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## THINK PAPER #2

INSIGHTS FROM THE INCULTUM RESEARCH & INNOVATION ACTION

### HERITAGE COMMUNITIES AT THE HEART OF RURAL HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

*What do a rural trackway in Burgundy, a historic irrigation system in Andalusia, an old Irish cemetery or a forgotten transhumance track in the mountains of Albania have in common? These different heritage resources are of vital importance to local rural communities, symbolising their history, culture and identity – they are territorial commons that need to be revealed and reappropriated.*

*INCULTUM's experience underlines the central role of heritage communities in participatory initiatives to enhance rural heritage and strengthen resilience in the face of climate change.*

*Aimed at those involved in heritage preservation and enhancement and who wish to act in rural areas, this Think Paper has been written to stimulate debate on the issues raised by action research and proposes guidelines to encourage the emergence and development of heritage communities, in order to strengthen their capacity for action in local initiatives.*

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# THINK PAPERS

## Project's Summary

Tourism is more than travelling and consumption; it has great potential when it comes to culture, nature, knowledge, and personal experiences. Travelling is a way to learn and improve oneself, to enrich one's vision and improve mutual understanding. The INCULTUM project deals with the challenges and opportunities of cultural tourism with the aim of furthering sustainable social, cultural, and economic development. It will explore the full potential of marginal and peripheral areas when managed by local communities and stakeholders. Innovative participatory approaches are adopted, transforming locals into protagonists, able to reduce negative impacts, learning from and improving good practices to be replicated and translated into strategies and policies.

*This Think Paper has been produced to stimulate debate on the issues raised by the INCULTUM research and innovation action and to create new economic and social dynamics for rural areas.*

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<https://incultum.eu/>  
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## INTRODUCTION

The main hypothesis explored by INCULTUM is that the development of inclusive and sustainable projects for the preservation and enhancement of rural heritage is facilitated by the creation of **heritage communities** united by a **shared attachment** and committed to the preservation of their common heritage.

This heritage community approach is in keeping with the spirit of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro 2005), which recognises the right of every individual to benefit from cultural heritage and to contribute to its preservation and enrichment.

Rather than being managed externally, heritage resources can be taken in hand by members of the local community, who together draw up rules for their preservation. These heritage resources can thus be considered to be **commons**, in the sense that has been understood since the pioneering work of Elinor Ostrom (1990).

Taken as a whole, the shared reasons for attachment to a territory can also be considered as the constituent elements of a **landscape**, as defined by the European Landscape Convention (Florence 2000).

## FOUR TOOLS TO SUPPORT THE EMERGENCE OF HERITAGE COMMUNITIES AND ENCOURAGE

### 1. Putting together a dedicated team

Holistic territorial projects, which include heritage and tourism among other components, require the mobilisation of multi-disciplinary expertise over the long term, while strengthening local expertise that is firmly rooted in the area.

#### EXAMPLE

##### ***Project managers in charge of running heritage communities***

*Some of the INCULTUM pilot projects have put in place project leaders who are positioned as managers, responsible for the emergence, development, and structuring of heritage communities. This role involves acting as referee, analysing complex situations, and mobilising the expertise needed to overcome blockages, persuading the local community and external bodies on whom the success of the initiative depends, and empathising with the project and its stakeholders.*

## 2. Mobilising participatory approaches

*Participatory heritage inventories* and **cultural and artistic mediation** are effective levers for revealing shared reasons for attachment, encouraging dialogue, changing residents' perspective on their environment, stimulating their desire to act together and facilitating a collective narrative of the heritage project. In order to anchor the project in local history, recurring events such as **participatory landscape maintenance projects, annual cultural events and festivals, or long-term educational activities** are powerful vehicles for social cohesion.

### EXAMPLE

#### ***The landscape approach, a mobilising operational approach***

*As a "collective process in which everyone's opinion is taken into account, in which the specific nature of the territory is the starting point, the ecological substratum and the historical continuum the foundation, and which is capable of imagining complex projects in which the attachment to places feeds their capacity for sustainable development", the landscape approach promoted by the Grands Sites de France policy offers a mobilising operational approach by integrating the various aspects of a territory, but also the way it is inhabited and the sensitive experience of its inhabitants.*

## 3. Choosing a cooperative governance structure that gives each stakeholder an appropriate role

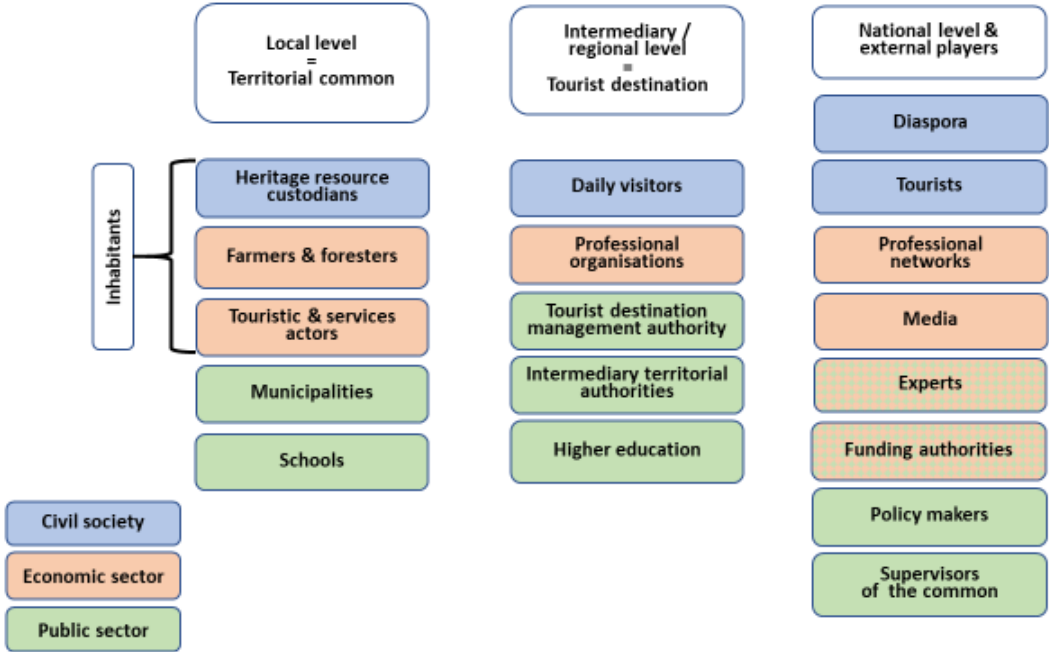
The development of rules for managing the territorial commons is an empirical and ongoing process, requiring the creation of a shared vision of the heritage and its legitimate uses, as well as consideration of the impact of individual actions on collective uses. It is essential to establish **permanent forums for dialogue** to ensure that standards evolve over generations and that the sense of cooperation within the community is maintained.

In order to address the issue of governance of the initiatives, the INCULTUM pilots adopted the "**five helix framework**" proposed to describe desirable innovation at a time of socio-ecological transition, which aims to create synergies between ecology, knowledge and innovation, fostering a win-win situation between the economy, society and democracy.

It identifies five sub-systems, including the political, educational, economic, civil society and natural environment systems, between which the circulation of knowledge fosters a continuous exchange to stimulate the production and integration of new knowledge. This approach, based on the prior **mapping of stakeholders**, the ongoing exchange of knowledge and the iterative nature of the process, can inspire rural land management systems on a regional or local scale.

**EXAMPLE**

*The stakeholders in INCUTUM's territorial tourism projects and their involvement*



**4. Recognising the role of local players who maintain heritage features**

The upkeep of the rural heritage is very often carried out by local people for whom it is an integral part of their job, particularly farmers. **Recognition of their know-how and the results of their work**, through material support or a symbolic act, is an important incentive for these players. This maintenance work can be integrated into a broader definition of **ecosystem services**, considering that, by maintaining the traditional components of the inhabited landscape and the associated know-how, we are contributing to the preservation of natural resources and biodiversity.

**EXAMPLE**

*Ecosystem services of irrigation communities*

*As part of the Spanish pilot project, the irrigators communities make a commitment to the municipalities to maintain the traditional irrigation systems and the associated new cultural itineraries under agreements that do not provide for payment in cash, but only for support in kind from the municipalities. The decisive factor is more of a symbolic nature: through such agreements, the local authority and the inhabitants it represents recognise the know-how and usefulness of the work done by the members of the communities.*

## LABORATORIES FOR LOCAL EXPERIMENTATION TO FORGE A SHARED VISION OF OUR HERITAGE

The experiments carried out as part of INCULTUM have confirmed the validity of the idea of placing heritage communities at the heart of participatory action research on heritage and sustainable cultural tourism.

One *modus operandi*, which is being used to varying degrees by the various INCULTUM pilots, is to set up project areas as **laboratories for territorial experimentation**, able to host teams of scientists over the long term for research-action projects which capitalise on their results over the years, making these areas showcases for good practice and privileged spaces for consultation, able to attract public support over the long term.

Within these systems, the landscape approach makes it possible to preserve shared heritage, consolidate cultural and social identity, and offer adaptive knowledge and practices.

### EXAMPLE

#### ***Bibracte – Morvan des Sommets, a laboratory for ecological transition***

*The Bibracte – Morvan des Sommets Grand Site de France is a territorial laboratory for ecological transition, mobilising local residents, elected representatives and players who are committed to their shared landscape. Within the laboratory, various research-action programmes are being carried out on different themes: agriculture transition, forestry, water management, heritage and sustainable tourism.*

## SOME LEVERS FOR ACTION

1. **Mobilise regional and national heritage inventory services** to support communities.
2. **Train heritage coordinators.**
3. **Encourage the development of free digital tools** for collecting and sharing heritage items.
4. **Facilitate the organisation of volunteer work camps**, by supporting organisations that can provide technical and administrative support to local authorities and stakeholders.
5. **Mobilise schools by involving pupils in the collective project:** heritage inventory, restoration of heritage features, etc.
6. **Encourage local players (local authorities, cultural operators, schools) to mobilise artists** with a view to revealing the reasons for attachment to heritage.
7. **Establish a clear governance scheme for the integrated territorial project**, giving a place to each group that claims to be a stakeholder in the project.
8. **Formally recognise the role and expertise of local players involved in maintaining heritage and landscape features.** Provide them with material and financial support on a contractual basis.
9. **Give priority to mobilising local players, in return for payment**, to maintain the rural landscape and heritage, in the same way as ecosystem services.
10. **Encourage closer links** between local areas and the surrounding university campuses.
11. **Create a network of areas involved in territorial innovation schemes** based on the landscape and heritage approach.