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Article

# A Contribution to the Integration of International, National and Local Cultural Heritage Protection through a Multilevel Approach to Planning: A Case Study of the Djerdap Area

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**Abstract:** The paper focuses on the application of a multilevel, integrative and territorial approach to the protection of cultural heritage through planning instruments in Serbia. It points out the problems of the sectoral approach and discusses international recommendations that can be integrated into the planning methodology. The case study is the area of Djerdap National Park, which has an already established international and national importance. The research suggests that the cultural heritage in the area, with the exception of the Roman limes, is still recognized at the level of individual localities. The study emphasizes the importance of aligning all levels of governance to safeguard the whole spatial entity rather than focusing solely on its particular areas. The international and national importance of the planning area contributes to the strengthening of awareness of heritage and its institutional protection. However, the vitality of the area, which is key to its sustainable development, comes from the local level. Planning documents contribute to the integration of local values and local communities into development programs and projects.

**Keywords:** Djerdap; danube; spatial plan; protected area; cultural heritage; multilevel approach

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## 1. Introduction

In recent decades, international documents concerning the preservation, planning, and governance of cultural heritage have emphasized a contextual approach and an expanded scope of protection, moving beyond individual monuments to encompass broader spatial entities. There is a clear call for integrating conservation strategies and the governance of historic urban areas with the overall development and with urban and spatial planning frameworks. Definitions of urban heritage and the historic urban landscape serve as the foundation for a holistic approach to identifying, assessing, and governing these spatial units within the broader context of sustainable development. The goals of urban heritage conservation are intertwined with those of social and economic development [1,2].

A multilevel approach to governance regarding the protection of historical areas and the integration of planning principles into spatial development framework is recognized in international contexts [3–5]. However, implementation of the national policy framework at the local level is often challenging and requires the coordination, collaboration and harmonization of measures for cultural heritage protection, planning standards and stakeholder interests [3].

The topic of multilevel governance is recognized in the planning framework of the Republic of Serbia (hereafter RS), i.e. in the development documents of spatial and sustainable urban development at the national level (e.g. *Law on the planning system of the RS* [6], *Strategy of the sustainable urban development of the RS* [7], *Spatial Plan of the RS* [8]). Spatial planning practice in Serbia recognizes a specific instrument called the spatial plan for special purpose areas. According to the law, these

plans are established for areas that require distinct regimes of organization, layout, usage, and protection of space. Such areas typically encompass key projects for the RS or those specified by the Spatial Plan of the RS or another spatial plan. Specifically, they focus on 'areas with natural, cultural-historical, or ambient significance' [9,10]. These plans contain a detailed elaboration of land use and zoning for special purposes that allows the direct implementation of development within the designated area.

This paper draws upon a case study of the Spatial Plan for the special purpose area of the Djerdap National Park (hereafter SPSP Djerdap) [11]. The SPSP Djerdap 2022 is third in line with the spatial plans of a special purpose area developed for the area, after its declaration as a national park in 1974. This testifies the continual attention to the area from the side of national institutions, striving for the protection of its territory. In comparison to previous plans (SPSP 1989 and SPSP 2013), the plan encompasses a considerably wider area that conditioned amendment and innovation of the data for all planning solutions. The methodology used for preparing the spatial plan is discussed, with particular emphasis on the treatment of cultural heritage. The overall objective of the paper is to explore how the spatial plan acts as an instrument for integrating international, national, and local levels of cultural heritage protection, by using a multilevel, integrative, and territorial approach.

Djerdap National Park was designated a protected area in 1974 by the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, primarily due to its exceptional natural attributes [12]. This status was further reinforced by its recognition as a UNESCO Global Geopark in 2020 [13], offering it both national and international institutional and legal protection. Both of these statuses required the adoption of relevant documents in the fields of governance by the competent organizations in order to achieve the protection, use and maintenance of the exceptional natural values in the area. Cultural heritage is highlighted as a value that must be treated in conjunction with natural heritage, without special guidelines.

The case study area encompasses numerous immovable cultural property sites [14–17]. At the same time, there is a lack of comprehensive institutional and legal measures addressing the protection of this area's cultural heritage as a whole [18]. With that in mind, it should be noted that Serbia ratified the EU cultural landscape charter [19], in the Official Gazette RS-International agreements, No. 4/11, and developed an action plan proposal for its implementation [20]. Djerdap National Park has been acknowledged as a cultural landscape [21]. However, it was not until 2021 that the Law on Cultural Heritage in Serbia introduced the category of cultural landscape [22], and its practical effects are yet to be observed. This situation reflects the current state of protection, characterized by a focus on individual localities lacking comprehensive protective mechanisms and a failure to recognize the value of buildings, units, and entire settlements [23,24].

The specific aim of the paper is to highlight the possibilities for improving planning methodology from the perspective of comprehensive cultural heritage protection, based on expertise, and adherence to legal frameworks and procedures, while incorporating theoretical knowledge from the field and recommendations from international practice. First of all, it describes the multilevel approach to protection in the case of the SPSP Djerdap, followed by an analysis of the results and contributions of the approach used. Then, possibilities for the general improvement of planning methodology in areas containing cultural assets are discussed. Finally, the paper draws attention to the need for improving the legal framework of planning, considering that this is the only secure path to incorporating recommendations into practice.

## 2. Materials and Methods

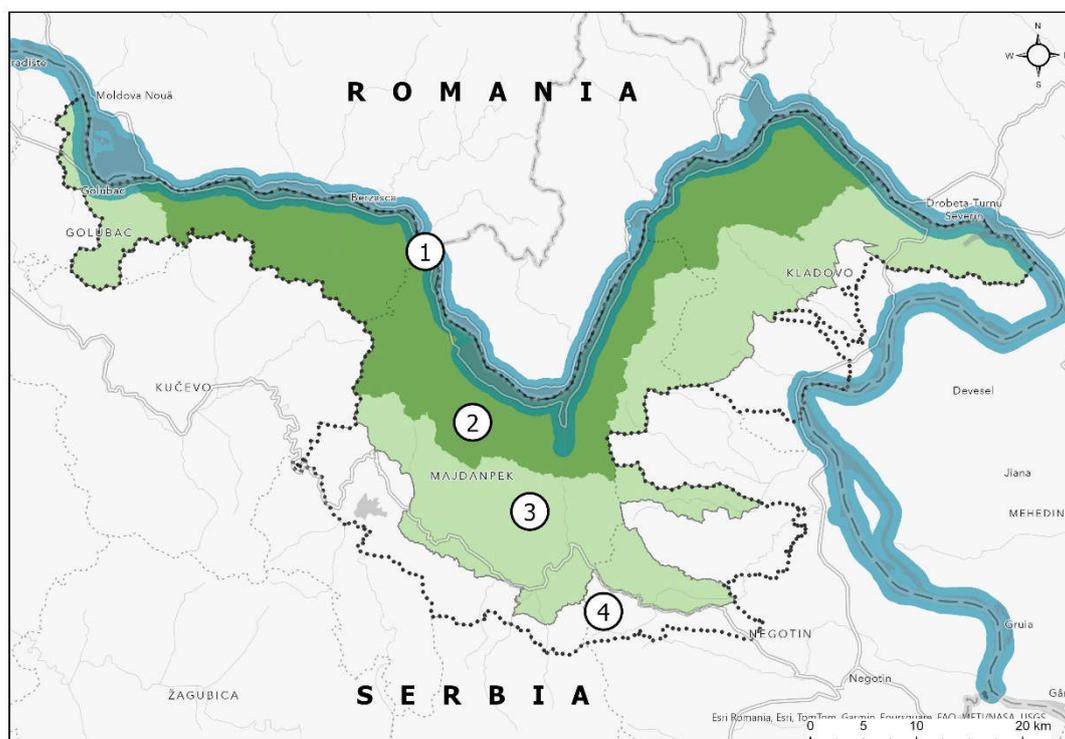
The research design is tailored towards understanding the existing propositions for the protection of cultural heritage through a multilevel and territorial approach, and its integration into traditional planning practice in Serbia. The case study research refers to the formation process of the SPSP Djerdap. The research method identifies and analyzes the available policies, documents, governance regimes and actors at the international, national and local level through a qualitative approach. The criteria for selection of materials for analysis were inclusion of a territorial dimension and association with Djerdap National Park. The choice of materials was determined by the research

design, with the aim to assess the propositions for sustainable and integrated development of the area and protection of cultural heritage as a whole. Triangulation of the obtained results was performed to shape the methodology for integrating different aspects of cultural heritage protection into the observed case study. This section presents diverse units of material at different levels of governance, in order to showcase the complex criteria that were implemented in the methodology for preparing the plan.

### 2.1. Multilevel Approach to the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Formation of the Spatial Plan for the Special Purpose Area of Djerdap

Djerdap National Park is located on the Danube River in northeastern Serbia, on the border with Romania. The area covered by the SPSP Djerdap, spanning approximately 172,700 hectares, encompasses the boundaries of three entities (Figure 1):

1. Djerdap National Park (covering around 64,000 hectares)—established in 1974. It includes the spatial unit of Djerdap Gorge and the natural area along the gorge, with exceptional cultural-historical values, significant natural ecosystems of exceptional rarity and value, original flora and fauna specimens, and well-preserved forests of natural composition and exceptional appearance.
2. Djerdap Geopark (covering approximately 133,000 hectares)—the first area from Serbia inscribed on the UNESCO World Geoparks List (Global Geoparks Network) in 2020. While not a protected area, the Geopark represents a specific concentration of geosites; a number of geological heritage sites are arranged, mostly within other protected areas, in the form of geological trails and individual structural profiles;
3. The Roman Empire border—the Danube Limes area, included in the preliminary list of the Republic of Serbia for inclusion in the international serial nomination, the Roman Empire border (from the Black Forest area (Schwarzwald) area to the Black Sea).



**Figure 1.** The areas of the SPSP Djerdap: 1. Roman Limes; 2. National Park, 3. Geopark, 4. Outside of the protected areas.

The SPSP Djerdap area encompasses parts of the territory of 4 municipalities (Table 1)—local self-government units (hereafter, LGU)—Golubac (8 cadastral municipalities), Majdanpek (10 cadastral municipalities), Kladovo (15 cadastral municipalities), and Negotin (4 cadastral municipalities). They are in charge of delivering local plans and also play important roles in developing the SPSP Djerdap.

**Table 1.** Area of the SPSP Djerdap. Source: NARS, 2022.

LGU	The area of the covered LGU territory, km <sup>2</sup>	The area of the Djerdap NP on the part of the LGU territory, km <sup>2</sup>	% Djerdap NP on the part of the LGU territory, km <sup>2</sup>	The area of the Djerdap Geopark total/outside of NP, km <sup>2</sup>	The area outside of the protected areas
Golubac	253.8	180.9	28.4	253.8 / 72.9	0.0
Majdanpek	748.6	296.5	46.5	601.6 / 305.1	147.0
Kladovo	499.2	159.9	25.1	391.6 / 231.7	107.6
Negotin	225.8	0.0	0.0	83.3 / 83.3	142.5
Total:	1727.4	637.3	100.0	1330.3/ 693.0	397.1

The spatial and functional integration of the mentioned areas is achieved through the planning document. An integrative and territorial approach is applied to the protection, preservation, and utilization of cultural heritage as one of the key resources for sustainable development. This is achieved through an analysis of the institutional and legal framework for the area's protection at both international and national levels, followed by a careful examination of individual sites and their integration into a unified database of cultural heritage in the respective areas. Key outcomes include the identification of cultural heritage, the definition of goals and planning solutions, as well as the presentation and recommendations for implementing planning measures in this field.

The next subsections outline different levels at which cultural heritage within the plan's area is governed, as well as the main stakeholders involved. This aims to enhance comprehension of the multilevel approach to its protection, because this principle ought to be integrated into the methodology for preparing the plan.

### 2.1.1. International Significance of the Protected Area and the Treatment of Cultural Heritage

#### UNESCO Global Geopark

The Djerdap area officially gained UNESCO Global Geopark status in 2020 [13]. The Geopark is managed by the Public Enterprise Djerdap National Park [25]. Its application includes identifying the area, describing the geological heritage, identifying current challenges faced by stakeholders involved in the protection, governance, and maintenance of the geological heritage, economic activities, and a business plan. Cultural heritage is described as an integral part of the Geopark in terms of its relationship to geological sites [26].

Within Djerdap Geopark, a total of 33 items of cultural heritage have been recorded. The name, type, and category of cultural heritage sites are listed in Table 2. The serial nomination *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* and additional 15 items belong to the category of registered immovable cultural properties (CHH). The remaining 17 items are elements of physical structures with the characteristics of monument (BMC), but they are not yet registered. It is particularly noteworthy that the vernacular architecture—Golubinje traditional architecture and the entire village of Miroč—is recognized as valuable heritage from the 19th century.

**Table 2.** Items of cultural heritage within the Djerdap Geopark [25].

	Name	Description	Status
1	Frontiers of the Roman Empire	Ancient fortification system along the Danube River right bank	CHH

2	Lepenski Vir	Early Mesolithic to Early Neolithic settlement (9500-5500 BC), Boljetin village	CHH
3	Golubac Fortress	Medieval fortress at the entrance to the Djerdap Gorge	CHH
4	Rudna Glava	Earliest center of copper mining in the central Balkans, Majdanpek	CHH
5	Kostol – Pontes/Transdrobeta	Castrum Pontes, next to Trajan's bridge, Kladovo	CHH
6	Diana – Karatas	Remains of fortress and castle, downstream of the HPP Djerdap I, Kladovo	CHH
7	Fetislam	Medieval fortress, Kladovo	CHH
8	Miroc Castle	Remains of a Roman fortress	CHH
9	Pena	Signal station between Mali Kazan and Veliki Kazan Gorge	CHH
10	Brnjica	Roman fort, castrum and necropolis (submerged)	CHH
11	Mala Orlova	Medieval necropolis, Brnjica-Trpčevo (submerged)	CHH
12	Cezava/Castrum Novae	Roman military fort, early Byzantine settlement; medieval necropolis (partially submerged)	CHH
13	Saldum	Roman and early Byzantine fort (submerged)	CHH
14	Bosman	Roman fort, Gospodjin Vir Gorge (submerged)	CHH
15	Gospodjin Vir	Prehistoric settlement; Roman road and tower; medieval monastery (submerged)	CHH
16	Stara Carsija	Old bazaar craft center, Kladovo	CHH
17	Saint Nicolas Church Golubac	Built in 1840 on the base of an old wooden Church	BMC
18	Tumane Monastery	Monastery complex, near Golubac	BMC
19	Zidanac/Speculum	Roman and early Byzantine fortification (submerged)	BMC
20	Kozica I & II	Prehistoric settlements (submerged)	BMC
21	Padina	Mesolithic and early Neolithic settlement; Roman and medieval fort (submerged)	BMC
22	Stubica	Early Neolithic settlement (submerged)	BMC
23	Pesaca	Prehistoric settlement, antique fortress and medieval necropolis (submerged)	BMC
24	Golubinje traditional house	Reconstruction of old traditional village, an integral part of Lepenski Vir complex	BMC
25	Klisura	Bronze Age settlement (submerged)	BMC
26	Lepenska Potkapina	Neolithic settlement near Lepenski Vir (submerged)	BMC
27	Katarinine Livade	Bronze Age settlement	BMC
28	Vlasac	Mesolithic settlements & necropolis (Vlasac I, II, III) near Lepenski Vir (submerged)	BMC
29	Trajan' plaque /Tabula Traiana	Latin inscription dedicated to the Roman Emperor Nerva Trajan, carved in rock above the Danube River	CHH
30	Mrfaja	Complex of prehistoric sites, Porecka Reka area (submerged)	BMC
31	Miroc village	Traditional architecture, Miroc Mt.	BMC
32	Manastirica Holy Trinity	Renovated monastery complex, Manastirica village (Novi Sip – Kladovo)	BMC
33	Vratna Monastery	Monastery complex at the entrance to the Vratna River Gorge	BMC

In accordance with the definition provided by UNESCO [13], the following principles should be applied within the Geopark space:

- A holistic approach to protection, education, and sustainable development;
- A bottom-up approach that combines protection and sustainable development while involving local communities;
- Sustainable resource use, mitigation of climate change effects, and reduction of natural disaster risks;

- Community awareness enhancement regarding the heritage value through promotion and education;
- Innovations—new local enterprises, new jobs, training;
- Community reconnection at all levels.

The bottom-up approach strengthens local communities and enables them to develop partnerships with other levels of authority, with the common goal of protecting, promoting, and sustainably using heritage in a broader sense, primarily geological heritage, but also other forms with which it interacts. The necessity of a comprehensive strategy that meets all community goals while protecting heritage is emphasized by UNESCO.

### Roman Limes

The main institutions dealing with the protection of the Danube Limes in Serbia are: the Archaeological Institute, the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments (hereafter RZZZSK), and the National Museum in Belgrade [27,28]. In April 2015, the World Heritage Centre accepted the tentative list submission form 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire—the Danube Limes in Serbia' and added it to the preliminary UNESCO list in 2020 [29]. The serial nomination covers parts of the territory of four countries: Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania. In Serbia, a total of 35 sites are included. Of these, the SPSP Djerdap encompasses a total of 19 sites from Golubac to Radujevac (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Cultural heritage sites within the Roman Limes serial nomination [28].

	<b>Cultural asset and its type</b>	<b>LGU</b>
1	Golubac (Cuppae), auxiliary fort	Golubac
2	Golubac, Roman road below Golubac fortress	Golubac
3	Čezava ( <i>Novae</i> ), auxiliary fort	Golubac
4	Saldum ( <i>Cantabaza</i> ), auxiliary fort	Golubac
5	Bosman (Ad Scrofulas), auxiliary fort	Golubac
6	Gospodjin Vir, Roman road and imperial inscriptions	Golubac
7	Boljetin, Gradac na Lepeni ( <i>Smorna</i> ), auxiliary fort	Majdanpek
8	Ravna (Camps), auxiliary fort	Majdanpek
9	Miroč ( <i>Gerulata</i> ), auxiliary fort	Majdanpek
10	Hajdučka vodenica, auxiliary fort	Kladovo
11	Trajanova tabla ( <i>Tabula Traiana</i> ), Roman road and imperial inscription	Kladovo
12	Karataš ( <i>Diana / Zanes</i> ), auxiliary fort	Kladovo
13	Kostol ( <i>Pontes</i> ), Trajan's bridge and auxiliary fort	Kladovo
14	Mala Vrbica, Konopište, military post and supply center	Kladovo
15	Rtkovo, Glamija, fortlet	Kladovo
16	Brza Palanka ( <i>Egeta</i> ), three auxiliary forts	Kladovo
17	Mihajlovac, Mora Vagei, fortlet	Negotin
18	Prahovo ( <i>Aquae</i> ), Late Roman city	Negotin
19	Radujevac, Četaće, fortlet	Negotin

According to UNESCO requirements, it is expected that the Roman Limes in Serbia will become part of the future transnational cultural heritage "Frontiers of the Roman Empire—The Danube Limes". In line with the guidelines for implementing the WHC convention, the Roman Limes in Serbia meets three out of four criteria for nomination. The main objectives in protecting world cultural heritage, described as the 5 Cs: credibility, conservation, communication, capacity-building, and community are related to the expected effects of managing these sites [30,31].

## 2.1.2. National Significance of the Protected Area and Treatment of Cultural Heritage

### National Park Djerdap

Djerdap National Park was declared so in 1974 [12]. The management of the National Park is overseen by the Public Enterprise (PE) Djerdap National Park [33]. Its protection, maintenance, and use are regulated by the Law on National Parks [34].

The Law on National Parks sets out the objectives, values, areas, and regimes of protection, governance, and sustainable use for the 5 national parks in Serbia, which includes Djerdap National Park. The law stipulates the obligation to develop a Governance Plan, Governance Program, and Spatial Plan for the special purpose area (Article 19), as well as the establishment of competent institutions responsible for managing national parks.

According to the Law, the Governing Authority has advisory bodies—the Expert Council of the National Park and the National Park Users Council, which include representatives of local self-governments, organizations, and associations.

The governance concept of Djerdap National Park is based on the protection of natural values and resources, the overall biological and geological diversity, and meeting scientific, educational, cultural, tourist, and recreational needs, in accordance with the principles of nature conservation and sustainable development. The main objectives are preservation, protection, and enhancement of sites of special natural value and rarity, and their purposeful use for scientific research, education, public presentation, and recreation, in accordance with the ecological potential of the area [34].

### Protection of Cultural Heritage at the National Level

The protection of cultural heritage at the national level is regulated by the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage [22]. According to this law, sites can have the following statuses, each entailing corresponding institutional treatment:

- Identified—properties presumed to possess cultural values;
- Recorded—properties under “prior protection”, meaning the identified properties that underwent initiation of the protection process or the determination of whether the property indeed possesses the presumed cultural values. The institution in charge of cultural heritage protection is obligated to propose their assessment within three years of being recorded as immovable properties;
- Registered—properties determined by a special act/decision to possess cultural values and are listed in the Central Registry of Immovable Cultural Heritage [35];
- Categorized—registered cultural properties determined to have significant or exceptional importance based on additional (prescribed by law) attributes.

Cultural heritage inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage Lists enjoys special access, protection, care, and attention.

According to the law, all four mentioned statuses imply institutional protection and represent cultural heritage. During the drafting of planning documents, lists of cultural properties, measures for their protection, and the protected environment of the single items of cultural heritage are provided for the planner. A problem arises if, due to lengthy procedures for determining cultural properties, the protection status of certain properties enjoying prior protection ceases. In the case of valuable objects and complexes, the plan becomes the only instrument through which their values can be safeguarded.

The Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments (RZZZSK) has issued Conditions for the preservation, maintenance, and use of immovable cultural property/goods and protection measures for the purpose of formation of the SPSP Djerdap (Conditions No. 6-88/2020-1 dated December 10, 2020, SPSP Djerdap, plan documentation), with registered and categorized cultural properties. Besides the Conditions from the national level institution, the territorial institutions for cultural heritage protection from the cities of Niš and Smederevo issued Conditions that included a list of properties with “prior protection” (Conditions No. 1370/1-03 dated December

31, 2020, and Conditions No. 370/2-2020 dated November 27, 2020, in: SPSP Djerdap, plan documentation). Furthermore, a previous version of the Spatial Plan for the special purpose area of the Djerdap National Park from 2013 included a list of recorded properties from that period [36]. Since then, some of them have lost their prior protection status, and therefore the possibility of institutional protection by the competent authorities.

### 2.1.3. Local Significance of Protected Areas and Treatment of Cultural Heritage

The local significance of cultural heritage can be understood through the analysis of individual cultural heritage sites that are not under institutional protection, local plans, and initiatives of the local community.

#### Cultural Heritage Sites That Are Not Under Institutional Protection

In addition to established and categorized immovable cultural goods and those under prior protection, there are a significant number of valuable buildings and complexes within the SPSP Djerdap area that need to be identified and protected: vernacular architectural objects (such as watermills, workshops, rolling mills, traditional houses, etc.), urban and rural architecture, war memorials, and commemorative fountains, old cemeteries, etc. As previously mentioned, some of these heritage elements have lost the status of prior protection. Through the SPSP Djerdap, all elements from the previous spatial plan [36] and other available sources were included in this consideration as parts of cultural heritage.

#### Local Urban and Spatial Plans

Within the scope of the spatial plan, several local planning documents are mentioned. The treatment of cultural heritage is observed within: spatial plans for the four municipalities, general regulation plans for Golubac, Donji Milanovac, and Kladovo; detailed regulation plans for the revitalization of Golubac Fortress, for the Danube riverbank from the Tourist Settlement Vinci-Usije to Golubac Fortress, and for the Tekija settlement. Three detailed regulation plans have been adopted for the following immovable cultural heritage sites: Golubac Fortress, the archaeological site of Rudna Glava, and the archaeological site of Lepenski Vir.

Data obtained from relevant protection institutions are incorporated in the spatial plans of local government units, along with a review of cultural assets and protective measures within the plan's scope. The protective zone of immovable cultural assets mostly aligns with the boundary determined by the competent protection institution, although it often fails to encompass other spaces crucial for the experience and presentation of the property. A significant issue is the limited deadlines for issuing conditions by protection institutions, which hinders the preparation of detailed studies.

Throughout development of the SPSP Djerdap, all existing planning documents and their guidelines at local levels were considered, cited and, if compatible, integrated in the spatial plan.

#### Local Community Engagement

The formation of the SPSP Djerdap facilitated a mandatory public inquiry that enabled broader public participation in the decision-making process. The draft spatial plan was presented to the general public via LGUs, the Ministry website, and at the local administration premises for 30 days. Some of the citizen and stakeholder remarks pertained to the need to allow the interpolation of tourist facilities in the Danube riverbank zone, which would foster economic development in this area (SPSP Djerdap, plan documentation). This clearly indicates the existence of a conflict between strict intervention restrictions in the protected area and the real needs of the local population. The plan facilitated dialogue among different levels of stakeholders. However, the general impression is that many questions regarding local development in the field of cultural heritage protection were not raised during the public inquiry. The general assessment is that the awareness of the local population regarding cultural heritage is underdeveloped. In addition, Serbia as a post-socialist country,

exemplifies a rather low level of active citizen participation in planning processes, with urban and spatial planning traditionally perceived as a task of the public sector [37].

Another reason for insufficient public engagement in the process of preparing the plan is the lack of implementation of certain provisions of the Law on National Parks, according to which the public enterprises governing national parks need to have an advisory body composed of local self-government representatives [38]. This would further facilitate smoother communication and collaboration between different stakeholders at the local, national, and international levels of decision making. Therefore, an integral understanding of the complexity regarding the development and protection within the case study's territory exists only at the level of spatial planning, while its interpretation and implementation depend on the education, interests, and decision-making power of the stakeholders.

### **3. Findings: Contribution of the Applied Methodological Approach to Integrating Multilevel Principles and Actors into Plan Formation**

The review of methodology for preparing plans for protected areas in international literature highlights the need for a multilevel approach to understanding the requirements for protecting cultural heritage as a whole and articulating the economic and societal need of the local community within a territory through planning standards [3,39,40]. The authors highlight the need to integrate the normative and institutional frameworks for policy transfer between different levels of governance with a substantive understanding of the local initiatives, perspectives and constraints. These principles were tested in the framing of the methodology for the case of SPSP Djerdap. The primary goal of the applied methodological approach to drafting the SPSP Djerdap was to spatially and functionally apply an integrative and territorial approach to the protection, preservation, and utilization of cultural heritage within the territory as one of the key resources for sustainable development. The integrative approach is reflected in the following phases: 1) identification of cultural heritage, 2) formulation of objectives and planning solutions, 3) presentation, and 4) implementation of measures for the protection, preservation, and use of cultural heritage. Through this approach, the aim is to overcome the limitations of a sectoral approach and to provide decision-makers, users, and plan implementers with a broader perspective on protecting existing and perceiving potential immovable cultural properties. The result of the integrative approach is implementation measures that correspond to all areas of spatial development: transportation, infrastructure, tourism, the economy.

The **territorial approach** stems from the very nature of the planning document, which emphasizes that the spatial dimension of cultural heritage is insufficiently recognized, in a strictly conservationist sense. Cultural heritage is acknowledged as both a spatial resource and a resource for sustainable development. The result of the territorial approach is the integration of protected areas of the Djerdap National Park, the Djerdap Geopark, and the areas without protection status. This opens up new possibilities for the spatial and functional revitalization of already protected immovable cultural properties. Additionally, immovable cultural properties under prior protection are further safeguarded, as they often lose their protected status if not declared within 3 years, despite their recognized value. Of particular importance is the evaluation of entities that are not under any institutional protection regime but represent significant spatial, historical, cultural, and environmental elements through the application of the new methodological approach. Special measures are also envisaged for these entities.

**Identification** involves analyzing the existing legal and planning framework and identifying points relevant to considering the spatial dimension of cultural heritage. Identification was carried out through: the collection, analysis, and extraction of relevant content from planning documents, presented in a separate chapter of the spatial plan; the analysis of legal elements and articles supporting the treatment of cultural heritage as a spatial resource, with the particular consultation of ratified international charters in the field of cultural heritage protection, applied in proposals for plan implementation; the analysis of Conditions obtained from relevant institutions responsible for various spatial development areas; the collection of data on immovable cultural assets from

competent institutions and their classification for presentation in the plan and for providing planning guidelines; and the triangulation of data on immovable cultural assets obtained from relevant institutions with cultural assets identified in the Geopark and Danube Limes files. Collaboration was established with the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, and the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Smederevo and Niš, which are the local level institutions that issues the Conditions for the preparation of the spatial plan. The process of preparing the plan included cooperation with the Public Enterprise Djerdap National Park, the Tourist Organization of the Municipality of Majdanpek/Donji Milanovac, as well as with representatives of the municipal administrations of Golubac, Kučevo, Majdanpek, Kladovo, and Negotin, whose role will be particularly pronounced in the process of implementing the planning solutions.

In the area of the Spatial Plan, there are a total of 186 sites of cultural and historical heritage (Figure 2): of which 41 are registered/established immovable cultural properties) and 145 recorded sites. Recorded sites include cultural and historical heritage: a) under prior protection (according to the conditions obtained from competent institutions for the protection of cultural monuments) and b) with monumental properties established in another way (localities identified through the preparation of nomination files for Djerdap Geopark and the serial nomination Danube Limes, as well as localities that were registered by the competent institutions for the protection of cultural monuments, but lost their protection status because they were not declared within the legally established period). Some of the recorded localities are under prior protection and have protection status within Djerdap Geopark and/or the serial nomination Danube Limes.

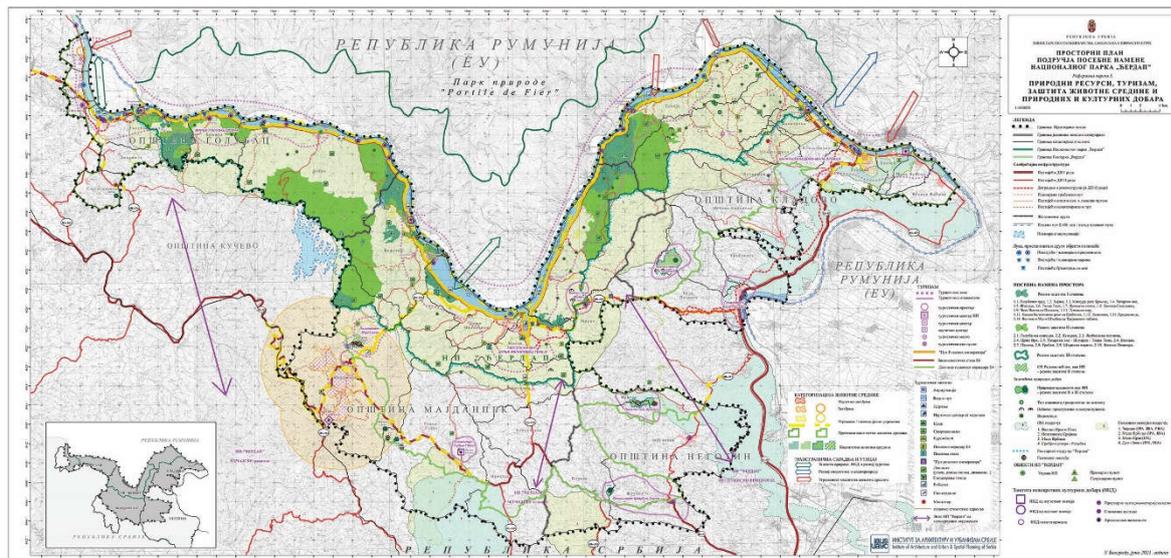
CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE NATIONAL PARK, GEOPARK AND OTHER AREAS OF THE SPATIAL PLAN			
Kladovo Municipality	Majdanpek Municipality	Golubac Municipality	Negotin Municipality
Trajan' plaque NP, NKD_I, LIM_11	Lepenski vir NP, NKD_I, GEO_2	Golubac Fortress NP, NKD_I, LIM_2, GEO_3	Church, Jabukovac PP, NKD_N
Trajan's bridge CP, NKD_I, LIM_13, GEO_5	Rudna glava CP, NKD_I, GEO_4	St. Nikola Church, Golubac CP, NKD_N, GEO_17	Štubičke pivnice PP, NKD_N
Diana – Karatas NP, NKD_I, LIM_12, GEO_6	Stara topionica PP, NKD_V,	Building, 102, V. Dugoševića st., Golubac, CP, NKD_N	Manastir Vratna CP, GEO_33
Fetislam Fortress CP, NKD_V, GEO_7	Miroč Castle CP, NKD_N, LIM_9, GEO_8	Building, 110, V. Dugoševića st., Golubac, CP, NKD_N	
Stara Carsija (old bazaar center) CP, NKD_N, GEO_16	St. Nikola Church, Donji Milanovac, CP	Stara kuća, Radoševac CP, NKD_N	LEGEND NP – within the area of Djerdap National Park
Signal station Pena NP, NKD_N, GEO_9	Golubinje, ethno house CP	Tumane Monastery CP, GEO_18	CP – within the area of Djerdap Geopark
Post Office, Brza Palanka PP, NKD_N	Katarinine livade CP, GEO_27	Vinci NKD_N	PP – within the area of SPSP Djerdap 2022
St. Trinity Church, B.Palanka PP, NKD_N	Miroč village CP, GEO_31		NKD_I – registered cultural property
Vajuga PP, NKD_N	+ Lepenski Vir, ethno park GEO_24	+ Brnjica village GEO_10	LIM_12 – property within the Danube Limes
Milutinovac PP, NKD_N	+ Stara Porečka čaršija GEO_29		GEO_5 – properties listed in the Application Dossier of the Geopark
Manastirica PP, GEO_32	+ Gradac na Lepeni ?		..... – identified cultural property

**Figure 2.** The visualisation of the recorded elements of cultural heritage of all types in the table (part).

**Presentation** involves textual and graphical representation of the planning proposal. It is particularly significant for digitalization of the spatial values of cultural heritage. Entities are presented in the form of comprehensive tables, as well as in the form of reference maps, made in GIS (Figure 3). This process allowed synthesizing of the results of spatial value research and visualization of the collected and analyzed data, as well as their further use by interested actors.

Such an approach to visualizing the plan's content facilitates an easier understanding of the space for the plan's users: institutions, decision-makers, investors, citizens, and interested stakeholders, as well as developers of detailed planning and urban-technical documents. It

particularly enables more adequate delineation of the boundaries of future planning areas and avoids situations where the planning boundary follows administrative divisions and cuts across areas with homogeneous spatial-morphological characteristics. The SPSP Djerdap is developed in a GIS environment based on ESRI technology (ArcGIS 10), allowing for easier data exchange, the formation of a Geographic Information System for the covered area, and more efficient monitoring of the implementation of the plan. The land use reference maps show: the boundaries of the National Park, Geopark, and Spatial Plan; the boundaries of local self-government units and cadastral municipalities; the transportation infrastructure and special designations; the regimes for protecting natural values and immovable cultural assets; tourist areas; mineral resources; and areas of special designation.



**Figure 3.** Reference map from the SPSP Đerdap (2022): „Natural resources, tourism, environmental, natural and cultural heritage protection“.

Implementation involves planning-programmatic, normative-legal, and institutional measures. Through these measures, efforts have been made to comprehensively address:

- Preparation and regular adoption of management plans for protected areas, in the manner and with the content determined by law and declaration acts;
- Tourism development programs;
- Connection between geological and other territorial heritage, i.e., natural biotic, cultural, and intangible properties.
- Building capacities to participate in future partnership strategies at national and international levels;
- Education strategy in partnership with other global geoparks;
- Activities to facilitate the mitigation of natural hazards and climate change in schools and local communities; etc.

#### 4. Discussion

By analyzing the international, national, and local importance of the protected area and the treatment of cultural heritage, it can be noticed that these levels are not optimally integrated in terms of cultural heritage treatment throughout the planning area. Table 4, review of the identified levels, protection statuses, related documents, management institutions and expected protection effects.

**Table 4.** The interrelating different spatial levels of heritage protection in the National park Djerdap.

Status	Documents/links	Management institutions	Goals/expected effects
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International level	UNESCO Global Geopark (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application dossier;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNESCO PE Djerdap National Park</li> </ul>	Holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development.
	World Heritage Centre, tentative list (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frontiers of the Roman Empire—the Danube Limes in Serbia;</li> <li>• Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia (RZZZSK)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNESCO Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the RS, Archeological Institute, National Museum</li> </ul>	The process of increasing the public awareness; protection and care, research and presentation; development possibilities; planning guidelines.
National level	National Park (1974)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law on National Parks (2015)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment Protection Institute of Serbia (ZZZPS)</li> <li>• PE Djerdap National Park</li> </ul>	Preservation, protection, and enhancement of cultural-historical heritage and geological heritage objects of Djerdap National Park.
	Immovable cultural properties—registered and categorized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Registry of Immovable Cultural Heritage (RZZZSK, 2024)</li> <li>• Law on Cultural Heritage (2021)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia (RZZZSK)</li> </ul>	Protection and preserving of CH through: covering, collecting, researching, documenting, studying, evaluating, presenting, interpreting, using and managing cultural heritage.
Local level	Immovable cultural properties—identified, recorded and other (identified through field work and alternative sources)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence lists for recording cultural properties under prior protection</li> <li>• SPSP Djerdap 2022</li> <li>• Local spatial and urban plans</li> <li>• Scientific and professional papers on the importance of local cultural heritage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Territorial institutes for the protection of cultural monuments (Niš and Smederevo);</li> <li>• Ministry of construction, transport and infrastructure of the RS;</li> <li>• Local government units;</li> <li>• Universities, Institutes etc.</li> </ul>	Protection of all valuable elements of the physical environment regardless of their institutional protection status; valorization of the context through additional research in the field; communication and collaboration between stakeholders, especially planners, conservationists and communities.

In the case of the SPSP Djerdap, the planning area encompasses a broader area than the boundaries of the National Park (see Figure 1), whose management is entrusted to a special agency, and accordingly, it is subject to the management rules prescribed by the agency's statute and the Law on National Parks. Additionally, these two boundaries do not coincide with the boundary of the Djerdap Geopark, recognized as a unit comprising natural and cultural heritage and included on the UNESCO Global Geoparks list, which further entails a specific treatment of this unit. The serial

nomination of the Roman Limes is on the UNESCO tentative list, and protection measures prescribed by the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments apply to it. While the issue of overlapping jurisdiction areas can be debated, the biggest problem lies in areas that do not belong to the Geopark or the National Park, and are solely reliant on protection through spatial planning.

The methodology for formation of the spatial plan for the SPSP Djerdap included a comparative analysis of cultural heritage in the Djerdap Geopark, Djerdap National Park, and the rest of the planning area, based on available data from relevant institutions, as well as all other accessible sources (plans, internet, field research). The aim was to place all elements of cultural heritage, both registered and identified by competent authorities, on an equal footing, particularly those objects recognized as valuable through planning analysis, thus protecting them from inadequate interventions.

This particularly applies to rural settlements in the Danube region. The fact is that even settlements located in the coastal zone, which are therefore more visited by both domestic and foreign tourists and have more potential for development, are already involved in numerous programs and projects. However, rural settlements are particularly exposed to processes of decay and depopulation. The SPSP Djerdap emphasizes the authenticity of these settlements and the need to preserve them in their authentic form, as well as to connect them into a network of cultural or tourist routes. By retaining existing values and introducing new connections, programs, and content, it is possible to stimulate the sustainable development of these settlements [41,42]. The local community plays a special role in this; however, they must first be aware of the existing heritage and then actively participate in its enhancement.

Consideration should be given to enhancing the capacity of the local community in degraded areas in the Danube region in Serbia to sustainably utilize local heritage for creating new opportunities and improving the quality of life. Some EU-funded projects have an important role in this regard, by supporting households to promote and protect heritage through targeted economic activities in the field of tourism, or by providing tangible investments in infrastructure and/or the revitalization of protected areas. The scaling-up of local solutions and enhancing their digital and physical visibility at national and supranational levels (i.e. via cultural routes – Interreg project ISTER [43]) may contribute to attracting new investments for integrated projects and more effective implementation of spatial plans supporting these initiatives.

This highlights the need to develop capacities for participatory planning at the local level to meet the demands for democratization, societal justice and multilevel governance, especially in the protected areas that have complex requirements [44]. Social groups should be enabled to manage their collective efforts in balancing protection and economic development, and share responsibility for decisions made. In the case of Djerdap National Park, this requires small steps and the use of soft engagement methods as a catalyst for transformation. These steps include: 1) recognition of current relationships between the actors at local, national and supranational levels and the creation of new relationships (i.e., establishing cooperation with local communities in areas with similar conditions regarding local cultural identity to seek new solutions through collaboration); 2) acknowledging emerging concerns and priorities through a multilevel approach to enable common understanding of problems; and 3) shifting existing perceptions and values, along with the goals of the planning process to achieve better integration of propositions within plans [45,46].

The existing legislature in the sectors of tourism, nature, and cultural heritage protection does not provide adequate instruments, or an integrative governance framework for the territories of the National Park and the Geopark. This is especially obvious at the locations where the sectoral jurisdictions are overlapping. For example, the medieval fortress Golubački grad and the archeological site Lepenski Vir represent at the same time cultural and natural heritage as well as being tourist sites. Consequently, the integrative governance of these areas is of crucial importance, and it requires tight intersectoral collaboration. However, the key management institutions and related documents are under the auspices of the Ministry of the Environment and are regulated solely by the Law on Nature Protection.

## 5. Conclusions

The cultural heritage within the boundaries of the SPSP DJerdap, with the exception of the Roman Limes, is still recognized at the level of individual sites. It is necessary for the development of the planning document to integrate different levels and principles for governing cultural heritage towards protecting the area as a whole rather than just individual sites. The international and national significance of the area contributes to raising awareness of heritage and its institutional protection, primarily determined by identified natural potentials. However, the vitality of the area, crucial for its sustainable development, comes from the local level and the synthesis of natural and anthropogenic potentials, including cultural heritage. Planning documents precisely contribute to integrating local values and communities into development programs and projects. Through identification, defining planning solutions and goals, presentation, and implementation measures, planning documents can serve as a direct starting point for interventions or as a stimulus for a more detailed analysis of specific areas. In the field of implementation, it is necessary to ensure the institutional cooperation of all actors involved in spatial protection, since this is crucial for achieving positive effects in the space and society.

Although spatial plans can significantly contribute to an integrated understanding of the territory regarding its overall natural and anthropogenic potentials, this is not always the case, because the methodology for drafting plans is not legally binding. In other words, in planning practice, only procedures prescribed by law are usually applied. Moreover, elements of international documents concerning integrative and territorial planning approaches have not yet been incorporated into the law, despite the ratification of a certain number of charters, and the fact that the scientific and professional community is familiar with current trends. However, depending on the stance of planning professionals, it is possible to improve planning methodology by introducing elements and analyses that are not legally binding, but ensure more efficient implementation of integrative and territorial approaches in planning practice.

## 6. Patents

‘The innovative metodological approach to the integrated planning and management in the field of the protection of cultural heritage of national and international importance and sustainable development in Serbia (the example of the Spatial Plan of the Special Purpose Area)’ has been accepted from the Ministry of Science, Technological development and innovation of the Republic of Serbia, as the ‘new technical solution (method) applied at the national level’.

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