

Changes

Changes in Cultural Heritage Activities:
New Goals
and benefits for
Economy and Society

changes

Project Summary

Environmental sustainability concerns are driving investments in conservation, but also construction sector at large, towards inclusive and sustainable development as well as innovation. Increasingly arguments rise against large restoration works, whilst a paradigm shift is observed towards Planned Preventive Conservation, Maintenance and Monitoring (PPCMM). The main benefits of the new approach are the cost-effectiveness for private owners and managers of historic properties, improved quality of protection of built heritage and environmental enhancement, empowerment of local communities resulting in increase of human and relational capital in a local context. The research aims at producing new local models capable to include the diversity of European Cultural Heritage and skills required in built heritage activities to support PPCMM, by increased understanding of:

1. conservation and valorization as preventive measures;
2. effectiveness of maintenance, involving relevant craftsmanship and expertise;
3. economic mechanisms underlying built heritage conservation in the context of regional economy and the (wider) construction sector.
4. impact of knowledge gain and its dissemination on smart economy for built heritage conservation, heritage management and for the construction sector.

The proposal meets the JPI call requirements as interdisciplinary research will lead to advances in understanding of cultural heritage and will produce outcomes ready to be transferred to stakeholders and society. Research will develop methods, technologies and procedures for a sustainable long-term care as a strategy to manage changes, in the framework of a learning environment where heritage is understood in connection with people as a tool for the production of social and human capital. The project outcome includes the proposal for a funding scheme providing the conditions to support the transition toward a sustainable conservation process. The project addresses the themes identified in the strategic research agenda: "Developing a reflective society", "Connecting people with heritage", "Creating knowledge" and "Safeguarding our cultural heritage resource".

Application and impact

The proposal meets the JPI call requirements as it integrates existing and available knowledge in different fields of study from several disciplines; this interdisciplinary research will lead to advances in understanding of cultural heritage as a driver of regional local inclusive and sustainable development. Together with Principal Investigators, who are reputed scholars and professionals in different heritage fields, other researchers will be involved from other disciplines not previously associated with research on cultural heritage.

The proposal is definitely relevant to the aims and topics of HERITAGE PLUS as it works on the improvement of the practices currently implemented for safeguarding tangible cultural heritage, taking into account spillovers and benefits, as capacity building, training, preserving traditional skills which are among its associated intangible expressions.

This proposal includes research into technologies, procedures and systems for the long-term monitoring and maintenance of built heritage, taking into account integrity and authenticity of the different historical and environmental contexts and historical layers of cultural heritage; its specific mark is the investigation on changes which are ongoing in this context, as the role itself of preservation in the societal context is changing, so that it becomes mandatory on one hand to investigate which strategies can make feasible the protection and management of an ever increasing cultural heritage, on the other hand to investigate how cultural heritage can become a factor for a sustainable development.

Therefore the research will develop a twofold approach to Heritage activities:

- Preventive Conservation will be investigated as a system able to avoid the costs of major repair, to make heritage properties a more functional infrastructure for timely cultural activities, to make heritage buildings and historic landscapes better protected and resilient against natural disasters; it builds upon the research yet carried out within the PRECOMOS UNESCO chair in which various partners of the consortium are involved;
- this changing attitude will be explored, by means of an interdisciplinary analysis, as the way to make cultural heritage

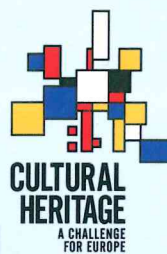
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preservation a production factor for sustainable and inclusive cultural policies for pluralistic and open societies.

The proposed research will provide an analysis at European level of advanced strategies of planned and preventive conservation based on diverse concepts. Experiences (good practices) in Belgium, The Netherlands, Italy and Sweden will be looked into more detail aiming at understanding how a more integrated approach could generate benefits for the built heritage preservation but also for a more sustainable construction sector at large. The analysis of the economic challenges that affect the construction sector will generate the potential new role for the built heritage conservation and maintenance sector, based on a knowledge economy inducing potential relevant societal dynamics and local sustainable development.

The proposed research will develop materials, technologies and procedures for a sustainable long-term care as a strategy to manage changes, in the framework of a learning environment where heritage is understood in connection with people as a tool for the production of social and human capital.



One of the main purposes of the proposed research is to investigate thoroughly this new understanding of heritage as tool for society at large, that implies a changing role for the public also in the administration of resources and in setting mechanisms for financing and giving incentives to heritage activities. The concept will implement a "trading zone" in which politics, the market, people and experts come into terms and can find win-win solutions. The multi-disciplinarity of the research consortium will help the analysis to tackle all the phases of the system and of the process. The project therefore addresses the themes identified in the strategic research agenda: "Developing a reflective society", "Connecting people with heritage", "Creating knowledge", "Safeguarding our cultural heritage resource" and it acknowledges the holistic integrated way heritage counts for Europe (see Heritage Counts for Europe project funded by DG Culture of EC).

Coordinator

Politecnico di Milano (POLIMI) (ITALY)

Participants

- University of Leuven (BELGIUM).
- Technische Universiteit Delft (NETHERLANDS).
- Uppsala University (SWEDEN).
- Foppoli Moretta e Associati Consulting (ITALY).

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Budget

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Subject area(s)

Preventive and Planned Conservation, Valorization, Maintenance, Craftsmanship, Territorial Capital

Project website

<http://www.changes-project.eu/>