

CULT MED

Sustainable Cultural Tourism
on the Mediterranean

Training Video Transcript

Module 1 – Video 1

Project 101174435



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MODULE 1: *How to organise sustainable cultural event based on ISO 20121 Standard*

VIDEO 1- Learning about environmentally responsible event planning

“What make a Cultural Event Sustainable?”

Cultural events celebrate identity and community. However, when they are not well managed, they can also create pressure on places, residents and cultural heritage. Sustainability is what helps events bring value without causing harm.

Key points

1. **Mediterranean cultural events:** Understand challenges and opportunities.
2. **Find the differences:** Recognize unsustainable vs sustainable event practices.
3. **Introduce the mindset of ISO 20121:** Identify impacts, engage communities, plan responsibly.

“The Pillars of Sustainable Events”

- Environmental contrasts
- Social contrasts
- Economic contrasts
- Cultural sustainability: the emerging fourth pillar

Let’s look at some contrasts across the three main pillars of sustainability:

Environmental contrasts

- Unsustainable: Uncontrolled visitor flows damaging fragile heritage sites; overflowing bins; widespread single-use plastics.
- Sustainable: Managed visitor flows through timed entry or distributed venues; reusable cup systems; well-labeled waste sorting stations.



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Social contrasts

- Unsustainable: Events designed without resident consultation; inaccessible entrances; lack of multilingual information.
- Sustainable: Co-created events involving community stakeholders; clear accessibility routes and ramps; multilingual signage welcoming diverse audiences.

Economic contrasts

- Unsustainable: Heavy reliance on external vendors, offering little benefit to local businesses.
- Sustainable: Supporting local value chains by working with nearby artisans, food producers and small enterprises.

In addition to these three pillars, cultural sustainability plays a central role in the Mediterranean context.

- Unsustainable: Events that commercialise or dilute traditions, pressure heritage sites, or overlook the cultural meaning of the place.
- Sustainable: Events that protect heritage, highlight authentic practices, involve local artists and knowledge holders, and reinforce community identity.

These examples show how environmental, social and economic pillars interconnect, while cultural identity remains a defining value for Mediterranean destinations.

“ISO 20121: A Structured Approach”

- Understand: identify impacts and opportunities
- Act: implement measures
- Review: assess what worked and what didn't
- Improve: apply learnings to future editions

ISO 20121 provides exactly that — a practical framework that helps organisers identify impacts, involve communities and make sustainability part of every decision.

ISO 20121 guides organisers through a simple cycle:

First, understand the event's impacts — from congestion and waste to accessibility, heritage pressure and opportunities to support local suppliers.

Then take action: plan mobility, reduce waste, choose reusable systems, co-create activities with residents and prioritise local businesses.



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After the event, review what worked and what needs improvement. And finally, use these insights to strengthen future editions.

By following this structured approach, organisers can protect cultural identity, support communities and reduce environmental impact — helping events become more sustainable year after year.

“What makes a Cultural Event Sustainable?”

- Responsible resource use
- Accessibility and inclusion
- Support for local communities
- Measured impacts & ongoing improvement
- Protection of cultural heritage

So, what truly makes a cultural event sustainable?

It is when organisers:

- ✓ Use resources responsibly and reduce environmental impact
- ✓ Ensure accessibility, safety and inclusion for everyone
- ✓ Support local businesses, artisans and the wider community
- ✓ Measure their impact and aim for continuous improvement
- ✓ Protect cultural heritage and reinforce local identity

“Sustainable Cultural Events”

Connecting People • Culture • Place

Sustainable cultural events connect people, culture and place — while respecting the future.



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