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Branding strategy for the Night of Fortresses manifestation in the Italy-Croatia area

Night of Fortresses



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Fortress of Culture Šibenik conducted a public procurement, announced on August 1, 2024, titled "*Service for the development of a branding strategy for the Night of Fortresses*" and "*Service for the creation of promotional materials*" (procurement reference number: 44/2024). This procurement is part of Activity 3.1 Capitalization of established creativity: the Development of new creative ways to promote cultural heritage outside the high season.

The contractor selected for the procurement was Trotočka d.o.o., and the contract was signed on October 21, 2024, in Zagreb.

The objective of the task was to develop a comprehensive branding strategy for the Night of Fortresses event, which included: analysis of the current brand status, defining the objectives, identifying target groups, defining the key messages and communication channels, an implementation plan, and translation of the strategy into Italian. The assessment of the current brand status also involved a review of previous communication channels, activities, and proposals for their improvement. As part of the task, it was necessary to identify fortification-heritage sites for hosting the event in Italy, with an emphasis on the partner municipalities in the FORTIC project (municipalities of Cervia and Vieste), and to analyze three examples of good practices in the sustainable management of cultural events.

From 2025, the event will be under the slogan *Night of Fortresses Goes Green*, with the key message *Step by Step, Event by Event*. The strategy will, therefore, use the event as a tool to raise awareness about the concepts of green and sustainable development. An additional goal of the strategy development is to strengthen cross-border cooperation among cultural heritage managers and to mobilize new sites to join the initiative.

To ensure a high-quality and systematic approach to marketing the cultural-tourism event Night of Fortresses, a branding strategy was developed as a tactical and operational document. This document reviewed previous communication activities and clearly defined the messages to convey, target audiences, and appropriate communication channels.

1.1. About the Night of Fortresses manifestation

Night of Fortresses is an annual cultural and tourist manifestation held simultaneously at fortified cultural heritage sites during the pre-season. It was first held in 2022 in Croatia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina as a result of the joint European project FORTITUDE (INTERREG IPA CBC HR-BA-ME).

The goal of the event is to enhance the cultural and tourist offerings of European cities with fortified heritage by promoting cooperation and raising awareness about the importance of cultural heritage. By bringing together fortified sites across Europe, Night of Fortresses has, in just three years, become a platform for networking, sharing experiences, and engaging the audience

From 2022 to 2024, three successful editions of this event connected and promoted programs at 50 fortified sites in eight European countries: Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the Czech Republic, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Ukraine. This cross-border cooperation project, held simultaneously under a shared visual identity, was implemented by Fortress of Culture Šibenik, the City of Banja Luka, the City of Karlovac, the Municipality of Bar, the City of Trebinje, and the Municipality of Ulcinj. They united around a shared challenge in the cross-border area: the lack of cultural-tourism events that would enrich the tourist offer and increase its attractiveness outside the high season.



The event also expands and strengthens cooperation among cities and organizations managing fortified heritage sites, supported by international associations EFFORTS (*European Federation of Fortified Sites*) and FORTE CULTURA, which have included Night of Fortresses in the *European Fortress Summer Event*.

The significance of the event was also recognized by the Croatian National Tourist Board, as Night of Fortresses was awarded a Croatian Tourist Board (HTZ) recognition as a finalist in the category *The Event of the Year* at the Croatian Tourism Days in 2022.

All fortified sites across Europe, along with other heritage institutions, are welcome to join the Night of Fortresses celebration by organizing activities and programs for visitors, such as exhibitions, lectures, workshops, concerts, films, dance performances, guided tours, open-door days, and more.

Starting in 2025, the event will be under the slogan "Night of Fortresses Goes Green," using the existing cross-border cultural platform to raise awareness among stakeholders, the public, and visitors about green and sustainable development in the region. The Night of Fortresses Goes Green initiative highlights how cultural sites and their infrastructure can play a vital role in advancing sustainable development, not only in economic, social, and tourism contexts, but also in fostering a more resilient and environmentally responsible shared space.

By empowering cultural heritage managers to develop and implement environmentally sustainable practices—such as reducing carbon footprints, increasing energy efficiency through green technologies, sourcing sustainable products and services, organizing eco-friendly events, and applying effective waste management policies—it will directly support the long-term sustainability of cultural tourism in the region.

Fortress of culture Šibenik is a partner in the EU project FORTIC – *From Remains Of the War to the aRchiTecture of Peace in the Cross-border Area of Italy-Croatia*, implemented under the Interreg Italy – Croatia 2021–2027 Cross-border Cooperation Programme. Through the FORTIC project, the Night of Fortresses event will be expanded to the territory of Italy with the support of Italian partners: the Municipality of Vieste and the Municipality of Cervia. In Croatia, the event will be extended to project partner cities that have not participated so far – the City of Pula and the City of Korčula.

In addition, the event will continue to expand to other fortification and heritage sites in Croatia, Italy, and the rest of Europe, which will be invited to participate. *Night of Fortresses Goes Green* is also part of the EU project *GIFTSnet – Network for Green and Inclusive Fortified Tourism Solutions*, funded by the Interreg IPA Croatia – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Montenegro 2021–2027 Programme. The project is led by the public institution Fortress of Culture Šibenik, with partners including the City of Banja Luka, Municipality of Bar, City of Karlovac, Public Institution Heritage Museum of Herzegovina Trebinje, and the Municipality of Ulcinj. The project will ensure the continuation and further expansion of the event to that programme area as well.



1.2. About the project FORTIC

Project title: *From remains Of the war to the aRchiTecture of peace in the cross-border area of Italy-Croatia*

Acronym: FORTIC ITHR0200123

Programme: Interreg Italy – Croatia 2021–2027 (1st Call for Project Proposals)

Programme priority and specific objective: 4 - Culture and tourism for sustainable development, SO 4.1 – Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion, and social innovation

Lead partner: City of Pula

Project partners: Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Fortress of Culture Šibenik, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Municipality of Cervia, Municipality of Vieste, City of Korčula

Associated partners involved in the project: School for Training and Education, Korčula Tourist Board, and the Venetian association UNPLI Veneto

Project start and end date: April 1, 2024 – September 30, 2026

Project duration: 30 months

Total project budget (all partners): €2,135,773.60

EU co-financing amount: €1,708,618.88 (80%)

The FORTIC project addresses common challenges in the cross-border areas of the Adriatic region, with a focus on enhancing sustainable tourism through digital solutions and innovative social models.

Key challenges include the lack of digital tools for developing joint sustainable tourism products, the seasonal dependence of tourism activities, and the need for green and digital technologies in the preservation of cultural heritage.

The goal of the project is to strengthen the role of cultural heritage, particularly fortifications, in promoting sustainable tourism. This involves identifying and applying business models that integrate innovative digital solutions and inclusive social models tailored to the needs of vulnerable groups and heritage-related communities

By achieving these goals, the FORTIC project aims to establish strategic and sustainable tourism management practices in the Adriatic region, with a focus on preserving natural heritage and reducing territorial vulnerability. Through pilot activities, the project will test digital and physical solutions that improve access to cultural heritage for different user groups. The objective is to enhance cooperation and position the Adriatic cross-border area as technologically advanced and sustainable, thereby increasing its attractiveness for tourism while simultaneously preserving its cultural and natural heritage.



2. BRANDING STRATEGY OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

The branding strategy for the cultural-tourism event *Night of Fortresses* was developed to establish a clear, sustainable, and recognizable identity for the event at the European level. The following objectives were set for the development of the branding and market positioning strategy:

1. Precise target groups identification
2. Development of the brand concept and its implementation in line with the target group
3. Defining the communication tools and messages tailored to the target groups
4. Identification of the new sites in the territory of Italy

The focus is on strengthening its position within the cultural-tourism sector, ensuring long-term visibility, and creating an emotional connection with the audience through the values the event promotes: cooperation, heritage, sustainability, and community.

The development of the strategy is based on a research-driven, analytical, and strategic approach that encompassed several key phases. In the initial phase, secondary research was conducted, which included the collection, analysis, and processing of existing data from relevant professional publications, previous project documents, and available sources. The goal was to gain insight into the current state of the brand, communication practices, and the potential for further development of the event.

Alongside the analysis of available data, several working meetings and consultations were held with representatives of the Client, offering valuable insights into past experiences, expectations, and the desired direction for brand development. Based on these insights, a qualitative analysis was conducted, serving as the foundation for defining the brand objectives, identity, and strategic and communication guidelines.

As part of the analytical phase, a targeted analysis of the potential for expanding the event to new markets was conducted, focusing on fortified sites in Italy. In cooperation with representatives of project partners from the Municipality of Vieste and the Municipality of Cervia, 21 potential locations were identified that meet the eligibility criteria for the event, thereby laying the groundwork for expanding the partner network and internationalizing the brand.

The brand definition was carried out using the brand archetype model, which clearly structured the event's identity. In collaboration with the Client, the brand's strategic objectives, core values, as well as proposals for positioning and key messages were defined. Furthermore, communication channels and tools were developed to enable the practical implementation of the brand through a targeted and consistent approach toward different audiences.

The final part of the document presents concrete promotional and communication activities, visual and textual templates, as well as an operational action plan with defined implementation steps, a timeline, and recommendations for media selection, ensuring the strategy's feasibility and measurability



Table 1: Methods for strategy development

STUDY DEVELOPMENT METHODS	DESCRIPTION OF METHODS
Consultation of relevant Project documents	Based on the Project task and the additional <i>brief</i> provided by the Client, initial project data was obtained.
Meetings with Client representatives	Meetings with representatives of the Client were held with the aim of collecting additional information about the project and identifying new fortified heritage sites in Italy that could be included in the event.
Secondary Research (Desk Research)	Data from secondary research relevant to the definition of target groups and their media habits were used.

Source: Prepared by the author

3. BRAND STATUS ANALYSIS

The brand analysis of the Night of Fortresses provides insight into the existing identity, visual recognizability, communication messages, and communication channels used by the event. The objective of the analysis is to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the brand's current positioning, evaluate the effectiveness of past activities, and identify opportunities for further development and increased visibility of the event at the local, national, and international levels. By analyzing the visual identity, key messages, and communication channels, a foundation has been established for defining future guidelines in the branding and promotion of the event, with an emphasis on consistency, sustainability, and increased engagement of target audiences.

3.1. Visual identity analysis

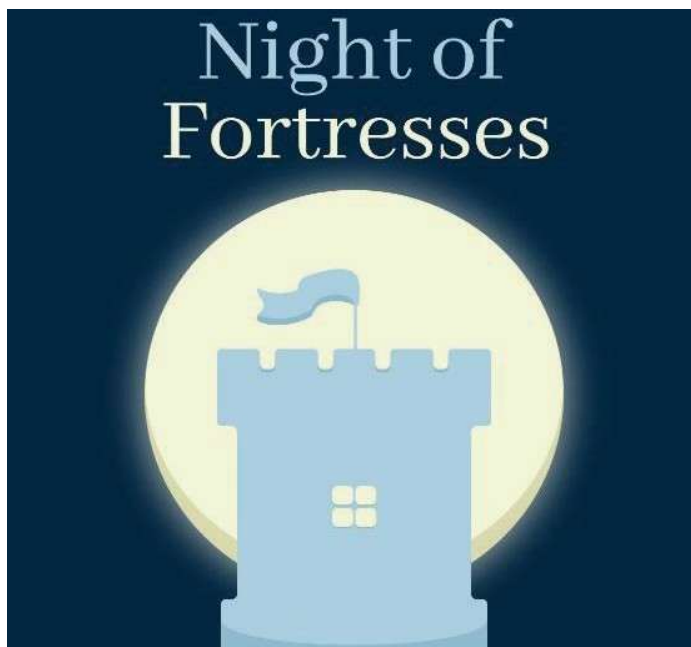
The visual identity of the Night of the Fortresses event was designed to reflect the values of cultural heritage, historical legacy, and a contemporary approach to sustainability. Through the use of carefully selected visual elements—colors, symbols, typography, and graphic solutions—the event presents itself as a serious, authentic, and easily recognizable initiative at the European level.

The central element of the visual identity is the logo, which depicts a stylized fortress under a full moon. This minimalist and symbolic design simultaneously evokes a sense of security, discovery, and connection to historical narratives. The dominant navy blue color in the logo and overall visual impression conveys trust, wisdom, and endurance, while the use of a serif font suggests tradition, seriousness, and the institutional character of the event. Visual consistency has been maintained throughout all years of implementation and across all communication channels, contributing to a stable and recognizable image of the event.

In 2025, the visual identity was further enhanced with the introduction of the *Goes Green* label, clearly communicating the event's commitment to sustainable development and environmental responsibility. A circular green element was added to the logo, symbolically associated with the planet Earth and the ideas of circularity, unity, and care for the environment. The light green hue reinforces the connection with nature, while the circular shape introduces a sense of dynamism and inclusivity. This upgrade logically integrates the ecological dimension into the existing cultural framework of the brand without compromising its original character. The use of the English — Night of Fortresses Goes Green —



Picture 1. Logo *Night of Fortresses* 2024



Source: Contractor's material

Picture 2. Logo *Night of Fortresses* 2025



Source: Contractor's material

further enhances recognition and understanding on the international level, aligning with the cross-border nature of the event and its focus on the European audience.

Overall, the visual identity of the Night of Fortresses is based on strong symbolism, clarity, and consistency. The upgrade towards sustainability further strengthens the emotional and value-based connection of the event with the audience, while also creating space for further development of the identity in line with global trends of cultural and green transition.

IMPLEMENTATION OF A SHARED VISUAL IDENTITY AMONG ALL PARTICIPANTS

To maintain visual and communication consistency of the event at the international level, all participants have access to the *Event Graphic* material as the primary tool for applying the *Night of Fortresses Goes Green* brand. This *kit* includes logos in several versions (basic, negative, monochromatic) adapted to different formats and needs, as well as visuals for social media, prepared for easy use and quick distribution through *online* channels

In addition to visual elements, partners have at their disposal the *Participants' Guidelines* document, which contains the key communication messages of the event, the recommended communication tone, and *hashtags* for consistent tagging of social media posts. This ensures that all partners communicate to the public in a uniform and professional manner, further strengthening the event's recognizability.

When adapting content for local needs (e.g., posts in Italian), partners have the freedom to include local information but must respect the basic visual and communication guidelines. For any additional questions or requests for adjustments, partners have access to the organizers' team, which provides support in the form of consultations and advice.



VISUAL IDENTITY – DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES UNTIL 2030

As the Night of Fortresses event continues to expand and include new partners, a gradual development of the visual identity is recommended, aligned with available resources, local specifics, and the shared brand goals. The following guidelines are recommended for further development until 2030:

- **Expansion of the existing *Event Graphic* material**

It is recommended to upgrade the existing material into a comprehensive *Brand Kit* with additional visual assets—such as templates for print and digital materials (posters, flyers, video promos)—to facilitate partners’ daily use of the visual identity without the need for extra design resources.

- **Development of localized visuals for partners**

It is advised to prepare customizable templates that allow input of local information (e.g., city name, date, program title), while maintaining visual consistency with the event brand.

- **Creation of a social media guide**

It is recommended to create a concise and practical social media guide with examples of formats, post types, visual style, as well as recommended *hashtags* and calls to action

- **Standardization of the *Goes Green* label**

Clear guidelines for the use of the *Goes Green* label are recommended to ensure consistent implementation and to avoid excessive or inconsistent use of this element in visuals

- **Shared digital material repository**

It is advised to establish a centralized digital folder (e.g., on *Google Drive*) where all partners would have easy access to updated logos, templates, and communication materials.

- **Organization of workshops for partners**

It is recommended, depending on circumstances, to occasionally hold *online* workshops or consultations for new partners—especially when first joining the event—to facilitate better understanding of the visual and communication guidelines.

- **Creation of animated visuals**

It is recommended to develop basic animations (e.g., animated logo, video invitations) that partners can use for promotion on social media and digital channels.

- **Compiling and sharing good practice examples**

It is advised that after each edition of the event, visual examples used by partners in promotion are compiled. These examples can be shared within a common folder or documented as inspiration and support for other partners in future development



These guidelines are not mandatory but rather represent a shared framework within which the *Night of Fortresses Goes Green* brand can continue to develop while respecting the specificities of local contexts and the capacities of all involved partners. The goal is for the brand to evolve alongside the community while maintaining its recognisability, values, and sustainable character.

3.2. Analysis of key communication messages

As the event has grown and developed, so too have its core communication messages.

The first messages appeared in 2022, when the Night of Fortresses event was launched as part of the EU project FORTITUDE. At that time, communication focused on presenting the concept itself – a unique cultural event taking place simultaneously at historical sites across the region. It was highlighted that the event features concerts, workshops, exhibitions, and guided tours, and that it has the potential to grow through onboarding new partners.

The messages were informative, inviting, and clearly tied to the project framework, with the goal of increasing the event's visibility and attracting audiences outside the high season.

In the following years, communication evolved further. During 2022 and 2023, the focus shifted toward connecting European cities through their shared fortification heritage and highlighting cultural programmes set in authentic environments. Messages such as “fortifications as spaces of culture,” “experience history through the night,” and “culture in heritage spaces” were used. While the tone remained informative, it gradually adopted an emotional dimension by emphasizing the unique experience and the symbolic significance of the locations.

Given the growth of the event and the expansion of the network of sites, the 2024 communication strategy underwent a significant shift in emotional and symbolic terms. A new message was introduced: “What once divided us, now unites us”, which carries strong symbolic potential. Through this message, fortresses are no longer presented merely as venues for events, but as spaces of transformation – from former symbols of separation and defense into contemporary places of unity, encounter, and cooperation.

Night of Fortresses is positioned as a unique cultural event that connects historic sites across Europe, with its core message communicating the multi-layered idea of connection, unity, and the new role of cultural heritage. Fortresses, once symbols of division, are now becoming places of encounter, exchange, and openness. Their purpose is shifting — from defensive spaces to spaces of dialogue, art, education, and tourism. They are becoming cultural bridges between past and future, tradition and innovation, local communities and international visitors.

NIGHT OF FORTRESSES GOES GREEN

The communication shift to '*Night of the Fortresses Goes Green*' adds a new dimension of environmental responsibility and sustainable development, aligning with its core goals. By adding this slogan, the event is positioned not only as a cultural happening, but also as a platform that promotes environmental awareness, responsible behaviour, and the green transition of the cultural sector. The word *Goes* implies action and movement towards change, while the globally understood term *Green* clearly communicates the core value — sustainability.

The message is simple: culture and heritage can and should go hand in hand with environmental awareness. The goal is to use the event as a tool for raising awareness among the public and visitors about the concepts of green and sustainable development. The event becomes a platform for communicating the importance of sustainable tourism, environmental preservation, and responsible behaviour by all participants — *Step by Step, Event by Event*.





The slogan *Night of Fortresses Goes Green* is paired with the key message *Step by Step, Event by Event*, which emphasizes that change is possible—but gradual. The sustainable transition is not abrupt; it is built with every next step, every next event, collaboration, and decision. In this way, *Night of Fortresses* in 2025 and 2026 moves beyond the framework of a cultural event into a project that systematically unites cultural heritage with environmental awareness.

The aim is for the event to be perceived in the future as an International Cultural Event with an emphasis on sustainability.

To ensure a clear, consistent, and strong positioning of the *Night of Fortresses Goes Green* event for 2025 and 2026, a set of communication messages has been developed to reflect its purpose and values. These messages were created by the Fortress of culture Šibenik's team. As the organizer and initiator of the event, their implementation ensures that all participants, partners, and sites communicate in a unified and recognizable manner, regardless of linguistic, cultural, or local context.

Therefore, it is crucial that all event participants use the defined key messages in their promotional activities—whether in media publications, social media, printed materials, or on-site events—to ensure unified, recognizable, and strategically aligned communication.

The central element of the communication strategy is the core slogan:

Night of Fortresses Goes Green – Step by Step, Event by Event

This message emphasizes that sustainability, inclusivity, and green practices are not one-time actions but ongoing commitments that evolve with every new initiative, workshop, and event. Through each edition of the festival, participants contribute to the long-term transformation of cultural tourism - **Step by Step, Event by Event**.

In addition to the main slogan, seven key messages have been defined, forming the foundation of the event's communication strategy:

- Culture and sustainability go hand in hand – The manifestation links cultural heritage with environmental responsibility and promotes environmental protection through sustainable tourism and cultural practices.
- Step by step, event by event – Sustainable change doesn't happen overnight, but through collective effort and gradual activities at each location.
- Education and raising awareness – Through cultural programmes, visitors learn about environmental challenges and solutions they can apply in everyday life.
- Heritage protection through ecological practices – Implementing sustainable methods in event organization helps preserve cultural sites while reducing environmental impact
- Local communities as change drivers – By engaging citizens, the event fosters community spirit and develops local initiatives like recycling workshops, clean-up actions, and renewable energy use.
- Sustainability boosts local development – The event attracts eco-conscious visitors who value green destinations, while promoting consumption of local products and services.
- Culture inspires change— Art and cultural programs can transform mindsets and behaviors, motivating audiences to actively participate in sustainable development.



Implementing these messages in local and international campaigns is crucial for building the event's unified identity and amplifying the visibility of the core values that *Night of Fortresses Goes Green* aims to promote.

In conclusion, the communication messages of the Night of Fortresses event have been gradually shaped in accordance with its development, the expansion of the international network, and the strengthening of thematic focuses. From the initial informative and project-oriented messages, through the symbolic message “What divided us now unites us,” to the introduction of the green dimension with the slogan *Night of Fortresses Goes Green*, the event has built a communication framework that simultaneously promotes culture, unity, and sustainability.

The introduction of the message *Step by Step, Event by Event* further emphasizes the processual nature and continuity of changes, while clearly positioning the role of the event as a socially responsible platform.

The strategy outlines plans for further refinement and enhancement of key messages, particularly for targeted audiences and tailored communication approaches to both B2C and B2B segments. The objective is to ensure consistent and recognizable communication across all participants and partners, thereby strengthening the event's unified European identity

3.3. Analysis of previous communication channels and activities

The event's communication activities to date can be divided into three main groups:

Media communication – Includes public relations, television, radio, and print media.

Digital communication – covers the official website, social media, digital advertising, and video content.

Partner communication – Refers to the preparation and distribution of communication materials for partners and event participants (e.g., manuals, *toolkits*, emails, direct communication, invitations, joint guidelines).

Overview of the used communication channels:

- **Public relations** – Regular distribution of press releases and the creation of a communication guide for participants ensured a professional and consistent public presentation. A positive image of the event was successfully developed with wide media reach and minimal costs.
- **Online communication** – The official event website <https://nightoffortresses.org/> serves as the main source of information. The Fortress of Culture's social media channels were used to promote the program through posts, visuals, and video content. Partners in the Interreg HR-BA-ME Program also used their channels for information dissemination.
- **Advertising** – Digital banner ads were implemented on local and national portals, along with print media publications across Croatia. Billboards were used in key cities.
- **Radio and television** – Short promotional spots were broadcast across Croatia, and information about the event was distributed to all relevant media.



- **Fortress of Culture Šibenik's YouTube channel** — Promotional video content was published with significant reach, though potential for further development of this channel remains
- **Communication with participants** — Key documents were prepared: Memorandum of Cooperation, activity plan, communication guide, participant manual, and visual toolkit. This ensured consistency of communication at all levels.

Achievements and Good Practice Examples

- Public relations ensured consistent media presence and strengthened the visibility of the event with minimal costs.
- The website and social media provided efficient information accessibility and audience engagement.
- Prepared materials for partners facilitated coordination and ensured consistency in visual and communication presentation.

PROPOSED COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENTS

Based on the analysis of all past communication activities and tools, a set of recommendations has been identified for their improvement and further development. The proposals are aimed at strengthening the visibility of the event, increasing engagement among the target audience, and enhancing the user experience, with a particular focus on accessibility, sustainability, and consistency in communication among all participants. Each recommendation also serves as a guideline for the professionalisation of the event's promotional approach, laying the groundwork for its sustainable growth and expansion

For the effective implementation of marketing and promotional activities, it is essential to ensure adequate human resources and financial means to carry out all planned actions efficiently and within the designated timeframes

1. Public Relations

- Organise press conferences (preferably as exclusive media tours).
- Hold workshops for partners on writing press releases and developing media contacts.
- Systematically use interviews and appearances in local media

2. Media Sponsorship

- Actively develop collaborations with media through content and visibility exchange.
- Prepare cooperation agreements with clearly defined obligations and benefits for both parties.

3. Website

- Align the website with WCAG standards (accessibility for all users).
- Redesign with an interactive map of fortresses, clearer typography, and add more visual content



4. Social Media

- Launch profiles for the *Night of Fortresses Goes Green* event (Facebook and Instagram).
- Regularly post content: announcements, interviews, *behind the scenes*, audience experiences.
- Use a targeted advertising budget for specific audiences (SINKs, DINKs, families).

5. YouTube and podcast

- Expand video content (teaser video, *aftermovie*, testimonials).
- Develop a podcast covering topics in culture, history, ecology, and event management:
 - "Journey Through the Fortresses"
 - "Culture Under the Stars"
 - "Green Fortresses"
 - "Night Guards"

6. Offline advertising

- Continue using print, TV, and radio, with a focus on local stations.
- Link printed ads with digital content via QR codes.
- Use advertising spaces provided by cities, counties, and municipalities for billboards.

7. Materials for partners – further development

- Create a *flipbook* to present the event.
- Produce an event results report for evaluation and promotional purposes.
- Introduce a *checklist*, visual guidelines (*branding guidelines*), Q&A document, *press kit*, and an internal material database (e.g., on *Google Drive*).

For the continued growth and expansion of the Night of Fortresses event, communication activities should not remain solely within the organizer's domain. Every event participant plays an important role in strengthening the shared identity and visibility of the event, both locally and internationally.

Therefore, it is recommended that all participants:

- actively communicate their involvement in the event through local media, social networks, and available channels,
- use the defined key messages, visuals, and communication tools from the official *toolkit*,
- share photos, video content, and statements from the events with the organizer and other partners.



- involve local institutions and the community in the promotion and preparation of the event (e.g., schools, tourist boards, associations),
- promote the sustainable approach and values of the event (*Goes Green*, local community, cultural heritage).

Given their strategic role in expanding the event to new geographical areas, the partners in the FORTIC project have an additional responsibility. It is recommended that they:

- actively work on attracting new fortification sites from their regions (Italy and Croatia),
- use their own networks (cultural institutions, cities, municipalities, associations) to identify and motivate potential participants,
- promote Night of Fortresses as a European event open to growth and partnerships,
- share the call for participation through local and national media, associations, and sectoral events.

Through this approach, the event maintains its shared identity while naturally expanding through local initiatives, strengthening the common platform and creating new value for all involved.



4. ANALYSIS OF POTENTIALS

4.1. Identification of the new sites in Italy

Based on the Project task, new sites have been identified that could be included in the event. A list with contact details has been prepared for 21 fortification heritage sites in Italy. Priority in selection was given to sites in the municipalities of Cervia and Vieste, which are project partners, followed by sites in the provinces of Ravenna and Gargano to which these municipalities belong. For the final selection of sites identified in these provinces, the key criteria were the general condition of the site and the possibility of identifying a managing body or organization for the location.



Cervia

Cervia is located on the Adriatic coast of Italy and has a rich history tied to salt production dating back to Roman times, while its World War II bunkers testify to the city's strategic role in coastal defense.

Table 2: List of sites in Cervia

Ref.N o.	Site name	City/Location	Website	Contact	Brief Description
1.	Dragon's teeth and bunkers	Cervia	LINK	MUNICIPALITY OF CERVIA	Dragon's teeth are anti-tank obstacles made of iron and concrete. The Cervia and Milano Marittima area was filled with bunkers - some preserved in original state, others underground or integrated into private buildings/hotels. German bunkers and "dragon's teeth" served for coastal defense, with positions including barbed wire, minefields, and obstacles. Bunkers were mainly Tobruk or Regelbau types
2.	Torre San Michele	Cervia	LINK	CERVIA- Tourist information centre	Built between 1689-1691, this tower served for city defense and salt storage. Count Michelangelo Maffei constructed it to protect Cervia from pirate attacks.
3.	Magazzino Torre	Cervia	LINK	Municipality of Cervia – Culture Unit – serv-cultura@comunecervia.it	Magazzini del Sale (The salt warehouses) weren't directly used for defense but were crucial for preserving Cervia's economic wealth through salt storage.
4.	Magazzino Darsena	Cervia	LINK	Darsena Delsale	Built in the 18th century, this salt warehouse is now a cultural/exhibition space preserving Cervia's maritime and salt heritage.
5.	Archaeological site of Old Cervia	Cervia	LINK	Municipality of Cervia – Culture Unit – serv-cultura@comunecervia.it	This archaeological site reveals remains of ancient Cervia, including traces of settlements and economic activities dating to antiquity.
6.	„Cervia quadrilateral” ancient fortress	Cervia	LINK	Municipality of Cervia – Culture Unit – serv-cultura@comunecervia.it	Fortress construction began in 1698. Its unique feature is the alignment of city walls with salt workers' houses that even occupied defensive bastions at the four corners.

Source: Prepared by the author



Province of Ravenna

The province of Ravenna in Italy's Emilia-Romagna region abounds with historic fortifications, including castles, towers, and ancient walls.

Table 3: List of sites in Ravenna

Ref. No.	Site name	City/Location	Website	Contact	Brief Description
7.	Rocca Brancaleone	Ravenna	LINK	Municipality of Ravenna	Built in 1457 by the Venetians, this fortress was part of the city's defensive walls. The preserved structure now serves as a public park, blending history with recreation
8.	City walls and gates	Ravenna	LINK	Municipality of Ravenna	Ravenna's ancient walls originated in the 5th century and were reinforced over centuries. Key gates like Porta Adriana and Porta Serrata testify to the city's medieval defense system.
9.	Torre Civica	Bagnacavallo	LINK	Municipality of Bagnacavallo	Remnants of medieval fortifications, this tower symbolizes the town's historical significance.
10.	Rocca Estense	Lugo	LINK	Municipality of Lugo	Originally a medieval fortress, later remodeled during Este family rule. Municipal offices and a library are currently there.
11.	Torre di Oriolo	Faenza	LINK	Torre di Oriolo	Located in Oriolo dei Fichi, this 15th-century tower is a rare example of a hexagonal-layout fortress.
12.	Torre d'Acuto	Cotignola	No available website	Municipality of Cotignola	Medieval tower linked to condottiero John Hawkwood (known in Italy as Giovanni Acuto).
13.	Rocca di Riolo	Riolo Terme	LINK	LINK	14th-century fortress now serving as a museum, offering insights into medieval life.

Source: Prepared by the author



Vieste

Vieste is a picturesque town in the Apulia region of Italy. It boasts numerous historic fortifications that reflect its strategic importance along the coastline

Table 4: List of sites in Vieste

Ref. No.	Site name	City/Location	Website	Contact	Brief Description
14.	Castello di Federico II di Svevia	Vieste	LINK	LINK	Originally built in the 11th century by Count Roberto Drengot, this castle was further fortified in 1242 under Emperor Frederick II. Perched on a cape, it offers majestic Adriatic Sea views. Currently a military facility closed to the public, its imposing structure testifies to Vieste's medieval history.
15.	Torre di Porticello	South of Vieste	LINK	LINK	Located near the coastline, this tower served as a watchtower to monitor the southern approach to Vieste.
16.	Old town walls	Vieste	LINK	Municipality of Vieste	Vieste was protected by medieval walls that surrounded the old town, especially the promontory area. Some sections of these walls remain visible today, contributing to the historic charm of the town.
17.	Torre dell'Aglio	Along the coast near Vieste	LINK	LINK	Although not in perfect condition, this tower is a significant historical building and part of the region's coastal defense system
18.	Torre San Felice	Along the coast near Vieste	LINK	LINK	Located in the settlement of Oriolo dei Fichi, this 15th-century tower is a rare example of a fortress with a hexagonal floor plan.

Source: Prepared by the author



Gargano

Gargano province in Apulia is rich in historical fortifications, including castles, towers, and city walls.

Table 5: List of sites in Gargano

Ref.No.	Site name	City/Location	Website	Contact	Brief Description
19..	Monte Sant'Angelo	Monte Sant'Angelo	LINK	MUNICIPALITY OF MONTE SANT'AGNELO	This castle includes bastions from different historical periods. The oldest part, known as the "Torre dei Giganti" ("Tower of Giants"), is a pentagonal tower 18 meters high with walls 3.7 meters thick. It was first mentioned in 979..
20.	Peschici castle	Peschici	No website available	MUNICIPALITY OF PESCHICI	Built by the Normans to control the sea and defend the territory. The castle features strong walls and watchtowers. The historic center of Peschici has preserved its medieval charm with narrow streets, stone arches, and white houses perched on the cliffs.
21.	Vico del Gargano castle	Vico del Gargano	No website available	MUNICIPALITY OF VICO DEL GARGANO	This medieval castle offers of the city's most prominent architectural features, reflecting its historical importance in the region.

Source: Prepared by the author

All the listed sites represent potential partners from municipalities and provinces in Italy. While there are many fortification and heritage sites in the mentioned municipalities and provinces, the selected ones have an identified contact — an institution, organization, or association that could act as a potential participant. The provided tables represent a list of potential participants from the Italian territory.



4.2. Analysis of good practice examples

Examples of events that incorporate green strategies and combine heritage preservation with sustainability and environmental awareness:

1. Edinburgh Castle Sustainability Festival

- Website: <https://www.edinburghfestivalcity.com/about/strategy>
- Location: *Edinburgh Castle*, Edinburgh, Scotland
- Examples of good practice:
 - Implementation of a rainwater collection system for festival use.
 - Use of electric vehicles for transportation within the festival grounds.
 - Collaboration with local producers to reduce carbon footprint.
 - Organization of educational talks on climate change.

2. Eco festival Petrinja

- Website: <https://inncro-it.hr/projekti/eko-festival-petnja/>
- Location: Petrinja, Croatia
- Examples of good practice:
 - Waste management: Waste separation and recycling.
 - Visitor education: Organization of workshops and lectures on sustainability and environmental protection.
 - Support for local and eco-friendly producers: Offering food and beverages from local and ecological producers helps reduce the carbon footprint related to transport.

3. Mystic Mountain Festival

- Website: <https://mysticmountainfestival.com/>
- Location: *Zipline „Pazi Medo“*, Rudopolje, Croatia
- Examples of good practice:
 - Waste management: Waste separation and recycling.
 - Support for local and eco-friendly producers: Offering food and beverages from local and ecological producers helps reduce the carbon footprint related to transport.



Key practices for environmentally sustainable events:

- Use of renewable energy sources (solar panels, wind turbines).
- Eco-friendly decorations (recycled materials, biodegradable products).
- Sustainable transport (encouraging the use of public transport, bicycles).
- Recycling and waste management (placement of clearly marked bins for recycling and compost).
- Use of environmentally responsible food and beverage services (local and organic products, minimal plastic packaging).
- Visitor education on sustainability and cultural heritage through workshops and guided tours.

Know-how for implementing environmentally sustainable practices at the event

To successfully implement environmentally sustainable practices, a strategic approach with clear guidelines and actionable steps is required:

1. Use of renewable energy sources

- Explore options for installing solar panels or portable solar generators.
- Use energy-efficient lighting (e.g., LED floodlights) and smart power management systems.
- Partner with companies that provide eco-friendly power solutions for events



2. Eco-friendly decorations

- Use recycled and biodegradable materials (e.g., cardboard, wood, natural fibres).
- Design decorations to be reusable for future editions of the event.
- Instead of plastic ornaments, use plants that can be replanted or donated afterward.

3. Sustainable transport

- Provide visitors with public transportation information and organize shuttle buses.
- Install temporary bicycle parking and offer discounts for attendees arriving by bike.
- Use electric vehicles for on-site logistics and staff transportation.

4. Recycling and waste management

- Install clearly labelled bins for paper, plastic, glass, and organic waste.
- Organize the collection and composting of organic waste from food vendors.
- Encourage vendors and caterers to use reusable packaging (zero-waste concept)

5. Eco-friendly food and beverage services

- Collaborate with local food and beverage producers to reduce the carbon footprint.
- Use biodegradable or reusable utensils instead of plastic.
- Implement a returnable packaging system for cups and plates.

6. Educating visitors on sustainability and cultural heritage

- Organize workshops and lectures on sustainable practices and environmental protection.
- Set up educational corners and digital guides to promote eco-friendly initiatives.
- Communicate the event's green measures through social media and the official website.

Implementing these ecological measures not only helps reduce the environmental impact of the event, but also enhances its image, attracts environmentally conscious audiences, and increases support from institutions and sponsors who back sustainable projects.



As part of the FORTIC project, a two-day workshop titled *Green Sustain Lab* was held in Šibenik in October 2024, focusing on climate change adaptation, ecological sustainability, and the role of cultural institutions in this process. The aim of the workshop was to deepen participants' understanding of sustainability, with a special emphasis on the international event *Night of Fortresses Goes Green*. The practical part of the program, Night of Fortresses served as a case study and testing ground for developing sustainable solutions – focusing on event organization, logistics, and the active involvement of audiences in green practices. Based on the workshop outcomes, a set of guidelines titled *Green Sustain Guidelines for Night of Fortresses* was developed, providing a clear and applicable framework for implementing the event in line with sustainability principles.

The guidelines are available for download at the following link: [LINK](#)



5. BRAND STRATEGY

5.1. Defining the brand objectives

Defining the brand objectives for Night of Fortresses is an essential step in shaping its identity and communicating its purpose and values. The objectives focus on creating a recognizable brand by raising awareness of the event and generating interest in it.

Brand objectives are:

1. Increase the event's recognition locally and internationally
2. Promote sustainability and ecological responsibility (Goes Green)
3. Create an emotional connection between visitors and the event

The Night of the Fortresses aims to inspire communities to engage with the past through cultural heritage preservation while shaping a sustainable future through raising environmental consciousness. Its clear purpose enables adaptability to change and provides direction as well.

To establish the brand concept, it was essential to define the core values of the Night of Fortresses brand. These values form the essence of the event and guide marketing and communication activities.

The values of the Night of Fortresses are G.R.E.E.N.:

Growth—Encouraging sustainable development and responsible use of resources.

Resilience—Protecting and revitalizing historic fortresses for future generations.

Ecology—Promoting environmentally sustainable practices and encouraging visitors to actively participate in environmental preservation.

Engagement—Connecting people, organizations, and communities with the goal of preserving cultural heritage and protecting the environment.

Nature & Culture—Celebrating art, history, and nature in the unique settings of cultural heritage sites.

When developing the branding strategy, the *elevator pitch* technique was used — a method that presents and explains the brand Night of Fortresses in just 60 seconds

Elevator pitch:

The Night of Fortresses Goes Green bridges the gap between past and present, transforming historic fortresses into hubs of sustainability and culture. Through ecological initiatives, art, and innovative solutions, we connect heritage with the future, inspiring communities to preserve both their legacy and the environment. Each event is a step toward a greener tomorrow — because fortresses are not just witnesses of the past, but drivers of change!

5.2. Brand concept and implementation

In developing the brand concept, the method of brand personality creation was used, i.e., brand personification through archetypes—linking the brand to what already exists in the human subconscious. This strategy was developed using the model of 12 archetypes originally introduced by psychologist Carl Jung.



Archetypes provide a concrete framework for decision-making and shaping communication activities, as every step taken should align with the specific personality or way of operating defined by the chosen archetype.

By applying the archetype model, the manifestation was given a human identity, thereby creating an emotional connection with the visitors. The defined target group recognizes the brand characteristics of Night of Fortresses in themselves, which enables them to connect emotionally with the brand. This creates a clear differentiation in the market.

In the brand personification process, the personality of the fortress as a type of structure was defined, highlighting its symbolic meaning. A fortress is not just a physical structure that offers defense or dominates its surroundings—it carries a deeper, often cultural, historical, and emotional value. It symbolizes identity, power, resistance, or a community's connection with a specific place and time. The second personality represents the identity of the Night of Fortresses manifestation itself—its essence—while the third personality, the third archetype, defines the direction in which the manifestation is heading, i.e., the archetype representing its future.

Branding through archetypes is one of the most effective ways to create a strong and recognizable narrative. Archetypes are universal patterns of behavior and character deeply rooted in the human psyche, allowing brands to establish a deeper emotional connection with their audience. By using archetypes, Night of Fortresses not only communicates its vision and values but also creates a clear and consistent perception across various target groups.

In relation to its partners, *Night of Fortresses* is positioned as the Creator, as the event generates opportunities and embodies innovation. To the general public, it takes on the archetype of the Magician, because it transforms historical fortresses into magical places of culture, art, and unique experiences. *Night of Fortresses Goes Green* carries the archetype of the Caregiver, as it promotes sustainability, care for the environment, and responsibility toward future generations.

By applying archetypes, we ensure consistency in communication and enable target audiences to intuitively connect with the event.

Picture 3. 12 archetypes model



Picture 4. Overview of the archetypes and their relation to belonging, stability, change, and independence.

CREATOR ARCHETYPE

Picture 5. Creator – The archetype of the Night of Fortresses event in communication towards B2B segment



Picture 6. The Creator archetype's gamma colors



Source: www.brandpersonalities.com.au/thecreator98276150/, downloaded: 10. 2. 2025.

Picture 7. Visual experience of the Creator



Source: www.brandpersonalities.com.au/thecre

The Creator Archetype is an artist, dreamer, designer, and builder. The Creator is imaginative, expressive, and innovative. They create exceptional things and lasting values for society. The Creator's motto is: "If you can imagine it, it can be done." In communication towards the B2B segment, the Night of Fortresses manifestation embodies the Creator archetype. The manifestation expresses the essence of the Creator through a blend of innovation, aesthetics, and permanence, presenting the grand vision of its original builders who did not only construct defensive structures but cultural masterpieces. Their endurance and adaptability to challenges symbolize creativity and the creation of an inspiring legacy for future generations. The manifestation, as a product, is authentic, unique, and creative. The materials are professional and outstanding in both concept and execution, communicating in a sophisticated manner, with clear dedication to detail. The tone of communication towards the B2B segment should be innovative, inspirational, and authentic.

Key words that identify the Creator's attitude towards life and its application to the Night of Fortresses brand: innovation, authenticity, knowledge sharing, imagination, and creativity. The focus should be on research and development of innovative products/services based on long-term results and sustainability. Communication with business partners and collaborators is grounded in the exchange of creative ideas and the addition of value through innovation.

Application of the Creator archetype to the Night of Fortresses Goes Green manifestation in the B2B segment:

In B2B communication, emphasis should be placed on co-creating a sustainable event, where partners act as co-creators and contribute to the development of long-term conditions for the sustainable growth of the local community.



MAGICIAN ARCHETYPE

Picture 8. Magician – The archetype of the Night of Fortresses event in communication towards B2C segment



Picture 9. The Magician archetype's gamma colors



Izvor: <https://brandpersonalities.com.au/themagician2903682/>, downloaded: 10. 1. 2025.

Picture 10. Visual experience of Magician archetype



Source: <https://brandpersonalities.com.au/themagician2903682/>, downloaded: 10. 1. 2025.

Key words that identify the Magician's attitude toward life and their application to the Night of Fortresses brand: transformation (historic sites become vibrant spaces of art, culture, and imagination), visionary thinking (Night of Fortresses redefines how we perceive cultural heritage), synergy (visitors and place merge into one experience), magic (Night of Fortresses creates an experience beyond the ordinary), inspiration (The event sparks imagination and inspires visitors).

The tone of communication across all media and channels aimed at the B2C segment should be eloquent, dramatic, and imaginative.

Application of the Magician archetype to the Night of Fortress Goes Green event for the B2C segment:

Communication should use *storytelling*, describing the manifestation as a magical journey through time, merging past and present to create an unforgettable experience and encouraging visitors to reflect on sustainability.

Through promotional campaigns and social media content, visitors should be invited to contribute with their ideas and suggestions, actively participating in creating a sustainable event, which fosters a sense of co-creating something extraordinary. To promote the event, *influencers* should be engaged with the hashtag *#NightOfFortressGoesGreen*.

"Magical" prize contests should be created, where eco-friendly gifts are awarded to participants.

In this way, visitors are given the opportunity to be part of the "miracle" they help create through their presence and support for sustainable initiatives.



Participants should be engaged by inviting them to take part in eco-workshops, where they can transform old items into something new and useful.

LED light installations in green color, symbolizing sustainability, should be used, along with projections of the *Night of Fortress Goes Green* logo on the walls of historical fortresses.

It is suggested that QR codes be placed at selected locations, allowing visitors to scan them and access information about the event.

CARER ARCHETYPE

Picture 11. Carer – The archetype of the Night of Fortresses manifestation in long-term communication

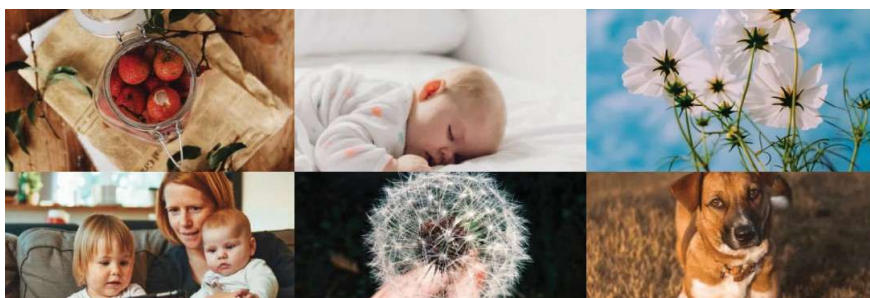


Picture 12. Carer archetype's gamma colors



Source: <https://brandpersonalities.com.au/thecaregiver20193748/>, downloaded: 10. 1. 2025.

Picture 13. Visual experience of the Carer



Source: <https://brandpersonalities.com.au/thecaregiver20193748/>, downloaded: 10. 1. 2025.



In the communication of the *Night of Fortress Goes Green* event, which is based on the **Caregiver** archetype due to its focus on sustainability, it is essential to use words that reflect care, protection, community, and responsibility. The Caregiver communicates in a warm, empathetic, and encouraging way, motivating active participation in the preservation of nature and heritage. The Caregiver is driven by the need to nurture and protect, and these values can be conveyed by the brand through carefully chosen key words:

1. Care – Caring for nature and heritage
2. Preservation – Maintaining historical sites
3. Community – Connecting people through sustainable practices
4. Responsibility – Environmental and social responsibility
5. Safety – A safe and sustainable environment
6. Empathy – Understanding and educating about the environment
7. Balance – Harmony between culture and nature
8. Sustainability – Environmentally friendly activities
9. Nurture – Encouraging positive change
10. Inspiration – Motivating individuals to take action

Application of the Caregiver archetype to the *Night of Fortress Goes Green* event for the B2C segment

The *Night of Fortress Goes Green* event integrates the Caregiver archetype as a key element of its branding strategy, showcasing not only the preservation of the environment and cultural heritage but also a deep commitment to the community. At the heart of this concept lie core values – care, support, and protection – which are reflected in every organized activity, from recycling and upcycling workshops to interactive art exhibitions. In this way, the event becomes a platform that not only educates but also motivates concrete actions for environmental protection. Through carefully designed plastic-free and zero-waste projects, *Night of Fortress Goes Green* demonstrates its commitment to sustainable development and strengthens its position as a leader in promoting responsible behavior and social engagement.

By using archetypes in the branding process, a clear, consistent, and emotionally appealing identity of the event is established, one that communicates effectively with different target audiences.

The *Night of Fortresses* brand positions itself as a Creator towards participants and partners, emphasizing innovation and creativity in the development of new cultural and tourism products. To the general public, the event presents itself through the Magician archetype, creating unforgettable and transformative experiences that connect the past and the present. The event's long-term vision is grounded in the Caregiver archetype, with a focus on heritage preservation, sustainability, and social responsibility.



6. PROMOTION STRATEGY

6.1. Target group identification

Clearly defined target groups are the foundation of effective implementation of communication activities. The target groups can be divided into B2C¹ and B2B² segments. The B2C segment represents the event's communication with end users, i.e., visitors (the general public), while the B2B segment represents communication with partner organizations, the business community, international associations, educational institutions, NGOs, and the media.

Picture 14. Target group overview

B2C segment

Tourists and local residents:

- SINKs,
- DINKs
- Parents with older children

B2B segment

- Partner organizations
- Educational institutions
- Interest groups and civic associations
- International associations
- Sponsors and donors
- Tourism organizations (city, municipality, county level – tourist boards, travel agencies, tour guide associations, hotels & campsites)
- Local entrepreneurs

Source: Prepared by the author

1. B2C (Business-to-Consumer) marketing is aimed at the general public (visitors).

2. B2B (Business-to-Business) marketing targets partner organizations, the business community, international associations, educational institutions, NGOs, and the media.



The presented overview describes the Family with (older) children, including demographic, psychographic, and behavioral aspects — identifying their key characteristics such as age, gender, income, and similar traits, as well as their travel motivations, preferences for certain tourism products, and the way they spend their time at events. Additionally, success factors were identified — that is, the criteria by which this target group evaluates the event.

Picture 15. Family with older children

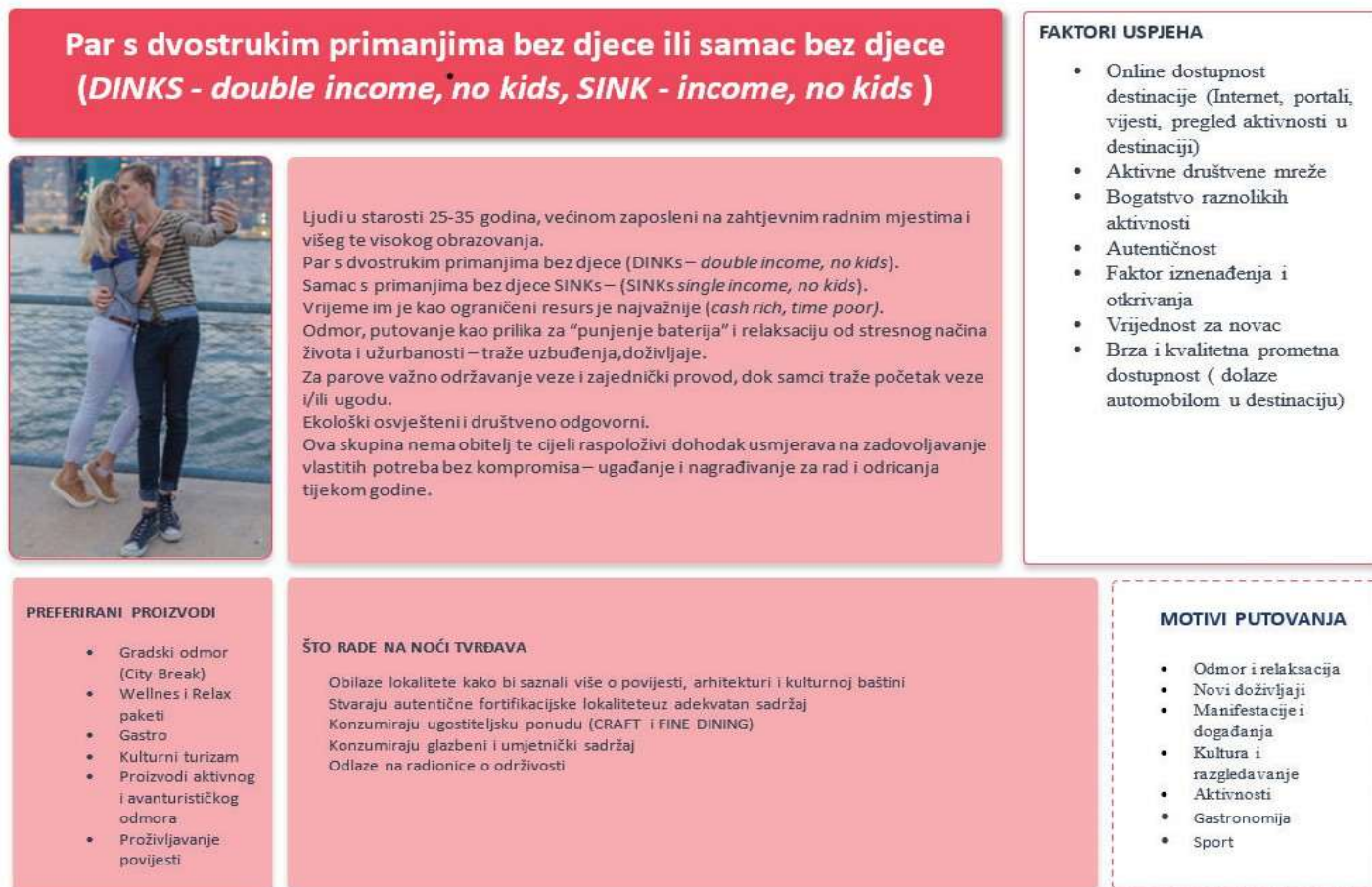


Source: Prepared by the author

The next target group within the B2C segment is a couple with dual incomes and no children or a single person without children. The description of this target group also includes key characteristics, travel motivation, preferences for tourism products, their behavior and activities during the Night of Fortresses event, as well as the success factors — the criteria they use to evaluate the event.

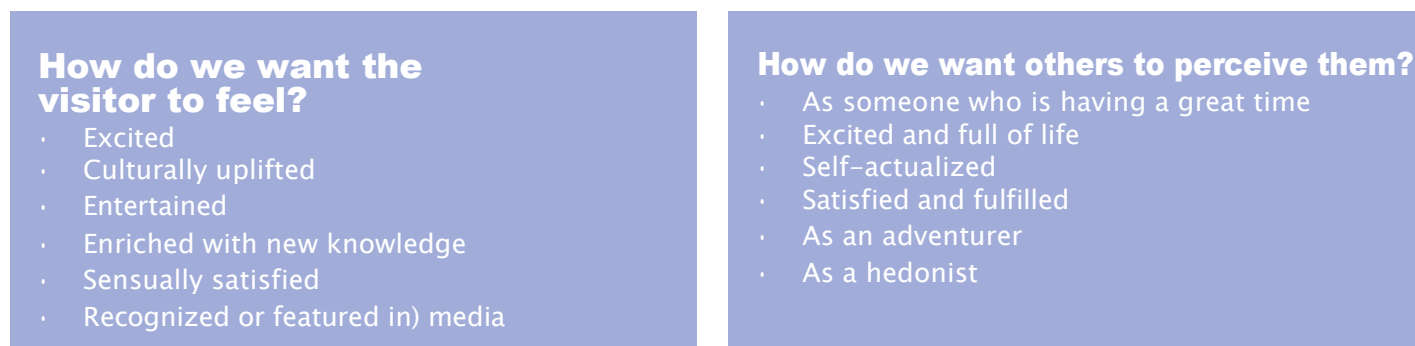


Picture 16. SINKs and DINKs



Source: Prepared by the author

In order to connect the target audience with the established brand values, it is important to define how we want the visitor to feel and how we want others to perceive them



Source: Prepared by the author



The Night of the Fortresses is not just a cultural manifestation aimed at the general public but also a platform for establishing and strengthening B2B collaborations. Through strategic communication with institutions, businesses, tourism organizations, media, and other stakeholders, the event creates opportunities for partnerships that contribute to its long-term sustainability and growth.

B2B communication is focused on delivering value to businesses by promoting the destination, developing cultural and sustainable tourism, and connecting with creative and innovative industries. Using targeted communication channels and tailored messaging, the event aims to engage key partners who can contribute to its success—whether through financial support, joint projects, or the exchange of resources and knowledge.

To effectively position the event as a brand and communicate with target B2B audiences, it is essential to identify their key motivations and drivers.

Table 6: Motivations of target groups in the B2B segment

TARGET GROUP	MOTIVATION (INTERESTS OF THE TARGET GROUP)
Partner organizations	- Increasing visibility and promotion of cultural heritage - Knowledge and experience exchange
Educational institutions	- Promotion of institutions - Education - Social responsibility
Interest groups and civic associations	- Visibility and promotion of their own activities - Networking and collaboration - Social responsibility
International associations	- Preservation of cultural heritage - Promotion of sustainable development - Networking and collaboration - Increasing visibility
Sponsors and donors	- Visibility - Building a positive image - Social responsibility
Tourism organizations (e.g. city, municipal and county tourist boards, travel agencies, guide associations, hotels and campsites)	Providing information to users
Local entrepreneurs (e.g. souvenir producers and traditional or eno-gastro product makers)	- Connecting with key players in the development of tourist destinations and products - Expanding their own business
Media	- Attracting audiences - Creating quality content - Supporting cultural initiatives

Source: Prepared by the author



The effective implementation of communication activities for the Night of Fortresses event is based on clearly defined target groups, which are divided into two segments: B2C and B2B.

Within the B2C segment, demographic, psychographic, and behavioral aspects of key target groups, such as families with children and couples or individuals without children have been analyzed. Their motivations, preferences, and ways of participating in the event are essential for crafting communication messages and shaping the overall visitor experience. The B2B segment focuses on building strategic partnerships with organizations, educational institutions, media outlets, international associations, and entrepreneurs. By identifying the motivations of each target group within this segment, tailored communication can be ensured, creating added value for all participants, from increasing visibility and promoting cultural heritage to networking and business collaboration.

Understanding target groups is key to aligning the brand values of the event with the expectations of both visitors and partners, thereby contributing to the successful positioning and long-term development of the manifestation

6.2. Defining the communication channels

The success of the event depends on effective communication with the previously defined target groups, making it essential to establish appropriate communication channels and methods. Each target audience, whether B2C or B2B, has distinct needs, interests, and preferences regarding how they receive and process information.

This section analyzes the communication channels used for informing, promoting, and engaging target audiences, with emphasis on message customization to maximize impact. Digital tools, social media, traditional media, PR activities, direct communication, and live events are just some of the key components of the event's communication strategy.

By selecting the right channels and tailoring content to each audience's specific characteristics, Night of the Fortresses ensures brand recognition, strengthens its identity, and achieves long-term sustainability through active inclusion of all relevant stakeholders—all while prioritizing a deep understanding of their unique motivations for participation.

The accompanying table outlines communication channels aligned with each target group's motivations, ensuring optimal reach and audience engagement.



Table 7: Overview of communication methods by target audience:

TARGET GROUP	COMMUNICATION CHANNELS	COMMUNICATION TOOLS
General public Tourists and local residents: SINKs, DINKs And parents with older children	• Event website • Social media • Portals • Print media • <i>YouTube</i> • Television • Radio • <i>Billboards</i> • Tourism organization websites • Live events • Promotional materials	• Interactive maps and virtual tours, inclusion, interactivity, redesign, multilingual content, SEO optimization • Advertising, collaboration with <i>influencers</i> and ambassadors, social media posts (date/location announcements, program details, performer spotlights, logistics info.), <i>stories</i>, photographs, video reports • Dynamic <i>banners</i> • Media ads, press releases, interviews • Podcasts, short videos, 15" teaser videos, Night of Fortresses after-movie, 15" spot publication, interviews and guest appearances, press releases announcing and reporting on the event, 30" spot, interviews and guest appearances, press releases announcing and reporting on the event, 15-day rental of advertising space in cities where the events take place and in key source markets from which visitors are expected • Advertising, press releases, and media coverage • Pop-up promotions, <i>storytelling</i> relevant to the event (e.g. event mascot), engaging the audience during the event, photo booths, children's workshops, green activities, prize competitions, "green passport" with stamp collection across events, etc. • <i>Google Ads</i> • Flyers and brochures (distribution through tourist information centers and tourism-related facilities)
Partner organizations	• <i>Online</i> meetings • <i>E-mail</i> • Internal <i>newsletter</i>, direct marketing • Event website • Social media • Partner materials • Internal database	• <i>Zoom, Meet</i> • Generic and personalized email messages • Registration form, interactive map • Event-related posts with relevant content for partners that they can share on their own profiles • <i>Checklists</i>, Q&A, branding guidelines, activity and results report, <i>flipbook</i>, media kit • <i>Google Drive</i>
Educational institutions	• <i>Online</i> meetings • <i>E-mail</i> • Event website • Promotional materials • Institutional collaboration	• <i>Zoom, Meet</i> • Personalized email • Interactive maps and virtual tours • Brochures, leaflets – distributed through educational institutions • Lectures about the event (<i>case study</i>), writing papers on the topic of the event, student volunteering at the event
Interest groups and civic associations	• Direct <i>mail</i> and <i>newsletters</i> • Event website • Promotional materials • Live promotions • <i>YouTube</i>	• Generic and personalized email messages • Interactive maps and virtual tours • Posters and leaflets – distributed to associations via direct mail • Presentations • Interviews with organizers and key stakeholders



TARGET GROUP	COMMUNICATION CHANNELS	COMMUNICATION TOOLS
International associations	• Direct <i>mailing</i> and <i>newsletter</i> • Event website • Reports	• Generic and personalized emails • Interactive maps and virtual tours • Presentations
Sponsors and donors	• <i>Mailing</i> • Event website • Social media • Live promotions	• Generic and personalized emails • Dedicated web section for sponsor information and benefits • Interactive maps and virtual tours • Posts with relevant content for partners to share • Presentations
Tourism Organizations (e.g. local, regional tourist boards, agencies, guide associations, hotels, campsites)	• <i>Mailing</i> • Promotional materials • Event website • Live promotions • Cooperation with tourist guides	• Generic and personalized emails • Leaflets, brochures, posters in branch offices • Interactive maps and virtual tours • Presentations • <i>Storytelling</i>
Local entrepreneurs (e.g. souvenir makers, traditional and eno-gastro producers)	• <i>Mailing</i> • Social media • Event website • City and county tourist board websites	• Generic and personalized emails • Partner-relevant event posts for sharing • Application form, interactive maps, program • News and event info, application form
Media	• Public relations	• Press releases (announcements pre- and post-event), press conferences, reports and interviews , media kit

Source: Prepared by the author



6.3. Defining the key messages

Clearly defined key messages ensure consistency in conveying the brand's values, vision, and identity to various target audiences – business partners, visitors, and the general public. Through carefully crafted messaging, the event positions itself as an innovative cultural project that transforms historical fortresses into dynamic spaces of art, community, and sustainability. The messages are aligned with the brand's defined archetypes – the Creator, the Magician, and the Caregiver – enabling precise and emotional connection with the audience. The key message used in the 2025 communication campaign – *Step by Step, Event by Event* – emphasizes a gradual and continuous transformation. Different key messages are defined separately for the B2C and B2B segments, as the communication styles, target audiences, channels, and tools differ.

Suggested key message for communication to the public:

OLD STRONGHOLDS, FRESH EXPERIENCES, GREENER CHOICES.

It conveys that visitors can expect much more than just a typical tour of a historical site – it will be a unique experience that inspires individuals to drive positive change in society through their own engagement. Revitalized historical locations that blend rich heritage with modern, sustainable tourism are redefined through interactive storytelling, innovative approaches, eco-workshops, and a strong focus on environmental preservation. Visitors leave these sites transformed – enriched with knowledge, inspired by beauty and history, and with a deeper awareness of the importance of sustainability.

- **Transformation of historic sites**
Old fortresses become living spaces of art, culture, and imagination. Visitors have the opportunity to witness how the past gains new life through creative interpretation and sustainable initiatives, turning these locations into dynamic spaces where stories are told that matter – not just historically, but for the world we live in today.
- **Synergy between history, art, and visitors**
Through interactive programs, artistic performances, and innovative tours, the event creates a unique connection between place, visitors, and artists. Historical tales, legends, and symbolism of the sites are blended with contemporary content to create a magical and unforgettable experience.
- **Education on sustainable tourism**
Every opportunity is used to educate visitors on the importance of sustainable tourism. Through workshops, exhibitions, and engaging activities – even small interventions like signage – visitors learn how simple changes, from waste reduction to using local resources, can help protect both the environment and cultural heritage.
- **Magic and inspiration**
A visit to the site becomes an unforgettable journey through time, where past and present meet, while laying the foundation for a better future. With inspiring stories and enchantingly restored monuments, visitors leave with new insights and experiences, more aware of their role in preserving nature and cultural legacy.
- **Greener choices for visitors and the community**
The event encourages making green decisions, such as choosing local products, reducing carbon footprint during travel, and using renewable energy whenever possible. This way, visitors don't just enjoy the experience – they also become ambassadors of sustainability



- **A vision for the future of tourism**

A visit to a revitalized historic site redefines the way we perceive cultural heritage, promoting its role not only as a witness to the past, but also as a driver of change for a more sustainable future. It encourages people to reflect on the world we are leaving behind for future generations.

- **From visitor to change-maker**

Visitors are not merely observers – they become active participants. Through interactive content and hands-on workshops, they are encouraged at every step to engage in environmental preservation and are empowered to apply their newfound knowledge in their everyday lives.

CUPS – text suggestion:

Sip like a knight, recycle like a hero!

AROUND THE FORTRESS – Text suggestion:

The battle for a clean nature is on. HEROES WANTED!

T-SHIRT – Text suggestion:

KNIGHT OF THE FORTRESS

WASTE BIN – Text suggestion: ENVIRONMENT

PROTECTION IS NEVER WASTE

Proposed key message for b2b segment:

EVENT WHERE HISTORY, CULTURE AND GREEN IDEAS COME TOGETHER!

This message describes restored historical sites as unique venues where history is brought to life, culture is nurtured, and the environment is protected. Through collaboration with educational institutions, historical societies, cultural professionals, and local communities, these locations are transformed into true hubs of creativity and innovation. The development of modern content for these spaces enables the evolution of next-generation tourism – tourism that warmly welcomes visitors while also respecting and enhancing the quality of life for residents. The doors of these historic locations are always open to those with the will and vision to turn them into fortresses of heritage preservation and environmental sustainability.

- **History as a foundation for innovation**

The main emphasis is always on environmental sustainability, social responsibility, and economically viable business models. Partners are invited to jointly develop products and services that use environmentally friendly materials, promote zero waste policies, and involve the local community in every project.

- **Sustainable development at the heart of collaboration**

The main emphasis is always on environmental sustainability, social responsibility, and economically viable business models. Partners are invited to jointly develop products and services that use environmentally friendly materials, promote *zero waste* policies, and involve the local community in every project.

- **Social responsibility through inclusion**

Involving the local community and vulnerable groups is key to the development of socially responsible projects. Programs that empower the local population through employment, education, and participation are encouraged, as they create and strengthen a sense of community and belonging.



- **A space for sharing knowledge and creativity**
Bringing together international experts, educational institutions, and various creatives with a shared vision – with the goal of exchanging ideas and developing solutions for modern tourism. Through workshops and presentations, participants exchange innovative ideas that will transform historical sites into places of unique experiences.
- **Connecting culture and green ideas**
Revitalized historical locations serve as an example of successfully merging culture and ecological awareness. *Go-green* approach to tourism is promoted, education is provided on ways to reduce the carbon footprint, and methods that protect the environment and cultural heritage are encouraged.
- **Innovative and sustainable products**
Creating tangible and sustainable tourism products and services that are innovative, authentic, and aligned with high environmental standards. Partners are invited to collaborate in designing content that enrich visitor experiences while contributing to the local community and environmental preservation.
- **Inspiration through authenticity**
Historical sites spark imagination, resulting in the creation of unique projects for the travellers of a new era. Culture and history become the drivers of change that transform tourism and elevate it to a new level of quality and sustainability

The key message used in the 2025 event communication – *Step by Step, Event by Event* – emphasizes gradual and continuous transformation, while the proposed key message *Old Strongholds, Fresh Experiences, Greener Choices* represents the evolution of that concept. It unites the three core values of the event: the preservation of historical heritage (*Old Strongholds*), an innovative approach to programming (*Fresh Experiences*), and sustainability (*Greener Choices*). This slogan reflects a vision of the future in which Night of the Fortresses not only continues to grow "step by step" and "event by event," but also actively redefines the role of heritage sites in the contemporary cultural and ecological context. The key message *Step by Step, Event by Event* lays the foundation, while the message *Old Strongholds, Fresh Experiences, Greener Choices* highlights the progress made and a clear orientation toward a sustainable and innovative future for the event.



7. BRANDING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN – ACTION PLAN

To realize the vision of sustainable and innovative development of historical sites in practice, a clear and structured action plan is required. The proposed plan defines concrete steps, key stakeholders, and timeframes necessary for the implementation of the branding strategy through precisely defined measures. The action plan lays the foundation for the successful achievement of goals and ensures measurable results.



The poster features a dark blue background. On the left, the 'Interreg' logo is in white, followed by the European Union flag and the text 'Co-funded by the European Union'. Below this, 'Italy – Croatia' is written in white, and the 'FORTIC' logo is at the bottom left. In the center is a stylized illustration of a blue castle tower with a flag on top, set against a large yellow circle representing a full moon. On the right, the text 'Night of Fortresses' is in a large, white, serif font. Below it is a green circular badge with the words 'GOES GREEN' in white. Further down, the phrase 'STEP BY STEP, EVENT BY EVENT' is written in a bold, green, sans-serif font. At the bottom right, the date 'May 9, 2025' is displayed in a white, serif font.

Interreg  Co-funded by
the European Union

Italy – Croatia

 FORTIC

Night of
Fortresses

**GOES
GREEN**

**STEP BY STEP,
EVENT BY EVENT**

May 9,
2025



Measure 1: INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

Table 8: Measure 1: Internal communication and stakeholder collaboration

Activity	Communication tools	Conducted by	Timeframe	Target group
1.1. Establishing effective communication and stakeholder partnerships in the project	Defining and implementing communication and collaboration tools Defining communication platforms: group email addresses by topic, shared collaboration platform (e.g., <i>Google</i> , <i>Asana</i> , etc.), shared digital document archive	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses	At the beginning of the project	Municipal tourist Board, County tourist Board of the event organizer, other relevant stakeholders (cultural institutions, heritage and ecology promotion associations, etc.)
1.2. Developing new materials for partners	Short-term 2025/2026: - Internal collaboration database (hosted on <i>Google Drive</i> or similar tool) with a content-sharing base: texts, photos, event calendar - Partner <i>checklist</i> - Visual identity guidelines (<i>Branding Guidelines</i>) - Q&A document with frequently asked questions - Media package (<i>Press kit</i>) Long-term 2027–2030: - <i>Flipbook</i> for event presentation	Fortress of culture Šibenik	2025.	Partner event organizers
			2027.	
1.3. Workshops on planning and conceptualizing content and defining the execution of the Night of the Fortresses event	Workshop	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses	At least once a year	Stakeholders
1.4. Stakeholder coordination meetings	Work meetings	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses	Continuously	-II-
1.5. Preparing reports on the implementation of planned activities	Report	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses	At least once a year	-II-

Source: Prepared by the author



Measure 2: INFORMING THE LOCAL PUBLIC BODIES AND COMMUNITY

The aim of this measure is to develop a long-term plan for engaging the local public bodies and communities. It is necessary to include as many different stakeholder groups as possible who are involved in the creation and delivery of the tourism product, as well as to inform the entire population of the municipalities organizing the Night of the Fortresses event. Effective public participation should focus on agreement with stakeholders and achieving a common goal: promoting the protection of cultural monuments and the development of sustainable tourism within the local community of the event organizers. Support from associations involved in culture, environmental protection, and similar fields is of great importance for fostering a positive attitude toward the project and for contributing to the creation of the event's program.

Table 9: Measure 2: Informing the local public bodies and community

Activity	Community tools	Conducted by	Timeframe	Target groups
2.1. Identifying key stakeholders in the local community	Workshop	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses	At the beginning of the project	Municipal tourist board of the event organizer Municipal event organizer
2.2. Workshops aimed to involve local stakeholders in project activities according to their fields and interests	Workshop	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses	At the beginning of the project	Cultural institutions Associations promoting heritage, ecology, etc. Family farms (OPGs) Businesses relevant to the project
2.3. Stakeholder coordination meetings	Work meetings	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses	Continuously, at least quarterly	-II-
2.4. Preparing reports on the implementation of planned activities	Report	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses	At least once a year	-II-
2.5. Informing the wider local community about project activities	Unsolicited mail Event organizer's website Information table for the local community	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses	As needed	Local population

Source: Prepared by the author



Measure 3: INFORMING TARGET B2C GROUPS AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

The goal of this measure is to provide a methodology for mass communication efforts. The initial step involves monitoring event attendance and conducting market research on a sample of visitors and followers to determine their attitudes and media habits. A key step is planning an activity calendar. This overview should include all communication phases of the project (e.g. first announcement of the date, program release...), an overview by communication channels, and an overview by topics/messages. Beyond the event itself, communication content—especially on social media—can relate to the location, history, significant dates, and similar themes. For these as well, it is beneficial to have a calendar indicating when each topic is expected and a plan for how it will be presented. An attendance of prominent and/or well-known individuals at the event can also be part of the communication strategy and should be anticipated in planning

Table 10: Measure 3: Informing target B2C groups and related activities

Activity	Community tools	Conducted by	Timeframe	Target groups
3.1. Monitoring event attendance according to relevant indicators and comparison with plan	Report (number of visitors, amount of time spent at location, attendance per individual event, number of educational activities conducted, data collected via visitor counters if available, website and social media profile visits...)	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses	Continuous / monthly	Founder Relevant institutions
3.2. Market research	Visitor sample survey (on-site, <i>online</i>) aimed at collecting information about media habits and ways visitors learn about the event	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses event or in cooperation with external contractors	Once or multiple times during the year (recommended to conduct in three waves: pre-season, in-season, and post-season)	Visitors
3.3. Development of annual Promotion plan with responsible parties/contractors per plan segments	Promotion plan containing event calendar, media plan by content/channels/timings and target values for individual channels (where possible)	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses event or in cooperation with external contractors	Annual planning for following year	For organizer's needs



3.4. Promotion implementation with responsible parties/contractors per plan segments	Short-term – 2025/2026: • Press conference • PR campaign • Event website (more visually engaging elements, improved typography, better text-background contrast) • <i>Banner</i> advertising (dynamic banners) • Social media (launching Night of the Fortresses profiles on Facebook & Instagram) • Event YouTube channel (publishing all video content) • TV (national or local, depending on budget/media landscape) • Radio • Local print media • Large-format posters • Promotional materials for visibility • Audience engagement (photo booths, children's workshops, interactive workshops) • Green initiatives: waste separation, reusable cups/items (<i>reusage</i>)		2025.	
	Long-term 2027–2030: • Media sponsorships • Event website (WCAG-compliant per EU Web Accessibility Directive) • Social media: podcasts, influencers • YouTube channel: podcasts • <i>Storytelling</i> • Prize contests • "Green passport" initiative		2027.	



3.5. Comprehensive partner activity plan	Activity plan includes : joint activity calendar, cross-publishing on partner websites, social media coordination, shared media outreach (co-creation and content sharing)	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses event or in cooperation with external contractor	Annual planning for following year	Municipal/County tourist boards NGOs Co-organizers (other locations) Relevant institutions (educational, etc.)
3.6. Content development	Creation of event-related communication themes: program highlights, project team features, performer spotlights, historical stories, location-specific traditions relevant to the program	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses event or in cooperation with external contractors	Continuous	NGOs Media

Source: Prepared by the author



Measure 4: INFORMING THE TOURISM AND OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS STAKEHOLDERS

The goal of this measure is to provide a working methodology for communication with the tourism industry and other relevant business stakeholders. Each group should be addressed according to its specific interest in potential business collaboration with the organizer of the Night of the Fortresses event. An overview of target audiences and their corresponding interests is provided in the chapter *Target groups identification*.

Table 11: Measure 4: Informing the tourism and other relevant business stakeholders

Activity	Community tools	Conducted by	Timeframe	Target groups
4.1. Identification and categorization of tourism and relevant business stakeholders	Workshop	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses or in cooperation with external contractor	At the beginning of the project	Hotels & campsites (county/province) Travel agencies Private accommodations (organizer's municipality) Tour guide associations (county/province) Municipal/County Tourist Boards Relevant local entrepreneurs International associations Sponsors & donors
4.2. Communication channels and content definition	Channels specified in Document chapter 6.2 "Defining communication channels"	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses	At the beginning of the project	-II-
4.3. Stakeholder coordination meetings	Work meetings	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses	Continuous (quarterly)	-II-
4.4. Implementation progress report	Report	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses	At least once a year	-II-
4.5. Informing the tourism industry stakeholders	Organizer's website Local tourist board website	Organizer of the Night of Fortresses and Tourist board	As needed	-II-

Source: Prepared by the author



8. CONCLUSION

The branding strategy for the Night of the Fortresses event was developed with the aim of establishing foundations for long-term positioning of the event as a recognizable cultural-tourist attraction at the European level. Based on analysis of previous development, existing communication activities and expansion potential, concrete steps have been proposed for improving visual identity, communication channels and methods of audience engagement.

The introduction of the Night of the Fortresses Goes Green concept further strengthens the values of sustainability, inclusivity and community that the event cultivates. Through implementation of the proposed activities, the event can further increase its visibility, attractiveness and impact, particularly among target audiences such as families with older children, tourists and local communities.

The key to successful implementation of this strategy lies in collaboration between all stakeholders - from institutions and partners to local authorities and media. A special role belongs to partners of the FORTIC project who, through their own networks and activities, should actively encourage joining of new locations and participants from their respective geographical areas.

Strategy implementation requires adequate human resources and secured financial means. Only through consistent and coordinated implementation of planned activities can the brand objectives be achieved and sustainable growth of the event ensured in the coming years.

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Branding strategy for the Night of Fortresses manifestation in the Italy-Croatia area

Night of
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