

PILOT ACTION REPORT

PILOT 1

Velenje pilot action report:

D.T3.1.3

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05 2020



1. Summary description of the pilot action explaining its experimental nature and demonstration character

The analysis carried out during the first half of the HICAPS project has confirmed our assumption, that most appropriate location for the investment is Velenje castle with surrounding. The Castle park Velenje is a public green area belonging to the Municipality of Velenje, whose management has been entrusted to the museum Velenje. Before investment, the park was actually parking space for visitors and employees of Museum Velenje.

Focus in renovation process for pilot in Velenje was making park more accessible to all and provide content also for people with visual disabilities. All that we did take in consideration already when preparing revitalisation concept for the whole area. In phase one (HICAPS pilot) we focused on smaller area of 800 m². Investment was formed out of removing architectural barriers, implementing new walking paths in manors of hardened sand paths that are barrier free and wider, so that people on wheelchairs can move around park unhindered. We provide two tactile signs, accessible also for people on wheelchairs. Visual appearance of those two signs is readable also for blind people (tactile words and pictures). Content of tactile signs is about flora in the park and related important historic person for establishment of park. We set also urban equipment (out of HICAPS project: 2 benches, one trash can). Inside the pilot area, we planted new greenery (flowers, bushes, grass areas). In the park we put informational board informing visitors about program Central Europe and project HICAPS.

Along the whole process (development and implementation of pilot), we pursued outcomes and knowledge developed by HICAPS, focusing on ensuring accessibility for all and people with visual disabilities, which was also the aim of our pilot. We were trying to incorporating as much inputs as possible from stakeholders and public and to provide place, which can serve also as an educational outdoor classroom.

2. Describe stakeholder engagement and involvement during the whole process

First, after that most appropriate location for the investment was identified, we did a public tender for expert, to prepare the Revitalisation concept for identified historical area. During process of preparation of Revitalisation concept and detailed technical plan, we worked with the Institute for Monumental Protection in Slovenia, Celje department. Along the whole process, we pursued outcomes and knowledge developed by HICAPS, focusing on ensuring accessibility for all and people with visual disabilities, which was also the aim of our pilot. From start to finish of the project, various stakeholders from decision makers, societies, representatives of local communities, associations of museums, citizens, representatives of the Institute for Cultural Heritage, tourism workers and public were invited to several events in order to involve as many actors as possible in preparation of Revitalisation concept, followed by detailed technical plan and pilot implementation. Last, but not least also in development and adoption of Local action plan.

Mentioned activities provided a direct contribute to the general objective of the HICAPS project:

- to contribute to strengthening capacities of public and private sector for use and protection of natural and cultural heritage resources for sustainable growth of regions in Central Europe, focused on historical gardens by developing strategies and tools which will provide public and private sector with necessary skills.

Within this framework, the HICAPS project allowed to strengthen the relationship with the local, regional and national stakeholders interested in the management of historical gardens

The pilot action run in Velenje also contributed to the achievement of the two specific objectives of the HICAPS project:

- Consensus building of public and private sector about protection and revitalisation of historical parks;
- Improved quality of life for the citizens of Central Europe.

3. Investment location (NUTS 3 region(s), address, postal code, city, country)

NUTS 0: SI

NUTS 2: SI01, Vzhodna Slovenija

NUTS 3: SI014, SAVINJSKA

Castle Velenje -Velenje Museum, 3320 Velenje

4. Description of the investment, including technical characteristics

Municipality did a public tender for expert, to prepare the Revitalisation concept for identified historical area. In case of Municipality Velenje, this was Velenje Castle with surroundings (Castle hill), which took in consideration area of more than 1500 m² that was initially planned in application form (request of Monumental protection department and Municipal department for environment). Since the identified area is big and consequently the investment costs, we divided concept in more phases and prepared detailed technical plan for phase one approximately 800 sqm. During process of preparation of Revitalisation concept and detailed technical plan, we worked with the Institute for Monumental Protection in Slovenia, Celje department. Along the whole process, we pursued outcomes and knowledge developed by HICAPS, focusing on ensuring accessibility for all and people with visual disabilities, which was also the aim of our pilot. We were trying to incorporating as much inputs as possible from stakeholders and public.

When starting the works on pilot site, first we raked lawn, architectural barriers, old pathways and curbs. The trails were arranged according to demands needed to be followed to be suitable also for people with mobility impairments and following as much possible the first appearance of the park in the past. Then we continued with earthworks: communal infrastructure, hidden under the planned and later constructed surface (path, green area, flower beds). Since the retaining wall that supports the entire pilot area was statically insufficient, we started with construction of it. However, for that first we needed to obtain building permit, which we did on 23.7.2019.

Afterwards we implemented wide sandy paths with steel curbs, to divide paths from the greenery. In the middle of the park is a fountain, surrounded by a paths and urban elements placed in space. Almost all infrastructural work was done and finished by the end of 2019. Because of winter and low temperature, we were not able to plant greenery and we postponed this latest until March 2020, when we finalized works with planting the flowers, bushes and greens. In March we finished with works and on 23.4.2020 we obtained also Operating Permit.

During the implementation phase the wall (scab) collapsed and this and bad weather conditions resulted in signings of two annexes. First annex is related with increasement of investment and the second one with prolongation of deadline.

5. Which horizontal principles did you take in consideration during preparation and implementation process (equal opportunities, non-discrimination, economic aspect, barrier -free accessibility,)

Project has taken in to the consideration principal "accessibility for all" in areas of cultural landscape and heritage. By providing transnational handbook of the most appropriate tools for providing accessibility, we tried to address people with disabilities and improve accessibility in cultural landscape and also improve quality of life for them. We ensured taking into account different opinions and views on the matters of equal opportunities and non-discrimination principles. Entrance to the park is barrier free and free of charge, equipped also with information readable to blind people, and accessible to people on wheelchairs.

6. Duration and process of investment implementation

The whole process, from start until implementation of pilot was 18 months long.

First we identified most appropriate location for pilot. Then we start with preparation of Revitalization concept (10.2018). Afterwards we prepared detailed technical plan. Because of statically weakened retaining wall, we were forced to prepare additional documentation and obtain a building permit. That happened on 23.7.2019. After obtaining this document, we were able to publish public procurement tender for Construction Company. We signed the contract

with contractor on 26.9.2019 and we started with works. We finished with works in March and in April we obtained also Operating Permit for park.

7. If applicable, compliance with relevant regulatory requirements

All the time we worked closely with the Institute for Cultural Heritage Celje. We needed to obtain and follow building permit. The works carried out during revitalization had no significant impact on the environment, so it is assessed as acceptable and no additional environmental protection measures were prescribed.

8. Major milestones of investment

We sign contract with Construction Company on 26.9.2019. Next day introduction of the contractor to the work happened and works on site started. It was originally planned that the work would be completed within 60 days, but then, during the implementation phase the wall (scab) collapsed and this and bad weather conditions resulted in signings of two annexes. First annex is related with increase of investment and the second one with prolongation of deadline. Because of temperature, we were not able to plant greenery and we postponed this latest until March 2020. In March we finished with works and on 23.4.2020 we obtained also Operating Permit.

9. Investment costs (BL5, BL6: including break-down of main costs items) in EUR

The costs exceeded planned amount in the project proposal in AF.

Total investment cost after annex: 244.681,27 €

ERDF 53.515,43 €

BL 5 Equipment (within project): 23.063,73€

BL6 Infrastructure and works (within project): 39.895,60€

10. Ownership and durability of the investment (e.g. maintenances, financing)

The owner of pilot site is Municipality of Velenje. Care for maintaining the site will/is divided between Municipality Velenje and Museum Velenje (Castle Velenje). Velenje City Council adopted Local action plan (LAP) in May 2020, for a period of five years and is designed for a longer period. The purpose of the LAP/management was to prepare a long-term strategy for the management and maintenance of identified areas. The managing plan presents the management structure, functions and responsibilities of individual stakeholders, defining the role and tasks of the manager and the supplementing expert committee, listing some of the important competencies, decision-making and implementation processes, implementation monitoring with the financial framework, timeline and duration of the plan making the prepared concept ready to use.

11. Expected impact and benefits of the pilot action for the concerned territory and target groups

The expected impact and benefits of the pilot actions will be the strongest in fields of tourism, economy and social interaction. The improvement of physical condition of paths and wall will improve the quality of life for residents and visitors. The stakeholders and public gave a very positive evaluation of the park. In general, they all agree the park will contribute to the wellbeing of the citizens, also the majority thinks, the park will contribute to the recognition of the area. People evaluated park as friendly for families and toward disabled people and this was also our initial goal.

12. Lessons learned from the implementation of the pilot action

At the beginning partners learned a lot by exchanging information's among us. Therefore, we all get some new knowledge from exchange practices (bad and good) among us and spreading this knowledge on workshops held during the project lifetime. Trough that we achieved that we manage to avoid to some bad practices and to use better path tackling the issues of HICAPS project. We developed tools, that can/will be used also outside the partnership and with which we are empowering private and public sector. Developed tools are now tested also on pilot sites.

We have learned that is really important to involve proper stakeholders, to start working with Monumental Protection office as soon as possible, sometimes just to inform them what are the plans, before even developing documents. That you need to have a lot of time for preparation and implementation, since you never know what is waiting for you "behind the corner" and the whole process is really time consuming.

13. Transferability to other territories and stakeholders

During HICAPS project Municipality of velenje has gained new, additional knowledge about management of green areas and implementation of modern technical solutions for maintenance of historical parks. Local government and stakeholders that took part in project gained a new perspective on challenges, solutions and methods. Staff that was involved in transnational exchanges shared experience and benefited from learning about new educational tools about the parks, plants, history, heritage and cultural diversity gaining opportunity to develop European mode of thinking.

Because of HICAPS project we raise awareness about the issue and made possible renovation of the park that was not executed in years. Additional funds was provided out of municipal budget. This renovation and new appearance made park more attractive for citizens and tourists that spend more quality time there.

Acquired knowledge is very important and we will transfer and share it among partners in our future project - the new territories on national and international level, beside that cooperation with different stakeholder and interested public enabled us to disseminate the knowledge also among them and it is expected that they will sheer gained knowledge further. For transferability is also important on-line publishing of our publications which are available to all on project web site: <https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/HICAPS.html> .

14. Added value of transnational cooperation

The diversity of the partners' experience provides a transnational added value supporting a wide diffusion of the project results in many other Central European regions. Transnational added value besides revitalization and testing on site the new developed transnational tools will be the transfer of findings/experience through Transnational strategy in other parts of Central Europe.

Transnational cooperation has significant effect that brings many advantages; exchange of knowledge, learning from good practices, discovering new innovative solutions for common challenges used by other partners in the transnational network. All this saves time and at the same time enhances capacity of local government. Undoubtedly, partners will benefit from stronger involvement of local authority and participation of different stakeholders in shaping strategic documents and pilot actions. Added value also derive from adopting strategic short and mid-term planning which will provide stabile financing and enable implementation of set goals.

15. References to relevant deliverables and web links

All our deliverables are presented in eMS and partly at the: <https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/HICAPS.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnDElrZr4uU>

- D.T1.1.2 Analysis of national legislation
- D.T1.1.3 Good practices analysis report (GPAR)
- D.T1.2.1 Report on most appropriate location
- D.T2.2.1 Socio-historical Report on Historical Parks
- D.T2.2.2 Report on plant diversity and their value
- D.T2.2.3 Transnational EOTT
- D.T2.3.1 Quality review report on proposed tools
- D.T3.1.1 Revitalisation concept and detailed technical plan

16. Pictures and some images









