

31 August 2020

**To all CaveMAB members,
Significance of Cultural Heritage in Karst
Landscape Management Workshop participants
and other interested parties**

Subject: **Invitation letter following an agreement of the Karst2020
Significance of Cultural Heritage in Karst Landscape Management Workshop**

Dear Sir or Madam,

In celebration of the International Year of Caves and Karst and the 50th anniversary of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Program in 2021, the participants of the "Significance of Cultural Heritage in Karst Landscape Management: Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Workshop" that took place on August 20, 2020 at the "Conservation of Fragile Karst Resources: A Workshop on Sustainability and Community in support of UNESCO science programs – Karst2020", agreed upon [building an open database of sustainable traditional practices/cultural heritage elements on karst areas around the globe to fight global warming as well as participatory practices and activities for people's engagement in data collecting.](#)

The collection of explanatory narratives or legends explaining karst phenomena was added.

The database is going to be delivered/made public online (CaveMAB webpage, e-book etc.) in 2021 for all of you to share and use as ground material for evaluating different practices and developing innovative ideas.

Please find attached the collection form and photo rights agreement.

Please take notice that this activity is voluntary and that by filling out the form and sharing the information you gave permission of its use in the manner described above and for the development of the CaveMAB database of cave and karst resources and presentations of this initiative. The names of the authors/informants/copyright holders will be cited alongside CaveMAB initiative whenever their records are used in any form by the CaveMAB network.

It is not important how much is collected, but the act of collecting itself. Sharing and learning from members of our local community and beyond about the traditional sustainable cultural elements/solutions for surviving in karst landscapes in different climate zones. Letting ourselves be inspired by our ancestors' wisdom and building a network with it.

We sincerely hope you will join us.

Darja Kranjc
Jasna Fakin Bajec

Why should we do it?

Cultural heritage (tangible and intangible) is thoroughly tested and holistic as it includes all three aspects of sustainable development (environmental, economic and social) with the perspective of a hundred years of living in a specific environment.

According to UNESCO and Council of Europe (Agenda 21), culture and its heritage constitute the fourth pillar of sustainable development, i.e. they combine ecological, social and economic perspectives in a community and make it suitable for the way of life of the local population.

The sustainable goals for cultural heritage preservation should be the simple inclusion of our ancestors' wisdom in the modern paradigm of sustainable living. By doing this, we could prevent deformation or decomposition of cultural heritage to sole aesthetics and ensure that it would live on. Heritage should not be only protected and exhibited, but live on. This means that it should be respectfully and carefully upgraded and modified (not banalized) with the help of heritage experts according to contemporary needs and demands as well.

Due to changes in local climate and consequently in local nature as a system, nature itself sometimes prevents the (once local) traditional way of living. The traditional knowledge the system was built upon can no longer be applied to the changed circumstances in local nature, at least not without deeper understanding and careful upgrade.

If the climate in our area is warming up, should we not look at traditional solutions of regions that used to be warmer already in the past and try to upgrade our solutions to theirs? Do we have limestone regions worldwide in different climate zones? Should we not share our knowledge and help each other with traditional solutions? Should we not engage local population that are still true barriers of their own traditional knowledge from karst landscapes around the globe and let them connect with the help of experts? Would this change our community identities? Would we lose our own cultural heritage and identity?

Experts should be included, meticulously recording the processes of adaptation and adoption. They should ensure a documented line between what is an adopted foreign nation's traditional solution or its upgrade and what is an original local traditional element.

However experts would decide to approach this idea, with its distinctive holistic approach, a Treasury of Global Traditional Knowledge and Ways of Living in karst landscapes and in general can help human civilization, modern science and professionals prepare for the uncertain times to come.

To conclude, the creation of landscapes does not start with ploughing or building shrines, it starts with establishing the relationship between people and their surroundings. One of the first humans' activities in the environment is naming. It is the first step towards domestication, towards creation of a landscape out of sheer physical environment. Landscape is engraved with names that carry information about the way people perceived, interpreted and adopted the environment to their everyday needs. One of the interpretations of landscape features are also the legends explaining them.

