

Recreating tourism through heritage interpretation

Frequently asked questions

General notes about the initiative

Can you explain me the point of this initiative?

It is Interpret Europe's response to the Covid crisis, and can offer paths to a more sustainable future and more resilient communities while improving visitor experiences. It is a proposition to your own and to other communities around heritage sites that you adopt a 'value-based heritage interpretation' approach (UNESCO) to the development of tourism. With acquired skills, your colleagues and local stakeholders will be able to **offer deeper and more meaningful experiences of places and local culture to visitors** on the one hand, and to **create closer cooperation of local communities** on the other.

Am I eligible to join the initiative?

We welcome and support **tourism communities** (or destinations). So, in the context of this initiative, the community could be a cluster of local authorities, a private business, an agency, an organisation (governmental, non-governmental or public), an association, a freelancer or other civil society entity working in tourism in a geographical area.

How can my community join the initiative?

Your community should be represented by any **legal body** (local authority, private business, organisation, agency or association) that files an application and leads the process according to the initiative's programme.

If you are an eligible applicant, please have in mind that you will be asked to involve and cooperate with local stakeholders. To make sure you are on the right track, contact us on: tourism@interpret-europe.net.

How will I and my community benefit from the whole initiative?

The benefits are many-fold. Not just for you, but also for your tourism community:

- **Your organisation:** Promotion and recognition Europe-wide. If you join the initiative as a partner, we'll present and promote your organisation through IE media (social media, IE Newsletter), at the [IE Conference](#) for those joining by 15 August 2021 and in a digital publication of case studies.
- **Your staff and your stakeholders:** After the IE training programme, your staff and local service providers will be empowered by skills and knowledge of contemporary heritage interpretation, communication skills and better understanding of visitors' needs. In the training programme, each participant will develop a product or programme on a real site/location, one which will be applicable in practice. Many organisations in the past have, through IE training, acquired a shared 'library' of resources for guided walks, interpretive plans, interpretive products and other

ideas which were implemented later in practice (see success stories in informational brochure, p. 5-8).

- **Your visitors:** After the acquired skills have been applied in practice, visitors will enjoy a deeper experience of places, local culture and nature. They will be more likely to repeat their visit and to share their unforgettable experiences with friends and families. Through interpretive experiences, they will not just get to know local heritage, but will also reflect upon values and sustainability issues linked to your places and community – as well as to their own lives.
- **Your community will become more resilient:** Your stakeholders will work together on new ideas through peer-learning activities already included throughout the training. These will help strengthening the ties and cooperation between them also for the future. It will increase their sense of responsibility for their heritage and tourism development and for the quality you all wish to assure to the visitors.

What are the milestones and deadlines?

- **15 August 2021:** early bird application for joining the [conference 'Recreating tourism through heritage interpretation'](#) which runs from 1 to 4 October 2021. Join by this date and you will be able to present yourself in a special conference session dedicated to the initiative.
- **1-4 October 2021:** presentation at the IE conference Recreating tourism with heritage interpretation.
- **31 December 2021:** call for applications closes.
- **31 September 2022:** all training sessions have taken place.
- **31 December 2022:** release of the publication Recreating tourism through heritage interpretation – a presentation of results and case studies.

About heritage interpretation

What is heritage interpretation?

A very good question. Heritage interpretation is a non-formal approach to informing the wider public about heritage, and it is relevant to tourism where people seek meaningful first-hand experiences and want to immerse themselves in local nature and culture. Interpretation can be also called a communication strategy that takes into account people's cognition, behaviour and their visitation context, as well as the significance of heritage phenomena, managerial goals and even globally significant issues. Professional interpreters do not only facilitate learning processes as guides in face-to-face dialogues, they also make use of other media supporting the experience of heritage, including audio guides, text panels, multimedia apps etc. They provoke people's curiosity and interest by relating the site or objects to the participants' own knowledge, experience, background and values. Professional interpreters always refrain from simply communicating unrelated facts or strictly defined messages.

How will heritage interpretation make a difference?

Even better question.

Heritage interpretation is adding deeper meaning to any experience. With interpretation, you can make your heritage more meaningful to people and people more mindful of our shared values. Values here refer not only to protection of heritage and to sustainability issues but also to fostering human

values such as democratic rule, respect, openness and benevolence. All this can be fostered in an engaging, entertaining and meaningful way.

Look at success stories of four destinations in our informative brochure (p. 5-8). They have included heritage interpretation approach in their strategic plans and changed their developmental philosophy and direction from 'mainstream' tourism to more mindful and sustainable products and services. They have received several awards for this!

Will we increase our income with heritage interpretation?

Like with other investments in tourism, such outcomes take time. However, immediate effects that we can guarantee you, are:

Participants will:

- develop new ideas for value-based and sustainable products and services embodied in the course,
- improve their performance and communication,
- engage with visitors in a meaningful dialogue based on universal values,
- better understand visitor's needs,
- act more inclusively,
- foster respect towards all heritage,
- co-create a cohesive and more resilient community.

Terms and conditions for joining

How do we apply?

1. First step: Commission a training course for your community

Contact us at tourism@interpret-europe.net and we will connect you with our trainers. Agree with one of them to run one of the [courses or modules](#) by 30 September 2022. With this step, you automatically become our Training Partner and receive a special label. Please consult our [website](#) or our [Training Policy](#) on how to organize a training course/module. However, at this step you are not yet a part of the initiative.

2. Second step: send us an application form and join Interpret Europe's network

Fill out the [application form](#) and send it to us at tourism@interpret-europe.net. At the same time, join Interpret Europe as an [Institutional or Business member](#). From here on, our Tourism Team will lead you through the process of case study development and a promotion.

Is there any selection process?

No. Every community joining IE by 31 December 2021 and organising the course by 30 September 2022 will have a chance to be included in promotion and in the final publication.

Is my country eligible?

Yes, no matter where in the world you are. However, there is one small catch. The first condition for joining is the organisation of an IE course/module. All IE trainers are Europe-based, which might present a challenge if you are based on some other continent. Having said that, it is not impossible for you to invite an IE trainer and host them in your country so get in touch with tourism@interpret-europe.net and we'll connect you with our trainers.

Organisation of the training programme

Which training courses or modules I can choose from?

You can choose between three courses (40-hours programme) and one module (16-hour programme).

- **Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG):** The 40-hour course is primarily intended for tourist guides.
- **Certified Interpretive Planners (CIP):** The 40-hour course is primarily intended for architects, designers, curators and others involved in the planning of interpretive centres, museums, exhibitions, nature trails, and interpretive media.
- **Certified Interpretive Writer (CIW):** This 40-hour course is primarily intended for copy-writers providing text for labels, panels, brochures, audio guides and other textual interpretive media.

Special conditions

Please NOTE! For the purposes of this initiative, you should make sure that you invite to the training event some key people, in addition to the usual participants (guides, hosts, etc.), otherwise the desired effects will be less far-reaching and durable.

- **Responsible person** – a representative of an applicant, whether this is you or someone you can entrust with the task of working with the results of the training and after the course/module has finished; such a person could be a tourism manager, business owner, heritage site manager, local decision maker in tourism etc. This person should make sure that the training and interpretive approach will make a real difference with long-term effects!
- **Local stakeholders** such as tourism providers, freelancers, business partners, and other people dealing with tourism. Consult the previous question or ask our tourism team as to who would be most suitable stakeholders for a particular course.

Consult our [Training Policy](#) about other conditions and technical requirements.