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## The Mediterranean Diet as Cultural Landscape Value: Proposing a Model towards the Inner Areas Development Process

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### Abstract

This paper presents the overall concept and the first stage of a research project focused on the Mediterranean Diet as opportunity and a valuable tool for the sustainable development of the Inner Areas. The goal is to contribute to the Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria planning and the methodology is based on the definition of a evaluative-oriented tool that allows the identification of the correct assets of knowledge and planning towards the cultural landscape valorization. The scope is to design and share a project of knowledge able to help in enhancing the contexts of local products, preserving the “tangible” elements bringing this “intangible” lifestyle named Mediterranean Diet, in order to produce specific effective impacts on territories and communities.

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### 1. Introduction

The Mediterranean Diet, inscribed in 2010 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, involving Italy, Spain, Greece, Morocco, and from 2013 also Cyprus, Croatia, Portugal, could be seen as the optimal tool for the development of particularly disadvantaged areas, such as inner areas of the metropolitan city of Reggio Calabria (Calabrò F. et al, 2015). The recognition of this outstanding universal value identifies in

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Mediterranean life style the more balanced interaction between nature and humanity, according to the original etymology of the word "diet" that is life style. As stated by UNESCO, the Diet refers to all the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills and cultural spaces with which peoples of the Mediterranean have created and re-created, over the centuries, a synthesis between the cultural and the social organization environment. From this standpoint, it reveals a universe of abilities, rituals, symbols, and traditions related to food production, harvesting, fishery, zootechnics, conservation, processing, and cooking. (8.COM UNESCO) Therefore, Mediterranean Diet appears as an element that goes far beyond the simplistic sense linked to nutritional properties – as generally instead it appears - bringing itself values that necessarily in Italy must be extended to the whole Mediterranean area and not to specific areas (such as the town of Pollica in Cilento's area), emphasizing the individual specificities. Not limited to nutritional values, then, instead and especially attention should be given to the ways and contexts where these foods are produced and consumed, or rather the cultural landscape that characterizes this lifestyle.

This paper presents the overall concept and the first stage of a research model, where the Diet, according to this more thorough reading, becomes an opportunity and a valuable tool for the growth of the Inner Areas. In addition, the application model considers the Mediterranean diet not uniquely referred to the values related to the Intangible Heritage: according to the proposal sense, the Diet becomes amplifier of tangible values, contributing to the cultural landscape connotation designed by this lifestyle, understood as an interaction between nature and humanity. In this sense, the proposed model focuses on both physical and human components, declined into a variety of adequate phases and activities. Protecting the areas where typical products are grown and adopting strategies on a local level in order to preserve the living habits of the place are the basic actions that will have to be carried out to make a positive impact on the regions and communities.

## 2. The research project approach and methodology

The research project for the development of the inner areas of the Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria is based on the definition of an effective model able to integrate a set of historical, cultural and environmental resources, in order to guide the choices of urban and economic planning area. (Nesticò A, De Mare G., 2014)

The primary objective of this model is expressed in the identification of the correct axis of knowledge, planning and feasibility assessment oriented towards the development of identity resources linked to the Mediterranean Diet.

The model has been structured into three phases:

- Phase A - Knowledge;
- Phase B - Programme;
- Phase C - Feasibility-Sustainability.

The knowledge phase is focused on the definition of the contextual framework and the consistency of the identity heritage (tangible and intangible) to be protected, its significance and local community' perception. This phase is designed in order to develop detection tools useful to define the addresses for the implementation of phase B.

The programming phase is made of the systematic organization and coordinated implementation of programs fostering the sustainable development of the inner areas of the Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria. The data collected in the phase A define the programming axis, and its implementation is expressed through the definition of projects that will be evaluated in Phase C. To this end, an early stage qualitative-quantitative evaluation is designed in order to define the criteria and indicators of the programme. Particularly, the relevance and coherence evaluation does apply to Phase B, where the relevance is concerned with assessing whether the project is in line with local needs and priorities and coherence refers to the consistency/complementarity and freedom of contradiction of guiding general principles, analyzing whether the whole set of identity resources have been taken into consideration in the forming objectives or not. In this sense, the close connection between Phase A and B allows the identification of specific interrelations between resources and between resources and detractors, and accordingly appropriate strategic projects capable of enhancing the same resources, and mitigate the disturbances are formulated. The definition of indicators in the programming phase therefore becomes a priority in the Feasibility-Sustainability phase, Phase C. This phase leads to a technical, procedural and economic evaluation of the potential projects,

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