



KEEP ON
Interreg Europe

ACTION PLAN

for the improvement of the regional policy instrument regarding the sustainability and durability of projects in the cultural heritage sector

Cross-border Cooperation Programme Spain-Portugal (POCTEP) 2021-2027

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: KEEP ON "Effective policies for durable and self-sustainable projects in the cultural heritage sector"

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REGIONAL POLICY INSTRUMENT

Cross-border Cooperation Programme Spain-Portugal (POCTEP) 2021-2027

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1. Introduction

This document has been prepared as part of the project **KEEP ON "Effective policies for durable and self-sustainable projects in the cultural heritage sector"** funded by the Interreg Europe programme, a project with an implementation period of 36 months (01.06.2018 – 31.05.2021) followed by 24 months for monitoring the project results. The main objective of the KEEP ON project is to improve public policies in the cultural heritage sector in terms of **delivering high quality projects that allow results to remain sustainable with reasonable public funding and have long-lasting impact on regional development**. The project lead institutions is the Institute for Economic Development of Ourense Province (INORDE) in Spain.

The purpose of this document is to **compile a list of concrete actions that can help improve the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Spain-Portugal (POCTEP)**. This objective is in line with the main purpose of the Interreg Europe programme, which is to support stakeholders in all European regions to implement more effective policies through the exchange of knowledge, experiences and good practices.

Some preliminary assumptions are made for the actions described in this document:

- The proposed actions are related to the **issue of sustainability and durability of cultural heritage projects**.

- The recommendations in this document are based on the conclusions of the **meetings with the Stakeholders** organized by the INORDE, as well as **the lessons learned from the KEEP ON project**, collected in the Practical Guide: Cultural Heritage and Sustainability.
- All the proposed actions are aimed at **improving the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Spain-Portugal (POCTEP)**, with this aim an analysis of the programme has been carried out, as well as an analysis of the projects financed in the past, based on the data available on the Internet, as well as working documents provided by POCTEP.
- Actions are focused on the **Cross-border Cooperation Programme Spain-Portugal (POCTEP) 2021-2027**.
- Although the territorial scope of the POCTEP has 5 areas of cooperation, the main area of interest in this document is the **Galicia-North of Portugal area** (Galicia-North Portugal Euroregion).

The document is structured in three main parts: diagnosis, analysis of the Interreg VA Spain-Portugal programme (POCTEP) and proposal of actions. The exchange of experiences and knowledge with the different stakeholders of the Stakeholders group has been of great relevance for the collection of information, its analysis and formulation of improvement proposals.

2. Problems and challenges in project sustainability

The cultural heritage sector constitutes an essential resource for sustainable socio-economic development, having much more values than the cultural, which is often difficult to quantify and intangible. This sector has an important role in tourism development, it is related to the functioning of private companies and generates income for the local community. Cultural heritage has a special importance in rural areas, where it constitutes an alternative to other economic sectors in decline.

To preserve cultural heritage for future generations, it is important to approach it from the point of view of sustainable development. **The sustainability of the**

cultural heritage sector can be analysed in social, cultural, economic and environmental terms. Ensuring the sustainability of cultural heritage is not a simple task and must be considered as a whole. It may happen that cultural heritage resources provide sustainability, for example in an economic sense, but at the same time do not provide an adequate level of protection of cultural heritage or are irrelevant to the local community, which should normally be its direct beneficiary. Therefore, when talking about sustainability, it is important to consider all its elements, as providing only one aspect of the sustainability of a cultural heritage can have a negative impact on the rest.

2.1. Conclusions of the meetings with the Stakeholders of the KEEP ON project

During the implementation of the KEEP ON project the following stakeholders have been involved by INORDE:

1. SG of European Territorial Cooperation. Ministry of finance
2. University of Vigo
3. Territorial head of culture in Ourense. Regional Government (Xunta de Galicia)
4. Galicia Tourism Agency. Regional Government (Xunta de Galicia)
5. Celanova town hall. Cultural heritage working group
6. Local Action Group GDR – 12 Carballiño – Ribeiro
7. Local Action Group GDR – 11 ADERCOU
8. Local Action Group GDR – 10 Limia – Arnoia
9. Local Action Group GDR – 9 Monteval
10. Local Action Group GDR – 8 Sil-Bibei-Navea
11. Local Action Group GDR – 7 Valdeorras

Without forgetting the different facets of the sustainable development of cultural heritage, one of the main problems addressed by the KEEP ON project is the **sustainability from the economic point of view**. Aside from the difficulties in obtaining funding to tackle a cultural project, one of the problems is what happens when public or European Union funding runs out. Studies are not available on how projects are maintaining their results and ensuring their long-term sustainability. The debate and contributions of the interested parties during the meetings organised by INORDE with the Stakeholders confirm this statement:

“The European Commission considers that a lot was invested in past projects but did not have continuity, the KEEP ON project is important for continuity and get the result to be sustainable with less investment. ”

“The KEEP ON project is interesting, since almost all the recovery projects end up abandoned.”

“Projects are usually linked to the time that their execution lasts, that is one of the main inconveniences that projects face. They are born with great enthusiasm, but once the funds are finalized, it is diluted. It is important to lay the foundations and do a prior planning, so that they are not forgotten. ”

An important source of funding for cultural heritage corresponds to **public funding, coming from the**

state, from the regions (autonomous administrations), or from local administrations.

In the case of Spain, the results of the "Yearbook of Cultural Statistics 2019" indicate that, in 2017, the expenditure on culture settled by the central administration stood at 678 million euros, by the regional administration at 1.144 million and by the local administration at 3.270 million euros, figures that represent, in terms of GDP, 0,06%, 0,10% and 0,28% respectively¹. **This means that, for every 1 euro paid in culture by the central administration, the local administration contributes almost 5 euros, making it the level with the most responsibility in terms of financing the cultural sector.**

Another important source of financing for projects in the cultural heritage sector are **projects within the framework of European Union programmes**. At European level, 3,2 billion euros were invested from the European Regional Development Fund in activities related to cultural heritage in the financial perspective 2007-2013. It should be noted that this amount for the entire European Union is of a similar level to what the local administration in Spain spent on culture for just one year. In the current financial perspective 2014-2020, cultural heritage remains one of the areas benefiting from many EU support programs.

All the participants of the Stakeholders group agreed on the **need for coordination and planning** between the different institutions and social and economic agents in the field of cultural heritage. Project planning for sustainability must always take into account previous projects, strategies and previous studies.

“Sometimes when there is a grant we try to adapt the project to that grant but without planning and in the end the project looks very little like what was initially planned and conceived.”

“There are projects in town halls, it is necessary to coordinate and plan.”

¹ Principales resultados Anuario de Estadísticas Culturales 2019, División de Estadística y Estudios, Secretaría General Técnica Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte,
<https://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/dam/jcr:3bdcb17c-050c-4807-b4f4-61e3714cbc15/anuario-de-estadisticas-culturales-2019.pdf>

For the partners of the Stakeholders group it is important to **support the sustainability of projects already executed**. Instead of creating new tourist attractions, the adequate use of the resources already rehabilitated must be ensured.

"We must support the recovery and facilitate accessibility for all in resources already rehabilitated."

"Support sustainability - facilitate accessibility especially in already rehabilitated resources."

"Recovering the heritage, if later it is not accessible or part of any circuit, it is useless, if it does not generate and revert to the economy of the area."

Stakeholders also mentioned the importance of involving **local community and the role that should take the local administration** in the protection and use of cultural heritage. According to the principle of subsidiarity, decisions should be made as close as possible to the citizens. At European level, subsidiarity is a principle according to which the European Union, except in its areas of exclusive competence, only intervenes to the extent that its action is more effective than an intervention at national, regional or local level. In the case of the Autonomous Community of Galicia, the prominence of the municipalities is recognized, which according to current law have the obligation to protect, disseminate and promote its cultural value².

The members of the Stakeholder group highlighted this importance of the local level:

"The local community is the one that really knows how to maintain the heritage, it should be given more prominence."

"There is patrimony mainly in small councils and they have no way of maintaining it."

From the review of the main challenges and problems in the sustainability of projects during the meetings with the Stakeholders of the KEEP ON project, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- **Access to financing** constitutes one of the main problems of the cultural heritage sector to ensure sustainability of projects. It is a concern shared by the stakeholder group participants in the KEEP ON project. Funding is also one of the main barriers to the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage indicated in numerous reports from the European institutions.
- Before launching any funding, ensure **proper planning and coordination**. The objective of

this process is to analyse the needs, identify the objectives, coordinate all the agents and, in the context of the KEEP ON project, analyse the economic sustainability and viability of the projects.

- The sustainability of projects is not only a problem of new actions, but also it's necessary to ensure the **sustainability of projects already executed**. The primary objective and purpose is to ensure the conservation of heritage for sustainable use, in order to preserve the heritage for future generations.
- **The level of local administration** is essential in the protection, management and enhancement of cultural heritage. Local administrations offer a high degree of efficiency and effectiveness in the management of cultural heritage resources. On the other hand, the participation of the local population through the agents involved must be ensured.
- Do not forget **about environmental issues** in heritage sustainability. Environmental pressures can be related to carrying capacity, ecological footprint, but also natural catastrophes such as floods or fires.

² Ley 5/2016, de 4 de mayo, del patrimonio cultural de Galicia, <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2016-5942&p=20190502&tn=0>

2.2. Recommendations and good practices of the KEEP ON project

Within the framework of the KEEP ON project, the Practical Guide has been prepared in which good practices are collected, as well as the lessons learned that could be of interest for the sustainability of projects in the sector cultural³.

During the preparation of this document, an analysis of six policy instruments related to cultural heritage from six partner countries was carried out, to identify the existing measures and how sustainability is considered within the document. In order to collect good practices in the areas of durability and sustainability of cultural heritage, focusing on qualitative information rather than statistical data, additional research was carried out based on surveys with cultural institutions, conducted by project collaborators. Another method for gathering the necessary data on good practices for the durability and sustainability of cultural heritage projects was the analysis of projects in the cultural heritage sector, implemented according to each of the aforementioned six policy instruments from six partner countries.

Next, the 10 main recommendations of this Guide are collected to ensure the sustainability and durability of cultural heritage:

1. Plan and secure financing by creating a mixture of uses and funding from different private and/or public sources.
2. Ensure the preservation of the heritage by involving scientists and related experts in heritage management planning and in restoration works.
3. Apply integrative management approach: involve different stakeholders from different levels and different disciplines. Involvement of local politicians and decision makers, or regional authorities, can sometimes be crucial for the success of the project.
4. Conduct continuous educational activities in order to raise awareness of cultural heritage values and to enhance the knowledge about it.
5. Use new technologies as a tool for heritage conservation and interpretation.
6. Embrace change and design innovative solutions for sustainable and adaptive (re)development of a

heritage asset, also securing its long-term economic viability.

7. Involve local community in your project, raising their awareness of heritage they have and its cultural and economic potential; encourage the exchange of experiences and transfer of knowledge between experts, authorities and local citizens.
8. Repurpose built heritage for purposes corresponding to the needs of the community, thus ensuring its long-term sustainability.
9. Develop a long-term strategic plan, setting clear goals for heritage site management alongside its sustainability and durability; find balance between inherent heritage values (conservation/art/education/science) and economy-related ones proved to be beneficial to heritage sustainability/durability.
10. Plan and conduct the ex-ante evaluation of heritage management planning documents, thus evaluating the sustainability of a heritage project already in the process of planning and in this way ensuring its certain achievement.

³ Practical Guide: Cultural Heritage and Sustainability
https://www.interregeurope.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/tx_tevprojects/library/file_1586942702.pdf

During the implementation of the KEEP ON project the following good practices have been identified by the LP as an inspiration to design the actions⁴:

1. Conference of Paggaio Local History

This study case is focused on the organization of a scientific conference in Paggaio, addressing the questions of cultural and natural heritage, its protection and sustainable use in purpose of tourism, economic and social development of the area of Paggaio. Conference gathered numerous scientists from related fields with the aim of networking and exchanging knowledge in order to discuss the possible actions for sustainable development of cultural heritage projects and the way of using the heritage assets in tourism and economic development of the area.

Although a conference on cultural heritage and sustainable cultural tourism development is certainly not unique, some of the ideas can serve as an inspiration for the other regions or countries that organize, or are planning to organize similar type of events. A multidisciplinary approach, involving scientist and experts from completely different areas of expertise can be seen as an example of an integrated approach to the subject of heritage and a catalyst for a powerful ally in preserving the heritage, while at the same time supporting its use in tourism and economic development in a sustainable way.

2. Heritage tourism in a place of power: reconstructing and reliving the past at Chęciny Royal Castle

The project consisted of restoration works, reconstruction and revitalization of the whole castle, Lower and Upper Castle, as well as of the whole surrounding landscape of the Castle Hill. The restoration works have been based on the scientific, historic and archaeological researches that were conducted prior to the restoration, in order to ensure the preservation of the original appearance and characteristics of the building.

This combination of restoring the built heritage, combined with the construction of the additional features strongly impacting the visitors' experience, and simultaneous initiation of the authentic experiences such as "Night Sightseeing", "Siege of the castle", etc., can be seen as unique and can serve as the inspiration for other region and countries in Europe.

Besides the excellence in terms of cultural impact, the project can also be seen as a strong catalyst for the touristic and economic development of the community. Largely increased number of visitors had a positive social impact on the city, by providing the local inhabitants new business opportunities in terms of tourism and hospitality services which can be offered to the visitors, thus boosting the local economy and creating a solid base for a long-term cultural tourism development.

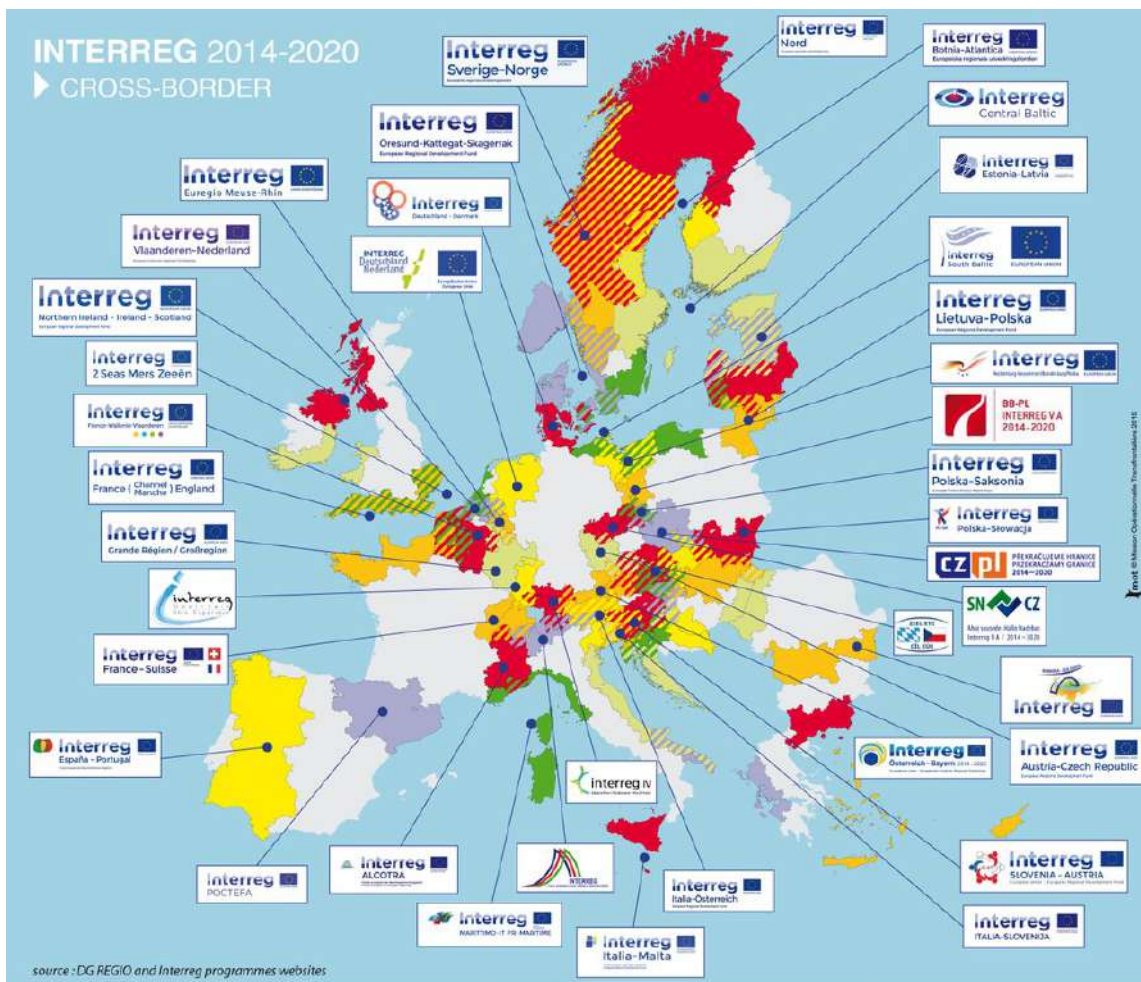
3. Marienburg: repurposing religious heritage for education and housing

This study case is focused on the redevelopment of the former monastery complex Marienburg. The reason for redevelopment of the monastery is linked to the increasing secularization, that has become a worldwide phenomenon, in turn leading to questions about adaptive reuse of religious heritage. Since much of (former) religious buildings can be a burden on a city and space is limited within the urban environment, the municipality looked at the possibility to maintain the building, while repurposing it to current needs. By accommodating a graduate school in the building, combined with student housing, the education function that was linked to the monastery in its heyday has returned to the inner city of 's-Hertogenbosch.

By repurposing the building, current needs (student housing and education in data science) have been accommodated. In this way, the project not only profits the investor, but helps to revitalise a part of the city by bringing in students, increases social security by adding "extra eyes" to the area and maintains an iconic building for future generations.

⁴ This chapter has been prepared based on the document "Collection of the Good Practice Examples in Cultural Heritage Sustainability and Durability" prepared under the KEEP ON project

3. Analysis of the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Spain-Portugal (POCTEP)



3.1. General information about the programme: 2014-2020 perspective

The Interreg VA Spain-Portugal programme (POCTEP) is one of the 57 programmes of **European cross-border cooperation**, known as Interreg A, which supports cooperation between NUTS III regions. The territory covered by the POCTEP is very broad, with many regions and a high budget allocation for the 2014-2020 period of 484 million euros.

The POCTEP 2014-2020 acts in five main areas or thematic objectives⁵:

- 1) promote research, technological development and innovation, more specifically:
 - To improve the scientific excellence of the Cross-border Cooperation Area and research with the potential to be competitive internationally.
 - Improve the participation of the business community in innovation processes and in R&D&I activities close to the market (technological development, trial tests, innovation) that can be exploited commercially.
- 2) Improve the competitiveness of small and medium-sized companies, specifically:
 - Improve the necessary and favourable conditions for the emergence of new business initiatives, guaranteeing their sustainability and promoting their growth.
 - Promote competitiveness in those sectors in which the Cooperation Area has competitive advantages.
- 3) Promote adaptation to climate change in all sectors, and more particularly, promote the increase of territorial resilience to cross-border natural risks.
- 4) Protect the environment and promote resource efficiency, specifically:
 - **Protect and enhance the cultural and natural heritage, as an economic basis of the cross-border region.**
 - Improve the protection and sustainable management of natural spaces.

in cross-border areas. Its aim is to tackle the common challenges identified jointly in the border regions and exploit the growth potential for the overall harmonious development of the European Union.

- Reinforce sustainable local development along the entire Spanish-Portuguese border.
 - Increase efficiency levels in the use of natural resources to contribute to the development of the green economy in the area of cooperation.
- 5) Improvement of the institutional capacity and efficiency of the public administration, consolidating new strategies for dialogue and interrelation, which allow the launching of new initiatives between the different actors operating on the border.

⁵ <https://poctep.eu/es/2014-2020/presentaci%C3%B3n-2014-2020>. Consultado el 26 de octubre de 2020

3.2. Cultural heritage as a priority of the programme (2014-2020 financial perspective)

The cultural heritage sector is included in the Priority Axis 3 relative to the management of natural resources with a budget of 145.341.791,00⁶ euros, the largest budget item representing more than a quarter of all funds allocated to the POCTEP programme. More specifically, cultural heritage is framed within **Investment Priority 6.C: Protection, promotion and development of cultural and natural heritage**, whose main objective is to protect and enhance the cultural and natural heritage as an economic basis for the region cross-border.

For the subsequent evaluation of the implementation of the program, in reference to Investment Priority 6.C, the result indicator corresponding to the number of visitors in the cross-border territory has been taken.

ID	Indicator	Unit of measurement	Reference value	Reference year	Expected value (2023)	Data source	Update frequency
R006	No. of visitors in hotel occupations in the cooperation area	Visitors	30.714.538	2012	32.585.150,00	National Statistical Institutes	Annual

Source : Table 3, Interreg VA Spain-Portugal Rescheduled Version (POCTEP), 15.09.2020

Another indicator to be taken into account by POCTEP is the productivity indicator understood as the increase in number of visits.

ID	Indicator	Unit of measurement	Expected value (2023)	Data source	Update frequency
CO09	Sustainable tourism: Increase in the number of planned visits to sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions supported by the programme	Visits / year	1.731.928,00 COOPERA	2020	Annual

Source : Table 24, Interreg VA Rescheduled Version Spain-Portugal (POCTEP), 15.09.2020

⁶ Modificación del Programa de cooperación Interreg VA España Portugal (POCTEP), fecha de la decisión de la CE: 15-sep-2020

The guiding principles for the selection of operations in Investment Priority 6.C related to cultural heritage, refer to⁷:

- Adaptation of the project to the strategy of POCTEP cooperation on risk prevention and improvement of natural resource management:
 - Contribution to the sustainable growth objective of the Europe 2020 Strategy.
 - Prioritization in natural spaces and areas of greater environmental value (classified and / or protected areas) and in the cultural resources with the greatest potential.
 - Participation of regional and / or local administrations, as key agents for the protection and valorisation of natural resources.
- Intensity and added value of cross-border cooperation:
 - Strengthening of regional and / or local structures for the management of natural resources.
 - Strengthening mechanisms for the territorially integrated management of cross-border natural spaces.
- Contribution of the project to the territorial development of the area:
 - The expected effects of the project can be measured through one or more of the common and specific performance indicators of Axis 3 and its expected impact on the specific objectives through the results indicator of the Investment Priority 6.C.
 - Positive impact on the enhancement of cultural heritage.
 - Expected environmental impact, in terms of possibilities to improve the management capacity of the main natural spaces in the cooperation area.

Regarding the specific criteria for this Investment Priority, the document Interreg VA Spain-Portugal Rescheduled Version (POCTEP) specifies that projects that increase and improve the cultural offer of a cross-border natural areas and those that involve a greater revitalization of historical resources will have priority, as well as those that involve natural resources for the attraction of a quality tourism in the cooperation area that favours the economies of the area.

In addition, the programme wants to pay relevant attention to the landscape, both natural and built, as one of the territorial values and assets, and its adequate conservation as an expression and result of the use of the entire territory.

The durability and sustainability of the projects is one of the criteria during the strategic evaluation of the candidatures:

*The main results and products are maintained over time (the project is expected to offer a significant and sustainable contribution to solving the challenges addressed). If not, is it justified?*⁸

The maximum score that can be received in the evaluation question related to long-term sustainability is 3 points out of 100.

Although certainly other evaluation criteria are related to the long-term durability and sustainability of projects, the question about whether the programme adequately addresses the long-term sustainability of the project remains open.

⁷ 2.A.6.2 Principios rectores para la selección de operaciones, Versión Reprogramada Interreg VA España-Portugal (POCTEP), 15.09.2020

⁸ Documento “Evaluación de candidaturas”, POCTEP, https://www.poctep.eu/sites/default/files/VF_Criterios_evaluacion_ES.pdf

3.3. Analysis of approved projects – lessons learned (2014-2020 financial perspective)

According to the information provided by the Ministry of Finance⁹, a total of 44 projects have been approved in the topic of sustainable tourism and heritage.

According to the Interreg VA Spain-Portugal Rescheduled Version (POCTEP), the **type of actions to be financed** in Investment Priority 6.C includes, among other possible:

- Initiatives and actions that contribute to the creation of networks of natural and cultural spaces, as well as the structuring of networks, physical and non-material, that connect common natural, historical and cultural values.
- Actions to promote, protect and enhance the various aspects of the historical and cultural heritage, as well as those related to the enhancement, conservation and rehabilitation of classified built heritage and those aimed at the recovery of the functionality of heritage elements for new cultural uses.
- Initiatives and actions for the coordinated management of tourist resources and itineraries based on common environmental and cultural resources and the joint promotion of the cooperation space.
- Actions linked to the valorisation of environmental tourism and the creation of specialized international networks in the sector.
- Initiatives and actions of animation and joint cultural programming with the potential to attract tourists.
- Study and documentation of the cultural heritage of the geographical context of the cooperation space.
- Actions aimed at promoting and marking cultural heritage, and the use of new technologies (ICT) applied to tourism.
- Initiatives and actions that contribute to the creation of tourist or agri-food brands, turning the identity components of the border into opportunities to develop that competitive advantage.

- Actions to promote traditional products and cultural uses in environmentally protected areas.
- Actions to support the exchange and articulation of a joint offer of cultural and tourist products and services based on the local particularities of the different territories.
- Actions to promote the exchange of good practices in the development of tourism strategies that respect the historical and natural heritage (for example, waste management, reduction of the impact on protected areas, etc.).

Main characteristics of the approved projects for natural and cultural heritage:

- Total project cost: 70,5 million euros, of which 52,8 million euros correspond to ERDF funds.
- Average cost per project: 1,605 million euros. Both small projects have been approved, such as the "Musical Territories" project with a total budget of 274.600 euros, as well as a project of 3.637.964 euros (project for "Cultural Heritage of the Euroregion Galicia-North of Portugal: Assessment and Innovation").
- The institutions that have carried out the most projects in the area of cultural heritage are regional administrations (such as the Xunta de Galicia, Junta de Castilla y León) and government (DRCN - Direção Regional de Cultura do Norte).
- A low participation of local institutions is observed.

An evaluation of the impact of each specific objective of the POCTEP is planned, which includes the analysis of its effectiveness, efficiency and impact¹⁰. According to the POCTEP Evaluation Plan, the first source of information for evaluations will consist of monitoring the approved projects through their intermediate execution reports. To allow more complete information to be gathered within the framework of the Program, and also to reach local and regional agents more effectively, this approach will be combined, as far as possible, with the participation of project beneficiaries in the data collection.

⁹ Presentación "Apoyo a los proyectos de turismo & patrimonio POCTEP 2014-2020", M^a Carmen Hernández Martín, 10.09.2020

¹⁰ *Plan de Evaluación del Programa de Cooperación INTERREG VA España-Portugal (POCTEP) 2014-2020*

During the POCTEP evaluation process, the participation of the relevant actors of the territory is foreseen. This principle will be specified through meetings or consultations with the partnership. The Programme may address other forms of consultation and exchange of experiences and information with the

different actors participating in the programme, taking into account that these are also recipients of the Interreg Spain-Portugal dissemination and communication actions, specifically, in relation to the results of the evaluations.

3.4. Cross-border Cooperation Programme Spain-Portugal (POCTEP) 2021-2027

National authorities of POCTEP are in the process of preparation of the new Cross-border Cooperation Programme Spain-Portugal (POCTEP) 2021-2027. Recently a document called “Project of joint strategy and programme structure draft”¹¹ has been prepared. In this document 7 priorities for the POCTEP 2021-2027 have been selected:

Priority 1. Strengthen the cross-border space by taking advantage of the potential of cooperation to improve business competitiveness, consolidate the scientific and technological ecosystem and promote digitization.

Priority 2. Encourage cooperation to maximize the use of endogenous resources in the territory and the development of key sectors, advancing in smart specialization.

Priority 3. Promote the ecological transition and adaptation to climate change of the cross-border area through cooperation as a tool to promote the green and blue economies.

Priority 4. Protect and conserve biodiversity in natural spaces and enhance the natural ecosystems and urban environment of the transboundary space through cooperation.

Priority 5. Promote cooperation for the development of attractive living conditions in the border area in terms of social inclusion, equal opportunities and access to cross-border public services.

Priority 6. Promote through cross-border cooperation the development of multisectoral strategies for integrated and sustainable development.

Priority 7. Overcoming border obstacles by applying a transformative multi-level governance approach to cross-border cooperation.

This document, together with the analysis of territorial needs, has been subject to public consultations that finished on the 2nd of March 2021.

The following phases for the preparation of the new Cross-border Cooperation Programme Spain-Portugal (POCTEP) 2021-2027 have been planned¹²:

Phase 1: Preparatory works (October 2020)

Phase 2: First public consultation (February – March 2021)

Phase 3: Second public consultations (May 2021), Final proposal of the programme (July 2021)

In all these phases the Working Groups are providing necessary input and guidance.

¹¹ “Proyecto de estrategia conjunta y borrador de la estructura del programa”
https://www.poctep.eu/sites/default/files/estrategia_conjunta_borrador_programa_poctep_21_27_esp_vf.pdf

¹² <https://www.poctep.eu/en/2014-2020/consulta-p%C3%BAblica-preparaci%C3%B3n-del-programa-de-cooperaci%C3%B3n-transfronteriza-esp%C3%B1a-portugal>

4. Proposal of actions

The Action Plan aims to present an outline with actions in response to the problems and challenges identified in the cultural heritage sector. This scheme provides a framework with specific objectives and actions that support the achievement of results.

The main objective of the Action Plan is the following:

Support the implementation of durable and self-sustainable projects in the cultural heritage sector

The specific objectives of this Action Plan are aligned with the main objective and respond to the needs identified during the implementation of the project KEEP ON.

Specific objective 1: Promote greater participation of the local administration in the projects financed by the POCTEP

Local administration is crucial in the cultural heritage management, because this level is directly taking care for monuments, providing access to them, building social ties and conducting cultural, educational and promotional activities. The local level implements cultural projects; organises events, festivals, they are a meeting place for the local community. Public participation is extremely important in cultural projects.

According to numerous recommendations, it is necessary to give prominence to the local administration. The traditional centralization of public heritage management, due to high technical expertise and the need for an expert opinion, does not contribute to the feeling of proximity and identification of citizens with cultural heritage¹³.

For these reasons, a greater participation of the local level is sought in the POCTEP that would allow obtaining sustainable and lasting results from the executed projects.

¹³ Ley 5/2016, de 4 de mayo, del patrimonio cultural de Galicia, <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2016-5942&p=20190502&tn=0>

Proposed actions:

1.1. “Small project fund” scheme to finance small initiatives at the local level

▪ **Relevance**

The analysis of good practices in the KEEP ON project suggests that the sustainability of cultural heritage can be reinforced by projects of relatively smaller budget and limited duration. This type of actions can reinforce the sustainability of cultural heritage, especially at the local level. An example of short-term projects with a relatively low budget, but with a relevant impact on the territory, are cultural events. The following examples of cultural events have been collected in the KEEP ON project practical guide: 1) Dutch flowers from the national gallery brought to life by funnyhowflowersdothat.co.uk, 2) Festival of Philippi in Greece, 3) Local history of Pagaio's conference, 4) Raigame Ethnographic Festival in Vilanova dos Infantes.

Currently this type of project is not eligible for co-financing from POCTEP. However, there is a scheme that could allow their eligibility in the future.

Small projects or microprojects are projects of shorter duration and a relatively small budget that allow smaller-scale projects to be carried out by mostly local entities (local administration, associations and foundations, as well as other agents) with the participation of the local community. Small projects usually include the following activities¹⁴:

- Organization of cultural events, shows, festivals;
- Exchange programs in the field of culture, education, professional life, research;
- Organization of workshops, summer schools, summer academies, competitions;
- Creation of works of art, films, theatre performances;
- Publication of brochures, books, brochures, DVD;
- Radio or television programmes, etc.

The main characteristics of microprojects, compared to regular projects, are the following:

- Limited duration of the project (generally between 12 and 24 months);

- Use of simplified procedures (simplified selection process, simpler reports, simplified expense justification options, etc.);
- Large number of approved projects compared to regular projects;
- The objectives of the programme and the values of the EU are promoted directly among the local inhabitants.

The “Small projects funds” scheme is mentioned in the programming documents for the next funding period as a complementary tool to large infrastructure projects¹⁵.

¹⁴ *Small projects in Interreg. Repository of Interreg programme management practices. February 2018*

¹⁵ Interreg Specific Objective 1 'A better Interreg governance'
Bringing territoriality into Interreg - Policy Objective 5

- **Activities**

The main activities for the development of this action are:

- Collect all the information on the “Small projects fund” scheme and experiences of other cross-border programmes that have implemented this scheme. (May-August 2021)
- Meetings or consultations both at the level of the management structures of the POCTEP programme, as well as with the relevant actors in the territory. (public consultations, POCTEP Working Groups, May-September 2021)
- Analysis of the documentation collected, understanding how this scheme could be implemented in the next financing period 2021-2027. (May-September 2021)

- **Partners**

INORDE, KEEP ON stakeholders group established by INORDE.

- **Schedule**

8 months

- **Costs**

11.200 EUR

- **Sources of funding**

The cost considered for the execution of this action refer to the work that will be carried out by the technical team of INORDE.

- Preparation of the final document of POCTEP 2021-2027 (December 2021). In this document, National Authorities of POCTEP would decide whether to include of a “Small projects funds” scheme within the framework of the POCTEP 2021-2027. In case of including the “Small projects funds” scheme, the programme document and implementation documents should contain the basis for the operation of the scheme, the investment priorities, scope of application, the main characteristics of the selection procedure, the main requirements of the projects, financial issues, processing and evaluation of applications (December 2021).

Specific objective 2: Ensure the sustainability of projects from a social, cultural, economic and environmental point of view

This objective requires introducing procedures for the identification of sustainable projects during the evaluation of applications, as well as analyzing the sustainability (permanence over time) of the results of the projects already implemented.

As an example, in the case of economic sustainability, projects that access POCTEP funding could analyze

the economic and market viability of the projects. The solutions and organisational activities after the implementation of the projects could also be planned, as well as the short and long-term financing, taking into account the funds available to the beneficiaries, the income from the activity carried out, the EU funds and funds from other external sources (sponsorship, community funding - crowdfunding, etc.).

Proposed actions:

2.1. Introduce evaluation criteria for application assessment that ensure the sustainability and durability of projects

▪ **Relevance**

During the evaluation process of the applications in the call for proposals under POCTEP, there are many aspects that should be taken into account in order to determine the level of contribution of the project to aspects related to the sustainability and durability.

The selection of projects that are presented in the framework of a call for proposals approved by the POCTEP Monitoring Committee is a key process to identify those projects that ensure a level of sustainability that is determined as acceptable. In this context, during the implementation of the KEEP ON project, different facets of the sustainability of cultural heritage have been analysed: cultural, economic, environmental and social. Based on these criteria, good practices have been selected that represent examples of actions in the cultural heritage sector that are sustainable from these four perspectives. Examples of good practices identified within the KEEP ON project that are sustainable from the cultural, economic, environmental and social point of view: 1) Heritage tourism in a place of power: reconstructing and reliving the past at Chęciny Royal Castle, 2) Marienburg: repurposing religious heritage for education and housing. These examples have been described in the subchapter 2.2. of this document.

For example, in the economic aspects, these are some of the questions that beneficiaries should have an answer to before submitting an application for funding to POCTEP:

Have all the costs of the project been calculated (taking into account its entire project cycle or lifetime)?

Has a financial model been prepared to assess whether the identified sources of funding would be sufficient to cover all the costs of the project throughout its life cycle?

Will the project be able to sustain its effects once its financing ends?

What are the greatest risks to sustaining the effects of the project once it is finished?

Has a market study and profitability analysis been carried out?

Has the market research and profitability analysis confirmed that there is potentially strong market interest?

However, heritage sustainability must be approached holistically, to ensure that all aspects (cultural, social, economic, environmental) are equitably represented and properly managed. Only in this case could we consider that it is an effective and efficient management. Thus, although ensuring proper conservation may mean an effective durability of the heritage asset, it does not necessarily include the best economically possible way to carry it out, which could actually be a threat to the sustainability of the heritage. Similarly, ideal conservation actions can prevent people from using heritage assets, by not responding to their daily needs as these are substantially different from the original function of the heritage asset. Again, this compromises the idea of sustainability as well as durability¹⁶.

¹⁶ Practical Guide: Cultural Heritage and Sustainability, https://www.interregeurope.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/tx_tevprojects/library/file_1586942702.pdf

- **Activities**

The main activities for the development of this action are:

- Carry out the collection of reports and studies on the evaluation of projects in the field of cultural heritage and experiences of other cross-border programmes. (May-September 2021)
- Meetings or consultations both at the level of the management structures of the POCTEP programme, as well as with the relevant actors in the territory. (public consultations, POCTEP Working Groups, May-November 2021)
- Analysis of the documentation collected, understanding how the application and selection process could be improved in the next financing period 2021-2027. (May-September 2021)

- **Partners**

INORDE, KEEP ON stakeholders group established by INORDE.

- **Schedule**

10 months.

- **Costs**

7.200 EUR

- **Sources of funding**

The cost considered for the execution of this action refer to the work that will be carried out by the technical team of INORDE.

- Preparation of the Manual and the terms of reference for the first call under POCTEP 2021-2027 (June 2022). In this document, National Authorities of POCTEP would decide whether to include evaluation and selection of applications with strategic and operational criteria that take into account the sustainability of projects. These criteria could be applied from a series of questions that could be evaluated according to a scale, considering their degree of compliance (insufficient, medium, good, excellent) to which a numerical quantity could be assigned that allows a quantitative evaluation of the project. (June 2022)

Specific objective 3: Promote the exchange of experiences and the transfer of knowledge between stakeholders

The Interreg VA Spain-Portugal programme (POCTEP) promotes cross-border cooperation projects, so a strategy and planning of information and communication activities for the selected target groups, including the public opinion in general, are needed.

In the current period 2014-2020, information and communication activities are described in the Communication Strategy¹⁷. This document establishes the objectives and target groups, the strategy together with the measures that will be developed within the framework of the strategy. The Communication Strategy includes the organisation of meetings and networking for the exchange of ideas, as well as thematic conferences on capitalization of results and good practices, facilitating the exchange of experiences and knowledge.

One of the conclusions of the KEEP ON project is that the beneficiaries who are more active in the execution of projects should share their experience and transfer good practices to institutions that have no experience in this field. The process could be linked to the implementation of a training system for cultural institutions in the cross-border region based on their needs and current trends in the management of cultural heritage.

Proper heritage management requires different skills, not only related to heritage conservation but also to its planning, long-term financing, development of specific products related to heritage property, marketing, visitor / community / employee management, interpretation, evaluation, etc. Ensuring durability does not mean being better in one skill than another, but rather finding the right balance to reconcile all aspects related to the life cycle of the asset.

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https://www.poctep.eu/sites/default/files/VF_Estrategia_COM_POCTEP_21_07_15.pdf

Proposed actions:

3.1. Learning platform for the exchange of experiences and good practices

- **Relevance**

The objective of this action is to develop for the next financing period 2021-2027 a platform that promotes a space for the exchange of experiences, continuous learning and networking for agents in the programme territory. This is important in the context of sustainability, because sustainability can only be achieved when we ensure the participation and interacting of stakeholders. Some elements of this idea of exchanging experiences between projects and stakeholders have already been implemented in the current financing period 2014-2020 with the organisation of seminars and thematic days (measures planned in the Communication Strategy¹⁸), but until now the interaction with the all the stakeholders of the programme has not been fully and systematically addressed in the POCTEP strategic documents.

The policy learning platform promoted by the Interreg Europe program, in which the partners of the KEEP ON project participate, has been taken as an example and has already demonstrated its effectiveness and efficiency. This platform is defined in the Communication Strategy of the Interreg Europe Program 2014-2020¹⁹, as an expertise hub with its own management and its own budget, however fully integrated within the framework of the Interreg Europe programme.

The new POCTEP learning platform could be a point of information and services for continuous learning, offering activities and services for the entire community of local and regional actors, in particular ensuring the exchange of experience of institutions that participate in POCTEP projects with similar themes, as well as institutions that are interested in contributing to the projects or getting to know the results of the executed projects.

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https://www.poctep.eu/sites/default/files/VF_Estrategia_COM_POCTEP_21_07_15.pdf

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https://www.interregeurope.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Programme-communication-strategy-and-annexes.pdf

▪ **Activities**

The main activities for the development of this action are:

- Collect information and experiences from the Interreg Europe programme in the implementation of the "learning platform", as well as experiences from other programmes in the interaction and exchange of experiences between stakeholders. (May-June 2021)
- Meetings or consultations both at the level of the management structures of the POCTEP programme, as well as with the relevant stakeholders in the territories. (public

consultations, POCTEP Working Groups, May-November 2021)

- Analysis of the documentation collected, understanding how a learning platform could be integrated into the POCTEP communication plan for the period 2021-2027. (May-September 2021)
- Preparation of the final document of POCTEP 2021-2027 (December 2021) and the Manual (June 2022). In this document, National Authorities of POCTEP would decide whether to include the implementation of a learning platform within the framework of the POCTEP 2021-2027 program. (December 2021 and June 2022)

▪ **Partners**

INORDE, KEEP ON stakeholders group established by INORDE.

▪ **Schedule**

8 months.

▪ **Costs**

5.600 EUR

▪ **Sources of funding**

The cost considered for the execution of this action refer to the work that will be carried out by the technical team of INORDE.

Date: October 18, 2021

Name of the organisation(s) : Institute for Economic Development of Ourense Province

Signatures of the relevant organisation(s): Rosendo Luís Fernández Fernández
President