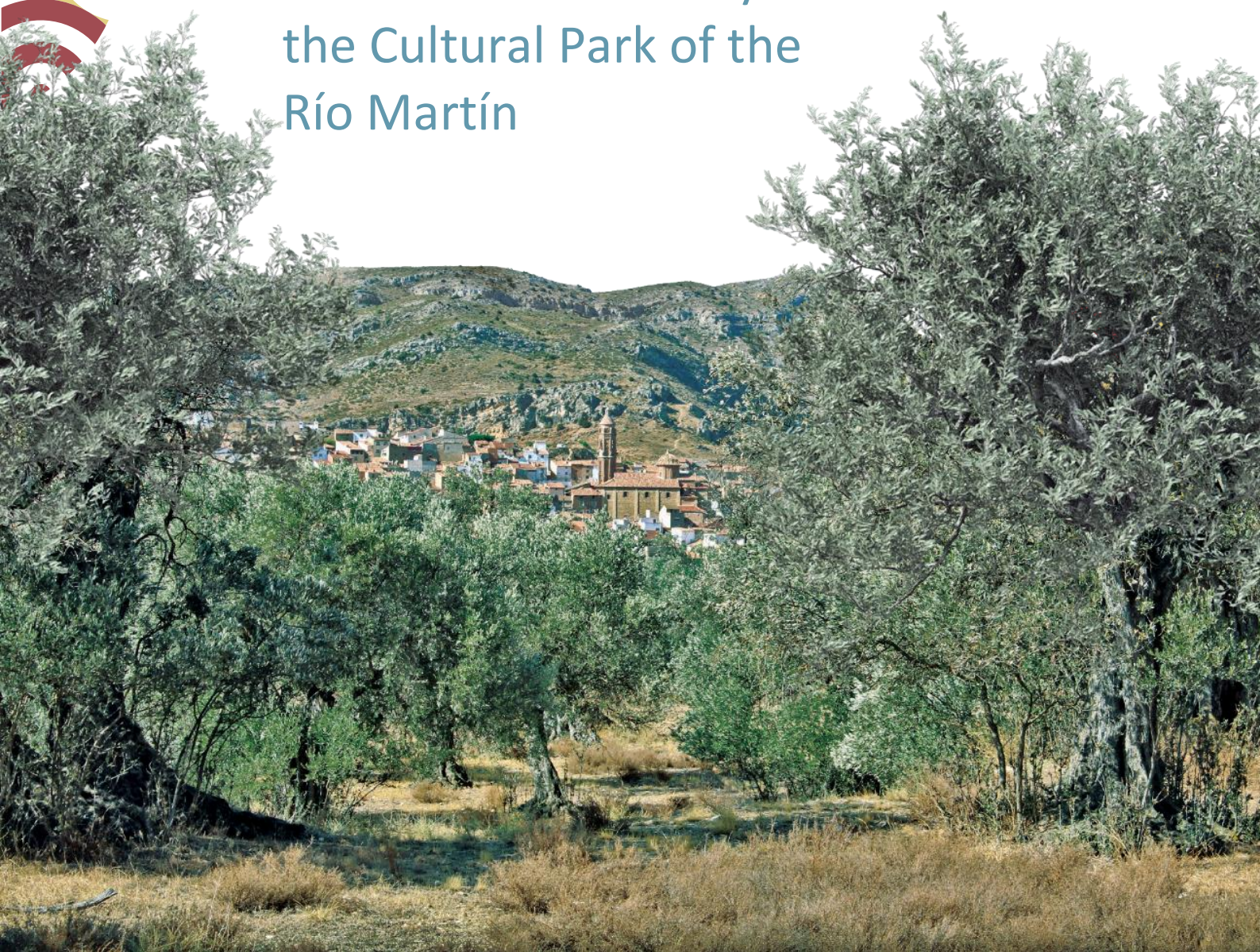




Be.CULTOUR
Beyond cultural tourism

Aragon, Spain

Action Plan Summary for
the Cultural Park of the
Río Martín



Be.CULTOUR Beyond cultural tourism

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PREFACE

To develop the Action Plan of the Be.Cultour Project in the Cultural Park of the Martín River, three local meetings were necessary, which took place in November 2021, March 2022 and May 2022, with the participation of more than 30 agents. In each of the local workshops, work has been carried out with different objectives, from the general to the concrete, to create an Action Plan.

This intense work made it possible to reflect on the changes needed to move from linear to circular tourism, to time the actions (short and long term) and identify the products/services that would contribute to solving the challenge.

As a result of these workshops, eight proposals for actions were identified and discussed at the last local workshop, resulting in the Action Plan below, consisting of three actions.



This Action Plan was authored by Local Pilot Heritage Site Coordinators and their Contributors

Cultural heritage – a starting point for co-creation, innovation, sustainable and circular cultural tourism

Discovering hidden treasures: cultural heritage as driver of attractiveness in less-known and remote areas

The cultural tourism sector in Teruel region of Aragon is considered mature and it features many natural cultural parks which fall within a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Tourism and hospitality are considered crucial for the region's social-economic development. General characteristics related to the region's potential include: Nature (biodiversity, starlight, rare species); History and heritage (Jewish heritage, legends); Agrofood (dry tomatoes, beans, traditional sweets); Craftwork and raw materials (mushrooms, jewelry, medical plants, stones, and bones decorated with rock art). Aragon's uniqueness, peaceful natural areas, and quality local food are seen as assets attracting teleworkers, trail sport enthusiasts, gourmet enthusiasts, and families.

Tangible cultural heritage

- Rock Art of the Mediterranean Basin
- Iberian settlement site
- Mudejar Art, including: Church of Santiago in Montalbán, Church of the Assumption of Our Lady of Obón, Church of La Asunción, Church of Santa María La Mayor, Church of La Asunción de Oliete
- Mediaeval architecture, including: The Tower of Los Moros de Alacón, The Castle of Alcaine, The Archbishop's Castle of Albalate del Arzobispo, The Montalbán Wall and the Torre de la Cárcel, The Castle of the Encomienda de Montalbán.



Ruins in the cultural park

Intangible cultural heritage

- The art of dry-stone wall technique
- Tamboradas (drum ritual)
- Knowledge, skills and traditions relating to the Mediterranean diet
- Local seasonal festivals and pilgrimages, many about agriculture and livestock farming, including: Festivals of San Fabián, San Sebastián and San Antón, Pilgrimage to the San Pedro Chapel in Oliete

Natural heritage

- The river Martín
- Fauna interpretation center (Alicante) and Flora interpretation center (Torre de las Arcas)
- "Cola del embalse de Cueva Foradada" reservoir Foradada in Alcaine: breeding place for aquatic species
- Observatory of birds of prey at the Alacón vulture feeder
- Reptile and dinosaur ichnites (Paleontological heritage)
- Unique geological features such as the "Sima de San Pedro"



Sima de San Pedro



Source: <https://parqueriomartin.com/en/>

Challenges

Aragon faces several challenges, as identified in local workshops. These include: Depopulation in favour of cities, with no clear plan to address brain drain and retain young people; Lack of awareness of the region's potential amongst locals and visitors alike; Involvement of residents and cooperation between local stakeholders (e.g. between culture organisations and local producers and possible product distributors). In general, stakeholders need to cooperate and use the potential of a region that is often overlooked.

Stakeholders of ecosystems around cultural heritage

Aragon's local workshops cultivated a new group of stakeholders, ranging from tourist organisations, cultural park participants, local universities and others. Participants primarily did not know each other, and were overall very diverse, representing different interests and sectors. In general, the organisation with the greatest impact and also the greatest interest in the project is Turismo de Aragón. While businesses have a great influence in the region, their interest in the project was considered to be low or medium. Various stakeholders are being continuously mapped and engaged.

Local community benefiting from the heritage-led local action

Discussions around cultural heritage in Aragon have become a starting point for long-term relationship building between previously disconnected actors. Increased awareness of the cultural value of the region is also beginning to raise the self-esteem of its residents as they begin to recognise its attractiveness. Aragon's Action Plan outlines how cultural tourism will be linked with community empowerment and entrepreneurship.

Summary of Main Actions

For full Action and Sub-Action descriptions, see here: <https://becultour.eu/pilot/aragon-spain>

This Action Plan is a living document and therefore its contents are subject to change.

Action 1: Innovative ecotourism centre

This action involves the creation of an Innovative Ecotourism Centre, which would consist of an activity centre where ecotourism experiences such as experimental accommodation under the stars could be carried out.

Tourists will enjoy nature and the observation of the rural environment, minimising negative impacts on the territory. In addition, it generates economic benefits for both the community and the entities that operate in the region, offers alternative employment, and raises awareness of the importance of conserving natural and cultural assets.

- Sub-Action 1.1 Financing plan



Landscape at sunset

Action 2: Enhancement of local products

This action enhances the value of the agri-food products produced in the area, which suffers from an ageing agricultural workforce and a lack of generational replacement. The enhancement of the importance of local produce is essential because of the growing interest among consumers in healthy and quality food. Social welfare and demand for gastronomy, tourism, local products and traditional culture have also grown. Awareness is growing for agri-food products with differentiated quality based on their origin and certified quality brands.

It includes a series of more concrete steps such as the homogenization of brands, including the logo of the Cultural Park to geolocation the product, a communication campaign (external and internal), and the generation of agro-experiences.

- Sub-action 2.1: Communication plan

- Sub-action 2.2: Homogenize the brand
- Sub-action 2.3: Marketing contest

Action 3: “La Plaza Circular” (Circular Square)



Ruins in the cultural park

“La Plaza Circular” consists of a network for exchanging information and knowledge between agents in the territory of the Cultural Park of the Río Martín. It is both a physical and virtual square. It seeks the coexistence of different municipalities and synergies between them to detect needs. Coordination in terms of strategy and training would be needed. It consists of three processes:

1. An intensive mapping of agents, resources, products and places.
2. Search for dynamisation: participatory processes with common challenges with pre-established (tangible, concrete).
3. Communication: through social networks and the web (Wikipedia).

- Sub-action 3.1: Mapping phase
- Sub-action 3.2: Dynamisation phase





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