



Meditour
— Agadir - 2026 —

iART: Grand events for the Enhancement of Sustainable Tourism in Mediterranean small Villages

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Réseau de Développement du Tourisme Rural

Village & Rural Tourism in the Mediterranean — *Key Data 2020–2024*

Small-village and rural tourism is not a marginal niche — it is an accelerating structural shift across the Mediterranean and globally.

INDICATOR	FINDING	SOURCE
+7.4%	Annual growth rate (CAGR) of rural tourism globally 2020–2024, vs 5.1% for overall tourism	Business Research Co. 2024
+63.8%	Growth in attendance at village festivals and local fairs in Italy in 2024 vs 2023 — driven by young people (31%) and families (45%)	ISTAT / Banca d'Italia 2025
51%	Leisure travellers who say experiencing a destination ‘as a local’ is a high priority; 45% concerned they are not having an authentic experience	GetYourGuide 2023
83%	Travellers who consider sustainable travel important (2024), up from 61% in 2021	Booking.com 2024
89%	Tourism service providers reporting higher demand for experiential and authentic travel	Flyware 2024
\$108B	Global rural tourism market size in 2024 (up from \$71B in 2020); forecast to reach \$115B in 2025 at 7.7% CAGR	Future Market Insights 2025
115%	Rural/village tourism arrivals vs 2019 pre-pandemic baseline — outperforming Mediterranean overall (108%)	UN Tourism Barometer 2024
135%	Morocco’s international arrivals vs 2019 — #1 in Africa; heritage/village share rose from 18% to 31% of arrivals (Chefchaouen, Atlas, medinas)	UN Tourism / WTFI 2024

Sources: UN Tourism World Tourism Barometer 2024 • UNWTO Best Tourism Villages Reports 2021–2024 • ISTAT/Banca d'Italia 2025 • Booking.com Sustainable Travel Report 2024 • Future Market Insights Rural Tourism 2025 • GetYourGuide Survey 2023 • Flyware Experiential Travel Report 2024 • World Tourism Forum Institute 2025

iART: Hollywood in small villages—*tourism enhancement and destination attractiveness*









Key Success Factors: iART — The Replicable Model

What 20 years of iART projects teach about event-driven transformation for small Mediterranean destinations



01Authenticity Over Scale	02Co-creation With Community	03Artist as Territorial Ambassador	04Permanence Of the Work	05Digital Extension Of the Physical
The event must be rooted in the specific identity of the place — its traditions, landscape, stories. Identity-based events generate attachment, return visits, word-of-mouth, and media resonance that no advertising budget can buy.	Local artisans, schools, associations and elders became protagonists, not spectators. This transforms an event into a community asset — ensuring the legacy is social, not only physical.	International artists who work in a village become lifelong ambassadors. Through their networks, exhibitions and social media, they carry the destination to audiences unreachable through conventional marketing.	A mural, a digital museum, a restored cultural centre — permanent presences that generate visits year-round. The event is the catalyst; the artwork is the lasting infrastructure.	Virtual exhibitions, augmented reality and online platforms let small villages reach global audiences. Art4Sea's virtual dimension creates a digital touchpoint that drives real destination interest.

Thank you for your attention!

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