

Danube GeoTour

Valorisation of geo-heritage for sustainable and innovative tourism development of Danube Geoparks

Pilot geoCulture and geoOutdoor products tested

Output Code: 4.3.

“Project co-funded by the European Union”

Programme: Interreg Danube Transnational Programme
PA2: Environment and culture responsible Danube region
Project Duration 01/2017 to 06/2019

Responsible Partner(s): ERDF PP8 University of Bucharest
Co-ordinators: Alexandru Andraşanu, Cristian Ciobanu – ERDF PP8 University of Bucharest

Participating Partners: LP, Idrija Heritage Centre

Date: 22.11.2018
Version: 1.0



List of Abbreviations

DTP	Danube Transnational Programme
JS	Joint Secretariat
LP	Lead Partner
PP	Project Partner
WP	Work Package
EGN	European Geoparks Network
GGN	Global Geoparks Network
UGG	UNESCO Global Geopark
TIC	Tourism Information Centre



Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations	2
Table of Contents	3
1. Introduction	5
1.1. <i>Background information</i>	5
1.2. <i>Methodology</i>	6
1.3. <i>Summary</i>	9
2. Basic criteria	9
2.1. <i>Description</i>	9
2.2. <i>Application</i>	10
3. Qualitative assessment	12
3.1. <i>Description</i>	12
Identity Axis	13
Management Axis	14
Production Axis	15
3.2. <i>Application</i>	16
Geo direct connexion	16
Structure and economic viability	17
Geopark partnership	18
4. Quantitative evaluation	19
4.1. <i>Description</i>	19
4.2. <i>Application</i>	19
5. Customer satisfaction	26
6. Conclusions and recommendations	26
6.1. <i>Conclusions</i>	26
6.2. <i>Recommendations</i>	26
7. Annexes	27
7.1. <i>Output Factsheet</i>	27
7.2. <i>Visual graphic of certificate</i>	28



Table of Figures, Maps and Tables

Figure 1. **Working group for development of basic documentation**

Figure 2. **Workshop for local providers**

Figure 3. **Individual counselling**

Figure 4. **Testing and evaluation of geoproducts**

Figure 5. **The philosophy of the geoproduct**

Figure 6. **The requirements of the geoproduct**

Figure 7. **Idrija dilca (i.e. a wooden board for degustation) – an example of a geoproduct**

Table 1. **Logical matrix in development and assessment of a geoproduct**

Table 2. **Logical matrix used for the GeoArt product in Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark**



1. Introduction

1.1. Background information

Danube GeoTour project aims to “improve management capacities and strategies and to develop practical solutions for the activation of geodiversity/geoheritage and to seize positive market trends for sustainable tourism development in 8 Geoparks of the Danube region”¹. In order to achieve this, one of the challenges is to “seize the potential of Geopark values and brand for socio-economic development while inspiring local residents and small businesses to develop new, sustainable and innovative geoproducts along the defined Danube GeoTour”²

The objective of WP4 is “to increase the capacities of participating Geoparks in creating unique sustainable tourism products and services based on a Geopark’s specific heritage, the involvement of local SMEs, new gamification tools and visitor engagement with a focus that is in line with the strategy on management tourism pressures and the carrying capacity of each individual territory.”³ Thus, the new geoproducts developed are key elements for the success of the entire project.

This document shows how the pilot geoproducts were tested and what results were reached both qualitative and quantitative. The pilot geoproducts were developed and tested in the WP4 in connexion to all other WPs. The basic criteria, the first step in testing the geoproducts were developed in WP3. It also uses the work from WP5, especially in defining “innovative” as mainly a question of interpretation and also in describing the methods of emphasizing the products connexion to Earth. The promotion component of a geoproduct will be developed in correlation with WP6 recommendations.

Testing the geoproducts shows a snapshot of a particular new geoproduct in this moment of its development. However, all the tools described and used here are available on the on-line platform in a gamification form. Thus, any time from now, the geopark staff, the partners, SMEs or any other producer may use the assessment tools available on-line to test a geoproduct. This is also helpful for education and training purposes, for any discussion involving the concept of geoproduct.

Each of the Geoparks created and tested a unique product by designing a concept, by engaging, training local providers and/or by developing missing highlights in the geoproduct. Different GeoCulture and GeoOutdoor products were introduced in participating geoparks. Lessons learned are documented, evaluated and made available as models for others in this document and on the on-line platform.

Within the 4.3 activities in the Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark 12 innovative GeoArt products were developed and evaluated. A range of geoArt products was labelled “**Creativity and heritage hand in hand**”. The wide range of products is made of local material, manufactured and processed in a sustainable way, based on authenticity, storyline and linked to the geological heritage of the Geopark. Seven suppliers from the Partner Network of the Idrija Geopark took part in the development. These pilot geoproducts in the field of GeoCulture present the basis of a new collective Idrija geopark trademark and starting point for further upgrading the trademark and tourism programmes.

¹ Danube GeoTour Application Form

² Danube GeoTour Application Form

³ Danube GeoTour Application Form



1.2. Methodology

This material was developed using data provided by the partners in the project and by other geoparks in the European Geoparks Network. Most of the data for defining the geoproducts was developed for Output 4.1. *Guideline for development of innovative GeoProducts.*

Other data derives from experiences and lessons learned from ASP and other members of EGN and GGN, the skills and expertise of the geopark managers present in the project as well as all the partners direct contact with local entrepreneurs in tourism, food art and crafts.

Process of creating innovative geoArt products in Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark was divided in three steps.

The first step was development of basic documents. The main emphasis was on the establishment of internal system for development of geoproducts, which involves an assessment system, a quality assurance system and marketing system. For development of basic documentation, a working group was formed, which consisted of geopark staff, geopark partners (local providers) and external expert from the field of natural and cultural heritage and tourism products development.

The second step was cooperation between geopark staff and geopark partners and other local providers. Within project activity 4.4. Pilot actions: Demonstration of innovative geoproduct development as part of Danube Geotour 5 presentations of project activities for geopark partners and local providers were implemented between January and February 2018. The main purpose was to motivate and encourage participants for collaboration with Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark in development of innovative geoArt products. In April, May and June 2018 three workshops for geopark partners and local providers were organized. The main purpose of workshops was to educate the participants about the specifics and importance of geoproduct, about basic requirements and assessment criteria of geoArt products. Further on, personal consultations for geopark partners and local providers were organized in June, August, September and November 2018 to support them in product development, improving the visibility and design of their individual geoArt products.

The third step was Pilot testing of innovative geoArt products. For the pilot testing the assessment commission was formed by geopark. Besides internal staff members, the assessment commission consisted also external experts from the field of natural and cultural heritage of Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark and experts in development and marketing of innovative products. Within project activity 4.4. Demonstration of innovative geoproduct development as part of Danube Geotour 14 different geoArt products have been tested of which 12 of them met the assessment criteria of while 2 were eliminated. The pilot testing has been implemented in August and October 2018.





Figure 1: Working group for development of basic documentation



Figure 2: Workshop for local providers



Figure 3: Individual counselling



Figure 4: Testing and evaluation of geoproducts



1.3. Summary

Based on the methodological approach mentioned above 12 handicraft geoproducts were developed within the project. The authors mostly complied with the recommendations and the definition of a geoproduct and followed the designer's advice. They drew the product's story from the heritage of the local environment, used natural materials, abode by the principles of sustainable development and upgraded everything with an innovative approach and applicability. The set of handicraft products was given the name: **"Creativity and heritage hand in hand"**. The first geoproducts of the collective Geopark Idrija brand consists of the following products: a unique linen dress, a unique hand-knit vest, a hand-painted wooden box, a small picture on a piece of wood with a magnet, the Idrija dilca (i.e. a wooden board for degustation), a towel with Idrija lace, a series of images called "Deliberating by lace", a nuno felt scarf with Idrija lace, šajblčk (i.e a small clay holder into which wax is poured to be lit), a pot marigold ointment, a natural olive oil soap "autumn forest", and a natural lip balm - honey. Thanks to lace making, Idrija boasts a strong handicraft tradition that spans over more than three centuries. In the past, some other branches of cottage industry were developed as well, woodcraft in particular, pottery, nail making, and others that were conditioned by natural resources.

With the currently developed geoproducts, we would like to emphasize the fact that the majority draw their inspiration from heritage. Some reveal strong modern design trends, manual work, one-of-the-kindness, and, above all, a lot of invested knowledge. All products are linked to the geology of the local environment, and are classified as market objects. For products that somewhat deviate from the standards the panel of experts made suggestions for improvement and upgrading. We also received two products that did not meet the set criteria. The above mentioned products form the pilot basis for the collective Geopark Idrija brand.

2. Basic criteria

2.1. Description

Geoproduct is a product that presents the characteristics of a geopark on the market. At the same time, a geoproduct can have additional values from nature conservation. In this case, a geoproduct must comply with the principles and standards of conservation of the geological heritage and its promotion in order to improve awareness about the importance of conservation of our GEO heritage. The geological heritage should be recognized through the geoproduct as the geopark's essential element.

The Strategy on Management of Tourism Pressures in Geoparks (shortly Strategy) elaborated within WP3 provides a tool which enables all target groups (visitors, residents, geopark managers and investors) to better plan their activities, understand different impacts of these activities and alternatives which can be used to avoid or reduce negative impacts. The Strategy has to be included to clarify the aspect of nature protection as well as the aspect to contribute to the holistic concept of protection, education, public awareness and socio-economic benefits for sustainable local development. In order to carry out integrated evaluation of geoproducts we had to firstly create the relevant framework and then a methodology for the assessment of impacts of recreational activities on natural heritage.



The framework developed in WP3 can be used as a first and basic qualifier in the first steps of the decision process, which tells us if the product can be defined as a geoproduct. The Strategy also provides a common framework which enables all geopark managers as well as visitors, residents and investors to better plan their activities, understand different impacts of each activity and to be aware of available alternatives which can be used to avoid or reduce negative impacts. The information from the Strategy can be also used to increase awareness of investors and it can help to change their behaviour towards more sustainable patterns in geoproducts. As such it leads to better conservation of natural and cultural heritage and it supports the achievement of the programme specific objective “Foster sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources”.

In this way, the Strategy also served as a framework for the development of joint geoproducts (as a part of WP4).

Nature conservation definitively has to be incorporated to the geoproduct as its intangible value. The evaluation of the geoproduct from the point of nature conservation is essential. The geoproduct has to comply with the principles and standards of conservation of the geological heritage and its promotion in order to increase the visibility of the importance of protecting the geoheritage.

Geoproducts may include various geoheritage and nature conservation aspects, which can be displayed in several ways. Finally a geoproduct may be included/integrated directly as a tangible (mineral raw materials, agricultural product) or intangible (cultural, historical, ethnological) content. Geoproducts can be recognized as an activity or a final market object, available indoor or outdoor.

Four different groups of geoproducts can be distinguished:

- Market objects (souvenirs, food)
- Outdoor activities (guiding for groups/individuals in nature; rafting, biking, hiking, riding, water activities, mines and caves visiting, camp schools)
- Indoor activities (indoor programs in museums, info centres, restaurants, tourist farms)
- Small interpretation infrastructure dedicated to specific local heritage items (houses, dinostops, geotrails) developed and managed in partnership with local partners.

2.2. Application

A set of questions supporting geoproduct development was applied and tested by each partner while designing its own geoproduct.

Question 1: Is a geoproduct developed according to the actual legislative framework and it does not cause any damage to nature?

If the answer is YES:

→ *follow the assessment. The product:*



1. *has strong tangible connection to local geodiversity or **geological heritage** (geosites, fossils, minerals, rocks, mines, quarries, caves, geologic processes or phenomena...) YES/NO*
2. *has strong intangible connection (historical, ethnological, cultural) connection to local geodiversity or **geological heritage** YES/NO*
3. *increases awareness of users about the importance of protecting geological heritage. YES/NO*
4. *encourages and helps the user to engage/involve in nature conservation. YES/NO*
5. *is produced in a sustainable way, it is made from recycled or/and local materials. YES/NO*

If the answer is NO:

→ contact to your geopark or follow the *Recommendations for residents, visitors and investors on behaviour and sustainable use of geodiversity in Geopark*

In the case of the geoproduct "**Creativity and heritage hand in hand**" the answer is yes as it follows the legislative framework and it does not cause any damage to nature.

1. *YES it has strong tangible connection to local geodiversity and **geological heritage***

Yes, most of developed product can be linked to the geology of the area. The products are made from ingredients and materials that grow or are found in the area of the Idrija Geopark. Stories that complete the products also have a strong connection to geology. Links are found with mercury as the most important natural value of the Idrija Geopark, with clay, and other natural resources, which are greatly influenced by the geology of the area.

2. *YES it has strong intangible connection (historical, ethnological, cultural) connection to local **geodiversity***

Yes, pilot products generated through activities in work package 4 have a strong connection to the intangible cultural heritage. Products with Idrija lace, which is seen in several products and approached in different manners, take a special place. Lace making has more than three-century-long tradition in the town of Idrija. The making of Idrija lace is registered as a separate unit in the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This year Bobbin lace making also becomes UNESCO's intangible heritage. Lace making belongs to the very top of handicraft skills. In the pilot geoproducts, Idrija lace appears in modern interpretation - it is used in items of clothing, in prints, or it is hand-painted. Other products that do not include lace also have a connection to the intangible heritage. They indicate the knowledge of wood processing and herbs, and of local habits and customs.

3. *YES it increases **awareness** of users about the importance of protecting geological heritage and the importance of geodiversity.*

Yes, through the activities in work package 4 and during the developmental process of the pilot geoproducts, the providers were acquainted with the local geological heritage and the importance of protecting it. They were shown how



to incorporate local heritage into their products and, above all, in their story, so that their product would be a true geoproduct.

4. YES it encourages and helps the user to engage/involve in nature conservation.

Similarly as ad 3, we point out the importance of raising awareness of local providers about the importance of protecting natural heritage, about the further development of their products and services in order to minimize their negative impact on the environment.

5. YES it is **produced in a sustainable way**, it is made from recycled or/and local materials

Through education, the providers have been made aware of how they can contribute to sustainable development. We encouraged them to use local and natural materials where possible. The rules governing the conditions for obtaining a collective trademark certificate also stipulate that at least 50% of the raw materials or knowledge should come from the Idrija Geopark area.

3. Qualitative assessment

3.1. Description

Geoproduct is a new term appeared along with the geopark philosophy. It is usually used in the context of a geopark's socioeconomic involvement along with geotourism and geodiversity. Its understanding varies from a broad perspective to one of the most concrete result of the geopark concept implementation.

In the most extensive definition, the geoproduct is considered a potential geotourism focus point⁴, usually a geological attraction. The more focused definitions mention a geopark connexion and include local, manmade products as well as the dialogue between tourists and local heritage. For example, Farsani et al. (2012) define geoproduct as:

Local products related to geopark activities and symbols of geological and geomorphological heritage of the geopark. Geoproducts which are made based on geological elements of geoparks not only introduce the local products and the local handcrafts as cultural components to tourists, but also increase the public knowledge of tourists about geology.⁵

If we discuss the main attributes of a product⁶, then we have to consider three aspects which the geoproduct must comprise in order to be a product:

- It has to respond to a need,
- It has to be created, constructed through a production process,

⁴ **Complova, M.**, 2010, *The identification of geoproducts in the village of Jakubany as a basis for geotourism development*, Acta Geoturistica, volume 1, number 1, 51 – 56

⁵ **Farsani, T., Coelho, C., Costa, C., Carvalho, C.**, 2012, *Geoparks and Geotourism. New approaches to sustainability for the 21st century*, BrownWalker Press, Boca Raton

⁶ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/product>



- It has to be marketable and sold.

These characteristics bring the term geoproduct closely to a practical and economical approach, it defines it more clearly and focuses on its necessity as a tool for socioeconomic development through geoparks. This perspective underlines the role of geoparks in achieving social, economic and cultural sustainability and in coping with pressure from the sociocultural impact of tourism.

On the other hand, a geoproduct is not simply another product sold in a geopark. A geoproduct comes with a deep connexion to Earth on a local level and with a strong sense of identity. Each geoproduct is unique in its construction with a story about people and the place they inhabit.

As a result, we find that the philosophy of a geoproduct takes into account three axes: identity, management and production. If we see it as a graphic model, then the geoproduct finds itself at the intersection of these three axes (Fig. 1).

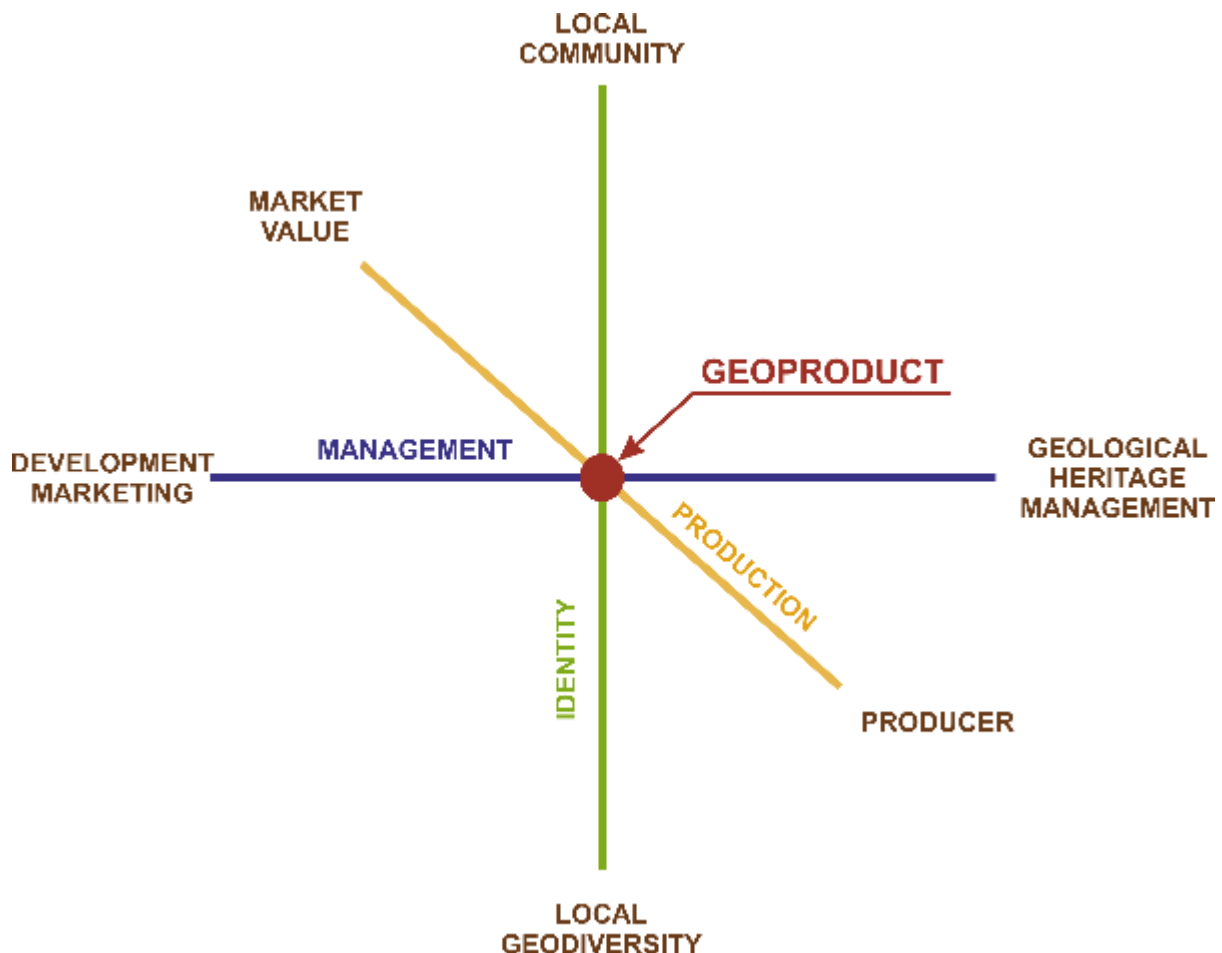


Figure 5.: The philosophy of the geoproduct

Identity Axis

A geopark territory is a complex structure made of ecological, socio-economic and cultural realities, shaped by its geodiversity, biodiversity and historic evolution. The sum of them is generating the local identity made of tangible and intangible heritage. The tangible

heritage is mainly related to local geodiversity like raw materials, relief, mineral resources and soils. Intangible Cultural Heritage, as defined by UNESCO, 2003⁷ means:

...the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

One of the key requirements² for a UNESCO Global Geopark is to have sites and landscapes of international geological significance managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. A UNESCO Global Geopark uses its geological heritage, in connection with all other aspects of the area's natural and cultural heritage, to enhance awareness and understanding of key issues facing society, such as using our Earth's resources sustainably, mitigating the effects of climate change and reducing the impact of natural disasters. By raising awareness of the importance of the area's geological heritage in history and society today, UNESCO Global Geoparks give local people a sense of pride in their region and strengthen their identification with the area. The creation of innovative local enterprises, new jobs and high quality training courses is stimulated as new sources of revenue are generated through geotourism, while the geological resources of the area are protected.

The Identity axis expresses local cultural and historical identity generated during centuries or millennia by the continuous interaction between local community and natural environment. On the other hand, this axis is revealing one of the main goals of a geopark to cooperate with communities and to identify innovative approaches in order to re-appropriate tangible and intangible heritage values and to revive and strengthen the local cultural identity, in respect to sustainable development principles.

The identity axis is the axis of product development. Is the way a producer is using directly or indirectly local geodiversity components, local knowledge and market needs in the geopark context. This process is part of the cooperation between geopark team and local entities which could be associations, companies, private persons, artists, freelancers, museums, schools, etc.

Management Axis

The management axis is the way to transform a geoproduct in a market good, a product to be sold directly or indirectly and to generate benefits. The benefits are both direct incomes and indirect and induced ones that contribute to geopark promotion, strengthen of local identity and socio-economic development.

Each Global Geopark is using the UNESCO Global Geoparks logo which is one of the most powerful brand in the world in order to develop a local brand of quality for its territory. The management axis is reflecting the way a geoproduct is using the geopark brand to increase its value and also the role each new geoproduct is playing in strengthening the geopark brand. The management axis is expressing the cooperation between the geopark team and the producer of a new geoproduct. In some cases the producer is the geopark team. The management axis is reflecting the main philosophy of Global Geoparks: *Celebrating Earth Heritage, Sustaining local Communities*. Each



⁷ UNESCO, 2003. *Intangible Cultural Heritage*

geoproduct is embedding a part of local geodiversity or geoheritage and in the same time is contributing to local socio-economic development.

Production Axis

This vector represents the organisational aspect of a geoproduct. The Geopark has to encourage entrepreneurship of local partners and to provide to them the context presented by the other two axis. The production axes starts with a producer, an entity able to provide a service or create a product in a legal way and in close cooperation with the Geopark. The direction of the axis is the actual profit from the products and services. In the case of the Geopark being also the producer of a geoproduct, the benefits can be other than financial: awareness, promotion, community involvement etc.

The philosophy of the geoproducts uses axes to show the whole concept as a process. The Geopark team has to manage the process and evaluate its position on each of the axis. The partners (SMEs, NGOs and others) base their business in geoproducts on the identity and management axis and contribute to the development of the production axis.

In conclusion, figure 1 shows a geoproduct at the intersection of the three axis. The identity axis is expressing the innovative way in sustainable use of local resources, the management axis reflecting the capacity of a geopark team to support geoproducts development and sale in the benefit of producer and local communities and the production axis shows the process of constructing the offer by a geopark partner.

In the creation and development of geoproducts, geopark managers and local entrepreneurs must start from the philosophy described in the previous chapter. Then they must follow the most important three requirements of a geoproduct (Fig. 2):

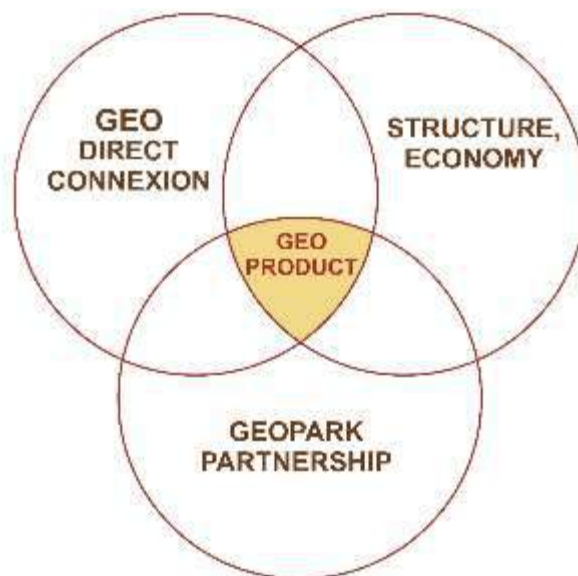


Figure 6.:The requirements of the geoproduct

In addition to the main three requirements, the newly developed geoproducts have to respect sustainable standards and communicate these values to their users, visitors and

thus help raise awareness on the importance of protecting and valorising the area's geodiversity, natural and cultural heritage in a sustainable way.

Geoproducts creation and development will also consider and respect specific needs of people with disabilities or elderly people and thus increase potential for these groups to have access to geoheritage. The design of these products and their management have to reflect equal chances and inclusion of all categories.

3.2. Application

Geo direct connexion

“Geo” (Gaia / Gaea in Greek) is the personification of Earth. Represents natural characteristics of a territory, whether is the local geodiversity, or biodiversity. Cultural values or tangible and intangible heritage being the human appreciation and use of these characteristics. Geo direct connexion requirement assures that the product is not only a geographical designation – “produced in the geopark” – but it has a deep meaning and an interpretation. The geoproduct must be a sentence in the dialogue between Man and Earth. Sometimes this connexion is only a matter of interpretation. Many products developed today in geoparks can be transformed into geoproducts with ease, if the proper interpretation of their connexion with geology or local identity is added.

A good example for this requirement is the GeoFood label⁸. This designation, managed by Magma UGG, is more than just another ecolabel.

GEOfood products must have strong connection with the local Geological Heritage, specific brief information concerning this connection must be provided in the food products and in the GEOfood restaurant menus through written information (ex: potatoes or vegetables that grown in fertile sandstones which were formed by glacier movement during the last Ice Age; olive oil produced from olives grown in Jurassic marls that were deposited in the ancient Sea of Tethys, salt from the ancient Sea, bread from grain growing in the Geopark soil due to special geological phenomena, etc.).

By set standards the developed and Geopark certified geoArt products need to be made in the territory of Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark with local elements. At least 50 % sources and processes of geoproducts need to come from the area of Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark. According to the specifics of every geoproduct and in cooperation with local provider, a specific story about connection between geoproduct and Earth was developed for each product.

Examples of developed GeoArt products in their connection with “geo” in Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark: Each developed pilot product can be linked to the geology of the area. We are pointing out the Idrija dilca (i.e. a wooden board for degustation), the story of which is related to mercury as the most important natural value of the Idrija Geopark and the history of mining. It is made from oak wood with epoxy resin. Within the resin there are also zinc drops that visually act as mercury drops. Another example is a “šajblčk”. »Šajblčk« is small

⁸ <https://www.geofood.no/>



clay pot which was in the past filled with fat or wax and it was used as candle on the graves. Clay products are a heritage of rich pottery tradition, which has been present in Spodnja Idrija town for many years. In the next decades they started to use »šajblčk« on special days. Initially, the locals lighted clay pots next to the path of the Easter procession and also on the shelves of their house windows. After the Second World War, this tradition was also used for the first of May celebrations. The Fara Tourist Association created the "šajblč" suitable for business and other gifts.



Figure7.: Idrija dilca (i.e. a wooden board for degustation) – an example of a geoproduct

Structure and economic viability

Structure and economic viability means that the geoproduct has to live up to its "product" part of the term. It has to be constructed ("produced") as a marketable product meant to be sold. Of course that in some cases the geoproducts are not sold per say, instead they belong to the geopark administration's educational offer, or they are provided along with other services. In order to be a geoproduct, the object or service doesn't have to be actually sold, but to have the construction and economic viability which allow it the possibility to be sold. For example, an educational program from the educational offer of a geopark can be considered as fulfilling this requirement by asking the question: would this program be viable if it were to be sold by someone to tourists?

The viability is the health assurance of the geoproduct – it can only exist if it is bought. This means it has to be adapted to market demands, it has to continuously address the needs of the buyers and it has to have the adaptability to focus on new trends and requirements.

During the development process of geoArt products under a common name "**Creativity and heritage hand in hand**" the group of external experts which helps geopark staff increasing of economic value of new geoproducts was established. In cooperation between geopark staff and group of external experts, the following activities have been implemented:

- Development of basic documents for establishment and development of geoArt products in Idrija Geopark (quality, assessment and evaluation system, marketing plan, system for branding geoproducts in Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark, strategic document for increasing the visibility of geoproducts in Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark)
- Cooperation with geopark partners (implementation of workshops on development of geoArt products and increasing the visibility of geoArt products, individual counselling for local providers about increasing the visibility, design and quality of geoArt products)

In the future Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark will establish necessary networks for promoting and selling these products in local stores, in TIC Idrija, on the web-site and on the national and local fairs and other events. The geoArt products will also be on sale in shops of local providers and included in different tourism programmes.

Geopark partnership

The geological connexion and the economic viability would describe only a good business idea without the active role of the geopark. This is the reason why the third important requirement for geoproducts is to have the geopark partnership. Of course, this applies when the geopark is not itself the provider of the geoproduct.

The geopark's role as a partner of the geoproduct provider is to assure the quality of the geoproduct and the conditions in which the selling process takes place. This will eliminate opportunistic initiatives of low quality products made to look like geoproducts. It will also make sure that the production process is made with care for the heritage and environment and that it respects the culture and needs of all people, especially vulnerable groups.

The developed geoArt products under the common name "**Creativity and heritage hand in hand**" are the result of cooperation between Geopark and geopark partners (local providers). By set criteria for collaboration in development of new geoproducts in Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark each involved partner needs to be registered in the area of Idrija Geopark and needs to sign a cooperation agreement with Idrija Geopark. Geopark offers its partners necessary support in developing, promoting and marketing of geoArt products on the local and international level. The high quality geoArt products are also important for increasing the visibility of Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark, its stories and its unique natural heritage while they bring value added to the local economy.



4. Quantitative evaluation

4.1. Description

The evaluation process starts from the basic idea that a geoproduct is representing the tool a geopark has to develop in order to contribute to the holistic concept of protection, education, public awareness and socio-economic benefits for sustainable local development.

Testing and evaluation are connecting four key elements defining a geoproduct: Earth resources, Geopark management, Local community, Geoproduct development.

The questionnaire has five sections from A to E, each section with a set of elements to be self-evaluated on a scale from 1 to 5. The values are: 1 – low degree; 2 – quite low; 3 – medium; 4 – quite high; 5 – high degree. According to the Logic Matrix:

LOCAL COMMUNITY	Contribute to social entrepreneurship approach of the geopark	Documented relation geo-bio-cultural	Tells a story about local community	Enhances local cultural heritage	GEOPRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING
New local products strongly related to geopark territory				Integration in geopark's marketing strategy	Connects to the marketing strategy
Connects to geodiversity and geoheritage interpretation			Quality assurance by geopark labeling		Involves the geopark in the product process
Integrates into geopark's promotional strategy		Common advantages based on a partnership agreement			Contribution to the promotion of the geopark values
Results from geopark's involvement in the community (trainings, seminars, programs)	Assures novelty and innovation				Impact evaluation
GEOLOGICAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT	Contribute to Geodiversity Action Plan Development	Identify all potential values of geoheritage	Tangible and intangible themes	Assessment of local geodiversity	LOCAL GEODIVERSITY

Table 1. Logical matrix in development and assessment of a geoproduct

4.2. Application

Section A - Any geoproduct has to be connected to local geodiversity / geological heritage and to have a geological story (in a broad sense). Local geological assets are identified and defined based on scientific research and a coherent management plan guides the

conservation and interpretation of geological features. It sets the geological scene, looks in detail at the geological heritage in the geopark territory, details opportunities to explore and celebrate the local Earth history.

A1. How well are the geological assets / subjects related to the geoproduct documented from the scientific point of view?

1 – not documented; 5 – Very well documented

A2. In what degree the geoproduct contains both tangible and intangible components of the geological asset/s?

1 – not having both elements; 5 – Very well integrating the two elements

A3. Does the geoproduct tell all the possible stories on the specific geological asset?

1 – very few stories; 5 – the whole story

A4. In what degree are those geologic assets part of a geodiversity action plan / geoconservation plan developed by a Geopark?

1 – they are not in a plan; 5 – all of the assets are part of a clear plan

Section B - A geoproduct has to incorporate a story of local people and could contribute to connect geological heritage with local community.

B1. In what degree is the geoproduct created and developed by a local company / person / producer?

1 – not a local company; 2 – most parts of the geoproduct are not created/developed by a local company/producer; 4 – most parts of the geoproduct are created/developed by a local company/producer 5 – to-tally created and develop by a local company

B2. In what degree the connections between the identified geologic asset/s and natural and cultural heritage are documented?

1 – not documented; 5 – Very well documented

B3. Does the geoproduct tell more than a geological story?

1 – only the geological story; 5 – many other stories connected to geology

B4. In what degree is the geoproduct directly connected to a specific community / person/s?

1 – not directly connected; 5 – Very well connected

Section C - A geoproduct has to have a practical and economical approach, as a tool for socioeconomic development inspired and supported by the geopark development.

C1. In what degree is the geoproduct new and innovative?

1 – not new; 5 – totally new and innovative

C2. How detailed and clear has the geopark identified different types of partnerships in geoproduct development (e.g. produced by the geopark, supported by, produced in the territory of the..., etc ?

1 – not a single partnership; 5 – clear and detailed partnerships



C3. Did you use the geopark's geoproduct development criteria defined by the Geopark in the geoproduct development?

1 – not defined/used; 5 – Very well defined/used

C4. Is the geoproduct sold in regular events (geo-fairs) organized by the geopark dedicated/integrating local geoproducts?

1 – no; 5 – frequent events clearly targeted

Section D - A geoproduct is not simply another product sold in a geopark. A geoproduct comes with a deep connexion to Earth on a local level and has to generate interest and respect for the Earth pro-cesses that generated local geodiversity

D1. In what degree local producer/s are inspired by the local geodiversity / geoheritage in developing new products?

1 – very low; 5 – very high

D2. In what degree the geoproduct/s are connected or supported by the interpretation infrastructure of the geopark (taking into consideration geological and cultural components of the geopark territory)?

1 – not connected or supported; 5 – Very well connected and support-ed

D3. In what degree the new geoproduct/s are promoted by the geopark?

1 – very low; 5 – very high

D4. In what degree were the producers involved in training courses and/or regular meetings as part of the geopark activity plans?

1 – not at all; 5 – they are very much involved

Section E – A geoproduct is a combination of market opportunities generated by the geopark activities in tourism development and the ability to generate emotions of visitors to be interested to buy new products related to local Earth and people stories.

E1. Is the developed geoproduct connected to the geopark marketing strategy?

1 – very low connection; 5 – very high connection

E3. In what degree is the geopark involved in development, marketing and selling of the geoproduct?

1 – very low; 5 – very high

E3. Does the geoproduct contribute to the promotion of the geopark values?

1 – very low contribution; 5 – very high contribution

E4. Is there any established mechanism to evaluate the geoproduct impact (financial, appreciation, satisfaction, recognition, etc.)?

1 – no; 5 – a very well developed mechanism

LOCAL COMMUNITY	B1 - 4/5	B2 - 4/5	B3 - 5/5	B4 - 5/5	GEOPRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING
E1 - 3/5				C4 - 5/5	D1 - 4/5
E2 - 3/5			C3 - 5/5		D2 - 4/5
E3 - 5/5		C2 - 5/5			D3 - 4/5
E4 - 1/5	C1 - 4/5				D4 - 5/5
GEOLOGICAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT	A4 - 2/5	A3 - 4/5	A2 - 4/5	A1 - 5/5	LOCAL GEODIVERSITY

TOTAL = 81 / 100

Table 2. **Logical matrix used for the geoproduct "Creativity and heritage hand in hand" - Idrija Geopark**

According to the above assessment presented in the logical matrix for GeoArt product "**Creativity and heritage hand in hand**", we shall emphasise that our geoArt products can be considered a real geoproducts. Newly developed GeoArt products have a strong connection with geology but they still offer variety of possibilities for developing diverse stories related to geological heritage of Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark. Within the WP4 project activities such as meetings, workshops and individual consultations, a strong collaboration between geopark staff, geopark partners (local providers) and external experts was established. In cooperation agreement the role of geopark staff and geopark partner in process of developing and marketing of new geoproduct it is clearly defined. According to the overall self-assessment result, we realized that our main task in the future is to establish a mechanism for evaluation of the geoproduct impact.

A1. How well are the geological assets / subjects related to the geoproduct documented from the scientific point of view?

In the development of the new geoproducts we included scientific basis about the area of Idrija Geopark which were made by experts from different institutions in the process of establishment, as well as new findings from the time of geopark development. Geological assets of the area are well documented especially due to importance of Idrija Mercury mine trough centuries.

1 – not documented; 5 – Very well documented

A2. In what degree the geoproduct contains both tangible and intangible components of the geological asset/s?

The newly developed geoproducts contains both tangible heritage as well as intangible. They are related to mercury as the most important natural value of the Idrija Geopark and the history of mining, to heritage of rich pottery tradition, which has been present in Spodnja Idrija town for many years and to rich tradition of lacemaking.



1 – not having both elements; 5 – Very well integrating the two elements

A3. Does the geoproduct tell all the possible stories on the specific geological asset?

Some geoproducts tell interesting stories about above mentioned heritage and tradition on a very innovative approach (e.g. lace making,..)

1 – very few stories; 5 – the whole story

A4. In what degree are those geologic assets part of a geodiversity action plan / geoconservation plan developed by a Geopark?

The geopark plan is not very specific about the geoconservation because different national organisations are responsible for regulating the protection of main geological assets. Idrija geopark follows their rules and transfer them into local environment.

1 – they are not in a plan; 5 – all of the assets are part of a clear plan

Section B - A geoproduct has to incorporate a story of local people and could contribute to connect geological heritage with local community.

GeoArt products incorporate stories of local people in the past - mining, lacemaking, pottery tradition and are developed with cooperation with local community, especially with local SMEs.

B1. In what degree is the geoproduct created and developed by a local company / person / producer?

All of the geoproducts are created and developed by a local company and producer with strong support of Geopark staff and external experts.

1 – not a local company; 2 – most parts of the geoproduct are not created/developed by a local company/producer; 4 – most parts of the geoproduct are created/developed by a local company/producer 5 – to-tally created and develop by a local company

B2. In what degree the connections between the identified geologic asset/s and natural and cultural heritage are documented?

The connection between the identified geological assets and natural and cultural heritage are regulated by the geoproduct criteria and documented in the official SME/farmer applications and minutes of the assessment commission. Geoproducts are equipped with local stories connected with heritage.

1 – not documented; 5 – Very well documented

B3. Does the geoproduct tell more than a geological story?

The new Geoproduct tells more than geological stories. Most of developed product can be linked to the geology of the area but are also connected with local tradition, with knowledge of wood processing and herbs, and of local habits and customs.

1 – only the geological story; 5 – many other stories connected to geology

B4. In what degree is the geoproduct directly connected to a specific community / person/s?

The geoproducts are connected to a high degree to the community and people because are developed by local providers and have strong connection with local identity.

1 – not directly connected; 5 – Very well connected



Section C - A geoproduct has to have a practical and economical approach, as a tool for socioeconomic development inspired and supported by the geopark development.

C1. In what degree is the geoproduct new and innovative?

GeoArt products are new and innovative because designers drew the product's story from the heritage of the local environment, used natural materials, abode by the principles of sustainable development and upgraded everything with an innovative approach and applicability.

1 – not new; 5 – totally new and innovative

C2. How detailed and clear has the geopark identified different types of partnerships in geoproduct development (e.g. produced by the geopark, supported by, produced in the territory of the..., etc ?

By set criteria for collaboration in development of new geoproducts in Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark each involved partner needs to be registered in the area of Idrija Geopark and needs to sign a cooperation agreement with Idrija Geopark.

1 – not a single partnership; 5 – clear and detailed partnerships

C3. Did you use the geopark's geoproduct development criteria defined by the Geopark in the geoproduct development?

Yes, we used geopark's geoproduct development criteria defined by Idrija Geopark.

1 – not defined/used; 5 – Very well defined/used

C4. Is the geoproduct sold in regular events (geo-fairs) organized by the geopark dedicated/integrating local geoproducts?

We made a marketing strategy how to promote and sell new geoproducts, and we will ensure the platform of partners to easier access the market thorough common brand promotion, linkage to tourism, set of events organized by Idrija Geopark...

1 – no; 5 – frequent events clearly targeted

Section D - A geoproduct is not simply another product sold in a geopark. A geoproduct comes with a deep connexion to Earth on a local level and has to generate interest and respect for the Earth pro-cesses that generated local geodiversity

D1. In what degree local producer/s are inspired by the local geodiversity / geoheritage in developing new products?

Local producer were inspired by the local geodiversity and geoheritage in developing new geoproducts. During the workshops the local stories connected to geology were incorporated into the design of the products.

1 – very low; 5 – very high

D2. In what degree the geoproduct/s are connected or supported by the interpretation infrastructure of the geopark (taking into consideration geological and cultural components of the geopark territory)?

Almost all developed GeoArt products can be connected to some of the existing infrastructure and interpretation of the Geopark. With them we will be able to enrich the



designed Geopark trails and to upgrade the offer in the Geopark Visitor Centre which will be set up within the Danube GeoTour project. These pilot geoproducts in the field of GeoCulture present the basis of a new collective Idrija geopark trademark and starting point for further upgrading the trademark and tourism programmes.

1 – not connected or supported; 5 – Very well connected and support-ed

D3. In what degree the new geoproduct/s are promoted by the geopark?

According to the developed marketing strategy, all available promotional channels of Idrija Geopark will be used for promoting the new geoproducts.

1 – very low; 5 – very high

D4. In what degree were the producers involved in training courses and/or regular meetings as part of the geopark activity plans?

We organized presentations, workshops and individual counselling for local providers.

1 – not at all; 5 – they are very much involved

Section E – A geoproduct is a combination of market opportunities generated by the geopark activities in tourism development and the ability to generate emotions of visitors to be interested to buy new products related to local Earth and people stories.

E1. Is the developed geoproduct connected to the geopark marketing strategy?

Yes, we prepared a marketing strategy for geoproducts but we have not tested it yet.

1 – very low connection; 5 – very high connection

E2. In what degree is the geopark involved in development, marketing and selling of the geoproduct?

At this point, the Geopark is involved mainly in development of the geoproducts with all activities prepared for local providers. Marketing and selling are our next tasks.

1 – very low; 5 – very high

E3. Does the geoproduct contributes to the promotion of the geopark values?

Yes, geoproduct contributes to the promotion of the Geopark values. We plan to include them in activities, promotion and interpretation where possible.

1 – very low contribution; 5 – very high contribution

E4. Is there any established mechanism to evaluate the geoproduct impact (financial, appreciation, satisfaction, recognition, etc.)?

Not yet. Our main task in the future is to establish a simple and effective mechanism for evaluation of the geoproduct impact and monitor customer satisfaction.

1 – no; 5 – a very well developed mechanism

5. Customer satisfaction

The products are not yet on the market thus the customer survey is not available. However, a panel of assessors - being culinary experts, professionals in product design and heritage experts provided a report with recommendations for improvement or further work for each assessed geoproduct. They also provided a general report on product quality.

Their main observations are:

- Innovative approach to tradition and heritage;
- Sufficient quality level;
- Continuity of knowledge;
- Low age structure of producers;
- Assessors are missing some handicraft products, such as basket ware or wickerwork, traditional wood and flax products.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1. Conclusions

The pilot development and testing of GeoArt products provides the basis for the first collective Idrija Geopark trademark, which guarantees the geopark origin and the quality of products. One of our main advantages are our partners, which are in comparisons to the general Slovenian artisans rather young and very motivated. Thus some of the products are very innovative such as one-of-a-kind cutting or sampling board while some of products revive the local heritage of festivities - the so-called šajblčki. Idrija lace also appears in modern interpretations, while at the same time it is maintaining the quality and continuity of knowledge. Most manufacturers have taken care of the overall image of products, which, in addition to the product itself, includes a story and appropriate packaging. The range of handicraft products was named "**Creativity and heritage hand in hand**". These first products present the basis for further upgrading of both, the trademark and the corresponding tourism programmes. The Geopark will include the providers and their certified products in the current promotional activities and individual tourism programmes, thus contributing to the sustainable tourism development, rural areas and the widening opportunities for new job creation.

6.2. Recommendations

Despite high quality of the geoproducts, the pilot testing has shown that there is still a lot of room for improvement. While high-level knowledge and innovation have been put in place, the use of local ingredients and materials should be somewhat better represented in products that allow this. Given the rich handicraft heritage of the area, we are missing. These are also our future focus areas in designing geoArt products. During the course of 4.4 activities, we realized that a continuous co-operation between the local providers, the Geopark employees, and other external experts, who are engaged in the development of new products, is required.



Bibliography

- Danube GeoTour project application form
- <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/product> visited in October 2017
- **Complova, M.**, 2010, *The identification of geoproducts in the village of Jakubany as a basis for geotourism development*, Acta Geoturistica, volume 1, number 1, 51 – 56
- **Farsani, T., Coelho, C., Costa, C., Carvalho, C.**, 2012, *Geoparks and Geotourism. New approaches to sustainability for the 21st century*, BrownWalker Press, Boca Raton
- <https://www.geofood.no/> visited in October 2017
- **UNESCO**, 2003. *Intangible Cultural Heritage*

7. Annexes

7.1. Output Factsheet

7.2. Visual graphic of certificate



