



## General information

### Partner Details

Project: Green Pilgrimage

Partner organisation: National Institute of Research and Development in Tourism

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant):

Country: Romania

NUTS2 region: -

Contact person: Roxana Aștefănoaiei

email address: roxana.astefanoaiei@gmail.com

phone number: +40 726 295 389

## Policy Instrument

This Action Plan aims to impact:

- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- European Territorial Cooperation programme
- Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed:

Policy name: **Regional Operational Programme (ROP)**

Priority Axis 5: **Improving urban environment and conservation, protection and sustainable capitalization of cultural heritage**

Investment priority 5.1.: **Conservation, protection, promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage.**

Period of application of the policy: 2014-2020

Source of funding of the policy: ERDF

Responsible body: **Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration**

## Introduction

Produced by each partner, the action plan is a document that provides details on how lesson learnt from the cooperation will be exploited in order to improve the policy instrument tackled within that region. It specified the nature of the actions to be implemented, their timeframe, the players involved, the costs (if any) and funding sources (if any).

## Partners

Kent County Council, UK

Region Ostergotland, Sweden

National Pilgrim Centre, Norway

National Institute of Research and Development in Tourism, Romania

Norfolk County Council, UK

Diocese of Canterbury, UK

Puglia Region, Italy

## Project Background

The continued fragility of Europe's economy means that growth and development policies often take precedence over environmental policies, threatening our cultural and natural heritage assets. The Green Pilgrimage project will show how growth and development policies can economically exploit and protect natural and cultural heritage. Key to this is our focus on the power of pilgrimage-recognized today as one of the fastest growing segments of the travel industry (UNWTO, 2015) with more than 300 million pilgrims every year.

Green Pilgrimage project will show policy makers how to protect natural and cultural heritage whilst developing jobs and growth along pilgrim routes through developing low impact tourism, digitalization, pilgrim accommodation and strengthening local traditions. This reconnects pilgrims with their environment, landscape and culture.

Policy influence will increase pilgrimage across Europe through creating a greater awareness of its benefits. Green Pilgrimage project will hold exchanges and workshops on sustainable pilgrimage promotion, pilgrimage tourism impact, environmental protection and European best practice.

The Main Beneficiaries of the project are: Government; Local communities and businesses on Europe's main pilgrim routes; Management groups safeguarding our natural and cultural assets.

The project's advisory partner, The European Green Pilgrimage Network, will ensure that the indirect beneficiaries of the project are: the major pilgrimage routes and destinations of Europe and working with the support of the European Institute of Cultural Routes, the project's findings will also benefit the diverse 33 certified Cultural Routes of Europe.

## Project Aims and Outcomes

The project aims to change the policies in 5 countries:

- Great Britain - Green Pilgrimage addresses the South East England LEP ESIF Strategy which directs delivery of EU Structural Funds in Kent. The SELEP ESIF strategy focuses on economic growth and recognizes the growth potential of Kent's natural and cultural heritage.
- Great Britain - The France (Channel) England Programme is a "Cross Border" ETC programme; Investment priority 6.c aims to conserve and develop natural and cultural heritage; Specific Objective 3.1 To realise the potential of common natural and cultural assets to deliver innovative and growth.
- Sweden - Regional tourism actors have developed a tourism policy for Östergötland where Visit Östergötland (the official Tourism Development Department) is responsible for the implementation. The policy includes four thematic areas for product development; peaceful, active, smart and water.
- Italy - POR Puglia 2014-2020 has specific objectives related to this project: objective 6.6 improves the conditions and bidding standards for the use of natural heritage, according to the Landscape Regional Plan to preserve the most important natural landscape of inland areas; objective 6.7 integrates the use of historical and cultural heritage, landscape, traditions, arts, food and wine through the consolidation and development of networks; objective 6.8 fosters competitive positioning of tourist destinations through valorization, focusing on improving the capacity to adapt to demand changes for different forms of tourism experiences.
- Norway - The National Pilgrim Strategy written by the Norwegian Government Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs in 2012 was given to the National Pilgrim Center as their policy document.

- Romania – ROP(Regional Operational Programme 2014\_2020, Priority Axis 5: Improving urban environment and conservation, protection and sustainable capitalization of cultural heritage, Investment priority 5.1.: Conservation, protection, promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage) finances the conservation, protection, restoration and sustainable valorisation of the UNESCO national heritage, cultural heritage, regardless of location (urban or rural) and local cultural heritage in the urban environment. Specific activities are almost exclusively focused on physical cultural heritage and there is virtually no mention of natural or tradition heritage such as pilgrimage.

## Project Progress to End of Phase 1

In the first part of the project, NIRDT Romania managed to form a network of proactive stakeholders interested in the project theme and results. Through the national meetings and the international best practice exchange events and conferences we attended together (Canterbury-UK, Suceava -Romania, Galicia – Spain, Trondheim – Norway, Puglia – Italy, Norfolk – UK) we managed to raise awareness and involve them in the implementation of the project, and moreover they quickly took over some of the good practices learned. The network of stakeholders representative as structure as well, includes central authorities (Ministry of Tourism/ Ministry of Economy, Energy and Business, Ministry of Regional Development Public Administration and European Funds, Romanian Gendarmerie, National Authority of Forest), local authorities (county Councils of Harghita, Neamț and Suceava, Natural Park Vânători Neamț), NGOs (Via Mariae Association) who wish to develop the first green pilgrimage route in Romania (Via Mariae), according to the model of the partner countries.

From the preparation phase of the project Via Mariae Association joined us as stakeholder; they manage part of the international pilgrimage route Via Mariae (in Harghita County - Romania) and they have been involved and supported the extension of St. Mary's route in the neighboring counties (Suceava, Neamț - stakeholders in the project) and shared with them the experience gained in managing and promoting the tourism pilgrimage route. This was made possible by the Green Pilgrimage project, the Romanian partner NIRDT and the stakeholder central public authority - the Ministry of Tourism, who functioned as liaisons of the entire network of stakeholders.

PP6 organized 5 Stakeholder meetings at national level (Bucharest, Suceava County, Harghita County, Suceava County, Iași County) to identify opportunities to improve policy instruments and coordinate feedback between local/regional and interregional events with the aim to prepare the integration of lessons learnt into action plan. PP 6 also participated in several non-formal meetings with representatives of the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Culture, local authorities, which were consulted

on the feasibility of the project - extending the pilgrimage route Via Mariae, the possibilities of changing the public policy regarding the development and financing of the thematic routes.

PP 6 organized with the support of the Suceava County Council and of the Ministry of Tourism, the International Conference, the 2nd Partner Meeting, and a Study Visit under the project called "Green Pilgrimage - Supporting Natural and Cultural Heritage". The theme of this event was the "Relation between tourism, religions and pilgrimage to stimulate and facilitate the dialogue among different civilizations and different faith groups" and aimed to identify and exchange good practices between partners and stakeholders involved in the project, thus fitting the first phase of the project. The event was divided into three levels: The International Conference with 3 sessions: session 1 - Introduction to religious tourism and pilgrimages, session 2 - Good Practices in Romania and session 3 - External stakeholders' presentations, Steering Committee and Study Visits.

In the last period of the first phase of the project, PP6 - NIRDT with our stakeholders, agreed a final form of the Action Plan, and we observe that they became much more determined to extend the pilgrimage route Via Mariae, to identify sources to finance the route and identified themselves with this initiative and the brand. During this period the stakeholder group increased, joining the Iasi County Council and the Pilgrim Tours Travel Agency. The stakeholder group managed by PP6 is formed from 19 representatives: Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, Suceava County Council, Neamt County Council, Romanian Gendarmerie through representatives from Neamt County, Suceava County and national level, National Agency of Forests-ROMSILVA, Mountain Rescue Service Suceava, Metropolitan Church of Moldavia and Bucovina, the Administration of the Vanatori Neamt Natural Park, Neamt County Forestry Division, Iasi County Forestry Division, Harghita County Forestry Division, Via Mariae Association, Pilgrim Tours Travel Agency.

## The Romanian Context

### *Policy description*

The policy aims at the restoration, consolidation and conservation of the historic monuments (especially UNESCO and national sites), in order to be included in the tourist circuit, with goals like improving the quality of life and creating job opportunities. In addition, with restored monuments, funding can be obtained for equipment designed to protect and exhibit the movable and immovable cultural heritage, as well as for marketing and digitization activities.

Operations to be funded are to be consistent with the relevant sectoral strategic documents (Strategy for Culture and National Heritage — 2014-2020, local strategies, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, EUSDR).

Most of the monuments restored, protected, and preserved through these funds are religious sites.

Restored churches and monasteries can also attract funding for marketing and digitization activities as means to reach out for more pilgrims.

#### *Limits of the policy influence on pilgrimage development*

Because of the limited funds allocated to this investment priority, eligible activities are focused on works of restoration, consolidation, protection, and conservation of historical monuments (mostly UNESCO and national sites).

The policy does not mention cultural routes, pilgrimage routes, and long-distance cultural trails.

Although the natural heritage is mentioned in the title of the political instrument, however, this program does not fund activities that highlight the natural heritage.

#### *Impact up to date*

As of the current date (December 2019), through this political instrument, a total of 215 projects are in the implementation phase, with a total value of approximately EUR 535 million, of which about EUR 435 million are ERDF funds.

Of these, 113 (52,5%) are religious monuments (monasteries, churches, cathedrals), some of which holding a significant spiritual value.

As of the current date, around 93% of the budget of Axis 5.1 has been allocated.

### **State of art of green pilgrimage trails, long distance trails and mountain trails in Romania**

In the recent years in Romania there have been several attempts to develop green pilgrimage routes (Via Mariae) or long-distance routes (Via Transilvanica).



**Via Mariae** is a tourist route with a spiritual character that honours the Virgin Mary, uniting the spiritual places with the cultural - historical objectives from 7 countries in Central and East Europe. The route draws an imaginary cross on the map making the link east to west between the localities Mariazell (Austria), Budapest (Hungary) and Şumuleu Ciuc (Romania – Harghita county) and on the direction north to south between Czestochowa (Poland), Budapest (Hungary) and Medjugorje (Bosnia).

On the territory of Romania Via Mariae crosses several counties and reaches Harghita county (currently), being more active in the last hundred km. In Harghita county the route was developed on several variants that cover as a network almost the entire county and connects with neighboring counties Brasov, Covasna, Mures, Bacau and Suceava.

The initiative is implemented through the cooperation of the local stakeholders. This initiative contributes to the competitiveness of SMEs from the concerned area, because the route passes through areas where previously was not developed the tourism activity but thanks to the networking activity this process started.



**Via Transilvanica** is a long distance route under development, set up by Tășuleasa Social which will start at Putna (Suceava county), the resting place of Stephen the Great, will go through Transylvania and its cultural richness and will end in Drobeta Turnu – Severin (Mahedinți county) - where

King Carol I arrived Romania. The route will have a total length of 950 km and can be crossed in a few weeks, or on segments. The first marked segment of 100km, has been certified as a mountain tourist route, was in Bistrita - Nasaud county.

### **Mountain tourist trails**

In Romania there are 886 certified mountain tourism routes that cross like a network the Carpathians. The certification of these routes is the responsibility of the central institution of national authority of tourism on the basis of Governmental Decision 77/2003. The purpose of the certification of the mountain tourist routes is to establish measures for the prevention of mountain accidents and to organize the rescue activities in the mountains, activities that need a legislative framework in order to develop.

## **Conclusions**

There is a need for action in different fields in order to set the legal framework for the development of long distance trails, thematic routes or green pilgrimage routes.

In the first phase of the project, INCDT had to identify 3 best practices and develop the action plan aimed to implement the good practices within the project in order to change the political instrument ROP.

The good practices identified within the project were:

- Via Mariae - Reconciliation Route - the last 100 km was built in a partnership by Harghita County Council, Transylvanian Way of Mary Organization, Harghita Community Development Association, local municipalities and associations;

- Economic and social development of local communities based on religious monuments included in UNESCO heritage - The existence of UNESCO religious assets and the implementation of a coherent tourism destination strategy contributed to the development of tourism in Bucovina;
- Pilgrimage routes in Neamț County - The existence of a “holy mountain” (Ceahlău) and of a monastic area in Neamț County (Romania), entails two different approaches in terms of pilgrimage.

In the second phase of the GP project, INCDT wants to create the premises for the development of the thematic routes in Romania, by improving the specific financing instruments, but also to expand an existing route that will be a good practice for future projects on this topic. Due to the increased interest in the good practices disseminated within this project, Via Mariae Association agreed that the Via Mariae pilgrimage route they administrate, to be extended to Suceava, Neamț and Iași counties, thus transforming this project from a regional one into a national one.

## Action Plan Summary

The objective of the action plan is to influence the change of the Regional Operational Programme 2014\_2020 - Priority Axis 5: Improving urban environment and conservation, protection and sustainable capitalization of cultural heritage - Investment priority 5.1.: Conservation, protection, promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage in Romania, that in the future certain infrastructure components of these thematic routes can be financed through this program.

Through the Action Plan that will be implemented with the support of the stakeholders involved in the project, it is considered also the development of new projects financed through regional operational programs or other sectoral operational programs.

The action plan is addressed first and foremost to the stakeholders of the Green Pilgrimage project, to the extended working group created for the implementation the project and not lastly to all the authorities that want to be involved in developing this way of valorizing the natural and cultural resources. The action plan will be addressed to both **central** and **regional** and **local** authorities.

Among the stakeholders of the Green Pilgrimage project in Romania we mention: Ministry of Economy, Energy and Business Environment, Suceava County Council, Neamț County Council, Via Mariae Association, Romanian Gendarmerie, Mountain Rescue Service Suceava, Mountain Rescue Service Neamț, Vânători Neamț Natural Park.

The specific objectives and actions of the plan are:

## **Objective 1 – Creating the legal framework in order to influence the development of cultural routes, pilgrimage routes, and long-distance cultural trails**

*Action 1.1. Improving the legal framework for signposting tourist trails / routes*

*Action 1.2. Developing a strategy for the development of pilgrimage routes, pedestrian routes, and cultural routes in Romania*

*Action 1.3. Information and Awareness of Policy Makers (AMPOR) on the importance of policy change in the next programming period*

## **Objective 2 – Developing pilgrimage routes, pedestrian routes, and cultural routes in Romania**

*Action 2.1. Consolidation of existing pilgrimage trails*

*Action 2.2. Development of new pilgrimage trails in Romania*

*Action 2.3. Developing an information/promotion material of the cultural and natural heritage for the extended pilgrimage route*

## **Actions**

### **Objective 1 – Creating the legal framework in order to influence the development and financing of cultural routes, pilgrimage routes, and long-distance cultural trails**

***Action 1.1. Improving the legal framework for signposting tourist trails/ routes*** – this action is based on good practices regarding the trail legal framework of all the other Green Pilgrimage partners (especially Great Britain regulation regarding signposting).

#### **Description**

In Romania the legal framework only covers the signposting of mountain tourist routes (Government Decision no. 77/2003 regarding the establishment of measures for the prevention of mountain accidents and the organization of the rescue activity in the mountains). Other types of routes (thematic, long distance routes) are not the subject to any law in Romania, which makes their marking difficult and the intervention of institutions that ensure safety difficult as well, because they are not certified.

It is intended to develop a new legislative act regulating the implementation and approval of other types of tourist routes (eg. pedestrian routes, pilgrimage routes, cultural routes).

## **Organisations involved**

Ministry of Economy, Energy and Business Environment

## **Implementation plan**

In this respect a series of action will be taken:

- Carrying out a diagnostic report based on the international experience in legal framework, including the experience of the project partners;
- Preparing a substantiation note/ memorandum based on the international best practices but also on domestic needs to be presented to decision makers.

## **Link with policy**

Policy change. The existence of the legal framework will be the basis for their inclusion in future financing programs.

## **Impact on policy**

Marking the different types of routes is necessary for the tourist orientation and information of tourists, to ensure the safety on the route and for branding. A legal framework for that will change the policy - if the need for financing is greater, the offer will have to be adapted accordingly.

## **Timeframe**

2020 - 2021

## **Costs**

Staff costs

## **Sustainability**

It will be applied after the completion of the project.

## **Suggested Funding Sources**

Public funds (Ministry of Economy, Energy and Business Environment's budget)

## ***Action 1.2. Developing a strategy for the development of pilgrimage routes and other thematic routes in Romania***

## **Description**

A strategy for developing the thematic routes is absolutely necessary for Romania, as it can be the basis for future changes and decisions regarding the establishment of financing lines in the ROP and

also for enabling key actors for cultural heritage related tourism product development. This strategy will be based on Norwegian experience. The National Pilgrim Strategy written by the Norwegian Government Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs in 2012 was given to the National Pilgrim Center as their policy document.

### **Organisations involved**

Ministry of Economy, Energy and Business Environment, National Institute of Research and Development in Tourism, Suceava County Council, Neamț County Council, Iași County Council

### **Implementation plan**

To be developed

- Setting up a working group in order to realize the strategy.
- Establishing the methodology for developing the strategy of pedestrian trails and identifying funding sources.
- Discussions/Meetings with all the stakeholders from this field.
- Carrying out the strategy.

### **Link with policy**

Change the policy

At this moment:

- The policy is focused on restoration, protection, preservation and sustainable valorization of UNESCO heritage sites, of national significance heritage sites (regardless of localization – urban or rural) and of local significance heritage sites in the urban area.
- Most of the restored, protected and preserved monuments, through this funds, are religious sites.
- The policy does not mention cultural routes, pilgrimage routes and long-distance cultural trails.

This national strategy will help to create the strategic framework for the development of such routes at the national level. It can be the document that will be the bases for the improvement of our policy instrument.

### **Impact on policy**

A changed financing policy will better respond to tourism needs

**Timeframe**

2020 – 2021

**Costs**

Staff costs

Travel costs for the working group

**Sustainability**

Will be a strategy for the next programming period (2021-2027)

**Suggested Funding Sources**

-Pilot Action;

- Public funds (Ministry of Economy, Energy and Business Environment's budget)

***Action 1.3 – Information and Awareness of Policy Makers (AMPOR) on the importance of policy change in the next programming period*****Description**

In the current programming period, 2014 - 2020, it is quite difficult to bring improvements to the political instrument.

Based on the experience learnt from the study visits in Italy, Norway, England and Spain, certain proposals for improving the policy instrument will be made for the next programming period. In order to improve the policy, it will be emphasized the importance that the pilgrimage / long-distance hiking routes have had in these countries for regional development.

**Organisations involved**

National Institute of Research and Development in Tourism, Ministry of Economy, Energy and Business Environment

**Implementation plan**

In this respect, a series of steps will be taken:

- Producing an informative material about the best practices learned and about the added value of thematic routes, that will be presented/sent to central and regional the responsible actors;
- Participation in the working groups organized for the evaluation of the current ROP and the elaboration of a set of proposals regarding the next programming period.

## **Link with policy**

Policy change

At this moment:

- The policy is focused on restoration, protection, preservation and sustainable valorization of UNESCO heritage sites, of national significance heritage sites (regardless of localization – urban or rural) and of local significance heritage sites in the urban area.
- Most of the restored, protected and preserved monuments, through these funds, are religious sites.
- The policy does not mention cultural routes, pilgrimage routes and long-distance cultural trails.

## **Impact on policy**

Through this activity we propose:

- Inclusion in the National, Regional, Local Development Strategies and Plans of proposals for the development of pilgrimage routes, pedestrian routes, cultural routes, and development / promotion of the monuments that could be included in these routes;
- Highlighting explicitly the role of the pilgrimage and cultural routes as an opportunity for national and international promotion of cultural and natural heritage under the next Regional Operational Programme and its related documents.
- The provision, under the next ROP, of eligible activities that may facilitate the development of cultural routes, pilgrimage, or long distance trails (small-scale investments in infrastructure – marking, signposting, digitization, and promotion of the route; creating partnerships for route management).
- Recommendations regarding the implementation of a national strategy for the development of thematic routes, which will be the basis for the formulation of future financing policies within the ROP.
- The provision, under the next ROP, of eligible activities aimed at the recovery and protection of the natural heritage along with cultural and pilgrimage routes.

## **Timeframe**

2020 - 2021

## **Costs**

Staff costs

## **Sustainability**

Changing the policy will be applied even after the completion of the project.

## **Suggested Funding Sources**

-Public funds (Ministry of Economy, Energy and Business Environment's budget)

## **Objective 2 – Developing pilgrimage routes, pedestrian routes, and cultural routes in Romania**

### ***Action 2.1. Consolidation of existing pilgrimage trails***

#### **Description**

Consolidation of the 'Via Mariae' route that has already been signposted. The aim is to implement within Via Mariae route some measures identified on St Olav Way (Norway), Via de Francigena (Italy) and Camino de Santiago (Spain):

- Type of accommodation, in rooms featuring several beds;
- Promotion of local products;
- Innovative ways of signaling the route;
- Improving the interpretation of heritage - using the local legends and stories;
- Cooperation with local private land owners to facilitate the access and ensure a proper route maintenance;
- Encouraging volunteerism to better manage the route;
- Establishment of a pilgrimage centre.

#### **Organisations involved**

Via Mariae Association, National Institute of Research and Development in Tourism

## **Implementation plan**

- Realization of a guide for the development of a pilgrimage route that will be based on the good practices of this project and which will deal with the topics mentioned above (type of accommodation on pilgrimage trails, type of signs, marketing of the trails/marketing kit, establishment of a pilgrimage centre, funding the route, cooperation between different stakeholders);
- Dissemination of the guide to local authorities involved in the administration of Via Mariae route.

## **Link with policy**

This project will contribute to the improvement of the policy instrument, which specifically aims to stimulate local development by preserving, protecting and capitalizing on cultural heritage and cultural identity.

## **Impact on policy**

This project will contribute to the achievement of the objective of the political instrument proposed for improvement and it will be a good practice for future projects (i.e. ROP, Priority Axis 5, Investment Priority 5.1 ... which specifically aims to boost local development by preserving, protecting, and capitalizing on cultural heritage and cultural identity and for whose accomplishment the experience gained in the partnership will be exploited).

## **Timeframe**

2020 - 2021

## **Costs**

Staff costs

Printing cost

## **Sustainability**

The development model of the Via Mariae route will be implemented also in other routes (with other topics) and is already in implementation in the neighboring counties in order to extend the route.

## **Suggested Funding Sources**

Public funds from county councils involved, funds attracted by the Via Mariae Association

## **Action 2.2. Development of new pilgrimage trails in Romania**

### **Description**

Submission of new projects related with the development of the pilgrimage routes/long distance trails. This activity will include new national scale projects, based on the good practices identified under the Green Pilgrimage project - on Italian experience (extension of the Via de Francigenaroute),Norwegian and English experience (signposting the route).

### **Organisations involved**

Ministry of Economy, Energy and Business Environment, Suceava County Council, Neamt County Council, Iași County Council, Vânători Neamț Natural Park

### **Implementation plan**

- Development of new hiking trail between the monasteries in Neamț County;
- Development of new hiking trail between the monasteries in Suceava County;
- Development of new hiking trail in Iași County;
- Connections among these routes and with Via Mariae in Harghita County;
- Setting up of the associations that will manage the new routes.

### **Link with policy**

This project will contribute to the improvement of the policy instrument, which specifically aims to stimulate local development by preserving, protecting and capitalizing on cultural heritage and cultural identity.

### **Impact on policy**

This project will contribute to the local and regional development, by capitalizing on cultural and natural heritage in tourism and pilgrimage. Also the project will be a good example to develop these kind of routes in other regions.

### **Timeframe**

2020 - 2021

### **Costs**

Staff costs

Travel costs

## **Sustainability**

After the finalization of the pilot project, this process will be carried out together by the involved County Councils, being administered by a common unit established by them. Also the establishment of a pilgrimage route will be the basis of several future local development projects.

## **Suggested Funding Sources**

- Public funds from county councils involved;
- European funds;

### ***Action 2.3. – Developing an information/promotion material of the cultural and natural heritage for the extended pilgrimage route***

#### **Description**

This material will meet the need to inform future pilgrims and will be a good way to promote the extended route (it will include the cultural, natural, religious heritage of the counties, Harghita, Neamt, Suceava, Iași, of the villages and towns that are along the route or nearby). This material will be based on the good practices and lessons learned in Italy – tourist guidebook for Via Francigena of the South.

#### **Organisations Involved**

INCDT, Suceava County Council, Neamt County Council, Iași County Council, Vânători Neamt Natural Park.

#### **Implementation plan**

- establishing a methodology for the information material;
- gathering information on cultural and natural heritage as well as intangible heritage, with the support of local authorities involved in the project;
- editing material for web but also printing;
- publication and dissemination.

**Link with policy**

This project will contribute to the improvement of the policy instrument, which specifically aims to stimulate local development by preserving, protecting and capitalizing on cultural heritage and cultural identity.

**Impact on policy**

The development of specific tourism promotion materials will strengthen the image of the route and increase the awareness of the decision makers regarding the importance of thematic routes for the local development.

**Timeframe**

2020 - 2021

**Costs**

Staff costs

Printing and editing

Travel costs

**Sustainability**

This information material will also be used after the completion of the project.

**Suggested Funding Sources**

Public funds from county councils involved

## Conclusions and Monitoring

The action plan will be implemented with the help of local stakeholders, as well as the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Business Environment.

Its implementation will be monitored by the National Institute of Research and Development in Tourism through the project team. Within the team will be designated a person who will communicate permanently with the stakeholders to ensure the accomplishment of the activities.

Also, two meetings with stakeholders will be organized, where the implementation stage of the action plan will be monitored. The team will also participate in the 10th Via Mariae Conference, organized by the Via Mariae Association, where we will discuss the action plan also.