



## SENIA



111,514



### Challenge

Despite the many things that unite the people of Sénia, coordinating across three different autonomous communities and 27 municipalities (15 from Valencia, nine from Catalonia and three from Aragon) posed a challenge.

All share a high concentration of ancient olive trees which, besides their natural, cultural and heritage value, produce high-quality olive oil. The need to preserve the natural cultural heritage while creating sustainable development for the area was the starting point for the initiative 'Ancient olive trees of the Territorio Sénia'



### Solution

The 27 town councils formed the Taula del Sénia Commonwealth in 2006, which then joined private stakeholders (tree owners, oil producers, restaurants and other actors) to form the non-profit Sénia Territory Association. An oil brand was created to control production of certified oil from ancient olive trees.

A holistic, cross-sectorial project now preserves the ancient olive trees and deals with oil production, tourism, cultural and educational activities and more, to make the trees a symbol of the territory and drive sustainable development.

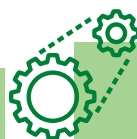
# Oil and ancient olive trees



An engine for sustainable development



Participatory governance of cultural heritage



### How ?

- 1 The Taula del Sénia Commonwealth carried out an extensive inventory to map the number and characteristics of ancient olive trees in the area.
- 2 As a joint initiative of the Commonwealth and the Sénia Territory Association, from 2009 to 2013, the four-year pilot project 'Oil and ancient olive trees, the engine of sustainable development in the Territorio Sénia' was developed. This project was the starting point for other related projects to support tourism, entrepreneurship and employment in the years to come, under the umbrella of the 'Ancient Olive Trees of the Territorio Sénia' initiative.
- 3 Historical oil mills were restored as museums and as a point of sale for olive oil. Areas for visitors were also developed. The property owners, oil mills, and gastronomy and tourism actors that consume and promote the certified olive oil signed agreements for cooperation.
- 4 In parallel, scientific research and outreach activities, including an traveling exhibition, participation in the European Heritage Days and public events were developed to foster community engagement.
- 5 The initiative is ongoing and will be expanded.

## CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ACTION

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## Budget/Financing

**€ 2.428 million**

- €76,500 for the inventory of ancient olive trees
- €1,504,833 for the Ancient Olive and Oil Project
- €97,117 for book production
- €151,711 for natural museums
- €373,030 for oil production and job creation projects (2013 – 2014, 2018)
- €79,500 for a tourism study and microsite
- €13,800 for European Heritage Stories
- €132,000 for congresses and exhibitions

The funding sources were:

- 23.4% from the 27 municipalities through the Taula del Sénia Commonwealth
- 22.2% from the Provincial councils (Generalitat of Catalonia, Generalitat of Valencia and Castellón, Tarragona and Teruel councils)
- 54% from the Spanish Ministry of Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs
- 0.4% from the European Heritage Stories of the EU and the Council of Europe

## Management

- The project is led by the Taula del Sénia Commonwealth and the Sénia Territory Association.
- Representatives from the private sector (landowners, mills, restaurants, tourism) are closely involved through the Sénia Territory Association.
- Volunteers and the local community contribute to activities.
- The 27 municipalities, the provincial councils of Catalonia, Valencia, Castellón, Tarragona and Teruel, as well as the national administration support the initiative financially.



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## Transferability

- The practice could inspire other territories in Southern Europe, especially in the Mediterranean Basin, where there is a significant number of ancient olive trees (Italy, Greece, France and Portugal).
- Before conceiving a project, make sure to know the dimension and characteristics of your heritage assets through inventories, studies and research.
- Given the public and private mix of entities, consensus, close cooperation and exchange of information are vital for the success of the project. Devise the correct governance structures to involve different public and private actors.



## Impact

- Advances in conserving and protecting ancient olive trees.
- Greater awareness among tree owners and locals.
- The culture of the oil, local products and new economic activities have created jobs and slowed down depopulation.
- Increased quality production of oil.
- Cross-sectoral collaboration between stakeholders.
- Increased tourism, and a steady increase of yearly visits to the natural museums of ancient olive trees.
- Legislation to protect ancient olive trees in Valencia approved in 2005 and a law proposed in Catalonia.



## Links

[Ancient olive trees in the Territory of Sénia flyer](#)  
[Nature Museum of Millenary Olive Trees in Arión video](#)  
[The Sénia Territory Millennium Olive Tree Landscape video](#)



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