Guidelines for Sustainable Cultural Tourism in Historic Towns and Cities

September 2009

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Cultural tourism plays a major part in conserving and realising the value of our heritage, which includes not only the physical heritage and landscape, but also the cultural heritage, such as languages and religious and culinary traditions. Cultural tourism is also a vital route for cultural exchange, promoting understanding and for cultural diversity to flourish. It is an activity that is both an important means of individual personal fulfilment and a major industry generating jobs and investment; it depends upon both ancient history and the most up to date technology; it has both local and global environmental implications.

1.2 Tourism is an industry facing in many different directions, all of which bring their challenges and opportunities. Addressing these in a way that reconciles sustainability and competitive economic prosperity is a major issue for the European institutions – the EU and the Council of Europe - and for the leadership of those Municipalities whose towns and cities are the focus for cultural tourism.

1.3 These Guidelines are aimed at policy makers and senior professional practitioners\(^1\) at the European, national, regional and local levels. They are especially relevant to municipalities and those governmental agencies best placed to influence more sustainable approaches to the planning and development of cultural tourism through their legal powers and democratic legitimacy. The aim is also for the Guidelines

\(^1\) Including planning, tourism, economic development, and environmental protection and management.
2.0 Purpose of the Guidelines

2.1 The Commission of the European Communities Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European Tourism\(^2\) stresses that, ‘Creating the right balance between the welfare of tourists, the needs of the natural and cultural environment and the development and competitiveness of destinations and businesses requires an integrated and holistic approach where all stakeholders share the same objectives’ (p.3) While getting all European stakeholders to agree common objectives will undoubtedly be challenging, these Guidelines seek to help achieve a consistent approach by:

a. raising awareness of the need to tackle the sustainability issues posed by cultural tourism in historic towns and cities;

b. establishing a shared framework and a common language through which the issues can be tackled; and

c. actively promoting practical action in sustainable cultural tourism.

2.2 The Guidelines concentrate on the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of sustainable cultural tourism, but they do not provide a detailed, comprehensive toolkit for practitioners. Publication of the Guidelines will be followed and supported by other learning and development opportunities, including conferences and web based exchanges to allow those involved to contribute and update their experiences of initiatives and practice, e.g. through the Heritage Zone\(^3\). As experience of using the Guidelines grows it may become apparent that there are significant connections between the needs of this higher level audience and practitioners on the ground in a range of tourism and delivery fields. This should be explored through a major European project bringing together good practice and the experience of a number of destinations. The case for more detailed advice and guidance will be kept under review.

2.3 These Guidelines have drawn on those listed in Appendix 1 and are intended to reinforce and complement them by providing a coherent methodology and bringing together a full range of issues that add further dimensions. Critically the aim is to move beyond statements of high level aspirations.

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\(^2\) Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European Tourism, Brussels, 19.10.2007 COM(2007) 621 final


\(^3\) http://www.heritagezone.net/
3.0 Definitions

3.1 If the benefits of a consistent approach to sustainable cultural tourism are to be realised it is important for policy makers to be working to consistent definitions and concepts. The following are used for the purposes of these Guidelines.

Cultural Tourism: Tourism the principal purpose of which is to share and enjoy physical and intangible heritage and culture, including landscapes, buildings, collections, the arts, identity, tradition and language. In terms of time spans, the culture may range from pre history to contemporary events. The key elements relate to the characteristics of historic or cultural value worth conserving and the value that society places on them. It is important to remember that not all cultural tourists are the same and they will have different needs and impacts, see Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 A cultural tourism typology

Historic towns and cities: Historic places and areas, including villages, small towns, cities and parts of larger urban areas with significant cultural and heritage assets that are recognised through local, national or international designations.

Sustainability: The term used by the Bruntland Commission has become the most often-quoted definition of sustainable development, as development that ‘meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. This will suffice as a working definition for these Guidelines, embracing as it does not inaction, but the processes of aiming to achieve less unsustainable development. Its meaning in the tourism context is elaborated in Section 5 below.

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4.0 Tourism and Historic Towns – Issues

4.1 It is worth remembering that ‘tourism’ is not new to historic places and that much of their history was built around it. Pilgrimages and the resting place of a saint were regarded by previous ages as lucrative commercial opportunities; and later generations indulged in the European Grand Tour – the first cultural tourism perhaps! People today enjoy being 21st century cultural tourists whether they are travelling for leisure or business – experiencing new places and relaxation enrich their lives. Aside from the personal benefits, tourism supports many historic places by:

- generating economic value and contributing to local, regional and national income;
- raising the image and profile of the town as a place to visit, live and invest;
- bringing back derelict historic buildings into productive use;
- creating reasons to invest in the town’s heritage - heritage becomes associated with the prosperity and economic vitality because it attracts visitors and their spending;
- increasing the use of local facilities and services, which helps their viability, particularly in smaller towns and villages;
- helping to keep alive local traditions and events;
- supporting locally produced food, drink and crafts because visitors create an additional and market for niche interests and products; and
- creating markets for new micro-businesses and may help retain local talent and/or help create reasons and opportunities for people to live where they work.

4.2 Yet tourism is sometimes a problem for historic places, it can: damage the physical historic environment; undermine both the sense of place and cultural identity; cause inflation; and can create difficulties for local people. Crucially for municipalities, pressures for tourism growth are often externally driven and appear uncontrollable.

4.3 In practice tourism will mean different things to different places. For some it is an aspiration, for others it is a threat to be managed – much will depend on where they are in the destination lifecycle. It is also important to consider the potential of different destinations - not everywhere has the same potential as a Vienna or Edinburgh. Some destinations could be highfliers, others play to modest local distinctiveness; and then there is probably another group that, for a variety of reasons, simply have very little tourism potential. Municipalities must address the opportunities and challenges positively. A critical point to understanding the position of most historic places is that generally where the supply of services outstrips demand and especially where the spending power of visitors is much greater than the indigenous population giving rise to an inflation of expectations.

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places is that for most of them modern day high pressure tourism is not their raison d'etre, it is an activity grafted in to an existing historical function – cathedral city, market town, university city, manufacturing centre – and the place is very rarely designed physically or socially to cope with these new pressures.

**Defining the product**

4.4 The significance of historic places and their embedded culture as part of a broader national heritage draw is huge, much more than a single cathedral or castle. The historic place product contributes to the whole cultural tourist experience and includes attractions and facilities:
- the built and natural environments;
- collections, museums, galleries;
- culture, customs, cultural associations;
- the public realm;
- the experience of a different everyday way of life;
- accommodation, facilities and services; and
- the ‘software’, e.g. destination image, information and the customer services.

4.5 Some of these elements motivate the trip, others are expected and necessary, perhaps taken for granted. Not only must they all work individually, but critically they must be sufficiently concentrated in space to come together as a coherent and identifiable whole to maximise the contribution made by tourism to the historic place and its community.

**Physical and Social Impacts**

4.6 Many historic places are comparatively small, often well below 200,000 populations and the visitor: resident ratio may be very high. The results can be congestion, wear and tear, disturbance and a sense of displacement for local people. The scale and layout of most historic towns exacerbate the actuality and perception of the congestion and dislocation. However, what constitutes congestion varies from place to place – bustling shopping streets are one thing, bustling churches quite another.

4.7 Adapting a historic place to the demands of the 21st century can bring the fear of physical change including the loss of familiar townscape and buildings. Moreover, additional attractions sometimes have little to do with the inherent qualities of a historic town. However, regeneration working with tourism can often find valuable new uses for historic buildings and reduce the pressure for redevelopment for new facilities. Where development does occur, the place must rise to the challenge of ensuring that good design of all new buildings enhances the environment.

**Retaining Distinctiveness**

4.8 Historic towns and cities offer local distinctiveness and a sense of place arising from the combination of buildings, the landscape, the climate and people. Small towns founded around ancient markets
have distinct identities, as do walled cities; vernacular buildings in stone are very different from those in brick; and a place by water feels quite different from a landlocked one. A sense of place arises from a mix of physical, social and cultural influences and results in otherwise apparently similar places having quite different characters.

4.9 Unfortunately, these special qualities are increasingly under threat from the spread of corporate, chain, identities, the loss of small businesses and the replacement of local vernacular materials. Creativity is an intrinsic part of culture and it is a mistake to impose an external corporate style on a place that is to a greater extent defined by its creativity. Historic places need to retain their distinctiveness if they are to be successful in attracting high value tourism in a competitive market. Conversely, properly managed tourism can: help local people to understand and value authenticity and promote what is distinctive about their place; be a vehicle for cultural exchange; and help to preserve distinctive local businesses. The issue of distinctiveness extends beyond tourism, however: it is part of the wider attraction of historic cities, particularly in relation to creative industries and the knowledge based economy, and thus to attracting new economic development generally.

Resources and Climate Change
4.10 No sector of activity can any longer afford to ignore its potential impacts on the wider environment, renewable resources and the contribution to climate change. Waste disposal and energy use by hotels and especially CO₂ emissions by air and car transport are just three examples. There is a tension, an inconsistency, in the juxtaposition between the aspirational cultural learning that travelling to new places brings to visitors and environmental impacts.

4.11 However, there is an opportunity for business and destinations to develop more environmentally friendly products and practices and to lead behaviour in other sectors. Businesses that do this may find particularly receptive customers in the sort of people who are attracted to historic towns.

Optimise Benefits
4.12 Historic places face the major challenge of trying to optimise the benefits of tourism in ways that address the broader issues of culture, identity and distinctiveness. They need to create jobs, attract inward investment, conserve the heritage – see tourism as an opportunity for conservation not a threat - and support viable town centres. Yet many rely on comparatively low-spending visits sometimes concentrated into a limited season. Increasing the income flow simply by growing the numbers may be undesirable because of the impacts already spelt out. What most historic towns seek is discerning, high spending staying leisure and business visitors spread throughout the year and who stay for longer. Achieving this requires a positive attitude toward cultural tourism.
Competition

4.13 Historic places in any one country face competition from towns and cities in another, places that are accessible through cheap flights and offer a rich and varied product. What the state of the global competition will be in future remains to be seen, but Europe’s historic places cannot afford to be complacent and they need to understand how the markets are changing. Well-travelled visitors from Western Europe, and increasingly from Northern America and Australasia, are seeking something distinctive and different. The new emerging world markets – Brazil, Russia, India, and China - are looking for iconic experiences offered by the likes of London, Paris, Rome and Venice. This might indicate a polarisation of international destinations and visitor markets in the short to medium term.

4.14 Delivering to overseas and domestic visitors a high quality experience is central to remaining competitive. That experience depends on a distinctive place, good access, bookability, excellent services and sensitivity to environmental issues.

Support and Funding

4.15 Given the importance of tourism and its reliance on public services, it is a matter of regret that it assumes a low political priority in funding and innovative legislation. The consequence is that overall historic places, receive insufficient resources to ensure product quality and distinctiveness and establish proactive destination management. All too often the public realm and services suffer and let down destinations. Historic building conservation is also under funded. Although visitors are strongly attracted to places where historic buildings are conserved to a high standard, the connection between visitors’ spending on cultural tourism and the ability to channel that spending into reinvestment in maintaining the heritage very complex. There is some more or less direct benefit where private historic buildings are maintained for a tourism related business, e.g. use as a cafe, and through commercial heritage focussed regeneration schemes. However, the ability to channel visitors’ spending into maintaining public assets – buildings and the public realm – is a great deal more difficult.

4.16 These challenges are related, interact with each other and reinforce the need for action. However, it is important to recognise that the relative significance of each issue varies from place to place and consequently the priorities for action must be decided locally.

5.0 Principles for Sustainable Cultural Tourism

5.1 An analysis has been made of the content of the high level frameworks established by the Charters listed in Appendix 1. The twelve principles set out below reflect common themes that emerge in the light of both
this analysis and the discussion above of the issues posed by the interaction between tourism, culture and heritage in historic places. The principles should guide an integrated approach to the development of sustainable cultural tourism.

1. Priority should be given to forms of cultural tourism that reduce carbon emissions, conserve rare and precious resources, in particular water and energy, and avoid waste production.

2. Municipalities should attach an intrinsic value to the culture and heritage of historic towns and cities over and above their importance as tourism assets.

3. Cultural tourism should maintain authenticity and distinctiveness and respect the dignity, rights and beliefs of local cultures.

4. Tourism is an economically important activity and cultural tourism should contribute to an overall programme of sustainable development.

5. Cultural tourism should contribute to conservation of the cultural and heritage assets.

6. Cultural tourism should be agreed and owned by the host community and the aspirations for it communicated to visitors.

7. Cultural tourism should aim to provide benefits equitably to the local community.

8. All local stakeholders, including municipal governments, local communities and businesses must be involved in the development of cultural tourism.

9. Cultural tourism must respond to the needs of visitors and aim to deliver a high quality visitor experience.

10. The impact of tourism should be reflected in the prices to consumers and producers, prices reflecting the real cost to society and the environment.

11. Cultural tourism will be built around more sustainable transport both to and within the place.

12. Cultural tourism will evolve continually and its management and development should be responsive to change.

5.2 Such is the complexity of cultural tourism that it will rarely be possible to abide by all of the principles, indeed, it may not be appropriate given the diversity of destination with different aspirations. It is a matter of balance and each place must seek the position that is right for it. However, by embracing these principles it is possible to take a positive attitude towards tourism that recognises that new culture and heritage are being grafted sustainably onto more ancient roots. A key advantage of accepting these principles is that they would provide a basis on which places could assess their progress over time and compare themselves with others, not a quantified benchmarking, rather as a framework for subjective but rigorous judgements.

5.3 Taking the issues underlying these principles, a structured approach to an inclusive view of sustainable cultural tourism can be defined.
Sustainability embraces social, environmental and economic matters and for cultural tourism involves a consideration of each of the components through:

- **Visitors** – their needs, aspirations and wellbeing
- **Industry** – the need for tourism businesses to be profitable and have a long-term future
- **Community** - respecting the values, needs and quality of life of the local community
- **Environment** - conserving the cultural and physical environments, local identity and sense of place

5.4 A critical challenge for historic towns and cities is to decide on the relative priority to be given to each of the components. It is likely that achieving a central point of balance will be rare: in practice the priority will vary from place to place and over time as circumstances change, i.e. the interaction between place and cultural tourism will always be dynamic, see Figure 2. The key requirement is that informed decisions are made in the light of a careful consideration of the priority to be given to each of the components.

![Figure 2](image_url) The interests of visitors, industry the community and the environment overlap

### 6.0 Guidelines for Practice

**Position Statement**

6.1 It is essential for historic towns and cities to rise to the challenge of sustainable cultural tourism. This requires careful planning and management, embracing both strategic and operational issues. Embarking on this journey demands a clear starting point and the municipality and its partners responsible for a destination must at the outset prepare corporately and collectively as part of an Action Plan a position statement to establish:

a. the key cultural assets of the place, their quality and the need for conservation and renewal;
b. the current profile of tourism to the place – numbers, reason for the visit, origins, time and length of stay, means of travel, visitor spend;
c. the social, economic and political factors that are shaping attitudes towards tourism locally; and
d. regional, national and international tourism trends that will shape the future of tourism at the destination.

Sustainable Guidelines
6.2 Section 5 above has established principles for sustainable cultural tourism. The principles are necessary, but not sufficient in themselves to achieve a positive and proactive approach – guidelines for action need to flow from them. The guidelines follow from the analysis of the issues, an understanding of the steps likely to be needed to achieve the objectives underlying the principles and an awareness of good practice in a range of destinations.

6.3 A framework for sustainable tourism in historic places depends on an integrated approach to: objectives and policies; processes; delivery and action; and appraisal. The details of these components are given below in the form of a checklist of questions. In interpreting and using the Guidelines it is important to recognise that they are not set in stone, indeed municipalities are encouraged to use them as starting points for the development of an approach that meets the needs of their locality.

Objectives and Policies
a. Is there a consistent local vision, objectives, strategy and policy framework for cultural tourism agreed at the heart of corporate municipal government?
b. Is the strategy joined up with regional and national policy?
c. Does the framework include a cultural tourism strategy, destination management plan and inclusion of tourism issues in land use and transport planning policies?
d. Does the policy framework:
   i. Take a long-term view?
   ii. Ensure a holistic and integrated approach across the full range of multidisciplinary activities?
   iii. Have a foundation on robust, objective evidence and an understanding of culture, heritage, tourism and tourists?
   iv. Manage risk and adopt the precautionary principle?
   v. Include provision for review based on monitoring?

Processes
a. Are all stakeholders, including residents, businesses, politicians and heritage and interest groups responsible for the stewardship of the place engaged in the development of the objectives and policies and the subsequent delivery of more sustainable tourism?
b. Are there measures to develop effective decision making through education and training for policy makers and decision takers?
c. Does the approach to developing local engagement include:
i. Establishing formal or informal inter-agency delivery partnerships?
ii. Use a Tourism Forum to facilitate an ongoing dialogue with the host community?
iii. Use local guides and volunteers?

Delivery and Action

a. Do the steps towards establishing a sustainable destination:
i. Include a clear understanding of what local products and markets are to be developed and what are to be managed?
ii. Ensure that marketing and media exposure is objective and aimed at potential cultural tourists, who have a real interest in visiting the destination for its inherent qualities?
iii. Use destination management techniques to balance demand and capacity by managing/restricting access to sensitive sites and spread the visitor load both spatially, temporally and consider lengthening the stay?
iv. Use interpretation carefully to celebrate the distinctive culture, heritage and diversity of the place?
v. Establish mechanisms to ensure that a proportion of the economic benefit accruing from tourism is reinvested in the culture and heritage of the place?
vi. Actively promote the use of sustainable transport, including cycling, walking and public transport locally and for access and charging accordingly?
vii. Meet visitor needs for services, information, comfort, stimulation and safety?
viii. Provide advance information to visitors to plan their visit effectively and encourage appropriate and sustainable behaviour and transport use?
ix. Respect diversity and meet the needs of minority groups and mobility impaired people?

b. Do steps to support and develop sustainable businesses,
i. Favour businesses with good long-term prospects that are rooted in the inherent strengths of the destination?
ii. Encourage businesses that take conservation and community engagement seriously and show strong corporate social responsibility?
iii. Encourage community businesses based on marketing locally distinctive products?
iv. Encourage businesses that invest in training and skills to provide jobs for local people?

c. In developing sustainable products, is there a focus on:?
i. Attractions that are built on the inherent strengths of the area and which reinforce distinctiveness and identity?
ii. Complementing the inherent qualities of the place where there is pressure to diversify the product(s)?
iii. Products that are identified and developed by the local community – community based tourism – and provide them with a direct income?
iv. Using tourism creatively to find new ways of viably and flexibly reusing historic buildings?
v. Sourcing local goods and materials that benefit local people?
vi. Services and products with small carbon footprints?

Appraisal
a. As culture, heritage and tourism are not static, is the approach to sustainable cultural tourism subject of fundamental regular review, dependent on the rate of change, usually at not more than five year intervals?
b. In order to provide evidence for policy development and investment decisions, are tools and methodologies to developed continually to:
   i. Measure the local quantitative dimensions – volume and value – of tourism?
   ii. Assess the physical and social impacts and other qualitative aspects of tourism?
c. Do you regularly review best practice to learn from the experience of other destinations?

Process Overview
6.4 These guidelines for practice embody the fact that places and cultural tourism are not static, but exist it a range of dynamic relationships that affect each other. Figure 3 summarises the principles and guidelines as a dynamic process. A figure showing the process in detail is given in Appendix 2.

![Figure 3 Sustainable cultural tourism – a dynamic process](image)

6.5 In applying the Guidelines it is important to consider the relationship with the practicalities of tourism from the perspective of the visitor and the interaction with the destination and stakeholders. Figure 4 sets out
a simplified form of a visitor journey that embraces the thinking behind these principles and guidelines, which should be applied at each step on the visitor journey. Each step in the visitor journey has a counterpart in the principles and guidelines and is important in ensuring that the objectives are realised on the ground. An appreciation of the steps, which are in effect a circle providing feedback – and visitors as key stakeholders to be engaged on the processes – contributes to understanding and monitoring the success of the approach to sustainable cultural tourism.

Figure 4 Sustainable cultural tourism and the visitor journey (with acknowledgements to Tourism Site Network)

Action Plan

6.6 All of the preceding stages should be brought together in a sustainable cultural tourism Action Plan lead by the municipality. This has six main steps:
1. The municipality to endorse the Principles
2. Establish a stakeholder group
3. Prepare of a collective and corporate Position Statement
4. Open and honest assessment of the current position against the Guidelines
5. Agree actions, resources and timetable in the light of 4 to reflect local circumstances and needs
6. Implementation

6.7 Professional expertise to support work on an Action Plan may be accessed through the EAHTR.
7.0 Conclusions

7.1 There is a strong philosophical case for the conservation of culture and heritage in its own right, irrespective of any direct financial value. However, cultural tourism is an important part of the European economy and there is also a compelling case for safeguarding place based European cultural heritage as the main resource for cultural tourism. Indeed, there are innumerable opportunities for a positive relationship between culture and heritage and tourism. These will be different in each place and the responses will need to be different in each place. The principles and guidelines set out in this document aim to provide a consistent framework for decision making by municipalities while respecting local distinctiveness. The Guidelines do not ignore the broader environmental issues – an argument that travel is inherently unsustainable – but seek to show how actions towards more sustainable tourism can be taken locally in the context of that bigger picture.

7.2 Europe now includes a number of member countries, as yet with limited experience of the destination management approach to tourism embodied in these guidelines. A key challenge for the future is to explore how this approach can help new, emerging historic town destinations sustainably capture the benefits of tourism. It is a question that municipalities need to address urgently and seriously working collectively and corporately alongside stakeholders in a transparent and open process.

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Appendix 1

Existing Guidelines and Programmes

The Commission of the European Communities *Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European Tourism* sets out a medium-long term strategy to achieve sustainable and competitive European tourism. It proposes that all stakeholders take action to strengthen the contribution of sustainable practices to facilitate the competitiveness of Europe as a destination. In this context sustainability objectives very importantly include ‘economic prosperity, social equity and cohesion and environmental and cultural protection’ (p.4).

These Guidelines do not exist in a vacuum. In addition to the *Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European Tourism*, other charters and guidelines for sustainable tourism have been published over the past 10 years. These include:

- International Cultural Tourism Charter – Managing Tourism at Places of Heritage Significance, 1999
- World Tourism Organisation Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, 1999
- The Burra Charter, ICOMOS Australia, 1999
- The Malta Declaration on Cultural Tourism: Its Encouragement and Control, Europoa Nostra, 2006
- The Dubrovnik Declaration, Council of Europe, 2006

Matters relating to sustainable tourism and heritage have been the subject of six recent European programmes.

- **ARCHWAY**: The project aims to develop and expand shared expertise on a range of key urban development issues using the specific context of historic walled towns and cities to inform regional policy across Europe. The central problem the project addresses is the challenge of providing Access for all to the historic built environment as part of sustainable development in walled towns. Tourism development and management is one of the key interrelated themes addressed.
- **Cultural Routes**: The Cultural Routes programme was launched by the Council of Europe in 1987. Its objective was to demonstrate in a visible way, by means of a journey through space and time, how the heritage of the different countries and cultures of Europe...

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7 http://www.icomos.org/tourism/charter.html
11 https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1044795&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679
12 http://www.archway-interreg.com/
represented a shared cultural heritage. The Cultural Routes also provide a concrete demonstration of the fundamental principles of the Council of Europe: human rights, cultural democracy, cultural diversity and identity, dialogue, mutual exchange and enrichment across boundaries and centuries.13

- **ECTN**: The European Cultural Tourism Network (ECTN) was established in 2003 under the Interreg III C programme to provide a link between the cultural and tourism sectors across Europe. The main objectives are to: enable the exchange of experience and best practice; enable the sharing of research; facilitate transitional working; ensure increased co-operation and integration between the tourism and cultural sectors; develop common positions to EU consultations; and to link with other networks14.

- **EPOCH**: A network of European cultural institutions joining their efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of information and communications technology for cultural heritage. A major strand in the development of the network is to consider an integrated infrastructure to support the production of applications to communicate aspects of cultural heritage to different markets, e.g. tourism.15

- **European Cultural Heritage Label**: The European Heritage Label was launched in 2007 by various European countries as an intergovernmental initiative. It aims to "strengthen the support of European citizens for a shared European identity and to foster a sense of belonging to a common cultural space". To be awarded the Label, heritage sites must highlight their European significance and a plaque bearing the Label logo is mounted at the entrance to such sites. Currently 66 sites have obtained the label in 18 European participating countries (17 EU Member States, plus Switzerland)16.

- **HerO**: Facing the various challenges to historic European cities of different size and structure, the HerO Network aims to develop integrated management strategies and good practice to facilitate the right balance between preserving the cultural heritage of historic urban landscapes enabling sustainable, future-proof urban development to maintain and to strengthen the attractiveness and competitiveness of the historic urban landscapes. The aim is to balance the different demands of "users" and cultural heritage protection, including the local economy, citizens, tourists, property owners, UNESCO and conservators17.

- **INHERIT**: The overall aim of INHERIT is to increase the capacity of Cities to regenerate physically, economically and socially through realising the potential of investing in heritage. This

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17 [www.urbact.eu/hero](http://www.urbact.eu/hero)
heritage can then, among other things, bring benefits to and from tourism.\footnote{18}<ref>http://www.inheritproject.net/theproject.asp<ref>\footnote{19}<ref>www.picture-project.com/article_home.php3?lang=en<ref>

- **PICTURE**: Picture aims to develop a strategic urban governance framework for the sustainable management of cultural tourism within small and medium size European cities. The framework will help to establish, evaluate and benchmark integrated tourism policies at the local level with a view to maximising the benefits of tourism on the conservation and enhancement of built heritage diversity and urban quality of life.\footnote{19}

The reports issuing from these projects contain wide range of advice, guidance and instructive case studies of great value for decision makers and managers in historic towns and cities.