

→ Protecting international cultural heritage

Country Turkey

Project title Protecting international cultural heritage

Twinning Municipality of Alkmaar (the Netherlands)

Municipality of Bergama (Turkey)

Project period 1 December 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 61,603

Project objective

Improving the capacity of Bergama's Cultural Heritage department, raising the awareness of owners of monuments and ancient properties and creating a databank on registered building.

Project summary

To raise the consciousness of the public and owners of registered buildings to become protection-aware, upgrade the work of Bergama's Cultural Heritage department, create a databank of registered buildings, and protect sites and structures for the future.

Core information

Bergama is an ancient Turkish civilized settlement with numerous historical and archaeological treasures at 100 km north of Izmir. The city population is around 55,000. Agriculture, trade and tourism are the pillars of the local economy. Bergama municipality is the local administration serving local public services to meet demands of citizens, especially in the fields of infrastructure, city planning, and social services.

Problem analysis

Over recent decades the old buildings of Bergama with historical value have remained untouched and unprotected. Many have been abandoned by their owners and are deteriorating. Citizen owners of such registered buildings are not aware of the laws, their rights, and relevant procedures related to their buildings. The related technical facilities at the municipal office were insufficient, office staff were not able to inform citizens on a day-to-day basis about the available protection facilities. The municipality wished to provide better services and create social sensitivity to the ancient semi-communal assets the town possesses.

A practice to improve service delivery of local governments

Project implementation

Firstly 700 questionnaires and brochures were distributed to property owners to determine the problems as well as to determine the owners' level of consciousness of both problem and their assets. In this way, the town's Cultural Heritage department gained insight in the problem. The results were evaluated together with the Number 2 Council of Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets in Izmir, the Chamber of Architects of Izmir, Ege University, and Bergama Faculty Restoration Division. Data on registered buildings was collected to create a databank. Training was provided on computerized drawing programs to Bergama office staff by the Chamber of Architects of Izmir. Training was also conducted for municipal staff by the Council of Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets Nr.2 of Izmir to upgrade their professional knowledge. Missing technical equipment was procured and at a later date conferences, study visits, evaluation meetings, and awareness and information meetings for the public were organized.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Involve all stakeholders (private and public) in the challenge and the solution;
- Consider careful planning and timing of activities;
- Stay focused on improving service delivery and not on promoting tourism when targeting cultural heritage.