

# CHANGES

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

### DURATION

01/06/2015 – 31/05/2018

### BUDGET

100.000 €

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

CHANGES takes into account the evolving role of heritage activities in the framework of a Knowledge and Creative Economy, giving increasing relevance to the “making” of people. Heritage preservation therefore has to embed itself in new planning instruments, which combine spatial planning with e.g. regional smart specialization strategies. In this way, heritage protection becomes a pro-active process, or a production factor, where historic buildings and related activities could be used as an infrastructure for innovative initiative in the creative industry. Targeting benefits on the long run, the research will address non-use values and spillovers which are not immediately related to the use of cultural properties, but may give larger benefits to local systems in terms of increase of human and relational capital.

Heritage valorisation, which is necessary to boost European competitive advantages, cannot be carried out without an enhancement of conservation practices: preventive conservation ensures heritage integrity and is assumed cost-effective on the long term. However, today a large-scale implementation of the methodology never started because it still lacks reliable evaluations of cost-benefits, that is the main output of the proposed research. Such evaluation should be based on a sound analysis of the whole process of activities carried out on heritage properties, taking into account a system of diverse relationships inside and outside the heritage sector. Moreover, similar to preventive medicine and public health, preventive conservation can be a successful strategy because it addresses the larger conservation process and system through policies rather than focusing solely on single actions.

The proposed research aims at identifying and understanding the diversity of skills needed for quality protection, conservation and management of built cultural heritage. The outcome could be useful not only inside the heritage sector, but also to job creation within the construction industry at large. The construction industry needs guidance in the current crisis in finding new sustainable markets as well as in defining the required knowledge (including skills) to implement this paradigm change. Considering that proper built heritage maintenance starts from a good understanding of the applied construction techniques, one of the aims is to conduct research on how adequate knowledge of built heritage maintenance techniques and related construction practices can be of value in the mechanisms underlying the transition in the conservation sector and the construction industry at large. The project will demonstrate that Planned Preventive Conservation (PPC) allocates and uses existing resources for heritage management more efficiently than curative conservation by means of creating synergies and advantages. PPC can improve preservation using the available resources, that is without an increase of spending even if the amount of protected heritage increases, while more skilled people will reinforce the local construction system. The increase in local knowledge economy builds upon diverse European approaches ranging from the valorizing of craftsmanship and traditional practices until the development of innovative techniques including high-qualified restorers and scientists, as well as the implementation of ICT tools.

The mix of disciplines involved in the research enables to deal with heritage as a complex system. Furthermore, this approach is made mandatory by the preventive paradigm, and it is able to take into account the diversity of stakeholders involved in the proposed research. Thereby the concept of “trading zone” can be usefully applied to elaborate an innovative concept in which heritage is no longer the monopoly of restricted groups, but becomes a production factor for an inclusive and sustainable development model, i.e. the economy of tomorrow. The “trading zone” is an active arena or a field of force corresponding to the actors’ various policies, values, legal frameworks and resources. The “trading zones” are therefore negotiation models between cultural heritage, economic growth and sustainable development.



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The final outcome of the project will be the proposal for a funding scheme (mixed origins) that would provide the conditions for supporting the transition based on learning from maintenance scheme and providing necessary skills and knowledge for qualitative PPC conservation strategy (understanding maintenance is covering all aspects of construction on a small scale). The many (+20) years of practices of assessing and monitoring state of conservation and maintenance advice by Monumentenwacht in the two regions with leading experience in that field (The Netherlands and Flanders) will be the fact base to value the benefit of maintenance, the effectiveness of the maintenance and conservation practices and to evaluate the need for skills for qualitative conservation. The experiences from Italy and Sweden will help in dealing with the links between conservation and policies on a larger scale.

## Objectives:

1. Highlight the theoretical framework which makes built cultural heritage a production factor for inclusive and sustainable development.
2. Highlight the relationships between conservation activities and valorisation strategies as a “trading zone” among a number of stakeholders.
3. Evaluate built heritage maintenance interventions in terms of effectiveness (quality), relevant craftsmanship and expertise (knowledge), cost (economics) and additional external benefits
4. Define the economic mechanisms underlying the whole process of built heritage preservation (prevention, monitoring, maintenance, restoration, management) and how this could be integrated with regional economy and the construction sector (funding, smart specialization strategies, regional innovation strategies).
5. Understand the impact of research, development and dissemination of adequate knowledge of built heritage conservation on the construction sector.
6. Formulate opportunities to invest in research, development and dissemination of adequate knowledge of built heritage conservation techniques and related construction practices.
7. Formulate and disseminate a proposal for a funding scheme that would provide the conditions of supporting the transition based on learning from Planned Preventive Conservation strategy.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### **Coordinator**

Prof. Stefano DELLA TORRE  
Politecnico di Milano / ABC Department  
[stefano.dellatorre@polimi.it](mailto:stefano.dellatorre@polimi.it)

### **Partner**

Koen VAN BALEN  
KULeuven / Department of Civil Engineering  
[koenraad.vanbalen@kuleuven.be](mailto:koenraad.vanbalen@kuleuven.be)

Silvia NALDINI  
TU Delft  
[S.Naldini@tudelft.nl](mailto:S.Naldini@tudelft.nl)

Prof. Christer GUSTAFSSON  
Uppsala University  
[christer.gustafsson@konstvet.uu.se](mailto:christer.gustafsson@konstvet.uu.se)

Dario FOPPOLI  
Foppoli Moretta e associati consulting engineers  
[posta@foppolimoretta.it](mailto:posta@foppolimoretta.it)

## LINKS

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