



**SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGIES TO  
CONSERVE AND VALORISE THE MEDITERRANEAN  
COASTAL AND MARITIME NATURAL HERITAGE**

**INHERIT A3.11  
SPECIFICATIONS FOR  
SELECTING AND  
DEVELOPING INHERITURA  
AREAS**

**PREPARED BY  
REGION OF PELOPONNESE**



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## 1 Introduction

Tourism in the Mediterranean has been growing at an accelerated rate in the last decades. As a consequence the Mediterranean coastal and maritime natural heritage is under pressure due to the impact of mass tourism activities, seasonality and overcapacity. MED territories need to react by developing sustainable tourism that preserves the natural heritage to ensure the future of the MED environmental habitat as well as the sustainable tourism growth potential. Combining the protection of natural heritage with sustainable tourism is the only option for the tourism industry to further grow and to face the international competition.

The INHERIT project is an integrated Interreg MED project aiming at the development of an innovative and inclusive approach to the protection and valorisation of natural heritage tourism destinations. A key component of the INHERIT approach is the formation of the INHERITURA protected area concept, i.e. of designated areas where touristic activities will occur under enhanced protection of natural heritage, with attribution of the corresponding label to ensure visibility and function as a seal of high level tourism sustainability.

INHERIT Activity 3.11 foresees the development of the specifications for selecting and developing INHERITURA areas. The specifications report will provide a catalogue of the criteria for selecting INHERITURA areas, describe and explain the main principles and features of the INHERIT approach, and outline the benefits from implementing the INHERIT approach and the ways to achieve them. The aim of this activity is to consolidate the principles, features, and criteria of INHERITURA areas thus providing the foundation for testing, developing and capitalizing upon the INHERIT approach and INHERITURA areas. Project partners FUSE, IPTPO AIFM and UPATRAS have provided their scientific and technical support for the consolidation of the principles, features, and criteria of INHERITURA areas.

The specifications report is structured as follows: Section 1 discusses the key concepts and principles of the INHERIT approach. Section 2 builds on the INHERIT project Activity A3.9 to presents the eligibility requirements, criteria and process for accreditation of areas under the INHERITURA label scheme. Finally, Section 3 presents the key benefits for Mediterranean coastal areas implementing the INHERIT approach.

## 2 The INHERIT approach

In its study looking at the opportunities and challenges of developing tourism based on natural and cultural heritage in non-traditional tourist destinations in Europe, the European Commission (2002) understands natural heritage in its broadest sense, covering not only the wildlife and habitats of a particular area, whether protected or not, but also its geological features and landscapes. Nuryanti (1996) attributes cultural components to sites of natural heritage “for it is humans that label and ascribe values to them, for example, deciding to designate particular areas as national parks and placing boundaries around them”.

The strong links between natural and cultural assets and the need for their integrated management have been recognised by the European Commission, highlighting the role this interconnection can play in boosting recreational and eco-tourism activities as well as green jobs and additional socioeconomic benefits<sup>1</sup>. Natural heritage sites may function as poles of attraction for different types of tourists seeking different types of experiences, ranging from providing an important scenic backdrop to providing opportunities for undertaking nature orientated physical or learning/research activities (European Commission, 2002).

The INHERIT project aims at developing an innovative approach to a) protect and enhance the quality of the natural heritage, thereby enhancing the attractiveness for tourists, b) leverage visibility, thereby increasing the value of tourism offerings, and c) sustain natural heritage, thereby increasing the long term value of tourism.

A key concept for pursuing the project’s aims is carrying capacity. The concept of carrying capacity stems from the perception that tourism cannot increase indefinitely in a specific area without causing irreparable damage to the local system. The concept can be understood and used in many ways in order to set limits to tourism development in terms of extent or intensity. For instance, it can refer to “(...) the maximum number of people who can use a site without causing an unacceptable alteration to the physical environment (natural and man-made) and without an unacceptable decline in the quality of the experience gained by visitors” or “a maximum acceptable tourist development (number of beds, hotels, mooring places, etc.) on the basis of the capacity of key resources (such as beaches, land area, energy, water, etc.) or infrastructure (such as ski lifts, etc.)” (Coccossis, 2004: 5).

Seasonality of touristic activities is also a concept pertinent to the scope of the INHERIT project. In the tourism sector, seasonality is mainly seen as a problem that needs to be tackled. Yet, some authors point out that seasonality is more than a threat to the viability of the tourism sector as it bears positive impacts on the environmental, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of tourist destinations (Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development, 2012). Thus, the extension of the tourist season is not to be pursued blindly but be a product of planning,

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<sup>1</sup> See:

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/links\\_natural\\_cultural\\_heritage\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/links_natural_cultural_heritage_en.htm)

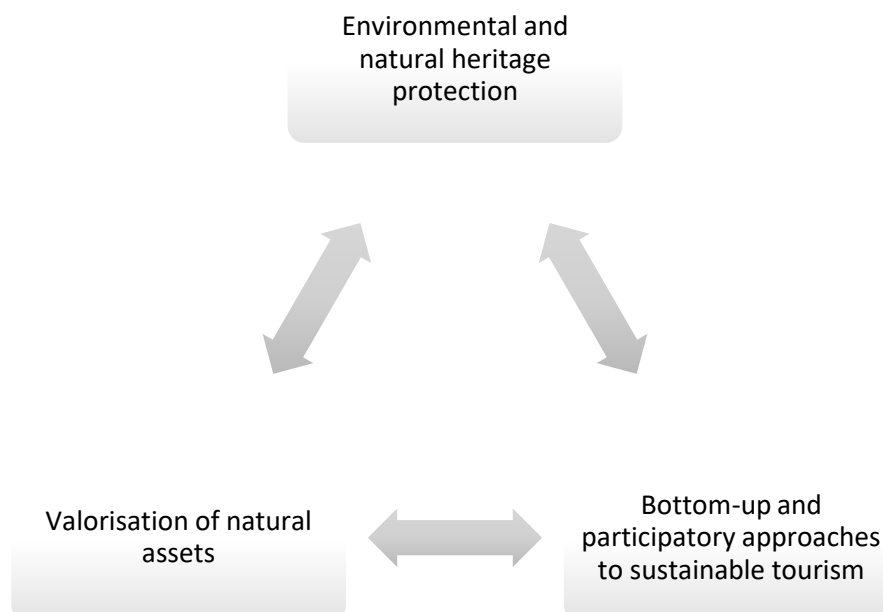
taking into consideration all the relevant factors (environmental, social, tourism intensity etc.).

The INHERIT project aspires to address the excesses in carrying capacity and the seasonal overpopulation and their collateral effects by introducing an integrated approach for the protection and valorisation of natural heritage in MED coastal regions.

The INHERIT approach follows three integral principles that are inherent in all the INHERIT project activities and should be embraced in all areas participating in the INHERITURA label scheme:

- Environmental and natural heritage protection,
- Valorisation of natural assets, and
- Bottom-up and participatory approaches to sustainable tourism.

Figure 1: The principles of the INHERIT approach



The following sub-sections will discuss the principles of the INHERIT approach and their role in addressing the negative impacts of tourism on natural heritage and the promotion of sustainable tourism while highlighting their complementarity.



## 2.1 Environmental and natural heritage protection

UNESCO defines<sup>2</sup> natural heritage as “Natural features, geological and physiographical formations and delineated areas that constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants and natural sites of value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty. It includes nature parks and reserves, zoos, aquaria and botanical gardens”. The UNESCO criteria for the selection of World Heritage sites<sup>3</sup> include the following natural criteria:

- Criterion VII: To contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.
- Criterion VIII: To be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features.
- Criterion IX: To be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals.
- Criterion X: To contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

The protection of coastal natural heritage is of particular importance as these sites suffer enormous pressures by human activity and climate change resulting in: inundation of land close to the shore and flooding of wetlands, salt water intrusion into inland water systems and groundwater aquifers, changes in physiological pathways of many organisms, that have adapted to a specific concentration of salt water in their habitat, modifications in the sedimentation process of the rivers and erosion.

The United Nations Environment Programme (2001) has identified three main areas of environmental impacts of tourism activities:

- **Depletion of natural resources:** referring to the pressure on natural resources by increasing consumption in locations and areas where resources are already scarce.
- **Pollution:** referring to air emissions, noise, solid waste and littering, releases of sewage, oil and chemicals, even architectural/visual pollution.
- **Physical Impacts:** referring to degradation of sites such as sandy beaches, lakes, riversides, and mountain tops and slopes, that are often transitional zones, characterized by species rich ecosystems and at the same time attractive landscape sites.

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<sup>2</sup> See: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/natural-heritage>

<sup>3</sup> See: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>

As highlighted by Coccossis (2004: 4) “Sometimes the negative impacts from tourism might have negative feedback effects on the tourist activity itself, particularly when it affects the very basis of its growth and existence, the tourist assets and tourist experience”. Thus, the need to protect the environment, alleviate the negative impacts of human activity, including touristic activities, and safeguard locations with rich natural heritage in coastal and maritime regions is vital. To this end, public authorities in Europe have formed marine protected areas and NATURA 2000 protected areas that were instituted, organised and managed through a top-down process, applied at a regional or national scale (Gaymer et al., 2014).

## 2.2 Valorisation of natural assets

Given that the quality and attractiveness of Mediterranean touristic destinations depends largely on their natural environment, their competitiveness is inherently linked to sustainability. The sustainable valorisation and promotion of natural assets can improve destinations' branding and recognition while strengthening the distinguished identity of local communities. Furthermore, the valorisation of natural assets can contribute to the increase of influx to the valorised sites as well as the extension of the touristic season.

Blain et al. (2005) provide the following definition for destination branding:

“Destination branding is the set of marketing activities that (1) support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that readily identifies and differentiates a destination; that (2) consistently convey the expectation of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; that (3) serve to consolidate and reinforce the emotional connection between the visitor and the destination; and that (4) reduce consumer search costs and perceived risk. Collectively, these activities serve to create a destination image that positively influences consumer destination choice.”

Yet, other scholars suggest that the term “place” is more suitable to describe the design and development of regional branding strategies as it refers to a wider concept than the term “destination”, including all the associated economic activities and sentiments (Briciu, 2013).

Govers & Go (2009) define place branding as “The process of discovering, creating, developing and realizing ideas and concepts for reconstructing place identities, their defining traits and ‘genius loci’ and subsequently building the sense of place, by efforts and investments in hardware (e.g. infrastructure, buildings), software (e.g. events, stories), orgware (e.g. co-operative organisational structuring) and virtual ware (e.g. symbols and symbolic actions, websites)”.

It is thus evident that the valorisation of natural assets that may contribute to a place's branding is a rather complex process requiring efforts and investments by various actors. The role of local stakeholders is often emphasised in the development of a place brand (Zouganeli et al. 2012) highlighting the room for bottom-up approaches in the valorisation of natural assets.



### 2.3 Bottom-up and participatory approaches to sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism development and natural heritage protection are multidimensional processes requiring integrated approaches that recognise the interconnectedness of economic, social and environmental aspects and attempt to link scientific knowledge, policy perspectives and community goals through interdisciplinary methods of problem solving and multi-stakeholder involvement (Mishra et al., 2009). The adoption of approaches involving local communities and key stakeholders in tourism and environmental protection planning and decision making contributes to the alleviation of conflicts of interests, higher consensus and higher willingness to participate in relevant activities.

A bottom-up approach presupposes that priorities and targets are set at the lower levels of a given organisational hierarchy and are progressively integrated into the global (organisational or operational) framework. Moving from the lower to the higher (senior) level bottom-up initiatives may gain institutional legitimacy and recognition and become established.

As pointed out by the “Feasibility study on the application of “bottom-up” initiatives for sustainable tourism in MED” (INHERIT 3.6), bottom up approaches would be beneficial for both the natural environment and the valorisation of natural assets as they can contribute to: a) the protection and enhancement of the quality of natural heritage, thereby augmenting the attractiveness for tourists, b) the visibility of natural heritage, thereby enhancing the value of tourism offering, c) the sustainability of natural heritage, thereby increasing the long term value of tourism.

The top-down organization and management approach to natural heritage protection faces several limitations including: the lack of compliance by local residents and visitors which can be attributed to an absence of consultation before establishing the regulation for the protection of the area (Sanchirico et al., 2002) as well as the weak knowledge of the geographical limits of the area, the restrictions and negative feedback from the social, economic and cultural perspectives (Bennett & Dearden, 2014). Bottom-up and participatory approaches to sustainable tourism can contribute to addressing these challenges.

### 3 The INHERITURA label

The INHERITURA label is a sustainability and environmental accreditation, awarded to MED (coastal) areas making a remarkable effort to conserve and valorise natural heritage with respect for the local environment and nature. Particular emphasis is placed upon sustainable tourism development through bottom-up approaches and collaborative, participatory efforts of local stakeholders.

This section presents the eligibility requirements and criteria of the INHERITURA label programme as defined by the INHERIT project Activity A3.9 which resulted in the "Study on the integration of the INHERIT approach in tourism labelling schemes" prepared by Malta Regional Development and Dialogue Foundation.

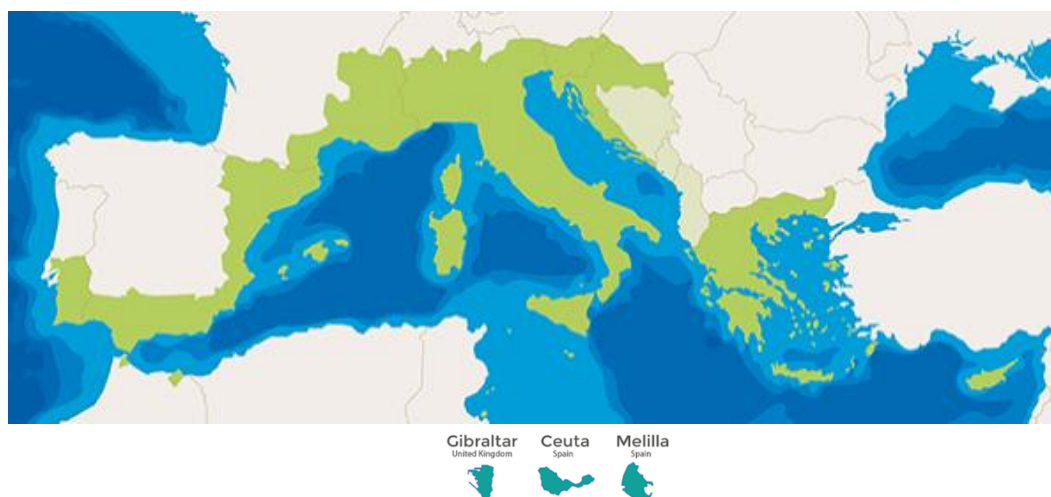
The INHERITURA label programme covers coastal areas of 13 European countries in the Northern shore of the Mediterranean Basin containing natural heritage sites of various categories and types. In addition, INHERITURA areas should meet a number of mandatory and optional environmental and sustainability criteria which can be classified in the following categories:

- Environmental management and protection measures
- Valorisation and promotional activities
- Governance and strategic planning
- Education and awareness

#### WHAT IS AN INHERITURA AREA?

An INHERITURA area is a MED coastal area with rich natural heritage, implementing measures to: a) promote environmental protection, b) decrease seasonality of tourism and address excesses in carrying capacity and c) foster sustainable tourism development (using natural heritage as an asset), through bottom-up approaches and collaborative and participatory efforts.

Figure 2: The INHERITURA programme area



### 3.1 Eligibility requirements and award criteria

The geographical span of the INHERITURA label scheme includes coastal areas from the following Mediterranean countries: Cyprus, Greece, France, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Gibraltar, Croatia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro.

**To be eligible under the INHERITURA scheme, areas of the aforementioned MED countries should be located within a NUTS 3 level region that has a coastline or more than half of its population living less than 50 km from the sea, thus being considered “coastal areas”<sup>4</sup>, and include natural heritage sites of various types and categories presented in Table 1.**

Table 1: Categories and types of natural heritage sites in INHERITURA areas

CATEGORY	TYPES OF NATURAL HERITAGE SITES
<b>COASTAL AND MARITIME ENVIRONMENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lagoons</li> <li>- Posidonia beds</li> <li>- Estuaries</li> <li>- Reefs</li> <li>- Tidal zones</li> <li>- Salt flats</li> <li>- Vegetated sea cliffs</li> <li>- Large shallow inlets and bays</li> <li>- Sand dunes</li> </ul>
<b>FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Natural eutrophic lakes</li> <li>- Dystrophic lakes</li> <li>- Temporary ponds</li> <li>- Artificial lakes</li> <li>- Constantly flowing rivers</li> <li>- Sub-mountainous rivers</li> </ul>
<b>FORESTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deciduous forests</li> <li>- Sclerophyllous forests</li> <li>- Mountainous coniferous forests</li> </ul>
<b>ROCKY SITES AND CAVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caves open to the public</li> <li>- Caves not open to the public</li> <li>- Volcanoes</li> <li>- Fields of lava</li> <li>- Submerged or partly submerged sea caves</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup>Based on the relevant definition of the Interreg MED programme. See: <https://interreg-med.eu/documents-tools/glossary/lexique/C/>

## CATEGORY

## TYPES OF NATURAL HERITAGE SITES

<b>OTHER SITES OF TOURISTIC INTEREST</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lighthouses</li> <li>- Coastal shipwrecks</li> <li>- Underwater shipwrecks and archaeological sites</li> <li>- Remote islands</li> <li>- Pre-historic, fossil sites</li> </ul>
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Furthermore, eligible areas should meet specific mandatory and optional criteria presented in Table 2 in order to be awarded the INHERITURA label. The criteria can be classed into four (4) categories:

- **Environmental management and protection measures:** Measures and activities aiming to preserve natural landscapes and biodiversity, promote the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources, foster sustainable waste management and green transportation, monitor environmental degradation and pollution, and achieve high bathing water quality.
- **Valorisation and promotional activities:** Activities aiming to contribute to the destinations' branding and thus attract investors and visitors and extend the touristic season while strengthening the identity of local communities, creating employment opportunities and improving the quality of life for residents.
- **Governance and strategic planning:** Strategies and action plans on natural heritage protection, coastal and maritime management as well as monitoring frameworks on the environmental, economic, and social impact of tourism on natural heritage.
- **Education and awareness activities:** Activities aiming at raising awareness on natural heritage and environmental protection as well as communicating information on natural heritage sites and relevant regulations and codes of conduct.

Table 2: The INHERITURA criteria

CATEGORY	CRITERIA
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION MEASURES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implementing bottom-up protection measures to prevent and/or reduce pollution in natural heritage sites.</li> <li>2. Ensuring that beaches and marinas comply with national water quality requirements.</li> <li>3. Implementing investments to promote environmental protection in natural heritage sites.</li> <li>4. Promoting sustainable mobility at the destination, including public transportation and low-emission transportation solutions.</li> <li>5. Preventing activities that disturb the natural environment in natural heritage sites.</li> </ol>
<b>VALORISATION AND PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Designing site-specific thematic routes to highlight aspects of natural heritage sites.</li> <li>7. Developing and promoting artificial reefs to promote coastal destination's branding and enhance marine environmental protection.</li> <li>8. Providing opportunities to experience biodiversity &amp; wildlife in natural heritage sites.</li> <li>9. Implementing investments to leverage the visibility of natural heritage landmarks.</li> <li>10. Taking steps towards the development of multi-destination itineraries in MED coastal areas to valorise natural heritage sites and prolong touristic season.</li> </ol>
<b>GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGIC PLANNING</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Designing and implementing a strategy on natural heritage protection and valorisation through public consultation with key stakeholders.</li> <li>12. Implementing integrated coastal and maritime management.</li> <li>13. Creating a framework to monitor and measure the environmental, economic, and social impact of tourism on natural heritage.</li> </ol>
<b>EDUCATION AND AWARENESS ACTIVITIES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Implementing awareness raising activities on sustainable tourism development and natural heritage protection.</li> <li>15. Displaying information relating to natural heritage sites in central spots of the destination.</li> <li>16. Communicating a code of conduct for visitors to natural heritage sites that reflects sustainability principles and complies with environmental regulations.</li> </ol>

### 3.1.1 Criteria pertaining to environmental management and protection

#### *Criterion 1: Implementing bottom-up protection measures to prevent and/or reduce the pollution in natural heritage sites.*

This mandatory criterion refers to activities and actions to decrease pollution in natural heritage sites. The activities may be initiated or supported by various actors (e.g. residents, tourism entities) and may include: forest, beach and underwater clean-ups, activities for the reduction of rubbish produced in recreation and tourism activities, promotion of

segmentation of waste at source, implementation of efficient and sustainable wastewater services, reduction of single-use plastics consumption and promotion of products that are designed to last longer and can be easily reused and promotion of responsible recreational activities on the water and land.

Such activities can be documented through reports describing the protection measures that have been taken or planned to be taken for reducing pollution in natural heritage sites, as well as feasibility and technical studies conducted by local tourism entities on protection measures. Furthermore, media releases and photos from participatory activities for natural heritage protection (e.g. clean-ups) may be used to document the actions.

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#### **Example 1:**

The Ascot Beach Hotel in Paphos, Cyprus, replaced disposable plastic cups with reusable ones and stopped using plastic bin liners in guest rooms saving thousands of euros but most importantly resulting in a significant reduction in the number of plastic cups and bin liners disposed, without affecting guest satisfaction.

Source: JRC, 2013

#### **Example 2:**

“Get Trashed Malta” is a Facebook-based community organising clean-up events in various localities, beaches and underwater sites. The events are mainly based on the efforts of volunteers and have been gathering growing support.

Sources:

<https://www.facebook.com/gettrashedmalta/>

<http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2017-11-23/local-news/Ta-Xbiex-Local-Council-teamed-up-with-Get-Trashed-Malta-6736181832>

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In order to assess an area’s compliance with Criterion 1, the committee should consider the measures to prevent and/or reduce pollution in natural heritage sites in place given the area’s characteristics (e.g. size, population and touristic activity) as well as the stakeholders’ involvement.

#### ***Criterion 2: Ensuring that beaches and marinas comply with national water quality requirements.***

This mandatory criterion, applicable only to coastline areas, refers to the selection of specific sampling points in potential sources of pollution (e.g. near streams, rivers, storm water outlets) for the measurement of the quality of water by local authorities, in collaboration with key stakeholders, in order to provide evidence that tourism activities do not affect the quality of bathing water in beaches and marinas.

Indicative sources of pollution for bathing waters include:



- Insufficiently treated or untreated wastewater due to outdated sewage systems or (biological) systems with limited capacity to cope with massive inflow of tourists during summer.
- Deliberate release of sewage into bathing waters or streams that discharge close to beaches and marinas by tourism facilities.
- Unsustainable boating activity, associated with the disposal of sewage and substances that can pollute sea water and alter water's chemistry such as oil and fuel, litter, and contaminated bilge waters.

Adherence to this criterion can be documented through official records of bathing water quality assessments.

In order to assess an area's compliance with Criterion 2, the committee should consider whether the water quality meets the appropriate standards. In addition, the measures in place to achieve good bathing water quality as well as the stakeholders' involvement should be taken into consideration.

The microbiological parameters to be monitored in INHERITURA areas are *Escherichia coli* and Intestinal Enterococci, fully aligned with the EU Bathing Water Directive (76/160/EEC). More particularly, in coastal and transitional waters, the minimum standards for *Escherichia coli* are 250cfu/100ml and for Intestinal Enterococci 100cfu/100ml.

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#### Example:

The Surfrider Foundation set a network of laboratories for testing water quality, especially in high-density swimming and water sports areas, in collaboration with local stakeholders. The samples are collected by volunteers on a monthly basis, with a strict protocol. If there is a threshold exceedance, local authorities are alerted to determine the cause of pollution and react properly if necessary.

Source:

[https://www.surfrider.eu/doc/waterquality2017\\_web\\_EN.pdf](https://www.surfrider.eu/doc/waterquality2017_web_EN.pdf)

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### *Criterion 3: Implementing investments to promote environmental protection in natural heritage sites*

This mandatory criterion refers to investments aiming at the promotion of environmental protection in natural heritage sites. These investments are meant to sustain biodiversity and ecosystem services, reduce the ecosystem's vulnerability to natural hazards and other environmental pressures, prevent pollution and littering and enhance the aesthetic value of landscapes.

Indicative examples of improvements on natural heritage sites include:

- The installation of underground gradual compression bins, to facilitate waste collection in tourism destinations with rich natural heritage. The underground bins compress a large volume of waste and can thus improve the attractiveness of natural heritage by reducing the

need to have many waste bins. They also lower the costs of waste management by reducing the frequency of waste collection.

- Erosion control investments consisting indicatively of compost berms, compost filter socks, and silt fences to be used in major coastal tourism destinations to tackle erosion and desertification caused by tourism activities.
- Toilet facilities with controlled sewage disposal that reflect the average number of site visitors during the peak season, the length of the natural heritage site and the number and location of major access points. They must be easy to locate through signage.

Adherence to this criterion can be documented through the provision of relevant media releases and publications, photos of the investments or other relevant documents such as maps of the locations of bins in the site or schedules of waste collection routes.

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#### Example:

In 2009 TUI AG signed a framework agreement with the Environment Ministry of the Balearic Islands to preserve and promote the environment of the islands. That same year TUI AG started to plant a forest in the Levante nature reserve of eastern Majorca as part of a plan to plant 57.600 wild olive and pine trees over an area of 48 hectares. The aim of the plan was to reduce ground erosion on the coastal slopes while raising awareness on environmental issues among customers.

Source: JRC, 2013

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In order to assess an area's compliance with Criterion 3, the committee should consider the investments (both planned and actual) to promote environmental protection in natural heritage sites given the area's characteristics as well as the stakeholders' involvement.

#### *Criterion 4: Promoting sustainable mobility at the destination, including public transportation and low-emission transportation solutions.*

This optional criterion refers to the implementation of sustainable mobility measures with the view to offering smart low-carbon transport solutions for tourists and residents through innovation and cooperation with key stakeholders. The overriding purpose is to preserve the natural environment by decreasing carbon emissions and energy consumption, increase the environmental quality of destinations, improve rural accessibility, and contribute to behavioural and attitudes change about the importance of sustainable mobility for recreation and tourist purposes. This criterion refers to all actions that:

- Encourage public and collective transport.
- Improve public transportation services, addressing routes and timetable adjustments, ticket procedures, bike transportation on buses.
- Encourage bicycling and bike renting, as well as economy-sharing driven mobility solutions for travellers.

- Create walking and cycling routes.
- Develop smart information applications/services to inform travellers of the main tourist attractions and how to get to these attractions using sustainable modes of transport.
- Promote the uptake of green vehicles by fleet operators (e.g. car rentals).

To further elaborate on this, natural heritage sites and surrounding areas, including routes, facilities and parking areas should be clean and maintained at all times. Trash, bags, litter or other waste shall not be allowed to accumulate causing these areas to become unsightly or hazardous. Tourism facilities, on their own initiative and/or in cooperation with local authorities, can work together to place garbage bins in natural heritage sites, to keep them clean and in pristine condition. Signs aimed at encouraging visitors to make proper use of the bins and dispose of their waste in a responsible manner can be also placed in selected spots. Broadly speaking, there should be an adequate number of bins and containers; and they should all be regularly maintained, well secured, and spaced appropriately. It is also recommended to substitute or supplement existing containers with recycling bins for different waste streams (e.g. plastic, paper, metal, glass) to promote recycling and waste separation at source.

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**Example:**

The flat terrain of Kos Island makes bike an easy means of transportation and many routes can be enjoyed by visitors.

Kos' bike path extends from the beach of Faros and to the end of Psalidi beach (approximately 13 km) with many side paths, some of which leading to the city of Kos, making it possible for both locals and visitors to use bike as their sole means of transport.

Source:

<http://www.kos.gr/el/kos/SitePages/bicycle.aspx#>

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Adherence to this criterion can be documented through the provision of photos of walking and cycling routes and infrastructures, transport information applications (links), documentation on routes, timetables and ticket procedures, brochures from tourism service providers that promote cycling and collective transport as well as evidence of carpooling and other economy-sharing driven mobility solutions.

In order to assess an area's compliance with Criterion 4, the committee should consider the activities implemented so as to promote sustainable mobility. Access for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements as well as stakeholders' involvement in the promotion of public transportation and/or low-emission transportation solutions should also be considered.

***Criterion 5: Preventing activities that disturb the natural environment in natural heritage sites.***

This mandatory criterion refers to the promotion of environmental responsibility and the response to various environmental challenges by INHERITURA areas. In this context, unauthorized camping, dumping and any other type of economic activity (e.g. husbandry, mining, nightclubs) that can potentially disturb the natural environment (incl. biodiversity) should be prohibited in INHERITURA areas. Information about these restrictions should be displayed at the entrance points of natural heritage sites, and circulated within local communities to prevent the initiation of unsustainable and unwanted economic activities.

Adherence to this criterion can be documented through the provision of written regulations, directives and decisions (incl. planning documents) as well as photos of signs and information boards in natural heritage sites that inform visitors on the activities allowed and forbidden in the site.

In order to assess an area's compliance with Criterion 5, the committee should examine whether there are provisions in place safeguarding the integrity of the natural heritage sites, given the area's environmental characteristics as well as stakeholders' involvement in the development and implementation of the provisions.

3.1.2 Criteria pertaining to the valorisation and promotion of natural heritage sites

***Criterion 6: Designing site-specific thematic routes to highlight aspects of natural heritage sites.***

This mandatory criterion refers to the implementation of initiatives that promote natural heritage tourism and at the same time contribute to managing natural resources in a sustainable and eco-friendly way.



Thematic routes are carefully designed routes connecting natural attractions and/or cultural and historical assets on the basis of a certain theme, which harmonise and co-exist in a certain geographical scale and can be reached through different means of transport. Thematic routes offer opportunities for education and entertainment at the same time, raising interest about environmental quality and local traditions and contributing to environmental preservation. Tourism routes can be broadly categorised based on their:

- a) Geographical scale (local, regional, national),
- b) Thematic focus (natural trails, cultural assets, specific interests), and

c) Means of transport used to experience nature (cycling, sailing, horse riding, hiking routes).

Tourism entities, in cooperation with local authorities and/or on their own initiative, should designate site-specific thematic routes in natural heritage sites, to showcase the distinguished Mediterranean characteristics of the destination and promote environmental protection.

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#### Example:

In 2013, the Municipality of Serifos, the company MEK Constructions and the Social Co-operative Enterprise Paths of Greece developed a trails network of 28 km consisting of 8 footpaths. The island's hiking trails network had been previously sign-posted, but the signs became old and needed replacement. The colour signs were renewed and directional as well as information signs were added at the beginning of each trail.

A new logo, with references to the island's nature and history was also designed: in ancient times the frog was the symbol of Serifos and there are numerous frogs in the creeks of the island.



Source:

<https://www.pathsofgreece.gr/en/portfolio-items/walking-serifos/>

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Site-specific routes may include natural trails aimed to highlight environmental quality, special interest routes focusing on a specific activity (wine production, farming, sports etc.), cycling routes, combining athletic activity and exploration, which encapsulate different natural, historical and religious in an enlightening and interesting way or even sailing routes in sea caves and remote islands.

Adherence to this criterion can be documented through the provision of brochures, leaflets, and other (online and offline) publications promoting the activities, media releases, photos of thematic routes as well as comments from visitors on platforms promoting tourism activities.

In order to assess an area's compliance with Criterion 6, the committee should consider the thematic routes in their vicinity, given the area's characteristics. Access for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements as well as stakeholders' involvement in the design and development of the thematic routes should also be considered.

*Criterion 7: Developing and promoting artificial reefs to promote coastal destination's branding and enhance marine environmental protection.*

This optional criterion refers to the development and promotion of Artificial Reefs (ARs), which can be viewed as biodiversity conservation tools and underwater ecotourism sites that promote a destination's branding and promote (marine) environmental management and restoration. They are manmade structures deployed on the seabed to mimic the main functions and characteristics of a natural reef. Submerged shipwrecks are the most common form of artificial reef. Oil and gas platforms, bridges, lighthouses, and other abandoned offshore structures can be also used to form artificial reefs. The creation of artificial reefs requires an integrated approach, with the participation of different stakeholders (e.g. tourism economic operators, public authorities, scientific community, users of the sea, environmental organisations), to identify opportunities, exploit innovative ecological solutions, evolve regulations, maritime spatial planning and coastal management, and raise public awareness. INHERITURA areas should promote the creation of artificial reefs in marine environments to increase coastal area's recognition and branding and promote environmental management. In this context, local tourism operators can create tourism packages that combine accommodation and recreational activities in artificial reefs (e.g. diving, fishing). Overall, artificial reefs have the potential to contribute to destination's branding by:

- Creating interesting diving locations
- Improving the quality of beaches and bathing waters
- Providing a diverse range of recreational activities such as snorkelling, angling, yachting and moorings
- Enhancing professional and recreational fisheries
- Generating reef-related economic activities to coastal communities
- Enhancing biodiversity and marine resources
- Attracting media attention

Adherence to this criterion can be documented through the provision of technical studies on the development of artificial reefs, relevant media releases, photos, brochures, leaflets, and other (online and offline) publications promoting activities in artificial reefs.

In order to assess an area's compliance with Criterion 7, the committee should consider the presence of artificial reefs in their vicinity as well as their benefits. The committee should also take into consideration stakeholders' involvement in the development and promotion of the artificial reefs.



*Criterion 8: Providing opportunities to experience biodiversity and wildlife in natural heritage sites.*

Natural heritage sites usually have a relatively high biodiversity value. They might have especially large numbers of endemic (native) species that may experience habitat loss by human activity or other environmental pressures (e.g. climate change, biological invasions). INHERITURA areas should provide travellers with the opportunity to explore these biological treasure troves in a sustainable and eco-friendly way. Nature based activities should be organised and guided by local tourism professionals, who are familiar with local ecosystems and committed to conservation principles, and making as little impact as possible. When implemented responsibly, they can promote a destination's branding and serve as a driving force behind conservation efforts. Indicative ways to explore biodiversity and wildlife in natural heritage sites are:

- River cruises and canoeing in wetlands
- Hiking through forests
- Waterfall trekking
- Scuba diving in underwater hotspots (e.g. reefs) and submerged caves
- Tree climbing and bird watching

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**Example:**

The combination of reefs, shipwrecks, caves and crystal-clear waters make the Maltese islands of Malta, Gozo and Comino an attractive destination to both beginner and experienced scuba divers and locally licensed diving schools are able to provide a range of activities and courses.

The waters surrounding the Maltese Islands also present an idyllic setting for snorkelling, for those wishing to explore marine life without scuba equipment, as snorkelling requires nothing but a snorkel, a mask and a pair of flippers.

Source: <https://www.welcome-center-malta.com/diving-in-malta-explore-the-mediterranean-sea/> & <https://www.welcome-center-malta.com/snorkeling-malta-top-10-destinations/>

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Adherence to this optional criterion can be documented through photos from relevant activities (e.g. river cruises, canoeing in wetlands), brochures, leaflets, and other (online and offline) publications promoting these activities, media releases and comments from visitors on platforms promoting tourism activities.

In order to assess an area's compliance with Criterion 8, the committee should consider the opportunities to experience biodiversity and wildlife in natural heritage sites in their vicinity, given the area's characteristics. Access for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements as well as stakeholders' involvement in the development and implementation of such activities should also be considered.

***Criterion 9: Implementing investments to leverage the visibility of natural heritage landmarks.***



This mandatory criterion refers to the implementation of investments to leverage the visibility of significant landmarks and improve destination's branding. Relevant investments are meant to a) improve accessibility to (hard to reach) natural heritage sites (e.g. gorges, caves, inaccessible inland locations with aesthetic value), b) improve labelling in natural heritage sites and inform tourists about

protection measures and INHERIT sustainable tourism activities therein, and c) address excesses in coastal areas' carrying capacity.

Indicative examples of improvements in natural heritage sites include:

- The development and/or repairing of walking paths in natural heritage sites to facilitate the proliferation of sustainable tourism activities.
- The instalment of maritime floating docks and ramps that will allow tourists to reach by boat key attractions that cannot be easily reached by car or other means.
- The instalment of platforms (well-protected and safe for visitors) or other structures that offer breath-taking views of natural heritage attractions (e.g. shipwreck beach in Zakynthos, Greece).
- The development of a sustainable tourism activities' signage system, consisting of information boards, to guide visitors' sightseeing in natural heritage sites.

Adherence to this criterion can be documented through photos of the investments (e.g. walking paths, floating docks, platforms) and relevant media releases and publications.

In order to assess an area's compliance with Criterion 9, the committee should consider the investments (both planned and actual) in their vicinity, given the area's characteristics. Access for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements as well as the level of stakeholders' involvement in the development and promotion of the investments should also be considered.

***Criterion 10: Taking steps towards the development of multi-destination itineraries in MED coastal areas to valorise natural heritage sites and prolong touristic season.***

This optional criterion refers to efforts for the creation of multi-destination itineraries in MED coastal areas to valorise the rich natural heritage and highlight (enhanced) tourism sustainability levels.



The goal is to diversify the dominant MED tourism offering by reorienting tourists from overcrowded places to under-valorised ones, yet rich in biodiversity and environmental quality and increase tourism flows in low/medium seasons extending the touristic season. Multi-destination itineraries are usually organised around a specific theme like environmentally friendly tourism, athletic tourism, food and wine tourism,

health and wellbeing tourism, nature tourism.

The INHERITURA label programme promotes the creation of multi-destination (transnational) itineraries to connect a number of MED coastal areas around a common theme akin to natural heritage such as islands itineraries in the Adriatic Ionian Sea and biodiversity itineraries in MED natural 2000 sites. The emphasis should be placed on conserving, valorising and highlighting the unique characteristics of the Mediterranean natural heritage while encouraging tourists to engage more fully with communities along their trip.

Efforts to stimulate the creation of multi-destination itineraries may include:

- Assessing the feasibility of forming and applying such itineraries.
- Joining synergetic schemes working on multi-destination itineraries.
- Participating in EU projects focused on the creation of sustainable transnational tourism products (especially in the field of natural heritage).
- Participating in collaborative schemes (e.g. networks, associations, platforms) that strengthen transnational cooperation in sustainable tourism.
- Encouraging greater involvement in sustainable tourism for small tourism enterprises and local authorities.
- Encouraging tourism economic operators to offer discounts and other benefits for travellers participating in multi-destination itineraries.

Adherence to this criterion can be documented through the provision of feasibility studies on the creation of multi-destination itineraries, reports demonstrating the actions to be taken for creating multi-destination itineraries, brochures and leaflets promoting transnational and/or multi-destination thematic routes (offered by tourism providers), evidence that local tourism entities participate in projects focused on the creation of sustainable transnational tourism products.

In order to assess an area's compliance with Criterion 10, the committee should consider the type and number of steps taken towards the development of multi-destination itineraries. The

committee should also take into consideration the involvement of stakeholders in the initiation, development and implementation of such steps.

### 3.1.3 Criteria pertaining to governance and strategic planning

#### *Criterion 11: Designing and implementing a strategy on natural heritage protection and valorisation through public consultation with key stakeholders.*

This mandatory criterion refers to the concrete strategies and/or action plans on natural heritage protection set aside to guarantee efficient and coordinated actions, better management and long-term planning. Such a strategy will ensure tourism development abides by sustainability principles and supports the long-term protection and valorisation of natural heritage assets. It will also help to minimise adverse environmental impacts and strengthen coastal areas' management and monitoring through collaborative and participatory efforts. To do so, it is pertinent to employ a destination approach that coordinates and connects the natural and cultural assets, in order to create a (holistic) tourism product. This will showcase the strong MED character of the destination, alleviate the pressures exerted by tourism economic activities (especially in sites suffering from over-tourism), and provide opportunities for sustainable local development.

The actions to be prescribed in the strategy need to be tailored to local circumstances (e.g. environmental conditions, growth priorities, market structure), and cover the following fields:

- Decision making (e.g. promoting co-operation between tourism stakeholders, and involving them in policy and decision making)
- Sustainable development (e.g. setting up networks of local tourism economic operators for better marketing and tourism packages).
- Environmental management (e.g. monitoring the impact of tourism on natural heritage).
- Capacity building and communication (e.g. raising environmental awareness among tourism entities).

Meaningful consultation with key stakeholders is a cornerstone for needs identification, prioritisation and informed decision making. It captures the views and perceptions of tourism entities and individuals that may be affected or have a strong interest to promote a new tourism model based on natural assets, leverages greater participation in protection measures, and provides greater transparency and accountability. The natural heritage protection strategy, apart from prescribing priorities and coordinating protection measures, will also ensure that the right level of intervention occurs from the most relevant entities in a timely manner.

Adherence to this criterion can be documented through the provision of written regulations, directives and decisions, copies of applicant's strategy on natural heritage protection and valorisation, relevant media releases on applicant's goals and objectives related to natural

heritage protection, planning documents presenting measures/actions to support the achievement of strategy' objectives, and evidence from public consultation process.

In order to assess an area's compliance with Criterion 11, the committee should consider whether there is a strategy/action plan in place. The committee should also take into consideration the involvement of stakeholders in the initiation, development of the strategy/action plan.

### *Criterion 12: Implementing integrated coastal and maritime management.*

This mandatory criterion refers to the integrated management approach adopted by INHERITURA areas to guarantee the sustainability and environmental health of the various uses and activities in marine and coastal areas. The programme foresees that economic activities taking place in coastal areas and at sea should pay particular attention to the protection of natural environmental and work towards minimising the risks associated with natural hazards and intense tourism activity, following an "ecosystem based approach". Integrated coastal and maritime management aims for the coordinated application of the different policies affecting the coastal and maritime zone. It also coordinates the implementation and management of related activities (e.g. environmental protection, aquaculture, fisheries, agriculture, tourism infrastructures, and shipping) in an attempt to bring into balance the environmental, economic and socio-cultural dimensions of tourism development. Integrated coastal and maritime management covers the full cycle of information collection, planning, decision-making, management and monitoring of implementation (European Commission on ICZM), addressing issues such as mapping of coastal and maritime uses and activities, zoning, risk analysis, cross-sectoral cooperation and conflict resolution. To end with, relevant management schemes require the active involvement and participation of all stakeholders (incl. synergies between sectors as well) to ensure consensus and broad support for the implementation of coastal and maritime strategies.

Adherence to this criterion can be documented through the provision of written regulations, directives and decisions, copies of applicant's management plans for coastal and maritime areas and planning documents reflecting the different uses in coastal zones and at sea.

In order to assess an area's compliance with Criterion 12, the committee should consider whether there is an integrated coastal and maritime management plan in place as well as the aspects of integrated management covered by the plan.

***Criterion 13: Creating a framework to monitor and measure the environmental, economic, and social impact of tourism on natural heritage.***

This mandatory criterion refers to the monitoring methods and assessment practices that should be an essential component of INHERITURA areas tourism planning. Public authorities and communities affected by tourism development should have a clear knowledge of the status of the natural environment in their area in order to assess the progress towards policy objectives that have been set.

Systematic monitoring and assessment of tourism provides a defensible basis for effective decision-making, since actions are based on data collected in a scientifically and reliable manner. Data-driven tourism monitoring can provide crucial information on trends, elucidate its adverse effects on the environment and local communities, and assess its economic sustainability. In this way, public authorities, local communities, and tourism stakeholders can address concerns and problems that arise from tourism activities, reflect on existing policies, and plan future actions. To be effective, tourism monitoring methods should be based on a set of environmental, economic, and social indicators that allow to measure all the detrimental aspects of tourism. To end with, monitoring effectively tourism impact requires multidisciplinary and cross functional collaboration. The involvement of local destination players (e.g. tourism facilities, environmental agencies, civic society) is sought at all levels through consultation and participation in research and monitoring activities.

Adherence to this criterion can be documented through the provision of links to online platforms and networks as well as databases and inventories. Further evidence could include indicator systems for monitoring impact and reports presenting the results of tourism environmental impact on natural ecosystems.

In order to assess an area's compliance with Criterion 13, the committee should take into consideration whether there is a the framework in place to monitor the environmental, economic, and social impact of tourism as well as the types of indicators it includes. The committee should also take into consideration the participation of stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation.

**3.1.4 Criteria pertaining to education and awareness raising activities**

***Criterion 14: Implementing awareness raising activities on sustainable tourism development and natural heritage protection.***

This mandatory criterion refers to awareness raising activities that should be implemented at local/regional level (by either tourism facilities or the local authority), to promote the strategic objectives of the programme, and more especially to:

- Create an environmental culture within the society.



- Increase public awareness (incl. travellers and locals) on the importance of natural heritage protection and sustainable tourism.
- Foster sustainable environmental and resource management in tourism facilities.
- Stimulate the creation of recreational activities that will highlight aspects of MED natural heritage, address excesses in the carrying capacity and prolong the touristic season.
- Encourage the participation of local stakeholders in environmental protection measures.
- Stimulate the emergence of ecotourism businesses that will gradually replace those facilities relying on mass tourism.

Educational and communication activities must be relevant to the scope of the INHERITURA label programme (i.e. natural heritage protection and valorisation), offered to the community applying for the label, and addressed to tourism entities or the general public. Furthermore, they must be clearly disseminated to the public. For instance, they can be posted on social media platforms, on information boards in central spots of the destination or published in newspapers and other media. The different types of awareness raising activities can be divided into 5 categories:

1. Activities for passive participation: Workshops, information days, exhibitions, debates, lectures and presentations by experts, conferences, etc.
2. Activities for active participation: Guided tours, educational games, cleaning days, diving and snorkelling, forest and beach inspections, nature conservation projects, etc.
3. Training and education: Training sessions in tourism facilities, educational activities for management bodies or/and staff in beaches and marinas, special classes in schools, etc.
4. Publications: The production and distribution of brochures, leaflets, newsletter, stickers, postcards, T-shirts, bags, and magazines.
5. Media appearance: Articles and advertisements in newspapers, magazines and journals, TV and radio broadcasts (incl. interviews).
6. Social media activity and email campaigns.

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**Example:**

The Association BIOM, a non-profit, voluntary and independent civil society organization involved in nature protection, species and habitats conservation and promotion, has coordinated local citizens, schools and entities to create a place for bird ringing within an organized camp in Učka Nature Park in Croatia. Camp attendees were local citizens but also visitors, interested tourists and volunteers. Such awareness raising activities enhance the maintenance of bird populations on the territory and create conditions for “green tourism”.

Source: <https://www.biom.hr/en/vijesti/ornitoloski-kamp-ucka-2018/>

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Adherence to this criterion can be documented through the provision of photos from awareness raising events and activities (e.g. cleaning days, information days), relevant media releases (e.g. articles, broadcasts) and publications (e.g. brochures, posters, leaflets) as well as participation lists and training records displaying that tourism facilities' personnel has been trained in environmental management.

In order to assess an area's compliance with Criterion 14, the committee should consider the awareness raising activities taking place, given the area's characteristics as well as the involvement of stakeholders in the development and implementation of the activities.

***Criterion 15: Displaying information relating to natural heritage sites in central spots of the destination.***

This mandatory criterion refers to the display of information about natural heritage sites (e.g. environmental elements, protection measures implemented, and sustainable tourism activities offered) in central spots of INHERITURA areas. The objective is to inform travellers/locals about natural assets, sensitive areas and their importance to the local community so that they are encouraged to learn more about, experience the environment in a responsible and sustainable way and potentially participate in protection activities. The information must include details about the natural area, a map of the site and a code of conduct for visitors.

Natural area details should include the following information:

- Site description
- Site location (decimal degrees) and size/surface
- Ecological information such as the natural habitat types as well as the animal and plant species of community interest on the site
- Threats, pressures and tourism activities with adverse impact on the natural heritage
- Protection status (e.g. NATURA 2000)
- Body responsible for the site management
- Sustainable tourism activities offered on the site (e.g. thematic routes, bird watching)
- Main tourism economic operators

Information on natural heritage sites can be displayed in different spots and locations of the destination such as at the entrance points of natural heritage sites, in tourism information offices, public buildings, airports, ports, and bus stations. Relevant environmental information could furthermore be published in tourist brochures, local newspapers or pamphlets created specifically for this purpose.

Adherence to this criterion can be documented through the provision of photos of information posted in central spots of the destination as well as copies of tourist brochures, local newspapers and/or pamphlets that include information on natural heritage sites.

In order to assess an area's compliance with Criterion 15, the committee should take into consideration the information relating to natural heritage sites displayed as well as the locations of display of such information.

*Criterion 16: Communicating a code of conduct for visitors to natural heritage sites that reflects sustainability principles and complies with environmental regulations.*

This mandatory criterion refers to the development and communication of a code of conduct for visitors (both tourists and local residents) to the INHERITURA areas' natural heritage sites, with the aim to prevent environmental damage, address potential risks and sustain destination's environmental quality.

Tourism activities have adverse environmental side-effects. Safeguards such as codes of conduct can prevent this from happening and at the same time can encourage tourists to visit the site and experience the natural heritage in a responsible way. The code of conduct should address the activities carried out in natural heritage sites and include (indicative) rules about noise, equipment used, rubbish disposal and management, the use of vehicles, camping, fires, diving, fishing, hunting, etc. It shall comply with all applicable environmental legislation. It should be displayed (necessarily) at the major entrance points of natural heritage sites, near to relevant tourism activities (e.g. "No diving" sign on a pier near a wetland or lake) or as information at the stores and offices of tourism service providers that offer eco-tourism activities.

Adherence to this criterion may be documented through the provision of copies of the applicable code of conduct as well as photos of the code of conduct displayed in natural heritage sites and other locations.

In order to assess an area's compliance with Criterion 16, the committee should take into consideration whether there is a suitable code of conduct in place, safeguarding the integrity of the area's natural heritage sites, as well as the locations of display of the code of conduct.

### 3.2 Accreditation procedure

Local or regional authorities of Mediterranean coastal areas will be able to apply for the INHERITURA label. A provisional application form, based on the application form developed in INHERIT Activity A3.9, is available in Annex I.

The label will be awarded by the INHERIT Committee, INHERIT Committee will be composed of 15 board members in total, with each INHERIT partner contributing 1 representative. Committee members will be directly appointed by the participating organisations in the INHERIT project. A provisional INHERITURA logo, as developed in INHERIT Activity A3.9, is available in Annex III.

The committees will evaluate all the applications meeting the eligibility requirements. Table 3 presents the performance indicators corresponding to each criterion as well as the maximum score and the threshold for each criterion. The aim of the indicators is to measure the INHERITURA standards across a wide variety of areas in a reliable and effective way. Furthermore, a tool designed to guide the committee members through the evaluation process is available in Annex II. An area has to reach a minimum score<sup>5</sup> of 83 points to be awarded the INHERITURA label, while the maximum score that can be obtained is 219 points.

The criteria of the programme, as well as the indicators and scoring system, will be reviewed and revised regularly to address latest technological developments and trends in environmental management, and to keep up with EU-wide priorities for sustainable tourism.

Based on the scientific and technical support provided by the project partners FUSE, IPTPO AIFM and UPATRAS upon the circulation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Draft of the specifications report, no on-site visits will be foreseen so as to simplify the procedure and constrain the costs. The INHERITURA accreditation will be only provided for a limited time interval - one year, and during that period the label will be valid and exploitable as long as the mandatory criteria are fulfilled. When this is not the case, the awarded areas will have a one-month period to resolve non-compliance issues before label withdrawal. The INHERIT committee will monitor areas' compliance over time and until the license period expires.

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<sup>5</sup> The minimum score for non-coastline areas is 75 points.

Table 3: The INHERITURA criteria and performance indicators

CRITERIA	INDICATORS	STATUS / SCORE
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION MEASURES</b>		<b>Maximum score: 61 points</b> <b>Threshold: 20<sup>6</sup> points</b>
<b>CRITERION 1: IMPLEMENTING BOTTOM-UP PROTECTION MEASURES TO PREVENT AND/OR REDUCE THE POLLUTION IN NATURAL HERITAGE SITES.</b>	a. Protection measures to prevent and/or reduce pollution in natural heritage sites in place. b. Stakeholder involvement.	Mandatory  Maximum score: 10 points Threshold: 5 points
<b>CRITERION 2<sup>7</sup>: ENSURING THAT BEACHES AND MARINAS COMPLY WITH NATIONAL WATER QUALITY REQUIREMENTS.</b>	a. Water quality. b. Measures in place to achieve good bathing water quality. c. Stakeholder involvement.	Mandatory  Maximum score: 15 points Threshold: 5 points
<b>CRITERION 3: IMPLEMENTING INVESTMENTS TO PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN NATURAL HERITAGE SITES.</b>	a. Investments (both planned and actual) to promote environmental protection in natural heritage sites in place. b. Stakeholder involvement.	Mandatory  Maximum score: 10 points Threshold: 5 points
<b>CRITERION 4: PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY AT THE DESTINATION, INCLUDING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND LOW-EMISSION TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS.</b>	a. Actions to promote sustainable mobility. b. Access for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements. c. Stakeholder involvement.	Optional  Maximum score: 16 points Threshold: N/A
<b>CRITERION 5: PREVENTING ACTIVITIES THAT DISTURB THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN NATURAL HERITAGE SITES.</b>	a. Provisions safeguarding the integrity of the site(s). b. Stakeholder involvement.	Mandatory  Maximum score: 10 points Threshold: 5 points
<b>VALORISATION AND PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES</b>		<b>Maximum score: 68 points</b> <b>Threshold: 10 points</b>
<b>CRITERION 6: DESIGNING SITE-SPECIFIC THEMATIC ROUTES TO</b>	a. Thematic routes in place.	Mandatory  Maximum score: 14 points

<sup>6</sup> The threshold for non-coastline areas is 15 points.

<sup>7</sup> Criterion 2 is applicable only to coastline areas.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS	STATUS / SCORE
HIGHLIGHT ASPECTS OF NATURAL HERITAGE SITES.	b. Access for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements.  c. Stakeholders involved in the design and development.	Threshold: 5 points
<b>CRITERION 7<sup>8</sup>: DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING ARTIFICIAL REEFS TO PROMOTE COASTAL DESTINATION'S BRANDING AND ENHANCE MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.</b>	a. Presence of artificial reefs. b. Benefits of artificial reefs. c. Stakeholder involvement.	Optional  Maximum score: 14 points Threshold: N/A
<b>CRITERION 8: PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPERIENCE BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE IN NATURAL HERITAGE SITES.</b>	a. Opportunities to experience biodiversity and wildlife in natural heritage sites. b. Access for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements. c. Stakeholder involvement.	Optional  Maximum score: 14 points Threshold: N/A
<b>CRITERION 9: IMPLEMENTING INVESTMENTS TO LEVERAGE THE VISIBILITY OF NATURAL HERITAGE LANDMARKS.</b>	a. Investments (both planned and actual) to leverage the visibility of natural heritage landmarks. b. Access for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements. c. Stakeholder involvement.	Mandatory  Maximum score: 14 points Threshold: 5 points
<b>CRITERION 10: TAKING STEPS TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTI-DESTINATION ITINERARIES IN MED COASTAL AREAS TO VALORISE NATURAL HERITAGE SITES AND PROLONG TOURISTIC SEASON.</b>	a. Steps taken towards the development of multi-destination itineraries. b. Stakeholder involvement.	Optional  Maximum score: 12 points Threshold: N/A
<b>GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGIC PLANNING</b>		<b>Maximum score: 48 points Threshold: 20 points</b>
<b>CRITERION 11: DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING A STRATEGY ON NATURAL HERITAGE PROTECTION AND VALORISATION THROUGH</b>	a. Strategy or action plan on natural heritage protection and valorisation.	Mandatory  Maximum score: 10 points Threshold: 5 points

<sup>8</sup> Criterion 7 is applicable only to coastline areas.



CRITERIA	INDICATORS	STATUS / SCORE
<b>PUBLIC CONSULTATION WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS.</b>	b. Public consultation with tourism stakeholders prior to the development of the strategy.	
<b>CRITERION 12: IMPLEMENTING INTEGRATED COASTAL AND MARITIME MANAGEMENT.</b>	a. Integrated costal and maritime management plan. b. Aspects of integrated management covered by the plan.	Mandatory Maximum score: 13 points Threshold: 5 points
<b>CRITERION 13: CREATING A FRAMEWORK TO MONITOR AND MEASURE THE ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF TOURISM ON NATURAL HERITAGE.</b>	a. Framework to monitor environmental, economic, and social impact of tourism. b. Environmental indicators c. Economic indicators d. Social indicators e. Stakeholders' participation in monitoring and evaluation.	Mandatory Maximum score: 25 points Threshold: 10 points
<b>EDUCATION AND AWARENESS ACTIVITIES</b>		<b>Maximum score: 30 points Threshold: 15 points</b>
<b>CRITERION 14: IMPLEMENTING AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND NATURAL HERITAGE PROTECTION.</b>	a. Awareness raising activities on sustainable tourism development and natural heritage protection. b. Stakeholder involvement.	Mandatory Maximum score: 10 points Threshold: 5 points
<b>CRITERION 15: DISPLAYING INFORMATION RELATING TO NATURAL HERITAGE SITES IN CENTRAL SPOTS OF THE DESTINATION.</b>	a. Information displayed. b. Locations of display.	Mandatory Maximum score: 10 points Threshold: 5 points
<b>CRITERION 16: COMMUNICATING A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR VISITORS TO NATURAL HERITAGE SITES THAT REFLECTS SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES AND COMPLIES WITH ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS.</b>	a. Code of conduct safeguarding the integrity of the site. b. Locations of display.	Mandatory Maximum score: 10 points Threshold: 5 points

# INHERITURA LABEL APPLICATION PROCEDURE



## FILL IN THE APPLICATION FORM

The responsible local or regional authority completes the application form and gathers all the relevant documentation.

## SUBMIT THE APPLICATION FORM

The responsible authority sends the application form with enclosed documentation to the INHERITURA appointed committee.



## EVALUATION

THE INHERITURA appointed committee evaluates the application form for compliance with the INHERITURA criteria.

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS

THE INHERITURA appointed committee announces its decision which can be an approval or rejection. In some cases the committee may request additional measures from the applicant to resolve non-compliance issues.



## ACCREDITATION

In case of approval, the coastal area is awarded the INHERITURA label.



## 4 Expected benefits for INHERITURA areas

Mediterranean coastal areas stand to reap significant environmental, financial, organisational and sociocultural benefits from the implementation of the INHERIT approach.

As the INHERIT approach and the INHERITURA label scheme emphasise on measures protecting the environment and safeguarding sites of natural inheritance, the implementation of the INHERIT approach is expected to alleviate the (natural and human-induced) pressures on the natural environment of coastal areas of the Mediterranean basin thus leading to important **environmental benefits**.

These benefits will be accomplished through the implementation various measures including:

- **Measures to reduce the depletion of natural resources, the pollution and the physical impacts induced by tourism activities.** The measures may be initiated or supported by various actors (e.g. residents, tourism entities) and may include: forest, beach and underwater clean-ups, activities for the reduction of rubbish produced in recreation and tourism activities, promotion of segmentation of waste at source, implementation of efficient and sustainable wastewater services, reduction of single-use plastics consumption and promotion of products that are designed to last longer and can be easily reused and promotion of responsible recreational activities on the water and land.
- **Investments to promote environmental protection in natural heritage sites.** The investments should aim at sustaining biodiversity and ecosystem services, reducing the ecosystem's vulnerability to natural hazards and other environmental pressures, preventing pollution and littering and enhancing the aesthetic value of landscapes and may include: the installation of underground gradual compression bins, to facilitate waste collection in tourism destinations with rich natural heritage.
- **Prevention of activities that disturb the natural environment in natural heritage sites.** The activities may include unauthorized camping, dumping and any other type of economic activity (e.g. husbandry, mining, nightclubs) that can potentially disturb the natural environment (incl. biodiversity).

Furthermore, the bottom-up and participatory approaches to sustainable tourism promoted by INHERIT can generate greater consensus among the relevant stakeholders (i.e. public authorities, local residents, tourism enterprises, civil society actors) reconciling their conflicts of interest. This consensus is expected to have a positive impact in the implementation of environmental preservation measures and contribute to their success.

The adoption of the INHERIT approach can lead to significant **financial benefits** mainly linked to the valorisation of natural heritage, which can be accomplished by:

- **Implementing investments to leverage the visibility of natural heritage landmarks.** The investments should aim at improving accessibility to natural heritage sites, improving labelling in natural heritage sites and informing tourists about protection

measures and INHERIT sustainable tourism activities therein, and addressing excesses in coastal areas' carrying capacity.

- **Designing site-specific thematic routes to highlight aspects of natural heritage sites.** Site-specific routes may include natural trails aimed to highlight environmental quality, special interest routes focusing on a specific activity (wine production, farming, sports etc.), cycling routes, combining athletic activity and exploration, which encapsulate different natural, historical and religious in an enlightening and interesting way or even sailing routes in sea caves and remote islands.
- **Developing and promoting artificial reefs to promote coastal destination's branding and enhance marine environmental protection.** Artificial reefs have the potential to contribute to destination's branding by: creating interesting diving locations, improving the quality of beaches and bathing waters, providing a diverse range of recreational activities such as snorkelling, angling, yachting and moorings, enhancing professional and recreational fisheries, generating reef-related economic activities to coastal communities, enhancing biodiversity and marine resources and attracting media attention.
- **Providing opportunities to experience biodiversity and wildlife in natural heritage sites.** Such opportunities may include: river cruises and canoeing in wetlands, hiking through forests, waterfall trekking, scuba diving in underwater hotspots and submerged caves, tree climbing and bird watching.
- **Developing multi-destination itineraries to valorise natural heritage sites and prolong touristic season.** The development of multi-destination itineraries will diversify the dominant tourism offering by reorienting tourists from overcrowded areas to under-valorised ones, yet rich in biodiversity and environmental quality and increase tourism flows in low/medium seasons extending the touristic season. Multi-destination itineraries may be organised around specific themes including: environmentally friendly tourism, athletic tourism, food and wine tourism, health and wellbeing tourism, nature tourism.

Through the valorisation of their natural assets areas adopting the INHERIT approach will strengthen their position as tourist destinations and thus are expected to:

- Increase in the influx of visitors
- Increase the value of the tourist offerings
- Expand the touristic season

Thus, the implementation of the INHERIT approach can boost the local economies of Mediterranean coastal areas by increasing the revenues from touristic activities and creating jobs linked to tourism, both directly and indirectly.

Through the bottom-up and participatory approaches to sustainable tourism promoted by INHERIT Mediterranean, coastal areas will gain important **organisational benefits** as all stakeholders (public administrations, tourism businesses and civil society) are expected to be involved in initiatives for natural heritage protection and valorisation.

INHERIT foresees a “bottom-up” approach to site management which may be more time and resource consuming yet, at the same time, is expected to be more effective and enduring through the consensus and social acceptance from local communities and key stakeholders.

Finally, the INHERIT approach can lead to a variety of significant **sociocultural benefits** for the communities involved, including the following:

- The job creation linked to touristic activities is expected to reduce emigration from the areas.
- The valorisation of natural heritage sites is expected to increase local awareness of those sites, contributing to the communities’ self-esteem.
- The educational and awareness activities envisaged are expected to contribute to the cultural exchange between the visitors and the local communities.

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## 6 Annex I

A revised version of the INHERITURA application form as presented in the “Study on the integration of the INHERIT approach in tourism labelling schemes” (INHERIT A3.9) prepared by Malta Regional Development and Dialogue Foundation.

### **i. Area identification and location**

Area name

Responsible authority

Country

Administrative region (NUTS2)

Size / Land area (km<sup>2</sup>)

Distance from sea (km)

Decimal degrees

Land cover (%)

- Artificial surface (e.g. urban, transports, industry):
- Agricultural surface (e.g. vineyards, fruit plantations, crops):
- Forest and semi-natural areas (e.g. heathlands, beaches):
- Wetlands:
- Water bodies:
- Marine area:

## **ii. Types of natural heritage sites**

What types of natural heritage sites are present in your area? Select those that have existing or potential touristic interest.

### **Coastal and maritime environments**

- ☐ Lagoons
- ☐ Posidonia beds
- ☐ Estuaries
- ☐ Reefs
- ☐ Tidal zones
- ☐ Salt flats
- ☐ Large shallow inlets and bays
- ☐ Sand dunes

### **Freshwater ecosystems**

- ☐ Natural eutrophic lakes
- ☐ Dystrophic lakes
- ☐ Temporary ponds
- ☐ Artificial lakes
- ☐ Constantly flowing rivers

### **Forests**

- ☐ Deciduous forests
- ☐ Sclerophyllous forests
- ☐ Mountainous coniferous forests

### **Rocky sites and caves**

- ☐ Caves
- ☐ Volcanoes
- ☐ Fields of lava
- ☐ Submerged or partly submerged sea caves

### **Other sites of touristic interest**

- ☐ Lighthouses
- ☐ Coastal shipwrecks
- ☐ Underwater shipwrecks & archaeological sites
- ☐ Remote islands
- ☐ Pre-historic, fossil sites

Please name the natural heritage sites that are present in your area. For each of them, provide a brief description presenting its main characteristics and importance to the local community, and explaining how these sites are being used in the context of the local tourism offering (e.g. attractions, biodiversity hotspots, recreational activities, and sightseeing).

### **Site description (1): *Name....***

**Site description (2): *Name....***

**Site description (3): *Name....***

**Site description (4): *Name....***

What are the main threats, pressures and tourism activities with impact on the afore-mentioned natural heritage sites?

### **iii. Ecological information**

Which animal species of community interest<sup>9</sup> are present on your area's natural heritage sites?

Scientific name	Site(s) found	Population	Status <sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Endangered or vulnerable or rare or endemic species.

<sup>10</sup> Critically endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Near Threatened (NT), Rare (R), Endemic (EN)

Which plant species of community interest are present on your area's natural heritage sites?

Scientific name	Site(s) found	Population	Status <sup>11</sup>

#### **iv. Environmental management and protection measures**

***Criterion 1: Implementing bottom-up protection measures to prevent and/or reduce the pollution in natural heritage sites.***

What measures have been/are being implemented in your area to prevent and reduce pollution in natural heritage sites? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Organise forest, beach and underwater clean-ups
- ☐ Reduce the amount of rubbish generated in recreation and tourism activities
- ☐ Promote segmentation of waste at source
- ☐ Promote products that are designed to last longer and can be easily reused
- ☐ Implement efficient and sustainable wastewater services (e.g. treatment systems)
- ☐ Reduce the consumption of single-use plastics
- ☐ Promote responsible recreational activities on the water and land
- ☐ Take care of the local streams
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Describe the protection measures have been/are being implemented in your area to prevent pollution in natural heritage sites in more detail.

<sup>11</sup> Critically endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Near Threatened (NT), Rare (R), Endemic (EN)

How were these activities and measures initiated? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ The measures were developed and implemented independently from stakeholders' considerations.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development and implementation of the measures.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of developing and implementing the measures.
- ☐ The measures were developed and implemented together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities.
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and implemented the measures with increased responsibilities.

List the attached proofs of compliance for criterion 1.

1.  
 2.  
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 ....

**Criteria 2: Ensuring that beaches and marinas comply with national water quality requirements. (Applicable only to coastline areas)**

Present water quality information (as drawn from official audits) on selected beaches and marinas.

**Beach (1): Name**

Date of audit:  
  
 Escherichia coli / Faecal coliform:  
  
 Intestinal Enterococci / Faecal streptococci:

**Beach (2): Name**

Date of audit:

Escherichia coli / Faecal coliform:

Intestinal Enterococci / Faecal streptococci:

### Beach (3): Name

Date of audit:

Escherichia coli / Faecal coliform:

Intestinal Enterococci / Faecal streptococci:

What measures have been/are being implemented in your area to achieve good bathing water quality? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Beach and underwater clean-ups
- ☐ Biological waste treatment
- ☐ Promote sustainable boating activity and charter shipping
- ☐ Promote sustainable recreational activities on the beach
- ☐ Prohibit unsustainable activities nearby beaches and marinas (e.g. nightclubs, industrial activities)
- ☐ Prevent deliberate release of sewage into bathing waters and/or streams that discharge close to beaches and marinas
- ☐ Adequate number of bins and containers at the beach
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Describe the measures have been/are being implemented in your area to achieve good bathing water quality in more detail.

How were these activities and measures initiated? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ The measures were developed and implemented independently from stakeholders' considerations.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development and implementation of the measures.



- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of developing and implementing the measures.
- ☐ The measures were developed and implemented together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities.
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and implemented the measures with increased responsibilities.

List the attached proofs of compliance for criterion 2.

1.

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***Criterion 3. Implementing investments to promote environmental protection in natural heritage sites.***

What investments have been/are being implemented or planned in your area to promote environmental protection in natural heritage sites? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Waste disposal bins and containers in natural heritage sites.
- ☐ Recycling bins for different waste streams to promote separation at source.
- ☐ Signs aimed at encouraging visitors to make proper use of the bins and dispose of their waste in a responsible manner
- ☐ Underground gradual compression bins.
- ☐ Compost berms, compost filter socks, and silt fences for erosion control.
- ☐ Toilet facilities with controlled sewage disposal.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Describe the investments have been/are being implemented or planned in your area to promote environmental protection in natural heritage sites in more detail.

How were these investments initiated? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ The investments were developed and implemented independently from stakeholders' considerations.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development and implementation of the investments.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of developing and implementing the investments.
- ☐ The investments were developed and implemented together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities.
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and implemented the investments with increased responsibilities.

List the attached proofs of compliance for criterion 3.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- ....

***Criterion 4. Promoting sustainable mobility at the destination, including public transportation and low-emission transportation solutions.***

What actions have been/are being implemented to promote sustainable mobility in your area?  
(Select all that apply)

- ☐ Promote public and collective transport.
- ☐ Improve public transportation services, addressing routes and timetable adjustments, ticket procedures, bike transportation on buses.
- ☐ Promote bicycling and bike renting.
- ☐ Promote economy-sharing driven mobility solutions for travellers and local residents.
- ☐ Create walking and cycling routes (i.e. infrastructures).
- ☐ Develop smart information applications/services to inform travellers of the main tourist attractions and how to get to these attractions using sustainable modes of transport.
- ☐ Promote the uptake of green vehicles by fleet operators (e.g. car rentals).

Are the public transportation and other solutions developed accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements?

- ☐ The public transportation and other solutions are not accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements.
- ☐ The public transportation and other solutions are partly accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements.
- ☐ The public transportation and other solutions are fully accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements.

Describe the sustainability mobility measures have been/are being implemented in your area in more detail.

How were these activities and measures initiated? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ The activities/measures were developed and implemented independently from stakeholders' considerations.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development and implementation of the activities/measures.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of developing and implementing the activities/measures.
- ☐ The activities/measures were developed and implemented together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities.
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and implemented the activities/measures with increased responsibilities.

List the attached proofs of compliance for criterion 4.

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**Criterion 5. Preventing activities that disturb the natural environment in natural heritage sites.**

What activities are prohibited in natural heritage sites? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Camping
- ☐ Diving
- ☐ Fishing
- ☐ Hunting
- ☐ Fire lighting
- ☐ Mining
- ☐ Use of vehicles (e.g. cars, speed boats)
- ☐ Garbage disposal
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Describe the activities prohibited in area's natural heritage sites in more detail.

How were these provisions initiated? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ The provisions were developed and implemented independently from stakeholders' considerations.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development of the provisions.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of developing the provisions.
- ☐ The provisions were developed together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities.
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated the development of the provisions.

List the attached proofs of compliance for criterion 5.

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#### **v. Valorisation and promotional activities**

##### ***Criterion 6. Designing site-specific thematic routes to highlight aspects of natural heritage sites.***

What type of site-specific thematic routes are offered in your area? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Natural trails aimed to highlight environmental quality.
- ☐ Special interest routes focused on a specific activity such as wine production, farming, and sports.
- ☐ Cycling routes, combining athletic activity and exploration, which encapsulate different natural, historical and religious in an enlightening and interesting way.
- ☐ Sailing routes in sea caves and remote islands.
- ☐ Cultural routes to learn about the area's longstanding traditions and way of life.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Describe the site-specific thematic routes offered in your area in more detail.

Are these thematic routes developed accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements?

- ☐ The thematic routes are not accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements.
- ☐ The thematic routes are partly accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements.
- ☐ The thematic routes are fully accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements.

How were these thematic routes created? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ The thematic routes were designed and developed independently from stakeholders' considerations.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the design and development of the thematic routes.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of designing and developing the thematic routes.
- ☐ The thematic routes were designed and developed together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities.
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, designed and developed the thematic routes with increased responsibilities.

List the attached proofs of compliance for criterion 6.

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**Criterion 7. Developing and promoting artificial reefs to promote coastal destination's branding and enhance marine environmental protection. (Applicable only to coastline areas)**

What forms of (artificial) reefs are present and promoted as touristic attractions in your area?

- ☐ Submerged shipwrecks
- ☐ Abandoned vessels
- ☐ Oil and gas platforms
- ☐ Bridges
- ☐ Lighthouses
- ☐ Other offshore structures
- ☐ No artificial reefs in my area

Describe the artificial reefs have been/are being developed in your area in more detail.

How were actions to develop artificial reefs initiated?

- ☐ The artificial reefs were designed independently from stakeholders' considerations.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the design and development of the artificial reefs.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of designing and developing the artificial reefs.
- ☐ The artificial reefs were designed and developed together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities.
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, designed and developed the artificial reefs with increased responsibilities.

What are the main benefits sought from the creation of artificial reefs?

- ☐ Create interesting diving locations
- ☐ Improve the quality of beaches and bathing waters
- ☐ Provide a diverse range of recreational activities such as snorkelling, angling, yachting and moorings
- ☐ Enhance professional and recreational fisheries
- ☐ Generate reef-related economic activities to coastal communities
- ☐ Enhance biodiversity and marine resources
- ☐ Attract media attention
- ☐ Other (please specify)

List the attached proofs of compliance for criterion 7.

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***Criterion 8. Providing opportunities to experience biodiversity and wildlife in natural heritage sites.***

What opportunities to experience biodiversity and wildlife in natural heritage sites are offered in your area? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ River cruises and canoeing in wetlands
- ☐ Hiking through forests
- ☐ Waterfall trekking



- ☐ Scuba diving in underwater hotspots (e.g. reefs) and submerged caves
- ☐ Tree climbing and bird watching
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Describe the activities offered in your area to experience biodiversity and wildlife in natural heritage sites in more detail.

Are the activities developed accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements?

- ☐ The activities are not accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements.
- ☐ The activities are partly accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements.
- ☐ The activities are fully accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements.

How were these activities created/initiated? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ The activities were developed and implemented independently from stakeholders' considerations.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development and implementation of the activities.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of developing and implementing the activities.
- ☐ The activities were developed and implemented together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities.
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and implemented the activities with increased responsibilities.

List the attached proofs of compliance for criterion 8.

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**Criterion 9. Implementing investments to leverage the visibility of natural heritage landmarks.**

What investments have been/are being implemented or planned in your area to leverage the visibility of natural heritage landmarks? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Development or repairing of walking paths in natural heritage sites to facilitate the proliferation of sustainable tourism activities.
- ☐ Instalment of maritime floating docks and ramps that allow tourists to reach by boat key attractions that cannot be easily reached by car or other means.
- ☐ Instalment of platforms (well-protected and safe for visitors) or other structures that offer breath-taking views of natural heritage attractions.
- ☐ Development of a sustainable tourism activities' signage system, consisting of information boards, to guide visitors in natural heritage sites.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Describe the investments have been/are being implemented or planned in your area to leverage the visibility of natural heritage landmarks in more detail.

How were these investments initiated? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ The investments were developed and implemented independently from stakeholders' considerations.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development and implementation of the investments.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of developing and implementing the investments.
- ☐ The investments were developed and implemented together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities.

- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and implemented the investments with increased responsibilities.

List the attached proofs of compliance for criterion 9.

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2.  
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***Criterion 10. Taking steps towards the development of multi-destination itineraries in MED coastal areas to valorise natural heritage sites and prolong touristic season.***

What steps have been taken in your area to create multi-destination itineraries in MED coastal areas that valorise natural heritage sites and prolong touristic season? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Assess the feasibility of forming and applying such itineraries.
- ☐ Join synergetic schemes working on multi-destination itineraries.
- ☐ Participate in EU projects focused on the creation of sustainable transnational tourism products (especially in the field of natural heritage).
- ☐ Participate in collaborative schemes (e.g. networks, associations, platforms) that strengthen transnational cooperation in sustainable tourism.
- ☐ Encourage greater involvement in sustainable tourism for small tourism enterprises and local authorities.
- ☐ Encourage tourism economic operators to offer discounts and other benefits for travellers participating in multi-destination itineraries.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Describe the steps taken in your area to create multi-destination itineraries in more detail.

How were these steps initiated? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ The steps were taken independently from stakeholders' considerations.

- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the initiation of the steps.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of the initiation of the steps.
- ☐ The steps were initiated and developed together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities.
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and implemented steps with increased responsibilities.

List the attached proofs of compliance for criterion 10.

1.  
 2.  
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#### **vi. Governance and strategic planning**

***Criterion 11. Designing and implementing a strategy on natural heritage protection and valorisation through public consultation with key stakeholders.***

Does your area have a strategy or action plan on natural heritage protection and valorisation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Strategy or action plan development/consultation is underway.

What are the main priorities and/or targets for natural heritage protection, prescribed in the strategy?

How were the stakeholders involved in the development of the strategy/action plan?

- ☐ The strategy/action plan was developed independently from stakeholders' considerations.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development of the strategy/action plan.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of the development of the strategy/action plan.
- ☐ The development of the strategy/action plan was initiated together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities.
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated the development of the strategy/action plan with increased responsibilities.

List the attached proofs of compliance for criterion 11.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
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***Criterion 12. Implementing integrated coastal and maritime management.***

Does your area have an integrated coastal management and maritime plan?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What aspects of integrated management are covered by the plan?

- ☐ Conflict resolution mechanisms
- ☐ Monitoring schemes
- ☐ Mapping of coastal and maritime uses
- ☐ Zoning
- ☐ Risk analysis
- ☐ Cross-sectoral cooperation
- ☐ Public consultation processes
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Describe your area's integrated coastal and maritime management plan in more detail.

List the attached proofs of compliance for criterion 12.

1.  
 2.  
 3.  
 ....

***Criterion 13. Creating a framework to monitor and measure the environmental, economic, and social impact of tourism on natural heritage.***

Does your area have a framework for measuring and monitoring the impact of tourism on natural heritage sites?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

What types of indicators are included in the monitoring framework? (Select all that apply)

**Environmental indicators**

- ☐ Biodiversity loss  
☐ Breeding success rates for selected species  
☐ Health of population of key species  
☐ Land degradation / erosion  
☐ Water quality  
☐ Air emissions  
☐ Frequency of contamination events of seawater  
☐ Other (please specify)

**Economic indicators**

- ☐ Tourist stays (nights) per month  
☐ Percentage of tourists using alternative modes of transport  
☐ Amount of funding provided to natural heritage agencies  
☐ Percentage of local enterprises in the tourism sector actively supporting protection of local biodiversity and landscapes

- ☐ Other (please specify)

**Social indicators**

- ☐ Local employment  
☐ Quality of life  
☐ Number of complaints by local residents for environmentally harmful tourist activities  
☐ Percentage of residents involved in natural heritage conservation programmes  
☐ Other (please specify)

What is the level of stakeholders' participation in monitoring and evaluation?

- ☐ Participation in planning  
☐ Participation in information collection  
☐ Participation in evaluation  
☐ Participation in decision making  
☐ Participation in reflection activities/measures

Describe how tourism stakeholders are involved in monitoring and evaluation activities in more details.

List the attached proofs of compliance for criterion 13.

1.  
 2.  
 3.  
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**vii. Education and awareness**

***Criterion 14. Implementing awareness raising activities on sustainable tourism development and natural heritage protection.***

What actions have been implemented in your area to raise awareness on sustainable tourism development and natural heritage protection?



- ☐ Workshops, information days, presentations by experts and lectures.
- ☐ Guided tours, cleaning days, forest and beach inspections
- ☐ Training sessions in tourism facilities
- ☐ Educational activities for management bodies
- ☐ Production and distribution of brochures, leaflets, newsletter, stickers, postcards, T-shirts, bags, and magazines
- ☐ Articles and advertisements in newspapers, magazines and journals
- ☐ TV and radio broadcasts (incl. interviews)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Describe the measures have been/are being implemented to raise public awareness on sustainable tourism development and natural heritage protection in more detail.

How were these activities initiated? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ The activities were developed independently from stakeholders' considerations.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development of the activities.
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of the development of the activities.
- ☐ The activities were initiated and developed together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities.
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and implemented the activities with increased responsibilities.

List the attached proofs of compliance for criterion 14.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Criterion 15. Displaying information relating to natural heritage sites in central spots of the destination.**

Is information relating to natural heritage sites displayed in central spots of the destination?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

Describe the content relating to natural heritage displayed.

At which locations is the information relating to natural heritage sites displayed?

- ☐ Entrance points of natural heritage sites  
☐ Tourism information offices  
☐ Public buildings  
☐ Airports and ports  
☐ Bus stations  
☐ Tour operators  
☐ Other (please specify)

List the attached proofs of compliance for criterion 15.

1.

2.

3.

**Criterion 16. Communicating a code of conduct for visitors to natural heritage sites that reflects sustainability principles and complies with environmental regulations.**

Is there a code of conduct for visitors to natural heritage sites in your area?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

At which locations is the code of conduct displayed?

- ☐ Entrance points of natural heritage sites  
☐ Tourism information offices  
☐ Public buildings  
☐ Airports and ports  
☐ Bus stations  
☐ Tour operators  
☐ Other (please specify)

What rules are included in the code of conduct?

List the attached proofs of compliance for criterion 16.

1.

2.

3.

....

## 7 Annex II

The aim of this evaluation tool is to guide the committee members through the assessment of INHERITURA area applications, based on the indicators presented in Table 3.

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**Evaluation tool for the selection of**

# INHERITURA areas

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**Committee member:**

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**Area name:**

---

**Responsible authority:**

---

**Criterion 1: Implementing bottom-up protection measures to prevent and/or reduce the pollution in natural heritage sites.**

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**a. Protection measures to prevent and/or reduce pollution in natural heritage sites in place.**

- ☐ No measures in place. (0 points)
- ☐ The measures in place are limited, given the area's characteristics such as size, population and touristic activity. (1 point)
- ☐ The measures in place are moderate, given the area's characteristics such as size, population and touristic activity. (3 point)
- ☐ The area implements extensive measures. (4 points)
- ☐ The area implements extensive and innovative measures. (5 points)

---

**b. Stakeholder involvement.**

(In cases where different responses apply for different measures implemented by the same applicant, please select the highest rated response that applies)

- ☐ The measures were developed and implemented independently from stakeholders' considerations. (1 point)
  - ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development and implementation of the measures. (2 points)
  - ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of developing and implementing the measures. (3 points)
  - ☐ The measures were developed and implemented together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities. (4 points)
-

- 
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and implemented the measures with increased responsibilities. (5 points)
- 

**Score:**

Maximum score: 10 points

Threshold: 5 points

---

**Criterion 2: Ensuring that beaches and marinas comply with national water quality requirements. (Applicable only to coastline areas)**

---

**a. Water quality.**

- ☐ The water does not comply with the appropriate standards in one or more sampling points (0 points)
- ☐ The water complies with the appropriate standards in all the sampling points (5 points)
- 

**b. Measures in place to achieve good bathing water quality.**

(In cases where different responses apply for different measures implemented by the same applicant, please select the highest rated response that applies)

- ☐ No measures in place. (0 points)
- ☐ The measures in place are limited, given the area's characteristics such as size, population and touristic activity. (1 point)
- ☐ The measures in place are moderate, given the area's characteristics such as size, population and touristic activity. (3 point)
- ☐ The area implements extensive measures. (4 points)
- ☐ The area implements extensive and innovative measures. (5 points)
- 

**c. Stakeholder involvement.**

(In cases where different responses apply for different measures implemented by the same applicant, please select the highest rated response that applies)

- ☐ The measures were developed and implemented independently from stakeholders' considerations. (1 point)
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development and implementation of the measures. (2 points)
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of developing and implementing the measures. (3 points)
- ☐ The measures were developed and implemented together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities. (4 points)
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and implemented the measures with increased responsibilities. (5 points)
-

**Score:** Maximum score: 15 points

Threshold: 5 points

**Criterion 3: Implementing investments to promote environmental protection in natural heritage sites.**

**a. Investments (both planned and actual) to promote environmental protection in natural heritage sites in place.**

- ☐ No investments in place. (0 points)
- ☐ The investments in place are limited, given the area's characteristics such as size, population and touristic activity. (1 point)
- ☐ The investments in place are moderate, given the area's characteristics such as size, population and touristic activity. (3 point)
- ☐ The area implements extensive investments. (4 points)
- ☐ The area implements extensive and innovative investments. (5 points)

**b. Stakeholder involvement.**

(In cases where different responses apply for different measures implemented by the same applicant, please select the highest rated response that applies)

- ☐ The investments were developed and implemented independently from stakeholders' considerations. (1 point)
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development and implementation of the investments. (2 points)
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of developing and implementing the investments. (3 points)
- ☐ The investments were developed and implemented together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities. (4 points)
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and implemented the investments with increased responsibilities. (5 points)

**Score:** Maximum score: 10 points

Threshold: 5 points

**Criterion 4: Promoting sustainable mobility at the destination, including public transportation and low-emission transportation solutions.**

**a. Actions to promote sustainable mobility.**

(Please select all that apply and sum the corresponding points)

- ☐ Promotion of public and collective transport. (1 point)

- 
- ☐ Improvement of public transportation services, addressing routes and timetable adjustments, ticket procedures, bike transportation on buses. (1 point)
  - ☐ Promotion of bicycling and bike renting. (1 point)
  - ☐ Promotion of economy-sharing driven mobility solutions for travellers and local residents. (1 point)
  - ☐ Development of infrastructures such as walking and cycling routes. (1point)
  - ☐ Development of smart information applications/services to inform travellers of the main tourist attractions and how to get to these attractions using sustainable modes of transport. (1 point)
  - ☐ Promotion of the uptake of green vehicles by fleet operators (e.g. car rentals). (1 point)
- 

**b. Access for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements.**

- ☐ The public transportation and other solutions are not accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements. (0 points)
  - ☐ The public transportation and other solutions are partly accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements. (2 points)
  - ☐ The public transportation and other solutions are fully accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements. (4 points)
- 

**c. Stakeholder involvement.**

(In cases where different responses apply for different measures implemented by the same applicant, please select the highest rated response that applies)

- ☐ The investments were developed and implemented independently from stakeholders' considerations. (1 point)
  - ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development and implementation of the investments. (2 points)
  - ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of developing and implementing the investments. (3 points)
  - ☐ The investments were developed and implemented together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities. (4 points)
  - ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and implemented the investments with increased responsibilities. (5 points)
- 

**Score:**

Maximum score: 16 points

---

**Criterion 5: Preventing activities that disturb the natural environment in natural heritage sites.**

---

**a. Provisions safeguarding the integrity of the site(s).**

- ☐ No provisions in place. (0 points)
-

- 
- ☐ The provisions in place are limited, given the area's environmental characteristics. (1 point)
  - ☐ The provisions in place are moderate, given the area's environmental characteristics. (3 point)
  - ☐ The area implements extensive provisions. (5 points)
- 

**b. Stakeholder involvement.**

(In cases where different responses apply for different measures implemented by the same applicant, please select the highest rated response that applies)

- ☐ The provisions were developed and implemented independently from stakeholders' considerations. (1 point)
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development and implementation of the provisions. (2 points)
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of developing and implementing the provisions. (3 points)
- ☐ The provisions were developed and implemented together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities. (4 points)
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and contributed to the implementation of the provisions with increased responsibilities, in collaboration with the competent authorities. (5 points)

**Score:**

Maximum score: 10 points

Threshold: 5 points

---

**Criterion 6: Designing site-specific thematic routes to highlight aspects of natural heritage sites.**

---

**a. Thematic routes in place.**

- ☐ No thematic routes in place. (0 points)
- ☐ The thematic routes in place are limited, given the area's characteristics such as size, population and touristic activity. (1 point)
- ☐ The thematic routes in place are moderate, given the area's characteristics such as size, population and touristic activity. (3 point)
- ☐ The area has developed extensive thematic routes. (5 points)

---

**b. Access for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements.**

- ☐ The thematic routes of the area are not accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements. (0 points)
  - ☐ The thematic routes of the area are partly accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements. (2 points)
-



- 
- ☐ The thematic routes of the area are fully accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements. (4 points)

---

**c. Stakeholder involvement.**

(In cases where different responses apply for different measures implemented by the same applicant, please select the highest rated response that applies)

- ☐ The thematic routes were designed and developed independently from stakeholders' considerations. (1 point)
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the design and development of the thematic routes. (2 points)
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of designing and developing the thematic routes. (3 points)
- ☐ The thematic routes were designed and developed together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities. (4 points)
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, designed and developed the thematic routes with increased responsibilities. (5 points)

---

**Score:**

Maximum score: 14 points

Threshold: 5 points

---

**Criterion 7: Developing and promoting artificial reefs to promote coastal destination's branding and enhance marine environmental protection. (Applicable only to coastline areas)**

---

**a. Presence of artificial reefs.**

- ☐ No (0 points)
- ☐ Yes (5 points)

---

**b. Benefits of artificial reefs.**

(Please select all that apply and sum the corresponding points)

- ☐ Environmental (1 points)
- ☐ Recreational (1 point)
- ☐ Publicity (1 point)
- ☐ Economic (1 point)

---

**c. Stakeholder involvement.**

(In cases where different responses apply for different measures implemented by the same applicant, please select the highest rated response that applies)

- ☐ The artificial reefs were developed and promoted independently from stakeholders' considerations. (1 point)
-

- 
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development and promotion of the artificial reefs. (2 points)
  - ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of developing and promoting the artificial reefs. (3 points)
  - ☐ The artificial reefs were developed and promoted together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities. (4 points)
  - ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and promoted the artificial reefs with increased responsibilities. (5 points)
- 

**Score:**

Maximum score: 14 points

---

**Criterion 8: Providing opportunities to experience biodiversity and wildlife in natural heritage sites.**

---

**a. Opportunities to experience biodiversity and wildlife in natural heritage sites.**

- ☐ No opportunities available. (0 points)
  - ☐ The opportunities in place are limited, given the area's characteristics such as size, sites, population and touristic activity. (1 point)
  - ☐ The opportunities in place are moderate, given the area's characteristics such as size, sites, population and touristic activity. (3 point)
  - ☐ The area has developed extensive opportunities. (5 points)
- 

**b. Access for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements.**

- ☐ The opportunities are not accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements. (0 points)
  - ☐ The opportunities are partly accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements. (2 points)
  - ☐ The opportunities are fully accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements. (4 points)
- 

**c. Stakeholder involvement.**

(In cases where different responses apply for different measures implemented by the same applicant, please select the highest rated response that applies)

- ☐ The activities were developed and implemented independently from stakeholders' considerations. (1 point)
  - ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development and implementation of the activities. (2 points)
  - ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of developing and implementing the activities. (3 points)
  - ☐ The activities were developed and implemented together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities. (4 points)
-

- 
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and implemented the activities with increased responsibilities. (5 points)

**Score:**

Maximum score: 14 points

---

**Criterion 9: Implementing investments to leverage the visibility of natural heritage landmarks.**

---

**a. Investments (both planned and actual) to leverage the visibility of natural heritage landmarks.**

- ☐ No investments in place. (0 points)
- ☐ The investments in place are limited, given the area's characteristics such as size, population and touristic activity. (1 point)
- ☐ The investments in place are moderate, given the area's characteristics such as size, population and touristic activity. (3 point)
- ☐ The area has implemented extensive investments. (5 points)

---

**b. Access for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements.**

- ☐ The sites are not accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements. (0 points)
- ☐ The sites are partly accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements. (2 points)
- ☐ The sites are fully accessible for individuals with disabilities or specific access requirements. (4 points)

---

**c. Stakeholder involvement.**

(In cases where different responses apply for different measures implemented by the same applicant, please select the highest rated response that applies)

- ☐ The investments were developed and implemented independently from stakeholders' considerations. (1 point)
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development and implementation of the investments. (2 points)
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of developing and implementing the investments. (3 points)
- ☐ The investments were developed and implemented together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities. (4 points)
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and implemented the investments with increased responsibilities. (5 points)

**Score:**

Maximum score: 14 points

Threshold: 5 points

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---

**Criterion 10: Taking steps towards the development of multi-destination itineraries in MED coastal areas to valorise natural heritage sites and prolong touristic season.**

---

**a. Steps taken towards the development of multi-destination itineraries.**

(Please select all that apply and sum the corresponding points)

- ☐ Feasibility assessment of forming and applying such itineraries. (1 point)
- ☐ Joining synergetic schemes working on multi-destination itineraries. (1 point)
- ☐ Participating in EU projects focused on the creation of sustainable transnational tourism products (especially in the field of natural heritage). (1 point)
- ☐ Participating in collaborative schemes (e.g. networks, associations, platforms) that strengthen transnational cooperation in sustainable tourism. (1 point)
- ☐ Encouraging greater involvement in sustainable tourism for small tourism enterprises and local authorities. (1 point)
- ☐ Encouraging tourism economic operators to offer discounts and other benefits for travellers participating in multi-destination itineraries. (1 point)
- ☐ Other (1 point)

---

**b. Stakeholder involvement.**

(In cases where different responses apply for different measures implemented by the same applicant, please select the highest rated response that applies)

- ☐ The steps were taken independently from stakeholders' considerations. (1 point)
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the initiation of the steps. (2 points)
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of the initiation of the steps. (3 points)
- ☐ The steps were initiated and developed together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities. (4 points)
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and implemented steps with increased responsibilities. (5 points)

**Score:**

Maximum score: 12 points

---

**Criterion 11: Designing and implementing a strategy on natural heritage protection and valorisation through public consultation with key stakeholders.**

---

**a. Strategy or action plan on natural heritage protection and valorisation.**

- ☐ There is no strategy or action plan in place. (0 points)
- ☐ Strategy or action plan development/consultation is underway. (2 points)
- ☐ There is a strategy or action plan in place. (5 points)

---

**b. Public consultation with tourism stakeholders prior to the development of the strategy.**

---

- ☐ The strategy/action plan was developed independently from stakeholders' considerations. (1 point)
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development of the strategy/action plan. (2 points)
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of the development of the strategy/action plan. (3 points)
- ☐ The development of the strategy/action plan was initiated together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities. (4 points)
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated the development of the strategy/action plan with increased responsibilities. (5 points)

<b>Score:</b>	Maximum score: 10 points
	Threshold: 5 points

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**Criterion 12: Implementing integrated coastal and maritime management.**

---

**a. Integrated costal and maritime management plan.**

- ☐ There is no integrated costal and maritime management plan in place. (0 points)
- ☐ There is an integrated costal and maritime management plan in place. (5 points)

---

**b. Aspects of integrated management covered by the plan.**

(Please select all that apply and sum the corresponding points)

- ☐ Conflict resolution mechanisms (1 point)
- ☐ Monitoring schemes (1 point)
- ☐ Mapping of coastal and maritime uses (1 point)
- ☐ Zoning (1 point)
- ☐ Risk analysis (1 point)
- ☐ Cross-sectoral cooperation (1 point)
- ☐ Public consultation processes (1 point)
- ☐ Other (1 point)

<b>Score:</b>	Maximum score: 13 points
	Threshold: 5 points

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**Criterion 13: Creating a framework to monitor and measure the environmental, economic, and social impact of tourism on natural heritage.**

---

**a. Framework to monitor environmental, economic, and social impact of tourism.**

- ☐ There is no monitoring framework in place. (0 points)
  - ☐ There is a monitoring framework in place. (5 points)
-

---

**b. Environmental indicators.**

- ☐ No environmental indicators monitored. (0 points)
- ☐ Some environmental indicators monitored. (2 points)
- ☐ Extensive environmental indicators monitored. (5 points)

---

**c. Economic indicators.**

- ☐ No economic indicators monitored (0 points)
- ☐ Some economic indicators monitored (2 points)
- ☐ Extensive economic indicators monitored (5 points)

---

**d. Social indicators.**

- ☐ No social indicators monitored (0 points)
- ☐ Some social indicators monitored (2 points)
- ☐ Extensive social indicators monitored (5 points)

---

**e. Stakeholders' participation in monitoring and evaluation.**

(Please select all that apply and sum the corresponding points)

- ☐ Participation in planning (1 point)
- ☐ Participation in information collection (1 point)
- ☐ Participation in evaluation (1 point)
- ☐ Participation in decision making (1 point)
- ☐ Participation in reflection activities/measures (1 point)

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**Score:**

Maximum score: 25 points

Threshold: 10 points

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**Criterion 14: Implementing awareness raising activities on sustainable tourism development and natural heritage protection.**

---

**a. Awareness raising activities on sustainable tourism development and natural heritage protection.**

- ☐ No awareness raising activities. (0 points)
- ☐ The awareness raising activities are limited, given the area's characteristics such as size, population and touristic activity. (1 point)
- ☐ The awareness raising activities are moderate, given the area's characteristics such as size, population and touristic activity. (3 point)
- ☐ The area offers extensive awareness raising activities. (5 points)

---

**b. Stakeholder involvement.**

---

(In cases where different responses apply for different measures implemented by the same applicant, please select the highest rated response that applies)

- ☐ The activities were developed independently from stakeholders' considerations. (1 point)
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed during the development of the activities. (2 points)
- ☐ Stakeholders were informed and consulted in the process of the development of the activities. (3 points)
- ☐ The activities were initiated and developed together with stakeholders, with a moderate role overall, without increased responsibilities. (4 points)
- ☐ Stakeholders initiated, developed, and implemented the activities with increased responsibilities. (5 points)

**Score:**

Maximum score: 10 points

Threshold: 5 points

**Criterion 15: Displaying information relating to natural heritage sites in central spots of the destination.**

**a. Information displayed.**

- ☐ No information is displayed. (0 points)
- ☐ The displayed information is limited, given the area's characteristics. (1 point)
- ☐ The displayed information is moderate, given the area's characteristics. (3 points)
- ☐ The displayed information is extensive. (5 points)

**b. Locations of display.**

- ☐ No display locations. (0 points)
- ☐ The display locations are limited, given the area's characteristics such as size, population and touristic activity. (1 point)
- ☐ The display locations are moderate, given the area's characteristics such as size, population and touristic activity. (3 point)
- ☐ The display locations are considerable. (5 points)

**Score:**

Maximum score: 10 points

Threshold: 5 points

**Criterion 16: Communicating a code of conduct for visitors to natural heritage sites that reflects sustainability principles and complies with environmental regulations.**

**a. Code of conduct safeguarding the integrity of the sites.**

- ☐ There is no code of conduct in place. (0 points)

- 
- ☐ The provisions of the code of conduct in place are limited, given the site's characteristics. (1 point)
  - ☐ The provisions of the code of conduct in place are sufficient, given the site's characteristics. (3 point)
  - ☐ The provisions of the code of conduct in place are extensive. (5 points)
- 

**b. Locations of display.**

- ☐ No display locations. (0 points)
- ☐ The display locations are limited, given the area's characteristics such as size, population and touristic activity. (1 point)
- ☐ The display locations are moderate, given the area's characteristics such as size, population and touristic activity. (3 point)
- ☐ The display locations are extensive. (5 points)

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**Score:**

Maximum score: 10 points

Threshold: 5 points

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**Total score:**

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## 8 Annex III

The INHERITURA logo as presented the “Study on the integration of the INHERIT approach in tourism labelling schemes” (INHERIT A3.9) prepared by Malta Regional Development and Dialogue Foundation.

