

PRESS RELEASE

MetaHeritage unveils four innovative business cases to strengthen interregional digital heritage value chains across Europe

New strategic framework connects cultural and corporate heritage, digital technologies and smart tourism to develop new interregional business opportunities across Europe

The MetaHeritage project has released its Deliverable 5.2 “Business Cases”, presenting four interregional business models designed to explore how Europe’s cultural and corporate heritage assets can be transformed into market-oriented opportunities through digital innovation, immersive experiences and smart tourism solutions.

In line with MetaHeritage’s S3 and interregional cooperation approach, the four business cases translate the project’s wider ambitions into concrete pathways for stronger SME participation, interregional value-chain development and future investment opportunities. Developed together with project partners, regional stakeholders and supporting organisations, the four business cases address real ecosystem challenges and market opportunities across European regions.

“Heritage is not only a legacy of the past – it is a powerful driver for future innovation, economic diversification and sustainable growth,” said Orquidea Ribeiro, Project Coordinator. *“Through MetaHeritage, we are creating practical models that connect SMEs, cultural actors, technology providers, public authorities and investors around shared opportunities for innovation.”*

The four business cases combine immersive storytelling, artificial intelligence, digital technologies, heritage routes and metaverse-based solutions to create new services, visitor experiences and business opportunities and to strengthen existing and develop new interregional value chains. They demonstrate how digital innovation can strengthen the accessibility, attractiveness and market potential of heritage across Europe.

Four business cases shaping the future of heritage innovation

The four proposed business model concepts build on MetaHeritage’s two innovative approaches – **Heritage and Cultural Routes** and **Metaverse-Based Heritage Innovation** – providing practical contexts to explore their potential for heritage-driven innovation. Rather than representing separate models, the two approaches provide a common foundation for developing complementary pathways that connect heritage, digital technologies, SMEs and territorial ecosystems within new and strengthened interregional value chains.

1. Wine & Historic Houses: immersive experiences powered by digital technologies

Focusing on Galicia, Northern Portugal and the Azores, this business case proposes an interregional platform connecting heritage stays, winery visits and curated experiences through AI-supported planning tools, immersive content and shared market access.

The model supports SMEs in overcoming challenges such as limited digital capacity, fragmented offers and difficulties reaching wider markets, while creating opportunities for stronger regional branding and sustainable tourism growth.

2. Wellness and Regenerative Tourism: connecting people, places and sustainable experiences

This business case develops an interregional ecosystem across Emilia-Romagna, Northern Portugal, the Azores, Galicia and Thuringia, combining slow mobility, wellness, cultural heritage and regenerative tourism.

Through an AI-integrated platform and app with gamification features, the model helps SMEs transform local assets into coherent, bookable experiences while supporting longer stays, off-season tourism and stronger local value creation.

3. Interregional Metaverse Space for SMEs: immersive access to European heritage and innovation

The third business case introduces a shared metaverse environment where users can discover SMEs, cultural venues, workshops, wineries and creative enterprises through interactive experiences.

Using 3D digital twins, AI-supported content creation and immersive storytelling, the concept enables new forms of engagement, virtual exploration, trip planning and digital visibility for local stakeholders.

4. Creative Tourism & Innovative Cultural Ecosystems: building new value chains around heritage

The fourth business case proposes a Digital Heritage Innovation Accelerator connecting heritage, tourism, creative industries, digital providers and investors in Emilia-Romagna, Brussels-Capital and Vienna.

The model aims to transform fragmented cultural assets into coordinated, market-oriented ecosystems by supporting SMEs in developing innovative services, visitor experiences and investment-ready solutions.

From concepts to future investment opportunities

The Business Cases Deliverable marks an important step in MetaHeritage's ambition to move from ideas towards implementation. The proposed models provide a foundation for future pilots, validation activities and scalable solutions, with the aim of progressively maturing scalable concepts towards investment readiness.

Through these business cases, MetaHeritage demonstrates how cultural and corporate heritage can become a catalyst for digital transformation, economic resilience and sustainable development – connecting Europe's heritage with new opportunities for innovation.

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