

Caves and sustainable tourism: an opportunity for natural and cultural heritage conservation

The Interreg ADRION – Adriaticaves project

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The Adriaticaves Project

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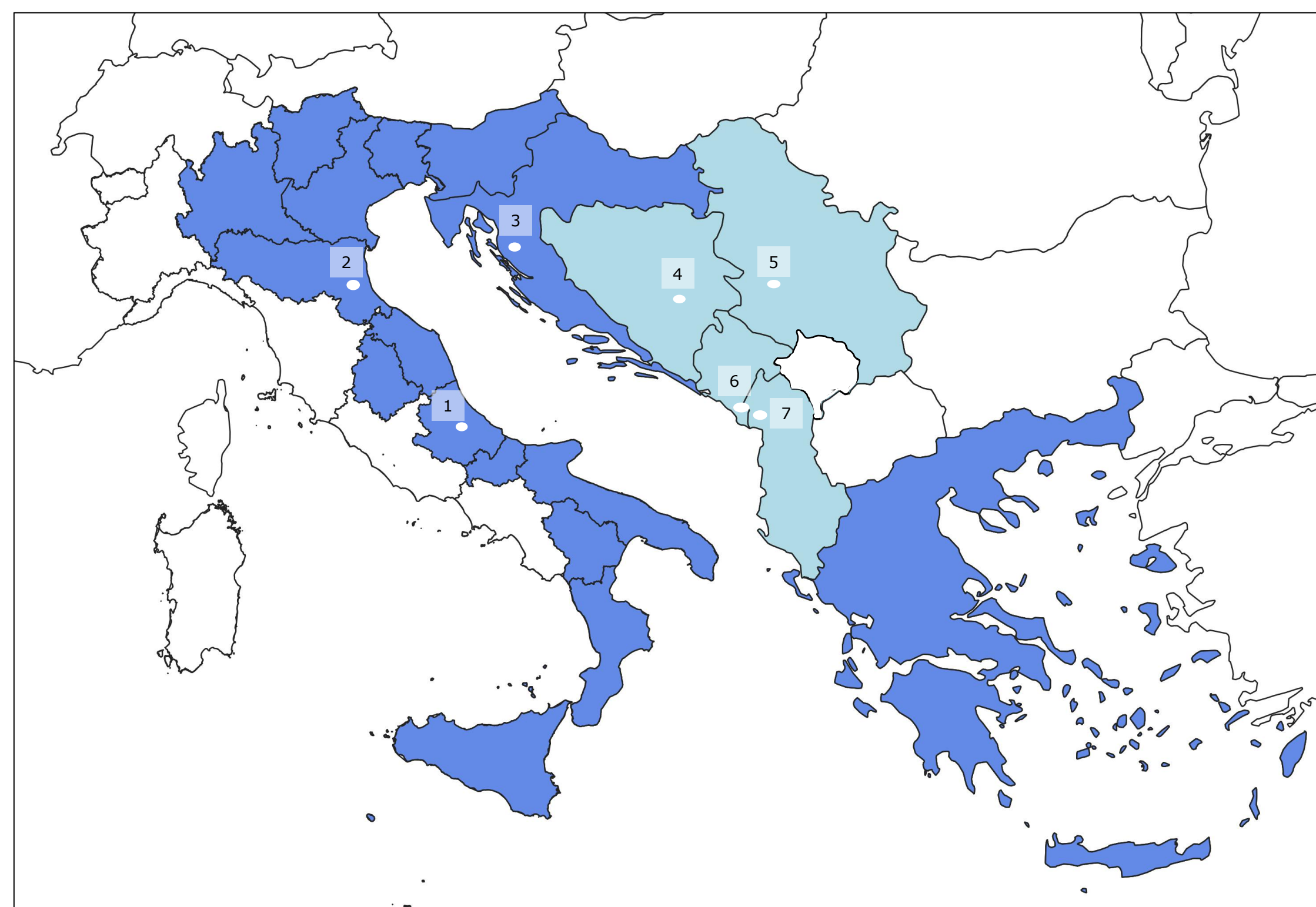
Total Project budget: EUR 1,325,236.10
(ERDF budget: EUR 702,847.30;
IPAI budget: EUR 423,603.36)

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The **Interreg ADRION** is a European transnational program aiming at supporting exchange and transfer of experiences between countries of the Adriatic-Ionian area.

The **Adriaticaves project** was focused on the promotion of natural and archaeological heritage in «minor» caves of the Adriatic-Ionian Region as an implementation of the actual tourist offer, through the sustainable development of caves open to the public and the organisation of activities addressed to protect karst areas.

The Project Partners



- 1) Majella National Park (Italy)
Lead Partner
- 2) Authority for the Management of Parks and Biodiversity – Romagna (Italy)
- 3) Velebit Nature Park Public Institution (Croatia)
- 4) Cantonal Public Institution for Protected Natural Areas (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- 5) City of Čačak (Serbia)
- 6) TC Lipa cave ltd (Montenegro)
- 7) Regional Council of Shkodra (Albania)

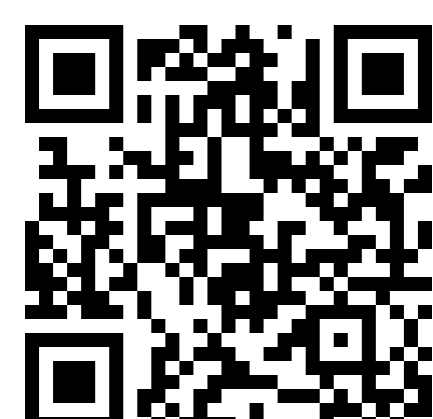
Project Activities

WPT1 – Tourism Development and Sustainable Management Strategy

- Creation of a «**Speleoguide Network**» including the organisation of workshops for existing cave guides to train them on cave conservation and cave scientific importance;
- Production of a commitment agreement (the «**Charter of Caves**») including the best cave managing practices issued by UIS, ISCA and IUCN to be signed by the cave managers joining the network.



Download the «Charter of Caves»!!

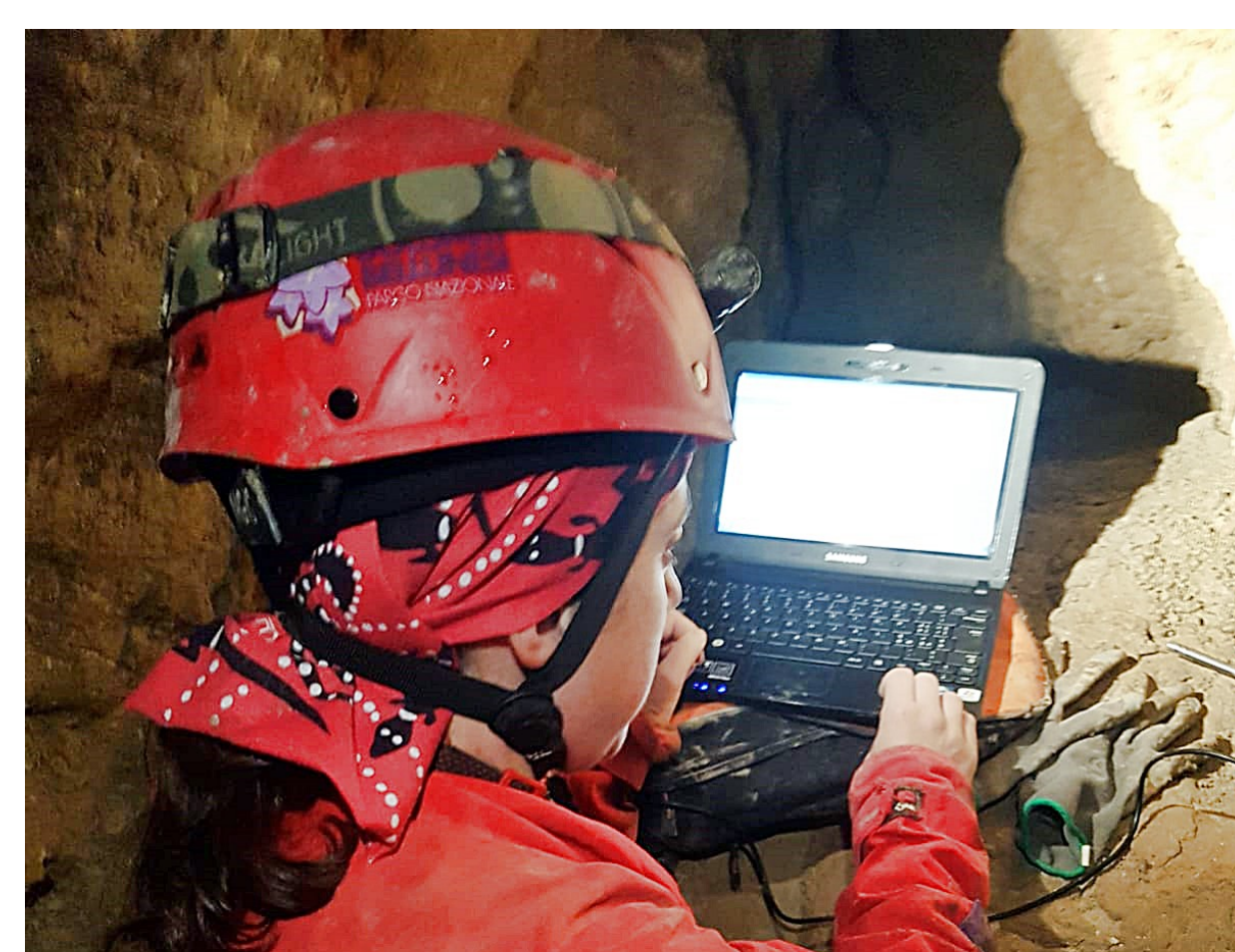


Download the «Speleoguide Network Agreement»!!



WPT2 – Cave Conservation through Natural and Cultural Heritage Protection

- **Monitoring of cave microclimate** parameters to better manage cave visits.
- Production of a «**Habitat 8310- Action Plan**» (Caves not open to the public according to 92/43/EEC DIR) including a list of threats and dangers for the cave habitat and actions to prevent habitat loss and to restore it in case of environmental deterioration



Download the «Monitoring Strategy»!!



Download the «Habitat 8310-Action Plan»!!



WPT3 – Pilot Projects

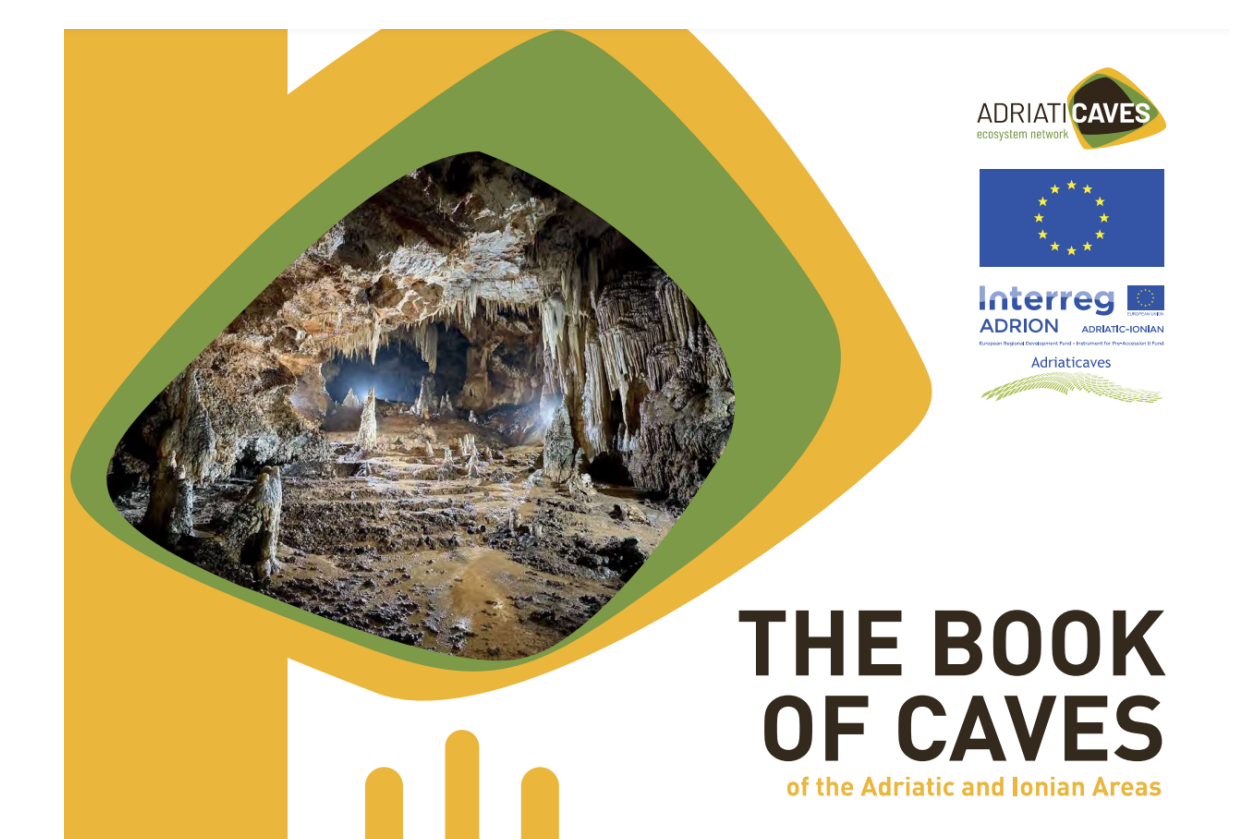
Direct interventions to **improve cave environmental conditions** and to **increase the sustainability and accessibility** of the project tourist sites.

E.g., waste removal, light bulbs replacement with LED lights, renovation of old and high consuming electric illumination plants, replacement of old walkways using materials more suitable for the cave environment, production of informative materials like panels, etc.).



WPC – Communication

- Production of local tour packages.
- Realisation of the «Book of Caves», a photographic book about the Adriaticaves Project, the Project Partners' caves and all the tourist sites that joined the network.
- Organisation of several public events to disseminate the project results.



Download the «Informative Catalogue»!!



Download the «Book of Caves»!!



Conclusions

The Interreg ADRION – Adriaticaves Project represented an opportunity to develop two important thematics regarding karst areas: **natural heritage conservation** and **tourism**.

Through the implementation of the project activities and the inclusion of already existing guidelines regarding cave sustainable management (ISCA and UIS guidelines), it was possible to create a new quality brand («**Adriaticaves**») to identify and promote slow tourism in karst areas managed in a sustainable way, and to improve cave habitat conditions in the partner's territories.



The **newborn Adriaticaves network has been enlarged** inviting other caves opened to the public and located in the Adriatic-Ionian region to join the Adriaticaves brand through the subscription of the Chart of Caves, which requires a specific commitment in reaching the Adriaticaves standards for the sustainable management of tourist karst areas.

However, **joining this Brand represents a self-commitment** which will require a further development of a proper organised structure able to successfully supervise the network, an activity that was not developed within this project.

Acknowledgements

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