

Introduction

Almost every region within Europe is proud of certain buildings that for different reasons can be linked with cultural heritage. Those buildings or built constructions such as castles, abbeys, historical wind mills or former railway lines, lost or changed their functions for various reasons. Revalorisation can help to give new inputs to the development of a region and its identity.

Against this background the interreg III C project cultured – CULTtural heritage and REgional Development – has been initiated to connect planners and stakeholders from different regions to discuss best practices in the preservation and marked oriented valorisation of cultural heritage.

In total there are 14 different partners* from nine countries involved in the project. The project has officially started in January 2005 and will last for 2 and a half years (until June 2007).

The University of Ghent is Lead Partner in this project, which is co-financed by the European Union.** The total budget for the whole period is 1.14 Mill Euro of which 717.236 Euro is ERDF funding.

The University of Ghent is supported by Iris consulting, that is taking the responsibility for the co-ordination, management and practical organisation matters of the project.

The main project objectives are:

- ❑ To develop best practice guidelines for the revalorisation of elements of built cultural heritage by sharing experience between the involved partner lands
- ❑ To stimulate further discussion and networking on cultural heritage and regional development

General objectives of the project are to contribute towards the EU goals of achieving balanced regional development and reducing social and economic disparities within and between the regions of the EU.

External experts will be involved in the project for advice on specific topics and to make sure that the project reaches a high quality content.

A number of activities have been planned to elaborate best practice guidelines and all partners will develop innovative demonstration projects in the field of cultural heritage and regional development. Relevant activities include five workshops in different partner lands, three regional seminars, a large scale end conference and a website.

The expected results of the project are:

- ❑ increased transfer of knowledge and best practice between partner lands
- ❑ increased capacity and networking in partner institutions strengthening partner's ability in policy making and absorbing funding sources
- ❑ provision of frames of reference for good practice for interested parties



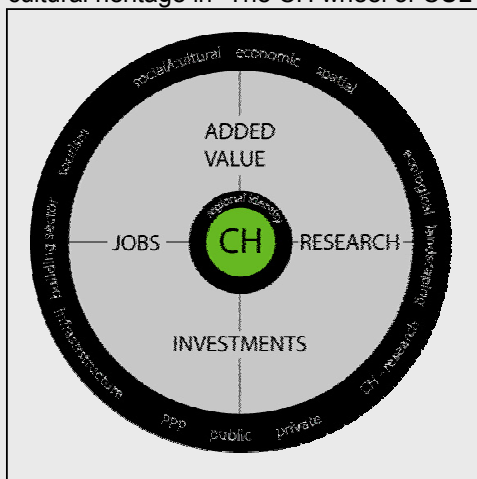
What have we done so far?

Since the project has officially started, a number of actions have been taken. Initial meetings were held with the team of the University of Ghent and Iris consulting. On May 19th the official Start meeting took place. With a total of 29 participants, this meeting was well attended.

The Start meeting provided the opportunity to present and discuss a number of important issues in relation to co-ordination and management of the project. First Prof. Allaert, Lead Partner of Ghent University, and Dirk Lauwers, Managing Director of Iris consulting, welcomed all partners. Neil Adams and Gonda Cock gave a presentation on financial and management issues. The afternoon session focused on the work programme for the next two and a half years. Jose Miguel Delgado from the County Council of Ubeda gave a presentation on the link and possible synergies of the CULTURED project and two other interreg III C operations Ubeda is involved in. The most interactive part finally was a short presentation of each of the partners, who were asked to present in five minutes their ambitions and exceptions on the project. As could be expected, so diverse the partners so different their needs and ambitions in relation to the project. The challenge of the project will be to meet as much as possible the needs of all partners and at the same time to make sure that all individual ideas fit the overall ambition of the project.



Recently the Lead Partner and Iris consulting met to discuss first ideas on the content of the project. What could be a link between a wheel on one hand and 'regional development' on the other hand? By using the first, the wheel as a metaphor, it can become easier to explain the other one, which is regional development. That is the way, Professor Allaert from Ghent University explained his vision on regional development and cultural heritage in "The CH wheel of CULTURED".



The CH-wheel of CULTURED consists of the central hub, the spokes, the wheel itself and finally the area between the central hub and the wheel. The core or central hub is formed by 'cultural heritage' as it is the central issue within the project. As spokes are important for the solidity of a wheel, the 'spokes' in the CH-wheel are building blocks to ensure a strong regional development. Creating jobs, attracting investments, stimulating research and, as a result, creating added value in the context of cultural heritage, seem to be such important aspects for a solid regional development. The black outline or 'the wheel' itself stands for the variety of different policy fields with which cultural heritage and regional development interfere. The area between the core and the 'black outline' can be considered as the identity of a region. Cultural heritage can be one element in formulating a regional identity.

Future activities

As policy on cultural heritage and regional development is an important issue, delivering an essential part towards the revalorisation of cultural heritage, the project will now focus on this issue. All partners will be provided with a template to describe the specific situation in their country.

The following activity with all partners is planned in October 2005 in Spain/Ubeda. Iris consulting and the County Council of Ubeda will organise this first 3days workshop.

In the following program period a website for the CULTURED project will be developed, making it possible to find information on the project and to follow its evolution. The Lead Partner will closely work together with the County Council of Ubeda to prepare the structure of the future website.



Concluding messages

The project has made a good start. If all partners wish to obtain the maximum benefit from the project then it is important that we work closely together. Without your active participation the project can't become a success.

For further information on the project, please contact the relevant representative of the respective administration or institution in your region.

For more information you may also contact the Lead Partner:
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We look forward to seeing you in Ubeda.

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*These are 2 partners from Belgium/ Flanders (University of Ghent; Ministry of the Flemish Community), 1 partner from Hungary (Somogy County Council), Ireland (Cork County Council), United Kingdom (Cardiff University), Italy (Pistoia Business Innovation Center), Latvia (Kurzeme Tourism Association), Slovakia (Academia Istropolitana Nova), 3 partners from Lithuania (Panevezys County Governors Administration; Vilnius Pedagogical University; Birzai District Municipality) and 3 partners from Spain (City Council of Ubeda; Local Development Agency of Bunol; Mallorca Regional Council).

**Interreg III C is an EU- funded programme that helps European regions to form partnerships to work together on common projects. These projects enable regions to share knowledge and experience that will help them develop new solutions to economic, environmental and social changes. More information on interreg III C can be found on www.interreg3c.net .