

# **Living Memories!**

**Collecting oral testimonies and enhancing them through artistic practices: towards new resources for rural territories!**

# Presentation of the booklet

This training booklet is part of the activities of ECOHOMY project, supported by the Europea program Erasmus +, launched in February 2020. It aims to develop new mediation actions that present heritage using artistic practices. The project is based on the meeting of young Europeans with inhabitants of rural territories located in South Ardeche in France, in the Rhodopes in Bulgaria and in the Italian South Tyrol.

## The project ECOHOMY

The ambition of the ECOHOMY project is to propose to young Europeans between the ages of 18 and 30 to reflect on intangible cultural heritage, particularly oral heritage, and to experiment with original forms of valorisation of the words of inhabitants.

The training was implemented by partners from various fields and offered different perspectives on the question of the relationship between these inhabitants and their territory. It was carried out by the company Theatre of Theatre des Chemins company, which has been proposing for many years strolling shows based on the words of the inhabitants. Historians, geographers and anthropologists from Cermosem, a research and training centre focused on territorial development at the University of Grenoble-Alpes (UGA) and the social science laboratory Pacte in Ardèche, the association BAAT (Bulgarian Association of Alternative tourism), which works in the field of ecotourism and the training of mountain guides, also contributed. It is a collective research whose postulate is that orality can be a heritage object in its own right. The training proposed to the young Europeans (some of whom were enrolled in a professional degree course for mountain guides at the UGA) a method of investigation with the inhabitants to collect songs, legends, poems, life stories, popular beliefs, anecdotes, testimonies, know-how... At the end of this collection, the Théâtre des Chemins company carried out an initiation to the work of reinterpretation and staging of these words of inhabitants. This work, carried out collectively with artists and young people, was presented to the inhabitants and tourists in the form of strolls and shows on three occasions: in France (May-June 2021), in Bulgaria (July 2021) and in Italy (May 2022).

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The **multinational and intercultural dimension** of the project proved to be particularly enriching and appreciated by the participants. It led the young people to adopt a reflective posture on their culture and its repercussions on the landscape and their daily environment. It was particularly the collection of oral testimonies that allowed this "step aside" and the change in the participants' view of their way of life. Finally, the exploration and dissemination of a mediation method of this corpus of words at the local and European levels also made it possible to federate a network of diversified actors: young mediators, local authorities, artists, and tourist actors.

The project's objective was to have young people of different nationalities collectively experiment with a method of collecting and artistically enhancing the words of inhabitants in rural European territories. Its ambition was to question the place of young people, sciences and arts in the engagement of a patrimonial reflection around orality. The training booklet bears witness to this process and proposes to share it.

### **The training booklet**

This training booklet brings together the results, the process and some of the experiments carried out during the ECOHOMY project without seeking to fix them to duplicate them. We aim to share some essential elements, to make the approach appropriate and to put our reflection at the service of future projects carried out by others in an enriched way.

It includes synthetic theoretical chapters on the concepts deployed, such as that of "intangible and oral heritage" from different points of view (UNESCO, anthropologists, heritage mediators, project participants, etc.); reflective questioning; methodological tools for collecting words; practical exercises developed within the framework of the project; and bibliographical suggestions.

It is intended for all those who wish to collect and value the words of inhabitants. It is backed up by a second booklet dedicated to trainers and offering additional indications on pedagogy, group management and the skills developed.

## **Proposed modules and skills developed**

This booklet offers four training modules. Followed chronologically, they allow you to carry out a project of collection, analysis and artistic mediation of inhabitants' words. The skills developed for each module are the following:



**Module 1 / Identify places and resource persons, prepare for the collection:** Locate a tourist itinerary and meet inhabitants in the field;

**Module 2 / Collecting the word:** Acquire technical and methodological know-how to collect words, memories, testimonies;

**Module 3 / Processing the oral corpus:** Processing and analysing the collected corpus;

**Module 4 / Enhancing and transmitting:** Set up forms of transmission of the word, by mobilising artists, to create a guided tour. Communicate and promote an original tourist product (for example, the "spectacle" walk).

## Feedback from participants

"I learned a lot about the importance of the word of the inhabitants, and all these words, testimonies, stories shape the territory, as much as tree plantations, ways of cultivating the land"

*Participant in the residency in Bulgaria, July 2021*

## "Looking away": a project that promotes interculturality (the dimension most appreciated by the participants)

"It's also interesting that it's an intercultural project that brings together a rural past and rural folklore from Ardèche with a rural past and rural folklore from Bulgaria. For me, it is this: To preserve and highlight a heritage that we don't think about and that the populations themselves don't think about and would never consider as a heritage, and at the same time to allow interconnection between these populations by showing them that their life is not so different from that of rural populations elsewhere. Because at the end of the day, rural lifestyles do overlap a little bit."

*Participant in the residency in Bulgaria, July 2021.*

### *Photograph of Dryanovo village, Bulgaria, July 21*

"I have a problem with my posture when I am a tourist. [In the ECOHOMY project] It's a way of travelling that I have found to be right; we are not looking for the most beautiful monuments and filling in all the boxes of the Routard guide but taking the time and listening [...] it has given me a different view of travelling.

*Participant in the residency in Bulgaria, July 2021.*

"[...] We attached to it a human experience with stories and a more intimate knowledge of the places and the people. And as a result, it gives more value to things and makes everything more moving and powerful. And it indeed changes everything. Now I will travel differently.

*Participant in the residency in Bulgaria, July 2021.*



### *Photograph of the village of San Martin, South Tyrol, Italy, May 2022*

## A project with an ecological dimension?

"For me, it is a project of valorisation of the heritage, to try to valorise heritages other than monuments. To find other heritages which could



put forward the territories. And also to try to reconnect with the past. I think it can be intertwined with environmental protection and ecology because this way of telling the story of ancient and traditional ways of life also means reconnecting with the sobriety of life with resilient ways of living that will no doubt be beneficial to us soon. And it could be a vector of education for these more sober ways of life. I'm also thinking of the proximity with nature that was much emphasised by all the people we interviewed."

*Participant in the residency in Bulgaria, July 2021*



*Sketch made during the residency in Bulgaria, June 2021.*

### Participation of the inhabitants in projects that concern them

"It brought me more questions than answers. Questions about the way we do our job. We are in our offices, in front of our computers, and we draw plans, and public spaces, saying to ourselves, the inhabitants will go here and do it like this (...) It is a position that has always bothered me to decide for others. But this trip confirmed that it's really important to design with users, with the inhabitants.

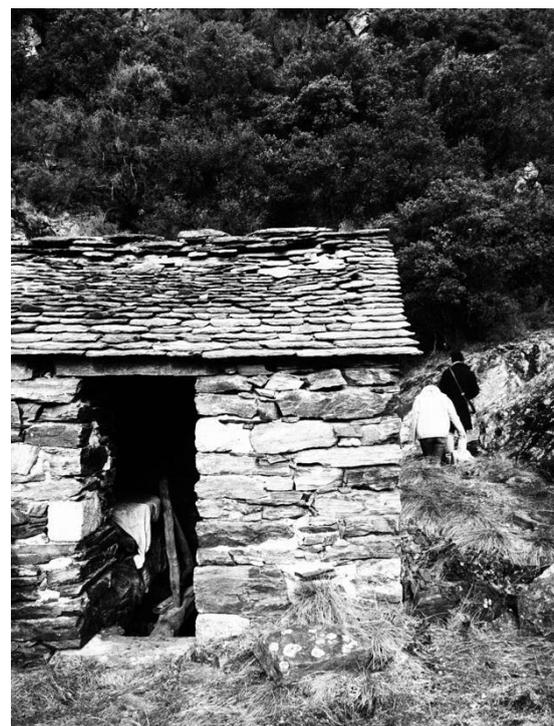
*Participant in the residency in Bulgaria, July 2021, training to become a landscape designer.*

**Photograph of the village of Vernon, France, 2021**

### Linking heritage mediation, orality and artistic practices

"I would say that the ECOHOMY project has given me an insight into how to insert an artistic dimension into guiding practice, as well as contacts for, one day, perhaps setting up projects involving artists. This experience has also shown me the richness and effectiveness of working in groups to create a theatrical guided tour and the importance of using natural spaces as a setting, a stage. This is something I plan to integrate quickly into my practice as a tour guide."

*Participant in the residency in the Italian South Tyrol, May 2022.*



## Framing elements

Being interested in orality and its valorisation refers to different notions, approaches and methodologies that we should first specify. Indeed, this subject raises many questions that we propose to address before the four training modules.

### Why be interested in oral heritage when you are a young heritage mediator?

Oral heritage is a heritage category whose recent emergence has involved a change of paradigm since it has led to a shift from the valorisation of the tangible, commonly represented through the built and historically ancient heritage, to the intangible (in this case orality). However, the immateriality of this heritage, its actors and its supports (often sound) impose new methods and postures just as much as they pose specific problems concerning its valorisation and mediation. Thus, can we transmit and enhance this heritage through traditional mediation devices (guided tours, exhibitions), or should we devise new forms of mediation that are more participative, creative and interactive?

This is a new challenge that all those interested in oral heritage, whether they are professionals in heritage institutions, researchers, artists, etc., must consider. Far from claiming to provide ready-made solutions, this booklet attempts to provide some elements for reflection based on a project to translate and transmit life stories in the form of a dramatised walk.

#### The view of Aurélie Perret, historian and tour guide

"For me, the project is very innovative, because traditionally in training courses, the question of oral heritage is not mentioned at all. It is not at all part of the official curricula of guide-lecturer training courses. It gives them something extra, especially as this aspect is of increasing interest to local authorities, through inventories of know-how, the collection of the words of inhabitants...".

## What is intangible cultural heritage?

### Our definitions of these different concepts:

**Oral testimony:** Declaration, attestation of an experience lived by a witness. However, this notion covers several meanings depending on the discipline.

**Oral archives:** They constitute the stage of preservation of the testimony. "An oral archive is an oral testimony, conceived, produced, collected, preserved and archived for heritage, memorial, scientific, educational or cultural purposes, either to compensate for the disappearance of written documentation or to complete and enrich it<sup>1</sup> "

**Heritage:** It represents tangible assets (buildings, objects, places) or intangible assets (practices, know-how, customs, rites, songs, etc.) that are considered to be sufficiently important in our common history to ensure their conservation, preservation, protection and enhancement.

**Oral heritage:** This refers to all oral expressions (testimonies, songs, lullabies, voices and words of the past, etc.) that have reached the end of the heritage process - from their recording to their conservation, transmission and appropriation - thus leading to their change in status.

- A new heritage category created by UNESCO, its definition and challenges

In 2003, UNESCO defined intangible cultural heritage (ICH) as "**the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills - as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces** associated in addition to that - that communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is **constantly recreated** by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a **sense of identity and continuity**, thus helping to promote respect for cultural diversity and human creativity<sup>2</sup> . Thus, UNESCO recognises through the ICH "that communities, in particular indigenous communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals, play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and recreation of intangible cultural heritage, thus contributing to the enrichment of cultural diversity and human creativity.

While the choice and management of tangible heritage were relegated to experts, intangible heritage integrates "communities" into the heritage process. This is a major change of attitude!

- The social science perspective

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<sup>1</sup> DESCAMPS Florence, " La mémoire orale, quesaquo ? ", Perles d'histoire, published online on 15.01.2021. Available at: <http://www.perlesdhistoire.fr/archives-orales-florence-descamps>.

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003 [online] <https://ich.unesco.org/fr/convention>

## Heritage, a matter of emotions, selection and resources for the present and the future

Heritage is about making visible the traces of the past, even if they have been remodelled. It is a deliberate selection of places, stories or practices so that they remain **traces of the past for the present and the future**. In so doing, heritage preservation helps to extract them from ordinary treatment to pass them on. The group that mobilises them thus projects itself with them and through them into a **common horizon to be built**. This anchoring in the long history then allows the conversion of a source into a **potential resource at the service of a territorial project**.

Heritage is also about highlighting a historical episode or period (sometimes to the detriment of other moments in history). Through this action, it is a matter of **choosing the image that one will give to others and to oneself**. In this sense, heritage is an enterprise of legitimisation, appropriation and exclusion. As the historian Dominique Poulot explains, it, therefore, constitutes "a scholarly reflection but also a political will, both of which are sanctioned by opinion within the complex interplay of sensitivities towards the past, its various appropriations and the construction of identities"<sup>3</sup>.

Lastly, the creation of heritage is prompted by a **sensitive relationship with the past** and the places and practices that embody it. These "**heritage emotions**", as the anthropologist Daniel Fabre has called them<sup>4</sup>, are guided by the fear of forgetting and losing these traces of the past "in the face of historical ruptures"<sup>5</sup>. This paradigm urges heritage experts, at UNESCO or elsewhere, tourists and local populations to promote the **safeguarding of the persistence of the past**. However, in the context of intangible heritage, the question can legitimately be asked: **how can dynamic and complex cultural expressions be safeguarded?** Several anthropologists consider that UNESCO's conception of intangible cultural heritage contributes to **reifying, i.e.** freezing, a dynamic process and encouraging the recreation and performance of so-called traditional traditions<sup>6</sup>. Yet the transmission of cultural expressions is always a re-reading. Cultures are not hermetic and homogeneous units, and the past is never reproduced exactly as it is but is reconstructed according to the present context.

"I have a little trouble with the word "heritage". It's something that all of a sudden you have to preserve, put it under a bell. I saw it as very much linked to architecture too. It's something that maybe doesn't allow us to go forward anymore. It's very interesting to rely on ancestral methods, but there's a risk of freezing them too much, of not accepting to live in the world we live in.

*Participant in the residency in Bulgaria (July 2021)*

<sup>3</sup> POULOT Dominique (dir.), 2000, *Patrimoine et modernité*, Collection Chemins de la mémoire, Paris, l'Harmattan, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> FABRE Daniel (ed.), 2013, *Émotions patrimoniales*, Paris, Maison des sciences de l'homme.

<sup>5</sup> BERLINER David, 2013, "Nostalgia and heritage. Esquisse d'une typologie", in Fabre D., *Émotions patrimoniales*, Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, p. 393-407.

<sup>6</sup> BERLINER David, 2010, "Losing the spirit of place. Les politiques de l'Unesco à Luang Prabang (rdp Lao)", *Terrain*, n° 55, pp. 90-105 ; CIARCIA Gaetano, 2006, *La Perte durable. Étude sur la notion de "patrimoine immatériel"*, Paris, Carnets du Lahic n°1, Lahic/Mission à l'ethnologie.

## What about the oral heritage?

"The recorded and archived word [...] can calm the memory of the living by offering immaterial tombs to those whom the past haunts and whom the fear of forgetting embraces"<sup>7</sup>

### *From oral testimonies to the constitution of an oral archive*

The use of oral testimonies to shed light on history is an ancient phenomenon that has been observed since antiquity. However, in France, from the 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY onwards<sup>7</sup>, oral sources, considered partial and biased, have **struggled to be recognised by scientific disciplines**<sup>8</sup>. This was despite the invention of the **phonographic recording process** in 1898.

Paradoxically, throughout the 20<sup>TH</sup> century<sup>8</sup>, **multidisciplinary missions were** launched to **document the know-how, practices and dialects of French rural areas**. Their ambition was to collect and thus safeguard the traces of a rural world that, in full mutation, which it was thought would soon disappear. This approach, described by Daniel Fabre as the "paradigm of the last"<sup>9</sup>, was part of an era sensitive to the urgency of collecting cultural expressions perceived as "authentic", which, in the face of the modernisation of societies, were considered on the verge of extinction. This was followed by projects to collect the memories of survivor-witnesses of the Second World War, aimed at documenting and preserving traces of the atrocities of the war.

However, it was not until the "**heritage turn**" of the 1980s and 1990s that large-scale oral archives were created, first within various organisations (unions, ministries, public companies, local authorities, etc.) and then leading to their patrimonialization. This turn of events coincided with a change in Western societies' relationship to memory. Numerous intellectuals have spoken out against an "excess of memory"<sup>10</sup>, "abuses of memory"<sup>11</sup> or even a "tyranny of memory"<sup>12</sup>.

Today, there is a wide variety of oral archives. They can be of a conservative, commemorative, scientific, pedagogical or militant nature. Whatever the case, it is always a question of questioning the forms adopted in these modes of restitution and of reflecting on the **status of oral archives**. Do they serve to illustrate, document, inform or testify? What are the motivations and issues behind their construction?

"It is this multiplicity of views, which are singular views, that creates a common narrative. From the moment we put them in the public square, we make a common narrative. And this is what allows us to understand the present and to project ourselves into the future as well. [We are going to collect sayings, proverbs, songs, etc. We asked ourselves the question: how do they make up our heritage?

***Raphaël Faure's February 3, 2022 speech in an agricultural high school in Yssingaux.***

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<sup>7</sup> DESCAMPS Florence, 2019, *Archiving Memory*, Paris, Éditions de l'EHESS, p. 156.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 31-50.

<sup>9</sup> FABRE Daniel, 2010, " D'une ethnologie romantique ", in Daniel Fabre & Jean-Marie Privat (dirs.), *Savoirs romantiques. Une naissance de l'ethnologie*, Presses universitaires de Nancy, coll. " Ethnocritiques ", Nancy, pp. 51-56.

<sup>10</sup> RICOEUR Paul, 2000, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil.

<sup>11</sup> TODOROV Tsvetan, 2004, *Les abus de la mémoire*, Paris, Arléa.

<sup>12</sup> NORA Pierre, 1992, *Les Lieux de mémoire*, Paris, Gallimard.

### *Do the testimonies collected constitute heritage?*

In the same way as monuments, memories, memorabilia, or testimonies **are never strictly heritage**. But they can become so through a complex process known as **patrimonialization**, in which actors as diverse as scientific experts, local elected officials, representatives of associations, governmental and cultural administrations, mandated researchers or delegates of ethnic or cultural minorities, but also ordinary inhabitants, intervene. Thus, to qualify as heritage, oral sources must be appropriated, revisited, enhanced and transmitted. This is, therefore, a process that takes time and involves several people (from experts to the recipient public).

#### **The view of Pierre-Antoine Landel, geographer (IUGA-PACTE)**

"We conducted interviews in Sablières and Vernon, but we were collecting life stories rather than a narrative. As geographers, we know what life stories are, but I question whether they can be used to support something called "oral heritage" that can be transmitted. However, the interest of the ECOHOMY project is that it can help us better understand how to integrate this question of oral heritage into the training of guide-lecturers.

### **But how can the mediation of oral heritage be designed and conducted?**

In recent years, we have seen the **multiplication and diversification of memorial projects** (museum exhibition projects, artists' companies and collectives, local history associations, residents' collectives, etc.). These projects give rise to new uses of oral testimonies and, more generally, life stories, which are closely linked to **technical and digital innovations in sound recording and broadcasting** (audio discs, radio broadcasts, audiovisual documentaries, websites, audio guides, sound terminals, mobile applications, etc.). Other media can accompany all these modes of dissemination to enrich them (photographs, videos, critical notes, etc.).

Does this mean that the mediation of the oral and memorial heritage requires a different method of promotion and transmission than that used for the built heritage? Already, because of the collection methods used (recording), the conservation of oral heritage must be carried out via media that are often digital. It is, therefore, necessary to set up systems to disseminate these sound recordings and, in a way, to capture and retransmit the immateriality of these sources. This is why it is no coincidence that the audiovisual sector has rapidly embarked on the production and distribution of these sound sources. It should be remembered that the use of oral testimonies by artists is far from a new phenomenon. In France, we can think, among others, of the documentary filmmaker Raymond Depardon, whose documentary films on the peasantry include long filmed interviews.

Furthermore, the transmission of this heritage certainly raises specific issues about the status, value and role it is given as an object of display within a museum institution or a guided tour: is it illustrative; an object of display, explanatory; documentary; certification; evidence? Moreover, the use of oral testimonies raises the question of subjectivity and the value of authenticity, implying that it must be combined with a scientific approach to place it in its historical or anthropological context.

### The view of Gentiane, landscape designer and coordinator of the ECOHOMY project

"Heritage is a process. As a company, we are at the first stage of this heritage process. We are going to give back the word of the inhabitants during the show and afterwards, we don't know, maybe there will be things that will be seized by the public and things that will be abandoned. Did it awaken memories? What persists and is passed on? What remains forgotten? Who passes on this heritage? We are a link in this heritage process.

## Sound tours, storytelling tours, dramatised walks, etc. Towards the hybridisation of art and heritage mediation practices?

The emergence of new heritage categories, such as "intangible and oral heritage" (or "natural heritage")<sup>13</sup>, as well as the increasingly diversified expectations of tourists, have taken the actors of heritage mediation outside their usual framework. At the same time, we are witnessing the opening up of traditional guidance methods towards more interactivity and public participation. To bring back the voices of the past, mediators increasingly use artistic practices, such as singing, theatre, 3D digital reconstructions, sound broadcasts via terminals dotting the itineraries, geolocated sound routes via mobile applications, etc.

On the other hand, artists and artist collectives integrate sensitive relationships to places and memory to give substance to their creations. To do this, they go out into the field to collect individual and collective memories, which they then stage in various forms. These creations shed new light on the relationship between humans and their environment and the places they inhabit.

Finally, the academic world is progressively opening up to other modes of restitution which, without being reduced to the theme of heritage, progressively includes forms of artistic translation of research work. Numerous research-creation projects are thus being carried out, notably by and within cultural, museum and heritage institutions<sup>14</sup>. They allow for a more creative and poetic look at the social world.

Revealing much more than compartmentalising fields, **these innovations tend to hybridise several approaches and points of view** on heritage dynamics. In doing so, they induce new

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<sup>13</sup> The major heritage categories also include many variations: "industrial heritage", "rural heritage", "maritime heritage", "religious heritage", "agricultural heritage", etc.

<sup>14</sup> A few inspiring examples in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region: "L'enquête dans la recherche-cr ation" at RIZE in Villeurbanne; "Chemins faisant.... The new cultural itineraries in the Regional Nature Parks" supported by the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs (DRAC) and ten Regional Nature Parks, federated within the Association of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Parks (APARA); the Memorha Network dedicated to the history and memories of the Second World War in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes or the Traces Network "History, memories and current events in migration in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes".

forms of relationships to heritage and open up to other ways of producing and disseminating knowledge about our past.

**Some inspiring examples from the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region (the examples cited are not intended to be exhaustive):**

**Bazar Urbain** (Grenoble) is a multidisciplinary collective that intervenes on urban and social space with the help of mental maps, commented walks, urban sections, observations and micro-interviews in situ used to enter into action in the City.

<http://www.bazarurbain.com/>

**The Cie du Théâtre des Chemins** (Aubenas) is an itinerant troupe of actors, circus artists and musicians whose creations explore the relationship between heritage, nature and culture.

<https://www.theatredeschemins.org/>

**The Solsikke Company** (Vesseaux) is a group of artists (dancers and actors) whose creations "draw their material from reality, whether through the place, the movements or documentary research (writing, collection of testimonies), to confront it with each one but also to shift it, to divert it.

<https://www.solsikke.org/>

**The Cie des non-alignés** (Lyon) is a company of artists who carry out residency-creation projects in the territory. With the creation *Terre d'En Haut*, "the project is set up in residence in a mountain range, and a multidisciplinary team of scientists and actors/writers/directors investigate the inhabitants and actors of the territory to draw up a living and theatrical portrait.

<https://lesnonalignes.com/>

**The FUSEES collective** (Grenoble) is a group of artists who put on travelling shows and artistic journeys. Their creation, *the Perspectives de l'Escargot* is an "invitation to travel differently in the public space, a creation to shift the gaze on the natural and urban heritage of the Grenoble agglomeration."

<https://www.fusees.fr/>

**La Guilde** (Guides Utopistes Inspirant Ludiquement la Découverte et Émerveillement - Ardèche) is an "association of guide-lecturers who are committed to renewing the image that people have of the profession. Today, the guide-lecturer is no longer a human being who has swallowed a tape recorder, and he is a versatile actor of heritage discovery. They use games (treasure hunts, photo rallies, games of the goose, etc.), workshops, the senses, stories, songs, etc., and above all, human interaction, which they use in their scientific skills.

**Cybèle** (Lyon) organises guided, storytelling, theatrical and unusual tours of Lyon.

<https://www.cybele-arts.fr/>

**The Facim Foundation** (Art and Culture in the Mountains - Savoie) offers guided tours and cultural activities in the mountains.

<https://fondation-facim.fr/>

**Scènes obliques** (Belledonne-Les Adrets) aims to be "a space for artistic creation, encounters and knowledge, open to the landscape and the world. Recognizing the "slope" as a founding element of an intangible heritage, it offers through the artistic gesture, enriched by the scientific approach, a singular and attentive look at its environment."

<https://www.scenes-obliques.eu/association/>

**The Résonance association** (St Etienne de Boulogne - Ardèche), through the projects " Les chemins de mémoire " and " La fabrique à mémoire " which consist of " diving into the history of the inhabitants of the south and centre of Ardèche, by enhancing the memory of the oldest people ".

<https://rezone.media/projet-chemins-de-memoire/>

### To go further :

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# Module 1. Identify the locations and prepare for the collection

Initiating this type of approach on a territory can be the result of a request (institutional, associative, community order) or of your own initiative. In all cases, it is essential to identify the aims (political, educational, cultural, etc.) and to formally determine the orientations.

Engaging in a work of collection and mediation of inhabitants' words requires important preparation and solid empirical knowledge. The choice of the field, the knowledge of the places, the identification and the contact with the resource persons are prepared beforehand. In parallel, the preparation of the collection work should lead to a mastered interview guide that meets the objectives of your project.

Finally, during this first phase, you should already be thinking about the form in which the project will be presented (walk-show, sound trail, etc.), as this will determine the type and quality of the material as well as the legal framework adopted.

## 1. Getting to know the place

Conduct an **inventory of heritage resources**.

This documentation work will help you to better know and understand your field. It will also help you to be an **active listener** during the interviews. The more you know and master the place, the more you will be able to understand and respond to what your interlocutors say. Moreover, documenting a place will allow you to bring out themes to orient the collection.

In order to get to know the area better, the young participants of the ECOHOMY project were invited to make an **inventory of the heritage resources** of the villages of Sablières and Vernon and more widely of the Beaume and Drobie. Different databases can be used for this, for example in France the POP (open heritage platform) [www.pop.culture.gouv.fr](http://www.pop.culture.gouv.fr) gives access to these.

## 2. How to identify contacts?

All data collection begins with a phase of **identifying the people** to be met. To do this, there are several methods: it is possible to use one's network of acquaintances, to contact structures (local authorities, associations) present in the field, to use "word of mouth", to use social networks to distribute a call for testimonies, mailing lists, etc.

No one method is better than another, but all of them require a clear and precise presentation of the objectives and the ways in which interviews are recorded and used.

**The richness of the oral corpus collected depends greatly on the plurality of points of view.**

The people interviewed should therefore come from a variety of backgrounds (social and cultural origins, professional categories, origin, etc.). Unless your survey requires you to interview people of a specific age or location, they should also be as diverse as possible.

**Finally, the number of interviews may vary depending on the objectives of the project.** If the aim is to document lifestyles or to investigate a specific social group, a representative sample may be necessary, but a small number of testimonies may also be used if one wishes to unearth tales, songs or practices from the past.

**Familiarizing oneself with places takes time... Even more so when one is in a place that is foreign to one's self, which requires one to recover one's bearings, to set cultural markers. But it is this experience that was lived most intensely by the participants!**

"We found ourselves in the middle of Dryanovo, in a village where we were very well received. And it was really a leap in time... We were out of time. Knowing that we live in a city where everything is very fast, there was a kind of slowness that settled even in our daily life. Every morning, we took the time to do voice exercises. In the beginning, it was quite disturbing but we quickly got into the rhythm. We were placed in pairs with Bulgarians and started to do interviews."

*Participant in the residency in Bulgaria (July 2021).*

## The different types of interviews

There are 3 methods of interviewing, the directive interview which proposes a series of questions previously established, the semi-directive or free interview. In this training, we will use **the semi-directive interview**, which is part of what is called the qualitative method. It is a type of interview widely used in the human and social sciences because it makes it possible to collect the representations of the people interviewed while orienting their answers in part according to previously defined themes. It allows for both upstream preparation (the interview grid) and a great deal of freedom of speech. There are several methods for conducting an interview, none of which is better than another, depending on the objectives that have been set.

### Building an interview grid

Keep your goal in mind: to get the word out! To do this, it is important to ask the right questions. This is the time to ask yourself what you want to know or understand.

The interview grid consists of a series of questions organized according to the preliminary study of the chosen subject. It is not a questionnaire, but an arrangement of the collector's questions. It will change throughout the research, but this evolution must remain legible because it is the witness of its constant readjustment to the object of study. The grid must therefore be carefully prepared in advance. During the interview, it will allow you to structure your thoughts.

To encourage people to speak, **use open-ended questions**, which cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no" (for example, questions that begin with "What does...?" "What does...?"; "How did...?"; "How would you describe...?"; "What do you remember about...?"; "How...?", etc.).

**Also avoid questions that are too theoretical**, but rather ask your interviewees to talk about what they do, to describe their practices.

Generally, a "funnel" method is favoured, i.e. the interview is started with general questions, followed by more specific questions. Questions that may be sensitive or very personal should be asked last, as they could prevent the interview from continuing.

**Know your grid well enough** to be able to move around freely according to the interviewee's answers. The more comfortable you are, the more easily you will be able to bounce back, make transitions between what they say and your questions, etc. But remember that **this grid is only a working tool**, a guide for mapping out a route. During the interview, do not force yourself to follow the order of the questions at all costs if your interviewer's words lead you to other subjects.

Also, feel free to bounce around if necessary ("Why...?"; "When did it happen...?"; "To whom are you referring...?"; "Where did it happen?", etc.).

Thus **the grid can be replaced by an interview outline**, i.e. a personal reminder which, while respecting the dynamics of the discussion, makes it possible not to forget the important themes. Be careful, this requires a certain amount of improvisation in formulating the questions you ask yourself.

## Prepare your equipment

From this first phase, ask yourself the question of how you want to promote the project. It is according to the form that you wish it to take (photographic exhibition, audio disc, sound trail, show, documentary film, etc.), that you must choose your material, in particular the recording material.

### Choosing the right microphone

This seems obvious, but each type of microphone has a specific directivity and connection mode. You will have to determine which one is the best adapted to your needs according to the mode of restitution (for example in the case of the creation of a sound trail, it will be necessary to be very vigilant as to the quality of the sound and the use of the appropriate material).



Tie microphone



Micro canon



Handheld  
Microphone

The lapel microphone is used for individual interviews. It is attached directly to the interviewee by means of a small clip.

The shotgun microphone is used to capture sounds in report mode or dialogues between two or more people. This microphone is very directional, so you must be sure to point it directly at the sound source to be captured, and not too close. The almost obligatory use of a boom as well as its great sensitivity to the wind make it a delicate tool to master for beginners.

The handheld microphone is used for TV reporter-type sound recording or on a stage. The person being interviewed must speak very close to the microphone.

- Choosing a recorder

A recorder stores sound on an SD card. You should therefore make sure that it has sufficient capacity (greater than or equal to 4 Gb). You can connect your microphone to the recorder via a stereo jack or an XLR socket, but **most have built-in microphones**.



### The recorders The windscreen

If you choose to use the recorder's microphones (which is becoming very frequent), be aware that to record voice, you should not position the microphone too close to the speaker's mouth (less than 15 cm), that it is better to have a windscreen if you are outside (to attenuate wind noise), and that these microphones are very sensitive to the noise of handling the recorder (if you hold the recorder in your hand, the slightest pressure or shock on the case will be heard loudly). Also, remember to check the directionality of the microphones so that you point your recorder in the right direction.

### Setting up your recorder

You can choose default settings or configure your recorder yourself. For better sound quality, **we advise you to record in .WAV**

You also need to **set the gain**, i.e. the recording level. If it is set too high, the sound will crackle and be of poor quality, if it is set too low the sound will be badly defined. In any case, it is better to set it too low than too high. Ideally, you should test your sound recording with headphones connected to your recorder, just before conducting your interview (a tip: remove your headphones during the interview, it is less intimidating for the interviewee).

- The **gain is to be adjusted before each interview** according to the voice of your witness and the location of your recorder.

All recorders are different, so please read the manual or get advice before use.

Once these different settings are done you can start!

*Nota bene:* Depending on the type of feedback, it is possible to capture images, but in this case, it is imperative to ask the people being interviewed for the right to the image.

## Some practical advice for a quality recording

- Be careful when choosing equipment: choose quality equipment, especially when broadcasting recordings.
- Do not choose the recording location randomly (and adapt your equipment accordingly). The location also influences the nature of what the interviewee says (whether it is in a private and intimate space or in the public arena, what is said will vary).
- Be aware of the context around the microphone: is there noise around it? Is your microphone too close to the interviewee? Too far away? Position the microphone and your interviewer (be careful if there are two of them).
- Check the batteries and storage capacity of your recorder.
- Practice beforehand and make sure your microphone is working.
- Be careful with the movement of the microphone, which generates noise (avoid sudden movements, shocks and rubbing).

## Preparing for the interview

Prepare a systematic summary sheet that you will only have to fill in at the end of the interview. This should include the identity of the interviewee, contact details, biographical details (age, profession, place of birth, residence, etc.), the date and duration of the interview, etc. (an example is given in the Annexes)

### **An exercise to prepare for the interview**

*During the ECOHOMY project, participants practised various exercises to prepare for interacting with respondents*

#### **Rules:**

The game takes place in groups of 3 people. Each of them chooses the following roles: the collector (the one who conducts the interview), the reporter (the one who takes notes, and manages the recorder) and the inhabitant who testifies, delivers memories, a song, etc.

Each participant has a card with some information about the role he or she is to play.

- The collector: he/she must introduce himself/herself and the project. They also have a list of questions to ask.
- The reporter: introduces himself/herself and the purpose and uses of the recording. He/she shows the contract that legally authorizes them to use excerpts of their testimony.
- The inhabitant has some answers to the questions asked (but these must remain open).

The cards also offer indications of the state of mind, the mood of the collector, the reporter or the inhabitant.

*For example*

*The collector is not very comfortable because the witness had forgotten the appointment.*

*The inhabitant is welcoming but not at all ready for a collection.*

*For the character, it's about making people feel more than expressing it in words.*

**Exercise Objectives:**

- Practice interviewing;
- Learn to adapt to different situations;
- Present the project and summarize it.

**Tips for the trainer:**

Experiment with the exercises before doing them with the group.

**Momtchill's advice, a mid-mountain guide in the BAAT association:**

"Try to introduce yourself to the municipality in which you are conducting the interviews, highlight the fact that you are going to put on a show about the history of the village for its inhabitants. Explain that all interviews will be anonymous. You should also avoid difficult questions and if people refuse to talk, you should not insist.

For example, in Dryanovo, the mosque was demolished to build the new school but the inhabitants did not want to talk about it. I interviewed a woman in Dryanovo who said "I don't know where it was, I don't want to talk about it". It's like in the Italian South Tyrol, it would be wrong to ask outright: "Are you Italian or Austrian?" That could jeopardize your presence on the field. You have to go very slowly with people.

## Module 2: Gathering the oral heritage

Now is the time to interview your interviewer, but before you do, take a moment to ask yourself a few questions: "What will happen to these recordings?" is probably the first question you need to answer.

In fact, you must already have a fairly precise idea of the type of restitution you wish to make! This determines the legal regulations you will have to comply with.

Next, ask yourself about the posture to adopt, as this will define the relational mechanism of the interview. It is a question of knowing how to maintain a distanced view while showing empathy, active listening and analysis. This position is not easy to find but there are many tools that can help you.

Finally, this booklet is not intended to train the reader to become an ethnologist (or any other profession that uses interviews), nor to provide a ready-made recipe on how to conduct an interview, but to propose a methodological framework that will hopefully help avoid certain errors and oversights.

### 2.1. Ethical and deontological rules to be respected

Collecting oral testimonies is not a trivial matter. Moreover, their conservation, exploitation and dissemination are subject to a strict and complex legal framework, governed for example in France by the Heritage Code and/or the Intellectual Property Code (CPI) as well as by the General Regulation on the protection of personal data (RGPD).

In all cases, it is imperative to establish a **contract of transfer of rights** specifying the use or uses that will be made of the recordings (an example is presented in the appendices).

Make sure that everything that is said is recorded, used and broadcast only with the **free and informed consent of** the interviewee. This requires that the conditions and uses of the recording have been clearly explained to them.

Beyond all these legal constraints, it is necessary to conduct an ethical reflection on the use of oral testimony and its implications.

#### What precautions should be taken?

- Remember that **the interviewee has rights**, including the right to privacy! The witness is also the owner of what he or she says. His word must be respected in its integrity and in its destination.
- You also have rights as an interviewer, including the right to privacy that may be reflected in the recordings.
- Whenever possible, the **anonymity of the interviewees** should be ensured. In this case, there are also rules to respect!

- You may want to **have the informants read back** the contents of their transcribed interviews so that they can judge whether they are comfortable with what they have said and whether they still agree to its use. If necessary, you may have to censor the content of the interview if the interviewee wishes.
- **Never steal a word**, nor hide the presence of the recorder. The informant must agree to have his or her words recorded. If he/she refuses, you must agree to conduct the interview without this technical support and be more attentive when taking notes.
- You must know how to **refuse, postpone or reinterrogate** a word that seems out of place (ideology or intimacy). However, we must not leave a wound after our departure, and we must never forget that the memory awakened can cause an emotional discharge.

For more information:

DESCAMPS Florence, 2019, *Archiving memory*, Paris, EHESS Publishing.

LE DRAOULLEC Ludovic, 2006, " L'utilisation des corpus oraux à des fins culturelles : quels contrats mettre en œuvre ? ", *Bulletin de l'AFAS* [En ligne], 29, URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/afas/622>

GINOUVÈS Véronique, GRAS Isabelle, 2018, *La diffusion numérique des données en SHS : guide des bonnes pratiques éthiques et juridiques*, Aix en Provence, Presses universitaires de Provence.

## How to introduce yourself?

When you arrive at the respondent's home, don't forget to introduce yourself and remind them why you are there. Your goal is to build a relationship of trust with the respondent.

**Take the time to introduce yourself**, say who you are, where you come from, and how long you will be staying and quickly present the project in its entirety. Present the modalities, the objectives of the collection as well as what will happen to the oral materials in **a clear and synthetic way**.

You can practice your presentation skills beforehand. The exercises in the ECOHOMY project<sup>15</sup> can help you with public speaking.

**Ask for permission before starting to record** (even if this has already been agreed). Briefly state why the recording is being made and what will be done with the recordings. If so, state that the recordings will be anonymised and announce that at the end they will be asked to sign a document that gives you legal permission to use extracts from their testimony.

Finally, it may seem like common sense, but to put on a good face and get the word out, **a few rules of politeness must be respected**: be punctual, turn off your phone (or at least don't answer it), wear clothes appropriate to the place (keep in mind that these are also social markers), be patient (don't interrupt, for example), be attentive, thank the person for their time, etc.

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<sup>15</sup> As an example, some exercises will be presented in the following pages.

In the ECOHOMY project, the interviews were conducted in pairs, with one person asking the questions and conducting the interview, and the other observing and taking notes in the notebook. If you choose to do this, both people should of course introduce themselves. The note taker can also ask questions, but be careful not to let go of the note-taking.

## 2.2. The interview, adopting the right posture

### **The moment has arrived!**

Keep in mind that the richness of the interview and the freedom of speech depend very much on the interview relationship you have managed to develop with the interviewee. Similarly, the more clearly the objectives have been stated, the less likely the interview will diverge into other topics. That being said, you should be flexible to the twists and turns of speech and memory. **Show empathy and involvement**, be curious (even deceptively naïve), and don't hesitate to follow up and bounce back on what your interviewer says. On the other hand, don't try to bring up every subject, to ask questions about everything. This can hinder the flow of the discussion and be exhausting, both for you and for the person you are interviewing. If you don't have time to cover everything, or if you notice any gaps, it is certainly possible to come back at another time.

You must both lead the interview and remain open. In short, you have to know how to leave your grid without breaking the thread.

**Be careful not to make any moral judgements or *preconceived notions* of** any kind. You must also be careful not to inject your own representations into the other person's words, you must remain as close as possible to what the informant is trying to tell you.

On the other hand, it could be badly perceived to correct the answers in a peremptory manner and could "block" the interview. On the other hand, this does not mean that you have to remain passive with regard to what is said, you can ask for clarifications, highlight contradictions or get the person to question his or her representations by asking questions ("What makes you say that..."; "Why do you say that...").

**The interview sometimes resembles a balancing act, in which it is difficult to adopt the right posture.** In ethnology, we discuss "negotiating your place in the field". This negotiation requires you to analyse the place assigned to you by the interviewers to find the right position.

### Some practical advice

- If possible, we advise you to conduct several interviews with the same person, spread out over several times. This will help to establish a relationship of trust and familiarity.
- There is no ideal length of the interview (it depends on the interviewee) but it seems preferable not to exceed 1h30-2h. In any case, plan a sufficiently large time slot in case the interview goes over. It is often at the end that the interviewee ends up forgetting the recorder and that tongues are loosened.

- Avoid interfering with the recording by saying "yes" all the time, "ok", "sure", or clearing your throat while the other person is talking. Favour non-verbal communication, you can nod, show that you are surprised, etc. but with a facial expression more than with words.
- The interview is neither a questionnaire nor a discussion! Be careful not to be too present, nor to use too technical or erudite vocabulary. Remain natural, but avoid judgmental or leading questions and closed questions that lead to enumeration. Remember to bounce back on answers that require explanations and that will allow the interviewer to clarify his or her thoughts.
- Manage silences. They are not necessarily annoying (sometimes they lead your interlocutor to clarify his thoughts), you can keep the link by gestures to go back to another subject.
- It is also possible to conduct group interviews. In this case, adapt your questions.

### Possible blockages depending on the case and some ways to get around them

*Every field experience is fraught with difficulties. Each one reveals something about the context in which you find yourself.*

- **Silent people.** In this case, it can be interesting to use third-party documents (photographs, maps, archive documents, objects...) to unravel the speech.
- **People who will tell you that they are not sufficiently qualified** and that you should rather ask this or that local scholar. In this case, you can explain again your project: it is not about collecting a scholarly discourse on a specific subject but rather about collecting various points of view, memories, and life stories. In the last two cases, do not insist if there is a real refusal of the interview. Instead, try to analyse the reasons.
- **People who talk too much.** Some people find it difficult to synthesize and go into great detail. The interview drags on and you see the transcription work becoming more and more gargantuan... In this case, it is advisable to skilfully "reframe" the interview. You can bounce off what your interviewer says to invite him or her to refocus on the subject ("When you tell me about your childhood on the farm, it reminds me of a question I wanted to ask you...")
- **People with a great deal of knowledge of the subject matter** who have difficulty giving a personal account (they are in the position of teacher and you are the student). Here, the use of third-party documents can also serve to refocus the interview on the interviewee's personal memories and experiences.

## 2.3. Observe and listen. Paying attention to the *off-screen*.

### Active listening

You have to be attentive to what is going on in the relationship and communication. Be a good listener! Always in a non-directive way, bounce back on what the person tells you, gradually try to obtain more details (dates, names of places and people, etc.) and ask for

clarification when the terms he or she uses seem unclear to you or when you are not familiar with them.

## Observation and logbook

The presence of the recorder do not exempt you from taking notes.

The logbook allows you to record your observations during and after the interview. Taking notes is not the same as transcribing verbatim what is said. Use abbreviations, syntactic shortcuts, and symbols... that will allow you to go faster and follow the interviewee's pace!

Its interest also lies in the description of the places in which you are, but also your personal feelings, the attitude of the interviewee, the elements that have impressed you the most, the possible difficulties (material, technical, in the discussion), the conversations that took place *off the record*, etc.

All these elements are not trivial! They provide information on the conditions of the harvest, which may not appear in the recordings. All these indications on gestures, emotions, sinuosities and difficulties of speech make up the metadiscourse which often proves to be just as rich and important as the answers given.

### A few tips

- On the left-hand page of your diary, you can give practical information (who the interviewee is, where, how, and when). On the right-hand page, your observations and personal questions;
- Make sure you can read them again;
- Stay attentive and focused to capture the essence;
- Work on your ability to synthesize and take notes.

**At the end of the interview, thank the people** who gave you their time, and make an appointment to meet them for the show or for any other event. Make sure that you have had the performance contract signed.



Sketches from the logbook of Lina Guardiola, a participant in the Italian South Tyrol residency (May 2022).



### After the interview

**Immediately after the interview:** the pair notes their impressions on the spot. The notes are reread. Discuss the interview among yourselves:

- What themes were discussed?
- Your personal feeling: feeling, visual, auditory...
- The interviewee's attitude: At ease? Embarrassed? Angry? Were there any emotional moments? Body language? Did he/she speak quickly? Or slowly?
- What elements have impressed you the most?
- Did you experience any difficulties (material, technical, in the discussion)?

After the interview, don't forget to **download your recording** to a computer and rename the audio track.

You can then proceed with the **transcription!**

Photo was taken during the residency in Bulgaria, June 2021

## Module 3: Processing the oral corpus

Now that the oral corpora have been collected, the question arises of their analysis. The processing must allow the emergence of shared themes, complementary visions and remarkable expressions.

### 3.1. Some tools to transcribe

A tedious but no less essential exercise, transcription consists of writing down word for word everything that was said by you and your interviewee during the interview. A well-transcribed interview is one that captures the nuances, tones and complexity of the spoken word.

Every word should be transcribed, none should be substituted for another or added. Hesitations (using "..."), procrastinations, slurred words, sighs, silences, speech patterns: "uh", "good".

Also number your questions and answers in your transcript (Q1, R1, Q2, R2...) and the corresponding timing of your audio tape.

By going back to your transcript or the audio tape, you can then make a chronological summary.

However, the transcription (however necessary it may be) only offers partial restitution of the interview, devoid of the richness of orality.

#### Raphaël's view, director in the Cie du Théâtre des Chemins

"Our basic principle is that this word is not transformed, it is restored as it is. That's very important. So writing it down was very complicated because it was full of syntactic errors [...] That's why I don't like writing it down. For me, it's much more interesting to render orally because you render in the most raw way possible. Then, of course, there is an editing, a selection of words. But these choices really start from the place where you are, it is it which dictates".

### 3.2. What are chronothematic summaries?

A chronotopic summary is a topic-by-topic listing of the various topics discussed by the witness during the interview, indicating the duration and corresponding tracks in the audio tape.

Some tips:

- The time of transcription is also the time of rereading the field diary;
- Always use the same chart and do not change it (or adapt it but keep it uniform for all interviews).



*Participants of the ECOHOMY project were in the middle of an interview transcription session (Bulgaria, 2021 and Italy, 2022).*

### 3.3. How to cross-check the results and select the testimonies?

Once you have collated and reread the information collected and the observations, sorted them and classified them in the chronological summaries, the next step is to bring all the data together. To do this, take note of the information relating to the initial questions, and look for repetitions or points of divergence on similar themes. Do not hesitate to write summaries of what was said. Although this is not a sociological survey, it may be interesting to cross-check the information gathered according to certain criteria that you consider relevant (age, socio-cultural background, professional activity, etc.). This will provide you with elements for analysis.

**For example**, in the ECOHOMY project, the participants built the walk-show from the words of the inhabitants which were in line with their initial themes, in this case: water, the mountain, life in the valley, yesterday and today, the rural exodus, the return to the land, songs, legends, tales, the future. The choice of these different themes was determined by their importance in the lives of the inhabitants of the territories explored (Ardèche, Bulgarian Rhodopes and Italian South Tyrol). In the end, the topics were selected according to their resonance with the places crossed by the walk show. Thus, a point of view can be used to mobilize testimonies on the landscape, agriculture, the proximity of a river to talk about water, etc. Playing with space and the environment is infinite.

## Module 4. Valuing and transmitting

Once these life stories have been collected and analysed, the question of their mediation arises. Different possibilities are available to you: after a brief presentation, we will come back in detail to the conception of a mediation taking the form of a walk-show by the group itself. We will nevertheless insist on the interest and the conditions of mobilizing external artistic skills if you do not have them. In short, not everyone is an artist!

### 4.1. What to do with the collected oral corpus?

In addition to the artistic reconstructions presented in the following pages, there are various ways of making use of the oral corpus collected. Museums, foundations, research laboratories in anthropology or linguistics, and many organizations make their sound archives available to the public. Here are a few examples of collections and online sound archives (non-exhaustive list):

Inter-regional oral heritage databases. These databases have a large number of regional sound collections, previously documented and catalogued.

<http://patrimoine-oral.org/>

*INFRASONS*, a digital platform developed by AMTA (Agence des Musiques des Territoires d'Auvergne) and the CMTRA (Centre des Musiques Traditionnelles Rhône-Alpes). It is a collaborative project aiming to disseminate the sound heritage in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, in the form of an interactive map, allowing each and everyone to publish their sound archives.

<https://www.infrasons.org/cartographie/>

The sound library of the Maison méditerranéenne des sciences de l'homme (MMSH)

<http://phonotheque.mmsh.huma-num.fr/>

*The Portal of Oral Heritage, a collective catalogue of sound and audiovisual archives on oral traditions* published by the Federation of Traditional Music and Dance Associations in partnership with the National Library of France.

<http://stq4s52k.es-02.live-paas.net/>

Another alternative is to publish the collected life stories in textual form (anthological extracts, quotations or publications of full interviews).

## 4.2. Building a heritage mediation itinerary

Individuals conceive of space not as a *map* but as a *journey*<sup>16</sup>. Since every space is first and foremost a place that is lived and practised, the approach we propose invites us to rethink landscapes according to their subjective meaning, both sensitive and narrative.

*Keep in mind that landscape is always a relationship to the observer*

Based on your interview corpus and the sorting and analysis you have carried out, you should be able to identify places (places of memory, places of life, etc.) that were evident in the words of your interviewees or that aroused particular emotions.

### The look of Gentian

What seems important to us is that the itinerary should not be drawn only at the end but over time so that there is a back and forth between what we are looking for from the inhabitants and what will be the reasoning when we see the landscape in front of us.

### Practical exercises

#### Map the route

Using a map, locate the places mentioned by the inhabitants during the interviews. Assign a coloured dot for each emotion (sadness, nostalgia, joy, etc.) evoked by these places. The aim is to create a sensitive map based on the interviews collected.

Do you observe similarities or differences in spatial representations? What links the people interviewed to the places they encounter on a daily basis?

Ask yourself about the typology of these places (natural? heritage? cultural? workplaces? etc.) and classify them.

When possible, go to these places. Observe the environment and record on the map the different spaces and elements that you pass through (a stream, a human construction, a burrow, etc.). Make an inventory of the heritage (natural or built), and describe the landscape and your impressions in a notebook.

From these descriptions, determine the places to pause and stop, read the script aloud and make sure that the text resonates with the landscape. This is where your ability to feel, to share and to create comes into play.

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<sup>16</sup> CERTEAU de Michel, 1990, *L'invention du quotidien*, T. 1 " Arts de faire ", Paris, Gallimard. PEREC Georges, 1974, *Espèces d'espaces*, Paris, Galilée.

## Creating a mediation route: asking the right questions

Before constructing the itinerary, it is important to understand **the relationship between the public and the landscape**

Is it a landscape:

- "surprise" (if the public does not know this place)
- known (public used to frequenting it)
- constructed and invisible (public that shapes it and forgets it).
- intimate (little frequented, even "secret" landscape).
- public (very busy)
- loaded with individual history (the audience has individual memories).
- charged with a collective history (the public has a collective memory).

*Nota bene:* Think about the reception of the public, the information concerning security and the progress of the walk.

### **It is also important to ask the right questions about the suitability of the route for the public**

Physical and technical capacity of the group (do young children or elderly people participate?) The number of km? Duration of the route? Time of departure and arrival? Size of the group (how many people)? The number of breaks? Diversity of the route in terms of atmosphere and landscapes (entirely natural, more residential parts?) The shape of the route: loop or not? Identification of private and public places? Do we cross sensitive or protected areas? Possible dangers, etc.

#### Momtchill's advice

"For me, the most important thing is to know which public will come, to determine the interest, the length, the difficulty. If there are children, the loop should be shorter, while for older people, it should not be too complicated or sporty. Don't forget to announce the level of walking, the difference in altitude, etc."

#### 4.1. Designing a walk-show: 3 tips from Gentiane and Raphaël from the Théâtre des Chemins company

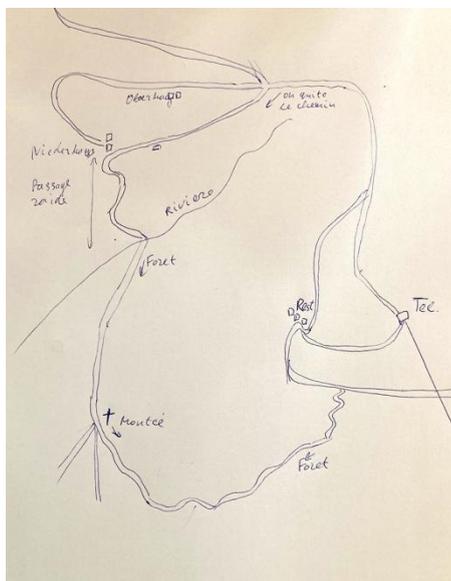
1. **Write an introduction to present the walk** (welcome the public, put the places in their historical and geographical context, explain the approach and methods used, etc.). This moment sets the mood for the walk, so it must be carefully prepared.
2. **Draw the itinerary of the walk by specifying:**
  - The arrival and departure points of the group and the time of the performance;
  - Locate the sun exposure (shade, sun location);
  - The distribution of the group (make circles to represent them); Are the people: Lined up / in a semicircle / in tiers / lined up / scattered? The distribution of the artists (make crosses);
  - Note the distances: distance between the people in the audience, with the artists, with the places;
  - Identify and represent the elements of the landscape that are remarkable or that you would like to point out.
3. **The posture of listening to and relating to landscapes**
  - Think of proposing an original posture: sitting, standing, lying down, moving, eyes closed, etc... Identify the places that make these postures possible. Ask yourself: *How can we get people to adopt these postures?*
  - Imagine and describe your relationships with others (audience members and artists): (feeling of closeness, the possibility of listening, etc.)
  - Describe your sensations in relation to the space: the comfort of the posture, state of fatigue, sunshine, the elements to be observed or likely to be felt.



Photo taken during the show walk in Vernon, June 2021



*Drawing of the itinerary of the show walk in Vernon (Ardèche), 2021*



*Drawing of the itinerary of the show-ride in San Martin (Italian South Tyrol), 2022*



*General rehearsal of the show ride in San Martin (Italian South Tyrol), May 6, 2022*

## To stage the oral corpus...

### Some practical exercises carried out in the framework of ECOHOMY

Within the framework of the ECOHOMY project, the participants were divided into 3 workshops, each aiming to experiment with original forms of public guidance.

*\*We have tried to reproduce the workshops carried out during the training as well as possible, however, as they are practical body exercises, involving interactions between participants, it is difficult to transcribe them faithfully in writing.*

#### Workshop 1: Writing exercise and role-playing to learn about live performance

Workshop 1 was led by Raphaël Faure, director of the Théâtre des Chemins company. Here are some examples of exercises he proposed to the participants of the ECOHOMY project to train them to speak in public outdoors (on forest paths, near a stream, on a mountain top, etc.)

##### 1/ The exercise of skill

This exercise allows us to get to know each other while working on our skills and voice in the open air.

###### Rules:

All participants stand in a circle. One person is designated to call another participant by his or her first name. He or she must imagine that the person is far away, at the other end of the valley. This involves carrying the voice, articulating and accompanying the voice with the eyes.

For example: "**Ho ho Kevin!**" The person being called must respond by placing his or her hands behind their ears: "**I'M HERE!**" The two participants on either side of the person being called respond by putting their hands behind their ears: "**WE ARE HERE TOO!**" Then the person being called in turn calls someone in the circle, and so on...

This exercise can be done in pairs. The first participant says: "Can you hear me?", the person opposite answers: "Yes, I can hear you", or "How are you today?", "No, I'm not...".

Between each question/answer, both participants take 3 steps back, each time adopting a different emotion (annoyed, enthusiastic, angry, etc.).

###### Exercise Objectives:

- Practice reading aloud in public (voice, eye contact, intention...)
- To develop the inter-knowledge of the participants in the group.
- To make speaking easier
- Be precise in your address, and accompany the voice with your gaze



##### 2/ Visualization exercise

###### Rules:

The participants get together in pairs. Each person tells a short story (memory, anecdote) from the past. The listener can ask questions and ask for more details if necessary. When each person has told his or her story, one of the two trainees tells the whole group what has been said, using the first person ("I") and trying to make the story their own. The exercise continues until all participants have spoken.

**Exercise Objectives:**

- Practice taking ownership of another person's story and adopting their point of view.
- Restore a life story faithfully and clearly

**Tip:**

The collection booklet is likely to facilitate this appropriation of the story.



**Workshop 2: singing**

This workshop was conceived and led by Fenja Abraham (actress, singer, and musician) and Frédéric (violinist and music teacher).

All workshops begin with **breathing exercises as well as body and vocal warm-ups.**

Breathing is the basis of all speech and singing. The exercises proposed by Fenya and inspired by yoga, allow participants to become aware of the importance of breathing in singing.

**The objective of these exercises:**

- Adopt the right body posture;
- To discover the various breathing spaces (thorax, rib cage, diaphragm).

**Example of an exercise: "the guide**

The participants stand in pairs. One of them takes on the role of a puppet and the other must direct and guide its movements.

**Exercise Objective:**

- This exercise allows you to let go and to work on your body's feelings in order to get in condition before the singing.

**Interpret traditional songs in several languages**

To enable participants to sing in languages they do not master (Bulgarian, French, Occitan, South Tyrolean dialect), Fenya is inspired by Grotowski's approach to theatre, based on vocal and physical imitation. This "doing" approach invites the participants to let go of their minds and to become physically anchored in the songs through mimetic repetition.

Thus, after discussions on translation and pronunciation and listening to the original excerpts, the participants must reproduce the songs according to their own phonetic interpretation.

**Objectives:**

- To make participants aware of their voice placement and teach them how to change it;
- Know your range;
- Listen to each other to adjust your voice;
- Acquire vocal techniques, and skills in terms of melodies, and rhythm;

**The look of Fenja**

"Music has a very powerful emotional and memorial charge! Like smells, it allows us to relive and bring back very strong memories.

**The view of Marine, participant in the singing workshop (May 2022)**

"The project allowed me to surpass myself and to overcome my shyness. I tell myself that after having succeeded in singing in Tyrolean/Bulgarian/Occitan in front of strangers, I am capable of all kinds of staging in my future job as a tour guide and the looks of others no longer impress me!"

*Participant in the project in the Italian South Tyrol (May 2022), enrolled in a professional degree "guide-lecturer" at Cermosem.*

- Gain confidence in yourself and in the group strengthen group cohesion and team spirit.

### Thomas' view, participant in the singing workshop (May-June 2021)

"I joined the singing group. The workshops began with a reading of a text. What I liked was that we did songs in Occitan... When you go for a walk you realise that it's very intense when you sing, when people hear. It's music that they listened to when they were young. I think of the mayor of Sablières, whom we interviewed, it was music that he listened to at wakes when he was young. And it was really very intense. Especially the bourrée. The old people, they remember. The walks are a moment of sharing.

## Workshop 3: Reading the landscape

This workshop was conceived and led by Gentiane Desveaux (landscape designer), in collaboration with Momtchill Damyanov (mid-mountain guide) and Aurélie Perret (historian and conference guide) during the 2020 and 2021 residencies.

The reading workshop has 3 dimensions:

- a sensitive reading (feelings, touch, atmosphere), i.e. it must concern a reading of the close and palpable environment (ground on which we walk, water that we can hear and touch, etc).
- a more contemplative and global reading of the landscape (from a panoramic view for example)
- an interpretative reading, making it possible to explain what is not visible (human activity, sociological profile of the inhabitants) and which nevertheless leaves traces in the landscape.

During the workshop, different exercises are proposed to explore these different dimensions of the landscape. It is up to the participants to draw inspiration from these explorations to make a proposal for the public.

### 1/ The blind caterpillar

The idea is to find a place from which there is a panoramic view (a belvedere for example). Just before getting there, ask the students to get into groups of two. One of them closes his eyes and the other guides him. The latter must describe the landscape he sees to his partner. Once finished, the other participant opens his eyes and compares the landscape he sees with the one he imagined.

#### Exercise Objectives:

- Describing a landscape;
- Compare two representations of the landscape;
- Observation skills.

### 2/ Pencil stroke game

**Materials:** 3 sheets (minimum) of drawing paper, pencil; a board, a drawing clip (or other means of attachment)

Each of the participants must represent the landscape. On a first sheet, with 15 pencil strokes, on a second sheet with 10 pencil strokes and finally on a third sheet with 5 pencil strokes.

#### Exercise Objectives:

- Observe and analyze a landscape;



- Sorting information and synthesising data;
- Explore different forms of storytelling in order to show the world.

### 3/ Frame game

**Materials:** A-frame.

Given a frame, participants should choose a corner of the landscape and explain why. This exercise can be repeated during the show and tourists can be encouraged to come and look in the frame.

**Exercise Objectives:**

- Analyze the landscape;
- Explain and defend your choices;
- To give the opportunity to explore playful forms to present a site, places, people, and stories.

**Different relationships to landscapes depending on where you come from: Momtchill's view**

"Between Bulgaria, France and Italy, the relationship to landscapes and heritage is not the same. In Bulgaria, the old villages have been little preserved, people prefer to build new. What is valued is modernity! Except in what are called museum villages.

#### Aurélie's view of the storytelling walk

"The people who took part in the show were mostly locals. They rediscovered the history of their village and they had fun, some said "yes, it's true, I was told that but I didn't remember". You interest them in a different way. And it also takes the dust off the profession of guide-lecturer.



## 4.1. Some keys to using artists

As already stated in the previous pages, the ambition of this booklet is not to train readers to become artists, ethnologists or archivists!

The aim is rather to encourage the development of more collaboration and partnerships between the various practitioners and mediators of the oral heritage, in the shared conviction that it is by breaking down the barriers between our professional fields that we will succeed in establishing a dialogue between our approaches and in opening up to a multiplicity of techniques and viewpoints.

This is why, as far as possible and when it is wanted, it is advisable to call upon companies and artists' collectives from the very beginning of the project (several examples are cited in the section "Framing elements" but there are many artists' collectives adopting a documentary and participative approach, based on the collection of life stories from

inhabitants). In this case, financing is an important parameter. There are several ways to obtain aid and subsidies: you can contact local authorities, try to respond to a call for projects<sup>17</sup>.

#### Some tips for writing a file or specifications

- Explain precisely your objectives and the interest of the project for the public and the territory concerned;
- The target audience and the beneficiaries of the project. Who is the creation aimed at? Local residents, tourists, school children, etc;
- Describe the local anchorage of the project;
- Determine a provisional budget, a financing plan and a provisional calendar.

## 4.2. The importance of communication in valuation

As soon as the project is conceived, create a mailing list and add to it all the people you contact (name, first name, contact details, function, participation in the project). This list should include elected officials, local authorities, local associations and of course the inhabitants who have entrusted you with their words. Once the mailing list is created, use it to spread the date and place of the walk. You can also use social networks. All means are good to communicate about the project, use your imagination! You can create a poster, flyers, a website or even make a teaser to present the event.

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<sup>17</sup> For example, in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, the call for projects "Memories of the 20th and 21st centuries in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region" is published each year by the Region and the Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs (DRAC): <https://www.auvergnerhonealpes.fr/aide/5/289-realiser-des-actions-culturelles-artistiques-ou-patrimoniales-a-vocation-memorielle-et-scientifique-culture-patrimoine.htm>

La Cie du Théâtre des Chemins présente

# Nos mondes insoupçonnés

Paroles en balade

Sur le parcours : restitution de souvenirs, d'anecdotes, de témoignages d'habitants ; chant, conte, poésie et musique inspirés de ce collectage.

**22 mai & 12 juin à Vernon à 14h30**  
**23 mai & 13 juin à Sablières à 14h30**

**Nos mondes insoupçonnés Balades spectacles**

**Vernon**  
 Les samedis 22 mai et 12 juin 2021  
 Départ 14H30 - Rdv au Parking de la mairie

**Sablières**  
 Les dimanches 23 mai et 13 juin 2021  
 Départ 14H30 - Rdv au camping de Sablière (Camping la Drobie)

Durée de la balade spectacle : 3h  
 Dont 1h15 de marche. Prévoir de bonnes chaussures, chapeau, eau...

Inscription obligatoire par mail, par téléphone ou par SMS du 17 au 21 mai / du 07 au 11 juin  
 Vernon : 06 30 82 94 85 - durandmarina@orange.fr  
 Sablières : 06 43 44 90 17 - sylben07@gmail.com

Ouvert au public sans réserve de l'évolution des conditions sanitaires. Organisation dans le respect des gestes barrières et des recommandations en vigueur.

**Gratuit**

Nos mondes insoupçonnés est une création partagée à l'initiative de la Cie du Théâtre des Chemins. Elle restitue des paroles collectées en janvier et février auprès des habitants des vallées Beanne/Drobie, en impliquant des jeunes français et bulgares, passionnés par la valorisation du patrimoine oral. Cette sortie de résidence sous forme de balades spectacles est une des actions du projet ECOHOMY financé par Erasmus +

Les partenaires du projet :  
 BAAT (Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism's) est une association bulgare qui agit dans le domaine de la valorisation du patrimoine.  
 Le CERMOSEM est une antenne de l'Université Grenoble Alpes en Ardèche spécialisée dans le domaine de la formation et de la recherche sur les patrimoines.

Remerciements à la commune de Vernon, de Sablières, à l'association Sablières.com, à l'Office de tourisme Cévennes d'Ardèche, et la communauté de communes du Pays Beanne Drobie.

Poster announcing the show-ride in France, Cie du Théâtre des Chemins, May-June 2021

## Unsere ungeahnten Welten

Worte unterwegs

**Samstag, den 7. Mai**  
**in St. Martin im Kofel**

Treffpunkt : Bergstation der Seilbahn St. Martin

**11 h : Lesung in einem Gasthaus**  
**15 h : Wander Aufführung (3 Stunden Wanderung)**

Anmeldung empfohlen!  
 Bei : Tourismusverein Latsch-Martell  
 Tel : 0473/623109

Val Martello

Latsch San Martin

Poster announcing the show-ride in the Italian South Tyrol, Cie du Théâtre des Chemins, May 2022

## A few words to conclude...

This booklet aims to be a pedagogical guide that will help to launch some ideas and methods on the interactions between different views and uses of oral heritage. The project on which it is based, ECOHOMY, is part of this process which tends to transform oral sources into resources for the territory.

Valuing topographical memories, relationships with inhabited space and landscapes (particularly mountainous), what contributions to the territory?

The ECOHOMY project was carried out in three different areas, but all three had a certain number of common features: rurality marked by the departure of young people, and areas located in the middle of the mountains. The approaches implemented involved observing, listening, spotting the details of the environment and taking an interest in things that had previously gone unnoticed, or that might at first glance seem banal or common. To look at these landscapes of a familiar strangeness, to question the people who live there about their experience of the place, to go back in time through space, to cross the views of some and others, all this contributes to a better knowledge of the spaces whether they are familiar or more distant. This is why the project also represents a call to travel and visit differently.

"The fact that we attached a human experience to it with stories and a **more intimate knowledge of the places and the people**. And so, it gives more value to things and it makes everything more moving and strong. And it's true that it changes everything. Now I will travel differently.

*Participant in the residency in Bulgaria (July 2021)*

Moreover, the project invites us to question the intimate contact with the environment that walking brings and the emotions aroused by the landscapes. The path, the itinerary is a construction that materializes the relationship and the dialogue between landscapes and living beings. It is the link that persists between the immediate environment and the outside world, which encourages exchanges and encounters. If well designed, it allows us to cross these "proximity" heritage places, like fixed landmarks in space, capable of serving as semaphores (Pomian, 1990), receptacles of collective memories to make them last (Halbwachs, 1925). In this respect, surveying the landscape (De la Soudière, 2019) arouses a particular attachment, as much as it questions the making of territories, identities and forms of local anchoring. For the public, whether local or not, this approach facilitates the appropriation of the space and a better understanding of subjectivities and points of view.

**The contribution of the project to the practice of mountain guiding: the view of Momtchill**

"In my practice as a mid-mountain guide, I also tell hikers what I have heard from the shepherd or from the people in the village. The project encouraged me not just to quote these words but to stage them, add intonations, to find the right place to say them. But it's an approach I've had for a long time.

For me, the project is especially useful for the young guides we have in training at BAAT. In Bulgaria, they think that everything lies in the practice of the mountain, and that the job is

only to show the way. I tell them "wait, if it's only showing the way, a GPS can do it better than you! For them, it's a matter of understanding how they can describe and tell the story: putting your voice down, going to meet the inhabitants and asking them questions, putting emotion into the information you give!"

**Pierre-Antoine Landel's view of the project**

"For me, a fundamental contribution of this training for tour guides lies in the posture, first of all, the physical posture, which comes from theatre, breathing, distancing oneself from the object. But also the whole posture in relation to the stock of materials that they have to exploit to build their visit. They must take enough distance to highlight the essential, what is most valuable. This type of training brings them this dimension, both physical and reflection on what makes heritage. When we take an object like oral heritage, it should help them to think about what makes heritage and how it is transmitted.

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## Annexes

### Treatment of oral archives

*To help you, an example of a table*

Last name/first name of investigator	Last name/first name of interviewee	Biographical information (age, occupation, etc.)	Title of the interview	file number	Date	Location	Duration	Number of sequences
Urien Fanny	Desveaux Gentian	landscaper	"The show walk as a tool for landscape designers".	Wav240	10.02.2022	Cermosem Mirabel (Ardèche)	1h23	9

### Chronothematic summary

Sequence	Duration	Theme	Timeline analysis	Persons mentioned	Places mentioned
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

## **Example of the contract of communicability and exploitation of an oral interview**

### **Assignment of rights**

#### **Context:**

Within the framework of the ECOHOMY project, European Cultural and Oral Heritage, one Mediation by Youth (France/Bulgaria), the trainers, artists and young people involved in the shared creations are led to make recordings of the words of inhabitants, as collectors.

In order to be able to record, keep and then work on the recording made, the collector must have a contract signed for the use and transfer of this recording.

#### **Objective:**

This contract establishes the authorizations given between

- The collector
- the registered witness
- The 3 partners of the project: the Trib'alt association (Cie du Théâtre des Chemins), the BAAT association (Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism's), and the University of Grenoble Alpes (Cermosem, territorial development platform)

Extract from the recordings will be used to create a corpus of inhabitants' words, freely available on the ECOHOMY website and the websites of the structures associated with the project. Some of the inhabitants' words will be read aloud during a walk dedicated to the arts of speech.

#### **Respect for personal data:**

The project partners undertake to ensure that the recordings produced are anonymised before being used for training or cultural and artistic productions.

## Example of an agreement to use oral testimony

### Article 1

Dear Sir or Madam .....

Hereinafter referred to as the deponent, declares that he has voluntarily given testimony at .....

The interview is conducted by: .....

Date: ..... Time:.....Location of interview.....

### Article 2

The original recordings will be kept by the Cie du Théâtre des Chemins. Copies of these originals will be made for the various partners of the ECOHOMY project to ensure conservation on the one hand and communication on the other. These copies can be replaced by a transfer to new support in case of deterioration, change of standard or consultation system.

#### Annex 1:

The depositor authorizes the consultation of this data by any person free of charge, with the obligation to remain anonymous.

#### Annex 2

The depositor authorizes the use of these data, in original form, and free of charge by any means of exploitation, within the framework and for the needs of the activities of the ECOHOMY project, for cultural, scientific, documentary purposes, with the obligation to remain anonymous.

#### Annex 3

The depositor authorizes the use of these data and their dissemination, in original form or in the form of reading aloud, for any cultural event and more specifically for the creation of walks dedicated to the arts of the word (testimonies, tales, songs, poems...) and guided tours, with the obligation to remain anonymous.

**Article 1:** The depositor transfers free of charge, the literary property and the entirety of his copyright on this recording and on the photographs in case of free exploitation of the latter, within the framework of the ECOHOMY project. And for all its duration, within the framework of a cultural diffusion which benefits the public.

**Article 2:** The applicant expressly warrants that he has full power and authority to grant this authorization and that the uses have not in any way been assigned, mortgaged, encumbered or in any way vested in a third party.

The depositor also guarantees that the elements covered by this agreement do not contain anything that could fall under the laws in force and more particularly the laws relating to counterfeiting and image rights.

Generally speaking, the applicant guarantees the ECOHOMY project holders against any disturbance, claim or eviction of any kind that would affect the peaceful enjoyment of the rights that he/she hereby assigns.

**Article 3** A rectification of the present agreement is possible at any time with the signature of both parties.

**Article 4** The Applicant and the EcohomY Project Leaders undertake, prior to referral to the competent jurisdictions, to find an amicable solution to any dispute that may arise.

Done at ..... In two copies on .....

The depositor (witness)  
collector

The

ECOHOMY project partners

Trib'alt Association  
Alpes

BAAT

University of Grenoble  
IUGA - Cermosem

Booklet written by Fanny Urien-Lefranc with the support of Nicolas Senil

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