

LOCAL ACTION PLAN Vilnius Old Town

March 2011



AN URBACT II PROJECT





VILNIUS OLD TOWN

VILNIUS IS A CAPITAL OF LITHUANIA, LOCATED AT THE CONFLUENCE OF THE NERIS AND VILNIA RIVERS, AT THE BORDERLAND BETWEEN ROMAN CATHOLIC AND EASTERN ORTHODOX CULTURES.

VILNIUS OLD TOWN IS UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE SINCE 1994. BESIDES, VILNIUS IS A STOP ON THE EUROPEAN ROUTES OF BRICK GOTHIC AND BAROQUE ARCHITECTURE. THE OLD TOWN COVERS AN AREA OF 351 HA WITH APPROXIMATELY 20 000 INHABITANTS AND 1500 BUILDINGS.

Criteria for designation

Vilnius to the UNESCO World Heritage List

Criterion ii: Vilnius is an outstanding example of a medieval foundation which exercised a profound influence on architectural and cultural developments in a wide area of Eastern Europe over several centuries.

Criterion iv: the townscape and rich diversity of buildings that it preserves, Vilnius is an exceptional illustration of a central European town which evolved organically over a period of five centuries.

Brief synthesis

A Neolith settlement among and on the glacial hills in the valley around the confluence of two rivers, in 13 c. Vilnius became a capital and a political, scientific and religious centre of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL): in 15 c. the largest country in Europe, stretching from the Baltic Sea in the North to the Black Sea in the South.

Together with Lithuanians, other nations of GDL as well as their tongues, religions and cultures shaped the development of Vilnius: outstanding, multicultural and tolerant city, merging the influences of the West and the East. In 1387 the city has been granted the Magdeburg Law. The Christianity, dominating since the middle Ages, and the growing extent of Judaism were complemented by the Byzantine, the Protestant and other forms of Christianity, and the material manifestations of the communities of all these religions and confessions. The

identity of Vilnius has been always open to influences enhancing the social, economic and cultural activities of the thriving communities. These influences materialised in the works of Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque, placed furthest eastward in Europe.

After Central European masters who in 15 c. created St. Anne's Church in elaborate red brick technique, the Italian Renaissance architects of the 16–17 c., and the masters of Baroque Matteo Castello, Constante Tencalla, Giovanni Pietro Pertini and Giovanni Maria Galli, in the 18 c. there has developed a School of Vilnius Baroque, which excelled in the work of the German architect Johann Christoph Glaubitz, who worked in Catholic and Lutheran churches and Jewish synagogues, leaving an imprint in the large area of the GDL. This School was succeeded by a distinct Classicism, nurtured by a Lithuanian architect Laurynas Gucevičius in the latest Cathedral of Vilnius and the Town Hall, and in the surviving work of architects Martin Knakfuss, Vasily Stasov, Tadeusz Rostworowski, Waclaw Michnevicz, Mikhail Prozorov. The current form of the city retains its authentic qualities in the material attributes and continuous processes, traditions of the arts and life witnessing often stormy history of the city and the country and their political, economic and cultural evolution throughout the centuries.

Vilnius as a city and a phenomenon played an important role in the development of the Lithuanian and other nations of the city and its region, thus imprinting an eternal track in the cultures of the Yiddish speaking Litvak Jews, the White Russians, Poles, Russians, Lithuanian Tatars, Karaims.

Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Integrity

The radial street pattern in the Old Town remains since the Middle Ages. Its spatial structure reflects the evolution driven by changes of the styles and the political and natural calamities. The site retains the vast majority of the attributes of integrity needed to confirm the outstanding universal value: a University ensemble of the 16 c., a Town Hall with a square, the temples of all confessions, filling the street pattern without any significant gaps. Just a few places mark the damages of the occupations and wars: the Cathedral square covering the foundations of the Lower Castle, demolished after the last, 3rd partition of the Commonwealth of the Two Nations in 1795, the empty place of the Great Synagogue, demolished after the WWII, and the nearby attempted fragment of a broad avenue on the side of Vokiečių street (Deutsche gasse), and some squares or modern buildings build in the places of the demolitions of the same period.

Those features gone and changed remain in the sources of history, diligent archaeological and historical research reports, the fine and applied arts, living traditions of music, theatre and hospitality. Some spaces, uses and activities have naturally changed with developing social and economic needs, yet the formulated outstanding universal value is readily recognisable. The City has retained its political role and economic and cultural importance in the country and the region, and its current shape represents its complex history excellently.

Authenticity

The spatial pattern of the city in the natural frame and a vast majority of the buildings filling the pattern remain authentic in their shape, materials, and building technique. Many of the buildings retain material layers from several periods, as, with introduction of new styles, the buildings have been

rebuilt, incorporating the old buildings into the new ones. Those buildings that suffered from the wars and fires, and notably after the WWII were reconstructed by technical solutions typical to that time, whilst the traditional methods of restoration were used only for the monuments and the outstanding details. On the whole, the authentic attributes remain in the pattern of plots, structure and internal spatial arrangements of the buildings, distinctive elements of internal decorations and equipment, surfaces of the external walls and various decorations of the facades, doors, windows, and roofs, pavements of the streets and squares, and details of the engineering and transport infrastructure, along with the surviving intangible heritage: arts and traditions.

Further information: <http://www.vsaa.lt>

Local challenges

After the recreation of Lithuania's statehood in the early 1990s the Old Town was in decline with the heavily run-down engineering infrastructure. Living conditions in the Old Town of that time were worse than generally in the city. Vilnius Old Town Revitalisation Strategy was approved in 1996 and implementation of annual Old Town Renewal programmes started since 1998. During 1st stage of the urban area regeneration process in 1998–2003 the Old Town gradually became attractive for investors and for economical well off people.

The rapid change of the economy made an impact on its functional use – the growth in number of shops, restaurants, hotels etc. forced the decline of residents number. Today Vilnius Historic centre became a vibrant and the most attractive part of the city though at the same time there are still few neglected buildings and their complexes in the area.



Panorama of Vilnius Old Town (Photo: Vilnius OTRA)



Medieval defensive wall and the Gate of Dawn (Photo: Vilnius OTRA)

- To secure the housing function for all income households in the Old Town;
- To improve the attractiveness of public space and semi-public/ private yards for recreational purposes, in particular in remote areas of the Old Town.

Further Vilnius is going to focus on following issues:

Cultural heritage issue

Efficient and sustainable use of cultural heritage potential. The exceptional attention should be given to conservation and maintenance of the remaining authentic buildings, their environment and elements, their exposition and interpretation; preservation of historic building techniques and traditions.

Communication system

Improvement of the public communication system in the Old Town; protection of the Old Town from the impact of intensive motor vehicles; develop system of a multi-storey parkings just outside the Old Town, creation of more favourable traffic conditions for cyclists, pedestrian and disabled people.

Community Development

Vilnius prioritizes community development issue, including sensitization, awareness rising, development of consultations and dialogues, public-private system for maintenance of historic properties and financial encouragement means for property owners.

Tourism

Further development of public tourism infrastructure (set up panoramic view points, development of public recreation areas and wc). Carrying out active marketing on tourism – integration of cultural heritage into tourism programmes and routes, organisation of traditional cultural events, dissemination of information.

Key challenges regarding “integral management” of the historic urban area are:

- The development of high-rise buildings close to the Old Town and within the historic suburban area and contemporary city centre;
- The new architecture of buildings often insufficiently respond/respect the historic, spatial and townscape character of the Old Town;
- Insufficient maintenance of historic buildings and their inner yards, whose owners often have no financial capacity and/or proper knowledge about the conservation, and maintenance;
- The deteriorated engineering infrastructure (especially sewage and rain water drainage) and lack of electricity supply capacities;
- Improvement of the public funding and incentives' system for the preservation of monuments and their regular maintenance;
- Stimulation and support of private rehabilitation and maintenance initiatives and needs (in particular for inner yards to improve the recreational and green space functions).

Key challenges concerning the “Integrated revitalisation to balance/ adapt the use and function of the historic urban area to the different stakeholder needs” are:

- To improve a public transport in the historic centre (limiting the access for motor vehicles and their parking, and increasing pedestrian and cycle friendly routes);
- To stimulate the multi-level exchange with subordinated institutions and public-private partnerships/ cooperation with the private sector (investors) and the local community (citizens and entrepreneurs) to take part in the revitalisation process, raising the awareness about the cultural heritage values and needs for their preservation;
- To connect the Old Town with the riverside as a green recreational area;
- To attract more cultural and conference tourism (development of tourism strategy/ tourism marketing concept);



Aušros Vartų Street (Photograph: Saulius Paukštys)

Overview of experiences and good-practice examples

Vilnius has set up a number of policies and management strategies to safeguard the cultural heritage values and the sustainable development of the historic urban landscape.

The most important are:

Vilnius Old Town Revitalisation Strategy prepared by the group of international experts with the support of the World Bank in 1995–1996. The Strategy provided for the need of setting up Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency (OTRA), which was established in 1998 by Vilnius City Council. Vilnius Old Town Revitalisation programs are implemented annually since 1998. The program consist of physical renewal of buildings and public areas, conservation and restoration of authentic buildings and their elements, community awareness rising and support, promotion of traditional crafts, development of international co-operation and wide scope activities of Information Centre. The citizens and investors evaluate these public works very positively. The quality of the upgrade and restoration carried out in the Old Town is constantly improving, and more attention is being given to the conservation of heritage. There was a number of sub-programs established within the framework of Vilnius Old Town Revitalisation program.

Cultural heritage property owners may be financially supported from the municipal budget under the "Community Development" program. The owners may get compensation of up to 50% of the total renewal costs for roof renovation, street facades and building's surroundings and up to 40% of the costs for inner yard's facades and landscaping. Consultation meetings are organized, special information publications are distributed. It is consulted how to properly preserve authentic parts of buildings and their environment. The program encourages growth of the public consciousness, interest in Vilnius Old Town values and their preservation. Initially in 1990-ies the "Community Development" program was supported through UNESCO/WHC – UN/UNDP Technical Assistance Program, which included the promotion of public involvement and dissemination of information among residents and investors (Good-practice example II).

The sub-program "Lost Vilnius" is aimed to preserve authentic heritage objects or their elements as well as reconstruct the lost most significant historic objects. Commence of the sub-program featured by conservation and restoration of a number of exterior wall paintings in Old Town buildings: the Gate of Dawn, the main facade of the Sacred Cross Church, the Franciscan Chapel and Alumni buildings.

The aim of the sub-program "Fine Arts and Ethnographical Trades and Fairs" is the encouragement of traditional craftsmanship and fairs, stimulation and support for establishment of craftsmen workshops and galleries. The soft rent of municipal properties in the Old Town for the artists and craftsmen was provided. There are 16 galleries-workshops in the Old Town working under conditions of the sub-program. They organize demonstrations of manufacture processes and training of customers interested, exhibition of hand-made goods and their sale. Vilnius municipality financed design and development of engineering infrastructure for setting the Crafts Training Centre in Tymo Quarter. New pedestrian paths and sightseeing site were built and historic street was reconstructed developing the surrounding of the Centre, expected to be constructed in near future.

The sub-program "Protection of Wooden Architectural Heritage" started in 2005 after the approval of Vilnius City Wooden Architectural Heritage Protection Strategy. Number of wooden buildings were restored and renewed from the municipal budget since 2007, and some restoration works were accomplished in co-operation of private and public sectors according to the "Community Development" program.

OTRA's Information Centre established in the year 2000 develops and implements sensitization and awareness rising programs for citizens, mostly for youth – children and pupils, investors and private stakeholders, encouraging their awareness and interest in historic values and property maintenance, various ways for their safeguard and conservation. The OTRA Information Centre also arranges exhibitions, seminars, thematic walks, public debates and lessons.

Assesing impacts of new developments on the visual integrity of historic urban fabric (Good-practice example I).

Contact

Mr Gediminas Rutkauskas,
Director of Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency
otra@lithill.lt

Website

www.vilnius.lt
www.vsaa.lt

Managing authority

Lithuanian Ministry of Finance
www.finmin.lt

Good-practice examples from Vilnius (as part of the HerO Good-practice compilation published in April 2009)

I. ASSESING IMPACTS OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS ON THE VISUAL INTEGRITY OF HISTORIC URBAN FABRIC

Expressive relief of Vilnius with a height difference of 154 meters (from 76 to 230 meters) is extremely significant for the formation of the city centre landscape. The lower city terrace is being separated from the upper one by a natural green slope arc, formed by a glacier. Gladly during the rapid development of new housing areas in Soviet times the slope arc had not been urbanized and separates naturally the historic centre from the high dwelling house areas.

In 2006 there were around 200 modern high rise buildings (above 35 meters) in Vilnius. Most of them built from the 70-ties to 90-ties of the last century. Following the city development policy of that time the high rise buildings were evenly spread in North-West dwelling house areas remote from the Old Town. Until 2005 the Vilnius City Master Plan (prepared in 1998 and amended in 2004) did not regulate development of high rise buildings. In the beginning of 2007 the newly ratified Vilnius City Master Plan (valid until 2015) commenced regulations in planning and development of high rise construction by defining particular sites for such kind of development. Territories of district centers are also potential for such developments, but each case – volume and architectural forms according to Special Plan for High Rise Buildings should be precisely checked using a 3D GIS model that covers the entire city. The Special Plan for High Rise Buildings was updated in 2009.

From the year 1999 the Operative Development of Vilnius City Master Plan is conducted yearly. Monitoring of panoramic views is implemented with the help of selected viewpoints. The 3D GIS city model data base was prepared and allows modeling and testing of new construction in the existing urban context. The Model of Vilnius central part (in a scale M 1:1.000) was prepared and exposed in the Municipal Exposition Hall.

These advanced urban development regulation tools are employed in Vilnius to observe and – if necessary – restrict new development projects in the city. Each case of proposed substantial development is being tested using the 3D GIS model and then debated at the municipal Experts Board. If the case appears complicated or controversial, the Lithuanian Union of Architects is asked for their Experts' Council resolution. Then consequent requirements for necessary corrections of development projects and their architectural design are provided to the

developers. Finally, the arguments of economic and architectural demands are put together to achieve a cohesive urban and architectural solution.

OBJECTIVES

- Creating a framework of regulations for the evaluation and testing of new urban development proposals in the existing building context.
- Seeking to ensure sound spatial and morphological growth as well as safeguard uniqueness of urban landscape and panoramic features of the city.



View of high-rise buildings from Gediminas Castle (Photo: Vilnius OTRA)

KEY STEPS AND ACTIVITIES

From the year 1999 Vilnius Municipality started the Operative Development of Vilnius City Official Plan. One of the topics was monitoring of cities panoramic views from the selected most important viewpoints. Such spots were chosen through a relief and spatial-visual analysis of the natural and urban landscape. The scientific Vilnius landscape analysis was ordered by Vilnius municipality and performed by Vilnius Technical University and a group of experts. 17 sites have been chosen for monitoring of changes in the historic centre and its environs.

In 2002, taking into account growing developers' interest and attempts to develop high rise buildings, Vilnius City Board decided to develop 3D GIS model data base for the city centre that would allow evaluating properly the visual and spatial integrity of intended constructions. Since then in the municipality of Vilnius there is a constantly renewed the 3D model GIS data base of the city that allows preparing new building arrangements in the present urban context. In Vilnius municipality's Exposition Hall one can see permanently renewed model of Vilnius central part in a scale M 1:1000.

In 2002 urban planning specialists from Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VGTU) prepared a scientific study called „Establishment of Vilnius City Central Part Building Height Regulation”. In 2004 a first scheme of high rise buildings in Vilnius city centre had been prepared that for the first time set the regulation of high rise construction in Vilnius.

In 2006 Vilnius municipality together with the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania and its Department for Cultural Heritage prepared an outline of the Special Plan (conceptual part) of Protection Zone of Vilnius Old Town. The work included proposals for the complex of Vilnius cultural conservation areas and their protection zones' height analysis where present and planned high rise buildings are being evaluated.

In 2006 "High-Rise Buildings Layout Special Plan Concept in Vilnius city" has been prepared that foresees new high rise construction possible in two sites only: right bank of river Neris (new commercial and administrative centre) and in the area of the new Western Centre. It was forbidden to build high rise buildings in other territories of the city unless the Special plan and comprehensive urban analysis would be prepared.

In December 2006 a regional seminar of Baltic capital cities "High-Rise Buildings and Historic City Centre" took place in Vilnius. Participants from Riga, Tallinn and Vilnius discussed preservation and continuity of historic urban landscapes. The seminar was supported by UNESCO World Heritage Centre, and assisted by ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property). During the seminar an exhibition "High-Rise Buildings and Historic City Centre" was opened in Vilnius municipality. The joint exhibition presented urban changes in the capitals of Baltic countries. (Vilnius exhibition could be seen: www.vsa.lt/paroda_aukstybinu.htm)

In a course of 2003–2010 urban planners checked and modelled a design of every new large scale and high rise building with the help of the 3D GIS model of the city. This method helps to assess impacts of new developments on the visual integrity of the historic urban fabric. The new design of the building integrated to the 3D GIS model is presented to the Architecture and Urban Planning Council of Experts and to the Vilnius City Council during the presentation of new local development plans.

RESULTS AND IMPACTS

Main result achieved through the process using the 3D GIS model in developing buildings' design and contextualizing them in the particular urban fabric is sustaining Vilnius city's spatial and panoramic characteristics, ensuring harmonious development of city's urban landscape. The impact of this work is not the physical or urban only – it helps to convince investors and developers to approach urban development consequences more carefully and to be more deferential to aesthetic and urban landscape qualities. Both public/ municipal and private sectors: architects and developers became direct long-term beneficiaries of the 3D GIS model instrument and acquired progressing approaches towards coherence of urban and natural landscape.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While few mistakes have been made in the past, which have left high-rise buildings in various locations infringing on the visual integrity of the city, there is a growing awareness of the importance of the character and qualities of urban landscape as a defining element underpinning the Outstanding Universal Value.

Some recommendations were prepared on the base of conclusions of Vilnius Regional Seminar "High-Rise Buildings and Historic City Centre" (7–8 December 2006, Vilnius):

- 1) To determine appropriate locations, types and forms of development in and around the World Heritage cities, thorough analysis and studies have to be conducted, including economic feasibility studies into the necessity of high-rise constructions with full cost-analyses;
- 2) To utilize viewpoint, silhouette and urban morphology analyses to supplement historic townscape descriptions, to assess visual impacts on the World Heritage cities and to guide city planning upstream of development proposals – not after planning decisions have already been made – and to inform the World Heritage Committee of these analyses with related decisions.

CONTACT DETAILS

Mr Gediminas Rutkauskas,
Director of Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency,
otra@lithill.lt
www.vsa.lt



Šv. Jono Street with the Baroque belfry (Photo: Vilnius OTRA)

II. COMMUNITY SENSITIZATION AND ENGAGEMENT FOR URBAN CONSERVATION AND REVITALISATION

New generation of inhabitants coming to the Old Town seeks to adapt the historic environment to their contemporary needs according to their understanding, often failing to take into account the specific inherited and to be protected features of the architectural and urban context. As a result the respectful authenticity of historic objects or areas, unique Old Town's historically shaped character gradually suffers. Such a loss of “genius loci” – spirit of the site happens due to mental, social and urban globalization. Often social groups or persons residing or setting up their business in the historic cities. centers have no sufficient awareness of the history, culture and heritage value of the area. Rarely they associate themselves with the social and cultural values of the sites that are respected or even adored, at least by intuition, by citizens' majority. Often they have an insufficient knowledge about cultural heritage and urban preservation matters or a wish to take a relevant action.

Rapid growth of renewal works in the Old Town of Vilnius increased the need for heritage-wise sensitization and consultation of residents' and investors'. Raising awareness within the Old Town's community is one of the most important goals of Vilnius municipality and the Old Town Renewal Agency (OTRA). Set up of the Agency's Information Centre in year 2000 immediately followed by numerous consultation meetings with local residents, representatives of home owners and their associations. Number of relevant guideline brochures were issued by OTRA. “Community Development” program was started as a part of the Old Town Revitalization Program, becoming a priority of OTRA activity. Consultation and technical advise could be followed by financial support for those intending to restore or upgrade the historic property. These major activities were planned and started with the technical assistance of UNESCO WHC, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Lithuania and Edinburgh's Old Town Renewal Trust.

Since 1998 OTRA has been seeking to involve private funds to sustain the Old Town Revitalization Program. However, no appropriate legal mechanisms that would make sponsorship work (tax incentives, soft loans, etc.) existed in 2000. Since then quite a limited part of the total budget of Vilnius Old Town Revitalization Program was allotted for the support of private restoration or renovation works. Nevertheless private owners or residents could take part at the Program with the condition that the owners finance half of the price themselves. In 2000–2008 frequent public meetings and consultations took place in OTRA where the Old Town Revitalization Program was introduced to residents, emphasizing the need for proper preservation, renovation and maintenance of historic buildings and their environment.

OBJECTIVES

- To sensitize and raise cultural heritage awareness within the Old Town community
- To create the acknowledged conditions and initial will for the conservation, maintenance, and up-grade of the historic properties and urban environment
- To build transparent and effective mixed municipal-private funding mechanism as a Public-Private Partnership tool aimed for urban conservation and regeneration



Sight-seeing tour for Community (Photo: Vilnius OTRA)

KEY STEPS AND ACTIVITIES

Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency started implementation of the “Community Development” program designed for Old Town residents, property owners and investors. Initially the Program was financially supported by United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Lithuania. The program consisted of community development activities (meetings, seminars, youth participation/ training activities) and information/communication measures (information brochures and stands, the web site). Seminars for property owners and contractors on historic buildings' conservation and renovation have been organized with specialists from the Lithuanian Monuments' Restoration Institute. Conservation experts explained issues of value of historic, architectural and urban environment, its maintenance, use and upgrade. In the following years Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency continued the “Community Development” program financed from the limited Vilnius' municipal budget. The OTRA's role was consultation and technical advice for private investors, residents/homeowners as well as management of public-private projects co-financed by the owners and Vilnius municipality.

Following publications were developed and disseminated in 2000–2009:

- "How to take part in the Vilnius Old Town Revitalization Program" – 2 parts,
- "Conservation Guidelines",
- "9 Main Rules for the Maintenance of Historic Buildings";
- "Investor guidelines";
- "The Renewal of Wooden Buildings in Vilnius",
- "The Renewal of Historic Buildings of Vilnius Old Town: Windows, Doors, Gates",

Co-operation of private and public sectors commenced after the rules of financial support for private owners and project co-financing were approved by Vilnius City Board in 2000. Intensive negotiations with the owners and homeowners' associations were started first. OTRA signed first agreements with the private owners on co-financing of historic buildings' restoration and upgrade in 2001. Not all the applicants managed to consolidate their interests and collect relevant part of money so that to conclude co-financing agreement. Many complained of their bad financial situation or inability to achieve relevant consolidation among the co-owners of properties. Consequently the list of properties to be renovated was drawn up. It was based on the historic properties' evaluation criteria that had been approved by Vilnius City Board. These criteria encompassed

- heritage-conservation characteristics and function of the property;
- ratio of financial support to the applicant's investment;
- previous applicant's efforts to maintain the property and protect its cultural value;
- physical condition of the property;
- ownership status of the property and relevance of intentions in upgrading the property.



European days in Gedimino Avenue (Photo: Vilnius OTRA)

Public financial support was offered as following:

- up to 50% of costs for roof-renovation, street facades and building's environment and
- up to 40% of costs for inner yard facades, and yard environment upgrade could be covered from the municipal funds.

Totally there were about 70 objects (facades, roofs, balconies and inner yards) restored and upgraded through public-private partnership (PPP) contracts in 2000–2008.

RESULTS AND IMPACTS

The beneficiaries of Community Development program were the Old Town residents and property owners. The main gainers of the awareness raising activities were children and pupil from Vilnius kindergartens and secondary schools.

Residents and property owners were involved in the process of conservation and renewal of historic properties through implementation of public-private partnership (PPP) projects. Municipal funds were successfully and transparently used in restoring and upgrading historic properties, encouraging owners to further maintain and protect them. Confidence of residents and entrepreneurs in the municipal authorities increased. But most important result of the "Community Development" program implementation is an increase of Old Town's residents' understanding, interest and wish to maintain and protect the historic environment. There are already 8 historic buildings that were upgraded in the buffer zone of the Old Town. Number of historic property owners willing to take part at the Program and get the municipal financial support was constantly mounting until the beginning of economic crisis in 2008.



Inner yard in Pilies Street (Photo: Vilnius OTRA)

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Having almost 10 years of experience working with community development we can conclude, that only minority of property owners could afford co-financing the historic buildings' exterior restoration or proper renovation. The initial and fundamental challenge in attracting and engaging property owners into the process of historic buildings' upgrade or conservation is awakening an adequate owners' perception and knowledge about cultural heritage treatment, also an understanding of long-term economic and social benefits of such a costly and not simple undertaking.

Unfortunately general community understanding and attitude towards maintenance of their historic immovable properties remains quite inert. In former Soviet times all real estate was state owned therefore in a course of more than 45 years (2 generations!) people lost a relevant sense of responsibility and social habits in buildings' maintenance, despite the fact that these were valuable heritage objects.

After the process of property privatization commenced in 1991, the situation didn't change at once. It was expected that after privatization owners would establish Home Owners' Associations that would carry an economic responsibility. Unfortunately due to the insufficiency of legal regulations, lack of supportive incentives and socially disintegrated human intercourses houses' maintenance still remains incoherent and little effective. In view of the fact that foundation of Home Owners' Associations was entirely voluntary process, their establishment was very slow and still remains too little effective.

In the other hand, the gentrification process appeared and flooded in the Old Town in 2001. Today historic property owners consist of two major different groups: old residents living here for 30 and more years, who often cannot afford the costs of renovation, and thus sell their property to new rich owners, and new riches – young urban professionals, businessmen, foreigners. Many buildings purchased through privatization or assembled post-privatization from several owners to one entity were converted into hotels, offices, or improved apartments, with the ground floor usually occupied by catering or retail. The number of the residents in the Old Town still keeps falling and may even more radically alter social and cultural character of the site. These two different social groups live following different attitudes and values of life, therefore have nearly no trust in each other or closer intercourses. Such a social disintegration is still in process, and thus state of urban environment often reflects existing economic and social contradictions. In such circumstances it is rather difficult to join the efforts of property share holders that have sharply different capabilities and wishes though living in the same house.

In spite of these barriers and obstacles we see the community awareness raising and engagement process as a relevant instrument stimulating cultural sensitization and social consolidation. And OTRA does its best in gradually and without rush developing intercourses with different kind of historic property owners. Recognizing that Lithuanian and Vilnius' communities still experiences transitional social behavior we put an emphasis of our endeavor to the youth awareness rising and technical, financial support of exemplary historic properties' conservation and upgrade projects. In the years 2009–2010 Vilnius OTRA have had quite a number of sensitization and awareness rising programs and projects and, unfortunately, very few exemplary conservation projects.

OTRA's practice evidence that urban regeneration process most depends on communities' cultural attitudes, social intercourses and cohesion. And OTRA targets and attempts to impact progress of the situation through heritage-wise sensitization, dialog development and financial stimulation.

CONTACT DETAILS

Mr Gediminas Rutkauskas,
Director of Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency.
otra@lithill.lt
www.vsaa.lt



Literatų Street (Photo: Vilnius OTRA)



LOCAL ACTION PLAN VILNIUS

IN THE HERO NETWORK THE LOCAL ACTION PLAN IS DEFINED AS A CONCEPT PAPER THAT DESCRIBES HOW THE PARTNER CITY PLANS TO ELABORATE AN INTEGRATED CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THEIR OLD TOWN AREA

WORK PLAN FOR THE ELABORATION OF A CULTURAL HERITAGE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLAN (CHIMP) FOR THE OLD TOWN OF VILNIUS

Name of the organisation, country

City of Vilnius, Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency,
Lithuania

Goals and objectives of the Cultural Heritage Integrated Management Plan

Goal 1: Efficient and sustainable use of cultural heritage potential

Objective 1.1. Protect, maintain, and use cultural heritage

- Study the cultural heritage of the Old Town (inventory, information system, centre for heritage studies and restoration)
- Develop and implement conversion projects in Užupis and Paupys (“Architectural park”)
- Manage cultural heritage structures and sites (adaptation of derelict properties, historical cemeteries, protection of Wooden Architecture heritage)
- Adapt and use cultural heritage properties and territories for cultural events
- Carry out preventive protection of cultural heritage (preventive control, control of cultural heritage management, monitoring)
- Foster the adaptation and regeneration of the “green areas” of cultural heritage to leisure, recreation, and tourism.

Objective 1.2. Protect the uniqueness of the Old Town and boost its attractiveness

- Create the system for protecting the Old Town from the impact of motor vehicles
- Bring into spotlight the architectural and urban peculiarity of the historical centre
- Implement projects aimed at reviving crafts and small trade in the historical centre, restart the tradition of seasonal craft fairs.

Goal 2: Improvement of the communication system in the Old Town

Objective 2.1. Increase residents' mobility by public and motorless transport

- Improve the administration, management, and monitoring of public transport
- Implement public transport reform by liberalising the work of this sector.

Goal 3: Community development

Objective 3.1. Promote and develop the sense of community among residents.

- Establish community centre in the Old Town
- Bring together the community of the Old Town and promote foundation of House Owners Associations.

Goal 4: Efficient use of the tourism potential and increased tourist flows

Objective 4.1. Develop public infrastructure for tourism

- Elaborate panoramic view points of Vilnius City
- Ensure development of leisure areas and public wc

Objective 4.2. Carry out active marketing on tourism in the Old Town

- Disseminate information about natural and cultural properties
- Integrate cultural heritage into tourism programs and routes
- Organise and advertise traditional cultural events (Kaziukas and St.Bartholomeus Fairs, Days of the Capital, Vilnius music and cinema festivals)



Folk festival in the Old Town (Photo: Vilnius OTRA)

Intended result

Vilnius municipality and OTRA initiated and developed a Draft of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHIMP) for Vilnius historic city centre – the Old Town, as a result of participation at the URBACT Hero Project. The intended result expected at the beginning of the Project was to develop and approve comprehensive document that would ensure integral management of the Old Town joining both national and municipal administrative capacities. But due to the slow biurocratic processes at the national institutions as well as continuous frictions within the national and municipal interaction, desirable common decisions and agreements weren't achieved in due time. Already in the midway of the HerO Project Vilnius partners predicted that they wouldn't be able to achieve the anticipated result. Therefore approaching the concluding stage of the Project the Vilnius LSG made the decision that the final result of the HerO project in Vilnius would be just a partial – Draft of CHIMP encompassing Vilnius Old Town management affaires managed at the municipal level. When national level decision on the CHIMP for Vilnius Old Town content and development will be approved, the result achieved at the URBACT HerO Project would be offered as a systematic product reflecting municipal level intentions and plans.

Structure and content of the Cultural Heritage Integrated Management Plan

TABLE OF CONTENT

I. INTRODUCTION

II. IDENTIFYING THE SITE

Description of the site: Criteria for designation Vilnius to the UNESCO World Heritage List and Brief synthesis

Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

Integrity and Authenticity

Existing instruments and policies (strategies and plans)

III. MANAGEMENT OF THE SITE

Goals and objectives

Management and responsibilities of parties engaged

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation (Action) Plan

Monitoring and update

Work plan

1. SET UP A LOCAL SUPPORT GROUP

First meeting of potential LSG members took place on July 2008. Representatives of the State Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism Division of Vilnius Municipality and local urban planning enterprise took part at the meeting. They expressed their opinions about issues of base-line study of HerO project. Leading officers of municipal Department for Urban Development (Development Projects Division, Cityscape Division, Cultural Heritage Division) were invited to join the LSG. The Managing Authority (the Ministry of Finance), public associations and private stakeholders were invited to the third meeting at the beginning of 2009. The official "Order to establish the LSG for the work within the framework of the Project HerO" was signed on 18th of May, 2009. There were 11 members approved by the Order. Private sector was represented by Lithuanian Real Estate Development Association, private construction company, private urban development company and House Owners' Association.



Pilies Street (Photo: Vilnius OTRA)



City Model in Vilnius municipality's Exposition Hall (Photo: OTRA)



Construction of Mindaugas bridge (Photo: Vilnius OTRA)

2. ANALYSIS

The work of LSG in Vilnius started from analysis of current situation in preservation and regeneration of the historic city centre and the problems of cultural heritage maintenance. It was decided first of all to review all relevant documents (laws, bylaws, strategies, territorial planning documents, regulations, programs, etc.) and current endeavors and programs of institutions, responsible for cultural heritage management. Compiled list of the main documents was prepared: the Law of Protected Territories (1993), Law on Immovable Cultural Heritage (1995), Law of Territorial Planning (1995), Vilnius Old Town Revitalisation Strategy (1996), Vilnius City Strategic Plan for 2002–2011, Vilnius City Official Plan (1998 and 2007), Vilnius Old Town Preservation Regulations (2006), Vilnius Old Town Maintenance and Building Rules (1995), annual Vilnius Old Town Revitalisation programs and their impact assessments (since 1998). Extracts from these documents directly related to the preservation of urban and architectural heritage were prepared by the staff of Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency (OTRA). OTRA also compiled a list of main institutions, responsible for cultural heritage management in Vilnius: State Cultural Heritage Commission, Department of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture and the Heritage Division at Vilnius municipal administration; analysis of their functions and responsibilities was done. Consequently LSG made summary of the analysis. LSG group meeting authorized OTRA to provide conclusions of the work. Most of the statements about the historic urban site and its cultural heritage were extracted from Vilnius City Official Plan and Vilnius Old Town Preservation Regulations. These documents served as a very good base for analysis of the situation. Vilnius City Strategic Plan was a good basis to

determine the concrete objectives and issues to address of the CHIMP. LSG decided that Vilnius City Strategic Plan's objectives for the Old Town preservation and upgrade are relevant and should be used as a basis for the CHIMP of Vilnius Old Town. These objectives and relevant fields of actions were used by Vilnius LSG developing the Road Map. (January – July 2009).

3. REGULAR LSG MEETINGS

There were three LSG meetings organized dedicated for analysis of the compiled information and debate on the current situation's challenges and needs.

The second meeting of LSG was organized to clarify what goals the CHIMP would target and what's its essential intention. Representatives of the municipal administration together with the key representative of state administration – Deputy Director of the State Department of Cultural Heritage debated these strategic questions before we started the debate of the general issues with private stakeholders. The third LSG meeting was organized using brainstorming when new fresh ideas were gathered and employed for development of the Road Map and CHIMP's content. After the brainstorming the OTRA staff summarized suggestions using them in the Road Map.

The structure, objectives, issues of CHIMP were discussed again during 4th meeting (November 2009). Priority actions relevant to the goals of operational programs were discussed during 5th and 6th meetings (March 2010). During 7th meeting (April 2010) LSG approved various organizational issues of upcoming Vilnius experts' seminar. During 8th meeting the structure of HerO guidebook draft was discussed (May 2010).

4. ELABORATION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLAN

Co-ordination of CHIMP with Vilnius City Strategic Plan.

2010 was a year of planning and decision making for Vilnius City. Vilnius City Strategic Plan 2010–2020 was prepared, outlining city's vision for the next decade as well as certain areas of development and financial resources needed to achieve it. Strategic plan will be a guide for Vilnius' government through the coming decade. A number of professionals and opinion leaders took part in roundtable discussions. Vilnius City Strategic Plan 2010–2020 was approved by the Decision No. 1-1778 of November 24th 2010 of Vilnius City Municipal Council. After the approval of the Strategic Plan the task of HerO LSG group was to revise all statements regarding the Old Town and integrate those statements, objectives and actions into the CHIMP. The action “Draft and approve the Old Town Management Plan” is included into Vilnius City Strategic Plan, the implementation period is 2011–2012.

Co-ordination of CHIMP with the Governmental Guidelines

At the beginning of 2010–2011, the updated description of Outstanding Universal Value of Vilnius Historic Centre – a World Heritage site as well as General Guidelines for

Management System of Vilnius Historic Centre were developed by the working group of the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture. Members of HerO Vilnius LSG took part at the discussions and development of this document. In early 2011 these documents were approved by the national Government. Vilnius municipality and the Ministry of Culture agreed in advance regarding further common work and integration of the URBACT HerO Project's CHIMP Draft into the “Guidelines for Management System”. HerO Vilnius LSG group will present the defined priorities, plans and actions to be incorporated in governmental level work on “Guidelines for Management System of Vilnius Historic Centre”. Hence, the CHIMP Draft for Vilnius will be an advanced input and valuable resource for the further endeavour of working group of the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture, that include three members of the HerO Project Vilnius LSG.

5. APPROVAL OF CHIMP

According to the Vilnius City Strategic Plan 2010–2020 all considerations and final approval of the CHIMP for Vilnius Old Town by the City Council should be accomplished in 2011–2012.

Annexes:

TABLE No. 1. VILNIUS FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

TABLE No. 2. VILNIUS CHIMP (DRAFT)
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



Panorama of Vilnius with the Missionary Church (Photo: Vilnius OTRA)

TABLE No. 1. VILNIUS FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

Project	Brief description (i.e. objective, output)	Responsible	Estimated costs	Financing secured (Investment Plan)	Funding by / Funding Programme	Schedule
Safeguarding Cultural Heritage: Buildings, Public and Green spaces						
Community Development programme	Objective is to raise the awareness of the community about the proper rehabilitation and conservation of their cultural heritage and to support them in that activity (financial support for private owners of heritage buildings to maintain their property, consultation, information).	Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency	800.000 €	Yes	Municipal Budget	2010-2012
Improvement and renewal of historic green areas in the Old Town	Priority projects: Improvement of the riverbed and banks of the River Vilnia and improvement and renewal of the adjacent Sereikiskiu park.	Urban Development Department of Vilnius, City Maintenance Department, Private company UAB "Vilniaus vystymo kompanija"	5.792.000 €	Postponement of project (or limited implementation) due to the economic crisis	Municipal Budget	2010-2015
Develop and implement conversion projects in Užupis and Paupys	Implement the project Architecture Park.	Urban Development Department, City Maintenance Department,	To be defined (Project in process of planning)	To be defined (Project in process of planning)	Municipal Budget	2010-2018
Accessibility and Mobility						
Planning of new (ecological) public transport in the Old Town	Regulation of the transport flow and parking in the Old Town, introducing the new small public buses and bicycle rides.	City Maintenance Department of Vilnius	To be defined (Project in process of planning)	To be defined (Project in process of planning)	To be defined (Project in process of planning)	To be defined (Project in process of planning)

TABLE No. 2. VILNIUS CHIMP (DRAFT) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

No.	Action	Detailed description of the action	Implementation period	Organisers and bodies responsible for implementation	
				The main responsible (coordinating) body	Other responsible bodies (when responsibilities are shared)
1.	GOAL. Efficient and sustainable use of cultural heritage potential				
1.1	OBJECTIVE. Protect, maintain, and use cultural heritage				
1.1.1	Study the cultural heritage in the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Compile the inventory of cultural heritage in the city and study it; b) Develop the system of informing about the cultural heritage in the city and the requirements for its protection; c) Establish the centre for heritage studies and restoration. 	2010–2020	Urban Development Department	Administration of Paviliniai and Verkiai Regional Parks; Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency (OTRA); Culture, Sport and Tourism Department
1.1.2	Develop and implement conversion projects in Užupis and Paupys	Implement the project Architecture Park.	2010–2018	Urban Development Department	City Maintenance Department
1.1.3	Manage cultural heritage structures and sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Restore and adapt to public visits derelict or misused cultural heritage properties and their complexes (churches or monasteries of St. George, Missionaries, the Visitation, Dominicans, Augustinians, Verkiai Estate, the Sapiegas' Estate, the Kirdėjai Estate and other historical residences as well as their complexes); b) Put in order and adapt to visitors the historical cemeteries of the city (by adapting their infrastructure to people with special needs); c) Refurbish the most significant cultural heritage structures and sites; d) Encourage the managers of cultural heritage structures to maintain them; e) Carry out the programme implementing the Strategy on Protection of Wooden Architecture Heritage. 	2011–2020	City Maintenance Department	Urban Development Department; OTRA; Culture, Sport and Tourism Department

1.1.4	Use cultural heritage properties and territories for cultural events	<p>a) Refurbish Trakų Vokė Estate;</p> <p>b) Develop the concept of the use and administration of Trakų Vokė Estate;</p> <p>c) Restore Trakų Vokė Estate and adapt it to cultural, tourism, and public needs by putting in order ownership documents; renovating the structures and adapting them to cultural, tourism, and public needs; develop cultural, tourism, and public activities in Trakų Vokė Estate;</p> <p>d) Organise programmes of famous foreign and Lithuanian performers in churches, estates, and other cultural heritage properties.</p>	2010–2020	Culture, Sport and Tourism Department	Assets Management and Business Services Department; Urban Development Department; City Maintenance Department
1.1.5	Carry out preventive protection of cultural heritage	<p>a) Carry out preventive control of cultural heritage;</p> <p>b) Carry out control of cultural heritage management;</p> <p>c) Design and implement the system for monitoring cultural heritage.</p>	2010–2020	Urban Development Department	Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency (OTRA)
1.1.6	Foster the adaptation of the “green areas” and river banks to leisure, recreation and tourism	Adapt the following “green areas” and river banks to leisure, recreation, and tourism: Bernadine Garden, Missionary Gardens, Reformat Park, park of the Sapiegas’ Estate, Vingriai Springs, Vingis Park, Colourful Springs Park, the park of Verkiai Estate, Pučkoriai, the park of Trakų Vokė Estate, Markučiai Park, Kalnų Park (Park of Hills), etc.	2010–2020	City Maintenance Department	Urban Development Department; OTRA; Culture, Sport and Tourism Department Administration of Pavilniai and Verkiai Regional Parks
1.2	OBJECTIVE. Protect the uniqueness of the Old Town of Vilnius and boost its attractiveness				
1.2.1	Create the system for protecting the Old Town from the impact of motor vehicles	<p>a) Reduce the number of car parking spots in the territory of the Old Town by developing the system of multi-storey parking lots on its edges thus reducing the number of parked cars in the streets of the Old Town;</p> <p>b) Limit transit and reduce general traffic in the Old Town by increasing the car parking charge, by charging for transit and reducing the number of parking spots;</p> <p>c) Design the public transportation system of the Old Town.</p>	2010–2020	City Maintenance Department Urban Development Department	Urban Development Department; Financial Management and Accounting Department

1.2.2	Bring into spotlight the architectural and urban peculiarity of the historical centre of Vilnius	<p>a) Preserve, restore, and revive the elements of the historical defensive wall of the city; implement the heritage management programme of the defensive wall of Vilnius City;</p> <p>b) Illuminate outstanding buildings and their facades;</p> <p>c) Implement activities set forth in the programme Lost Vilnius;</p> <p>d) Design and implement programmes aimed at repairing the elements of defaced building facades in the Old Town (windows and doors, roofs and roof windows, parterres) and the interior.</p>	2010–2020		City Maintenance Department OTRA; Private Company UAB Vilnius Development Company
1.2.3	Implement projects aimed at reviving crafts and small trade in the historical centre, start the tradition of seasonal craft fairs	<p>a) Implement the Programme on Fine Crafts, Ethnographic Businesses, and Fairs;</p> <p>b) Initiate and design mechanisms promoting restoration of various commercial and other functions to the buildings of the Old Town.</p>	2010–2020	Urban Development Department	OTRA; Public Establishment Vilnius Town Hall; Assets Management and Business Services Department; Culture, Sport and Tourism Department
2. GOAL. Improvement of the communication system in the Old Town					
2.1 OBJECTIVE. Increase residents' mobility by public and motorless transport					
2.1.1	Improve the administration, management, and monitoring of public transport	<p>a) Improve the administration, management, and monitoring of public transport;</p> <p>b) Implement public transport reform by liberalising the work of this sector.</p>	2010–2020	City Maintenance Department	Municipal Enterprise SĮ Transportation Services
3. GOAL. Community Development					
3.1. OBJECTIVE. Promote and develop the sense of community in residents. (Wards)					
3.1.1.	Establish community centres (homes) in wards	Establish new multifunctional community centre in the Old Town.	2011–2020	Old Town Ward	Assets Department, City Maintenance Department
3.1.2.	Bring together the community of the Old Town and promote the House Owners associations	Educate, consult, and provide financial assistance in improving the quality of living environment and assigning greater responsibility of owners for the maintenance of the buildings and their environment.	2010–2020	Urban Development Department	OTRA; Old Town ward

4. GOAL. Efficient use of the city's tourism potential and increased tourist flows					
4.1 OBJECTIVE. Develop public infrastructure for tourism					
4.1.1	Set up panoramic view points of Vilnius City	Set up panoramic viewpoints in accordance with an adjusted location scheme.	2013–2020	City Maintenance Department	
4.1.2	Develop public toilets and improve their condition	Set up automatic public toilets in the Old Town: 1) at Olimpiečių St, 2) at the junction of Liejyklos and Universiteto streets, 3) in the square at the junction of Vilniaus and Liejyklos streets, 4) in K. Sirvydas Square, 5) in Užupis Square, 6) at Vokiečių St., 7) in Tymo Quarter, 8) in the car parking lot at the junction of Arklių and Visų Šventųjų streets, 9) at Rasos Cemetery, etc.	2011–2020	City Maintenance Department	
4.2. OBJECTIVE. Carry out active marketing on tourism					
4.2.1.	Disseminate information about tourism products, resources, and cultural properties	Prepare and disseminate information about natural and cultural properties (publications, documentary films, online services, etc.).	2011–2020	Culture, Sport and Tourism Department	Vilnius Tourism Information Centre
4.2.2.	Integrate cultural heritage and tourism resources into programmes and routes of international and local, specialised, and learning-oriented tourism	a) Integrate cultural heritage into the routes and programmes of international and local, specialised and learning-oriented tourism; b) include historical cemeteries onto the routes of cultural tourism (Bernadine, Rasos cemeteries)	2010–2020	Culture, Sport and Tourism Department, OTRA	Administration of Pavilniai and Verkiai Regional Parks; Vilnius Tourism Information Centre; Urban Development Department
4.2.3.	Engage in a more active advertising campaign at local and international levels on the events for tourists	Announce about the traditional cultural events taking place in Vilnius at an international level (Vilnius Festivals, Capital Days, Kaziukas Fair, St.Bartholomeus Day).	2011–2020	Culture, Sport and Tourism Department	Assets Management and Business Services Department; Vilnius Tourism Information Centre

AN URBACT II PROJECT

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development. It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 181 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants. URBACT is co-financed by the ERDF Funds and the Member States.

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