



# Promoting Responsible Tourism for Heritage Protection and Sustainable Development

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*The project aims to improve the capacity of local development actors to promote and manage responsible tourism as a resource for protecting cultural heritage, thus contributing to employment generation and sustainable development.*



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Co-funded by DEVCO (European Commission Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development) with a view to supporting local development and expanding economic opportunities in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the “Promoting Responsible Tourism for Heritage Protection and Sustainable Development” project aims to improve the capacity of local development actors to promote and manage responsible tourism as a resource for protecting cultural heritage, thus contributing to employment generation and sustainable development.

This newsletter is a quarterly brief to share, with Action participants, the news, events and activities related to tourism and cultural heritage promotion in the Islamic Republic of Iran, activities being implemented by partners as part of the DEVCO co-funded Action and news of interest from across the world.





## Action Partners

The Action is being implemented by a Italo-Iranian consortium of civil society organisations: **ATLANTIDE**, the **Consortium Lead**, an Italian Organization with extensive experience of networking, education and developing responsible tourism offers based on cultural and natural heritage protection; **Marefat Pardis Toos**, a Mashhad based institute working with local communities on supporting local socio-economic development, including responsible tourism for cultural/religious heritage protection; **Plan for the Land**, a national level organization based in Kish Island that fosters participatory and sustainable local development aimed to protect and promote local resources; **ITACA** provides technical and business development support to entrepreneurs and social enterprises, operating in marginalised urban areas, especially start-ups - in responsible tourism, agriculture, home-based business, service industry, heritage protection; **NECOS** (Civil Society Network for Cooperation and Solidarity) is an international network of organizations that specialise in building public awareness and local capacity in participatory development processes.



## CSO networking Symposium held in Mashhad 8-9 January 2020



academic institutions, local authorities and professional associations, participated in the Symposium.

The main event held in the first year of the Action was a CSO networking Symposium, held at Mashhad (Khorasan Razavi) on 8 and 9 January 2020, aimed to promote responsible tourism for cultural heritage protection and sustainable development. Representatives of 20 civil society organisations, from the five target provinces of Khorasan Razavi, Kish, Fars, Bushehr and Golestan, along with members of

Italian partners introduced the project and its activities, highlighted the tourism industry through statistical data, elaborated the key characteristics of sustainable and responsible tourism, negative and positive impacts of tourism on local communities and social fabric, importance of community engagement and value added of including sustainable tourism in the SDGs, explained the European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS), positive impact tourism policies of the EU and globally, best





practices, and networking groups. The Iranian consortium partners shared the state of art in the tourism industry of their respective target provinces and the findings of the capacity needs assessment exercise they conducted in order to identify training and community awareness building



Cultural events were organised as part of the Symposium wherein a group of boys sang patriotic songs and two girls recited excerpts from *Shahname*, a poem written by Ferdowsi, a renowned Iranian poet born in Toos (940 – 1020AD) near the city of Mashhad.



During the Symposium, meetings and discussions were held on Action thematic and envisaged activities. The CSO networking symposium evoked keen local interest in the thematic being tackled, methodology and envisaged activities, opportunities and challenges of responsible tourism in pilgrimage cities. On Day 1, the symposium participants were divided into three groups:

Cultural Heritage Protection and Tourism; Tourism Businesses; Tourism Policies and Legislations. Each group was asked to (i) conduct situation analysis on needs and gaps; (ii) identify who needed to acquire knowledge and skills (professional groups, local authorities, businesses, NGOs); (iv) understand local knowledge and skill needs; (v) determine how knowledge could be transferred to those who needed it.

A one-day workshop was also held on 12 January 2020, focusing on Tourism and Hospitality and jointly organised by the offices of the Mayor and the Director of Urban Tourism of the Municipality of Mashhad (Associate Action partner). The workshop included sessions on sustainable and creative tourism and hospitality. 50 municipality staff members (50% female) participated in the workshop. NECOS, Italy facilitated two workshop sessions where its team shared experiences, best practices, lessons learned and also participated in a panel discussion on hospitality, heritage and sustainable tourism.

