

Romania

CULTURAL HERITAGE PROJECT

Cultural Heritage Sector

Project Number: P058284 – Learning and Innovation Loan

Loan Amount/Project Costs: \$5.0 million/\$6.9 million

Cost of Cultural Heritage Component: \$6.9 million (100 percent of total project costs)

Task Manager: Thomas Blinkhorn

Fiscal Year of Bank Approval: 1998

Project objectives, activities, and preparation plans or implementation status

This project's development objective is to help Romania improve its cultural heritage strategy in order to preserve important cultural heritage sites and assets. The revised strategy will test different types of partnerships - public-private, community based, national-international - with the aim of improving management and making it more sustainable and cost-effective. The project focuses on the Brancusi sculptural ensemble, Brancovean palace ensembles, Saxon villages development, and institutional capacity strengthening.

Despite a slow start and difficulties in implementation, performance is satisfactory, and the project is expected to achieve its development objective. Restoration of the main project component - the Brancusi sculptural ensemble, one of Romania's most revered artistic complexes - is mostly complete. In addition, work is nearing completion at the two 18th century Brancovean palace ensembles, located just outside Bucharest. These important cultural assets should contribute to the development of tourism.

Work is also complete or nearing completion in three Saxon villages in Transylvania (including the villages of Viscri and Mosna, where Britain's Prince Charles has taken an interest and provided some assistance); the work has supported cultural preservation as well as community-based income-generating activities. At the government's request, the project closing date has been extended by a year to 31 December 2003. Project savings, estimated at about \$2 million, are being used for a variety of cultural preservation activities related to the original project objectives.

Project benefits

Key elements of the improved national strategy for cultural heritage are in place, including two new laws regulating management of cultural assets. In addition, a national cultural inventory is being conducted with assistance from the project; the inventory will be a critical element of the national strategy and enhance management of national patrimony. The government, particularly the ministries of culture and finance, appear committed to testing different partnership approaches for the preservation of priority cultural sites and assets. This should also make overall management more sustainable.

Preparation or implementation challenges

No risks are expected for the final implementation of the project.