

# PROJECT DESIGN GUIDELINES

## Methodological and Regulatory Framework of the Initiative

This open call is part of the broader project **“Human Re-Generation between Ancestral Rituals and Experiential Attractors – Tradition and Innovation framed by the pristine landscape of the Gallipoli Cognato Natural Park and the Lucanian Little Dolomites.”**

The initiative involves the municipalities of **Castelmezzano, Pietrapertosa and Accettura** in the Basilicata region of southern Italy.

Among the actions foreseen within the project is the development of **cultural services aimed at strengthening the overall tourism offer** and supporting cultural, creative, tourism, commercial, agri-food and craft activities. These initiatives aim to enhance local knowledge and traditional techniques while integrating and strengthening a tourism ecosystem that has been active for more than **15 years**, making the area one of the most important tourist destinations in the region.

Within this framework, the Municipality intends to enhance its tourism offer through **cultural and technological innovation**.

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## Introduction and Territorial Context

Castelmezzano, located in Basilicata and home to approximately **700 inhabitants**, is a jewel set within the dramatic landscape of the **Lucanian Dolomites**. Recognized as one of the *“Most Beautiful Villages in Italy,”* the village—with its architecture perched on steep slopes and the majestic crown of rocky peaks towering above it—represents an extraordinary natural canvas for **digital art interventions**.

The profile of the Lucanian Dolomites frames one of the most mysterious landscapes in the Lucania region. Moving through the area means gradually entering a natural environment shaped by **sandstone formations sculpted by atmospheric forces**. Under particular conditions of light and shadow, local imagination has given these rock formations evocative names such as:

- Royal Eagle
- Owl
- Great Mother
- Anvil
- Lion’s Mouth

At the heart of the village, inside the **Mother Church dating back to the 13th century**, visitors can admire the **“Madonna dell’Olmo,”** a magnificent 14th-century wooden sculpture of the Madonna and Child.

A narrow staircase carved into the rock leads to a scenic viewpoint and to the remains of the ancient defensive walls and the medieval castle known as **Castrum Medianum**, where during the summer visitors can attend the multimedia performance “**La Grande Madre.**”

The urban structure of Castelmezzano is **typically medieval**, characterized by a concentric cluster of houses with roofs made of sandstone slabs set within a rocky basin. The historic center is particularly evocative thanks to buildings embedded in the rock and the many steep stairways that open between narrow alleys, inviting visitors to climb toward the surrounding peaks and enjoy the spectacular views of the Lucanian Dolomites.

This harmonious relationship between the built environment and the surrounding natural landscape has allowed Castelmezzano to be described as a “**nature-city**” and included in the network of **The Most Beautiful Villages in Italy**.

The village also features notable historical buildings, including the **Ducal Palace**, once belonging to the De Lerma family, the last feudal lords of Castelmezzano. Located near the castle where the duke’s garrison resided, the palace dates back to the **18th century** and features a monumental portal topped by a large loggia.

Another important building is **Palazzo Coiro**, situated behind the Mother Church and built in the **19th century**, distinguished by balconies supported by decorative brackets and elegant wrought-iron railings.

Outside the village, a network of **paths, stairways and stone bridges** leads to the **Caperrino valley**, where visitors can still see the remains of ancient dry-stone mills whose roofs are made from local stone slabs known in the dialect as “*chiang.*” From the valley, crossing a single-arch stone bridge—possibly of Roman origin—it is possible to reach the nearby village of **Pietrapertosa**.

Castelmezzano lies within the **Gallipoli Cognato – Lucanian Little Dolomites Natural Park**, which offers not only pristine natural landscapes but also traces of an ancient history, including the **megalithic walls of the Lucanian settlement of Croccia Cognato dating back to the 4th century BC**.

Every year in September, during the religious celebrations dedicated to **Saint Anthony**, the village revives one of its oldest traditions: the “**Maggio Festival.**” This ritual celebrates the fertility of the land through the symbolic union of a **holm oak trunk** and a **holly treetop**, ceremonially transported from the forest to the village.

The oak trunk is pulled by pairs of oxen, while the holly crown is carried on the shoulders of the young men of the village. The procession transporting the two trees represents the most spectacular and engaging phase of the celebration, allowing the community to become part of the symbolic ritual. The festival concludes in the village square where the trunk and the crown are joined together, raised upright and climbed by the most daring inhabitants.

Similar celebrations with the same symbolic meaning take place in nearby villages such as **Accettura, Oliveto Lucano and Pietrapertosa**.

In **2022**, Castelmezzano was recognized by **United Nations agencies (FAO and UNWTO)** as a global model of sustainability and a **best practice in sustainable tourism**. These organizations highlighted how the local community, through collaboration between public institutions and private stakeholders, has been able to generate significant economic and employment opportunities, helping to counteract the depopulation of mountain areas.

The development model is based on **slow and high-quality tourism**, known above all for the **“Flight of the Angel”** zipline experience and the recently built alpine coaster, both considered examples of territorial enhancement achieved without altering the natural environment.

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## **Objectives of the Residency**

The call invites **multimedia artists, electronic composers and visual artists** to explore the relationship between the village’s ancestral rituals—traditions, silences and natural rhythms—and **new immersive technologies**.

The aim is to transform the village into a **sensory device**, where light is not only a visual component but becomes sound, and where sound itself becomes architecture.

### **Specific objectives of the project**

#### **Heritage Enhancement**

Reinterpret urban and natural spaces by creating a contemporary dialogue with the history and morphology of the place.

#### **Tourism Attraction**

Develop a cultural tourism product capable of **extending the tourist season beyond the peak months of July and August**, attracting visitors through multimedia installations, winter programming and evening performances capable of generating new entrepreneurial energy within the territory.

#### **Support for Creativity**

Offer visual artists and sound designers a **unique exhibition environment** and the opportunity to work within an inspiring landscape and community context.

#### **Technological Innovation**

Position Castelmezzano as a **regional hub for digital arts and videomapping in Basilicata**.

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## Description of the Residencies

### TARGET ARTISTS

The call is open to **visual artists, light designers, videomakers and sound designers**, both emerging and established, working in the field of **digital and performative arts**.

**PERIOD 4–18 June 2026**

**The residency will last two weeks (15 consecutive days).**

### LOCATION

Castelmezzano (PZ), Basilicata, Italy.

The Municipality will provide **accommodation facilities and working spaces** (temporary studios or multifunctional spaces).

### EXPECTED OUTPUT

Each artist or collective will produce a **videomapping performance lasting 6–10 minutes**, synchronized with an **original soundtrack (sound design)**, to be projected on a specific portion of the village or on a rock wall identified by the organization.

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### APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Applications must be submitted by completing the online form available at:

<https://forms.gle/f1Kv44fs9tjvkSNT8>

**Deadline:** 13 April 2026, 12:00 (noon).