



EAFRD-funded projects

Living Museums



SMART technology to keep rural heritage alive.

This LEADER Transnational Cooperation project used SMART technology to develop the automation of opening, video monitoring and closing of ethnographic museums, interpretation centres, cultural spaces and similar centres in rural areas, that were closed due to the lack of resources.

The project allowed the installation of remote-control units, automatic locks, surveillance cameras, video recording units and connection to a central digital platform for each centre.

The automation concerns all the stages of the visit: request to enter the centre, identification of the visitors, opening of the buildings, follow-up of the visit and closing the facilities.

This technology keeps these centres open 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, introducing a new concept of the tourist visit.



Location

Transnational (Spain and
Czechia)

Programming period

2014 - 2020

Priority

P6 - Social inclusion and
economic development

Measure

M19 - LEADER/CLLD

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 493 557
EAFRD 357 608
National/Regional 89 394
Other 46 555

Project duration

2018 - 2022

Project promoter

ADRI Valladolid Norte

Contact

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Website

museosvivos.com

Results

The project was based on the success of a previous LEADER project (2018-2019), which involved seven Spanish LAGs and resulted in the reopening of 19 small museums and cultural centres through a web-based platform.

The new LEADER Transnational Cooperation project involved 15 LAGs from Castilla y León (Spain), three LAGs from Galicia (Spain) and one LAG from Czechia. It resulted in over 71 museums and cultural centres being reopened, which over 32 000 visitors (of which 12 000 visits have taken place in the last two months of 2022).

The project is expected to expand further, involving new centres in Spain and other countries.

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Context

Since 1992 Local Action Groups (LAGs) have contributed to the promotion of ethnographic, cultural, natural, and environmental values in their territories through LEADER, and similar Spanish initiatives. Amongst the tools chosen has been the creation of interpretation centres, nature classrooms, museums and other places that have made tourism activities possible. However, after the 2008-2012 global economic crisis, which particularly affected Mediterranean countries such as Spain, many of these centres were closed to the public in Castilla y León due to lack of funding.

In 2018-2019, the ADRI Valladolid North LAG coordinated a pilot programme called «Museos Vivos» – Living Museums. The project involved seven LAGs in the Castilla y León region and resulted in the creation or reopening of 19 museums and centres, managed by the digital platform www.museosvivos.com.

The project recognised that in many rural areas of Spain and Europe, the situation of small rural cultural centres is similar to that of Castilla y León. Based on this observation and experience, a new cooperation project 'Living Museums' was launched in 2020 to pursue national and international dimensions.

LAGs from Romania, Estonia, Germany and France showed an interest to cooperate in a follow-up project. Eventually, the project was developed as a LEADER Transnational Cooperation project involving 18 Spanish LAGs (15 from Castilla y León and three LAGs from Galicia) and one LAG from Czechia (Central Bohemia).

Objectives

The project aims to provide value and dynamism to the local and rural culture through the reopening of ethnographic museums, interpretation centres, cultural spaces and similar centres located in the territories covered by the LAGs. These spaces were closed to the public due to the lack of funds.

The project aims to promote the ethnographic, cultural, environmental values of the participating rural territories (LAGs) and to create elements of tourist attraction, while improving local environmental education infrastructures and increasing the self-esteem of the local population.

Activities

The project uses smart technology to develop the automation of the opening, video monitoring and closing of the ethnographic museums, interpretation centres, cultural spaces and similar centres in rural areas.

Each participating LAG contacted the owners of some museums or centres in their region, that were closed due to lack of budget to pay the staff. A five-year agreement was signed with each owner, whereby the latter (often a city council) committed to maintain Internet/Wi-Fi connectivity in the venue and to take care of the cleaning.

The LAGs, on their side, take care of the installation of the smart system in each museum or centre. This includes cameras, video recorders, keypad and opening system installed in the entrance door, automatic lighting etc. All these elements link the venue to the digital platform, which was created and maintained through the cooperation project budget.

The automation covers all the stages of the visit: the request to enter the centre, identification of the visitors, opening of the buildings, follow-up of the visit and the closing of the facilities.

Visiting one of these museums is simple and convenient. Through the websites www.livingmuseums.eu and www.museosvivos.com, the visitors can select the venue they wish to visit, the day and the time. The website automatically generates an access code which can then be entered in a digital keyboard located at the door of the centre.

This technology keeps these centres open 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, introducing a new concept of tourist visit.

Through the LEADER project, the LAGs have coordinated and financed the implementation of the opening and video-tracking systems and the set-up of the digital platforms.

Additionally, the implementation of this system requires a Wi-Fi connection, and this has been implemented in each centre by the owners, in many cases the town councils.

Information about the project has been disseminated through various communication materials (guides, leaflets, small videos), to inform the public about the list of centres. In addition, the project was presented in fairs and to tour operators to disseminate the activities.

The LAGs emphasise that the support received from the Managing Authority has facilitated the implementation of the project.

Main results

The LEADER Transnational Cooperation project involved 15 LAGs from Castilla y León (Spain), three LAGs from Galicia (Spain) and one LAG from Czechia.

Since 2019 the project has allowed more than 71 small museums to reopen and more than 20 000 visitors have visited the museums.

The project has attracted the attention of the Autonomous Community, the Tourism Boards of the Provincial Councils and the National Rural Network, who organised an exchange of experiences between different LAGs, both Spanish and from the European Union. Several Provincial Councils in Spain have shown interest in the project and are considering carrying out similar actions in their territories.

The project had to face the inequality and digital gap in rural areas. In the most isolated municipalities, where fibre optic is not available, installing Wi-Fi networks was a challenge. Satellite installation has been used in such cases. A positive spin-off effect of the project is the introduction of technical innovation in rural areas.

The project has been very positively received. A recurring question concerns the use of technology rather than creating jobs. LAGs reply that smart technology has been implemented only in centres closed to the public due to the lack of funds, it will never replace the staff of an active centre. Similarly, this technology will not prevent recruiting staff for these centres during work hours.

This project has provided support for environmental education and ethnography in 19 rural territories. Living Museums is therefore a project that supports the young population, since our youth is responsible for transmitting our culture to future generations. It was interesting to note that, thanks to their technological skills and knowledge, youth played a role in making the project known to their elders and guided them to book their visits.

Additional sources of information

museosvivos.com

This project has been categorised under 'Digital futures' by the nominating National Rural Network