MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Subject: Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of a European Concerted Research Action designated as COST Action IS1007: Investigating Cultural Sustainability

Delegations will find attached the Memorandum of Understanding for COST Action IS1007 as approved by the COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) at its 180th meeting on 1 December 2010.
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
For the implementation of a European Concerted Research Action designated as

COST Action IS1007
INVESTIGATING CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Parties to this Memorandum of Understanding, declaring their common intention to participate in the concerted Action referred to above and described in the technical Annex to the Memorandum, have reached the following understanding:

1. The Action will be carried out in accordance with the provisions of document COST 4159/10 “Rules and Procedures for Implementing COST Actions”, or in any new document amending or replacing it, the contents of which the Parties are fully aware of.

2. The main objective of the Action is to conceptualise and mobilize the cultural dimension of sustainable development, to examine and compare best policy practices and to investigate frameworks and indicators for cultural sustainability assessments.

3. The economic dimension of the activities carried out under the Action has been estimated, on the basis of information available during the planning of the Action, at EUR 56 million in 2010 prices.

4. The Memorandum of Understanding will take effect on being accepted by at least five Parties.

5. The Memorandum of Understanding will remain in force for a period of 4 years, calculated from the date of the first meeting of the Management Committee, unless the duration of the Action is modified according to the provisions of Chapter V of the document referred to in Point 1 above.

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A. ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS

Due to its broad definition and understanding, “culture” can be regarded as a fundamental issue, even a precondition to be met on the path towards Sustainable Development (SD) that is necessary to face in our various European societies. Yet the theoretical and conceptual understanding of culture within the general frames of sustainability remains vague. Consequently, the role of culture in the political framework of sustainable development is poorly considered. Therefore, the ultimate goal of this COST Action is to increase the understanding and to determine the role of culture in SD based on multidisciplinary principles.

The work will be carried out: 1) by investigating and mobilizing the concept of culture in the context of SD through multidisciplinary approaches and analyses; 2) by examining the best practices for bringing culture into policy and practical domains; and 3) by developing means and indicators for assessing the impacts of culture on SD. The results of the Action will be exploited by: the scientific community; policy makers; administrative personnel and practitioners working with sustainability and culture from the EU to the local level.

Keywords: Sustainable development, culture, cultural sustainability, cultural policy, indicators
B. BACKGROUND

B.1 General background

The neologism Sustainable Development (SD) was launched in 1987 by the Brundtland Commission, formally known as the World Commission on Environment and Development. In its report, SD was defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. SD is usually considered to be composed of the ecological, economic and social dimensions or pillars (Black 2005). The interrelationship between culture and development was taken into proper consideration in the WCCD Report ‘Our Creative Diversity’ (1995) where culture was acknowledged to play both an instrumental role in promoting economic progress and have a constituent role as a desirable end in itself (Throsby 1998; Kangas 2005). Since then, SD and culture have been connected in many international reports, such as the Biodiversity Convention (1992), From the Margins (European Council 1997), the European Treaties of Maastricht (1993) and Amsterdam (1997), the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage (UNESCO 2001), the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO 2005), the Agenda for culture 21 (2004; 2009), the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (EC Commission 2008), the Decade of Education for SD in 2005-2014 (UN/UNESCO), the Culture in Development Policy (EC 2006) and the European Consensus on Development (European Parliament, Council and Commission 2006).

In spite of these international conventions, the cultural dimension of sustainability has not been sufficiently recognised in scientific research and sustainability policy implementation (Throsby 2008). Usually, it has been either examined as a component of the social dimension or it has been totally ignored. Yet, especially due to the broad definition, culture lies at the very heart of sustainability, as it refers to how we understand and appreciate natural resources and each other (Dewey 1951; Alexander 1987; Reisch 2006; Stefanovic 2000; Birkeland 2008).
The neglect of culture in SD can first result from conceptual difficulties, as the concept of culture, similar to that of sustainability and development, is multidisciplinary and ambiguous by nature and subject to fierce debate (Williams 1983; Throsby 2001; Kangas 2005). The conceptual difficulties and the tension between the broad (as a way of life or as network of meanings) and narrower (as sectoral policy or as art and high culture) definitions of culture cause difficulties for the communication between researchers belonging to different traditions and disciplines, as well as between researchers, development practitioners, public policy and NGOs (Pímes 2008). In addition to this, culture is dynamic in spatial and temporal scales, which are primary means for both individualisation and social differentiation (Harvey 1990), and which have further been challenged by globalisation (see e.g. Castells 2000, Massey 2005). Depending on the definition of culture and the context in which it is examined, distinct meanings for culturally sustainable development can be found.

Secondly, there is a question on the relationship between culture, development and sustainability. Culture can be seen as a means and/or end of development (Throsby 2001; Sen 2008). However, in the context of sustainability, a distinction has to be made, whether we focus on culture for development or culture as development (Throsby 2008; de Bustos 2009). The role of culture as a way to development was supported by theories of modernization, whereas, during recent years, there has been a growing tendency to view culture as an instrument for economic and social development and regional policy (Throsby 2001, 2008; Siivonen 2008; Soini & Birkeland 2009). Many researchers have pointed out drawbacks, which follow exactly the latter line of thought (Robinson 1998; Dorsey et al. 2004; Siivonen 2008). Culture as development is less discussed in the context of SD. Here a further challenge is included in the concept of sustainable development itself: it is an oxymoron referring both to stability and change (Redclift 2005).
Thirdly, sustainable development is at the heart of policy design (EC 2008): basically all current policies strive for sustainability, but the role of culture in the policies is poorly understood and mobilized. Therefore, it is important to analyse and benchmark policies that have successfully included the cultural perspective, and analyse the reasons why culture is not adequately taken into consideration. Compared with other dimensions of sustainability, there are only few impact assessments (such as EIA, SIA) related to culture – presumably due to the complex character of culture described above. Yet, indicators and other measures have turned out to be important tools for policy discussion and policy making (Rosenström 2009), and therefore it is useful to develop such assessment methods for culture as well.

Hence, according to this Action, culture should be regarded as a fourth pillar of SD in this age of climatic and economic crises, calling for new ways of thinking and living. The Action applies an approach to cultural sustainability, which implies both the development of the cultural sector and culture as the proper place, or foundation, in all development policies (see Agenda 21 for culture 2009). COST provides the optimal means for mapping this complex and multidisciplinary topic and for constructing a theoretical and methodological basis for further international research and policy activities in this field. Followed by this omission of culture in the sustainability discourse, what is now needed is an opening up of the discussion on the contents and frames for culture in the context of SD among the researchers and across various disciplines. To date, no single discipline nor researcher has provided appropriate frameworks to deal with the cultural dimension of sustainability, but there are many who acknowledge the cultural approach for fulfilling the aims of SD without having the appropriate scientific means to achieve it.

B.2 Current state of knowledge

As indicated below many studies have recognised the importance of a cultural approach to SD, but the scholarly understanding of the issue is still insufficient in terms of theoretical conceptualisations and policy analysis.
Cultural perspective to SD has especially been emphasised in the context of developing countries, indigenous cultures and nature conservation (e.g. Berkes & Folke 1994, 1998; Michaelidou & Decker 2002; Radcliffe 2006), and also in the context of primary production, tourism and regional development (Rannikko 1999; Dorsey et al. 2004; Siivonen 2008). The studies have suggested that cultural sustainability requires the recognition of local cultural values, equal rights and cultural logic of the respective communities in policy planning and decision-making, providing support for community-based or participatory approaches. Moreover, it has been noted that development should not take place at a rate that exceeds the ability of the local communities to adapt to change (Rannikko 1999). In this context the relationship between culture, democracy and SD in local and regional cultural policy making has also been explored (Johannisson 2006). This way of dealing with cultural sustainability reflects the general trend of SD discourses since 1987, shifting away from the preservation of the needs to the rights of humans and non-humans, and questions of power and equality (Redcliff 2005) and heritage (with reference to the themes of bio-regionalism), viewed as the strategic keys for a sustainable future. This approach is linked to the studies of local territorial systems focusing on the SD processes for valorisation of local material and non-material resources, involving ecological, social, cultural spheres and the auto-organisational skills of local communities. This calls for culture-specific understandings of culturally sustainable development, which is stressed in the behavioural and cultural sciences (Kent 1984; Hummon 1992; Lewica 2005) field of architectural and urban ambiances. There are also some institutions outside Europe (e.g. in Canada) which have already been involved in the topic.

Secondly, cultural sustainability has been associated with the role of art, creativity and cultural activities for community vitality and community planning of urban and rural areas (Helander et al. 2005; Chiu 2004; Kong 2009). Moreover, the promotion of cultural diversity and the preservation and conservation of tangible and intangible local cultural heritage have been considered important for both cultural and economic development (Hawkes 2001; Kennedy & Hall 2006; Birkeland 2008).

Thirdly, cultural sustainability has been viewed as a dimension of sense of place (Vileniske 2008) and local or place-based self-sustainable development (Rapoport 1969; Magnaghi 2005). Here the territory is considered as an entity that is given priority in place-consciousness: a reflexive relation with local identity.
Fourthly, cultural sustainability has been understood as a sustainable way of life, based on ethical choices in the everyday activities, consumption of products and services in relation to the environment and other people (Hajer 1996; Reisch 2006; de Bustos 2009). Cultural policy, social learning, innovations and education for sustainable development have been considered to be the essential means for the required cultural change.

Fifthly, the so-called bio-cultural approach to sustainability highlights the importance of diversity of life in all of its manifestations, i.e. biological, cultural, and linguistic, which are interrelated (and possibly co-evolved) within a complex socio-ecological adaptive system (Kassam 2009). It is suggested that these diversities do not exist in separate and parallel realms, but they rather interact with and affect one another in complex ways (UNESCO & UNEP 2003). So far these linkages have mainly been identified only in ecologically and culturally unique and valuable cases. More holistic approaches for these interlinkages, which acknowledge diversity, are now called for (Kassam 2009).

In addition to the perspectives named above, some other disciplines, for example cultural and social psychology, have sought for an understanding between sustainable development and culture (see Azurmendi et al. 2003).

Considering research that addresses the cultural dimension in an SD framework, there are some attempts that have sought to define the place of culture in relation to economic, social and ecological dimensions (Nurse 2006; Chiu 2004, Duxbury & Gillette 2007; Agenda 21 for culture 2009). Also, alternative concepts (including resilience and carrying capacity) or frameworks (including the Sustainable Livelihood approach), which take the cultural dimensions into consideration in development, have been introduced.
Regarding the cultural impact assessment, as demonstrated e.g. by studies on the social impacts of the arts, the benefits of culture on development or well-being are not easy to discern (Merli 2002). Similarly, it has been difficult to develop indicators for culturally sustainable development (Kangas 2005; Häyrynen 2005; Throsby 2003). As far as culturally ‘sensitive’ policy practices are concerned, the existing literature calls for developing new, participatory planning methods/processes, where cultural dimensions can be taken into consideration or where culture plays an important role in planning, for example for sustainable use of natural resources (Convention of Biodiversity 2004).

There are also some research networks that are linked to cultural sustainability or some aspect of it, such as: ORACLE, a network of European Cultural managers highlighting the importance of intercultural co-operations within the context of the European Union; Cultural Heritage and Property Group under the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore; the European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres (ENCATC); and the International Ambiances Network aiming at structuring and developing the research field of architectural and urban ambiances. There are also some institutions outside Europe and virtual internet-based discussion groups, which have somehow become involved in the topic.

Despite all these activities, it can still be argued that the link between culture and other dimensions of SD is still unstructured in scientific terms and it has not been fully discussed in the context of policies for SD. The innovation represented by this Action is that the Action will take culture as a starting point in the SD analysis. It will look at the issue by regarding culture both as an aspect of sustainability and as a new approach to solving existing problems associated in the societies. During the course of the Action, the cultural dimension will be integrated into the broader sustainability framework and will conclude with policy analysis and assessment. Such a multidisciplinary investigation into different thematic areas of development is new and innovative, and urgently needed to formulate the conceptual and theoretical groundwork so that a research agenda and policy practices can be developed. This will be possible with the measures the Action provides.
B.3 Reasons for the Action

The Action will address the existing research gaps and the lack of a cultural dimension in policy making by expanding the multidisciplinary knowledge-base. This will involve joint working and dissemination of the results in the scientific community and among the decision-makers in the private and public spheres. Moreover, the theme of this Action calls for new multi- and interdisciplinary communication. Currently, there are no suitable platforms for such interaction that can directly support the scientific research around the topic. The Action will promote the establishment of new, dedicated research networks and strengthen the existing networks of European researchers. In this way the Action will reinforce the existing links and create new ones between different branches of knowledge and professional practices incorporating environmental, economic and cultural issues.

Besides scientific activities, the Action will target the policy domain at European and national levels, encouraging integration of the cultural perspective into decision-making. The Action will also raise general awareness of the importance of culture within the context of sustainability, which could generate and support new visions of sustainability among social, economic and environmental stakeholders. In the long term, it can be argued that the Action will contribute to environmental, economic and social development within and outside Europe thorough increased awareness of the importance of culture in development. Thus the Action will benefit economic, social and cultural as well as scientific development.

B.4 Complementarity with other research programmes

The Action is linked to the project “SD in a Diverse World” (SUS.DIV, 2005-2010) co-financed by the European Commission (FP6, Priority 7) and the project “Cultural diversity in Europe” (EURODIV 2006-2009) supported by the European Commission too (FP6, and Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses). EURODIV provides top-level training opportunities to young researchers on understanding cultural diversity in Europe. However, these projects only touch on some aspects of cultural sustainability, whereas the approach of this Action is much more holistic.
C. OBJECTIVES AND BENEFITS

C.1 Main/primary objectives

The main objective of the Action is to conceptualise and mobilize the cultural dimension of sustainable development, examine and compare best policy practices and investigate frameworks and indicators for cultural sustainability assessments. In more details, the Action has the following three objectives:

1) To conceptualise and mobilize culture in the context of sustainable development. The Action involves inventories, analysis and comparison of ongoing research and development projects related to culture and sustainable development and analysis of the distinct theoretical approaches and meanings of culture in them. Similarly meanings given to sustainability and development need to be analysed. The multidisciplinary scientific knowledge produced in several contexts will be analysed and theoretical approaches related to the issue will be deepened. Furthermore, the conceptual and theoretical links to the other dimensions of sustainability, and to related concepts (e.g. resilience, sustainable livelihood, cultural democracy, cultural ecology) will be analysed too and proposals for new conceptual models will be developed. The Action will produce SD frameworks where culture is integrated with other dimensions of sustainability and/or totally alternative means for understanding and representing the role of culture in SD. Rather than a single definition, the Action will produce a systematic analysis of the various approaches, meanings, functions and use of culture in the context of SD.

2) To examine and compare practices for bringing culture into policy ad practical domains. The Action will produce a list of best practices and policies for culturally SD. It will also investigate the role of cultural policy in the societies.

3) To investigate frameworks for indicators for cultural sustainability. The Action will develop methodologies to determine/indicate cultural impacts for sustainable development.
C.2 Secondary objectives

The secondary objectives of the Action will be:

1. Develop a new multidisciplinary network of scientists working on topics of relevance to cultural sustainability;
2. Organise symposiums, seminars and workshops that use new, interactive ways of communication among the participants;
3. Establish a database for the literature related to the topic;
4. Design an international research agenda around the topic to be offered to EU and national research councils and generate other research activities among partners;
5. Involve young researchers in the research on the topic;
6. Involve policy makers from various levels and NGOs in the discussion on cultural sustainability
7. Use sustainable means of communication within the scientific communities and among practitioners
8. Produce and disseminate scientific and other publications on the topic in order to raise awareness of the topic

C.3 How will the objectives be achieved?

The objectives will be achieved through the collaboration between researchers representing various scientific backgrounds (cultural studies, cultural politics/policies, cultural planning, human geography, arts, aesthetics, ethnology, sociology, social policy, futures studies, tourism, environmental sciences, economics and philosophy), theoretical and methodological approaches to culture and development policies, as well as different empirical research fields ranging from urban to rural contexts. The multidisciplinary expertise will be engaged in the following activities:

- Workshops, seminars and symposiums that gather together scientists, politicians and NGOs and provide forums (panels and transversal working groups) for the exchange of knowledge across the disciplines;
- Exchange and production of knowledge in internal web-based systems;
- Organisation of training schools for the post-doctoral researchers interested in the topic;
- Publications targeting the scientific communities, decision makers, civil servants and the general public;
• Communication between the general public and representatives of public policy from various levels through Internet (an open discussion forum will be established);
• Mobility of the researchers provided by STSM;
• Co-operation with other COST Actions relevant to the topic (e.g. COST IS0802 The transformation of global environmental governance: risks and opportunities);
• Co-operation with existing research networks;
• Use of other financial instruments available (e.g. ERASMUS/MUNDUS) for post-graduate education on the topic.

In addition to the research activities, social movements are needed for the promotion of the issue (UNESCO 2009). There are several local movements around the cultural sustainability and the European Cultural Watch (CWE), which promotes culture as "the soul of democracy" by offering an innovative and evidence-based overview of culture, heritage and media developments in Europe. However, there is no real social movement (compared with environmentalism) for culture in sustainable development at the European level. Therefore this COST Action will seek to establish a forum or movement that bridges the divide between the scientific community and civil society.

C.4 Benefits of the Action

The Action will produce new knowledge on the cultural dimension of sustainability, based on systematic mapping of existing research and theoretical approaches, leading to the comparative analyses and the production of new frameworks. In that way, the Action has the potential to strengthen existing European research in the field of culture and sustainability. Moreover, it will increase the understanding by policy makers and practitioners (at all levels) of the important role that culture plays in sustainability issues and human-environment interactions. This is urgently needed for achieving the general aims of sustainability. The Action will promote joint multi- and interdisciplinary research activities in the broad field of culture, development and sustainability and engage young researchers within the topic. The knowledge produced by the Action and by the subsequent research activities will support the work of different sectors (e.g. social, cultural, health and environmental policies) of EU policies as well as international development programmes and civil society organisations.
C.5 Target groups/end users

Potential target groups will be:

- Policy makers and administrators at EU, national, regional and local level;
- Scientific communities (EU, bilateral and national multi- and interdisciplinary research);
- NGOs in the environmental, social and cultural sectors that promote sustainability, democracy and well-being of individuals, communities and the environment;
- Enterprises and entrepreneurs addressing cultural, ethical and environmental values;
- Professionals working with educational and sustainability issues.

D. SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

D.1 Scientific focus

The aim of the Action is to examine different approaches and positions of culture, ranging from broad to narrow conceptualisations, in different contexts and from the point of different development ideologies. Based on the variety of theoretical approaches and empirical cases represented by different disciplines, contexts and geographical scales, the approaches and cases will be synthesised, organized and represented in a systematic way.

Due to the complexity of the concept of culture itself, we apply an integrated approach that will follow a dual approach to culture and sustainability as proposed by Agenda 21 for culture (2009). Thus, in addition to the instrumental use of culture (like culture as culture industries, see Throsby 2008), the Action will also study a more holistic relation between culture and sustainable development in the public policy. This kind of approach will lead to a more harmonious and balanced territorial development (EC Commission 2008). The variety of approaches for culture emerging from different disciplines and research traditions will be acknowledged and examined in the Action. Therefore, the starting point for the Action is the broad definition for culture, i.e. culture as a system of meanings that become manifest and attain a material form in structure of experience and in cultural products covering the tangible and intangible aspects of culture (Williams 1983). Moreover, culture is understood as a dynamic process both in spatial and temporal terms (Fornäs 1998).
The Action is divided into four objectives, which are here represented as separate but in the practice they are closely linked with each other. All the sub-tasks have basically the same structure including inventory, analysis, synthesis and dissemination carried out by the participants of the Working Groups.

The aims of the Action are

1) To conceptualise culture and mobilize it in the context of sustainable development.

Culture is one of the two or three most complex words in the English language (Williams 1984). It has been employed in a variety of senses in everyday use, but without a tangible or generally agreed core meaning. As a scientific concept, it is essentially multidisciplinary and complex. The key question is how to deal with the concept of culture in a manner that is analytically and operationally useful in the context of SD. Some uses of culture are narrow, others are all-inclusive, where culture is indeed everything and becomes analytically empty and operationally meaningless. This problem lies at the heart of the following sub-task: how to establish appropriate frames for the concept of culture in the context of SD. A functional relationship between culture and other dimensions of SD should be found. Alternative concepts and approaches to sustainability, which recognise the cultural dimension, will be identified and analysed too.

This sub-task includes the following activities:

- Inventory of distinct approaches to culture, development and sustainability in various R&D approaches and mapping of existing models of culture in SD;
- Comparisons between the various uses and meanings of culture in various contexts and sustainability models;
- Synthesis of different meanings and functions of culture, sustainability and development;
- Proposals for framing culture in sustainable development;
- Identification of research needs for the future.
2) To examine best practices and policies for culturally sustainable development. Sustainability is included in all policies at the global, EU, national, regional and local level, and it has found its way into all sectoral policies, at least as a word. Nevertheless, the cultural dimension is not necessarily always represented in these policies. Within Europe, there are however policy practices where the cultural dimension is successfully included. Such work often takes place outside the research arena, i.e. in NGOs or other groups and organisations, local initiatives that cross boundaries, like arts-based or place-based initiatives. Yet, this work is not necessarily very well recognised by the researcher. For that reason, the exchange of knowledge and experience and mutual learning among practitioners and researchers, cutting across the scientific and policy-sector borders, should be encouraged.

This sub-task includes the following activities:

- Inventory of policy practices that promote a cultural approach in national, regional and local development with cooperation among practitioners (NGOs, civil servants, politicians);
- Comparison of these practices (why they were successful, how they dealt with culture);
- Analysis and synthesis of the practices;
- Descriptions of best practices that take culture into consideration;
- Identification of future research needs;

3) To investigate frameworks and indicators for assessing cultural sustainability. There are many sets of indicators for SD (SDIs) published by international organisations like the United Nations, OECD, European Environmental Agency, EUROSTAT as well as national agencies. Here, cultural indicators, if they exist, are often combined with social indicators. Yet, there is work on indicators currently ongoing in the field of cultural policy (see Kangas 2005: Agenda for culture 2006). There is also a lot of discussion as well as critical remarks addressed to the usefulness of the indicators and the difficulties related to their interpretation in policy making. However, it has been established that indicators are useful for policy making as well as for learning and raising awareness on issues (Rosenström 2009).
This sub-task consists of the following activities:

- Inventory of sets of cultural indicators (local, national, international);
- Comparison, classification and evaluation of the current sets of indicators;
- Exploration of new assessment methodologies for cultural sustainability;
- Design of new frameworks for assessing cultural sustainability;
- Identification of future research needs.

D.2 Scientific work plan methods and means

1. Symposiums
   
The Action will organise two symposiums open to the wider public besides the participants of the Action. The first symposium, organised at the end of the second year, will present the initial results of the Working Groups (inventory and comparison tasks of each Working Group). The second symposium, organised at the end of the Action, will present the final outputs of the Action.

   The themes of the symposiums are integrated with the objectives of the Action and the work of the four Working Groups. Both symposiums will involve decision makers (for example representatives of the European Union, etc.), civil servants and representatives of NGOs to discuss the topic and the outcomes of the Action. This will generate new knowledge, promote the exchange of knowledge, the dissemination of results and potential future cooperation and partnerships. The topic of the Action, similarly to culture itself, differs from country to country. Therefore, it is useful for the participants to become familiar with the specific issues related to the topic in each country/region where the symposiums will take place thorough excursions and involvement of local/national actors.

2. Seminars and workshops
   
   In addition to the symposiums, seminars and workshops will be organized in the first and third year. They are smaller events than symposiums, primarily addressed to the participants of the Action, but external experts can be invited to have lectures on the topics that are considered relevant for the Action.
3. Working Groups

Working Groups (WGs) are organized according to the three objectives. They will all work together, especially the first two. The Working Groups will focus on their topics and will have their own meetings once a year, although the participants will contribute to all the discussions.

Each WG will produce the following outputs:

- A state-of-the-art report at the beginning of the Action (inventories and comparisons);
- A final report (analysis and proposals);
- Research proposals/agendas focusing on research needs concerning especially their specific topic;
- Other publications of various forms (from scientific articles to newspaper articles) stemming from the main outcomes of their specific topic.

4. Short-term scientific missions

Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSM) will be organised to enable the exchange of young researchers. This will further enhance international cooperation among research groups and contribute to the implementation of optimal scientific methods. Such missions are particularly relevant for PhD students and post-docs who need to develop interdisciplinary understanding/approaches and/or come from different cultural backgrounds or contexts. The Action aims at 10 STSMs during the whole Action.

5. Communication within and outside the Action.

The success of the Action requires good and efficient communication among the Action participants as well as with the stakeholders and end-users. Therefore, it is important to facilitate appropriate communication tools for the discussion. An Action website will be established at the very first beginning of the Action and it will be linked to the websites of the participating universities and research institutions. This website will create a major link among the participants, and host a discussion forum for all interested in the topic. All the documents related to the Action will be posted with links to other relevant information sources.
The website will be maintained beyond the end of the Action. Scientific committees within the EU and national research councils will have access to the final research programme developed by the Action through the website.

In addition, at the beginning of the Action, a common web-based, closed on-line web-environment (e.g. Optima or Moodle) will be established for the Action participants. This tool can be exploited for informal communication between meetings, for the electronic distribution of materials that are in process, as a database for literature, for completing and turning in assignments, discussion boards, chats, etc.

6. Publications

Publications (scientific papers, edited books, book chapters, posters, CD-ROMs) will be produced throughout the Action. They will be addressed to various target groups, including the scientific communities, decision-makers and civil servants as well as the general public.

E. ORGANISATION

E.1 Coordination and organisation

The Action will have the following organisational bodies:

1. Management Committee (MC), which has a maximum of two representatives from each of the signatory Parties. The MC will be in charge of the Action. The MC will nominate the persons for the following positions:
   - Chair and Vice-Chair;
   - STSM manager responsible for issues related to the STSMs;
   - Technical Assistant responsible for the establishment and the regular update of the website as well as for the establishment and update of the web-environment tool and database for the literature.

2. Steering Committee (SC), which is composed of the Chair, Vice Chair, and Chairs and Vice Chairs of the WGs. The SC is an operative body responsible for preparing proposals for the MC (e.g. regarding planning symposiums and meetings, coordinating the research tasks, publications and research agenda). The Steering Committee may invite additional experts from the Management Committee for dealing with specific issues.
E.2 Working Groups

It is suggested that four Working Groups will be organised according to the three main objectives of the Action. These will focus on:

1. Conceptualisations of culture in the context of sustainable development;
2. Policy practices for cultural sustainability;
3. Indicators for cultural sustainability.

The WGs provide a home for each sub-task/objective of the Action. However, during the Action, they will work closely with each other so that the knowledge will be easily transferred among the experts and the groups. This interaction will be ensured by organising joint meetings and seminars, transversal workshops and using participatory working methods (e.g. Learning Cafes). The final responsibility for achieving the objectives and carrying out the activities remains within the WGs. The Chair and Vice Chair of each WG will be selected by the WGs and approved by the MC. Most WG meetings will be held as workshops and as part of the seminars/symposiums organized by the Action, so that the participants are able to attend plenary sessions. Much of the scientific work and documentation behind the development of the research programme will be carried out within meetings by WG participants, using the internal web-based (Optima/Moodle) and other tools.

E.3 Liaison and interaction with other research programmes

Possibilities for cooperation (joint meetings and publications, exchange of expertise) with other COST Actions (e.g. COST IS0802 “The transformation of global environmental governance: risks and opportunities” and COST Action IS0803 “Remaking Eastern borders in Europe: A network exploring social, moral and material relocations of Europe's eastern peripheries”) will be considered. Similarly, liaisons and interactions with other European and international ongoing research programmes will be mapped out and interaction in the form of Working Groups activities, joint seminars and publications will be considered.
E.4 Gender balance and involvement of early-stage researchers

This COST Action will respect an appropriate gender balance in all its activities and the Management Committee will place this as a standard item on all its MC agendas. The Action will also be committed to involve Early-Stage Researchers. This item will also be placed as a standard item on all Management Committee agendas.

The gender balance and the involvement of Early-Stage Researchers has already been take into consideration when planning the Action and inviting experts to join the Action. Gender balance will be considered for the nomination of experts in various positions within the Action (such as Chair/Vice chair, Chairs of the Working groups, etc.). Gender as such is not only important with regard to the gender of the participants in the Action. The Action will indeed ensure that gender issues are integrated on the basis that culture, cultural policy and sustainable development are not gender-neutral phenomena. Given that:

1) Gender is an analytical tool for understanding the cultural variation of sustainability along with other dimensions like ethnicity, class;
2) Constructs and theories involving nature-culture interaction are not gender-neutral (Merchant 1984, Plumwood 1993);
3) Science in itself is presented as a gender-neutral or even chauvinist social institution (Rose 1993). The network will make sure that gender is included in the network activities on all levels. Some of the participants in the network have scientific competence in gender and feminist studies. The contribution of gender issues on all levels will allow for a more holistic approach to culture and sustainable development.

As far as Early-Stage Researchers are concerned, they are actively invited to join the Action and to contribute to the Working Groups. Members of MC are responsible for making sure that there will be at least one Early-Stage Researcher from each Party participating in the Action. The Early-Stage Researchers will be offered various duties/research tasks by the Working Groups. As the topic of the Action is new, it is especially important to involve young researchers.
F. TIMETABLE

The Action will kick-off with a first Management Committee (MC) meeting and will last four years. A preliminary timetable is presented in Table 1. The MC can change it whenever they deem it appropriate or necessary. Note that various activities can take place during the same event (like MC meetings, seminars and workshops, and working-group meetings) in order to save travel costs.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR/MONTHS</th>
<th>NAME OF THE EVENT/ACTIVITY</th>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>OUTPUTS</th>
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<td>First year</td>
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<tr>
<td>01/01</td>
<td>MC meeting</td>
<td>Organisation of the Action</td>
<td>Nomination of persons in charge in the Action and the SC Work- and dissemination plan for the year 1-2 Evaluation plan and form for the Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/04</td>
<td>Kick off – seminar + WG meetings</td>
<td>Identification of expertise related to the topic; Detailed planning of the work of the WGs during the Action; Starting of the activity 1</td>
<td>Material of the seminar published on the website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/01-4</td>
<td>Establishment of external and internal websites and communication tools</td>
<td>Promotion of the internal and external communication</td>
<td>Web-pages and web-based working environment created; Database for literature established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/06-12</td>
<td>1 STSM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/12</td>
<td>SC meeting</td>
<td>Planning of the activities of the next year</td>
<td>Proposal for the MC – Committee to be discussed and agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>02/02</td>
<td>MC meeting:</td>
<td>Evaluation of the first year, planning of the second year</td>
<td>Scientific articles published by the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>02/02</td>
<td>WG meetings</td>
<td>Concluding the activity 1 and starting the activity 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Drafts of the state of the art reports (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/11</td>
<td>SC meeting</td>
<td>Planning of the activities for the next year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Proposal for the MC – Committee to be discussed and agreed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>02/11</td>
<td>First symposium</td>
<td>Communicating and disseminating the first results of the Action with the stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>State of the art reports; Conference proceedings</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>02/06</td>
<td>Training School (option)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>02/01-12</td>
<td>3 STSMs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third Year</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/02</td>
<td>MC meeting</td>
<td>Evaluation of the second year, planning of the third year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/02</td>
<td>WG meetings</td>
<td>Concluding the activity 2; Starting the activity 3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/10</td>
<td>SC meeting</td>
<td>Planning of the last year and symposium</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Proposal for the MC – Committee to be discussed and agreed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/11</td>
<td>MC meeting</td>
<td>Evaluation of the third year, planning of the final year</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>03/11</td>
<td>Internal seminar of the Action</td>
<td>Concluding the activity 3; Starting the Activity 4.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Material of the seminar published on the websites</td>
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<tr>
<td>03/08</td>
<td>Strategic workshop on some special topic (if needed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>03/1-12</td>
<td>3 STSMs</td>
<td>Reports of STSMs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fourth year</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>04/01</td>
<td>MC meeting</td>
<td>Evaluation of the third year, planning the activities of the final year and final outputs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Description</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 04/01-06 | WG meetings  | Completing the activity 4  
Starting with the final outputs of the WGs;  
Starting with the Research Agendas |
| 04/06  | SC meeting      | Working on the final outputs                                                |
| 04/10  | Final Conference | Communication and dissemination of the final outcomes (scientific outcomes and research agenda) of the Action with stakeholders  
Final Reports of the WGs Conference proceedings  
Research Agenda |
| 04/1-12| 3 STSMs         | Reports of STSMs                                                             |
| 04/10  | MC               | Evaluation of the Action and Planning for the future cooperation             |

**G. ECONOMIC DIMENSION**

The following COST countries have actively participated in the preparation of the Action or otherwise indicated their interest: BE, CY, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IS, IT, NO, PL, RS, SE, UK. On the basis of national estimates, the economic dimension of the activities to be carried out under the Action has been estimated at 56 Million € for the total duration of the Action. This estimate is valid under the assumption that all the countries mentioned above but no other countries will participate in the Action. Any departure from this will change the total cost accordingly.
H. DISSEMINATION PLAN

H.1 Who?

- Researchers, university teachers and research institutes working in the field of sustainability and culture;
- Policy makers at European, national and regional level;
- NGOs, civil servants and various organisations working in the cultural and environmental sectors and in the field of education at transnational, national and regional levels (e.g. Unesco, World Bank, national ministries);
- Regional and cultural planners;
- The general public.

H.2 What?

- State-of-the-art reports such as inventory of approaches/conceptualisations, sustainability frameworks, sets of indicators, policy practices (3 electronic publications);
- Final reports of the four WGs (3 printed publications);
- Symposium proceedings (2 printed publications);
- Guidelines for policy uses (3 e-publications);
- Internal platform (Optima, Moodle) for exchange of knowledge/publication, discussion, partnership creation;
- External website with main documentation related to the Action and links to publications
- Discussion forum on the topic;
- Newspaper articles (national representatives are responsible for writing these articles in their countries, 1 article/country);
- Outcomes of the Action will also be published as a special issues in well known journals in the filed such as the International Journal of Sustainable Development or the International Journal of Cultural Policy;
- Participation in future workshops and conferences gathering researchers, policy makers and administrators, NGOs and entrepreneurs using institutions such as ENCATC, the European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres.
H.3 How?

In addition to the conventional one-way means of dissemination (printed and electronic publications), various methodologies will be used to facilitate an efficient interaction among the researchers and the various stakeholders, including interactive web-pages and internet-based discussion forums. In addition, seminars and Working Group meetings will use, for example, participatory and future research methodologies and various kinds of panel, providing possibilities for gathering researchers, policy makers, administrators, NGOs and representatives of the private sector to discuss and debate the key topics of the Action. These working methods will generate new knowledge on the topic and promote dissemination. The members of the Action will attend other conferences and meetings and also non-academic events, where they will present the results from the Action and will be able to get feedback from the practitioners.