COR STUDY ON
WORLD HERITAGE AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Fabio Bisogni, PhD
Fondazione FORMIT

Report authors: Fabio Bisogni (FORMIT), Rossella Soldi, Simona Cavallini (Progress Consulting), Lorenzo Di Matteo (FORMIT)
The study

PART 1
Review on how local and regional authorities use/could use WH agricultural landscapes as a tool for enhancing the economic and social sustainability of rural areas

PART 2
How are EU funds used to preserve agricultural heritage? How can this be better linked with the financing of the preservation and the promotion of other world heritage sites in Europe?

PART 3
Presentation of five case studies. Identification of good practices, success factors and the various steps to follow

PART 4
Synergies to be exploited for a strategic approach to initiate, finance and promote integrated European WH projects, including in a cross-border spirit

PART 5
Conclusions and recommendations

ANNEX I
Representative examples of existing trails linking agricultural, cultural, spiritual and other WH sites across Europe

KEY FIGURES
49 cultural landscapes analysed
23 agricultural landscapes categorised
10 interviews conducted
5 case studies illustrated
1 online consultation performed
9 recommendations presented
Agricultural Landscapes

An ‘agricultural landscape’ is a concept falling under the ‘cultural landscape’ type of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention.

Currently, the UNESCO website lists 49 cultural landscapes located in the 27 EU Member States. Out of these properties, according to our review, 23 sites (47%) encompass agricultural and pastoral elements, which may be considered an ‘agricultural landscape’
WH listing
Benefits and barriers

Expected benefits for rural areas from being part of a WH list

- More economic development opportunities (economic gain)
  - In the list: 53%
  - Not in the list: 38%
- Enhanced capability of involved stakeholders of creating jobs (social gain)
  - In the list: 32%
  - Not in the list: 19%
- Enhanced management of the territory, including through the drafting or improvement of management plans (environmental gain)
  - In the list: 42%
  - Not in the list: 50%
- Higher institutional commitment for rural areas
  - In the list: 47%
  - Not in the list: 50%
- Better integration of the territory’s natural and cultural elements (cultural gains)
  - In the list: 58%
  - Not in the list: 69%
- Responsible tourism in rural areas
  - In the list: 31%
  - Not in the list: 58%

Main barriers for taking the decision to bid for a WH listing

- Ownership-related problems (e.g., fragmentation)
  - Expected: 47%
  - Experienced: 56%
- Unsupportive communities as a consequence of insufficient communication, education and public information
  - Expected: 21%
  - Experienced: 25%
- Insufficient economic benefits
  - Expected: 21%
  - Experienced: 25%
- Unmet funding needs
  - Expected: 26%
  - Experienced: 25%
- Lack of coherence amongst the wide variety of policies affecting the rural area
  - Expected: 32%
  - Experienced: 25%
- Inadequate national legal framework
  - Expected: 19%
  - Experienced: 21%
- Existence of disputes amongst stakeholders at the territorial level
  - Expected: 42%

Top barriers in the accreditation phase

- Limited internal capacity
  - Expected: 58%
  - Experienced: 75%
- Management costs intended as the additional costs of managing a WH Site
  - Expected: 42%
  - Experienced: 50%
- Organisational resistance
  - Expected: 37%
  - Experienced: 19%
- Bidding costs intended as the risk-related costs of getting onto the WH List
  - Expected: 21%
  - Experienced: 25%
- Limited international support and cooperation
  - Expected: 13%
  - Experienced: 21%
- Difficulty in finding practitioners having expertise in cultural and natural heritage
  - Expected: 25%
  - Experienced: 25%
CASE STUDIES
Val d’Orcia, Italy
Alto Douro Wine Region, Portugal
Champagne Hillsides, Houses and Cellars, France
Wachau Cultural Landscape, Austria
Hortobágy National Park - the Puszta, Hungary

MAIN ELEMENTS
Description
Reasons and processes leading to the labelling of the site
Management, stakeholders and funding arrangements
Socio-economic trends
Challenges and success factors resulting from the interviews
**Recommendation 1**

Benefits brought to society by cultural heritage in general and WH agricultural landscapes in particular have to be monetised in to increase the attractiveness of the label as well as the interest in initiating the nomination process.

**Recommendation 2**

UNESCO should consider defining within cultural landscapes the current ambiguous ‘concept’ of ‘agricultural landscape’ by using easily understandable terms for both the stakeholders and the general public.

**Recommendation 3**

The WH label needs to be associated with economic labels in order to support the revitalisation of the rural areas where agricultural landscapes are located.

**Recommendation 4**

European agricultural landscapes should be structurally supported in their networking for ‘cross-border’ cooperation, as well as for exchange to face challenges which are common to this type of cultural landscape.

**Recommendation 5**

Benefits brought to private actors by WH agricultural landscapes should be balanced by mechanisms of private contribution to the WH nomination costs.

**Recommendation 6**

The CoR should promote a hybrid approach in the conservation and preservation of agricultural landscapes that considers also the development of rural areas under the socio-economic perspective.
Recommendation 7  

The CoR should promote creative ways to actively engaging local communities in initiatives with a central role for young people in order to maintain vital rural areas and preserve the heritage from one generation to another.

Recommendation 8  

Better use of EU funds for the conservation and preservation of the cultural and natural heritage should be fostered by raising awareness and enabling empowerment.

Recommendation 9  

The potential accreditation of agricultural landscapes to the World Heritage list should be properly fostered and analysed by those LRAs involved focusing on mapping and technical support.
Conclusions

There is not a systematic approach towards the use of WH agricultural landscapes as a tool for enhancing the economic and social sustainability of rural areas and, in fact, several agricultural landscapes face nowadays sustainability challenges.

Existing agricultural landscapes need to be supported in exchanging their knowledge and in accessing new opportunities for funding, networking and gaining a return to the investment made for obtaining the WH label.

Among the key factors of success for using the WH label to the benefit of rural areas in agricultural landscapes are the involvement of the private sector, the synergy of the cultural heritage label with economic labels and a participatory and/or informed management that pays attention to the interests and needs of those living in the site.