

**Gábor Bódis**

**The role of design in future-proof tourism destinations**

**Positioning and narrating a micro-Danube region**

**Institute of Sustainable Development**  
**Department of Tourism**

Supervisors:

Dr. Gábor Michalkó, Full Professor

Dr. Ariel Zoltán Mitev, Full Professor

**Corvinus University of Budapest**  
**Doctoral School of Business and Management**  
**Tourism Specialisation**

**Gábor Bódis**

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## Table of contents

<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>1.0 THE RELEVANCE OF THE TOPIC</b>	<b>15</b>
1.1 The narrative context	16
1.2 The learning and design context	19
1.3 The tourism and design context	23
<b>II. RESEARCH TOPIC &amp; LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>2.0 PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION</b>	<b>28</b>
2.1 The positioning context	29
2.2 Destination vision, mission and objectives	33
2.3 Sustainability and competitiveness	36
2.4 Newtourism?	40
<b>3.0 BRANDING</b>	<b>46</b>
3.1 Brand building in general	46
3.2 Branding components: Value—Identity—Promise	47
3.3 Branding in Tourism	48
3.4 Destination branding	51
3.5 Best practices	53
3.6 The composition of Tourism and Design with Branding	55
<b>4.0 DESIGN</b>	<b>56</b>
4.1 Definition of the value community and the role of design in branding	57
4.2 View—Narrative—Livelihood design	60
4.3 Touch-points and the interface design	64
<b>5.0 SEGMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>68</b>
5.1 Communication design	69
5.2 Thematic content design	70
5.3 Segmentation and positioning: behavioural segmentation	72
5.4 Messages and narratives	74
5.5 Good practices of Localhood	76
5.6 Avoidable practices	78
<b>6.0 FUTURE CONSCIOUSNESS AND NEW TOURISM MODELS</b>	<b>79</b>
6.1 Future consciousness: the preferable future	79
6.2 Post-COVID models in Tourism	80
<b>7.0 SERVICE EXPERIENCE DESIGN</b>	<b>85</b>
7.1 Grouping destination management organisations in terms of branding and strategy	85

7.2 Tourism Learning Area concept	86
7.3 Organisational Function Design	87
7.4 Danube Bend tourism within a framework: D4	89
7.5 Transdanube Travel Stories: Product Clubs	91
<b>III. RESEARCH</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>8.0 RESEARCH DESIGN</b>	<b>92</b>
8.1 Methodology	92
8.2 Comparative content analysis	92
8.3 Moderated workshops	93
8.4 Semi-structured interviews	95
8.5 In-depth qualitative interviews	97
8.6 Creativity throughout the research and in the future process	104
<b>9.0 TOURISM MICRO-DESTINATION DESIGN &amp; KEY RESULTS</b>	<b>105</b>
9.1 Preliminary studies: a destination for connections	105
9.2 Communication analysis	106
9.3 Destination product audit and contextualisation	107
9.4 Destination function design and conceptualisation	108
9.5 Destination frame design and conceptualisation	108
9.6 Synthesised evaluation of development projects	111
9.7 Experience route design	112
9.8 Project grouping	119
9.9 Destination emotion design and branding conceptualisation	121
9.10 Conclusions	125
<b>10.0 VALUE PROPOSITION DESIGN</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>IV. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>11.0 CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>132</b>
11.1 Research design evaluation	132
11.2 Reflection on the research problem areas	135
11.3 Narratives derived from the research	136
11.4 Summarized conclusions derived from the research outputs	137
11.5 Future research directions	138
11.6 Limitations of the dissertation	139
<b>Resources</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>172</b>

## Table of figures and charts

<i>Figure 1: Visual merging of the key areas of the dissertation</i>	15
<i>Figure 2: The centripetal effect of closed borders and the open cross-border flows</i>	17
<i>Figure 3: Environmental, social and economic narratives around the Ipoly Valley</i>	19
<i>Figure 4: The multiple layers of destination design competences</i>	23
<i>Figure 5: Destination design flow to sustainable development (own design)</i>	24
<i>Figure 6: Destination competitiveness represented by an athlete</i>	26
<i>Figure 7: Destination communication built upon the character of Tintin</i>	27
<i>Figure 8: Research problem areas visualized</i>	28
<i>Figure 9: Placement of adventure tourism in the tourism product system</i>	30
<i>Figure 10: Placement of adventure tourism in the tourism product system, examples</i>	31
<i>Figure 11: The position of ecotourism within the sector of tourism</i>	32
<i>Figure 12: London First, Vision, Missions and Objectives</i>	34
<i>Figure 13: Adaptation of the simplified outline of vision-mission-objectives</i>	35
<i>Figure 14: Storytelling design circle and a simplified DNS model section</i>	35
<i>Figure 15: The economic, social and natural nexus of tourism sustainability</i>	37
<i>Figure 16: Intra- (single-) and Inter- (multi-) destinations</i>	37
<i>Figure 17: Sustainability pillars</i>	38
<i>Figure 18: Conceptual Evolution of Tourism</i>	40
<i>Figure 19: Branding composition</i>	47
<i>Figure 20: Tourism branding composition</i>	49
<i>Figure 21: Contrast-Choice-Surprise triad in Austrian destination campaigns</i>	52
<i>Figure 22: Further implementations of destination brands</i>	53
<i>Figure 23: Further implementations of destination brands</i>	54
<i>Figure 24: Community of Meanings composition and the interfaces</i>	59
<i>Figure 25: The phases of visitor engagement</i>	60
<i>Figure 26: The framing of design in destination management and marketing</i>	61
<i>Figure 27: The role of design in destination and attraction marketing</i>	61
<i>Figure 28: Brand image management</i>	64
<i>Figure 29: Service interface and designed touchpoints</i>	65
<i>Figure 30: Backstage and front stage interface design examples</i>	66
<i>Figure 31: Cross-stage interface design examples</i>	67
<i>Figure 32: Experience transition vocabulary extract</i>	67
<i>Figure 33: Visitor experience design based on Empathy Map Canvass</i>	69
<i>Figure 34: Danubian Travel Stories and their branding and map-based interpretation</i>	71
<i>Figure 35: New, behavioural segmentation categories initiated by large market actors</i>	72

<b>Figure 36:</b> <i>New, behavioural segmentation categories</i>	74
<b>Figure 37:</b> <i>Good practices of narrative design</i>	76
<b>Figure 38:</b> <i>Avoidable practices of narrative design</i>	78
<b>Figure 39:</b> <i>The Futures Cone</i>	79
<b>Figure 40:</b> <i>The 4-dimensional model and its application in practice</i>	80
<b>Figure 41:</b> <i>The 4-scenario model and its application in practice</i>	81
<b>Figure 42:</b> <i>The original 5-dimensional model and the 5-O model</i>	83
<b>Figure 43:</b> <i>Self-Hunt-Tribe-Heritage cycle in organisational design</i>	88
<b>Figure 44:</b> <i>Extended Self-Hunt-Tribe-Heritage cycle in tourism organisational design</i>	89
<b>Figure 45:</b> <i>The first tourism professional day of the four Danube-Bend towns</i>	90
<b>Figure 46:</b> <i>Moderated competence-based workshop content flow design</i>	94
<b>Figure 47:</b> <i>Relevance of the applied research methods complementing each other</i>	96
<b>Figure 48:</b> <i>Infographic-style illustration about the steps and the final composition</i>	109
<b>Figure 49:</b> <i>The functional design of the destination</i>	110
<b>Figure 50:</b> <i>New local product sales point branding concept</i>	119
<b>Figure 51:</b> <i>Ipolymente logo design concept 1</i>	122
<b>Figure 52:</b> <i>Ipolymente logo design concept 2</i>	123
<b>Figure 53:</b> <i>Ipolymente logo design concept 3</i>	124
<b>Figure 54:</b> <i>Ipolymente logo design concept 4</i>	125
<b>Figure 55:</b> <i>A selection from the series of value-organizing maps</i>	128
<b>Figure 56:</b> <i>A selection from the series of canvasses used in the primary research</i>	129
<b>Figure 57:</b> <i>Workshop sessions in the primary research semi-structured groups</i>	130
<b>Figure 58:</b> <i>Value and narrative design synthesis canvasses</i>	131
<b>Chart 1:</b> <i>UDL categories and their references in the dissertation</i>	21
<b>Chart 2:</b> <i>Contrast, choice and surprise branding pillar features</i>	51
<b>Chart 3:</b> <i>Freedom, surprise, contrast, segmentation and highlight in a brochure</i>	63
<b>Chart 4:</b> <i>Standard and creative vocabularies</i>	75
<b>Chart 5:</b> <i>The 5-dimensional future consciousness model explained</i>	84
<b>Chart 6:</b> <i>DMOs and their brand building alternatives</i>	85
<b>Chart 7:</b> <i>Interviewees' names, position and origin with the areas they represent</i>	99
<b>Chart 8:</b> <i>Interview key concepts according to the points of criteria in the header</i>	100
<b>Chart 9:</b> <i>A sample of project evaluation charts</i>	112
<b>Chart 10:</b> <i>Thematic tourism matrix of the analysed area</i>	114
<b>Chart 11:</b> <i>Project grouping in the analysed area</i>	120
<b>Chart 12:</b> <i>Advantages and the achievements of the patchwork-type dissertation</i>	134
<b>Chart 13:</b> <i>Narratives that the micro-destination may use in the future</i>	136



***“Tourism  
is the most narrated visual encounter ever in the world,  
enabling us to get to know ourselves  
in the reflection of the social and the natural environment  
in which we are immersed.”***

*Gábor Bódis,  
Transdanube Travel Stories, Closure Conference, Linz  
24. November, 2022*



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## Abstract

This doctoral thesis brings together two areas: **Tourism** and **Design**. The dominant conceptual backbone of the merger is the **Learning** process that is present in both fields. For new destinations, such as the *Ipoly Valley* that have not yet been invented and which, due to their geographical location, cannot be developed within the traditional administrative framework, the TLA as a tourism learning area is an organisational model. Design can support this model with the tools of design-thinking. And Learning as a shared intersection between Tourism and Design can **position** the place through **branding** based on relevant product portfolios as well as earlier and existing **narratives** that will be developed in the future. What is also special about this scientific thesis is that it leaves room for the visualisation of science, given that narratives are not only textual, but can also be visual narratives.

The role of design in the day-to-day practice of tourism destination management is a complex challenge, as it concerns the planning of processes, the approach to activities, the details of collaborative and engaging work, as well as strategic thinking, positioning and, last but not least, branding and related communication. The mapping and modelling of competencies, the creation process and the types of tourism products will ultimately lead beyond the theoretical solutions of the future-proof destination design to the formulation and logical sequencing of practical steps. The development of visitor and service experience routes and value chains, with the brand as the connecting link, should be considered together. The sectors present in tourism's service set are successfully applying creative and innovative solutions to segmentation and positioning, which are most tangible in human and likeable narratives. The brand, as a community of meanings, is able to connect the stakeholders and actors of the backstage and the front stage. The triple unity and interconnection of internal and partnered external management, marketing communication, the tourist destination as a place and its interfaces are unthinkable without the complementarity of design and co-design - this is what the practice of service design teaches us.

This dissertation explores the dimensions of the micro-destination in question, the *Ipoly Valley*, and examines what makes its narrative exciting and complete for today's visitor. The research questions also focus on the visibility, presentability and management of a region that is not geographically homogeneous and is not balanced in its services. It examines whether a tourism product structure can be assigned to a destination thus framed, based on the meaningful use of leisure time and the varied use of the landscape, both in terms of motivation and responsibility.

## Kivonat

Jelen doktori értekezés két területet fog össze: a **Turizmust** és a **Dizájnt**. E kapcsolat meghatározó fogalmi gerincét a mindkét területen jelen lévő **Tanulási** folyamat adja. Az olyan új desztinációk számára, mint az *Ipolymente*, amelyeket még nem hoztak létre, és amelyek földrajzi elhelyezkedésük miatt nem fejleszthetők a hagyományos adminisztratív keretek között, a TLA mint turisztikai kísérleti, vagy tanulási terület alkalmas szervezeti modell lehet. A dizájn a dizájn-gondolkodás eszközeivel támogathatja ezt a modellt. A Tanulás pedig a Turizmus és a Dizájn közös metszéspontjain keresztül **pozicionálja** is a teret egy releváns termékportfólión, valamint a jövőben kialakítandó, a korábbi és a meglévő **narratívák**on nyugvó **márkaépítéssel**. Egyedisége ennek az értekezésnek, hogy teret enged a tudomány-vizualizációnak, ugyanis a narratívák nem csupán szövegesek, de képi narratívák is lehetnek.

A design szerepe a turisztikai desztinációmenedzsment mindennapi gyakorlatában összetett kihívás, mivel a folyamatok tervezését, a tevékenységek megközelítését, az együttműködés és a bevonó munka részleteit, valamint a stratégiai gondolkodást, a pozicionálást és nem utolsósorban a márkaépítést, valamint a kapcsolódó kommunikációt érinti. A kompetenciák, az alkotási folyamat és a turisztikai termékek típusainak feltérképezése és modellezése végső soron a jövőképes desztinációtervezés elméleti megoldásain túl a gyakorlati lépések megfogalmazásához és logikus egymásutániségéhez vezet. A látogatói és szolgáltatási élményútvonalak és értékláncok fejlesztését, a márkával, mint összekötő kapocccsal együtt kell figyelembe venni. A turizmus szolgáltatáskészletében jelen lévő ágazatok sikeresen alkalmazzák a szegmentáció és pozicionálás kreatív és innovatív megoldásait, amelyek leginkább az emberi és szerethető narratívákban válnak kézzelfoghatóvá. A márka, mint jelentésközösség, képes összekötni a színpad mögötti, illetve a színpadon szereplők érdekeltjeit. A belső és a külső partnerség gondozása, a marketingkommunikáció, a turisztikai desztináció mint hely és annak érintkezési pontjainak meghatározása elképzelhetetlenek a dizájn és az együtt-tervezés komplementaritása nélkül - erre tanít bennünket a service design gyakorlata.

Jelen disszertáció feltárja az *Ipolymente* dimenzióit, vizsgálja, hogy mitől lehet izgalmas annak narratívája a ma látogatójának. Kutatói kérdései nyomán egy földrajzilag közel sem egységes, szolgáltatásaiban sem kiegyensúlyozott mikro-térség ismertségére, bemutathatóságára és menedzsmentjére is fókuszál. Vizsgálja, hogy egy keretbe foglalt térhez rendelhető-e olyan turisztikai termékstruktúra, amely mind motivációs szintjeiben, mind pedig felelősségteljeségében a szabadidő tartalmas eltöltésére és a változatos tájhasználatra épül.

## Objectives

The fundamental professional, scientific and academic, but a certainly practical goal of the author is **to influence the daily and operational work at local and regional levels of tourism communication and branding in Hungary** in the sense that destinations can effectively plan and design their communication both horizontally and vertically. Thus, the *Danube* itself is linked to the theme as a horizontal macro-entity, and the most renowned and practised experts have been involved in its interpretation for tourism. The *Ipoly Valley*, as a transversal micro-destination, provides the vertical perspective, which the author has based on the stake-holders of the space concerned.

Generally speaking, in the course of any **Learning** process, we start with the questions: *what*, *how* and *why*. This dissertation draws on this triad of learning questions by associating the interdependent process of Expression, Representation and Involvement with the Information-, Experience- and Capacity-**Design** challenges and roles of **Tourism** destinations.

By looking at the whole process and the points of integration, and thus reach their target groups with the right segmentation and narratives, embedded in the principles of sustainability, the main mission is **to gain higher and wider professional recognition in this area as a tourism developer and researcher**, to be able to further invent, adapt as well as interpret intellectual approaches and models.

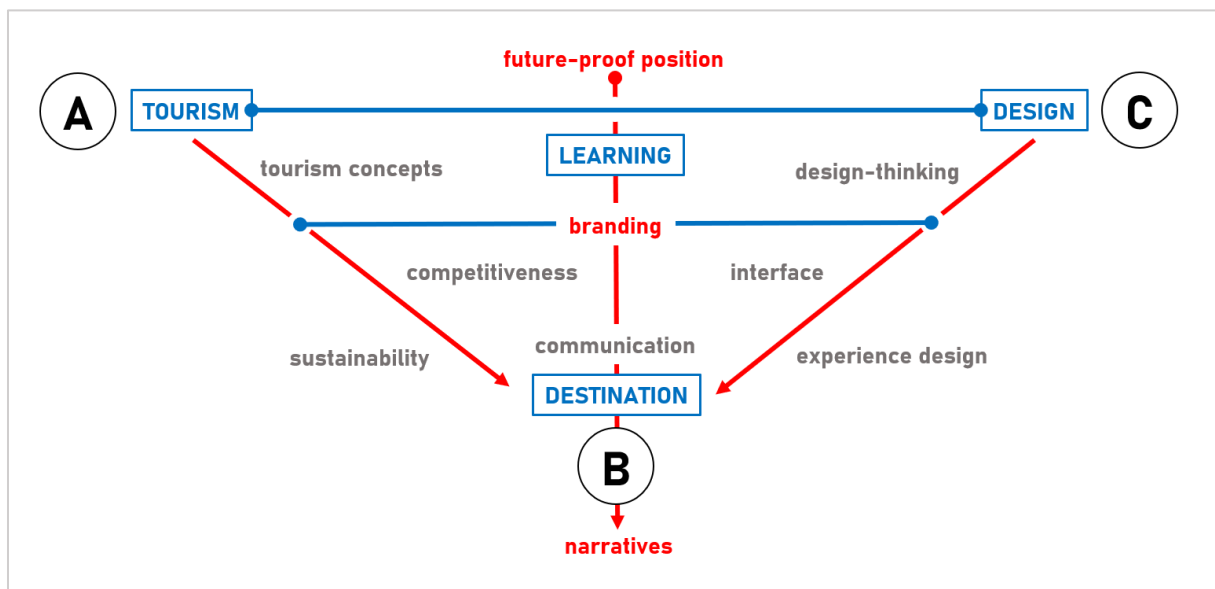
**To have a soft and gentle approach of treating rivers** as female creatures, the author does the same with the *Danube*. The geographical space of the analysis is partially the *Danube* herself and partially the *Danube Bend* with one of the possible entry points in focus: the *Ipoly Valley*. The complete and concise understanding of design in the Hungarian tourism sector is still in its infancy or better to say early stage. In international contexts, however, design - a design-oriented approach and thinking - is already evident at many points and levels (in strategies, concepts, master plans, physical environment design, urbanism, impact assessments, environmental studies, etc.). Design in other words is not just about graphics, images and visual communications, but also it is about some more holistic processes in which stakeholders are involved (Haskett, 2005).

**The primary goal of the research is to find answers to the question of how to generate a story, what makes a story new but systemic, interesting and appealing, what gives it its uniqueness.**

# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 THE RELEVANCE OF THE TOPIC

**Tourism** (A) is the area where the encounter between the visitor and the host societies comes to the sharp end (of the knife), as the English say. The destination's value proposition can be made more effective and attractive through **Design** (C). Both tourism and design involve **Learning** as a process. And in learning, we formulate questions, and the questions are answered by stories: textual and visual narratives. **Narratives** build the **Brand** and the brand **Positions** the **Destination** (B) in terms of **Future-proofness** (Figure 1). From this perspective, it is of paramount importance to examine the context of narratives first.



*Figure 1: Visual merging of key areas of the dissertation (own design)*

The relevance of the topic is also given by the fact that in a broader interpretation of the present area, there are congested points, such as the *Danube Bend*, and future, larger-scale developments are expected there, compared to which the *Ipoly Valley* could be an alternative, soft or relief area, if this is clearly reflected in its new and energizing narratives. The topic is also relevant from the point of view that, after the Pandemic, visitors and destinations are looking for those types of tourism products that can be used individually, as a community, physically and mentally, and at the same time develop in their responsibility and future-awareness. It can be deduced from these that it is worthwhile to examine the triple environment of destinations (Figure 15): nature, society and the economy, and to group the narratives in the same way (Figure 3).

## 1.1 The narrative context

The interest of the investigated area is confirmed by the earlier and current narratives related to it. The author examined the context of the narratives in accordance with the research goals. Considering that the stories associated with the *Ipoly Valley* occur in quite a large number both in the scientific literature and in the press of the time, it is reasonable to group the narratives as it appears later in point 2.3 (Figure 3). The drama of the narrative context is conveyed by the keywords assigned to each branch by the author: Extremety, Conflicts and Frames, and the words that are typed in bold. In relation to these three directions or contexts (environment, society, economy), the author formulates his research areas or questions in Chapters II and III.

### 1.1.1 Environmental narratives

The examined area is actually an area of contrasts, which is why the destination brand design approach based on the contrast outlined later in point 3.4 will be relevant. The contrast emerges when comparing both the flow of water and its extremity, and the **topography** of the mountainous areas on the Hungarian side and the flat areas on the Slovakian side. Talking about **hydrology**, the Ipoly is a river with an **extreme** flow. The difference between the lowest and the highest water level can be up to 10 times, and the difference in water flow can be up to 500 times (Mike, 1969). The area is geomorphologically colourful, too, so its wildlife is more **diverse** than average. In the mosaic-shaped areal layout, communities and the fauna represent a significant added value: the birds fly along the river as a "**green highway**" (Nagy, 2004). The characteristics of the Ipoly and its flood plain have been shaping the natural - and in this case the **universal** - face of the area for centuries. Early spring and summer floods covered the discharge areas with fertile mud, thanks to which the "**white grass**" (*Stipa* in Latin) could be mowed twice a year (Vit, 1992). The area was particularly suitable, and partly is today, for fishing, grazing, hay collection, the production of reeds, cattails, rushes, berry bushes and fruit trees.

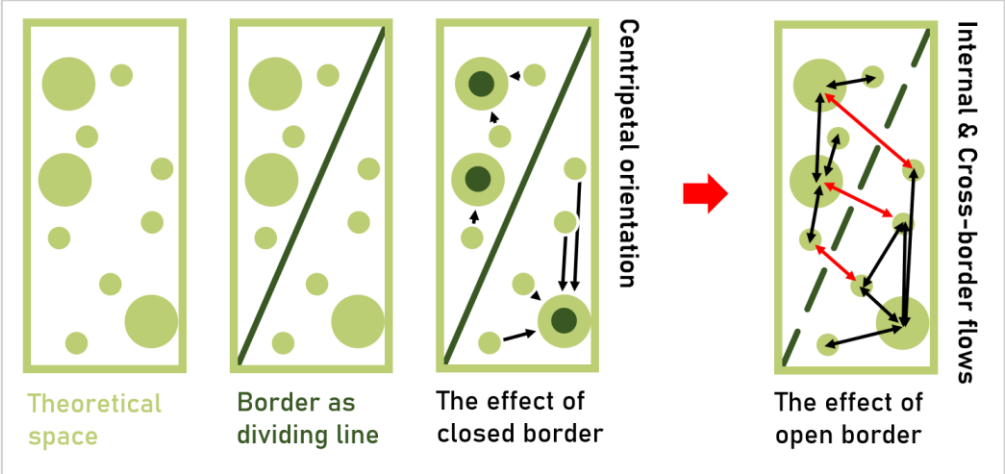
### 1.1.2 Societal narratives

To start with a really interesting story, I am referring to the fact that in the 19th century, almost all settlements operated mills in in the area, on the river itself, 17. The millers were opposed to any kind of riverbed regulation, and even it sometimes led to serious **interest-driven conflicts** (Mike, 1991). A change was brought about by the Ipoly becoming a border river from 1947. In the strictly guarded border strip, bridges and mills had to be demolished. However, this made some positive effects on the natural environment.



Examining the social narratives, it is beneficial to broaden our vision since the destination of this study is located within a **geographic boundary**, which is a state border. Hungary is a small country in terms of area, but the number of neighbours is quite high in comparison. So, it does matter what kind of **connections** and bilateral agreements the country concludes (Ritecz–Sallai, 1999). This is still the case today, mostly thanks to visitors’ behavioural patterns, which are presented in point 5.3. People living along the border line, no matter how common their space, language and cultural roots are, as time progresses, the distance between the groups living on both sides of the border increases (Figure 2), especially if it is politically motivated. These become their **mental boundaries**. The ‘we / us’ and the ‘they / them’ are created (centripetal orientation) as differentiating motifs, and one group may come up with **stereotypes** when referring to its neighbours. (Houtum, 1997). What's more, this phenomenon even affects identity, since as long as there is no clear or political boundary between the societies, the regional or local identity is stronger than the national identity.

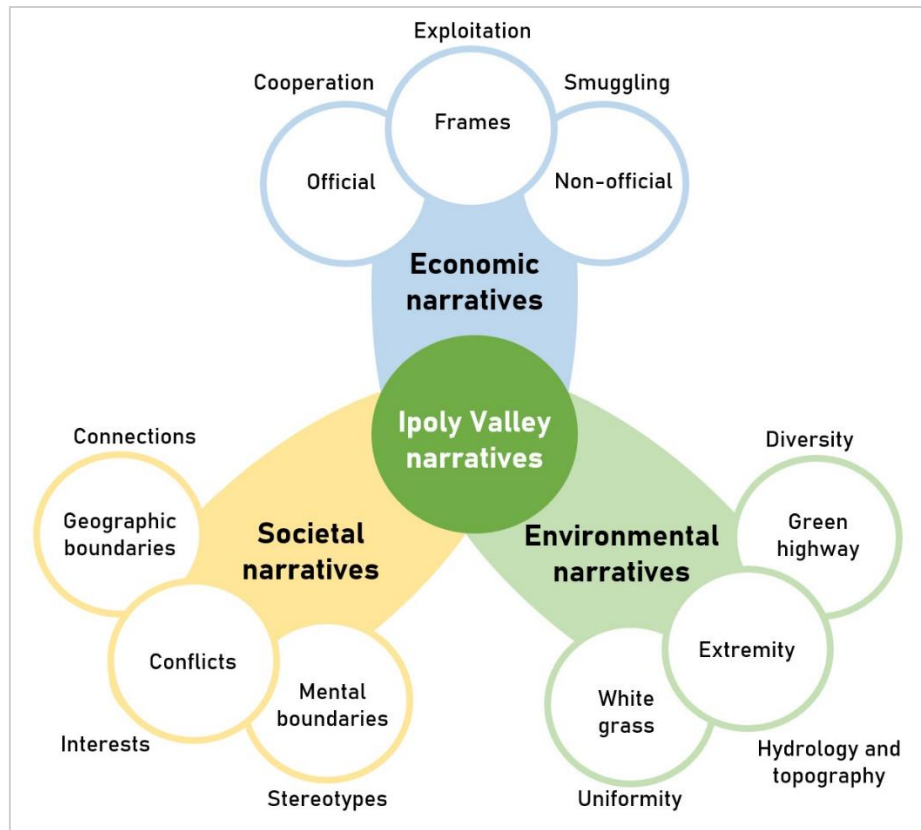
EU development projects, such as INTERREG prefer crossing borders, so the regional approach strengthens the localhood identity, which also has a good effect on communal cohesion. The rightmost rectangle in the illustration shows new internal spatial movements due to the opened border, as well as movements across the border line. This research suggests narratives and brand concepts based on the given openness, exploring the effects and possibilities in the region. The relevance of the topic is therefore also given by the fact that we are talking about the development of a specific, cross-border micro-region in the territory of the EU, where internal points can be involved and further developed thanks to the openness of the border.



**Figure 2:** *The centripetal effect of closed borders and the open cross-border flows (sources: Heigl, 1978; Janssen (2000); Laine (2008); adapted own design)*

### 1.1.3 Economic narratives

The utilization of the natural features of the area is still worth considering, and due to its beauty, it could be a great tourist attraction (Ruzsinné–G. Tóth, 2013). The river is more a decoration of the landscape and reflects the way of looking at nature in which it is worth as much as it brings direct economic benefits. In the past, the direct value use (**exploitation**) of the river was provided by fishing, water mills, or reed harvesting. As soon as it was regulated or became an international political border river, it lost its natural identity and the tourism opportunities are still waiting to be explored (under-exploitation) and made viable (in an operational frame). Organizational development has emerged in many forms, and there are **official organizations** operating in the region now, which seek to unite economic actors and make them cooperate. One of the organizations is the Ipolymente-Börzsöny Nature Park Association (IBN, 2007), established in 2003 with the participation of 13 settlements, civil organizations, businesses and individuals in Hungary. Its goal is the harmonized development of the region's economy and the creation of a nature park on the Slovakian side. The accession of Slovakia and Hungary to the EU brought many opportunities, favourable initiatives are the projects implemented within the **framework** of INTERREG, for example the creation of artificial fish ladders used by many fish species (Papanek, 2012). Cross-border economic development organizations are reviving previously broken relationships. One of the successful forms of **cooperation** is the so-called European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation, EGTC for short, such as Pontibus, which supported this research. Linked to social narratives, one of the most drastic consequences of the delineation of the Trianon borders was the separation of families, relatives, friends, neighbours, acquaintances, that is, people from each other (FPKNM, 2020). The attached illustration (Figure 3) shows that, in addition to social conditions, geographical conditions also played a role in the appearance of **non-official** economic relations and processes. The Ipoly is not a wooded boundary line, and it was more difficult to guard it in the past. This also contributed to the emergence and strengthening of the often-risky **smuggling** (Zalabai, 1988). “Often, the river bed is so low that in the evening twilight black pepper and pearl button smugglers can escape duty-free through the unfortunate Trianon border with stuffed sacks on their backs” (KÚ, 1937). The inhabitants of the border settlements wore the Czech Bata shoes, which was not a rare phenomenon at the time (LL, 1938). Double ownership also contributed to illegal trade. By marking the border lines, the lands of some farmers were also divided into two. They could stay on both sides with a permit and move freely. Those who worked for them after 1920, who were also smugglers, of course, received a border card to cross (EÉ, 1969).



*Figure 3: Environmental, social and economic narratives around the Ipoly Valley based on the Economic, social and natural nexus of tourism sustainability (source: Farjami, 2019; own design)*

## 1.2 The learning and design context

### 1.2.1 Tourist learning

Here the author refers back to his own statement shared in the very beginning of his dissertation: *“Tourism is the most narrated visual encounter ever in the world, enabling us to get to know ourselves in the reflection of the social and the natural environment in which we are immersed.”* Tourism is often an integral part of learning. On the one hand, visitors are able to acquire new and new knowledge very actively, on the other hand, they learn passively by simply comparing or just observing calmly (Gössling, 2017). Visitors experience new natural or man-made physical and social environments in business and leisure contexts (Hall, 2005; Pearce–Lee, 2005), through the processes of visual consumption based on impressions (Urry, 1995). This raises the issues about how tourism shapes the understanding of sustainability in destinations. In order to be able to interpret a visitation from the context of the learning process (that is, the discovery), it is worth examining the relevant design theories as well.

It is widely recognised that learning means more than formal education, and that learning in less constrained situations and environments contributes as much to an individual's development as the knowledge acquired in the school system. While it is true that there are many forms of lifelong learning, travel to unknown and discoverable places provides one of the most useful ways of acquiring practical knowledge (Broomhall–Pitman–Majocho–McEwan, 2010). It has also been found that the learning process can support the motivation to travel (Crompton, 1979). In fact, if we interpret this relationship in a marketing sense, one of the pull factors is the desire to learn, which can be fulfilled by visiting a place. Likewise, and here we can also refer to the adventure tourism product portfolio (Figures 9 and 11), the author cited earlier identifies discovery as one of the determinant motives in the personal development of an individual. The association of learning processes with tourism is therefore not without foundation, and there is a growing body of literature that identifies elements in the process of tourist learning that complete the roles and tasks of learning.

Researchers have also found that experience itself has a new kind of economic offering that is stronger and more valuable, but different in many aspects, from the tangible products or less tangible services. These studies suggest that visitors are looking for experiences that are memorable, engaging, personal, sensational and even transformative, enhancing their personalities and resilience (Pine–Gilmore, 1999). The context of adventure tourism, to which the author of this thesis refers at several points, is therefore relevant.

There is, however, a significant further aspect of the learning process that emerges from this topic, and that is the assessment of learning as a process that constructs meanings. The definition of the meaning community or community of values is given prominence in this work in passage 4.1. Learning scientists and studies confirm that the human mind creates and constructs values in a very unique way (Bransford–Brown–Cocking, 2000). Knowledge is not created in the human brain like a toolbox, where you place each tool on the right box or shelf. Contrary to this, knowledge and experience are scattered and stored in a distributed way (Gazzaniga–Ivry–Mangum, 2002). When necessary, in today's language on-demand, these scattered elements are ignited, assembled and constructed. The memories and reports do not only refer to the moment and place just experienced, but consist of many areas and previous experiences. The higher the degree of the meaning creation is, the greater the satisfaction is, and the construction of meanings is directly related to personal identity and development (Falk, 2009). Thanks to these, we can design the experiences (Chapter 4.0, more precisely Point 4.3.5) and are able to modify the learning processes via exploration with design concepts.

## 1.2.2 Universal design for learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning (information and experience value exchange) for all people based on scientific insights (destination managers) into how humans (visitors) learn. The reasoning is organized around the most basic question words (What, How, Why). It really matters how the management of the place designs the information and content. UDL describes information design as a system of representation tools: **What = multiple means of representation**. In the case of destinations, this means the set of values that is important for the community, authentic and new for the visitor, i.e. one of the brand-building elements. Continuing the thought process with the next brand element, the identity, in the same system, the question of how is the creation of narratives and the delivery of stories to the consumer through appropriate languages, visuals and channels: **How = multiple means of expression and action**. In the field of destination work, this is called visitor experience route design. Finally, when we talk about capacity design, our main question-word will be the why. Who and why identifies him- or herself with a place or an attraction, what is the degree and level of involvement and fascination. It is possible to relieve the visitor load and stress at certain points of the space, if the management does not invite everyone, but those who want to have a deeper experience and live it. Analysing this learning process, we call it the **Why = multiple means of engagement**. In the table below, the author provides a preliminary overview of where the tourism design placed in the learning context appears in later chapters and paragraphs (Figure 26).

*Chart 1: UDL categories and their references in the dissertation*

<b>WHAT – Multiple means of representation</b> Information design	Placement in later chapters Examples
<i>Language and symbols</i>	<i>1.3.3, 3.2, 3.4</i>
<i>Perception</i>	<i>2.2, 2.3, 5.1, 6.1</i>
<i>Comprehension</i>	<i>4.2.2, 5.3, 7.2</i>
<b>HOW – Multiple means of action and expression</b> Experience route design	Placement in later chapters Examples
<i>Navigation and orientation</i>	<i>4.1</i>
<i>Communication</i>	<i>5.3</i>
<i>Functions and emotions</i>	<i>5.4</i>
<b>WHY – Multiple means of engagement</b> Capacity design	Placement in later chapters Examples
<i>Motivation and challenge optimization</i>	<i>5.2</i>
<i>Individual interests, tailor-made programmes</i>	<i>7.2</i>
<i>Communal interests, collaborative programmes</i>	<i>7.5</i>

### 1.2.3 The importance of storytelling

The importance of narratives (stories told) and their motivational effects can perhaps be understood the best through films. In the context of film tourism, several studies (Mitev–Irimiás–Michalkó, 2018) investigate the motivations for visiting the locations of certain stories and narratives. Story-taking, such as reading, film watching, audio listening (Gerrig, 1993) can be compared to the travel experience. The traveller is removed from his/her original, everyday world and, upon arriving in another world, which may be a world of fantasy, is influenced by factors that, upon his/her return, result in a slightly changed self. This process is described in the literature as transport, the individual or individuals involved are the passengers who have been transported. This is the narrative transport.

It is also well known, and we can experience it every day, that the marketing profession in general, and within it the field of tourism marketing, builds on existing myths and stories or constructs new ones in order to achieve its sales objectives (Levy, 1981). Storytelling is a great way to experience a tourist itinerary or route and to understand the local attractions and cultural values. However, storytelling does not just happen, it needs to be designed, in fact, the destination development project itself can have a story, which is fundamentally determined by its vision and mission.

There is a kind of conceptual difference between narratives and stories, even though sometimes we do not separate the two concepts. A narrative is usually a more comprehensive concept or description, a sequence of events. Narrative in sociology also receives a different interpretation than in tourism or in storytelling. Stories can evoke emotions and reactions, stories have a beginning, a body, and an end. There can be twists, surprises, and mystery in the story (Moscardo, 2020). Therefore, when I talk about narratives, stories have a place in them just like other means of expressing value, such as a colour, a material, a pattern, a single word, or situations that somehow but partially affect our senses. It is also worth examining which are the aspects of competence-based (Figure 4) storytelling in tourism (Woodside–Martin, 2015):

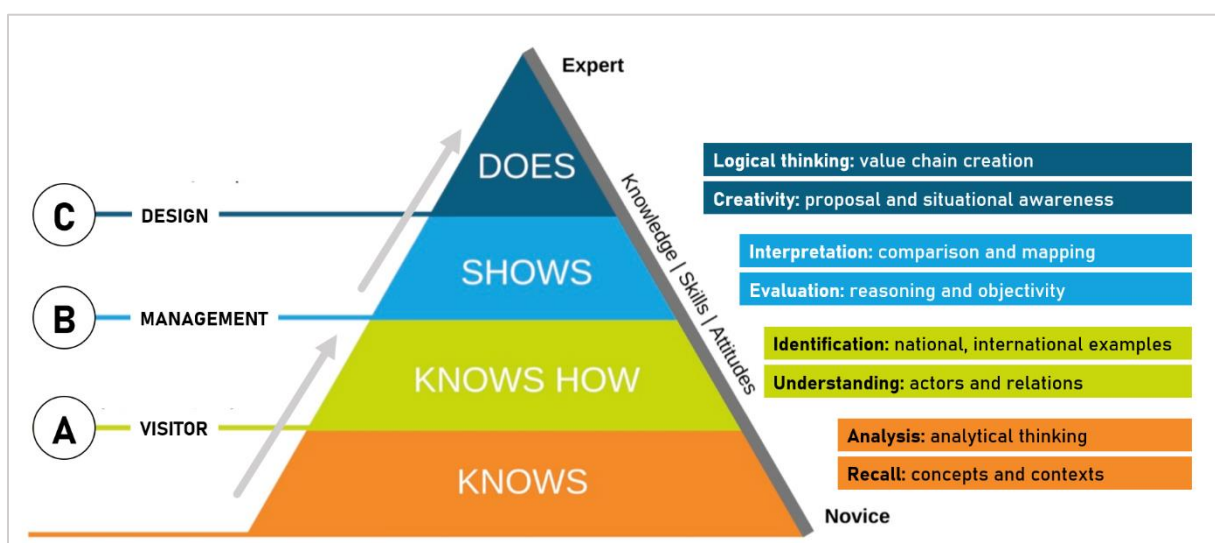
- different consumption experiences can also have different stories: *know* (Point 4.2.3);
- the visitors tell about their unforgettable experiences: *show* (Point 3.4);
- visitors often repeat stories that have been told to them and built on clear segmentation: *know how* (Point 5.3);
- the visitor can place himself or herself in the story, experience it and act accordingly: *do* (Point 4.1).

### 1.3 The tourism and design context

Design is a more holistic concept and toolkit that makes sense in several areas. Smaller-scale, but even more significant transformations can be carried out by design (Volgger–Erschbamer–Pechlaner, 2021). Products, such as those related to adventure tourism, are transformative.

#### 1.3.1 Competence needs in destination design

The development of a tourism area, whether small or large, domestic or cross-border, requires unquestionable professional preparation, conscious action, an open attitude, analytical and logical thinking, and even creativity. The author considers this as a starting point, using the competency pyramid (Rocha, 2016), now put into a competence-based approach that makes it valid in the field of tourist visitations. The present dissertation guides the reader, the assessor, through three defining levels, indicated by the initial three letters of the alphabet. The (A) designation labels the visitor, the (B) designation stands for the organisation, management - in certain cases the service providers - and finally (C) is the design, marketing, branding levels. Generally speaking, when it comes to tourism or destination design, in our professional way of thinking, we move from novice to expert. We get higher and higher from the basic competences of **Recall** or retrieval and **Analysis** (knows), giving us an understanding of the needs and behaviours of visitors and segments of the tourism sector, to the levels of **Understanding** and **Identification**, the ability to evaluate and group data, phenomena, and the ability to see the how (knows how) through good practices and other experiences. This type of division correlates with the previously discussed narrative groups, in which we also included visitor expressions.

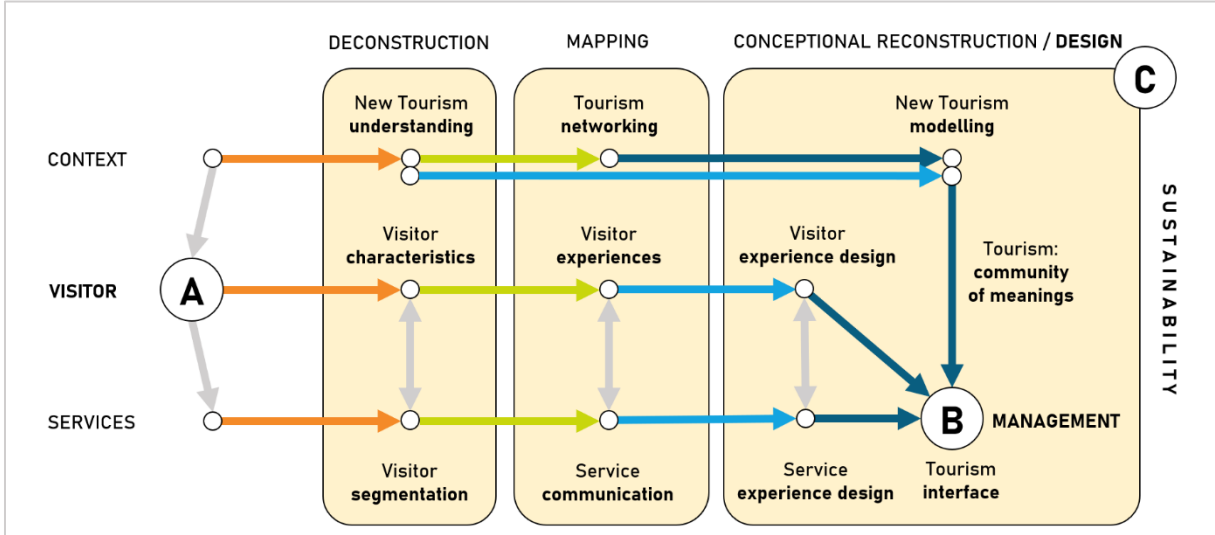


*Figure 4: The multiple layers of destination design competences  
(source: Rocha, 2016; altered own design)*

Once we are able to overview the systems of connections and relationships, which is undoubtedly the first step in proactively implementing a management approach, we move closer to branding as well as design-led thinking, by developing our knowledge, skills and attitudes. **Evaluation** and different mapping and comparison methods will strengthen our expressiveness and **Interpretation** (shows), in order to take action in an effective, competitive and sustainable way to meet the practical challenges of everyday life. **Creativity**, situational awareness and rapid reactions are now skills that provide solutions in unexpected situations, in the knowledge that we have alternatives, value-based chains of experiences, planned visitor and service systems – in **Logical** orders. The (does) is therefore the highest level of thematic tourism itinerary development programmes, as we need to guide visitors not only in the physical space but also in their minds, connecting them emotionally to the place, in which the theme, the brand, the branding can deliver the messages and promises in a concise and digestible way (see also the semi structured in-depth interview questions in Chapter 8).

### 1.3.2 Overview of the process of destination design

The flow chart (Figure 5) outlines the logic and the conceptual multi-channel backbone of destination design, using the same colours and labels as the previous pyramid (Figure 4).



*Figure 5: Destination design flow to sustainable development (own design)*

The **Context** (top level) contributes to the exploration and design of tourism and related systems. Level (A) remains the **Visitor** level, in which we are moving from the left box to the central one, from the characteristics to the experiences. The **Services** or management level is the lowest one, providing the foundation for segmentation, communication, contents and narratives: altogether the design of experiential journeys, reaching the total management sphere



(B). The process that describes the interpretation of values (community of meanings) are given by (C), the model approach in the **Design** box. Following the boxes from **Deconstruction** (understanding in detail), the context is interpreted in the box marked with the word **Mapping**, while the **Conceptualisation** box provides the creative steps.

### 1.3.3 Key features of competitiveness

Several models summarise the competitiveness of tourist destinations. One of the best known, and admittedly the most complex, is the multi-level interpretation of the Competitiveness and Sustainability of Destinations (Crouch–Ritchie, 1999), which in everyday practice cannot be presented to decision-makers or stakeholders who want to shape the future of a municipality or a region. What they are looking for some tangible answers to are the following:

- We have got the values, but how to show them to the public (involvement/address)?
- What are the values that attract visitors and sufficiently express the identity of our community (representation/inspiration)?
- How can visitors actively spend their time here, how can they be involved in the area's atmosphere, flow and offer (competition/dynamism)?
- How can our area be differentiated and identified from others, possibly similar, areas in the market, what will make people visit us from time to time (character/followability)?

From the above consideration, the so-called "Qualifying and Amplifying Determinants" level from the cited model, the selection of the image, the recognition and the brand element, i.e. the character and face of the area, can be paramount. Continuing this logic, from the "Destination Policy" level, the author now highlights the competitive and collaborative element, which is essential for competitiveness and dynamism. From the level of "Core Resources", we can move on to the level of "Supporting Factors", choosing values, their summarisation and representation, and from there to the most important of these: accessibility and addressing. Having completed this filtering and simplifying process, we are able to suggest what our destination is all about.

In this sense, no question that it is favourable if a product, a product group or a bundle of services has a living face, a character or influencer (Zak–Hasprova, 2019). A competitive athlete is able to present and recall (from the competence of recall to the competence of interpretation - as they are stated in Figure 4) the goals he or she has set for himself or herself in terms of positioning and narrative creation, even for a regional management, faster and more

effectively because of his or her familiarity. What Péter Galambos, two-time European champion, five-time World Cup winner, rower on the *Danube* (Vác), suggests (in the pictures of Figure 6) is the sufficiency for the competitiveness of destinations. Of course, now the objectives are simplified. “Future-proofing your business means turning it into an Athletic Organisation” said Tom Cheesewright during the first hit of the pandemic (Cheesewright, 2020). He **Has got a character** which is followable, likeable, kind, engaging, casual and successful. **Addresses**, engages the viewers, not only looking at them, but also he is sharing his success, indicating that he has achieved his goal. The crest on his jersey **Represents** and expresses his belonging, his identification with the values that symbolise the world, his home, his distinction, inspiring people nearby. We can see that he **Competes**, he understands what competition is about, he is dynamic, but he also can relax, slow down, recharge and enjoy himself. Technology is now providing a figurative way for ordinary people to express their preferable, advantageous, competitive and distinctive, honest and personal qualities.



*Figure 6: Destination competitiveness represented by an athlete (own design)*

While unattainable models and influencers are just points of alignment in our lives, a more humble means of self-expression, avatar solutions mask weaknesses, simplify appearance, give people their own characteristics (Kim–Sundar, 2012). To make an event more likeable and recallable, to make it more relatable to visitors, we have long used the function of the main patron, the mascot, or the thoughts of a historical figure, a writer, a poet or an artist. Moreover, this concept also supports some kind of value interpretation for FMCG products, think of Mozart balls or Walt Disney's parks with Mickey Mouse. But the Loch Ness Lake could not be as well-known without the perhaps non-existent character called Nessie the monster, just as Mount Pilatus overlooking Lucerne in Switzerland has got a red dragon figure.

The idea and practice of employing a prominent and well-known figure is not at all new, as Brussels has been using the Tintin figure for 30 years. Many street corners and firewalls feature one or other of the story's characters from the Franco-Belgian comic strip, and even decorate metro stations with some scenes of the story. Visit Brussels put the figure onto the official tourist map covers as well (Figure 7).



**Figure 7:** Destination communication built upon the character of Tintin

(source: [www.tintin.com/en/news/5731/](http://www.tintin.com/en/news/5731/), 2023)

In the case of tourist reception areas, having an attractive character means benefits, because the visitor perspective is looking for attractiveness, while the service provider perspective is looking for competitiveness. This therefore qualifies the task as dual, this is why quite a wide range of models dealing with Tourist Destination Competitiveness and Attractiveness (TDCA) provides a rainbow of portfolios (Vengesai, 2003). As modelled by the just-cited specialist, branding actually does not only connect the desire of attractiveness and objective of competitiveness, but it is the cornerstone, or better to say, the first stepping stone of what a destination sets as strategic goals: having an attractive image, having satisfied visitors, and a running successful and efficient organization. Stepping back a little bit, competitiveness has recently become a popular term in the most diverse fields of social sciences. Getting insight into the professional literature, there is an endless number of competitiveness compositions. Factors determining the competitiveness of products and services, companies, countries and regions, as well as organisations are the subject of research (Chikán–Czakó, 2007).

The common magnitude of the concepts is the future-consciousness: if something is competitive, it has elements that successful market presence can be built on long haul (Somogyi, 2009). If we want to adapt all this into the language of tourism, then we are obviously talking about the competitiveness of destinations. A tourist destination is competitive if its offer of experiences is able to be renewed continuously, to ensure long-term well-being and to enforce the principle of sustainability (Sziva, 2009).

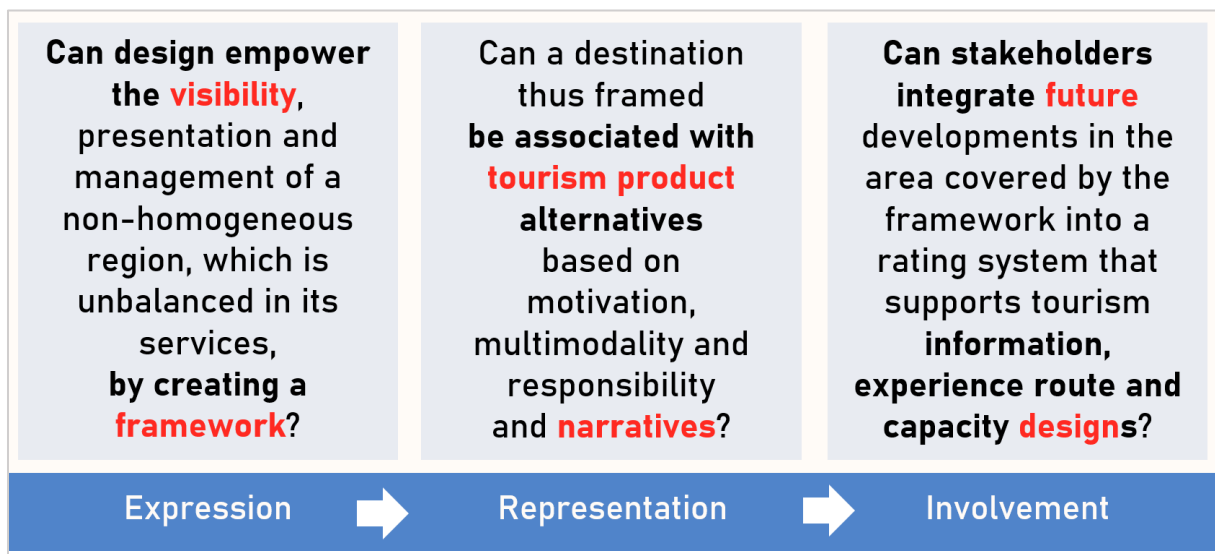
## II. RESEARCH TOPIC & LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.0 PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Some attempts have been made to explore the tourism potential of the micro-region discussed. This is obviously due to the fact that, on the one hand, despite the geographical diversity of the area, it is somewhat backward and unknown in the shadow of the *Danube Bend*, and on the other hand, the cultural links rooted in the Hungarian language and customs due to its borderless accessibility today are interesting. These two conditions continue to inspire those who live in the region, those who think about its development and the author of this study.

The author of the thesis draws the research question areas on the triple guiding thread already introduced in the previous paragraph (Point 1.2.2) in the context of exploratory learning processes, which is the ultimate driver of tourism, and design. These are indicated in italics at the end of each point below. The research focuses on three strategic problem areas, and follow the Expression—Representation—Involvement conceptual spine derived from Universal Design for Learning, namely:

- **Research problem area 1, Expression:** *Multiple means of expression and action;*
- **Research problem area 2, Representation:** *Multiple means of representation;*
- **Research problem area 3, Involvement:** *Multiple means of involvement.*



*Figure 8: Research problem areas visualized (own design)*

It is important to note that the concepts indicated in the lower blue band, which symbolize learning, start from the beginning after taking the last step and returning to the very first one.

## 2.1 The positioning context

*“An idealised river, renowned throughout the world via the melodies of Johann Strauss, the Danube can hardly complain of a lack of publicity and all the familiar clichés. But such overriding impressions also distort insight into deeper associations, into an understanding of this European river that should go far beyond the heady whirl of the waltz, Vienna, wine, the Wachau, and Sisi, the tragic Empress Elisabeth of celluloid fame. It relates to the many borders, cross-border tales and narratives propagating tourist programmes and the motivation to travel through multiple countries.”*

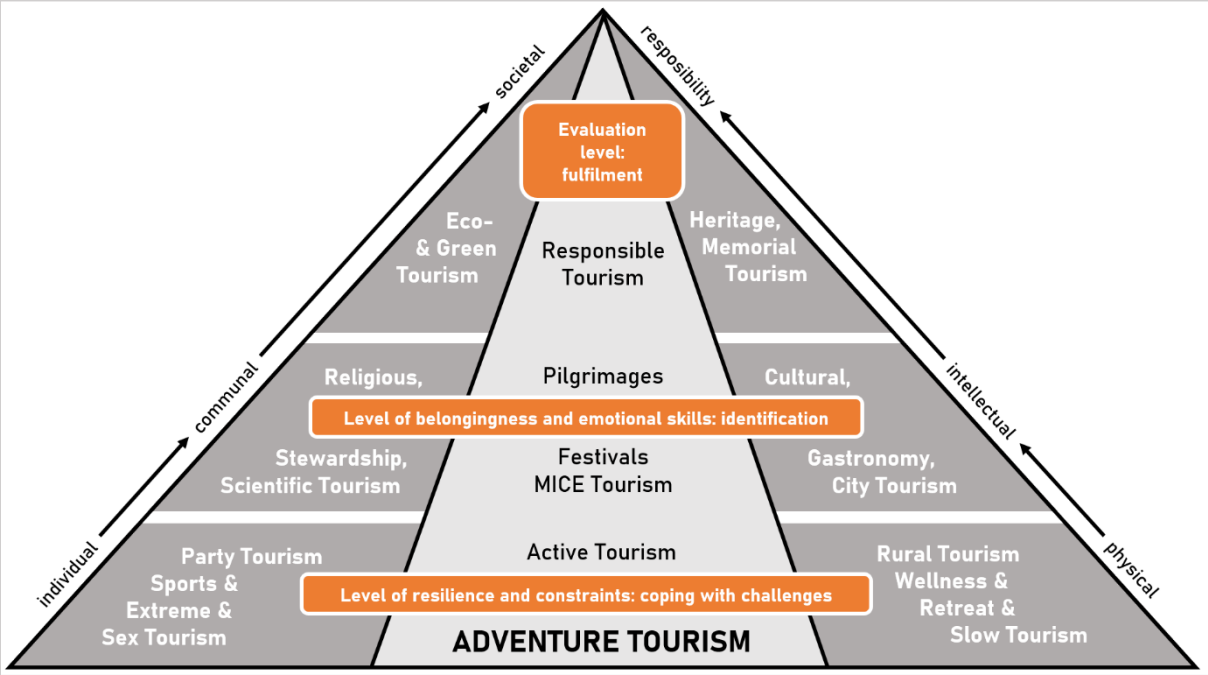
*Georg Steiner, Visit Linz*

In this paragraph, the author outlines the interconnected model-type system of tourism. The included tourism products or fields are as follows: active tourism, cultural tourism, religious tourism, city tourism, retreat tourism, extreme tourism (just to name a couple of them) - referred to collectively as adventure tourism. On the one hand, adventure tourism is very complex, but on the other hand, it is also interesting in its relationship and synergy with other tourism products. Extending Maslow's pyramid of needs (Maslow, 2003), the aspects ranging from the individual to society, as well as physical and mental involvement, leading to the responsible thinking about tourism that is so desirable today are explored in detail (Figure 9). It is embedded in the evolution of tourism (Figures 18 and 32).

Adventure tourism is thus in the middle and at the top, which also means that it is inextricably linked to the tourism products defined at the levels below. However, other factors should also be taken into account. The individual-community-society relationship can be superimposed on the left-hand side of the pyramid of tourism products, as well as the triple relationship of physical, mental and responsibility contexts. In meeting our physiological needs, it is the individual and our physical, bodily tolerance and capacity to perform that are more decisive. The horizon is widening as other actors enter into this system of needs. First, just another person, a partner, then a closer circle of friends, a community, and finally the society. As the physical needs are met, emotional relationships become dominant, while at the same time conscious, spiritual needs emerge. Moving comfortably in a spiritual and emotional (religious, cultural) environment, and then realising oneself in it, the goal that society recognises, is share responsibility, the expression of one's sensitivity and care.

The seemingly selfish and singular motivation of adventure tourism, to overcome physical obstacles or coping with the challenges is now being expanded. It is also a question of

discovering our own intellectual limits, of achieving the fullest self-awareness and even of taking responsibility in a community, which can be satisfied by a range of tourism products. What they all have in common is that adventure, the spirit of adventure, and therefore adventure tourism, can be understood or at least traced at all levels. The diagram is a simple illustration (the relevant tourism products are shown in their shortened form for clarity at points.

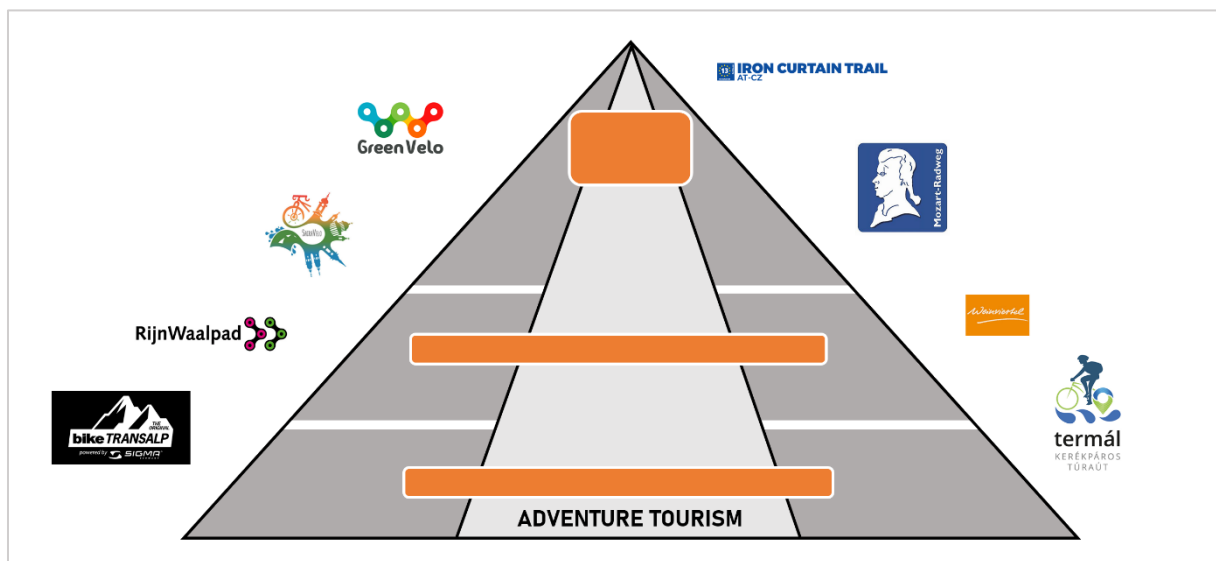


**Figure 9:** Placement of adventure tourism in the tourism product system  
 (concept, design and editing by Bódis, 2019;  
 sources: Maslow, 2003; Puczkó-Rátz, 1998; Michalkó, 2012)

This model (Bódis, 2019) distinguishes three levels. Beyond the needs, capabilities are defined in the diagram, and at the bottom, active tourism products are placed to exploit or strengthen individual/physical carrying capacities. Next is the level of community/spiritual or attachment and emotional capacities, where the tourist participates in the programmes along some kind of community-definable theme. They move from the rural to the urban, from the party to the scientific, to the point of committing to a value system and increasingly embracing it. It is more than a city stroll to make a purposeful cultural discovery, and even to make a pilgrimage to a place is as much a test of physical fitness as it is a test of the need to express our spiritual belonging in community. At the highest level of the model is the level of appreciation in which the individual can gain the recognition of the community, achieve his or her goals and thus also of the self. This is done by not only exploiting the values of the community or society in an increasingly broad sense, but also by building on them, caring for them, taking some

responsibility for the future. Green/ecotourism, which is based on an active approach that preserves and conserves cultural and natural values, should be placed on this level, as should heritage tourism, which is also promoted by sustainable tourism.

The logos around the simplified triangular system (Figure 10) are thematic tourism products and itineraries (Bike Transalp, RijnWaalpad, SacraVelo, GreenVelo, Iron Curtain Trail, Mozart-Radweg, Weinvirtel and the Hungarian Thermal Bike Route) which, in terms of content, are strong brands in the market, incorporating a number of complementary tourism product groups or elements, thus offering a complex promise and satisfaction.

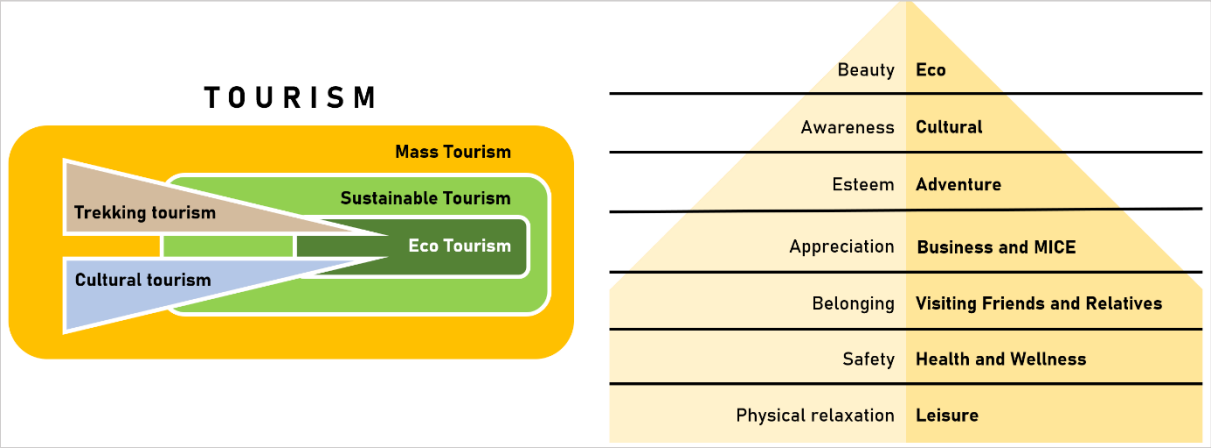


**Figure 10:** Placement of adventure tourism in the tourism product system with examples (concept, design and editing by Bódis, 2019)

The adventure tourism context of tourism along the *Danube* outlines the triple desire that the destination can offer visitors, by satisfying them, feelings of their encounter, identification and fulfilment. We have already seen how much the power of character is crucial (Figures 6 and 7), but the key to overall success lies in storytelling, where the values are more easily identified with / by the visitors, and even their own stories, in the process of being conveyed, becomes memorable.

The ultimate goal of the author of the dissertation is to discuss sustainable forms of tourism and their practical implementation. All of the experiences available to us compares or associates the natural environment with alternative tourism products. From the available researches and studies (Dávid–Ambrus, 2010) it can be deduced that the more we move towards the alternative direction on the palette of tourist products (toward the top of the pyramid of adventure tourism),

the more sustainability and harmony with nature increases. It is obviously clear that there are creative and innovative colleagues who also want to graphically illustrate the range of adventure tourism-related products. Éva Tóth (Figure 9) shows this when she places the area of sustainable tourism within the field of mass tourism, presenting ecotourism more narrowly. It makes us realize that the natural side and the social side are both important, there is a transition between mass services and opportunities that can be experienced more deeply on an individual basis, see nature tourism and cultural tourism. Both of these lead to ecotourism (Tóth, 2015). The self-developed pyramid, which the author of this dissertation presents at the beginning of the chapter (Figure 9), classifies tourism products more finely, the individual and the community appear in it, the needs and motivation levels, as well as the interoperability, prevail.



**Figure 11:** *The position of ecotourism within the sector of tourism and the pyramid of needs related to tourism (sources: Tóth, 2015; Aubert, 2012; own design, partially adopted)*

Tourists often spend only a few days in selected destinations, which are mainly reached by plane and/or car. Sustainable methods and efforts to exploit the huge tourism potential are limited, and there is a lack of networking between different tourist destinations, which would increase the tourism importance of the Danube region. Thanks to the Transdanube Travel Stories project (TDTS, 2023), the initiative was to promote the development in this direction by further developing European adventure and cultural routes and by creating other networks represented in the project. Storytelling is part of positioning, as the message of the destination should be placed in the minds of shoppers or future travellers. Storytelling, creating narratives is an increasingly popular means of communication in tourism. Stories inspire and help weaving dreams towards our next travel destination. Stories can fly us anywhere around the world. How to be good at destination marketing to tell stories? The next paragraph discovers it.



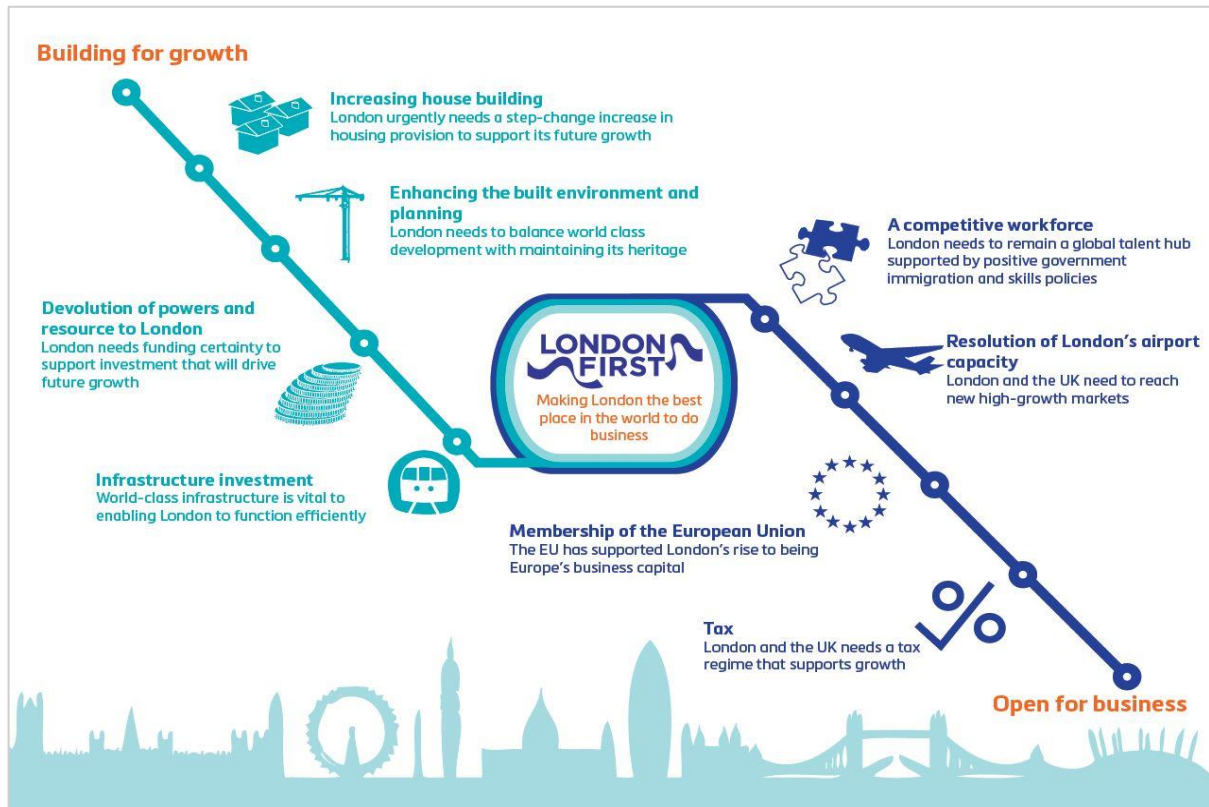
## 2.2 Destination vision, mission and objectives

Articulating the vision and mission is an important and fundamental part of strategic planning, where the marketer, together with the managers and owners of the development company, will create the vision, mission and brand strategy. This task, which at first sight seems simple, is often challenging for managers, because what is in their heads, and fortunately in most cases the vision for the future of the project is firm and powerful, is not always clear on paper. So, look at the concepts of vision, mission and brand strategy now.

A vision is a less tangible statement of what we want to achieve in the future, where we are going, in what way a project is getting a shape, what the dreams are. The vision should be inspiring and ambitious. Let DMO professionals dare to dream big, because it is through the vision that they give purpose, even justification to their developments and investments. "What are the dreams? What are the hopes?" - These and similar questions are the ones we need to be able to answer when creating a vision. Think big, because we want to inspire: "What problem are we solving for the world? Who and what do we want to change, to do differently?" – these are the initial questions to be raised. An important difference between vision and mission is that mission is more focused on the present. It answers the question "what are we doing now, in the present, to achieve the vision." We can ask ourselves questions like "What are we doing? What is the basis of our business? Whom are we serving, for whom are we developing? How do we serve them?" If we can articulate the answers to these questions, we will succeed in writing the mission statement. It is the brand owner's responsibility and task to clearly articulate the brand strategy.

To build a strong brand, a well thought-out and solid brand strategy is needed, and there are a number of tools and models for developing it, such as the so-called "brand wheel", which is the essence and mapping of the brand strategy, and analyses the brand from aspects such as rational and emotional brand values, brand personality or the style and tonality of brand communication (Burkiewicz–Knap–Stefaniuk, 2020). Figure 12 (LF, 2018), and the simplicity and transparency of the infographic, can be conveyed not only to investors, future partners or even tourists about the steps of the project, but also the professionals in charge of the development. In the middle of the illustration there is the vision ('London First'), and below it the mission ('Making London the best place in the world to do business'). The two branches, the two sets of objectives, run into the middle from two different areas, the hard (growth) on the left, i.e. the infrastructural approach, and the soft (openness) on the right. In the outline of the destination management, there can of course be three or even four branches, but they should keep in mind

the logic and transparency. This sample concept has been implemented by the author in the first workshop outlining the later series of small group-set project assessment trainings giving source information for the qualitative moderated focus-group workshop research carried out in the *Ipoly Valley* (Figure 13).



**Figure 12: London First, Vision, Missions and Objectives**

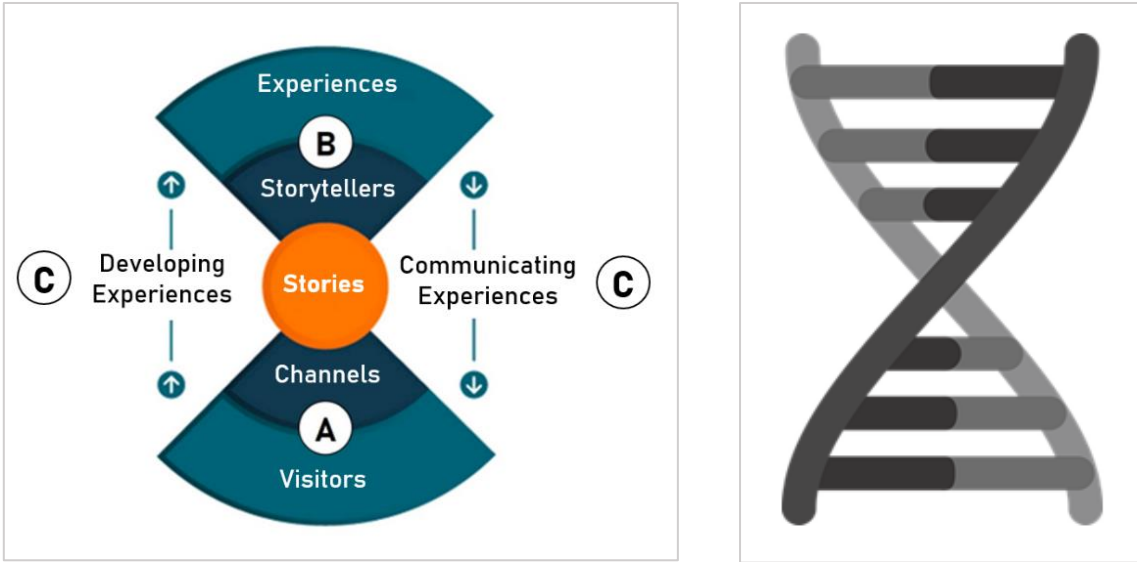
*illustrated on a single sheet of paper as infographics (source: BusinessLDN, 2015)*

This kind of storytelling development, or more precisely saying, storytelling design, can transform the way of thinking and recognise the circular system by which good and consumable stories are born and constantly evolve. Starting from the values that exist locally, DMO actors can pick out the special ones, the unique ones, and ask their guests what they represent for them. So, as it is shown (Figure 14), our starting point will be the visitor (A). From their experiences, we will be able to design real and relevant stories (C) that can be experienced and made meaningful by others, and then embed them in marketing (C) through appropriate management (B) processes. As figure 14 suggests, the process involves a narrowing of the focus by creating a tailored story for a segmented audience. Going further, we are also narrowing down in terms of what values are worth presenting, what content is acceptable, likeable and digestible (Fach, 2020). This narrowing down procedure is also a way of expressing the true essence and identity of a destination.

The DNA of a place is made up of, shaped by, and moulded by several components: its history, its people, its communities, its culture, its location, its climate, its natural environment, and last but not least, its economy (Bakker, 2016).



**Figure 13:** Adaptation of the simplified outline of vision-mission-objectives presentation in the emerging twin, cross-border destination along the river mouth of Ipoly (sources: Bedőcs–Kovács, 2022; own research and design)



**Figure 14:** Storytelling design circle and a simplified DNS model section (source: [https://www.destq.com.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/1337466/destination-think-redefining-destination-marketing.pdf](https://www.destq.com.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1337466/destination-think-redefining-destination-marketing.pdf), 2023)

### **2.3 Sustainability and competitiveness**

In addition to ensuring that the thematic routes (value chains of stories) to be invented and developed are sustainable in both designation and operational terms, I would like to make a number of additional points here. It is worth doing so because, at first sight, competition and development (and I am not using the word 'growth' here) are at odds with the principle of conservation, of protection, of maintaining the attractiveness of a landscape or a region over the long term without overburdening or diluting it (Spangenberg, 2004).

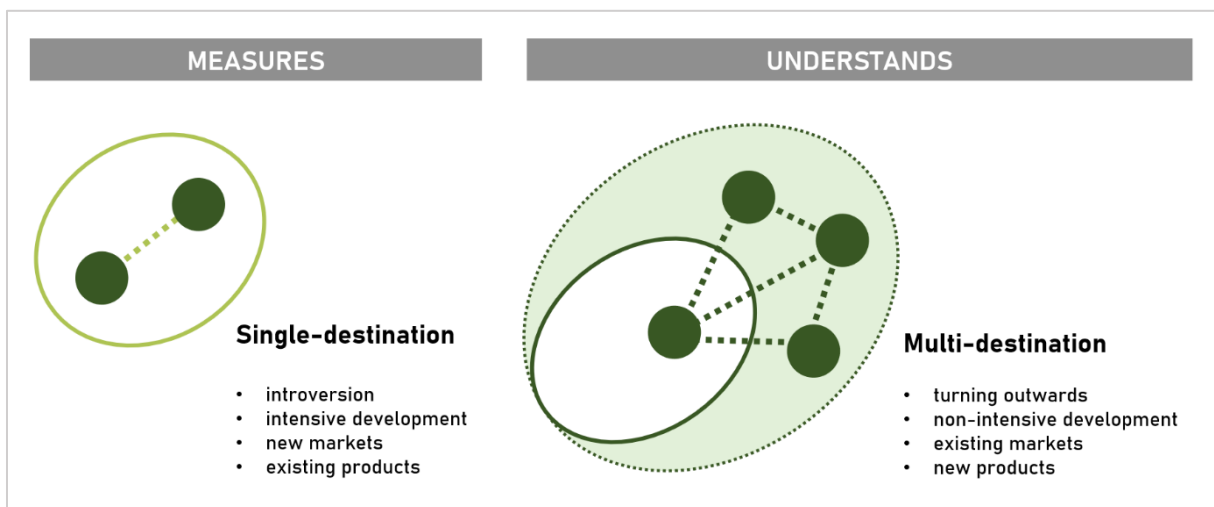
Sustainability in branding means that it should function as a frame (Point 9.5), an organizing umbrella concept in the processes of preparation, infused into the destination philosophy as well as in its daily contents, story-generation and communication activities. Sustainability today is linked to all tourism products, and it goes far beyond eco-tourism or green tourism.

In the tourist destination, which can be a municipality, city, region, country or even a continent, sustainability has become a broad concept, defined as a goal to minimise or eliminate the permanent damage to the natural, social and cultural environment. Tourism is no longer just about travel, economic performance, contribution to GDP, job creation or good use of the multiplier effect, but about a wider set of relationships. Tourism is undoubtedly well positioned in economic terms, and in many cases more effectively presented to decision-makers and investors in the sector, but it is the environmental degradation or impact that is the most negative feedback. We tend to forget, however, that if it was no mobility-based tourism at all, which is rooted in the exchange and interpretation of values between societies that are often geographically distant from one another, heritage protection, the collection and preservation of cultural assets, and the emergence of the concept of national parks would perhaps not exist (Aasen, 2022).

This “care of / for tourism” as a whole is the sustainability itself. In 2006, Queensland's tourism marketing organisation developed a model (Figure 15) illustrating the economy—socio—nature nexus of tourism in a simple and clear way, with a focus on sustainability (Farjami, 2019). On the three wings of the propeller-like model, the economic goals, the social goals and finally the natural goals are shown, with tourism sustainability in the hub. A tourist destination can increase its competitiveness in two different, alternative ways. Either it can develop its products intensively, making more and more use of the area's resources and seeking to establish itself in saturating feeding markets, and struggle to remain a pin on the map.



*Figure 15: The economic, social and natural nexus of tourism sustainability (source: Farjami, 2019)*



*Figure 16: Intra- (single-) and Inter- (multi-) destinations (source: Bódis, 2017)*

These places can be described as intra- (single) destinations, and generally speaking, they move little in the direction of sustainable tourism. Another way to increase competitiveness, with the prospect of a sustainable outcome, is to talk about multi-, multiple- or inter-destinations (Pearce, 1995; Bódis, 2017). In practice, this means creating experience itineraries (experience routes and packages), interlinked and coordinated communication of the service value chain, adapting to today's tourism consumption needs and patterns, without aiming at maximising the

exploitation of resources (Figure 16). Two key words can be identified for the two different approaches to destination management. In the case of the single one, this is the "measure", since a destination typically expresses its competitiveness in terms of metrics: the number of nights spent, length of stay, the amount of money spent. The other one is the multi-destination approach, where the aim is networking, relying on each other's resources and understanding them, so the "understand" is the key word in this case. In the latter approach, the measurement tools are different, too, as we are interested in the whys, hows, motivations and satisfaction of our visitors, and we also want to know to what extent the products of our own destination can complement (and not replace) the value proposition of the neighbouring area (Chapters 7 and 10).

The transformation of the visitor economy is happening ahead of us, at this very moment (Figure 18). The exploitation of goods has been followed by the production of goods and then by the provision of services at higher and higher levels. After the experience on the stage (destination), something else comes: identification, immersion, small-scale consumption, not on a mass scale but on a personal scale (Pine–Gilmore, 2011). We can also link the nature of consumption to each stage of development using keywords (Figure 32): fungible (commodities), tangible (goods), intangible (services) and memorable (experiences).

<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protection of natural assets</li> <li>• reducing littering</li> <li>• reducing harmful emissions</li> </ul>
	<b>Respect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protection and transmission of local heritage</li> <li>• respect for the works of past communities</li> <li>• preservation, but not altered to suit tourist needs only</li> </ul>
	<b>Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• express the pride of local communities</li> <li>• improving the quality of life in the destination</li> <li>• developing platforms and touch-points for value transfer</li> </ul>

*Figure 17: Sustainability pillars (source: Peltier’s, 2019)*

Peltier's (2019) research shows that tourists are increasingly aware of and willing to choose destinations, and within them, attractions and offers where a commitment to sustainable tourism is visible and supported by explicit and conscious communication. What is less known, however, is what travellers understand by the concept of greening. The research also shows that our perception of sustainability now goes far beyond the 'air pollution' mindset of the past. Most visitors' impressions, interpretations and statements can be grouped around three main words: protection, respect and improvement (Figure 17). Sustainability and competitiveness are not either-or exclusive categories, concepts and objectives.

Interesting, and not least because of its size and points of conflict, is the situation of the Balaton Uplands, which have undergone and are undergoing a number of life-quality and milieu, or well-being related transformations (Rátz–Michalkó–Kovács, 2008) that await the *Danube Bend*.

It is enough to look at the investment flows and the preliminary development pace of the priority tourist regions (Sándor, 2019). In order to avoid reaching the critical points of the situation and the maximum level of the destination's carrying capacity, I summarize the findings of the participants of the Tájteka Landscape Mentoring Programme (Tájteka, 2023) that I led myself.

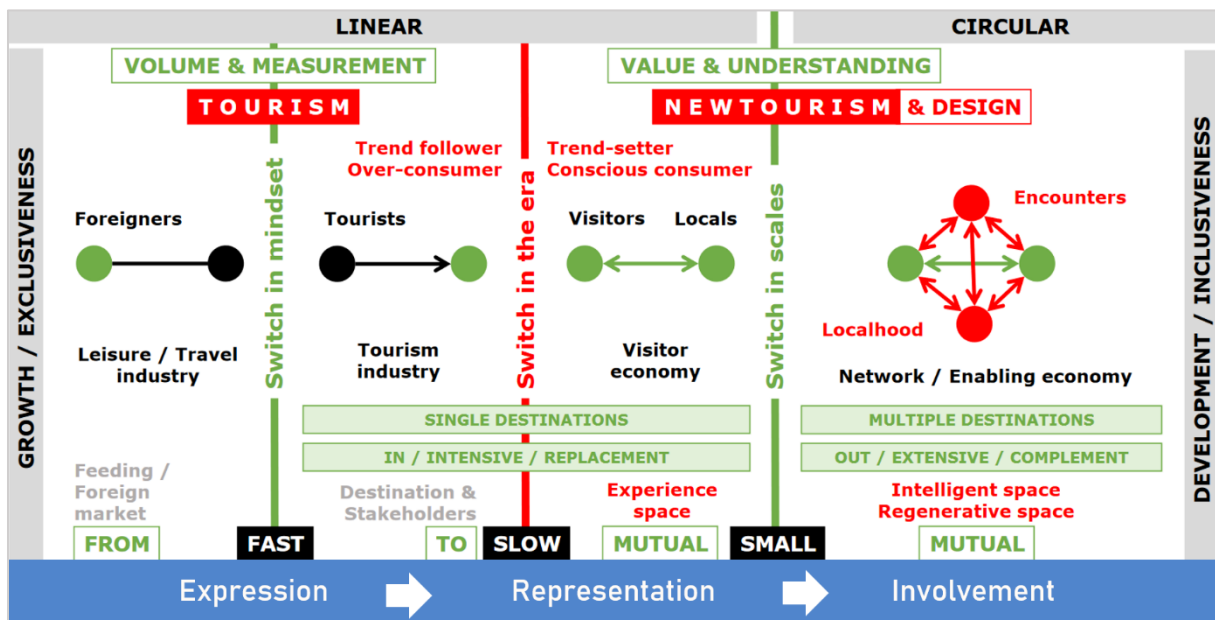
Three important things happened during COVID in the Balaton Uplands. In the first wave of the pandemic, many people decided that curfews were more bearable and that home work and online education were more manageable in the countryside than in a city apartment. Many seasonal, weekend homes were filled with residents for six months, a year or longer. A large influx of people, compared to the few permanent residents in the area, has brought a new generation of people with new attitudes and ambitions to the local communities. Partly as a result of this process, and to a large extent because of the decline in foreign travel, demand for land and property in the Balaton Uplands has increased dramatically in a matter of moments (HT, 2023).

Previously unknown areas, used for generations only by locals, have become sought-after investment areas, with prices rising several-fold practically in months. This process, which has been taking place mostly in the outskirts of villages, has been less controllable because of its unexpectedness, and its long-term effects on vineyards, pastures and the outskirts of villages will only become more visible over time. The third important change was in services. The composition of tourism has changed, with many more visitors coming to the Uplands in addition to the Balaton coast. The needs were also different: long-term residents expected big-city services in their daily lives, with the advent of daily menus delivered over long distances, new healthy meals, coworking and other opportunities. On the other hand, the increasing tourist influx sought the services of the coast rather than the region's specialities, which had a negative impact on the well-known central locations of the Lake Balaton region. Local resistance to the pressures and associated economic impacts previously known only from festivals has so far met with varying success, as they do not typically affect the 'home' areas of local residents. However, collective action can create the opportunity to make the region a distinctly different type of tourism destination, which helps rather than erodes the quality of local life.

## 2.4 Newtourism?

Tourism as a sector or industry that has undergone significant changes throughout its history, which have now led to the emergence of the new tourism (Michalkó, 2023).

What is the "new normal" for the world of travellers in a post-pandemic world? Should we strive to return to where and how things are and were, where all known vulnerabilities and shortcomings persist, or is there something better that can be achieved? If we choose the latter, the question is what it is and how we get there. The Lake Balaton region has seen a strong development- and profit-driven shift in approach after 2016, but in parallel, or even in excess of this, the region now needs to change in scale. It must be taken back! And the basic unit of scale is the local place, the local dweller (localhood). The conceptual evolution towards a switch in scales is illustrated on a timeline of Figure 18 (see: Figure 16, as well) below:



*Figure 18: Conceptual Evolution of Tourism (own design; source: Bódis, 2023)*

There is a growing need and interest to redesign and rethink tourism, and to reduce unsustainable attitudes and practices. In fact, there is increasing talk of tourism as a phenomenon that is unthinkable without the internal development of the place, without understanding and supporting the value-preserving aspirations of local communities, i.e. the development of the visitor economy is just icing on the cake: it is not enough in itself. We should add the cherry on top. What is needed, therefore, is a better 'rebuilding' (Sampson, 2020) and a more conscious 'rewilding' (Hall, 2019) of the ecosystem partially influenced by tourism.



In mass and active tourism (before the Switch in the era), visitors are beneficiaries of tourist attractions and services. They contribute to economic or environmental or natural sustainability in whatever way they can. In contrast, proactive tourism (after the Switch the in era), and in many cases silent tourism, is a travel activity where visitors plan and research the destination in advance, its cultural, historical, natural and other features, and aim to promote sustainable tourism and support local communities (Elkhwesky, 2022). Active or circular and passive or linear tourism are shown in the illustration, the difference between the two is the scale and intensity of mass consumption.

Passive (linear) tourism is more focused on the spectacle, the aesthetics and the entertainment, while active (circular) tourism is characterised by deeper experience, learning and escapism (Garrod–Dowell, 2020). In the case of silent tourism, even if the visitor does not necessarily interact with the local community, the emphasis is on sustainability, respect for nature and the local environment, discovery of local assets and less environmentally damaging modes of transport. The proactive tourist does not only travel to see something beautiful, but also seeks to understand and respect the culture, traditions and values of the destination. Proactive tourism focuses on working with local communities and sustainable tourism, balancing the traveller's experience with the preservation of local culture and the natural environment. Proactive tourism is a more sustainable and responsible form of tourism development that strengthens the link between visitors and the destination and promotes positive interaction between tourism activities and the quality of life of local communities.

- **Fast / over-tourism:** “Associated with the traditional package holiday, well-known holiday resorts and famous tourist attractions, many areas both benefit and suffer at the hands of mass tourism” (source: <https://tourismteacher.com/mass-tourism/>).
- **Slow tourism:** “An emerging tourism trend that serves as an antidote to some of the negative aspects of mass tourism. At the same time, slow tourism places a strong emphasis on sustainability, engagement with local culture, and fully appreciating travel experiences” (source: <https://www.revfine.com/slow-tourism/>).
- **Small tourism:** “Local entrepreneur-oriented, sensitive to the environment, socio-cultural structure, can be realized gradually in the long term aims to make the interactions between nature-human, environment and tourism activities beneficial which aims to protect the ecological system balances, keep the dynamic impact to a minimum and support moderate economic development” (source: <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/covid-19-and-alternative-tourism/100521>).

Let me refer back to Figure 18, which also shows three dividing lines. The first is the **Switch in mindset**. The National Strategy for Tourism Development 2030 in Hungary, adopted in 2017, is the basic document defining the objectives and instruments of public tourism management up to 2030, which is the basis for a change in the approach (or mindset) to tourism. By identifying the main points of intervention and setting strategic goals, it defines the tasks of the state in the sector in the short, medium and long term, and allocate the appropriate means, resources and institutional arrangements to achieve these objectives (MTÜ, 2023). An online business magazine (Üzletem, 2022) introduced the concept of data-driven tourism with the headline: A **Switch in the era** in the history of Hungarian tourism with the introduction of National Tourism Data Centre (NTAK). The MTÜ's Deputy Director General for Marketing and Communications said, "The introduction NTAK was a watershed in the history of Hungarian tourism, which laid the foundation for data-driven sector management and enabled us to make decisions based on concrete, up-to-date, comprehensive data rather than intuition. Data-driven sector management is one of the key pillars of the Hungarian tourism strategy, which will fundamentally determine the development of the sector up to 2030 and beyond". The founder of the Hungary NEXT country-branding-workshop, examined tourism from the perspective of what has changed and adapted in recent times, and what is needed to be considered for new tourism. A change of mindset and attitude have already taken place in tourism, but it is no longer enough. The way, tourism has been practiced so far is unsustainable, and many think tanks and development workshops, including Hungary NEXT, are at the forefront of the process, saying that tourism needs a **Switch in scales** (Márkamonitor, 2022). Related to the above illustrated changes, the paradigm of the so-called Transformation Economy, where change itself and the conditions for creating change play a role. The changing landscape and the rethinking of values can be understood and rethought by using models (Brand–Rocchi, 2011).

Figure 18 shows the steps of conceptual evolution of Tourism, so we can see the evolving relationship between the representative of the guest society, i.e. the visitor and the representative of the host society, i.e. the local, and the depth of the encounter, indicated by the presence or absence of arrowheads. While in **Linear (Global) Tourism** the relationship remains superficial, tourism services that are becoming localised initially bring only quality fulfillment and relaxation to visitors, but as we move forward, locals also understand the real value of the encounter, as indicated by the two-way arrows. **Circular (Regional or Local) Tourism**, or network-based tourism and the use of space already takes into account the limitations of

**substitute product development** (or replacement), opening up the destination view outwards, offering **complementary places and services** in an interoperable and meaningful territorial unit (Figure 18).

Although the tourist seasons are getting longer thanks to the increasingly colourful services, the Balaton Uplands are not yet a year-round dumping ground for visitors. In the smaller settlements, even the most basic types of services, such as the use of toilets, are sometimes unavailable to visitors during the off-season. The seasonal opening hours of local catering establishments are, of course, determined by economic considerations. A vicious circle is created by the fluctuating presence of services and visitors. If a locality is struggling to meet basic needs, it will have few visitors, and if it has few visitors, it will not be economical to maintain basic services. More forward-thinking and those with a good knowledge of the area can create the conditions to make it a year-round destination.

In addition, it should be remembered that the dynamics of the Balaton Uplands depend to a large extent on landscape management and thus, of course, on the seasons. At different times of the year, processes take place at different speeds and the priorities of a given municipality, as well as those of the local population, are different. All in all, visitors may not always be a priority.

Within the framework of destination tourism, global approaches are increasingly being pushed into the background, and the role of place - where we live or what we visit - is becoming more prominent. This is where multicultural societies meet, where we immerse ourselves in the beauty of the landscape. Place is a unit, a scale of tourism that needs to be managed in a more holistic way. Information design, design of movement or experience itineraries (visitor experience route design) and capacity design need to be integrated into everyday preparation and decision-making routines (Figure 26). A not merely functional and not over-intensive use of our resources lies in a synergistic combination of local values and opportunities, which implies a more open, future-oriented (Chapter 6), local mindset and then lays the foundations for the promise of a year-round experience.

In Hungary, the official tourism sector management continues to see the future in investment and optimal financial sustainability. It aims to develop tourism products by increasing the number and quality of tourism products, which are more and more modern and meet all needs, and by increasing capacities to stimulate consumption. The main aim is to fill the large investments already made with well-paying visitors, even if it does induce over-tourism at

certain points. It is neither sensitive to impact studies, nor environmental damage, because it only superficially or not at all reconciles the interests of local people, both socially and environmentally. “Lake Balaton is the largest freshwater lake in Central Europe. In addition to its natural value, it is the second most popular tourism destination in Hungary, after Budapest. Due to the high vulnerability of the lake to climate change, coordinated environmental, climate mitigation and tourism development measures are very important in order to ensure that Lake Balaton and the surrounding area could receive the utmost protection” (Bóka, 2020).

By contrast, the definition of future-oriented and scalable tourism is not one of continuous and intensive growth, nor even of meeting consumer needs as perfectly as possible, but of taking account of the carrying capacity of destinations. This means that tourists do not own the place where they come to stay. It belongs to the local cultural and ecological community, which the visitor the right to ask to see and which the 'proud colony' will reveal to him or her if he or she does not go there in massive flocks but shows a deep interest, devotes quality time and interacts with it in a positive way. Paying for the service should no longer be enough: the guest and the host should be given the opportunity to be pampered.

For the actors that are part of the tourism network (Figure 24), the long-term questions to consider are: how can the region be active all year round and how can well-functioning local and regional cooperation be developed?

It is important to have prepared and dynamic hosts for the Lake Balaton as well as the *Danube Bend* regions. There is no doubt that tourism requires management on both the demand and the supply side. It is necessary to manage visitors, to understand their needs, to communicate with potential and already arrived customers. There is a need for stronger cooperation and more effective destination management, serving the needs of residents first and foremost, and enabling real cooperation with businesses and all stakeholders on the basis of a common agenda. This also requires a significant change in attitudes and behaviour on the receiving end. Stronger destination management needs a new mandate based on community engagement (bottom-up, Point 7.1), new skills and data to understand the full impact of tourism, new tools to develop the capacity of local SMEs and inclusive procurement practices, and new ideas (workshops, Point 8.3) and tools to manage the growth of the visitor economy. And most importantly, new financing mechanisms are needed to protect destination assets and invest in new products and sustainable infrastructure.

Branding (detailed in the next main chapter of the dissertation) is also an important component of these processes. A brand is cohesive and can and should be referred to as a reference point. An attractive and unique tourism brand is an umbrella, and certainly good at three things. Adaptive: it can change and adapt, even become a trendsetter (Point 6.1). Cooperative: it feeds on synergies, not only because of the finite nature of its own resources or the growing need for sustainability, but also because of the scarcity of external support systems. Incubates: educates and embraces, going beyond intensive investment development to profitable plant scale through its alternative, green, community, engaging, small-scale solutions offering original experiences. The birth of such a brand, growing not for itself, strengthens and defines the community's values-based identity, communication and messages. These considerations are already in line with some postmodern approaches. The restoration of an aesthetic approach, with a particular focus on the linguistic and symbolic aspects of human life, emphasises the role of visuality and spectacle, recognising the importance of subjective experience (Mitev–Horváth, 2008).

The filtering and selection of branding values (Figure 58) is important to ensure that there is one or two elements that do not exist anywhere else that can identify the area and the route as an identity. And the promise sells, narrates the place. If we are looking for identity, we can involve the public, the visitors. And the message should be ordinary but bite-sized, something that the target audience can digest. The root of branding is to understand what your customers and visitors think of a place, what they associate with the area, its products and attractions. The framework of the vision, which can be filled in with daily practical tasks, should be provided by the visitor management and the content by the locals. The task for the *Danube Bend* and the Balaton Uplands and the smaller regions within it is therefore to define, through dialogue and cooperation, a common path from which both residents and visitors can benefit, and contribute to the survival and development of the landscape, the built environment and local traditions. They must also take the necessary steps together and with a shared awareness, for example in workshops. Workshopping is like learning to ride a bicycle. There is no blue-print recipe: one's knowledge cannot be directly transferred to another. "The only way is through the slow and often painful process of trial and error. This type of knowledge is a crucial element in innumerable skills vital to firms and particularly important in design practice" (Haskett, 2009).

The next chapter deals with **Branding**, as a connection between **Tourism** and **Design**, and in the relationship between **Narratives** and a future-proof **Position**. In this sense, it became the focus of the content geometry of the dissertation (refer back to Figure 1).

## 3.0 BRANDING

### 3.1 Brand building in general

Oscar Wild's advice: "Be yourself, everyone else is taken." This is also true for tourist destinations. We live in a visual society, we communicate with photos and other visual media, in fact, images can help us focus on things and relations that are hidden or considered to be less significant. It is especially true in the fields of art, but in terms of a place, too (Zürcher, 2020). The visual power of images is known to be high, but sometimes they need a few words to reinforce them: this is called the main message, the mission, the "mission statement", in other words. Brand elements make up the brand instrument to be the actor of differentiation. While the product can be developed and it is necessary to add something new from time to time to extend its market presence, the images of the product or service may evolve on their own, in ways that we cannot necessarily influence, in a good or even undesirable direction. A brand is more than just a product: not only is it a message, not only a set of images that makes a place for itself in people's minds, but also it is a serious work, a conscious construction. People very rarely buy products or services alone. What they buy is the brand. "In today's marketplace, customers reject that authority and no longer buy products only - they purchase experiences. They join brands. If you're not clued into this already, it's time to push your business's reset button on your positioning in the marketplace" (Bigos, 2022). Brands give value, they feel the benefits outweigh the costs. In these benefits, the emotional side is as important as the functional (Point 5.4). Content is the real "currency" these days, we create content, we share content, we even have the content manager status. What is more, in marketing we are also familiar with the concept of customer-generated content: the communication that a guest or visitor makes with his or her own circle of acquaintances by sharing a picture of a selfie-point, instead of the attraction host's. The content occurs everywhere, whether it is a theme trail, a museum or an adventure park. Content becomes an experience when the customer can identify it, can see him- or herself within it, can experience it, and even more, can invent it.

A reference back to the research problem areas outlined in Point 2.0, are listed to showcase the functional relevance of branding (key expressions underlined above) in the major topic discussion:

- **Expression:** *focus on things and relations, actor of differentiation, evolve, give value*
- **Representation:** *reinforce, mission, message, conscious construction, experiences*
- **Involvement:** *people's mind, join brands, create / share, customer-generated, invent*

### 3.2 Branding components: Value—Identity—Promise

In practice, this triple makes sense when a local community defines it, and often filters its values and authenticity with external professional guidance in such a way as to formulate its competitive promise to visitors by giving it a characterful identity. The topic of Value Proposition Design (in Chapter 10) presents the group workshop methodology, its advantages, which the author used in the *Ipoly Valley* region, based on this threefold division.

- **Value (expression):** What means ‘everything’ (valuable to have and show) for the local community is only ‘something’ (valuable to see and experience) for the latecomers, to visitors who come for a short visit, if using relevant techniques by the destination management.
- **Identity (representation):** We need to break out of the mainstream (Figure 37), with courage, creativity, often pushing boundaries, to be able to identify the place with its distinctive, truly representative, authentic as well as thrilling value.
- **Promise (involvement):** Only a service coupled with a lasting experience has a chance of becoming a lasting memory, a promise made in the narrative that can be fulfilled and experienced by the visitor.



*Figure 19: Branding composition (source: Fuller, 2013) and destination marketing promotion examples from Salzburg (value), Chicago (identity) and Australia (promise)*

Figure 19 clearly shows what the building blocks of a brand are, the triple bottom line that we need to think about when we talk about branding (Fuller, 2013). Values come first, because they are local and special, and they are why the visitor sets out to discover. The filtering and selection of values is important so that there is one or two elements that do not exist anywhere else, that can identify the area, the route (Figure 58). And the promise sells, narrates the place. One of the values of Salzburg is that it is the birthplace of Silent Night, the most famous Christmas carol. The name of the settlement may not at all reveal the promise that the values hold or what is marketable today. From this point of view, it is the choice of core value (Unique Selling Point or Proposition) that the story or brand is rooted in gives Stille Nacht Land its appeal. If we are searching for identity, we can involve the public, as the Chicago History Museum has done (Huffington, 2013). In the first round, the CHM asked for any and all ideas that were relevant to Chicago and a "family friendly" museum. In the second round, the museum staff was evaluated the votes and narrowed the list to the top 16 ideas. The public then voted in single-elimination brackets whittling the contenders down to the top eight, and then the final four before an ultimate winner was chosen. And the promise (Thrillist, 2019) should be ordinary but bite-sized, something that the target audience (Australia) can absorb. The Australia campaign for the UK market was able to make a splash because it used common, every-day, yet surprising, words that at first glance seem like slang ('bloody hell') in a campaign, but which are part of a household or even everyday life when reacting to success, sorrow or surprise.

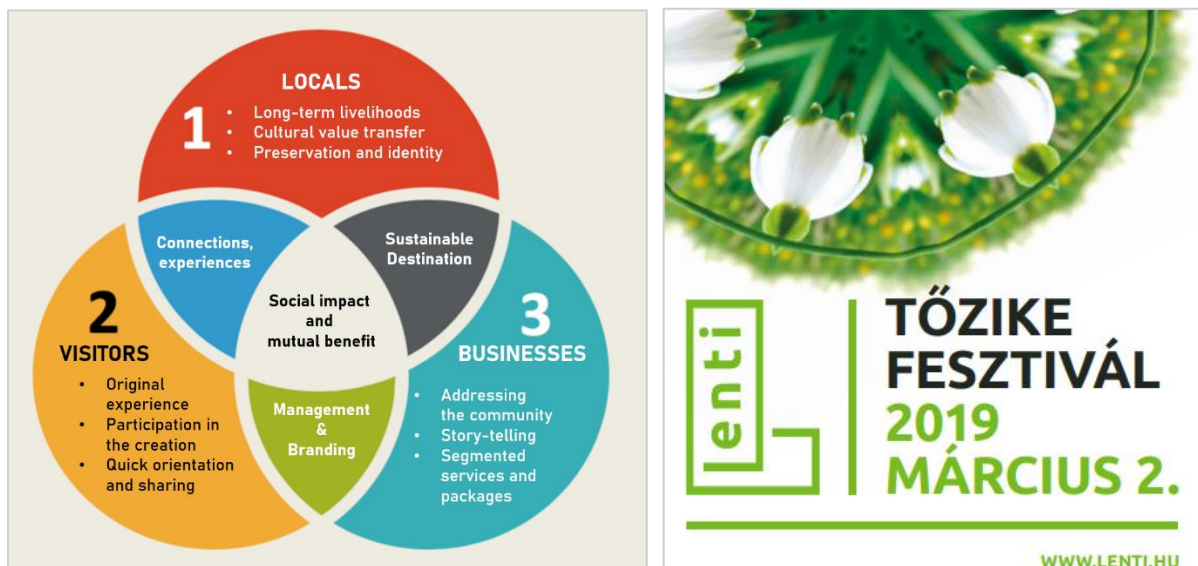
### **3.3 Branding in Tourism**

A tourist destination, whether it is a city, a small municipality, a region, a cross-border cooperation, a country in an even broader sense, or a thematic route in a narrower sense, can only achieve its goals if it does not only present its attractive and unique visual world, in other words its profile, with clever slogans and narratives, but also if it creates a system behind. Using the VICE model of destinations (Worthington, 2011) as a basis, branding should be conscious and sustainable, planned for the long term (Figure 20). The values of local communities (letter C in the before cited models) should be presented in a way that is understandable and even relevant to the promises and value propositions for visitors (letter V in the VICE model) who visit them, most of whom may come as ambassadors of their cultures. DMOs do not need to put everything in the shop window at every point, only what is relevant there and then. By displaying a chain of values and guiding the guests through them, the identity can be shown in a good and non-intrusive way. It is essential that we do not mislead the guest, not to give them indecipherable information, and that what we serve (represented by letter I (investors) in the



model) is professionally done. This model, however, is more complete than the original VICE approach, although it retains the main actors. The environment marked by the letter E, which occasionally swaps places with the visitor marked by the letter V in various tourism interpretations, is placed in the middle. The diagram (Figure 20) here used, further breaks down the overlapping of the set drawn by the assemblers. In the common domain of locals and visitors, there is the relationship and experience, and in the relationship defined by visitor and investor, there is management and branding. The third intersection of this type of environment is the shared domain of locals and entrepreneurs, i.e. sustainable business and destination. Social impact and shared profit are at the heart of the diagram. This logic will be further developed with the concept of the Community of Meanings (Figure 24). The social impact shown in the middle of the figure fits in with the mission of social campaigns, which can also be seen in tourism. These campaigns warn, inform, educate, encourage, influence and support target groups to change their future behaviour patterns (Peattie–Peattie, 2003).

This is the case with the name of a settlement in runic script ('rovásírás' in Hungarian), which has been marked out following a competition, or the forced Hungarian name, which might be thought as a mysterious cultural or gastronomic mission. The brand of the city of Lenti is a good practice (Turizmus.com, 2019).



**Figure 20:** *Tourism branding composition (own design, source: English Tourist Board and Tourism Management Institute, 2003, p. 6.) and the brand implementation of Lenti (source: Turizmus.com, 2019)*

The recipe is to break out of the mainstream, with courage and creativity in the design process (Dorst–Cross, 2001), often pushing the boundaries. At the same time, simplicity is essential (a few words, geometric elements), a story supported by character (human, child, animal), which is not ordinary and boring, but bite-sized. A destination may also need influencers, a kind of brand myth-making: the experience itself is not enough, there should also be some mystique and well-followed, desirable patterns. Graphic design requirements are exceeded, there is no question that only professional creations should appear, but the attention is drawn to the need for consistency, strict image constraints, and the need to think systematically, to link the brand to its sub-brands (brand hierarchy), to its environment and to national communication guidelines, in an autonomous way (Chapter 7).

In the end, a tourism brand should be a well-engraved brain tattoo (Post, 2004), an icon that inspires empathy, fills you with optimism, is born after experimentation and, last but not least, sparkles in a way that the visitor, the tourist, gives it a personal meaning, which meets the meanings consciously selected from the host society's set of historic and or natural values (Chapter 4.1 and Figures 56, 58).

A successful tourism brand operates with several of the following characteristics (Bódis, 2018):

- **It tells a story, but it doesn't tell everything:** lets the customers work, involves their brain, or physically forces them go out to explore an area to get an answer or solution;
- **It is clearly segmented:** not only according to the current and average practices: it is either designed for “the everyone” or it is articulated within the good old “child-adult-retired” breakdown - but it is based on real lifestyles and situations, e.g. by assigning classic, explore and trendy categories (Figure 36);
- **It is included in real and imaginary scenarios:** there should be a pattern and a solution in a given situation;
- **Accessible and easy:** helps to understand abstract meanings, in a simple and clear way, but it is:
- **Deceptive and a little mysterious, too;**
- **Engages all the senses:** it operates with colours, shapes, patterns, textures and sounds;
- **Plays, provokes, stimulates** and unleashes the visitor.

A brand is good when it does not communicate the cold figures and facts, achievements or numbers, but immerses the visitor in a specific context: the built, natural and cultural environments.

### 3.4 Destination Branding

Professionals tend to initiate from the aspect of the visitor, but the locals are equally important. Every tourism researcher and expert will have a different way of summarising what tourists are looking for today. Three things would certainly be on any of their lists: **view**, **story** and **identification** or livelihood. By grouping the needs and expanding this list, it is possible to clarify the definition of "what are they looking for?" with the **contrast-choice-surprise** triad. I will use this triad again in the next chapter (Point 4.2).

*Chart 2: Contrast, choice and surprise branding pillar features*

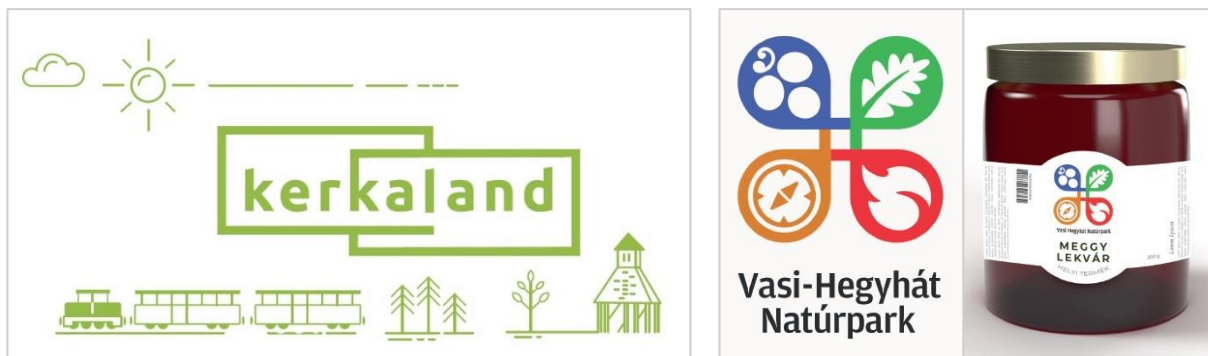
Contrast	Choice	Surprise
mystery	impact on the senses	intimacy
<b>view / sight</b>	<b>story / narrative</b>	<b>identification / livelihood</b>
future, dream, icon, inspiration, going beyond	sounds, tastes, smells, touches, imaginations	empathy, play, cuteness, loyalty, involvement

The main motif of Vienna's tourism promotion campaigns (Der Standard, 2020) was based on contrast even before COVID-19, with negative Trip Advisor comments on individual attractions being selected from thousands of satisfied entries. The DMO did not delete or deny them, but gave the photo of the boat on the Old Danube and the couple in it, one star out of five, and the comment "booring". At this, everyone picks up their heads and continues to read the poster or the banner that says "Who decides what you like? Discover your own Vienna. Now and forever." Surprise is part of the composition, but so is choice and variety, as not one but a dozen well-known points of interest and attractions returned in the campaign. In order to rebuild tourism, the Austrian capital had launched a major marketing campaign entitled "Wien ist eine Weltreise wert", or "Vienna is worth a world tour". The aim was to reach out to travellers who, after a long period of isolation, would like to get out and about, but do it nearby. The key message was based on the "8 days around the world" (not 80!) story, that you don't have to travel far to see a lot of beauty. In Vienna, we were able to experience Venice at the Dogenhof, Athens at the Temple of Theseus, or Japan at the Peace Stupa, all within an average journey of half an hour. There's surprise, choice and contrast again. Look at the 'Travel builds bridges' campaign from Austria, sending a message to the country of Hungary. Once again, there is the character Norbert from Graz, who invites the Hungarians to visit him with a picture of the Buda Castle district next to the Austrian logo. This campaign is specifically targeted at the Central and Eastern European countries, with the Czech, Romanian and Slovakian markets dominating in addition to Hungary (Figure 21). Balázs Gyémánt, one of the Hungarian travel bloggers, said that this campaign should have been in marketing textbooks (Gyémánt, 2020).



**Figure 21:** Contrast-Choice-Surprise triad in Austrian destination campaigns  
 (source: Bassa-Bódis, 2023)

When branding a destination, there are other elements to bear in mind. One of them is represented by the brand of Kerkaland, the sister-brand of Lenti (Kerkaland, 2021), as it was the legitimate expectation of the client and the tender, and no less of the visitor, that it should fit in with the previously composed Lenti tourism brand (Figure 20), both in terms of colour and geometry, in order to clarify and simplify the content and geographical connections in the mind of the visitor (Figure 22). Another aspect in the design of destination branding is content matching, which I will illustrate through the example of the Vasi-Hegyhat Nature Park (VHN, 2021). The brief provided the four themes, which are: winery (grapes), nature (leaf), hiking (compass) and communities, crafts (fire). The images show that the graphics of the four distinctive and decodable colour areas can be interwoven into a capital letter H (standing for the mountain ridge called Hegyhát) and can be applied on different surfaces and situations. e.g. local jam's label (Figure 22).



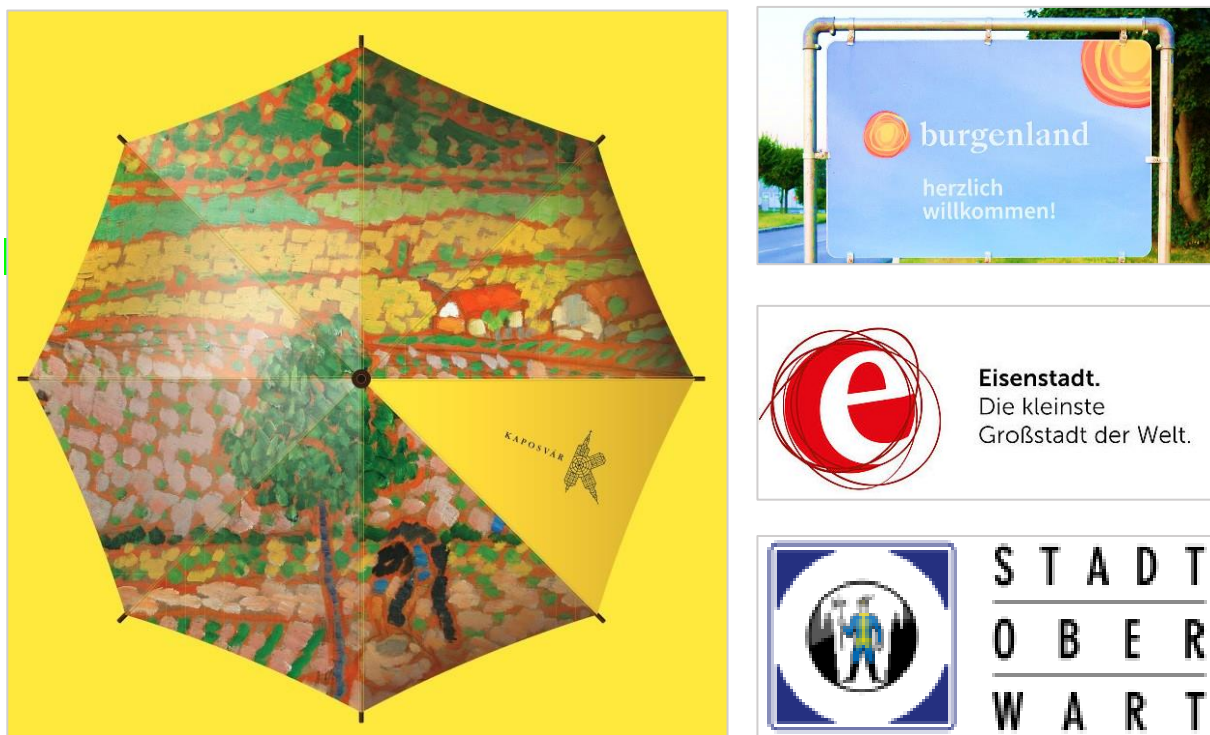
**Figure 22:** Further implementations of destination brands

- Kerkaland is in line with the Lenti city brand, Vasi Hegyhát is put on a local produce –  
(sources: Kerkaland, 2021; VHN, 2021)

### 3.5 Best practices

Positioning the tourism destination is a primary objective of marketing and branding, but it is also worth positioning the brand itself: this means determining the platforms and professional communities in which it will be visible and increasingly known. The launch of a new brand in a small town is half the battle, but a second step must be taken to position the brand not just among towns and cities, not just in the minds of visitors, but also in the minds of those who have the highest level of marketing and communication expertise. It therefore makes a huge difference whether we are talking about an innovative, highly innovative visual and organisational system based on local motifs and attractions, or the kind of answers that are mostly heard locally: “Well, we have done away with that, too”, - but with a sun-dappled, hill-flooded, dull and empty creation.

It is essential that the creative professionals feel belongingness towards the work, can see it as good practice, and this can be guaranteed if the work is not entrusted to a self-appointed, moderately qualified, certainly enthusiastic, not surprisingly with many mistakes; but to acknowledged professionals. DMOs certainly have to dig deeper into their wallets, but it is worth it, because it is not every year or two that the decision-making body realises that it has approved something that is rather embarrassing, even though a municipality could flash its new brand. From a practical point of view, a well-positioned brand also means that the local government behind it can demonstrate cohesion, local acceptance, local performance and a strong capacity to increase its advocacy. The image and brand of the city of Kaposvár, created by Miklós Kiss, unites the features of the iconic buildings of the main square in the K-letter (Pleskovics, 2020). It defines a distinct destination-colour and extends the visual world to Rippl-Rónai products, which make the city's communication surfaces, the city's message and the merchandising product range wider, unique, fresh, original and qualitative (Figure 23).



**Figure 23:** Further implementations of destination brands (own selection)

If a village is about to generate tourism, but has no exciting, exploratory landscape or waterfront, and is particularly poor in history and attractions, it is worth looking at the wider environment. This is what the small town of Oberwart in Burgenland did when it found a tourist breakthrough and specialisation in its border (the Hungarian) location. This is shopping tourism, based on both the Hungarian and Austrian markets. As a backdrop, its historic coat of arms,

with a guard keeping us away from the settlement, magnifies the initial letter, highlighting it, referring to the Burgenland emblem and its central street layout. This example also ties in with the value chain idea discussed earlier on: it retains its previous dark blue base colour, common to the region, while harmonising the circles. In all of its sub-brands and visual identity, the Oberwart uses the simplified geometric O. The simplified look is in vogue today, and the use of geometric shapes is a very plastic application. Eisenstadt's new and fresh image is also in line with this concept (Figure 23).

### 3.6 The composition of Tourism and Design with Branding

Branding (Figure 1) is the integrative connecting force of the previously processed Tourism topics and the following Design areas. The human experience, which can also be outlined as a learning process inherent in tourism, and one of the most prominent motivational forces that trigger travel, is related to the human environment and senses. The presentation of four areas of human behaviour-based perception (Tussyadiah, 2017) listed in bullet points below supplement the existence of needs or demands during the visit and learning experience with the tool system and theoretical foundation of the design. Practice shows that design can bring these four visitor behavioural areas together, as marketing is more successful and the reach is more complete if they can be influenced together. The next chapter deals with design for this reason.

- **Abstract** (above-the-head) **recognition** of a place  
*via brands, taglines, narratives, stories, meanings, values, value-chains, messages, stories and promises:*  
refer to Figures 19 and 22;
- **Cognitive** (before-the-eye) **recognition** of a place  
*via brand images, brand logos, branded attractions and facilities:*  
refer to Figures 20 and 21;
- **Physical** (to-the-hand) **recognition** of a place  
*via branded tangible products and intangible services, experience routes, branded brochures and other touchpoints:*  
refer to Figures 20 and 21;
- **Environmental** (behind-the-back) **recognition** of a place  
*via location, elevation, climate, culture, languages spoken, cuisine, tastes, sounds, smells, colours, attitudes:*  
refer to Figures 22 and 23.

## 4.0 DESIGN

In this chapter, the dissertation focuses on the integrative power of **Design** (C), because **Tourism** (A) development thinking in many cases conceptualizes what needs to be done for **Destinations** (B) in terms of creating concepts, increasing competitiveness, and implementing or establishing sustainability. The **Branding** chapter discussed branding tools and opportunities, based on several good practices, and also presented the perception and **Learning** connections to the world of tourism. For the sake of completeness, as shown in the very first figure (Figure 1), design-thinking as a concept must be equivalent to the tourism concept, and competitiveness is fulfilled in the connection system by presenting the interfaces, which we also get to in this chapter. The connection between experience design and tourism makes sense when not only the design of the product for its own sake, but also the planning of the intelligent and stress-free use of the space is realized for the sake of sustainability.

This chapter does not try to explore the elements and functions of design in relation to individual or tourist visits, but rather looks for the connections and the relationships beyond. In addition to the strategic aspects (Point 4.1) and its ability to integrate, it is also important to demonstrate the deepening role of design (Point 4.2) supporting authenticity, so that the author can connect them with the segmentation questions of the next chapter (5.0).

Even before this chapter discusses the relationship between tourism and design in detail, the author highlights the connection between design and **creativity**. In this case, it is also useful to return to Figure 4, where one of the highest competencies is creativity. Creativity is a set of abilities that surely integrates the following:

- imagination;
- inspiration;
- intuition;
- **improvisation.**

The improvisation is emphasized here because the small group discussions and workshops used as one of the pillars of the primary research (Chapters 8, 9 and 10) were created with the aim that the region can define itself and rise from the shadow that, for example, is cast on it by better-known destinations. And one of the means of standing out is creativity and joint, group improvisation. As a result of group improvisation, more complex and mutually inducing questions and suggestions arise and come together, since in addition to individual performances,



there is also interaction between the members of the group, which can respond to the given question, situation or suggestion (Sawyer, 2000). When we talk about creativity-supporting workshops or knowledge transfer, such as those that the author has carried out in practice in the *Ipoly Valley* region, it can be seen that divergent thinking is best able to support new and previously non-existent creations if the convergent thinking of the participants is also there, or it is facilitated by the person leading the workshop, in this case the researcher.

The significance of design therefore goes far beyond the interpretations of design discussed in this chapter, and then the tasks of tourism organization, as part of design-thinking is also the fact that the research methodology, which prepares and bases the creation, organization and positioning of the region in the right direction, is able to **take advantage of divergent to convergent thinking transformation** (Zhu–Shang–Jiang–Pei–Su, 2019). In our case, creativity has a place in the destination because the author perceives the area to be developed as a learning space, in other words, a Tourism Learning Area (TLA).

The **4Ps of creativity** were formulated to provide a framework for its interpretation (Rhodes, 1961). With the help of Person-Process-Place-Product creativity components, the already mentioned UDL (Point 1.2.2) and TLA connection induces further thoughts:

- **PROCESS**: the whole development is based on **design-thinking** (performance);
- **PRODUCT**: multiple means of **expression** (experience routes and products);
- **PLACE**: multiple means of **representation** (nature, culture, economy contexts);
- **PEOPLE**: multiple means of **involvement** (motivations, segmentation).

Design + tourism and design + creativity relationships can and should be interpreted at the destination level and used well in the planning and construction phase. The most obvious relationship system between the visitor experience and tourism, is covered in point 4.2.1 of the dissertation. In addition to the design relationships, it is essential to show the role of design during the planning of the concepts, and even to highlight one sub-area such as customer care, communications, or publications.

#### **4.1 Definition of the value community and the integrative role of design**

*“Design also has an enormous role to play in accessibility, overcoming issues of disability or language. Get the right design and you can demolish barriers to scales and reduce the cost of servicing customers, as well as increasing their loyalty.”*

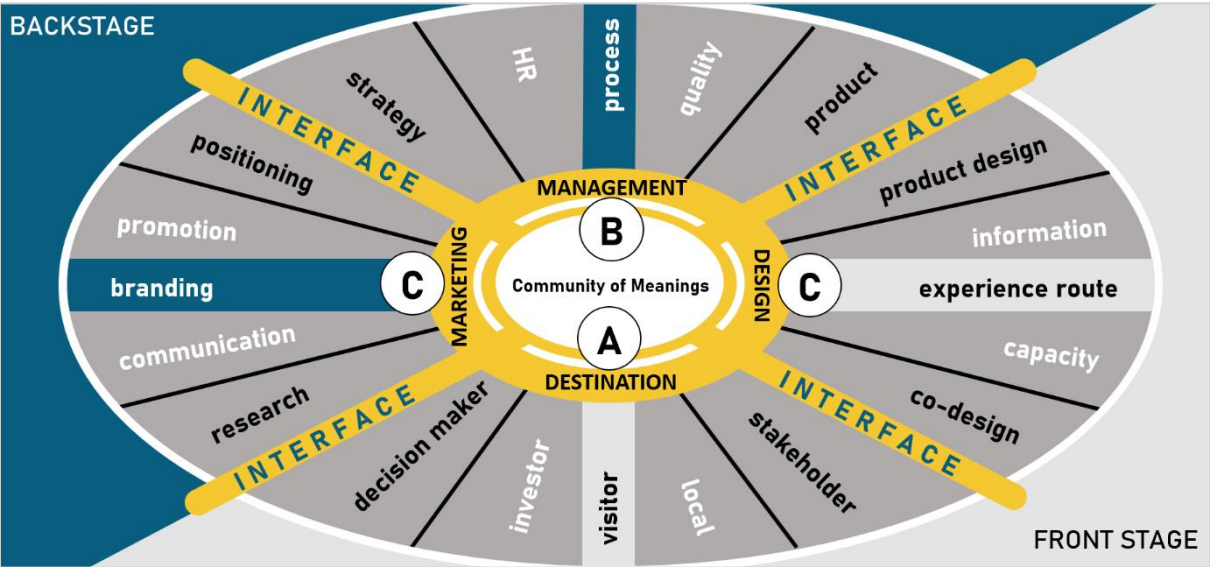
*Tom Cheesewright, Futurist*

When designing tourism products and itineraries or experience routes, with a communication and branding focus, it is necessary to use design tools from the very beginning. Concept design (Point 9.5) should also have pillars, reference points and guiding principles that can be kept in mind at every stage of the work:

- **Synergy:** It is not enough to work with a good product base and the need to be able to link services, but to strive to ensure that all these are fully in line with the objectives of professional regional branding (Figure 23) and the vision of the new destination management organisations to be introduced in Hungary (NTS, 2021).
- **Integration:** When developing package offers (Lawlor, 2021) it is important to ensure that the individual and combined offers of the elements can be communicated and marketed by providing a short, concise and distinctive presentation of the destination, with sufficient text, then maps and then images, on all surfaces (TDTS, 2023).
- **Reality:** Present available, tried and tested operators in package offers. Our objectives should also be realistic, based on credible information, analyses and reports, justifying the need for professionalism.
- **Community of values/community of meanings:** I believe that an area will become not only a likeable but also a truly sustainable tourism destination if local values, heritage and meanings tell the story of what today's consumers are looking for in their travel motivation to the greatest extent possible (Latyák, 2021).
- **Innovation:** The pandemic has significantly reshaped the tourism market and, with an optimistic view of the sector, the stake-holders' outlook. Consequently, it is good to build on the character – or the functional type – of the key points (Figure 48) of the package offers to be developed in the destination in order to ensure the future development of the attractions and the preferred services (Nunes–Cooke, 2021).

**The touristic experience should be treated as a meta-concept (Figure 24) in its context (Tussyadiah, 2014), in which the Value Proposition plays a starting role (Chapter 10), and at the same time practical, everyday tourism organization tasks are defined within it. The interpretation of the design as “meta” in the case of this dissertation therefore means two additional things: one is the need to involve visitors at as many points as possible, and the other is joint exploration with stakeholders.** The “*Danube Bend Study*”, with its additional title, “Development and positioning of the *Danube Bend* priority tourist area”, the tourism professional editorial board used the same criteria when compiling regional package offers (VEKOP, 2020) which I was an author of.

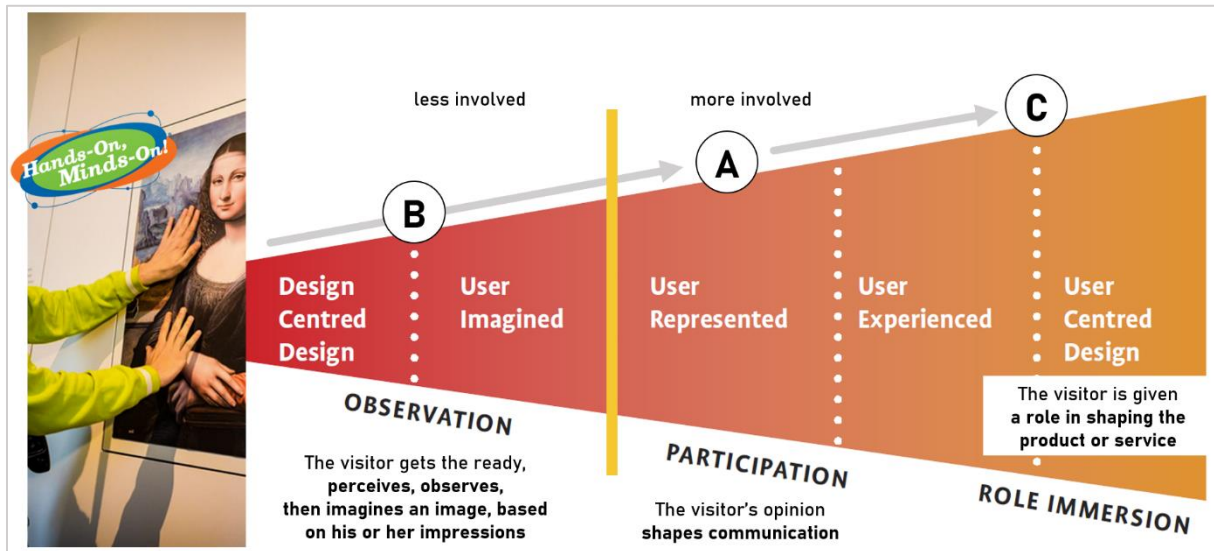
The most important illustration and meta-conceptual basis of the dissertation is the following connection system map (Figure 24). For the sake of comprehensibility and applicability, additional interface connections of the overview diagram are also presented in paragraph 4.3. Finally, the author gives a summary through the theoretical layers of experience design and tourism. Present map illustrates the meaning community and its determining relationship factors. The dark blue colour indicates the level of the previous triangle of competence (Figure 4). The backstage is where the value discovery, design and service work take place, and the front stage is where the value is located and consumed. The two spaces are connected by the interface surface, which represents the depth of value transfer and the number of touchpoints. The back is where marketing and management appear, while the front is where destination and then design appear, with equal ranking of the former. Breaking down the linkages further into actors and tasks, linking design (C) to management (B) (product design / product management) or linking design (C) to destination and visitors (A) (stakeholder involvement in co-design) will contribute to the successful and complete realisation of the Community of Meanings.



**Figure 24:** Community of Meanings composition and the interfaces between the relevant areas and fields (own design and adaptation; source: Stefan, 2005)

Every product or service chain needs planning. Instead of planning, I use the word design because it is less about technical, bound, regular, function-driven and check-list-driven processes and frameworks, and more about imagination-driven, creative and able to build emotional bridges. The defining source and outcome of this design thinking is also the often cross-cultural encounter between the tourist destination and the visitor who arrives there. The involvement of visitors in design processes can be multi-layered, as illustrated in Figures 24

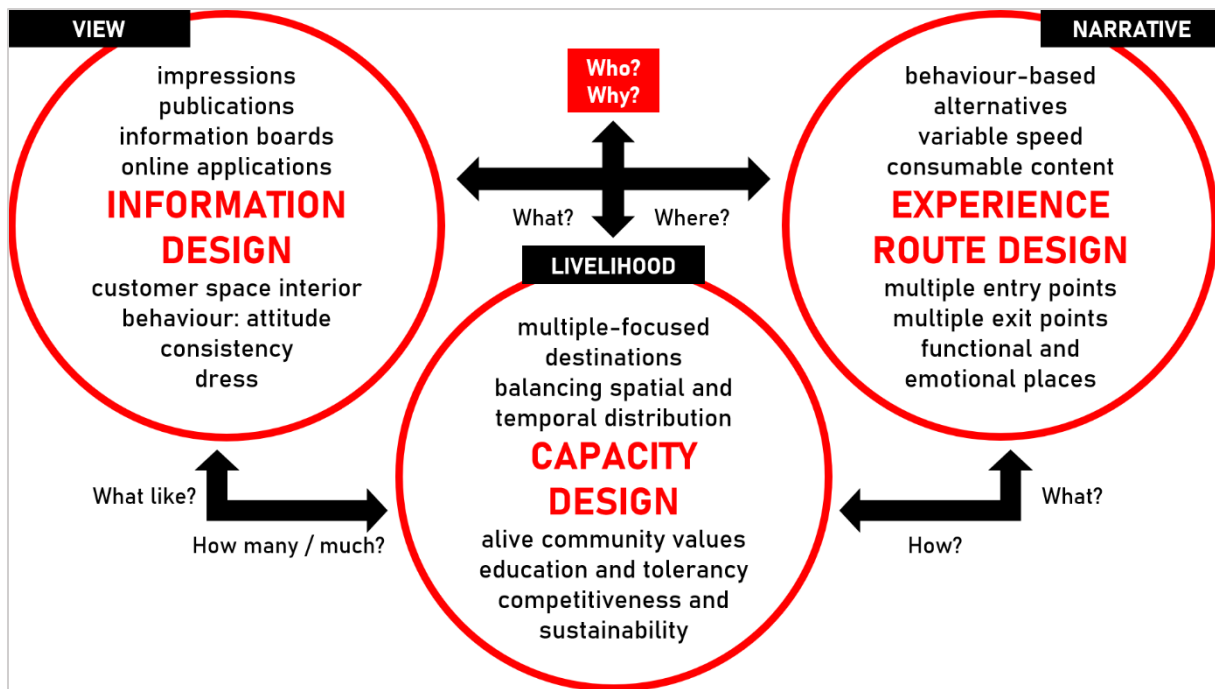
and 25 (Stefan, 2005). Experience design, however, i.e. who, when, to what depth in time and space to involve, can be realized together with information and capacity designs (Figure 26).



*Figure 25: The phases of visitor engagement (own adaption; source: Stefan, 2005)*

#### 4.2 View (expression)—Narrative (representation)—Livelihood (involvement) design

To continue Point 3.4 for a short while, the encounter between host and guest societies is all about giving today's modern and prepared, knowledgeable tourist a first-hand, authentic, original experience, unique to the place, without leaving behind the tools and services that comfortably define their lifestyle: they want to experience the unprecedented by extending their lifestyle (Hao–Xiao, 2021). At the epicentre of the reflection is the triple challenge or set of tasks defined by **Information Design** (designing the visual and presentation), **Experience Route Design** (customer journey design: designing the content and consumption) and finally **Capacity Design** (designing the identification and immersion) in the activities of a tourist destination. This triad has already been outlined in the Destination branding section (3.4), in tabular form. Of course, the role of the planned architectural work is very decisive here, as it can reduce or eliminate potential or legitimate conflict points. It is in this triple framework of tasks that the area to be developed should be mapped. I use the illustration (Figure 26) to give a sense of the framework, indicating the reciprocity and the relationship between the different areas, while at the same time drawing them into questions and question words that ennoble the aforementioned planning processes. These are the basic questions of behaviour-based segmentation, and if we can answer the two question words in the core ('Who?' and 'Why?' - coming to us – also see Point 11.4), we will be able to deliver the pleasure, the satisfaction, and in the most planned or "designed" way possible (Point 1.2.2).



*Figure 26: The framing of design in destination management and marketing (own design)*

#### 4.2.1 Information—Experience Route—Capacity designs

The resulting impressions, images, visions and activities are experiences that not only belong to the moment, but can also be taken home and shared. If a strong tourism brand is able to support this with its ecosystem, this experience is multiplied by replication, it is brought to life in contexts where it may not have been heard of before. In fact, as tagged in Austria (Pinterest, 2018), it is not even the experience that is now perhaps obsolete, but joy, the joy of life ('tisza életöröm' in Hungarian), that appears as the key message of communication (Figure 27).



*Figure 27: The role of design in destination and attraction marketing (sources: Pinterest, 2018; Cockerell, 2008)*

Putting the “joy-design” into practice, into everyday life, is a complex process. One is to evaluate the components of the destination's competitiveness (capacity design), another is to identify the components of conscious and consistent communication (information design), and the third is to outline the culture of customer management (experience route design).

#### **4.2.2 The design and cult of customer care**

Customer service is typically an area which not every tourist attraction or destination can be proud of. The function of this area goes beyond the status of "good to have", since it is one of the key factors in creating a pleasant impression. In order to be at the top of our customer management, we should first look at it from the perspective that it is an area in constant evolution. To take a tourism angle, this is how Disneyland works. Management says that if a visitor only comes once, it's a failure. The whole experience centre is geared towards customers who have already been there not only recounting their adventures in their surroundings or sharing them in communities defined in the online space, but also returning. And the motto and mission is "We create happiness". How? Look at a practical example, a small thing. Use children's stuffed animals. They are placed as if they were an episode from a fairy tale. There is no lack of feedback and delight when the little ones run into the room and discover the scene (Figure 27). From a marketing point of view, another emotional bridge has already been built with the children who return later. This kind of magic is also in the details. Employees are fanatical, almost cult-like, followers of Disney's original vision: they are the teeth on the cogs, says Lee Cockerell, Disney World's chief operating officer (Cockerell, 2008).

Customer service, customer management, may be just a paragraph in a destination's strategy, but in practice it is a cost centre. In economic terms, a destination that builds its vision and activities on the development and maintenance of a joy of life must change. This is perhaps an extreme suggestion, but since we have been talking about cult and return, let us define this area not as a cost centre, but as a revenue centre. The experience can be revenue generating and return-generating if the offer comes from a known source (brand), there is no thought of waiting (shortcut), it is convenient and honest, the product is delivered quickly (time), it is relevant, functional and likeable (simple).

#### **4.2.3 The power of communication design**

It is also true of tourism communication that it is not always the same where and what, when and how much we say and tell. I am going to go deeper now, also to build emotional bridges, to build joy, to look at what a single word or punctuation mark, a seemingly small detail in the

design of information can do. The São Paulo tourist publication (SPT, 2012, 2013) did not write ‘Tourist Guide’ on its cover. It doesn't even use that term. What does is a short sentence, without any punctuation, at the end: 'Stay another day'. Its greatness lies in the fact that it looks at tourism and hospitality with the simple words and logic of inviting a guest to visit the place personally, like in a family. These three words can convey three messages at once:

- **As a host**, you are so important to us, it's good to have you here, “stay another day”.
- **As a guest**, I feel so good, “I'd like to stay another day”.
- **As a destination**, there's so much more to discover: “stay another day”.

*Chart 3: Freedom, Surprise, contrast, segmentation and highlight in the brochure*

‘Stay another <i>day</i> ’				
Choices <b>Freedom</b>	Contents <b>Surprise</b>	Location <b>Contrast</b>	Lifestyle <b>Segmentation</b>	Day of the week <b>Highlight</b>
Tailor-made <i>days</i> A <i>day</i> for good deals	Thematic <i>day</i> trips A <i>day</i> of culture A <i>day</i> of fine arts A <i>day</i> for wellness A <i>day</i> for shopping	A <i>day</i> downtown A <i>day</i> outdoors A <i>day</i> in nature	A trendy <i>day</i> An inexpensive <i>day</i> A sophisticated <i>day</i> A <i>day</i> with the family A cool <i>day</i>	A perfect Saturday

In terms of content, the catalogue continues to build on this: ‘*day*’, by not pouring out information, not even talking about TOP 10, but, instead, providing its chapters, with a segmentation criteria discussed later on (Point 5.3). Another good design solution is the brand-oriented image management in the Swiss Deluxe Hotels catalogue. It is also a source of pleasure, as the small details that are now published guarantee a good overall visual image and a pleasant stay. The advertisements in the publication do not seem alien, but are integrated into the content by the subdued background, usually monochrome or in shades of grey, known as grayscale. The main feature is the obligatory Swiss red as the main destination colour. The photos feature a lady's lips, the railway, typical products and the tail wing of an aeroplane. The same psychological, one might say reassuring, effect is achieved by the full stop at the end of the titles. The omission of the exclamation mark can make communication more subtle, less pushy, less intrusive, and the full stop can close off a train of thought. As the English say: full stop, that is, look no further, you have arrived (Figure 28). Colour make us associate and they have functions. I do not wish to get into details here, but red makes us stop, means passion, awakens the emotion of love, represents power, stands out in marketing, used as a focal point in arts, and finally the one-worded description of the red would be the “bold” (Gouda, 2022).

### 4.3 Touch-points and the interface design

Recognising, consciously planning and redesigning the interfaces, in addition to shaping the mindset of the profession, it also brings practical renewal. It teaches us to draw consciously on values, but more importantly, to interpret them professionally. If this process of narrative creation is designed and implemented at the interfaces of a network (Figure 24), it can transform tourism products into experiences and experiences into a community of meanings, which is the most profound and responsible realisation of recreation and discovery linked to movement.

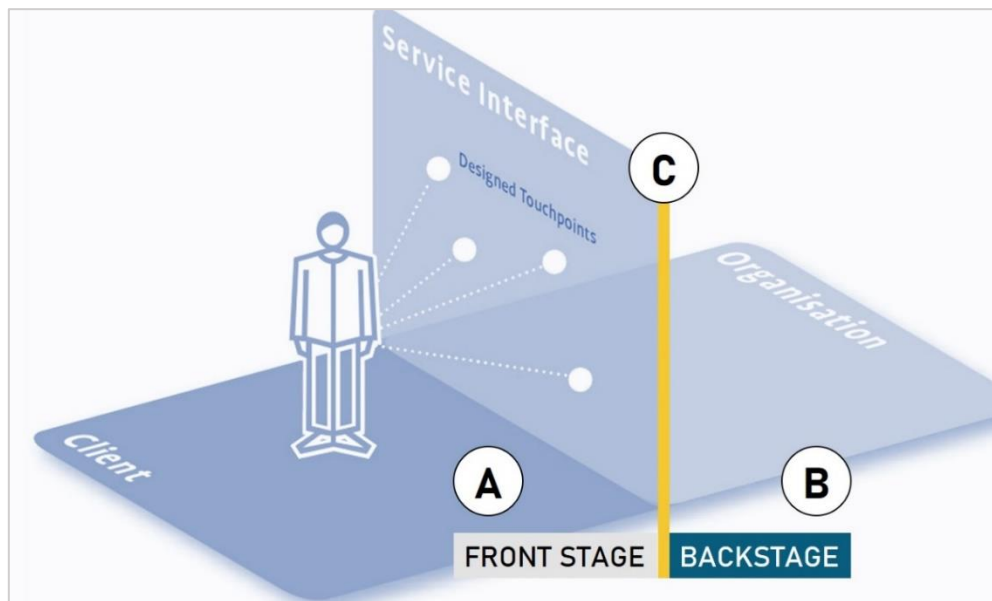


**Figure 28:** Brand image management (source: Switzerland Tourism, 2013)

Referring back to Point 4.1, the main interfaces between the front- and backstage spheres or areas of activity in tourism practice define the inseparable positioning and strategic objectives of marketing and management (back / back), which can be achieved through a distinctive destination presentation. Stakeholders in the tourism destination area can also be involved in the visitor experience route planning process (front / front) by jointly developing and testing service package offers. The identification, selection and screening of tourism products for competitiveness will result in authentic sources of experience favoured by visitors, if, in addition to visitors, local cultural communities, producers and entrepreneurs who preserve local



values but wish to present them are also addressed by management in the product development process (front / back). The back-end organisation of marketing research is able to define and outline simple and clear directions, and even more, so narratives for the destination's decision-makers if they are value-focused and passionate: they are not only physically but also mentally accessible to today's consumers (back / front), i.e. they can be absorbed and understood in a short time. The process has been described in Chapter 10.



**Figure 29:** Service interface and designed touchpoints (source: Stefan, 2005)

#### 4.3.1 The Management—Marketing interface

The backstage interface (B)-(C) is where the management process / strategy and the marketing branding / positioning needs are linked. A good solution is to use a character (Point 1.3.3), is given by Panoptikum Art (2022). The selfie point is not an unknown element in tourism marketing - almost every city has a large 'I love [city name]' sign, usually with a red heart where the word "love" is, so that tourists can take a photo of themselves. Why not create simpler installations and sculptures that allow the guest to be more creative, to think along with the sculptor and the person who commissioned the sculpture, but still create a memorable image (Figure 30)?

#### 4.3.2 The Destination—Design interface

The front stage interface (C)-(A) is between the destination stakeholder and the designer. Involvement is the essence of the situation, as in the case of the Route of Pálos (2022). The pilgrimage route, presenting the history of the Pálos Order, was realised in the summer of 2022

with a strong design approach, in line with today's visitor patterns, in a joint design with all stakeholders, including in terms of its image, signage and designation (Figure 30).



*Figure 30: Backstage and front stage interface design examples  
(sources: Panoptikum Art 2022; Pálos Út, 2022)*

#### 4.3.3 The Destination—Marketing interface

Destination decision makers and researchers on the marketing side define another interface (A) to (C). This is the situation when DMOs collect insights in order to prepare their plans, their communication, to target correctly. ‘This is why I love you, Budapest’ collected insights and impressions for the tourism marketing organisation of the capital (BTDM in 2011) in a way that did not burden customers and potential visitors, but the research itself was an experience. The empty mobile wall had to be replaced several times because it filled up with words and drawings about their reactions in almost a few hours thanks to the audience of the Travel Exhibition (Utazás) at the time (BTDM, 2012), see: Figure 31).

#### 4.3.4 The Management—Design interface

The interface between design and management (B)-(C) is also interesting. The former slogan ‘Because the experience is eternal’ has been replaced by Club Aloha and segmented as discussed later (Chapter 5). This gave rise to the classic, explore and then trendy market messages. Classic: ‘I’m letting mum rest’, Explore: ‘My imagination is soaring’, Trendy: ‘I can be a kid again’. The common message, the main message, playfully combines all of these: ‘moody muse million moves’ (Figure 31 and Point 11.3).



**Figure 31:** Cross-stage interface design examples  
(photo: Gábor Bódis, 2011; source: Schopp, 2021)

#### 4.3.5 Key concepts for the experience economy transition and design

Some key words are extracted from the Design chapter and grouped to boost product and experience design, understanding the processes introduced and discussed in paragraph 2.4 (Figure 32). Further publications had been used to complete the illustration (Fekete, 2006).

Key feature of tourism experiences	Fungible tourism products	Tangible tourism products	Intangible tourism products	Memorable tourism products	Abstract tourism products
Activity	Extract	Make	Deliver	Stage	Guide
Objectives	Commodities	Goods	Services	Experiences	Transformations
Visitor	consumer		prosumer		transumer
Service	products		experiences		brands
Gain	access / safety		quality / luxury		lifestyle
Construct	economical / ecological		social		mental
Generation	pictures		images		visions
Volume	massy		communal		individual
Purpose	product development		innovation		design-thinking
Situation	expected		respected		lived
Scale	fast-paced		slow-paced		small-scaled

**Figure 32:** Experience transition vocabulary extract (sources: Bódis, 2018; Fekete, 2006)

According to Figure 1, the discussion of segmentation for competitiveness and sustainability is particularly necessary in the following chapter.

## 5.0 SEGMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION

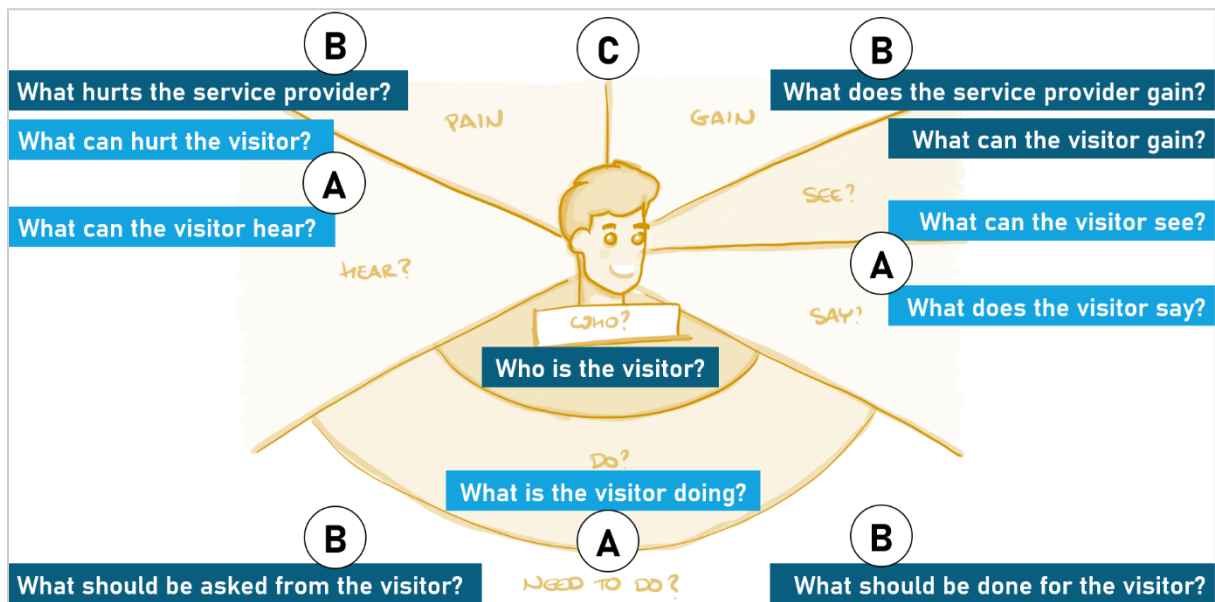
Segmentation has been used by marketers for a long time in a variety of ways and techniques, and it can also be seen in the marketing of places. First of all, the author connects this more practical issue to the previous Design chapter with a theoretical foundation, for which he proposes many new, decisive solutions from the market that can be transferred to the marketing work of tourist destinations. The type of segmentation that is the key element of this chapter is also decisive in the development of the *Ipoly Valley* tourist area.

Russel Haley wanted to help destinations with the so-called **Benefit Segmentation** theory, interpreting future potential as purchasing power and going beyond traditional segmentation solutions which are characterized by geographic, demographic and volume-based categories. Obviously, these cannot be questioned or ignored, but it is also true that traditional segmentation (even in the case of kid-youngster-adult-pensioner-family) causes some difficulties, because they are not based on behavioural patterns (motivations), they are unable to be passed or crossed through (Haley, 1968). The basis of this idea is how much a tourist product or place is worth to the visitor, what they mean to him or her (and this is the point where the defining concept of **Community of Meanings**, showcased by Figure 24 comes into play). The above-mentioned author also adds that benefit management should be handled together with **communication** (for this reason, they are covered under the same roof in this dissertation as well). In another approach, benefit segmentation was formulated in such a way that it cannot be used exclusively in promotion or communication in individual motivational categories, but in the design of **package offers**: visitor experience route design (Woodside–Jacobs, 1985). Another technique is **thematic segmentation** (Shoemaker, 1989), which is also discussed in detail in Point 5.2 of this dissertation. The American author cites such communication campaigns as the "Take Your Grandchild" weekend, or the "Get Away" opportunities that gain experience (calling for learning, see Point: 1.2.2, too). Examining this topic further, reaching the product or destination levels, a student analyses the benefit categories tailored to North Carolina skiers, which are the so-called **unexpected benefits** (Bonn, 1984). Mostly communal, or we may call them social or societal factors were identified, such as "time spent with friends", "being in good mood" or "enjoying the vibes", etc. Movement or fitness was rarely highlighted as a benefit in that survey. It is worth choosing categories in such a way that they can be easily communicated and easily digested by visitors. The communication-based, content- or narrative-based, behaviour-based, and even transportation-based segmentation solutions presented in the following points offer tourism destinations the freedom inherent in future potential (Point 6.1).

## 5.1 Communication design

Before DMOs engage in any communication activities, they should look around and ask questions. First of all, ask visitors, if any, and also ourselves. The diagram (Figure 33) helps us to plan the communication content and process, based on the following key questions:

1. What is the **purpose** of the communication?
2. What is the **message** of the communication?
3. Who is the message **addressed** to?
4. What are the **methods** and **channels** of communication used by the destination?
5. What **budget** is available?
6. What **content** will the tourist destination display and **when**?



**Figure 33:** Visitor experience design (own design; based on Empathy Map Canvas, (source: <https://medium.com/@davegray/updated-empathy-map-canvas-46df22df3c8a>)

Visitor impressions (A) will clearly be the content on which to build, as the visitor hears (**hear**) and sees (**see**) what is important to him/her or what he/she is satisfied with, or perhaps not satisfied with. He or she expresses it in words (**say**) and even acts on it (**do**). It is the management's (B) task to select what hurts them (**pain**), and this field contains all the obstacles and difficulties that the service provider, the destination management, experiences in the planning, development and operation of the service. Asking the visitor, mapping his/her behaviour, reviewing his/her resources will lead to the **gain**. This design (C) method is simple to apply and quickly leads to results. However, we cannot leave the composition of the content

solely to our existing and prospective customers and business partners, as it needs to reflect our vision and mission (Figure 56). The different thematic classification points also facilitate segmentation, make the offer clear and simple options and alternatives can be put on the buffet table. The colour coding of initial page images is also reflected here (Rhys, 2018).

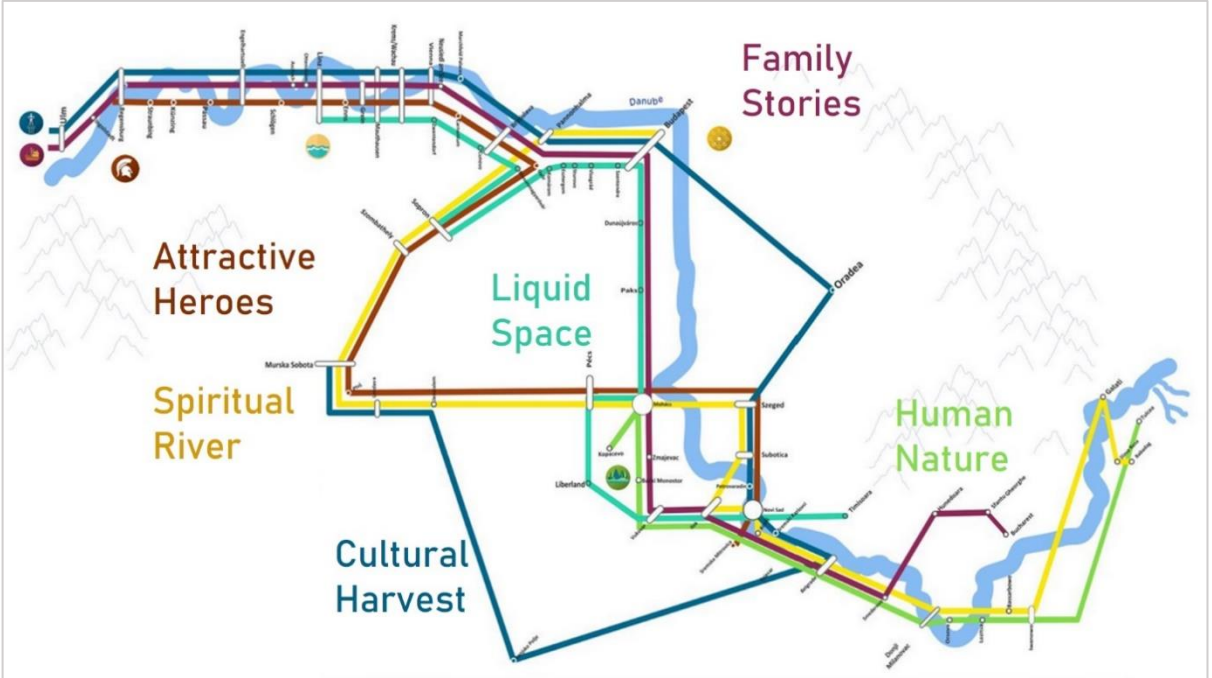
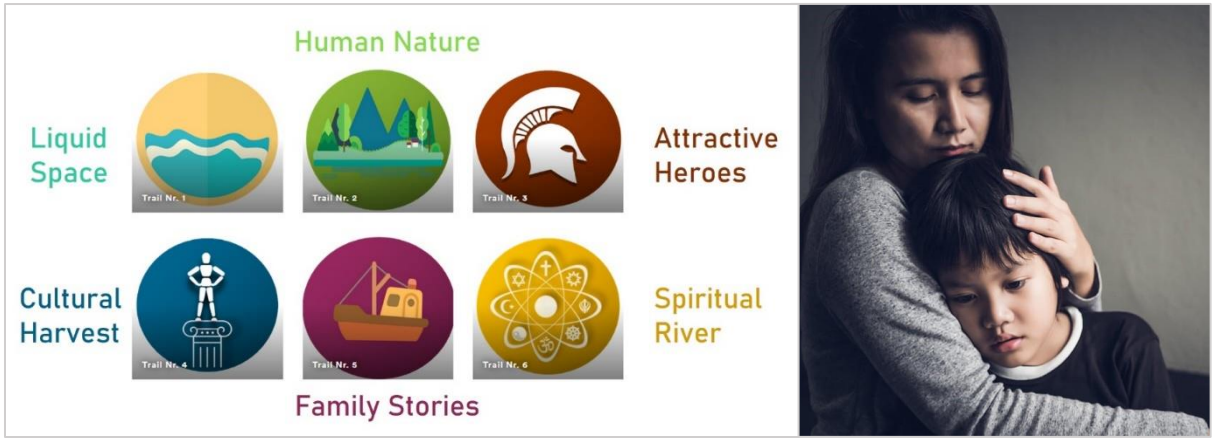
## **5.2 Thematic content design**

Before looking at the main destination theme along the Danube, review the position of the continental River Danube. Transdanube Travel Stories, in the framework of Interreg, set out to give new narratives to the entire *Danube* (from the Black Forest to the Black Sea), using new, modern tools and content to rephrase the meaning of the Danube. The best way is to involve stakeholders and communication professionals. A number of workshops were attended by all those with a historical, heritage, conservation, cultural and tourism perspective on the Danube's various short and long stretches and associated areas. Their work is only truly complete if the messages thus composed can be translated into the language of trade and marketing. The process of profiling is therefore followed by the mapping of market penetration. Product Clubs were formulated. It is essential not to define too many categories; even in the case of the Danube, six were enough (liquid space, nature-humanism, heroes, culture, family stories and spirituality), see also Paragraph 3.1 and Figure 34.

Recognising the extensive cultural and natural heritage, the project aims to promote sustainable tourism in the Danube region through the introduction of innovative marketing concepts (new narratives/stories) and sustainable mobility management tools. The new narratives and mobility management, together with intensive and regular cooperation between stakeholders, provides a framework to better position the Danube as a unique sustainable tourism destination in the market. As a result, more European citizens will have the opportunity to experience Europe's cultural and natural heritage in a sustainable way. In Figure 34 you can see which stories and themes are the most comprehensive and detailed reflection of the Danube's meaning, emotions and experiences. In the second picture, the experience routes themselves appear, offering a number of entry and exit points. The map and the category breakdown is very user-friendly.

The Danube is the mother to whom her wandering, successful or disappointed child can always return for a lap (see the small image of Figure 34). This is reflected in the theme of the Danube as a liquid space. This route along the middle stretch of the Danube invites visitors to discover another Europe: a Europe along the Danube, which is clearly different from the Europe along the Rhine. On our stretch from Linz to Novi Sad and Timisoara, the Danube is revealed as a

"fluid space" in constant transformation. For many centuries it has run between the West and the East, where the after-effects of recent and current political transitions are still being felt. The scars of fascism and communism have left a lasting imprint on societies and urban architecture along the river. On the other hand, the astonishing technological innovation and artistic creativity stand in stark contrast to the region's past. The rich cultural diversity makes Europe unique in the world for the treasures and turmoil that the Danube mother river has gathered from its tributaries. You cannot step into the same river twice: the Danube and the surrounding regions are in a constant state of flux. I cannot present the six themes in detail here, but the contents are available at the link provided (Linz, 2022).

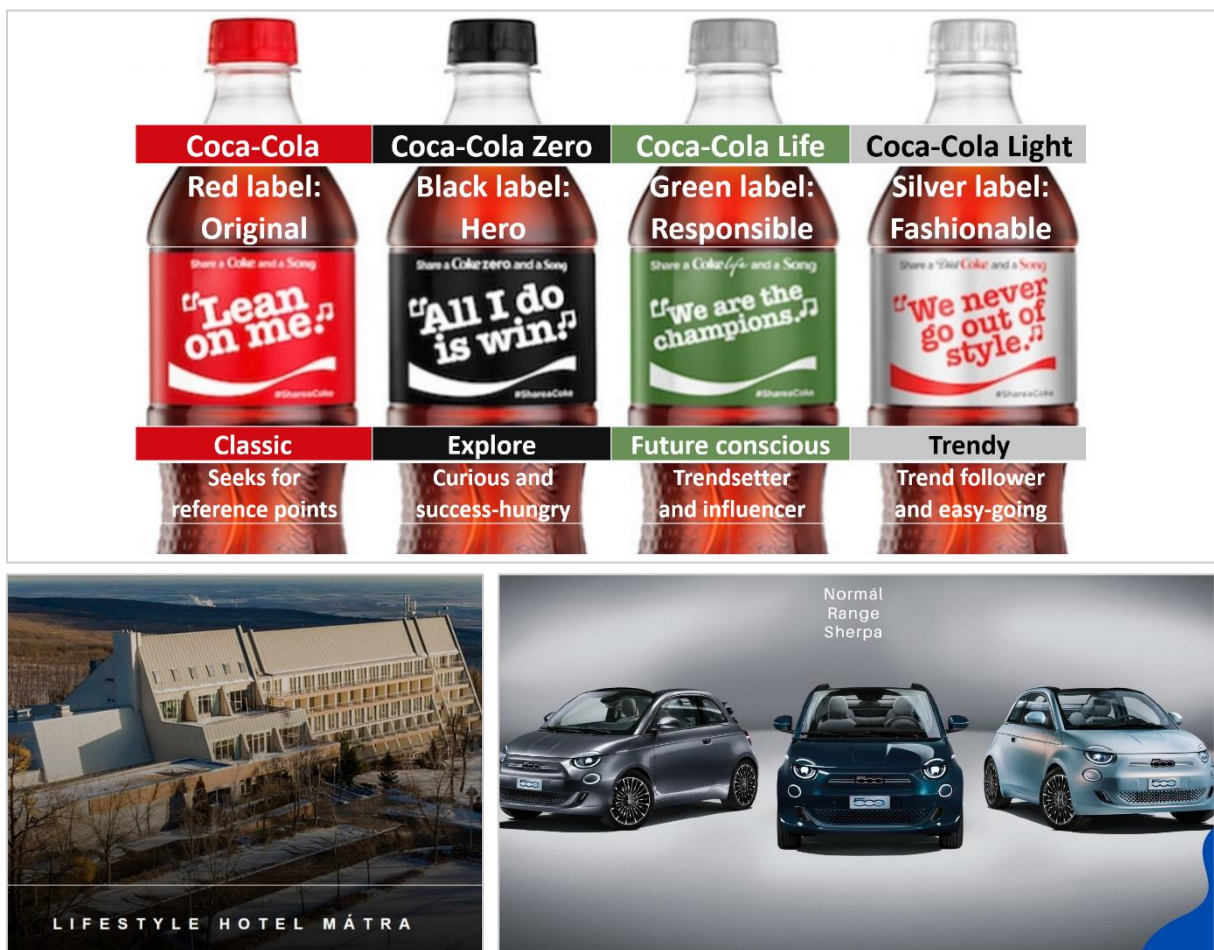


**Figure 34:** Danubian Travel Stories and their branding and map-based interpretation (source: TDTS, 2023)

The next paragraph examines segmentation based on lifestyle attitudes and behaviours.

### 5.3 Segmentation and positioning: behavioural segmentation

In order to be successful in reaching the different segments, the design must be sensitive and deeper in its understanding of them, of the actors, of the people. New segmentation, based on the behavioural norms and patterns of visitors, as the labels (classic/red-zero/black-life/green) of big companies such as Coca-Cola (Hungary NEXT, 2020) or the adjustable driving styles of the new electric FIAT 500 (Stellantis, 2020) (urban/normal-fast/range-efficient/sherpa) teach us: DMOs can work with classic-explore-trendy behaviour-based visitor segments in tourism (Figure 35). The term “character marketing” also supports a simplified approach to destination visibility. We can also safely rely on the LinkedIn post of Tamás Pakuts, the operator of szalloda.blog: “Finding the character of the venue and then making it exciting, all by stimulating the hidden depths of our brain’s memory database” (Singer, 2020). Another good example is the Lifestyle Hotel Mátra, where the interior design and menus are tailored to the lifestyles of the guests.



**Figure 35:** New, behavioural segmentation categories initiated by large market actors

(source: Hungary NEXT, 2020; Stellantis, 2020)



Behavioural segmentation in marketing is a process that divides customers into segments based on the patterns of behaviour they exhibit when interacting with a particular business or, say, a website (or any place). These segments may involve grouping customers according to their

- **attitude** towards a product, brand or service;
- **use** of the product or service;
- general **knowledge** of our brand and the brand's products;
- shopping **habits**.

Going beyond traditional demographic and geographic segmentation methods and using behavioural data can lead to more successful marketing campaigns. Indeed, behavioural segmentation gives marketers and businesses a more complete picture of their audience, allowing them to tailor products or services to the specific needs of their customers. This type of segmentation identifies and categorises the most engaged users.

Filtering existing customers and prospects who show the highest engagement - for example, those who open emails regularly or spend the most time on landing pages - allows marketers to make more informed decisions about how and where to best allocate time, budget and resources. In return, it makes marketing more cost-effective by not burning budgets trying to warm up predominantly cold enquiries. We can focus on those most likely to buy. The example of this type of segmentation for cycling tourism, already implemented in the VELOREGIO developments (VMÖH, 2021), is presented now (Figure 36).

In the booklet the three target groups are as follows:

- Mountain bikers, abbreviated as **MTB**, lumped into the category of **Explore** tourists;
- Touring cyclists, abbreviated as **TREK**, put into the category of **Classic** tourists;
- Road cyclists, abbreviated as **RACE**, in the category of **Trendy** tourists.

The target groups of cycling tourists can be defined in terms of the vehicles they use, their technical parameters, by identifying their destinations, taking into account their orientation habits and by identifying the terrain. The identification and clear definition of target groups is also necessary when the destination is planning routes, linking attractions in such a way that they can provide alternatives, can be used at variable speeds and have multiple entry and exit points (Figures 26 and 48). Target groups can be differentiated in many ways, either by motivation, type of accommodation or interest.

Mountain bikers / A.1.1 MTB				
Vehicle type technical aspects	Goals motivational background	Target group demographic background	Information orientation habits	Area terrain geographical nature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• durable tube / fork frame</li> <li>• special equipment</li> <li>• slopes and inclines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sports purpose</li> <li>• nature lovers</li> <li>• challenge seekers</li> <li>• <b>EXPLORE</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• youngsters</li> <li>• young adults</li> <li>• friends</li> <li>• extreme athletes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• digital orientation options</li> <li>• often moving off the beaten route</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uneven terrain</li> <li>• dirt roads</li> <li>• trails</li> <li>• different obstacles</li> </ul>
Touring cyclists / A.1.2 TREK				
Vehicle type technical aspects	Goals motivational background	Target group demographic background	Information orientation habits	Area terrain geographical nature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comfortable tube / fork frame</li> <li>• placing larger packages (racks)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trip</li> <li>• visiting attractions</li> <li>• community experiences</li> <li>• maintaining health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• miscellaneous</li> <li>• <b>CLASSIC</b></li> <li>• family tours</li> <li>• middle-aged</li> <li>• more in the longer haul</li> <li>• for several days</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• predictability</li> <li>• high quality information systems</li> <li>• infrastructure</li> <li>• quality services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mostly paved roads</li> <li>• possibly dirt or gravel roads</li> </ul>
Road cyclists / A.1.3 RACE				
Vehicle type technical aspects	Goals motivational background	Target group demographic background	Information orientation habits	Area terrain geographical nature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• large diameter wheels</li> <li>• thin tires</li> <li>• minimal weight</li> <li>• for fast progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• doing sports</li> <li>• cultural heritage</li> <li>• natural values accessible on asphalt roads</li> <li>• performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cycling is integrated into their way of life</li> <li>• extreme athletes</li> <li>• <b>TRENDY</b> communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance and thorough planning</li> <li>• high demands towards the quality of roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• having the least capability of using natural wandering routes</li> <li>• good quality asphalt</li> </ul>

*Figure 36: New, behavioural segmentation categories in the Thematic Cycling Route Development Handbook (source: VMÖH, 2021)*

## 5.4 Messages and narratives

As I alluded to earlier (Paragraph 3.4), the visitor likes three things: products “packed” with contrasts and tensions (excitement); freedom of choice; and surprise. Why is it good to consciously clash colours, symbols, meanings, words, phenomena? Beyond awareness, there are certainly more serious psychological factors that influence purchase and commitment to a brand, a product, a service or a place.

“Good” only makes sense when we experience what “bad” is; light only when we have been in total darkness; comfort only when we have suffered a little in harsher circumstances (Gaur, 2020). This is also part of the process of learning, and part of brand consumption is learning, getting to know, experiencing, trying, experimenting. Interactive tourist / visitor centres and museums are also successful and well-visited specifically because the world of the information sender and the world of the information receiver start from different places but can arrive at the same place by achieving a kind of communion of meanings (Figure 24). To do this, however, we need to understand what works, how it works, what is produced, how and by whom, and at what cost and with what difficulties and challenges. A boring short film does not compensate for such a deep experience, nor can it produce contrast and then a community of values with the same effectiveness. The freedom of choice is based on the fact that, as service providers, DMOs delegate the decision to the consumer, and, based on their choices, the alternative route they choose, the "Meal / Menu / Plan B" or any product becomes theirs, winning them emotionally. Surprises can be astonishment, a well-asked question, or a phrase (Figure 19: ‘bloody hell’) we use among ourselves in everyday life.

The ‘Buffet’ sign and the pictogram are informative and functional, but how much more surprising and personal to have this message in English, for example: ‘Are you ready for a nice cup of tea?’ I have illustrated with a few examples of lukewarm, boring and rather functional or standard approaches compared to exciting, emotional or creative and surprising twists and turns collected from tourist catalogues and websites (Bódis, 2018):

**Chart 4: Standard and creative vocabularies**

Standard, functional vocabulary	Creative, emotional use of words
<i>Visit our website!</i> <i>Follow us on Facebook!</i> <i>Holiday Magazine, Summer 2023</i> <i>For more information, call ...</i> <i>Table of contents</i> <i>Did you know?</i> <i>Natural Attractions, Excursions</i> <i>Plan your holiday!</i>	<i>Summer is only a click away ...</i> <i>Are you, too in love with Switzerland?</i> <i>Happy summer vibes 2023</i> <i>If you ask me ...</i> <i>It's all waiting for you</i> <i>Secret tip</i> <i>Invitation to happiness</i> <i>We'd love to give you ideas:</i>

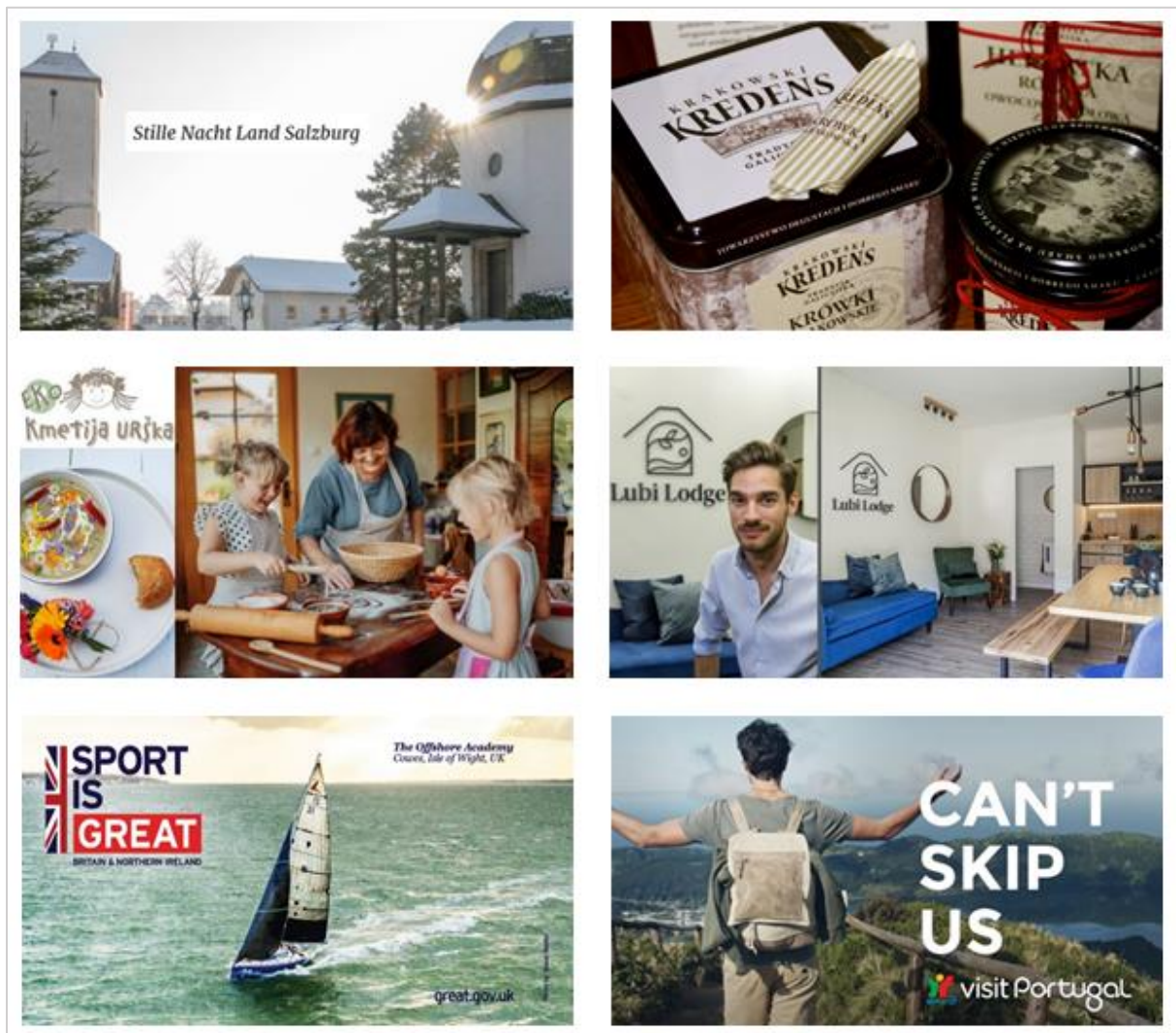
Marketing of tourist destinations has changed little over the past decade. We cannot continue to promote in the same way, as the seemingly endless growth has made the hitherto invisible burden visible. The question, in simple terms, is therefore what we use our resources for: to maximise exchange or to maximise life. Old-school marketing aims to maximise exchange by stimulating sales and consumption: see the four well-known P's (product, price, place and

promotion). Marketing has also moved from the 4P's (Kotler–Keller, 2006) to the 4W's in tourism (Dens, 2020):

1. economic **W**ealth,
2. environmental **W**ellness,
3. social **W**ell-being, and
4. human **W**isdom.

This approach reflects all that has been presented earlier in the sustainability (Figure 15) and social co-benefit (Figure 20) models and diagrams. The triad of economy, society and nature is completed by wisdom, the human him- or herself, which is also the basic unit of the scale of new tourism (Figure 18).

### 5.5 Good practices of Localhood



*Figure 37: Good practices of narrative design (own selection; sources cited in the text)*

### **5.5.1 The “place” itself is the value**

One of the most beautiful Christmas carols in the world was given to the world by Joseph Mohr and Franz Xaver Gruber. The carol's home province is Salzburg, where 13 Silent-Night settlements are worthy memorials to the well-known, fable-like melodies. Not far from the provincial capital, the world-famous Christmas carol was first sung in the Oberndorf church in 1818. The two-part carol was accompanied only by a guitar because the organ in the church, which was later demolished, had failed. The memorial chapel, built on the site of the former church, has long been a place of pilgrimage (Figure 37, top-left photo). (Stillenacht, 2023)

### **5.5.2 The association of the “place”**

One successful example of city marketing in Krakow is the Krakowski Kredens (Kredens, 2018) brand for local products. The reason why it has been able to grow enormously year on year in terms of awareness and earning power is because we know what the word kredens means. A special place in our homes for the finest ingredients and surprises. So, this product must be good and delicious, and the name is alliterative (Kr... Kr...). If the city had just said that it was the ‘Official Local Produce of Kraków’, it would have been more likely to alarm visitors, and perhaps locals too, at the mention of the word 'official' (Figure 37, top-right photo).

### **5.5.3 The “human” and “local” scale**

Another good practice is the Urška Farm in Slovenia. Even during the pandemic, the family organic farm was able to go from strength to strength by adding bright, human and small-scale elements to the holiday. The mother, Urška Topolšek Planinšek says that nature is their home and their love, and the place where they live and work is nothing but a farm from which life itself emerges. When you dine at their place, your plate is like a flower garden, because it's all about nature creeping into their home (Figure 37, middle-left photo). (Kmetija, 2023)

### **5.5.4 Breaking up with the boring templates: the “human” approach**

Lubi Lodge makes incredibly clever use of communication tools. It avoids templates, it emphasises the emotional side, what really makes this B&B unique. They write about sitting in the garden, crushing a leaf between one's fingers and thinking about the parsley smell of Sunday soup. They have mapped all the elements that surround the guesthouse and the family, such as the peach orchard, and built very cleverly from them. It really makes for a unique, honest story. But words remain empty if they are not followed by action. The Lubics, who are hosting some

small-scale events as well, make sure that visitors can feel the family hospitality they have been promised (Figure 37, middle-right photo). (Lubics, 2023)

### 5.5.5 Simply cook with the “local” ingredients at hand

And that's the ‘Great’. What could be more obvious in a British campaign? There is no magic. Or maybe there is, if we are talking about playing with words or half the flag, because in this case the brain is given a task, not consuming a finished product, much more involved than in a ready-made solution (Figure 37, bottom-left photo). (Great, 2023)

### 5.5.6 Talking about the future

Looking back, we've been through a lot together, ups and downs. But these moments make us stronger. We are different, but somehow we have a lot in common. The clarity to which we must return, to rediscover a new way of travelling and flying, firmly grounded on the ground. Because soon we will meet again. Tomorrow is today. Act today, make a difference tomorrow. For a better planet, for better tourism. Travel better, Visit Portugal - suggested the campaign entitled ‘Can't Skip’ (Visit Portugal, 2020) during the pandemic (Figure 37, bottom-right photo).

## 5.6 Avoidable practices

The dozens of solutions in the picture series (Figure 38) should be avoided. If we were to look for messages in them, we would go wrong: fish like grapes and transport chapels, the Eastern Gate (Keleti Kapu) is something to enter through, the river Tisza has got an administrative capital (Főváros) called Szolnok, it is not the chocolate that makes you happy (Boldoggá tesz), rather it is Bács-Kiskun, a county, and perhaps railways run from the sun (Hegyköz) etc.



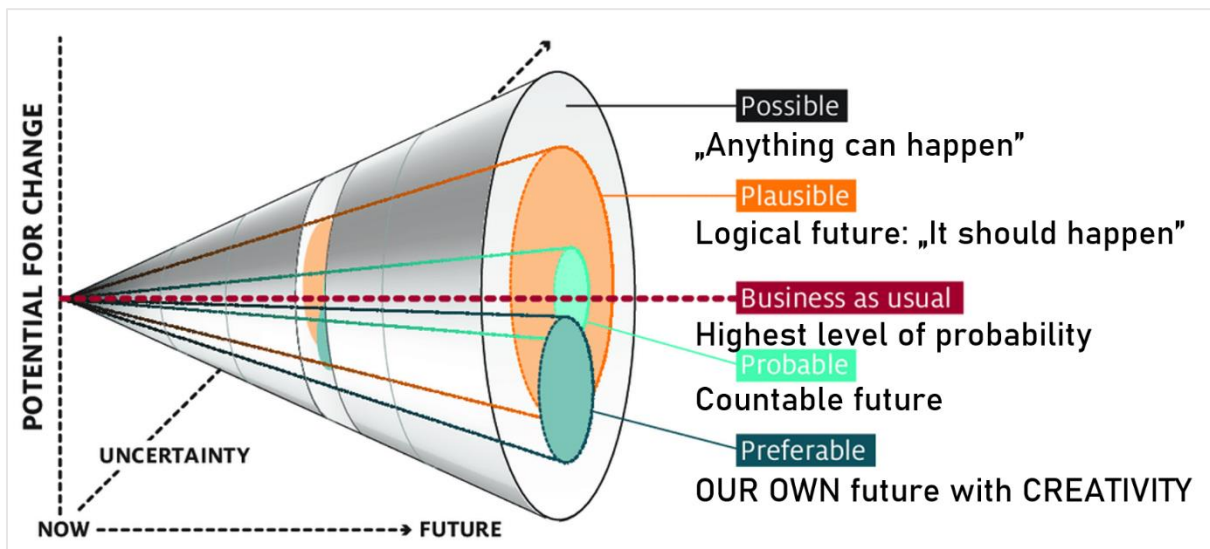
*Figure 38: Avoidable practices of narrative design (own selection)*

## 6.0 FUTURE CONSCIOUSNESS AND NEW TOURISM MODELS

Future capability, or future-proofness (Figure 1) is decisive to position a **Destination** (B). The structure of the present dissertation mainly projects the future potential on the narratives, using branding to bring together the disciplines of **Tourism** (A) and **Design** (C). The processing and presentation of future consciousness is also essential for the theoretical definition of future-proofness.

### 6.1 Future consciousness: the preferable future

The future could theoretically be of any kind. If we want to define the broadest future, it is the “possible future”. If we were to work only within this broad spectrum, it would hardly be possible to shape, form or influence the future. The “plausible future” is a narrower range of interpretation, because there are signs, signals of change, phenomena and trends that narrow down the set of theoretically possible events. The “probable future” is perhaps the narrowest range, but even here we have little freedom to act or influence. From the possible futures, we need to pick out the points that are favourable to us, supported by a range of obvious, available research and data, while also following the trends, the likely outcomes. In this way, we can build up a picture of a “preferred future” (Hancock–Bezold, 1994) as Figure 39 illustrates it.



*Figure 39: The Futures Cone (source: Hancock–Bezold, 1994)*

This means that not only do DMOs have to follow trends when they develop or market a destination, but they can also shape the situation themselves, and often, for sustainability reasons, they need to turn our preferred solutions into trends, in contrast to so called accepted visitor behaviours. Let me refer back to Figure 35, in which Coca-Cola uses the trendsetter avatar of its green Coke Life to shape the market as well as the mindset of its customers.

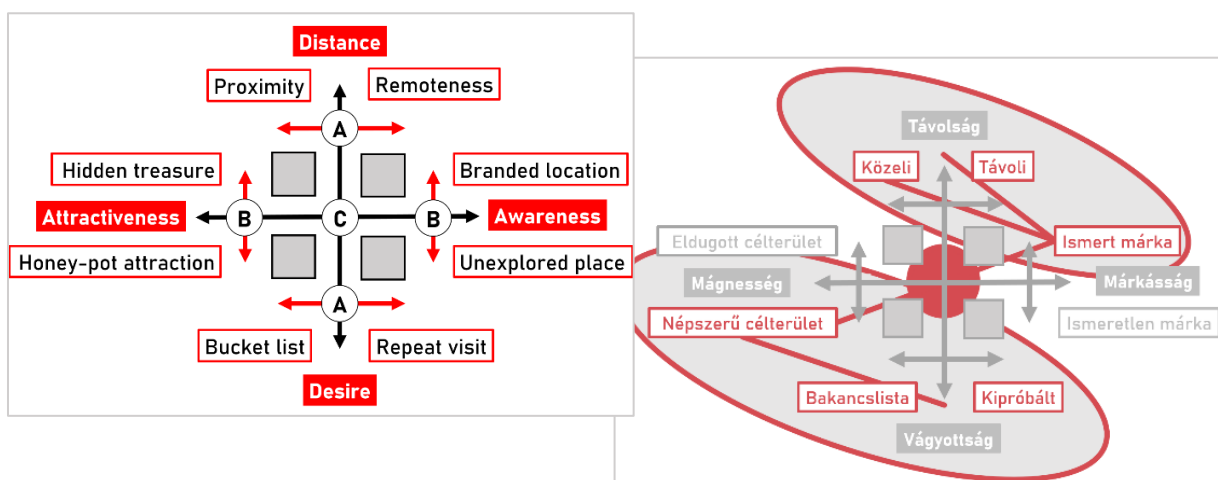
When we design visitor experience routes, our only goal is not to maximise visitor satisfaction, but to develop and promote alternatives that create the same amount of lower pressure or less stress on the destinations' lives, both in terms of space and time (Figure 34) (Pechlaner–Innerhofer–Erschbamer, 2019).

## 6.2 Post-COVID models in Tourism

There are a number of scientific models and experiments in the making, in the early stages of publication, or already half-developed in an attempt to describe, simplify and systematise what the post-COVID-19 tourist is looking for. The models that are now intended for presentation also took part in the joint creations of the guided workshops (Point 8.3). Locality is the key issue, so the dimensions and desirable position of the space were determined by the participants. A larger area when the destination is placed at the National, European or Global levels. The other pillar of the research, the series of interviews (Point 8.5), also proceeded in the same way, although the sequence was the opposite.

### 6.2.1 The 4-dimensional model

László Puczko (2020), a health tourism specialist, has integrated into a collapsible Rubik's cube scheme - as he called the 4-Ság model (Figure 40) - the choices or dilemmas that most characterise guests already when choosing destinations. The four extremes are: Distance-Desire-Attractiveness-Awareness. In this system destination marketers may look for the factors that motivate their visitors the most. I used this model in my primary research here, and it was also used by the participants in the Tájéka mentoring programme of the Balaton Uplands mentioned earlier in Section 2.3.



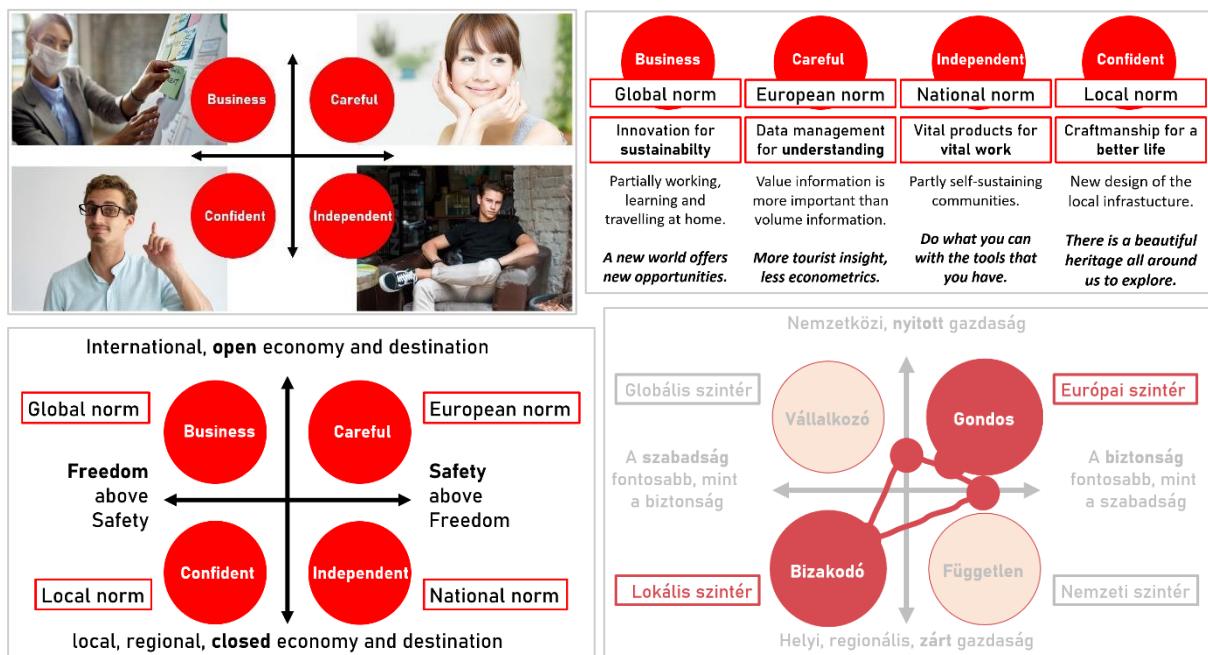
**Figure 40:** The 4-dimensional model and its application in practice in Hungarian  
(source: Puczko, 2020; own adaption to Balaton Uplands)



This model can both fine-tune and position the picture of a tourist destination from several angles. The findings show that Lake Balaton is both close (proximity) as it can offer services in all seasons, and distant (remoteness) because not everyone can afford to spend a holiday there due to the increasing prices. It is well-known (honey-pot), as most Hungarians have been to its shores, but it is the hidden treasures and opportunities of the Balaton Uplands that make it a bucket list destination.

### 6.2.2 The 4-scenario model

It has already been discussed how important the illustration or application of the character or avatar is in destination marketing (Point 1.3.3) and how it strengthens the competitiveness of the place. In his recent study, Patrik van der Duin (Foresight, 2020) puts the new tourism norm in four different scenarios, starting with global, continuing with European and then local. It is not a behavioural or motivational idea, but rather a concept of responsibility and awareness behind each segment (Business, Careful, Independent, Confident), but ultimately it involves character, the person, not as a tourist but as a tourism organiser, who can be entrepreneurial, careful, independent or trusting. The essence emerges in the dilemmas of openness/closure (vertically) and freedom/security (horizontally), and also defines the new norms (Figure 41). I used this model as well in my primary research here, and it was also used by the participants in the Tájétká mentoring programme of the Balaton Uplands mentioned earlier in Section 2.3.



**Figure 41:** The 4-scenario model and its application in practice in Hungarian

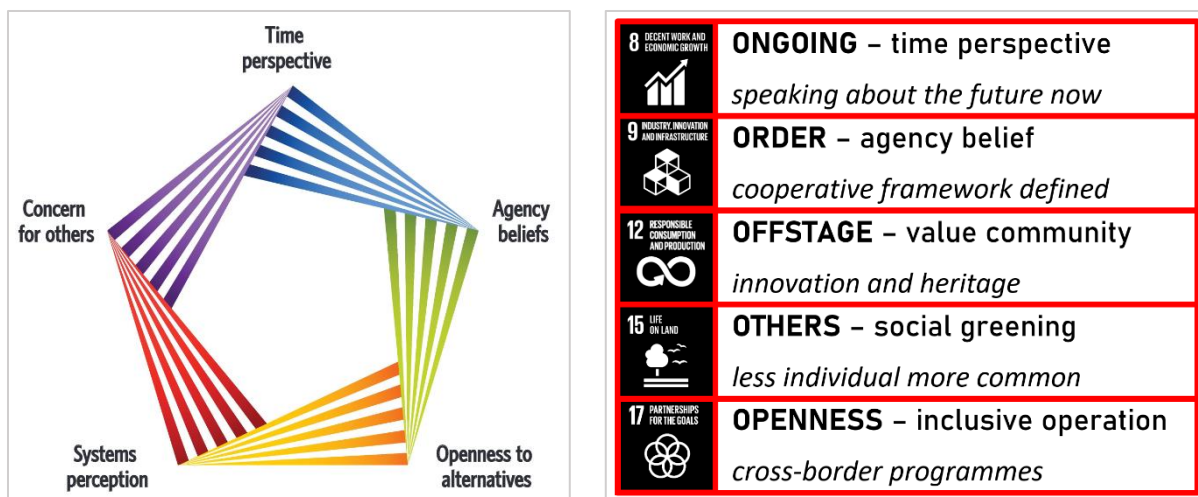
(source: Foresight, 2020; own adaption to Balaton Uplands)

In the case of Lake Balaton, it can be seen that in addition to the local identity and characteristics (confident), there is also a strong European identity (careful), not by chance, because of the historical links between the lake and its foreign markets. These findings were not only made by the participants in the mentoring programme, but are also in line with the summaries of the regional and rural development studies (Horváth–Pálfi–Aubert, 2018). This model helps a lot in developing the character of the destination, as well as in the work of how the messages are worded or narrated by the management in order to be able to address the relevant target groups, those who do not come to rob the place, because they can get and afford everything, but those potential interested parties who are able to find meanings in the value set of the place, which also lay the foundation for the previously discussed community of meanings in Sections 3 and 4. The future capacity of the tourist reception area is not only to be interpreted in relation to time (see: The Futures Cone), but also in terms of social problems, challenges and goals.

### 6.2.3 The 5-O model

In the UN Social Development Goals (UN, 2015) system, almost all objectives can be linked to tourism, simply because of the fact that the tourism sector interacts intensively with all areas of life. Tourism is a complex activity that develops from the synergistic effects of the sub-units of many sectors (Tózsér, 2011). The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), a United Nations specialized agency, is the leading international organization in the field of tourism. UNWTO is responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism geared towards the achievement of the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNWTO offers leadership and support to the tourism sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide, advocating for responsible tourism and promoting tourism as a driving force towards economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability. With a current membership of 159 countries, UNWTO encourages the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics in Tourism, in order to maximize tourism's socio-economic contribution while minimizing its possible negative impacts (UNWTO, 2015). The SDG-links to the topics covered in this dissertation are:

- SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth – **Newtourism concept** (Point 2.4);
- SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure – **Design concepts** (Points 4.0, 7.0);
- SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production – **Localhood** (Points 5.5, 7.3);
- SDG 15: Life on Earth – **Involvement** (Points 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 4.1, 5.4);
- SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals – **Management** (Points 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 10.0).



*Figure 42: The original 5-dimensional future consciousness model and the self-designed 5-O model of destination future-proofness*

*(sources: Ahvenharju–Minkkinen–Lalot, 2018; Bódis, 2020)*

I will now highlight five points that form the basis of immediately applicable reactions for all tourist destinations preparing for a future-proof position. As Figure 42 shows, first of all, the guarantee of success and growth (SDG 8) is if DMOs or services work continuously (**ongoing**), not firing employees and then take them back, or perhaps a less experienced and qualified staff.

The definition of the path immediately presupposes the system (**order**), the innovation (SDG 9), in which, to put it mildly, there is more to be done here. This is cohesion instead of separation, not the generation of tension and differences. Being different, standing out, and showing one's own values is of course typical of marketing work, but the area, the destination, the hospitality unit that has a strong network of partners are less vulnerable.

By creating communities of meanings, we can implement responsible production and consumption (SDG 12) in our sector as well, which is based on the understanding tourism approach already formulated, that is, a deeper, behind-the-scenes display of people and cultures (**offstage**), which is an attractive offer even in quarantine mode.

Instead of individual interests, community interests (**others**) will be achievable in the long term, hoping that dumping developments will also get a stop sign as soon as possible, so we will move in the area of protecting the living world as well (SDG 15).

Partnership (SDG 17), (**openness**): in the communication of destinations that had been reopening after the pandemic, and promising to be successful, inclusivity is narrated instead of exclusivity.

The 5-O model is based on the Five Dimensions of Futures Consciousness (Ahvenharju–Minkkinen–Lalot, 2018) model. The table sums up the destination-related challenges, additionally I listed some possible responses a destination management may consider.

*Chart 5: The 5-dimensional future consciousness model explained*

Original dimensions of future awareness	Time perspective	Agency beliefs	Openness to alternatives	Systems perception	Concern for others
The dimensions of future-oriented tourism (5-O) and challenges	<b>Ongoing</b>  Constant competition, the need to innovate, comparison and ranking	<b>Offstage</b>  The authentic is interesting, the mass is less attractive	<b>Openness</b>  Cross-border programmes and experience routes are popular	<b>Order</b>  Providing a framework for the expression of local values is expected	<b>Others</b>  Evolution in sharing economy and community marketing
<b>Responses</b> of the forward-thinking destination management	Reach the prospective visitors constantly, but in ever shorter time	Emphasis on back stage / office work, design-thinking	Reflexive planning with stake-holders, partners, suppliers and neighbours	Developing the system and content of the coordination / alignment	Information and education for both hosts and guest

Future-proofing also means that the responsible managers taking their best care of the destination also understand that our narratives are also changing, and even destinations are able to change the narratives that have already been in use in general. Questions that many authors and researchers have formulated around the turn of the millennium would also be worth discussing (Smith K., 2006):

- Whose narrative (culture) should be the **official** one?
- What types of narrative should be regarded as worthy of **display** and which shall be **hidden**?
- Whose **story** or history shall be remembered and whose should be forgotten?
- What **image** of life should be projected and which ones should be put aside?
- What **voices** should be heard and which shall be silenced?

## 7.0 SERVICE EXPERIENCE DESIGN

### 7.1 Grouping destination management organisations in terms of branding and strategy

Just as "Partnerships for the Goals" is the most important of the SDGs, the author now looks at the discussion of the future potential of the destinations from the management side. The below table (*own design*) shows the alternative directions or solutions along which a Destination Management Organisation (DMO) can be set up or launched.

*Chart 6: DMOs and their brand building alternatives*

Models	TOP level signal	What the TOP level does	Interface	What the BOTTOM level does	BOTTOM level signal
<b>TOP-DOWN</b>	<b>BRAND GUARDING</b>	Top ministry or local government with a strong vision and a defining, exclusive attitude.  POSITIONS  ALLOCATES RESOURCES	<b>Top-level strategy</b>	Local people do not know clearly what they want.  LIMITED OR ZERO KNOWLEDGE  LACK OF RESOURCES AND ORGANISATION	<b>Resistance</b> at low level
<b>BOTTOM-UP</b>	<b>Misunderstanding</b> at top level	Top ministry or local government with a weak vision and exclusive attitude in co-operation.  DOES NOT ACT  DOES NOT PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK	<b>Low-level strategy</b>	Local community knows exactly what should be done.  VALUE-ADVOCACY  STRONG ECONOMIC MOTIVATION / STRONG ORGANISATION	<b>BRAND BUILDING</b>
<b>MIX</b>	Top-level <b>integrating strategy</b> and framework	Top ministry or local government with a flexible vision and inclusive attitude.  PROVIDES FRAMEWORK AND RESOURCES  POSITIONS AND PROMOTES THE VALUES	<b>BRAND BUILDING</b>	Local people know what they want, but with no experience.  LACK OF ORGANISATION  STRONG ECONOMIC MOTIVATION  CONTENT MANAGEMENT	Bottom-up unstructured semi-professional inbound <b>content</b>
<b>TLA</b> <i>Tourism Learning Area</i>	<b>BRAND-VALUE MODEL</b>	Everyone participates on an equal basis.  DEFINES THE FRAMEWORK  POSITIONS VALUES  OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES  TRANSFERS KNOWLEDGE	<b>BRAND BUILDING</b>	Local community knows exactly what should be done.  VALUE REPRESENTATION  STRONG ECONOMIC MOTIVATION  ORGANISATION  CONTENT MANAGEMENT	<b>BRAND GUARDING</b>

It is valid to state at the beginning that the situation is not so clear-cut in practice, and that there are not only the three cases (top-down, bottom-up, mixed) described here, but also an overlapping combination of them. This chapter is interesting and relevant because it concerns the whole of the *Danube Bend* and its smaller units, or areas closely adjoining to it (*Ipoly Valley*), which are not only under-resourced but also under-organised.

## **7.2 Tourism Learning Area concept**

*“Learning Areas are the concrete application of a new approach to basic education and training for sectors with a high diversity and highly complicated learning situation. They help in organising the necessary dialogue and collaboration between education and training institutions and the sector stakeholders, as well as the capability of enterprises to develop the existing workforce. They constitute local cooperation platforms for learning and qualification of tourism professionals.”*

*Pedro Ortún, European Commission*

In cases where administrative borders have to be crossed, because visitors cross them, e.g. national borders, regional borders, district borders, it is worth choosing the most flexible destination management model (TLA). This situation and approach is true for the Ipoly-bank area, as it connects Slovakian and Hungarian areas, cannot be developed from national or governmental levels from the top, but tourism can be well-built from the bottom and with the involvement of stakeholders at both the top and bottom levels, based on a round table and equal representations and votes. A Tourism Learning Area (TLA) is a concept of a multi-stakeholder, inter-sectional partnership approach aimed at improving human potential for running the tourism sector at the local/regional or cross-border levels (Januszewska, 2008). The handbook “How to Set up Tourism Learning Areas” was published by the European Commission with the aim to explain what learning areas are, why they can be useful and how they concern the tourism sector (EC, 2004), and at certain points, the above-inserted table concludes its excessive knowledge. The TLA approach involves a wide spectrum of regional stakeholders and brings them together in a combined top-down/bottom-up (mix) process to form cohesive information and collaboration networks. A TLA can respond to today's challenges in the tourism sector by developing inter- and intra-destination (Figure 16) collaboration alongside a range of learning opportunities. If we look at the table and compare it with the research results of the dissertation, we can see that this concept can be a driving force for cross-border tourism organisation along the *Danube*. Black text in the table interprets the weaknesses, brown interprets the strengths.

### **Brand Transgression:**

Brand building, and not brand guiding, as a procedure in branding and ultimately in positioning, is justified by the author in this additional point, for the case of micro-destinations. Brand building can be followed by brand protection, but it must be based on local characteristics, values and value exchange. The phenomenon of Brand Transgression, which occurs in micro-cases, is also interesting on a theoretical level. Here I am dealing with damage to the brand, but the brand, which is defined by a higher level, may be meaningless or unacceptable to the community. This is simply names as an act of violation of the direct or indirect rules regarding consumer-brand relationship, when a macro-designed brand can go bad at the micro level. (Aaker, 2004).

### **Brand guiding:**

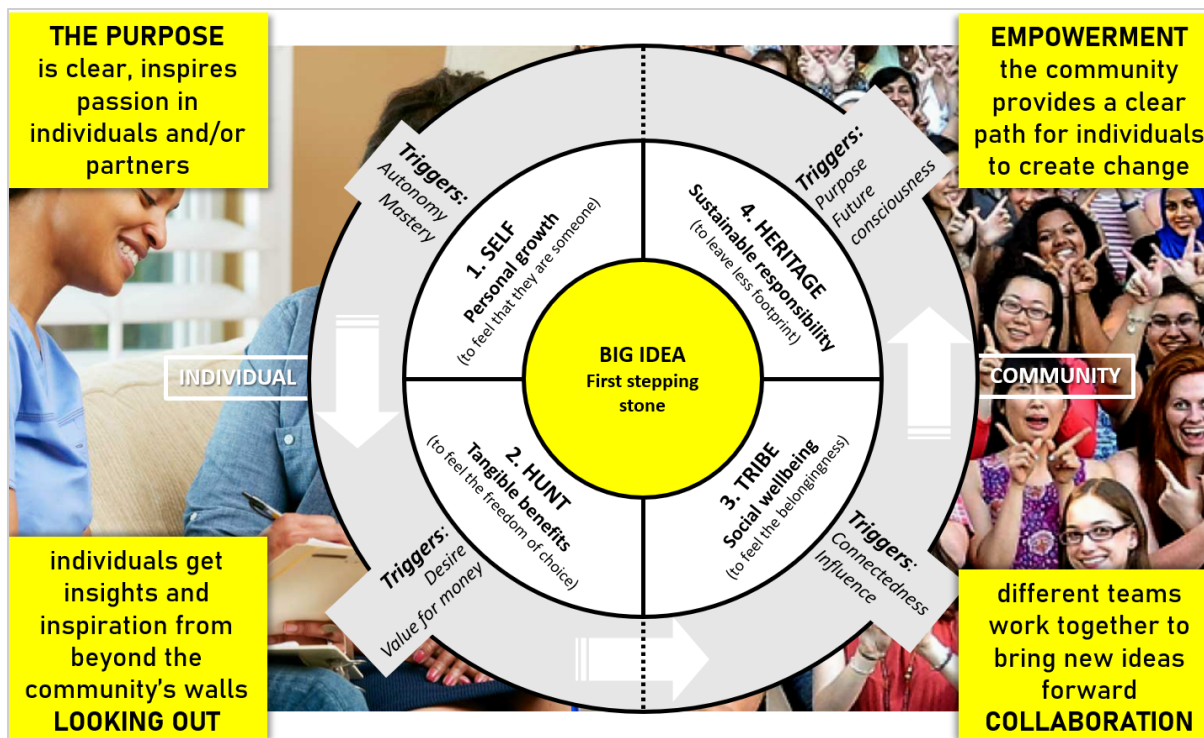
In order to provide an outlook, or a broader context to the focal area of the *Ipoly Valley*, branding in Hungary may not result in the most successful solutions if it is carried out by the national tourism marketing organization without consultation with local tourism actors (brand guarding). In Hungary, and as soon as the finalization of the image of destination management organizations and regions is reached in the near future, this will be treated as a challenge appearing in the *Danube Bend* soon as well.

### **Brand building:**

Although the traveller is an increasingly experienced consumer, even individual destinations are not in an easy situation, as the brand images of individual cities differ significantly from those that the national tourism management wants to envision and convey to them. If we look at the values that cities put in the communication focus, i.e. in their brand (brand building), these are the rooster in Győr, the fire tower in Sopron, the ring structure in Budapest and many more ideas that fit in an abstract emblem, the castle of Eger, the wine of Tokaj, the innovation of Debrecen, the castle of Gyula, the riverside of Szeged, the meeting of culture and design in Pécs.

## **7.3 Organisational Function Design**

In this paragraph I am showing the organisational design with the adaption of the Austrian Tourism Masterplan (Plan T, 2019). This illustration (Figure 43) is a four-phase process that businesses as well as destination management organisations can use to create products, services or service chains used habitually by their colleagues (here not their visitors!) in this context.



*Figure 43: Self-Hunt-Tribe-Heritage cycle in organisational design (source: Bódis, 2021)*

At the core of the value wheel, the first stepping stone, or the instant action is defined (what should the destination do first). On the left, there is the **individual** (self and hunt), while on the right, we can see the **community** (tribe and heritage). Counter-clockwise the management is able to have the need of the individuals met first. In terms of destinations, the individuals may be the single attractions, cities etc. on a map, the community is a regional, or even a cross-border destination.

In 2019, the Austrian ministry responsible for tourism published a new national tourism strategy, the "Plan T – Master Plan for Tourism". It lays down guidelines for sustainable development of tourism and serves as a guide for political decisions at all levels. Sustainability in all its dimensions and a culture of cooperation are central considerations to achieve a new quality of tourism policy. Plan T strongly aims to contribute to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. For implementation, it is complemented by action plans with concrete measures and activities. Plan T has been developed in a broad participative process involving hundreds of relevant stakeholders from every region in the country. It is the basis for tourism policy and lays its focus on joint sustainable development of tourism in Austria – addressing not only the needs of guests, but also of the economic sector, the environment, host communities and the DMOs. The mission is to be the most sustainable destination worldwide.



This model, or as many call it, the value wheel, has a mission of four corners. One is **purpose**, that is, a vision-like summary of goals for the individual destination (single destination), the settlement. This is followed by **outlook** and then cooperation or **collaboration** (multiple destination), when the organization can operate almost as a tribe (Figure 16). The fourth quarter puts the crown on the whole, that is, the **authorization** to change. With this method, we can discover what and in what ways new measuring indexes Austria can introduce beyond the widely applied measurement (share of GDP, Tourism expenses, Overnight stays, Employment, RevPAR, Arrivals) the new understanding of the tourism market (Value-added, Guest satisfaction, Share of renewable energy sources in hospitality – gastronomy and accommodation). See Figure 44.

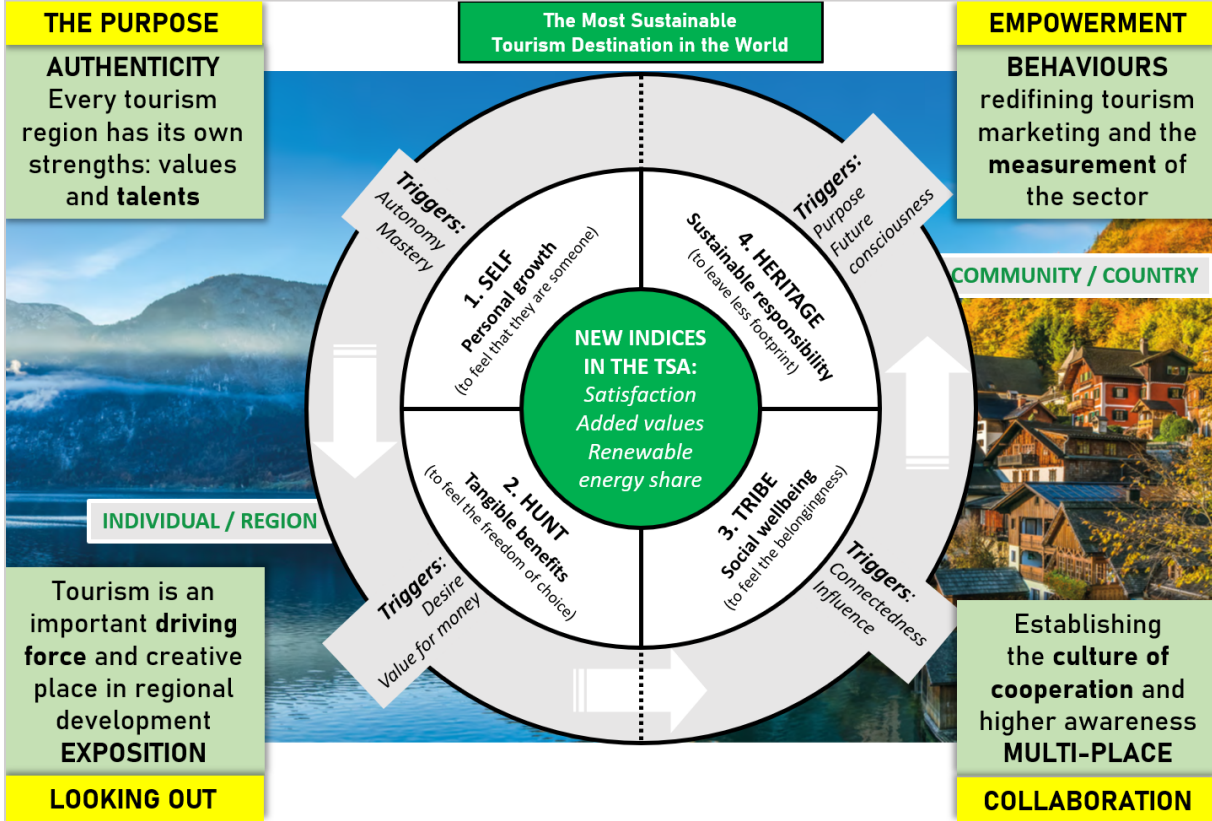


Figure 44: Extended Self-Hunt-Tribe-Heritage cycle in tourism organisational design (adapted from Plan T, 2019; source: Bódis, 2021)

7.4 Danube Bend tourism within a framework: D4

The first tourism professional day (16th September, 2021) of the four Danube-Bend towns - Szentendre, Esztergom, Vác and Visegrád, i.e. the D4 towns - was held in Szentendre, in the Skanzen (Figure 45). In the framework of the D4 cooperation, the participants are planning a joint Danube Bend tourism concept (Szentendre, 2021).



**Figure 45:** *The first tourism professional day of the four Danube-Bend towns*  
 (source: Szentendre, 2021)

Every day, Péter Galambos (Figure 6), European champion and World Cup-winning rower from Vác, who is the face of the regional tourism cooperation, greeted the participants gathered in the Skanzen, reminding them of the common point, the love for the region. The Deputy Director General of the Open-Air Ethnographic Museum, in his role as host, gave a presentation on the history and situation of the Skanzen and the ongoing development of the Transylvanian landscape. The mayor of Szentendre, said that towns were shaped by individual life stories, the history of a house or a family was integrated into the history of the town and the wider environment. The new tourism concept also draws on these personal stories, Szentendre, the *Danube Bend* and Hungary are built on personal stories, and this is what the D4 tourism cooperation should be about. The representative of Good Deal Consulting Vienna—Budapest, said that the *Danube* was a symbol that connected us, but he encouraged the audience to learn and use new professional concepts while keeping the old basic principles. Forget about being a tourist, he asked. The arriving one is a person with individual stories (Figure 14). Let us think in terms of “visitor economy” rather than “tourism” (Figure 18), providing a personalised, quality experience, and the use of the term 'tour guide' is also revealingly outdated, he noted, as he or she is the 'moderator of encounters', assisting the guest, not the stranger, with his or her work. A researcher of Xellum, spoke about the forthcoming Tourism Strategy of Szentendre. Emphasising that it is not intended for the general public, but is specifically professional material. It is a comprehensive strategy covering all aspects of the subject, from cultural aspects to accommodation and hospitality. It sets out a framework and principles, and is a preparatory

document for decisions that are still to be adopted, he said. Small towns like Szentendre can find their way in creativity, their tourism concept should be flexible, local and brand-building, he said. To achieve this, they need cooperative partners, such as accommodation providers, restaurateurs and artists within the town, and the towns of the Danube Bend in the region. The professional day continued with the presentation of the Programme Director of the Hungarian Tourism Agency (MTÜ). As she said, the National Tourism Development Strategy 2030, prepared in 2017 (NTS, 2021), had partly been overwritten by the COVID-19 pandemic, so the material had been further developed under the title Tourism 2.0. "We are working to share our love for Hungary," she said, citing the motivation behind the comprehensive strategy. The branding of the cities (D4) is now looking for a way of organisational collaboration (Point 7.1). This dissertation has got the essential role in effective organisation design in the conclusions of the research (Chapter III), as well as the organisational background (product clubs) of the six visitor routes along the river *Danube*.

### **7.5 Transdanube Travel Stories: Product Clubs**

In the framework of Transdanube Travel Stories, the Westpannon Team organised the first Product Club meeting in Győr, Hungary (Westpannon, 2021). The event took place on 21.10.2021 at the County Hall. The relevant tourism operators of Western Transdanubia were invited to the meeting. They could learn about the project's objectives and get an insight into the new Danube-area stories (Figure 34). During the meeting, everyone expressed their opinions and expectations about the project and the work planned in the so-called Product Club. The aim of the Product Club is to bring the stories that will be developed during the project closer to the traveller, to give him/her a taste of the stories of the Danube region. In the future, they will further expand the range of participants and focus on developing a common green tourism product for the region. The tourism development will include the collection of natural, cultural and built heritage sites along the route Bratislava—Győr—Pannonhalma—Szombathely, which is part of the St. Martin's Cultural Route (Martini, 2016). The new product club will promote and present the treasures of the region.

### III. RESEARCH

#### 8.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design answers how to carry out the research, what methods and procedures to use in order to answer research questions effectively with available resources (Gyulavári–Mitev Neulinger–Neumann-Bódi–Simon–Szűcs, 2017). To get the best value-based outcome from the research, which is based on understanding, interpretation and narratives, qualitative research methods had been applied. The author chose non-numerical, descriptive, explanatory methods as the primary aim was to reveal local meanings, the nature of the destination as well as the dynamics of the particular phenomenon (cross-border location). The qualitative tools chosen do not require sophisticated statistical treatment, but they serve as a scientific investigation of non-quantifiable phenomena, such as design, experiences, movements, chains of values, encounters of societies through a holistic approach and description. Qualitative methodology seems to be the most proven way when it comes to researching not only the WHAT, but the HOW and the WHY questions (Point 1.2.2 or Chart 1) of human experiences.

#### 8.1 Methodology

Based on the triangulation principle (Tomcsányi, 2001; Babbie, 2008; Decrop, 1999), I used several methods, in order to obtain information to provide precise support for my findings. One pillar is the **review of secondary sources and literature**, publications, conferences, good practices and case studies both from Hungary and elsewhere, leading me to a more holistic understanding of the Danube areas in micro and macro terms. I used the tourism development strategies as a source of **comparative content analyses** of Hungary vs. Austria, *Danube Bend* vs. Balaton Uplands as well as the available smaller-scale regional materials or concepts.

#### 8.2 Comparative content analysis

Qualitative content analysis is used when certain conditions are met. The first of them is the **complexity** of the contents to be compared. It is essential that individual contents are processed in a holistic approach. Another important feature is that the cases under analysis are **balanced** and homogeneous from the point of view of the topic (Smela, 2021). Content analysis is a research method used to determine the presence of certain words, expressions, topics, application of concepts within some specific qualitative data, for example textual information in publications or online platforms. Using content analysis, we can **quantify and analyse the presence, meanings, and relationships** of such selected or determining vocabulary or any

other features about a phenomenon. Content analysis with scientific demands is relatively new in the social sciences among its methods. Its application in the last two decades in the social sciences, above all in sociology, psychology, political science, media research, but in psychiatry, ethnography, linguistics, and literature and became known in history in our country as well. For wider interest, the economics or especially market research has only recently started to apply it. With the usage of content analysis, the market researcher identifies and explores the meanings of words in the texts of interviews, in advertisements or in the case of the present research, the elements and components of visual narratives, the **meanings of concepts**, and the complex relationships of the concepts used (Kérdő, 2008).

I was also interested in tourism destination organisations and their environment, development proposals, and areas that serve as models or have already experienced, or perhaps even suffered the processes of transformation and are the precursors of the phenomena to be expected in the *Danube Bend*. It was important for me to take a holistic approach to the concept of design, mentioning the areas that link it to tourism, and to show why and how design-thinking can be used to plan the intelligent use of space and to operate it in a future-oriented and sustainable way. The evaluation of the transformations (including both the horizontal level: conceptual tourism approaches and the vertical level: reorganization of local demand and supply) was aided by **in-depth interviews** with destination management and tourism professionals working and living in the sample areas, mayors, businessmen, investors and other people interested in the system (*Danube, Danube Bend*), **semi-structured interviews and moderated workshops** (*Ipoly Valley*).

### **8.3 Moderated workshops**

Co-creation is becoming more and more obvious and successful in knowledge transfer and education, so they can also be used during the first practical steps of destination development. It results in practical approaches and interventions that reveal deeper connections than the scientific or academic way of seeing. The workshop is one of the most suitable tools for

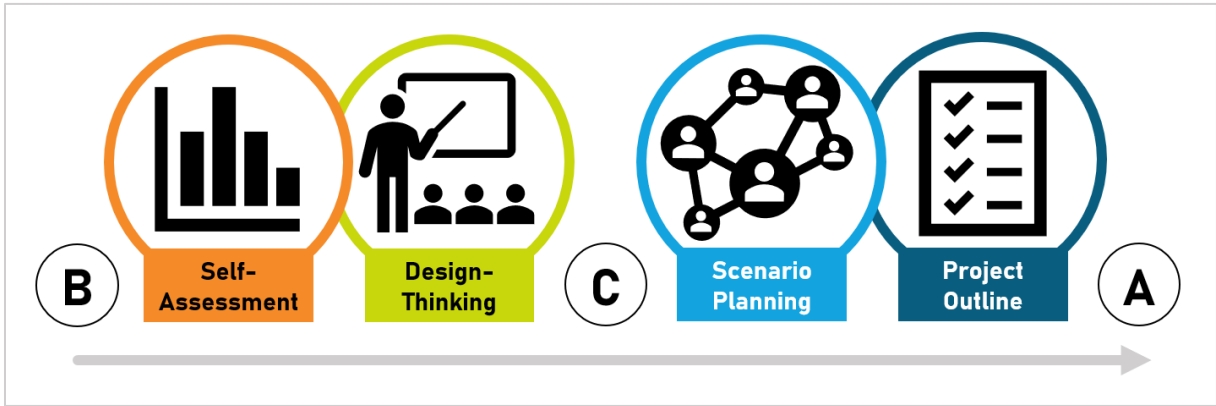
- collecting data,
- formulating ideas, and
- grouping thoughts

(Boone–Braeckman–Michels–Kindermans–Van Hoof–Van den Broeck–Godderis, 2023). In addition, the participants do not perceive that some abstract solution is created without them or above their heads, but that they can do it in practice.

Market research, a tool in marketing, not only generates data and answers, but it can also generate new ideas by bringing participants together under one roof when it comes to creation and development. Good qualitative research as a practice, rests on two pillars. One is theory, the other is practice (Keegan, 2009). In this research, it is exactly this double necessity that is why the author chose the workshop as one of the most suitable for this purpose. Focus group research, one of the methods of which is moderated workshop work, has the following advantages (Mack–Woodson–Macquien–Guest–Namey, 2005):

- it effectively captures information about social norms and relationships;
- it allows a variety of opinions or views within a population;
- its data is rich as they emerge from the diversity and the dynamics of the group;
- its participants influence each other with their presence in a positive way;
- its participants are able to reflect upon what is said and suggested;
- its participants have got different social, educational experiences and backgrounds;
- it promotes the importance of the community and cohesion.

Since the long-term goal is for *Ipoly Valley* to be a functioning professional organization, managed by community representatives, one of the defining elements of the research was the illustration and practice of this already during the exploratory work. Of course, a suitable moderator is also needed to lead the workshops. In this case, the moderator and the person evaluating the data were the same person, the author of the dissertation. The author also considers it of utmost importance that the structure of the workshop reflects the essentials that will be necessary in the subsequent destination creation process, and as a result, it is based on the same competence level scheme that is echoed in many places in the dissertation.



**Figure 46:** Moderated competence-based workshop content flow design (own design, adapted; source: Brozzi–Rauch–Riedl–Matt, 2021).

The first phase of these competence-based (Figure 4) workshop series (Figure 46) is the so-called **Self-Assessment**, which consisted of a self-assessment survey to identify the potentials and the existing challenges faced by the settlement and the region in the main product development and organisation processes. In the second phase (**Design-Thinking Workshop**), according to the results of the assessment, a number of expert workshops were held in the villages and towns. The workshop serves for knowledge transfer, adventure and green tourism topics and for the identification of specific requirements in terms of soft skills or organisation processes. The workshop itself is conceived to close the information gaps between stakeholders. This phase foresees innovative and creative moderation techniques belonging to the design thinking methodology in order to analyse problems in the areas and to derive possible outlooks.

The workshops consisted of five steps:

- Step 1: Discussion and structuring of plans and objectives in the area;
- Step 2: Detailing of specific challenges and opportunities identified in the area;
- Step 3: Brainstorming of possible development courses and concepts;
- Step 4: Improvement of identified ideas/solutions;
- Step 5: Selection of feasible ideas/solutions.

In the third phase (**Scenario Development**) alternative experience routes (Point 9.6) were designed in line with the individually identified settlement objectives. The scenarios developed by the experts considered different degrees of main advantages and drawbacks and thus supporting a successful integration in already existing developments. After the validation and selection of most promising projects, the settlements received in the fourth phase (**Project Outline**) a proposal (Point 9.7) for an implementation project, indicating specific objectives, expected results, internal resources needed and the necessary time-frame for the implementation (Brozzi–Rauch–Riedl–Matt, 2021).

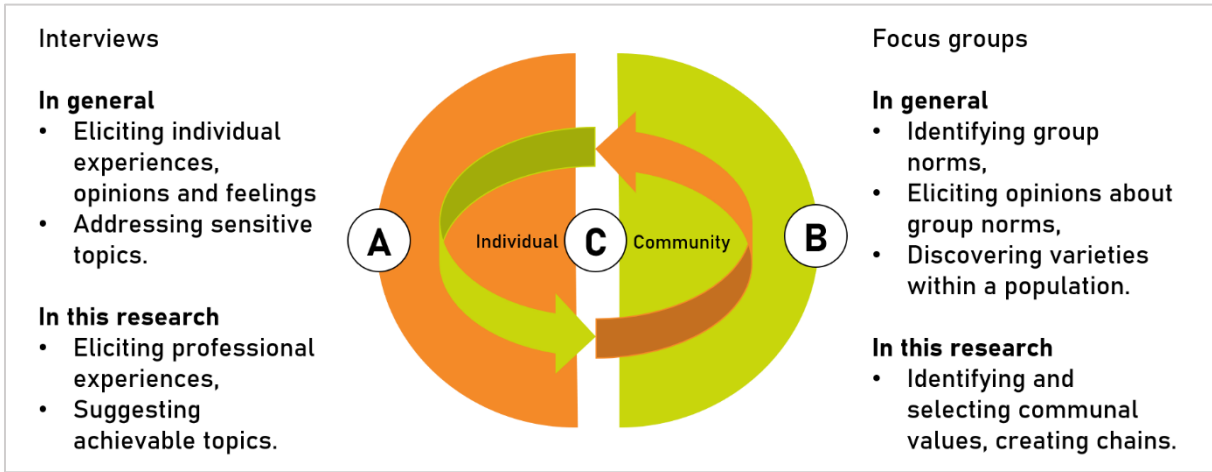
#### **8.4 Semi-structured interviews**

An interview as a research method is a conversation that has a structure and purpose. Different parties are talking, the interviewer determines the questions, and the respondent answers freely. We can prepare an interview from several approaches. In one approach, the interview is highly structured (formally edited), in the other, unstructured (lack of editing). Interviews that lie between the two are called semi-structured. Those researchers who use the semi-structured approach in their interviews prepare questions on the main topics of the researched area, which they will ask the respondents.

In this context, both structured and unstructured model elements are used. When designing the semi-structured interview, I paid attention on asking some standardized questions. A semi-structured interview design usually contains several open-ended questions. The use of words in these questions is not fixed in advance, because it is adapted to the respondent, his or her style and level, and the user of such interviews must formulate or reformulate his or her questions spontaneously. The basic spine and the structure of the interview is specified, which on the one hand guarantees the existence of certain basic information and prevents the interviewer from moving further away from the core topic, and on the other hand, the structure of the interview remains flexible so that those contents that are not designed in advance, can be discussed in the main thread, but the interview sticks to its framework topic.

It is true that the interviewer and the interviewees are not unlimited, but they have some degree of freedom for action and development. The great advantage of the semi-structured interview is that it can be easily used in both qualitative and quantitative research (Sheatsley, 1963).

I considered it essential that the relationship between tourism and design be beam-lit from the organizational and operational sides, starting from competencies to planning steps, both at strategic and action levels. I emphasize the importance of a character (Point 1.3.3), first and foremost in connection with the brand, since the brand and the character are able to shape the system and position and frame development ideas by reflecting on consumer attitudes and patterns from the world of brands from other areas, even from the FMCG sector (Point 5.3). In designing my research, I have built on the elements emphasised in the previous chapters, which explains why there are quite a few back-and-forth reference brackets in the text.



**Figure 47:** Relevance of the applied research methods complementing each other (own design; source: *Strengths of focus groups versus in-depth interviews*, Namey, 2005).



Figure 47 best illustrates how the two methods complement each other. As the scientific source notes (Namey, 2005), both research methods have strengths. The clear advantage of the guided group session, in addition to the previous findings, is that it can produce a large number of standards or norms (identifies locally existing values and then filters them) and opinions (ideas, suggestions, directions) within a relatively short time. The dynamics of the group can stimulate conversations, bring out reactions as that the participants are equal. If the author had only used in-depth interviews in this research, then they would rather reflect the individual's point of view, the nuanced differences or even contradictions that are not so important in a horizontal approach, but at the same time, in a more practical form, can induce decisive tension.

The dissertation further completes the **Destination**-oriented (B) focus group research with **Tourism** expert-oriented (A) interviews with **Design**-centred techniques (C). What makes the research exciting is that the respondents of the interview-series, moving more and more from the horizontal to the vertical, from the abstract to the steps that show up in the differences in the daily work, but the overall narratives appear in connection with the *Danube*, and are almost identical to each other.

### 8.5 In-depth interviews

*“In-depth interviews are a useful qualitative data collection technique that can be used for a variety of purposes, including needs assessment, program refinement, issue identification, and strategic planning. In-depth interviews are most appropriate for situations in which you want to ask open-ended questions that elicit depth of information from relatively few people.”*

*Lisa A. Guion, University of Florida*

One of the basic sources of qualitative research is the interview: some verbal a text that is spoken by one or more members of the researched social or professional group with characters who embody the researched phenomenon, individually or in groups, using different techniques (Heltai–Tarjáni, 2005). The questions were formulated on the basis of The Institute for Arts Integration and STEAM's Creative Process (Riley S., 2021). In addition to the basic questions (from 1 to 7), the interviewees were also given helpful and explanatory questions (in *Italic*), which did not intend to narrow down the content or the freedom of the answers, but helped to keep them in line with the raised topics. Thanks to this, the interviews can also be considered semi-structured in this case. The main questions also reflect on the competencies that were defined in the very first section of the literature review as part of secondary research (Figure 4).

### 8.5.1 Interview questions

1. **DESCRIPTIVE** question (**focus** given by the respondent)

What phenomenon would you compare the *Danube* to, in general and in Hungary?  
(Based on Figures 33, 35, 40 and 41.) *What is the meaning of the Danube for you, what values do you identify it with (3 values), what identity would you attribute to it and what is its promise for Danube tourism?*

2. **ANALYTICAL** question (**details** revealed by the respondent)

Which tourism services can make the Danube region more consumable and competitive? (Based on Points 1.3, 2.3, 3.2 and 3.3.) *How can the values of tourism along the Danube be preserved and brought together? Please mention such a project or idea.*

3. **INTERPRETATIVE** question (**personal meaning** is associated by the respondent)

Which of the human qualities embodied by a river make the *Danube* special for you?  
(Based on Points 5.3, 5.6.) *Which characteristics or features of the Danube are, or could be, involved in the communication of the Danube municipalities and regions?*

4. **CREATIVE** question (**meaning community**: meanings are linked by the respondent)

Which geographical places along the *Danube* would you add to an imaginary route to represent the message of the *Danube*? (Based on Points 4.1, 4.2.2.) *Which tourism products or thematic routes are able to present the Danube municipalities and regions in the most complete way, making them interesting for today's consumers?*

5. **PRESENTING** question (the respondent shares his/her **alternative creation**)

In planning and designing your imaginary Danube route, which theme would you focus on and why? (Based on Points 3.4, 4.2, and Figures 26 and 35.) *Do you consider it relevant to develop „classic”, „explore” and „trendy” itineraries or packages along the Danube? If yes, why, if not, why not?*

6. **EVALUATIVE** question (respondent mentions **others'** perceptions)

What national and/or international good practice would you mention in the field of preservation and transfer of values along the *Danube*? (based on Points 6.2.3, 7.2 and Figures 23, 40.) – *integrated into the previous questions after piloting.*

7. **REFLECTIVE** question (how can the respondent **influence** his or her environment)

What advice would you give to a tourism organisation in a region of the Danube in order to achieve a future-oriented operation? (Based on Points 7.1, 7.3 and Figures 43, 44.) – *integrated into the previous questions after piloting.*

## 8.5.2 Interview respondents

In the preparation of the interviews and in terms of their content yield, I relied on the following specialists. The below excerpt contains their names, positions, and the area they work in, as well as the language used in the interview. The interviews were conducted using Zoom, and they were recorded by the author of the dissertation with the consent of the respondents.

*Chart 7: Interviewees' names, position and origin with the areas they represent*

	Name	Position	Area	City	Language
Interviewees	<b>Prof. Georg Steiner</b>	former Geschäftsführer / Tourismusdirektor <i>Linz Tourismus</i>	Danube as a whole region	Passau	English
	<b>Dr. Paul F. Langer</b>	Managing Director <i>European Danube Academy</i>	Danube as a whole region	Ulm	English
	<b>Márton Méhes PhD</b>	Direktor <i>Collegium Hungaricum Wien</i>	Danube, Austria & Hungary in Focus	Vienna	Hungarian
	<b>Balázs Kovács</b>	Ambassador to Newtourism, CEO & Partner at <i>GD Consulting</i>	Danube, Austria & Hungary in focus	Linz, Vienna, Budapest	Hungarian
	<b>Zoltán Székér</b>	CEO for <i>Visit Esztergom</i>	Danube, Danube Bend focus	Esztergom	Hungarian
	<b>Ágnes Lőrincz</b>	former CEO for <i>Irány Szentendre</i>	Danube, Danube Bend focus	Szentendre	Hungarian

The selection of interviewees was also conscious in the sense that the process had to follow the philosophy that this dissertation can claim as its own. Based on the relationship between the macro-destination and the micro-destination, the first step was to interview professionals who could interpret and see the *Danube* as a continental destination. After that, as the table shows, I asked the Hungarian professionals who live and work along the *Danube*, in our neighbourhood, who see the Danube as a region, the Western and Eastern meanings as well as the Hungarian characteristics, both touristic and natural or in a cultural context. Finally, the leading managers of those destinations which, so to speak, include the *Ipoly Valley* micro-region, and even, as an alternative, with its new and additional elements, is able to free up the two typical, iconic settlements of the *Danube Bend*, Esztergom and Szentendre from overtourism. In the following table, the key words of the questions and the key ideas of the answers are displayed, in the same order as the previous table displays the respondents of the interviews. The first three columns indicate the brand-building elements (Point 8.5.3).

### 8.5.3 Content analysis of the interview responses

*Chart 8: Interview key concepts according to the points of criteria in the header*

VALUES of Danube	IDENTITY of Danube	PROMISE of Danube	Projects preserving values	Communication reflecting values	Behaviour-based SEGMENTS
<p><b>Symbol:</b> not only clichés but connections;</p> <p><b>Europe:</b> centre, arts, history, culture;</p> <p><b>Transformation:</b> from nature to culture, trans-identical</p>	<p><b>The flow and the power to transform</b></p>	<p>Tourism can go deeper than the river cruises, and far beyond, there are the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> places to <b>discover</b>.</p>	<p>“<b>Danube Stories</b>” that has got 6 routes, but the other initiatives lack strategic thinking, only cities are good in their self-marketing actions.</p>	<p>There is no time or mindset at local levels for cross-border Danube communication. No issues, no marketers, no budgets. Lot of misuses, more holistic approach needed. “<b>Route of Kings and Emperors</b>” is a good example.</p>	<p>Professionals are afraid of narratives and targeting this way. A right structure is needed today. There is a lot of potential in the mentioned categories. <b>Classic &amp; Trendy:</b> Linz, Tabakfabrik is a best practice.</p>
<p><b>Diversity:</b> cultural adventure;</p> <p><b>Curiosity:</b> positive attitude of people to it;</p> <p><b>Tradition:</b> cradle of Europe, migration route</p>	<p><b>The human horizon that it broadens</b></p>	<p>True cultural <b>adventure</b> is an alternative to beach-type vacations.</p>	<p>“<b>Danube Pearls</b>” to bring up certain areas. “<b>Danube Academy</b>” to educate. However, many good projects collapse.</p>	<p>The balance should be communicated: a Danube discovery is more in terms of discoveries than a beach holiday. Thematic routes: “<b>Women along the River</b>” may be more successful.</p>	<p>These categories make sense, but people would rather design their own packages based on <b>Trip Advisor</b>. People do not book rigid categories, they prefer freedom.</p>
<p><b>Symbol:</b> embraces the space, everything flows into it;</p> <p><b>Diversity:</b> but one point of alignment;</p> <p><b>Exciting:</b> different environment, but the Danube is the same everywhere</p>	<p><b>It has its own identity, which it gains by feeding on its environment</b></p>	<p>It can provide the thrill of <b>discovery</b> through thematic pathways and future-packages.</p>	<p>Variations for 1 piece: that would be the best. <b>The four European Capitals of Culture and Ulm</b> are already working on Danube projects. Weaker marketing in the East.</p>	<p>Danube as a region is a too big dip. Communication must be broken down into smaller units. Shorter routes, festivals and conferences can represent the feeling of “<b>Being European</b>” from Ulm, Linz, Krems, Vienna, Győr, Budapest to Novi Sad.</p>	<p>The <b>Explore</b> is a good category because it can be thematized well. Crossing the border is the point. <b>Trendy</b> is also good because of the festivals. Architecture, music, and Art Nouveau are the <b>Classic</b>.</p>

VALUES of Danube	IDENTITY of Danube	PROMISE of Danube	Projects preserving values	Communication reflecting values	Behaviour-based SEGMENTS
<p><b>Symbol:</b> Hungarian-ness, realization, possibility of the future;  <b>Relation-ship:</b> most international river, belonging to Europe, shipping;  <b>Trans-formation:</b> history, from old to new, from individual to communal</p>	<p><b>It is part of the Central European identity, basic fundament of diplomacy</b></p>	<p>Slowing down, connecting, getting involved, an <b>experience</b> space that builds on multi-modality.</p>	<p>The city of <b>Győr's European Capital of Culture application</b>, which uses the Flow principle, <b>DCC</b> in Belgrade, <b>NeueDonau</b> in Germany, the former <b>Danube Commission, Schiffahrt Conference, Dunakavicsok</b> podcast.</p>	<p>We feel &amp; move at home in the Danube region, there is a lack of awareness and acceptance of the role of <b>“integrator, the role of a turning point”</b> for Centre5 and V4, experience spaces and transformation (Linz). <b>“D4”</b> is also functional at the communication level. Regionalism, proximity, originality.</p>	<p>It is possible to categorize, whether it is the acquisition of experience or the transformation, it should be leveled. Good examples are the Szigetköz (Bike&amp;Boat), kayak slide, and the slow-down, thought-provoking programmes. In a sexy way and the <b>Classic</b> will be <b>Trendy</b>.</p>
<p><b>Life:</b> its basic condition is water;  <b>Sound:</b> music, comfort and connection, diversity;  <b>European:</b> it does not separate, but connects, global</p>	<p><b>The values lie in her identity, not only Hungarian, but also European</b></p>	<p>Sound and <b>active movement</b>, connecting and associating possibilities.</p>	<p><b>“DunaBike”</b> project in Esztergom, connecting places in a 5-15 kms with gastronomic experience. The creation of ship-type and distance-based routes is missing. <b>“Breakfast on bridge”</b>.</p>	<p>Every place is different along the river, <b>location-specific transport</b> and multimodality are needed, which can be thematic routes, e.g. gastro is associated. But unfortunately, there is no <b>brand nor story-design</b> yet.</p>	<p><b>Classic</b> and <b>Trendy</b>, but they should be improved. Sporty but not sweaty, active, city-centric. The bio-themed <b>Explorer</b> is not, rather the categorical breakdowns: 1 hour, 1 day, 1 week...</p>
<p><b>Culture:</b> built heritage and arts;  <b>Nature:</b> the relationship between mountains and water;  <b>Gastronomy:</b> specialties and local producers</p>	<p><b>It's an adventure, a creative place with creative and highly educated people to get to and explore</b></p>	<p><b>Adventures</b> at your fingertips.</p>	<p>Initiatives: <b>“European Heritage Protection”</b> for the Danube Bend; <b>“D4”</b>: value preservation: if 1 wins, everyone wins; Water values and connections, ports.</p>	<p>They have to <b>position</b> the Danube Bend, it is not as easy as Tihany in the evening of Lake Balaton, where <b>1-2 values</b> are given, e.g. the lavender. Museums also need an <b>accompanying, complementary experience</b>.</p>	<p><b>All three categories</b> are relevant and provide orientation and easier interpretation for visitors and service providers. Important and essential categories in future developments.</p>

During the interviews, everyone received the same 5 questions, so that the answers to questions 6 and 7 were already covered in the previous topics. A pilot interview was completed earlier on, where the author had the experience that every response to his request contained evaluation and reflection (Point 8.5.1), so I only asked these during the live interview if the respondent did not address them. The interviews support the findings that were used during the planning of the Ipolymente destination on many points. A system of criteria (please refer to the first linear header of the table beforehand) was developed for the content analysis of these in-depth interview conversations, which are not only interesting because of the content spoken, but also make the content comparable and evaluable. They were prepared as a supplement to the semi-structured interviews and the methodology used there (Points 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4), with the purpose that the wider (macro-destination) and then narrower context of the *Danube*, the *Danube Bend*, help to put into context, not only in terms of its meaning, but also in terms of its tasks and challenges at micro-destination level.

As the excerpt from content analysis shows, the **vision** is mostly shared by the professionals, as well as their findings that with more conscious and focused marketing work, more concrete meanings can be given, conveyed and thematic routes can be designated. The *Danube* as a symbol to which it is good to belong, because it represents diversity, exciting discovery, historical continuity as a starting point, was mentioned by all of the respondents. As for the promise of the *Danube*, all respondents mentioned adventure tourism and discovery (highlighted by **inversion** in the table cells), which also confirms the relevance of paragraph 2.1 (Figure 9). In addition to the already operational and tested thematic routes, all respondents drew attention to the challenges, joint and concerted marketing, and came to the conclusion, including the present research, that the itineraries should be created on a design basis, so that the guest has his or her own be able to shape them. In addition to the need for decision-making support, isolation and, in some cases, networking appear, e.g. the festivals along the *Danube*. As far as customer behaviour-based segments are concerned, the conclusion can be drawn that it is worthwhile to define understandable and simple categories and to build on the way some itineraries are currently compiled for visitors themselves.

There were those who could completely identify with the three categories listed, some who even combined them, and there were interviewees who initially preferred not to, but found relevance in these categories as the interview progressed. The contents of the in-depth interviews prove the integrated way of thinking and the ability to mediate the expressive power of the Danube region, to which Ipolymente / *Ipoly Valley* is able to connect with another thread.

At the same time, the micro-region is a much better, more effective and efficient field for experimentation and innovation, because the networking and success achieved locally can set a good example, as is currently the case with the aforementioned cities along the *Danube*, or the D4 alliance, although at other levels. It is striking that multimodality, which is one of the organizing elements of the *Ipoly Valley* region, is also formulated as a leading idea in the creation of experience spaces along the *Danube* in several places.

As the interview process progressed towards location-specific destination management, the design-based thinking described in the previous chapters became more and more apparent, the way in which global narratives can be marketed, produced, and grasped. The lack of storytelling and the brand was also found at the micro-regional levels, in the sense that today there is no brand-level association competitive advantage that anyone could assign to the *Danube*. Movement, active recreation, adventuring, sound, music, art and creative work have a decisive distinguishing power.

Moreover, the new dimension of connections, which is based on interoperability, not on walking through, would be fundamentally important on a micro-level. This is also an important element in the organization of the *Ipoly Valley* design fair, just like the dream project that would connect neighbouring settlements on the opposite side of the *Danube* via a cable car, e.g. Esztergom and Šturovo. Another practical approach to experience route design is to assign vehicles (boats and ships) to different distance categories, as well as time categories to individual visitation behavioural patterns (Figures 34 and 35). The “Reggeli a Hídon” / “Breakfast on the Bridge” event in Esztergom also proves that the human, the everyday, the simple categories have a greater reach and engaging power than expensive advertising campaigns, the human scale, the change of scale does not only mean that we are talking about neighbouring communities, but we give them, primarily the locals, one of the most basic ways of meeting, the table community (Figures 18, 37 and 44). This can then induce a demand that makes visitors curious about what it's like to have breakfast with a "stranger".

In the course of the interviews with the key actors of the geographically increasingly narrow interpretive domains, not only did the thinking reach from more holistic approaches to place-specific ideas and meanings, but also movement on the water, mooring, community building with local producers, and the promotion of markets came to light (Point 9.7.4 and Figure 50), as well as the role of the creative and educated local population of Szentendre or settlers, mostly in the new scenarios following the pandemic.

The aforementioned categories of segments (classic, exploratory and trendy) are not only a simplification of communication, but in essence they convey the mission of caring for the visitor in a much more human way from the management and service provider side.

## **8.6 Creativity throughout the research and in the future process**

To conclude this part, the author brings the attention to the introductory passages of Chapter 4.0 (and Figure 39), in which creativity and its relevance is discussed in a detailed way. Design methods can be applied in all areas of tourism in the service process. To innovate and win, companies need design-thinking (Martin, 2009). I want to highlight the aspects of tourism where design and creative thinking are inevitable and which I kept reflecting on in this dissertation. The following creativity-based findings emerge from the design and implementations revealed by my researches. Destinations, in communicating their intangible cultural assets, seek

**(1) to make use of creative tools and spaces that support visitor activity and engagement** (OECD, 2014). Creative tourism, still a niche area today, has grown out of cultural tourism, mainly due to destinations' responses to visitor behaviour that cater to, and even stimulate mass demand and needs, often focused on culture.

**(2) Destinations that are able to offer their creativity to their visitors**, by offering them active participation, encourage them to experience and learn, knowing that the ultimate motivation for travelling is to get to know oneself and to compare the cultural background of the visitor with the unknown to be explored and understood at the new place where he or she is welcomed (Duxbury–Richards, 2019).

**(3) The design-based organisation of creative tourism and destination work can be implemented in practically any geographical unit**, whether it is a region, a district, a city or even a cross-border area. The role in public life, the tourism assets and opportunities, and destination marketing, i.e. positioning, branding and relationship building, are consciously pushing space-management towards creative-thinking (Emmendoerfer, 2019). The strength of

**(4) the relationship between stakeholders can greatly influence the development and exploitation of the destination's creative potential**. In spite of the above-described idea, in most cases, the actors are very diverse, they have got different interests (Pavlovich, 2003).

In the future, design will continue to take a strong part in the creation of the specific destination development along the River Ipoly. The discussion of this is the task of the next chapter.



## 9.0 MICRO-DESTINATION DESIGN & KEY RESULTS

This chapter presents a Hungarian design-based best practice, which will enable the implementation of a Danube micro-destination, specifically the tourism developments along the Lower-Ipoly and the Garam, in a coordinated network, based on multimodality, exploiting mutual synergies, both on the Hungarian and the Slovakian sides. In order to achieve this, in the framework of a European Union Interreg project, with the Pontibus Limited Liability European Territorial Partnership as the lead partner (Pontibus, 2022), I managed to organise and led a series focus group workshops (Points 8.3 and 8.4) and semi-structured interviews (Point 8.5), during the period of June—September 2022, to develop project package outlines that form the basis of a cross-border destination based on an easy-to-implement and consumable offer. The European Territorial Partnership was established in 2015 by the Municipality of Pest County (Hungary) and the District Municipality of Nitra (Slovakia) with the aim of developing social, economic, touristic, cultural and inter-institutional relations in the cross-border area, thus contributing to the coordinated development of the region.

### 9.1 Preliminary studies: a destination for connections

The studies grounding the destination design and the surveys of the settlement project proposals were prepared with the involvement of experts, during which the settlement and regional data (and maps) as well as technical and professional contents of the planned projects were systematized.

After that, the selected tourism project proposals were reviewed and evaluated by the professional committee in the framework of personal, small-group workshop meetings with regional mayors, civil organizations, businesses, and other project managers. During the field reports, interviews and workshop discussions, it was clearly stated that the Ipoly bank area is an area of connections. The primary development area of the tourism action plan includes 13 Hungarian settlements out of a total of 17 located in the Szob district, as well as 27 settlements and Palást from the Nyitra district. The following points were identified:

- Ipoly does not separate but connects the neighbouring areas.
- There are physical crossing points, bridges, border crossings in the region, the Ipolydamásd bridge is new (officially opened in July, 2023).
- The Garam—Ipoly area can represent a competitive alternative for those who already know the *Danube Bend* as city back-pack tourists (Xellum, 2021), or who are no

longer interested in it due to its massive visitor traffic overload in peak seasons, weekends and extended weekend days (Kondor–Szabó–Prorok, 2020).

- It can serve this with complementary (supplementary) potential (Kádár–Gede, 2020).
- The settlements in the area and the level of infrastructure development are very different.
- The spread of development concepts is also wide: they need a systematic evaluation.
- The development of the area is evaluated: there is already some touristic demand or interest, which for sure will increase in the future.
- The development should not only apply to the attractions that can be built: soft development is also necessary.
- It is worth positioning the region in a unified system with a new approach.
- The settlements want to strengthen the cohesion, sustainability and resilience of their communities.
- The goal is to achieve economic, natural and cultural sustainability in the region.

The participants of the workshops met several times. The preparatory and framing discussions lasted from May to September 2022, and the focus group analyses were held and led 6 times by the author of this research in Szob, Kemence, Ipolyszalka, Zalaba, Ipolyvisk and Ipolyság. The summing up took place in Ipolyszakállos.

## **9.2 Communication analysis**

As far as today's regional communication is concerned, the lag could be made up for, the participants said, since the Ipoly area can be travelled practically without language difficulties, since Hungarian is spoken on both sides, in fact, it is the primary language used. For the time being, there is very little information about the tourism offer on the websites of the individual settlements, the possibilities and capabilities are different, sometimes giving excessive importance to some attractions with very little appeal, which - in many cases - is the church of the village, with limited opening hours.

At the organizational level, the destination promises to be particularly cohesive. It was underlined that it is only possible to develop the region through joint and mutual thinking, dialogue and consultation. There is a lack of coordinated communication and competitive marketing, and currently the number of destination management and civil organizations in the region is also small (Bedőcs–Kovács, 2022).

### **9.3 Destination product audit and contextualisation**

The following tourist products are clearly present in the region (see: Appendix maps), their elaboration and connection are the next steps. Each of the individual tourism products, even at the level of definition, supports the network and design philosophy of the twin region.

**Water & tourism:** The real attraction of water-based tourism is the variety and uniqueness of the natural values. Tourism developments can also be based on this diversity, as a result of which the network can be unified, but individual areas and sections can appear with different offers. Due to its natural features, Hungary has a serious potential for water tourism, which is still untapped in certain areas (Kovács, 2022).

**Cycling tourism:** Cycling as a tourist product can be sold on its own, but it can be really popular as part of a complex experience package, where cycling itself is not the main activity, but that it represents an active, enjoyable and sustainable mode of transport between various attractions and restaurants (Berencsi, 2022).

**Trekking, active, hiking and pilgrimage tourism:** Trekking routes designated for recreational and touristic purposes make it possible to reach and connect many attractions, as well as various trips and tours around the attractions, and sometimes become attractions themselves. The designated routes make it possible to approach and visit various natural attractions and historical-built heritage sites, connecting them with each other, with settlements and transport hubs with stops and parking spaces (Molnár, 2022).

**Equestrian tourism:** Similar to international trends, the demand for experiences close to nature can also be observed in the travel habits of Hungary. It is known in the world tourism market that the best selling tourist products are those that have some characteristics, are unique to a specific country. The name of Hungary has been intertwined with the horse for centuries (Lóska, 2022).

**Forest, narrow-gauge railway tourism:** Tourist flow can be improved by developing the forest railway and its environment, in which not only the existence of attractive elements, but also their values play an important role. The attractiveness of each line in terms of tourism depends strongly on the attractions and programme opportunities located nearby. By the transformation of the forest railway lines into thematic routes, the thematic route that consists of several elements or sections, can be visited or viewed by stopping at the stations of the route (Princz–Vasvári, 2018).

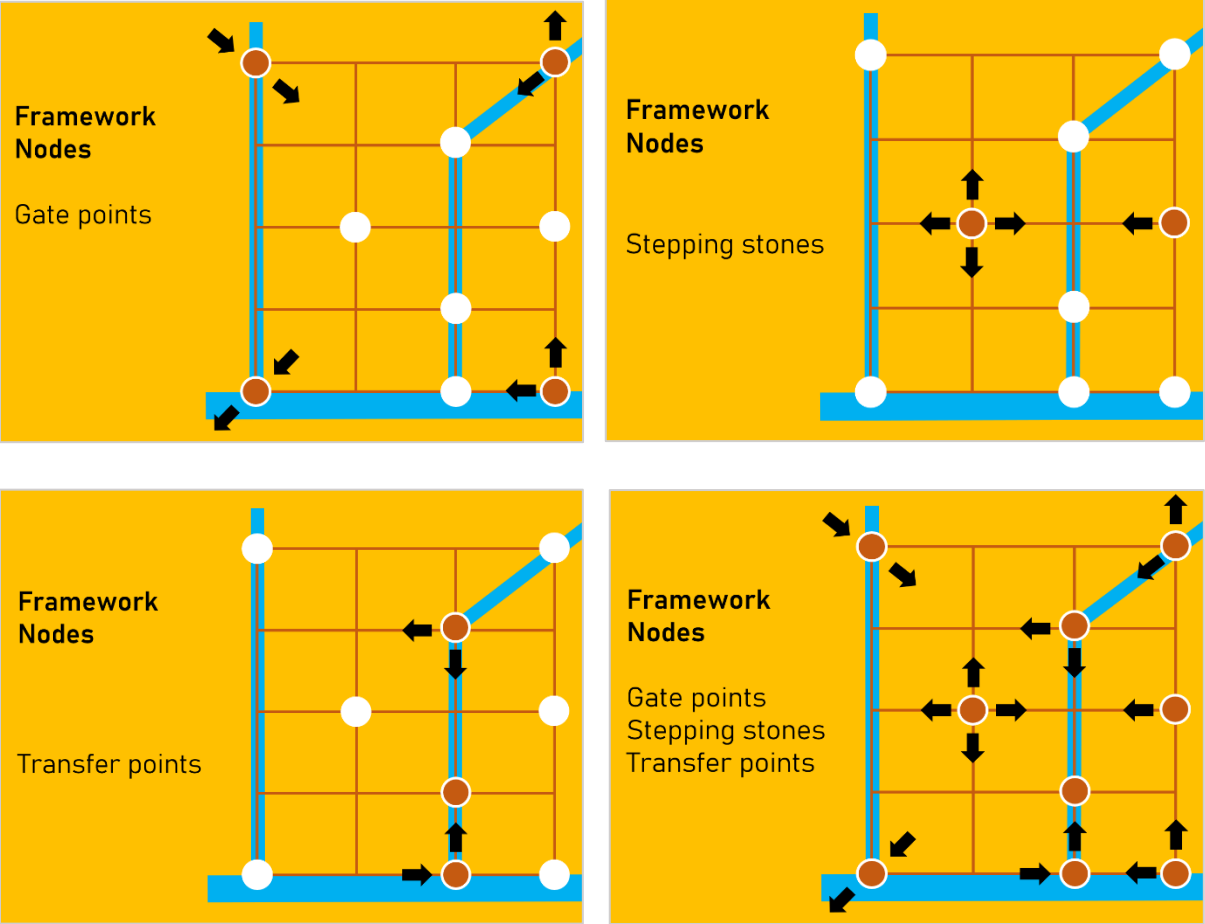
#### **9.4 Destination function design and conceptualisation**

The region has the geographical, landscape and cultural contrast (Point 3.4) that today's visitors are looking for. Ipoly itself is the link, the passage. The passage is supported by active tourism products (Figures 2 and 9). Individual points can be connected in time and space in a transparent system defined by nodes and movement lines (Figure 34). The area immerses visitors in the original, the untouched, and they can co-create with the local communities (Figure 25). The key to success at the destination level is openness and cooperation. It builds on what creates specific, complementary and non-substitutive products, both in terms of accommodation and in all other fields, since there are elements in which settlements or their surroundings are stronger, while others are weaker (see: Appendix maps). In the soft projects, knowledge transfer and incubation also appear, the transfer of values to visitors can strengthen the locals. Most of the domestic tourist regions, including the Ipoly region, are inseparable from the micro-regions beyond the borders. This plan solves the investment-centric positions (Point 2.4), which are often loaded with tension. It is a transparent, homely, small-scale place for adventure tourism, and fits in with the selection and trends. It serves sustainable tourism, with multimodal transport and local products. This destination is a small region in which micro-mobility vehicles should be used for short distances (traditional or e-bike), but walking is also an option (Miskolczi–Jászberényi–Munkácsy–Nagy, 2020).

#### **9.5 Destination frame design and conceptualisation**

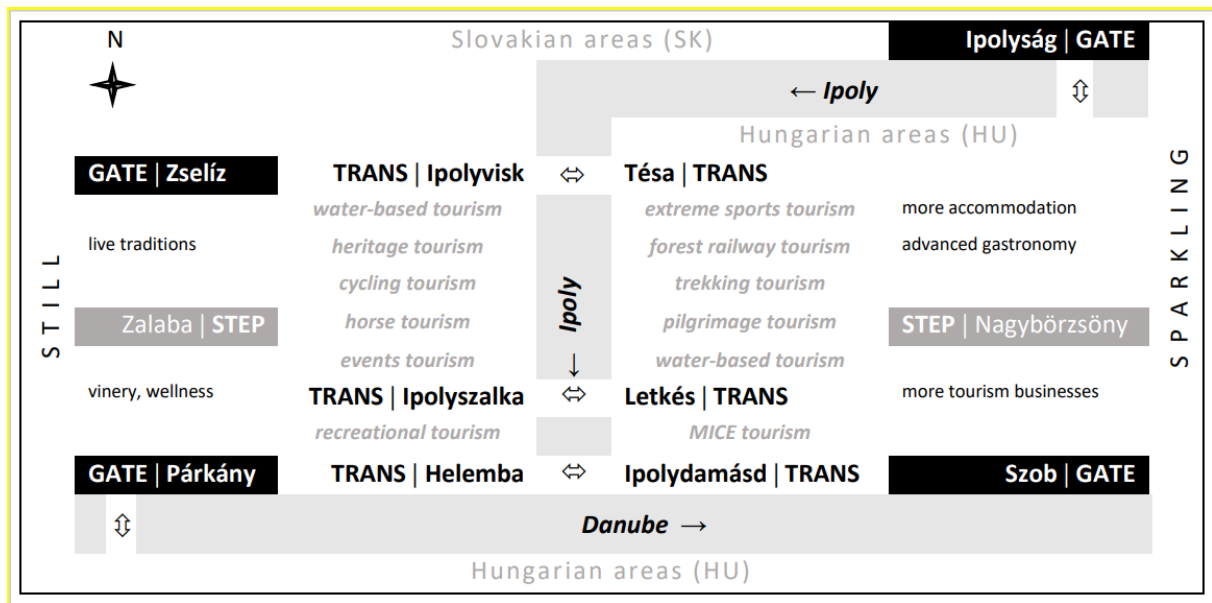
'Less is more', marketing and communication practitioners know that it is worth simplifying complex, multi-sold and multi-bought systems, such as a destination with a very diverse product range, in its philosophy as a first step. It is true for content creation, too. Short, snappy writing tends to perform better than long, complex copy. Internet search engines prefer key words, shorter sentences and paragraphs. Concise use of vocabularies and writing in general, tends to be strong writing, rather than trying to sound like the next Shakespeare in the any content, DMOs should be logical and natural. A down-to-earth style is both easier on the author and easier on our consumer (Hall, 2021). The data (settlements, their relationship to the river, and to each other) as well as the functions of the individual points can be more transparent and consumable (Points 2.2 and 8.4) if we choose infographics for spatial presentation (Ashman–Patterson, 2015). People started telling stories with pictures (visual narratives) well before the use of sentences (textual narratives). This began about 35,000 years ago when people drew pictures on rocks and walls to communicate with each other.

This concept was used in the workshops (Point 8.3). Wide rainbow of colours in the area, differences in development, spread of attractions, water and topography can be framed by drawing a frame and placing a rectangular net on it (Figure 48). Within the frame, the movements of the visitors were determined, along spatial and temporal lines, reflecting on their attitudes. Nodes or junctions were designated: **gate points** were created (entry and exit points), **stepping stones** (those where resting and distribution takes place), and **transfer points** (where visitors change modes of transport). Human-powered, sustainable modes of transport have an advantage in the development of a region. A kind of connection between bicycle—canoe—horse-riding modes of transportation is already operating in the Ipoly area (Makase, 2023), and this multimodality was a determining element when planning the experience routes. Due to flexibility, temporary events and places with variable opening hours can also be added.



**Figure 48:** *Infographic-style illustration about the steps and the final composition (Gate points, Stepping stones and Transfer points) of the functional design in the Ipoly East/West-bank—Garam East-bank—Danube North-bank twin destination (own design)*

The preliminary studies have shown that the region is not uniform in many aspects (Point 9.1), but a sort of complementary product structure already exists and can be created, which corresponds to the embedded nature of the previously formulated products, to the fact that they can be developed with little success on their own, but rather in a systematic, coordinated way, and with appropriate manner supported by communication (Points 4.1 and 7.3). Figure 49 demonstrates the complex interpretation of the area.



**Figure 49:** The functional design of the destination with the nodes, settlement names and the functions indicated. The relevant tourism products and the strengths of the areas are provided (sources: Appendix maps; own design)

The western part of the region relies on the wine region and living traditions, crafts and country houses (between Garam and Ipoly). The living presentation of cultural heritage is significant on the northern and southern borders of the region, typically in the case of Zselíz, Ipolyság, Szob and Párkány, so it is worthwhile to establish entry and exit points there labelling them **GATE**-points. On the ‘sparkling’ Hungarian side (Börzsöny), hiking, trekking, forest railway and pilgrim tourism are strong, of course, water-based tourism is also decisive. Typically, there are more commercial accommodation facilities, more developed hospitality, and more tourist service providers. On the ‘still’ Slovakian side, the paved road infrastructure is better, the traffic load is lighter, which means bicycle routes that can be put on the public road network, or on the already existing bicycle path network. The terrain is more suitable for horse-riding in Slovakia. This side also has advanced water-based tourism and capacities, with less professional service units. **TRANS**fer-point settlements naturally connected by bridges (Ipolyvisk—Tésa;

Ipolyszalka—Letkés; Helemba—Ipolydamásd). It is not recommended to develop the same services on both sides in parallel, but rather on the side where it is more justified or where a service already exists, including tourist information offices or visitor centres (see: Appendix charts). The soft-projects are able to settle at the points where other prominent attractions are tangentially located, due to their geographical location or their agility, they are able to guide visitors in several directions, in the form of **STEP**-ping stones on the routes. There are Nagybörzsöny and Zalaba.

## 9.6 Synthesised evaluation of development projects

The evaluation criteria for the projects (including their number, name, additional explanations and location in the country), compiled and synthesised by myself during the personal visits and workshops, are presented in a transparent summary set of charts for easy comparison in the Appendix. The basic organising principle is networking. The items in the table headers are:

- **Item ‘A’:** The Network position says "**Inter**-mediate" only in the cases where the project is neither a **Gate**-way Point, a **Trans**-fer Point nor a **Step**-ping Stone, nor a project closely related to any of these.
- **Item ‘B’:** Reflects the Current status, based on the 4-dimesional model described in Point 6.2.1 (Figure 40), locates the project in the Design-Desire-Attractiveness-Awareness model. Typically, the status is given in pairs, e.g. ‘Proximity’ and ‘Hidden’.
- **Item ‘C’:** Projects are rated on a three-star system: one star (\*) stands for a low identifiable project, two represents medium (\*\*), and three means full-level (\*\*\*)

Although the ‘Progress’ in other words the development and elaboration (Network position and Current status) of the project are ranked first, it does not mean that the provisional strong role in visitor experience routes, which had been professionally justified by the workshop participants, should be excluded from the later selection or shortlisting just because its level of preparation may currently be low. ‘Relevance’ is interpreted in terms of content, thematic aspects, and ‘Adaptability’ means how it fits into a visitor experience value chain. ‘Relevance’ was also worth considering for the sake of variety, adventure and length of time spent. ‘Attractiveness’ reflects the uniqueness of each attraction. ‘Operability’, is the assessment of economic sustainability, particularly a strong consideration, as it is a key challenge in many localities. The further items are described as follows:

- **Item ‘D’:** Experts’ suggestions are added as improvement ideas to the project.

- **Item ‘E’:** Lists elements that can be taken from best practices elsewhere those that are currently missing.
- **Item ‘F’:** The definition of the target group is based on Paragraph 5.3.
- **Item ‘G’:** The table sets out a number of themes, based mainly on the framework presented in Point 9.5 (Figures 48 and 49).

‘Creativity and novelty’, innovation is at least as significant as the previous points of criteria. The ‘Importance’ of the project is understood as regional (local, Slovakian, Hungarian), or generating visitations from the neighbouring countries (Austria, Poland). The former is one star, the latter got two. The projects with European significance are marked with three stars. Under ecological ‘Sustainability’ we looked at how green the project was meant to be, how it interacts with the natural environment. Ideas that promote community involvement, the ability of local communities to express their values, or that provide space for educational, incubation, traditional or professional events, are considered as ‘Community cohesion’, or in other words social sustainability. A sample of the project evaluation charts is provided here in English, and the full set of tables in Hungarian language can be found in the Appendix.

*Chart 9: A sample of project evaluation charts*

0. Project name:		SAMPLE				SK	HU
A. Network position	B. Current status	C. Evaluation criteria and rating (* ** ***)		D. Development proposals	E. Missing element	F. Target group definition	G. Thematic route it fits into
<b>Gate Trans Step  Inter</b>	<b>Proximity Remote Hidden Honey-pot Branded Unexplored Repeat Bucket list</b>	Progress	*	<i>Reasoning and additional expert development suggestions</i>	<i>Elements that can be adopted from good practices and are currently lacking</i>	<b>Classic Explore Trendy Responsible</b>	<b>Active Cultural Event Recreation  ... Permanent Seasonal</b>
		Relevance	**				
		Adaptability, linkage	***				
		Attractiveness	*				
		Operability	***				
		Creativity, novelty	**				
		Importance	*				
		Sustainability	*				
		Community cohesion	***				
Additional information and explanation:	<i>Detailed explanation of the assessment</i>					<b>Recommended / Recommendation is subject to conditions</b>	

## 9.7 Experience route design

The movement lines (visitor experience routes) were designed with the use of the classic, the explore, the trendy and the responsible behaviour patterns (see: Point 5.3). These experience chains are able to meet the expectations of those coming for slower, faster, shorter and longer tour sections - including gastronomy, hospitality and accommodation. In order to expand diversity, multimodality, the temporality (1-2-3 etc. days) and spatiality of stays, it is worth



taking the advantage of the internal opportunities in the following complementary product relationships, and supporting the proposed projects for development in this way:

- cycling—rowing—hiking—horse-riding (multimodality),
- culture, preservation of traditions—active recreation—recreation (diversity),
- education, handicrafts (educational),
- active recreation—excursions—forest railway rides (active and thematic)
- wine tourism—event tourism—wellness—active recreation—horse-riding,
- garden spa spiritual slow tourism experience tours (beekeeping, rose garden)—pilgrimage (small scale and more spiritual consumption),
- bike tours, rowing tours (active),
- sightseeing (culture-focal thematic) tours.

This paragraph presents pre-defined route alternatives, based on the framework set out previously (Point 9.5) and supported by the attraction project tables (Point 9.6 and the Appendix). Based on the consumption and behaviour patterns of visitors (Paragraph 5.3), the characteristics of the area and the characteristics of the tourism products, the workshop participants created segment-specific offers with multiple entry and exit points and variable consumption speeds (Figure 26). In order to form manageable, colourful, diverse and sustainable networks, it is essential to take into account or give preference to those elements that are decisive in terms of theme, convenience, accessibility or load rebalancing (destressing of the areas with capacity design),

### **9.7.1 Thematic tourism matrix of the destination**

The thematic design of the routes was formed on the basis the following matrix, which is an extract of the tourism product elements covered by the evaluated projects. It can be seen from the table that water-based, bike-, horse-riding tourism and trekking are dominant in the region, which is strengthened by the other product cluster: culture, preservation of traditions, local products, education and event tourism. In the table, the TRANS-fer and STEP-ping stone-points are bold, and the GATE points are in capital letters. The table does not include each development project, and there are settlements that are neither included. The projects that are recommended are indicated in red. A filled or blank circle shows the location of the possible coordination or visitor information centre. The settlements are listed in alphabetical order.

*Chart 10: Thematic tourism matrix of the analysed area*

	Water-based	Bike	Equestrian	Trekking	Forest railway	Extreme sports	Pilgrimage	Religious / sacred	Cultural	Traditions	Local produce	Education	Wine	Back pack / city	Events	Recreation	Ecotourism	Coordination office
Bernecebaráti									●						●		●	
Felsőtúr		●				●			●	●	●	●			●	●	●	
Garamkövesd		●					●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●		
Garamsalló		●							●	●	●	●			●	●		
<b>Helemba</b> <b>TRANS</b>		●							●	●	●	●	●		●			○ 2.
Ipolybél	●					●												
<b>Ipolydamásd</b> <b>TRANS</b>	●	●							●						●			
Ipolypásztó		●	●															
<b>IPOLY-SÁG</b> <b>GATE</b>	●	●	●	●					●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Ipolyszakállós	●		●															
<b>Ipolyzalka</b> <b>TRANS</b>	●	●							●	●	●	●			●	●		
Ipolytölgyes	●	●		●								●			●	●	●	
<b>Ipolyvisk</b> <b>TRANS</b>	●	●							●									
Kemence	●	●	●	●	●				●	●		●			●	●		
Kóspallag				●			●		●	●	●	●					●	
<b>Letkés</b> <b>TRANS</b>	●	●							●	●	●				●	●	●	● 1.
Márianosztra				●	●		●	●		●	●							
<b>Nagybörzsöny</b> <b>STEP</b>				●	●		●	●	●		●					●	●	
Nagytúr		●										●				●	●	
Palást									●	●	●				●	●	●	
<b>PÁRKÁNY</b> <b>GATE</b>		●							●				●	●	●	●		
Peszektergenye		●	●	●						●	●	●	●		●	●		
Százd			●			●												
Szete	●	●	●												●	●		
<b>SZOB</b> <b>GATE</b>	●	●		●			●							●	●			
<b>Tésa</b> <b>TRANS</b>	●	●							●									
Vámosmikola	●															●		
<b>Zalaba</b> <b>STEP</b>		●							●	●	●	●			●			○ 3.
<b>ZSELÍZ</b> <b>GATE</b>		●							●	●	●	●		●	●			

## 9.7.2 Proposed experience routes and their added values for visitors

The added values had been determined on the basis of the adventure tourism model (Figure 9).

### A. Back pack / City / Sightseeing (cultural routes)

Routes	Added values
Szob, Párkány, Zselíz, Ipolyság	<i>social, spiritual</i> attachment and emotional skills: <b>LEVEL 2: identification</b>

### Multimodal routes

#### B. Bike—Water-based / Canoeing (active & cultural)

Routes	Added values
Zselíz—Zalaba—Ipolyszakállos— Ipolyvisk—Ipolyság—Palást	<i>individual, physical, social, spiritual</i> load capacities and limitations: <b>LEVEL 1: coping with challenges</b> attachment and emotional skills: <b>LEVEL 2: identification</b>
Zselíz—Zalaba—Párkány— Ipolyszalka—Ipolytölgyes—Szob	
Szob—Ipolydamásd—Letskés— Ipolytölgyes—Szob	

#### C. Trekking—Water-based / Canoeing (active & recreational, forest railway & cultural)

Routes	Added values
Szob—Márianosztra— Nagybörzsöny—Ipolytölgyes— Ipolydamásd—Párkány	<i>individual, physical, community, mental, social, responsibility</i> load capacities and limitations: <b>LEVEL 1: coping with challenges</b> attachment and emotional skills: <b>LEVEL 2: identification</b> evaluation: <b>LEVEL 3: fulfilment</b>
Ipolyság—Ipolyvisk—Tésa— Kemence—Nagybörzsöny— Letskés—Ipolyszalka— Garamkövesd—Párkány	

#### D. Return / Circular (active & cultural)

Routes	Added values
Ipolyság—Szob—Párkány— Zselíz—Ipolyság	<i>individual, physical, social, spiritual</i> load capacities and limitations: <b>LEVEL 1: coping with challenges</b> attachment and emotional skills: <b>LEVEL 2: identification</b>
Ipolyság—Ipolytölgyes—Zalaba— Szete—Ipolyvisk—Ipolyság	

## Thematic routes

### E. Panoramic routes

Routes	Added values
<b>Ipolyság</b> —Ipolyszakállos— <b>Párkány</b> — <b>Helemba</b> — <b>Ipolydamásd</b> — <b>Szob</b>	<i>individual, physical, social, spiritual</i> load capacities and limitations: <b>LEVEL 1: coping with challenges</b>
<b>Ipolyság</b> —Ipolyfödemes— <b>Ipolyság</b>	attachment and emotional skills: <b>LEVEL 2: identification</b>

### F. Traditions / preservation & Educational routes

Routes	Added values
<b>Ipolyság</b> —Nagytúr—Felsőtúr—Palást	<i>community, mental, social, responsibility</i> attachment and emotional skills: <b>LEVEL 2: identification</b> evaluation: <b>LEVEL 3: fulfilment</b>
Szokolya—Kóspallag—Márianosztra— <b>Szob</b>	
<b>Szob</b> — <b>Párkány</b> —Gramkövesd—Ipolyszalka— <b>Zalaba</b> —Garamsalló— <b>Zselíz</b>	
<b>Zselíz</b> —Pezsektergenye—Ipolyvisk— <b>Ipolyság</b>	
<b>Ipolyság</b> —Kemence—Nagybörzsöny—Letkés— <b>Ipolyszalka</b> —Garamkövesd— <b>Párkány</b> — <b>Szob</b>	

### G. Equestrian / horse-riding routes

Routes	Added values
Kemence— <b>Tésa</b> — <b>Ipolyvisk</b> — <b>Ipolyság</b> —Kemence	<i>individual, physical, social, spiritual</i> <b>LEVEL 1: coping with challenges</b> attachment and emotional skills: <b>LEVEL 2: identification</b>
Ipolypásztó—Garamsalló—Pezsektergenye—Szász— <b>Szete</b> —Ipolyszakállos— <b>Ipolybél</b> —Ipolypásztó	
<b>Párkány</b> —Garamkövesd—Ipolyszalka— <b>Helemba</b> — <b>Ipolydamásd</b> — <b>Szob</b>	

### H. Wine routes

Routes	Added values
<b>Szob</b> — <b>Helemba</b> —Garamkövesd— <b>Zalaba</b>	<i>individual, physical, social, spiritual</i> <b>LEVEL 1: coping with challenges</b> attachment and emotional skills: <b>LEVEL 2: identification</b>
Zalaba—Garamsalló—Pezsektergenye— <b>Szete</b> — <b>Ipolyvisk</b> — <b>Ipolyság</b>	
<b>Szob</b> — <b>Helemba</b> —Garamkövesd—Zalaba— <b>Garamsalló</b> —Pezsektergenye— <b>Szete</b> — <b>Ipolyvisk</b> — <b>Ipolyság</b>	

### I. Ecotourism / green routes

Routes	Added values
<b>Szob</b> —Márianosztra—Kóspallag— <b>Nagybörzsöny</b> —Ipolytölgyes— <b>Letkés</b> — <b>Szob</b>	<i>individual, physical, community, mental, social, responsibility</i> load capacities and limitations: <b>LEVEL 1: coping with challenges</b> attachment and emotional skills: <b>LEVEL 2: identification</b> evaluation: <b>LEVEL 3: fulfilment</b>
<b>Ipolyság</b> —Bernecebaráti— <b>Ipolyság</b>	
<b>Ipolyság</b> —Nagytúr—Felsőtúr— <b>Palást</b>	

## J. Recreational routes

Routes	Added values
<b>Párkány</b> —Garamkövesd— <b>Ipolyszalka</b> — <b>Letskés</b> — Ipolytölgyes—Nagybörzsöny—Vámosmikola— Kemence— <b>Ipolyság</b>	<i>individual, physical, community, mental, social, responsibility</i> load capacities and limitations:
<b>Ipolyság</b> —Nagytúr— <b>Ipolyvisk</b> —Szete— Peszektergenye—Garamsalló— <b>Zalaba</b> — Garamkövesd— <b>Párkány</b>	<b>LEVEL 1: coping with challenges</b> attachment and emotional skills:
<b>Párkány</b> —Garamkövesd— <b>Párkány</b>	<b>LEVEL 2: identification</b> evaluation:
<b>Ipolyság</b>	<b>LEVEL 3: fulfilment</b>

### 9.7.3 Strongly recommended development elements that can be part of visitor routes

**A. Coordination or management office**, place of operation, which can also be part of one of the development projects, at the same place where the construction plan is realized and accessible from everywhere, e.g. Letkés as a transfer point (project no. 6, Relax Park development), or Helemba, also as a transfer point (project no. 10, Ipoly Museum development), perhaps Zalaba is considered as a stepping stone point, considering that its location is central (development project no. 13, Old Mill).

**B. Establishment of visitor information points** at the gate points and stepping stone points, in a covered area, with an office, which is operated by at least 1 person during opening hours, who speaks Hungarian, Slovakian and English. These points and projects are as follows: Szob (project no. 7, Forest Railway Garage renovation and change of function), Párkány (project no. 11, in the already existing Information Centre), Zalaba (project no. 13, Old Mill), Ipolyság (there is no definite project plan, but in the existing Information Centre), Zselíz (project no. 20, Sacher House and Visitor Centre), and Nagybörzsöny (project no. 33, Cultural Park and Visitor Centre).

**C. Slow or small-scale tourism**, which gives the image and identity of the region (Figure 13), justifies that among the development ideas, which were marked as ‘recommended’ in the last box of the evaluation chart, the following should be included: projects no. 2-3 in Ipolydamásd (water-based and cycling elements, additional services, multimodality), projects no. 4-5 in Marianostra (pilgrimage, local produce elements, community cohesion), project no. 6 in Letkés (new: Recreation Park), project no. 9 in Garamkövesd (new: Api-House), project no. 12 in Ipolyszalka (heritage protection and knowledge transfer, community cohesion), project no. 14 Ipolyvisk (additional water tourism service), project no. 17 Ipolyság (new: therapy and research centre), project no. 19 Peszektergenye (tradition preservation and knowledge transfer), project

no. 20 Zselíz (gastro element, international reference point), projects no. 23-24 Felsőtúr and Nagytúr (new: cable car course and thematic route), project no. 29 Kemence (accommodation capacity expansion, relevant segment), project no. 30 Ipolytölgyes (canoeing and bicycle tourism additional service), project no. 33 Nagybörzsöny (additional information service).

**D. Regional tourist card** may be introduced later on (Sedláková–Heřmanová–Indrová, 2014).

#### **9.7.4 Optional development elements that can be part of visitor routes**

**A. Expansion of accommodation capacity:** for aging villages, empty rooms can be a starting point, but at the same time, the employment of existing and hospitable housewives who can cook can be used as a spread-out hotel, where accommodation and catering are also provided. Székelykeve, located in the neighborhood of Belgrade in Serbia, is good practice for this (Juhász, 2020). The development of glamping and yurt accommodation is also a good direction, in those locations where the view is good, but the place struggles with some shortage of accommodation capacity. Such opportunities are also available in Garamkövesd, Peszektergenye and Felsőtúr. With a change of function, the modernization of buildings for the purpose of expanding accommodation is again a good option. Looking at the proposed routes (Point 9.7.2), it is advisable to increase accommodation capacity in the following settlements: Szob, Zalaba, Márianosztra, Szete, Százd, Ipolyszakállos, Ipolybél, Kemence, Bernecebárat, Tésa and Kóspallag.

**B. Innovative product development:** after the pandemic, certain situations and opportunities have changed, more people are still working from home, at least for a few days, away from the office. Well, such a home-replacement, but still office environment can be offered by the tourist destination, which is already denoted by the word "workation" in the literature and some start-up services (Workation, 2023). It is nothing more than an independent small building in an incomparably beautiful environment, far from the office and home. It is possible to go hiking and relax, but the employee can also get involved in official work. Such developments do not require a huge investment, yet they are able, if not in large numbers, to appeal to visitors with a higher willingness to spend, even for a longer period of time. Recommended locations: Nagybörzsöny, Kemence, Garamkövesd, Helemba, Ipolyszakállos, Szete and Százd. Cemetery tours can be organised in Ipolyság, professional photo tours and training in the most beautiful landscapes along the Ipoly: Ipolydamásd, Letkés, Ipolvisk, Tésa, Kóspallag, Párkány are the recommended points. The tractor safari mentioned in the individual projects would also bring something new to the wider region, in the vicinity of Ipolybél. The application of augmented

reality replaces expensive stone-and-brick constructions, instead, conservations and software development provides a more sustainable solution, for example in Ipolydamázd.

**C. Open stoves, kitchens, courtyards, craft and country house programmes, shows, fairs, local product promotion and their uniform promotion:** in the region, there is a strong opportunity and demand to use this category as part of a tourism product development. It is worth preserving and not interfering with already established local branding processes created at the family or other organizational level, even if they are not perfect. What is recommended, due to tourist visibility, is not the labelling of the products, but of the points of sale. Hungary NEXT visualized a concept called ‘Helyben vagyunk.’, which is already legally protected (Figure 50) thanks to the mandate of the LEED Local Economy and Employment Nonprofit Ltd. (Gerák, 2023). The goal is to create a branding system that can work across borders. The projects of the following settlements can be put into this category: Márianosztra, Letkés, Garamkövesd, Helemba, Ipolyszalka, Garamsalló, Felsőtúr, Kóspallag. A secondary list is: Peszektergenye, Ipolybél and Ipolytölgyes, and the settlements of the wine region.



**Figure 50:** New local product sales point branding concept – the main brand and its sub-categories for portals/cellars/farms/workshops, market places/shops/exhibitions/fairs, restaurants/festivals/buffets (source: Hungary NEXT)

## 9.8 Project grouping

Projects can be typified or grouped according to many aspects. In this subsection, I defined the unexploited, active, recreational, trendy and novel, as well as the potential of the thematic route categories. The identity-defining settlement projects are marked with a red circle, and the innovative product development category, too. I marked the accommodation expansion options in blue, an unfilled circle shows innovative solutions, while a filled circle shows traditional solutions. Settlements with a strong local brand (signature or branding developments) are marked in red, while those serving to strengthen local communities are marked in black. The green colour indicates two categories: whether it is a construction-type project or a soft project.

Chart 11: Project grouping in the project area

	unexploited potential	active potential	recreation promise	novelty / trendy	thematic route	identification project	trendy accommodation development	classic accommodation development	innovative product development	open-air / local produce	signature developments	community cohesion potential	construction-type investment	soft project element focus
Bernecebaráti	○			●				●					●	●
Felsőtúr	○	●	●		●	●	○			○		●	●	●
Garamkövesd	○		●	●		●	○		●	○				●
Garamsalló	○	●	●							○		●		●
<b>Helemba</b> <b>TRANS</b>	○	●							●	○	●	●		●
Ipolybél	○	●		●				●	●	○		●		
<b>Ipolydamásd</b> <b>TRANS</b>	○	●		●		●			●		●		●	
Ipolypásztó	○	●											●	
<b>IPOLYSÁG</b> <b>GATE</b>			●	●	●	●			●		●			●
Ipolyszakállós	○	●						●	●			●		
<b>Ipolyszalka</b> <b>TRANS</b>			●			●				○	●	●		●
Ipolytölgyes		●			●	●				○	●		●	●
<b>Ipolyvisk</b> <b>TRANS</b>		●	●			●			●				●	
Kemence		●	●	●		●		●	●		●		●	●
Kóspallag	○	●		●	●			●	●	○		●		●
<b>Letskés</b> <b>TRANS</b>	○	●				●			●	○	●	●		●
Márianosztra	○	●			●	●		●	●	○		●		●
<b>Nagybörzsöny</b> <b>STEP</b>		●	●			●					●			●
Nagytúr	○	●	●		●	●						●		●
Palást	○				●							●		●
<b>PÁRKÁNY</b> <b>GATE</b>			●	●	●				●		●			●
Peszkekergenye			●	●		●	○			○		●		●
Százd	○	●		●					●					●
Szete	○	●						●	●				●	●
<b>SZOB</b> <b>GATE</b>	○	●						●			●		●	●
<b>Tésa</b> <b>TRANS</b>	○	●						●	●				●	
Vámosmikola	○	●	●									●	●	
<b>Zalaba</b> <b>STEP</b>	○	●						●				●		●
<b>ZSELÍZ</b> <b>GATE</b>		●		●	●	●					●	●		●



## **9.9 Destination emotion design and branding conceptualisation**

In this paragraph, the author provides pillars for brand building. These ideas had also been sent to the leading development partner for a shortlist evaluation. The ideas presented here are based on the secondary and primary results of the research and are the author's own work.

The area should be presented as a unity, which the brand can do solely if we look at the effectiveness and behaviour of a brand in general. I provide simplified briefs for the graphic proposals of the regional brand, with image design, integrating everything reflected in the philosophy and basic concept of the action plan delivered by the end of the moderated the workshop series (Point 8.3). The images build on the duality, that the Slovakian side is "still", while the Hungarian side is "sparkling". The solutions on the following pages do not reflect the order I prefer, but typically show each idea in one situation, position, and surface. For the sake of simplicity, I used the name "Ipolymente" (in Hungarian), implying that the name of the regional brand should be short.

### **9.9.1 Intertwining I-letters with modern lines**

In both Hungarian and Slovakian, Ipoly begins with the capital letter i. In this design (Figure 51), the dual political regional identities merge, forming a unified tourism geographic region, in the letter I. Modernity also defines the colours of the image: instead of red (and green) which are included in the Hungarian and Slovakian national flags, but keeping the blue one, another new colour that is typical of the adjoining twin areas had been chosen. Having the blue, which is a good complementary colour to yellow, can express that the two parts of the twin space do not compete, but complement each other. The name 'Régió' (region) is the same in both languages, Ipolymente is given in Slovakian in this design, because the dynamism of the emblem allows it, one does not rule out the other. Looking at the texts, we move down from the long to the short, thus giving a sense of the direction of the Ipoly river. The yellow colour is not included in the text elements, its use on a light background would make it difficult to read and recognize. The logo works even without text, it can also be an illustration element. On social media platforms, it is enough to use the blue-yellow ribbon on a white field. Its clarity and simplicity can be used on almost any surface. It is particularly advantageous on white paper, as letterhead, on business cards, but also on souvenirs where white is the cheapest basic colour: thus cost-saving. The colours reflect the image colours found in the flags of both the Nyitra District and the Pest County flags.



*Figure 51: Ipolymente logo design concept 1. (own design)*

### **9.9.2 The diversity and unity of the region, the connection of possibilities**

The second concept (Figure 52) is based on the philosophy that the neighbouring settlements on the Ipoly coast belong to one system. In addition to this meaning of the circle, it also expresses completeness: anyone who comes, receives packages complement each other in their elements on each bank, regardless of which entry point they arrive at. The colour-pairs help to create this feeling, and not only the green of the mountains appears heavily where it is located, but the blue colour of the rivers is included, too. Events, culture, relaxation, and calm are evoked by red, purple, and yellow shades. Overlapping small circles is also a good solution because the elements are not isolated, their consumption is built on each other (experience routes). The geographical heights above sea level are also expressed by the size of the circles: Börzsöny area takes up a larger circle. The most prominent bubble, which indicates freshness, is the Ipoly herself, in the middle. The philosophy of the destination is also represented, which is an organizational system that names certain points (framework, nodes etc., see: Figures 48 and 49). In terms of its modern motifs, the image is "sparkling", while its essence is "still", i.e. the central promise, the calmness, the slow destination, where we actively arrive, have adventurous experiences, but ultimately from the turbulence of the world around us, we are freed.



*Figure 52: Ipolymente logo design concept 2. (own design)*

This image can be used well on all white backgrounds, it is not advisable to show it on a coloured substrate, and in fact it only looks good with these colours; black and white, or any monochrome version would not be able to convey the essence of the message. Its circular shape distinguishes it from the tourist attractions in the area, but many images, e.g. the DMO in Párkány (OOCR) uses circles and similar colour tones. The circle enables this logo to fit into social media surfaces aesthetically. Its advantage is that it includes the colour characteristics of acceptance and inclusion (rainbow), which is so dominant today, and this is fundamental in the mission of the destination: tolerance, respect, appreciation.

### **9.9.3 Contrast, nature, amplitude**

The third design concept (Figure 53) is extreme-modern in the sense that it breaks with the usual ways, and builds on an element of vibes (emotion design). The lines arranged in the logo reflect the characteristic lines of movement, from top to bottom, from north to south. The height of the lines from the outside to the inside is rising, like abstract arrows directing our gaze inwards, towards the essence, the Ipoly. The middle line is the river. Its modernity is given by the colours derived from the defining natural elements: blue for water-based experiences, green for excursions, whether it's trekking or cycling. The amplitude reflects strengthening, weakening, the recharging nature of active recreations, in a modern way, as we would see it on

a smartphone screen. The lines are almost animated, referring to the type of programmes where speed, performance, struggle, activity are the essence, so that they keep growing. In the case of relaxing, pampering, draining tourist products, we can feel the opposite. White basis has not been applied in this design. The goal here is to clarify the Ipoly associations with the blue background colour, which brings in one of the colours of the neighbouring counties in a modern tone. It is significantly different from other regional images, it can clearly represent the essence in a simple way, even in contour lines, in black or any monochrome colour usage.



*Figure 53: Ipolymente logo design concept 3. (own design)*

#### **9.9.4 Traditional, connecting, soft lines**

The fourth draft (Figure 54) is the most traditional destination logo. It is less simple compared to the previous ones, less playful either, but it shows the basic elements via its connected curves and the orange dot at the top. It draws the letter I, too. It is also true that there is no letter i without any of these sides, it needs both parts to be seen. Blue is for water experiences (canoeing on the river, spa in Párkány, for example). In addition, this design is almost true to the geological situation. The green is the mountain, the trips, the nature, the hills, which are concentrated in Börzsöny and spread out on the northern, Slovakian side. A figurative man also appears, his head is the orange dot, the sun, rising, giving strength, settling down, etc. It can be used particularly well on white backgrounds, walls, t-shirts, business cards and other pieces of

documentation. The use of the word 'tourism' (turizmus) is not essential, nor is 'Slovakia - Hungary' (Szlovákia – Magyarország). The latter can be replaced by the address of the regional website or the name of a specific settlement where appropriate.



*Figure 54: Ipolymente logo design concept 4. (own design)*

## 9.10 Conclusions

### 9.10.1 This is not a mass tourism destination

As a result of the semi-structured focus group research, the point of view was formulated as to what kind of desirable tourism the regional actors envision for themselves. Mass tourism is not wanted, but the desired details are listed in the points below (Figure 13):

- Most settlements see their breaking-out points in the development of tourism.
- The settlements of the region do not wish to intensify mass tourism, they would base themselves on what is already given, exploiting the mutual synergies.
- The region is open to adventure, eco, slow, active, as well as cultural and gastro-tourism.
- The diversity of tourist opportunities (sightseeing, activities, catering, programmes) in the region is competitive.

- In almost every settlement there is a strong intention to showcase their values, somewhere this is already a practice.
- Tourism demand and supply are stronger at certain points, and seldom exist at other points.
- Thematic components had been designed as inevitable elements of value chains, for example: wine routes.
- Tourism products can be specifically defined, for example: water-based tourism.
- Local products, courtyards, cellars, preservation of traditions exist in some places, but they are separated from each other.
- Feeding markets are: Budapest, *Danube Bend*, South and North Slovakia, the Czech Republic.

### 9.10.2 Similarities with the Balaton Uplands workshop methodology

The purpose of the focus group research carried out in the Tájétká mentoring programme (Points 6.2.1 and 6.2.2; Figures 40 and 41) was not to list and scroll through the gaps and conflict points, likewise in the Ipoly area workshop series (however, the pains were identified). By looking at the gaps, the interventions, the definition of the desired position in a system, it was possible to clarify the starting point and see where the breakthrough points are.

In the Tájétká project, participants wanted to change the stereotypical images of the Balaton Uplands. Old, traditional and new, innovative values, good practices and future-shaping initiatives were sought out, collected and presented to preserve the cultural landscape of the Balaton Uplands, based on the real needs of the people who live there and want to use the area in a sustainable way. This objective has also been the backbone of the research of this study, accepting the determining ideas of Gergely Böszörményi-Nagy (BNG, 2022):

- **Intelligent** (Information): “Do not eliminate responsibility.”
- **Place** (Destination): “Attachment to place is the basis of our personal identity”.
- **Use** (Scale): “The desire for everyday life adapted to the human scale.”

As the author of the book says this is the age of conformism. Under the banner of diversity, a global monoculture is being built in which all educated people must think the same about science and religion, ecology and technology, nation and international relations, the meaning of right and salutary lifestyle.

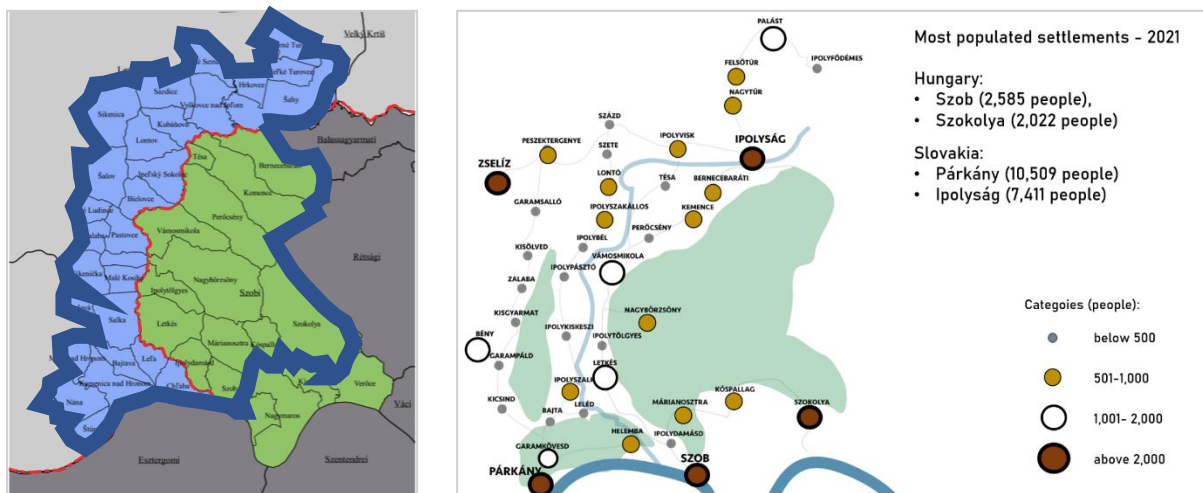
During the focus group research implemented by myself, the following questions were answered together:

- How can we develop services for visitors that showcase cultural and natural values that are good for the landscape and for the people who live there?
- How can cultural heritage be interpreted in an innovative way to create a better and more attractive experience for the local people and for the visitors of the next generations?
- How can visitor and service experience routes be designed?
- How does information and capacity design support everyday decisions?
- How do networking routines have an impact and how can they be improved?

In the Balaton Uplands, the gaps can be best described as follows: coordination, information flow, lack of information, lack of participation and expertise, isolated programmes, lack of resources, and in many cases a bazaar character. In the case of the intervention, these were added: difficult to change attitudes, lack of cooperation, lack of specialist employment, over- or underdevelopment of infrastructure. When it came to the desirable part of the discussion, the following emerged as visions: a living and liveable space, less seasonality, a professional community, straight and well-directed decisions, ongoing cooperation. In the end, this is what the Balaton Uplands can gain: brand, managed, organised tourism, solvent demand and guest distribution, balance. It is obvious that tourism in Balaton region is ahead of tourism in the Danube region in Hungary, and is undergoing the same processes that the *Danube Bend* will experience in the foreseeable future. The similarity is essential in terms of the supply side: alternative areas, the so-called background areas, such as the Balaton Uplands or the *Ipoly Valley* twin region try to position themselves, relieving the priority tourist destinations from further visitor stress and damping, with an alternative, segmented and well-communicated branded image and a varied product portfolio, with designed visitor experience routes. The practical use of this research (Chapter 9.0) from the point of view of the participating stakeholders is certainly to be in the the “not to be surprised” situation, boosting their ready-to-implement product, place, network development and organisational plans, with feasible studies and strategies for these micro-regions, taking the new tourism trends into account so that they can not only follow but also influence and shape them, with their preferred vision and resources that can be realised via tenders, not only to offer something new to visitors, but also to strengthen the value and resilience of local communities.

## 10. VALUE PROPOSITION DESIGN

Value Proposition Design is highlighted here as a separate paragraph because it gives insights into the process and methodology of the workshops (Points 5.2, 8.3, 9.1, 9.2, 9.6, 9.7 and 9.10), and some of the findings are based on it. The small group, multi-site survey discussions and creative work started with an exploration of places and values, supported by preliminary map-based datasets from secondary research. The maps are included in the Appendix, only a few are highlighted here (Figure 55). This process is the first, spectacular result of Value Proposition Design, known in the literature (Osterwalder–Pigneur–Bernarda–Smith, 2014) as an Environment Map. Its role is to help the researcher understand the context in which the further creative design is taking place.



*Figure 55: A selection from the series of value-organizing geographic, cultural and leisure maps of the secondary research (source and design: Bedőcs–Kovács, 2022)*

During the work I used a number of canvases, the most important of which are presented here (Figure 56), to give a sense of the data collection process used to structure and aggregate the information in a comparable solution, so that the values could be filtered, the routes could be assigned to visitor segments and designed in a variety of ways, taking into account the geographical, cultural, spiritual and other characteristics of the area, and the twin opportunities of the destination, with its cross-border (Points 2.1, 3.4, 6.2.3, 7.3, 8.5, 9.0 and Figure 13) and multimodal (Points 9.0, 9.4, 9.5 and 9.7) potential. Using canvases, the second major task of Value Proposition Design was carried out, this is called the **Business Model Canvas** category, and it lays the foundation for Service Experience Design, i.e. the development and subsequent application of the cooperation and organization of DMOs and stakeholders.



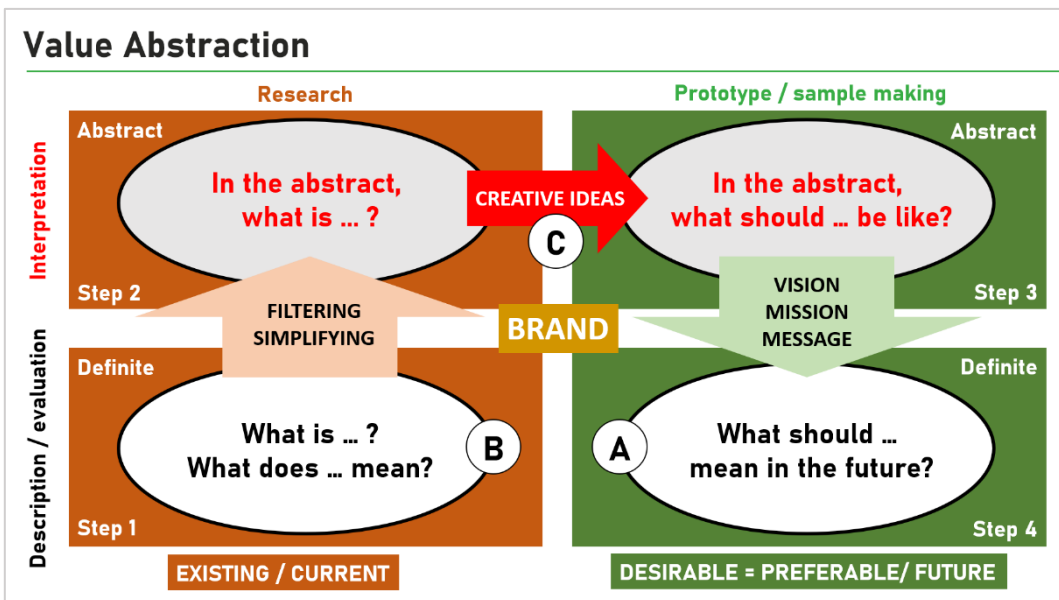
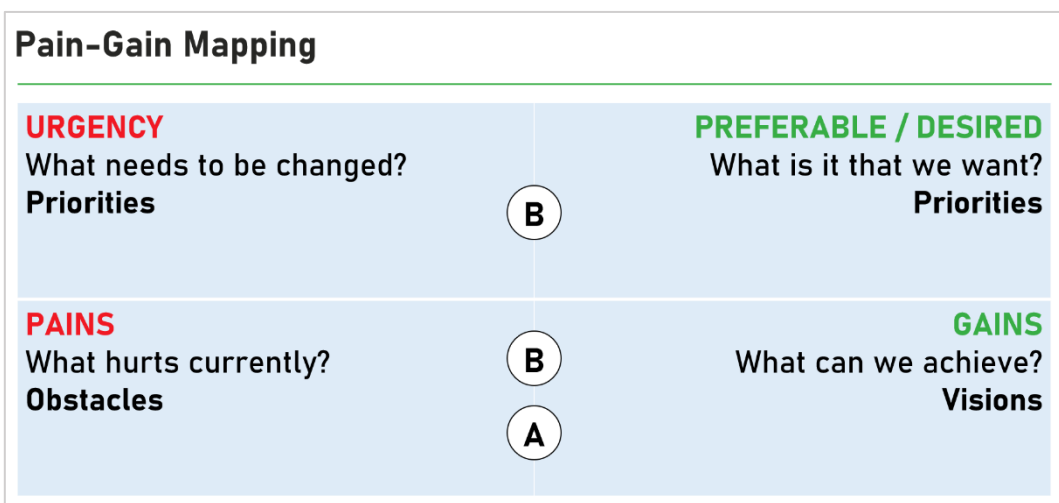
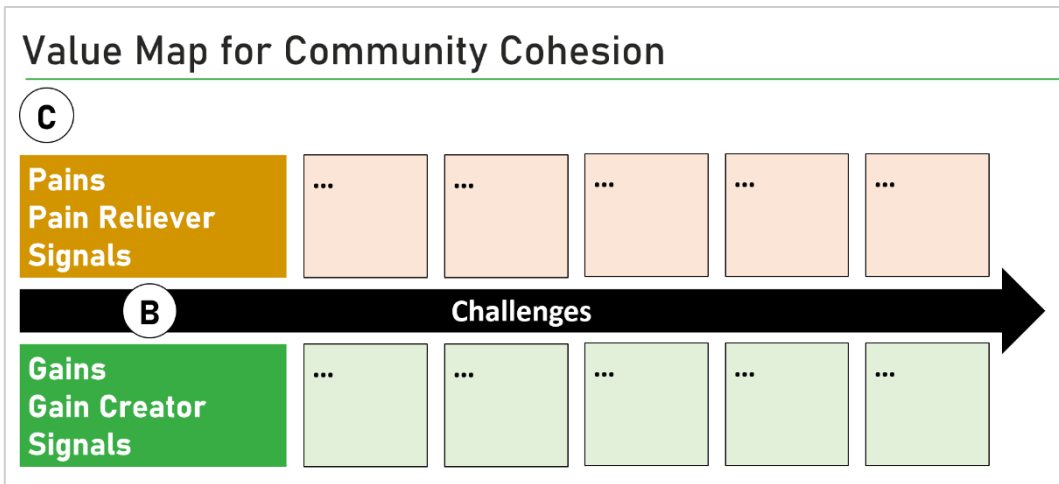


Figure 56: A selection from the series of canvasses used in the primary research (own design)

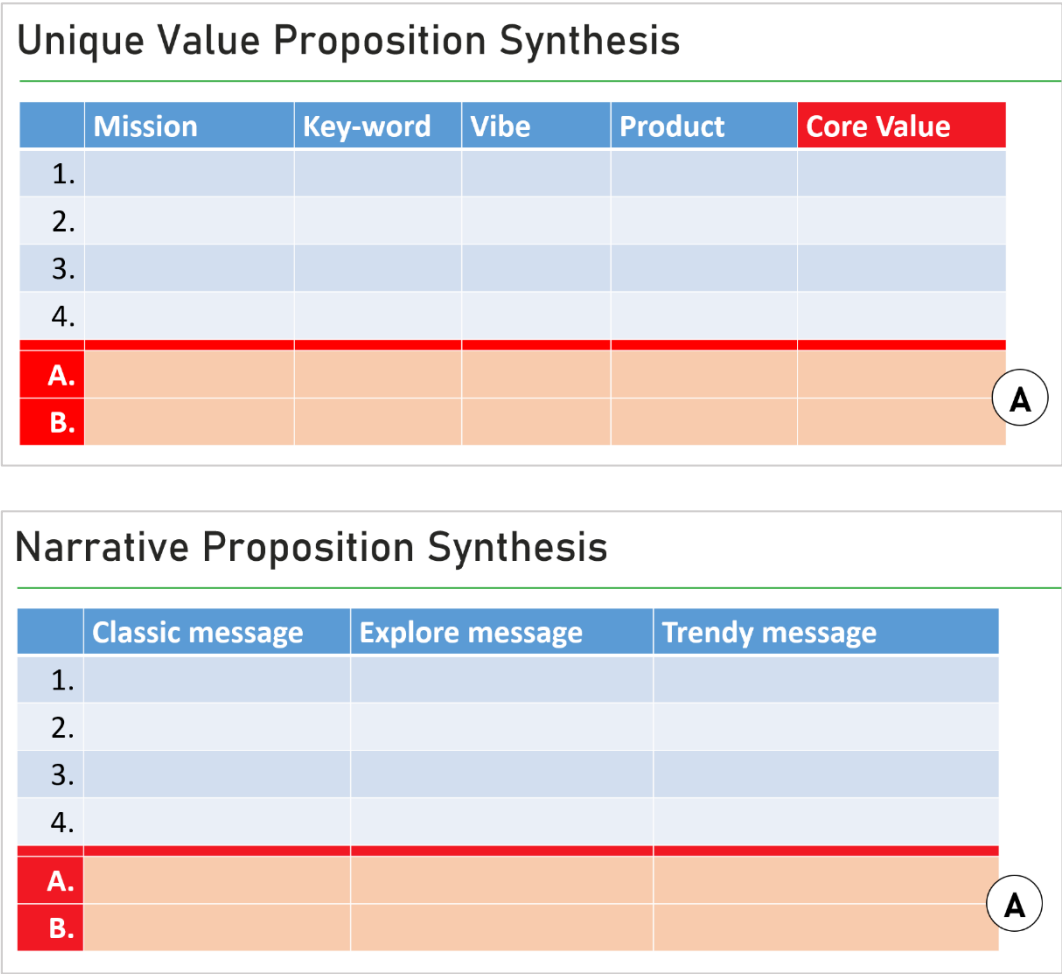
The third stage of the work process was the use of the **Value Proposition Canvas**, which makes the values interesting, unique, exciting, comprehensible, and finally consumable for visitors with the tools of communication design and branding, so that it can also be an additional destination in the shadow of the *Danube Bend*.



**Figure 57:** Workshop sessions in the primary research semi-structured groups (own images)

The advantage of these methods (Figure 57) is that they are very easy to use and the sessions are spectacular. In addition, the work can be organized well, quickly and with effective time-management. Participants who in the future will define, build and operate the management of the destination can practice inclusion and openness, under equal conditions, thus getting used to the TLA structure (Points 7.1 and 7.2), considering that their responsibility spans a border between nations, so the top-down organization model, which is outlined earlier can be excluded.

It is no less effective that the participants involved in the research part and the creative part in this way felt good, received and gave energy and ideas that supported each other, and even, as the Tájéka mentoring programme (Tájéka, 2023) showed (Points 6.1, 6.2 and 9.11), the organization of the destination was carried out on their own initiatives, they are able to actively take it further within the framework of their own meetings on a regular basis. Design-thinking was an integral part of this discovery and value display process, since it channelled the initial non-structured, messy and idea-like proposals into a transparent framework, so in the case of the Ipoly region we were able to create an implementable framework that reflects the same philosophy, viewed from the perspective of consumers and demand in the end (Figure 58). The application of the so-called Value map, or value set map (Figure 56) brought the Pains together, defining the Pain Relievers, Gains and Gain Creators by mentioning the existing and the proposed products, facilities and services. The customer or visitor Empathy maps (Figure 33), reflecting the Pain-Gain approach, too, were able to outline and compose the typical visitor characters coming to the destination for market segmentation.



*Figure 58: Value and narrative design synthesis canvasses (own design)*

## **IV. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

### **11.0 CONCLUSIONS**

In order to draw conclusions, the research part itself must first be examined. To reach this goal, the author begins with the broadest categories of research (ongoing / periodic / as-needed), then moves on to qualitative adequacy (focus groups / individual depth interviews / observation / case studies in the primary research design), and then presents what further research and areas are worth conducting (physical products / people / packaging / programming) for the future destination management organization (Morrison, 2013).

#### **11.1 Research design evaluation**

##### **A. Non-ongoing research type**

A significant part of this doctoral dissertation is based on research, qualitative research, which cannot be considered continuous in the sense that an existing destination periodically asks experts or its stakeholders. If it were a question of continuous research, which must be carried out after the destination has been created, then marketing evaluations, marketing plan analyses, situation analyses, communication channel analyses, feeding market analyses, visitor satisfaction surveys, or website attendance indicators would be marketing-type surveys.

##### **B. Partially periodic research type**

Considering this research as periodical, since the author examined a basic or initial situation, a competitive pontificate, carried out comparative analyses, included image-type theories and practices, analysed potential customer profiles according to behavioural pattern categories, all in such a way that for the well-being of the region addressed working professionals and managers, entrepreneurs and mayors. It is periodic, as the organizations working on the development of the affected area will carry out new, now narrowed, feasibility studies in the near future using the results of this analysis.

##### **C. As-needed research type**

This research methodology and interpretation of results can mostly be fitted into the category of as-needed analyses, as it reveals a potential situation and opportunities, serves as a basis for subsequent studies, product developments, the development of community sustainability programmes, the evaluation and implementation of events and other value chain-type ideas by naming competencies and sustainability and competitiveness, we can safely say for a shadow destination.

#### **D. Primary research design evaluation**

The secondary part of the research, which means the theoretical part, received a lot of support thanks to the processing of **Tourism** (marked by capital letter **A** throughout the whole study) as the main domain of activity and development. Already in the theoretical part, the author offers solutions and his own derived concepts (patchwork dissertation type), which he interprets with such a large number of illustrations (science visualization), because the topic is complex, and the other supportive leg is **Design** (marked by letter **C**). The two theoretical areas are merged by the field of practical implementation, the **Destination (B)**, as the primary research, along the main spine into which the author fits the processing of the topic: the **Learning**.

Since a region becomes the centre of interest through narratives, and even after a visitation, the visitor shares narratives, in visual, textual and other terms, therefore the **UDL** as a model that assigned basic questions to the guiding thread of the research is also a relevant element. The basis of destination development is learning, since the visitor also learns during the visit (experience), and in fact, this is one of the most effective ways of learning in terms of moving information or memories. The **TLA** destination creation and operation model also reflects on the learning process. The concept of learning is strengthened by the realization of creative abilities based on knowledge transfer, for which the most suitable method is a series of workshops designed both in terms of content and form, as well as the supporting, also design-driven interview. The intersection of horizontal narratives (comprehensive, true for a larger region) and their vertical (true for a local and small-scale region to be developed) creates new narratives that position the region and can even make it future-proof.

Almost all of the primary qualitative research methods were used. These include the guided or moderated workshops or focus groups, the in-depth interviews, and the case studies, which were interesting because of the comparative content and applicability of the methods. The research does not cover areas that are well summarized by **4P**, or only touches on them, because the subject of the research is a design area that has not yet been realized. Visiting the places (site inspection) appears as a side thread of the research at the same time as the Physical product, but by definition no business performance measurement or test purchase (mystery shopping) took place. The People part of product development research is also partially covered, more rather than less. It did not affect the workforce, but the community, and assessed the services (based on the foundational studies). The Packaging part is strong, as it defined routes, but at the same time only superficially referred to the Programming component.

## E. Patchwork dissertation type evaluation

The author summarizes the advantages of his patchwork dissertation according to an academic set of points of assessment (Sinner–Irwin–Jokela, 2018) in the table below:

*Chart 12: Advantages and the achievements of the patchwork-type dissertation*

ENCOUNTERING	ENFLESHING	ENTAGLING
<p><b>Difference:</b> Just as one of the conditions for the visibility of a tourist encounter is astonishment, sight, contrast, touching the visitor, the first characteristic of the dissertation related to tourism, defined by the author, is the encounter that involves the reader, the reviewer, and later any user in a non-traditional intellectual adventure.</p>	<p><b>Insights:</b> The dissertation provides a deeper interpretation of many concepts through insights, and also suggests that the narratives of the region can be established with the help of the addressed stakeholders and experts. Some insights are given by the examples as well as the cases mentioned.</p>	<p><b>Qualitative research:</b> The methodology of the research is qualitative precisely because the connections and the creation of additional products are based on the approach in which the author interprets the macro-destination narratives and then introduces them into the vertical, micro-situations together with the respondents and those involved.</p>
<p><b>Adventure:</b> What's more, the concept of adventuring gains a double meaning, since the group of terms that can be relevantly assigned to the region is defined around adventure tourism.</p>	<p><b>Alternatives:</b> Alternatives seem to fragment linear knowledge. The dissertation may seem fragmented at first, but as the parts are strung together, it is built into a whole.</p>	<p><b>Creativity:</b> It is a skill that the workshop participants could use, as the explanatory canvases prepared by the researcher promoted abstract and simple thinking and laid the foundation for design-thinking.</p>
<p><b>Visualisation:</b> The visualized interpretation and the large number of figures enable the rapid flow of knowledge, and it is also more emotionally provocative, resulting in the birth of new ideas, giving room for free ideas and creativity. It was a grounding idea behind the workshop design and management.</p>	<p><b>Multi-purpose toolkit:</b> The dissertation has got a clear objective: to facilitate the destination basement building. The practice-based or practice-led approaches are tied to some relevant conventional science models, and provide academically contextualised guidelines.</p>	<p><b>Artistic knowledge exchange:</b> The exchange of opinions and knowledge, incubation, in addition to cooperation, is one of the necessary elements to increase the adaptability of the destination. The author paid attention to the knowledge exchange of the workshops, followed by the design of the routes where the weaker supports the more advanced one.</p>
<p><b>Involvement:</b> There are participants in the research, of course, but speaking with pictorial narratives also facilitates the acceptance of the dissertation, it can transform its readers from a passive status to an active one. It may showcase the linkages and relationships in a more brain-involving manner.</p>	<p><b>Conceptualisation:</b> The dissertation provides a new level of merging two areas and establishes the design-driven destination concept or tourism design suggesting how important the role of the human impact and creativity is in order to transform places future-proof.</p>	<p><b>Critical assessment:</b> There are situations that not only tell about the convenient best practices or cases to study, but also point out the bad ones, the failures or things to be avoided. This is not discourtesy, but rather a diversion from the semi-professional but convenient view to the more perfect out of the box view to facilitate competitiveness.</p>
<p><b>Status quo:</b> The dissertation produced in this way confirms the author that he has a field, a place, and room for movement in academia, that he is able to meet the demands of searching for alternatives. The academic level of the profession can also recognize his work, as the author has already proven to have achieved this in practice.</p>	<p><b>Conversations:</b> New pathways of cooperation are introduced in the conversations carried out during the workshops in both halves of the region. This methodology is based on freedom and equality of the involved people in the data collection as well as in the elaboration or assessment.</p>	<p><b>Associations and narratives:</b> The goal was to provide easy-to-refer-to classic, explore and trendy narratives embedded in values, knowledge and organizational skills that can be extracted from the region, which are able to place the shadow destination on the mental map of the visitors, which will be promising for them and a breakout opportunity for the locals.</p>

## 11.2 Reflection on the research problem areas

The author does not publish a long conclusion chapter here because the previously known literature and sub-thematic chapters often contain stoppages, so the sentences described here are based on previous chapters, figures, or tables, which are put into brackets to quick references.

As the in-depth expert interviews confirm, considering the first research problem area (*Multiple means of expression and action*), if we want to position any (micro) or all (macro) of the Danube's sections in the market, it is essential to plan and coordinate the processes by a catalyst. The creation of a flexible and not a traditionally rigid, function-based framework should seem like a workable catalysator idea, in such a way that the individual spaces (small scale locations) can cultivate their own development within it (Point 7.3). The practices so far do not prove that management can be implemented organizationally successfully (refer to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> columns of the table in the entry of 8.5.3) and in the long term by directing from above (top-down), but it does prove that many micro-regional or neighbouring connections (enabling economy based on networking or the TLA structures) can be successful (Point 7.1). The activities of the new Visit Esztergom destination management organization and its new direction are the same as the findings that it prefers complementary products in the field of product development (wire ropeway connection over the river, water-based man-powered but safe devices: multimodality).

Having examined the second research problem area (*Multiple means of representation*), posing a question whether we can associate a tourism product package or value chain to the spaces of various sizes and locations along the *Danube*, the conceptual answer is also affirming. All of the interviewees clearly emphasized adventure tourism and its integrative role (Point 2.1), which presents the arrangement of historical values, natural features, architecture, and gastronomy into a flow. One of the tools lies precisely in the relational power and relational capital of the Danube, since everything it can connect (with inter-city shipping, e.g. the Twin City Liner between Bratislava and Vienna) also represents the role of a conductor, which makes it clear that it is also necessary to organize, order and emphasize the tourist products, even in such a way as to allow the visitors to have their own organization and discovery, even against rigid or impenetrable categories (Point 5.3). The issue of representation includes the existence of the organizing concept, i.e. the network, which echoes in the interview proposals as well. According to them, it is necessary and advisable to implement and promote connections both along the river, longitudinally and transversely (Point 9.5).

As one of the interviewees said, the *Danube* and any of its sections can perhaps fulfil its mission most successfully by slowing down (Point 2.4) and involving the stakeholders. It is a clear reflection to the third research problem area (*Multiple means of involvement*). In addition to the visitors, of course also the decision-makers should be addressed. There is no proven, blue-print-like model for the management of the space, but at the same time, dialogue and openness, receptiveness are the first conditions for involvement (Point 6.2.3). In most cases, civilian or other organizations can directly be linked to an integrative person, for whom the Danube, because of its meaning, has not only become a part of their life and work, but also represents their own identity. Yes, they have the power, they have their own preferences to visualise a sustainable future for the regions along the *Danube* and the *Ipoly Valley* (Point 6.1).

### 11.3 Narratives derived from the research

The narratives in the following table (Chart 13) are as yet incomplete slogans or product descriptions. These outline one of the most visible results of the research work, the narratives that the destination management organization to be established in the future can incorporate into its communication and brand strategy in order to reach each target group (Point 4.3.4).

**The specialty of the region is the common ethnographic, linguistic and cultural roots, but besides it, the *Ipoly Valley* represents the cultural differences that have developed between the two countries in the last fifty years, offering visitors uniquely memorable discoveries.**

*Chart 13: Narratives that the micro-destination may use in the future*

CLASSIC narratives	EXPLORE narratives	TRENDY narratives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• blue and yellow</li> <li>• traditions, heritage</li> <li>• reliable packages</li> <li>• local and small markets</li> <li>• balanced and balancing</li> <li>• provides the ‘still’</li> <li>• cultural experiences</li> <li>• accessible and affordable</li> <li>• bridging the differences</li> <li>• outlook, sacredness</li> <li>• churches, calvaries, chapels</li> <li>• Sacher House, folklore</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• colourful and alternative</li> <li>• tension: hilly and flat</li> <li>• tension: low and high</li> <li>• communal and individual</li> <li>• experimental</li> <li>• challenges the ‘sparkling’</li> <li>• respected nature / culture</li> <li>• powerful and active</li> <li>• cross-border experiences</li> <li>• caves, springs, streams</li> <li>• spas, railways, ruins</li> <li>• BÖBL, trails, ropeways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• green and blue</li> <li>• unusually off the beaten</li> <li>• hidden, non-official</li> <li>• extremely sporty</li> <li>• transformative</li> <li>• ‘still + sparkling’: 2in1</li> <li>• paddles &amp; fun</li> <li>• ownable stories</li> <li>• highlighting the contrasts</li> <li>• boat lifting, hectic waters</li> <li>• api-house, mill houses</li> <li>• rose garden therapies</li> </ul>

The horizontal narratives that can be extracted from the in-depth interviews are suitable for narrowing down or specifying the *Ipoly Valley* narratives like this: "**Active & Mental Transformation by the Twin Pearls of Danube**".



## 11.4 Summarized conclusions derived from the research outputs

Numerous studies explore the extent to which strategies built on narratives are able to shape the perspective of stakeholders and the place's own transformation in the creation and development of a tourist destination. Image building and branding are tools for which design-thinking supplies raw materials (Lichrou–O'Malley–Patterson, 2010).

The most exciting question clearly is: **Who tells Which story and Why?** (De Fina, 2008). This dissertation is to link the micro and macro contexts in consumable narratives. As a result, if we understand the request: **Who comes to Which part of the destination and Why?**, then we can get the answer (Figure 26). It has also been proven that storytelling can strengthen the cohesion of communities and increase the number and quality of interactions within the community.

**Macro-narratives** are necessary because our society is institutionalized, and the people living in it are able to express their values individually or in a community. Clear and simple wording is essential for the human being when we communicate and exchange information between each other representing distant cultures sometimes. When we, as visitors, arrive at a specific place where there are local values, identities and promises (Figure 19), the **micro-narratives** are more effective, but the transition is only uninterrupted if the larger-scale narratives are also flashed. In this case, the brain does not experience the stories as a conflict, but as a connected whole (Figure 31).

To conclude, we can firmly state that **design can underpin the visibility, presentation and management of a geographically not nearly homogeneous region** (the whole of the *Danube* at macro-level, and the *Danube Bend* or the *Ipoly Valley* as smaller units at micro-level), which is not balanced in its services, **by creating a framework** that is meaningful, transparent and complementary to its differences. The content analyses of the personal interviews with the six experts clearly reinforce that **a destination thus framed can be associated with a tourism product bunch** or structure that is **based**, both in terms of motivation and responsibility, on **quality leisure time, adventure, landscape diversity and multimodality**, i.e. the use of different environmentally friendly modes of transport. Another aspect is derived from the workshops, underpinning the view that **stakeholders**, local authorities and development practitioners **can integrate future tourism developments** in the area covered by the framework **into a comparable rating system** so that individual developments can be evaluated against each other, according to a set of criteria **that will help in the planning and design of the experience routes** through the area.

## 11.5 Future research directions

It is also worth talking about possible future research here, because it is justified to examine what **direction the development ideas** of a given area take after the passage of time, during the realization of the tenders, and how well the final implementation proves not only from a natural and social point of view, but also from an economic point of view, operational, from a management point of view, even just looking at human resources and the success of involving regional actors, as sustainable, profitable and competitive in the long term. If the professional ideas outlined in the Ipolymente (*Ipoly Valley*) programme will be implemented in the future, it is worth reassessing to what extent the new portfolio of **elements that had been expected come alive** when the tenders were evaluated: intermodality, exchange of values and culture, preservation of tradition, innovative developments, the actual involvement of local people, etc. Of course, many analysis solutions are at hand, it would be worthwhile to **measure the position and acceptance of adventure tourism**, to examine to what extent it is an integral part of the strategies along the *Danube* now and, thanks to the developments, in the near future.

### 11.5.1 Further DMO or supplier content analyses

A good and relevant direction from the point of view of design themes is the analysis of **visual contents**, the evaluation of videos and image films along a detailed and similarly defined system of criteria. It would also be worth examining at what level the **Danube values** determined by the present research interweave the communication along the *Danube*, which layer or destination size, which culture is the one that does this successfully and what are the possible additional obstacles, challenges and difficulties. It is also worth further investigating how macro-level communication elements (narratives) are incorporated into micro-level destination brands and publications and online interfaces.

### 11.5.2 Further CGC analyses

If the necessity of design and joint product planning was stated in this doctoral thesis, it would be essential to investigate what evaluation points the newly designed space, Ipolymente / *Ipoly Valley*, as a tourist destination, to see **to what extent visitors are enabled to rate and provide opinions or recommendations** not only about the individual services, but also **about the experience chains** (Points 4.1 and 9.4). It is also worth interpreting the **Danube-associations** from this point of view, because in many cases it is the visitors who are able to deliver the best solutions to the management of the area (Figure 26).

### **11.5.3 Further comparative studies**

Lake Balaton as a region appears at some points in this doctoral thesis, from the point of view of being able to **compare the course of developments**, the possibility of avoiding problems, and the options for organizing management (Point 8.1). An important additional element of research could be to compare the best tourism practices of the Balaton region with the practices of the Danube regions, and even to **identify the immediate intervention points** for both soft and hard cases, looking at the threats surrounding Balaton (Point 9.10.2).

### **11.6 Limitations of the dissertation**

It cannot be said that the author was stingy with the visual topic support, which at first glance is really a striking feature of the dissertation. At the same time, this represents a limitation, because many examples that are tangentially related to the topic, but could have made the processing even more complete, unfortunately either did not make it into the work, or had to be removed due to the supervisors' or opponent's suggestions. Of course, it would have been nice to give more space to the conceptual development of tourism, to present it in more detail, but the limitations of the volume gave only a limited opportunity for this, and they appear in the dissertation more in relation to today's transformations.

The author is committed to making the relationship between Tourism and Design accessible to the general public in the pages of a book (with the title “Tourism Design”) that relies on the theoretical and practical materials discussed here at many points.



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## **Appendix**

### **A. Tables**

The tables in the appendix are in Hungarian, because the author prepared them for the purpose of making them available later. Point 9.6 describes all important details of the tabular scheme in English. The categories and aspects in the tables are the intellectual works of the author, while the content assigned to them are sentences formulated jointly in the workshops. The additional explanations are suggestions and additions based on the conclusions of the workshops, formulated by the author.

### **B. Maps**

The maps of the investigated area or design area (*Ipoly Valley*) had been designed by the previously mentioned authors who prepared the foundational study. The maps were originally made in Hungarian, but for easier understanding, the author of this dissertation translated them into English. The maps show the following topics:

- Towns by population;
- Economic background of the settlements;
- Accommodation facilities in categories;
- Hospitality services in categories;
- Highlights in terms of attractions and narrow-gauge forest railways;
- Active tourism products, services and related events;
- Other characteristics with the main theme-based delimitations.

### **C. About the author**

The author is a recognized specialist in the field of tourism, which is supported by the list, in a very concise form, which summarizes his tourism and design-orientation, managerial experiences as well as his commitment in the field of design-based destination development.

1. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Ipolydamásd, Vár: lakótorony építés, várfal konzerválás</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Átadó	Közeli Eldugott Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	***	A jelentős mennyiségű visszaépítés helyett, vagy mellett érdemes a Virtual Reality alkalmazása.	A VR-technológia képes a korábbi felvételek alapján rekonstruálni a helyszínt.	Trendi	Kulturális  Állandó
		Relevancia	**				
		Illeszthetőség	**				
		Vonzóerőképesség	**				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	***				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	**				
Közösségi kohézió	*						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A projekt jól kidolgozott és előkészített, kulturális értelemben releváns. Mivel átadópontként pozícionáljuk a települést, így a megállítást indokolt. Jól kapcsolható a Szobon és a déli zónában, magyar oldalon körvonalazódó egyéb kulturális elemekhez (Márianosztra). Amennyiben a trendi (kerékpáros, vízi és szakrális termékcsoportok technológiai érdeklődésű szegmenseit) szólítja meg a javasolt VR megoldással, illetve bemutatott fényfestéssel, tartalmas időt ad a látogatóknak. Állandóan üzemeltethető. Egyszerű, de az egységes tájékoztató rendszer vezessen a legközelebbi információs ponthoz.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

2. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Ipolydamásd, Ipoly-part: víziturisztikai intermodális megállóhely</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Átadó	Közeli Népszerű Kipróbált	Fejlettség	***	Stégek beszerzését irányozza elő. Úgy érdemes megvalósítani, hogy egyéb szolgáltatást is telepítenek.	Mosdó, öltöző, zuhanyzó, értékmegőrző, fedett kerékpár tároló, telefon töltők.	Felfedező	Aktív Vízi Kerékpáros  Időszakos
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóerőképesség	**				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	*				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	***				
Közösségi kohézió	*						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A projekt alapvetően illeszkedik az intermodális, a zöld, emberi erőforrásra támaszkodó, aktív és nem tömeges turizmus minőségi kiszolgálásának célrendszerébe, így megvalósítása hasznos. A kerékpáros, térségi útvonalakhoz, valamint az áthaladó kerékpárturizmushoz komplementer lehetőséget biztosít, azáltal, hogy alternatív mozgásformát kínál számukra, kényelmes átszállási lehetőségként. Lényeges, hogy a ponton legyen fedett kerékpár tároló, mosdó, zuhanyzó, zárható értékmegőrző, telefontöltő, valamint információs tábla, amely a lehetséges útvonalakról térképpel, időtartam-magadással, vendéglátóhelyek ajánlásával kiegészített. A térség egységes honlapja legyen kommunikálva a további lehetőségek miatt.					<b>Feltétlenül</b> / Feltételekkel javasolt a fejlesztése	

3. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Ipolydamásd, BÖBI: Börzsöny Bike</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Átadó	Közeli Népszerű Márkás	Fejlettség	**	A HR és információs fejlesztés alapvető. Lényeges a rendszer rövid szöveges és vizuális leírása.	Szervezeti háttér szükséges az üzemben tartáshoz, a szállításhoz, az esetleges mentéshez.	Klasszikus Felfedező Trendi	Aktív Kulturális Kerékpáros Esemény  Állandó
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóerőképesség	***				
		Üzemeltethetőség	*				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	***				
		Jelentőség	**				
		Fenntarthatóság	***				
Közösségi kohézió	*						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	Előnye, hogy három alapvető kerékpáros szegmens keresletét (TREK, MTB, CITY) egyszerre képes kiszolgálni. Továbbá, számos attrakció elérhető általa, már Verőcétől, Szobot is érintve akár, éppúgy képes megalapozni az aktív turizmust, mint amennyire hozzájárul a kulturális attrakciók kényelmes és természetbarát felfedezéséhez. Az Esztergom—Párkány (Mária Valéria) rendszerével kompatibilis a tervezet, így erősíti nem csak Szob, de Párkány kapu pozícióit is, sőt megnyitja jelen desztinációt déli irányban, pl. Esztergom bejáráására is. A BÖBI akkor lesz sikeres, ha azt az egyes pontokon, teljes hosszon, tartós felületeken kivitelezett információs és térképes rendszer is támogatja, applikáció is kíséri.					<b>Feltétlenül</b> / Feltételekkel javasolt a fejlesztése	

4. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Márianosztra, Zarándok szálláshely</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Távoli Népszerű Márkás Kipróbált	Fejlettség	*	Érdeemes az ilyen típusú, egyszerűbb szálláshelyet nem csak a zarándokoknak elérhetővé tenni.	Megálló pontról beszélünk: az egyszerű, helyi melegkonyha bevonása indokolt.	Felfedező	Aktív Kulturális Zarándok Szakrális Kisvasutas  Állandó
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóerőképesség	**				
		Üzemeltethetőség	**				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	**				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	*				
Közösségi kohézió	**						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A korábbi iskolaépületben történő szálláshely kialakítása (bővítése) mindenképp egy támogatandó terv. A zarándoklás eddigi egyik hazai célállomása Márianosztra, a Pálos 70 zarándoklat is ide érkezik. A Dunakanyarban már első szakaszában megvalósult három útvonalas Pálos Út hálózat további fejlesztése a Börzsönyben kerül majd megvalósításra, így a zarándok-szállások kihasználtsága egyenletes lesz. Jól illeszthető és bekapcsolható a bakancsos túraszakaszok, a kisvasút által egy kulturális/szakrális útvonalba is, pihenőpontként is szolgál. Megvizsgálandó, hogy az ellátás tekintetében milyen helyi lehetőségek állnak rendelkezésre, amelyek közül a helyi termelői piac is helyet kaphat.					Feltétlenül / Feltételekkel javasolt a fejlesztése	

5. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Márianosztra, Helyi termék és termelői piac</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Távoli Népszerű Márkás Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	*	A piac lehet egyszerű, de az, hogy mikor van nyitva, az lényeges. Kell egyeztetni a zarándoklat szervezőkkel is.	Kommunikáció. A helyi beszállítók bevonására és a jó gyakorlatok átadására javasolt 1-2 műhelymunka.	Felfedező	Aktív Kulturális Zarándok Szakrális Kisvasutas  Időszakos
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóerőképesség	*				
		Üzemeltethetőség	*				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	**				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	*				
Közösségi kohézió	***						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A közösségi érték kifejezés, a kisléptékű vendéglátás, a látogató–helyi találkozás egyik kulcsfontja a piac, a helyi, termelői kitelepülés. A magánházak megnyitása abban a tekintetben is támogatja a projektet, hogyha egy csoport érkezik, akkor szívesen fogyaszt jellegzetes, házi készítésű ételeket, italokat. Nem szükséges ezeket túlgondolni, inkább az információ, és a kiszámítható elérhetőség, nyitva tartás a lényeges. Nagy mennyiségeket nem fogyasztanak az aktív/zarándok látogatók, a kalória és az íz lényegesebb. A helyi termelőket képes megmozgatni és összekovácsolni közösségi szinten is a lehetőség.					Feltétlenül / Feltételekkel javasolt a fejlesztése	

6. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Letkés, Pihenőpark az Ipoly-parton</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Átadó	Közeli Eldugott Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	***	Célszerű a helyi termelőket bevonni, a helyi és a Szalkai lakosokkal közös programokat megvalósítani.	Az információ átadás is lényeges. ezek felületei legyenek meg. Zárható tárolók is szükségesek.	Klasszikus Felfedező	Aktív Vízi Kerékpáros Kulturális Esemény  Állandó
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóerőképesség	***				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	***				
		Jelentőség	**				
		Fenntarthatóság	***				
Közösségi kohézió	***						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A település turisztikai vendéglátás szempontjából jó ellátott. Kiépített kerékpár útvonal végpontja is. Jól kialakítható akár rövidebb kerékpáros kör, de kézenfekvő a kenuba átszállás, vagy abból itt történő kiszállás. A hid alkalmas arra, hogy a helyi, kézműves és élő tájházi hagyományápolást a szlovák oldali Ipolyszalkán is átélhetővé tegye. Már vannak piactéri rendezvények, így a helyi termék kínálatot, térségi, desztinációs szinten is erősíteni lehet. A pihenőpark alkalmas rendezvények befogadására is. Magán egzotikus állatkert van a településen, a Mária út érinti. Lényeges, hogy legyenek zárható boxok a vízi / kerékpárral mozgók számára, kisebb javításokara alkalmas szervizpont.					Feltétlenül / Feltételekkel javasolt a fejlesztése	

7. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Szob, Kisvasúti telephely</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Kapu	Közeli Népszerű Márkás Kipróbált	Fejlettség	**	Mivel be- és kilépési pontról van szó, inkább itt szükséges egy komplex turisztikai látogatóközpont megvalósítás.	Információs pont, bérlés, zárható tárolók, büfé, mosdó kialakítása elengedhetetlen.	Klasszikus Felfedező Trendi Felelős	Aktív Vízi Kulturális Kerékpáros Kisvasutas  Állandó
		Relevancia	**				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóerőképesség	**				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	**				
		Jelentőség	**				
		Fenntarthatóság	**				
Közösségi kohézió	*						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A remízhez kapcsolódó kerékpáros pihenő kialakítása a terv. Inkább ezen a ponton célszerű egy turisztikai fogadópont komplex kialakítása, mint Ipolydamásdon, amelyik egy átadópont a rendszerben. A nagy- és kisvasúti végállomás kapcsolat, (a közösségi közlekedéssel a gépkocsi kiváltása) is indokolja ezt, illetve azt a helyzetet, hogy innen Szokolya, Márianosztra, Nagybörzsöny, sőt kirándulva Kemence is elérhető. Körtúrára és kimondottan a zöld turizmus megvalósítására alkalmas pont Szob, hiszen beköthető a körtúrába Letkés—Ipolyszalka—Helemba—Ipolydamásd, vízi közlekedéssel. De kerékpáron is folytatható az út, Letkés—Ipolyszalka—Bajta—Garamkövesd—Párkány—(Esztergom)—Szob) útvonalon, utóbbi viszonylatban a Dunán, hajón. Kulturális szempontból is jelentős. A kisvasút telephelyének felújítása lehetővé teszi szálláshelyek kialakítását is.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

8. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Szob, Börzsöny Múzeum</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Kapu	Közeli Népszerű Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	**	Interaktivitás és nem pusztán tárlatvezetés. Bekacsolni a Duna-parti és jelen desztinációs vérkeringésbe.	Kiseb programok, animáció színesebbé teszik a tárlatot. Egy régiós kártya eleme lehet.	Klasszikus	Kulturális  Állandó
		Relevancia	**				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóerőképesség	*				
		Üzemeltethetőség	*				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	*				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	*				
Közösségi kohézió	**						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A kiállítás egyelőre nem túl vonzó és nem interaktív, de a tárlatvezetés, amely elérhető jelenleg is, kompenzálja mindezt. A felújítás és bővítés indokolt, annak ellenére, hogy nem a legkeresettebb turisztikai termékek közé tartozik. Mégis, tematikájánál fogva, jó és átfogó képet nyújt a térségről, érdemes kihasználni a belépési pont funkcióját a városnak ezzel is.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

9. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Garamkövesd, Apihouse és pihenőhely</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Közeli Eldugott Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	***	A méhészet és a borászat révén bekapcsolódni a helyi termék közösségek életébe, párkányiakat megszólítani.	Glamping megvalósítása is elképzelhető, ha éppen nem itt, akkor összefogva másokkal.	Trendi Felelős	Rekreációs Esemény Borászat  Időszakos
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóerőképesség	***				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	***				
		Jelentőség	**				
		Fenntarthatóság	***				
Közösségi kohézió	**						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A gyógyító erejű, és minden szempontból újszerű, izgalmas, relaxációs, stresszoldó, méhtherápiás API house és borterasz kialakítása egy szőlőültetvény közepén, csodás kilátással az esztergomi bazilikára. A terület mellett halad át a Mária út is, sőt kiépített északi kerékpárút a szlovák oldalon Zselíz felől, érinthető az észak-dunai Eurovelo 6-os útvonal, a lovasturisztikai útvonal, sőt, a párkányi wellness és fürdőturizmus számára is egy kisléptékű, de autentikus élményt képes biztosítani. Tanösvény is megvalósul majd, ami edukációs tartalommal bír, események, rendezvények szervezhetőek ide, hiszen a Garamtól keletre elterülő borvidék déli csücske a hely. Borteraszra már most boresteknek ad helyet.					<b>Feltétlenül</b> / Feltételekkel javasolt a fejlesztése	

10. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Helemba, Ipoly Múzeum</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Átadó	Közeli Népszerű Márkás Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	*	A múzeum maga lehet egyszerűbb, a közösségi tér és helyi termék-pont funkcióval tartalmassá tehető.	Az átadó funkciót erősítsük oda és vissza. Szervizpont odaát, kultúra pedig itt.	Klasszikus Felfedező	Aktív Kerékpáros Kulturális  Állandó
		Relevancia	**				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzerőképesség	*				
		Üzemeltethetőség	*				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	*				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	*				
Közösségi kohézió	***						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	<p>A település múltját és tradícióit őrzi részben a Falumúzeum és a Pincemúzeum melyek bemutatják az ősök tradícióit de inkább a mezőgazdaság és a bortermeles szempontjából. A közeli hangár adna otthont a múzeumnak, amely így módon színesítené a kulturális kínálatot, hasonló szerepet kaphatna, mint Szob esetében a Börzsöny Múzeum. Amennyiben közösségi tér is megvalósítható az épületben, a hagyományörző események és a helyi termékek sokkal inkább elérhetővé, láthatóvá tehetők azok számára, akik csak átkerekeznek a településen, tovább a híd felé. Szállás és vendéglátókapacitása erős a településnek, ezért hatékonyan és a fejlesztés által tartalmasabban képes az időt növelni. Mivel szemben, Ipolydamásdon létesül vízi és kerékpáros turisztikai pont, itt nem szükséges.</p>						Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése

11. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Párkány, Látogatómenedzsment</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Kapu	Közeli Népszerű Márkás Kipróbált	Fejlettség	***	A térségi turisztikai információs rendszerben kiemelt szerepet adni a városnak, van gyakorlat itt.	A térségben összeállítandó aktív és egyéb elemekre támaszkodó útvonalak bemutatása, promóciója.	Klasszikus Felfedező Trendi Felelős	Aktív Kulturális Esemény Rekreációs  Állandó
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzerőképesség	***				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	*				
		Jelentőség	***				
		Fenntarthatóság	***				
Közösségi kohézió	*						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	<p>Párkány konkrét fejlesztési tervvel nem jelentkezett, de mivel kapu szerepe van, szervesen kapcsolódik a magyar észak-dunakanyari és fővárosi küldőpiachoz, továbbá a nemzetközi turizmushoz is talán a legerősebben, érdemes integrálni a hálózatba. 250-300 ezer vendégéjszaka, TDM-szervezet, 5 kerékpáros túraútvonala révén meg kell ragadni. Információs pontja élő (még online is), ahol jelen térségünk csomagajánlatai, útvonalai bemutatathatók. Jól nyitható innen a Garam—Ipoly-köz, ide fut be a Zseliz felől a kerékpárút, itt halad el az Eurovelo, gasztró- és szálláshely-kínálata erős.</p>						Feltétlenül / Feltételekkel javasolt a fejlesztése

12. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Ipolyszalka, Tájház</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Átadó	Távoli Eldugott Népszerű Kipróbált	Fejlettség	***	Humán erőforrás és utánpótlás nevelés, szakemberek képzése, tudásátadás, marketing.	A helyi közösségek megszólításában és bevonásában rejlő erő kihasználása Letkésről is.	Felfedező Felelős	Kulturális Esemény Rekreációs  Állandó Időszakos
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzerőképesség	***				
		Üzemeltethetőség	**				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	***				
		Jelentőség	***				
		Fenntarthatóság	**				
Közösségi kohézió	***						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	<p>Átadó szerepén túl, a helyi hagyományörzés élő és aktív példája, amelyet minden szempontból érdemes támogatni és fejleszteni. Inkubációs ház is, jó gyakorlatát át lehet adni olyan már zárt, de látogatható tájházaknak mindkét országban, ahol erre igény mutatkozik. Tudásátadási és helyi termék szempontjából is kiemelkedő, képes táborokat, eseményeket vendégül látni, el is szállásolni. A szomszédos Letkés kapacitásai nagyobbak, az együttműködés a két település között már csak ezért is kívánatos. Csodálatos, nyugodt környezet révén a rekreációs vonalra is felfűzhető, életstílust és életérzést közvetít.</p>						Feltétlenül / Feltételekkel javasolt a fejlesztése

13. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Zalaba, Régi malom rendezvényhelyszín</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Ugró	Távoli Eldugott Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	**	Az elgondolás jó, érdemes egy rendezvénytervezetet is összeállítani, milyen eseményekkel kihasználható.	Képzési, és szálláskínálat összefűzése a környékbeli települések szolgáltatóival. Palóc gasztró kihasználása.	Klasszikus Felfedező	Aktív Kulturális Esemény Kerékpáros  Időszakos
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzerőképesség	**				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	*				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	**				
Közösségi kohézió	***						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A község tulajdonában lévő malom átalakítása, mely ezáltal szervesen kötődne a szomszédságában lévő, már élő kulturális központhoz, piactérhez, kerékpárpihenőhöz, mintegy rendezvényhelyszíneként. Elhelyezkedése a településnek indokolja, hogy elosztópont legyen a kerékpáros turizmusból, illetve erős a készség a rendezvények, akár szakmai események befogadására is. A rétesütés támogatandó, de meg is erősítendő egyéb ételek készítésével, illetve a vendégház-ötlet sem rossz, ugyanakkor a környékben jobban ellátott településeket is érdemes szálláskapacitás tekintetében bevonni.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

14. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Ipolyvisk, Kajak—Kenu központ</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Átadó	Közeli Eldugott Népszerű Kipróbált	Fejlettség	***	A kapcsolódó turisztikai termékek alternatív megjelenítése (kerékpár, kultúra, gyalogos utak).	Tésa, Lontó, Ipolyság, Szete, Százd, Bernecebaráti, Kемence, Ipolyszakállós bekapcsolása csomagokba.	Felfedező Trendi	Aktív Vízi Kerékpáros Kulturális  Állandó
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzerőképesség	***				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	**				
		Jelentőség	***				
		Fenntarthatóság	***				
Közösségi kohézió	**						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A településnek különleges státusza van, amelyet a gyakorlatban igazol is a turizmus már most, hiszen átvadópont Tésa felé. Egyértelműen a víziturizmushoz kapcsolódó szolgáltatásokat érdemes fejleszteni. A vízállás magas, lassú folyású, ideális családoknak, illetve jól kapcsolható a kerékpáros turizmushoz (Ipolysági és Zselízi útvonalak), jól kialakíthatóak körök is. Az Ipoly Grand Prix befektetője is érdekelt benne. Érdemes a már most meglévő edzőtábori érdeklődést is megtartani, erősíteni. Látogatóközpont nem szükséges, de alap információnyújtás különböző felületeken igen.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

15. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Szete, Pihenő ház</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Távoli Eldugott Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	*	Érdemes lenne a helyi gasztró potenciált is kihasználni, a tervezés során felmerült a gasztronapok gondolata.	Nyitott konyha kialakítása akár eseményekhez kapcsolva.	Felfedező	Aktív Vízi Kerékpáros  Állandó
		Relevancia	**				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzerőképesség	*				
		Üzemeltethetőség	**				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	**				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	*				
Közösségi kohézió	*						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	Az Ipoly partján fekvő kúria felújítása 16-18 személy elszállásolására. Az épület multifunkciós, helyet kapna benne: Kajak-kenu tárolás, mellékhelyiségek. A területén már kiépített kerékpárpihenőhely található, jól bekapcsolható a kerékpáros és a vízről érkező látogatói útvonalakba. A közeli borvidék és az északi irányban meghatározó kulturális vonzerők is elérhetők innen. Indokolt a szálláshelybővítés a térségben. A szilva, káposzta és tök megalapozhatja a gasztró kínálat bővítését és az eseményturizmus kínálatot is. Érdemes lenne a fedett kerti konyha / főzőhely ötletet a pihenőház / kúria rekonstrukciós pályázat egyik elemeként értelmezni.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	



16. Projekt megnevezése:		Százd, Kilátópont és extrémturisztikai szolgáltatás				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Távoli Eldugott Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	*	Megállópont, extrém traktoros kalandtúra indító és érkező állomása, fotós és szelfis hely.	A földrajzi adottságok nem terhelő kiaknázása. A többi turisztikai elemhez képest új.	Trendi	Aktív Extrém  Időszakos
		Relevancia	**				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzerőképesség	***				
		Üzemeltethetőség	**				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	***				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	**				
Közösségi kohézió	*						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	Önmagában a kulturális vonzerő nem annyira jelentős, de azért engedjük a látogatókat, hogy rátaláljanak a kistemplomra. A földrajzi lokáció, a hegylábi jelleg mindenképp megér egy rövid tartózkodást, és teret nyit olyan extrém turisztikai lehetőségek számára, amelyek nagyon korlátozottan szerepelnek az elképzelések között. Szálláshely fejlesztés nem indokolt, a környezetben ezekre történt javaslattétel.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

17. Projekt megnevezése:		Ipolság, Villa ArtRoza, mintakert, kertterápiás- és kutatóközpont				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Kapu	Közeli Népszerű Márkás Kipróbált	Fejlettség	**	A kertterápiás foglalkozásokat pl. a "burn out" civilizációs betegségben szenvedők vehetnék igénybe.	Kis művész- telep és edukatív foglalkozások megvaló- sítása. Speciális ku- tatóközpont.	Klasszikus Trendi	Kulturális Esemény Rekreációs Lovas  Állandó Időszakos
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzerőképesség	***				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	***				
		Jelentőség	**				
		Fenntarthatóság	***				
Közösségi kohézió	**						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	Pöhlös Kertészet néven a családi vállalkozást Pöhlös Imre hozta létre 1985-ben, melynek fő profilja 20 000 balkonnövény virágzó késznővényként való előállítás volt. A vállalkozás 2005-ig üzemelt, majd 2021-től, új igényekre alapozva, új szolgáltatásokkal bővítve fejlesztik tovább a kertészetet és az ingatlant Villa ArtRosa néven. A lakóterek 6 szobás panzióvá alakítás céljára alkalmasak. Tartozik hozzá egy wellness sziget kültéri és beltéri medencével, szaunával, télikert, 2 db borospince. Az üdülőövezet alkalmas arra, hogy bemutatókerteket (modellkerteket, lásd. Die Garten Tulln, Ausztria) lehessen kialakítani azért, hogy a kert-, és a rózsakultúra színvonalát emeljék, illetve az egészségnevelésre ösztönözzenek, kapcsolt terápiás foglalkozások keretében. Komoly az érdeklődés a gödöllői és nyitrai egyetemek speciális kutatóprogramjának befogadására a helyszínen. Ezzel növelhető a MICE szegmens kereslete is a térségben, jól illeszthető az egynapos, vagy félnapos városi sétákhoz, lazító programokhoz. A kerti elfoglaltságok jól kapcsolhatók iskolai és már kézműves programokhoz is akár, érdemes Ipolszalkához is bekapcsolni.					Feltétlenül / Feltételekkel javasolt a fejlesztése	

18. Projekt megnevezése:		Ipolszakállós, Hajós móló és kenekölcsönző				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Távoli Eldugott Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	*	A kenek és kajakok átemelésére szolgáló megoldás beépítése a tervekbe.	A kölcsönző helyett célszerű lenne az átemelést segíteni, akár a helyiakkal.	Felfedező	Aktív Vízi Lovas  Időszakos
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzerőképesség	*				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	**				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	**				
Közösségi kohézió	***						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	Tekintve, hogy egy duzzasztógát van itt az Ipolyon, mindenki megáll, ki- és beszáll. Indokolt tehát a fejlesztés, 50 fős szálláshelykapacitással bír a település, egyfajta gyors-szállás fejlesztés is elképzelhető. Kisbusz, utánfutó és kajak kenek vásárlása, móló kialakítása, kölcsönzővel. Az átemelés családok, vagy sok csomaggal utazó turisták számára nehézkes.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

19. Projekt megnevezése:		Peszektergenye, Pincészet és Gyapjűfeldolgozó műhely				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Távoli Eldugott Népszerű	Fejlettség	**	A tudástranszfer és hagyományörzés jó gyakorlatának összehangolása a tájházakkal.	Glamping kialakítására alkalmas a terv, izgalmassá tenné a már elérhető szolgáltatást.	Felfedező Trendi	Kulturális Rekreációs  Időszakos
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzerőképesség	**				
		Üzemeltethetőség	**				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	***				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	**				
Közösségi kohézió	***						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A Biocentrum Kft. elképzelése a préház funkciókat bővíti oktatással, borismereti tanfolyamokkal és kihasználja a saját állatállomány adta lehetőségeket is. Erősíti a hagyományörzést, jól összefűzhető Ipolyszalkával és Ipolysággal kulturális tematikában. Jelenleg van szálláskapacitás a panzióban, 15 fő elhelyezhető. További tematikus kapcsolódás Zselizzel, az Esterházy örökség kapcsán.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

20. Projekt megnevezése:		Zseliz, Sacher-ház és Információs központ				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Kapu	Közeli Népszerű Márkás Kipróbált	Fejlettség	***	A marketing-tevékenység, a kommunikációs felületek színvonalas fejlesztése, látogatóközpontszinten is akár.	Az Esterházy és Schubert örökség felvillantása mellett a helyi gasztro beépítése a kínálatba.	Klasszikus Trendi	Aktív Kerékpáros Kulturális Esemény  Állandó
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzerőképesség	***				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	***				
		Jelentőség	***				
		Fenntarthatóság	***				
Közösségi kohézió	***						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	Itt született Sacher, a cél a család és a zselizi gasztrokultúra elmélyítése, valamint, mivel kapupontként szerepel a hálózatban, célszerű a látogatóközpont fejlesztési igényekkel összevetni a ház már elkezdett (80%-ban kész) felújítását. Erős szerepe lehet a helynek a helyi termék kultúra kimunkálásában is. Az egyetlen hely ugyanakkor, ahol világmárka-szintű vonzerő van, a helyi polgári társulás marketingeszközökkel is él már. Mivel kerékpáros útvonal halad el itt, indokolt a kapuszerep-kiemelés, önálló szálláskapacitás fejlesztés kevésbé, tekintve, hogy a vendéglátás és egyéb szolgáltatások mellett ez is van. A város ma is kínál romantikus csomagokat, ezek információs elérhetősége limitált.					Feltétlenül / Feltételekkel javasolt a fejlesztése	

21. Projekt megnevezése:		Garamsalló, Tájház				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Távoli Eldugott Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	*	Arra alapozni, ami helyben adott. Szálláshely kialakítása nem indokolt, külön nevesített kilátó sem.	Az élő tájház és helyi termék adottságok beépítése a térségi kínálatba.	Klasszikus Felfedező	Aktív Kerékpáros Kulturális Esemény Rekreációs  Állandó Időszakos
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzerőképesség	**				
		Üzemeltethetőség	**				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	**				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	*				
Közösségi kohézió	***						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	Tájház felújítása, parkosítás, bekerítése és pódium kialakítása. Összefűzendő a későbbiekben Ipolyszalkával is, Zalabán (Csontos Vilmos költő) keresztül. A helyi gasztronómiai érdekességek, amelyek a cigány kultúrára lehetne alapozni, pl. cigánykálacs, kimondottan erősítik a hagyományörzést és a közösségek egymás mellett élését, az elfogadást. A kerékpár útvonal áthalad itt. Célszerű lenne a Börzsöny bakancsos turistáinak megmutatni, milyen is a hegy erről az oldalról, mert a kilátás páratlanul szép. Útvonal javaslatunkat itt is kiemeljük: Nagyborzsöny—Ipolytölgyes—Letkés—Ipolyszalka—Zalaba—Garamsalló—Zseliz. Jól kombinálható a bakancsos és a kerékpáros turizmus. A borturizmusba is bevonható: Peszeki Leányka innen ered.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

22. Projekt megnevezése:		Palást, Török Park tematikus ösvény és kézműves utca				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Távoli Eldugott Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	*	A tematikus sétaútvonal állapot- és kommunikációs javítása, integrálása a térségi útvonalakba.	A kézműves utca egyfajta találkozási pontként szolgálna, közösségi térként is.	Klasszikus Felfedező	Kulturális Öko  Állandó
		Relevancia	**				
		Illeszthetőség	**				
		Vonzerőképesség	**				
		Üzemeltethetőség	**				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	*				
		Jelentőség	**				
		Fenntarthatóság	**				
Közösségi kohézió	***						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	Már létezik a tematikus út, ismertségét, elérhetőségét célszerű lenne erősíteni, fokozni. Van szándék a településen a történelmi emlékek bemutatására, ugyanakkor a kastély, mai iskola, felújítása és kulturális központtá történő átalakítása talán nem reális cél rövid távon. A szabadtéri színpad előtti kézműves utca hiánypótló és kiegészítő termék lehet az egész térségben, amelyet akár havi szinten tervez megvalósítani az önkormányzat.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

23. Projekt megnevezése:		Felsőtúr, Drótkötélpályás kalandpark és Tanösvény				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Távoli Eldugott Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	**	Bekapcsolható a helyi termék vonal, hamar a gyümölcsös revitalizációja is cél. A kerék-párosok is megszólíthatók.	Felsőtúr és Nagytúr közös tanösvény-fejlesztése és ennek ismeretése, marketingje.	Felfedező Trendi	Aktív Öko Kulturális Esemény  Állandó
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzerőképesség	***				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	***				
		Jelentőség	***				
		Fenntarthatóság	**				
Közösségi kohézió	***						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A kalandpark egy régi gyümölcsösben, az erdőbe nyúlva a Korpona-patak partján valósulna meg. Az egyetlen attrakciós elképzelés, amely az "ipolyviski" klaszterben szorosan kapcsolódhatna az összes projekthez. A gyümölcsös is revitalizálná a terv, lenne mászófal és íjászat is. 4 pályás, szegmentált pályarendszere vonzó lenne a családok számára is, jól kapcsolható a kalandpark az Ipolyság—Nagyfű kerékpárúthoz, érdemes itt is a glamping szálláshely bővítési lehetőséget vizsgálni. Ami ide kapcsolódik, mint ökoturisztikai terv, az a Túri György tanösvénybővítés. A palásti Török Park, Felsőtúron át, Nagytúrig alkotna egy útvonalat, integrálva a ma is meglévő 6 km hosszú, hegyháton futó ösvényt, 3 pihenővel és padokkal. Javasolt egy kis kilátó tervezése is, mert gyönyörű a rálátása a Börzsönyre.					Feltétlenül / Feltételekkel javasolt a fejlesztése	

24. Projekt megnevezése:		Nagyfű, Tanösvény és pihenőpont				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Távoli Eldugott Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	*	Közös marketing aktivitás a szomszédos Felsőtúrral és Palásstal is. A kilátópont egyszerű, de látványos.	A tanösvény tematikájának kidomborítása, narrációval történő ellátása 2 nyelven.	Felfedező Felelős	Aktív Öko Rekreációs  Állandó
		Relevancia	**				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzerőképesség	*				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	*				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	**				
Közösségi kohézió	***						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	Rákapcsolódás a felsőtúri turistaösvényre és a meglévő tanösvényre. Mint ökoturisztikai terv, része a Túri György tanösvénybővítésének. A palásti Török Park, Felsőtúron át, Nagytúrig alkotna egy útvonalat, integrálva a ma is meglévő 6 km hosszú, hegyháton futó ösvényt, három pihenővel és padokkal. Javasolt egy kis kilátó tervezése is, mert gyönyörű a rálátása a Börzsönyre. Jó lenne, ha ezen elképzelés nyomán a két település közös marketingmunkát is végezne, ismertetés, bemutatás és szolgáltatásfejlesztés terén. A település egyéb attrakciói között van a felújítás alatt álló templom, illetve a célközönség számára kiaknázandó a savanyúvíz-forrás is. A kerékpáros látogatók megszólíthatóak, hiszen tervben van a Hont—Gyűgy kerékpárút tervezése.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

25. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Ipolypásztó, Kerékpáros és Gyalogos híd</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Közeli Eldugott Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	*	Pihenő és piknik-hely telepítése a szlovák oldalon, nyitás a zalabai és vámosmikolai elképzelések felé.	A térség középső, NY–K-i átjárását képes biztosítani, kisebb körök tervezhető.	Felfedező Felelős	Aktív Kerékpáros Lovas  Állandó
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóerőképesség	**				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	***				
		Jelentőség	**				
		Fenntarthatóság	**				
Közösségi kohézió	**						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A híd kapcsolatot létesít Ipolypásztó és Vámosmikola között, amely jót tesz mind a két oldalnak, hiszen létesül egy aktív turisztikai átadópontra. A kerékpáros turizmust erősítene a fejlesztés, a vámosmikolai elképzelések keresletbővítését szolgálja, ugyanakkor a szlovák oldalon meglévő attrakció-hiány csökkentéséhez is hozzájárul. Tervezése és kivitelezése költséghatékony, hiszen gépjárműforgalmat nem generál, fenntartható módon járul hozzá a közlekedéshez és a hálózatfejlesztéshez. A Letkés—Ipolyszalka átjárást, ami délebbre esik, valamint az északabra eső Ipolyvisk—Tésa összeköttetést kiegészíti a térségben, közepén.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

26. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Ipolybél, Kikötőpont</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Közeli Eldugott Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	*	Stégek vásárlása, valamint vízi pihenőpont létesítése. Ezzel a hiánypótló fejlesztéssel bekapcsolható.	Traktor van, szép terep is, időszakosan javasolt az ilyen extrém-kalandos szafari túra tervezése.	Felfedező Trendi	Aktív Vízi Extrém  Időszakos
		Relevancia	**				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóerőképesség	*				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	**				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	*				
Közösségi kohézió	***						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	Több elképzelés is van a településen, kezdve a szálláshelyfejlesztéssel, majd a kilátó építéssel. Mégis, érdemes lenne inkább az erősségeket támogatni, amelyek a hely adottságokból a legcélszerűbben kihozhatók. A kanászház tájházzá alakítása, illetve a háromszintes kastély, korábbi gyermekotthon szálláshely-rekonstrukciója kissé nagyívű elképzelések. A stégvásárlás, valamint egy kikötési pont kialakítása reális elképzelés.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

27. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Kemence, Vármegyeház felújítása és kiállítóterek</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Közeli Népszerű Márkás Kipróbált	Fejlettség	***	A történelmi utalások és emlékek mellett jelenjenek meg a mai igényeknek megfelelő interaktív elemek.	Belső látogatói élményútvonalak tervezése, valós szegmens specifikációval.	Klasszikus Trendi	Kulturális Esemény  Állandó
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóerőképesség	***				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	**				
		Jelentőség	**				
		Fenntarthatóság	**				
Közösségi kohézió	*						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A korábbi, félévszázados közigazgatási szerep és funkció újszerű, interaktív bemutatása. Tekintve, hogy más pályázati rendszerben is beadásra került, támogatása annak függvényében érdekes. A tematika viszont jól kapcsolható a térség északi kulturális kötelékéhez, jó kiegészítő termék, amely nem csak jó időben, és a vízi-kerékpáros-bakancsos turizmus főszezonon keresletét indukálja. Ismert település a térképen, kialakult szolgáltatói bázissal, kedvező kapcsolatrendszerrel. Új kiállítóterként a börtön látogathatóvá tétele is cél, valamint egy egyedi játszótér kialakítása kapcsolódva a 18. századi vármegyeháza tematikához. A vármegye elnevezések és koncepció újragondolása és visszavétele a hazai közéletbe jobban indokolható, ha ennek érvei és jótékony hatása a társadalmi szervezőképességre igényesen és politika mentesen kerül interpretációra.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

28. Projekt megnevezése:		Kemence, Strand				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Közeli Népszerű Márkás Kipróbált	Fejlettség	**	A műszaki fejlesztéseken túl, érdemes a tartalmat is fejleszteni, kényelmi szolgáltatások, animáció.	Zárható értékmegőrzés a vízi és kerékpáros, illetve egyéb látogatói csoportoknak.	Klasszikus Felfedező	Aktív Kisvasúti Rekreációs  Időszakos
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóképeség	**				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	**				
		Jelentőség	**				
		Fenntarthatóság	**				
Közösségi kohézió	*						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A mai is kedvelt nyári élményelem nyiban hozzájárul az aktív turisták és a pihenésre vágyók elégedettségéhez. A térség turisztikai kínálatát egyértelműen színesíti és bővíti. Meg kell azonban várni a legelőből történő átminősítést. Lehetőség továbbá, az úszásoktatás felé történő nyitás.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

29. Projekt megnevezése:		Kemence, Ifjúsági tábor				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Közeli Népszerű Márkás Kipróbált	Fejlettség	**	Hagyományörzés szempontjából jól kapcsolható Ipoly-szalkához is, illetve más, iskolai-programokhoz.	A szálláshely funkció mellett érdemes a gasztró funkciót is fejleszteni a táborban.	Felfedező Felelős	Aktív Kisvasúti Esemény  Időszakos
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóképeség	**				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	**				
		Jelentőség	**				
		Fenntarthatóság	***				
Közösségi kohézió	*						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A térség aktív turisztikai jellegét, kínálatát és keresletét tekintve, támogatandó terv a 70 férőhelyes, faházás tábor korszerűsítése és szolgáltatási színvonalának emelése, ugyanakkor nem cél a nagyobb volumenű és magasabb kategóriát kereső vendégek szálláskapacitás hiányának kompenzációjához, amely egyértelműen hiányzik a felső Garam—Ipoly-köz településein, és Ipolyvisk—Tésa átjárással, meg is közelíthető. Ideális lenne még az Ipolyásztóhoz javasolt kerékpáros híd déli bekötése a csomagajánlatokba.					Feltétlenül / Feltételekkel javasolt a fejlesztése	

30. Projekt megnevezése:		Ipolytölgyes, Víziturisztikai központ és kiállítótér				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Közeli Népszerű Márkás Kipróbált	Fejlettség	***	A vizes ruhában érkezőknek tisztálkodási és szárítási lehetőség biztosítása. A „vízi-bicikli” népszerűsítése.	Inkább a kényelmi, kevésbé az edukatív elemek telepítése, a relaxáció biztosítása.	Felfedező Felelős	Aktív Vízi Kerékpáros  Időszakos
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóképeség	***				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	**				
		Jelentőség	***				
		Fenntarthatóság	***				
Közösségi kohézió	*						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A folyóhoz legközelebb fekvő, ma használaton kívüli épületben egy Ipoly tematikájú kiállítás megvalósítása a cél, illetve a vízi túrázók számára alapvető szolgáltatásokat biztosító központ kialakítása (mosdó és zuhanyozási lehetőség, teakonyha és sátorozási lehetőség). A kiállítás inkább legyen folyócentrikus, izgalmas és interaktív, a jelennel, de leginkább a jövővel, a vízkezeléssel és fenntarthatósággal foglalkozva. Az Ipoly-part és a központ közötti útvonalra van elképzelés. A vizes élőhelyek bemutatása itt is megtörténhet, mintegy kivezetve a tematikát a központból. Inkább kivitelezhető ez az elképzelés, mint egy önálló tó kialakítása. A tanösvény jól kapcsolható az egyéb edukatív, vagy szoft elemekhez a térségben, akár a kemencei ifjúsági tábor, a kisvasúti turisztikai, akár a tájházi programokat keresők számára. A település ismertsége, már mostani turisztikai terhelése nem fokozandó, de tartalmi értelemben kívánatos a bővítés.					Feltétlenül / Feltételekkel javasolt a fejlesztése	

31. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Bernecebaráti, Huszár Kastély</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Közeli Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	*	A funkciók bővítése kimondottan jó, a népszerű lehetőségek mellett, megjeleníthető az öko-téma.	Az Ipoly-tölgyesen adott vízi, az erdei élőhelyek ismertetésével jól kapcsolható értéklánc.	Klasszikus Trendi	Kulturális Esemény Öko  Állandó
		Relevancia	**				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóerőképesség	***				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	**				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	*				
Közösségi kohézió	*						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	Erőssége, hogy jelenleg is kiállítóhely. Jó gondolat a Börzsönyt kutatók számára kialakítandó bázishely funkció, elhelyezkedésénél fogva ez adott, illetve jól illeszkedik a kulturális, értékmegőrző és bemutató funkciók közé. A MICE szegmenst képes erősíteni a térségben, amennyiben szakmai programokat és a kutatóknak szállást biztosít, ugyanakkor az esküvők és egyéb rendezvények szép és emlékezetes helyet ígér. A kutatóprogram kidolgozása további munkát igényel.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

32. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Vámosmikola, Horgász és Családi Központ</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Közeli Eldugott Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	*	A hosszabb időtöltést kiszolgáló létesítmények, WC, valamint lakókocsis megoldásban.	A rekreációs és aktív / sport elemek szétválasztása térben szükséges lehet, egyébként konfliktusos.	Felfedező	Aktív Rekreációs  Időszakos
		Relevancia	**				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóerőképesség	*				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	**				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	*				
Közösségi kohézió	***						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	Az Ipoly mellett egy park kialakítása a cél. Játzóterrel, kondiparkkal, a családdal érkező horgász vendégek kiszolgálására szolgálna a fejlesztés. A települési turisztikai, szabadidős kínálatát kis mértékben ugyan, de növelni képes, egyben a helyi lakosságot is kiszolgálja. Ilyen jellegű attrakció, amely a horgászturizmusra épül szinte nincs a térségben, vagy konfliktust teremt a horgászok és az evezősök együttes vízhasználata, pl. Ipolytölgyesen.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

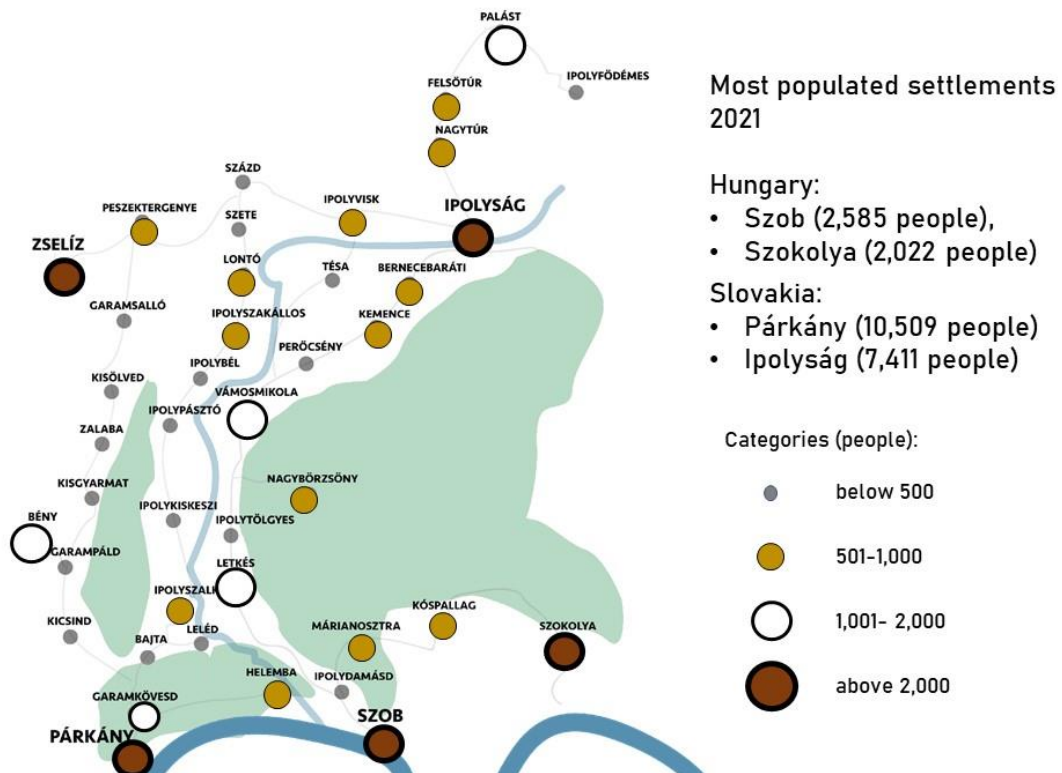
33. Projekt megnevezése:		<b>Nagybörzsöny, Kulturális Park és Látogatóközpont</b>				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Ugró	Távoli Népszerű Márkas Kipróbált	Fejlettség	***	Információ-átadás és látogatómenedzsment eszközök, tájékoztató felületek integrálása.	A csomagajánlatok egyértelműsítése, a település intergrálása az élményláncokba.	Felfedező Trendi	Aktív Rekreációs  Állandó
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóerőképesség	***				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	**				
		Jelentőség	***				
		Fenntarthatóság	**				
Közösségi kohézió	*						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	Nagybörzsöny funkciójában hasonló erővel és képességekkel bír, mint a szlovákiai oldalon ugrópontként megjelölt Zalaba a hálózatunkban. A különbség talán az, hogy e település ismert, jól bejáratott, elérhető és népszerű turisztikai szolgáltatásokkal bír, adott, hogy ne érkezési pont legyen mindössze, hanem számos túraútvonal, kisvasutas program, zarándokútvonal haladjon át rajta. Cél most a település hagyományos központjának továbbfejlesztése, a kiszolgáló funkciók bővítése mosdókkal, közterületi fejlesztések, kiállítótér-információs központ kialakítása, alulhasznosított ingatlanok bevonása. Az információs pont indokolt, jellegéből következik az is, hogy megálló- és tájékoztató hely. Jó pozíciókkal bír a Szob—Kemence útvonalon, de a Kóspallag—Szokolya irányból történő megközelítés is adott, min ahogyan az is, akár Tésa, akár Letkés felé a lágyabb, szelidebb, feltöltődést kínáló turisztikai termékeket elérhetővé tegyük a magasból.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

34. Projekt megnevezése:		Tésa, Szálláshely				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Átadó	Távoli Eldugott Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	*	Csak kooperációban célszerű fejlődnie a településnek, Ipolyvisk ebben partnere lehet.	Százd, Szete, Lontó és Ipolyszakálos is belesik abba a körbe, amely komplex élményt ígér.	Felfedező	Aktív Vízi Kerékpáros  Állandó
		Relevancia	***				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóképeség	*				
		Üzemeltethetőség	**				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	*				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	**				
Közösségi kohézió	*						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A település a hálózatunkban mindenképp meghatározó, úgynevezett átadópontként szerepel. Érdekes a szemközti oldal szálláshely szűkösségét ezzel a projekttel kiegészíteni, erősíteni ezzel a települések kiegészítő szolgáltatásait mind a vízi, mind pedig az egyéb turisztikai termékek terén. Amennyiben rövidebb szakaszokat és hurkokat tervezünk, az északi szegmensben kimondottan érdemes erre a szálláshelytípusra koncentrálni. Az egykori boltnak és kocsmának helyt adó épületet az önkormányzat külsőleg felújította. A projekt célja a belső kialakítása: szobákkal és vizesblokkokkal.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

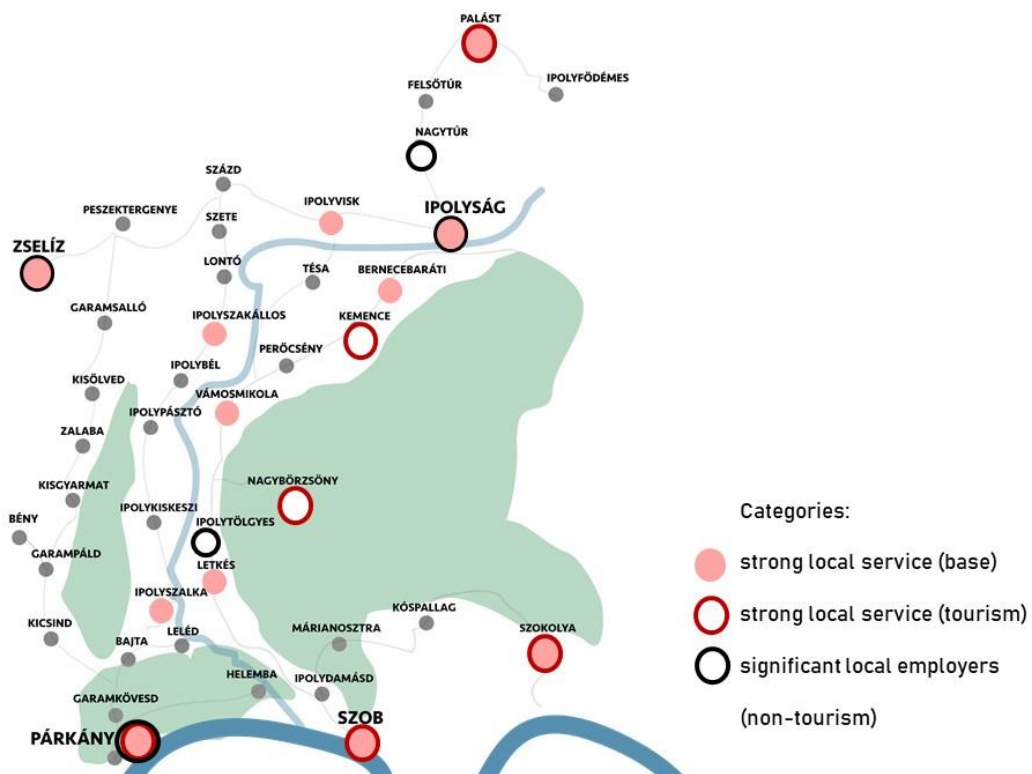
35. Projekt megnevezése:		Kóspallag, Malom Ház				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Távoli Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	*	A malom funkciójának interaktívá tétele, lehessen benne örölni, el is vinni valamit, amit ott süt a vendég belőle.	A tematikus útvonalak vonzóak és izgalmasak legyenek, ne csak leírás, hanem felfedezés is.	Felfedező Trendi	Aktív Kulturális Esemény  Állandó Időszakos
		Relevancia	**				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóképeség	*				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	**				
		Jelentőség	*				
		Fenntarthatóság	*				
Közösségi kohézió	***						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	A projekt számos elemet tartalmaz: a vízimalom restaurálását, a környező források, patakok és felszín alatti vizek védelmét, tisztítását, rehabilitációját. Az épületben malomtörténeti kiállítás, a múzeumi funkcióján kívül vendéglátási és szálláshely szolgáltatások kialakítása is cél. Három tematikus útvonal van tervben: Mesélő vizek és források; Malmok útja; Regélő várak - több települést bevonva, programokat és túraútvonalakat rászerveve. Mindenképp jó a fő ütőértől (Ipolypartok) kissé távolabb eső projektek bevonása a turisztikai hálózatba.					Feltétlenül / <b>Feltételekkel</b> javasolt a fejlesztése	

36. Projekt megnevezése:		Kóspallag, Helyi termék promóció				SK	HU
A. Hálózati pozíció	B. Jelen státusz	C. Értékelő szempontrendszer és értékelés (* ** ***)		D. Fejlesztési javaslatok	E. Hiányzó elem (átvehető)	F. Célcsoport meghatározás	G. Útvonalra illeszthetőség
Köztes	Távoli Ismeretlen Felfedezetlen	Fejlettség	**	Csatlakozás a REL által kidolgozott védjegyrendszerhez, valamint a környező helyi termékekhez.	Elérhetőség, marketing, társ-településekkel megvalósítható rendezvény naptár. Webáruház.	Felfedező Felelős	Aktív Kulturális Esemény  Időszakos
		Relevancia	**				
		Illeszthetőség	***				
		Vonzóképeség	**				
		Üzemeltethetőség	***				
		Kreativitás, újszerűség	***				
		Jelentőség	**				
		Fenntarthatóság	***				
Közösségi kohézió	***						
Kiegészítés és magyarázat:	Az önkormányzati biokertben termelt gyümölcs és zöldség, valamint a bővülő feldolgozott termékínátra alapozott a fejlesztés. A termelési infrastruktúra bővítése, korszerűsítése, feldolgozási kapacitások bővítéséhez kapcsolódó infrastruktúra és eszközállomány fejlesztése, márképítés és értékesítés, valamint szervezeti háttér (szövetkezet) kialakítása. Turisztikai szempontból is releváns a projekt, mert engedi megmutatni a helyi értékeket, ízeket, a termelési módszereket. Dobozrendszer már működik, de ez szélesíthető, jobban kiaknázható, és bekapcsolható a javarész átmenő turizmusba is. A Malom Ház felújítása ezzel a projekttel máris láncot alkot, megfelelő kereszt-promócióval erősödik mindkettő.					Feltétlenül / Feltételekkel javasolt a fejlesztése	

## DESIGN AREA - TOWNS BY POPULATION

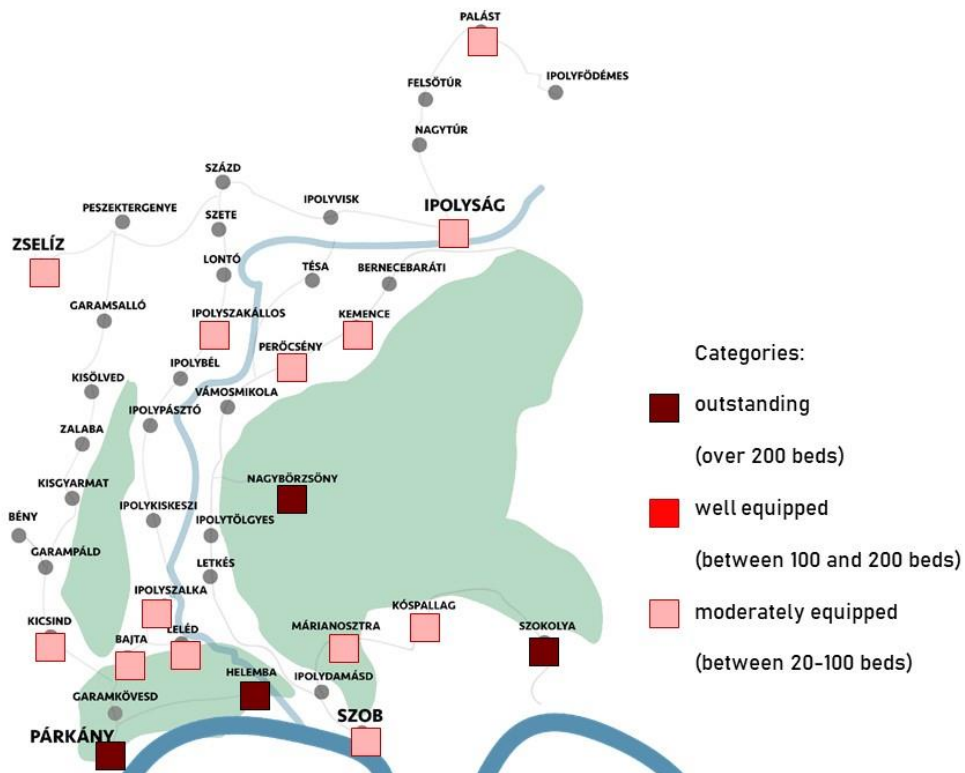


## DESIGN AREA - AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF SETTLEMENTS

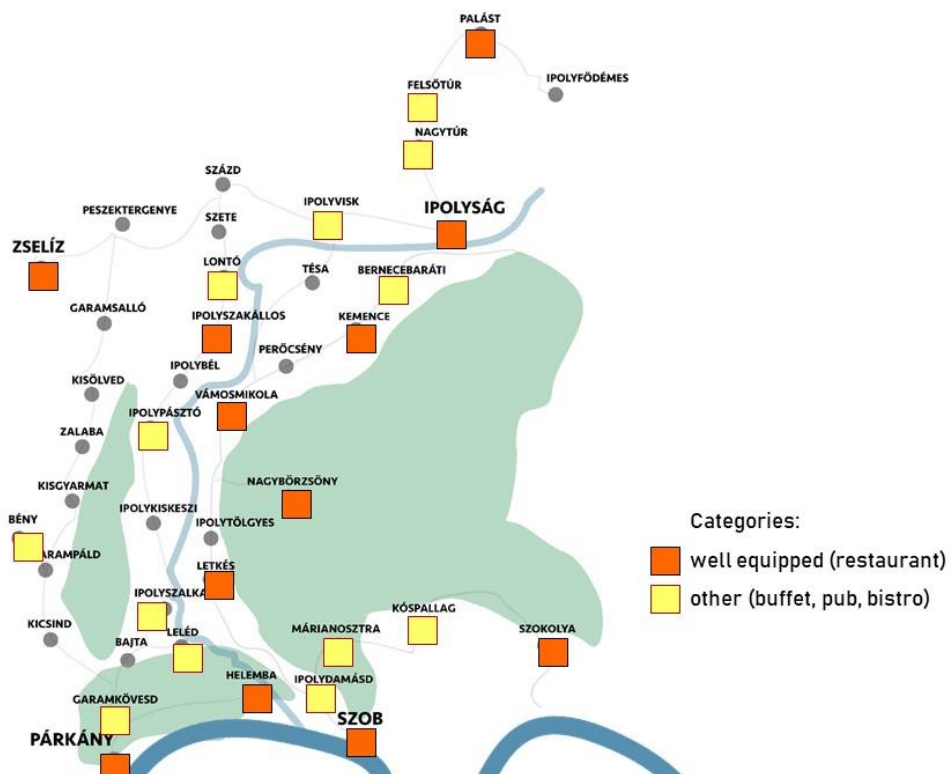




## DESIGN AREA - ACCOMMODATION



## DESIGN AREA - HOSPITALITY



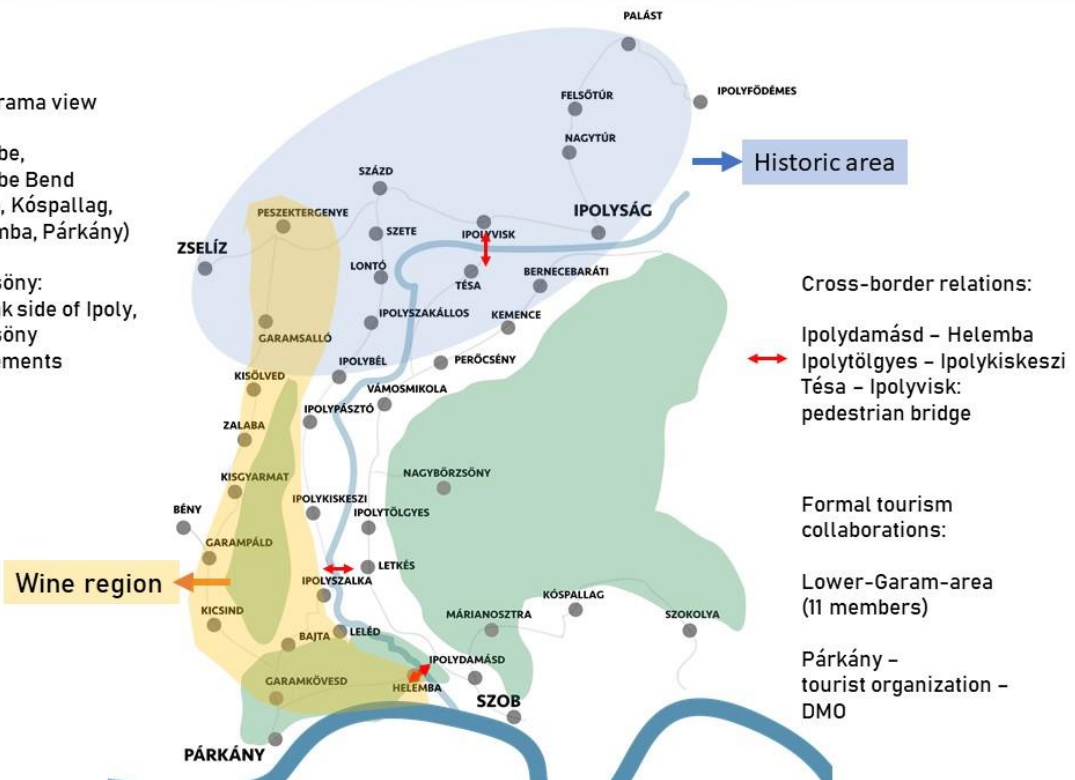


DESIGN AREA - OTHER CHARACTERISTIC DELIMITATIONS, PROPERTIES

Panorama view

Danube,  
Danube Bend  
(Szob, Kóspallag,  
Helemba, Párkány)

Börzsöny:  
Slovak side of Ipoly,  
Börzsöny  
settlements



Cross-border relations:

Ipolydamásd – Helemba  
Ipolytölgyes – Ipolykiskeszi  
Tésa – Ipolyvisk:  
pedestrian bridge

Formal tourism  
collaborations:

Lower-Garam-area  
(11 members)

Párkány –  
tourist organization –  
DMO

## Background

*Danube*, the river that connects Europe from all directions, is the most authentic teacher of cooperation to learn. Some prominent features of the river can be used to showcase the values of tourist destinations. Moreover, the personality and character of a competitive athlete, who is a daily sportsman on the Danube, breathing with the river, can be seen as a guide in defining the communication pillars of tourist reception areas. Truly, Danube features are the following:

Faithful and embracing: flowing from the Black Forest to the Black Sea - Danube is about relationships, politics, geopolitics, history, economy, transport, traffic, commerce, landscapes, regions, culture, art, music, languages, and more (a **multiple** and **inclusive** destination).

Honest and diverse - she has got far more colours than the primary colours in paper printing, from which every shade, feeling, impression, mood can be produced or mixed: blue, magenta and yellow. However, as it turns out in additional printing technologies, when the layers of the three colours are mixed, it results in black, giving some referral explanation for the spring and the mouth, in fact, some elegance to the narratives when they are merged and simplified (it is a **design-based** destination).

The best storyteller - the continent itself, with its personal stories, the ones that make her a proud woman, always an accepting mother of her “naughty” kids escaping from West to East time on time. Her waters are dynamic, renewing, elemental, recharging, uplifting, revitalising, or simply switching off the people being in connection with her (it is a very **human** destination).

Teaches us to get to know ourselves, to discover ourselves - it is what we travel for, it is what can be the most fundamental driver and motivating factor in tourism. In a smaller unit, the *Ipoly Valley* can be the symbolic and the essential condensation of the whole river (it is a **complementary** tourism destination based on **meaning communities** and **adventures**).

## About the author

#KDG - Guest lecturer at the Belgian KdG University of Applied Sciences and Arts in the area of “A Common Good Economy” to find ways to improve the societal added value of companies.

#CORVINUS - Guest lecturer at the Centre for Mobility and Tourism Training, Methodology and Research at Corvinus University of Budapest, teaching the courses "Visitor Management", "Tourism Project Analysis", “Future-proof New Tourism” and “Tourism Design”.

#METU - Lecturer at the Departments of Tourism, Marketing and Social Sciences of the Budapest Metropolitan University, awarded as "Teacher of the Year 2020". Winner of the "Best Lecturer" title in the academic year 2018—2019.

#MIND\_THE\_GAP - Author of the book "Mind the Gap", Creative Tourism Coaching (Akadémiai Publishing House, 2018), which won the "Publication of the Year" award in 2019.

#MY\_BRAND - Compiler of the good practice manual for the "MyBrand" creative-university competence development programme.

#BRANDBOOST - Award-winning speaker at the 10th International Conference of Consultants (2021), about launching a tourism social responsibility campaign, "Figure it out".

#ART\_IS\_BUSINESS CULTURAL\_TOURISM - Co-host and co-creator of the bi-annual "Cultural Tourism Destination Award” in cooperation with the Art is Business Association.

#FORESIGHT - Participant of the Dutch Fontys Academy For Creative Industries "Teach the Teachers" intensive programme (2019), compiler and author of the programme "Handbook" (2020), certified lecturer and trainer of the "We Are Global Citizens Week" (2021).

#TRANSDANUBE\_TRAVEL\_STORIES WINTER\_SCHOOL - Trainer and examiner for tourist guides from the Danube countries in the Interreg International Programme (2021, 2022).

TUTSZ - Hungarikum Committee – Creative Industries Roundtable - Hungary NEXT - Member of the Association of Tourism Developers and Consultants (TUTSZ), member of the Hungarikum Commission's Specialised Committee on Sport, Tourism and Hospitality, member of the "Creative Industries Roundtable", chaired by the Ministry of Culture and Innovation. Founding leader of the 10-year old Hungary NEXT country-brand-workshop, with 200 projects managed, 390 satisfied partners, host and organiser of 33 events, speaker of 260 public lectures (as of 30 November, 2023).