

## Promoting sustainable territorial development in inner areas through paleontological heritage: the case study of Campania region in southern Italy

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The study presented has been developed within the PRIN 2022 INSITE: Integrated Shared Knowledge: From Geo-Paleontological Heritage to Present Territorial Challenges, funded by the Italian Ministry of University and Research. The project involves two teams of experts from different cultural backgrounds fully integrated in developing activities and pursuing objectives. The two teams consist of territorial experts and palaeontologists, who jointly implement all project activities to reach a development proposal by enhancing cultural assets connected within a territorial network. Conducted with a multidisciplinary approach, the study suggests that geo-heritage can drive sustainable territorial development by defining adequate strategies that can improve the knowledge of territorial resources and their use for sustainable tourism typologies (i.e., slow and cultural tourism). The INSITE project focuses on two pilot sites in the Campania region. The selected case studies are Pietraroja and Le Ciampate del diavolo, chosen because of their peculiarities of being both high-value paleontological resources inside an urban context. These paleontological resources are precious for revitalization if they are mainstreamed into a global design of compatible territorial development. The Fossil Park in Pietraroja “Le Cavere” is notable for the discovery of a small dinosaur fossil, *Scypionyx samniticus*, commonly called “CIRO”, found in the sediments of a tropical lagoon dating back approximately 110 million years and is renowned for its exceptional fossilization (Dal Sasso and Maganuco, 2011). The site of Ciampate del diavolo is an ichnosite that preserves evidence allowing for behavioural and structural evaluations of Middle Pleistocene hominins. The human footprints found here are likely attributable to *Homo heidelbergensis* or archaic *Homo neanderthalensis* and are among the oldest and rarest in the world (Mietto et al., 2022). Both sites rely precariously on a few enthusiasts striving to restore them for public use. In this sense, the INSITE project aims at setting adequate solutions to consider both the need to preserve and improve the fruition of these sites. On one hand, some virtual solutions are proposed, on the other hand, some collaborations among researchers and local communities are being implemented.