

**Project:** RECBEL, *Redes de ciudades con tradición belenística* (a network of cities with nativity scene traditions).

**Developing organization:**

The nativity scene house friends Association of the Region of Murcia is a private non-profit cultural association whose aim is the promotion, the research and the spreading of the nativity scene's artistic and cultural development. It aspires to increase the collections and funds of the museum through its members' donations.

Since 2008 it's been promoting educational, exhibition, purchasing, museum, editorial and economic activities, all with the partnership of the township of Murcia and the Autonomous Community of Murcia.

The museum is situated in the Clock House in Puentes Tocinos (picture n. 1), an old farmhouse, recently restored and extended, that can host educational and museum activities. This building is part of the patrimony of the municipality of Murcia and has been restored with the collaboration of the Autonomous Community. Besides, Puente Tocinos is known here as the Cradle of the Nativity Scene.



**The project:**

One of the characteristics of the European culture and, in particular, of many Mediterranean cities, is the development and the manufacture of nativity scenes. It is an expression of the religious faith which, anyway, leans on artistic and craft traditions (e.g. the ceramic and the sculptural ones) and involves local customs.

This culture can be an economic development resource, especially for the old towns where nativity scene exhibitions are usually held and where it is sometimes possible to find workshops and selling areas.

The small scale of this sector explains its decline or, in any case, its limited diffusion.

Without losing the distinctive features of any town or region, the RECBEL project aims to set up a long-lasting network which makes the research, the acknowledgement, the promotion and the spreading of this tradition easier.

We can reach these purposes through five STAGES:

**RESEARCH**

We will gather information related to the beginning and the development of the nativity scene in several European towns, in order to find common themes among them. In this phase, the possibility of an exchange between the exhibitions might be considered.

**TRAINING**

Our training courses offered to artisans during the first half of the year will help the apprentice skill of the art and also promote mobility among the network towns.

#### INNOVATION

We will experiment with new techniques and materials even in view of a possible mass production according to the study of the traditional manufacture. In any case, quality and religious and cultural features will be guaranteed.

#### MANAGEMENT

After having analysed the policies which reflect on this custom and the relative economic system, we will draw up a manifesto with our proposals for protecting and exploiting this economic resource.

#### SPREADING

The most worthwhile results of the project will be spread and towns with nativity scene traditions will be invited to join the network.

**Potential partners:** public and private sector, associations, artisans, local authorities...

**Key words:** craft, sculpture, nativity scene, museum, formation.

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