



## Cultural Heritage

# HERCULES

### At a glance

Title: Sustainable futures for Europe's HERitage in CULtural landscapES: Tools for understanding, managing, and protecting landscape functions and values (HERCULES)

Instrument: Collaborative project

Total Cost: 3,897,144.00 €

EC Contribution: 2,994,548.40 €

Duration: 36 months

Start Date: 01/12/2013

Consortium: 13 partners from 11 European countries

Project Coordinator: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Administrative coordination); University of Copenhagen (Scientific coordination)

Project Web Site:

Key Words: cultural landscape values, heritage, multi-scale landscape modelling, transdisciplinary landscape management, knowledge hub, visioning of good practices, European Landscape Convention

### The challenge

European cultural landscapes are valued as everyday living environment, countryside, heritage, scenery with aesthetic and recreational qualities and unique biodiversity and as a source of ecosystem services that they provide to society. Cultural landscapes, however, are undergoing rapid and fundamental transformations across Europe, mainly as a result of an on-going polarisation of land use, with abandonment and rural exodus on the one hand, and intensification and urbanisation or peri-urbanisation on the other. Although the specific drivers and outcomes of these processes vary across Europe, a central tendency is the fundamental decoupling of the social and ecological sub-systems in cultural landscapes. This leads to the degradation of biodiversity and cultural heritage values and renders the future of many of these landscapes highly uncertain.

### Project Objectives

The HERCULES project strives for the empowerment of public and private actors to protect, manage and plan for sustainable cultural landscapes at local, national and pan-European scales. HERCULES has the goal to increase understanding of drivers, patterns and social-ecological values of European cultural landscapes and to use this knowledge to develop, test and demonstrate strategies for their protection, management and planning. Key research aims include the following:

- Synthesize existing knowledge on the drivers, patterns and outcomes of persistence and change in European cultural landscapes
- Close knowledge gaps regarding the dynamics and social-ecological values of cultural landscapes
- Generate tools for landscape observation and modelling in order to understand values of and

threats to cultural landscapes in Europe

- Develop a strong vision of pathways towards protecting landscape services
- Provide policy makers and practitioners with a cutting-edge Knowledge Hub to guide decision-making for the benefit of cultural landscapes

### Methodology

HERCULES builds on the development and application of innovative technologies and tools for understanding, managing and protecting cultural landscapes. The project follows the European Landscape Convention’s call for transdisciplinary research and involves all actors with stakes in cultural landscapes of social-ecological value. The insights, technologies and strategies developed in HERCULES will be tested and applied in six comparative study landscapes, purposefully selected to span major environmental and land use history gradients throughout Europe. The methods to be developed and used are diverse and include systematic review and meta-analysis techniques, multi-scale empirical landscape analyses, fine- and broad-scale landscape modelling, visioning processes, surveys, as well as development, testing and implementing of good landscape practices.

### Expected Results

HERCULES will produce a broad and comprehensive range of outputs that are targeted to communities of science, practice and policy around cultural landscapes, among others:

- Meta-analytic database of literature and expert knowledge on cultural landscape transformation case studies
- Well-documented case studies on the long- and short term histories and change in cultural landscapes
- Pan-European cultural landscape typology and map, validated by citizen engagement through

crowdsourcing

- New modelling approaches to assess future landscape developments and policy impacts on cultural landscapes
- Roadbook for the management of heritage values in landscape sensitive to diverse environmental and societal contexts
- Policy recommendations based on analysing the successes and failures of instruments across various levels and policy domains
- Community-based Knowledge Hub for Good Landscape Stewardship
- Series of tests and demonstrations of the use of the developed tools in case-studies and within a policy making context

### Project Partners

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, DE

University of Copenhagen, DK

Conseil Innovation Management et Environnement, FR

European Landowners’ Organization - ELO, BE

Forest Communication Network Ltd., GB

Landscape Research Group - LRG, GB

Sinergise Ltd., SI

VU University Amsterdam, NL

Swiss Federal Institute - WSL, (Switzerland) CH

Tallinn University, EE

University of Freiburg, DE

University of the Aegean, GR

Uppsala University, SE