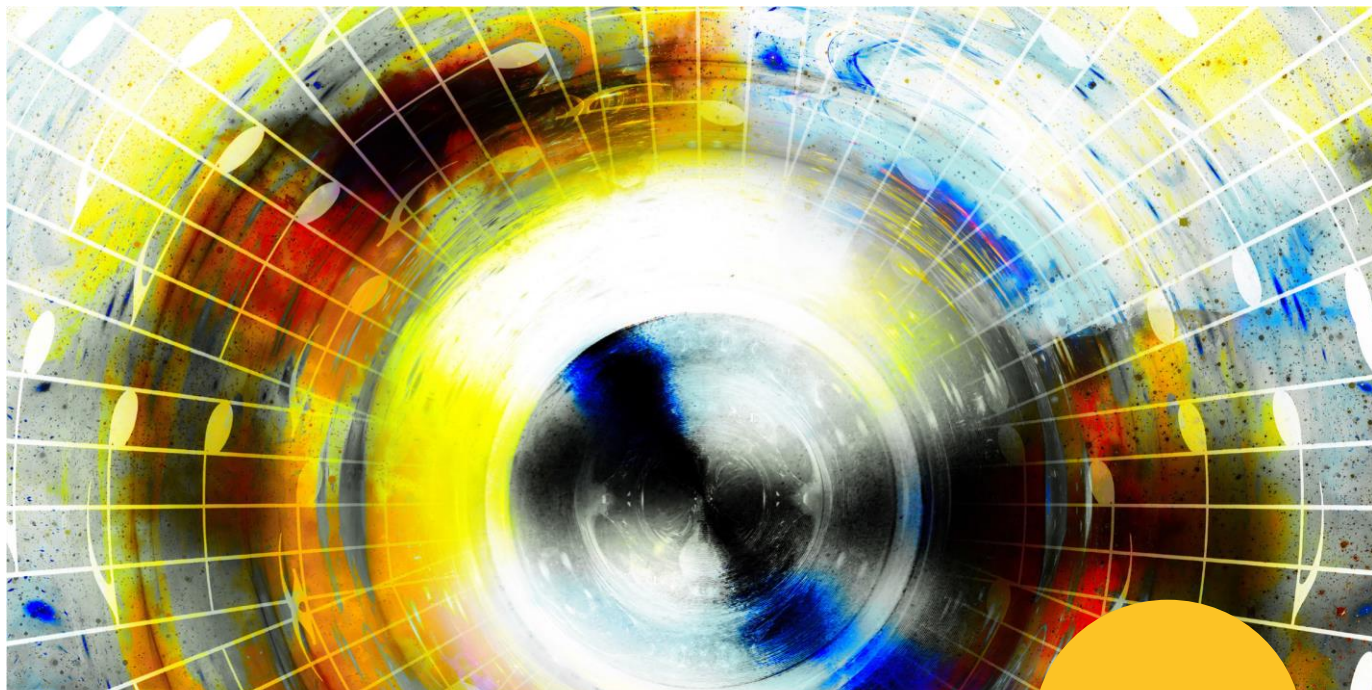


Interreg
North Sea Region
CUPIDO

European Regional Development Fund



EUROPEAN UNION



CUPIDO

CULTURE POWER: INSPIRE TO DEVELOP RURAL AREAS

CUPIDO REPORT

BUSINESS & CULTURAL/HERITAGE FIELD

WP3 - Power of Culture, the DNA of a region

Howest University of Applied Sciences, Belgium
28th of November 2019

CONTENT

1 INTRODUCTION	4
2 METHODOLOGY	5
3 RESULTS	6
3.1 RESULTS - BUSINESS	6
3.1.1 INNOVATIVE	7
3.1.2 CONTRIBUTION	9
3.2 RESULTS - BUSINESS + CULTURAL & HERITAGE FIELD	10
3.3 QUOTES AND TRENDS	16
3.3.1 QUOTES	16
3.3.2 TRENDS	17
4 CONCLUSIONS	19
4.1 CULTURAL OR HERITAGE IDENTIFIERS	19
4.2 NEEDS & EXPECTATIONS	19

1 INTRODUCTION

What is the characteristic cultural DNA of an area, what can be developed and how can this development contribute to job creation? This is the central question to WP3 of the CUPIDO project. Seven partner regions are involved, each one located in Europe. The areas where the partners are located suffer from decreasing population figures and ditto attractiveness. The CUPIDO project aims to discover ways to (re-)invest in projects of cultural and/or heritage importance that can lead to new job creation and a revival of the area.

Through this survey, we want to learn what the local communities indicate as cultural or heritage identifiers of the area they live or operate in, and what the needs and expectations are in terms of improvement with regard to the attractiveness of the area.

The survey must lead to discovering insights that can inspire the partners concerning new business-ideas and formats which in turn must improve the attractiveness of the areas and lead to job creation within the cultural/heritage field.

The survey is multi-layered. First, there's the general perspective. What do the areas have in common with regard to the topics that have been talked about in the questionnaire. Second, there's the individual story of each area, where individual features can pop up and enrich the general results. This means that, apart from the common solutions, each area can mold this solution according to particular insights that are relevant for a specific region. The survey can hence serve as a starting point for further developing new initiatives in a specific region.

2 METHODOLOGY

In setting up this research, each partner region was asked to interview 14 to 15 parties in their local area. Half of these are people who run a business, the other half are people involved in the cultural or heritage field.

With seven partner regions, that would give us a broad range of answers. In total we had 43 interviews among people in the cultural or heritage field and 48 among business owners.

Partner Region	Business	Culture/ Heritage
The Netherlands	9	6
Norway	8	5
Sweden	8	7
UK - Scotland	3	6
Belgium	7	6
UK - Folkestone	8	8
Denmark	6	5

For each target group (businesspeople or people from the cultural of heritage field), we had a separate online questionnaire. A few questions were different, most were the same. An interviewer would make an appointment and have someone interviewed for approximately 1 hour. The interviewer would then write the answers down in an online database.

The general results have been generated by one researcher and shared in a group meeting in Belgium, Ypres. The individual results have been processed by each partner individually.

In this report, the output of the general results is represented. These general results would serve as starting material for further brainstorming and idea-development in the group, whereas each partner can modify the outcome according to the individual situation.

3 RESULTS

First, we discuss the questions that have been asked to the businesspeople only. After that we'll continue with those asked to both groups of respondents (businesspeople AND cultural & heritage field)

3.1 RESULTS - BUSINESS

***What makes this area attractive to an entrepreneur?**

Locals

- Friendliness
- Do it yourself mentality
- Open
- Many people with good ideas
- Helpful
- Community
- Supportive

Facilities

- Shops
- Events
- Hotels
- Parking
- Cheaper rentals/ accommodation
- Education

Businesses

- Variety
- Many businesses
- Relaxed employees
- Tourists
- Feeling of opportunities
- Low financial risk
- Innovative thinking
- Ambitious

***What makes it difficult to have a business here?**

Locals

- Lack of dreaming
- Old fashioned
- Conservative thinking
- Aging population
- People (young) are leaving

Facilities

- Lack of places to stay for tourists
- Poor parking facilities

Business

- Lack of collaboration between entrepreneurs
- Not enough customers
- Difficult to find high quality employees
- Not many customers
- Low job-offer
- Not enough affordable hubs for starters
- Lower salaries

***Do you see opportunities for your business to meet culture/heritage? If so: which are these?**

- Offering packages together with partners for tourists
- Apply our ideas to cultural/heritage organizations and create new concepts and products
- New technologies showing and experiencing what we do (VR, 3D printing)
- Learn from the creative industries about brand building
- Mixing culture/heritage with other things/ businesses/ shops
- Engage with education institutions

***Can you give some examples of innovative businesses that are at work here at this moment?**

***What exactly defines their innovative aspect?**

***What do they contribute to the domain of culture and heritage?**

In the following we give an overview of what respondents find innovative about the examples given and continue with the contribution these innovative examples deliver. Each partner can look for himself what initiatives the respondents find innovative in their specific region. Since those are all different and unknown to the other partners in the project, it has no use to sum them up.

3.1.1 INNOVATIVE

Innovation

- Look at a product/concept from a different angle and by doing so, create added value
- Tapping into something that wasn't there before (creating something new)
- Constantly being involved with companies that want & dare to innovate
- Opening new markets, reaching for a broad spectrum of people

Technology

- Innovative technologies
- 'New generation companies' – i.e. involved in media/digital

- Businesses that focus on a positive customer experience, bring innovation in the customer journey
- Use of new technologies (VR, games) in traditional work processes
- Businesses that surf on new technologies like VR, gaming, AI
- Businesses in digitalization
- New packaging solutions
- AR/VR

Local (usp)

- Local materials for production (no import from countries that sell everything cheap)
- Focus on food culture, typical ingredients and food traditions
- Cooked and canned (mussel and seafood) products (now all is fresh)

Exclusiveness & high quality

- Offering unique, exclusive things/ services with high demands
- Exclusive products based on typical ingredients from the region
- Unique concepts
- Fashion, textiles, crafts of high level and quality

Landscape (usp)

- Involving the magnificent views on the landscape into architecture

Online presence

- Webshop selling more or less unique products (unique for this region, very smart idea since nobody comes here)

Artists, designers

- Work closely together with contemporary artists and designers to keep heritage relevant and interesting

Diversity

- Combination of companies with different backgrounds x from different fields x the presence of young generations
- Mixing culture/heritage with other things/ businesses/ shops

Corporate responsibility & innovation

- Businesses that take up corporate responsibility and try new products or processes (packaging f.e.)
- Engaging with education institutions (IT)
- New educational programs, with a focus on tradition and food
- New working ethics: working from home, flexible hours, ...
- Businesses that create environmental-friendly products with new materials
- Circular economy

3.1.2 CONTRIBUTION

Culture & heritage

- Keeping heritage relevant (traditions, buildings, ...)
- Help keep heritage (industry, ...) alive
- Making culture interesting

Awareness

- Influencers (are being followed beyond the region)
- Ambassadorship for the region
- Carrying out the identity of the region beyond the borders
- Positive WOM for the area
- Production of appealing and contemporary images of the region, good for promoting the area
- Contributing to the image of X as forerunner in technology
- Being better than technology developers in X, good for attracting young employees
- Spreading our name into the world

Visitors

- Attract people and therefor give visibility to the area
- Adding unique experiences

Locals

- People bringing new ideas
- Sharing and communicating ideas
- Willingness to try something new
- Investing into the community
- Bringing wellbeing to the community

The world

- Contribute to the world's problem of plastic waste

***Do you know initiatives/projects in this area that put cultural and/or heritage at the center of their business-model? If so, which are these?**

***Where do you see opportunities for further development with regard to these projects?**

We hear a lot of examples like museums, festivals, projects, many of the respondents work for an organization that puts culture or heritage at its center.

Let's have a look at some remarkable statements that might be of inspiration.

Again, each partner can have a look at the examples given for their specific region.

Opportunities for further development

- Activities that are now temporary but successful could transform into a permanent offer
- New activities on historic squares (open-air cinema f.e.)
- Connecting history with 'now'
- Make things more visible (more marketing skills)

- Be less humble
- Look beyond (ages, places, ... the established)
- Discuss more openly, making ourselves stronger by working together instead of being afraid and see everyone as a possible competitor.
- Image-building through Instagram (or other social media)
- Practice marketing to promote what we are and have
- Don't let too many tourists come in, let's keep it cosy and authentic (*exclusiveness?*)
- Work together with places around the area that are appealing and create festivals or events together
- Digital innovation
- Creating role models for the youth
- Better & more sing-posts
- Focus also on families with children
- Give farming and local production fame by redesigning the packaging etc (marketing/ branding) and export. Things made locally are wanted.
- Copy successful models and bring them to the other areas
- Many landmarks from the old days, that have history could become icons (again) if the receive a new destination/ function. The process requires imagination and creativity
- Gastro tourism that makes people taste and experience traditional local farming and production
- People seem to be more and more interested in seeing and experiencing where food comes from, so *FoodSafaris* with tastings and visiting the farms (cf Champagne in France)

3.2 RESULTS - BUSINESS + CULTURAL & HERITAGE FIELD

***Which are – according to you – the most important cultural identifiers of this area?**

In each region, the respondents were quite unanimous in answering this question. The things mentioned have to do with history, monuments, habits, food and drinks, music, agriculture, language, industry, nature and a strong community.

Only Folkstone came out as a place where consumerism, money and business identify the region besides the things mentioned above.

***Why do you think these are the most important cultural identifiers of this area?**

The reasons given go from 'bringing people together' to 'offering work' to 'attract visitors and/or tourists'. Others mention because it's 'unique' or 'tradition'.

***Do you share the view that these should be the most important cultural identifiers? What do you believe should be more prominent?**

All of the respondents agree.

***Would you like to change something about it? Why and what would that be?**

We receive a lot of input here that is quite conform in all the areas.

- More connection
- More inspiration
- More long-term vision
- More ambition
- More money
- More guts
- More liveliness, especially in winter-times
- More focus on young people
- Switch from competition to collaboration
- Explore opportunities with business partners
- Marketing and communication
- More places for visitors to stay
- Build on the model of community engagement

***Can you think of other cultural/ heritage related projects that serve as opportunities, but which are now underdeveloped in your area?**

Each respondent can think of cases for his/her specific area. These are very diverse and specific for each region. We leave it to each partner to decide what to do with that information in terms of the final business-ideas and formats for the region.

***Do you have any idea why these are not so obvious or visible at this moment?**

- Lack of money
- People tend to work on their island
- Lack of media attention
- Not in the minds of our politicians
- Tendency is to travel far away
- Lack of leadership
- Lack of resources
- Lack of facilities
- Not in the minds of our politicians
- Tendency is to travel far away
- Lack of interested audience

***You have just named initiatives that are less obvious in the area. How do you feel about that?**

Most respondents feel frustrated, disappointed or feel it's a pity.

One person is optimistic because he feels social media offers great opportunities to develop businesses.

***What is needed to make these initiatives more visible?**

- Not just talk, but do things
- Support talented people
- Courses in social media, marketing, communications
- More creativity
- Think about interactive ways
- Agree upon a cultural DNA
- People that take initiative
- Enough time
- New business-models
- Choose a focus

***About innovative businesses that are at work here at this moment: what exactly defines the innovative aspect?**

The reader can find a list of examples of innovative businesses per area in the extended reports.

Concerning the innovative aspect of these businesses, these are the characteristics given that were given the most:

- Using digital, latest technologies
- By mixing existing things, create new ones
- New working ethics
- Using the landscape in new ways
- Offering unique, exclusive things
- Jumps on new trends
- Modern and appealing tone of style of the communication
- The old in a new package
- Attention for entertaining aspect (experience)
- Storytelling, marketing
- Bring innovation in the customer journey
- Collaboration with artists and designers to keep relevant and interesting

‘New’ is the word that has been used the most.

What do these businesses contribute to the domain of culture and heritage?

For the people

- Engaging young people
- Connecting people
- Attracting interesting people
- Job creation
- Bring wellbeing to the community
- Community building

For the image

- Visibility and exposure
- Develop regional identity
- Appealing and contemporary images of the region

For the overall feeling

- Beauty
- Surprises
- Fun
- Inspiration

For the guests

- Contributing to the guest's experience

For all

- Opening up for people who are alone
- Diversity
- Dialogue

For the tradition

- Passing on tradition
- Keep heritage relevant

For the feeling of pride

- Pride, enhance faith
- Influencers, ambassadors

For the world

- Contribute to solve the world's problems

***Where do you see opportunities for improvement with regard to these innovative businesses?**

People tend to answer this for all businesses and cultural/heritage players, not just the innovative ones. That's why the reader should interpret the following as answers to the question: 'where do you see opportunities for improvement with regard to businesses in the area?'.

- Guts to not let the commercial interest prevail
- Employees of the institutions as ambassadors
- An allowing environment where people can make their dreams come true
- Culture-workers meet other entrepreneurs
- More networking
- Better understanding of the needs
- Improve processes to fight volunteer burden
- Offering activities in more languages
- Develop a focus and a plan
- Better storytelling by the big companies

- Cross-sector thinking
- Analyze better what visitors want
- Define 'what's in it for me' (no matter who I am)
- Look beyond tourism
- A strong story that explains our DNA
- Young graduates to see the value of staying here
- Improving the customer journey
- Create role models for the youth

***What if someone says to you this area isn't attractive. What could be the reason for that person to say that – according to you?**

- Emptiness
- Lack of liveliness in wintertime
- Inefficient/ lack of enough public transport
- Aging population
- Employment issues
- Not so many things to do
- Too far away
- Stuck in an old-fashioned image

***Do you agree and why (not)?**

Some agree on all items listed above, but for the respondents it doesn't mean the area is unattractive. Many don't agree (because they love their region).

***What if someone says to you this area is attractive. What could be the reason for that person to say that – according to you?**

- Healthy entrepreneurial environment
- People know each other
- Community-feeling
- Nice atmosphere
- Rich cultural heritage
- No stress
- Small scale
- Amazing nature
- Quality of life
- Authentic
- Spacious

***Do you agree and why (not)?**

Everyone agrees about the attractiveness of the area where they live/ operate.

***Imagine you receive a huge amount of money to improve the area's attractiveness. What would you do with that money?**

Vision

- Engage a visionary person

Strategy

- Work out a long-term strategy
- Work on better marketing and communication
- Invite more renowned artists
- Research on our target groups inhabitants, visitors, ...

Facilities

- Create spaces for different target groups (old, young, artists, ...)
- Better infrastructure and public transport
- More facilities: restaurants, cafés, public toilets, ...

Architecture & urban planning

- Restore old buildings
- Enhance the poorer parts

Interaction

- Create a platform for organizations to work together
- Set up more things to do

Education

- Education, passing on knowledge and traditions

Why would you change that? (wants & needs)

Visitors

- It would have a stop effect on visitors
- Visitors would be happier with their stay
- It would be good for our reputation
- This area would become an all-season destination
- It would create a new way of interacting with our visitors
- It would change the image of the region
- It would add much more to the visitor's experience
- It would allow people to see more of the area
- The area would be put on the international map

Inhabitants

- It would improve the quality of life
- The people who live here, would stay here
- It would attract more young people and be less empty
- Pride would increase
- We all would be better ambassadors for the region
- All people would feel acknowledged and recognized

- It would have a cohesive effect
- It would bring different parts of the community together
- It would bring a good vibe to the town
- Older people would relive their youth
- It would have an impact on the sense of identity, community and confidence
- It would improve the liveliness of the city

Businesses

- There would be economical growth
- There would be more employment
- It would make it easier for people to start up on their own
- It would attract new businesses
- It would generate new initiatives (money is now stuck in the existing initiatives)
- More of our culture would be exported
- It would boost creativity

***What area/city/ ... could be of inspiration to this area when it comes to cultural/heritage attractiveness and why?**

Respondents gave many different names of cities and regions. We didn't really find any similarities in those. But we did find the same answers we found above (wants & needs) when asking for why these cities and regions are inspirational. In addition to the list above (wants & needs), we were able to add these:

- City safari
- An artist colony
- Attitude that everything is possible
- Used culture to change the city and involved their citizens in this process
- Uses history and turns it into an opportunity
- A lot of 'green' businesses

3.3 QUOTES AND TRENDS

3.3.1 QUOTES

During the interviews, respondents generated interesting quotes that could be of inspiration for the project.

Finding balance

- It's important to get a balance of what you're doing for local people with what you're doing for people coming in and making sure it all works together.
- Let's not loose on the authenticity.

Role of Art

- Art is the best way the initiate change, hence it works so well in a regeneration context.

- We would like people to feel about engaging in cultural activities like having a cup of tea. If you want to achieve this then art is not allowed to be about an artist's ego, it has to be about working in collaboration with the public. You have to make it relevant to people.

Importance of Community

- Here you find very large and significant businesses, but at the same time a small community which perhaps has made great things

Youth

- What does the new generation want? What type of experience are they looking for? One should analyze the visitor first.
- You need that youth to keep the cultural dream alive.

On Exposure

- There are a lot of businesses, but they are not visible.
- The visual presentation (the package of a message ...) is very important.

On Strategy

- There has to be a really strong strategic plan.
- Culture eats strategy for breakfast.

Time

- Change takes time

3.3.2 TRENDS

In the following we bundled several ideas that have been talked about during the interviews and grouped them together according to trends that are emerging or have been existing for a period of time already.

Social & Ecology

- Ecology
- Social sustainability
- Climate
- Circular thinking
- Sharing culture
- Back to the roots

Marketing & Communications

- Influencer Marketing
- Ambassador programs
- Bloggers and vloggers
- Experience Marketing
- Storytelling (*but hey, we've been doing this for ages*)
- Customer data
- E-commerce

- New Media
- Relevance

Travelling

- Floating bungalows, glamping, ... new ways of experiencing nature (adventure/luxurious).
- Travelling far away

Culinary

- Food is the new black
- Provenance as a label of quality

4 CONCLUSIONS

Through this survey, we wanted to know what the local communities indicate as cultural or heritage **identifiers** of the area they live or operate in, and what the **needs and expectations** are in terms of improvement with regard to the attractiveness of the area.

The survey had to lead to discovering insights that can inspire the partners concerning new business-ideas and formats which in turn must improve the attractiveness of the areas and lead to job creation within the cultural/heritage field.

4.1 CULTURAL OR HERITAGE IDENTIFIERS

Each region has several specific cultural or heritage identifiers.

These range from **history**, over **museums, architecture, traditions, music, food, language, habits, industry, farming, nature, ...**

Each region incorporates a combination of several of these.

Another strong element that is mentioned in line with these is '**pride**'. Each of the regions testifies to have proud inhabitants and entrepreneurs.

All of these regions are characterized by strong **communities**, people that are friendly, help each other and feel strongly connected.

4.2 NEEDS & EXPECTATIONS

Many needs and expectations have been formulated by the respondents of each region. There is an enormous diversity of responses, indicating specific needs to a certain region on the one hand, and a subtle variation to a common need on the other. Here you can see the most important ones, mentioned by the respondents.

- When asking for what respondents want to change about the current situation, in many cases they mention actions to be taken by the local 'politicians'. Respondents expect them to support the region in terms of more, better and renewed facilities, money, vision, ambition and long-term thinking.
- When it comes to 'people', respondents mention the most the young people that are leaving. They see attractive job offers as the most important trigger for them to stay. They stress the strong power of their communities, co-creation and co-working as drivers for innovation.
- There are respondents that wish for less conservative and more 'open minded thinking'. It is a way they describe the local population. They feel like the conservative thinking stands in the way, and is responsible for young people to leave the area or entrepreneurs to start new businesses.
- Many respondents expect a lot from 'technology'. Mostly in terms of digitalization. It goes from platforms for co-working or sharing ideas to VR, AR, AI, gaming, 3D printing, webshops.

- 'Marketing and Communication' are to be used in a new way or just more frequently, with the goal of creating more promotion, WOM, PR, visibility and so on to raise awareness for the region. Some respondents point out that target groups should be studied before actions like these take place and strategies should be developed in long term visionary thinking. Others find storytelling an important aspect to take into further consideration.
- Some respondents put 'exclusive and unique' products or services at the heart of the matter. They refer to 'local' materials, products. Others mention the power of working together with artists and designers. Food is seen as a driver for new experiences (gastro tourism).
- Respondents search for more connection with 'education', when it comes to preserving and passing on the culture and heritage.

The combination of needs & expectations along with trends & quotes, can lead to interesting *insights* and from here to *strategies* and *formats* for future development. These are to be based on the general input from the report and adapted to the specific contexts of each region.

It just happened because they believed in it.

Interreg
North Sea Region
CUPIDO

European Regional Development Fund



EUROPEAN UNION