



Network UNITWIN/UNESCO “Culture, Tourism, Development”



Workshop on:

Maintaining the Balance: Heritage Preservation and Sustainable Tourism in Rural and Remote areas

A case study of the Cyprus heartland

From 26th to 30th of June 2023

Funded and organized by:



DEPUTY
MINISTRY OF
TOURISM
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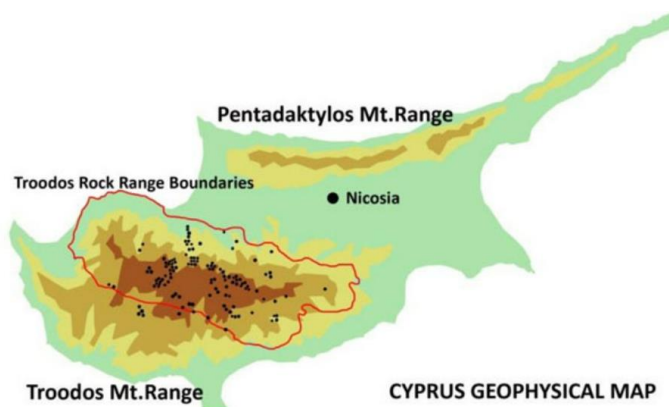


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The heartland of Cyprus

Cyprus' origin is directly connected to the development of the Troodos Mountain range, which was the result of a series of unique and complex geological processes. This led to Cyprus becoming a geological model for geoscientists worldwide and contributing to the understanding of ocean evolution and the evolution of our planet. The Troodos complex is composed of the deepest layer of the oceanic crust and other layers of the mantle. It was formed 90 million years ago, 8,000 meters beneath sea level.



The Troodos World Geopark¹ is located in the central part of Cyprus, covering an area of approximately 137,000 hectares or 1147 km² and occupying approximately 45% of the total area of the Troodos Mountain Range. As one of the most interesting geological reserves in the world, Troodos Geopark combines the geological heritage of the area with the unique blend of landscapes, histories of

humanity and culture heritages in the Eastern Mediterranean territory including: ancient ruins, traditional villages and religious sites. It is also an important economic and strategic region, with significant routes, energy resources and geopolitical interests. The Troodos UNESCO Global Geopark was inducted in the European and Global UNESCO Geopark Network in 2015 and was recognized as a unique World Heritage Site (WHS), combining the fascinating geology and unique natural environment of the Troodos Mountain range, with the long-lived history of the inhabitants and their unique customs, traditions and folklore.

In the Byzantine period, it was a centre of Byzantine art due to the construction of monasteries and churches in the mountains, away from the "threatening coastline". Throughout the villages and pine forests of the Troodos Mountain range, there are a significant number of icon-painting churches and majestic monasteries of the former Byzantine Empire that reveal the region's priceless religious heritage. In recognition of their unique architecture and frescoes, ten(10) of the area's churches have been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Throughout the centuries, the traditional villages of the inland of Cyprus have retained their distinctive cultural heritage, characterized by their cobblestone streets and folk architecture. There are many of these villages that can be considered to be "living" museums, and there are some that have been designated as "ancient monuments" and "controlled areas" as well. For instance, Fikardou has been a property of the Department of Antiquities since 1978 and has recently been designated as an open-air museum by UNESCO. As a general rule, the traditional villages of Troodos Mountain are located on the slopes of mountains, surrounded by orchards, vineyards, and pine forests, each with its own distinct aromas. A traditional local oenogastronomy and warm hospitality distinguish these villages in the countryside. These villages provide an opportunity for people to meet and experience Cypriot culture.

¹ <http://www.troodos-geo.org/>

During the passage of the Venetians from Cyprus, they left behind remains that have been used by the subsequent generations. The Venetian bridges of the Troodos mountains are outstanding examples of such monuments that have survived to this day. There is evidence that these roads were built by the Venetians during the 16th century as a means of transporting cargo (including copper and iron).

Nowadays, Troodos remains the main part of the "heartland" of Cyprus. This region comprises 115 communities, covering approximately 25% of free Cyprus, and is home to 27,695 residents and has ties with over 70,000 emigrants. While Troodos does not present the "permanent disadvantages", such as being far from the main population centers, it has experienced a great population shrinkage and aging, as well as a deterioration of its social fabric.²

In general the inland of Cyprus is not just a special territorial unit of Cyprus, on both a local and regional scale, but also a completely unique case of an area, that is relatively very close to all urban areas (such as Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca and Paphos). While it is technically an "exurban" area, it is at the same time a mountainous and environmentally sensitive area and therefore vulnerable. Even so, it tends to be absorbed by the dynamism of cities while at the same time being "claimed" and "shared" by them in a variety of ways. Today, it is more often known as a place where passive consumption is taking place than as a place where creative production occurs.



Cyprus' government has recently acknowledged that the lack of a strategy for promoting the sustainable rural development of mountainous communities resulted in desertions and declines in production. To address this issue, the Government developed a "Comprehensive Development Policy for Mountainous Areas of Cyprus" whose implementation was deemed a priority. In addition, the Deputy Ministry of Tourism, while evaluating ways to implement the objectives of this Policy, acknowledged that mountainous areas can offer many authentic experiences that enrich the heritage tourism product in Cyprus. Considering this, one of the key goals of the 2030 Tourism Strategy is to foster sustainable tourism in mountainous and remote areas. It also aims to develop special forms of tourism that contribute to the growth of the tourist stream outside of peak tourist seasons. An authentic experience route called Heartland of Legends (HoL)³ has been developed in this direction. The route provides visitors with an authentic experience of Cyprus' natural and cultural heritage, as it passes through mountainous and remote parts of Troodos.

²http://www.mountaincommissioner.gov.cy/Presidency/CDMC/CDMC/cdmc.nsf/esaok1b_el/esaok1b_el?OpenDocument

³ <https://heartlandoflegends.com/>

Aim and Objectives

As a case study, the heartland of Cyprus presents unique challenges when it comes to balancing the conservation of cultural and natural heritage with sustainable tourism plan and development. The aim of this workshop is to review in detail these challenging issues, as well as to present methods for dealing with them in a comprehensive manner. The UNITWIN team of experts will use this process to develop a strategic plan that balances the preservation of cultural and natural heritage of the study area with sustainable tourism.

In order to accomplish the main goal of the Cyprus UNITWIN workshop, the following objectives will be pursued:

- To identify and analyse the current state of heritage tourism development in the rural, mountainous, and remote areas of Cyprus and its impact on local communities, environment, and economy.
- To identify opportunities and challenges for sustainable tourism development in disadvantages areas and develop strategies to overcome these challenges.
- To explore and share best practices and successful case studies of sustainable heritage tourism development in in the rural, mountainous, and remote regions around the globe.
- To encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing among stakeholders, including local government officials, community groups, environmental organizations, tourism practitioners, and academics.
- To raise awareness among stakeholders about the importance of sustainable heritage tourism in in the rural, mountainous, and remote areas and its benefits to local communities, environment, and economy
- To develop an action plan with concrete steps and timelines to promote sustainable heritage tourism development in the inland of Cyprus.
- To provide a platform for networking and building partnerships among stakeholders to promote sustainable tourism rural, mountainous, and remote areas of Cyprus.

By achieving these objectives, the workshop aims to promote sustainable tourism development in study areas that benefits communities, preserves the environment and contributes to the local economy.

Expected Outcomes



Film production



Publication / Working Paper



Presentation Day / Symposium

Practical information

At the Cyprus UNTITWIN WS, 30 experts are expected to participate (on a first-come, first-served basis). The accommodation is sponsored by the Cyprus Deputy Ministry of Tourism and is provided for the days period between 25 June and 30 June.

A gathering of participants will take place in Limassol on Sunday, 25 June. The workshop will kick-off on Monday, 26/6, at the Pattichion Municipal Museum - Historical Archive - Limassol Studies Centre, where the first presentations will be held. In the following day (Tuesday 27/6), participants will be transferred to the mountainous traditional village of Agros, where they will remain until Thursday 29/6, when they will return to Limassol. A final presentation of the workshop's results and first conclusions will take place on Friday, 30/6. The workshop will be closed at 14.00pm on the same day.

In accordance with the workshop schedule, the workshop will conclude on Friday, 30/6, at 14:00. Anyone wishing to stay over on Friday will, unfortunately, have to be responsible for their own accommodation costs.

All participants of the Cyprus UNITWIN network will be accommodated in two hotels. The first hotel is located along the coast of Limassol and is known as the Park Beach Hotel (<https://www.parkbeach.com.cy/>), and the second hotel is located in the traditional mountain village of Agros and is known as the Rodon Hotel (<https://www.rodonhotelyprus.com/>).

Programme of the Cyprus UNTITWIN WS (preliminary)

Date	Agenda (Draft)
Sunday 25 June	Arrival in Hotel Park Beach in Limassol from Lamaca or Paphos Airport
Monday 26 June	<p>Pick up from Hotel Park and transfer to Pattichion Municipal Museum, Historical Archive, and Limassol Studies Centre</p> <p>Venue: Pattichion Municipal Museum, Historical Archive, and Limassol Studies Centre</p> <p>Kick-Off of the UNITWIN WS</p> <p>Welcome and Presentations</p> <p>Heartland of Legends, Deputy Ministry of Tourism</p> <p>The history of the tourism in Cyprus, Cyprus University of Technology</p> <p>An overview of the Troodos Geopark, Troodos Geopark</p> <p>Meetings with Key Stakeholders (local government officials, practitioners, environmental organizations, community groups, academics etc) to continue.</p> <p>City tour of Limassol and visit to the Cyprus University of Technology</p>
Tuesday 27 June	<p>Check-out of the Park Hotel and Departure for the Troodos Mountains</p> <p>Site visits to Painted Churches in the Troodos Region (WHS)</p> <p>The Church of the Holy Cross of Agiasmati in Platanistasa</p> <p>The Church of Panagia tou Araka (or Arakos) in Lagoudera</p> <p>Exchanges with key stakeholders</p> <p>Showcase example of sustainable tourism practice in action</p> <p>Byzantin Hagiography Workshop</p> <p>Exchanges with key stakeholders</p> <p>Check-in at the Rodon Hotel (Agros)</p> <p>Walking Tour in the village Agros</p> <p>Hands-on activities and opportunities to meet and taste local oenogastronomy</p> <p>An on-site demonstration of the Dragon Project at the Kaoura Fountain in Agros Square</p> <p>Exchanges with key stakeholders</p>
Wednesday 28 June	<p>Showcase example of sustainable tourism practice in action</p> <p>Experiential workshop and hands-on activities in Dry Stone Walling Workshop (knowledge and techniques)</p> <p>Museum visit</p> <p>Visit to the Hambis Printmaking Museum</p> <p>Exchanges with key stakeholders</p> <p>Showcase example of sustainable tourism practice in action</p> <p>Visit a local winery (knowledge and wine-tasting)</p> <p>Exchanges with key stakeholders</p>
Thursday 29 June	<p>Outdoor Activities (Optional)</p> <p>Hiking on the Nature Trail "Tisia of Madari" (circular), duration: 3 km, 1.5 hours</p>

	<p>or Cycling, or Yoga in nature</p> <p>Site visit to the Troodos Geopark (WHS) Site visit to the Geopark Visitor Centre Exchanges with key stakeholders</p> <p>Working session - Final results</p> <p>Check-out of the Rodon Hotel (Agros)</p> <p>Site visit at the traditional village of Lania A walk-through of the traditional village of Lania Folklore Karagiozis shadow puppet theatre play</p> <p>Return to the Hotel Park in Limassol</p>
Friday 30 June	<p>Venue: Cyprus University of Technology Presentation of the Cyprus UNITWIN WS Results /Round Table with the Cyprus Deputy Ministry of Tourism and other key stakeholders</p> <p>Working meeting of the UNITWIN Network "Culture, Tourism and Development"</p> <p>14.00 End of the Cyprus UNITWIN workshop</p>