

# RURITAGE

Heritage for Rural Regeneration



# Policy Recommendations

for the Integration of Cultural and Natural Heritage (CNH) within  
Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3/4)

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This project has received funding from the European Union's  
Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme  
under grant agreement No 776465.



## Why is this needed?

These Policy Recommendations aim to fill the **knowledge and implementation gap** regarding the underexplored potential of **Cultural & Natural Heritage** (CNH), and make the case for its inclusion as a priority component in the **Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation** (RIS3 – also simplified as S3).

Although CNH has recently received political recognition at the European level, few European regions highlight cultural heritage in their RIS3.<sup>1 2</sup> Therefore, there is a need to clearly link CNH with smart specialisation, innovation, experimentation, entrepreneurship, business development and sustainable development in regional economies. Furthermore, since similar policy documents have focused their attention predominantly on urban areas,<sup>3</sup> the present document pays **particular attention to rural regions** and look towards an integrated territorial approach.

## For whom?

The present Policy Recommendations are primarily **addressed to regional public authorities** who are developing, implementing and/or monitoring and evaluating RIS3, as well as **public authorities managing rural areas**, communities, towns or small cities which are interested in developing, engaging in and/or implementing RIS3. Importantly, these recommendations are relevant to experts and departments responsible for heritage, culture, economy, business development, entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable development. Additionally, the information in this document can be of use to policy makers, entrepreneurs, company managers, universities and research institutions (at the local, regional and national level).

## What is RURITAGE?

The present Policy Recommendations have been developed in the framework of the **RURITAGE** project. RURITAGE is a Horizon2020 project that focuses on rural areas as laboratories which demonstrate Cultural & Natural Heritage as a driver for sustainable development. It establishes a heritage-led paradigm based on six **Systemic Innovation Areas**: Pilgrimage, Local Food, Migration, Art & Festival, Resilience and Landscape (click on each icon for more information).



Pilgrimage



Local Food



Migration



Art & Festival



Resilience



Landscape

The project brings together numerous rural communities, grouped under **Role Models<sup>4</sup> and Replicators<sup>5</sup>** who developed and/or enhanced **regeneration plans** via an integrated and participative process of exchange, cooperation and co-design.

In this context, both RIS3 and the RURITAGE rural regeneration plans are generating “*integrated, place-based economic transformation agendas*”<sup>6</sup> at various scales.

<sup>1</sup> Stanojev, J., & Gustafsson, C. (2019). Circular Economy Concepts for Cultural Heritage Adaptive Reuse implemented through Smart Specialisations Strategies (in press). In Proc. Sts Conf. Graz.

<sup>2</sup> Stanojev, J., & Gustafsson, C. (2021). Smart Specialisation Strategies for Elevating Integration of Cultural Heritage into Circular Economy. Sustainability, 13(7), 3685.

<sup>3</sup> Report “Linking Culture to Smart Specialisation Strategies” (2020) developed in the framework of the ROCK project

<sup>4</sup> [www.ruritage.eu/role-models](http://www.ruritage.eu/role-models)

<sup>5</sup> [www.ruritage.eu/replicator](http://www.ruritage.eu/replicator)

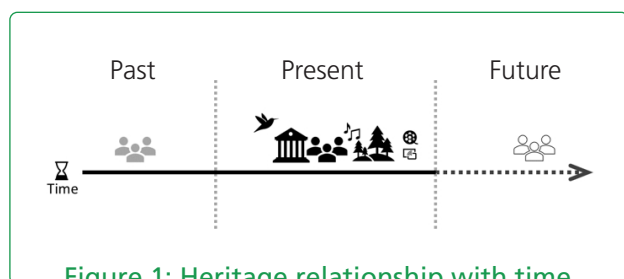
<sup>6</sup> Guide to Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisations (RIS 3) [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/presenta/smart\\_specialisation/smart\\_ris3\\_2012.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/presenta/smart_specialisation/smart_ris3_2012.pdf)



## What is Cultural and Natural Heritage?

**Heritage status** is offered to natural features, sites, buildings, objects, traditions, rituals, gastronomy, crafts, dances, music elements, language, etc. in recognition of their valuable and unique historical, archaeological, ethnological, anthropological artistic or/and technological characteristics. These are valuable elements from the past and/or present **that deserve to be preserved and passed to future generations.**<sup>7</sup>

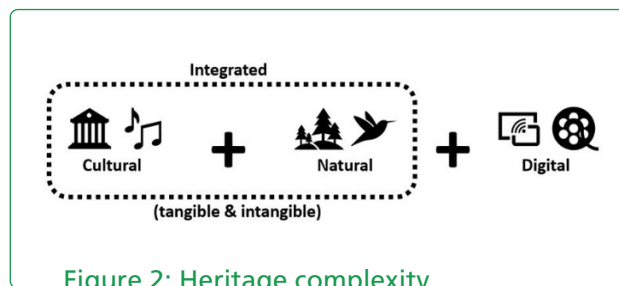
The **heritage concept** is admittedly rather complex. The **Faro Convention** defines it as: *“a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time.”*<sup>8</sup>



**Figure 1: Heritage relationship with time**

Source: the author

In recent years, not only has the importance of both anthropic and natural elements been acknowledged, but also their **intertwined relationship**. Since neither exists in a vacuum, they are increasingly discussed together in a variety of concepts that include CNH, cultural landscape, built environment and Baukultur. Since 80% of the EU territory is rural,<sup>9</sup> a considerable part of its heritage, and associated **intertwined relationships**, is located there.



**Figure 2: Heritage complexity**

Source: the author

Often, heritage is associated with **tangible** objects but its equally valuable **intangible** component should not be forgotten. Moreover, in the last three decades, since many ideas were directly developed in a digital format, **digital heritage**<sup>10</sup> is also growing in importance.

Furthermore, over the last decades, heritage has often become a component of new **Culture and Creative Industries**<sup>11</sup> (CCI) products and/or performances. This not only emphasises the value of heritage, but also the ongoing opportunity to create new ways of linking, interacting and engaging with the **past, present and future** via contemporary means.

Because of its complexity and intertwined nature, CNH is increasingly recognised, not just as a **key driver for the regeneration of rural territories**, but also as the **fourth pillar of sustainable development**,<sup>12</sup> a **“powerful catalyst”**<sup>13</sup> and an **“invaluable resource”**<sup>14</sup> for local communities and governments.

<sup>7</sup> Based on the UNESCO definition <https://whc.unesco.org/en/about>

<sup>8</sup> European Union Council. Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society; European Union: Brussels, Belgium, 2005. <https://rm.coe.int/1680083746>

<sup>9</sup> Long-term vision for rural areas: for stronger, connected, resilient, prosperous EU rural areas [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_21\\_3162](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_3162)

<sup>10</sup> UNESCO definition of digital heritage <https://en.unesco.org/themes/information-preservation/digital-heritage>

<sup>11</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sectors/cultural-and-creative-sectors>

<sup>12</sup> de Luca C, López-Murcia J, Conticelli E, Santangelo A, Perello M, Tondelli S. Participatory Process for Regenerating Rural Areas through Heritage-Led Plans: The RURITAGE Community-Based Methodology. Sustainability. 2021; 13(9):5212. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13095212>

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.europanostra.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/20200509\\_EUROPE-DAY-MANIFESTO.pdf](https://www.europanostra.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/20200509_EUROPE-DAY-MANIFESTO.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> [https://nws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/Cultural\\_heritage\\_A\\_powerful\\_catalyst\\_for\\_cities\\_and\\_regions.pdf](https://nws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/Cultural_heritage_A_powerful_catalyst_for_cities_and_regions.pdf)

## What are Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation?

RIS3 has been clearly defined within EU policy since 2012, when the Guide to Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisations<sup>15</sup> was developed (based on research from the Expert Group working on Knowledge for Growth<sup>16</sup>).

*"National/regional research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3) are*



*integrated,*



*place-based,*



*economic*



*transformation agendas*

*...that do five important things:*

- They **focus** policy support and investments on key national/regional priorities, challenges and needs for knowledge-based development, including ICT-related measures,
- They **build** on each country's/region's strengths, competitive advantages and potential for excellence;
- They **support** technological as well as practice-based innovation and aim to stimulate private sector investment,
- They **get** stakeholders fully **involved** and encourage innovation and experimentation,
- They **are** evidence-based and include sound monitoring and evaluation systems."<sup>17</sup>

RIS3 has three interdependent components: the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP),<sup>18</sup> governance and monitoring, and evaluation. All three should be developed and implemented during the entire RIS3 life cycle.



<sup>15</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/presenta/smart\\_specialisation/smart\\_ris3\\_2012.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/presenta/smart_specialisation/smart_ris3_2012.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> K4G Knowledge for Growth Working Group lead by Mr. Dominique Foray and advising the then Commissioner for Research, Janez Potočnik.

<sup>17</sup> Idem footnote 15

<sup>18</sup> <https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/w/the-entrepreneurial-discovery-process>





## Past, Present and Forward - From RIS3 to RIS4(+)

The first generation of RIS3 was linked with the EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020. During that time, the contents of the RIS3 were an **ex-ante conditionality** for receiving European Regional Development Funds (ERDF). That meant, regions needed to have a RIS3 for accessing certain EU funds. In the current Cohesion Policy 2021-2027, RIS3 is an **'enabling condition'**. This means it focuses on implementation via **"good governance of national or regional Smart Specialisation Strategies"**.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, there have recently been intense reflections<sup>20</sup> about the need to transition from RIS3 to **RIS4**<sup>21</sup> (and even RIS4+<sup>22</sup>). In June 2021, the President of the Committee of the Regions, Apostolos Tzitzikostas, and the Director for Growth and Innovation of the Joint Research Centre, Mikel Landabaso, launched the **"Smart Specialisation Strategies for Sustainability"** (RIS4). These are Smart Specialisation Strategies which **"ex-ante aim at improving sustainability and inclusiveness through an innovation-driven policy"**.<sup>23</sup> This means that RIS4 strategies are intended to generate **synergy between innovation and sustainability** as a natural reaction to the current climate crisis<sup>24</sup> and the aims of the European Green Deal. Developing or updating the RIS3 to a RIS4 is a voluntary choice, and should be decided jointly by the regional stakeholders and authorities involved in the EDP process. They address the sustainability-related challenges and digital transitions of the Green Deal and aim to **leave no one and no place behind**.<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, in 2020 the **Culture and Creative Regions Ecosystem** (CCRE-S3) working group was created under the Industrial Modernisation partnerships<sup>26</sup> of the **s3platform**.<sup>27</sup> It aims to stimulate new insights and opportunities regarding Culture and Creative Industries and their relationship with new technologies. Although its focus is not entirely on CNH, inevitably numerous interlinkages exist.

<sup>19</sup> 35<sup>th</sup> Breakfast@Sustainability's: Cultural and Natural Heritage for regional Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3) [www.iclei-europe.org/calendar/?c=search&uid=nbAb2dqG](http://www.iclei-europe.org/calendar/?c=search&uid=nbAb2dqG)

<sup>20</sup> Lead by The Joint Research Centre and Committee of the Regions <https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/w/a-boost-to-green-and-digital-recovery-with-regional-smart-specialisation>

<sup>21</sup> Sometimes simplified to S4

<sup>22</sup> RIS4+ (RIS4 plus) was mentioned but not yet clearly defined in the policy debates. Therefore, this document will consider predominantly RIS4.

<sup>23</sup> More information on the S3platform <https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/s4>

<sup>24</sup> Read the last report of The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) [www.iclei-europe.org/news?c=search&uid=QeAkkY0Ff](http://www.iclei-europe.org/news?c=search&uid=QeAkkY0Ff)

<sup>25</sup> JRC/COR Joint workshop on Smart Specialisation for the Recovery <https://webcast.ec.europa.eu/jrccor-joint-workshop-on-smart-specialisation-for-the-recovery-2021-04-15>

<sup>26</sup> <https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/s3-industrial-modernisation-partnerships>

<sup>27</sup> <https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

## Challenges

Current challenges specifically related to **CNH** can be grouped into three main categories<sup>28</sup>:

- Challenges related to **social and political transformations**
- Challenges related to the **environment and climate change**
- Challenges related to **technology, digitalisation and artificial intelligence**

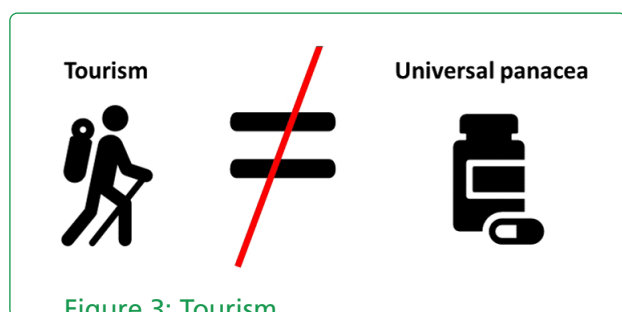


Figure 3: Tourism

Source: the author

**Rural areas** face their own specific challenges: low population density, falling and ageing populations with diminishing services, transport and digital connectivity. Additionally, stakeholders highlight that often rural areas are perceived almost entirely as agriculture and forestry spaces. Furthermore, valorisation of CNH and **redevelopment of non-urban areas is almost always imagined by developing tourism**. Although **tourism** can be, in some cases, a solution that addresses rural challenges, it is **not a universal panacea**. On the contrary, **dependence on tourism can become a challenge in itself**.

**RIS3** also faces some **particular challenges**. Notably:

- The effectiveness of horizontal and vertical governance **coordination** is still low.
- Managing **industrial transition** and the **EDP** remains highly **context-dependent** and discontinuous.
- RIS3 implementation **is not sufficiently selective** in terms of both priorities (of the niche areas of specialisation) and type of interventions<sup>29</sup>
- Stakeholders find it difficult to **reach consensus** on which niche areas of specialisation to prioritise.

They underline that there are no **clear criteria** guiding them on how to make a hierarchy and also no indicators for classifying innovation.

- Social innovations that do not fit clearly in specific **patents** and are hard to define according to a specific **Technology Readiness Level**<sup>30</sup> tend to not be considered innovations by some institutions.
- Often the innovation generated is documented but **not diffused** into the society and economy. Sometimes this is intentional, to avoid competition, other times it is due to a lack of incentives.
- Both RIS3 and CNH have been impacted by the **COVID-19 health crisis**. If no appropriate reflections are made, regions risk focusing on a quick economic recovery without a long-term strategic plan. Such an approach would result in unsustainable trends dominated by a “K-shaped recovery”<sup>31</sup> which would exacerbate already existing disparities between EU regions.

Most of the above challenges, are directly linked to the **“Fulfilment criteria for the enabling condition”**<sup>32</sup> of Cohesion Policy 2021-2027, which serves as a useful guiding list.

Regarding the specific relationship between **CNH and innovation**, regional actors and experts indicate that:

- **Innovation is often confused** with (information and communication) technologies, artificial intelligence and big data. Unfortunately, there is lower realisation that innovation can emerge from any source and in any domain (including, social, cultural, environmental and organisational).
- There is a general lack of **awareness** about the role of CNH as a source of innovation. This makes it challenging to convince **decision-makers** of its value.
- There is a significant divide in perspectives and lack of collaboration between traditional heritage conservation stakeholders and **policy/decision makers**.
- The majority of actors in the CCI sector have little or no **entrepreneurial focus and/or economic understanding**.
- The link between **culture-creativity-innovation** is often overlooked and there is a need to focus on this nexus.

<sup>28</sup> Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda 2020 of the Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage and Global Change [www.heritageresearch-hub.eu](http://www.heritageresearch-hub.eu)

<sup>29</sup> Periañez-Forte and Wilson (2021) “Assessing Smart Specialisation: The Entrepreneurial Discovery Process”

<sup>30</sup> <https://enspire.science/trl-scale-horizon-europe-erc-explained>

<sup>31</sup> Ms Elisa Ferreira, European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms during the ‘Smart Specialisation for the Recovery’ online workshop Watch the video: <https://webcast.ec.europa.eu/jrccor-joint-workshop-on-smart-specialisation-for-the-recovery-2021-04-15>

<sup>32</sup> [https://errin.eu/sites/default/files/2019-10/Towards%20RIS3%202.0%20-%20Enabling%20Conditions\\_Marek%20Przeor.pdf](https://errin.eu/sites/default/files/2019-10/Towards%20RIS3%202.0%20-%20Enabling%20Conditions_Marek%20Przeor.pdf)



## Policy context

CNH and RIS3 benefit from a generally favourable **policy context**. CNH is specifically mentioned in the **2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development** under **Target 11.4 of SDG Goal 11**. According to this target, “strengthen[ing the] efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage” is a key component for making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.<sup>33</sup> **The Council of the European Union** declared in 2014 that heritage is a “strategic resource for a sustainable Europe” and a “driver for development and growth”.<sup>34</sup> **The European Heritage Alliance**<sup>35</sup> further highlights that cultural heritage is “a powerful catalyst for the future of Europe”. And according to **The Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage and Global Change** “heritage science” has recently emerged as a new field of study.<sup>36</sup> The European Green Deal and CNH have also been brought together by the **European Cultural Heritage Green Paper**.<sup>37</sup>

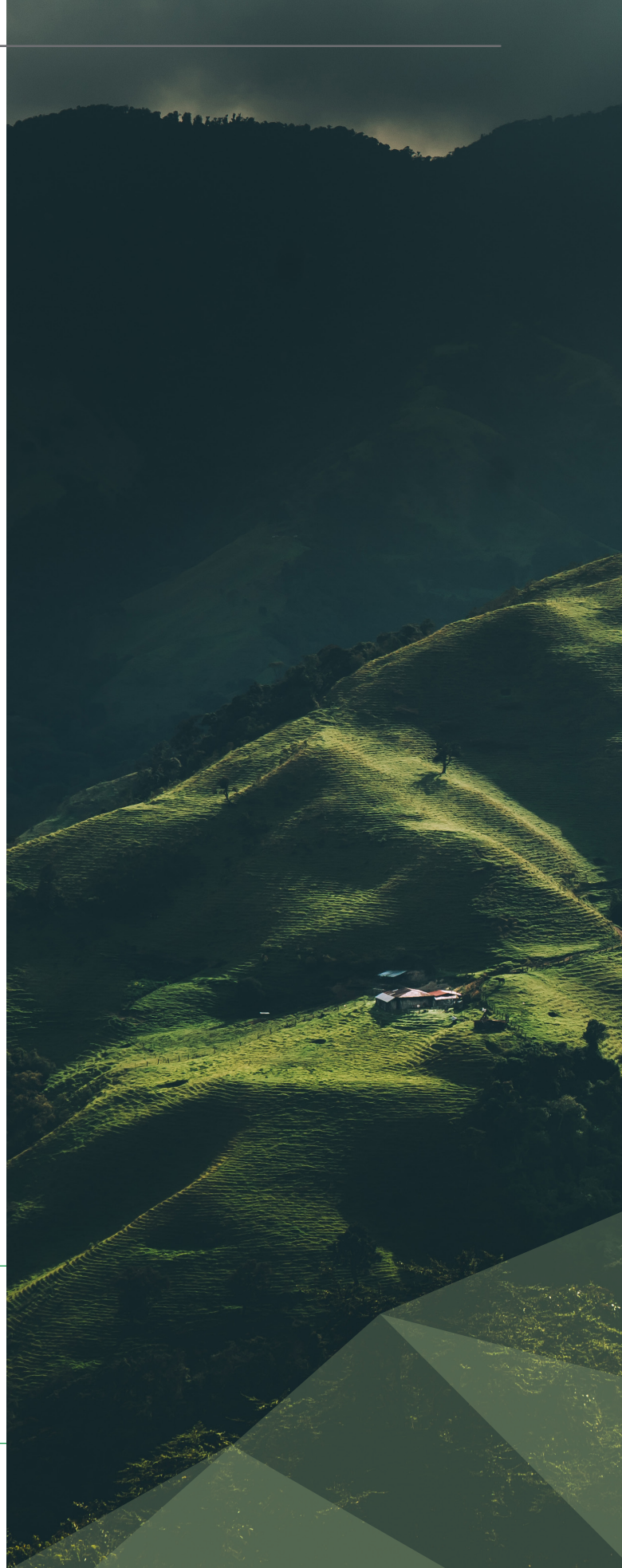
Finally, **The Long-term Vision for the EU’s Rural Areas**, presented in 2021, is a valuable policy document which presents a vision for **stronger, more connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040**. Taking into account the challenges presented above, it identifies the EU’s green and digital transitions and the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic as specific opportunities to address challenges, foster balanced regional development and stimulate economic growth in rural regions. The Vision is accompanied by an **EU Rural Action Plan** with several flagship initiatives from which those under the “stronger rural areas” component are directly related to research and innovation.

### Montaña de Salento

Source: Santiago Sierra Durán, Salento in Colombia

*“Traditional house on the mountainside in the central mountain range in Salento, Quindío.”*

1<sup>st</sup> place in the [RURITAGE Photo Competition](#)



<sup>33</sup> 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

<sup>34</sup> Conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe [www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/142705.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/142705.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> <http://europeanheritagealliance.eu>

<sup>36</sup> Page 5, Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda 2020 of the Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage and Global Change

<sup>37</sup> [https://issuu.com/europanostr/docs/20210322\\_european\\_cultural\\_heritage\\_green-paper\\_ex](https://issuu.com/europanostr/docs/20210322_european_cultural_heritage_green-paper_ex)



# Recommendations

The research that informs this policy document allows us to recommend some necessary actions for initiating and managing the challenging process of (re)framing CNH as a crucial part of RIS3/4.

Before clarifying the recommendations, it is important to acknowledge that there is a clear need to align all policy documents and funding streams, in order to achieve the goals of RIS3/4 and CNH. RIS3/4 processes are dynamic and complex and in order for them to be successful, they require trust, cooperation and continuity. RIS3/4 is not just about research and innovation, it is an (integrated, place-based) economic transformation agenda.

The following comprise the policy recommendations aimed at achieving better inclusion of CNH in RIS3/4:





## General approach

- 1** Innovation is often achieved by combining siloed knowledge and by looking at certain aspects from new perspectives. Therefore, it is paramount that **CNH experts and RIS3 experts go outside their comfort zones and interact with experts from seemingly unrelated sectors.**

  - If you are a **CNH actors and/or expert, contact the RIS3 representative** in your region and express your interest to be involved in the EDP. Explain and show that CNH can be a source for innovation. (Do not be discouraged by possible reluctance at first.) Take active steps in understanding RIS3, engage in the EDP in your region and try to inform yourself on aspects related to the “*commercialisation*” of your products and services.
  - **If you are a RIS3 actors and/or expert** reflect if the EDP of your region includes CNH actors and/or experts and, if not, invite them to participate in providing innovative perspectives from the CNH sector. (Do not be discouraged by possible reluctance at first.) Take active steps in understanding CNH, engage in the heritage debates in your region and try to inform yourself on aspects related to social innovation.
- 2** **Embrace a broader view on innovation and try to look at CNH from new perspectives.** Go beyond the mainstream (and often narrow) view of technology-driven products and services and acknowledge the existence of social, environmental, organisational and process innovations. CNH can be a source for research and innovation and not just the object of tradition, protection and conservation. This can be undertaken by thoroughly analysing and understanding the local/ regional reality via a well-managed EDP.
- 3** Contribute to **changing existing mind sets** and attitudes about the connections between heritage and innovations.
- 4** **Carefully reflect on the role CNH has played in the past, the one it is currently playing and the one it can play in the future,** in your particular region. Society, landscapes and the environment are constantly changing and therefore generate new and sometimes unexpected conditions that have never existed before. This can be where opportunities lie dormant.
- 5** Remember, also, that **CCI** are an excellent way to bring CNH features to life by linking the past, present and imagined future.
- 6** Remember to **investigate and explore intangible heritage** that exists in your region, since it is often an overlooked resource.
- 7** **Consider and reflect on CNH as a topic for research and innovation** and as a possible driver of post-pandemic recovery and sustainable development for the “*common good*”.<sup>38</sup> If the regional analysis and the EDP confirm it, select CNH as one of the niches/ areas of specialisation.
- 8** **Explore and develop further the concept of social innovation** in relation to CNH, defining cohesive methods, indicators and standards in order to recognise and valorise it properly.
- 9** **Reflect and approach both RIS3/4 and CNH in a holistic and complementary way.** Try to integrate culture, heritage, science, technology, entrepreneurship and innovation for a positive economic transformation of the region.
- 10** **Identify synergies and natural connections with other complementary topics** such as agro-food, art and festivals, healthy living, landscape, biodiversity, ecotourism and ICT.
- 11** Think of the role that CNH can play for human **well-being and health, education and lifelong learning** (skills development); areas which often remain unexplored in this context.

<sup>38</sup> The New Leipzig Charta (2020) [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/brochure/new\\_leipzig\\_charter/new\\_leipzig\\_charter\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/brochure/new_leipzig_charter/new_leipzig_charter_en.pdf)

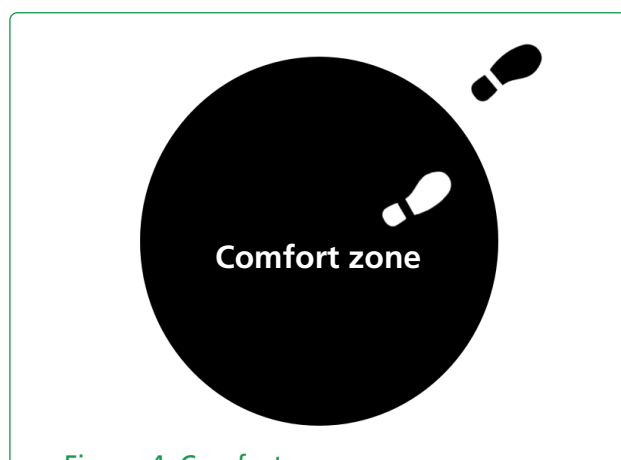
## General approach (continuation)

**12** **Avoid the trap of maintaining a non-authentic traditional/rustic image of your village**, because this type of “fossilisation”<sup>39</sup> will most likely inhibit innovative ideas. Investigate the potential of CNH in your area starting from the question: “*how can we improve the overall quality of life (environment, culture, society, technology, economy) in our region/town/village by using the existing/authentic CNH resources in an innovative way?*” and not from the question: “*what rustic/romanticised/traditional image do (wealthy urban) visitors like to see, in order to spend money here?*”

**13** **Conceive CNH beyond an opportunity for developing (traditional) tourism and try to diversify the rural economy**. Reflect on possible new and innovative products and services which are concomitantly good for locals and visitors alike. The current COVID-19 pandemic has strongly impacted the tourism sector, and in the last months new **Niche Innovation Areas and Trends**<sup>40</sup> have emerged. These will inevitably redefine both the consumers and providers of tourism services.

**14** Approach and develop the RIS3/4 in conjunction with other **Regional, Spatial and/or Economic Strategies**.

**15** Use the **fulfilment criteria for the enabling condition** of the of Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 as a guiding list.



**Figure 4: Comfort zone**  
Source: the author

## Improving governance

**16** **Bring together the often-segregated CNH and RIS3/4 experts, stakeholders and networks** with the aim of finding common ground, complementarity and synergies and building interdisciplinary cooperation, partnerships and alliances.

**17** **Bring together stakeholders and experts from urban and rural areas**. Make sure that grassroots contacts and networks from rural areas are represented, since they will play a fundamental role in understanding and also activating the rural communities.

**18** Engage with local governments/ villages/ cities/ regional **associations and organisations**, RIS3/4 and CNH communities and platforms, including the thematic (working) groups of the s3platform.<sup>41</sup>

**19** Communicate and cooperate with **higher administrative levels and departments, at regional and national level**, to secure integration with other strategies and especially the RIS3 developed at country level.

**20** **Raise awareness and share knowledge** with the actors that are active in cultural heritage about **commercialisation** of their products and services.

**21** Make sure your EDP and RIS3 have not just sound and robust governance, but also **monitoring and evaluation processes**, since these are often cited as a weakness of RIS3/4 processes.

**22** **Reflect on RIS3/4 and CNH as an integrated territorial development process** in which rural, peri-urban, in-between and non-urban spaces are also considered and not just focused on business, research and innovation related to the main cities and their immediate urban hinterlands.

<sup>39</sup> Read more under „Better Mutual Understanding for Rural-Urban Synergies” section, of the Cultural Connections Learning Hub of the ROBUST project <https://rural-urban.eu/learning-hub/cultural-connections>

<sup>40</sup> Read more on the Be.CULTOUR project website [www.becultour.eu](http://www.becultour.eu)

<sup>41</sup> <https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/about-us>



## Recommendations for regions at the start of developing their RIS3/4

- 23** **Think of CNH not as a liability** (dominated by restrictions, protectionist rules and conservation obligations) **but as an opportunity** for research and as a driver of innovation.
- 24** Acknowledge **heritage in its entire complexity**, beyond just its traditional image. Acknowledge that heritage should be considered in an integrated way, including, **cultural, natural and digital** components as well as **tangible and intangible** aspects.
- 25** **Involve and engage the local stakeholders in clarifying what CNH means for them** and its potential innovation pathways. Do this by also reflecting on the envisioned beneficiaries of the RIS3 niche/ area of specialisation.
- 26** **Reflect realistically** in the EDP on whether CNH **can be a unique niche/ area of specialisation**. Do this in a way that ensures RIS3 remains selective and focused.
- 27** **Select relevant indicators and frameworks** appropriate for measuring and monitoring the impact of CCI and CNH in the innovation context.
- 28** **Develop indicators** that can be relevant for **these innovations** (social, environmental, organisational, etc.) which cannot be expressed through patents and RTLs.
- 29** Make sure that, if CNH is recognised as a value and is selected as one of the unique niches/ areas of specialisation, **the budget allocation also reflects this aspect**.
- 30** **Learn from other regions in Europe** which have already included CNH in their RIS3/4. Their experience can be of great help.
- 31** **Actively search for practice examples** (both about successes and also about failures) since they can provide valuable inspiration.





## Recommendations for regions already implementing their RIS3

- 32** Think critically about whether you should update your current RIS3 or not and whether CNH should be included.
- 33** Reflect realistically if you want to also add the voluntary "*ex-ante aim at improving sustainability and inclusiveness through an innovation-driven policy*"<sup>42</sup> and therefore make the transition from RIS3 to RIS4.
- 34** Make sure that EDP processes will not cease after the niche/ area of specialisation had been selected. It should also be used during the implementation and monitoring and evaluation phases.
- 35** Ensure that innovation is also diffused in the economy and society at large. Too often innovation remains isolated and untapped.
- 36** Make sure the EDP process allows new experts to join the co-creating process and not become an elite group focused on protecting their interests. The RIS3/4 need to be open to broader stakeholders including those from CNH sector.
- 37** Use all opportunities to make the European Commission and other EU institutions aware that there is a need to have European initiatives also dedicated to rural areas<sup>43</sup> in addition to the urban (e.g. Creative Cities Initiatives, European Capital of Culture, Urban Innovation Action, etc.). The opinions of regional authorities matter!



<sup>42</sup> More information on the S3platform <https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/s4>

<sup>43</sup> Read more here: [www.ruritage.eu/news-events/thinking-beyond-the-covid-19crisis-heritage-based-opportunities-for-rural-regeneration-eu-vision-paper](http://www.ruritage.eu/news-events/thinking-beyond-the-covid-19crisis-heritage-based-opportunities-for-rural-regeneration-eu-vision-paper)



## Synergies with existing initiatives, programmes and funding sources

- 38** Remember that **RIS3/4 is one tool for reaching various EU, national and/or regional agendas and goals** (below) and not an additional, isolated strategy.
- 39** Remember that **Agenda 2030**, its 17 **Sustainable Development Goals** developed by the UN, the **Paris Agreement** and the recent **Glasgow Climate Pact**, are key global frameworks that highlight both the need and the pathways for sustainable development.
- 40** Remember that the **European Green Deal** is the overarching and integrated set of policies aimed at making Europe climate neutral in 2050. Therefore, regardless of whether you decide to remain focused on RIS3 or commit to RIS4: Communities will be impacted by the Deal, and inevitably need to take sustainability into account more and more. For this reason some local governments have started developing **Local Green Deals**.<sup>44</sup>
- 41** Make use of the **s3platform** and consider engaging in the **Culture and Creative Regions Ecosystem** (CCRE-S3) working group existing under the Industrial Modernisation Partnerships.
- 42** **Make sure your region's description on the s3platform is updated, accurate** and (if relevant) included aspects related to CNH. This will allow others to learn from your RIS3 and to engage with you.
- 43** Take into account the **European Cultural Heritage Green Paper 2021**, explore the **Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage and Global Change (JPI CH) Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda 2020**<sup>45</sup> and get inspired about **research areas** your region could explore.
- 44** Inform yourself about the **Rural Revitalisation Platform** and the **European Startup village forum**<sup>46</sup> (as well as support for rural entrepreneurs), announced under the Action Plan of the **Long-term Vision for EU's Rural Areas**.
- 45** **The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme**<sup>47</sup> can be an excellent opportunity to approach CNH in your area in an integrated way and to relate it to spatial distribution.
- 46** The **New European Bauhaus**<sup>48</sup> initiative can be an outstanding opportunity for regeneration of CNH and for generating innovation especially in relation to buildings, sites and places.
- 47** Think about the opportunities offered by **European Capital of Culture** (ECoC) (e.g. positive experience in Basilicata region during and after the ECoC Matera 2019) and reflect on the possibility to integrate your RIS3/4 with it, by supporting one city or even an area in your region (e.g. as done by Ruhr area in 2010<sup>49</sup>) in applying to become ECoC.
- 48** Link your work on RIS3/4 to the **Cohesion Policy Objective 1 – A Smarter Europe** which has four specific objectives supported by ERDF Innovations, particularly in the relationships between CNH, technology, research and the regional territory.
- 49** Consider the opportunities offered by the **Innovation Fund**<sup>50</sup> recently opened by the European Commission.
- 50** Support your work on RIS3/4 and CNH by applying to **Horizon Europe** and the recently-launched **Mission calls**.

44 [www.iclei-europe.org/news/?c=search&uid=OgfTRn65](http://www.iclei-europe.org/news/?c=search&uid=OgfTRn65)

45 [http://jpi-ch.eu/wp-content/uploads/2156\\_JPI-Cultural-Heritage.pdf](http://jpi-ch.eu/wp-content/uploads/2156_JPI-Cultural-Heritage.pdf)

46 <https://eustartupvillageforum.eu>

47 [www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes](http://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes)

48 New European Bauhaus  
[https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/index\\_en](https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/index_en)  
And Communication from the European Commission to the

European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions New European Bauhaus: beautiful, sustainable, together COM(2021) 573 final.  
[https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/system/files/2021-09/COM%282021%29\\_573\\_3\\_EN\\_annex.pdf](https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/system/files/2021-09/COM%282021%29_573_3_EN_annex.pdf)

49 <http://archiv.ruhr2010.de>

50 [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_21\\_6042](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_6042)

## Additional Resources

- [Eye on RIS3 Platform](#)
- [Guide on Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation \(RIS3 Guide\)](#)
- [The JRC/COR Joint workshop on smart specialisation for the recovery](#) (April, 2021),
- Report [Linking Culture to Smart Specialisation Strategies](#) (2020) developed in the framework of the ROCK project
- [The paper Smart Specialisation Strategies for Elevating Integration of Cultural Heritage into Circular Economy](#), developed by J Stanojev, C Gustafsson (2021) under the framework of the CLIC project.
- The report [Circular governance models for adaptive reuse of cultural heritage](#) developed by ICLEI Europe in the framework of the CLIC project
- [The 35<sup>th</sup> Breakfast at Sustainability's](#) dialogue (November 2020),
- The RURITAGE Board of Regions<sup>51</sup> [Workshop](#) (November 2021).
- [Thinking beyond the COVID-19 crisis: heritage-based opportunities for rural regeneration](#) (October 2020),
- RURITAGE Replicators and Role Models regeneration/enhancement plans.
- [Mannheim Message](#)<sup>52</sup>

## Acknowledgements

This policy document is a culmination of inputs from diverse experts and practitioners. Feedback from Ruritage's Board of Regions, specifically Mr. **Marcin Staniszewski** (Opolskie Centre for Economy Development, Opolskie, Poland), Ms. **Emmanuelle Lejeune** (Mission to the EU of Hauts-de-France Region, France) and Mr. **Hannes Slamanig** (Cross-border networks and Interreg Office of the Carinthian State Government, Carinthia Region, Austria) were instrumental in the creation of this paper. Furthermore, thanks to the speakers at the **35<sup>th</sup> Breakfast at Sustainability's** dialogue for their valuable insights. Finally, a special thanks goes to Professor **Christer Gustafsson** and Dr **Jermina Stanojev** for their valuable academic knowledge and reflections.

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2021

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## Based on what knowledge?

The present Policy Recommendations are based on specific insights derived from<sup>53</sup>:

- The **35<sup>th</sup> Breakfast at Sustainability's dialogue** (Nov. 2020),
- **Thinking beyond the COVID-19 crisis: heritage-based opportunities for rural regeneration** (Oct. 2020),
- The **RURITAGE Board of Regions<sup>54</sup> Workshop** (Nov. 2021),
- The **JRC/COR Joint workshop on smart specialisation for recovery** (Apr. 2021).
- The **RURITAGE project**

The images used in this document had participated in the [RURITAGE Photo Competition](#), for which 168 participants across the world submitted their photos: Urosh Grabner (cover page), Kjetil Bentsen (p.4 / p.5), Santiago Sierra Durán (p.7), Stefan Leitner / Eva Maria Vorwagner (p.8), Alessia Bertuca (p.11), Wenche Løyning (p.12)

<sup>51</sup> Read about all the Regions here: [www.ruritage.eu/collaborate-with-us/call-of-interest-for-regions](http://www.ruritage.eu/collaborate-with-us/call-of-interest-for-regions)

<sup>52</sup> Available also in French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Slovenian, Spanish

<sup>53</sup> Hyperlinks available under „Additional Resources”

<sup>54</sup> Read about all the Regions here: [www.ruritage.eu/collaborate-with-us/call-of-interest-for-regions](http://www.ruritage.eu/collaborate-with-us/call-of-interest-for-regions) and here [www.iclei-europe.org/news/?c=search&uid=yTJJ8aip](http://www.iclei-europe.org/news/?c=search&uid=yTJJ8aip)



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# RURITAGE

Heritage for Rural Regeneration

## Policy Recommendations

for the Integration of Cultural and Natural Heritage (CNH) within  
Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3/4)

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This project has received funding from the European Union's  
Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme  
under grant agreement No 776465.

