



SECReTOUR

Sustainable Creative Tourism

A Better Future for Rural and Remote Areas

Special session "Development of cultural & creative tourism in rural and remote areas, empowered by multidimensional models of tourism growth"

secretourproject.eu

Community-based tourism
Heritage communities
Fair & sustainable growth
Rural & remote areas

International conference

New challenges for UW nature and cultural heritage tourism during the Ocean Decade

29 January / 01 February 2026 / Aix-Marseille University

Background

SECReTOUR focuses on cultural tourism in the European peripheries, conceiving tourism as a tool to reinforce the resilience and cohesion of local communities. Cultural heritage tourism can help rural and remote areas diversify livelihoods, strengthen identity and stewardship, and increase access to culture and nature - provided that growth is fair, locally governed and climate-resilient.

Approach

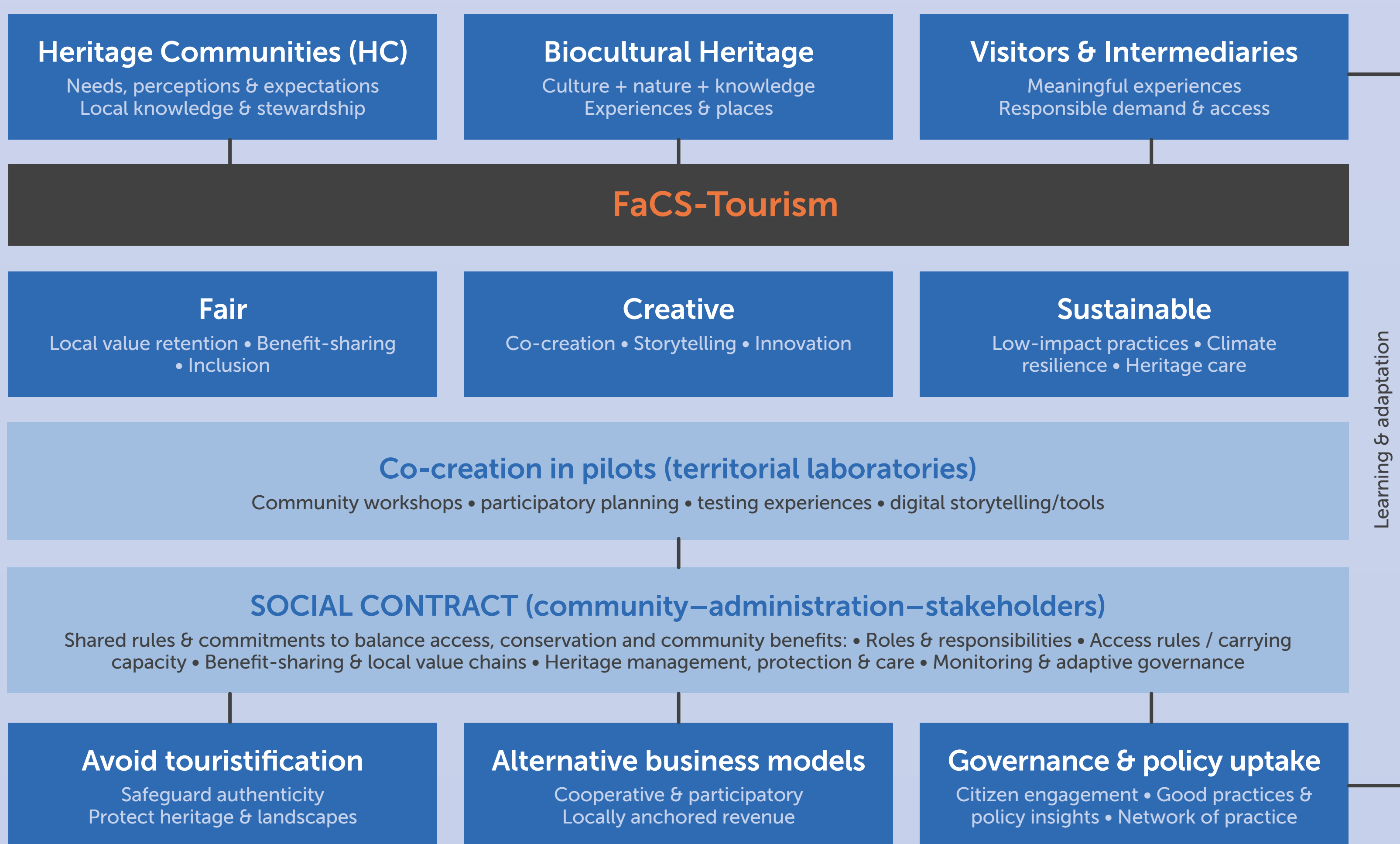
SECReTour combines research and co-creation in eight real-life pilots (territorial laboratories). Partners work with residents, SMEs, NGOs and public authorities to map heritage values and vulnerabilities, co-design experiences, and negotiate 'social contracts' balancing conservation, accessibility and community benefits.

Good practices in Cultural Tourism



FaCS-Tourism & Social Contract Model

Fair • Creative • Sustainable cultural heritage tourism co-designed with Heritage Communities



Open Resources
Project website: secretourproject.eu • Zenodo community: zenodo.org/communities/secretour
Join SECReTour network
secretour-network@promoter.it
Funded by the European Union (Horizon Europe, GA 101132584).
Views and opinions are those of the authors only.

Objectives

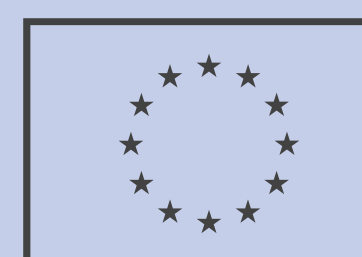
- Bottom-up local strategies and community-centred tourism
- Cooperative / alternative business models that retain value locally
- Effective cultural tourism policies and practical guidance
- Inclusion and wider participation across sectors and generations
- Collaboration across macro-region focused on FaCS tourism

Pilots

- FR Bibracte - Morvan des Sommets: A landscape in common
- ES Granada - Almería: Traditional irrigation systems in South-East Spain
- AL Upper Vjosa Valley: The heritage of the Vlach ethnolinguistic minority
- HU Romama Social Cooperative in Tomor: Rural Roma Heritage communities
- IE Ireland: Historic graves & the Irish diaspora
- SK Banska Bystrica: Mining cultural heritage and heritage communities
- SI Idrija: Digital nomadism in heritage-rich communities
- CH/IT Monte San Giorgio: The Threshold of the Sacred Mountain

Selected results

- Database of Good Practices in Cultural Tourism**
Curated collection of solution-oriented practices that promote sustainable cultural tourism in rural and remote areas, to support cross-border cooperation, policy development, and the wider adoption of effective tourism practices across macro-regions.
- Network of Common Interest**
A wide network of institutions, research centres, tourism organisations and European projects. The core of the Network is made by the cluster of the projects funded under the Horizon Europe call "Fostering socio-economic development and job creation in rural and remote areas through cultural tourism".
- Business Model Prototypes**
Report on business model prototyping, translating cultural assets into cooperative value chains, organised across the categories of tangible/intangible assets and centralised/diffused organisation of the offerings. Emphasis is on contracts, governance, and communication.
- Cross-border and Macro-Regions**
The Beyond Borders workshop was held in Lugano in October 2025. Projects' partners, international institutions, policy makers and local stakeholders presented their views about sustainable tourism in rural destinations, and showcased the Miraculous Catch itinerary, developed through a crossing border path across the Monte San Giorgio UNESCO site.
- Territorial Commons in Rural Europe**
Review of the concepts in use and the place of the commons in Europe at the start of the 21st century, after they had been erased from the legal and administrative landscape, and even from collective memory, for almost two centuries in favour of forms of exclusive ownership, whether private or public, with inspiring examples that illustrate the diversity of the territorial commons.
- Relevance to ocean decade & UW tourism**
Transferable methods for participatory governance, low-impact visitor experiences and community benefit-sharing-useful Tor coastal cultural landscapes, under-water parks and blue-economy initiatives.



Funded by
the European Union