

HERIWELL: Cultural Heritage as a Source of Societal Well-being in European Regions

Overview of the research project 2020-22

I. Background

This research project is carried out for the *ESPON EGTC*, based in Luxembourg. The ESPON European Grouping on Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) has been established according to European law to deliver the content envisaged by the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, which is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The new project will complement the ESPON Targeted Analysis of 2019: “*The Material Cultural Heritage as a Strategic Territorial Development Resource: Mapping Impacts Through a Set of Common European Socio-economic Indicators*” (<https://www.espon.eu/cultural-heritage>).

HERIWELL is carried out by a consortium consisting of the following partners, all of which are recognised as non-profit bodies and can look back on decades of European collaboration and joint research experiences:

- *Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale (IRS)* – Project Leader –, founded in 1973, based in Milan (with *Associazione ACUME* as a sub-contractor)
- *European Association of Cultural Researchers (ERICarts Network and Institute)*, founded in 1993, based in Bonn and Cologne
- *Associazione Economia della Cultura (AEC)*, founded in 1986, based in Rome.

Over 40 thematic or country experts and other specialists from across Europe will be involved in the new project. Its duration will be 24 months, starting from May 2020.

II. Objectives of the research

The main objective of HERIWELL is to develop of a pan-European methodology and territorial analysis of impacts of cultural heritage that can be associated with societal well-being, including but not limited to quality of life, social inclusion, educational benefits and other aspects. The research will cover both material and intangible cultural heritage and the impacts should be associated with:

- The presence of material cultural heritage (stock of buildings and other objects);
- Use of the material and intangible cultural heritage (including participation in related activities);
- Digitalisation of cultural heritage;
- EU-funded investments in cultural heritage;
- Activities (policies and measures, including participatory ones) aimed at increasing positive impacts of cultural heritage and diminishing potentially negative influences (if feasible).

The objectives of the study have been synthesised into six preliminary research questions.

1. How can the societal impact of cultural heritage be defined? To which societal domains does cultural heritage contribute? How significant is this contribution?
2. How to measure the societal impact of cultural heritage? How to express it in quantitative terms, considering reliability and validity, at the territorial level?
3. What disparities exist between societal impacts of cultural heritage in different types of territories and for different groups of stakeholders (particularly as regards residents, tourists, arts and heritage professionals, minorities and migrants)? And how to narrow these disparities?
4. How to compare impacts of cultural heritage across different European regions?
5. What are the impacts of EU funded heritage investments on societal well-being in cities and regions?
6. To what extent can the digitalisation of cultural heritage and related offers influence well-being in terms of education, knowledge, etc.?

The main outcome of HERIWELL will be a methodological framework, defining the most important societal domains in which impacts of cultural heritage can be observed, and providing evidence of such impacts. In addition, a quantification of impacts for the past 10 years is intended by establishing comparable socio-economic indicators and using different sources of information, taking into account the results of the 2019 ESPON Targeted Analysis.

A tentative classification of cultural heritage impacts on societal well-being comprises three dimensions:

- I. **Quality of Life** (including education/skills and the use of ICT for cultural purposes; health; cultural participation and satisfaction; environmental quality);
- II. **Social Cohesion** (e.g. equal opportunities and integration; cultural accessibility and governance; community participation, volunteering and charitable giving; trust);
- III. **Material Conditions** (e.g. income and jobs related to culture; real estate prices, cost of living).

The geographical scope of HERIWELL encompasses all 32 European countries participating in the ESPON Programme, but the search for evidence beyond the national level is deemed particularly important.

Potential impacts of the current COVID-19 crisis will be considered as much as possible; they will also lead to modifications of the methodology originally planned for the project (see below).

III. Main stages of the HERIWELL project

THE TASKS	APPROACHES AND METHODS
Task 1 Development of a conceptual framework for the research	- Literature review - Theory of change and contribution analysis - Delphi analysis - Public consultation
Task 2 Determination and definition of the most important societal domains in which impacts of cultural heritage can be observed	- Desk analysis - Theory of change - Public deliberation
Task 3 Proposal of a methodological framework and calculation methods to determine impacts of cultural heritage on selected societal domains	- Descriptive statistical analysis - Cluster analysis and ranking - Panel data approach
Task 4 Mapping and analysis of societal impacts of cultural heritage at territorial level	- Descriptive statistical analysis of EU funds - Surveys to managing authorities - Content analysis of EU funds - Big data - Public consultation
Task 5 Preparation of case studies in particular regions or cities	- Extrapolative approach to case studies - Desk analysis - Interviews, focus groups, surveys - Big data
Task 6 Development of recommendations	- Desk analysis - Public consultation
Task 7 Outreach activities to promote the results of the project	- Public consultation and deliberation - Social network engagement - Home-language local workshops

IV. Contact

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