

SPAIN

Fostering local development in rural areas

Location
Figueres

Programming period
2014 – 2020

Priority
P6 – Social Inclusion and
Economic Development

Measure
M19 – LEADER/CLL

Funding (EUR)
Total budget 118 299
EAFRD 50 868.57
National/Regional 67 430.43

Project duration
2016 – 2018

Project promoter
ADRINOC, Associació per al
Desenvolupament Rural
Integral de la zona Nord-
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Promoting the use of a landscape feature, as it is the dry-stone constructions, to stimulate territorial development.

Summary

Dry-stone constructions are not only a valuable cultural heritage element, but also one that has become part of the identity of rural Catalanian and other Mediterranean landscapes. This initiative, financed as a LEADER cooperation project, gives the value that these landscape features deserve, and puts in place tools for citizens to, in a collaborative way, transform this cultural richness in a driver for rural development and economic prosperity of these rural areas.



**col·labora
x paisatge**

construccions de
pedra seca

Results

84 people participated in the workshops

20 people linked to the dry-stone profession participated in the trans-border study trip to France.

The App for consulting and cataloguing dry-stone constructions is continuously used, and new elements are constantly being updated in the “Wikipedra”.

published the manual “Landscape, Rural Development and Citizenship” featuring 10 examples where landscape management was used to add value in an area.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ the study trip to France made everyone aware that it is important to pay attention to the chain of actors that such constructions involves, “filière” in French. Study trips are a great way to share approaches and experiences.
- ❑ It would be better if a single European call was put out, so that LAGs could work on the actions together.

Context

When preparing the local development strategy (LDS) for the territory the LAG ADRINOC, topics like energy efficiency and social responsibility were included as expected, however, a new one emerged as important for the inhabitants of the territory and this was landscape conservation. Through conversations with the Landscape Observatory of Catalonia something came to the attention of the project promoters: an inventory for dry-stone constructions that have been created with voluntary work until becoming the “wikipedra” (playing with the English word Wikipedia, as pedra means stone in Catalanian language).

The Wikipedra inventory was the starting point for this LEADER cooperation project that looked for further ways to create rural development based on the valuable indexed heritage. 7 Local Action Groups in Catalonia; the Catalanian Pyrenees Natural Park; the Landscape Observatory of Catalonia, the Dry-Stone and Traditional Architecture Association and the General Directorate of Culture of the Catalanian Government, are part of this project. This valuable connection between LAGs, the administration and other entities will make possible looking for future tourist and professional opportunities for the territory.

Objectives

The objective was to develop the LAG’s territories by linking the landscape, in this case a landscape feature being the dry-stone constructions, and citizens’ collaboration. In this way, tools had to be put in place in order to make “Wikipedra” a more complete resource from which to start creating new project ideas.

Besides putting in place the necessary tools, the first stage of the project also aimed at:

- Increase public awareness on the importance of this legacy;
- Create a dialogue among the administration and civil society in order to stimulate projects involving landscape features in the area;
- Communicating the dry-stone construction techniques to generate economic opportunities for the rural areas through new projects or restoration of existing infrastructures.



Activities

The first year of the project focused on creating the necessary tools for consulting and further cataloguing dry-stone constructions. Technical files were created both in paper and in a digital format, in order to include new categories (dry-stone ovens, walls, huts, water systems, etc.) to the “Wikipedra”. Then the “App of the Dry-Stone” was created for smartphones and tablets. The application can be used for information, but also to upload data to update the catalogue.

The project looked at other landscape features, further to the dry-stone elements, which could be used to inspire new projects and included them in the project information.

Besides developing tools and looking for other examples linking rural development with landscape, the project also organized:

- five workshops around Catalonia to show the potential of the dry-stone constructions to create added value for the territory;
- a trip to share experiences to the French part of the trans-border Natural Park of Catalan Pyrenees, to look at the work done there to stimulate the dry-stone chain (from extracting stone to the construction site)
- promotional talks to motivate volunteers to explore the rural areas while using the App for cataloguing.

Main Results

- 84 people participated in the workshops and 20 people linked to the dry-stone profession in one way or the other, have participated in the trans-border study trip to France.
- the App for consulting and cataloguing dry-stone constructions is continuously used, and new elements are constantly being updated in the “Wikipedra”.
- published the manual “Landscape, Rural Development and Citizenship” featuring 10 examples where landscape management was used to add value in an area. Some of the published initiatives include the UNESCO declaration of the area Priorat-Montsant-Siurana; and international examples from Italy-Switzerland, France, United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Czech Republic.
- An important result was also the decision to have a next step for this project, a second phase. It will be about building an inventory of dry-stone workers as it doesn't exist. It will be a good way to know who has this knowledge, and if it's only elder people, create the opportunities to transfer this knowledge. It is also intended to prepare a manual on dry-stone construction and share resources in the local schools with the students and groups at risk of being excluded. There is a niche for work in this sector and not only in the construction and education side: some tourism associations have shown interest in developing this further. A proposal for the second phase of the Project (to be performed from February 2018 and during 2019) has been submitted and awaits for final approval.

Key lessons

“There is no direct way to address a big challenge. We have learnt with this project that it is important to listen to what the territory demands, in this case, further focus on the landscape, as it has been included in our LDS, but through small projects it is easier to learn and to build a network and the necessary relations to develop different actions that will result in a valued, preserved, economically profitable landscape.”

Although the approach at the beginning was to focus on Dry-stone constructions and improving the “Wikipedra”, the study trip to France made everyone aware that it is important to pay attention to the chain of actors that such constructions involves (in French, “filière”). Study trips are a great way to share approaches and experiences.

In a way, the relations with the LAGs working on this issue in France are strong and a transnational cooperation project is in place. On of the project promoter said that “it would of course be better if a single European call was put out, so that we could work on the actions together. But while a better cooperating system is in place, we continue to learn and work with other territories, within our possibilities”.



Additional sources of information

<http://adrinoc.cat/ca/entitat/projectes-de-cooperacio/col-laboraxpaisatge/fitxes-de-catalogacio-de-noves-tipologies-constructives-de-pedra-seca/>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ionicframework.wikipedra>

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http://adrinoc.cat/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Guia_Bones_Practiques.pdf