

Best practice 37: Protection and rehabilitation of the Historical World Heritage, Santiago, Spain

Scale: Urban

Stage of tourism development: Mature

Main objective: Improve urban quality of life

Categories of effects:

Effects on urban governance

- Integrated urban planning
- Steering government
- Destination management
- Stakeholder participation

Effects on quality of life

- Built heritage diversity
- Urban economies
- Environment
- Social life, local values and traditions

Since the early nineties, Santiago de Compostela has been facing the challenge of the urban restoration and environmental regeneration of its historical World Heritage City. To address the rising residential, demographic, functional material crisis, the city has developed the framework of a complex town planning policy in its "Special Protection and Rehabilitation Plan". Priority objectives were clearly established: conservation of built heritage and green spaces; improvement of quality of life for the local population, consolidation of urban activities, restoration of the historical centre as a popular meeting place, centralization of compatible functions and decentralisation of congested ones. Around 650 projects were carried out between 1995 and 2001, most of them aimed at stabilizing the resident population and fulfilling their aspirations for improved housing. The reintroduction of traditional materials and introduction of compatible technologies required intensive educational and training work for businesses and workers for sharing the practice of small-scale and reversible rehabilitation. Despite shortage of free land, 23 more hectares have been zoned as new public parks, creating green corridors in the historical city. This long term project is still under way; so far, 50% of rehabilitation objectives were completed. The process has allowed a stable inter-administrative cooperation to develop, active participation and direct financial investment from the population. A new field of specialisation and employment arose for small businesses, professionals and technicians. A link has been made between the protection of cultural heritage, the restoration of the natural environment and the quality of life of citizens, enhancing social cohesion and diversity in the city. The initiative was awarded the 1997-1998 European Town Planning Prize by the European Commission and the European Council for Town Planners, and won the Best Practice Award of the UN-Habitat in 2002.

Source: UN-Habitat, 2004. Best practices Database in Improving the Environment.

Link:

http://www.bestpractices.org/database/bp_display_best_practice.php?best_practice_id=200