

ATLANTIC CULTURESCAPE STUDY VISITS, WP 6
CANTABRIA, 23-25 OCTOBER 2019
FINAL REPORT

CANTABRIA STUDY VISITS REPORT INDEX

1. STUDY VISIT AIMS
2. CANTABRIA PROGRAMME
3. ATTENDEES
4. STUDY VISITS' QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT
5. SCORE CARDS FEEDBACK

STUDY VISITS GENERAL AIMS

The aim of the Study Visits is to share and compare the different means of delivering tourism experiences concerned with intangible cultural heritage, and identify good practices in the Atlantic Area.

To this end, five SME study visits are included in the CultureScape workplan coinciding with Steering Committee meetings and the final event. Host partners demonstrate the best practices operating in their areas of ICH, what their experiences offer and how they interact with the local community. Partners use these meetings to organise workshops in key topics and distilled their experiences into a set of guiding principles. The duration of these visits is 2-4 days.

In situ visits were agreed to be the most effective way to share and compare the different systems of delivering tourism experiences and identifying good practice. This activity supports the creation of transnational management tools and exchange of know-how among participating regions.

CANTABRIA STUDY VISITS PROGRAMME, OCTOBER 2019

Wednesday, 23rd

Due to the extreme weather conditions all the visits planned for Wednesday, to Soplao Cave and ancient Forge of Cades, were cancelled, so the whole group remained in San Vicente de la Barquera, and the Steering Committee was held in the local cultural centre. The accompanying visitors and representatives of the associated partners took a small tour around the historical town although the weather did not allow them to enjoy much of the visit. Lessons were learned from the need to urgently organise contingency plans which in turn helped the ACS partners gauge how a similar situation would be managed in the future for paying customers.

Thursday, 24th

Wine Cellar "Picos Cabariezo" - Cabariezo (Cabezón Liébana)

Monastery of Santo Toribio Liébana

Honey and liqueur producer Martínez de Cos Brothers, Orchard (Potes)

Lunch Offered by Cantabria Government - OSO Restaurant

Meeting at Centro de Estudios Lebaniegos, Potes

Friday, 25th

Blue cheese "Picón Bejes" producer - Bejes (Tresviso)

Cudaña Farm – Labarces - Lunch (Tastings of typical local cheese) - Labarces

ATTENDEES

Country	Organisation	Role
UK, Northern Ireland	NMDDC	SC Member
UK, Northern Ireland	NMDDC	SC Member
UK, Northern Ireland	NMDDC	SC Member
UK, Northern Ireland	NMDDC	SC Member
UK, Wales	BBNPA	SC Member
Ireland	CIT	SC Member
Portugal	RMM	SC Member
Portugal	RMM	SC Member
Spain, Vigo	UVigo	SC Member
Spain, Vigo	UVigo	SC Member
Spain, Vigo	UVigo	SC Member
Spain, Andalucía	AAIICC	SC Member
Spain, Andalucía	AAIICC	SC Member
Spain, Cantabria	DGT Cantabria Government	SC Member
Spain, Cantabria	DGT Cantabria Government	SC Member
Spain, Cantabria	Fundación Camino Lebaniego	SC Member
UK, Northern Ireland	Fiddlers Green Festival	ASSOCIATE PARTNER
Spain, Andalucía	Fiddlers Green Festival	ASSOCIATE PARTNER
Spain, Andalucía	Instituto Andaluz del Patrimonio Histórico	ASSOCIATE PARTNER
Spain, Andalucía	GDR Litoral de la Janda	ASSOCIATE PARTNER
Spain Cantabria	ADR Saja Nansa	Collaborating Entity
Spain, Cantabria	ADR Saja Nansa	Collaborating entity
Spain, Cantabria	Grupo Acción Local Liébana	Collaborating entity
Spain, Cantabria	Botin Foundation	Collaborating entity

STUDY VISITS QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

The overall impression of the Study Visits was very positive. The Cantabria partners made an excellent organisational effort and selected inspiring local sites and committed agents to host the visits.

The extreme weather conditions the whole region suffered, on the first day of the visits, made it impossible to visit the planned sites on Wednesday, but our local partners did their utmost to readjust the programme.

After that unforeseen circumstance, the visits proceeded as planned. The programme included visits to sites related to agriculture and gastronomy traditions and one linked to the ICH of religious traditions, which illustrated the diverse cultural heritage richness of the area.

In order to gather participants' impressions and quality feedback, a *Site Report template* was designed with the contribution of tourism expert Jennifer Houiellebecq. The aim of the above-mentioned template was to collect information to help us to identify good practices in tourism in the context of the CultureScape project, standardising the procedure for gathering the learning outcomes in each one of the planned study visits. A *Score Card* was also designed, which asked attendees to give their opinion about specific aspects of the sites, such as visitor's facilities or interpretative resources.

At the end of the second day of our stay at Potes, Ms Houiellebecq facilitated a debate at Centro de Estudios Lebaniegos, giving the group the opportunity to reflect together on the ICH experiences visited.

We present here below a summary of the Study Visits' impressions and Score Card averages, and we add as Annexes, a copy of the Site Report templates and Score Cards delivered.

1st Wine Cellar "Picos Cabariezo" - Cabariezo (Cabezón Liébana)

Introduction/ Presentation:

The winery was created in year 2000 by a group of local friends who wanted to explore the possibilities and modernise wine-making in this mountainous area in Liebana council, surrounded by the Picos de Europa, whose ancient winemaking tradition had been lost. It is a pioneering winery and distillery set in Cantabria that has managed to contribute to the growth and recovery of local mountain vines.

The company produces wines and distillates and it offers wine tourism experiences that include guide visits, wine tasting, wine therapy experiences and a shop selling other related local products.

The winery offered the CultureScape group a guided tour through their facilities, both in English and Spanish, and at the end of the visit the owners offered the group a wine tasting accompanied by other local products, such as cheese and pâtés. The group could also see and enjoy the shop in which the cellar sells a wide variety of products, including distilled liqueurs and wine jams and jellies.

For further information: <http://vinosylicorespicos.es/en/home/>



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Site Reports' comments and Key Learning:

The group noted that, among the key success factors of this ICH experience, in terms of contributing to sustainable development in the local area, the winery uses and transforms local ingredients, cultivating and maintaining the land and giving employment locally.

Additionally, the company's branding refers to the natural beauty of the landscape that surrounds the site, reinforcing local identity. Another positive factor is that they produce on a small scale and successfully sell artisan quality products. A website in English, giving clear information about the history of the company and the wine tourism experience is also offered.

In relation to the key issues or challenges, participants considered that the guide needed training to make herself better understood, as there were some interpretive issues. In addition, some areas of the tour did not lend themselves to accommodating large groups. Participants also thought they could use more environmentally friendly cups for the wine tasting.

As to how the business could create additional local economic, social and cultural wealth, participants thought they might look at charging for guided tours to create additional revenue, as well as diversifying the tour to include other experiences, such as grape picking.

Finally, as transferable practice, we can mention the complementary offer of wine tourism experiences that enriches the company's main task of producing and selling wines and distillates and their passion for recovering an ancient local tradition.

2nd Monastery of Santo Toribio Liébana

Presentation:

An excellent example of the ICH of religious traditions in which visitors and pilgrims can admire the cultural heritage of the monastery and the religious traditions linked to it. The monastery is located at the very heart of the Picos de Europa mountains, a site of outstanding natural beauty where visitors can enjoy a religious, natural and cultural heritage tourism experience, all at the same time. From Medieval times, pilgrims came to Liébana to see the largest relic of the Holy Cross, and it was considered one of the four main sacred Christian pilgrimages, along with Jerusalem, Rome and Santiago de Compostela. The monastery is linked to the popular Saint James Way, connecting with both the Northern Way and the French Way.

A local guide offered the CultureScape group a tour, relating the history of the monastery, the sacred relic of the Holy Cross and the exceptional eighth century Beatus of Liébana illustrated manuscript. The guide's English was very good, combining a wealth of knowledge with humour and anecdotes, which caught the visitors' interest. The site supports a small shop with some books in English.

For further information: <https://www.santotoribiodeliebana.es/>



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Site Reports' comments and Key Learning:

Among the key success factors of this ICH experience in terms of contributing to local sustainable development, the group remarked that the monastery could potentially attract a very diverse range of visitors, given its environmental, monumental and religious significance. They felt the association with the historic and busy pilgrimage route, St James Way, was a huge positive, which could be nurtured to improve the tourism offering at this site.

Participants felt that, in terms of key challenges the site faces, there is a clear conflict between tourists and pilgrims visiting the monastery. Guided tours take place alongside religious events, such as masses, which sometimes causes difficulty in keeping groups together and in controlling a crowd inside the church, while maintaining a respectful environment for worshippers. The monastery is in an isolated mountain location, so visitors need private cars or regular buses to get to the site. Finally, the monastery's website is only in Spanish and it does not give much information about the facilities for visitors.

In terms of how the site could create additional local economic, social and cultural wealth, participants pointed out that it will be a good idea to charge for guided tours and for the car park in order to raise revenue to allow the monks to restore some parts of the building that need urgent repairs. The restoration of some buildings could then allow the monks to offer accommodation as many other monasteries do along Saint James' Way. They could also enlarge the visitor facilities and enhance the tourism experience, for example, by offering refreshments at a coffee shop; gastronomy products made by the monks; mindfulness experiences at the gardens; guided nature trails through the surrounding area and by improving the gift shop.

Finally, as transferable practice, the guided tour was full of legends and interesting interpretive detail that made the visit very immersive. Above all, the link between religious, built heritage, environmental and natural tourism means visitors can combine a visit to a sacred relic site with some great hiking around the monastery.

3rd. Martínez de Cos Brothers. Honey and grape liqueur producers - Orchard (Potes)

Presentation:

Martínez de Cos Brothers was an example of a local family firm devoted to traditional farming, honey harvesting and grape liqueur production. The owner is an enthusiastic producer fully in tune with the land, who keeps bees and runs a small agriculture business contributing to the maintenance of a family tradition, the local economy of Picos de Europa and the preservation of the environment.

For further info: <https://www.facebook.com/Orujo-y-Miel-Martinez-de-Cos-1498419463785532/>

Site reports' comments and Key learnings:

Among the key success factors of this ICH tourism experience, in terms of contributing to sustainable development in the local area, the group mentioned the importance of the preservation of a family tradition along with the use of local ingredients. They felt keeping bees was an excellent way of

preserving the environment and helping traditional agriculture, and that offering artisan quality products is also an important success factor.

In relation to key issues or challenges, participants considered that the site is not visitor friendly as it lacks proper visitor facilities and the site visit may face hygiene problems. The language barrier and lack of tours, guides and demonstrations in English is another challenge. Finally, the business has not have a website providing basic information, either in English or Spanish.

Participants pointed out various ways the site might create additional local economic, social and cultural wealth, including: create suitable conditions for visitors to attend; charge for guided tours in order to increase revenue; diversify the offering by including other experiences, such as honey tasting or the chance to make a grape liqueur, which would create opportunities for visitors to participate in the visit and make it more immersive and rewarding. They could also offer the opportunity to shop at the site as well as at their own shop at Potes, as well as looking at a management structure to carry the business on after their lifetimes.

Finally, as transferable practice, we can point out the company's passion for maintaining the tradition, the quality and the authenticity of the processes and those of the final products.

4th Visit to the famous blue cheese "Picón" Bejes (Tresviso)

Presentation:

In the small and picturesque town of Bejes, right at the heart of Picos de Europa, we found a few producers of the renowned blue cheese *Picón de Bejes* with the *Tresviso* cheese designation of origin.

The visit included a special tour to the ancient communal cave in which the cheeses are kept for a few months during the cheese-making process, as well as to a cheese-tasting event. The tasting was conducted by a local cheese producer, Tomás from the firm La Brañuca de Bejes, an enthusiastic keeper of local traditions and Picos de Europa ICH.

For further information : [@queseria.labranucadebejes \(facebook\)](#)

Site Reports' comments and Key Learning:

The key success factors of this ICH tradition in terms of contributing to sustainable development in the local area, the group felt, was the importance of keeping alive the tradition and knowledge of cheese making, the use of local products and labour, and the cheese-making tradition's usefulness in maintaining the cattle and the land of the area. The opportunity to try artisan quality gastronomy products was also very positive. Finally, the site offered many unique experiences, such as the visit to the cave and the unspoiled natural beauty of the surrounding landscape. A key success factor for the future could be the opening of the planned museum and local shop.

In relation to the key issues or challenges the site faces, participants flagged up the need for training, both from the commercial point of view and the language barrier, as the producers couldn't offer guided tours or visits in English. In addition, some spaces, such as the cave, did not support large groups and may face safety and accessibility problems. Accessibility by road was a problem in terms

of transport of goods. The isolated location was both an advantage and a disadvantage, because of the access difficulties and problems in distributing products.

The site could create additional local economic, social and cultural wealth, the participants pointed out, by diversifying the offering to include other experiences such as cheese-making workshops and cheese tasting to provide revenue. It will also be important to have selling and information points at different locations, they felt, because of the access difficulties at Bejes. A website could simultaneously attract visitors and clients and allow for online commerce. It would be interesting to have a kind of 'interpretive centre' where tourists could learn about the village traditions, the making of the cheese and where they could buy local products, although the planned facilities we mentioned before might partly fill this gap.

Finally, as transferable practice, we can highlight the opportunity to walk up to the cave, enjoy the landscape and get to know a real local producer who shares all his knowledge and passion for the site with visitors.

5th - Cudaña Farm - Labarces

Presentation:

Cudaña farm was a family agriculture and stock farm in the western area of Cantabria which had been handed down from generation to generation. The farm combined the traditional activities of stock breeding, producing and selling quality milk and cheese, with innovative milk production control, educational and leisure activities for schools and families, guided tours of the farm and of their cow-comfort system, and cheese-production workshops.

This visit included a lunch that allows for tasting a variety of their home-produced cheeses and other typical local gastronomy products.

For further information: <https://www.granjacudana.com/>

Site reports' comments and Key learnings:

Among the key success factors of this ICH tour, in terms of contributing to sustainable development in the local area, the group noted the importance of using and transforming local ingredients, maintaining a high-quality herd, helping to preserve the environment and giving employment locally. It was viewed as positive that they had a website with clear information about the tourism experiences offered at the farm, and that visitors could taste and buy products directly at the site. In fact, the opportunity to have lunch at the beautiful site where the farm is located was a clear key success factor.

In relation to the key issues or challenges the site faces, participants considered the language barrier to be significant as they don't offer guided tours or tourism experiences in English and the website does not give any information in English either. In addition, some parts of the farm did not support large groups and visitor's facilities are scarce. They may also need promotion or commercial support in order to sell their products out of the area.

In respect of things the site could do to create additional local economic, social and cultural wealth, participants pointed out that they could offer tours in other languages, making the site attractive for

foreign visitors. They could also think about offering accommodation at the site and diversifying the tourism offering in order to get additional revenue.

Finally, as transferable practice, the group considered the family passion for the land and for the cattle that the owners transmitted. Above all, the lunch at the site was very attractive and quite cheap, and it offered families and groups of friends the opportunity to spend a nice day at the farm, eating and buying local products after having tasted them.

AVERAGE SCORE CARDS IMPRESSIONS

Wine Cellar "Picos Cabariezo" - Cabariezo (Cabezón Liébana)

	SCORE
1. The Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) experience at this site is well delivered	4,3
2. I left with a good understanding of the significance of this ICH to the area	4,5
3. The visitor experience was highly immersive	4,5
4. I particularly enjoyed this experience	4,4
5. The following elements of the visit are given excellent consideration:	
a. Parking	4,1
b. Visitor safety	4,6
c. Hospitality services	4,9
d. Personal accessibility	4,3
e. Interpretation / storytelling	4,4
6. Any other comments	

Monastery of Santo Toribio Liébana

SCORE

1. The Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) experience at this site is well delivered	3,3
2. I left with a good understanding of the significance of this ICH to the area	3,9
3. The visitor experience was highly immersive	3
4. I particularly enjoyed this experience	3,4
5. The following elements of the visit are given excellent consideration:	
a. Parking	4,9
b. Visitor safety	4,7
c. Hospitality services	3,5
d. Personal accessibility	3,3
e. Interpretation / storytelling	3,9
6. Any other comments	

Honey and liqueur producer Martínez de Cos Brothers, Orchard (Potes)

	SCORE
1. The Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) experience at this site is well delivered	4,4
2. I left with a good understanding of the significance of this ICH to the area	4,2
3. The visitor experience was highly immersive	4
4. I particularly enjoyed this experience	3,9
5. The following elements of the visit are given excellent consideration:	
a) Parking	5
b) Visitor safety	3,5
c) Hospitality services	3,1
d) Personal accessibility	3,5
e) Interpretation / storytelling	2
6. Any other comments	

Blue cheese "Picón Bejes" producer - Bejes (Tresviso)

	SCORE
1. The Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) experience at this site is well delivered	4,1
2. I left with a good understanding of the significance of this ICH to the area	4,3
3. The visitor experience was highly immersive	4,1
4. I particularly enjoyed this experience	4,8
5. The following elements of the visit are given excellent consideration:	
a) Parking	2,1
b) Visitor safety	2,2
c) Hospitality services	2,3
d) Personal accessibility	2,1
e) Interpretation / storytelling	3,2
6. Any other comments	

Cudaña Farm – Labarces

	SCORE
1. The Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) experience at this site is well delivered	3
2. I left with a good understanding of the significance of this ICH to the area	3,5
3. The visitor experience was highly immersive	5
4. I particularly enjoyed this experience	5
5. The following elements of the visit are given excellent consideration:	
a) Parking	4,5
b) Visitor safety	3,5
c) Hospitality services	4
d) Personal accessibility	5
e) Interpretation / storytelling	
6. Any other comments	