



## **A new natural stone database: from the logical design to the implementation**

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This is a project to design, create and implement a database on ornamental and dimensional stones used in monuments and modern buildings. This project seeks to enhance, preserve and sustain cultural heritage data through the collaboration of: different institutional and private corporations: universities, laboratories, local and regional planning authorities, institutions and organisations, such as those involved in conservation and restoration, cultural heritage councils, architects and industry.

The advantage of this collaborative project is not only the chance to build a multidisciplinary database, but also the possibility to get closer to the needs of several targets.

Main target groups of this project are not only the scientific world and stone industry managers, but also cultural heritage councils, architects and restorers. In addition urban planners, local authorities and academic historians should be able to acquire a much greater awareness of the factors linking monuments and their quarry sites at a local, regional and National level.

The database structure is built on three parts: a set of data on quarry sites (both modern and ancient), information on material features and an inventory of the main monuments and buildings where they have been employed.

For each of these three parts, a dossier including technical data, photographs, and geological information on the origin and provenance is provided. When stone is still available full access to commercial information concerning the producer is supplied

including web links if possible. When ancient extraction sites are no longer accessible, geological data enabling possible future sources are provided.

Benefits of such a data base are obvious and numerous. It will be a flexible tool for:

- Improvement of sustainability of natural stone resources.
- Improvement of information transfer between the stone industry, stone users and consumers (e.g. designers, architects, etc;).
- Improvement of the information base on cultural heritage and features of stone material.
- Provision of information on availability of replacement material in restoration projects.
- Identification of ancient quarry sites leading to their preservation.
- The database will be Internet accessible.
- Providing local authorities the possibility to enable quarrying on rock material for cultural heritage restoration.

Many European institutions such as BRGM-LRMH (France), Eurolithos (Rome, Italy) Itallithos (Rome, Italy), OSNET, Marmotec have already produced stone databases quarried in their countries and aimed at their use for cultural heritage preservation. Some of them are public and are available for public consultation. Others are of more difficult access and very few are Internet accessible. However, none of them are as complete or complex as this one.