

Cultural Heritage, Landscape & Rural Development

Project Results, Lessons Learned and General Guidance

HISTCAPE: Historic Assets and Related Landscapes





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Introduction

Historic towns and their landscapes are a unique part of Europe's identity. Only through the conservation of cultural heritage and landscapes can generations be connected to their past and the prevailing character and spirit of a place or "genius loci" be preserved.

Small rural communities shape their territories and landscapes and were developed over many centuries. At one time these communities were the focal point of economic and social activity; but have come under serious threat in recent decades, facing depopulation, lower income levels and high unemployment. While 500 million members of the European population are concentrated in the large urban areas, 80% of Europe's territory is of a rural nature in which about 4,500 small towns and villages of less than 20,000 inhabitants are dispersed.

The European Union regional policy invests in the future of rural areas by supporting job creation, competitiveness, economic growth, improved quality of life and sustainable development.

The HISTCAPE project, funded by INTERREG IVC programme under the Cohesion Policy, has addressed these challenges through an interregional co-operation of 12 partners from 10 European regions. They are working together to identify good practice and policy recommendations in order to address the problems faced by rural communities and regions. A summary of the project results and partnership co-operation is presented in this brochure but is developed more extensively in a sustainable management guide: "Cultural Heritage, Landscape & Rural Development."

Background and Objectives

Many rural areas in Europe are threatened by a loss of facilities and services combined with a loss of economic activity and reduced investment. The acceleration of this trend directly threatens the existence of much of Europe's historic assets, therefore European identity. HISTCAPE aims to arrest the decline of historical assets in rural areas, focusing on the sustainable management of rural heritage and related territories in small rural towns. The Italian hill town of Arcevia in Marche Region, the mining valley of Sabero in Castilla y León and the World Heritage site Upper Middle Rhine Valley in Rhineland Palatinate are only some of the examples of unique and special rural places searching for innovative concepts to protect cultural heritage and landscape. The HISTCAPE has addressed these challenges by developing sustainable management solutions to help responsible government agencies and institutions develop a more dynamic view of cultural heritage assets in rural areas.

Approach and methodology

To support rural areas in addressing these challenges, the HISTCAPE project followed a defined methodology:

① **Identification of problems:** While it may seem that the problems are similar across Europe, a strategic problem diagnosis was required to gain an in-depth understanding. The insufficient recognition of cultural, natural and industrial heritage, a lack of cooperation between

authorities and ineffective tourism initiatives were recognized as important issues.

② **Identification of good practice or successful examples and assets:** The project builds upon the diversity and specificities of partners' experiences. Each project partner was asked to identify good practice examples from their regions highlighting their unique assets utilizing a standardized form. The standardization was critical in order to further evaluate, compare and contrast the good practice. Diverse technical practice and protection instruments for cultural heritage were identified by the partner regions as good practice. These range from techniques for the identification and cataloguing of cultural heritage to new models of financing and attracting investment. Innovative activities and participatory models for territorial development were investigated in detail within eight Inter-regional Workshops and nine study visits in the HISTCAPE partner regions.

③ **Development of policy recommendations and new policy instruments:** Based on the good practice examples identified in the project, policy recommendations and new policy instruments were developed and tested in six pilot actions. These pilot actions addressed specific issues of the regions by transferring successful models from one region to another. New management concepts for cultural heritage assets, methodologies for community involvement and guidelines for cultural heritage protection in local communities were identified.

④ **Dissemination of project results:** To create added value at the European

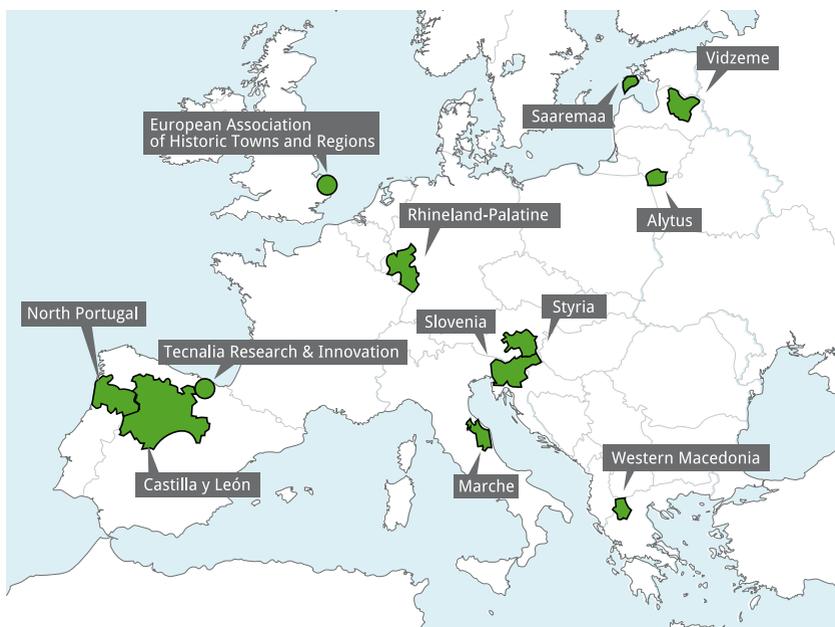
level, HISTCAPE partners are presenting the results of their cooperation in a sustainable management guide: “Cultural Heritage, Landscape & Rural Development”. This publication includes policy recommendations, examples of good practice and general guidelines for successful implementation. Project results were also disseminated via the project website (www.histcape.eu) and through quarterly newsletters.

In this way, the project created fresh perspectives and innovative ideas that have resulted in the identification of regional implementation plans for all the partner regions. New knowledge and skills were generated to bring about policy impacts at regional and European level.

Results

Through regional cooperation the HISTCAPE project has filled a strategic policy gap, improving the effectiveness of regional policies relating to cultural heritage in Europe’s rural areas. To achieve this, the HISTCAPE project has

- Disseminated good practice examples from 11 European regions
- Contributed to increased skills and capacities within the regional authorities
- Identified, implemented and transferred improved models of heritage protection
- Improved the networking of regions and heritage management authorities
- Developed policy recommendations for European regions



Lessons Learned

Preservation of cultural heritage and related landscapes in European rural areas is a complex and yet urgent challenge, concerning social, environmental, economic and many other topics of regional development.

One major finding was that rural communities most often do not need to be pushed by public institutions but that many good and innovative ideas are generated by the people themselves and just need to be recognized or helped to be realized.

Local communities, however, often have little capacity or are lacking the resources to materialize their ideas. Based on the partners' experience, a social, i.e. participative, management approach was named as the key demand for successful heritage and landscape driven rural development.

This particular style of management enabled the bridging of gaps between national and local levels, people and institutions, academics and local stakeholders, different disciplines and different policies of regional development. Good practice identification and their transfer between regions were some of the main challenges of the HISTCAPE project. Since each good practice example was at the same time addressing both the common problem as well as the specific situation in which it was embedded, it was not possible to simply transfer results or good advice. Instead the project partners recognized that a mixture of different approaches to identify the problems and highlight the

best potential solutions was the most sensible way of addressing these multifaceted challenges. By facing the enormous complexity of the field, the HISTCAPE partners learned that little steps in achieving a general aim should be considered as a positive result and that long-term approaches must be favoured if concrete conclusions are desired.

General Guidance

Rural areas face severe challenges threatening their cultural and community values. Structural and demographic change, loss of infrastructure and lack of urgent investment leave their mark on many European regions. This is often followed by a deep depression and lasting damage to rural societies. Local and regional politicians, regional planners and decision makers are invited to benefit from the HISTCAPE results.

According to the HISTCAPE experience the challenges concentrate on three topics:

Ⓐ Integrated planning and interdisciplinary knowledge transfer

One of the lessons learned in the course of the HISTCAPE project was that isolated approaches do not lead to sustainable and convincing results. As a repeated pattern it became obvious, that disciplines working in an integrated, interdisciplinary and cooperative way showed much better results than disciplines working in parallel. The results of an integrated approach entailed much better results in terms of sustainability and satisfaction of the stakeholders in the long run.

Although our European knowledge society is extremely focused on communication and dissemination of information, it seems that the creation and transfer of interdisciplinary knowledge is not well developed yet. The exchange of experience is not self-evident at all and requires constant efforts and professional steering so that different disciplines as well as regions, municipalities and communities can benefit from each other.

Recommendations

1. Create adequate processes and tools to promote, educate and communicate integrated experiences
2. Include the values of cultural heritage and landscape in educational programs of different disciplines
3. Promote public information and education in cultural heritage and landscape subjects
4. Support the creation of networks of different disciplines
5. Cluster landscape and cultural heritage related networks

ⓑ Organization of social and civic participation

One of the key problems of rural communities is the absence of knowledge of their own strengths. This is caused and further aggravated by the citizens' realization that political measures are not able to solve urgent problems such as 'brain drain' or a loss of infrastructure. However, there are convincing examples of rural communities starting their own initiatives, e.g. the re-vitaliza-

tion of their villages inner cities , in order to protect their cultural and natural heritage. This development in European societies enables citizens to trust their own resources and find new ways of cooperation. This new social power is capable of reviving the municipality's life enormously and additionally stimulates new development processes in communities.

Participation is a means to extract the knowledge that citizens already possess. Participation is an appropriate strategy if the replication of standardized models is not sensible or not possible and innovation must be fostered. Moreover, participation is a methodology that is, by generating new ideas and solutions, more efficient than others in simultaneously mobilizing all the resources available and stimulating interaction between stakeholders to solve a complex problem. It furthermore produces a broader involvement in the actual solution of problems and assists in developing a sense of ownership of ideas which in turn creates favorable conditions for a project's implementation. The communication channels set up between the various actors involved moreover remain in place as a permanent (social) capital for future initiatives.

Recommendations

1. Facilitate the processes of social and civic participation in cultural heritage and landscape preservation
2. Encourage and support civic participation and voluntary engagement
3. Steer civic participation in a professional way

4. Make use of new mechanisms and instruments for participation to foster investments in cultural heritage preservation and revitalization

5. Communicate Good Practice examples of social and civic participation

© Support economic valorisation

The relationship between culture and economy is of a demanding nature. However, economic aspects are critical to the sustainability and well-being of the communities in rural and intermediate areas of Europe as cultural and natural heritage offer a considerable potential for income and employment. But generating income and employment from cultural heritage sites often raises conflicts between conservation and heritage operators as both groups focus on different aspects. Therefore, bridging the gap between different needs in the most convenient way is a challenging task. An important advantage for the economic aspect of rural development is Europe's diverse and unique regional culture. Culture is a differentiating factor that significantly contributes to a region's economy while often remaining untapped. Therefore, the economy of culture and cultural heritage needs encouragement to develop and gain acceptance from rural stakeholders who still too often underestimate cultural heritage as a vital economic value. Economic valorisation also deals with the visual nature of cities and villages. This is directly connected with the major European problem of vacant properties in small city centers and villages. Avoidance strategies are not sufficiently established yet, therefore it is necessary

to develop integrated approaches in order to account for the complexity of the matter.

Recommendations

1. Promote and identify the economic potential of culture and cultural heritage in rural areas

2. Support cooperation between regions and agencies within and outside regions

3. Create new use for historic spaces

4. Develop a cross-regional management for vacant property

5. Start early to avoid vacant properties and assure consistent maintenance

Conclusions: The Integrated & Horizontal Management Approach

It can be asserted that the potentials of heritage and landscape protection and valorisation in rural areas can best be achieved by an integrated management approach which should be viewed as a complex, long-term and multidisciplinary process rather than a standard solution. The integrated management approach builds upon sustainable and participative management principles and the integration of cultural and natural heritage preservation jointly with the economic, structural and infrastructural drivers and features of each territory throughout a continuous adapting process. It gives equal importance to the specific circumstances of the particular area as well as to the more general aspects of regional development. The

plea for an integrated management approach is the result of the three years intensive collaboration in the HISTCAPE project. The HISTCAPE partnership offers this approach as the result of dealing with some very complex and chal-

lenging problems and as a response to many dilemmas, which were faced in this instructive and beneficial process. It is proposed to help regions, addressing their development challenges.

HISTCAPE:
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Lead partner



Rural Development Styria

HansSachsGasse5/3,
8010 Graz, Austria

The association for Rural Development Styria (Landentwicklung Steiermark) was founded by the Provincial Government to support the implementation of the Local Agenda 21 in Styria. The goal of the association is to foster civic participation in Styrian municipalities to create innovative strategies for dynamic rural areas.

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Partner 2



Regional Authority of Castilla y León

Av. Monastero Nra. Sra. De Prado s/n,
47014 Valladolid, Spain

The Regional Authority of Castilla y León represents the region with complete authority regarding its cultural heritage. The region of Castilla y León has an expansive historical and cultural character, which holds eight recognized UNESCO World Heritage sites and a valuable amount of cultural properties.

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Partner 3



Northern Portugal Regional

Directorate for Culture
Rua Igreja de Ramalde,
4149011 Oporto, Portugal

The Northern Portugal Regional Directorate for Culture mission, in coordination with services and bodies of the Portuguese State in the area of culture, the creation of conditions of access to cultural goods, monitoring the activities and supervision of artistic production structures financed by services and bodies in the area of culture, monitoring of actions relating to safeguarding, promotion and dissemination of cultural heritage assets, movable and intangible, and support for museums.

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Partner 4



Marche Region

Via Tiziano, 44,
60121 Ancona, Italy

Regione Marche lies in Central Italy alongside the Adriatic Sea. Marche Region has been pursuing the objective of safeguarding and enhancing the quality of its landscapes mainly thanks to the Regional Authority's Landscape Plan. It has focused on protecting the historical heritage assets through connected landscape and urban policies.

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Partner 5



Region of Western Macedonia

Z.E.P. Kozanis,
50100 Kozani, Greece

The Region of Western Macedonia connects decentralized bodies of the central government with the actors of local government. The Region contributes to the national planning, draws up programs and applies the policies for economic, social and cultural growth.

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Partner 6



General Directorate for Cultural

Heritage Rhineland-Palatinate

Erthaler Hof/Schillerstraße 44,
55116 Mainz, Germany

The General-Directorate of Cultural Heritage Rhineland-Palatinate (GDKE) is the federal state's professional authority for historical assets. The protection of historical assets in Rhineland-Palatinate is ensured jointly between the General-Directorate and 36 local authorities all over the region.

Contact:

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Partner 7



Alytus District Municipality is a local authority within Alytus County, situated in southern Lithuania. For the last two decades the municipality has had responsibility for the cataloguing and management of historic heritage objects and collecting information for a data base for the protection of cultural heritage assets.

Alytus District Municipality Administration

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62133 Alytus, Lithuania

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Partner 8



Saaremaa Local Government Association is in charge of promoting the balanced development of the environment, economy and cultural heritage of the county. It has competences in the development of sustainable tourism and in the implementation of strategic plans and policies to protect the environment, landscape and cultural heritage.

Saaremaa Local Governments Association

Lossi 1,
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Partner 9



Vidzeme Planning Region (VPR) is a regional planning and development institution which offer services at national, regional and municipal level, represents regional development interests of 25 municipalities and Valmiera city and moreover acts as a development platform for the municipalities of the region.

Vidzeme Planning Region

Jāņa Poruka 8108,
4101 Cēsis, Latvia

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Partner 10



Tecnalia Research & Innovation
GeldoParque Tecnológico de Bizkaia,
Edificio 700 - 48160 Derio, Spain

Fundación Tecnalia Research & Innovation (Tecnalia), headquartered in Spain, is one of the leading applied research organisations in Europe. Tecnalia applied research to strategic planning and management, developing methodologies and policies, advising public authorities and institutions and creating tools for the conservation of cultural heritage.

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Partner 11



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION
Historic Towns and Regions

Heritage Europe was formed as The European Association of Historic Towns and Regions (EAHTR) by the Council of and now represents through its range of membership categories in 30 European countries. Heritage Europe's aim is to promote the interests of historic towns and cities across Europe through International co-operation between heritage organisations.

Heritage Europe - The European Association of Historic Towns and Regions (EAHTR)

The Guildhall, Gaol Hill, NR2 1JS
Norwich, UK

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Partner 12



Slovenia has a rich cultural heritage and an outstanding landscape diversity. The University of Ljubljana promotes the integration of cultural and natural heritage in the sustainable regional development and to this purpose cooperated with Kozjanski Park, one of the oldest and largest nature reserves in Slovenia.

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Other Histcape publications

HISTCAPE Guidebook

HISTCAPE Project Overview

HISTCAPE Final Conference »Legacy of the HISTCAPE project« Proceedings

The HISTCAPE publications can be downloaded at: www.histcape.eu



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HISTCAPE (HISTorical assets and related landsCAPE) is an INTERREG IVC project. The Interregional Cooperation Programme INTERREG IVC, financed by the European Union's Regional Development Fund, helps Regions of Europe work together to share experience and good practice in the areas of innovation, the knowledge economy, the environment and risk prevention. Funding is made available for projects, more than that, a wealth of knowledge and potential solutions are also on hand for regional policy-makers.

