

The 7 Most Endangered 2014

Project Fact Sheet

<u>Project Title</u>	Carillons of the Mafra National Palace, PORTUGAL
<u>Location</u>	Mafra, Portugal
<u>Initial input date</u>	25.07.2017
<u>Current status</u>	Post appraisal follow-up
<u>Latest up-date</u>	27.07.2018

Summary, status, prognosis

A well prepared and essential restoration of ancient carillons and associated works. Progress had been slow initially but the full project is now under construction with completion programmed for September 2019 and so far within budget.

Classification: **B Good progress**

Basic data

Nominator:

Dr. Guilherme de Oliveira Martins. President Centro Nacional de Cultura.

Brief description:

Musical Heritage. Restoration of ancient carillons in basilica towers.

Owner:

The State under Direcção Geral do Património Cultural. Submission endorsed.

Administrator:

Overall: Direcção Geral do Património Cultural.
Planning and implementation: Palácio Nacional de Mafra (PNM).

Context, description

The National Palace at Mafra was completed in 1730 for King João V at the height of Portugal's prosperity. It included at its centre a fine Basilica, with a strong musical tradition through its unique six pipe organs, which play together, and its carillons sets, clocks and associated bells installed in the two towers. The carillons are the largest surviving set of 18th century carillons in Europe and were state-of-the-art at the time. They no longer function being in a dangerous state of disrepair.

The project is to repair and secure the carillons and bells and bring as many as practical back into service. The carillons will be restored so that those in the south tower will be able to play but those in the north tower will be kept as a museum piece. The wooden support structures within the towers will need major repairs to secure them. All the large swinging bells will be secured but only those that are un-cracked will be repaired to be able to chime. The clocks and associated bells will be restored and put into operation except for one cracked bell. General repairs and long-term maintenance works on the towers will be included.

Issues, problems, threats

The towers and particularly the bells are in a very precarious and dangerous state. Several parts of the bells and the structure have fallen to the ground over recent years. These are now blocked and supported temporary awaiting assessment and repairs and obviously are unable to be rung.

Lack of proper maintenance and repairs over many years have created these problems. Also, some past repairs were inappropriate and aggravated the present difficulties. The local "near maritime" environment has also contributed.

Urgent and comprehensive repairs are now required so that many of the carillons and associated bells can be brought back into operation and to ensure the safety of the towers and the visiting public.

Status pre-mission

Preventive actions have been the main focus due to lack of resources. These minimum actions have been done in a systematic manner with regular monitoring. The large bells have been secured and structural ties added as appropriate to the support frames. Wire mesh nets have prevented falling debris.

A comprehensive assessment of the carillons and bells by musicological experts has been undertaken. Also in the past structural assessments have been undertaken by specialists. The detailed proposals in terms of scope, cost, programme and procedures were still to be defined.

Summary EN/EIB-I mission recommendations, action programme

The Technical report was issued in January 2015 (also on EN website).

It underlined the need and justification of the project and supported the approach adopted. The main concerns expressed were of a detailed nature relating to how the works were to be undertaken with heavy bells at height and to optimising the pre-contract information to reduce subsequent contract risk.

Suggestions were made to improve the outcome by adding some minor works and by undertaking further study into the timber structures before letting the contract.

The project was estimated to cost 1.9 M € base cost with an overall financial need of 2.5 M €.

Work was projected optimistically to start by end 2015 with completion by 2017.

Finance should be sought from EU funds (ERDF) together with local funds. Considered overall to be an excellent project and to be supported, however with a perceived risk on meeting the proposed optimistic timetable.

Progress on recommendations and latest status

The report, its conclusions and recommendations were generally well received by those involved, notably the Nominator and the PNM team.

By April 2017 a contractor had been selected following an open tender for the full works with a cost of about 1.5 M € and a contract duration of 450 days. After some administrative delay, the full project works were awarded in June 2018 to a Portuguese Group at the above-cited cost and completion was set for September 2019. No problems have been reported and progress is as expected to date (July 2018). Funding has been directly from the Portuguese State.

Impact of EIB/EN intervention

Nominator's Comments:

The inclusion of Maфра in the "7 Most Endangered" programme has had important consequences concerning the acceptance by the public authorities of the priority of defending this heritage and for motivating public opinion. The international publicity and the wider information on its exceptional carillons have also encouraged many foreign and national visitors.

The engagement of Europa Nostra and the EIB Institute has demonstrated the importance of preserving this national heritage. This concept is considered innovative and efficient.

Appraisal Team's Comments:

The project fits into a well organised and competent managed context supported by Government. The contribution of the review was to bring the technical parties together and to help focus ideas on optimising the processes. Also by highlighting the project and giving it publicity, progress may have been advanced.

The initial lack of progress was disappointing but it seems that the project is advancing well although it is still early days in the contract.

Lessons learned

This has been considered at appraisal a well-coordinated and worthwhile project. The programme with a completion date of 2017 was always considered optimistic and driven by the anniversary of the inauguration of the works in 1717. So it is no great surprise that delays have occurred especially as funds are tight.

The project works are now in hand and with the full definition of scope as defined during the mission which is important.

Support of the Government has been important, ensuring funding for this national project. The EN/EIB Institute input seemed mainly effective as a review exercise to ensure good coordination and preparation pre-contract and to enhance credibility. The highlighting of the project by the "7 Most Endangered" programme has helped prioritise the scheme. A long-term view is necessary, especially when arranging finance in limited supply.

Data on inputs & timing	Dates, Participants
Nomination form submitted	November 2013
Project selected as 7 ME:	June 2014
Questionnaire from EIB Institute	May 2014
Response to questionnaire	July 2014
Appraisal mission	27 th -31 st October 2014
Participants:- EN - EIB Institute	Pedro Ponce de León Peter Bond
Feedback letter post mission	6 November 2014
Response to further questions	December 2014
Technical report issued	January 2015
Request for progress report	1) March 15: 2) April 17: 3) July 18
Response on progress	1) March 15: 2) May 17 3) July 18
Follow-up visit	none
Participants: EN EIB Institute	na
Report on follow-up visit	na
Fact sheet prepared by	Peter Bond, updated July 2017