

Danube Urban Brand + Building Regional and Local Resilience through the Valorization of Danube's Cultural Heritage

Deliverable D.T.1.4.3. Research reports on the potentials of intangible heritage related to the Danube to create joint development actions in peripheric and shrinking regions

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Figure 1: Courtesy of <https://domeniileostrov.ro/>

SECTION 1+2+3

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1 Introduction

The DANURB Strategy is based on the valorization of tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to the Danube, but the two types must be researched separately, as the integration of intangible heritage assets into projects and action plans basing those projects on specific sites is a separate important task. Intangible cultural heritage of a region is often connected with intangible cultural heritage of other regions along the Danube, therefore these are the value assets connecting projects desired by the DANURB Action Plan in a cross-Danubian interregional scale.

This Report is delivered for all the 3 sections of DANURB+ based on the contribution of all project partners.

This report show the potentials of **intangible cultural heritage (ICH) related to the Danube in the specific peripheral and shrinking regions**. The aim is to have clearly stated the typology and criteria of choosing intangible cultural heritage which could be integrated to Actions Plans. Reports are based on desk research and on the communication with local stakeholders and project partners. This Deliverable will directly contribute to O.T1.1 and its findings will also be integrated into the DANURB Atlas O.T1.2.

1.1 Background

Part of the research report is based on DANURB 1 searches and results; In the period 2017-2019, the intangible heritage elements from the Danube cities and regions were inventoried, grouped in research reports on macro and micro-regions, as for

- Wachau (Krems-Melk) region,
- Komárom-Komarno region,
- Danube-bend (Esztergom-Sturovo and towns downstream)
- Backa Palanca - Ilok regions
- Iron Gates (Golubac and beyond)
- Ruse, Giurgiu, Tutrakan, Silistra, Calarasi
- Danube Delta region

Each of these reports contained a chapter on capital and intangible cultural heritage, briefly presented in specific data identified as being culturally relevant. Elements of intangible heritage in the field of traditions were mentioned, as well as crafts, gastronomy and oral heritage.

Also, seems important for us to briefly take in consideration UNESCO definition¹ of Intangible cultural heritage, at 4 levels, as:

- a) **Traditional, contemporary and living at the same time:** intangible cultural heritage does not only represent inherited traditions from the past but also contemporary rural and urban practices in which diverse cultural groups take part;
- b) **Inclusive:** we may share expressions of intangible cultural heritage that are similar to those practised by others. Whether they are from the neighbouring village, from a city on the opposite side of the world, or have been adapted by peoples who have

¹ <https://ich.unesco.org/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003>

migrated and settled in a different region, they all are intangible cultural heritage: they have been passed from one generation to another, have evolved in response to their environments and they contribute to giving us a sense of identity and continuity, providing a link from our past, through the present, and into our future. Intangible cultural heritage does not give rise to questions of whether or not certain practices are specific to a culture. It contributes to social cohesion, encouraging a sense of identity and responsibility which helps individuals to feel part of one or different communities and to feel part of society at large;

- c) **Representative:** intangible cultural heritage is not merely valued as a cultural good, on a comparative basis, for its exclusivity or its exceptional value. It thrives on its basis in communities and depends on those whose knowledge of traditions, skills and customs are passed on to the rest of the community, from generation to generation, or to other communities;
- d) **Community-based:** intangible cultural heritage can only be heritage when it is recognized as such by the communities, groups or individuals that create, maintain and transmit it – without their recognition, nobody else can decide for them that a given expression or practice is their heritage.

1.2 Objectives

The major strategic objective of the research is to identify the most relevant and appropriate **for the purposes of DANURB+** intangible cultural heritage elements in the studied regions. Both by the project methodology and by its purpose, it was considered that these elements are not necessary to be exhaustively researched and presented, but to respect several decisive **criteria** for their inclusion in future approaches - either of the action plans or as bearing the Danurb Quality Label.

To define a coherent collection in this regard, we have followed a few sub-objectives:

O1. TO RESEARCH THE RELEVANT TYPOLOGY OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE RELATED TO DANUBE PERIPHERAL AND SHRINKING CITIES

O2. TO DETERMINED THE POTENTIAL TO CONNECTIVITY INTO DANURB NETWORK OF THE REVEALED INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

O3. TO SELECT WHICH ITEMS COULD BE VALORISED BY THE DANURB ACTION PLANS.

2 Methodology

2.1 Research Questions

The research questions to be answered by this research report are:

- 1. Which is the typological diversity of the intangible cultural heritage elements related to the studied Danube section?**

2. Which are the criteria to establish the potential to development of the revealed intangible cultural heritage within the project purposes?
3. Which are the most powerful elements of the identified intangible cultural heritage, to be integrated into DANURB Action Plan at a cross-Danubian interregional scale.

2.2 Research Design

The methodology consisted of a **structured collection** of elements of ICH from each region of the DANURB+ project, on the **4 categories** established by correlating UNESCO's methodology with the project objectives.

- A. **ORAL EXPRESSION** as part of the collective memory in Danube cities and regions such as: *proverbs, riddles, tales, nursery rhymes, legends, myths, epic and poems, charms, prayers, chants.*
- B. **PERFORMING ARTS**, such as: *vocal and instrumental music, dance, theatre, pantomime, sung verse, folksong, carnival, festival*
- C. **SOCIAL PRACTICES & RITUALS**, such as: *pilgrimage, ceremony, falconry, christening, wedding, funeral ritual etc*
- D. **GASTRONOMY AND CRAFTS**, such as: *traditional local foods, fish soup, ceramics, embroidery, wooden crafts, rushes, reeds.*

For all of them is important to remind the **main criteria** which relate these elements to the DANURB+ scope; they have to:

1. **play a crucial role in keeping the Danube cultures alive**
2. **be authentically related to Danube culture**
3. **use the Danube region specific resources – either human or natural**
4. **are preserved in a sustainable and future generation conscious way.**²
Besides these, there is one more very important criteria for the purpose of our project
5. **have already involved in DANURB+ stakeholders able to involve in future promoting of ICH at trans-regional level**
6. **are in a common language (do not necessitate translation in order to be understood by others)**

2.3 Research tools

The main tools used within this research are:

² These criteria fit also the 3 Key general requirements of the DANURB Certifying Quality Label for products and services as they have been set within the final proposal of the DANURB QL criteria system & logo (based on 2020-21 online and in-person workshops, Novi Sad, 9 November, 2021)

1. **DANURB+ SURVEY** on Potential of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) related to Danube (<https://forms.gle/yJ828XXozabBcU5g8>)
2. **EXCEL TABLE** of ICH related to Danube filled by partners, structured on sections and categories
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1nagev618sq5mqpNs_rdLgrUZNfrTgKTJ/edit?usp=sharing&oid=107163348932792188159&rtpof=true&sd=true
3. **DANURB 1.0 collection**
(<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vdKcsgML5oIUUPDA7kXiiJS7AeMudY1A/view?usp=sharing>)

Both 1 and 2 tools adopted the following questions for each category:

1. **NAME IT IN ITS ORIGINAL LANGUAGE AND IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION**
2. A SHORT **EXPLANATION** IN ENGLISH (2-3 SENTENCES)
3. MENTION THE **REGION AND COUNTRY** TO WHICH IT BELONGS.
4. MENTION THE APPROXIMATE **AGE** OF IT.
5. MENTION THE **SCALE** OF INFLUENCE
6. ADD A RELEVANT **WEBSITE** WHERE IT COULD BE VISITED OR LEARN ABOUT.

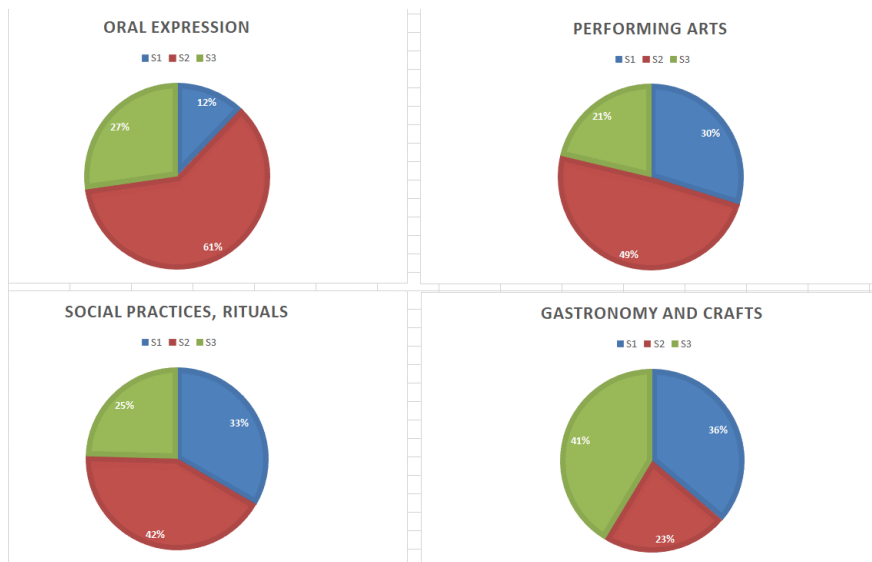
2.4 Data Collection

The data collection counts the following items:

ORAL EXPRESSION	PERFORMING ARTS	SOCIAL PRACTICES, RITUALS	GASTRONOMY AND CRAFTS
33	43	57	58

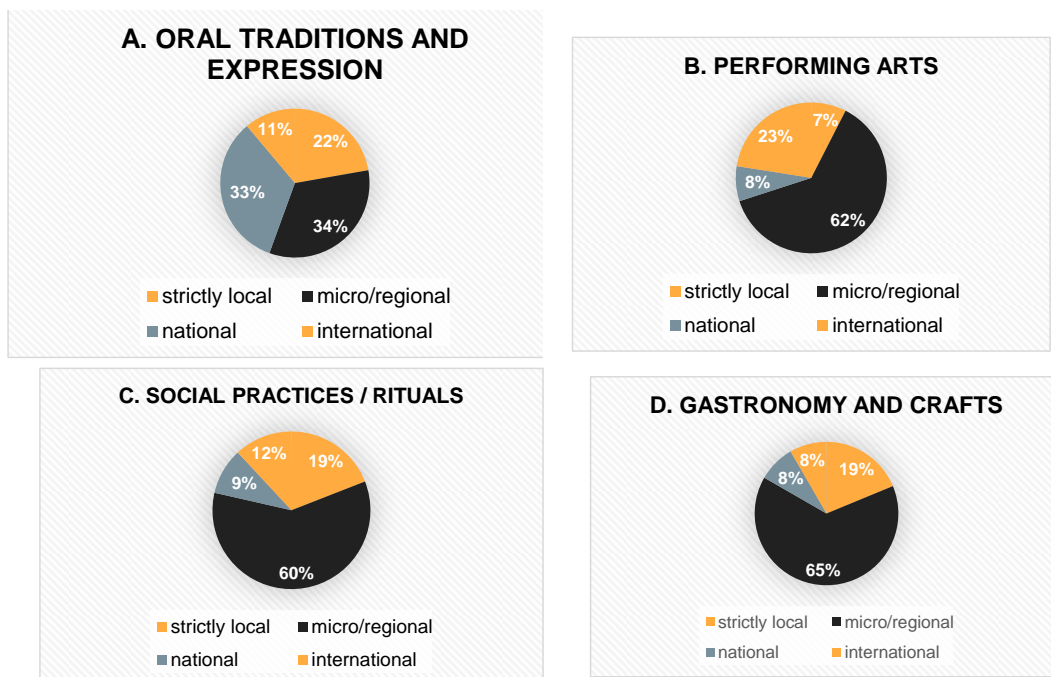
2.5 Data Analysis

- For each category and for each of the 3 sections in our project, we discover the images that show, for the most cases, a good balance among items introduced. Exception is the Oral expression, where the richness of the West part of Danube (Section 2) could be explained by the multiple geographical and cultural intersection (Serbia, Croatia, Romania)

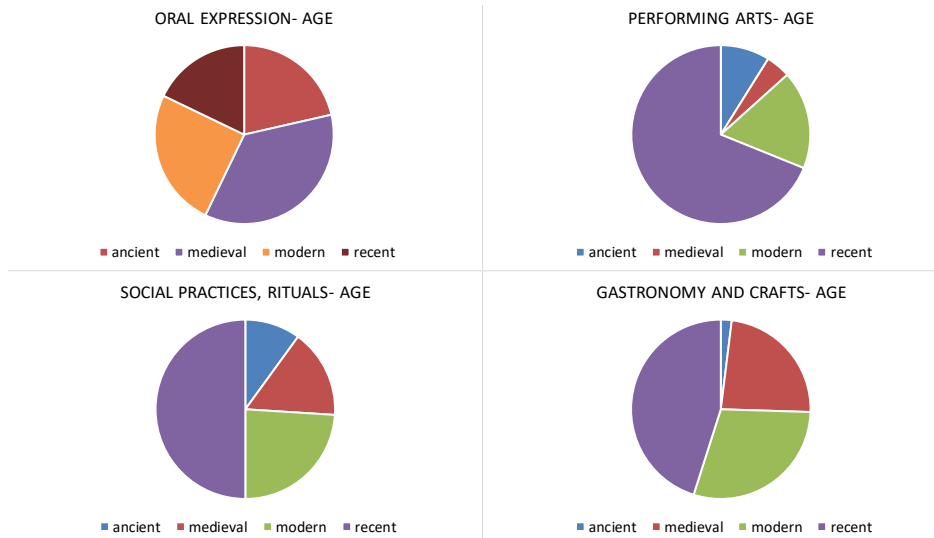


- As SCALE OF INFLUENCE for each of the 4 categories of ICH we found out that the most dominant is the MICRO/ REGIONAL SCALE. This means a prevalence of the place and the evidence of some traditions preserved on a small scale, implicitly a reduced circulation of them in the entire Danube basin. There are similarities between Romania and Bulgaria in the southern part, Romania and Serbia in the western part of the Danube.

Scale of influence

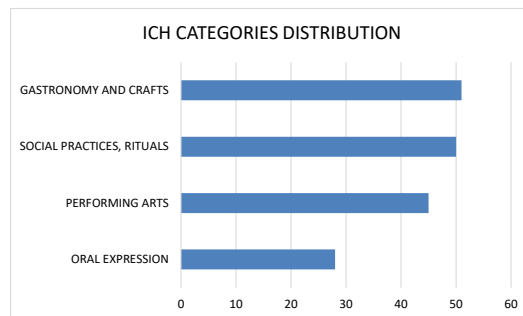


- As HYSTORIC AGE, the analysis show a very variate mix of periods for each of the 4 categories, but the most balanced one is the Oral Expressio, the rest of categories showing a predominat of **the recent period (after communism)**.



3 Results

- 3.1. For the research Question 1 - Which is the typological diversity of the intangible cultural heritage elements related to the studied Danube section? the collected data show us a rich diversity of exemples of ICH, and quite balanced between the 4 categories.**



With all the consistent differences between the regions, in the ICH chapter the balance is very high: Some differences are noticeable, for example in the region 3 dominates the category. A and B, and in region 1 and 2, category. C and D.

If for category A the medieval period dominates in all sections, for category. B, C and D dominate the recent ICH.

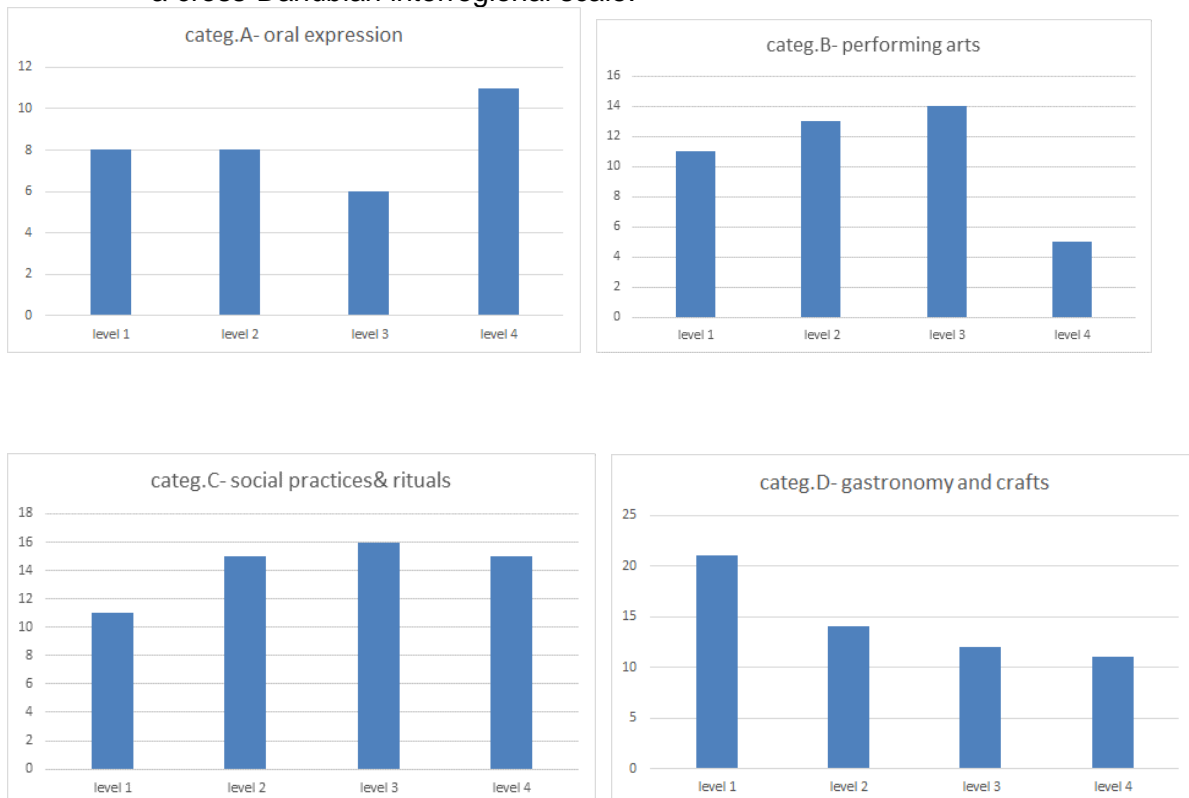
- 3.2. For the research Question 2 - Which are the criteria to establish the potential to development of the revealed intangible cultural heritage within the project purposes?**

The research showed that the most relevant examples reflect the criteria that made them eligible and on the basis of which the ICH collection will be modeled accordingly:

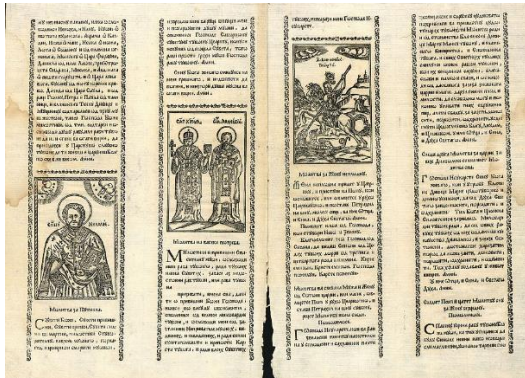
Following this layout, we could differentiate between:

- level 1- VERY BIG POTENTIAL (very possible, 80-100% criteria completed);
- level 2- AVERAGE POTENTIAL (possible, but not in short time, 50-79% criteria completed);
- level 3- SMALL POTENTIAL (possible, but with other joint efforts, 10-49% criteria completed)
- level 4- NO POTENTIAL (0-10% criteria completed)

3.3. For the **research question 3**, which are the most powerful elements of the identified intangible cultural heritage, to be integrated into DANURB Action Plan at a cross-Danubian interregional scale.



- For the A categ.- there are dominating is level 4- NO POTENTIAL (0-10% criteria completed), because of the heritage based on local languages.
- For the B and categ. – there are dominating is level 3 SMALL POTENTIAL (possible, but with other joint efforts, 10-49% criteria completed), quite close to level 2 level 2- AVERAGE POTENTIAL (possible, but not in short time, 50-79% criteria completed);
- For the C categ. – there are dominating is level 3 SMALL POTENTIAL (possible, but with other joint efforts, 10-49% criteria completed),
- For the D categ. – there are dominating is level 3 SMALL POTENTIAL (possible, but with other joint efforts, 10-49% criteria completed).



4 Discussion

The research revealed that there is a rich and diverse collection of intangible cultural heritage elements present and active in the studied Danube regions, but, in order to be integrated into the network and to function in joint trans-national projects, a common language is needed. Therefore, more prone to projects of this type are those in categories B and D that are based on either the common language of music and dance (B) or the common language of gastronomy and folk art (D) that do not need translation. Also, an important criterion of differentiation is the connection that is established between the place and the identified heritage element, having greater capacity for trans-regional co-operation those elements that are not specific to a certain place (most of B, D).

5 Recommendations

For a better further utility of this research, it should be correlated with deliverables related to:

- 1) the Danurb+ Quality Label System (O4.2.- DANUrB quality assurance seal to guarantee the visibility and quality of heritage valorization projects)
- 2) the Action Plan (O4.1- DANUrB Action plans to use Danube's heritage for the prosperity of local communities)

For the ICH good visibility and promotion within the rest of the DANURB+ products the results of this research should be integrated in O3.3. - Tours and films on DANURB values for tourists and locals.

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C: social rituals

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