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# Integrating Natural and Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Small Cities: Network of Eco-Cultural Routes on The Danube Region, Serbia

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## Abstract:

The paper represents a part of the research conducted through the EU Interreg project DANURB+ (Danube Urban Brand), which gathered six European countries including Serbia around the common goal: to foster the development of small cities along the Danube region through sustainable and heritage-based tourism and cross-border cooperation. One of the main outcomes of the project was the development of Action plans, defined by the set of goals and specific methodology, which included: analysis of strategic regional and local planning documents; field study; meetings, workshops and surveys with local stakeholders; research through participation, and thematic exhibitions. The Action plan for Golubac, the city with a declining population in the Eastern part of Serbia, represents a model for shaping new authentic tourist products and routes by combining natural and cultural heritage, and it could serve as a knowledge base and unique methodological model for action planning and building self-sustaining communities.

**Keywords:** Action plans; Natural and cultural heritage; Eco-cultural routes, Danube region; Participation, Golubac, DANURB+.

## 1. Introduction

The paper represents a part of the research conducted through the European Interreg project DANURB+ (Danube Urban Brand), which included six European countries alongside with Serbia in order to achieve the mutual aim to foster the development of small and medium cities along the Danube region. This development is based on benefits from sustainable and heritage-based tourism, cross-border cooperation, and mutual collaboration of stakeholders in each selected Danubian country and city (Interreg – Danube Transnational Programme, 2022a). The DANURB+ international project ended in 2022 and one of the main outcomes of the project was the development of Action plans and Pilot projects that are based on the integration of natural and cultural heritage into the planning process. The paper will be focused on the process, methodology and particular project outcomes of the Action plan for Golubac as a case study.

Natural and cultural heritage represent a crucial resource that is often neglected or underused by local citizens and even municipality due to the lack of knowledge and /or resources (Aziz Amen, 2017; Aziz Amen & Nia, 2018; Amen & Kuzovic, 2018; Amen & Nia, 2021). Natural and cultural heritage are important factors for urban environmental, social and cultural sustainability (Naheed & Shooshtarian, 2022) and their inclusion in various decisions on the urban development can contribute to better social cohesion, cultural diversity, and improve well-being and quality of life of communities (Nocca, 2017).

The development of small and medium-sized cities and towns in the Danube Region is related to their cultural and natural heritage, socio-economic capital, potential for tourism development, as well as their potential for networking with the nearest larger cities and the permeability of nearby national borders placed on the river (Antonić & Djukić, 2022). All the qualities of small and medium-sized Danube cities, both internal and external, represent important factors that can be additionally protected from potential disruptive impacts of urban development, and strengthened if they are recognized as primary components of urban plans, action plans, strategies, strategic development policies, etc. (Djukic, Antonić, Joković & Dinkić, 2019; Djukić, Djokić & Antonić, 2018; Nocca, 2017). Taking into account all planning actions, in order to prevent the possible pressure of mass tourism, the planning of cultural tourism appears as the most important element of its sustainable development at different spatial levels (Djukic, Antonić, Joković & Dinkić, 2019; Risteski, Kocovski & Arnaudov, 2012). However, the proper implementation of these planning actions is particularly challenging for small and underdeveloped cities and communities, bearing in mind that the economic, organizational and human resources of these communities are often limited (Djukic, Antonić, Joković & Dinkić, 2019; Jamieson, 1993). The development of medium-sized and small Danube cities and towns also depends on the proximity of centers of regional importance, bearing in mind that the role of regional territorial cohesion has become important throughout the European Union, which is evident in the EU support to Euro-regions (EC, 2021; Djukić, Antonić & Vujičić, 2017).

Bearing in mind this theoretical and practical framework, the international project has focused on small cities and their promotion and revitalization in terms of their cultural, historic, natural and other assets. According to the main vision and strategy of the DANURB+ project, the declining cities in all participating countries, regardless of their local specificities, have

unique values that need to be promoted, nurtured, and offered to the wider EU public, while cities themselves should benefit and become more attractive to the local population (Interreg – Danube Transnational Programme, 2022b).

## 2. Interreg European Project\_DANUrB+

The material showcased in this paper represent a part of the outcomes and results of the DANUrB+ project (*Danube Urban Brand - Building Regional and Local Resilience through the Valorization of Danube's Cultural Heritage*). It is a part of a European Interreg project and refers to the regional network building through tourism and education to strengthen the Danube cultural identity and solidarity .

### 2.1 DANUrB+ goals and participants

DANUrB+ is primarily focused on the peripheral and border areas, the cities and towns that are not fully developed and that are facing economic struggles resulting in overall population decline. The aim was to make these cities attractive again, both for users, citizens and tourist, but also for possible investments. These usually called the shrinking cities, often have an impressive amount of undervalued heritage (Valentina, Marius-Răzvan, Ioana-Alexandra & Stroe, 2015; Ismagilova, Safiullin & Gafurov, 2015; Timothy & Boyd, 2006; Russo, 2002; Caffyn & Lutz, 1999; Borg, Costa & Gotti, 1996) (ref). Both natural and cultural heritage could represent a solid base for tourism development using local values, resources and strengths (Antonić & Đukić, 2018). DANUrB+ aims to reactivate once forgotten resources in shrinking settlements of Danube river's regions. The main goal of the project is to create a complete spatial and cultural network, a "Danube Cultural Promenade", connecting all communities along the river, unifying these under one popular brand, thus creating a unique platform for all the future projects that could emerge out of the interconnections and special "community network". The project creates a dense system of stakeholders from Danubian cities that can count only on the potentials and resources, people, services and overall heritage of the Danube to stop socio-economic shrinkage.

The novelty of DANUrB+ is to bring down to earth and to rationalize strategical goals to real stakeholders with action plans and accompanying actions usable in peripheric situations, and to brand these initiatives in inclusive and effective ways (Interreg – Danube Transnational Programme, 2022a). In this process many partners were involved, including faculties from Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia. The Faculty of Architecture of the University of Belgrade is one of the project partners, with associate partners from municipalities of Golubac, Sombor and Smederevo. These towns were selected for collaboration as they have well-known fortresses and unique natural heritage, resources and traditional local food products and services related to Danube River, but also rich cultural heritage that is often forgotten of underused. These areas are in decline and are struggling for economic prosperity.

### 2.2 DANUrB+ outcomes and deliverables

The DANUrB+ project is a rather complex one, according to the many deliverables and outcomes this project had. The project was divided into three sections, while the Serbian region was a part of the second section, alongside with Croatian and Romanian cities. Majority of the project results are concentrated towards social and touristic redevelopment of cities and their tributary areas, and mutual collaboration between project partners. DANUrB+ represents a platform for local development, providing tools and education for their usage. In that context, main project outcomes of the University of Belgrade as a project partner are: the Atlas, Quality labels, Action plans, and Pilot projects.

One of the main results of the whole DANUrB+ Project, containing the spatial, historic, demographic, and economic data about Danube cities from Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Serbia, is an Urban Atlas (D+ Atlas) aiming to discover hidden urban values along the Danube (D+Atlas: Atlas of Hidden Urban Values along the Danube, 2022). The structure of the atlas is innovative in a trans-Danubian context, where many areas are still not well-mapped or seen on a national level. Quality label included many items of service or products from Golubac and its surroundings that are unique and clearly connected to both natural and cultural heritage of the Danube region in Serbia. The main outcomes presented in this research include Action plans, alongside with two Pilot projects, which were integrated part of the Action plans. Both were developed for two Serbian cities – Sombor and Golubac. The Action plan has been prepared by the academic staff of the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Architecture, in cooperation with the representatives of the municipality government and relevant NGOs. In this paper the example of Golubac Action plan will be presented in following sections.

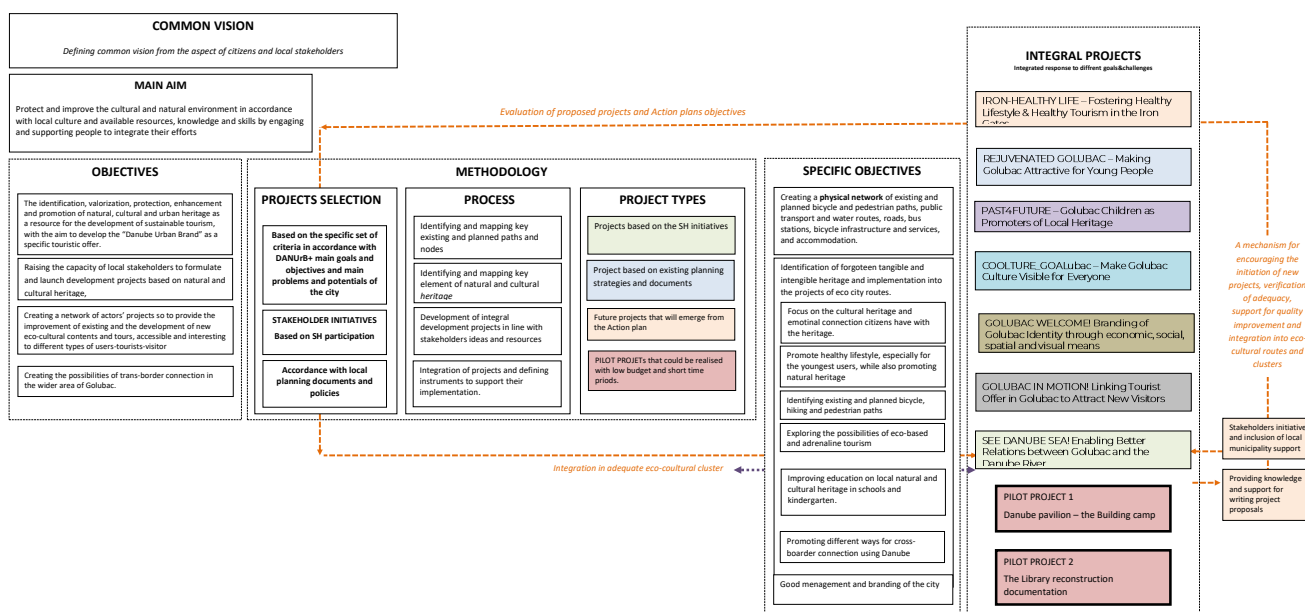
## 3. Material and methods / 500 words+table

The Action plan for Golubac is one of the two Action plans done for the Serbian section of the Danube region. It was developed during the period of six months and it is a result of the work of many academics, experts, local stakeholders, and other participants. It represents the result of efforts to connect and integrate local initiatives and actors for more efficient and effective formulation and implementation of sustainable solutions.

There were several important steps in the process of preparing the Action plan. The *first* step included initial partners meeting in order to come up with the main aim and basic structure of Action plans in general. However, during the *second* step, all of the partners were free to further develop the methodology and structure based on the theoretical research, good practice examples, *in situ* analysis, and expert observation of the city chosen as a case study for the Action plans. The *third* and the most complex one was to collaborate with the locals in order to propose the best project for the community that should be beneficial for their primary users. The projects were to be developed in order to strengthen the local economy, develop tourism and integrate natural and cultural heritage of the city while suggesting sustainable and eco-friendly concepts.

This step included continuous and active cooperation of approximately 15 stakeholders from public, private and NGO sectors, as well as from the spheres of culture, art, tourism, gastronomy, heritage preservation, education, project development, and public administration. Numerous in-person and online meetings were held with representatives of the local self-government. In this phase the common vision and the main aims and objectives were defined, and the material was collected. The last step included brainstorming and actual development of the Action plan.

The structure and methodology for Action plans was not typical. It was primarily project-based and consisted of several phases (Figure 1). The Action plan development process consisted of four interrelated phases: (a) Identifying and mapping key paths and nodes: existing and planned bicycle, hiking and pedestrian paths, public transport and waterway routes, roads, bus stops, bicycle infrastructure and services, as well as resting points, viewpoints and other supportive elements; (b) Identifying and mapping key elements: eco- (nature and landscape heritage) and cultural (tangible and intangible heritage) based on documents' analyses and outcomes of the communication with stakeholders; and (c) The development of integral development projects that are interconnected, complementary, and mutually encouraging, and which foster and enhance the local identity. The further activities included the valorisation and inter-connection of compatible elements in line with stakeholders' ideas and available resources, defined timeframe, and analyses of costs and benefits. This phase included the preparation of Pilot projects. In total, 25 project ideas were preliminary proposed. They enabled the creation of a wide platform for further prioritization and elaboration of projects. In addition, these project ideas are gathered around several sub-topics. Further research resulted in seven final project proposals developed in this Action plan (Table 1) and two Pilot projects that were realized (Figures 6-7).



**Figure 1.** Diagram showing the methodology of Action plan for Golubac; source: Danijela Milovanović Rodić, Biserka Mitrović, Jelena Marić.

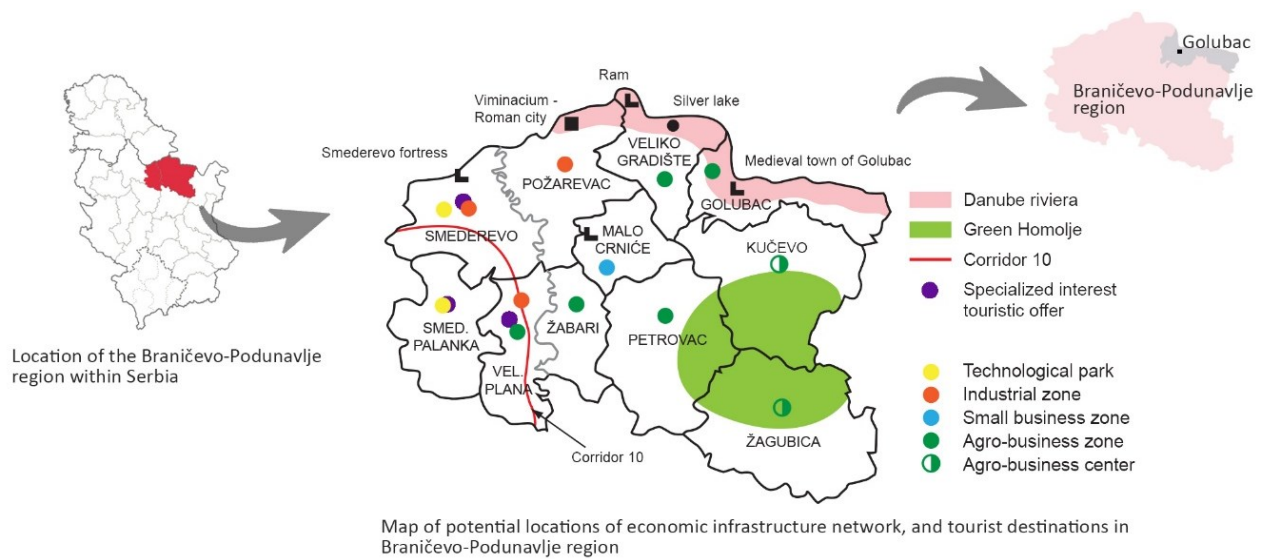
#### 4. Results\_ the Action plan for Golubac

Many small towns and municipalities along the Danube are rich in valuable natural and cultural heritage and attractive to tourists. However, due to their lack of accessibility and infrastructure, these places are facing many socio-economic challenges today. A good example is Golubac town and municipality area in Serbia. Golubac is a small city with a declining population in the Eastern part of Serbia and is located by the Danube where the big European river is the widest. The city can offer a lot in terms of natural and cultural heritage. It belongs to the area of the Iron Gate National Park and is positioned at the entrance of Iron Gate/Đerdap gorge, the greatest one on the river. The city of Golubac can boast with recently

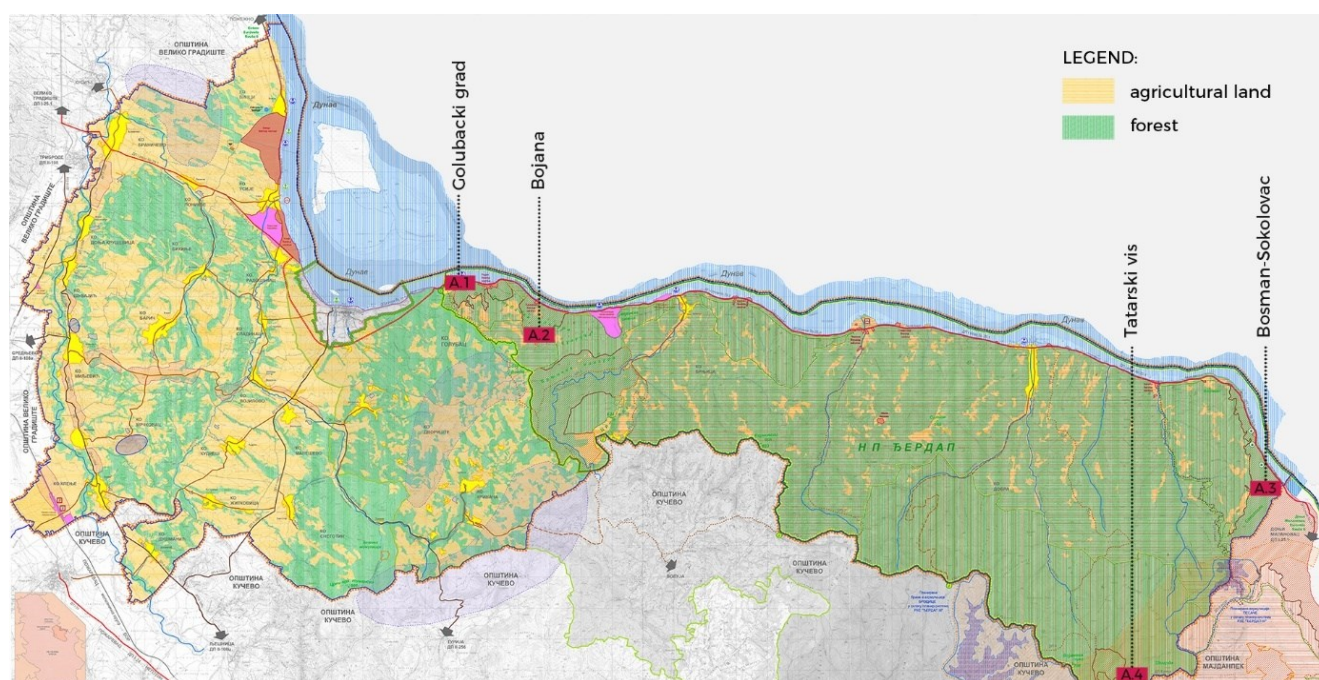
renewed medieval Golubac fortress (Figure 2). Despite these facts, the area is in decline for decades, partly because it is an emigrational area and young people tend to leave their city in search for better education and employment. Though touristically attractive, the place is scarcely visited and only by small number of Serbian tourists. The economy is relatively weak, leaning mainly on agriculture. The newest incentives and investments have made little influence to overcome this situation. They are mainly based on conventional planning and strategic documents, which have not carried adequate research in situ or with the locals.



**Figure 2.** Golubac city promenade and the Golubac fortress, source: Tourist organization, Golubac.



**Figure 3.** Location of the Municipality of Golubac within Braničevo-Podunavlje region with the map of potential locations of economic infrastructure network and tourist destinations in Braničevo-Podunavlje region (Source: Regional development strategy Braničevo - Podunavlje 2009 – 2013)



**Figure 4.** The ratio of agricultural and forest land in the municipality of Golubac and the location of 4 nature reserves: Golubacki grad, Bojana, Tatarski vis and Bosman-Sokolovac (Source: Golubac municipality spatial plan, 2011).

The problems addressed by this Action plan are typical for the majority of Serbian cities. Despite having a variety of numerous adopted documents regarding different spatial and governance levels, such as strategies, actions, spatial and urban plans and programs, dealing with the protection of cultural and natural heritage in urban and rural areas, there is still a very low rate of their implementation.

The strategic framework of the Action Plan for the protection and sustainable use of the natural and cultural heritage of Golubac is the Danube Region Development Strategy based on natural and cultural heritage (ref DANURB, 2019), which proposes the creation of spatial and cultural networks along the Danube with the aim of connecting communities and creating a unique, culture- and heritage-based and eco-friendly tourist destination. *The main aim* of the Action plan is the protection and improvement of the environment (urban + cultural + natural) that is based on local culture and available natural and cultural assets, human resources through community awareness, knowledge & skills, and settlement fabric as a linking element. Hence, this is an effort to create a network of diverse offers, places and routes of cultural, eco- and town tourism.

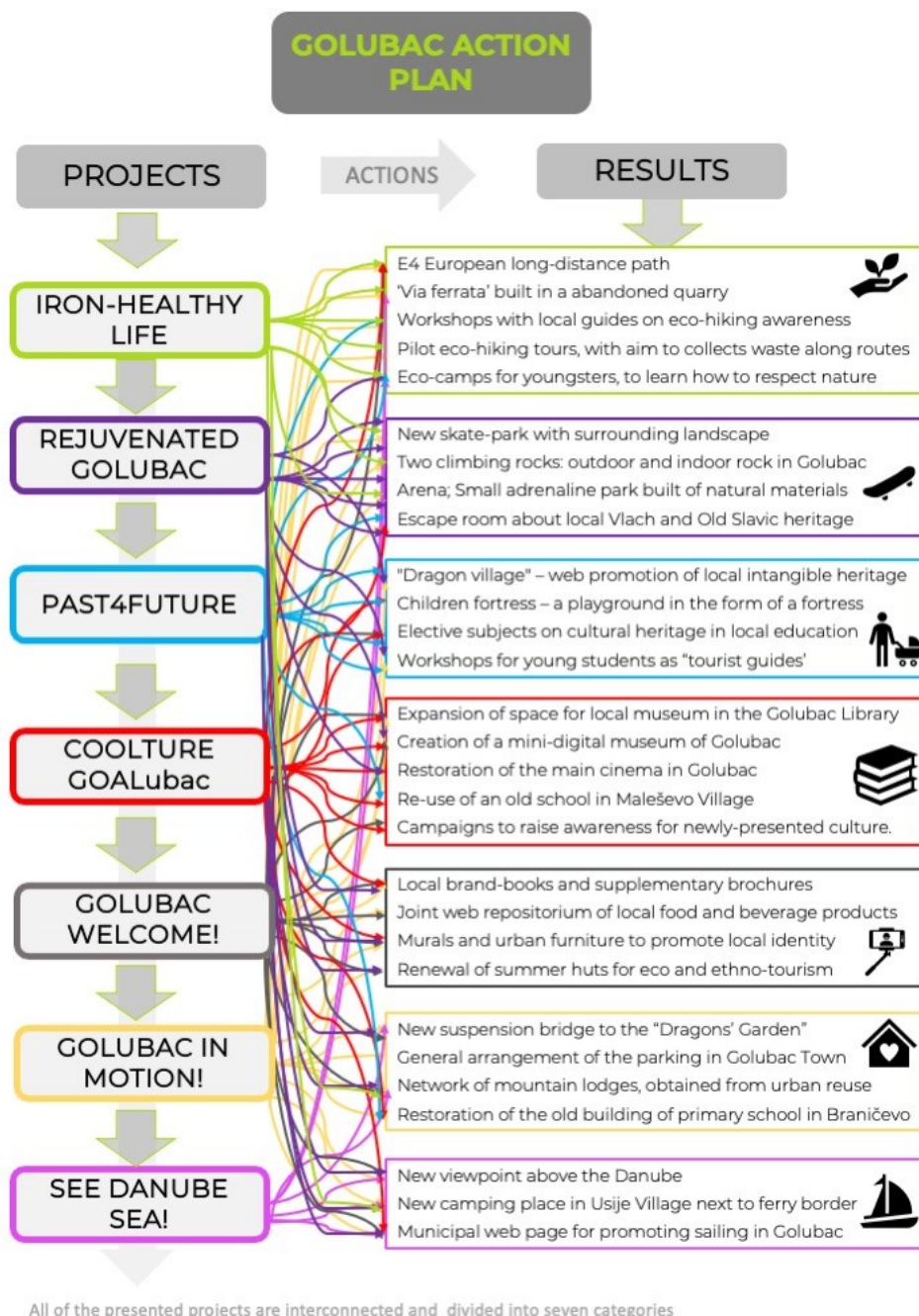
According to the Action plan for Golubac (Interreg – Danube Transnational Programme DANuRB+ (2022a), the *specific objectives* of the plan are:

- “1. The identification, valorization, protection, enhancement and promotion of natural, cultural and urban heritage as a resource for the development of sustainable tourism, with the aim to develop the “Danube Urban Brand” as a specific touristic offer;
2. Raising the capacity of local stakeholders and other actors to formulate and launch development projects based on natural and cultural heritage, aiming to achieve their full cooperation and access to funds at the local and international level;
3. Creating a network of actors’ projects so to provide the improvement of existing and the development of new eco-cultural contents and tours, accessible and interesting to different types of users-tourists-visitors; and
4. Creating the possibilities of trans-border connection in the wider area of Golubac, i.e., between both sides (Romanian and Serbian) of the Iron Gates Region, leaning on the Danube corridor in the field of sustainable, culture- and eco-based tourism.”

Achieving these objectives would lead to the empowerment of the local community, better connection between local people, institutions and organizations, and would enhance the local economy and the quality of life for local people. The Action plan development process (Interreg – Danube Transnational Programme DANuRB+ (2022a) consisted of four interrelated phases:

1. Identifying and mapping key paths and nodes: existing and planned bicycle, hiking and pedestrian paths, public transport and waterway routes, roads, bus stops, bicycle infrastructure and services, as well as resting points, viewpoints and other supportive elements;

2. Identifying and mapping key elements: eco- (nature and landscape heritage) and cultural (tangible and intangible heritage) based on documents' analyses and outcomes of the communication with stakeholders; and  
 3. The development of integral development projects that are interconnected, complementary, and mutually encouraging, which foster and enhance the local identity; valorizing and connecting compatible elements in line with stakeholders' ideas and available resources, defined timeframe, and analyses of costs and benefits.  
 In collaboration with stakeholders and other local actors, 25 project ideas were preliminary proposed. They enabled to create of a wide platform for further prioritization and elaboration of projects. In addition, these project ideas are gathered around several sub-topics. Further research resulted in several final project proposals developed in this Action plan.



**Figure 5.** A diagram of the interconnections between integral projects, activities, and results (Author: J. Marić, 2022).

Derived from the main objectives and based on the extensive site research and users' participation in creating the common visions, the main seven integral projects were developed: (1) IRON-HEALTHY LIFE – Fostering Healthy Lifestyle & Healthy Tourism in the Iron Gates; (2) REJUVENATED GOLUBAC – Making Golubac Attractive for Young People; (3) PAST4FUTURE – Golubac Children as Promoters of Local Heritage; (4) COOLTURE\_GOALubac – Make Golubac Culture Visible for Everyone; (5) GOLUBAC WELCOME! Branding of Golubac Identity through economic, social, spatial and visual means; (6) GOLUBAC IN

MOTION! Linking Tourist Offer in Golubac to Attract New Visitors and (7) SEE DANUBE SEA! Enabling Better Relations between Golubac and the Danube River (Figure 5). The interconnection between the results of each project is shown in the Figure 5. These projects were based on the additional objectives such as: promoting healthy lifestyle, providing education about heritage for youngsters, and (re)branding the city all with the focus on the Danube natural and cultural heritage. For each of the proposed seven project different characteristics were developed including: project acronym and title, type, location, duration, planned budget, key stakeholders and partners, specific project objective, main project elements, expected results, and project activities that are directly connected to the DANURB+ activities.

Table 1: Example of one of the ACTION PLAN DATA SHEET, source: DANURB+ Action plan for Golubac.

<b>PROPOSAL 1: DESCRIPTION</b>	
<b>Project acronym and title</b>	<b>IRON-HEALTHY LIFE – Fostering Healthy Lifestyle &amp; Healthy Tourism in the Iron Gates</b>
<b>TYPE OF THE PROJECT</b> (Within DANURB+ goals)	Branding of DANURB values to increase the attractiveness of towns and regions
Location	SERBIA / Iron Gates & Golubac Municipality + ROMANIA
Duration (if you can specify)	24 months
Planned budget	500,000 EUR
<b>KEY STAKEHOLDER</b>	
<b>Organisation name</b>	Biciklističko Planinarsko Društvo Golubac / Cycling and Hiking Society, Golubac
<b>Contact person</b>	Snežana Rakić Arsić / bpdgolubac.com / snezanaarsic@gmail.com
<b>Other stakeholders</b>	
<b>Partner I</b>	Asociatia "Dunarea la Cazane", Dubova, Romania
<b>Partner II</b>	Golubac Municipality, Serbia
<b>Partner III</b>	Tourist Organisation of Golubac, Serbia
<b>Partner IV</b>	"Đerdap/Iron Gates" National Park, D. Milanovac, Serbia
<b>Partner V</b>	Iron Gates Natural Park, Orșova, Romania
<b>PROJECT OBJECTIVE:</b>	
The main objective is to develop and promote a healthy lifestyle and healthy tourism in the Iron Gates Region by improving the infrastructure for outdoor and mountain sports and recreation.	
<b>MAIN PROJECT ELEMENTS:</b>	
Activity 1: E4 European long-distance path in the Iron Gates	
Activity 2: New climbing activities in the vicinity of Golubac Fortress and in Dubova Area	
Activity 3: Eco-hiking – hiking plus removing waste along the mountain routes	
Activity 4: Eco-awareness for the younger generation.	
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS:</b>	
Expected results are: (1) marked E4 European long-distance path for hiking activities in Golubac and the Iron Gates; (2) 'via ferrata' built in an abandoned quarry next to Golubac Fortress with supplementary access; (3) workshops with local guides and hospitality workers to address the awareness regarding to eco-hiking; (4) pilot eco-hiking tours, with aim to collect waste along routes; and (5) eco-camps for youngsters, to learn how to respect nature during mountain recreation and tourism activities.	
<b>RELATED DANURB ACTIVITIES:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops on the possibilities to create competitive regions by the networking of projects and stakeholders by the Danube</li> <li>• Local stakeholder workshops to find local and common values of peripheries and possibilities related to these and the Danube</li> <li>• Workshops on the evaluation and selection of underused heritage sites to be valorised by the DANURB Action Plans</li> <li>• Participatory design processes with stakeholders in all regions by university experts to develop local heritage</li> <li>• Technical documentation as the result of planning to develop local heritage</li> <li>• Guidelines for educational programs for young people in local schools on the cultural resources of the Danube</li> <li>• Guidelines for educational programs in special-technical training schools/and or artistic schools/cultural centres to promote the use of traditional local arts and crafts and professions</li> <li>• Proposals for effective local stakeholder networks capable to initiate heritage valorization projects</li> <li>• Workshops to develop competencies needed for cooperative valorisation actions</li> <li>• Regional reports on the possible impact of DANURB Branding activities on the resilience of peripheral regions by the Danube</li> </ul>	

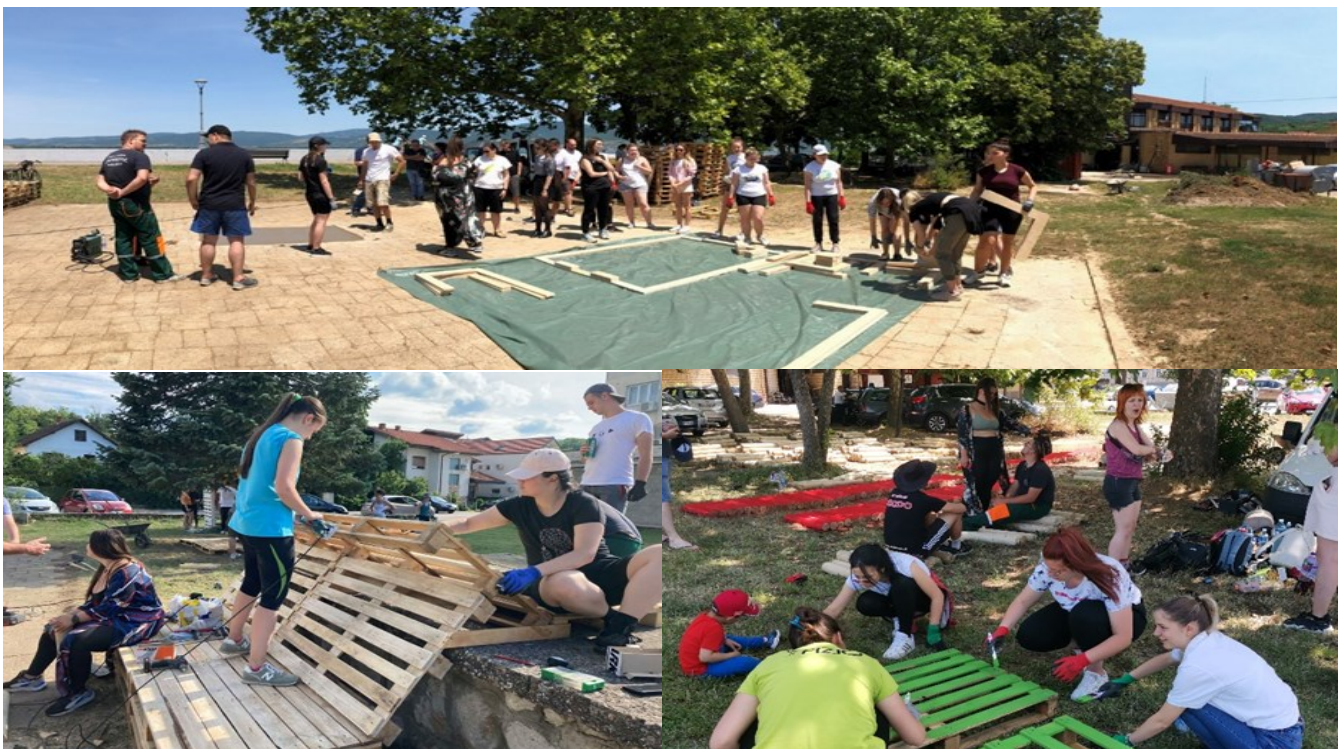
As a part of the Action plan for Golubac, two Pilot projects were actually developed in 2022. Both of the Pilot project were developed based on the mutual collaboration of Belgrade project team and students from the Faculty of Architecture and local municipality representatives. Pilot 1 included construction of new city park, while Pilot 2 refers to a project documentation for the reconstruction of national library in Golubac.

### **Pilot project No.1: Golubac building camp “Danube pavilion”and Pilot Project No. 2 for the National library in Golubac**

Danube pavilion is the name of Golubac Building camp, which presents a unique participatory process between professionals, teachers, students and the local community, combining education, knowledge transfer and community involvement in a single project. The exact area selected for the BC is located on the waterfront of Golubac, with great potential because of the proximity to housing and public facilities, as well as natural characteristics such as Danube vistas and greenery. The main goal of this Building camp was to start a multi-level participation process and to make an interactive and unique space that will continue to “live” even after the implementation. This park now can represent a new platform for festivals, performances and future cross-border collaboration. Additionally, one of the goals was education and knowledge transfer with the Romanian teachers and students.

The overall process of the BC development was done in several phases. Approximately 30 students from University of Belgrade – Faculty of Architecture alongside with several mentors developed this project in one semester, while the building process itself lasted for four days. This project required a preparation stage before the execution, as well as the promotion stage after the execution. The colorful appearance of the park, the interactivity of the furniture lightning, the possibility to change the arrangement of sitting areas and the variety of usage of the furniture all contributed to strengthening the local identity. The new public park in central Golubac became a very popular place for socialization. It has attracted all types of users: citizens in general, people in nearby streets, tourist, an, most of all – the local children. The whole process was promoted via social media an several tv channels, and new “Danube pavilion” became a park that sparked emotional connection with locals as well as one of the city urban landmarks today. The whole process is presented in the figures below (Figure 6).

Additionally, as a Pilot Project 2, the project for the reconstruction of the National Library was developed. During the meetings with local municipality and according to the current cultural capacities, the decision to develop more cultural and leisure space was made. The project focused on the library attic, a space of great potential that is currently not used, and project suggested a modern aesthetics, with opening vistas toward the Danube and urban design of open space and square surrounding the library building (Figure 7).







**Figure 6.** Construction of the wooden urban furniture (source: Jelena Marić and Branislav Antonic, 2022).: Coloring the urban furniture (source: Milorad Obradović, 2022). Preparation of a site for BC (source: Branislav Antonic, 2022). Cleaning and replacing concrete tiles at the site of BC (source: Milorad Obradović, 2022).



**Figure 7.** One of the renders from the Library project reconstruction and the urban design of open public space, source/design: Ivica Nikolić.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The DANuRB+ project is of great importance for increasing local cultural, economic and touristic prosperity of cities and towns in the Danube Region that are not fully developed. The main goal of the project, in addition to the valorization of the Danube heritage and improvement of the quality of life of the local inhabitants, is the empowerment of local stakeholders and the encouragement of cooperation both at the local and cross-border level. The Danurb Strategy, which represents the backbone of the whole DANuRB+ project, creates the network of small tourist gems -towns along the Danube River, thus promoting the river itself within the European Union and beyond. The structure of the project is diverse and rich and spans from the big sub-parts, such as Action plans, to the small interventions that involve everyone at the local level who is willing to take part. We believe that the outcomes of the project will not remain just the results of the international project; they have taught the local actors of how to recognize their home towns' own values; they have emphasized the importance of the local engagement, which can bring realistic improvement. The unified platform and cooperation of the international team have showed the value of the unified platform, which is a brand strong enough to increase local prosperity and international tourist attractiveness.

Action plans represent a useful tool for integrating natural and cultural heritage into sustainable future development of small and medium Danubian cities, by increasing their regional and international visibility and future funding for sustainable tourism projects, and creating a spatial and cultural network along the Danube. Methodology of Action plans presented in this paper is unique, it does not imitate the basic structure and approach used in this domain of planning documents and practice, and includes: an analysis of strategic regional and local planning documents, a review of publicly available written sources, a field study of the potential for the tourism development and research through participation, and organization of thematic events.

The Action plan proposed complementary and mutually interconnected integral development projects, which are the result of the findings of the territory analysis, the value-conceptual approach and the expressed initiatives of stakeholders. Projects differ by the type of intervention, the size of the territory they cover, the number of people concerned, required funds, types of resources that can and should be engaged, topics and possible project partners. As part of the Action Plan for Golubac, two pilot projects were developed - construction of a new city park and project documentation for the reconstruction of the National Library in Golubac. The importance of these pilot projects for local citizens is reflected in their direct involvement in the processes of project realization, connecting local citizens with other participants, but also in indirect benefits such as improving the standard of living through various cultural and recreational facilities. The future of these and similar pilot project is bright and they can in fact be implemented as they were supported and chosen by local people.

The challenges related to this research could be related to the formal planning network limitations and the possibility of integration of the results of the DANURB+ project into it. However, proposed projects represent guidelines and an illustration of how the practical action could be implemented in future. The main contribution of the research lies in its realistic implementability, operability, and transfer of knowledge and the outcomes to the other similar or different regions with small cities in decline. Future research and projects could also focus on the bigger space and time framework with the aim to investigate the balanced touristic development at a national or international level. Bearing in mind the (mainly negative) effects of mass tourism on many popular places and cities worldwide and especially on the local residents, it is recommendable to work towards the "transfer" of tourist interest and actions towards small towns. We hope the future international projects such as DANURB+ will bring more academics, local and national experts and other stakeholders together in common goal to achieve the concrete results for the benefit of the small cities and their inhabitants and sustainable tourism development.

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