



**INT-HERIT**

IMPLEMENTATION NETWORK OF HERITAGE STRATEGIES IN SMALL AND MEDIUM- SIZED EUROPEAN CITIES

# PEER REVIEW REPORT

## Armagh City Centre's key Heritage Assets



# 1. Peer Review Methodology

Within the frames of INT-HERIT project there will be organized Peer Reviews aiming to review the site visits performed during the transnational meetings. Outputs and conclusions will be derived to present in benchmarking format the Peer Reviews will help all partners to learn with each other. It will result in useful recommendations that will act as inputs for the project deliverables.

## 1.1. The Peer Review Process

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Peer review is the evaluation of a task, a project, a policy by one or more people of similar competence to the producers of the task/project/policy (peers). It constitutes a form of self-regulation and self-assessment by qualified members of a profession within the relevant field. Peer review approaches are employed to maintain standards of quality, improve performance, and provide credibility.

The European Union has been using peer review in the 'Open Method of Co-ordination' of policies in the fields of active labour market policy since 1999. A peer review is a process where dedicated representatives exchange information and experiences on a specific topic for an effective policy or practice. The Peer Review process comprises a range of presentations and interactive working groups there are included visits to local sites where the policy can be seen in operation.

## 1.2. Peer Review Implementation

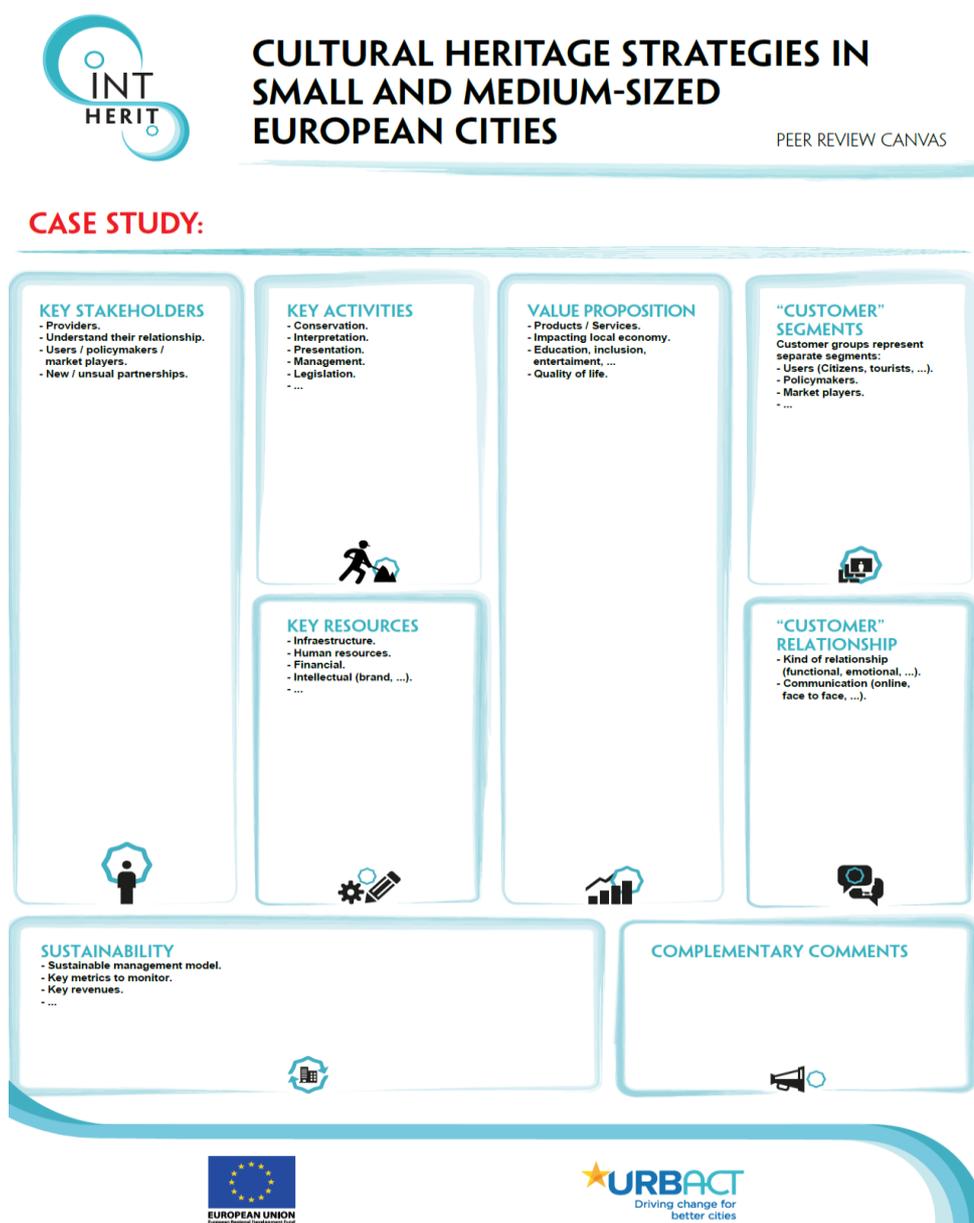
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- Peer review will be organized after each site visit in all transnational meetings;
- An open innovation approach will be followed in the peer review process. That means peers as well as interviewers (host city) are put together in round tables to review the site:
- 3 tables will be organized:

- 3 city partners + host city representative + other (ex: local experts)
- 3 city partners + host city representative + other (ex: local experts)
- 2 city partners + host city representative + other (ex: local experts)
- A good preparation of the “host city representative” taking part in the review is essential to ensure an effective and fruitful peer review;
- The LG should be invited for the peer review
- The peer review process is implemented using a taylor made Canvas tool for INT-HERIT;
- The peer review comments that goes to the Canvas tool are based on the group discussion;
- Comments could be:
  - Recommendations for improvements
  - Observations
  - Questions
  - ....
- The peer review session should have a minimum duration of 1 hour and 15 minutes;
- In the end of the session, the host city representative makes a 5 minutes presentation about the work developed in each table;
- After the peer review, the Ad-hoc make a report compiling the outcomes of each round table.

### 1.3. INT-HERIT Peer Review CANVAS

INT-HERIT PEER REVIEW CANVAS is a simple, relevant, and intuitively understandable model that allows the cities to implement a peer review activity using a shared language. The eight basic building blocks cover the main areas of analysis: Key stakeholders, key activities, key resources, value proposition, “customer” segments and “customer” relationship, sustainability and complementary comments. INT-HERIT PEER REVIEW CANVAS like a blueprint for a strategy to be implemented through organizational structures, processes, and systems, forming the basis for a handy tool.



## 2. The Site – ARMAGH CITY CENTRE'S KEY HERITAGE ASSETS

Partner	Armagh City Centre's key Heritage Assets
 <p><b>Armagh City Banbridge &amp; Craigavon</b></p>	<p>Armagh City has an extraordinary heritage with 90 listed buildings and many others of architectural and historical value. The project will regenerate the economic heart of Armagh City, through the restoration and regeneration of historic buildings and the delivery of an exciting programme of complimentary activities to ensure that everyone who lives, works and visits Armagh City can enjoy, experience and learn about our unique and wonderful heritage. The project will enhance the visual appearance and the physical, economic and social conditions of the ACA. The clustering of refurbished properties will act as a catalyst for the refurbishment and regeneration of neighbouring properties. As a result, the areas will succeed as retail, cultural and residential areas, with an emphasis on vibrant mixed use economy, providing a safe and attractive environment while injecting a pride of place and supporting independent shops and small businesses with unique identities and styles.</p>

## 3. Working Groups

The network members were organized in 3 groups, each group with a specific topic to be discussed, namely:

- I'm a visitor at Armagh:
  - Visitor experience
  - The story to tell
  - Visitor orientation scheme
  - Make a touristic product
  - Tools (video, website, events, promotional materials, social networks, tourism events in target markets
- Benchmark Armagh
  - With your city
  - With cities that you know
  - Where?why? What? How? With whom should they speak?
- Armagh conservation and historical buildings
  - Not a museum but a visitor experience based on real people and real stories
  - Brand personality clear identified by locals and visitors
  - Blend of contemporary architecture
  - Ensuring policy alignment
  - Work with private owners
  - New uses for old buildings

## 4. Peer Review Session

To kick off the peer review session, the Armagh local group present to the INT-HERIT partnerships the background and present context of Armagh Townscape Heritage. Following panel presentations and a walking tour of the heritage assets, individual groups discussed the potential for the heritage assets of Armagh to become a major draw for tourists and visitors.

The team enjoyed a panel discussion with three local experts; Primrose Wilson, Keith Gilmour and Brian Johnston, who took the group through the history of Armagh and also explained architectural and touristic aspects about the future implementation plan for Armagh.

<p><b>Benchmark other cities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kuldiga, Latvia - <a href="http://kuldiga.lv/lv/">http://kuldiga.lv/lv/</a></li> <li>- Ypres Belgium – <a href="https://www.ieper.be/">https://www.ieper.be/</a></li> <li>- Bath, UK - <a href="https://visitbath.co.uk/">https://visitbath.co.uk/</a></li> <li>- RYE, USA - <a href="http://www.ryeny.gov/">www.ryeny.gov/</a></li> <li>- Damme Belgium - <a href="http://www.damme.be/">http://www.damme.be/</a></li> <li>- Alba Julia, Romania - <a href="http://www.apulum.ro/">www.apulum.ro/</a></li> <li>- Sigulda, Latvia - <a href="https://www.sigulda.lv/public/">https://www.sigulda.lv/public/</a></li> <li>- Espinho, Portugal – <a href="http://www.cm-espeinho.pt">www.cm-espeinho.pt</a></li> <li>- Brasov, Romania - <a href="http://www.brasovcity.ro/">http://www.brasovcity.ro/</a></li> <li>- Michelin guide for churches</li> <li>- Religious tourism (church, ceremony, hotel)</li> <li>- Cathedral cities</li> <li>- Festivals cities</li> <li>- St Patrick + Armagh merchandising</li> <li>- Religious tourism</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Events: St. Patrick's day, Georgian Festival; Blues music Festival; Cider Festival</li> <li>- Improve city videos</li> <li>- Create a circle path around the city to get a sense of the Landscape</li> <li>- Promote a signature dish of Armagh ex: apple pie</li> <li>- I googled Armagh and watched the video Brian showed us earlier. The video is well done but names of buildings and places need to be subtitled onto the video so the visitor can note what they definitely want to see</li> <li>- Pedestrian mobility</li> <li>- Signage authentic</li> </ul>	<p><b>Value Proposition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warming people</li> <li>- Thematic tourism – Armagh; architecture, religion and cultural tours</li> <li>- Branding “the oldest city in northern Ireland”</li> <li>- Not a museum but a visitor experience based on real people and real stories</li> <li>- Brand personality clear identified by locals and visitors</li> <li>- Blend of contemporary architecture – protect old buildings but integrate the new ones in the city architecture</li> <li>- New uses for old buildings – book shops, coffee shops for young people; IT places; co-working places; experimentation places.</li> <li>- Build a pedestrian zone at the City centre</li> <li>- Pilgrims Ways; you want to walk these historic places, talk to people, learn new things stay in different places, eat local/regional food</li> <li>- St Patrick should be a massive focus for visitors as its “pure culture, pure history. Its tangible. Its history that happened here”</li> <li>- Could develop an architectural and cultural walk called ‘The Robinson Way’</li> <li>- Merchandise genuine</li> </ul>	<p><b>“Customer” Segments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not mass tourism</li> <li>- What does ‘Lonely Planet’ say about Armagh?</li> <li>- What Bed and Breakfast provision is in Armagh?</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Key Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- St Patrick's Walk; is it marketed well? How many tourists walk this? As a visitor to Armagh I saw no signs of this walking trail. Needs to be marketed more. Could link up to Pilgrims Path?</li> <li>- I googled the Georgian Festival online. The branding and information is excellent and the brochure is brilliant</li> </ul>		<p><b>“Customer” Relationship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sell the city identity locally and abroad</li> <li>- Friendly city for tourists - Signposting to guide tourists through the city, itineraries, ...</li> <li>- The Robinson Library is amazing. Would have loved to have stayed in it longer</li> <li>- St Patrick should be a massive focus for visitors as its “pure culture, pure history. Its tangible. Its history that happened here”</li> <li>- Information points are not visible; orientation points are needed</li> <li>- As a tourist we want to meet and mix with regional people and eat regional food.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with private owners – make it clear the offer that the city has for private owners</li> <li>- Ensuring policy alignment</li> </ul>		<p><b>Complementary Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Armagh is not a city that sells itself at first sight</li> </ul>	

## 5. Main Findings

The Main Findings intends to highlight the strong ideas developed during the peer review activity and should be used as a working document for the city local group. Those are organized accordingly to the 5 project dimensions, namely:

### **Culture4Development:**

MF1: Uniqueness: *“sell city identity”; “..want to meet and mix with regional people and eat regional food”; “Thematic tourism”* – the city should explore originality based on a genuine offer of a real Georgian city. This should be combined with progressive and modern way of living in Armagh, bringing local traditions to the core of the experiences that the city can provide.

MF2: Make city vision clear for private owners: *“new uses for old buildings”; “work with private owners”; “Brand personality clear identified by locals and visitors”* – many of the built heritage belongs to private owners and to make the buildings part of tourism attraction its important to build a value proposition for private owners. Engage the private owners into the INT-HERIT local group activities and make them feel that they play a key role in city attraction. It is also important that contemporary architecture is used, blending in with the historic.

MF3: Build an integrated touristic offer: *“Pilgrims Ways: you want to walk these historic places, talk to people, learn new things, stay at unusual places, eat local/regional food”; “Events: St. Patrick’s day, Georgian Festival, Blues Music, cider festival”*; – merge stories, with Robinson legacy, with small retail business, with local food, with religion, ... Make the visitor immerse into history, heritage, active culture, fun and thrill, entertainment and relaxation.

### **Culture4Engagement:**

MF4: Local people talents sells: *“..want to meet and mix with regional people and eat regional food”; “warming people”* – an attractive city is a city that local people love to live. The local talents and skills make attractive products, tasty food, friendly behaviours and good story tellers. Bring

up these talented people to the discussion will bring out of the box ideas for Armagh tourism attraction.

**Culture4Value:**

MF5: City soft measures to create value: *“improve videos”; “signposting to guide tourists”; “Information points are not visible”* – Repeat campaigns to stay in the mind of the citizens. It is essential to maintain a presence in the minds of the target group. Therefore a repetition or further development of campaigns is recommended. Emotions are a very appropriate way to raise awareness. Stimulate cooperation between city departments. Check the suitability of your communication tools. Use online tools, direct contact in face-to-face meetings, films, etc.

MF6: Hard measures to create value: *“create a circle path around the city to get the sense of landscape”; “pedestrian mobility”; “St Patrick’s Walk”* - In cities with relatively weak economies and property markets, public assets are being to work to underpin regeneration efforts, with city partners actively leading development to stimulate growth and economic activity in core urban areas. In other cases, partners (investors) are using public sector assets as a means of guiding and shaping the type of development that takes place, in order to meet local priorities for housing, tourism or employment space, for example. Meanwhile, other places are unlocking difficult sites through more coordinated and strategic city and city-region wide approaches to managing and investing in assets, rather than on a site by site basis.

MF7: Benchmark with other EU cities: - there were a range of suggestions including some of the INT-HERIT partners cities. The benchmark key words were: Architecture, Cathedrals, Astronomy, Ecclesiastical, heritage and festivals programme. The full list of identified cities is identified in the CANVAS board.

MF8: City branding: *“Branding the oldest city in Northern Ireland”*; *“Brand personality”*; *“Merchandise genuine”* – Developing a feasible place brand strategy for Armagh based on city values and vision. Hot topics identified during the peer review discussion were: Originality; unique landscape; history; old tales; vibrant and fun; food and others.

**Culture4Measures:**

MF9: Sustainability: *“not mass tourism”*; *“Ensuring political alignment”* – a Strategic Triangle framework focus on value creation, political management, and operational capacity, are necessary to create greater success. Make sure that you have the necessary resources (human, financial and infrastructure) allocated to raise city attractiveness.

The INT-HERIT network make it clear during the peer review activity their enthusiasm and fascination for being a visitor at Armagh, as can be seen in this statement *“Would have loved to have stayed in it longer”*.