

Culture and tourism: new financing for Italian villages

Pubblicato: Sabato 7 Novembre 2020

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism (MiBACT) has launched “Borghi in Festival”, a public notice for the financing of cultural activities (for a total amount of €750,000), to be carried out in the form of festivals, in order to foster wellbeing and improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of Italian villages, through the promotion of culture. The announcement, which is the result of an agreement between the Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity and the Directorate-General for Tourism of MiBACT, is part of the institutional measures implemented by the Ministry to encourage projects for regenerating the territories and to strengthen and integrate the tourist and cultural offer of Italian villages, under the banner of sustainability, accessibility and innovation.

In particular, “Borghi in Festival” aims to promote and support the quality and excellence of the territories, to make the most of their cultural, environmental and tourist resources, to create opportunities for social and economic improvement, also by encouraging cultural, creative and innovative community ventures, to promote and support innovative contents in educational and training activities, to enhance the tourist and cultural offer of the territories, and to develop integrated public-private approaches to projects.

The notice is aimed at municipalities with a resident population of up to 5000 inhabitants, that is, up to 10,000 inhabitants who have identified the municipality’s centre as a homogeneous territorial area (HTA), with preference for those that can be identified as priority and complex areas. These municipalities can participate individually or in a network; in fact, the notice favours projects based on integrated approaches, which are required to establish partnerships with at least one non-profit organisation and at least one co-financing partner. The funding available is limited to a maximum of €75,000 for municipalities participating individually, and €250,000 for municipalities participating in a network.

The projects submitted may include, among other things, events like meetings, seminars, workshops; training activities and support for training courses; the creation of digital platforms and applications, as well as non-digital but innovative communication tools; cultural and creative activities, with a particular focus on innovation; exhibitions, works, festivals that focus on promoting intergenerational, intercultural and social dialogue; innovative events that exploit the cultural heritage. “Borghi in Festival is a project which I strongly wanted, and that I believe in a lot,” said the Undersecretary of MiBACT, Anna Laura Orrico. “Our goal is to regenerate territories as spaces for experimentation, in which to implement innovative, balanced and sustainable economic models that are closely linked to the local communities. We want the communities to take care of their territories, and we want them to do this by promoting their historical and identity value, by making the most of their tangible and intangible cultural heritage, by launching training courses, and by implementing entrepreneurial initiatives, thereby creating opportunities for social and economic growth. The aim then, is to map the successful regeneration practices that emerge, so that the skills acquired in one village can be transferred to another village. In this sense, the concept of a network is crucial; municipalities and communities must know

how to act in a chain logic that favours interaction, exchange, and the sharing of good practices that have been successfully tried.”

“Villages in Italy represent not only the history and identity of our country, they are the essence and sap that spreads throughout the territory,” said Lorenza Bonaccorsi, MiBACT’s Undersecretary for Tourism. “They represent cultural, artistic and historical heritage. Keeping them alive means preserving this heritage and that widespread museum which is the added value of our tourist offer. Before this pandemic, we complained about the limit on the concentration of tourism, and the villages are the solution to this limit. In order to make the most of them, it’s necessary first of all to secure the architectural structures. And not only this; taking care of Italian villages means protecting our territory, which is so fragile and so in need of maintenance, attention and investments for hydrogeological protection. In one word: sustainability. And this is why the Borghi in Festival project, with this public notice which makes funds available for preservation and enhancement, is a project that finds the support of the whole of MiBACT and that will help to get other places of beauty to be admired and discovered by tourists from all over the world, once the pandemic has become just a bad memory.”

The notice will be published by mid-November on the institutional websites of the Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity (Direzione Generale Creatività Contemporanea) and of the Directorate-General for Tourism (Direzione Generale Turismo.) Participants will have 60 days to develop their projects. The winning festivals may take place between April and July 2021.

Translated by Debora De Benedetto

Reviewed by Prof. Rolf Cook