ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE TOURISM
MANAGING SUSTAINABILITY IN LOCAL TOURISM DESTINATIONS

EDITED BY MARKO KOŠČAK AND TONY O’ROURKE
Ethical and Responsible Tourism
Managing Sustainability in Local Tourism Destinations

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Summary

Cinque Terre’s terraced landscape represents an example of a peculiar relation between nature and humankind, thanks to its characteristic shaped territory. This area, vulnerable to natural disaster and anthropic degradation, has been involved in several actions aimed at its preservation since the 80s. The site was inscribed in the World Heritage List, and various laws and agencies were created to support local agriculture and landscape preservation. Through the analysis of the regulations, context and related requirements, this chapter aims to explore the relationship between tourism effects and landscape vulnerability and the conflict between conservation needs and the site’s real economy.

Links

The following Case Study links may be of interest to readers of this chapter:

- Case Studies Part A (Destination management aspects of ethical sustainable development) – Chapter 15
- Case Studies Part B (Environmental & social aspects of ethical sustainable development) – Chapters 19, 20, 22 and 23

Please see the Contents on pages v–viii, and the Guide to the textbook in Appendix 1 for further information.

Introduction

The word Cinque Terre, used for the first time in 1448, identifies a territory located in the eastern part of Liguria, around the villages of Monterosso al Mare, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola and Riomaggiore, distinguished by rugged and steep slopes. The closeness of the ridge to the coast entails a very mild climate, also due to the favourable exposure, but at the same time some isolation from the neighbouring region (Verbas, 1978). These factors determined the marked homogeneity of this area and the community bond, strengthened by the increasing relationships between villages after the annexation to the Republic of Genoa in the 13th century (Marengo, 1924).

Vine growing is Cinque Terre distinctive feature: it defines its landscape, by means of farmed terraces built in a large part of this territory, and economy, with all the
works related to wine production and distribution (Verbas, 1978). During the 19th century, economic and societal changes occurred, railway construction. In 1874, five stations were opened on the Sestri Levante-La Spezia section of the Genova-Pisa line. The spread of grapevines’ devastating diseases (Gasparini, 2014) caused the decline of wine-producing industry in the area.

In the 20th century, the great value of Cinque Terre landscape and culture was acknowledged and protected. In 1959, the territory was listed according to the Italian law, and a regional (later national) park was issued (see paragraph “Cinque Terre National Park between planning through and action”). In 1997, the site was inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List (WHL) as cultural landscape (Figure 8.1). Moreover in 1973, Cinque Terre and Cinque Terre Sciacchetra DOC labels were established to protect the local wine production (Verbas, 1978).

The Park Authority, UNESCO, Region of Liguria (Regione Liguria) and other local authorities, beyond preparing their own government and management tools, undertook many actions (such as scientific studies and resolutions) aiming to support agriculture and regulate tourism, as well as to restore and preserve the environment and terraced system.

**Hydrogeological risk and terracing in the Cinque Terre area**

From a geomorphological point of view, this area is prevalently mountainous and hilly, and the seaside is characterised by the presence of a high coast, mainly rocky and impervious. The rare small beaches, composed of deposits of pebbles and gravel,
are made of landslide material or by shingle transported by watercourses. Furthermore, the coast is exposed to storms and permanent wave action, causing its erosion, especially when streams emerge into the sea (Cevasco, 2007). Even if mountains are not particularly high (with a maximum height of ca. 800 m), the whole territory is extremely steep and sprinkled by waterways with a torrential regime. Many slopes are affected by detachments of blocks, landslides and debris flow (Figure 8.2).

Over the centuries, human intervention interacted with the structural vulnerability of the soil, modifying the slope shape and the water flow, by means of a vast terraced system allowing farming (Besio, 2004): terraces are supported by dry-stone walls that need constant maintenance. Nowadays cultivation abandonment (and subsequent lack of maintenance) mainly occurs in those areas that are high, far from the seaside, or hillside villages. Another factor causing abandonment is the extreme split of land property. The local custom wants each parcel to be equally divided among heirs, so that one person can eventually own little patches of cultivations very far from each other (Verbas, 1978) (Figure 8.3).

Regardless of the quality of constructive technique and employed materials, the lack of maintenance causes degradation of dry-stone walls, including collapse of upper course of stones, with the consequent confluence of surface water, and wall deformation (Martini et al., 2004).

Due to its conformation and man-made alterations, most part of the area is naturally subjected to a high hydrogeological risk. According to the 2016 update of Cinque Terre Piano di Bacino, a great part of the territory is classified with high and very high hydrogeological risk, further increased by the so-called land

Figure 8.2 Cinque Terre coastal view.
consumption phenomenon (DiAP et al., 2009). Piano di Bacino is a Regional planning tool that controls the actions and rules about conservation, defence and valorisation of the soil and correct use of waters (L. 183/1989). High risk (R3 class) corresponds to a high probability of phenomena such as landslides, soil erosion and river flooding. They can cause dangers for person safety, functional damage to buildings and infrastructures, interruption of functionality of socio-economic activities and damage to the environmental heritage. Very high hydrogeological risk (R4 class) corresponds to a higher damage degree that could involve injuries and loss of human lives.

Land consumption is caused not only by buildings and infrastructure construction, but also by mass tourism, significantly grown after the inclusion of the site in the UNESCO WHL. The presence of tourists affects the territory with demand of facilities and intense use of the trails (Martini et al., 2004) that follow ancient itineraries beside the ridge, coast or hillside and the diagonal paths joining them (De Marco, 2006). Land consumption can be generally defined as an anthropogenic process that involves progressive transformation of natural or agricultural surfaces through the construction of buildings and infrastructures (Figure 8.4).

In the area, there are more than 88 active landslides (Data available at http://www.bauchedati.ambienteiliguria.it (February 2019)), and, in the last decades, the territory was devastated by two floods (in 2000 and 2011) and two landslides. The first landslide caused the closure of the so-called Via dell’Amore path in 2012, while the second one determined the closure of Sentiero Azzurro path, between the villages of Manarola and Corniglia, in 2014. Following further landslides, the entire coastal
Terraced landscape preservation

Figure 8.4 Map of paths and landslide areas.

Itinerary is now not accessible. Its reopening, scheduled for 2021, is linked to the implementation of the safety measures in the territory. Via dell’Amore is a pedestrian path overlooking the sea, about 1 km long, connecting the villages of Riomaggiore and Manarola. It is a segment of Sentiero Azzurro that crosses the whole Cinque Terre area. It was built in the 1930s (D.M. 2015); therefore, it does not match with any historical path.

Most landslides correspond to abandoned terraces, whereas flows are related to neglect, lack of maintenance of forests and terraces, and cementing of the territory (in addition to heavy rains and huge debris falls).

The return to a natural state of the slope is the inevitable future for abandoned and faraway terraces; in fact the restoration of the whole Cinque Terre terraced system is not sustainable from the economic point of view. However, the recovery of the natural slope can be an additional risk, if it is not properly managed until the achievement of a new balance (Besio, 2004).

Tourist growth: promotion and sustainability

A distinctive aspect of Cinque Terre is its economy nowadays mainly based on tourism. While generating positive outcomes for the economy of the area, tourism has also a strong impact on its landscape and population. Cinque Terre tourist tradition dates back to the period after World War I, when a lodging, a small hotel and two bath facilities were opened in Monterosso (Verbas, 1978). During the 1930s, there were around 800 visitors per year, including about 50 foreigners, with an average stay of 20 days each (Consiglio Provinciale Economia Corporativa, 1934). After 1955,
tourism expanded, with more than 50% of foreign visitors. Apart from Monterosso, tourism is a quite recent phenomenon for the Cinque Terre hamlets: given the features of their territory, they could not develop large hotel facilities but rather developed small non-hotel properties. As for other touristic destinations marked by a fragile environment, the tourism infrastructure growth had a strong impact on the territory, causing the increase of urban settlements and the continuing touristification of territorial resources (Tizzoni, 2014). At least, however, it did not degenerate into the massive urban growth characterising other Ligurian coastal areas.

The analysis of data regarding the number of visitors and length of stay between 1998 and 2018 (Figure 8.5) reveals an evident increase of arrivals, both for the municipalities included in the UNESCO site and for neighbouring municipalities displaying similar characteristics (Bonassola, Framura, and Levanto). Riomaggiore has the most significant increase (from 12,333 to 96,285 visitors). On the contrary, Bonassola and Framura display the smallest increase. The distribution of tourists within the borders of the UNESCO site also reflects the accommodation capacity. The number of beds in hotels remained almost unchanged for all the analysed municipalities between 2002 and 2016, while the beds in non-hotel properties had a significant increase, except for Bonassola and Framura. The length of stay decreases or is almost unchanged for the analysed timeframe: 2–3 days for the municipalities of the UNESCO site, with a peak of 3.5 days for Monterosso al Mare in 2009. The length of stay for the municipalities of the UNESCO site is slightly lower than the national and regional average.

Foreign tourists represent 76% of total arrivals and 77% of total stays between 2010 and 2015; this emphasises the international vocation of Cinque Terre. These values are above the Italian, regional and also provincial average (MiBACT et al., 2016). According to ENIT (Agenzia Nazionale del Turismo) 2016 report, analysing the main foreign tour operators selling Italian destinations, Cinque Terre is among the favourite destinations for Spanish, US, Canadian, Indian and Australian tourists. Data regarding touristic flows come from the survey of customers’ movements in accommodation facilities. Data regarding accommodation capacity from Indagine sulla Capacità degli esercizi ricettivi by ISTAT – Istituto Nazionale di Statistica – is available at http://dati.istat.it/ (February 2019). (Data regarding municipalities, courtesy of Osservatorio Turistico – Regione Liguria.)

In addition to visitors staying overnight in the UNESCO site, the ones visiting on a day trip must be considered for their strong impact on landscape and population. Most of these visitors come from cruise ships docked at La Spezia harbour, the most important in the area. In 2017, 163 cruise ships reached this harbour, with 426,024 passengers in total, 80% arriving from May to October (data available at www.crocierelespezia.com (February 2018)). For example, 8,000 cruisers arrived in a single day in August, because of a lack of planning. In 2015, the excursions in Cinque Terre offered by cruise ships were mainly by boat, and included a visit to Portovenere and Monterosso and lunch in a traditional restaurant.

Although tourism is usually an important factor for the revitalisation of an area, its increase can dangerously affect the natural and cultural features of the territory (Musso, 2014). Thus, a concrete and conscious tourism strategy, addressed to the development of sustainable tourism activities, can play a key role in the preservation of the outstanding values of Cinque Terre site.
Figure 8.5 Visitors’ arrivals and average stay for the analysed municipalities 1998–2018.
Sustainable tourism takes into account current and future impacts on economy, society and environment, considering demands from visitors, industry and local communities (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). In 2014, the Cinque Terre Park Authority complied to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (CETS). The Strategy and Action Plan 2014 objectives are not limited to the preservation of Cinque Terre peculiarities but include calibrated actions addressing a continuous life quality improvement and sustainable development. The declared goal is to restore a harmonious balance between the human element and environment, starting from current conditions (PNCT, 2014).

The document identifies several weaknesses, and among them, the disorganised tourist offer suffering from the lack of overall coordinated management. In fact, local institutions do not cooperate with each other in the efficient promotion of the UNESCO site: none of their official institutional websites directly refers to the UNESCO website.

Excluding the phenomenon of mass tourism, especially aroused by cruise traffic, the main type of visitors is certainly the one interested in outdoor, cultural, wine and gastronomic activities, aimed to experience the local culture and traditions (PNCT, 2014).

Local institutions' main websites are analysed focusing on the promotion of seaside/mountain trekking itineraries. To obtain an effective web publicity of a tourism product, as the Cinque Terre trails and related cultural activities, a strong horizontal cooperation is necessary in order to develop a common strategy between the various local institutions. In fact, only a conscious promotion considering both the fragilities (among them, the high hydrogeological risk) and strengths of the territory could live up to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (CETS) commitments. This strategy should improve the influence on the market of the offered tourist products, trying to widen their degree of coverage (ratio between current and potential visitors).

The organization and management of an effective tourist promotion turns to be important to attract a specific kind of visitors, directly involved in the sustainable development process stated and promoted in the Strategy and Action Plan 2014.

Also the analysis of the Cinque Terre trails network tourist promotion highlights a low degree of horizontal cooperation between local institutions. Their websites promote the Park's trails network incompletely, often offering ambiguous and complex web references, especially for foreign tourists (that are the most part, according to the Strategy and Action Plan 2014). On the other hand, the website of the Park Authority is very exhaustive, with a well-assorted web page of the entire hiking network and many references, for example, to local food and wine producers.

Finally, it has been observed that direct reference to the UNESCO Cinque Terre main page is lacking on the institutional websites, and the UNESCO logo is scarcely present (MiBACT et al., 2016). Thus, the need of a conscious and common promotional strategy should start through the creation of a unique or integrated web tourist promotion management (e.g. on the trails network and related activities), linking the efforts from the involved local institutions, while sharing a common sustainable long-term vision.

Cinque Terre National Park between planning and action

[In this section, references to laws and decrees are made using the following abbreviations: L. (law), L.R. (regional law), D.P.R. (decree by the President of the Italian Republic), D.G.R. (regional decree), D.M. (ministerial decree), D.lgs. (legislative decree).]
First activities carried out for the conservation of Cinque Terre terraced landscape date back to the second half of the 20th century, with the national law for use of cultivated land (L. 440/1978) and the regional one on the protection of agricultural activity in the Cinque Terre area (L.R. 41/1985). In 1995, three protected areas, instituted in 1985 (L.R. 12/1985), were reunited in the Cinque Terre Natural Regional Park (L.R. 12/1995). In the wake of these actions and of the UNESCO nomination, the Municipalities of Monterosso, Vernazza and Riomaggiore sought the institution of the Cinque Terre National Park, which was granted in 1999 (D.P.R. 6 October 1999). After the institution, while the Park Plan was approved, the area was subjected to Disciplina di Tutela, a document focused on protection of traditional agricultural, pastoral and craft activities (D.P.R. 6 October 1999). In 2002, the Park Authority approved the new Park Plan: it was based on the principle that, to preserve this landscape, it was necessary to allow the permanence of dwellers and their agricultural activity, providing their oversight on the territory. The Plan focused on the creation of a market system that could support the Cinque Terre agro-food production, aided by new forms of sustainable tourism. However, after judicial scandal of the Park Authority (2010), the Park Plan was revoked (D.G.R. 1482/2010) and required to be updated. In August 2018, a call for tenders was published in order to entrust a multi-disciplinary working group with the writing of Cinque Terre Park planning tools (PNCT, 2018a), and currently it has been won provisionally. The required Park planning tools are Park Plan, Park Rules and Regulations, Long-term Economic and Social Plan, and strategic environmental assessment documents (PNCT, 2018a). The special contract specifications attached to the call for tenders require the planning which indicates, on the one hand, the fundamental directions for territory long-term transformation based on structural provisions and, on the other hand, short-term actions based on programmatic provisions. Moreover, the document identifies targets and strategies to be pursued through the planning tools. The Park Authority recognises as its mission, beyond the preservation of the natural environment, the recovery and preservation of Cinque Terre landscape whose survival is put in danger by complex economic and social reasons. So it identifies as strategies the vineyard and agriculture maintenance as well as quality tourism. The Park Authority acknowledges that tourism activities are the most important sources of revenue in the Park area, while the agricultural ones are the fundamental means to ensure landscape preservation: only the search for a new balance between these factors (and other ones) can lead to the territory's sustainable development.

Until the entry into force of the new Park Plan, the safeguard measures contained in the 1999 Disciplina di Tutela would be considered valid again. Since that moment until today, the Park Authority has no longer adopted a management plan, despite the numerous environmental emergencies and the evidence of a precarious situation that requires long-term planning, as soon as possible.

If, on the one hand, there is a deficiency by the Park Authority due to the absence of a plan, on the other hand, the Park Authority itself promoted numerous initiatives for the protection of the territory that, in some way, suggest the idea of a long-term vision for the Cinque Terre area. The aim of the National Park is to encourage the development of a new balance between economic competitiveness and landscape protection, traditional know-how and development of responsible tourism, involving public and private subjects (D.M. 22/2012). In December 2015,
Europarc (Europarc is a federation for the protection of natural and cultural heritage in European protected areas with particular attention on sustainable tourism, economics and health issues) included the Cinque Terre National Park in the network of Parks that obtained the CETS, activity that the Park has implemented with two paths it has already undertaken: the Environmental Certification ISO 14001 and Environmental Quality Label (MQA), with the aim of promoting sustainability policies that involve public and private subjects (PNCT, 2014). Starting from the analysis of dwellers’ quality of life, pressure of tourism on natural resources and tourism offer quality, the Action Plan identifies targets, intervention strategies, funding and required professional skills. On the analysis and comparison phase carried out, three work areas and relative activities were identified, reflecting the main undelined problems: original and innovative tourism offer, enhancement of local culture and know-how and territory and tourist flow management (PNCT, 2014). Among these activities, the Action Plan provides for the reinforcement of the tools adopted by the Park Authority in order to maintain a specific environmental quality standard (ISO 14001 and MQA), both in management and protection activities. Specifically, the MQA is based on voluntary participation by private subjects (restaurants, hotels, producers) who pledge to keep a certain service sustainability (For example, for raw materials supply, restaurants and accommodation facilities must choose from a list of local producers to obtain the MQA (PNCT, 2014.).) in exchange for enrolment in a virtuous circle of private activities, ensuring them some visibility. In the same year, the Park Authority published the Sustainability Report (PNST, 2015) to clearly disseminate its activities and the economic resources spent to increase the Park sustainability.

However, despite the numerous actions carried out for landscape protection and sustainability, in almost 20 years since the establishment of the National Park, there has been a lack of long-term management vision for this fragile heritage that can be compromised under the interests of various subjects and tourist pressure. The increase of institutions (This territory is under the provisions not only of the Park Authority, but also of UNESCO, Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, Regione Liguria, local administrations, associations and foundations.) who must (or voluntarily) produce a management or protection plan for the Cinque Terre landscape creates a complex situation and documents overlapping. (Among others, the Cinque Terre landscape and built heritage protection and management is defined by D.lgs. 42/2004, L. 394/1991 and D.lgs. 151/2006.) Some of the protection and management tools active in the area are landscape coordination plan according to L.R. 431/1985 (1990); town plans of Vernazza (1995), Monterosso (1977) and Riomaggiore (1997); Disciplina di Tutela (1999); Piano di Bacino (2016) and UNESCO Management Plan (2016). In this framework, the UNESCO Site Management Plan (MP) could be one of the tools for their coordination.

World Heritage List inscription and Management Plan development

Starting from 2003, MP is required for UNESCO sites and was included in the Italian legislative framework in 2006 (L. 77/2006). Its scope is to define strategies to maintain Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and increase positive outcomes for environment, society and economy. Despite the introduction of MP as essential for UNESCO
sites management, and several calls for its development from the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (WHC), it was only in 2016, almost 20 years after its inscription on the WHL, that the site was provided with one.

In 1997, the site of Portovenere, Cinque Terre and the Islands (Palmaria, Tino and Tinetta) was inscribed in the WHL as a continuing cultural landscape based on criteria (ii), (iv) and (v). Created by the work of humankind and nature, its significance relies in the active relationship between the two factors (UNESCO WHC, 1997).

From the WHL inscription onwards, the WHC documents recognise that the traditional lifestyle has been preserved, despite pressures from social and economic developments. In 1997, economic and social crises were identified as the biggest threats to the site, since the trend of speculative investments for mass tourism seemed advertised by then (UNESCO WHC, 1997). Nevertheless, even in 1997, ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments & Sites) recommendations highlighted the potential risks connected with the increase of tourism, possibly connected to the inscription on the WHL (UNESCO WHC, 1997). In fact, the inscription usually implies an average +30% increase in the number of visitors (Puglisi, 2012). Therefore, ICOMOS requested the State Party further information on tourist management and community involvement activities.

Problems connected to the lack of maintenance of terraced fields were already evident in 1999 and 2000, when the site was inscribed in the World Monuments Watch of the World Monuments Fund, and received funding for the implementation of scientific studies concerning the terraced landscape (e.g. project PROSOIT). Concern related to an uncontrolled tourism development and lack of an overall planning grew over the years. The 2006 periodic report warned on the effect of tourism on the integrity and authenticity of the site (UNESCO WHC, 2006). Major threats were identified with the increase of visitors (mostly day trippers), soil erosion, and the low coordination between the subject involved in protection and management.

At the time of 1997 inscription, MP was not mandatory, the protection of the site being ensured by the existing regulatory framework. At the same time, a buffer zone was not defined, in consideration of the features of the terrain, having a natural border on the landward side. The buffer zone usually includes areas displaying similar values to that of the inscribed property but with a minor degree of authenticity and integrity; the definition of a buffer zone can increase the level of protection to the site. Among other planning instruments, the approval of 2002 Cinque Terre National Park Plan further regulated interventions in one area of the UNESCO site. However, the need for an MP was urged in the report by the advisory mission invited to the site after the 2011 flood and landslides (UNESCO WHC, 2012a) and started again in 2013, alongside the development of tourism and risk management strategies (UNESCO WHC, 2013). After the 2011 flood and landslides, the State Party invited an advisory mission to assess the overall state of conservation of the property and provide technical advice on remedial measures and risk preparedness (UNESCO WHC, 2012a, 2012b). According to the 2012 report, the degradation of the cultural landscape was due to social and economic pressure, rather than to natural disasters (UNESCO WHC, 2012b).

In 2014, an agreement between MiBACT Segretariato Regionale of Liguria and FILSE S.p.a. was signed for the elaboration of the MP for the site. The workgroup involved MiBACT Segretariato Regionale of Liguria, Regione Liguria, Cinque Terre
National Park, Porto Venere Municipality and consultants. Finally, the buffer zone proposal and MP (MiBACT et al., 2016) were delivered to the World Heritage Centre in 2015 and 2016.

Preliminary studies were developed in three macro areas: analysis of the context including the cultural landscape, territory and safety and tourism. The research involved study regarding landscape transformations and residents’ sense of identity.

The MP provides the site with an overall strategy, assuming the existence of a complex regulatory framework in place. Identifying the social capital of the territory as a priority, it envisions a site where all dwellings are inhabited and all terraced fields are cultivated. The MP goals include increase of cohesion, identity and integration between the stakeholders and improvement of management and administration. The MP envisions recovery of terraced fields still used and maintenance of dry-stone walls, the modernization of agricultural sector and integration between farming and promotion of local products.

For the MP section about tourism management, the workgroup followed the methodology of UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Program, with the goal of making tourism contribute to the conservation of the site and the territory belong primarily to the inhabitants. The impact of mass tourism is worsened by landscape morphology and lack of overall management strategies and coordination between tourism and agriculture.

Regarding tourism, the MP for the UNESCO site includes initiatives aimed at increasing awareness of the value and vulnerability of the site among residents and tourists. It encompasses several objectives and related actions. First, create an overall assessment of the flows of tourists making it possible to control the carrying capacity of the site as a whole (with a specific focus on the impact of day trippers). This includes the implementation of a unique system of reservation (bus, hotel, activities) and access to the site, allowing the harmonization of touristic services and the diversification of the offer (for high and low season). Second, link the seaside and the landward side: this means decreasing the number of tourists staying only in the coastal towns also through wine-tourism, fostering the transmission of knowledge between rural and touristic sector, involving tourists in agricultural activities and maintenance of the rural landscape (as an educational tool for visitors), connecting agriculture production and restaurants (widening the product marked of origin) and thus increasing local entrepreneurship. Third, improve the social capital through educational activities aimed at different public and to address specific needs.

Finally, the MP also suggests creating a single municipality, to better integrate and coordinate the governance for the site, and identifying a mediator between the various stakeholders and institutions. Besides, in 2017, Regione Liguria accepted the proposal by the Mayors of the three municipalities to compile an Inter-municipal Town Plan (Piano Urbanistico Intercomunale) that includes the entire Cinque Terre territory.

A management office was created in April 2018, involving Regione Liguria, Cinque Terre National Park and the municipalities involved, to define strategies for the area, encompassing three main sections: logistics and transportation, agriculture

The agreement for the protection, management and sustainable development of the site was signed in August 2018 between Regione Liguria, Cinque Terre National Park, Porto Venere Regional Park, the municipalities included in the UNESCO site and buffer zone and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism. Among other actions, the agreement involved the creation of the “Cinque Terre, Porto Venere and the Islands UNESCO Site Office,” as a technical and administrative body formed by the National and Regional Parks. The main duties of the appointed Site Manager, working within the office, are coordinating the relationships between UNESCO and local authorities and organisations, and supporting the implementation of the MP initiatives. More specifically, the site manager oversees the MP actions as defined by the working groups and the coordination committee, is responsible for the efficiency of the management system and the MP effectiveness, transmits the periodic report to UNESCO compiled by the permanent workgroup and coordinates the involved stakeholders. Moreover, the Cinque Terre, Porto Venere and the Islands UNESCO Site Office works to improve the services to the users of the site, according to the territory emerging needs.

Further actions for the Cinque Terre landscape protection and promotion

In order to decrease the hydrogeological and territorial risk, the Region allocated funds to monitor landslides, implement anti-landslide mechanisms (such as laying of barriers, armed nets, rock fall), restore dry-stone walls and damaged trails and carry out some interventions on watercourses (as hydraulic checks and for safety of overflowing areas). Funds were allocated for repair works on Via dell’Amore and the hillside path called Strada dei Santuari, reopened in 2017 after a six-year closure.

In addition, the Regional Authority and European Union assigned funds for the conservation of Cinque Terre terraced landscape, by means of Piano di Sviluppo Rurale (Rural Development Program), co-financed by the State, that provides grants to restore dry-stone walls, specifically in regional or national parks and areas with a high hydrological risk. However, to carry out an effective slope reinforcement, this provision requires allocation of grants to be coordinated and aimed to recover entire areas that are still cultivated.

The Park Authority finances a centre for hydrological risk studies, coordinating actions regarding research and distribution of stones to be employed in maintenance of the dry-stone walls and promoting educational programs on territory maintenance addressed to disadvantaged people. Furthermore, the Park organises and promotes initiatives related to agricultural activity support. Among them are the recovery of abandoned farmland and planting of new vineyards following traditional techniques, such as the actions of TRA Monti project; the restoration of Case Lovara on behalf of the FAI (Italian Environment Fund) and the New Farmers initiative. Performance Planning is a tool introduced by D.lgs. 150/2009 to manage Public Administrations
performance; it allows to know year by year the directions and targets the Park Authority sets itself and how it wants to achieve them (PNCT, 2019).

Other educational activities related to agricultural tradition include the agreement with the Building School of Spezia and Manarola Cinque Terre Foundation (2015) to teach dry-stone wall construction technique in schools and the ones carried out by the National Park Environmental Education Centre.

All these initiatives involve young generations and aim to increase awareness about landscape problems and sense of belonging.

In order to decrease mass tourism impact on the environment, MSC and Royal Caribbean cruise companies changed their excursion itineraries excluding the villages of Manarola, Riomaggiore and Vernazza, starting from 2015. In 2014, an agreement between the La Spezia Port Authority and National Park established an Info Point for cruisers to warn visitors on the fragility and features of Cinque Terre Landscape; an adequate planning and distribution of cruise arrivals are necessary to contain and reduce the impact of day trippers.

Another existing tool is the Cinque Terre Card for tourist access to the National Park area and its paths. Introduced in 2001, it encourages public transportation, reducing the number of private vehicles, and aims to generate resources for territory and local services maintenance.

Moreover, numerous activities are organized to develop a new form of conscious and innovative tourism, such as the Sciachetrail, a race through the vineyards to learn about traditional wines and Sciachetrà liquor, or the training activities regarding Cinque Terre terraced landscape organized by Tu quoque organization. Finally, the Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage inscribed the “Art of dry stone walling, knowledge and techniques” on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity at the end of 2018 (UNESCO ICH, 2018). The dry-stone walling know-how transmission plays a crucial role in the creation and maintenance of the living societal environment. In fact, several cultural and educational activities at regional and local levels are aimed to booster existing synergies between communities and associated organisations and practitioners. In addition, the fundamental role of the dry-stone terraces in preventing landslides and floods of the land in Cinque Terre terraced landscape has been already recognised by the Piano di sviluppo rurale (Rural Development Program 2014–2020).

Conclusions

Despite ICOMOS first warnings, it has been difficult to find effective tools to manage the increasing flow of visitors. In the last years, international media have focused their attention on the issue of Cinque Terre tourism and on its effects on its fragile landscape. Cinque Terre and Venice were included by CNN in a list of 12 destinations to be avoided in 2018 because of tourist overcrowding. These recent events can be interpreted as the sign of a new consciousness about the negative effects of mass tourism on landscape preservation and tourism itself. Moreover, the increase of visitors does not ease the phenomenon of agricultural activities abandonment, but rather it has led workforce to move to the profitable tourist industry.

The critical situation of Cinque Terre landscape requests feasible strategies to avoid delisting from UNESCO WHL and above all the loss of its identity. This landscape
must find a new balance between mankind sustainable presence and natural environment preservation. Achieved and ongoing actions for a sustainable tourism offer should be supported by an effective rationalisation of visitors, in the villages and on widely known paths, and by a strict scheduling of cruisers’ landing. Tourist flow should be controlled so that it is adequate to Cinque Terre vulnerability and suitable for the enjoyment of the place identity.

Giving a unique body the responsibility of balancing tourist promotion and landscape preservation can foster the effectiveness of these strategies, through a subject who can mediate between the parks, UNESCO, State, Region, local institutions, associations and private citizens.

This study demonstrates how the coordination between the various planning and management tools involving Cinque Terre territory can run into obstacles when put into action considering the regulatory framework. Therefore, the MP offers an opportunity for a real change in the site management, given the fact local institutions incorporate its recommendations in their planning tools (An evaluation on MP results and its reception by local bodies is hard due to its recent publication.) and recognise the inhabitants’ role for landscape maintenance and implementation of actions aimed to preserve residents on site (Besio, 2004).

Reflections

1. Today, the Cinque Terre economy is mainly based on tourism, having strong impacts on natural and cultural features of the territory. The highest pressure comes from day trippers, mostly from cruises.

2. The significance of the site relies in the active relationship between humankind and nature. Landscape preservation can only be ensured by allowing the permanence of dwellers and their agricultural activity.

3. The return to a natural state of the slope is the inevitable future for abandoned and faraway terrace, but the recovery of the natural slope can be an additional risk, if it is not properly managed.

4. The definition of general tools to ensure coordination between the various subjects involved in the management and protection of the site to promote a long-term management vision is critical. In 2018, the “Cinque Terre, Porto Venere and the Islands UNESCO Site Office” was created as a technical and administrative body formed by the National and Regional Parks, working on the main sections of agriculture, tourism and transportation.

5. The conservation of the site requires the implementation of a conscious tourism strategy, encompassing the promotion of sustainable tourism activities, life quality improvement for residents and sustainable development.

Questions

1. Is restricting the number of tourists accessing the site an effective strategy to ensure landscape preservation and livability?

2. How is it possible to limit the negative pressures on natural and cultural features of the site coming from mass tourism on the most accessed paths?

3. By which means is it possible to address the problems related to waste produced by day trippers?
4 How to effectively promote active and slow tourism, contributing to the preservation of natural and cultural features of the site?
5 How to retain (or increase) the number of dwellers and rural workers, recognizing their role in the maintenance of the site?

Further reading

UNESCO WHC. 2017. Adoption of Retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value. Decision: 41 COM 8E.
References


Consiglio Provinciale Economia Corpositiva. 1934. Relazione statistica per gli anni 1931-32, La Spezia.


