



SUMMARY REPORT: REPORT ON MARKETING ORIENTED APPROACHES TO ICH PROJECTS

D.T1.2.2

(WP T1, ACTIVITY A.T1.2: MARKETABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF ICH)

Version 2

06 2018

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Delivery date	Updated Version 2: July 10 th 2018



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1. Introduction

The following report summarizes the main findings from the interviews and local reports of the project partners (D.T1.2.1) within the activity “Marketability and Sustainability of ICH” (A.T1.2). It outlines the motives and approaches used by cultural operators, gives an overview about the cooperation that are already used and the ones still required and discusses which competences are needed for the implementation of successful marketing approaches. Its final section provides an idea for the marketing of ICH. Furthermore, the questionnaires filled in by financial actors are taken into account, which provide insight about the motivations for (financially) supporting cultural and ICH projects.

The interviews and questionnaires have been conducted between November 2017 and May 2018. All project partners have been provided with an instruction manual, a guideline for a semi-structured interview as well as a template for the questionnaire (see annex 1). Some of the partners had troubles finding interview partners, others said stated that cultural operators in general were open for the interviews. Moreover, like PP02 stated, the flow of the talks with cultural operators seemed to be at ease, since they often had “the same point of views in many subjects” (D.T1.2.1 PP02: 4) like the interviewers, which made it easier to talk to each other and find a common ground.

In any cases, even if some project partners needed more time than was actually given, all required interviews were conducted.

More challenging was to find financial operators, e.g. bank employers, business representatives or local administration officers, who were willing to complete the questionnaires. Since the regions involved in the project differ regarding size and population, in some cases it can be argued that less questionnaires were received. We can confirm the effort of all project partners to collect the predetermined number of questionnaires.



Overview of the completed/submitted interviews and questionnaires

PP	Region, Country	Nr of interviews	Nr of questionnaires
LP	Veneto, IT	10	10
PP02	Veneto, IT	9	9
PP03	Steiermark, AT	10	10
PP04	Zahodna Slovenija, SI	10	10
PP05	Zahodna Slovenija, SI	10	10
PP06	Nyugat-Dunántúl, HU	10	6
PP07	Leipzig, DE	10	9
PP09	Podkarpackie, PL	20	20
PP11	Jihozápad, CZ	11	12
PP12	Bratislavský kraj, SK	10	10
PP13	Steiermark, AT	10	10

In the interviews provided by the project partners and the best practice research conducted by PP08, it became clear that the recognition and appreciation of ICH among the local community and the following valorisation is highly dependent on its visibility. The reports on the interviews done on the local level revealed that sometimes neither the community concerned nor potential investors know about ICH at all or they cannot name it - and therefore cannot imagine its potential for the region (see D.T1.2.1 PP04). Others said that the Cultural Capital Counts Project (CCC) contributed to the awareness of ICH - which was beneficial to the ICH (D.T1.2.1 PP05 & PP07). So, a first hypothesis is that visibility itself can be considered a marketing objective as it is indirectly benefitting the cultural operator's search for financing partners and the process of valorisation in a more general view.

Especially regarding this aspect, aiming at valorisation, it has to be kept in mind that ICH is often considered part of the local identity. This notion has to be taken



seriously: local identity is not to be commercialized but marketing measures should be adapted to the wants and needs of the ICH bearers and the local community - otherwise they cannot be considered sustainable, might provoke attempts of “undoing heritage” and have negative effects instead of being part of a valorisation process - that should always be of value for the ICH bearers. Even if the opinion that marketability is absolutely necessary “at these times” (D.T1.2.1 PP05) - possibly referring to the consumer society in the capitalist system - seems to be generally shared, one needs to be aware of the balancing act between valorisation and commercialisation.

Regarding financial valorisation, visibility is important because selling products, attracting visitors and potential partner organizations can only be done when the ICH and its practitioners are visible. Here, marketing as a way of analysing where, for whom and how the ICH should be visible, adapting this analysis to the conditions of the ICH and its bearers and then implementing the measures is necessary. Visibility also plays a very important role for motivating businesses, public authorities and other to financially support ICH. While there are regions which have a generally strong support for ICH, others have to fight more. It is not only that there is a lack of financial resources in general in most cases (which prevents ICH practitioners and cultural operators from engaging into activities such as marketing which are essential for valorization) but - even more crucial - the unsustainability of the funding: Most cultural operators dealing with ICH receive funding on a year-to-year basis, which makes it difficult for them to plan ahead and implement long-term projects. Receiving sustainable funding or support which is oriented to a long-term perspective is difficult.



2. Summary of the local reports: the state of affairs concerning sustainable marketing and financing ICH

2.1 Motives and approaches

First of all, it has to be stated that the motives of being actively engaged in marketing activities (or not) and the choice of the instruments is highly dependent on the general understanding of what marketing is, can be and is likely to achieve. This understanding is determined by the ICH field and the institution forms one is working in.

Two types of motives can be distinguished: On the one hand the motives for marketing can be closely tied to the ICH itself. It is used to provide information about products and events in order to gain the attention of the general community, especially of more paying consumers: Marketing is seen as an important tool for financing.

On the other hand marketing of ICH is seen as dedicated to the “greater goals” concerning the region: It is seen as potentially fostering patriotism, raising the attractiveness of the region for the residents (in order to keep people in the region), attracting potential new inhabitants, keeping the region unique (also to differentiate oneself from other regions) and being a general economic benefit factor. Here, ICH is put into a wider context and not so much seen as a direct financing tool but more a way of indirect valorisation. Nevertheless, there are attempts to make this idea of indirect valorisation more concrete and the affects more tangible. E.g. some cultural operators from the Veneto Region in Italy were referring to the findings of a research from their region that testifies “that for every euro invested in culture, the territory has a return of 1.8 euro” (D.T1.2.1 LP: 6). Marketing is understood as “absolutely necessary in these times” (D.T1.2.1 PP05: 6), but often cultural operators have a very low budget for actually doing marketing.



What both motives for marketing (direct financing and indirect valorisation) have in common is that the promotion of tourism is considered an essential objective of marketing activities.

Two marketing approaches used by cultural operators can be distinguished: First, there is the tendency of untargeted marketing: “Marketing is performed, but not on a professional level - it is learning by doing or just doing” (D.T1.2.1 PP07). Marketing is known to be important, cultural operators feel the need to position themselves “in the market” without really knowing where, why and how. Here, marketing is no more than a buzzword and untargeted actions are rather ineffective - as they are seen as an end in itself.

In the other - more seldom - cases a mix of methods and instruments, adapted to the target groups is used. Cultural operators using this - rather reflected approach are likely to come across difficulties as facing their lack of time and competence (see chapter 4) - Both resources required when conducting a thought out marketing strategy.

2.2 Marketing instruments

Concerning the instruments used for the marketing of the ICH projects in question three groups could be identified: traditional marketing instruments, social media and the ICH bearers themselves.

Before going into detail about the specific marketing instruments subsumed under these main categories, general findings are to be summarized: First, only few cultural operators claim to consciously combine various, differing marketing instruments - cross-marketing solutions are rarely applied, even if the operators know about their appropriateness. Second, a large part of cultural operators working with ICH seem to focus their marketing activities on the preparation of events. Nevertheless, they are aware of this limitation not being reasonable and want to develop an integral marketing approach.



Even if PP11 claims that “Nowadays, the preparation of new marketing instructions for discussion and approval has been pointed out. Some cities (cultural operators) already have such a manual and use it”, it remains unclear whether such manuals are flexible toolboxes needed by cultural operators and ICH practitioners.

Traditional marketing

First of all, printed media are (still) quite important when it comes to marketing: Cultural operators set up cooperation with local and regional print media for example by organizing press trips or regularly giving interviews. Another marketing instrument belonging to this analogue realm is the production of own print advertising for promotion and communication: Here, billboards are used to enhance the ICHs visibility.

For the digital part, it is also local and regional media, such as city portals or portals addressing tourists. Besides, newsletters spread via email are used in order to directly contact (potentially) interested people and/or keep in touch with them. Another digital, but already traditional marketing instrument is the website used by cultural operators.

Social Media

The use of social media is still in the development phase: The traditional channels described above are still considered more important, even if the consciousness about the importance and coverage of social media is emerging. An awareness about the importance of storytelling formats is arising - which is best done by social media (Instagram in particular) (D.T1.2.1PP11).

When cultural operators are already using social media, it is mostly Facebook they stick to. They seem to hesitate to use social media, due to a lack of knowledge and competence, even if there is quite some open and accessible knowledge about the use of social media (“As for the social media implemented, we found out that there is a change in the use of social networks by the young (under 20): they use mainly Instagram which has got a more visual impact [...]. Facebook is more used in the range



between 20/25 year old population and it is used to gather information and share events. Twitter instead is a social used for the dissemination of flash news. [...] Also newsletters and websites are still very well much in use, since there are different clients to be targeted and reached: for example those means are still used to reach more 'aged' people, but also to give a more formal and institutional communication" (D.T1.2.1 LP)) which would at least allow defining target groups and the medium to be used - even if one does not know how to concretely use it.

ICH practitioners themselves

The idea that the most relevant marketing actors are the cultural operators and/or ICH bearers themselves is a perception that influences marketing activities: On the one side it clearly is a good approach, as the love and passion ICH bearers have for their craft, tradition, etc., their knowledge and the making of everyday objects are best presented and thereby marketed by themselves. On the other hand the value of this perception is dependent on whether the practitioners are interested into presenting their work, their story etc. to the public. If they do not cooperate with the operators dealing with marketing, other instruments have to be found - even if they are not considered as useful.

2.3 Motivations for financing ICH

It became quite obvious, that the general willingness of financial operators to give insights into their motives and sponsoring activities was rather low. Almost every partner had more trouble finding enough people for the questionnaires than for the interviews, which take up more time than completing a questionnaire. Furthermore, some did not seem to take this request very serious, therefore some of the questionnaires are incomplete or give very short answers, which makes it difficult to understand the motives and thoughts behind.



Motives for supporting ICH for private institutions is mostly visibility of the own business/company, they hope for image building when giving money. But private investors also support ICH through donations and investments because they are aware of the importance of preserving ICH (D.T1.2.1 PP13) and think that culture is generally very important (D.T1.2.1 PP4). PP05 also named a motivation for private investors to be active in the own environment, not only as a quality employer but also by participating. Due to limited financial resources though, “they have to make some choices” (D.T1.2.1 PP04: 10) and often start cutting the support of cultural projects and events. Culture is often not the in the first place of foundations for example, social projects, health initiatives and children/family related activities come before that (D.T1.2.1 LP). Another challenge was detected by PP02: “private financing operators are too much focused on the classical principles of business, they usually don’t look for the projects to be financed, they wait to be contacted by the associations.” (D.T1.2.1 PP02: 8). Banking foundations, in the other hand, have a directly mission to valorise ICH which is why they look for projects: “They know very well that this kind of financing has a strong return in term of image.” (D.T1.2.1 PP02: 8).

Also, personal contacts and connections are important. Businesses are willing to support if they know the ICH initiators personally or are even involved with an ICH.

In some regions, public funding are very established. Even if an event for example has a private sponsors, they are majorly public funded, which might lead to the hypothesis that this “prevents the development of relations between culture and the rest of the private businesses.” (D.T1.2.1 PP9: 19). Motives for public investors are to enrich the social and cultural life in the region, to build a destination brand based on local identity, to enrich the tourist offer and to stimulate growth of new products (D.T1.2.1 PP05).

Generally speaking it can be stated, that no matter what the project is about, what matters for investors is what they get in return if they invest in / support it (D.T1.2.1 LP). Almost all investors think that it is important to support culture, but all in all the own visibility is more important. This means that it has to be made very clear what an investor or supporter gets in return.



Voluntary work

At the same time, one of the strongest backbones of ICH is voluntary work. People give their free time, without being actually paid - or at least not in a monetary way - mostly with a lot of passion and engagement for ICH. Most ICH would not be able to survive if they had not a strong community behind it, which organizes events and meetings and spreads word about it, also a significant marketing factor. Volunteering is an important factor which creates an economic benefit in an indirect way (D.T1.2.1 LP).

Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding was a topic which was directly addressed during the research activities. A surprising little number of - either cultural actors or ICH bearers - have experiences in crowdfunding. PP11 stated, that the awareness is there, but due to a lack of resources you need to prepare an efficient campaign, almost none has used it. There is certainly unused potential here, as "Crowdfunding platforms consider it as important to also promote cultural and ICH related projects because of sustainable preservation of valuable cultural heritage [...]" (D.T1.2.1 PP13).



3. Cooperation required

Cooperation on various levels form part of the basis for successful marketing of ICH but are often more seen as a by-product, a 'nice to have'. But even if the awareness of the importance of cooperation is missing, they seem to be working very good.

On the local level it is mostly touristic offices cultural operators cooperate with: The ICH or/and connected cultural projects are included in touristic activities of the region. These cooperation are supplemented by networks among cultural actors on a regional level. These are considered to be the most important cooperation: "[The] future of the region is only possible in cooperation with the neighbouring areas" (D.T1.2.1 PP06).

It seems that on the transnational level it is still particular cross border projects that are used for marketing purposes and not so much steady cooperation. Exceptions are international cooperation with partner cities.

In order to find (new) potential cooperation partners, already existing networks of ICH practitioners are used: One might call this a snowball system. A way of finding especially international cooperation partners is joining conferences in the realm of the ICH.

And of course, there are strong networks among the cultural operators. In many regions, they are all very well connected within the own field and neighbouring fields, everybody knows everybody, which is sometimes a challenge, as there are also resentments among individuals that might lead to a refusal to cooperate. But all in all, these cultural networks have been existing for a long time, and can be taken as a starting point for the cross-sectoral networks aimed at in the ARTISTIC project.



4. Competence needed

“It is necessary to take a qualitative step: ‘putting cultural work at the centre ... but definitely strengthening the entrepreneurial dimension’. If these realities fail to make the leap, they remain amateur and do not turn into companies that allow members to make their passion a trade.” (D.T1.2.1 LP)

‘Making the leap’, becoming more entrepreneurial and more professional seems to be linked to certain competences and knowledge. Cultural operators try to gain the knowledge they think they need by reading articles and e-posts, good practice examples and – rather seldom – people go to special trainings. Only very few cooperate with external marketing experts, even if they think it is necessary to involve external help into the development of businesses connected to ICH.

Cultural operators voiced that even if ICH bearers are conscious about the importance of “new” marketing instruments such as social media (or even more indirect marketing tools as crowdfunding) they are often facing a lack of knowledge and professionalism concerning the effective use and the evaluation of that use which prevents them from starting to use new channel such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc. Besides, it is often difficult for cultural operators to obtain the needed information autonomously. Here, contributory factors are the lack of time and financial resources dedicated to marketing activities.

However there are lot of ideas and wishes concerning the achievement of the needed competences: Cultural operators would like to take courses on digitisation in general and especially on the use of social media. Special competences that are considered essential for effective marketing concern language and wording but also more general, operational capabilities in the field of estimation and sales.

For developing a mature marketing strategy, collaborations with marketing experts are seen as indispensable. Besides, working together with professional graphic designers and branding companies is considered important: Here, the wish for a long-term horizon is stressed.



Finally, it is general communication skills that are needed, as collaborations among ICH practitioners and/or associated cultural operators are considered good and important in terms of marketing: For example, a professional regional marketing and information hub with a “market agent”, a company responsible for communicating and placing ICH related products on the market on the basis of sales commission, would be appreciated. Also, they use cross-marketing, common program packages with other participants, offering the products of each other is considered a useful approach.

Besides, “[i]t is often difficult for cultural operators to obtain information on the impact of different types of marketing. There are uncertainties about demonstrating and evaluating the benefits of campaigns. There are no sufficient ways to evaluate the impact of the marketing method on the target group” (D.T1.2.1 PP 11).

Concerning the financial aspect, it became quite obvious, that ICH bearers and cultural operators are usually sticking to financial models or possibilities they are already familiar with, without having an overview of newer, more innovative financial possibilities nor even knowing where to gain information. Crowdfunding, sometimes even fundraising, is in some cases “far away from their [cultural operators] mentality and they just look for public funding that is why they often have big problems to find money to support their activity.” (D.T1.2.1 PP02: 4) Here, professional know how is missing and needed. Sometimes, this missing knowledge is directly linked to the attitude: “If these operators don’t start consider a project from the aspect of profitability, the financing will be more and more a problem. Passion and heart are the main qualities of the members of the association, but nowadays these are not enough.” (D.T1.2.1 PP02:4) This, rather severe, statement points out, that there is still a huge gap between the valuable engagement of cultural operators and the idea of profit. On the other hand, the passion and heart mentioned are the motivation for working long hours, often unpaid, which must also be understood as material resourcing ICH.



5. Outlook and conclusion

Analysing the interviews and reports handed in by the project partners, but also during the workshop conducted at University Hamburg, the idea that the local ICH perception itself could - or even should - be used in terms of marketing came up. To give some examples, two perspectives on ICH are listed:

First, it was emphasized by various project partners that ICH practitioner and/or cultural operators love their jobs, are emotionally attached and are well integrated into local life, projects and associations. Their enthusiasm and conscientiousness could be a thematic anchor for marketing activities, a point that was already indicated in chapter 2.

Second, several project partners think that ICH practitioners and cultural operators are not aware of that they are indirectly influencing young people (even if they might not be able to carry out a successful social media strategy): The higher quality of life, happier community and heritage-based development of an area achieved by the ICH can affect even those who might be considered an unreachable target group. Maybe it is this enhancement of quality of life that should be a content transported via marketing activities.

The motives for marketing, the goals, the approaches, the instruments and difficulties differ from region to region, ICH to ICH and basically from cultural operator to another. What was most evident in all reports and was discussed during the workshop at University Hamburg, is the lack of time and financial resources that ICH practitioners and cultural operators have to spare for marketing activities. Whereas the first lack is hard to compensate, the second one - the lack of financial resources - might be approached by making operators ware of the marketing possibilities that are free of cost: E.g. social media. Surely, the use of social media is dependent on knowledge and capacities, but even this knowledge is likely to be found online - for free. But free of cost still demands time to acquire the knowledge, and if it isn't known were to find it, this is also a major obstacle. It can be stated already as an outlook that the ARTISTIC project should help to provide condensed information and help to transfer knowledge.



Another point that can be extracted from this analysis is the underestimation of the power of cooperation: Cooperation and related cross-marketing solutions are inexpensive and might be quite effective marketing instruments. Cultural operators seem to be aware of this but do not always place special effort in the existing networks - they seems to run 'along' other marketing undertakings.

Also cooperation between different fields seem to be rare; whereas the cultural landscape might be cross-linked rather well, contacts to businesses, financial actors or other sectors are not so much established. Many are not aware of the ICH in the specific region, they sometimes do not even know what ICH means. That is why one continuous concerns of the ARTISTIC project is to develop and establish sustainable networks of different stakeholders and operators: not only cultural operators and ICH related actors, but people who have not been involved at all with ICH so far.

And last but not least, non-monetary resourcing should be stronger incorporated in any valorization strategy developed. As already discussed above (see chapter 2), voluntary work, time and spaces are most important for ICH, and all project partner underlined the importance of it. These factors and their means for ICH should be treated with the same importance as gaining knowledge about financial models and how to establish sustainable financing for ICH.



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