

INCREMENTAL

INCREMENTAL newsletter #1

Dear readers,

Welcome aboard! We are delighted to present the very first newsletter of the INCREMENTAL project.

In this edition, we will introduce the project, present our fantastic partners, summarize the activities carried out during the first semester, and share our upcoming plans and objectives.

About the Project

**What does ICH safeguarding mean? How does INCREMENTAL contribute to it?**

According to the 2003 UNESCO Convention on ICH, the safeguarding of ICH involves measures designed to ensure its viability. These measures include the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission of ICH, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage.

In line with these principles, the INCREMENTAL project aims to enhance the policy instruments on ICH safeguarding of its partners, fostering more coordinated, innovative, and sustainable approaches to ICH preservation and transmission. More specifically, it achieves this by mapping ICH assets and identifying the challenges they face, while actively assessing the strengths and weaknesses of existing policies and safeguarding measures within its local stakeholders working groups. INCREMENTAL brings together partners from different countries and governance levels, creating a space for exchange and for the development of more efficient ICH safeguarding models.



Partners



REGIONE DEL VENETO

Veneto Region (LP 01), located in north-eastern Italy, is characterised by an extraordinary cultural and natural heritage. Indeed, it is home to 9 sites included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, as well as 2 elements inscribed on UNESCO intangible cultural heritage (ICH) list and hundreds of historical sites that give the region its distinctive atmosphere and unique cultural identity. In line with the 2003 UNESCO Convention on ICH, the Region recognises and promotes the safeguarding and valorisation of traditions, practices, knowledge, and community identities that risk disappearing over time.



Photo: Lega Bisse del Garda and Veneto Region

As Lead Partner of INCREMENTAL, Veneto Region coordinates the cooperation among project partners and contributes in debate on cultural heritage governance. Through the project, the region aims to improve the management, visibility, and accessibility of the ICH Register, while promoting interoperability with similar inventories developed in other European regions. INCREMENTAL represents a strategic opportunity to strengthen its policies on ICH.

At the local level, the Stakeholders Working Group, that supports the Region along the whole project implementation, represents an added value to ensure effective and concrete results. This group includes the Central Institute for Immaterial Heritage, Via Querinissima International Cultural Association, UNPLI Veneto, the committee for Venetian Art of Glass Beads safeguarding, the Ancient Games Association, the Italian Artisans Association and the UNESCO Regional Board.



Nordland

FYLKESKOMMUNE

Nordland is an Arctic coastal region in Northern Norway, known for its strong coastal traditions, vibrant local communities, and rich natural resources linked to fisheries, agriculture, and food production. The region has a rich and diverse cultural history shaped by both coastal and inland communities, as well as by the Sami people, who have lived in Northern Norway for generations. Sami cultural heritage is an important part of the region's identity and includes language, traditional knowledge, handicrafts (duodji), storytelling traditions, reindeer husbandry and food culture.

Nordland is also home to two UNESCO-designated sites that highlight the region's unique natural and cultural heritage. Vegaøyan World Heritage Site is internationally recognised for its distinctive coastal culture and the centuries-long interaction between people and nature. The area is particularly known for the traditional eider down practices, where local communities have sustainably managed the landscape and cared for wild eider ducks for generations. Inland, Trollfjell UNESCO Global Geopark has received international recognition for its geological heritage.



Photo: Magnus-Str and Emilie Solbakken/ Visit Helgeland

The Nordland County Council is a regional authority responsible for cultural heritage management and regional development, including tourism and experiential industries. On behalf of the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage, the County Council works systematically to safeguard and further develop both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, in close collaboration with municipalities, businesses, and knowledge institutions. In 2028, Nordland will hold the title European Region of Gastronomy, providing a strategic framework for further developing sustainable food systems and strengthening the connections between local food production, cultural heritage, and tourism. Within INCREMENTAL, the County Council will particularly contribute with experiences related to gastronomy and food traditions as part of intangible cultural heritage.

As a project partner, Nordland County Council is committed to active knowledge exchange, joint learning, and the development of best practices across regions. The overall ambition is to strengthen intangible cultural heritage as a resource for resilient communities and long-term sustainable regional development.



At the crossroads of international routes, along the New Silk Road, near the borders with Slovakia and Ukraine, you'll find one of the most beautiful regions in Poland—**Podkarpackie (PP 03)**. Mountains to the south, pristine forests to the north. The vastness and majesty of nature give a sense of freedom, while unique historical sites remind us of the roots of this multicultural borderland. The region's location "at the crossroads of cultures" has had a significant impact on the cultural heritage preserved in this area to this day.

In addition to its tangible heritage, the region's cultural identity encompasses many manifestations of intangible cultural heritage, which serve as a vehicle for an identity shaped by tradition as well as individual and collective memory.



Photo: podkarpackie.travel

What if Podkarpackie's greatest treasure isn't its historic monuments? What if it's the stories you won't find in textbooks? Songs that echo the voices of many generations. Legends passed down by the light of a fire. Customs that have survived for hundreds of years. Skills that cannot be learnt from a manual. This is what intangible cultural heritage is all about. Invisible, yet priceless. For centuries, Podkarpackie has been a meeting place for cultures, traditions and people. This has given rise to a unique wealth of stories, melodies, rituals and crafts, which to this day define the character of this region. There are treasures that can be locked away in a museum. But the most precious ones live within people. It is they that make Podkarpackie a place that cannot be mistaken for any other.



MINISTRY OF ECONOMY,
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND
TOURISM

The Ministry of Economy, Digitalization, Entrepreneurship and Tourism (MEDAT) (PP 04) is Romania's central authority responsible for tourism policies, strategies, promotion, legislation, financing programs, and tourism infrastructure development. It promotes Romania as a tourism destination, supports cultural and thematic routes, and participates in European initiatives such as the Council of Europe Cultural Routes programme.

MEDAT is currently finalizing its participation in the Interreg Danube project Mystical Danube, which promotes the region's natural and intangible heritage through a storytelling route, a mobile application, and an information point in Călărași.



Photo: MEDAT

In addition to national tourism strategies, MEDAT developed a Public Policy on Identity Tourism, promoting sustainable, community-based tourism rooted in local traditions, values, and cultural heritage. Through the INCREMENTAL project, the ministry will update this policy, strengthening its focus on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (ICH), community resilience, and sustainable tourism development.

Within the project, MEDAT is responsible for organizing a partners' meeting, a peer-learning activity, and a study visit on ICH valorization. It also prepares national analyses of policies and strategies related to ICH and contributes to stakeholder engagement, communication, training, and knowledge-sharing activities.

The ministry's team of tourism and EU project experts works closely with key national stakeholders from the fields of culture, tourism, heritage, academia, and local development. Together, they aim to strengthen cooperation, exchange good practices with international partners, and promote the sustainable preservation and valorization of Romania's cultural heritage.



Amiens (PP 05), the historic capital of Picardy in the heart of the Hauts-de-France region, is a city on a human scale that charms visitors with its perfect blend of monumental history, abundant nature and vibrant urban life. World-renowned for its Notre-Dame Cathedral — an absolute masterpiece of classical Gothic art, the largest in France and twice listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site — the city is just as inextricably linked to the figure of Jules Verne. The visionary writer lived there for over thirty years, and his famous Maison à la Tour, now a museum, invites visitors on an extraordinary journey into the imagination of the 19th century.



Photo: Laurent Rousselin - Amiens Métropole

Today, this cultural identity is underpinned by institutions of national significance that shape the city's life, such as the Musée de Picardie or the Maison de la Culture d'Amiens. But beyond its monuments, the spirit of Amiens is expressed through living traditions that coexist with a vibrant modernity. This is the case with the 'Chés Cabotans d'Amiens' theatre, which has kept traditional Picard puppets and the character of Lafleur alive in the local dialect since the 19th century, as well as the Hortillonnages, a 300-hectare market garden area that integrates art into the natural landscape by hosting the International Garden Festival each year, blending contemporary art, landscaping and the preservation of the water ecosystem. This historical and natural heritage is now being revitalised by a particularly active young and student population. These young people are breathing new life into the city and bringing a packed programme of events to life throughout the year, taking to the streets during comic book, music, film and street arts festivals, thereby making Amiens a city firmly focused on the future.



PELOPONNESE

The Region of Peloponnese (PP 06) is a place where history, cultural heritage, nature, and people come together to reflect a region shaped by tradition, identity, and a strong connection to its past. Located in southern Greece, the Peloponnese is known worldwide as the birthplace of great civilizations and timeless traditions, while its crystal-clear waters, breathtaking landscapes, and picturesque traditional settlements reveal the unique character of the region.

Here, history is not only preserved but it remains alive in everyday life and continues to inspire the future.



Photo: visitpeloponnese.com

From the ancient cities of Sparta, Mycenae, and Corinth to the castles of Monemvasia and Nafplio, every part of the Peloponnese carries its own identity and cultural legacy. Archaeological sites, Byzantine monuments, traditional villages, local customs, gastronomy, craftsmanship, and cultural events create a region where tangible and intangible heritage naturally coexist with contemporary life.

At the same time, the Peloponnese is a land of exceptional natural beauty. Crystal-clear seas, mountains, forests, rivers, caves, olive groves, and vineyards can all be found within short distances, offering a unique variety of landscapes and experiences. This diversity is reflected not only in the natural environment, but also in local gastronomy, traditions, and the warm hospitality of the people.

Inspired by its history and driven by the creativity and determination of its people, the Peloponnese continues to move forward while remaining closely connected to its heritage, traditions, and local communities.

The Peloponnese is more than a destination.

It is a place where heritage, people, and tradition continue to shape the future.



Gjirokastrë (PP 07) is one of Albania's most historic and picturesque cities, known for its well-preserved Ottoman-era architecture, cobblestone streets, and rich cultural heritage. Built on the steep slopes of the Mali i Gjerë ("Wide Mountain"), the city is often called the "City of Stone" due to its distinctive slate-roofed houses.



Photo: Ervis Hoxha

Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Gjirokastrë is home to the impressive Gjirokastrë Castle, which overlooks the Drino Valley. Around 23,270 residents live within the expanded Gjirokastrë Municipality, including the city center and surrounding administrative units and rural communities such as Lazarat, Cepo, and Lunxhëri.

The city offers a unique blend of history, tradition, cuisine, and mountain scenery, making it an important cultural and tourism destination in southern Albania. As the birthplace of internationally renowned author Ismail Kadare and the host of the National Folk Festival, Gjirokastrë is deeply rooted in literature, history, and Albania's rich polyphonic vocal traditions.

Within the INCREMENTAL project, Gjirokastrë Municipality contributes its experience in cultural heritage management, local development, and cross-border cooperation, supporting sustainable regional growth and community engagement initiatives.

Work-in-progress

First Interregional Thematic Seminar in Venice



Photo: Podkarpackie Region

The INCREMENTAL project meeting took place in Venice and Mestre from **27–29 October**, bringing together project partners and stakeholders to discuss the role of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in supporting local identity, social cohesion, and sustainable development.

The event opened with an **Interregional Thematic Seminar at Villa Settembrini in Mestre**, where experts highlighted the importance of safeguarding ICH and its contribution to local development and economic growth. Project partners also presented examples of traditions and community initiatives from their regions.

On the second day, partners met in Venice to discuss project management, communication, and future cooperation activities. Participants also took part in a study visit dedicated to the Via Querinissima cultural route, demonstrating how heritage can connect communities and strengthen regional identity.

The final day marked the official local launch of the INCREMENTAL project by the Veneto Region. Local associations and stakeholders presented good practices in preserving and promoting intangible cultural heritage in Veneto.

The meeting successfully combined knowledge exchange, strategic planning, and practical experiences, creating a strong foundation for future project activities.

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Peer-to-peer workshop in Poland



Photo: Podkarpackie Region

On 28-29 April 2026, Rzeszów and Medynia Głogowska hosted a peer2peer workshop within the INCREMENTAL project, focused on methods of identifying and safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).

Discussions highlighted regional activities related to the inventorying, protection, and promotion of living traditions, as well as the role of the European Funds for Podkarpacie 2021–2027 programme in supporting cultural heritage initiatives.

During the peer2peer session, project partners presented their regional policy instruments and exchanged good practices. Key challenges identified included globalization, urbanization, and the weakening transmission of traditional knowledge between generations. The Steering Committee meeting also reviewed project progress and planned activities for the upcoming semester.

The second day took place at the Medynia Pottery Centre in Medynia Głogowska, where participants explored a case study on traditional pottery craftsmanship. The visit demonstrated how safeguarding crafts included on the Polish National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage can strengthen local identity and community development. Participants toured the centre, visited exhibitions, and attended a pottery demonstration.

INCREMENTAL represented on Europe, let's cooperate!

The INCREMENTAL project was among the key participants at the annual event of the **Interreg Europe Programme – Let's cooperate 2026**.

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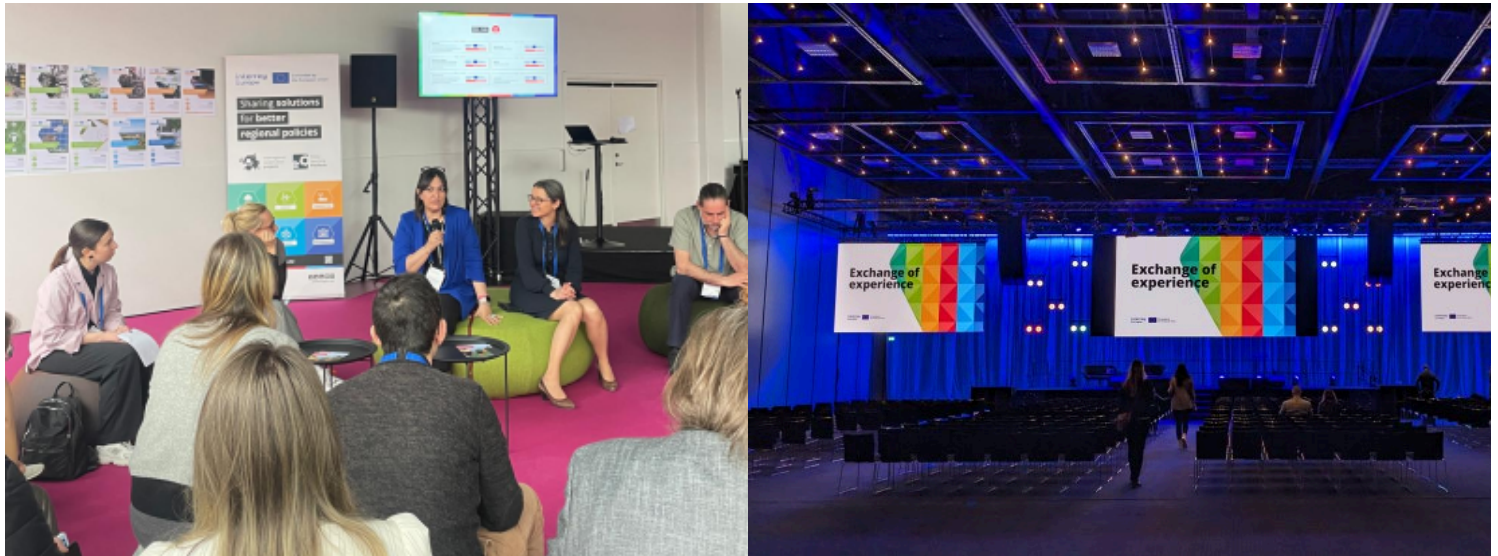


Photo: Podkarpackie Region

On the second day of the event, the Lead Partner took part in a pitching session where it presented the INCREMENTAL project alongside other projects from the SOCIAL strand.

What's up with our partners?

INTANGIBLE PODKARPACKIE – the comprehensive programme to support intangible cultural heritage

INTANGIBLE PODKARPACKIE is a systemic programme run by the Podkarpackie Region aimed at identifying and promoting intangible cultural heritage (ICH). The programme was launched in 2020 in response to the insufficient recognition of local traditions and the risk of practices passed down through the generations being lost. The need to implement these measures stemmed from the limited documentation of the region's ICH and was aimed at strengthening the protection of ICH, building intergenerational bonds and reinforcing the region's cultural identity. From 2020 cooperation with 21 regional institutions was established and 17 manifestations of ICH were identified.

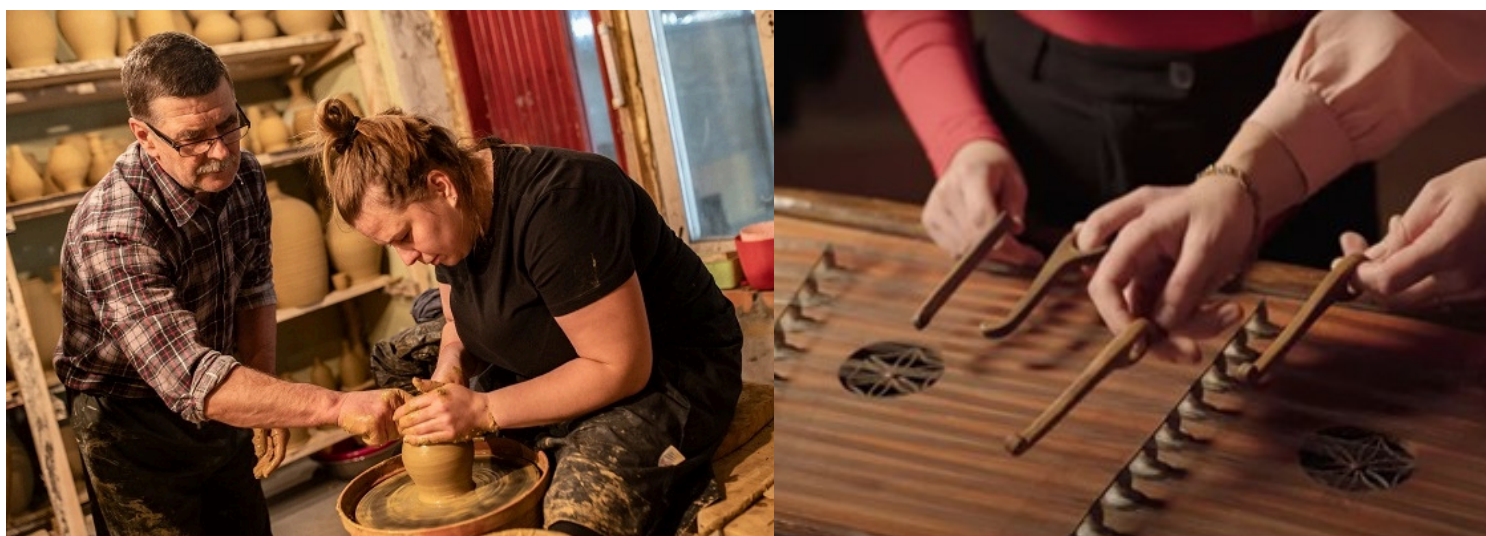


Photo: Podkarpackie Region

The regional government carries out activities to consolidate communities and institutions by organising consultation meetings, workshops and discussion forums involving custodians, non-governmental organisations, cultural institutions and representatives of the academic and educational communities. These meetings serve to exchange experiences and initiate conservation measures. The Podkarpackie Region collects materials documenting the region's living culture, participates in the processes of inscription on the national and UNESCO lists of ICH. In the period 2020-2025, five master-apprentice workshops were organised to support the transmission of traditional skills. The results of activities are disseminated via the platform <https://niematerialne.podkarpackie.pl/> supporting regional education and the promotion of ICH.

The initiative takes a systematic approach to the safeguarding of ICH in the region and facilitates the active involvement of stakeholders. By 2025, cooperation is established with 21 regional institutions, 17 manifestations of ICH were identified, support provided for the inclusion on national/UNESCO lists, 5 master-apprentice workshops were organised and 2 conferences attended by 140 people. Website <https://niematerialne.podkarpackie.pl/> is constantly maintained and updated.



Photo: Podkarpackie Region

National framework for safeguarding ICH through Gjirokastër Folklore Festival

The good practice is Albania's legal and institutional framework for safeguarding and promoting intangible cultural heritage, implemented through the National Folklore Festival of Gjirokastër as its main showcase. The framework responds to the need to preserve traditional music, dance, costumes and crafts while using heritage as a driver of tourism and local development. Under Law No. 27/2018, the National Center of Traditional Activities (NCTA/QKVT) organises the festival in cooperation with the ministry responsible for cultural heritage, local self-government units and other public and private institutions. The festival is organised on the basis of a regulation approved by the minister and announced by ministerial order one year before implementation. This makes it a planned policy instrument rather than a stand-alone event.



Photo: Qendra Kombëtare e Veprimtarive Tradicionale

Ministry of Culture and local-government support, NCTA coordination, public/private partners, performers, heritage experts and contracted technical staff. The Albanian Ministry of Culture allocated ~ 24.4 million ALL for the 2015 festival edition, covering stage logistics and infrastructure.

This practice provides a stable legal and institutional framework for organising and safeguarding the National Folklore Festival. Its success is demonstrated by the festival's continuous implementation since 1968 and its broad participation. In 2023, it involved over 1,200 performers, 500+ children and youth, and 7,000+ participants in pre-selection processes. The framework also strengthens institutional cooperation and the documentation and preservation of intangible cultural heritage.



Photo: Qendra Kombëtare e Veprimtarive Tradicionale

What's next?

Next term, we'll be busy with an interregional project meeting in the Nordland region of Norway and some exciting stakeholder meetings!

The partners will also be working on identifying best practices.

We look forward to summarising our key events in the next issue of our newsletter.

Where to find us

