



INT-HERIT

IMPLEMENTATION NETWORK OF HERITAGE STRATEGIES IN SMALL AND MEDIUM- SIZED EUROPEAN CITIES

PEER REVIEW REPORT



Dodoni

1. Peer Review Methodology

Within the frames of INT-HERIT project there will be organized Peer Reviews aiming to review the site visits performed during the transnational meetings. Outputs and conclusions will be derived to present in benchmarking format the Peer Reviews and will help all partners to learn with each other. It will result in useful recommendations that will act as inputs for the project deliverables.

1.1. The Peer Review Process

Peer review is the evaluation of a task, a project, a policy by one or more people of similar competence to the producers of the task/project/policy (peers). It constitutes a form of self-regulation and self-assessment by qualified members of a profession within the relevant field. Peer review approaches are employed to maintain standards of quality, improve performance, and provide credibility.

The European Union has been using peer review in the 'Open Method of Co-ordination' of policies in the fields of active labour market policy since 1999. A peer review is a process where dedicated representatives exchange information and experiences on a specific topic for an effective policy or practice. The Peer Review process comprises a range of presentations and interactive working groups there are included visits to local sites where the policy can be seen in operation.

1.2. Peer Review Implementation

- Peer review will be organized after each site visit in all transnational meetings;
- An open innovation approach will be followed in the peer review process. That means peers as well as interviewers (host city) are put together in round tables to review the site:
- A good preparation of the “host city representative” taking part in the review is essential to ensure an effective and fruitful peer review;



- The LG should be invited for the peer review;
- Presentation about the site to kick the peer review session (in attachment);
- Site visit - Visit of the peer-review targets;
- The peer review comments that goes to the Canvas tool are based on the group discussion;
- Some lessons learnt from previous peer review sessions have been taken into account:
 - make sure that partner members do not 'stick' together
 - give more data in order to frame the discussion
 - present a clear view on the scope and required deliverables to ensure a focused discussion
 - ensure that more representatives of the hosting city do participate
- 3 tables were organized:
 - 3 city partners + host city representative + other (ex: local experts)
 - 3 city partners + host city representative + other (ex: local experts)
 - 2 city partners + host city representative + other (ex: local experts)
- The participants were free to select the group to join, however, in each group no more than one representative of a city should participate
- The peer review session should have a minimum duration of 1 hour and 15 minutes;
- In the end of the session, the host city representative makes a 5 minutes presentation about the work developed in each table;

2. DODONI STRATEGIC PLAN

| Partner | Dodoni Strategic Plan |
|--|---|
|  <p data-bbox="150 797 434 833">ΔΗΜΟΣ ΔΟΔΩΝΗΣ</p> <p data-bbox="183 992 391 1081">Municipality of Dodoni</p> <p data-bbox="193 1137 381 1167">www.dodoni.gr</p> | <p data-bbox="448 577 1410 1021">In a context of an economic crisis, the municipality of Dodoni is taking steps to take advantage of the important cultural assets of the region. From the magnificent ancient theatre among the ruins of the important archaeological site of Dodoni (place of the oldest oracle of ancient Greece) to the rich cultural traditions of the 56 local communities, the region of Dodoni wants to develop cultural tourism by promoting and upgrading their current offer for lasting and sustainable impacts in the economy of the region.</p> <p data-bbox="448 1070 911 1451">The main objective of the strategic plan is a balanced valorisation of the important cultural resources of Municipality of Dodoni under sustainable tourism concept and support the creation or expansion of related businesses.</p>  <p data-bbox="932 1384 1410 1460">The ancient theatre of Dodoni's archeological site</p> <p data-bbox="448 1507 932 1541">The plan pursues the following aims:</p> <ul data-bbox="549 1576 1410 1998" style="list-style-type: none"> • the protection and preservation of cultural heritage sites for future generations • the enrichment of the cultural heritage through the development of local cultural activity • the evaluation of cultural differences and the improvement of intercultural conservation • the preservation of local customs and ecosystems and the enrichment of cultural identities • the harmonious combination of cultural and economic aspects |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>of tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the sustainable development of tourism while offering considerable tourism experience for visitors |
| <p>Areas of intervention and budget</p> | <p>The actions planned are focused in "Protecting, Promoting and Developing Cultural Heritage" building a network dedicated to the promotion of entrepreneurship, facilitating the exploitation of new ideas and stimulating the creation of new enterprises and the development of new business models and an increasing of investment in human capital. The conservation of a historic, urban, monumental and industrial heritage is the objective from which all these actions come from.</p> <p>The main actions that Dodoni plans are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing the Municipality of Dodoni and the archaeological site of Dodoni as a tourist destination (522.318€) • Upgrading and promoting the tourism product of Dodoni Municipality - Enhancing Accessibility (182.000€) • Protection, management and maintenance of the Natural Environment for the benefit of tourist development (100.000€) • Powerful and targeted display, promotion and dissemination of the tourist product of the municipality of Dodoni in Greece and abroad. Attracting tourists from new and / or existing markets and setting common goals (115.300€). |

The historic and cultural importance of the ancient Greek theatre of Dodoni makes it the main attraction of the region. However the region as much more to offer and a good promotion strategy is required to extend the stay of visitors from the 2 –hour visiting to a weeklong stay.

Among them some should be highlighted:

- **Museums** such as the Folklore Museum of Polygyros (traditional objects and costumes that mirror the history and the traditions of Dodoni are exposed), the Folklore Museum of Meliggoi, the Experiential Folklore Museum of Perdika, the War Museum 1912- 1913 (photos of military operations, uniforms and various military relics are exposed)
- **Churches**, like church of Agia Kiriaki, church of Agios Nikolaos, church of Agia Paraskevi, church of St. Ioannis Prodromos.
- **Other archaeological sites**, like "Emin Aga" Chani, Citadel of Kopani, Citadel of Myrodafni, Watermill, Stone bridge at the point of "Megas Lakkos".
- **Mountain trails** in Olytsika and riverside trails in Acheron.
- **Traditions**, strong and rich traditions such a the making of "tsipouro" a traditional drink



3. Peer Review Session

The challenge of the session is to provide a unique, special, and participatory tourist experience that will bring with it jobs and economic development in terms of investment in a range of initiatives. The challenge is further complicated by the need to preserve the cultural resources, offer an authentic experience, respect the social and cultural way of life of the host community all the while ensuring the sustainability and authenticity of the tourist product.

The peer review session was organized with 3 working groups. Each one discussed one of the following 3 areas of intervention of the municipality:

1. Valorisation and management of the archaeological site of Dodoni



surroundings.

The area of the site and surroundings is controlled by National Law that defines the land uses in the surrounding area, which are very restricted. It is classified as “Protection Zone A”, the highest protection, meaning that no constriction is allowed in its

- How could we manage this restriction?
- What kind of activities could we develop at the rest of the area around the archaeological site? (e.g. natural activities, business)?

2. Branding of Dodoni



Dodoni was selected as a runner up tourist “Destination of Excellence” in the Greek competition

The municipality is working on a branding study to support touristic promotion. Peers made contributions to the following aspects.

- Branding strategy?
- Ideas on the visual identity (e.g. logo, slogan)?
- Promotional activities?

3. Festival of Dodoni



The festival is organised by the municipality in cooperation with the region of Epirus and the Antiquities Ephorate. The events are held in several parts of the ancient theatre in order to promote the archaeological site. The entrance is free of charge. The organisation of such event is quite challenging for a small municipality as Dodoni. Therefore

they feel important to receive contributions from peers on how to build synergies in cooperation with the local community to expand the impact of the festival.



- Proposals for new/different productions
- How to promote the festival effectively?
- How could we attract volunteers and in what ways could we involve them in the organization of the festival?

4. Main Findings

The Main Findings intends to highlight the strong ideas developed during the peer review activity and should be used as a working document for the city local group. The findings are based on the outputs of each table explaining its purposes and possible impacts.

Group 1: Valorisation and management of the archaeological site of Dodoni

How could we manage this restriction?

- Keep as it is - maintain the identity
- The “site” does not necessarily need to be the main attraction -> combine with other resources

As “Protection Zone A” it is almost impossible to build anything at the site or its surroundings. However being a focal point for visitors it can work as the main entry point to other touristic offer in the municipality area. In this sense, it is of utmost importance to use the welcome centre at the site to promote the region. With 50.000 visitors per year, the site can become the entry point to visiting the region. Currently, there’s a small shop with general information (although there is no touristic map of Dodoni) and a few copies of archaeological items on display for selling but no clear idea of the regions and what it has to offer. This requires a collaborative strategy with the governmental authority in charge of the site but a kind of “info point” on the region does not violate any of the rules set by the “Protection Zone A” classification. Peers propose to setup a global project connecting the site to the villages scattered across the valley. The project should develop a “story telling” approach to enhance visitors experience at the site while motivating the extension of their stay in the region.

- Reborn the sacred spirit of the site; Promote legends & stories; Recover the old pilgrimage tradition related to the sacred oracle (rebuild the “SOUL” of the site; e.g. similar to Camino de Santiago). The ancient entrance of the site now closed could be rehabilitated for the pilgrimage route;

The main idea propose by peers is to work on a good “story telling” of the site that will be used to promote the region. Pilgrimage associated with the oracle could be promoted to create a different experiment to visitors, more spiritual. These pilgrimage routes can use the ancient paths that crossed the regions and stops could be created in those villages or spots of interested along the way. There’s a house on the top of a hill inside the site area that could be rehabilitated for other uses, namely to welcome pilgrims.

- “You don’t need a new museum”:

This is a proposal on the table however peers fear that such a huge investment could have less impact than expected. It could be good for increasing visitors to the site but will have minimal impacts for the region as it is not clear how it will increase the time spent in the region. Alternatively, peers suggest that virtual or augmented reality solutions can much improve the experience of visitors without the need for a big investment and without any negative impacts on the site as there’s no need for new constructions.

What kind of activities could we develop at the rest of the area around the archaeological site?

- Connect villages + paths + activities + keep in common!
- Take advantage of the Orson Welles film “Oedipus Rex” to promote the site;
- Celebrate the anniversary of unification of Dodoni to build union among people and promote the common identity of the region;
- Organise workshops about restoration and valorisation of the site
- Promote the existent “Route of Piraeus ancient theatres”
- Use the existing building “Andromachi” to house more services

The activities proposed by peers are centred in the region and not in the site, i.e., activities should be connected under a common “story telling” that “sells” the region.

Group 2: Branding of Dodoni

Branding strategy

- Experience of silence and sound at the site;
- Not local but territorial branding; and integrated strategy not only focused to the theatre but also on all kind of complementary local/territorial resources.
- The territory as a pilgrimage destination area; the experience of the pilgrim;
- Build a network of small hotels and family homes to consolidate offer;
- Define the target segment; define what aspect to focus.

Peers propose to focus on the territorial branding and not only in the archaeological site.

Ideas on the visual identity (logo, slogan, selection of colours)

- Simple brand, clear message; Make the logo easy to read for international tourism; create fluidity across the territory;
- Explore the ancient sacred theme: sound; the echo DO-DO of Dodoni.
- Slogan: ECHO YOURSELF IN DODONI or DODONI = ECHO SOUNDSCAPE; focus on sound related stories;
- Logo proposal: merge of the theatre and the oak tree
- Possible slogans too highlight its cultural importance: “We’re the roots of culture”/ “Back to origins”;
- Visual identity: roads, paths, ways to arrive, the historical & spiritual character of the place, some kind of flow star fly that connects the sacred tree (the oak).

Peers noted that the current logo is focused only in the theatre which is an important asset of the region no doubt but fails to provide the territorial approach. Besides that the site itself is not under the control of the municipality which can hamper the desire territorial view. New ideas for logo and slogan were proposed but since the investment of the current branding is relatively new another possibility is to complement the logo with other images and slogans to build a territorial communication. Another interesting idea is to explore the relation of the ancient site with sound leading to slogans as “DO-DO”, “Echo yourself in Dodoni”, “Complete silence will lead to yourself”, etc.

Production of promotional material

- social media;
- regional and national TV;
- basic tourist information (maps, tourist resources);
- information points (Dodoni Archaeological Site and villages);
- handcraft workshops (bronze, lead tablets and statues);
- videos for the promotion of the city festivals (focus on sound and theatre);

Peers noted the lack of presence of the region in the social media; many had trouble to find touristic information in the internet before coming. The lack of consistency on the name (Dodoni internationally and Dodona in Greece) is also not helping to consolidate the name as a brand. The overall strategy should be reproduced in any of the materials. The production of contents as “story telling” will feed other promotion materials (TV, videos, info points etc).

Promotional activities

- explore activities based on the energy of the site (e.g. “2 hours of silence” course)
- explore activities that combine nature and culture;

- events focused on theatre, literature and poetry;
- sport international events that connects with the ancient games that took place at the site;
- recreate the sacred/experimental atmosphere of the site;
- Promotion activities near travel agencies.

Again peers focused on creating activities that highlight not only the archaeological site but also the region, for instance combining cultural events at the site with nature experiments such as trekking. Another important proposal is to design activities that recreate the ancient sacred function of the site, namely for instance by reproducing the oracle with modern technologies where visitors can express their questions and receive answers (from the virtual world in this case). This will expand and enhance visitors' experiment while visiting the site. The small lead tablets that pilgrims used to write down their questions to the oracle could be reproduced again to display but also can be used by the new pilgrims, for instance buying a machine to engrave new tablets that will be on display. This proposal intends to recreate the feelings and hopes that lied beyond this prays to the sacred oracle of Dodona.

Group 3: Festival of Dodoni

Identity of the festival

- MYSTERY as the key for any activity (oracle)

Proposals for new/different productions

- hot air balloon festival;
- workshop in restoration for young people;
- gastronomy festival: small stage for music and tables for people to sit and stand to taste best from local restaurants (collaboration with the local communities);

How could we promote the festival effectively?

- Invite Instagram influencers to Dodoni;
- Design an App about the festival; Bundle all information here (hotel, restaurants and other events taking place here);
- Conceive a 'one stop' shop for accommodation/events/activities in the region;
- Work with local offer (hotels, restaurants) to build a travelling package;

How could we attract volunteers and in what ways could we involve them in the organization of the festival?

- 'Take care' of volunteers (provide food, drink, etc);
- Small "gifts" to show appreciation is a major factor.
- Engage local associations and turn the festival into an opportunity to Involve the local community;
- Involve students of the University of Ioannina and create Instagram & facebook page;
- Build a programme with the community to accommodate volunteers in local houses; enhance their experience by providing contact with locals; they will become promotional agents later on.

The festival must comply with the many restrictions at the site limiting the type of event that can be held there. An international rock concert for instance is inviable here as it can threaten the site preservation. Therefore peers propose to complement current festival with other perspectives of the region such as gastronomy or nature. To overcome the limitation of accommodation the municipality (currently there are only 56 beds in hotels), peers propose to create a programme involving the community to rent local houses during the festival period. This will provide an opportunity for visitors and volunteers to get a different perspective of the region and get to know other things than the archeologic site. Currently there 15 events per year in average taken place in the region

Regarding promotion, peers suggest the most effective (and cheap) way to promote the festival is to invite known instagrammers and blogger to visit the region; this type of communication is more targeted oriented and have better results in attracting the 'right' people to the festival. The international impact is much higher this way. Every year, there are in average 15 events taking place in Dodoni; this info should bundle in a web application building synergies with the main festival.

Final Recommendations

The main recommendations that arose from this peer review are the following:

1. Build a territorial approach on every project; use the most important assets of the region to build a "story telling" that integrates the archeologic site in the region;
2. Involve the local community, work with hotels and restaurants to create a touristic package; build a network of houses available for renting or receiving volunteer during the festival. Articulate this offer with existent hotels and restaurants;
3. Recover the ancient traditions of the oracle; explore sound and the splendid nature around it to create a sacred atmosphere where people can experience a lot more than only ruins. Explore the "Mystery" of the site though the festival. Create activities to recreate the ancient spirit of the site.
4. Use new technologies to enhance the experience of visitors. Use then to promote the regions as well; augmented reality opens all sort of possibilities to explore the sound theme.
5. Create a specialize group to steer the tourism sector in the region; involve the municipality staff and also ULG members.

In a sentence: **ECHO YOURSELF IN DODONI**

*Elaborated by the INT-HERIT LE
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