

## **GEPARK: THE RIGHT PATH TO TERRITORIAL COMPETITIVENESS THROUGH NATURE TOURISM**

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The birth of a Geopark allows a territory to belong to a network of Geoparks around the world, with a vast accumulated knowledge in management of geological heritage, in a tourist and scientific perspective, and, at the same time, be supported on a strong, solid, believable brand such as UNESCO.

### **Frequent Asked Questions**

- What is the right way to take advantage of opportunities brought by a Geopark creation?
- How should the population be involved in such a powerful and demanding process?
- What's the role of the political entities?
- How does economical growth, through Nature Tourism, can be taken as a raise of development levels to local population?

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### **Points to be followed**

#### ***Strategy***

- To push and manage all the different actors, either belonging to public or private sector, that perform or that in a more or less deep way are connected to the Environmental/Geological, historic and cultural heritage to give their active contribution in the implementation and development and consolidation of a sustainable strategy based on the heritage valorization.
- Ensure the productive capacity, respecting the heritage qualification principles, allowing the diversification of touristic products, aiming in particular to the innovation in supply through the incorporation of new methods, ensuring an attractiveness raise and, therefore, a more competitive territory.

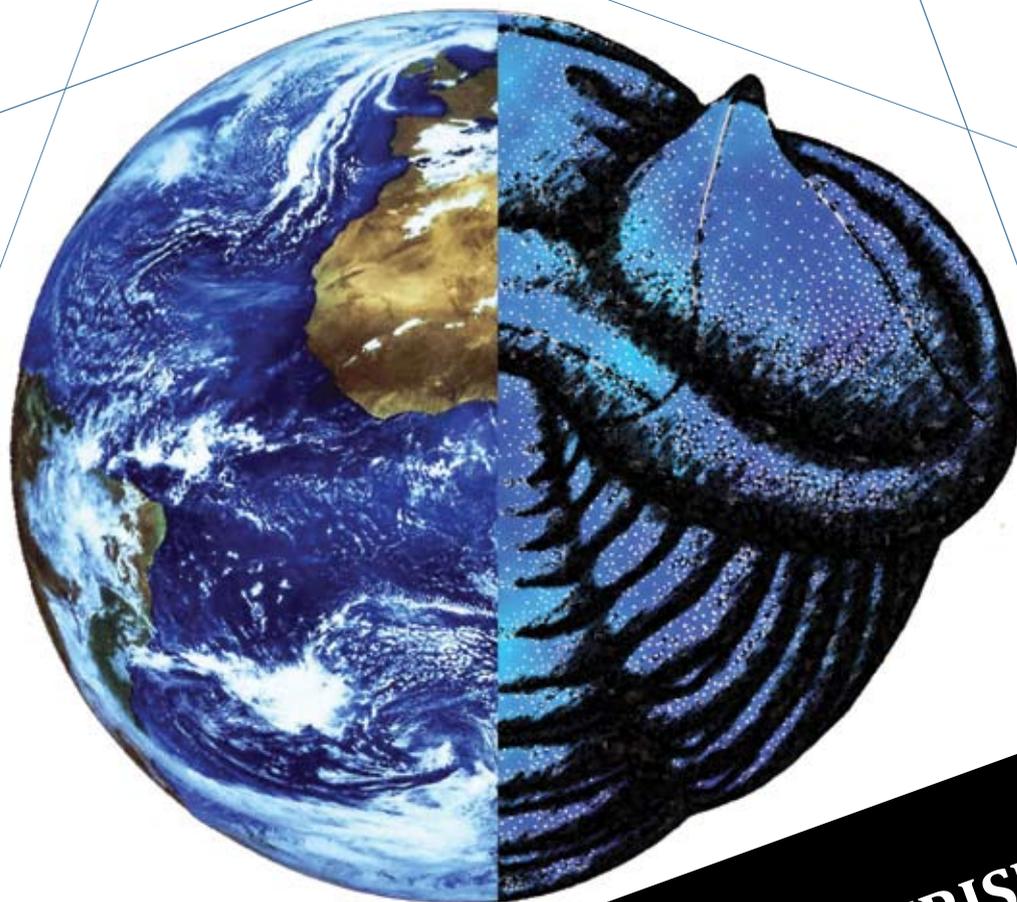
#### ***Definition of Development Goals***

- To protect and promote the natural and cultural-historical heritage through sustainable models of management;
- Focus on innovative products, market niches, certification and research on the framing of a Sustainable Tourism.
- To promote the articulation and harmony between National Touristic Strategic Plans and a balanced development in the context of the European Funds and policies.

#### ***A Nature Tourism Icon***

- Nature Tourism concept has its basis in the premise that projects and activities should give its share to local and regional sustainable development. Having these guidelines in mind it is easy to conclude that planning and touristic development should embrace, in harmony, the following 4 levels of interest:

- Receiving population (hosts);
- Tourists (guests);
- Tourism;
- Natural environment;
- Developed and implemented tools in the management of visitors:
- Agreements with tour operators over the number and size of ups to bring;
- Application of systematic environmental, social and cultural act assessment on all proposed development. This is also concerned with details of what is offered to visitors, such as the choice of products to them (for example avoiding artifacts with a sacred significance) or use of inappropriate sources of fuel;
- Codes of conducts for visitors;
- Zoning both within and outside protected areas. This should cover both the sitting of facilities and the degree of access allowed. In some locations, village communities have identified specific zones for ecotourism, both with respect to facility provision and wildlife.
- Conservation measures. A common approach is to locate tourist lodges some distance away from community villages.



# **NEW CHALLENGES WITH GEOTOURISM**

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