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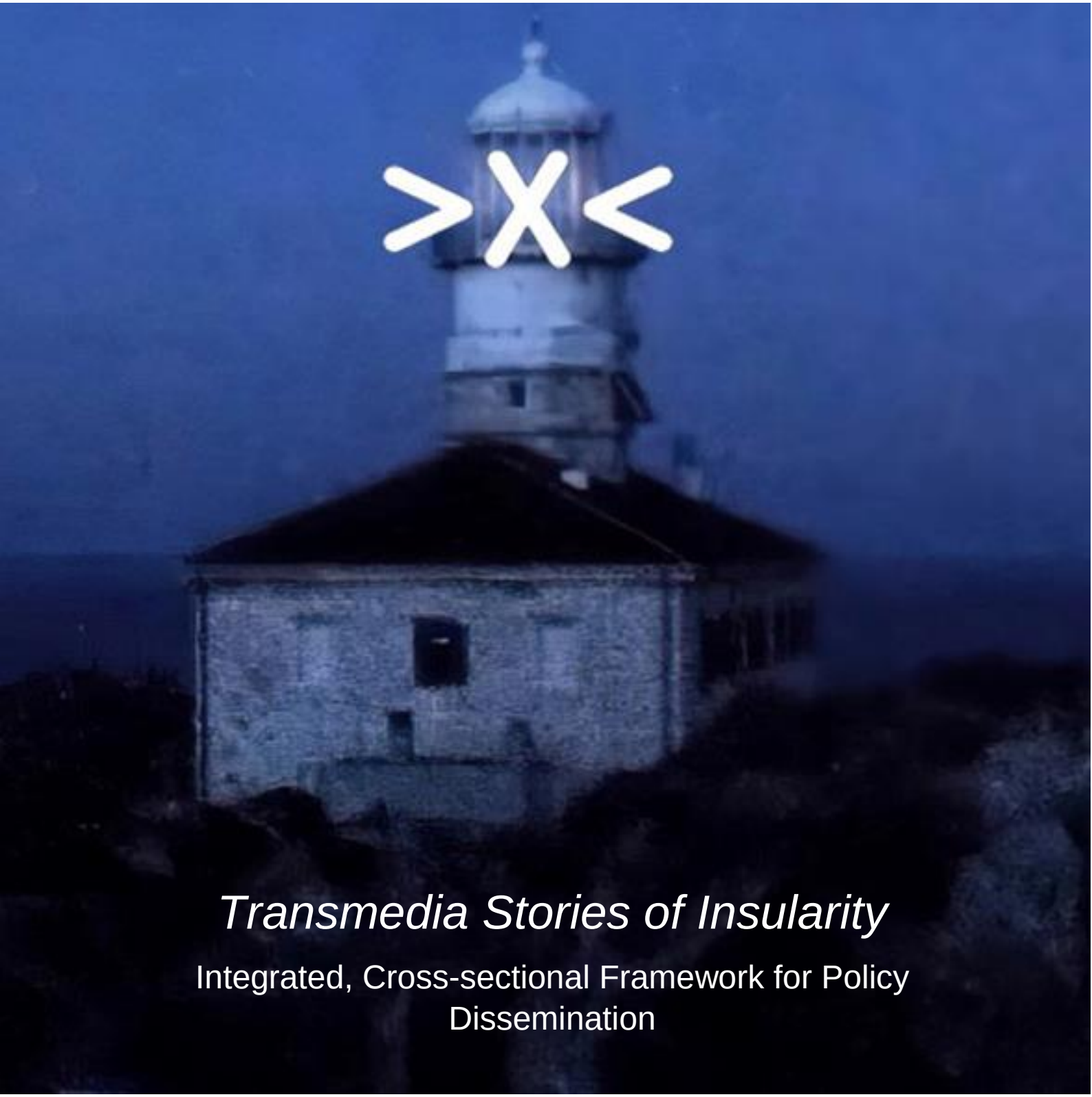

Transmedia Stories of Insularity

Integrated, Cross-sectional Framework for Policy Dissemination

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1. VISION

The project explores the concept of identity in relation to cultural assets, whether tangible or intangible, highlighting an inherent sense of identity stemming from individuals connecting with specific cultural items labeled as "heritage" by a particular group. It is grounded in the dynamic understanding of identity, rejecting a fixed model of collective life and adopting a holistic approach. Within this framework, identity arises from the identification process, recognizing both individual uniqueness and collective identity within specific domains.

This approach views identity as a socio-culturally conditioned phenomenon, taking various forms across different cultures and individual and collective expressions. It encompasses both collective and self-identification, remaining open to reconceptualization. The development of a shared identity necessitates a shared domain with negotiated values and narratives.

Consequently, the project aims to establish the "museum exhibition as a shared domain," providing a platform for subjective achievement, personal agency, and identity affirmation. The exhibition's structure encourages an exploration of the inner aspects of people's life experiences and emotions, allowing individuals to perceive museum activity as meaningful.

From Vision to Action: Translating Creative Research into Policy Impact

The TRAST project approaches cultural policy not as a top-down regulation but as an emergent field of shared meaning-making. Our performative and participatory methods produce not only artistic outcomes but also evidence-based, community-informed policy insights. These are captured through continuous monitoring, analysis, and stakeholder consultation throughout WP3 and WP4.

2. MISSION

The project team's perspective on insularity, narration, and identity formation recognizes their multi-actor nature and their connection to creative practice as a form of practice-led research within an innovative research paradigm. This includes:

1. Performative Research: This approach aims to generate sufficiently generalizable knowledge through participative methods.

2. Performative Turn in Research: Moving beyond viewing "culture-as-text," it perceives culture as a dynamic process with the capacity to produce reality and influence thoughts, words, and deeds. It emphasizes cycles of making and reflection, leading to the emergence of new objects of thought with transformative power.

The perspective also acknowledges that research instruments and objects are active co-producers in collaborative and participatory approaches. Consequently, the principles of openness, as defined and facilitated by digital technologies and collaborative tools, are extended across the entire research cycle. This includes sharing, collaboration, and providing users free access to experimental elements for research reproduction. Importantly, it welcomes participation and contributions from individuals beyond scientists and experts, emphasizing inclusivity and growth through co-creation.

The participative work methodology is guided by fundamental principles rooted in the respect for local cultural beliefs, particularly the aspirations related to the residents' quality of life, with the goal of reinforcing their identity. The methodology emphasizes a dialogic relationship and the promotion of autonomy. It ensures that the work is not conducted by external groups but by individuals familiar with the foundational concepts of the project. Methodologically inspired by critical pedagogy, the approach aims at social transformation.

The TRAST methodology combines an in-depth examination of secondary cases and existing theories with the creation of original participative transmedia works. These works, presented in both offline and online exhibition formats, encompass various forms such as video/film, performance, visual and theatrical storytelling, a museum collection, cultural or heritage artifacts, and intangible elements like personal and collective memories of insular groups or communities.

Our overarching methodological approach employs a multimethod strategy and intellectual and practical synthesis to deliver informative, comprehensive, balanced, and useful project results. Driven by the goal of conducting an emancipatory, anti-discriminatory, participatory project focused on the lives and experiences of individuals or groups in insular contexts, it incorporates various viewpoints, qualitative data collection, and analysis. The method considers local and broader socio-political realities, resources, and needs. Its advantage lies in its flexibility, allowing the inclusion of diverse approaches, strategies, styles, and methods throughout the project stages.

The multimethod approach is applied consistently across all project stages, incorporating theoretical perspectives, concepts, analytical strategies, styles, and research methods. While encompassing various types of research (historical, participatory) and data collection methods (physical and virtual), it emphasizes co-creative practices, methods, and outputs in project design. The aim is to generate insights that can be generalized and documented through two types of practice-related research.

1. Research through Creative Practice: This involves investigating and acquiring new knowledge related to insularity by incorporating co-creation and practical expertise from creative practitioners. The knowledge will be showcased through creative artifacts and outcomes in design, digital and visual media (such as film, VR), performances, and the TRAST transmedia storytelling exhibition.

2. Research Guided by Creative Practice: This approach utilizes co-creative work as a research and investigative tool to develop fresh insights into the project's practices. The aim is to generate knowledge about the practice itself and innovations within the practice that hold operational significance. Integrating co-creative practices into research validates the knowledge, methodologies, and tools characteristic of the project. The research spans various creative disciplines and employs diverse methods, including life histories/autobiographies, narrative examination, observation of participants, and more.

Incorporating multiple participants' perspectives aligns with a constructivist view of reality as multifaceted. Additionally, it resonates with a participatory perspective grounded in a subjective-objective ontology, emphasizing empowerment, collaboration, recognition of political realities, and findings negotiated with participants.

3. OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of Work Package 4 is to formulate effective policy recommendations that foster the development of novel approaches to social and cultural innovation. The aim is to achieve social and cultural inclusion for insular groups and communities, while also promoting intercultural dialogue. The strategic framework, devised through a cross-sectional approach, integrates actions across various disciplines and work areas, emphasizing policy aspects and their implications. These recommendations will be utilized by all project partners to facilitate widespread dissemination and application beyond the project cycle.

The project framework is centered around implementing an innovative exhibition format/model for the cross-cultural transmedia exhibition, which seamlessly blends physical, virtual, and digital spaces. This approach foresees dialogic exhibition practices and museographic forms through collaborative processes in transmedia exhibition development, encompassing film/video, VR, AR, performance, and sound/music. The model aims to connect distant communities, address their needs, and foster coexistence among diverse individual and group identities. It proposes a new strategy for revitalizing cultural forms using art, storytelling, and new technologies to revive tangible and intangible cultural heritage in a profound and memorable manner.

The project's innovative approach focuses on using experimentation to enhance the cultural competencies and capacities of cultural organizations and individuals. Additionally, it explores and implements new solutions in applying technological innovation to cultural presentation.

The project's innovative practices and models are rooted in the discourses of insularity and draw from experiences across museums, culture, and heritage fields. These practices involve participatory, community-led action, and co-creation through offline and online exploratory methods, aimed at fostering transformative change in target communities.

The project's added value lies in the unique combination of relevant stakeholders, including culture experts, artists/creative practitioners, curators, sustainable development experts, and various cultural stakeholders. This diverse group collaborates with target communities to develop an innovative model for cultural resources management. This model encourages community involvement and creative interpretive strategies (artistic approach) to increase the value of cultural resources. The project brings together stakeholders and experts to address specific project issues collaboratively, including exhibition and installation development, heritage protection, and the intersection of culture and digital technologies.

The TRAST methodology combines in-depth study of secondary cases and existing theories with the production of original participative transmedia works. These works, bundled in both offline and online exhibition formats, include video/film, performance, visual and theatrical storytelling, and a collection featuring museum or gathered cultural/heritage artifacts, personal artifacts of cultural value, and intangible elements of heritage such as personal and collective memories of insular groups or communities.

Impact Monitoring and Policy Relevance Assessment

The project incorporates a lightweight policy impact monitoring tool based on qualitative indicators (e.g., depth of community engagement, cultural representation, institutional uptake) and structured stakeholder validation sessions. Key moments include participatory focus groups, co-evaluation workshops, and policy labs.

4. ACTIONS

Comparative research and analyses

The research will be exploratory in approach and will use qualitative methods such as content analysis of primary and secondary written sources (professional literature, research documents, organisational reports, official documents, media reports, analysis of official data). In addition, participant observation and semi-structured individual and group interviews with open-ended questions will be used. These methods offer participants the opportunity to articulate their experiences and thoughts. The main characteristic of the research is its sensitivity, which focuses on examining participants' experiences and emotions through qualitative enquiry.

Transmedia & performative, practice-led research

Establishing a programme of practical experiments involves working directly with various areas/regions to identify challenges, assist isolated groups in evolving into cultural and social innovators, and promote the development and expansion of shared solutions.

In Work Package 4 the objective is to explore an exhibition model that redefines exhibitions as processes and actions rather than products. This approach places significant emphasis on experimentation, research, and interpretation, particularly in social, cultural, and museological contexts. WP4 involves specific forms of interpretation, including performance, sound, theater, and related mediums such as film/video and installation. By creating a dialogical physical and specially designed digital space, multiple stories, identities, and perspectives will be unveiled, unraveled, and presented. This approach provides an opportunity to contemplate and express sensitive issues within multicultural societies and insular communities or groups.

This framework provides a way for exploring and reshaping the exhibition's concept, meaning, and potential. It presents a comprehensive perspective on the cultural and material environment, impacting the well-being of the communities involved. The objective is to assign distinctive and robust cultural significance to varied cultural characteristics using a similar approach to culture and heritage management, development, presentation, regeneration, and sustainability. This commitment extends to the present while establishing a direct link to the future. In an innovative manner, Work Package 4 promotes social and cultural engagement, as well as cross-sectoral practices, by synergizing visual, digital, and sound art, heritage, the museum field, theater, and cultural tourism.

Strategic Framework

Starting with the general objectives of the project, we proceed to delineate specific objectives applied explicitly for laboratory activities.

Subsequently, it is essential to identify the target group reference and the arts that will be considered. The practical application of these arts to the target group involves the use of specific techniques designed to improve the effectiveness of target group involvement.

Following this, an examination of the expected results becomes crucial, with a particular emphasis on the tangible impact of the applied techniques on the target group.

Moreover, there is a subsequent exploration of how these techniques could be extrapolated to other artistic fields, employing a cross-sectorial approach, while taking into account policy considerations.

Finally, the outcomes may contribute to the formulation of new policies fostering the identified target groups.

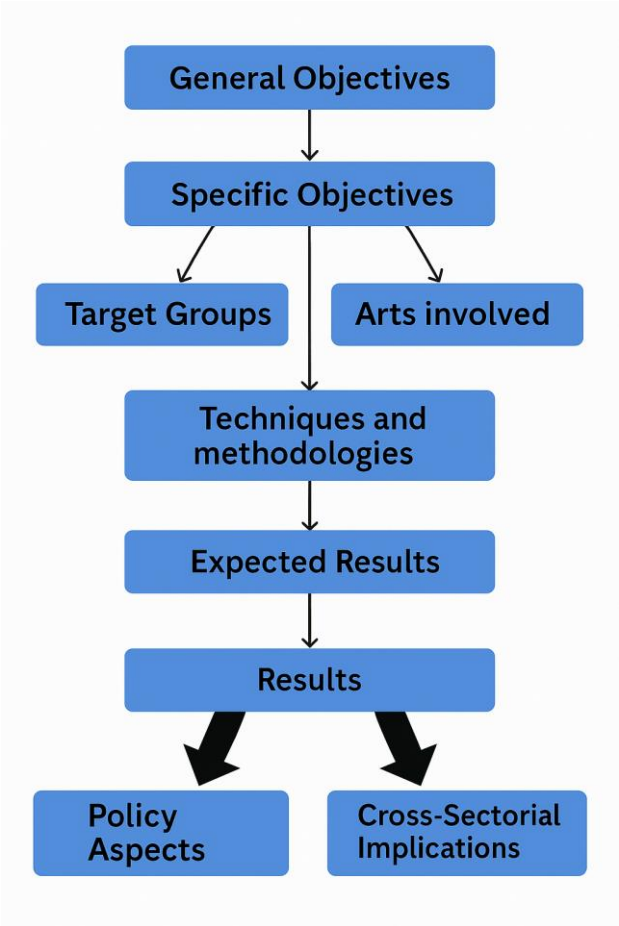

Figure 1: Strategic Framework Process Flow

General Objectives

To promote social and cultural inclusion of insular communities through participatory, transmedia artistic practices that foster coexistence, identity recognition, and intercultural dialogue.
To ensure the development of a usable and sustainable cultural management model grounded in experimentation, artistic expression, and co-creation.

Specific Objectives

- To develop and test an innovative exhibition model conceived as a dialogic, process-based space rather than a static product.
- To explore the potential of artistic disciplines to counteract isolation and marginalization of the targeted groups.
- To strengthen the capacities of local cultural actors and communities through collaborative artistic work and reflection.

Target Groups

The TRAST framework is designed to support communities experiencing spatial, social, cultural, or institutional exclusion—commonly referred to as "insular" in a broader, non-geographic sense. These are groups that face barriers to creativity, productivity, and social belonging due to isolation, marginalization, or systemic disadvantage. Such conditions may stem from limited access to cultural infrastructure, participation opportunities, or recognition in dominant narratives. They include, for example, post-colonial migrant communities (e.g., Cape Verdean women in Portugal), indigenous minorities undergoing cultural assimilation (e.g., Greenlandic Inuit), young creatives in EU-aspiring countries (e.g., the Western Balkans), and rural or remote island populations. These groups often experience compounded vulnerabilities—ranging from psychological and social isolation to cultural stereotyping, unemployment, and lack of access to education, welfare, or cultural life. The framework is intentionally open and inclusive, aiming to address diverse forms of insularity and support empowerment through participatory, arts-based strategies.

Arts Involved

- Theatre and performance arts (including participatory and documentary formats).
- Film and digital media (including VR/AR).
- Visual arts and storytelling.
- Sound and music as identity-driven mediums.

Techniques and Methodologies

- Biographical and autobiographical narrative methods.
- Participatory observation and creative interviewing.
- Use of VR technology to "immerse" in the lived experience of excluded communities.
- Co-mapping practices of memory and intangible heritage.

Expected Results

- Empowered target groups through artistic expression and active participation.
- Formulation of recommendations for including marginalized voices in cultural policymaking.
- Development of a sustainable exhibition format model applicable across diverse contexts.

Results

- Realized hybrid exhibitions (offline/online) using transmedia content that reflect the experiences and identities of the target groups.
- Increased visibility of the challenges of insularity in both cultural and political spheres.
- Development of transferable tools and methodologies suitable for replication.

Policy Aspects

The TRAST project advances a policy framework rooted in co-creation, cultural rights, and participatory practices. Its recommendations are designed to be applicable across multiple governance levels and institutional contexts.

Comparative Alignment with EU Policy Tools

TRAST aligns with the objectives of major European frameworks, providing a strong foundation for translation into policy actions. These include:

- Creative Europe's *Culture for Social Inclusion* action lines,
- Council of Europe's *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC)*, and
- New European Bauhaus, promoted across both Horizon Europe and Creative Europe, which supports inclusive, sustainable, and aesthetic co-creation bridging culture, design, and innovation.

These references provide the scaffolding for translating TRAST outputs into **scalable, repeatable policy formats**.

Macro-Level Policy Proposals *(EU / national level)*

- Integrate insular-sensitive indicators into national and EU cultural strategies and funding schemes.
- Allocate targeted funding at the EU level for participatory artistic initiatives addressing isolation in marginalised territories.
- Adopt policy instruments that link cultural participation with well-being, inclusion, and regional development outcomes.
- Encourage transnational cooperation programs that prioritize co-creation with underrepresented communities.

Meso-Level Institutional Practices *(Institutional / sectoral level)*

- Promote inclusion strategies within museum and cultural governance models (e.g., community advisory boards, resident curatorships).
- Fund training programs for institutions and practitioners in participatory facilitation and dialogic curating.
- Encourage partnerships between cultural institutions and social welfare, education, and urban development actors.
- Adopt participatory budgeting models for cultural institutions to include marginalized voices in decision-making.
- Proposals targeting public institutions (e.g., museums, community cultural centers, schools) to adopt participatory methods.
- Frameworks supporting inclusive exhibition models rooted in community dialogue, critical pedagogy, and cultural rights.

Micro-Level Operational Guidelines *(Local / grassroots level)*

- Co-develop exhibitions and cultural interventions with affected communities using participatory and co-creative methods.
- Embed co-creative artistic methods and practices into local development plans, particularly in areas facing spatial, social, or cultural exclusion.
- Support grassroots cultural initiatives through small grants, logistical assistance, and access to institutional infrastructure.
- Use storytelling and digital media tools to increase visibility of marginalized identities and lived experiences.

Suggested Impact Indicators

- Measurable increase in cultural participation **and engagement in co-creative processes** among insular or marginalized communities.
- Increased community cultural participation**.**
- Adoption of inclusive cultural policies at the municipal and regional levels.
- Increased visibility and representation of insular / underrepresented groups in public cultural spaces.
- Sustained collaboration between cultural institutions and community-based actors beyond project cycles.
- Growth in collaborative projects between institutions and community-based actors beyond the project timeline.

Cross-sectorial Implications

- Applicability of participatory artistic methods across:
  • Education: heritage-based curricula and creative civic education.

• Health & Well-being: memory-sharing and identity restoration through art.
• Cultural Tourism: inclusive storytelling formats and immersive experiences.
• Urban Planning & Local Governance: participatory mapping and cultural planning.
- Enables multi-level partnerships among cultural actors, local authorities, civil society, and academia.

Glossary

With the aim of providing as accessible and complete a reading key as possible, a short glossary of the main terms and definitions is given below.

Strategic Framework: A document outlining the project's vision, mission, values, objectives, and operational strategies.

General objectives: Broad, overarching goals that define the long-term purpose of the project.

Specific objectives:: Targeted, actionable goals that contribute directly to achieving the general objective.

Arts/disciplines involved: Forms of artistic practice implemented during workshops (e.g., theatre, VR, performance).

Techniques involved: Specific artistic, educational, or digital techniques used during project activities (e.g., improvisation, digital mapping).

Involved target group: Communities or populations defined as insular or marginalized and engaged in project activities.

Expected results: The intended impacts of project activities (e.g., enhanced social cohesion, identity recognition).

Case studies: In-depth research into specific communities or individuals used to generate applied knowledge and support arguments.

Team of experts and artists: A multidisciplinary group guiding co-creation processes, including cultural experts, artists, and facilitators.

Results: The actual outputs and impacts of project activities on target groups and stakeholders.

Policy Aspects: How project outputs can inform or influence policies at various governance levels.

Cross-sectorial Areas of Work Implications: How methods and results can be applied in other fields such as education, health, tourism, or governance.

Insularity: Not solely a geographical condition, but a broader state of cultural, social, or psychological detachment, exclusion, or marginalization.

Policy Recommendations and Projections: Formulated actions aimed at institutional change, addressing systemic gaps, enhancing inclusion, and combating discrimination.

Policy Co-Creation: A collaborative policy-making process where communities, artists, and stakeholders jointly develop policy ideas based on lived experiences.

Participatory Methodologies: Research and engagement techniques emphasizing collaboration, dialogue, and shared authorship in knowledge or content creation.

Insular Communities: Groups that experience systemic exclusion, reduced access to cultural infrastructure, or socio-political detachment—whether due to geography, history, or institutional neglect.

Transmedia Storytelling: The practice of conveying narratives across multiple platforms (film, VR, performance, etc.), often collaboratively and involving diverse voices.

ANNEX I: Policy Mapping and Extraction Framework for Participatory Cultural Research

Exploring policy aspects of the project's creative research activities
This annex aims to give an overview and a practical tool for implementing the task T4.1.
It will run in parallel with the project's creative research activities. On the following pages, is a guidance on how to extract policy-relevant insights and implications from every creative and participatory activity conducted through qualitative and, especially, artistic methods. This includes a mix of desk research, stakeholder reflection, and structured documentation during the project

Purpose
This document is designed as a practical tool to collect and structure information about relevant policies at national and international levels. It serves a dual function:

1. To offer implementing partners a comprehensive overview of the legislative, cultural, and social landscape affecting communities in conditions of insularity (geographical, social, cultural, or psychophysical).
2. To organize findings that emerge during the project's co-creative and participatory phases—including workshops and stakeholder discussions—into a coherent, policy-relevant narrative.

Definition of policy recommendations and projections
Policy recommendations refer to strategic guidance aimed at improving legal, administrative, or institutional practices. These may focus on strengthening the capacities of public cultural institutions, reducing stigmatization, fostering media pluralism, combating hate speech, or supporting inclusive cultural narratives.

CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Effectiveness*: the recommendations have been successful in achieving the desired result.
- *Efficiency*: good use of resources. In other words, they can be put into practice with resources easily available.
- *Relevance*: the use of these recommendations is in line with the aims of the project, they are directed to the target groups and stakeholders.
- *Sustainability*: their application is independent of the actual duration of the project and can continue in the future.
- *Duplicability*: they can be easily replicable.
- *Cross-sectorality*: they can be applied in more than one artistic or cultural sector (or in different contexts beyond art and culture).
- *Participatory Validity*: Recommendations have been co-developed, tested, or validated in collaboration with affected communities and stakeholders, enhancing legitimacy and relevance.

KEY STAKEHOLDER CATEGORIES:

1. **Cultural Institutions and Networks** – museums, cultural centers, galleries, and arts councils.
2. **Creative Professionals and Community Artists** – creators engaged in participatory or insular-sensitive work.
3. **Social and Development NGOs** – actors in tourism, sustainability, education, or community empowerment.

4. **Public Administrations** – national, regional, and municipal policy makers and development agencies.
5. **Academic and Research Institutions** – especially those active in cultural studies, heritage, or inclusive policy design.

ANNEX II: Policy Extraction Questionnaire

For use during WP3 & WP4 participatory and research activities

This tool is designed to help implementing partners extract policy-relevant insights, contextual data, and recommendations from artistic co-creation, community engagement, and desk research. It supports evidence-based policymaking and contributes to the overall strategic framework of the TRAST project.

I. European and National Legal Contexts

According to the research carried out, which regulatory instruments provide support for the target group from a European perspective?

.....

What is the current legal framework at EU level regarding the support of the target group?

With which instruments does the EU facilitate the inclusion and integration of the target group?

.....

Which additional European regulatory instruments should be put in place to guarantee better support for the target group?

.....

Based on national/regional research, what are the regulatory instruments that currently exist or should be developed to support the target group?

.....

What is the main regulatory framework at national and local level concerning the rights of the target group?

.....

II. Social Context Mapping

Describe the target group(s) and the main causes of their condition of insularity and marginalisation.

.....

How does the target group experience insularity and marginalisation at national level?

.....

How is this condition experienced at regional/local level?

.....

What is the approximate percentage of the target group in the local/regional population?

.....

What is the target group's proportion within the national population?

.....

What percentage does the target group represent at EU level?

.....

How much public funding is allocated annually to cultural and social inclusion policies for the target group at local level?

.....

How much funding is available for these purposes at national and EU levels?

.....

What percentage of the target group has access to:

- Secondary education?
- Welfare services?
- Cultural participation?

To what extent (and in what forms) does the group engage in formal (e.g., elections, consultations) and informal (e.g., associations, committees) civic life?

.....

III. Cultural Ecosystem & Artistic Practices

Have any EU, national, or local cultural projects been implemented in the past year to empower the target group through art? If yes, which disciplines were used?

.....

What was the local impact of these initiatives?

.....

How much (on a scale of 1–10) did they engage the local population and other target groups?

.....

How were the events perceived and evaluated by participants?

.....

Which artistic forms or cultural practices best addressed the needs of the group?

.....

Are there active organizations in the region working culturally with the target group?

.....

In which sectors (culture, tourism, social innovation, education, etc.) do the involved stakeholders operate?

.....

What are stakeholders' assessments of research outcomes, and which policy instruments do they suggest for reducing insularity?

.....

IV. Media and Representation

How do national and local media report on the insularity and marginalisation of the target group?

.....

Is this media coverage considered adequate or problematic?

.....

How does media influence public perception and the actual condition of the target group?

.....

This structured set of questions ensures consistency in data gathering across TRAST partners and supports the development of robust, community-grounded policy recommendations.

.....

POLICY FRAMEWORK

The following table serves as a standardized format for each partner to document relevant policies at European, national, and regional/local levels during the research phase. This ensures consistency and comparability across all contributions to Annex II.

Country:
Partner Institution:
Contact Person:

Name of Policy	Level (EU/National/Regional)	Year[1]	Country[2]	General Description[3]	Reference Link

(Add rows as needed)

[1] **Year:** Enter the year the policy was adopted, published, or last updated.
[2] **Country:** Enter the country responsible for the policy (e.g., Italy, Greece, or EU if it's a European-wide regulation).
[3] **General Description:** Provide a short summary of the policy's aim and how it supports cultural inclusion, participatory practices, or addresses insularity and marginalisation.

CROSS-SECTORIAL FRAMEWORK

The following framework aims to report the information that emerged during the workshop activities (WP3) of the project. It serves a dual purpose:

1. To evaluate which activities and techniques can be applied transversally across disciplines, sectors, and stakeholder groups.
2. To identify and document policies that emerged from workshop practice and could inform policy recommendations.

Cross-Sectorial Approach Template

CATEGORY	WORKSHOP 1 (PLACE – DATE)	WORKSHOP 2 (PLACE – DATE)	WORKSHOP 3 (PLACE – DATE)
General Objectives of the Activity			
Specific Objectives of the Activity			
Arts/Disciplines Involved			
Methods used			
Techniques Involved			
Target Group(s) Involved			
Expected Results			
Results			
Policy Aspects			
Cross-Sectorial Implications			
Areas of Work			