

## CHORAL

### RESEARCHPROJECT *(max. 5 pages)*

APPLICATION FORM TO REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR JOINTLY SUPERVISED DOCTORAL THESIS

#### TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Analysis and study of the role of ecomuseums in sustainable development and the representation of future territories (multidisciplinary, cross-disciplinary heritage and territorial study).

#### SUPERVISORS

From recruiting University	First name	LAST NAME	University	Department
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HDR or equiv.				
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## 5 main KEYWORDS

Sustainable development - Ecological transition and tourism - Ecomuseum - Heritage - Citizen Knowledge

## ABSTRACT (250 words max.)

This project aims to analyze and study the evolution of the ecomuseum concept from the perspective of sustainable territorial development. This collaborative project is rooted in the idea that tangible and intangible heritage can make a greater contribution to the social and ecological transition of the cultural and eco-cultural sectors. Over the past decade, ecomuseums have experienced a succession of crises. Their teams have adapted, taking into account the objectives of increasing their visitor numbers, developing their digital activities and transforming their primary missions of heritage promotion and mediation. These changes are profoundly transforming the original role and concept of ecomuseums in France, Europe and the rest of the world. These multi-faceted cultural structures, once testing grounds for a new museology involving local populations in their museographic choices, and for the management of their collections, seem to be at a historic turning point in their evolution. Ecomuseums are playing an unidentified role in transmitting gestures and practices that can help combat the environmental crises caused by climate change. The involvement of local residents and responsible tourists can help raise awareness of the need to bring man closer to nature. The aim of this project is to initiate research on a European and international scale, bringing together researchers from different disciplines and stakeholders involved in the question of the human-nature relationship in the ecological and tourism transition of territories. (228 words)

## Research aims and methodology

The first questions raised by this subject concern methodology and the way to study the ecomuseum object. The current state of available documentation (whether written or oral, scientific or citizen-based) raises the question of how to deal with the diversity and complexity of the ecomuseum concept. Indeed, while the sources appear to be very numerous and poorly connected, their wealth of information makes it very interesting to cross-reference a large number of data with a view to harmonizing them. Several approaches and technical tools will need to be implemented. The first step is to carry out an in-depth comparative study with a corpus listing ecomuseums in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region, cross-referenced with ecomuseums in other regions as well as ecomuseums in Quebec, Italy and Spain. GIS (Geographic Information System) tools will be used to build up this corpus, with the aim of identifying differences and correspondences of a historical, political, environmental, heritage, geographical, toponymic etc. nature between the region's ecomuseums. The analysis of an archival corpus will enable us to grasp the various fundamental and surface movements involved in the mutation of the ecomuseum concept. The aim is to understand their role in sustainable local development.

How do ecomuseums contribute to the appropriation of ecomuseums by stakeholders, elected representatives and local residents in sustainable development, ecological transition and tourism projects?

In preparation for the participatory research and shared diagnosis, several field surveys will be carried out in the form of semi-directive interviews with stakeholders, an inventory of life stories will be conducted and consultation meetings will be organized with members of the local community in partnership with the ecomuseums and stakeholders. This exploratory work will be used to draw up data sheets, which will then be used in the co-construction of the shared diagnosis. The working method combines the disciplines of geography, sociology, anthropology, new museology, mediation, history, tourism and sustainable regional development. The aim of this project is to provide ecomuseums with new tools, through innovative and resilient mediation and exhibitions, so that they can become veritable laboratories for the territories of the future.

### Relevance and added-value of the proposed research in relation to the current state of knowledge

Ecomuseums are an integral part of the economic system of the regions studied, particularly through the development of tourism. Their many material, financial and human difficulties have consequences for the areas in which they operate. With the support and participation of local players, elected representatives, technicians and local residents, the team aims to instigate participatory research that will initiate new, meaningful *eco-patrimonial* practices. Several ecomuseums contacted as part of our preliminary project are looking for new methods and tools to help them develop their concept and make their structures part of the sustainable development and ecological transition of tourism in their areas. The research project, positioned at the service of territories and local populations, will take into account the needs of the local economy and the cultural and tourist influence of the areas studied. Frédéric Poulard recalled in 2007 in an article on taking account of populations and audiences in museums: *"In 1971, the ninth ICOM General Conference, entitled The Museum in the Service of People Today and Tomorrow. The educational and cultural role of museums, marked a major turning point, since it emphasized the primacy of dissemination missions over those of conservation, favored at the time by the Direction des Musées de France. It was at this time, in fact, that the concept of the "ecomuseum" emerged in France, a concept that was to reconcile a number of expectations. Hugues de Varine, then Director of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) since 1962, invented the concept at a meeting with Georges Henri Rivière, founder of the Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires, and Serge Antoine, then advisor to Environment Minister Robert Poujade"*<sup>1</sup>. This vision seems even more relevant today, as it meets the expectations of ecomuseums and their stakeholders. We have analyzed the experience of the Geoparks<sup>2</sup> label as a territorial innovation, based on a number of studies carried out over the last few years in different tourist areas. Initially, we didn't see much point in adding a label, as the NRP had already had a national brand identifying their mainly tourism-related partners for several decades. However, after hearing the views of tourism and economic players, we noticed a strong and voluntary involvement on the part of the players in these predominantly rural areas. The consultation required to obtain this UNESCO label can lead to a certain institutional distancing from the inter-municipal boundaries of the majority of RNPs. In collaboration with geopark technicians and scientists, stakeholders can imagine and build products that correspond to a local identity, a shared vision and therefore an ecotourism approach. Institutional players, through the

introduction of the label, go beyond their areas of competence and develop innovative joint projects along the lines of sustainable tourism and local development. Private-sector players feel more involved, as they are not limited to the administrative territory where their establishments are located. They can work on tourism products that appeal to a broad public, targeted by promotion and communication tailored to their expectations. The research team wants to experiment with the tools and methods initiated in the consultation of this UNESCO label, so that ecomuseums redefine their identity, concept, role and differences as vectors of ecotourism, and not just as museums frozen in the past.

### Interdisciplinary nature of the research together with the alignment with the CHORAL programme and complementarity expertise of the teams

The very essence of the project is multidisciplinary and participatory. The cross-fertilisation of multiple players and the bringing together of several territories in a common cause that respects heritage and the environment is directly inherited from the principles of eco museology. The CHORAL programme seems particularly well suited to the implementation of this project. In fact, its scientific project, which focuses on preserving heritage and developing marginalized areas, is in line with the principles used to create the territories of the future, through the lens of ecomuseums. The desire to bring together several countries in this programme would be a major advantage in terms of cross-referencing data between French and international ecomuseums, which do not have the same approaches. Bringing these entities together on this common subject can undoubtedly help, encourage reflection and development. Collaboration with universities in France, Spain, Italy and Romania will be fundamental to this project. In a word, the ecomuseum, originally a French concept, has been exported to many countries, each of which has reappropriated this tool in a different way. This project will be able to draw on these many experiences to provide new common guidelines, in line with the major territorial and environmental issues of this century.

<sup>1</sup> POULARD Frédéric, « Les écomusées. Participation des habitants et prise en compte des publics », *Ethnologie française*, 2007/3 (Vol. 37), p. 551-557. DOI : 10.3917/ethn.073.0551. URL : <https://www.cairn.info/revueethnologie-francaise-2007-3-page-551.htm>

<sup>2</sup> VENZAL C. (2021) : « La question complexe de la valorisation touristique et patrimoniale au cœur du réseau des géoparc UNESCO / La questione complessa della valorizzazione turistica e patrimoniale al centro della rete di geoparchi UNESCO », p. 30-39, Actes du colloque franco-italien du 17 septembre 2021 à Mont Dauphin, Hautes-Alpes, "Les Labels : quels enjeux pour le développement de nos territoires alpins ?".

### Output plan including publication and dissemination activities

The research will be carried out by the project manager in coordination with the partners. The thesis student will coordinate the actions in the field and prepare reports for the steering committee, made up of researchers, ecomuseum professionals and stakeholders from the areas studied. From the outset of the pre-project, a dialogue will be established between the research team and the stakeholders ecomuseum players, national organizations (ICOM, OCIM, etc.) and local authorities. The team will adapt its expectations, objectives and tools according to the results of the exploratory phase and changes in partners' expectations. The research project relates to the notion of heritage appropriation<sup>3</sup> applied in our study to the ecomuseum concept. Our method is based on the co-construction of data with and by local stakeholders, mainly through the implementation of a shared diagnosis. The research team intends to draw inspiration from these tools, and by establishing feedback on these concepts, to make them evolve in line with the contemporary situation of ecomuseums and the changing territorial construction of territories. The project's priority will be to identify and position players. Understanding how the ecomuseum player fits in with local players (particularly in the tourism sector) and how he or she determines his or her position in relation to them is obviously an essential corollary. Identifying the key players in a territory is therefore contingent on the problem under study, and will be established in consultation with the parties involved in the research project. The perimeters of action areas can vary, and the boundaries of territories become blurred, in that they vary according to the different players involved in the same project. Each actor has his or her own area of action (NRP, Town Hall, Region, private actor, association, etc.), which may not coincide with those of other actors involved in the same project. By introducing the notion of a strategic project associated with heritage appropriation and sustainable development, perimeters are established according to the areas of action of the various partners. The definition of the perimeter loses its importance in relation to the constitution of a system of players acting around the project. The shared diagnosis will be established in particular during workshops bringing together work teams according to the objectives set out in the data sheets drawn up in the first part of the research. As part of these exercises, the team hopes to involve students from the

Heritage & Museums Master's program, enabling them to take part in these complex experiments, which have to be carried out within the framework of university teaching. This project represents a unique opportunity for these students to take part in a program of this nature and on a geographical scale inherent to the fields of study.

Finally, the research project will be structured around a series of study days. These events will be essential for bringing together the team's researchers, students, local stakeholders and experts from outside the project. This expertise and scientific input will enable us to review the results of our research, guide the project's future development and provide a more focused perspective on the issue of eco-heritage on a European and international scale. We plan to hold study days in Quebec, involving players from ecomuseums and UNESCO-labeled territories. Other study days will also be organized within the framework of the European UNITA alliance, in order to project the



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results of this research project into a longer-term scientific collaboration. A thematic school based on the notion of shared diagnosis and spatial analysis will be proposed to UNITA partners. Finally, a collective publication in a specialized journal is envisaged, bringing together multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary articles and approaches

<sup>3</sup> Dominique Sellier et Claire Portal, « Modalités de l'appropriation patrimoniale des reliefs », *Physio-Géo*[En ligne], Volume 12 | 2018, mis en ligne le 18 août 2018, consulté le 05 septembre 2018. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/physio-geo/6233> ; DOI : 10.4000/physio-geo.6233



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## Estimated schedule

Task title	2024				2025				2026				2027											
	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A
<b>Territorial analysis</b>																								
Sensitive approach	█	█																						
Documentary approach					█	█	█	█																
Variable choices / Databases - GIS					█	█	█	█																
Development of 1st shared hypotheses					█	█	█	█																
Resource person interviews									█	█	█	█												
Ecomuseums customers surveys									█	█	█	█												
<b>Experiment</b>																								
Technical data sheets													█	█										
Workshop meetings													█	█	█									
Report summarizing results													█	█	█									
Feedback to stakeholders													█	█	█									
Quebec - Europe surveys													█	█	█		█							
<b>Synthesis Feedback</b>																								
Report writing and stakeholder validation																								
Evaluation of results																								
Study days																								
Ecomuseum mediation exhibition																								
Feedback																								
Final report / Communication																								
Publications																								