

Creation of a Model for Strategic Direction, Prioritizing and Safeguarding of Tangible Cultural Heritage



MDG-F 1792

Alliances for Culture Tourism in Eastern Anatolia UN Joint Programme”



DEVELOPMENT OF A SOFTWARE AND AUTOMATED SYSTEM FOR THE CREATION OF DIGITAL DATA ON CONSERVATION, MONITORING AND SUPERVISION OF REGISTERED SITES AND IMMOVABLE CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

- Improvement in the safeguarding and management of cultural and management sites

- Sustainable integration into local tourism development programmes

BACKGROUND

An integrated model for the protection of cultural and natural assets, encompassing strategic direction, prioritization, and safeguarding, was needed in Turkey in order to promote sustainability and integration into local tourism-development programmes. This model, which would ideally comprise a decisive improvement of existing institutional capacities, was achieved by means of two main sets of interventions: creating a digital data management system, and preparing a management plan for the Site of Ani.

PROCESS

a) Creation of an automated system for managing digital data on conservation, monitoring and supervision of registered sites, immovable cultural and natural assets in the province of Kars. Activities included engineering the system structure and functioning, developing software, purchasing and installing said hardware, as well as training the system users at both local and national levels. The system, designed and realised in close coordination with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, which was both the main user and a direct beneficiary, and related Regional Preservation Councils, is the first comprehensive tool for the digitisation of cultural heritage in Eastern Anatolia, and will represent a point of reference for the development of similar structures in the region.

b) Preparation of a management plan for the Site of Ani, which is the main cultural asset and potentially the most important cultural attraction in the project area. Site Management Planning is a relatively new subject for Turkey. The first legal disposition was approved in 2004 and specific regulations were introduced in 2005. Since then, only a few management plans have been defined in Turkey in draft form mostly through external procurement. The JP initiated and led the process for the definition of the draft management plan, provided technical assistance and activated partnerships between all relevant stakeholders, with an inclusive participatory approach. It should be highlighted that this is the first management plan developed with such methodology in Turkey (where existing management plans of other



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sites have been mostly developed through an externalization of services), thus posing itself as a good practice to be possibly replicated in other sites. Within this process, the revision and integration of the existing official map of the Ani archaeological site was completed and integrated into automated software system. As a result of a series of workshops and consultation processes, a ‘Site Management Development Framework’ was approved, and an agreement established between the relevant stakeholders on the preparation of a draft 5 - year Management Plan based on the Turkish legislative framework as well as on relevant international standards.

Outcomes

The afore-mentioned activities resulted in a decisive improvement in the safeguarding and management of cultural and natural sites in the project area, and paved the way for their sustainable integration into the local tourism development programmes. The creation of the automated system for the digitization of local cultural heritage accelerated the establishment of the Regional Preservation Council in Kars, which was long planned by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and was opened in 2011. Furthermore, the activities brought significant results in terms of training, institutional and professional capacity building, awareness-raising, and the establishment of partnerships between central state authorities, local government agencies, and stakeholders for the academic sector and civil society. The activities within the Ani Site Management Plan process determined an increase of funds allocated by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism for the conservation and restoration of the site. The Ani Site Management Planning process is an outstanding achievement considering the methodology based on international standards and leveraging directly on the structures and capacities of the relevant institutions.