

# CULT MED

Sustainable Cultural Tourism  
on the Mediterranean

## Training Video Transcript

Module 4 – Video 7

Project 101174435



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## **MODULE 4: *Implementing Sustainable Cultural Tourism in Local Communities & Rural Settings***

### **VIDEO 7– Sustainable Cultural Tourism as a response to Rural Challenges “Using Culture to Strengthen Communities, Economies, and Identity”**

Rural and peripheral areas often face many challenges at the same time (interconnected demographic, economic, cultural, and infrastructure challenges) and these challenges are closely connected. Sustainable cultural tourism can help communities respond in meaningful, locally grounded ways.

#### **Key points**

- 1. Helping villages stay alive:** Making rural places more attractive place to live and work
- 2. Creating income locally:** Supporting small activities and services that bring money into the community
- 3. Valuing local culture and history:** Bringing old places, traditions, and knowledge back into everyday life.

#### **“Understanding the challenges facing Rural and Peripheral Areas”**

- Villages are getting smaller, and many young people leave
- Schools, shops, and cultural spaces are closing
- Many people work in seasonal or low-paying jobs
- Traditions, old buildings, and landscapes are fading
- Communities need to act together to keep their culture alive

Rural and peripheral areas often face many challenges at the same time, and these challenges are closely connected. Young people leave to look for work or education, and villages slowly grow smaller and older. As populations decline, schools close, shops disappear, and cultural spaces become harder to maintain. Public transport is often limited, for example, only a few buses a day or none at all in the evening. Internet connections can be slow or unreliable, making it harder to work or promote local activities online. Many people rely on seasonal jobs, such as summer tourism, which means income is uncertain for much of the year.

At the same time, traditions are practiced less, historic buildings fall into disrepair, and landscapes shaped by generations, like terraces, orchards, or shepherded paths, are no longer



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actively cared for. All of this affects not only the economy, but also the sense of identity and belonging in a place.

Understanding this reality is the first step. Sustainable cultural tourism, when it is rooted in local heritage and led by the community, can offer realistic and empowering ways to respond.

### **“How Sustainable Cultural Tourism responds to these challenges”**

- Creates new ways for people to earn money from local culture
- Involves young people as guides, storytellers, and helpers
- Brings old buildings and unused spaces back to life
- Makes people proud of their village and traditions
- Supports small improvements in transport and local services

Sustainable cultural tourism does not mean turning villages into tourist attractions. It means using culture as a living resource that benefits the community.

Small cultural activities—like craft workshops, food experiences, guided walks, or storytelling—can create new income opportunities and make it more attractive for young people to stay or return. Restoring an old house, mill, or workshop for cultural use brings abandoned heritage back into everyday life.

Tourism can also support small but important improvements, such as better signage, local mobility solutions, or digital tools that residents benefit from too. When people work together to organise festivals, workshops, or cultural routes, different generations reconnect, and local pride grows stronger.

### **“How to do it in practice: Using culture to revitalise a village”**

- Start with one local cultural asset
- Involve local people as hosts, guides, and storytellers
- Create a simple, repeatable experience
- Connect culture to everyday village life

Let’s look at a simple example.

A village with abandoned olive terraces and strong food traditions starts with a small seasonal activity: a guided olive walk followed by a shared tasting and storytelling session with local elders.



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Local residents act as guides and hosts. Young people help with promotion and digital storytelling. The experience runs a few times a month, using existing paths and spaces. Over time, this single activity creates income, keeps traditions alive, and brings new energy into the village—without large investments or losing authenticity.

This is how sustainable cultural tourism works in practice: small, local, and community-led.

### **“Community identity, local economies and landscape stewardship”**

- Brings people in the community closer together
- Helps local businesses and families earn fair income
- Offers cultural activities that are gentle on the environment
- Protects old buildings, traditions, and the landscape while supporting the economy
- Shows visitors what local products and skills are special

Sustainable cultural tourism helps villages create stronger local economies. It gives opportunities for artisans, farmers, cooks, musicians, and hosts to earn money while keeping it in the community.

For example, a village bakery can offer traditional bread-making workshops. Visitors learn, taste the bread, and share their experience with friends. This helps the bakery reach more people and earn a fair income. A craft workshop or a small guided tour can do the same for other local skills and traditions.

Activities that have low impact on the environment—like heritage walks, craft workshops, or storytelling sessions—also encourage care for old buildings, fields, and other local spaces.

When people see that visitors value their culture, confidence grows. The village feels alive again—not because outsiders change it, but because the community itself is taking pride in its traditions and places.



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