

## VALORIZATION OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE: A STRATEGY OF SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

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**Abstract.** *A new strategy to revamp Italian economy must enhance potentialities of internal market and of needs of citizens. This article suggests that taking care of the historical-monumental goods could be good in order to boost the economy towards sustainable growth, provided that everything takes place in close partnership with the stakeholders also through public-private partnership (PPP). This study examines the case study of the Agenzia del Demanio and the potential and policies it has undertaken. The conclusion to be pursued is that the enhancement and redevelopment of the territory must be based on economic integration and tourism, which is one of the main sectors driving economic development of different territories. It has to be implemented in a sustainable manner, combining the needs for use of the attractors and the safeguard of the heritage as a precious entity to be preserved, transmitted and handed down to future generations.*

**Keywords:** *Sustainable development; Agenda 2030; Re-qualification; Public-private partnership; cultural heritage.*

### Introduction

Cultural heritage, material and immaterial, is our common wealth: the legacy of the generations that preceded us and ours to posterity. It is a heritage of irreplaceable knowledge and a precious resource for economic growth, employment and social cohesion, which enriches the lives of hundreds of millions of people, a source of inspiration for thinkers and artists and a driving force for our cultural and creative industries. Our cultural heritage and the ways in which we preserve and enhance it are a determining factor in defining Italy's position in the world and its attractiveness as a place to live and work in and visit. Cultural heritage is a shared resource and a common good.

The purpose of this research is to demonstrate that the public administration is able to stimulate the local (and, consequently, national) economy exploiting the endogenous

A characteristics of the territory, enhancing it and pushing the community towards sustainable growth and the pursuit of the SDGs in an innovative way (Sustainable Development Solution Network Report, 2016), i.e. encouraging innovation and growth from abandoned ruins (owned by the State) with limited financial resources and lack of know-how, while satisfying the needs of the territory.

The paper, after providing a theoretical framework focused on the sustainable territorial development, analyses a case study of the Agenzia del Demanio: the "Valore Paese" project, which aims to redevelop and enhance the state property.

### **Theoretical framework: cultural heritage as a growth strategy**

Cultural heritage generates both direct and indirect benefits (Cappellin, 2014). The first ones concern the satisfaction of needs of those who directly use it, the latter are those that cultural heritage can activate in favor of the community. These benefits are both of an economic nature, concerning the increase in employment, investment, tourism, services, infrastructures and trade, and of a social nature, which means development of human capital, creation of a common identity, modelling strong collaborative relationships between citizens and with a general improvement in the quality of life (Barresi, 2013).

However, it is not possible to separate the idea of local cultural heritage as an *asset* for the economic development of a community from the idea of sustainable development. Sustainability concerns the standards of life of a community as it goes to check whether this leads to a healthy and productive life. If development is not sustainable, the impact of enhancing cultural heritage on the local community could be negative. It could undermine the integrity of traditional social systems, determine the cultural conflict with the increasing flow of tourists, the rise of prices of local goods, increased pollution is understood as a negative externality, and more generally a deterioration in the quality of life of the entire resident community (Cicerchia, 2009). On the other hand, if the economic development determined by the enhancement of cultural heritage is sustainable, optimal use of environmental resources is made, the social and cultural entity of the resident community is respected and long-term economic sustainability is assured, guaranteeing more jobs and more income opportunities (Cicerchia, 2009). However, we must consider that the mere presence of a cultural asset is not a guarantee of economic development of the territory, but it is necessary to implement a series of policies (Cappellin, 2014). This must be oriented towards the establishment of a system of integration between cultural heritage and the territorial context of belonging in compliance with the objectives of sustainability (Agenda 2030; ASVISS, 2017; Zbucnea, 2014).

"If a territory fails, the companies that operate in this area also fail and vice versa the success of the companies that insist on it" (Zamagni, 2017). An action of sustainable and local growth based on the valorization of a common good must provide for the pursuit of the SDGs (United Nations, 2016; Sustainable Development Solution Network Report, 2016), through the definition of a program that values the good by making the community an inclusive settlement, safe, durable and sustainable, respecting the SDGs 11 and 15, but also through the involvement of the local community that promotes companies to implement innovation, the SDGs 8 and 9, through collaborative and partnership logics, the SDGs 17. Therefore, development strategies can no longer be

defined by the central government and secondly transferred to territorial community for their implementation. "Rather it is the local that must be able to reacquire its capacity for innovation that has remained so long asleep, during the season of the industrial society" (Zamagni, 2017).

"Local development is not identified [...] with a given model of productive organization but it is built by the ability of local actors to collaborate to produce collective assets that enrich the external economies, but also to enhance common goods" (Triglia, 2005). Those who are the first to actually enjoy these assets are the local citizens and, playing both promoters and users, they are fundamental in the process of local innovation. The latter is an essential tool in terms of competitiveness: by adopting innovative systems for managing and monitoring heritage and cultural activities, it is possible to provide basic support for territorial policies aimed at both citizens and tourists. That the tourist relationship is a composite package of different goods and services and what is known. [...] The success of a territory, or of a city, in the competition between tourist destinations, depends only partly on the endowment of natural (or historical cultural) resources: it depends instead on the ability of the local community to organize a package (i.e. network - Candela, 2012) and offer a product that is firstly and foremost an *experience* (Cellini, 2017). In this way it is possible to build a targeted offer to meet the ever more diversified requests for tourism flows and an increasingly demanding demand, to efficiently manage local cultural sites through the continuous updating of management methods and coordination between all the *stakeholders* (Pultrone, 2013; Zbucnea, 2014).

### **Case Study: Agenzia del Demanio and project "Valore Paese"**

The Agenzia del Demanio is responsible for the management, rationalization and enhancement of the real estate assets. These are real estate for government use, available assets, historical and artistic heritage. The Agency also promotes the enhancement and regeneration of the entire public real estate assets, in synergy with the institutions and local authorities, also identifying innovative and participatory strategies and instruments. The goal is to contribute to the development of the country's economic-productive, social and cultural fabric and to reduce public spending, maximizing the value of goods and optimizing the spaces used by public administrations." (Agenzia del Demanio, 2018). The agency, pursuant to D.lgs. 33/2013 Transparency<sup>1</sup>, has structured the "OpenDemanio portal" as an online window that allows citizens, associations, local authorities and entrepreneurs to become aware of the composition of public real estate assets and of investment, recovery and reuse projects. This tool, as well as a dutiful example of transparency, is fundamental for awareness of the community and an incentive to become promoters of initiatives aimed at enhancing cultural heritage (Agenzia del Demanio, sd). Data of the State Balance Sheet give us an overview of the composition of the State Heritage of the Italian distributed at the territorial level (Region and Province) and by category (available assets, unavailable assets, artistic-historical heritage)<sup>2</sup> about 43.185 assets (Figure 1) for a value of about 60.5 billion (Figure 2) of euros (Agenzia del Demanio, 2018).

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<sup>1</sup> Legislative Decree 33/2013 Transparency - New Article 9bis \* Database of state-owned properties - Management System (REMS / ADDRESS) \* introduced by Legislative Decree 97/2016

<sup>2</sup> The data of the State Balance Sheet are updated annually, allow you to know the territorial distribution of properties and areas, their category (available assets, unavailable assets, artistic-historical heritage) and their value. Data on the real estate assets of the State under management at the Agenzia del Demanio are

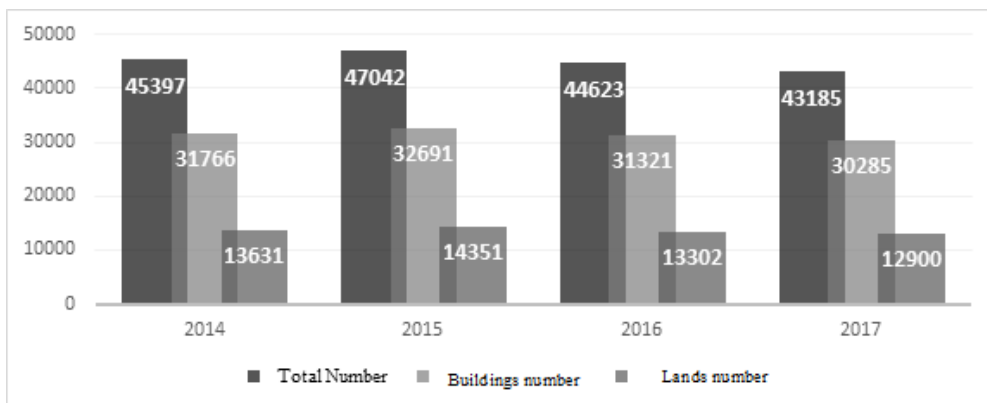


Figure 1. Consistency of the patrimony of the Italian state

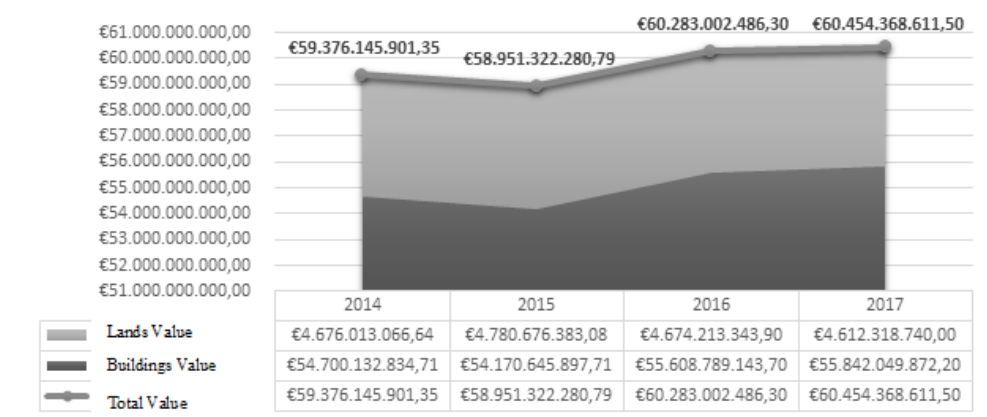


Figure 2. Value of the State Heritage

Moreover, we need to distinguish between assets of available assets and assets of unavailable assets (art 828 CC) and historical artistic heritage (Fig. 3). Figure 3 and Figure 4 provide, respectively, an overview of the consistency and value of Italian assets<sup>3</sup> from 2014 to 2017: data are reported in aggregate form at the territorial level and distinguishing between land, buildings and their sum (Total State Property).

divided into "Number of assets" and " Value of assets" both at the total level and detailed by type (buildings and non-built assets) and by category (equity available, unavailable heritage, historical artistic heritage). All data are also available by region and by province.

<sup>3</sup> The values refer to book inventory values that are not comparable to market values.

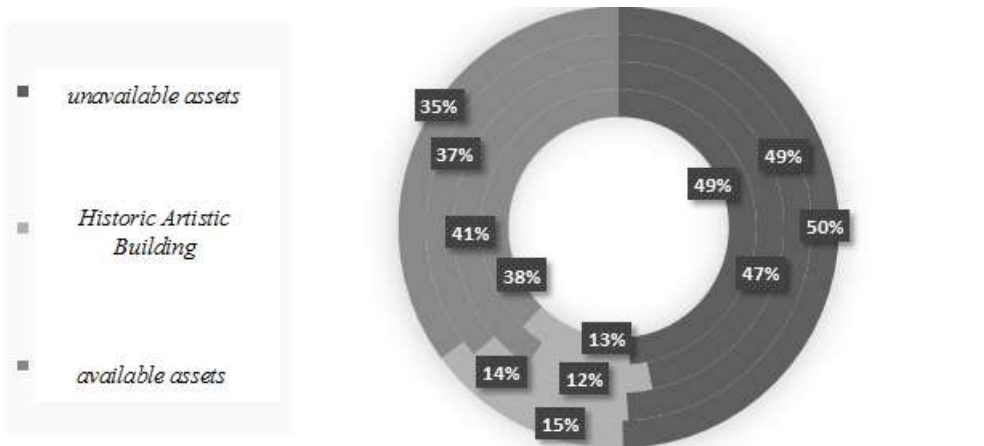


Figure 3. Percentage evolution of the consistency of the Italian state assets (by category)

Assets of *unavailable assets* (Figures 4 and 5) represent an average of 49%(figure 3) of the State's consistency. This type of property is subject to the public law regime and intended for use for public purposes (e.g. assets used by the Central Public Administrations, the endowment of the President of the Republic, mines, assets confiscated from organized crime, goods in free and perpetual use to universities and ecclesiastical institutions, public housing not yet transferred to local authorities) (Agenzia del Demanio, 2018).

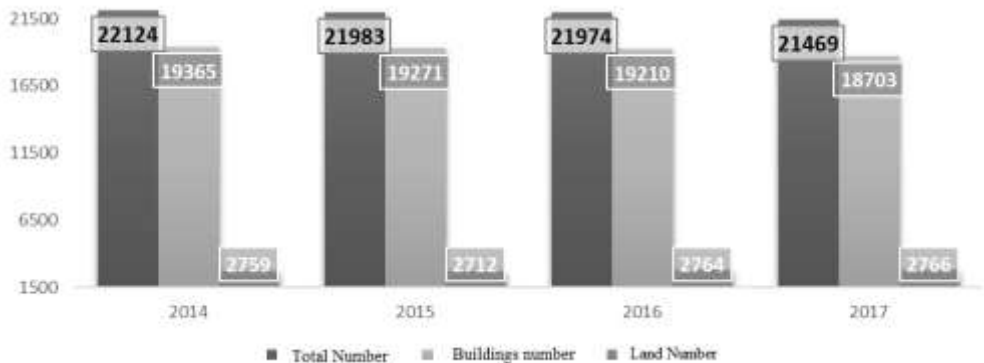
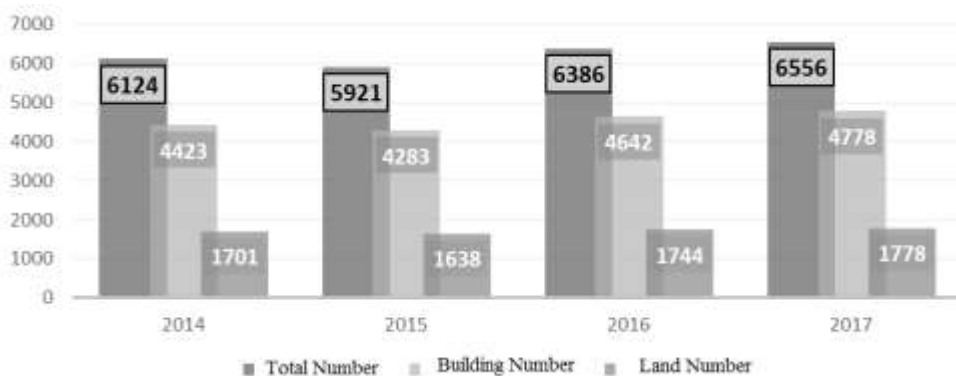


Figure 4. Consistency of the Unavailable Assets of the State

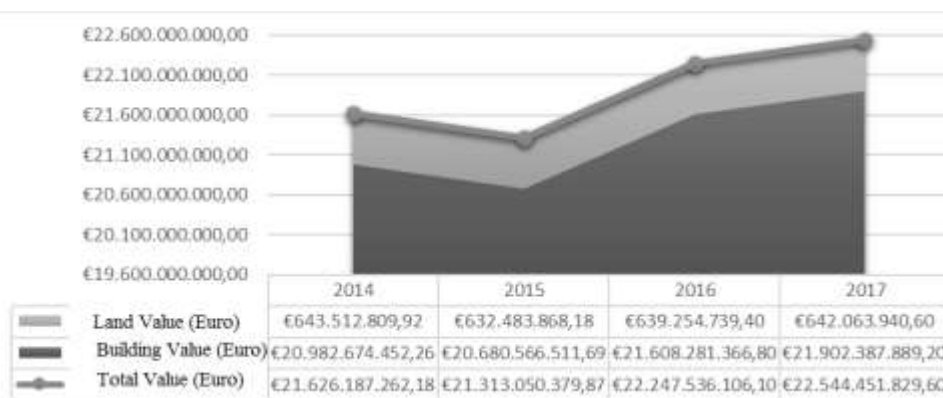


Figure 5. Value of the Unavailable Assets of the Italian State

The *Historic Artistic Building* (Figures 6 and 7) represents an average of 14% (figure 3) of the State's consistency. The MIBACT recognized a historical, archaeological, artistic and cultural, limiting availability to only a few types and special storage guarantees and proper intended use. Below is the trend from 2014 to 2017 of the amount (Figure 8) and the value of the aforementioned category of assets.



**Figure 6. Consistency of the Historic Artistic Building of the Italian State**



**Figure 7. Value of the Historic Artistic Building of the Italian State**

Assets of *available assets* (Figures 8 and 9) represent on average 38%<sup>4</sup> (figure 3) of the State's consistency and they are managed through the rules of private law (e.g. residential properties, agricultural land, devolved inheritances, donations, vacant real estate, properties devolved for tax debts, interbedded funds, quotas and assets non-strategic residual assets, assets in the process of transfer to Territorial Entities pursuant to State-owned Federalism)<sup>12</sup> (Agenzia del Demanio, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> The reported value was calculated by the author on data from the State Property Agency and corresponds to the average percentage change from 2017 to 2017.

<sup>12</sup> The reported value was calculated by the author on data from the state property agency and corresponds to the average percentage change from 2017 to 2017.

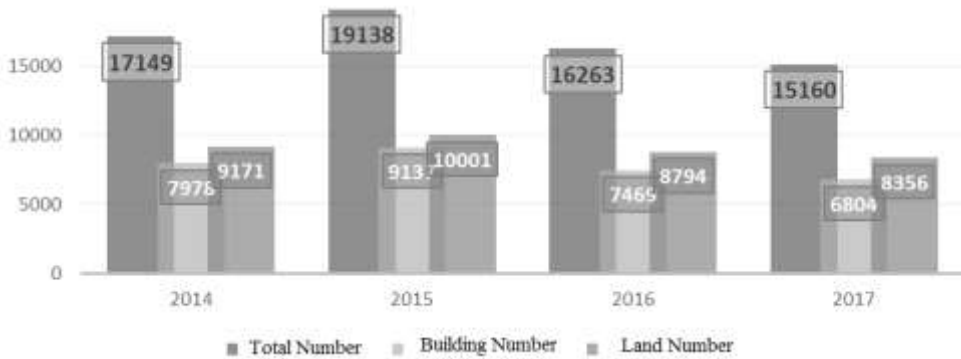


Figure 8. Available Asset Capital Property of the Italian State

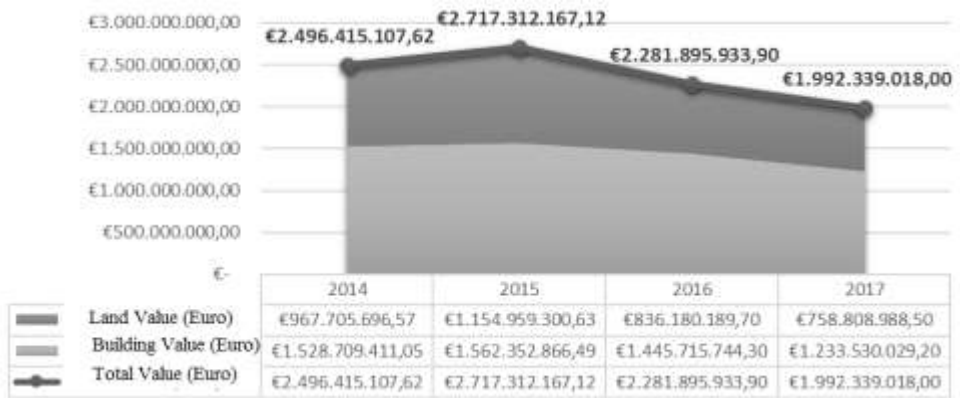


Figure 9. Consistency of the available assets of the Italian State

The Public Administration (Meneguzzo et al., 2012) needs to evolve in order to implement sustainable policies. In this context, the goals of the agency of the State property are regeneration and reuse of properties, enhancing them for triggering revitalization and development processes in the territories concerned. The different reuse projects include assets that are protagonists of administrative, financial and urbanistic paths aimed at maximizing their economic, social and cultural value: to 2017<sup>13</sup> we count 410 initiatives in Italy (Agenzia del Demanio, sd).

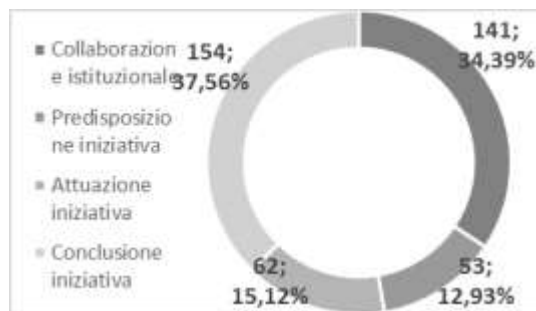
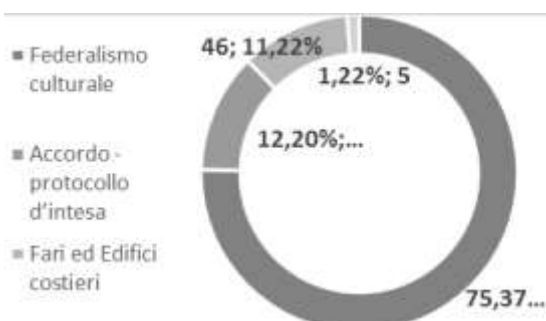


Figure 10. Distribution by status of work progress

<sup>13</sup> Data updated to December 2017, present on the OpeDate, the state property agency.



**Figure 11. Distribution by project type**

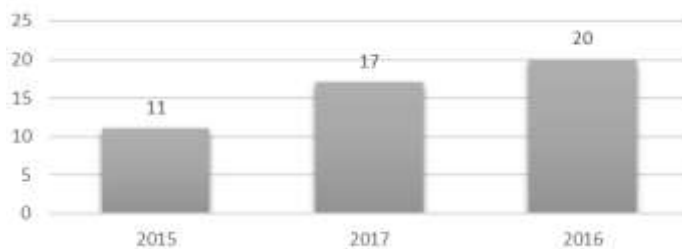
In 2007 the "Valore Paese - Dimore" project was born from the Agenzia del Demanio, Invitalia and ANCI - Foundation of the Common Heritage, with the involvement and participation of the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, the Ministry of Economic Development / Territorial Cohesion, the Conference of Regions and the Autonomous Provinces and the collaboration of other public and private subjects particularly interested in the initiative (Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, Institute for Sports Credit, Italian Association of Confindustria Hotels, Assoimmobiliare, Confindustria, Italian Geographical Society). "Valore Paese" is a program for the valorization of buildings owned by the State, kicking off thanks to the 2007 Budget Law, which introduced two important instruments: the granting of valorization for which a property can be rented up to 50 years and "Unitary Valorization Programs", with which it can be planned the redevelopment of public real estates located in the same territory. On the model of the "Paradores" in Spain and the "Pousadas" in Portugal, "Dimore" is a network system of prestigious public properties, such as villas, historic buildings, castles, prisons, barracks, lighthouses, and of receptive-cultural structures diffused on a national scale, to be realized in buildings of great historical-artistic value and in sites of environmental and landscape value with the aim of promoting Italian excellence (nature, art, history, music, fashion, design, creative industry, food and wine) and enhance the tourism-cultural offer, then the development of the territories.

The strategic objective of this operation is to optimize the income generated by the State's real estate assets to favor territorial development and contribute to the productive use of public goods. The project envisaged the transfer of various assets from the Ministry of Defense to the state heritage. The project aims, therefore, at *Ex Immobili della Difesa*, Unique Properties of high value with great historical-artistic value, and the Network Goods, which are inserted in a path of enhancement and redevelopment and then be returned to the community with new functions of social, cultural and commercial type consistent with the needs of local authorities and the community. Assignment of real estate takes place through the Valorisation Concession: an instrument of PPP that allows the development and enhancement of public real estate assets through the assignment to private parties of the right to use real estate for economic purposes for a certain period of time in the face of their requalification, functional reconversion and ordinary and extraordinary maintenance. Through the concession instrument, the private investor does not burden the costs for purchasing properties that remain publicly owned, while the State, in addition to collecting a license fee for the entire duration of the concession, saves the unproductive costs of supervision, custody, safety and maintenance reactivating, at the same time, virtuous circuits of urban transformation and local development. The duration of the concession



is commensurate with the achievement of the economic-financial balance of the investment plan and the related management, for a period of time not exceeding 50 years. For this reason, the assignment for a long period is an important tool capable of guaranteeing redevelopment interventions on capital (investments), using the properties owned by the state as "containers" of economic and social activities. This extension of the rent up to 50 years is intended to attract investors who are genuinely interested, who will be able to amortize expenses over a longer period, but which at the same time will guarantee adequate guarantees on the enhancement intervention and on its duration over time. In this way assets, while remaining property of the State, will be re-qualified and their value will be increased. At the expiry of the concession, the State automatically re-enters the full availability of the properties granted in use, with the acquisition of any transformation, improvement, addition and accession to them.

Sensitivity, and probably an increasingly growing awareness of the winning strategy of revaluing historical and cultural assets, gives rise to a second project within the Value Country program: the *Value Country-Headlights project* that consists of placing public headlights and coastal buildings on the market. In view of Valorisation and redevelopment of the territory, the Agenzia del Demanio in collaboration with Difesa Servizi SpA in 2015 proposed the localization of these assets, an endogenous, irreplaceable and unequalled feature that makes this type of property attractive for innovative and sustainable business projects. The project aims to create a network for the transformation of Italian coastal buildings into a development opportunity for the territories that host them. Figure 14 shows the amount of goods subject to three tenders, made from 2015 to 2017 for the granting of certain structures selected (Value Country lighthouses Agenzia del Demanio, 2018).



**Figure 12. Value Country Lighthouses: number of projects (2015-2017)**

In the first two years of the project, the agency has assigned 24 facilities to entrepreneurs and associations that will be redeveloped in *lighthouse accommodation*. The social economic impact in the local area estimated by the agency is about 60 million euros, 17 million euros of direct investments and an employment impact of about 300 operators. The last year the project involved two additional regions, Liguria and Marche, and islands of the Venetian lagoon with the release of 17 assets, 9 structures managed by the Agency and 8 by Difesa Servizi SpA.

The "Valore Paese" program has been strengthened in the last two years by a further and ambitious project: *Value Country Routes and Routes*. Promoted by MIBACT and MIT, it has the aim of redeveloping and reusing public buildings located along cycle paths and historical-religious itineraries, containers of services and authentic experiences in line with the philosophy of slow travel. Giving life to this program, the agency seeks to involve many stakeholders, using the tool of public consultation in order

to implement a more rigorous planning making use of the know-how of the private sector, in a logic of PPP, for the benefit of the whole local community. "Recover over 100 public buildings along the paths and cycle-pedestrian and historical-religious routes that cross all of Italy to turn them into hostels, small hotels, food outlets, cycle shops, service and assistance points for all pilgrims, tourists, walkers and cyclists who walk through these tracks every year. Promote and support the development of slow tourism by offering the possibility of reusing public buildings as containers of services and authentic experiences, strongly rooted in the territory: this is the philosophy that moves "Cammini and Percorsi" the new project "network" of the Demanio, promoted by MiBACT and MIT. "(press release Agezia del Demanio, 2017). The "Cammini e Percorsi" project sees today the closure of two calls. The first is a "free leasing for 9 years" closes on 11 December 2017 with 47 offers (14 foreign) and 33 participants (8 cooperatives, 9 associations and 16 companies), and sees the awarding of 13 state buildings, mainly in the center-south, entrusted in "free grant for 9 years" to companies, cooperatives and associations under 40. The second call, recently ended on April 16<sup>th</sup> 2018, differently from the first one provides for the assignment of 48 public buildings according to the "concession of valorization". This concession provides for the assignment of the asset for a period of 50 years and for the payment of a rent and is awarded the most valid project, or the best investment and local requalification project.

## Conclusions

One of the sectors to be exploited and increased to make our country converge towards sustainable development in full respect of the objectives of sustainable development (SDGs) is undoubtedly that of culture, understood both as cultural activities and as cultural heritage.

It is well known that Italy is one of the first countries for its artistic heritage. Despite the activity to date of the State Property Agency, the patrimony of the Italian State is not adequately valued, and its economic, financial and cultural potential is underestimated. Actually, we often discuss about "valorization" of a good in mere economic terms and in a short-term perspective. According to this view, the argument of preservation of the good for both exogenous and endogenous development of the local area is neglected. *Exogenous* development means that the external environment stimulates it and it relates to the attractiveness that the cultural asset exerts on both the flow of tourists and capital investments in that specific area. In this context, the good is appraised as a source of income and investment. Certainly tourism is one of the most dynamic sector of the global economy and, despite the crisis, has maintained its relevance in the positive items of income in the Italian State budget (Pultrone, 2013). Thanks to its positive impact it can both contribute to the resolution of fundamental problems such as the creation of new jobs (implementing the SDGs 8), and be the engine of development for those regions that preserves the traditional territorial and landscape aspects (implementing the SDGs 15). *From an endogenous point of view*, however, in order to be able to self-sustain, the development must start from the local territorial context. Since cultural assets, by nature, are local and relational public goods, they are the first candidates to start such a process. In this way, starting a process aimed at enhancing the endogenous and exogenous characteristics of the good and the local territory, a mechanism of sustainable development is triggered based on the pursuit of the objectives promoted by Agenda 2030 (United Nations, 2016) in particular of the SDGs 11.17, 8, 9, and 15.

On one hand, it is necessary to take into consideration the protection of heritage, a link between tourists and local community. On the other hand, heritage itself must be promoted, fostering the generation of financial resources in the whole territory. Tourism, as an activity that involves cultural and natural heritage, as well as traditions and contemporary cultures of the European Union, connects economic growth and sustainable development with ethical dimension. The tourism is a major economic activity, with a very positive impact on economic growth and employment in Europe. It is an economic activity capable of creating growth and employment, contributing, at the same time, to the development and economic and social integration, in particular of rural and mountain areas, coastal regions and islands, outlying regions, ultra peripheral or convergent.

Cultural enhancement, therefore, is achieved through processes both at macro-level (involving territorial development and collective well-being) and micro-level (reducing the inefficient use of dedicated public resources). Cultural policies must aim to trigger territorial development mechanisms through the stimulation of synergies that can be activated between cultural heritage and the local economic-productive fabric.

The strategies for the valorization of heritage assets must respect the intrinsic peculiarities of the asset. The Italian State assets, as we have seen, are divided into available and unavailable assets and historical assets, which are differently governed by private and public law. As relational goods they are placed as entities of which more individuals can enjoy together and whose fruition creates bonds and social relationships that contribute to a local identity and relationships of collaboration between citizens. If the recovery of the whole country is a phenomenon that initiates and develops locally, valorization of sites and cultural activities is a crucial factor. It is fundamental to liaise with stakeholders in order to make this strategy efficient.

The sectors connected to the world of culture and heritage are innumerable: in the process of redevelopment, a large number of industries are required to provide different intermediate and final goods. It is easy to see that, by way of example, the opening of a cultural site stimulates the creation of new infrastructures, transport and complementary services (catering services, gadgets), generates new jobs (dramatically increasing the SDGs 8) and stimulates the level of income of residents (dramatically increasing the SDGs 9).

The Program "Valore Paese" implemented by the State Property Agency represents the path to be pursued to achieve a sustainable development (United Nations, 2016) first and foremost national.

In fact, with the three "Value Country-Dimore, Fari e Cammini e Percorsi" projects, the agency seeks to overcome the limits, and to approach the community from a local development perspective, using two tools: public consultation and concession of valorization. The public consultation is an excellent tool for stakeholder engagement as it compares public and private parties in the pursuit of a common goal. The concession of valorization, as a PPP, establishes a virtuous collaboration: large national, public - private investment plan for innovation and projects aimed at improving the quality of life, using cultural historical assets as they give a cultural identity to the individual areas and, consequently, ensure cohesion and synergy between the various sectoral actions of a local development policy. We are witnessing changing roles:

the State, custodian and *dominus* of the public good, stays apart for the most efficient private individual identified through the competitive tender procedure. The focus of the relationship between the principal and the agent (State and private) lies precisely in the greater efficiency of the management of the asset or service delivery, a feature also given by the presence of complete contracts: the Public-Private Partnership (PPP), the signing of *bonus-malus* clauses, sponsorships and constant monitoring in the contractual execution phase allow both an inventiveness on cost minimization and an increase in the level of quality offered. Moreover, the importance of the demand for good or service is fundamental above all in line with the horizontal proliferation of similar market segments. Culture shall be able to generate income and the public must be able to access it: markets with more inelastic demand can finance where it lacks. Ramsey price application can be congenial, as well as it is important that, *ex ante*, tariffs are identified that embrace as many consumers as possible with contract times suitable to ensure that there is a fertile field for investments and retraining of assets.

It is therefore necessary to pay attention when addressing local territory as the starting point: it must not necessarily involve only the local communities. The Value Country Project identifies an extraordinary awareness, and the L. n. 228/2012 has provided that, at the end of the period of time envisaged by the concession, the Ministry of Economy and Finance - Agenzia del demanio, verified the achievement of the purpose of redevelopment and reconversion of assets, can recognize the concessionaire, where there are no needs for use for institutional purposes, the right of pre-emption for the purchase of the asset, at the market price. The DL n. 95/2012 also expressly provided for the possibility of sub-granting to third parties the economic or service activities envisaged in the management plan. This innovation may allow a significant extension of the valorization concession, already tested for the recovery of public buildings for tourism and cultural purposes, to transformation projects that provide for other functional destinations, including residential and commercial destinations.

There is absolutely no need to create monopolies or markets that are detrimental to ex-post competition to the consumer: capital or labor force must be welcome that come from anywhere (Italy and Europe) must be welcome, in presenting projects and offers judged more economically advantageous. The free circulation not only of the workers, but also of the capitals, and how much nowadays these are the manna from heaven. It will be up to investors and management to exploit economies of scale or more simply everything that is productive and that makes local communities participate.

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