

Approach and Methodology

1 The project activities follow a carefully defined methodology. First, partners identify good practice and jointly define a methodology for developing policies. Examples of good practice will be collected, analysed and highlighted by partners. Stakeholders in rural development will be invited to participate in these discussions. Study visits, peer reviews and state of art good practice will be important instruments in this first phase.

2 In the second stage, the viability of implementing those policies will be tested through six pilot actions in the partner regions. In parallel, the project partners will pool resources and knowledge to jointly develop new policy instruments building on identified good practice.

3 The final stage is dedicated to the development of an implementation plan for each participating region and to the training of partners to ensure these plans are successfully carried out after the end of the project. The plans serve as ready-to-implement strategies for improving the efficiency and sustainability of rural cultural heritage management across Europe.

4 Lastly, to create added value at the European level, HISTCAPE partners will present the results of their cooperation in a sustainable management guide on the preservation of rural heritage values. This will include policy recommendations, examples of best practice and general guidelines for successful implementation.

Through regional cooperation the HISTCAPE project will fill a strategic policy gap improving the effectiveness of regional policies relating to cultural heritage in Europe's smaller settlements whose viability is now seriously under threat. It will identify good practice in sustainable management and ensure they transfer into regional action plans that are capable of accessing the structural funds – providing a catalyst for further public and private sector investment alongside the empowerment of local communities.



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HISTCAPE

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Project Summary

- Arresting decline of historical assets in rural communities
- Developing sustainable management solutions



Background

Historic towns and their landscapes are a unique part of Europe's identity. While Europe's population is largely concentrated in larger settlements, 80% of its territory is rural in character. These rural landscapes are home to a scattered pattern of smaller historic towns and villages. Once focal points for economic and community activity, these smaller historic places have come under serious threat over recent decades. Changing patterns of economic activity have led to de-population, a lack of investment with a subsequent loss of facilities and services.

The HISTCAPE project addresses this challenge by focusing on the sustainable management of historical assets in small rural towns. Through interregional workshops, study visits and a special online practitioners' forum the project will identify and establish effective policies and plans for the sustainable management of cultural heritage assets and related landscapes.

Objectives and Results

HISTCAPE aims to arrest the decline of historical assets in rural areas. It plans to do this by developing sustainable management solutions to help responsible bodies develop a more dynamic view of cultural heritage assets in rural areas.

The project will

- identify and disseminate good practice
- contribute to increased skills and capacities within regional authorities
- identify, implement and transfer improved models of heritage protection
- improve the networking of regions and heritage management authorities
- develop policy recommendations at the European level

Planned project duration

01.01.2012 – 31.12.2014

Project partners

Rural Development Styria (Austria)	Castilla y León Regional Authority (Spain)
Northern Cultural Regional Direction (Portugal)	Region of Marche (Italy)
Region of Western Macedonia (Greece)	General-Directorate for the Cultural Heritage Rhineland-Palatinate (Germany)
Alytus District Municipality Administration (Lithuania)	Saaremaa Local Governments Association (Estonia)
Vidzeme Planning Region (Latvia)	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (Slovenia)
Tecnalia Research & Innovation (Spain)	European Association of Historic Towns and Regions (United Kingdom)

