



## The territory's image

**The territory's image arouses several questions :**

- What links exist between a territory's notoriety and its development ?
- Does the distortion, improvement or creation of a territory's image contribute to a region's dynamic ?
- How to create an impression, on what basis ?
- Who should, could or wants to participate in the development of a territory's image ?  
Is it necessary to find sponsors ? Generally speaking what is the role of the local population ?

The examples presented during the three workshops gave an insight into the subject, and led to a rich exchange of ideas about the role of culture, the promotion of local heritage and art ; and more precisely their role in creating a new and enhanced image of the territory, therefore improving its appeal.

**In most cases there were two typical common barriers :**

- Inhabitants who have a low esteem of their territory.
- And a territory's decline which is considered by all, municipal authorities, inhabitants and local businesses as an inevitability.

To break down these barriers and give the territory an appealing representation, the most effect measures are those that involve the community. Inhabitants should be able to identify with their local heritage and appreciate their territory's assets.

Firstly it is important to discover if the general population shares the same respect for their surroundings and environment. These principles will lead to the population's cooperation in defending their territory. Ideally local inhabitants should be able to take part in decisions.

**The association "Les plus beaux villages de France"**, contributes to the promotion of local heritage, by measures that aim to improve the perception inhabitants have of their territory, and improve the welcome for newcomers (artists, craftsmen and shops...) In this case general notoriety improves the territory's development.

During discussions the idea of using local heritage as a way of developing new ideas was evoked ; the use of storytelling (modernising tales, legends and stories related to the territory).



A good example of this is the **cultural project “le nombril du monde”**, in Poitou, which through its Tales and Legends festival, has given the territory a new dynamism, upheld economic activity and created jobs, as well as changing the image and perception of the territory. The population played an important role in this new venture.

Some projects include an external project manager in order to guarantee the project’s neutrality and involve the maximum amount of people.

This is how the economic, **tourist and cultural centre was created in the local heritage site at the Parc de Wesserling, in Alsace.**

As a result of this new enterprising measure, an old industrial area has received international exposure ; it has developed such a high quality image that new businesses have been set up. Community involvement is essential in the development of a new venture.