



Horne Oresany, Podmalokarpatsky region (Slovakia) from the south. Photo: Jan Hanusin

## LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT IN PLANNING DOCUMENTS

### INNOVATIVE METHODOLOGIES FOR SCREENING DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Strategic developmental documents should serve as important tools for achieving landscape quality objectives. Among the important objectives defined by the European Landscape Convention (ELC) is that the “wishes and requests of the public concerning characteristic features of landscape they live in (are) formulated for the given landscape by the responsible public authorities”.

In Chapter II the ELC requests the signing parties “to integrate landscape into its regional and town planning policies and in its cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as in any other policies with possible direct or indirect impact on the landscape.”

As part of the VITAL LANDSCAPES project the researchers at the Institute of Geography, Slovak Academy of Sciences (PP4) have examined how landscape development is reflected in the strategic development documents of regions and municipali-

ties. For this they have developed two innovative methods: **Expert Analysis** and **Keyword (KW) Analysis** which will be briefly introduced in this newsletter.

In addition, this newsletter includes a review of the first trans-national study tour of the VITAL LANDSCAPES project, organised in May 2011 by PP2 to the Slovenian pilot region. This excursion was an important step towards connecting the different PPs and to exchange know-how and best practice examples. The next excursion in September will visit Austria and the Czech Republic.

Finally, we would like to announce the programme of the VITAL LANDSCAPES Half-time Conference on 21/22 September in Ljubljana/Slovenia.

For further information, please also visit our website [www.vital-landscapes.eu](http://www.vital-landscapes.eu) or contact us directly.

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# SCREENING DOCUMENTS BY KEYWORD ANALYSIS

AN INNOVATIVE METHOD DEVELOPED BY VITAL LANDSCAPE / PP4

The European Landscape Convention requires that landscape development issues be integrated into regional and town planning policies. Since planning documents are complex and extensive, it is difficult to check how this is put into effect in practice. To ease and speed up the review process, VITAL LANDSCAPES intends to develop an innovative methodology for screening local and regional planning documents (Output 3.1.3).

During the project meeting in March 2011 in Bratislava/SK, the responsible partner (PP4, Institute of Geography at the Slovak Academy of Science) presented the first results of their work. The screening of strategic documents via frequency of keywords consists of the following steps:

- Draft of keyword clusters representing key characteristics of the European Landscape Convention (ELC). NB: Not all concepts or words are exactly/explicitly defined in the ELC. However, their meaning/essence sufficiently represents the message of the document.
- Screening of frequency of individual words using Microsoft Word and Adobe Reader. Searches were conducted with only the root of the word to discover relevant modifications and variants.
- Assessment and comparison of results corresponding to model municipalities.
- Modification of clusters based on suitability or unsuitability of selected keywords such as land-

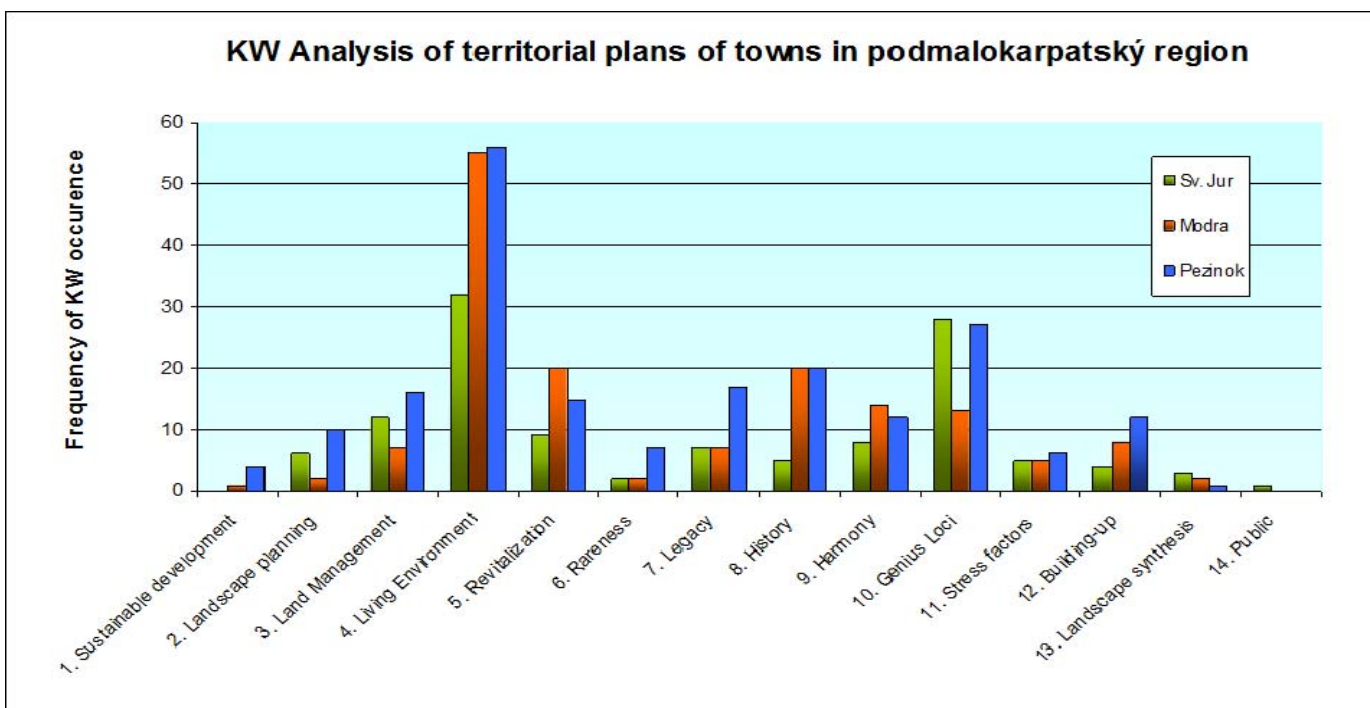
scape planning, living environment, land management, revitalisation etc. (see chart below).

The Keyword Method makes it possible to follow the implementation of the ELC in strategic documents and to create a tool that makes it possible to compare the quality of strategic documents pertaining to different municipalities (within a country or region).

As the conception of strategic development documents is often limited, this methodology (selection of suitable clusters of integrating keywords with related meaning or even synonyms) will also make it possible to screen the documents mentioned in terms of their complexity.

The next stage of work will expand on this to include international comparisons and presentation of the results. The value and practical relevance of the results obtained with this procedure can be further increased by assessing the results in the context of real changes in the landscape (for instance using data on land use changes in participating municipalities) followed by research into how such changes are perceived (e.g. through photo-reconstruction of the landscape and canvassing of public opinion of the resulting changes using, for example, electronic questionnaires).

For further and more detailed information please see [www.vital-landscapes.eu](http://www.vital-landscapes.eu).





# TRANS-NATIONAL STUDY TOUR TO SLOVENIA

## GERMAN STAKEHOLDERS EXPLORE SLOVENIAN BEST PRACTICES



The VITAL LANDSCAPES project includes trans-national study tours for regional stakeholders and decision makers to expand their knowledge of best practices in sustainable landscape development in the participating regions. The first study tour took place in May 2011. Organised by PP2 (Heritage Association Saxony-Anhalt), more than 20 German experts, politicians, landscape planners, historians and NGO representatives visited the Slovenian pilot region Ljubljansko barje as well as some other best practice examples of landscape preservation and development.

The results of this excursion have been manifold. Beside the resounding experience of enjoying the Slovenian landscape and the hospitality of the inhabitants, the following benefits and useful impressions are most noteworthy:

- Although Germany and Slovenia are hundreds of miles apart and have different historic backgrounds, both countries are confronted by many similar problems, including urban sprawl around larger cities, demographic problems in rural areas, and the (difficult) situation that farmers face etc.

- Consequently, most of these problems require solutions and strategies similar to those applied all over Europe. The excursion to Slovenia strengthened our awareness of the common European development and the need to find common solutions and strategies. This holds true especially in the current preparation phase for post-2013 EU policies.

- The visitors from abroad represented an important incentive for the Slovenian hosts. They used this opportunity to present their pilot activities in the region of Ljubljansko barje to regional politicians and stakeholders.

- Finally, the excursion also strengthened individual relations within the German group. Although many (but not all) of the participants had already met, the four day excursion provided an opportunity for discussions and exchanges for which there is less time in day-to-day office situations, enhancing mutual understanding. The visit to Slovenia therefore also supported the implementation of actions in the German pilot region – and even prepared the ground for possible future projects and co-operations.

The next international study tour will be organised to the Austrian and Czech pilot region. From 30 August to 2 September 2011, a German and a Slovenian group will visit the Mühlviertler Kernland (AT) and the Sumava Biosphere Reserve (CZ). Furthermore, the Hungarian partners are preparing an excursion to Slovenia in connection with the VITAL LANDSCAPES Half-time Conference. Guests are always welcome – please contact the co-ordination unit of the Lead Partner!



Historical landscape elements in Triglav National Park (Slovenia)  
Photos (3): Tom Werner



## PROJECT NEWS

### INTERNATIONAL STUDY TOUR

From 30 August to 2 September 2011 regional stakeholders and local experts from Saxony-Anhalt and the Ljubljana region will visit the Mühlviertler Kernland (AT) and Sumava Biosphere Reserve (CZ) to explore different approaches to landscape development.

Amongst others the group is going to learn more about the success story of various regional products and the impact of national park status for further regional progress.

### VISUALISATION WORKSHOP

On 25 May 2011 project partners from Germany and Hungary, together with Dr. Olaf Schroth from the University of British Columbia, met to discuss applied techniques for visualizing landscape changes.

Sandor Jomach (Corvinus University) and Dr. Schroth demonstrated GoogleEarth and related applications as appropriate tools for civil participation in the context of landscape development. Henrik Hass (Cultural Heritage Association of Saxony-Anhalt) presented the current state of archive research and digitalisation of historical maps in the Lower Saale valley.



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# VITAL LANDSCAPES HALF-TIME CONFERENCE

22 – 23 SEPTEMBER 2011, LJUBLJANA/SI

Given the focus of VITAL LANDSCAPES and the fact that the project's mid-term conference takes place at a time when new priorities in the European cohesion programme are being defined, this conference will host a discussion concerning the goals and priorities of future landscape development.

The conference programme is developed as a cooperation between the VITAL LANDSCAPES project group and the Slovenian authority for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) who believe that landscape as a capital for development should be ambitiously incorporated in future European territorial cohesion programmes. Taking into account the aims of the ELC to promote the protection, management and planning of landscapes and thereby to contribute to the quality of life and well-being of European citizens, the conference will encourage transnational discussion on the implementation of such aims through the forthcoming cohesion programmes, how landscape development can be supported in the next period of EU cohesion programmes, which priorities should be leading and which activities targeted.

Among others, the following guests and speakers have confirmed their participation:

- Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons, Council of Europe
- Maria Jose Festas, Chair of the Conference of Member States of the Council of Europe
- Dr. Gerhard Ermischer, CIVILSCAPE
- Dr. Miro Kline, Kline & Partner Ljubljana
- Margarita Jančič, Slovenian Ministry for Environment and Spatial Development

The conference will consist of the following three parts:

**Session I:** Landscape as development potential

**Session II:** Landscape development support mechanisms

**Session III / Round Table:** Landscape development in future EU policy and cohesion programmes

At the end of the conference, there will be an excursion to the Slovenian pilot region Ljubljansko barje.

For the latest information, please visit [www.vital-landscapes.eu](http://www.vital-landscapes.eu).



Ljubljansko Barje (Slovenia). Photo: Barbara Vidmar