

A SINGLE ENTITY FOR AN INTEGRATED GOVERNANCE OF THE HISTORIC CENTRE

The Office of the Historian of Havana Management – **Havana, Cuba**

1. DESCRIPTION

Established in 1994, the Office of the Historian brings together in a single entity the skills needed to coordinate actions in the areas of heritage, urban planning, social development, culture and the local economy to ensure the integrated management of the historic centre of Havana. This autonomous entity manages the rehabilitation of the historic centre, while ensuring that its residential function is maintained and improving the living conditions of its inhabitants. It has the authority to interact with the three levels of government: local, provincial and national.

2. CONTEXT THAT MOTIVATED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRACTICE

Before 1994, the management of Old Havana focused mainly on the conservation and restoration of old buildings, without sufficient consideration of social, economic and residential issues. Governance was fragmented among several institutions, making heritage management complex and inefficient.

3. APPROACH FOLLOWED/METHOD

- Creation of the entity: the Office of the Historian is vested with expanded powers to design, plan and implement long-term projects and programmes.
- Integrated management model: interventions cover heritage restoration, urban planning, social programmes, culture and economic development.
- Intergovernmental collaboration: partnerships with municipal administrations and several ministries (tourism, transport, environment), depending on the project.
- Diversification of the administrative organisation: more than 3,000 civil servants in different departments (culture, socio-humanitarian affairs, urban planning, territorial projects, licensing, etc.).
- Autonomous financial mechanisms: seeking funding through international cooperation, managing its own entrepreneurial system and applying a special tax mechanism to help finance programmes.



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4. EXPECTED/IMMEDIATE/MEASURABLE EFFECTS

Expected effects

- Rehabilitation of the historic centre.
- Strengthening of local development based on cultural diversity and heritage-related economic activity.

Immediate effects observed

- Strengthening of institutional capacity to promote habitability in the historic centre.
- Strengthening of management and international cooperation capacity.
- Social benefits for vulnerable populations (e.g. housing programme for the elderly).

Measurable effects

- Heritage restoration: 10 to 25 buildings restored per year.
- Heritage-based economic development: creation of a network of 25 hotel units (approximately 500 rooms) and 150 shops and restaurants.
- Improvement of the living environment: recovery of public spaces and construction of more than 2,000 housing units.

5. KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Improving the habitability of a historic centre requires integrated governance that goes beyond the simple conservation of buildings.
- The link between heritage, social development and the local economy is a major lever for habitability.
- A dedicated, long-term institution makes it possible to pursue a long-term vision and ensure the continuity of actions in the historic centre.
- Residents benefit directly from an approach that places quality of life and social inclusion at the heart of the management of the historic centre.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.planmaestro.ohc.cu

