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Research in the communities – mapping potential cultural heritage sites with potential for adaptive re-use – Vlora (Albania)

1. The Church of the Monastery of St. Mary in Vuno

To the right of the national road of Vuno-Himara on the hill above the neck of Visha in the place called Skutaria, is the Church of the Monastery of St. Mary for which DRKK Vlora specialists are preparing technical and historical documentation for previously unstudied monumental and artistic values.

In the partially ruined monastery, the church with solid and half-covered walls is still preserved, which is thought to have been built in the early 18th century. On the interior walls of the church walls are mural paintings made with great skill by a professional hand. In the monastery complex there are other constructions such as guest houses, two barns, a well and fragments of the surrounding walls. Located in the center of a lawn surrounded by centuries-old oaks from where the mountains of Vetëtima and the waters of the Ionian Sea look beautiful, this monastery has construction, historical and tourist values for heritage.

2. The church of St.Sergius and Baku in Himara

The church of St. Sergius and Baku, declared a cultural monument of the first category, is a tourist attraction on the Himara coast, where in addition to the beauties of the Ionian coast, tourists can touch closely the culture and heritage.

The church was built inside the surrounding walls of the Himara castle in its highest quota, in the Barbaka area. It served as the seat of the Bishop of Himara, which became the episcopal center in 1020, under the auspices of the Ohrid Patriarchate as evidenced by a diploma issued by the



Byzantine emperor Vasili II. In the northeast corner of the church was a walled stone plaque, which read the year 786.

3. Sazani Island in Vlora

Sazani Island was used by the Italians as a military base until the communists recaptured it in 1944. The island, once known as Saseno, was designed to resist nuclear strikes.

It was an enigmatic island, for more than half a century. The military operations carried out there fascinated the public during the Cold War.

Today, there are traces of the past, old and extremely depreciated buildings of the town dedicated to the military, a place where you see the Old Italian architecture and communist buildings in an interesting coexistence.

There are about 3,600 bunkers on the island's hills, some of which have beds and chairs.

Haxhi Alise's cave is named after the most famous pirate of the medieval period. It is considered the largest cave in the Balkans. It is known in history as one of the caves where an entire pirate army was housed inside. In it you can enjoy crystal clear and cold waters, diving is recommended only for professionals.





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4. Local community's involvement

The involvement of local communities is very important in every adaptive re-use sites that affect and improve their economic social and cultural life.

Also, some important and different indicators that will be consider in community impact, as well for improvement of local community life is the physical, cultural and environmental system both proper cultural heritage protection and further use.

Two identified sites are very important for their historical and cultural heritage context keeping in mind the transit situation during the communism system in Albania.

They need an urgent building rehabilitation and then promoting the valorization and regeneration sites. The adaptive reuse can contribute to cultural benefits (conserving alive a symbol of local community identity) and considering as e important values of the small area.

Rehabilitation may encourage new public and private investments, promoting the development of related activities and the provision of support services in the area in which the reuse project is carried out.