



## The INHERIT project test phase has started.

It is time to experiment in the field the knowledge acquired in the study phase. Since the testing activities will take place in the candidate INHERITURA areas....

### What is a *candidate* INHERITURA area?

A *candidate* INHERITURA area is an area that, after the test phase and under some conditions, could obtain the recognition of “INHERITURA protected area”, which includes:

1. Environmental and natural heritage protection;
2. Valorisation of natural assets;
3. Bottom-up and participatory approaches to sustainable tourism.

### Environmental and natural heritage protection

Natural heritage is a intuitive concept, but its definition is far from being simple. UNESCO defines 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”.

In many cases the protection of natural heritage is challenged by the human activity’s enormous pressure and by and climate change. 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.



### Valorisation of natural assets

**The quality and attractiveness of Mediterranean touristic destinations depends largely on their natural environment, thus 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.

But what is a “destination branding”? The concept relates to marketing activities that, collectively, serve to create a destination image that positively influences consumer destination choice, where *destination* should be considered in a wider sense, including all the associated economic activities and sentiments. 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, that’s why one pillar of the candidate INHERITURA area is the “Bottom-up and participatory approaches to sustainable tourism”.

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



Sustainable tourism development and natural heritage protection require integrated approaches that interconnects economic, social and environmental aspects and attempt to link scientific knowledge, policy perspectives and community goals through multi-stakeholder involvement.

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, to obtain higher consensus and higher willingness to participate in relevant activities.

That is why the test activities in each candidate INHERITURA area are carried out by working groups.

These working groups bring together the representatives of institutions and all stakeholders that interact directly or indirectly with the management and/or use of the territory. The stakeholders may have long-term commercial or environmental interests in natural heritage sites, can trigger policy changes (for representatives of public authorities) and act as drivers towards a sustainable and environmentally friendly paradigm of tourism development, and may be affected from the implementation of protection and valorisation measures. The working groups can include representatives of National, Regional and Local government, Tourism economic operators, Tourism sector associations and trade unions, Civic/citizen associations, Science, academia and research institutes.

[Learn about the INHERIT project](#)

## Pills

#### Emilia Romagna says no to disposable plastic

Emilia Romagna Region set a plan to free the regional territory from disposable plastic: in a progressive way, thanks to funds and incentives, businesses and workers will be plastic free.

#### France: new focus on the development of sustainable tourism

New measures against overtourism: for the first time in high season, the most popular destinations will no longer be promoted.

#### 66 million kg of trash in Greece

According to the data presented at the SETE Conference, visitors to Greece in 2018, along with cruise guests exceeded 33 million. On average the expenditure per tourist amounted to 520 euros, while everyone left behind 2 kg of trash.

#### Spain: an ambition project to spread sustainable tourism

Murcia Region promotes environment conservation and sustainable development with 11 initiatives planned from January to March.

#### News from Puglia Region

An informative meeting between the stakeholders that will be involved in the INHERIT pilot actions took place in the Regional Park of Coastal Dunes, Puglia candidate INHERITURA area.

#### Rehabilitation of Majjistral Nature & History Park in Malta

The clean-up project of the area known as Prajjet within Majjistral Park is now well advanced. The goal is to make the Park an afforested area full of indigenous species of plants and trees.

