<b>2. Applicant</b>	Municipality of Bojná
<i>Name of the local, regional authority(ies) or NGO(s)</i>	
<b>Represented by</b>	Mr. Jozef Stankovský, mayor
<i>Address:</i>	Municipal Office: Obecný úrad Bojná č.201 956 01 Bojná Slovakia
<i>Telephone:</i>	00421 911 231 924
<i>E-mail:</i>	<a href="mailto:starosta@bojna.sk">starosta@bojna.sk</a> <a href="mailto:jstankovsky@gmail.com">jstankovsky@gmail.com</a>

## 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](http://www.bojna.sk)  
[www.hradiskovaly.sk](http://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](http://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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**COUNCIL OF EUROPE LANDSCAPE CONVENTION**  
**LANDSCAPE AWARD OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

*8th Session – 2022-2023*

APPLICATION FORM

SLOVENIA

## **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 \(coe.int\)](#)

\*

## I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

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<b>2. Applicant</b>	Društvo krajinskih arhitektov Slovenije (Slovenian Association of Landscape Architects), CIPRA Slovenija, društvo za varstvo Alp (CIPRA Slovenia, Association for Protection of the Alps), IPoP – Inštitut za politike prostora (IPoP – Institute for Spatial Policies)
<i>Name of the local, regional authority(ies) or NGO(s)</i>	
<b>Represented by</b>	Ms Jana Kozamernik
<i>Address:</i>	Društvo krajinskih arhitektov Slovenije (Slovenian Association of Landscape Architects) Jamnikarjeva ulica 101, 1000 Ljubljana
<i>Telephone:</i>	+386 51 317486
<i>E-mail:</i>	info@dkas.si



## II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJCT

### 3. Name of the Project

Protection and Development of the Slovenian Landscape:  
Starting points for drafting the Landscape Policy

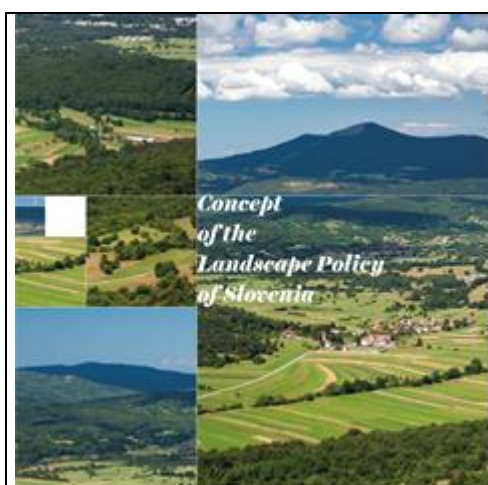
### 4. Location of the Project

Slovenia

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

With the European Landscape Convention, the Council of Europe wanted to provide an instrument that would enable uniform protection, planning and management of all European landscapes. In Slovenia, the Convention has been in force since 2004, but we have not yet adopted the Landscape Policy that would operationalize it. With the project Protection and development of Slovenian Landscape: Starting points for drafting the Landscape Policy, we initiated an inclusive process of preparing solutions for the comprehensive protection, planning and management of the landscape as a basis for the subsequent preparation of the Landscape Policy of Slovenia. We developed our findings and solutions gradually through professional analytical work and inclusively through wide stakeholder cooperation, which enabled discussion and exchange of opinions outside professional circles. We combined them into common starting points and the concept for the preparation of the Landscape Policy, which will ensure that the protection, management and planning of the landscape will be more comprehensive and coherent.

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



Authors:  
Luka Vidic (photo)  
Roman Ražman (design)

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

<http://www.krajinskapolitika.si/>

### 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**

10. **Financing bodies**

#### 11. Central aims of the Project

##### **Project description**

The purpose of the project was to draw the attention to the speedy reduction in the quality and development value of the Slovenian landscape as a common development resource and to initiate an inclusive and integrative process of preparing expert starting points for an integrated approach to landscape protection, planning and management, which will represent the basis for the subsequent preparation of the Landscape Policy of Slovenia.

The project is a response to warnings that care for the protection and development of the landscape in the spatial planning processes in Slovenia are disconnected and insufficiently effective. In the area, we are witnessing the gradual degradation of quality and the reduction of the development value of the Slovenian landscape. Both public and private interest holders are becoming more and more aware of the landscape management problems, but they are unable to adequately address the challenges of landscape protection and development with the existing spatial planning mechanisms. The signs and consequences of uncoordinated functioning of various departments/sectors and other actors at different levels can be perceived both in the landscape and in management processes.

The project will connect individual findings and knowledge about space conditions and landscape management and will, based on the assessment of the situation, form the platform for the Landscape Policy to ensure that the protection, management and planning of the landscape in Slovenia will become more comprehensive and coherent. An important component of the project will be the work process itself, which envisages that public interest holders at national, regional and local levels, as well as the interested local and general public, will be actively involved in the assessment of the current situation and the preparation of the starting points for the Landscape Policy of Slovenia.

##### **Purpose: to ensure a comprehensive and coherent landscape management**

The project work was aimed at the interdisciplinary professional, general and political

public, as a preparation for the adoption of the Landscape Policy and for the assumption of their roles and tasks in the implementation of the action plan measures. The purpose of the project was to address the institutionalized and wider professional public and to involve them with innovative work methods into the process of presenting the problems and finding solutions that the adoption of the Landscape Policy will bring into practice; and at the same time to involve the local and general public in the process and to promote the European Convention on Landscape, and thus to create the necessary level of understanding among the spatial planning actors, to develop a common language of landscape protection and development, and to establish solid starting conditions for cooperation in further work and decision-making processes.

**Aims: professional, participative, integrated**

1. To provide the necessary scientific basis for the drafting and implementing of the Landscape Policy of Slovenia.
2. To establish a broad professional alliance for the subsequent preparation, adoption and implementation of the Landscape Policy.
3. To ensure understanding of landscape management issues among the general professional public and among those responsible for spatial planning.
4. To promote the importance of the protection and development of the Slovenian landscape and the European Landscape Convention among the general public and decision-makers.

## **12. Outcome**

The project achieved its goals with an innovative work method and a competent implementation partnership. In addition to classical study analyses, the essential contribution in the process of preparing the project's professional starting points were the findings obtained through the inclusion of a focus group, workshops and consultations with the wider interested public, as well as an active exchange of opinions between representatives of various departments and representatives of local communities.

The process of preparing the starting points for the landscape policy was guided by an interdisciplinary focus group consisting of representatives of the departments for spatial planning, environment, nature conservation, agriculture, cultural heritage protection and tourism at the national level. Thematic workshops carried out in the authentic environment of four characteristic landscape areas ensured the flow and exchange of opinions and information as well as cooperation between the leaders of spatial planning from the listed domains and the interdisciplinary professional public, and representatives of local communities.

The online portal is intended for communication support for the content promotion of the landscape and for raising awareness of the importance of landscape and its role in the landscape protection and development. It will stimulate the general public's interest in the landscape and provide additional necessary conditions for the adoption of the Landscape Policy, and for an effective landscape management, and thus for the implementation of the provisions of the European Landscape Convention.

The outcomes of the project are:

- The analysis of existing status of landscape protection, planning and management in Slovenia, aimed at obtaining arguments and starting points for the preparation of the Landscape Policy;
- The Analysis of foreign examples of landscape policies;
- The Concept of the Landscape Policy of Slovenia as the first step towards the subsequent

drafting of the Landscape Policy text;

- A set of objectives and measures for the first phase of the implementation of the Landscape Policy, which will add to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention in Slovenia;
- An online portal dedicated to the promotion of the European Landscape Convention, Slovenian landscapes and communication support for the subsequent preparation and adoption of the Landscape Policy of Slovenia.
- Video contents aimed at promoting the European Landscape Convention and raising awareness of the diversity of the landscape in Slovenia.

#### 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 addresses landscape policy as an integral part of a comprehensive sustainable development policy. The state of the landscape and challenges of the future, such as ensuring a quality living environment, preserving the cultural and natural landscape, strengthening national identity, adapting to climate change, reducing the threat of natural and other disasters, increasing food self-sufficiency, the use of renewable energy sources, developing sustainable tourism, and implementing green infrastructure, all require coordinated landscape protection, planning and management under the auspices of landscape policy.

Landscape policy refers to all dimensions of the landscape, its environmental, social, economic, cultural and aesthetic values. The landscape policy is an exhaustively organised, formally adopted and established method of comprehensive, integrated and inclusive landscape protection, planning and management. Its implementation will provide the conditions for the long-term development of landscape, coherent in all respects, by integrating and harmonising the expectations, objectives and measures of different fields and stakeholders, and enabling us to develop the landscape as a common development resource and heritage, as well as an important element of personal and national identity.

The project is also a response to the state of the Slovenian landscape, which has changed considerably over the past few decades, mostly as a result of settlement, which impacts the landscape in various ways, and due to large infrastructure facilities, changes in farming methods and overgrowth of the landscape. The analysis of Slovenian practice reveals that spatial planning documents address landscape (in terms of content, scope and quality) very differently, and above all deficiently. Given the current situation and practice in Slovenia, it is believed that key improvements and a comprehensive and more effective landscape protection, planning and management practice is urgently needed. It has therefore been proposed that the Landscape Policy of Slovenia should be adopted as a uniform operational document, which will strategically and systematically regulate landscape protection planning and management issues, serve as a common guide for formulating legal and other solutions, require interconnection and cooperation, substantiate, explain, point to solutions and direct action related to landscape. By adopting the Landscape Policy of Slovenia, we shall gain a

fundamental instrument and a system of action in the field of landscape protection, planning and management, which will be binding on Slovenian society as a whole, Slovenia as a state, the National Assembly, the government, ministerial departments, local communities and the profession, educational institutions, the media and all citizens.

Policy objective is to prevent further degradation of the landscape and preserve its identity, attractiveness and potential for competitive development and the quality of living by planning the spatial development in the landscape based on landscape evaluation and impact assessment, paying special attention to rural development and maintenance of cultural landscapes, conservation of the natural landscape, limiting and directing the typology of dispersed settlement, and sanctioning illegal encroachments on space.

#### **14. Exemplary value**

*Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?*

*Which are the good practices that it implemented?*

The project can be an example for actions at the national level in the formulation of similar policies and for countries in the wider region (countries with a similar historical background of spatial planning and problems) that do not yet have this type of policy. It brings, or at least promises, progress in the field of intersectoral action in the field of landscape management and public involvement.

The first good practice is the method of preparation. The concept of the Landscape Policy of Slovenia was being developed gradually through the analytical work of a broad working group of experts, and in cooperation with numerous participants of interministerial and thematic workshops, as well as workshops for the general public (see chapter 15). Implement action of the project was monitored by an interministerial focus group composed of representatives of ministries which are traditionally linked to landscape; namely, those for spatial planning, environmental protection, agriculture, preservation of the natural and cultural heritage, and tourism. The cross-sectoral structure of the working groups has proven highly successful, as it has allowed for a broad and in-depth exchange of views, predominantly on how to establish a more effective system for collaboration at all levels of planning, development programmes, and measure implementation aimed towards facilitating positive effects in the environment.

Another good practice is systemic and integrative thinking. The concept of the Landscape Policy addresses landscape as a whole, thus going beyond the current sectoral approach, and in this way, establish the principle that all landscapes count. It is formulated as a commitment and modus operandi of the entire Slovenian society, and as a framework for the constructive collaboration of all stakeholders in landscape protection, planning and management. The policy as such, does not seek to redistribute and delimit the powers to narrow professional circles, nor does it offer just a handful of ad hoc objectives and measures, but brings systemic solutions leading to comprehensive measures and synergistic effects.

#### **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 actively encourages public participation regarding both the process and the contents. The concept of the Landscape Policy of Slovenia was being developed gradually both through analytical work and through public participation. Numerous experts participated



in the interministerial and thematic workshops, as well as in workshops for the general public and for the representatives of local communities. As part of the project, workshops for the general public, called “Let's talk about landscape – together” were organised, providing opportunities for discussing the issues and exchanging views also outside the professional circles. The response of the participants was very satisfactory, so the workshops regarding both the process and the contents proved to be examples of good practice and for the definition of common goals and measures in the planning and management of the landscape on all the levels – strategic documents, action plans, spatial plans and management programmes.

The raise of awareness of importance of the landscape for more inclusive society was one of the goals of the Landscape Policy, above all with promotion of education, awareness raising and public participation in the processes of landscape management. The concept of the Landscape Policy provides the measures of promotion of good practices on one side and of exposing bad practices on the other, the measures of promotion of articles and publication, public participation in decision-making processes and also the activities of NGOs that act professionally and responsibly in the field of planning, protecting and management of landscape.

The project is a part of broader efforts for sustainable development on the national, regional and local level in Slovenia. As a distinctly cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary project, it was created taking into account the Agricultural Policy of Slovenia, the Tourism Development Strategy and other sectoral development documents. The Landscape Policy is conceptualized as a substantive and semantic parallel of the Spatial Policy of Slovenia and of the Architectural Policy of Slovenia (adopted in 2017). It is in line of the Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia, which is being prepared at the same time. The concept of the Landscape Policy of Slovenia implements the obligations that come from the European Landscape Convention and enables more efficient achieving of the goals entitling nowadays issues, concerning the consequences of climate changes protection of agricultural land, water management, usage of renewable sources of energy, preservation of spatial identity, etc.

#### **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?*

Systematic approach for raising public awareness was established in the project. Public awareness regarding the importance of landscape was one of the main purposes and goals of the project. In the 2-year process of preparation of the Concept of Landscape Policy the statements on existing condition, problems and opportunities of Slovenian landscape as well as the examples of good practices from other countries were presented to general public. All the workshops proved that the landscape represents a core value for people, and touches them on an emotional and an identity level (landscape as one of the most important elements of national identity) as well as from an economic point of view (landscape as a natural source and an economic category). The findings and the demands of the experts served as the project's baseline and were confirmed. They stated that clear common objectives and criteria for the protection and better management of the landscape as well as for better system of intersectoral coordination should be formulated at the state level, and that good practices must start being developed and Landscape Policy measures constantly enforced.

Next to the workshops and a round table entitled “Slovenia – still my country?“, by which the discussions in professional circles and in general public were initiated, the new web-site [www.krajinskapolitika.si](http://www.krajinskapolitika.si) was established with the purpose to raise the public's awareness.

Thus, for the first time in Slovenia, all the material, information, professional bases and documents relevant for the landscape were gathered. One of the important outcomes of the project was the exhibition named “Landscape. Yesterday. Today? Tomorrow!” which, after the conclusion of the project, travelled through many Slovenian towns. In the course of the project many articles were published in media talking about the workshops. In addition, within the two “Months of Landscape Architecture” (April 2018 and 2019) many events were organised which promoted the efforts for the implementation of the Landscape Policy and enhanced the awareness on the importance of landscape. After the conclusion of the project a conference titled “Landscape Policy of Slovenia” was organised and the brochure entitled “The Concept of the Landscape Policy of Slovenia” was published in Slovenian and in English language which presented all the most relevant issues.

## 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).*

\*





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

*8<sup>e</sup> Session - 2022-2023*

APPLICATION FORM

SWITZERLAND

## **Presentation**

*The Council of Europe Landscape Convention is the first international treaty devoted exclusively to 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. Resolution [CM/Res\(2008\)3](#) on the rules governing the Council of Europe Landscape Award, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008 at the 1018<sup>e</sup> 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.***

\*

*Please note that :*

- participation in the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe is open only 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 taken into consideration.*

*For more details, see the Council of Europe's Landscape Award website at the following address:*

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

\*

## I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

<b>1. Status</b>	Switzerland
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<i>Email :</i>	<a href="mailto:gilles.rudaz@bafu.admin.ch">gilles.rudaz@bafu.admin.ch</a>
<b>2. Candidate</b>	Association du Musée valaisan des Bisses (AMVB) & Association des Bisses du Valais (ABV)
<i>Name of local or regional authority(ies) or NGO(s)</i>	
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<i>E-mail:</i>	<a href="mailto:gaetan.morard@musee-des-bisses.ch">gaetan.morard@musee-des-bisses.ch</a>

## II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT

### 3. Name of the Project

Landscapes irrigated by traditional Valais irrigation channels (bisses)

### 4. Location of the Project

Canton of Valais, Switzerland

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

Since the Middle Ages, the inhabitants of the canton of Valais have had to face problems of water management (shortages or excesses). These problems gave rise to the Valais bisses, the traditional irrigation channels used to bring water from the glaciers to the hillsides.

With over 600 years of history, the bisses have become a symbol of Valais heritage, still used to irrigate 75% of the Canton's agricultural land. In addition to their agricultural function, the bisses have many other uses: tourism, environmental, heritage, energy... They represent the multifunctionality of water resources and their multiple use by a wide range of stakeholders.

The bisses are both technical elements in the landscape with water reservoirs, distribution channels, meadows and irrigation systems, and social elements, with communities passing on age-old skills, some of which have changed little since the Middle Ages.

In the 21<sup>e</sup> century, the bisses are a source of hope and fear in the face of climate change. The consortia system and the know-how associated with traditional irrigation deserve special attention and protection. In addition to the application for inclusion in UNESCO's Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage (due to be submitted by the end of 2023), recognition as a Landscape of the Year would make it possible to raise awareness of the issues underlying the Bisses and the magnificent landscapes that stem from this history, and to encourage their protection and transmission to a wider audience.

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



*Bisse d'Heido - photo: Armand Dussex*

7. **Project website** (*if available*)

<https://bisses-valais.ch>

### III. CONTENT OF THE PROJECT

#### 8. Start of the Project

*The project must have been completed at least three years previously*

year

From the Middle Ages to the present day

#### 9. Partners

Consortia active in the Canton  
Swiss Foundation for Landscape Conservation (SL-FP)

#### 10. Financing bodies

Canton of Valais, Office for Structural Improvements  
Communes and bourgeoisies (around 100 communes are more or less involved)  
Local authorities

#### 11. Central aims of the Project

The Valais bisses and irrigated landscapes fulfil five functions:

##### Agriculture

With almost 200 canals recognised as being of agricultural use, the Valais bisses irrigate the majority of the canton's cultivated land (75%). Principally for vineyards, meadows, orchards and cereal crops, water from the bisses has contributed to the agricultural prosperity of the Valais for over 600 years. The climate of the Valais and its topography dictate this, with plenty of sunshine, foehn winds, water reserves in the form of ice in winter and very little rainfall in summer. As a result, the Valais is one of the only places in Switzerland that waters its vineyards. Without the bisses, the meadows would have remained yellow, the cows thin and the canton would have no cheese, and therefore no raclette, the symbol of Valais identity! Irrigation since the Middle Ages has enabled rural economic development in mountain regions. In some cases, traditional irrigation is still practised (by run-off), in others by sprinkling and the vineyards are being transformed to incorporate drip irrigation.

##### Water security - resource management

The availability of water resources, which is essential for the inhabitants of our mountain regions, also has a social component. Ever since they were built, the Valais bisses have been managed collectively and face a number of common challenges: water quality (pollution), storage of the resource, distribution of the water among the various users. This collective management has traditionally taken place within 'consortages', which are associations of co-owners. The aim of these consortages is the



management and maintenance of the canal, as well as the distribution and allocation of water. There are rituals that have changed little over the last 600 years, such as the annual impounding of the canals, the general assemblies of the consortages and the maintenance work carried out by the bisse guards. These rituals enable the local population and new arrivals to meet, as well as between generations. As well as irrigation, the bisses also serve as a water reserve in the event of fire, by acting as a 'wet barrier' and storing water in the ponds along its course. In terms of safety, we should also mention the role played by the bisses in the event of heavy rainfall, which helps to relieve flooding in the rivers, thus distributing the water more evenly over the area and preventing overflowing and damage to property.

### Tourism

The bisses are an undeniable indirect economic asset for sustainable tourism and agri-tourism. Furthermore, they serve as a promotional tool for the image of Valais' to the wider world, and along the bisses, educational trails enable visitors to discover the Canton's rich cultural and natural heritage. With almost 1,000km of hiking trails, the Valais bisses offer a variety of walks along the paths that border the open canal. Their easy access, gentle gradient and diverse landscapes have made the bisses popular walking routes for locals and tourists alike. They are used extensively by locals and tourists from Switzerland and abroad. They form part of a wider agro-tourism offering, with the promotion of local products (raclette) and heritage infrastructures (dry stone walls, mills, vineyard gatehouses, etc.).

### Heritage

Known since the 13th century, the bisses in the Valais required a great deal of technical ingenuity to bring water from the glaciers to the hillsides and plains. The techniques used to build (wood, stone), seal the canal and optimise the route have enriched the Valaisan heritage through the physical presence of these structures in the landscape, but also the intangible heritage through the transmission of technical and social knowledge. The various elements of the physical structures are regularly maintained or refurbished in order to showcase the skills involved in the construction techniques (gutters, guard's hammer, tretschebord, etc.). In addition, the consortage method of water management is also part of our heritage and is recognised by the canton. As a result of these management methods and irrigation techniques, the Valais bisses consortages were involved in the submission of an international UNESCO intangible heritage application on traditional irrigation in Europe. The bisses have enormous symbolic importance for the people of the Valais, and are regularly featured in campaigns to promote the Valais. They were present at the Milan World Expo in 2015, as well as Lausanne in 1964. They regularly make the headlines in the media (over 300 articles and reports on the bisses). They are part of the collective subconscious of the people of Valais and symbolise the mountain cultures of cattle farming and viticulture.

### Environment

Last but not least, the Bisses have an environmental function. The presence of open, non-concreted canals provides structures that are favourable to biodiversity (habitats). The loss of water from the bisse, through evaporation or infiltration into the ground, allows the



the presence of wetter biotopes in the vicinity of the canal. The "bisses" (irrigation channels) contribute to the small-scale water cycle thanks to losses along the route and enable a specific biodiversity to exist. They also provide water for wild fauna (blue network). In addition, the choice of irrigation techniques (drip, sprinkler and trickle) makes a significant difference to the biodiversity of grasslands and agricultural environments, encouraging the presence or, on the contrary, the disappearance of certain species. Gravity irrigation is a guarantee of diversified traditional rural landscapes and promotes sustainable agriculture.

## **12. Outcome**

The presence of irrigation canals over much of the Valais has had a major impact on the landscape. The main irrigation channels run horizontally across the slopes of the Valais, gradually descending from the glaciers to the plains. They bring water with them and cross the different levels of vegetation (alpine pastures, forests, residential areas, farmland). Along the bisses are locks and torrents, reservoirs and ponds, as well as secondary canals that testify to the complexity of an irrigation system that criss-crosses the Valais landscape to distribute water resources as efficiently as possible.

Irrigation techniques and the choice of crops are also transforming the landscape, offering a diverse picture of terraced vineyards, wet meadows and cereal crops. The bisses enrich the Valais landscape by offering a diversity of situations that are made possible by the addition of water and silt to a traditionally dry region.

Today, the Valais bisses system is a living tradition that could serve as a model for the future challenges of climate change and social and economic development. The aim is to pass on techniques without technology, to manage water resources together and make the most of local resources and the landscape. The two key words around the bisses are the multifunctionality of these structures and the multi-actors who represent the social diversity of this system.

## IV. COMPLIANCE WITH THE AWARD CRITERIA

### 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 Valais bisses are part of a sustainable development policy as a traditional irrigation system. Traditional irrigation is defined as the strategic use of gravity and canals to bring water from a source (glacier, river, torrent) to a cultivated area. The Valais bisses are a traditional irrigation system because they do not require fossil fuels to operate, and their smooth running is based entirely on the strategic use of gravity.

In addition, the experience of the consortages de bisses from the Middle Ages to the present day bears witness to the collective management of the resource within a supportive, standardised organisation. The consortages offer a resilient model for the rational management of a resource such as water, without the direct involvement of private companies or public authorities. This autonomy in the management of the resource, but also in the resolution of conflicts between users, makes the Bisses consortages an example of sustainable development in which water users are the decision-makers in their own use of the resource.

Through their symbolic image and their importance to the canton's agricultural prosperity, as well as their various environmental, safety and tourist functions, the Valais bisses and their irrigated landscapes help to reinforce the environmental, social and economic, cultural and aesthetic values of the landscape. In fact, the image of the Grand Bisse d'Ayent has been used on CHF 100 banknotes to highlight water and Switzerland's humanitarian tradition.

In the second half of the 20th century, the bisses of the Valais have faced the advent of piped irrigation to make water more profitable and the reduction in the number of people working in agriculture. Some of the bisses have been piped, but the majority of the bisses have remained open-sky canals, thereby contributing to the enrichment of biodiversity. At present, there are few scientific studies quantifying the contribution of the bisses to biodiversity. We can, however, point to the promising work of Andréa Savoy on macro-invertebrates in the bisses. The open canal is thought to favour this fauna and also to offer a lower water temperature than in the rivers from which the macroinvertebrates originate. The ability of the canal to cool river water could prove to be a vital function of the bisse in the face of global warming in the years to come.

To meet the environmental and social challenges of the future, the Bisses can serve as a source of inspiration. Against a backdrop of increasing pressure on water resources, the reintroduction of water towers by sector or the temporary restriction of use for certain purposes could help to better regulate access to water. In 2003 and 2015

Water towers have been introduced in some communes during heatwaves. In the future, consortages will be different from those of the past, because they are not folklore, frozen in time, but active entities that adapt to developments and changes.

The scale of the catchment area encompasses a multitude of stakeholders and a variety of rights, and can lead to tensions between economic, tourism and environmental stakeholders. Bisses stakeholders are on the ground and in contact with these many players. They can also play a role in supporting state players, for example in terms of water protection. They are potential points of exchange for users to raise their awareness of a range of issues. A consortage that operates and manages an irrigation network to satisfaction enables the authorities to avoid maintenance costs.

Community management methods help to make users stakeholders in the management of the resource. This involvement at both decision-making and operational levels means that users can be included and their needs met as effectively as possible, and user stakeholders are certainly in the best position to understand and meet their needs.

Some consortages can continue to count on the support, particularly the financial support, of water rights holders even when they are no longer using them directly.

In conclusion, we should also mention the roles of the institutions that support, coordinate or even make visible these issues and the transmission of this heritage. These include the Musée Valaisan des Bisses, the Association des Bisses du Valais, certain departments of the State of Valais and the Fondation suisse pour la protection et l'aménagement du paysage (SL-FP).

#### **14. Exemplary value**

*Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why? What good practice has been implemented?*

The Valais bisses can be considered exemplary for their longevity throughout the history of the Valais and their constant evolution and adaptation since the Middle Ages. They have lived through several political and environmental eras, adapting to different contexts and fulfilling multiple functions. Today, the Valais bisses and their managers, the consortages, are part of the modern legal and political system. The Valais bisses are subsidised by the canton of Valais when major renovation work is carried out, and some bisses are still being built today or put back into use, such as the bisse at Saint-Luc. The bisses are proof of the immemorial necessity of water for the proper functioning of society. These open canals are examples of sustainable development, both in terms of their historic collective management and their gravity-fed operation, which requires no fossil fuels.

Irrigation techniques and irrigated landscapes have also evolved over the centuries. Today, the Valais vineyards are increasingly irrigated by drip irrigation to save water as much as possible. Run-off irrigation is also starting to be used again, as it is beneficial to the biodiversity of the meadows. These good practices, which are determined by the need to avoid wasting water, are helping to raise public awareness of the need for rational water use that is both beneficial to human society and to the environment.

The bisses bear witness to the rational management of water by multiple players for multiple uses, and continue to fulfil essential tasks for Valais society. Good practice, such as listening and dialogue around the management of a resource, the

prioritisation of use and sharing are at the heart of inspiring practices.

A region of the Valais irrigated by the "bisses" - *the landscape of run-off-irrigated slopes on the sunny hillsides of the Upper Valais* - has been awarded the "Swiss Landscape of the Year Prize" for 2020. This award, presented by the Swiss Foundation for Landscape Conservation and Management, serves to communicate the values of Swiss landscapes, provide information about the threats they face and honour local commitment to landscape management. The 2020 award celebrates an outstanding irrigation landscape.

## **15. Public participation**

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

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

Consortages enable dialogue between resource users, visitors and public and private institutions.

Various audiences "use" these canals and are thus made aware of the issues involved in protecting the resource and the heritage, whether through educational panels, books or meetings in the field: Swiss and foreign tourists, school classes, hikers, etc.

A number of events have become highly popular rituals, such as the impounding of the bisses or collective maintenance, which enable people from a wide variety of backgrounds to take part in the age-old work and thus pass on this heritage.

The Canton of Valais has a water plan that is fully in line with the realities of the bisses (multiple uses, dialogue, water saving, etc.) and, to a greater extent, with the Confederation's and the EU's plans for water. Institutions such as the Musée des bisses also act as intermediaries between the general public and those involved in the bisses.

## 16. Raising awareness

*Is the 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?*

The Valais bisses began to interest scientists as early as the 1930s, but it was only in the 1980s and 1990s that research was really organised. The creation of the Valais Bisses Museum ten years ago has helped to institutionalise the bisses and traditional irrigation. The existence of a museum helps to raise public awareness of the importance of these irrigation channels for the Valais, as well as their impact on enhancing the rural landscape of the Alps.

The work of the Musée valaisan des bisses (Valais Bisses Museum) offers the opportunity to educate hikers about the bisses inside the museum in a permanent exhibition and temporary exhibitions, but also outside, on the bisses by means of educational panels, communications on social networks, collaboration with tourist offices to learn and pass on the teaching about the open canals and their importance, past and present, to the wealth of the canton of Valais.

As we have already mentioned, this awareness-raising work met with unexpected success when the Swiss National Bank chose to depict a bisse on the new CHF 100 banknote, the most widely used denomination in Switzerland. The symbolism of the Valais bisse on a banknote highlighting water and Switzerland's humanitarian tradition is a considerable asset in offering the population a collective story about the use of water and its importance. In addition, the Musée valaisan des bisses and the consortages de bisses have taken part in the submission of a UNESCO intangible heritage application for traditional irrigation in Europe. This involvement, in collaboration with the Federal Office of Culture and the Canton of Valais, has created synergies between the various players involved in raising public awareness. International recognition of the Valais bisses and their irrigated landscapes would be a formidable tool for raising awareness and encouraging consortia to pass on this heritage to future generations at a pivotal moment in our history, in the face of the challenges posed by global warming.

## V. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

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

*General Secretariat of the Council of Europe  
Council of Europe Landscape Convention  
8<sup>e</sup> Session of the Council of Europe Landscape Award  
F - 67075 STRASBOURG, Cedex*

- Text (max. 20 pages) : *Article "Les bisses du Valais" and Dossier on the functions of the bisses*
- Photos (10 max.) : *Bisse d'Heido - photo: Armand Dussex*
- Video (max. 15 mins.): *MVB Bisses Valais*

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