



COOPERATION PROJECTS ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN ITALY IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE INTERREG MED, ENI CBC MED AND INTERREG ADRION PROGRAMMES 2014-2020

EVALUATION REPORT



CREDITS

The analysis on the results of cooperation projects in the field of sustainable tourism was prepared in Italy within the framework of the national co-ordination of the Interreg MED Transnational Cooperation Programme and thanks to the contribution of the players who shared the pathway implemented:

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is not only one of the most important economic activities for Italy, in terms of wealth produced and jobs created, but also and above all a concrete field of cooperation and exchange between Institutions and public and private entities, in Europe and with the Countries of the south shore of the Mediterranean.

This can be seen in numerous projects funded in the framework of the Cooperation Programmes, with which, directly or in a transversal sense, numerous initiatives are developed to strengthen the tourism sector as a whole, affecting, for example, the quality and innovation of the services offered and the qualification of the operators' skills, in order to adapt them to the new needs of demand and the new ways of using the territories and the cultural and environmental heritage.

In addition to this, the pandemic, after an initial phase in which it was necessary to put in place emergency measures also to support the sector, in a subsequent phase of more in-depth reflection on the effects produced, has markedly shifted the focus towards the need to make tourism too increasingly sustainable from an economic, environmental and social point of view, also to strengthen it against external factors that make it particularly vulnerable. Hence the need, on the one hand, to identify specific strategies, at national or supranational level, to enable tourism to enhance and make the most of its potential, and on the other hand, to provide every useful tool, in each Country, to make these strategies feasible and the objectives outlined in them concretely achievable. A virtuous example of this is the **Transition Pathways for Tourism**, a new strategy resulting from the collaboration between the European Commission and stakeholders in the tourism ecosystem with which it intends to encourage a transition towards more eco-sustainable, digital and resilient systems by 2030.

This Report, which aims to contribute to ongoing initiatives and reflections, is the result of an analysis and evaluation of the results achieved, at national level, by projects on sustainable tourism and funded in the framework of the 2014-2020 **Interreg MED**, **ENI CBC MED** and **Interreg ADRION** Programmes.

This activity was promoted by **ART-ER/Emilia-Romagna Region**, in its capacity as National Contact Point of the **MED Programme**, with the contribution of the **National Contact Points** of the **ENI CBC MED** and **ADRION Programmes**, the **Apulia Region** and the **Marche Region**, and involved a total of 26 projects, which involved 60 Italian partners and mobilised resources, for the Italian territories and partners involved, amounting to over 16 million euro. During specific interviews carried out with the partners themselves, all the aspects that most characterised the projects and their implications at territorial level were examined in depth.

What emerges is undoubtedly a complex picture, made up of different players involved in the entire supply chain and of multiple specificities linked to each territory, in which, however, the still partially unexpressed potential of tourism is evident, as well as the ever-increasing need to invest in tools, methods and skills to trigger virtuous and lasting development paths, functional to the digital, green and socio-cultural transition processes.

In this sense, the results achieved by the projects analysed make it possible to identify the themes and trajectories on which it is desirable to concentrate interventions and investments, also within the framework of the current resources available for the 2021-2027 period and not only with the Cooperation Programmes. In particular, the points that have been most focused on are:

- the need for innovation in tourism products, which will also have to take into account an internal and proximity dimension as well as a different demand for the use of territories;
- the need to undertake specific training and skills qualification courses for operators in the field, in order to be better able to respond to new demand requirements and to offer increasingly competitive tourism products;
- the need to create collaborative networks between all players in the supply chain, also to create the best conditions for attracting investment in all the territories by generating new supply;
- the need for ever greater involvement of local communities not only to offer new ways of welcoming tourists but to strengthen the sense of belonging to territories and awareness of the sector's development potential.





ABSTRACT (ITALIAN VERSION)


Il turismo non è soltanto una delle attività economiche maggiormente rilevanti per il nostro Paese, in termini di ricchezza prodotta e posti di lavoro creati, ma anche e soprattutto un concreto ambito di collaborazione, confronto e scambio tra soggetti, Istituzioni ed enti pubblici e privati, in Europa e con i Paesi della Sponda Sud del Mediterraneo.

Questo è riscontrabile in numerosi progetti finanziati nell'ambito dei Programmi di Cooperazione, con i quali, direttamente o in una accezione trasversale, si sviluppano numerose iniziative per rafforzare complessivamente il settore turistico, incidendo ad esempio sulla qualità ed innovazione dei servizi offerti e sulla qualificazione delle competenze degli operatori, per adattarle alle nuove esigenze della domanda e alle nuove modalità di fruizione dei territori e del patrimonio culturale e ambientale.

A ciò si aggiunge che la recente esperienza della pandemia, dopo una prima fase in cui è stato necessario porre in essere misure di urgenza anche per sostenere il settore, in una successiva fase di riflessione più approfondita circa gli effetti prodotti, ha spostato marcatamente l'attenzione verso la necessità di rendere anche il turismo sempre più sostenibile da un punto di vista economico, ambientale e sociale, anche per rafforzarlo nei confronti di fattori esterni che lo rendono particolarmente vulnerabile. Di qui, la necessità da un lato di individuare specifiche strategie, a livello nazionale o sovranazionale, per consentire al turismo di potenziare e valorizzare le proprie potenzialità, e dall'altro di fornire ogni strumento possibile, a livello di ciascun Paese, per rendere attuabili tali strategie e concretamente realizzabili gli obiettivi in esse delineati. Ne è un virtuoso esempio, il Transition Pathways for Tourism, una nuova strategia frutto della collaborazione tra Commissione Europea e stakeholders dell'ecosistema turistico con cui si intende incentivare una transizione verso sistemi più ecosostenibili, digitali e resilienti, entro il 2030.

Il presente Rapporto, che intende contribuire alle iniziative e riflessioni in atto, è frutto di un percorso di analisi e valutazione dei risultati raggiunti, a livello nazionale, dai progetti incentrati sul turismo sostenibile e finanziati nell'ambito della programmazione 2014-2020 dai Programmi Interreg MED, ENI CBC MED e Interreg ADRION.





L'attività è stata promossa da ART-ER/Regione Emilia-Romagna, in qualità di National Contact Point del Programma MED, con il contributo dei Punti di Contatto Nazionale dei Programmi ENI CBC MED e ADRION, Regione Puglia e Regione Marche, ed ha riguardato complessivamente 26 progetti, che hanno coinvolto 60 partner italiani e mobilitato risorse, per i soli territori e partner italiani coinvolti, per oltre 16 milioni di euro. Nel corso di specifiche interviste realizzate con i medesimi partner, sono stati approfonditi tutti gli aspetti che maggiormente hanno caratterizzato i progetti e le loro implicazioni a livello territoriale.

Ne emerge un quadro sicuramente complesso, fatto di differenti attori coinvolti in tutta la filiera e di molteplici specificità legate ai singoli territori, in cui sono evidenti però le potenzialità ancora parzialmente inespresse del turismo, ma anche la sempre crescente necessità di investire in strumenti, metodi e competenze per innescare percorsi di sviluppo virtuosi e duraturi, funzionali ai processi di transizione digitale, verde e socio-culturale. In questo senso, i risultati raggiunti dai progetti analizzati consentono di individuare le tematiche e le traiettorie su cui è auspicabile concentrare interventi ed investimenti anche nel quadro delle attuali risorse disponibili per il periodo 2021-2027 e non soltanto con i Programmi di Cooperazione.

In particolare, i punti maggiormente attenzionati sono:

- la necessità di innovazione dei prodotti turistici, che dovranno tenere conto anche di una dimensione interna e di prossimità oltre che di una differente domanda di fruizione dei territori;
- la necessità di intraprendere specifici percorsi di formazione e qualificazione delle competenze degli operatori di settore, per essere meglio rispondenti a nuove esigenze della domanda e poter offrire prodotti turistici sempre più competitivi;
- la necessità di creare reti di collaborazione tra tutti i soggetti della filiera, anche per creare le migliori condizioni per attrarre investimenti nei vari territori generando nuova offerta;
- la necessità di un sempre maggiore coinvolgimento delle comunità locali non soltanto per offrire nuove modalità di accoglienza ai turisti ma per rafforzare il senso di appartenenza ai territori e la consapevolezza circa le potenzialità di sviluppo del settore.



FOREWORD

In the framework of the 2014-2020 European Territorial Cooperation Programmes, projects focusing on sustainable tourism have played and continue to play a particularly important role in terms of numbers, activities implemented and partnership participation.



Most of these projects, especially those that involve or are led by Italian institutions and organisations, are united by the shared consideration that fostering policies and initiatives for the development of tourism, declined according to sustainable approaches and methods, can contribute to the promotion, enhancement, protection and safeguarde of socio-cultural and environmental resources at a territorial and local level. Moreover, the promoted projects can potentially allow to relaunch a specific territory and its community by focusing on its peculiarities in order to open up new future prospects of inclusive and sustainable development.

The identification and analysis of the results of projects on sustainable tourism thus makes it possible:

- to have concrete information of the territorial context from the point of view of the tourism sector, identifying the main tangible and intangible assets to be valorised, the existing relations between the players in the sector, the strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities and risks, analysing the evolutions and trends of recent years;
- to define local development strategies by improving skills and knowledge to define possible action, starting from knowledge of the territory;
- to raise awareness among citizens, tourists and players active in the tourism sector on the relevance of sustainable tourism in terms of promoting and enhancing the (tangible and intangible) environmental, cultural, historical and landscape heritage, and on the opportunity that the promotion of sustainable tourism can represent for all territories and local communities;
- to have concrete information on potential cross-border or transnational collaborations for monitoring sustainable tourism, mapping local/regional tourism policies, promotion and enhancement of cultural and environmental heritage, both tangible and intangible.

This Report describes the results achieved, at national level, achieved by the cooperation projects focused on sustainable tourism, funded in the 2014-2020 **Interreg MED, ENI CBC MED and Interreg ADRION Programmes**. It is therefore a path, promoted by **ART-ER**, in its capacity as **National Contact Point** of the **MED Programme**, shared and implemented with the NCPs of the **ENI CBC MED - Apulia Region** - and **Interreg ADRION - Marche Region Programmes**, which have operated within the framework of the "**Governance Complementary Operational Programme of the national programmes of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective 2014-2020**" - PAC CTE".

For the reasons that will be better explained in this Report, the main objective of the activity carried out is to allow the main information that has emerged to be put to good use and to share, at the national level, the implementation methods and approaches adopted. The aim is thus to promote mutual knowledge among players and experiences and thus the building of networks, also in order to maximise and capitalise on the results achieved, strengthening and better orienting the 2021-2027 programming period. Last but not least, the elements that have emerged can also provide useful indications to the political decision-making level which, especially in recent years, due to the crisis caused by the pandemic, as we shall see, has been faced with the need to significantly review the methods and approach to tourism policies. Secondly, it is propose to project these reflections into a broader context, which sees the emergence of closer and more systematic collaborations between Countries, through a strengthened cooperation mechanism between an initial core of Programmes. This, in coherence with the shared guidelines, between the European Commission and Member States, related to the improvement of complementarities and synergies between Interreg Programmes in the Mediterranean, also leveraging on the greater flexibility offered by the 2021-2027 cohesion regulatory framework.

As a first concrete result in this direction, Italy and France, starting with the **EURO MED, Italy-France Maritime and NEXT MED Programmes**, have shared a pilot multi-programme coordination mechanism, identifying sustainable tourism as a qualifying and unifying theme for the exchange of experiences and projects developed and for the experimentation of joint initiatives. The decision to focus on tourism is undoubtedly strategic and far-sighted, since, as we shall see, following the pandemic crisis and in consideration of the negative effects that have been recorded in this sphere, especially in the Mediterranean, it is increasingly clear that there is a need to identify approaches and initiatives that strengthen tourism and enhance its potential for sustainable social and economic growth and in line with the objectives of green and digital transition towards which the main national and international initiatives are converging.

In particular, the elements that emerged from the analysis could contribute to the above-mentioned initiative:

- to identify the best and most innovative solutions to strengthen the tourism sector and the operators involved, through the transfer and reuse of the most qualified results achieved;
- to improve the communication of results also to activate capitalisation processes;
- to have at their disposal useful information to trigger a virtuous process of dialogue and exchange with the political decision-making level and other planning areas in order to optimise the use of available resources.

To complete the context information referred to in the analysis, the initiatives promoted within the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Intermediterranean Commission of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (IMC-CRPM) should be noted.

In particular, the UfM, in coordination with the IMC-CPMR, following a discussion within a small group of experts representing public institutions, organisations and qualified and relevant project partners, promoted the preparation of a Handbook for the revitalisation of the sector following the pandemic¹. Furthermore, the IMC-CPMR, since 2015 and within the framework of the Working Group on Economic and Social Cohesion, has been developing actions and projects focused on sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean, including a Policy Agenda on sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean regions².

In this regard, a dedicated Sustainable Tourism Task Force is operational, dedicated to defining the framework, policy initiatives and projects on sustainable tourism.

Intercepting and strengthening Italian participation, at national and regional level, in these realities active in the Mediterranean would, on the one hand, allow our territories to extend their network of institutional and non-institutional relations, also in view of their participation in increasingly numerous and qualified cooperation projects, and on the other hand, it would allow the considerations made in this Report to find a concrete field of application and experimentation at programme and project level.

The virtuous circuit that could be triggered is that of an increasingly active involvement and a more marked awareness of supranational public institutions, which can usefully direct the adoption of measures and the launch of shared paths for the structural relaunch of tourism. First and foremost, the European Commission, which, starting with the adoption of the *Green deal* and the promotion of initiatives within the framework of the *Recovery and Resilience facility*, is showing an unprecedented ability to react immediately and identify effective responses to the current challenges. Particularly relevant in this regard is the document "*Transition Pathway for Tourism*"³, the result of a co-creation process, which proposes measures and identifies outcomes needed to accelerate green and digital transitions and improve the resilience of the tourism ecosystem. These orientations are further reinforced by the so-called *European Agenda for Tourism 2030*, adopted by the European Council on 1st December 2022, in which it emphasises the need to protect the tourism sector and, at the same time, to develop a forward-looking vision to take advantage of the willingness of many Europeans to change their travel and tourism habits to become more sustainable and responsible.

The proposed approach and the themes identified in these documents, as described below, were taken as the main reference for identifying the analysis criteria used.

For a better rendering of the contents, this Report is divided into three parts:

- in the first part, par. 1 and 2, the main national and international context information with respect to the tourism sector are reported, useful to identify the most relevant and topical themes, as well as an illustration of the ways in which the three Programmes have declined the theme of sustainable tourism from a project perspective;
- in the second part, par. 3 and 4, the methodology used for project selection and evaluation is described, with a clear explanation of the criteria and indicators used;
- in the third and last part, par. 5 and 6, the results of the analysis activity are reported with some final considerations, which it is proposed to return and share also in contexts of public debate and exchange with the cooperation Programmes and projects.

Finally, detailed fact sheets are attached for each of the selected projects, with the information collected for the evaluation of the territorial results achieved.

1-The English version of the Manual is available at the following link:
https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/PRESENTAZIONE_low.pdf

2-The Document can be found at the following link:
<https://cpmr-intermed.org/download/promoting-sustainable-tourism-in-the-mediterranean-regions/?wpdmdl=7144&ind=1530538108502>

3-The Document can be found at the following link:
<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/404a8144-8892-11ec-8c40-01aa75ed71a1>





1. GENERAL OVERVIEW



The most acute period of the pandemic and the necessary measures adopted by the national governments to slow down its spread have had negative effects at both an economic and social level, increasing inequalities and generating greater poverty and discrimination throughout the world, and especially in the Mediterranean region.

Added to this are the serious repercussions recorded in the historically most vulnerable economic and productive sectors, among which tourism certainly stands out.

According to the 2021 edition of the Union for the Mediterranean's report *Towards a Sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean region*⁴, tourism is the Mediterranean's primary economic sector, accounting for 30% of global tourism flows thanks to the presence of the world's leading tourist destinations.

Against these significant strengths, as mentioned above, tourism, as an economic and productive activity, is characterised by as many weaknesses that denote its extreme vulnerability and thus its subjection to different factors such as climate change (e.g. coastal erosion) and global shocks (financial crises, pandemics, etc.) that require structural changes towards more ecologically sustainable and socially resilient models, including through the use of new technologies.

The initial responses given by most national governments in support of tourism were certainly significant, albeit dictated by the extreme urgency of the moment. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) briefing note "*Tourism and COVID-19, How are countries supporting tourism recovery?*"⁵, governments have responded quickly and decisively and the level of coverage of measures has increased over time.

According to the UNWTO report, most Countries have adopted economic stimulus packages (fiscal and monetary measures) and employment support measures with the aim of providing tax relief and financial support to SMEs and the self-employed and promoting job recovery and employment security. As the situation evolved and recognising the need to implement specific measures for tourism, Countries began to implement targeted measures, particularly where the sector plays a significant role in the national economy, contributing not only to GDP but also to the creation of millions of jobs. It also emerged, as in every crisis, that governance is crucial, and in some countries public-private partnership models were strengthened and the role of committees and task forces enhanced with the participation of stakeholders at different levels of public administration and the private sector.

In addition to these measures, an increasing number of Countries have identified proposals to revive tourism, in particular security protocols and the promotion of so-called internal and proximity tourism. These measures, however, by their very nature, cannot be the appropriate means by which to provide the tourism sector with the necessary tools to structurally protect itself from crisis situations.

4-The English version of the report is available at the following link:
<https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/21.7.19-2021UfM.studydefEN-web.pdf>

5-The English version of the report is available at the following link: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284421893>

In light of this, and in view of the need to identify elements to support medium- and long-term national policies, international organisations and institutions have conducted studies and analyses to address the socio-economic recovery of the sector by identifying the issues in which to invest the most.

As an example, it was noted that in order to successfully relaunch the tourism economy and get businesses back on their feet, more needs to be done in a coordinated manner, as tourism services are highly interdependent. The travel and tourism industry, together with governments, should continue to strengthen coordination mechanisms to support businesses, especially smaller ones, and workers. Particular attention should be paid to the most sensitive/vulnerable destinations in the recovery phase. Looking ahead, the measures implemented today will shape the tourism of tomorrow. Indeed, it is useful to consider the long-term implications of the crisis, staying abreast of sustainable digital developments, supporting the low-carbon transition and promoting the structural transformation needed to build a stronger, sustainable and resilient tourism economy⁶. And, still on the subject of the development and strengthening of the entrepreneurial environment linked, directly or indirectly, to the tourism sector, it will be increasingly important to focus on environmental, social and governance sustainability issues, to trigger a real paradigm shift, which in fact calls on all companies to define clear strategies for transition to more sustainable business models, with a long-term view. This approach is also fully consistent with the indicators identified to measure the progressive achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals⁷. In particular, related to tourism, the UNWTO is the custodian of two SDG indicators, namely indicator 8.9.1: Direct Gross Domestic Product of Tourism and indicator 12.b.1: Implementation of standardised accounting tools to monitor the economic and environmental aspects of tourism sustainability. Strengthening the monitoring and collection of information in these areas, also in support of the implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy, is the key to achieving the objectives described above and enabling the implementation of all measures to strengthen and revitalise the tourism sector.

Particularly with regard to the second indicator, there are several contributions that we will see from Interreg projects.

So far, the datum that certainly emerges and is universally recognised is that the collapse in tourist flows caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is offering the possibility of rethinking tourism by supporting a more responsible and sustainable offer, capable of decongesting cities or territories already affected by mass tourism, in order to direct it towards less frequented destinations. In fact, tourism has proved to be one of the most strategic economic sectors, especially for those lesser-known destinations that can thus benefit from positive economic effects on the entire territorial system.

As emphasised in the report "*Making Tourism More Sustainable - A Guide for Policy Makers*"⁸, by UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme, and UNWTO, local Institutions have a central role in the development of sustainable tourism, not only for the planning itself but especially in involving the main stakeholders, such as citizens, civil society and the private sector, in an informed and participatory way.

Implementing new sustainable tourism offers is an ongoing process that requires constant monitoring of impacts, capable of introducing necessary preventive and/or corrective measures.

6-Of particular interest in this respect is the OECD report 'Rebuilding tourism for the future: COVID-19 policy responses and recovery', available at the following link: https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=137_137392-gsvit75vnh&title=Rebuilding-tourism-for-the-future-COVID-19-policy-response-and-recovery&_ga=2.143958517.1988424164.1627317836-1866749793.162672595

7-The indicators have been defined by the IAEG-SDGs (Inter Agency Expert Group on SDGs) created by the United Nations Statistical Commission and implemented by Italy within the ISTAT SDGs system and with the Equitable and Sustainable Well-Being (BES) indicators updated and commented on each year in the ISTAT BES Report.

8-The Report can be downloaded at the following link: <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/8741>

And it is also important, when dealing with the issue of data and monitoring, to focus on the quality of these data and thus on the identification of the most effective indicators. In this sense, the analysis activity has repeatedly referred to "*The European System of Indicators for Tourism*"⁹, promoted by the European Commission to improve the sustainable management of destinations by providing stakeholders with a useful package of tools to measure and monitor sustainability management processes and to share and compare progress and results in the future.

With specific reference to Italy, where tourism represents a fundamental sector that contributes considerably to GDP and employment¹⁰, to respond to the crisis from COVID-19, the government, in an initial phase, adopted short-term measures, focused on public health issues and initiatives to mitigate the economic and social impact of the crisis on businesses and workers¹¹.

Subsequently, the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) was developed in line with the Strategic Tourism Plan, thus representing a medium- and long-term strategic reference framework, as national tourism strategies were adapted to the context created after the pandemic crisis. In this sense, a number of clear indications emerge, also taken as reference in the analysis conducted here, which concern issues such as:

- the digital transformation, to increase the competitiveness of tourism enterprises and the resilience of operators;
- the reduction of the fragmentation of the Italian tourism ecosystem, also through a greater systematisation of information and a more rational collection of data on specific indicators such as tourist flows;
- the reduction of gaps between operators in the supply chain, with a specific focus on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

In this framework, there is a clear need to invest in initiatives aimed at implementing training programmes for SMEs, to support them in the digitalisation of supply, increase competitiveness and productivity, and provide tools that address the issues of inclusion and sustainability in the provision of services, including through greater involvement of territorial stakeholders and local communities.

These aspects, which denote an innovative vision and a more participatory and inclusive approach to tourism policies, had great weight in the identification and analysis of the results achieved by the projects examined.



9-The Report can be downloaded at the following link:
https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/tourism/offer/sustainable/indicators_en

10-According to the OECD report 'OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2022', in 2019 in Italy, tourism directly accounted for 6.2% of total GVA (EUR 99.9 billion), directly employed 2.1 million people, contributing to 8.8% of total employment and involved more than 218,000 enterprises in 2019. The impacts of COVID-19 saw the direct contribution of tourism to GVA fall to 4.5% in 2020, also affecting international arrivals (down 61.0%), while domestic tourism decreased by 37.1%.

11-These include economic stimulus packages for financial liquidity, fiscal and tax relief measures for companies in the tourism industry, and income continuity for tourism workers.

Starting with the NRRP, a new season has opened, characterised on the one hand by a shared awareness of the need to adopt a different approach to the Country's development policies and on the other by an unprecedented availability of resources to launch long-term investments and implement structural reforms for the overall improvement of the social, economic and production system.

From this point of view, as we shall see later in this Report, the cooperation projects examined, in many cases had a visionary capacity that anticipated many of the issues that are on the agenda in this historical phase, emphasising the need for greater sharing of needs and solutions among all the players involved in the tourism supply chain and promoting a stronger integration between the various areas of programming and available resources.

In this regard, it is also worth highlighting the conclusion, during the second half of 2022 with the approval, in July, of the Partnership Agreement for Italy¹², of the negotiation phase of the documents related to the 2021-2027 programming of European structural and investment funds. In the following months, and up to January 2023, all the National and Regional Programmes were gradually approved, absorbing more than 75 billion euro, between European resources and national co-financing, representing the largest amount if compared to previous programming periods.

Initiatives for tourism can therefore be easily accommodated within as many as four of the five policy objectives (PO) identified. In particular:

- under OP 1 - A Smarter Europe, through strengthening the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors and the tourism sector;
- under OP 2 - A Greener Europe, by supporting the green transition in the same sectors;
- OP 4 - A more social and inclusive Europe is expected to integrate, strengthen and innovate the ordinary action of labour, education and training and social inclusion and protection policies, contributing to the enhancement of the role of culture and tourism in economic development, social inclusion and innovation;
- under PO 5 - A Europe Closer to Citizens, through thematic components within integrated territorial strategies.

Lastly, and as a complement to the numerous funding opportunities for effectively turning tourism policies around, the European Commission has published an online *Guide on EU Funds for Tourism*¹³, highlighting the funding Programmes dedicated to the tourism sector envisaged under the 2021-2027 financial framework and the Next Generation EU economic recovery financing plan¹⁴. The Guide constitutes an "orientation" tool in the panorama of "economic support" with which the Commission intends to support the transition towards a more digital, sustainable and inclusive European Union. In this phase of transition and renaissance, tourism and its sector represent strategic elements of development.

In this sense, it will be essential to promote increasingly stringent forms of integration between the various investment Programmes and the different European, national and regional programming areas, on the one hand to maximise the impact of the initiatives implemented and on the other to transfer and share the results between different entities and territories.

12-The Partnership Agreement between Italy and the European Commission for the 2021-2027 programming cycle was approved by the EC Implementing Decision on 15 July 2022, available at the following link: https://opencoesione.gov.it/media/uploads/c_2022_4787_1_it_act_part1_v3.pdf.

13-The Guide is available at the following link: https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/tourism/funding-guide_en.

14-For your information, here are the Programmes of interest to the tourism sector mentioned in the guide: Here are the main Programmes: Creative Europe (cultural and creative arts sectors); Digital Europe (innovation and digital transformation); Erasmus+ (academic and vocational training); European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (connectivity, physical and technological infrastructure and services in rural areas); European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (protection of aquatic biodiversity, low-impact fishing and aquaculture); Horizon Europe (research and innovation); LIFE (circular economy with a low environmental impact); European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Support (funding Programmes, of which three in the tourism sector).

In this sense, it will be essential to promote increasingly stringent forms of integration between the various investment Programmes and the different European, national and regional programming areas, on the one hand to maximise the impact of the initiatives implemented and on the other to transfer and share the results between different entities and territories. It will be important, in order to develop this aspect and make it functional to the best implementation of the Programmes, to promote and stimulate in all Countries, through a stimulating action that can be carried out by the Programmes themselves, a reflection on how to start mainstreaming actions able to favour the adoption of outputs/results in policies.

By way of example, mention may be made of the Focus Groups on mainstreaming carried out within the framework of the Italian coordination of the MED Programme, a trace of whose work was included in the Report "*Outcomes of the territorial focus groups on ETC mainstreaming, developed within the framework of the Italian National Coordination of the MED Programme*"¹⁵, of September 2020 and which will be referred to later in this work.

These considerations and the cited references have led to a better focus of the analysis carried out, with which we wanted to emphasise certain aspects that emerge in the selected projects, such as:

- the importance of incorporating a relevant local dimension in the context of the tourism sector, adopting a territorial approach that aims to enhance not only coastal and maritime tourism but also inland areas;
- commitment to building a more resilient and inclusive tourism, with a renewed focus on sustainability;
- the need to focus on the skills of the sector's operators and the private business world;
- the importance of the use of new technologies, in particular digital technologies, capable of relaunching the sector according to the logic of economy and performance;
- the need to raise awareness among policy makers, but also local communities, on the transition to sustainable tourism, including through the implementation of innovative policies and strategies;
- the importance/utility of a trans-local/trans-national dimension.

Moreover, to trigger virtuous processes and dynamics in the territories, sustainable and innovative tourism should take into account certain aspects such as:

- new forms of tourism, aimed not only at international visitors, but also and above all at local visitors and operators, so as to make the sector as a whole more resilient; indeed, domestic tourism is providing a much-needed boost to help sustain many tourist destinations and businesses and will continue to be a key driver of recovery in the short to medium term;
- integration and synergies with other related sectors (e.g. agriculture, fishing, catering, transport, energy efficiency infrastructures, the whole sector of culture and entertainment, Made in Italy productions, etc.) to maximise the local added value of tourism (e.g. fishing tourism, ecotourism, support for intangible cultural heritage in the broadest sense from literary to musical itineraries, from artistic-craft productions to Made in Italy brands, etc.);
- Since climate change impacts are expected to be severe for coastal communities, sustainable tourism business models and practices need to adapt to the increased challenges they will face (e.g. involving more resilient infrastructure, services/products offered, skills and capacities, etc.);
- digitisation aspects should be adequately taken into account.

¹⁵The activities conducted and their outcomes can be found at the following link: <https://www.art-er.it/2019/11/la-cooperazione-territoriale-europea-come-motore-delle-politiche-di-sviluppo-locale-lesperienza-del-punto-di-contatto-nazionale-med/>



In this sense, some of the most recent international, national and European key references and policy documents that can be usefully considered are:

- the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, with specific reference to those closely related to sustainable tourism¹⁶;
- the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a new approach to a sustainable blue economy in the EU - Transforming the EU blue economy for a sustainable future, 17 May 2021¹⁷;
- the European Green Deal¹⁸;
- the National Sustainable Development Strategy, the implementation of which is coordinated and monitored in Italy by the Ministry for the Environment and Energy Security¹⁹.

16-The Sustainable Development Goals and their implementation status can be found at: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

17-<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0240&from=EN>

18-Information and initiatives promoted within the framework of the European Green Deal can be found at https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_it

19-<https://www.mase.gov.it/pagina/strategia-nazionale-lo-sviluppo-sostenibile>



2. FOCUS ON PROGRAMMES

2.1 THE MED PROGRAMME



In the 2014-2020 Interreg MED Programme, tourism plays a central role in the themes addressed by the projects, affecting all the main pillars of its architecture.

In particular, also in support of the capitalisation processes, the Programme promoted the launch of thematic communities (one for each Programme objective) led by the so-called horizontal projects and the governance platform funded under Axis 4.

The main purpose of the horizontal projects is to promote the communication and capitalisation actions of the modular projects within a common framework in order to better highlight the interests of the Programme and the transnational projects themselves. These projects provided the framework for developing synergies, producing syntheses and qualitative analyses, and coordinating and managing the communication of a group of projects. Particularly interesting, also for the purposes of this Report, is of course the Horizontal Project on Sustainable Tourism²⁰ which, among the various activities carried out, prepared a catalogue illustrating some good project practices on sustainable tourism²¹, as a tool to support the transition processes towards sustainable development in the Mediterranean region, supporting the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the region and encouraging sustainable development in marine and coastal areas.

The main objective of the catalogue is to present examples and good practices of the Sustainable Tourism Community that have been successfully incorporated into policies (at local, regional or national level) in the Mediterranean with concrete results.

In particular, the implementation of the two phases of the horizontal project on tourism allowed the identification of themes particularly relevant for the possible reuse of the results achieved, with reference to:

- monitoring systems for more sustainable tourism;
- methods for reducing the impacts of tourism on the environment, cultural heritage and society;
- promotion mechanisms for responsible growth;
- governance models to reduce the complexity of the tourism sector.

20-<https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/>

21-The English version of the catalogue can be found at the following link:
<https://planbleu.org/en/publications/catalogue-of-best-practices-on-sustainable-tourism-in-the-mediterranean/>

In terms of governance, within Axis 4 of the MED Programme, the PANORAMED project represents a process, shared between the national and regional institutional levels of the participating Countries, aimed at:

- improving the institutional capacity of public authorities to ensure maximum impact of MED project results;
- strengthening the impact of MED project results through efficient implementation of EU/national public funds and mainstreaming actions;
- strengthening the institutional capacity of public authorities in policy-making and strategic planning;
- contributing to the coordination of synergies and dynamics between initiatives and strategies in the Mediterranean;
- contributing to the improvement of cooperation with the southern shore of the Mediterranean.

From a project point of view, one of the main achievements of PANORAMED is the promotion of strategic projects that can be seen as 'multi-level', implemented by partners capable of influencing and better defining policies. The actions implemented converge towards a common territorial development objective and are a showcase of good examples of regional cooperation.

On this basis, the strategic projects followed an integrated, inclusive and participative approach. This means that the projects have facilitated the initiation and strengthening of a broader process potentially involving all the territories of the 12 Mediterranean countries participating in PANORAMED, involving all the regional and local institutions concerned, as well as local communities and civil society.

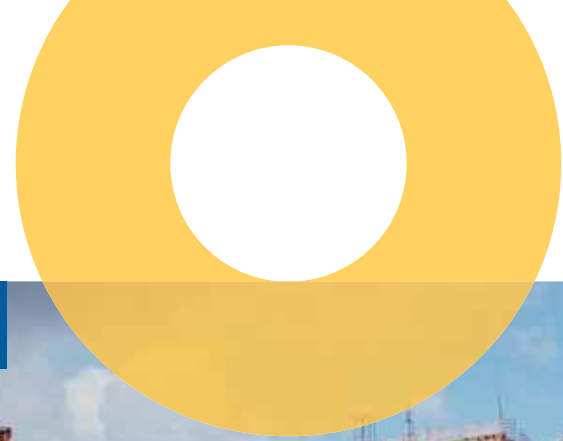
Among the strategic projects that have been financed and implemented, particularly relevant for the purposes of the analysis conducted is the BEST MED project²² which has identified as its main objective, the development of cooperation in the Mediterranean to encourage the deseasonalisation of tourist flows and improve the participation of local communities in tourism development processes. Within this project, a relevant result, also for the purposes of this Report, is the "Granada Charter"²³, which contains policy recommendations for strengthening governance to promote sustainable and resilient tourism throughout the Mediterranean.



22-<https://best-med.interreg-med.eu/>

23-The Document can be found at the following link:

https://best-med.interreg-med.eu/what-we-achieve/deliverables-database/detail/?tx_elibrary_pi1%5Blivrable%5D=16073&tx_elibrary_pi1%5Baction%5D=show&tx_elibrary_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=Frontend%5CLivrable&cHash=7668fd860997babcf7d9e30a3406796



2.2 THE ENI CBC MED PROGRAMME



The ENI CBC MEDITERRANEAN Programme is part of the European Union's broader Neighbourhood Policy 2014-2020, involving as many as 14 Countries between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, for a total of 112 eligible territories.

The strategy of the ENI CBC MED Programme, in addition to addressing common environmental challenges, has promoted the sustainable and equitable economic and social development of the Mediterranean Partner Countries involved, enhancing the identity of the territories, fostering cross-border integration and, consequently, promoting the security of the European Union's external borders.

The Programme financed a total of 80 project initiatives (41 standard projects, 23 strategic projects and 16 capitalisation projects) within the framework of 4 Thematic Objectives and 11 Intervention Priorities. Of these projects, as many as 73 saw the participation of at least one Italian partner, testifying to the national interest in the Mediterranean area and, above all, to the capacity of Italian beneficiaries to apply for and manage project initiatives in a cooperation area that is very broad and complex from a social, economic, and political point of view.

The theme of sustainable tourism is part of the broader Thematic Objective A.1 'Business and SMEs development', specifically in the A.1.3 'Encourage sustainable tourism initiatives and actions aimed at diversifying into new segments and niches'.

Other project initiatives were also able to enhance sustainable tourism, although this was not the 'core theme' of the project.

Among the challenges of Mediterranean tourism and following the detailed territorial analysis carried out at the start of programming, the Programme aimed to address the following challenges for the 2014-2020 period:

- the general decline in the international tourist market's interest in the Mediterranean area (also due to a certain political instability experienced in the past years by several Countries on the southern shore and the risk of terrorism);
- the need to diversify the sector into niches and segments, to relaunch the Mediterranean area beyond the traditional seasonality of its tourism products.

Under this priority, therefore, ecotourism and sustainable tourism have been promoters of local development, created jobs and contributed to poverty reduction in the areas involved, enhancing the strengths of the Mediterranean Countries (e.g. agri-food and gastronomy, environment and landscape, cultural activities and heritage) and developing new tourism products such as adventure tourism, sports and wellness tourism, slow, rural, cultural tourism, etc.

The funded tourism projects involved national, regional and local institutions, small and medium-sized enterprises, international tour operators, management bodies of protected areas, together with other relevant public and private stakeholders. The final beneficiaries of the projects were local communities, involved in the co-design of new tourism products.

People to people cooperation, in particular, was considered a strategic modality to achieve the Programme's objectives. As a transversal priority of each action, on the other hand, the Programme considered Institutional capacity building as the key to strengthening institutional capacities, especially of the Mediterranean Partner Countries.

The ENI CBC MED Programme has also activated the project clustering modality, activating thematic and horizontal clusters, since the operational start of the projects. Clustering has proved to be a successful mode of cross fertilisation and sharing of activities, models and relevant players. Clustering has also been the basis for capitalisation activities, instrumental in developing 'aggregated' responses to the dedicated call.

In relation to the Sustainable Tourism priority, several meetings were held, online and in-presence when possible, in which projects shared reflections and content related to, for example, the impacts of the COVID19 pandemic on Mediterranean tourism, good communication and awareness-raising practices of local communities and stakeholders, tools developed and good practices implemented, the impact of sub-grants on local communities, and the sustainability and capitalisation of project actions.

The results of the clustering activity also enabled the complementary intervention of several projects in the same geographical area and on the same sites of tourism importance, enhancing the impact of the Programme strategy.





2.3 THE ADRION PROGRAMME



Ph. provided by QNEST project

The Interreg ADRION Programme, in the framework of the 2014-2020 programming period, has invested resources to foster the transfer and reuse of project results through the creation of thematic networks to enable the exchange of practices and the creation of synergies between projects dealing with complementary topics. These networks called "*ADRION Thematic Clusters*" are related to the key strategic sectors for the development and growth of the Adriatic-Ionian region, through the EUSAIR Macroregional Strategy and following the objectives of the new EU Cohesion Policy.

In particular, the Thematic Clusters of ADRION aim to:

- support the creation of added value for projects and the Programme by increasing synergies between projects;
- contribute to the development of thematic analysis and the identification of new areas/areas of intervention to be funded for 2021-2027;
- help to increase the promotion of projects in a more strategic way: ensure the dissemination and transferability of project results both beyond the partnership and after the end of the Programme.

In relation to the topic of sustainable tourism, particularly relevant was the activity of the Cluster specifically focused on tourism, which addressed topics such as sustainable water management in coastal areas, common branding, revitalisation of non-tourist areas of lesser importance and promotion of local agri-food sectors, digitisation of cultural heritage, and innovative approaches to tourism management²⁴.

24-<https://www.adrioninterreg.eu/index.php/2020/03/04/adrion-thematic-cluster-towards-sustainability-in-cultural-and-natural-tourism-destinations/>

In 2021, a policy paper *Sustainable development of the tourism sector in the ADRION macro region. A strategic proposal for the programming period 2021-2027*²⁵ was prepared. This paper is the result of the collaboration of 77 partners from 8 ADRION projects, who identified the common challenges that threaten the sustainability of the tourism sector in the ADRION macro region, providing a proposal of evidence-based policy responses, new methodological approaches and innovative cooperation schemes and models, and formulating specific recommendations to strengthen sustainable tourism, focusing on the topics below:

- Digitisation,
- Skills development,
- Entrepreneurship and innovation,
- Diversification and customisation,
- Health and safety,
- Sustainable mobility,
- Protection and conservation of natural and cultural resources,
- Accessible and inclusive tourism.



Ph. Matera provided by APT Basilicata - THEMATIC project



3. METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS USED FOR THE PROJECT SELECTION PHASE

The methodology prepared as a basis for the activity carried out provides criteria and tools to identify, analyse and evaluate the projects with Italian participation focused on the theme of sustainable tourism among those funded as a result of the calls launched by the MED, ENI CBC MED and ADRION Programmes in the 2014-2020 programming period.

The results of this analysis will be able to provide tools at local level to structure planning on the basis of which new projects related to the promotion and development of tourism initiatives can be activated.



The methodology includes:

- the identification of criteria for the selection of projects and the subsequent selection of the analysis sample;
- desk analysis of key information from Programme databases, project websites (where available), application forms and progress reports;
- the identification of a set of criteria for project evaluation;
- in-depth studies through targeted interviews with the Italian partners of the identified projects;
- the systematisation of collected data and information;
- the evaluation of the knowledge gathered and the identification of good practices.

Based on the above-mentioned indications, as well as on the main national and Programme documents on capitalisation issues and following the discussions that took place, the criteria for project selection used to identify the sample of projects on which the analysis focused are given below.

1. Project status of implementation

In order to have all the necessary information, in terms of outputs and deliverables, to analyse the results achieved by the projects, priority was given to projects that were either closed or in an advanced state of implementation of activities, with specific reference to core activities;

2. Flagship project

In accordance with the National Capitalisation Plan prepared by the Agency for Territorial Cohesion²⁶ and the reconnaissance carried out at national level, priority was given to projects identified as flagship²⁷;

3. Geographical location of the partner

In order to best represent the entire country, projects with partners located in different regions of the country were selected;

4. Level of cooperation

In order to meet the representativeness of different interests within the project, priority was given to projects with a significant presence of partners at national level (multiple partnerships at national level);

5. Thematic representativeness

The survey sample was constructed in an attempt to include all the specific thematic areas covered by the projects (ecotourism, cruise tourism, rural tourism, hiking, etc.).

As to the above-mentioned criteria, below is the matrix used to collect the information concerning the projects of each of the three Programmes, with an indication of the projects selected.

In this regard, it is specified that, in order to make the analysis more effective and the interview phase more punctual, a threshold of a maximum of 10 projects was initially identified for each Programme.

Finally, taking into account the specificities and the processes necessary for the full implementation, for the ENI CBC MED Programme, without prejudice to the valorisation of the criteria, as reported in the table, all the projects concerning sustainable tourism were selected, as they were in any case, at a numerical level, within the average of those considered for the other Programmes:

26-Information and activities related to the capitalisation activities of the Agency for Territorial Cohesion can be found at <https://www.agenziacoessione.gov.it/lacoessione/le-politiche-di-coessione-in-italia-2014-2020/la-cooperazione-territoriale-europea/la-capitalizzazione/>

27-The Agency for Territorial Cohesion defines 'flagship' projects as those ETC projects - or groups of projects (clusters) focusing on the same theme - that have produced real, measurable and lasting changes in the territories involved. The objective of the model for collecting these projects is to highlight the best results emerging in the 2014-2020 programming cycle on the basis of two criteria: relevance and sustainability. In fact, the in-depth analysis of the projects has focused on the results actually achieved, tangible and documentable with specific reference to the solution of a problem and the real improvement of the initial situation, with particular attention to the needs expressed by the beneficiaries in the territories in which the project was developed.

INTERREG MED PROGRAMME - PROJECT SELECTION

Criteria	Values	ALTER ECO	BLUEMED Plus	COASTING	CONSUMELESS	DESTIMED Plus	INCIRCLE	INHERIT	MITOMED Plus	TOURISMED
Criterion 1 - Project status	completed / almost completed / ongoing	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
Criterion 2 - Most performing Projects	YES/NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Criterion 3 - Geographical location of the partners	Regional territory(s) involved	Liguria, Sicilia, Veneto	Calabria, Lazio	Lazio, Sicilia	Lombardia, Sicilia	Lazio, Sardegna	Toscana, Friuli Venezia Giulia	Emilia Romagna, Puglia	Toscana	Lazio, Sicilia
Criterion 4 - level of cooperation	Number of Italian partners	3	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	4
Criterion 5 - Thematic Representativeness	Topic	Promoting Mediterranean Identity	Underwater heritage	Multi-level governance	Reducing environmental impact	Ecotourism	Circular economy	Protection and enhancement of the natural heritage	Governance of protected areas	Fishing tourism

ENI CBC MED PROGRAMME - PROJECT SELECTION

Criteria	Values	COEVOLVE4BG	COMMON	CROSSDEV	IHERITAGE	MED GAIMS	MEDPEARLS	MEDARTSAL	MEDUSA
Criterion 1 - Project status	completed / almost completed / ongoing	Almost completed	Almost completed	Almost completed	Almost completed	Almost completed	Almost completed	Completed	Almost completed
Criterion 2 - Most performing Projects	YES/NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Criterion 3 - Geographical location of the partners	Regional territory(s) involved	1	3	3	1	1	1	2	1
Criterion 4 - level of cooperation	Number of Italian partners	1	3	3	3	1	1	2	1
Criterion 5 - Thematic Representativeness	Topic	Blue growth	Marine litter	Cultural routes	Digitalisation	ITC	Slow tourism	Economic development	Adventure Tourism

ADRION PROGRAMME - PROJECT SELECTION

Criteria	Values	ADRIATICAVES	ADRIATICAVES Plus	APPRODI	APPRODI Plus	QNEST	QNEST Plus	WONDER	INNOXENIA	EMOUNDERGROUND
Criterion 1 - Project status	completed / almost completed / ongoing	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
Criterion 2 - Most performing Projects	YES/NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Criterion 3 - Geographical location of the partners	Regional territory(s) involved	2	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	2
Criterion 4 - level of cooperation	Number of Italian partners	2	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	2
Criterion 5 - Thematic Representativeness	Topic	Ecotourism	Ecotourism	Cultural tourism	Cultural tourism	Rural tourism / ecotourism	Rural tourism / ecotourism	Child friendly tourism	Digitalisation	Tourism and CCI

As mentioned above, the first step of the evaluation process involved a desk analysis of the available project documents (application forms, websites) to identify the most important information (context, objectives, activities, outputs and results) to verify the degree of correspondence with the above criteria.

For each project, the individual NCPs drew up a summary sheet of the main elements that were also useful for evaluation purposes. The outcome of the desk activity was the subject of semi-structured interviews with the Italian partners of the identified projects, on the basis of a shared interview outline.

In the box below, the outline of the semi-structured interview administered to the selected projects during specific meetings is given.

1. What characterises the project also in terms of innovativeness?
2. What are the concrete results achieved by the project?
3. What added value can the project bring to the topic of sustainable tourism?
4. To which mission of the NRRP can the project be complementary? Have specific initiatives been taken to link the project and the Plan?
5. Has the Project contributed directly or indirectly to the objectives related to the green transition? In what way?
6. Has the Project contributed directly or indirectly to the objectives related to the digital transition? In what way?
7. Have synergies been developed with other projects funded within the same Programme or with other possible sources of funding?
8. Has the Project affected the instruments of programming, planning and implementation of public policies for tourism? In what way?
9. Have ways been identified/encouraged for private involvement in tourism policies?
10. Have specific initiatives been implemented to involve local communities? Which ones? What approach was adopted? What concrete results have been achieved?
11. Have specific initiatives been carried out to involve operators in the sector? Which ones? What approach was adopted? What concrete results have been achieved?
12. How were the results of the project communicated?
13. Is there a qualifying element of the project that was not examined during the interview?
14. Did the project include initiatives to relocate flows to rural/marginal areas? In what way?
15. Have initiatives for the employability of people with fragility been implemented?
16. Have entrepreneurial initiatives with a high social, environmental and cultural impact been started/strengthened? (e.g.: holiday working, hiking, never-ending tourism)

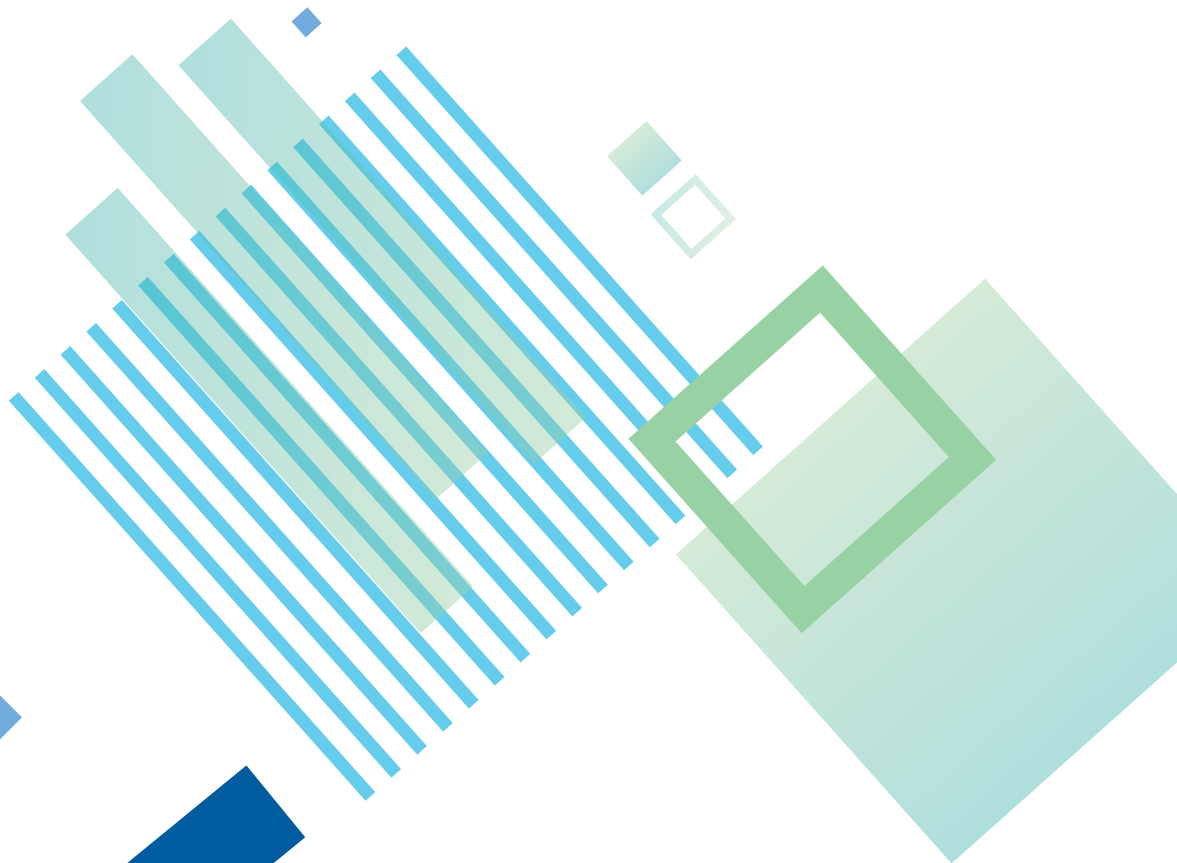
Below is an overview of the projects selected for each of the three Programmes.

Interreg MED	ENI CBC MED	Interreg ADRION
ALTER ECO	CO-EVOLVE4BG	ADRIACTICAVES and ADRIATICAVES PLUS
BLUEMED PLUS	COMMON	APPRODI and APPRODI PLUS
COASTING	CROSSDEV	EMOUNDERGROUNDS
CONSUME-LESS	MEDARTSAL	INNOXENIA
DESTIMED PLUS	MED GAIMS	QNEST and QNEST PLUS
INCIRCLE	MED PEARLS	WONDER
INHERIT	MEDUSA	
MITOMED+	iHERITAGE	
TOURISMED		

The 26 interviews were conducted involving the entire national partnership (60 partners spread throughout the country), so as to encourage free exchange between partners on the main achievements and results and to integrate various points of view in order to fully capture the territorial value of the projects' effects on different local contexts.

The involvement of all Italian partners also made it possible to make an initial assessment of the outcomes produced by certain categories of stakeholders on the sustainability processes of the results.







4. METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS USED FOR THE PROJECT EVALUATION PHASE

The subsequent project evaluation phase took into account:

- the results concretely achieved in the implementation of the project;
- the effects that these results have had in the territories involved in the implementation of the project;
- the degree of involvement of stakeholders at territorial level and the results achieved in this area;
- the degree of involvement of local communities in the territories and the results achieved in this area;
- the capacity of projects to generate social and cultural innovation processes;
- the capacity of projects to generate new project proposals;
- the capacity of projects to integrate with other projects developed in other contexts of national and/or EU programming.

The evaluation activity was therefore based on criteria to select the best project results and thus offer a catalogue of good practices.

In order to grasp the main aspects of the projects, six criteria were identified in the evaluation phase, which, for the most part, refer to the "Transition Pathway for Tourism" which, as already mentioned, outlines the measures and results needed to accelerate green and digital transitions and improve the resilience of the tourism ecosystem, encouraging all stakeholders of the tourism ecosystem to actively contribute.

These criteria, as elaborated by the experts who conducted the analysis, are reported and described according to a sequential order that hypothetically traces a logical path that reinforces the implementation of the projects and connotes their effects at the local level, thus starting from tangible results in terms of policy initiatives undertaken to the maturation of the best conditions for attracting new investments by public and/or private entities.



A. CRITERION 1: GREEN AND DIGITAL TRANSITION

In relation to this criterion, all the initiatives implemented within the projects were analysed that favoured the adoption of measures to meet the needs of tourists with a view to sustainability, such as, for example, the promotion of locally sourced products, the reduction of waste produced and water consumption, the deseasonalisation of flows and the promotion of less visited destinations and the choice of transport options on the basis of their ecological impact. Initiatives aimed at promoting the digitisation of processes and skills were also evaluated, in order to improve the services offered by tourism enterprises and the know-how of operators in the sector.

B. CRITERION 2: MAINSTREAMING

This criterion made it possible to ascertain how the results of the projects fit in with local, regional and national programming and which activities initiated by the projects allow them to be adopted in programming instruments, by extension, also at European level.

The criterion therefore aims to verify whether, in the context of the project, processes have been adopted or initiated for the adoption of measures for a more effective and innovative planning of initiatives for tourism, by local public authorities, and whether, in general, results related to the improvement of policies in favour of tourism have been achieved.

The indicators also showed how the processes were implemented.

C. CRITERION 3: GOVERNANCE

The evaluative focus on this criterion refers to the verification of the ways in which the results of the projects favour the creation of stable forms of coordination between the main players in the sector and the adoption of measures to strengthen the tools for improving tourism statistics and indicators. Finally, all the initiatives favouring and supporting forms of public-private partnership were examined in order to make the initiatives undertaken sustainable.

D. CRITERION 4: PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

This criterion refers to initiatives specifically aimed at raising the awareness and involvement of local communities in the processes of development and promotion of territories from a tourism perspective, as well as activities to promote specific training opportunities for operators in the sector in order to be better able to respond to the new needs that have emerged in relation to new destinations and new ways of enjoying tourism, and thus to be better able to meet the needs of tourists, whether local, national or foreign. In particular, initiatives such as, for example, the launch of training courses, for new professional figures and for the qualification of labour demand, as well as results regarding the increase in employment in this sector, will be assessed.

E. CRITERION 5: CULTURAL AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

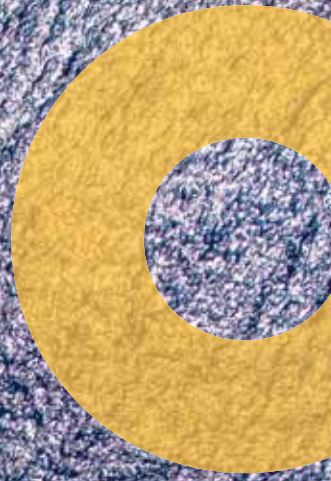
With this criterion, we focused on the innovation processes triggered by projects that launched initiatives to mitigate particularly relevant phenomena such as overtourism and anthropic pressure in the most attractive tourist destinations, through the relocation of these flows to destinations located in rural and/or marginal areas. Initiatives for the active involvement and employment of fragile subjects and for the start-up or strengthening of entrepreneurial activities were also evaluated. Finally, initiatives aimed at creating new narratives capable of promoting and making the culture of the local community accessible to visitors were considered.

F. CRITERION 6: INVESTMENT AND FINANCING

In this context, specific attention was paid to the ability, expressed by the projects, to attract and/or general new forms of investment and/or to create new projects by transferring and capitalising on the results achieved.

Then, for each of the four criteria described above, a grid was drawn up containing the evaluation criteria and related indicators to represent them, structuring a criteria/outcome/indicator correlation matrix.

CRITERIA	RESULT	INDICATORS
Green and digital transition	Adoption of initiatives to strengthen the sustainability of tourism	No. of agreements with transport companies
		No. of adopted sustainable mobility plans
		No. of sustainable routes created
		No. and type of initiatives taken
		Increase in seasonally adjusted tourist flows
		Increased use of less frequented tourist attractions
		New tourist attractions created in traditionally less frequented areas.
	Adoption of initiatives to digitise processes and improve the services offered by tourism enterprises and their quality	No. of initiatives for the digitilisation of tourism enterprises
		No. of companies involved in digitilisation processes
		No. and type of innovative tourism services offered using advanced technologies (virtual reality, augmented reality, AI)
Adoption of initiatives to digitilise the skills of practitioners.	No. of initiatives for the digitilisation of tour operators' skills	
	No. of operators involved in skills digitilisation initiatives	
Improved availability of online data	No. of portals created or improved	
	No. of accesses to portals	
Mainstreaming	Development of complementarity with the main areas of national and regional programming	No. of activities consistent with different areas of national and regional programming
	Adoption/improvement of planning and programming tools	No. of programming documents adopted No. of legislative and/or regulatory acts adopted
Governance	Improving tools for monitoring and compiling tourism statistics	No. and type of new statistical data collected to monitor trends in tourism flows
		No. and type of new indicators to measure the effectiveness of tourism policies
	Strengthening Public Private Partnerships	No. of initiatives undertaken as a result of public-private collaboration
Participation and empowerment	Awareness-raising activities and involvement of local communities	No. of initiatives implemented for the involvement of local communities
	Training for practitioners	No. and type of training activities carried out for practitioners
	Improving employment in the sector	New jobs created
	Improving tourist flows	Annual increase in tourist flows
	Stakeholder and social partnership involvement	No. of cooperation activities between stakeholders to agree on common practices and to actively share tourism data
Cultural and social innovation	Initiatives to mitigate overtourism	No. of initiatives for the valorisation of rural and/or marginal areas through approaches such as, for example, community-based tourism
	Involvement of fragile categories	No. of initiatives for employability of frail persons/No. frail persons employed
	Development of entrepreneurial initiatives	No. of entrepreneurial initiatives with social, environmental and cultural impact (e.g. holiday working, hiking, neverending tourism)
Investment and Financing	Induced new investments	No. and type of new investments made Source of new investments made
	New projects prepared	No. of research and innovation project proposals and pilot projects related to sustainable tourism prepared





5. RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION ON THE BASIS OF THE IDENTIFIED CRITERIA AND INDICATORS

The interviews to the 26 selected projects represented a useful opportunity for exchange not only with respect to the specific themes of the analysis conducted but also for sharing reflections and points of view with reference to the specificities of each Programmes and their respective areas of cooperation and to the more general themes of cooperation and the initiatives that promote it.

In relation to the three Programmes to which the analysed projects refer, it is important to point out some specificities, related to them, such as:

- for the MED Programme, the well-established Programme's structure, which encourage capitalisation processes and dialogue between projects dealing with the same theme, and the strong focus on governance issues and institutional capacity in relation to strategic themes of common interest in the cooperation area;
- for the ENI CBC MED Programme, the significant potential related to the cooperation area in which the Countries of the Southern Shore of the Mediterranean play a significant role; the involvement of these countries represents a challenge to be grasped together with the ensuing complexities, also in terms of project implementation, most of which had not yet been concluded at the date of drafting this report;
- for the ADRION Programme, the close linkage and complementarity with the EUSAIR macro-regional strategy, of which the Programme is an implementing tool, further strengthened and enhanced in 2021-2027.

Also with reference to the macro-regional strategies (EUSAIR and EUSALP) and to the Westmed Initiative, which make up the scenario within which the investigated projects are developed, it is appropriate to make some in-depth remarks.

As far as EUSAIR is concerned, the relations expressed by the projects mainly concern Pillars 3 and 4, on environmental quality and sustainable tourism, which meet the results related to the green transition and those on the diversification of the tourism offer and the strengthening of governance processes (including aspects related to the qualification of the indicator system and the improvement of processes and opportunities related to data management).

With reference to EUSALP, tourism develops synergies across the board, with the aim of ensuring sustainable development consistent with the need to protect the environment and increase innovation in products and services.

In both cases, the growth aspects related to human capital, and thus to the empowerment processes of the operators, are also contemplated and serve as a *condicio sine qua non* for triggering virtuous processes.

The issue of skills is one of the priorities of the Westmed Initiative, within which the focus on sustainable tourism (maritime and coastal) is prioritised with reference to the concept of sustainability and circularity.

Following these fundamental considerations, the information that emerged during the interviews were subjected to a double reading, carried out in order to give a broad and as complete a view as possible of the results that emerged and to be able to share them with a wide audience of interlocutors, as reported at the beginning of this Report.



In this sense, the results that can contribute to the achievement of the objectives of each Programme were first considered in relation to the approach and architecture of each of them, while a second level of interpretation of the same results focused transversally on the most representative criteria and the related indicators most clearly emphasised at territorial level.

As to the results closely linked to the objectives and the territories involved in each Programme, the following aspects should be noted.

The projects identified within the MED Programme have, in many cases, represented a "bridge" between previous experiences and project paths undertaken especially in the previous programming period and initiatives promoted on the basis of the results achieved and implemented within the European Commission's directly managed Programmes such as, for example, Horizon 2020 and LIFE (this is the case of **CONSUMELESS**, **DESTIMED PLUS**, **MITOMED Plus** and **INCIRCLE**).

This approach strongly contributes to strengthening the path towards the identified objectives and ensures their necessary sustainability. In general, the MED projects, taking into account the overall area of cooperation and thus the territories included as well as, especially for the Italian component, the partners involved and the topics addressed, make it possible to closely relate the two macro-regional strategies that concern our Country, EUSAIR and EUSALP, and, at the same time, to keep the guidelines expressed by the Westmed Initiative in mind.

Despite the specificities of the instruments, obviously linked to the characteristics of the territories involved, tourism appears as a strategic area from which to relaunch the economy of the areas.

The projects of the ENI CBC MED Programme have the peculiarity of focusing in a decisive way on aspects, initiatives and paths from which it is possible to start, develop or strengthen entrepreneurial activities that can contribute on the one hand to increasing the availability of jobs (in full coherence with the Westmed Initiative) and on the other hand to enriching by diversifying it, the offer of tourist services that can be enjoyed not only by an internal, local or at any rate national tourism, but also by a wider range of tourists in the entire Mediterranean basin, also helping to create common routes and promote specific identity values. In this regard, the contributions made by the **CROSSDEV**, **MED GAIMS**, **MEDUSA** and **IHERITAGE** projects are particularly relevant. In this sense, and in view of the results achieved by the projects analysed, what has been said above and repeatedly referred to in this report with regard to the need to develop, strengthen and maintain an active dialogue between Programmes is confirmed, also by enhancing their differences, which represent necessary complementarities and the basis for creating synergies, favouring project scale-up processes.

An example is offered by the **CO-EVOLVE4BG** project, the foundations of which are the results achieved by a previous project financed under the MED Programme that have been transferred to partners and territorial contexts on the southern shore of the Mediterranean.

What has been reported above with regard to EUSAIR finds an explicit reference in the ADRION projects, which, although expressing a high degree of coherence with the macro-regional strategy, show a clear territorial value, being linked to the specificities, peculiarities and potentialities of the territories in which they are implemented and for which a wide participation and involvement of local communities is also promoted. In particular, for example, with reference to Pillar 3, on the theme of the protection of the marine environment, an exemplary case is **APPRODI**, while with reference to Pillar 4 we find **WONDER** and **INNOXENIA**.

Concerning the above-mentioned frequent involvement of local communities in most of the ADRION projects, it is evident how they are considered both as active players in the promotion and implementation of initiatives for the development of the attractiveness of the territories and as the main beneficiaries, themselves, of the territorial assets being invested in (this is the case, for example, of the **EMOUNDERGROUNDS** and **QNEST** projects).

With reference to the second level of interpretation of what emerged from the work of analysing the projects examined, and therefore as to the results that emerged, the main elements of reflection are set out below, for each of the analysis and evaluation criteria mentioned above, it being understood that in the annexed sheets this information is detailed for each project. Finally, for each of the criteria, the indicators for which the most elements for their measurement have emerged are also recalled.

The criterion of **green and digital transition** was central to almost all projects, demonstrating a common and widespread awareness of the need to maintain a constant level of adequacy of the tourism sector to the specific needs of demand. It is significant to emphasise that this awareness arose, in many cases, in a period of project implementation preceding the pandemic, which brought these aspects to the fore, demonstrating the anticipatory capacity that many partners have in identifying the challenges to be addressed in their projects. This is the case of universities, research centres and organisations that often make tools and methodologies available to public bodies, policy-makers and promoters, to innovate the sector with obvious positive repercussions also, and above all, on operators. In this sense, and in the framework of the criterion related to green and digital transition, there are many initiatives aimed at:

- provide innovative tools for data analysis and digitisation tools also for the use of territories (this is the case of **MITOMED Plus, INCIRCLE, APPRODI, ADRIATICAVES, INNOXENIA**);
- innovating processes and products of the tourism-related supply chain by declining them with a view to sustainability and circularity and improving services (e.g. **CONSUMELESS, DESTIMED Plus, CROSSDEV**);
- improve the skills of operators in the context of the digitisation of tools linked to the offer and thus to the promotion of tourist packages and the use of territories (e.g. **QNEST, EMOUNDERGROUNDS**);
- enhancing and strengthening the competitive positioning of small and medium-sized enterprises (e.g. **MED GAIMS** and **MED PEARLS**).

In this sense, the most valued indicators are those related to:

- number and type of initiatives taken to strengthen the sustainability of tourism;
- increased use of less frequented tourist attractions;
- number and type of innovative tourism services offered using advanced technologies.



Ph. St Michaels Fortress Sibenik (HR) - EMOUNDERGROUNDS project

Similarly significant was also the criterion of **governance**, a theme that has always been central within the framework of the Cooperation Programmes and that will have an increasingly greater space in 2021-2027. The relevance of this theme is moreover evident, in almost all the projects, not only through the reading of the objectives specifically identified in the project proposal preparation phase, also determined by the involvement in the partnership of public institutional subjects, at a national, regional or local level, but also as a theme induced by the positive evolution of the activities implemented and by the feedback obtained at a territorial level. In particular, the results achieved related to this criterion concern:

- the preparation and adoption of specific tourism promotion programmes and initiatives (e.g. **MED GAIMS, WONDER**);
- the adoption of policy solutions to deal with critical situations that may negatively impact tourism and territories, providing tools to mitigate the impact of phenomena such as overtourism and thus favour the deseasonalisation of flows (e.g. **ALTERECO, MEDUSA**);
- to improve the pathway for the definition and implementation of spatial planning tools, encouraging meetings and exchange with all the players in the chain (e.g. **COASTING, APPRODI**);
- the identification of methods and policy support tools to assess the socio-economic impact of tourism initiatives (e.g. **DESTIMED Plus**).

For this criterion, the most valued indicator is the number of initiatives undertaken as a result of public-private collaboration.

While the involvement of public authorities in the improvement of existing governance tools or the identification of new ones has produced significant results, the involvement of local communities and operators in the sector (criterion of **participation and empowerment**) and the development of actions aimed at the development of entrepreneurial initiatives and the valorisation of territories in inland and marginal areas (criterion of **cultural and social innovation**) have been no less important. In these areas, the main results achieved are related to:

- the support of entrepreneurial initiatives for the production of innovative tools to support the tourist fruition of territories, also by resorting to the so-called experiential tourism and the adoption of 3D technologies (this is the case of **MED GAIMES, IHERITAGE**);
- the enhancement and strengthening of the skills of operators and workers in the sectors specifically identified to strengthen the economic and productive environment of the territories and improve supply (this is the case of **TOURISMED, INHERIT, CONSUMELESS, DESTIMED Plus, INNOXENIA, CROSSDEV, MEDARTSAL**);
- the need to put demand at the centre, directly involving tourists in the participation in specific activities aimed at getting to know the area and its heritage, but also in surveys to verify and assess the satisfaction of the services offered (e.g. **INCIRCLE, EMOUNDERGROUNDS**);
- the awareness and the involvement of local communities (e.g. **WONDER, COMMON**).

For the criterion of participation and empowerment, the indicators most emphasised are those related to awareness-raising activities and involvement of local communities as well as stakeholders and the social partnership, and to initiatives aimed at training professionals.

In relation to the criterion of cultural and social innovation, particularly relevant were the results achieved in mitigating phenomena such as overtourism (e.g. through initiatives for the enhancement of marginal areas).

Less significant results were achieved with regard to **mainstreaming** and **investment** criteria and thus to the ability of projects on the one hand to develop complementarities with the main areas of national and regional programming and on the other hand to attract new investments and/or generate new projects. In these areas, results can be found in relation to:

- the adoption of the results obtained or the improvement of local and regional planning and programming tools (e.g. **COASTING, ALTERECO**);
- the activation of new specific project initiatives within the framework of other cooperation Programmes or with the support of public resources from other sources (e.g. **MED GAIMS, INHERIT, BLUEMED Plus, COASTING, EMOUNDERGROUNDS, COMMON**);
- the initiation of in-depth studies on the topics covered, capable of serving as a baseline for future developments (e.g. **MEDPEARLS, INHERIT, BLUEMED Plus**);
- the adoption of instruments (e.g. Memoranda of Understanding, Negotiated Programming Agreements) and the launch of initiatives (e.g. the creation of bodies/associations to ensure the continuation of specific activities, to guarantee the sustainability of the results themselves (e.g. **TOURISMED, CONSUMELESS, IHERITAGE, COASTING**)).

For the latter two criteria, the most highly valued indicators relate to:

- number of programming documents, acts and regulations adopted;
- number and type of investments made.

Considering what reported above, it is evident that the exchange carried out with the interviews with the Italian project partners brought attention to part of the criteria identified, demonstrating their pertinence with the objectives of the analysis, which was instead reduced for other criteria that had been equally significant in the desk analysis phase. This is the case of the criteria relating to green and digital transition, governance and participation and empowerment, to which the most significant results achieved are linked.

Due to the specificities mentioned above, the weight of these criteria varies from Programme to Programme, on the basis of the objectives identified and the target groups, but they all represent a replicable model, albeit on different scales, with evident further potential that can be exploited.



Below is an overview of the most relevant criteria for each of the Programmes and projects analysed.

INCIDENZA DEI CRITERI DI VALUTAZIONE DEI PROGETTI*

PROGRAMMA INTERREG MED

Criteria	ALTER ECO	BLUEMED PLUS	COASTING	CONSUMELESS	DESTIMED Plus	INCIRCLE	INHERIT	MITOMED Plus	TOURISMED
Green and digital transition	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mainstreaming	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Governance	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Participation and empowerment	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Cultural and social innovation	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Investment and Financing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

PROGRAMMA ENI CBC MED

Criteria	COEVOLVE4BG	COMMON	CROSSDEV	iHERITAGE	MED GAIMS	MEDPEARLS	MEDARTSAL	MEDUSA
Green and digital transition	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mainstreaming	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Governance	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Participation and empowerment	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Cultural and social innovation	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Investment and Financing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

PROGRAMMA ADRION

Criteria	ADRIATICAVES e ADRIATICAVES Plus	APPRODI e APPRODI Plus	QNEST e QNEST Plus	WONDER	INNOXENIA	EMOUNDERGROUND
Green and digital transition	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mainstreaming	●	●	●	●	●	●
Governance	●	●	●	●	●	●
Participation and empowerment	●	●	●	●	●	●
Cultural and social innovation	●	●	●	●	●	●
Investment and Financing	●	●	●	●	●	●

*The higher intensity of the colour is referred to the impact of the evaluation criterion in the project.





6. CONCLUSION

The pandemic and the crisis that followed have highlighted all the weaknesses and criticalities of the so-called 'traditional' model of tourism, which has always been characterised by high levels of seasonality, to the advantage of mass tourism, which is less and less consistent with issues of environmental, social and economic sustainability.

Most of the projects analysed demonstrated the need for the tourism sector, in order to be the real driver of change, capable of triggering real and lasting development processes, to be put in a position to improve its capacity to regenerate and adapt to risks. This change requires a closer, more structured and constant collaboration between all the public and private players involved in the sector, including local communities.

In this sense, there are many examples and good practices matured that can pilot new ideas and innovations and whose transversal reading leads to the identification of some considerations that are reported below not only for the benefit of the Cooperation Programmes that intend to promote specific projects in the field of sustainable tourism, but also of the forms of coordination in progress as reported above, also in view of the launch of joint initiatives. Particularly useful, in this regard, is the indication, at the end of this report, of the main outputs of the projects analysed that can be the object of transfer and re-use activities also in order to broaden their scope and impact.

Furthermore, having as a strategic horizon of reference, that of promoting and strengthening the activation of capitalisation processes, with specific reference to the **green transition** what the projects make available are solutions aimed at reducing the environmental footprint of tourism, through the use of sustainable products and the reduction of waste, the use of sustainable and low-carbon fuels for sustainable mobility for travellers and visitors, the activation of processes to improve the energy performance of buildings, and the use of renewable energy sources. Examples are the provision of ecotourism packages within the **DESTIMED Plus** project or the provision of sustainable tourism products within the **CROSSDEV** project. In addition, as a tool combining green and digital transition, the platform for monitoring pollutant phenomena created within the **COMMON** project is worth mentioning.

As far as the **digital transition** is concerned, what is promoted within the projects is access to data, both public and private, and the creation of models that guarantee their interoperability, as well as the creation of tools that facilitate the use of the tourism offer. Underlying the process is the activation of partnerships with digital enterprises for the development of digitilised processes, the use of artificial intelligence and new technologies to enable consumers to make sustainable choices and to enhance innovative data-driven tourism services and the use of virtual reality to offer innovative tourism products. By way of example, with respect to the projects analysed, we would like to mention the ICT Platform for cultural heritage fruition created within the **iHERITAGE** project.



On the topic of **governance**, including aspects related to **participation**, capacity building and the activation of **cultural and social innovation** processes, the results are many and varied:

- the improvement of the indicator system to measure the green, digital and socio-economic aspects of tourism;
- the strengthening of collaboration between public and private sector organisations, local producers and services, local authorities, tourism management organisations, local associations, residents and tourists themselves, including through the use and extension of locally developed virtuous collaboration practices (coast and bay contracts, area plans, for example);
- the activation of partnerships with cultural and creative enterprises to develop innovative tourism based on cultural heritage, traditions, arts and authentic cultural experiences;
- the enhancement of managerial, green, digital and innovation skills of operators;
- the activation of collaborative processes (community cooperatives or other types of SMEs) in which local operators in the tourism chain become co-responsible for shared activities (destination promotion, coordination between tourist facilities, co-design and governance of online booking systems);

With reference to the development of **mainstreaming** processes and the transfer of results into policies, what is being experimented and made available is the activation of virtuous mechanisms of dialogue with political decision-makers, in order to make the adoption of what has been developed within the projects functional in local and regional level planning tools such as the Governance Agreements of Tourism Clusters promoted within the **MEDUSA** project.

In the light of the analysis carried out, in order to converge towards the goal of a tourism that is truly sustainable and consistent with the themes of green and digital transition, and to trigger development processes in the Mediterranean that are not only economic but also social, initiatives should converge towards:

- the promotion of governance models to encourage collaboration not only between the various levels of government but involving all players and local communities as well as tourists, in order to better orient supply and make it responsive to the expectations of demand, including by directing it towards sustainable models;
- the identification of shared monitoring tools, using methods and approaches based on collaboration and taking advantage of initiatives that have already been launched, such as that linked to the establishment of a network of tourism observatories;
- the promotion of a 'digital tourism', aiming at the digitisation and innovation of the tourism ecosystem, thus involving the entire supply and value chains of the tourism product;
- the adoption of a tourism model that incorporates the principle of circularity, biodiversity protection and access to sustainable transport and contributes to the decarbonisation goals of the Green Deal and a more sustainable global economy;
- the enhancement of so-called 'proximity tourism' and 'tourism for all' that pays greater attention to issues of safety, accessibility and quality of services;
- the improvement of training and refresher courses encompassing all levels, from vocational schools to higher technical institutes, universities and post-graduate programmes, and in all the most qualifying areas for the sector (hospitality, tourism attraction and organisation, to name but a few).

In general, what is desirable is a paradigm shift that heralds a cultural transition in tourism and a new approach to supply and demand, capable of opening up to new concepts and new trends ('slow', experiential, rural tourism, etc.).

The general objective of all the projects analysed turns out to be this: a real shift from a 'globalised' tourism to a 'sustainable' one, more focused on the typicality and needs of places.

In order to achieve the results as referred to above and also desired in the debate promoted by the projects, it is necessary to initiate the following paths:

- increasing accompaniment promoted by the Programmes and aimed at improving and strengthening the quality of the projects funded, starting with the preparation of the calls for proposals in which specific and targeted attention will have to be paid to the criteria for the identification and composition of partnerships, to the type of activities that can be financed and to the issues of sustainability and capitalisation;
- increasing integration between the different levels of the Programmes - transnational and cross-border - through the promotion and exploitation of synergies and complementarities with the most significant directly managed Programmes of the Commission such as, to name but a few Horizon Europe for the entrepreneurial development, innovation and digitalisation component, Life for the environmental component, Creative Europe for the cultural component, ERASMUS Plus for the training and professional qualification component, Interregional Innovation Investments for issues related to smart specialisation areas and Digital Europe for digital transition processes. The multi-programme coordination mechanism is intended to be the most effective tool for promoting these synergies, as was already the case with the Central Europe Programme, which, at the end of the last programming period, promoted a specific call for capitalisation on themes developed within the framework of Horizon projects;

- a constant and continuous confrontation between the actors responsible for the various areas and levels of programming of additional resources and implementation of the main investment Programmes; in this sense, at national level, it is desirable to increasingly strengthen exchanges with the ERDF and ESF+ National and Regional Programmes as well as with the actors responsible for the implementation of the investments of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

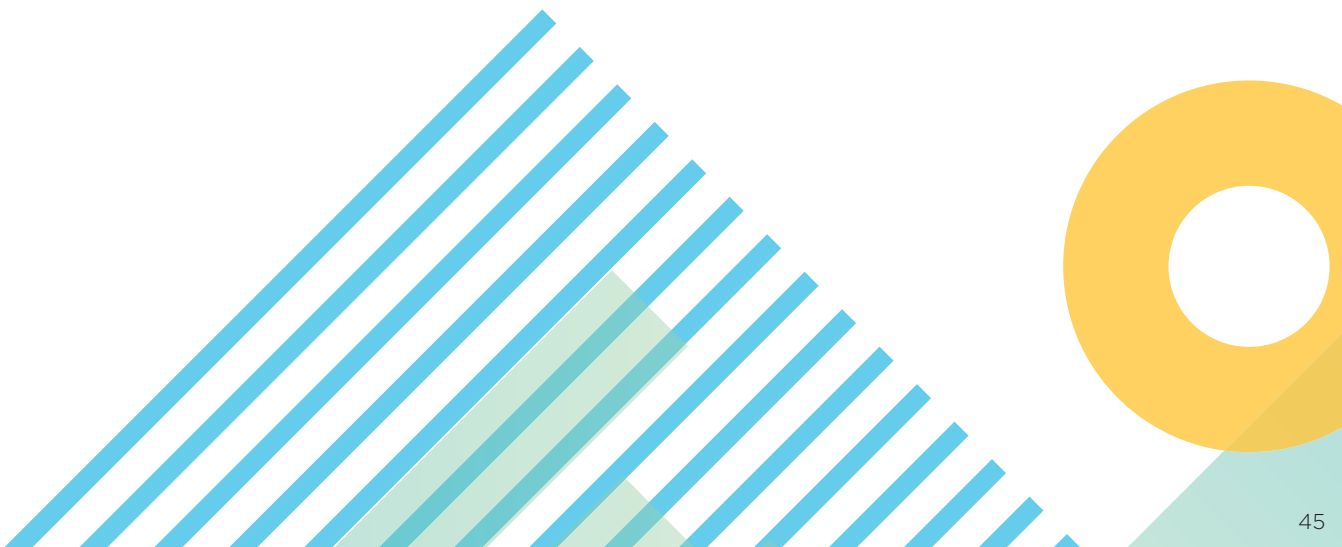
Moreover, as stated at the beginning of this Report, also in the light of the above and in pursuit of a logic of maximising results, the analysis conducted highlights the opportunity, for particularly important initiatives such as the inter-programme mechanism, represented by the participation and qualified contribution to be made to all the existing frameworks and networks of collaboration in Europe and beyond.

These networks have a main function of inter-institutional liaison and cooperation at national level, such as the Union for the Mediterranean and WESTMED, and at regional level, such as the Intermediterranean Commission of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, which has set up a specific working group on tourism. To complete the institutional level, it is believed that adherence to the following initiatives can strengthen the achievement of results as well as lead to an overall and systematised vision of initiatives for tourism:

- NECSTOUR, Network of European Regions for Sustainable and Competitive Tourism, which promotes the implementation of interregional projects to improve tourism governance in Europe;
- the Network of Observatories on Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean (INSTO), the establishment of which was promoted under the BEST MED project mentioned above;
- The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), an initiative of the European Commission, to support companies to innovate and grow internationally; within the network there is a specific expert group dedicated to tourism and culture;
- Future of Tourism, a coalition of 6 Non-Governmental Organisations that promotes, at an international level, many initiatives to trigger processes of change in the sector, also by preparing technical operational tools.

Lastly, at national level, it will be useful to encourage participation in national technology clusters, networks of public and private entities that operate nationwide in areas such as industrial research, training and technology transfer and act as catalysts of resources to meet the needs of the territory and the market, coordinate and strengthen the connection between the world of research and that of business.

Particularly relevant in this sense are the clusters Cultural Heritage Technologies, Design, Creativity and Made in Italy, and the Economy of the Sea, which were set up in 2016.



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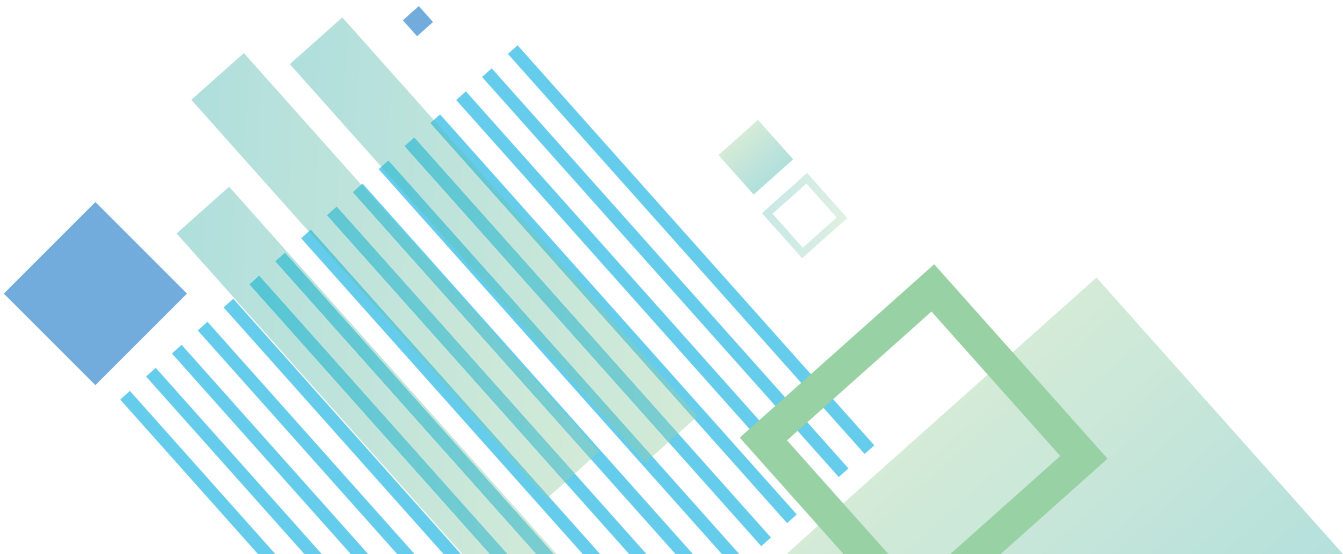


Project Evaluation Sheets

Interreg
Mediterranean



EUROPEAN UNION



Programme	Interreg MED
Project name	ALTER ECO - Alternative tourist strategies to enhance the local sustainable development of tourism by promoting Mediterranean Identity
Budget	2.3 million
Period	From 01/11/2016 to 31/07/2019
Countries involved	Cyprus, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Spain
Italian partners	Municipality of Genoa, Ca' Foscari University of Venice - Department of Economics Observatory on Tourism in the European Islands
Website	https://alter-eco.interreg-med.eu

ALTER ECO fosters the sustainable development of local tourism, promoting Mediterranean identity through the implementation of alternative tourism strategies, in 6 pilot projects co-designed and implemented by public and private stakeholders. The project offers the opportunity to test, in particularly representative cities, used as living labs, existing methodologies and tools created in previous high-impact projects in the field of sustainable tourism or proposed by key stakeholders, with the aim of identifying holistic and realistic tourism strategies at local and regional level, that enable their transferability throughout the Mediterranean.

The project results support policy makers in making more informed and integrated decisions for the governance and management of tourism in the Mediterranean and, at the same time, improve the coordination of actions between public and private stakeholders for the implementation of the proposed strategies in order to create new business opportunities.

ALTER ECO also contributes to improving knowledge and decision-making skills, including better use of observation, monitoring and planning in the field of sustainable tourism.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Improved availability of online data.	
Description	For a tourist destination affected by overtourism, it is increasingly crucial to equip itself with the most suitable tools for monitoring and managing tourist flows. As part of the AlterEco project, a DSS (Decision Support System) was therefore developed which, starting from the analysis of the different tourism subsystems of a destination and based on an innovative quantitative model using big data and analytics, allows the identification of the optimal level of tourism pressure bearable for a tourist destination and the outlining of appropriate tourism strategies.	
Relevant outputs	Software	1

Criteria	Governance	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Strengthening Public Private Partnerships.	
Description	Through increased public-private partnership, the project supported the identification and adoption of policy solutions for the mitigation of overtourism in the identified target areas.	
Relevant outputs	Definition of a model for the implementation of innovative tourism strategies.	2
Note	The pilot actions in Italy concerned the Nervi area (Genoa) and the area of Venice.	

Criteria	Participation and empowerment	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Stakeholder and social partnership involvement.	
Description	The actions identified in the pilot sites were supported by the use of innovative systems to meet tourist demand and expectations. To this end, living labs were set up with local stakeholders to define tourism products.	
Relevant outputs	Living lab	2
Note	Two living labs were set up in each of the two pilot areas (Nervi and Venice).	

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The ALTER ECO Project addressed an extremely sensitive issue for many Mediterranean tourist destinations, with specific reference to coastal areas, i.e. overtourism and therefore the excessive anthropic pressure that negatively impacts the territories.

The strength of the project is represented by the adoption of a scientific approach to the collection, analysis and follow up of data and information, which are useful for the political decision-making. This makes it possible, on the one hand, to monitor and control the phenomenon and, on the other, to adopt timely solutions to mitigate its effects.

Programme	Interreg MED
Project name	BLUEMED PLUS - Capitalisation by transferring to new Med territories the BlueMed multidisciplinary model for sustainable and responsible coastal tourism development
Budget	0.40 million
Period	From 01/06/2021 to 30/06/2022
Countries involved	Albania, Greece, Italy
Italian partners	University of Calabria - Department of Mechanical, Energetic and Management Engineering (lead partner), Apulia Region - Department of Tourism, Cultural Economy and Territorial Development
Website	https://bluemed.interreg-med.eu/

BLUEMED PLUS aims to capitalise on the most relevant experiences, results and outputs of the previous BLUEMED project, which focused on the enhancement of Underwater Cultural Heritage for the development of sustainable tourism in Mediterranean coastal and island areas.

The project involves Italy, Montenegro and Albania, which offer important underwater cultural sites covering 2000 years of history. BLUEMED PLUS therefore drew on the main results of BLUEMED, through which it was possible to identify good practices for the implementation and management of underwater archaeological routes.

The skills transfer process is aimed at improving the partners' capacity to manage underwater sites of historical/archaeological interest, also through the creation of Knowledge Awareness Centres in their territories, thus promoting new destinations as resources for the sustainable development of coastal tourism.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Mainstreaming	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption/improvement of planning and programming tools.	
Description	BLUEMED PLUS enabled the transfer of relevant outputs from the previous project experience, namely the Roadmap and the Action Plan for the promotion of underwater cultural heritage. This transfer took place through a process of knowledge systematisation and decision-making support to facilitate its adoption.	
Relevant outputs	Determination to adopt the Roadmap.	1
Notes	By act of the Department of Tourism of the Apulia Region, the Administration adopted its own roadmap.	

Criteria	Participation and empowerment	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Training for practitioners.	
Description	As part of the transfer of skills and knowledge acquired in BLUEMED, so-called Awareness Centres (KACs) were set up in each of the territories involved, aimed at enhancing the partners' capacity to improve the management of underwater sites of historical/archaeological interest.	
Relevant outputs	Creation of KACs	1
Notes	A centre was set up in the Italian receiving territory (Apulia).	

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The BLUEMED PLUS project certainly represents a successful example of a process of capitalisation and transfer of results from a previous project experience, of which the tools identified and adopted to favour a more effective valorisation and a better fruition of the cultural sites belonging to the underwater heritage were further enhanced. Particularly relevant, within the project, was the active involvement of the Apulia Region which, as partner and recipient of the transfer activities, perfected the pathway through the formal adoption of the roadmap prepared and aimed at the implementation of a pathway for the promotion of this heritage.

Programme	Interreg MED
Project name	COASTING - Coastal INtegrated Governance for Sustainable Tourism
Budget	0.98 million
Period	From 01/02/2018 to 31/01/2020
Countries involved	Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Spain
Italian partners	Lazio Region, La Sapienza University of Rome Sicily Region, UNIMED - Mediterranean Universities Union
Website	https://coasting.interreg-med.eu/

The **COASTING** project, included among the flagship projects by the Agency for Territorial Cohesion, has identified as its main objective to promote and, where already in place, improve the effectiveness of the Coastal Contract, a multi-level governance tool to facilitate the implementation at the local scale of EU, national and regional policies and regulations on environmental protection, hydraulic defence, adaptation to the effects of climate change, integrated management of coastal territories and promotion of local development. This objective was pursued through the transfer of a shared method focused mainly on the involvement of stakeholders and by focusing tools and actions in greater depth on the sustainability and qualification of the tourism sector in the Mediterranean area.

Particularly relevant was the implementation phase of the project in the territory of Lazio region, where the preparatory actions for the definition of the Agro-Pontino Coastal Contract were carried out and, after its conclusion, the Stakeholder Group, coordinated by the Province of Latina, participated in the Lazio Region's Call for Proposals concerning the process of signing River, Lake, Coastal and Mouth Contracts. In the Sicilian territory, moreover, the path undertaken among the stakeholders of the territory has led to a concrete involvement of the regional decision makers, who have been the recipients of a document in which they are strategic interventions and targeted actions are proposed for the sustainable development of the coastal strip.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption of initiatives to strengthen the sustainability of tourism.	
Description	A permanent observatory has been set up by the University of Rome 'La Sapienza' and kept open and active to date to collect, share and promote good practices on tourism sustainability in coastal areas. (https://wikicoasting.eu/).	
Relevant outputs	Catalogue of good practices - wikisource (CoastingWiki).	1
Notes	The catalogue includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Caorle Lagoon System Wetland Contract; - Marano Lagoon Area Contract; - Agro pontino coastline contract; - Massaciuccoli Lake Contract; - Coastal Contract of the Ulysses Riviera; - Adriatic Cycle Route. 	

Criteria	Mainstreaming	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption/improvement of planning and programming tools.	2 Strategies
Description	<p>Following the preparation of the Coastal Contract methodology, specific strategies for tourism sustainability and coastal management were identified for each territory to improve the coordination and effectiveness of regional policies for integrated coastal management and sustainable tourism governance.</p> <p>Catalogue of good practices - wikisource (CoastingWiki).</p>	

Criteria	Governance	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Strengthening Public Private Partnerships.	
Description	In the territory of Lazio region, the definition of the Agro Pontino Coastal Contract was carried out through a process of consultation between local authorities and stakeholders, based on a specific methodology.	
Relevant outputs	Common methodology focused mainly on stakeholder participation for the development of tools and actions for the sustainability of the tourism sector.	1

Criteria	Investment and Financing	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	New projects prepared.	
Description	Within the framework of the MED Programme's fifth call for modular projects dedicated to the transfer of tools and methodologies already developed, the COASTING PLUS project was financed, which transferred the main results/products developed and tested at a transnational level within the COASTING project to new MED territories, for Italy in favour of the Marche Region.	
Relevant outputs	Projects prepared	1
Notes	COASTING PLUS	

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The most qualified result of the COASTING project is related to the Governance criterion, since, for a relevant tool for the protection and enhancement of the territory, such as the Coastal Contract, methods of sharing the process and of concertation were used for the identification of the most qualifying elements, through the strengthening of relations between the various subjects involved in the process itself. Moreover, this result has potential repercussions not only on a better management of the territory concerned but also, in perspective, on the wellbeing of citizens and local communities.

Programme	Interreg MED
Project name	CONSUME-LESS: Consume Less in Mediterranean Touristic Communities
Budget	2.6 million
Period	From 01/11/2016 to 31/01/2020
Countries involved	Albania, Greece, Italy, Malta, Spain
Italian partners	Svi.Med - Centre EuroMediterranean for the sustainable development, Ambiente Italia srl, Sicily Region
Website	https://consume-less.interreg-med.eu / https://www.consumelessmed.org/

The project, included among the 'flagship' projects identified by the Agency for Territorial Cohesion, pursued as objectives the promotion of sustainable tourism models, based on the valorisation of historical heritage, natural resources and local products, and the promotion of a responsible approach by tourists, as well as the development of integrated strategies for sustainable energy, water and waste management in tourism-intensive Mediterranean cities.

It is precisely the high tourist flows that are the starting point of the project because, on the one hand, they represent important economic and employment opportunities, but on the other hand, they are also the cause of negative externalities that threaten the preservation of ecosystems, which guarantee precisely the main elements of attractiveness of territories.

The **CONSUME-LESS** project, therefore, starting from the awareness that the development of sustainable tourism in coastal cities is a strategic theme in the Mediterranean and therefore requires a shared approach and vision, identifies and adopts on an experimental basis a model of sustainable tourism based on the qualification of coastal cities as "consumption-free" localities and on the valorisation of this peculiarity through an innovative communication and territorial marketing campaign, both implemented by directly involving all the actors concerned (local authorities, operators and providers of tourist services, tourists). In particular, specific attention was paid to the universe of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises most directly involved in the supply chain and which, on the one hand, are a specific representation of the capacity and quality of the territories' reception and, on the other, are in most direct contact with Italian and foreign visitors and tourists.

The expected benefits of this new approach (reduction of water and energy consumption and waste production, valorisation of local products and natural resources, increase in tourist flows and awareness of the importance of adopting environmentally friendly lifestyles) contribute in a tangible and immediate way to the reduction of resource use and can be measured using indicators, based on the European System of Tourism Indicators.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption of initiatives and new instruments to strengthen the sustainability of tourism.	
Description	<p>The desire to identify how to promote tourist packages and tourist use that meet the criteria of sustainability led to the preparation of operational tools and guidelines (available in 7 languages: English, Italian, French, Greek, Montenegrin, Croatian and Spanish).</p> <p>Private establishments in the Italian tourism sector adhering to the brand and promoted on the Consumelessmed.org platform were given the opportunity to be accompanied in order to better develop their marketing and communication strategies as well as to adopt approaches and methods useful for gradual growth over time.</p> <p>During the implementation of the project, demonstration actions for reducing energy and water consumption and reducing waste were also carried out in the areas involved in Consume-less.</p>	
Relevant outputs	Guidelines for the use of eco-labels for tourist facilities - ConsumelessMed label.	1
	Interactive Atlas of Sustainable Tourism Facilities.	101 structures
	Promotion policies of the 'consume-less' model for tour operators and demonstration actions.	2
Notes	<p>Ragusa (48), Comiso (5), Monterosso Almo (2), Santa Croce Camerina (2), Scicli (4), Realmonte (40)</p> <p>Marina di Ragusa: innovative green wall for the treatment and reuse of grey water for secondary uses.</p> <p>Realmonte: LED lighting of Scala dei Turchi tourist belvedere.</p>	

Criteria	Mainstreaming	
Project results	Development of complementarity with the main areas of national and regional programming.	
Notes	<p>Although concluded prior to the adoption and start of the implementation of the NRP and therefore unable to carry out specific linkage activities, the project clearly showed clear elements of coherence with Mission 1, Component Tourism and Culture 4.0, especially for the investments related to urban regeneration and the improvement of the tourism ecosystem of accommodation facilities by enhancing infrastructure.</p> <p>Furthermore, elements of coherence can also be identified with Mission 2 and in particular with the Green Islands Investment.</p>	

Criteria	Governance	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Strengthening Public Private Partnerships.	
Description	<p>In Italy, the project involved two Sicilian municipalities, which also joined Consume-less as associated partners.</p> <p>These were the Municipality of Ragusa and the Municipality of Realmonte where the main stakeholders were involved, through the establishment of local committees. Within the framework of these committees, public and private stakeholders, starting with the municipalities themselves, networks and trade associations, as well as individual entrepreneurs, were invited to adopt and manage the sustainable tourism model, previously shared, in their territories.</p>	
Relevant outputs	Local committees for the joint management of tourism policies at local level.	2 Local Committees
Notes	<p>The Ragusa Local Committee, in the initial phase, saw the involvement of 5 entities (Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Agriculture and Crafts, Libero Consorzio Comunale di Ragusa, CNA Ragusa, Ascom Ragusa, Centro Commerciale Naturale Antica Ibla) in addition to SVI.MED, the Department of Sport Tourism and Entertainment of the Sicilian Region and the Municipality of Ragusa as project partners and associates. In the project implementation phase, the committee expanded to include the 12 municipalities in the province of Ragusa and the Scicli Albergo Diffuso Association.</p> <p>The Realmonte Local Committee is composed of: Municipality of Cattolica Eraclea, Municipality of Montallegro, Municipality of Porto Empedocle, Municipality of Siculiana as well as the Sport Tourism and Entertainment Department of the Sicilian Region as project partner. Before the end of the project, a further committee was created together with the Sicilian Region and SVIMED to replicate the experience. The committee was joined by the municipalities of the Union of Municipalities of the Madonie, which consists of 18 municipalities.</p>	26 local authorities involved

Criteria	Participation and empowerment	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	<p>Awareness-raising activities and involvement of local communities.</p> <p>Training for practitioners.</p> <p>Stakeholder and social partnership involvement.</p>	
Description	<p>Local committees were also the forum for promoting the participation and involvement of a widespread territorial partnership, thus including trade associations and networks representing the community.</p> <p>The meetings, which also evolved into skill-building moments and responses to the territorial needs that emerged, led to the preparation of an action plan and also to the organisation of workshops aimed at responding to the cognitive needs of the territory.</p> <p>In the case of local communities, the organisation of a workation(*) was an excellent example of the fusion of community and professionalism involved in the service of the project.</p>	
Relevant outputs	Model of participatory processes based on the active involvement of the local community and travellers (Workation formula = Work+vacation).	<p>2 action plan</p> <p>6 workshop</p> <p>1 workation</p>

Criteria	Cultural and social innovation
Project results	Initiatives to mitigate overtourism
Description	The involvement of territories, i.e. several neighbouring municipalities, allowed the management committees to address service issues jointly and to promote municipalities and facilities close to the most popular centres, better distributing tourist flows over the territory and avoiding peaks in some 'top' destinations.
Notes	The communication and marketing campaign was based on storytelling to trigger a cultural change in citizens, facility managers and workers, and turn tourists into ambassadors of a shared message.

Criteria	Investment and Financing	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	New projects prepared	
Description	Other project experiences resulted from the Consume-less experience.	
Relevant outputs	Generation of new projects	3 projects: Interreg MED INCIRCLE, Interreg MED WINTERMED, ENI CBC MED NAWAMED.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The CONSUME-LESS project was characterised by an integrated, inclusive and territorial approach that focused on intensifying collaboration between public bodies and the business world - especially small and medium enterprises - linked to the tourism sector, in order to arrive at the adoption of a brand and guidelines for its application. In this sense, the integrated approach allowed for an organic and systemic reading of the issues addressed in the project, extended to the entire Mediterranean basin, creating the prerequisites for an international marketing platform extended to several territories; likewise, the inclusive approach allowed for the involvement of small and medium enterprises in the tourism sector that are not normally targeted by existing European certification processes. In light of the activities carried out, results and outputs achieved, the project's main contribution to the development of the tourism sector concerned a decisive change in local governance, since, also thanks to the establishment of Local Committees, not only a process of dialogue between public and private subjects was triggered, but also an active involvement of tourists. The innovative experience in Italy of the workation, to merge tourism professionals/tourists/local community and public bodies in order to co-design together services and products useful to the territory for its sustainable development, represents one of the most relevant outputs to be capitalised as a future experience, beyond the model itself.

(*) The Workation, which precisely combines the idea of 'work and holiday' was the first professional Workation in Italy, in that the freelancers involved (called digital nomads) were paid (a minimum amount with respect to the products to be produced, such as the consumelessmed.org platform, marketing strategy and portfolio, promotional videos, social strategy, etc.) and hosted for 10 days in a place that would allow them to live together and co-create the required products, merging with the community and the territory, thanks to visits, meetings, experiences (which became the 'holiday' part) in our case functional to the objective. The experience proved to be very interesting and productive, not only for the project, but also for the territory because more materials were produced than those requested and direct links were created with the community to support their promotion. This is a sign of the involvement that has been created thanks to these formulas that unite 'digital nomads' and the community.

Programme	Interreg MED
Project name	DESTIMED PLUS -Ecotourism in Mediterranean Destinations: From Monitoring and Planning to Promotion and Policy Support
Budget	3.25 million
Period	From 01/11/2019 to 30/06/2022
Countries involved	Albania, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Spain,
Italian partners	Lazio Region - Environment Directorate (lead partner) WWF Mediterranean Autonomous Region of Sardinia - Environment Department
Website	https://consume-less.interreg-med.eu / https://www.consumelessmed.org/

The **DESTIMED PLUS** project represents the continuation of previous project experiences (MEET and DESTIMED) and is designed to promote integrated coastal tourism planning, with the active and direct involvement of regional policy-makers, for the identification of ecotourism products in Mediterranean protected areas.

The main element of the project is the awareness of the need to strengthen governance tools and legislation throughout the Mediterranean area for ecotourism to develop.

DESTIMED PLUS pursued as its first objective the creation of a Med Ecotourism Consortium (MEC) composed of actors involved in the valorisation and promotion process to exchange best practices and develop an integrated ecotourism model for the Mediterranean.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption of initiatives and new instruments to strengthen the sustainability of tourism.	
Description	Within the framework of the project, the target sites were actively involved in the preparation of integrated tourism packages in which all the chains of the process were involved, thus understanding sustainable tourism at 360 degrees and declining it according to the potential of the territories.	
Relevant outputs	Ecotourism packages	2
Notes	Sardinia - Porto Conte Regional Natural Park (regional protected area) Lazio - Ponzian Archipelago	

Criteria	Governance	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Strengthening Public Private Partnerships.	
Description	Starting from the DESTIMED experience, the Italian territories were involved in setting up regional and local concertation frameworks between all the actors identified and involved in the valorisation process.	
Relevant outputs	REC - Regional Ecotourism Clusters (regional coordination tables).	2
	LEC - Local Ecotourism Cluster (Local Coordination Tables).	2
Notes	The LEC of the Porto Conte Regional Park comprises about 50 stakeholders including public and private operators and representatives of the third sector. The REC is rooted in the Forum for Sustainable Development Sardegna2030 and is composed of the stakeholders of the Regional System and the representatives of Local Authorities, private and third sector.	

Criteria	Cultural and social innovation	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Initiatives to mitigate overtourism	
Description	Training with all stakeholders	
Relevant outputs	Training platform	1
Notes	The platform modules have been developed and are currently being evaluated by the IUCN training platform, which will host them in the future, ensuring the sustainability of the project. They should be available online soon. https://iucnacademy.org/	

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The added value of DESTIMED PLUS, compared to the previous DESTIMED project, is the involvement of all the players of the Italian territories involved, through the dimension of the RECs and LECs that were put in a position to dialogue with all the similar realities at the Mediterranean level. Governance is therefore certainly the relevant theme characterising the project, since, through the pathways aimed at preparing tourist packages, local and regional intersectoral policies were also strengthened, and integrated planning strategies were improved. A second relevant aspect, certainly functional to the one described above, is the training of stakeholders to provide them with knowledge and skills to manage, measure and promote ecotourism.

Programme	Interreg MED
Project name	INCIRCLE - Support INSular and low density areas in the transition towards a more CIRCULAR tourism Economy
Budget	3.38 million
Period	From 01/11/2019 to 30/06/2022
Countries involved	Albania, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Spain
Italian partners	AREA Science Park (lead partner) Sant'Anna High School
Website	https://incircle.interreg-med.eu/

The **INCIRCLE** project addresses issues such as the impact of tourism on vulnerable destinations and the most suitable policies to reduce the environmental footprint of tourism flows, to identify measures and initiatives to reduce pollution caused by tourism, to preserve the quality and availability of natural resources and to improve the quality of life of residents and tourists, applying circular economy principles to the tourism sector.

From a territorial point of view, the project focuses on particularly vulnerable territories, as they are characterised by geographical isolation (islands) and low population density, and, in general, on coastal tourist destinations that are negatively affected by seasonal flows of tourists, where it is necessary to initiate better planning of sustainable tourism, in order to preserve and enhance non-renewable resources.

The main target group of the INCIRCLE project are policy-makers, who were identified as recipients of concrete tools to improve their capacity in terms of sustainability assessment and planning, to leverage new funding and to provide concrete opportunities for replication of results. For this purpose, the INCIRCLE Knowledge Platform (<https://www.incircle-kp.eu/>) was developed. The platform, freely accessible to policy makers and tourism stakeholders, provides a set of solutions collected and tested in the Mediterranean area and shares reference models that have proven successful in other contexts. The platform also aims to classify and compare circular tourism policies and practices through a self-assessment tool, the Circular Tourism Self Assessment, to manage and monitor the impact of tourism from a circular economy perspective, both at the destination level (Circular Tourism Destination Tool) and at the tourism industry level (Circular Tourism Industry Tool).

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption of initiatives and new instruments to strengthen the sustainability of tourism.	
Description	Adoption of plans and strategies based on circular economy principles and focusing mainly on energy production and energy efficiency, water and waste management, sustainable mobility and environmental protection. The activities consisted in the development of pilot projects aimed at identifying the fragilities and needs of the new territories involved and developing new strategies in the replication territories, with the objective of assessing the performance of tourism circularity in the areas involved and activating processes and developing innovative services in response to the identified needs.	
Relevant outputs	Plans adopted for the benefit of the Italian territories involved.	2
Notes	As part of the replication activities, results were involved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The territory of the Oltre Po Mantovano Consortium; - The Terra Barocca Local Action Group territory. 	

Criteria	Mainstreaming	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Development of complementarity with other project initiatives.	
Description	The project enhanced the knowledge previously acquired in the sector and ensured the availability, 'circularity' and usability of this knowledge and a set of solutions collected and tested in the MED area through a dedicated online platform. The objectives of the Knowledge Platform are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying sustainable and circular economy solutions; - Self-assessing the sustainability and circularity of policies/practices; - Sharing knowledge, tools, methodologies and best practices in the field of circular economy applied to the tourism sector, ensuring transfer and capitalisation; - Bringing together problems and solutions by sharing reference models and pilot projects that have proved successful in other contexts. 	
Relevant outputs	INCIRCLE Knowledge platform	1

Criteria	Governance	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Strengthening Public Private Partnerships.	
Description	Support in terms of capacity building to the stakeholders involved, in order to foster the adoption and transfer to other territories of policies and practices based on the concepts of circularity in tourism.	
Relevant outputs	Stakeholders' meeting In the framework of INCIRCLE, dedicated moments were foreseen for the discussion between the representatives of the tourist destinations and their stakeholders. The project partner territories organised at least 2 "Stakeholders Working Groups" each lasting about 2 hours.	48

Criteria	Participation and empowerment
Project results	Stakeholder and social partnership involvement.
Relevant outputs	Creation of Stakeholder Working Groups
Notes	The stakeholders of the quadruple helix were involved in the strategy development process (bottom-up approach) and in the activation of innovation processes within the decision-making processes.

Criteria	Cultural and social innovation
Project results	Initiatives to mitigate overtourism
Description	Through the tools and documentation produced, the project contributed to offering innovative and circular services, going beyond the 'business as usual' perspective and adopting a life-cycle perspective; responding to the more environmentally conscious demand of tourists and customers; and developing new skills and knowledge for the transition to new circular business models in tourism.
Relevant outputs	<p>Tool for assessing the circularity of tourist destinations</p> <p>Report: Regional and national level strategies for the transition to more circular tourism</p> <p>Operational model for regional strategies supporting sustainable tourism, used as a basis for transfer activities in the Programme area outside the partner network.</p>
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Circular Tourism Destination Tool is a management and monitoring tool to assess the impact of tourism according to Circular Economy principles and aims to support the strategic management of tourism destinations. - Five regional or national and five local action plans were analysed. - The INCIRCLE operational model toolkit aims to guide and support Mediterranean policy makers in developing integrated regional and national strategies towards a more circular tourism, with the objective of reducing the negative impact of tourism on the environmental capital of destinations and preserving limited natural resources.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The project activities were aimed at analysing the relationship between the principles of the circular economy and Mediterranean tourism policy, with a particular focus on the development, management and application of specific circular economy indicators capable of improving the management and planning models of the tourism sector in the project partner territories, and in the Programme area in general, with a view to sustainability. The results achieved by the INCIRCLE project have demonstrated the effectiveness of the tools prepared, which are fully consistent with the recent guidelines adopted at European level to ensure a transition towards the principles of the circular economy. Particularly relevant, both for its repercussions in terms of governance and in terms of strengthening the management capacity of monitoring processes, is the so-called Circular Tourism Self Assessment, which is based on four capitals (natural capital, social capital, built capital, human capital) and on three levels (tourist destination level, tourism industry level, and networking level composed of the interactions that nurture sustainability and circularity between a tourist destination and a tourism industry), and includes the five principles of the circular economy (Reduce, Regenerate, Rethink, Innovate, Re-evaluate). In this sense, in the Italian territories covered by the replication actions, in Lombardy and Sicily, the project strengthened the capacity of policy makers to apply the principles of the circular economy to planning in the field of tourism, favouring sustainable tourism in low population density areas. Finally, it aimed to adopt circularity indicators to measure and assess the level of sustainability in the low-populated island and coastal areas of the MED area.

Programme	Interreg MED
Project name	INHERIT - Sustainable tourism strategies to conserve and valorise the Mediterranean coastal and maritime natural heritage
Budget	5.59 million
Period	From 01/02/2018 to 31/01/2022
Countries involved	Cyprus, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Montenegro, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain
Italian partners	Apulia Region, Emilia-Romagna Region
Website	https://inherit.interreg-med.eu/

The **INHERIT** project aims to conserve and enhance the natural heritage of coastal and maritime tourist destinations in the Mediterranean area through the promotion and development of sustainable tourism in areas less affected by large tourist flows, and the containment of tourist pressure and seasonality in the most frequented coastal areas.

By promoting sustainable growth in the Mediterranean area based on innovative concepts and practices and a reasonable use of resources, and by supporting social integration through a model of integrated territorial cooperation, the project experiments with a new approach modelled on the specificities of each territory for the protection of the natural heritage from the negative effects of intensive tourism. In particular, it promotes a 'bottom-up' protection approach based on self-regulation and monitoring by local communities and tourism stakeholders.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Participation and empowerment	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Stakeholder and social partnership involvement	
Description	Through a process of involvement of the stakeholders of the territories, in the two pilot areas, 'INHERITURA Areas' were created, spaces in which tourism activities coexist with the natural heritage through collaboration between public authorities, business and voluntary organisations and other relevant actors. These actors are called upon to jointly define the protective measures to be observed in order to preserve their territories.	
Relevant outputs	Workshops and capacity building sessions	2
	Creation of INHERITANCE areas	2
Notes	1 workshop for each of the areas, The Romagna-Tuscany Cycle Route and the Coastal Dunes Park in Apulia.	

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The INHERIT Project fully intercepted a need that had matured during the pandemic, i.e. the need to rediscover nature and the natural heritage after the considerable restrictions made necessary to slow down the effects of the same pandemic. In this sense, a strong point is represented by the adoption of a bottom-up approach that has seen the involvement and active participation of all the actors in the area in the process of mapping and selecting the emergencies to be protected and enhanced.

Programme	Interreg MED
Project name	MITOMED+ - Models of Integrated Tourism in the MEDiterranean Plus
Budget	2.65 million
Period	From 01/02/2017 to 31/01/2019
Countries involved	Cyprus, Croatia, France, Italy, Spain
Italian partners	Tuscany Region (lead partner), ANCI Tuscany, National Research Council - Institute of Biometeorology
Website	https://mitomed-plus.interreg-med.eu/

MITOMED+ follows the previous MITOMED project, which promoted the integrated management of coastal and maritime tourism by improving knowledge of data, products and services through a set of indicators based on the NECSTouR model. MITOMED+ reinforces these results with the objective of improving the coordination of strategies between territories at a transnational level for the development of coastal and maritime tourism through cooperation and joint planning between regions.

The main objective of the project is to strengthen sustainability and responsibility in tourism by improving local and regional strategies and policies and by coordinating them at a wider MED transnational level. To achieve this objective, the project intends to increase knowledge and social dialogue on the development of sustainable and responsible coastal and maritime tourism in each partner region in order to improve decision-making, improve tourism planning at destination level and its coordination for transnational governance, integrate the results into local, regional and national policies, and create a Mediterranean-wide tourism management model. The project fosters collaboration between regional authorities and their networks, associations of local authorities, spatial development agencies, higher education institutions and research centres, which have the appropriate skills and experience in coastal and maritime tourism.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption of initiatives to strengthen the sustainability of tourism.	
Description	As part of the project, a 'Green Beach' model was created by studying existing best practices, standards and regulations and approving the methodologies and criteria to be used. This eco-sustainable beach model was tested on the public beaches identified by the partners.	
Relevant outputs	Model experimentation	2
Notes	The Model, in Italy, was tested in the Versilia municipalities (Castiglione della Pescaia, Montignoso, San Vincenzo).	

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Improved availability of online data.	
Description	Based on Necstour's experience, a system of indicators and an open and shared online platform collecting tourism data was developed to support local and regional policy makers.	
Relevant outputs	Platform for tourism data management.	1

Criteria	Partecipazione e empowerment	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Training for practitioners	
Description	At the regional level, events were organised to develop the management capacities of destinations.	
Relevant outputs	Regional events	5

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The project's main strength lies in its effective capacity to promote social dialogue with local and regional stakeholders through meetings and workshops aimed at sharing information and knowledge on coastal and maritime tourism management. In addition, the preparation of guidelines, e.g. on the set of indicators, the list of criteria for implementing the "Green Beach" model, elements for evaluating the initiatives taken, lay the foundations for transferring the results to other destinations.

Programme	Interreg MED
Project name	TOURISMED - Fishing TOURISM for a Sustainable tourism development in the MEDiterranean area
Budget	2.16 million
Period	From 01/02/2017 to 31/07/2019
Countries involved	Albania, Cyprus, Greece, France, Italy, Spain
Italian partners	Municipality of Trabia (Lead Partner), International Promotion Sicily-World - PRISM Promimpresa srl, Haliéus
Website	https://tourismed.interreg-med.eu/

TOURISMED is a project aimed at testing and transferring a business model for fisheries tourism in the coastal territories of Italy, Cyprus, Greece, Albania, France and Spain, as a tool to promote a sustainable approach to tourism, while fostering the conservation of the marine ecosystem and traditional fishing culture of the MED region.

The challenge in the identified territories is to find new solutions to the worrying depletion of marine resources, the decline of the artisanal fishing sector and the negative impacts of tourism, such as social dislocation, loss of cultural heritage and ecological degradation. In response, the aim of the project is to promote fisheries tourism as a sustainable coastal and maritime tourism practice in the MED area.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption of initiatives to strengthen the sustainability of tourism.	
Description	The project produced a pilot test of the fishing tourism business model and an evaluation tool to assess its replicability in the area concerned.	
Relevant outputs	Pilot Actions	2
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Haliéus pilot action: out of a total of 160 participants in the activities, 31 tour operators, 7 environmental operators, 4 journalists and the remainder tourists were involved (broken down as follows: 56% local, 32% regional, 5% national and 7% international). - Sicily pilot action: out of a total of 160 participants in the activities, the following were involved: 82 local tourists, 56 regional tourists, 22 international tourists, 13 local economic operators (including 7 restaurateurs, 5 hotel or B&B owners and one travel agency). 	

Criteria	Participation and empowerment	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Training for practitioners	
Description	Training courses were held for fishermen to implement tourist itineraries in synergy with local tour operators.	
Relevant outputs	Training Courses	2
Notes	In Italy, training courses were carried out in Sicily (Trabia) and Apulia (Mola and Torre Guaceto) involving a total of 30 fishermen.	

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The project aimed to trigger a change related to a better utilisation of resources by artisanal fishermen, a diversification of income in the sector and a better valorisation of the traditional coastal and local sea heritage. The strong point is certainly represented by the active and constant involvement of fishery workers, also through the cooperatives they belong to, in order to make them protagonists of the initiatives undertaken.

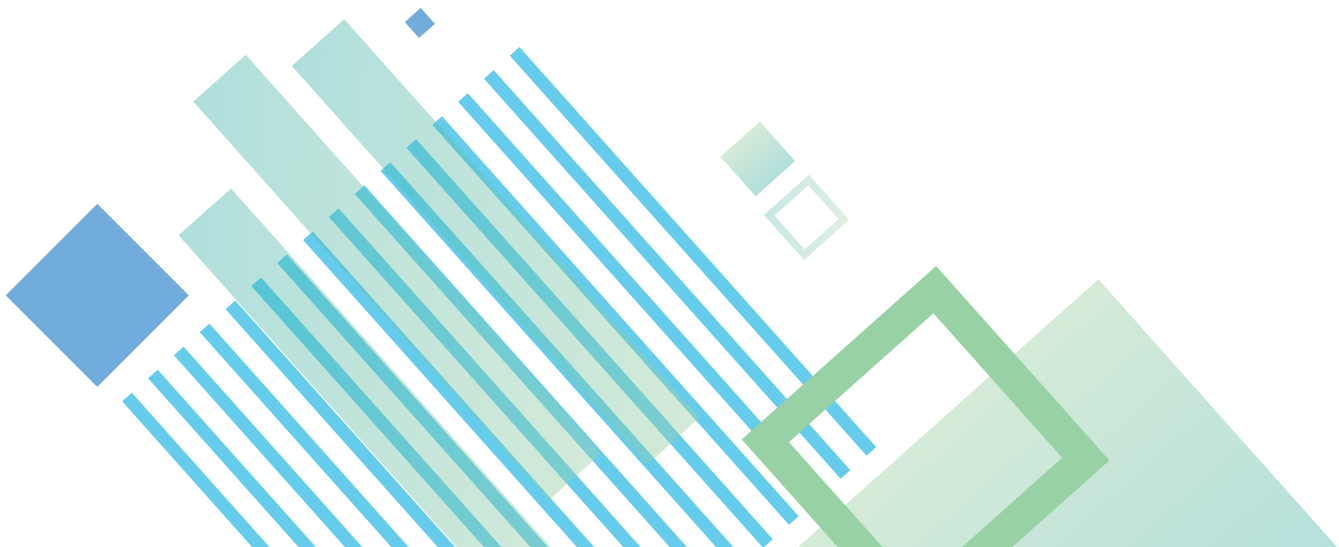


Project Evaluation Sheets



ENI
CBCMED

Cooperating across borders
in the Mediterranean



Programme	ENI CBC MED
Project name	CO-EVOLVE 4BG - Co-evolution of coastal human activities & Med natural systems for sustainable tourism & Blue Growth in the Mediterranean
Budget	2.9 million
Period	From 01/09/2019 to 31/08/2023
Countries involved	Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Spain, Tunisia,
Italian partners	Lazio Region
Website	https://www.enicbcmmed.eu/projects/co-evolve4bg

The **CO-EVOLVE4BG** project, which is part of the broader 'Med Coast for Blue Growth' project supported by the Union for the Mediterranean, starts from an awareness of the need to resolve real or potential conflicts that may arise, especially in coastal areas, between tourism and other possible uses of the same areas.

The objective is therefore to promote sustainable development forms for the promotion of territories, based on the principles of integrated coastal zone management and maritime spatial planning, while enhancing the potential related to the blue economy.

The activities involved a total of 7 pilot areas in the 5 countries involved, the selection of which took into account the possibility of obtaining concrete and transferable results. These areas were analysed with respect to threats and enabling factors for sustainable tourism, resulting in a toolkit containing a series of indicators useful for the authorities responsible for carrying out assessments and activating actions.

An important role in the implementation of the project is also attributed to training actions for partners and local actors involved in the pilot actions.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption of initiatives and new instruments to strengthen the sustainability of tourism.	
Description	In order to identify the most effective tools, also in support of policy, analyses on threats and enabling factors for sustainable tourism at the Mediterranean level were prepared, together with a toolkit for their measurement.	
Relevant outputs	Analysis	1
Notes	Toolkit containing indicators to analyse the level of sustainability of tourism.	1

Criteria	Governance	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Strengthening Public Private Partnerships	
Description	Pilot actions for the development of sustainable tourism were implemented in the target areas.	
Relevant outputs	Pilot actions	1

Criteria	Participation and empowerment	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Training for practitioners	
Description	In the same areas, training sessions were held for partners and local actors involved in the pilot actions	
Relevant outputs	Training sessions	2

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The CO-EVOLVE4BG project, the development and extension also in territorial terms of a previous project financed under the MED Programme (CO-EVOLVE), represents one of the instruments through which, in a broad context such as that of the Union for the Mediterranean, the theme of the co-evolution of human activities and natural ecosystems in coastal tourist areas has been brought to the attention of 43 Mediterranean countries that are members of the Organisation.

Its value, therefore, besides residing in the concreteness demonstrated by the demonstration actions aimed at creating business and job opportunities in the field of ecosystem-oriented services, maritime tourism and coastal management, lies in its ability to provide elements of comparison at the level of the entire Mediterranean basin, showing clear potential to be replicated and capitalised upon.

Programme	ENI CBC MED
Project name	COMMON - COastal Management and MONitoring Network for tackling marine litter in Mediterranean sea
Budget	2,223,421.00 euro
Period	From 03/09/2019 to 02/03/2023
Countries involved	Italy, Lebanon, Tunisia
Italian partners	Legambiente Onlus (lead partner), International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies - Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari University of Siena
Website	https://www.enicbcmed.eu/projects/common

The **COMMON** project, one of the flagship projects of the Agency for Territorial Cohesion, focuses on identifying tools and approaches to combat marine litter pollution, using the principles of integrated coastal zone management.

With the ambition of becoming a pilot experience to be transferred to the entire Mediterranean basin, within the project - still under implementation at the date of this report - activities have been carried out to deepen our knowledge of the phenomenon as well as concrete initiatives in pilot coastal areas with high environmental performance. In Italy, the pilot areas identified are the Maremma and Northern Apulia.

The project has also participated in the ENI CBC MED thematic cluster on integrated coastal management, with other projects such as CO-EVOLVE4BG, has already developed a number of synergies with other initiatives (e.g. FLAG and LIFE projects) and has been included in the UNEP network on pollution prevention in the Mediterranean Sea.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Mainstreaming	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Development of complementarity with the main areas of national and regional programming.	
Description	Preparing studies on the link between the marine litter issue and human activities on land.	
Relevant outputs	Studies.	10
Notes	The studies are related to: the description of the pilot areas, the state of the art of marine litter research in the pilot areas, the bibliographic review of the sources and impacts of marine litter on the environment and organisms in the Mediterranean, the monitoring and analysis carried out as part of the project on species of commercial interest, and the monitoring and analysis carried out as part of the project on sea turtles (live and dead specimens).	

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption of initiatives and new instruments to strengthen the sustainability of tourism.	
Description	Reports have been prepared with recommendations and best practices for improving marine pollution management, including in relation to governance.	
Relevant outputs	Report	1
Notes	The report, concerning Italy, provides an overview of the legislation in force with respect to the issue of plastics and litter in the sea, an overview of the state of marine litter contamination in the pilot areas considered by the project, resulting from the monitoring carried out within Common, an account of the stakeholder involvement and awareness-raising initiatives, and reports on what has emerged from the meetings and the experience gained during the project in terms of recommendations.	
Description	Establishment of a Network of Public Administrations and Coastal Cities.	
Relevant outputs	Network	14 Institutions involved
Notes	The Italian cities actively involved in the collection of good practices and meetings totalled 14: for the Maremma Castiglione della Pescaia, Orbetello, Follonica, Monte Argentario, Scarlino, Piombino, Grosseto and Isola Del Giglio; for the Salento Nardò, Tricase, Diso, Andrano, Castro, Porto Cesareo, Otranto, Taranto, Ostuni, Salve, Manduria and Castrignano Del Capo.	
Project results	Improved availability of online data	
Description	Implementation of an ICT platform for sharing methodologies and data on waste at sea.	
Relevant outputs	Platform	1

Criteria	Participation and empowerment	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Awareness-raising activities and involvement of local communities	
Description	Implementation of beach cleaning campaigns with the involvement of civil society organisations.	
Relevant outputs	Campaigns	9
Notes	Awareness-raising and community engagement campaigns and activities were diverse and took place throughout the three project years; thus, each campaign saw at least three editions. Local communities were involved in beach cleaning activities alongside citizen science activities, which involved categorising and collecting data on beach litter. More than 2000 people were involved throughout the project.	
Project results	Training for practitioners	
Description	Training and information campaigns on waste management at sea were carried out.	
Relevant outputs	Trained persons	9
Notes	Within the COMMON project, a total of 9 workshops were held between the two pilot areas with different categories of stakeholders and policy makers. The main objective of the workshops was to form a group of professionals to monitor and try to better manage beach litter in coastal areas. Representatives of local administrations, tourism managers and fishermen were the main stakeholders.	

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The issue of marine litter is of interest to all the countries of the Mediterranean basin which, albeit with different sensitivities, participate in different Programmes and projects to improve governance tools and operational methods for the management and prevention of the phenomenon, in compliance, for example, with the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

In this sense, the strength of the COMMON project is the adoption of an integrated and multi-stakeholder approach in the implementation of the planned activities, which saw the active involvement of civil society in marine litter removal activities, and the exchange of good practices and experiences between local institutions at the Mediterranean level.

Programme	ENI CBC MED
Project name	CROSSDEV - Cultural Routes for Sustainable Social and economic Development in the Mediterranean
Budget	2.51 million
Period	From 01/09/2019 to 31/08/2023
Countries involved	Jordan, Italy, Lebanon, Palestine
Italian partners	International Committee for the Development of Peoples (lead partner) Cultural Cooperative Society, Ministry of Culture
Website	https://www.enicbcmed.eu/projects/crossdev

The **CROSSDEV** project, included among the flagship projects of the Agency for Territorial Cohesion, aims at the definition and development of innovative models of tourism supply with a specific focus on cultural itineraries. The strategic reference context is represented by the cultural itineraries certified by the Council of Europe, to which we refer to follow the main indications.

The enhancement of the itineraries passes through the strengthening of infrastructures for the tourist use of the sites and the creation of a network between local communities and places linked by common history and heritage.

The activities implemented by the CROSSDEV project in the individual territories involved culminate in the establishment of a cross-border tourism framework designed to strengthen sustainable tourism policies, promote related activities and develop community-led action plans.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption of initiatives and new instruments to strengthen the sustainability of tourism.	
Description	Preparation of sustainable and innovative tourism products / Local action plans for the promotion of lesser-known tourist destinations.	
Relevant outputs	Local Action Plans	1
Project results	Adoption of initiatives to digitise the skills of practitioners.	
Description	The active involvement of private actors in new tourism initiatives took place via a territorial Digital ICT platform.	
Relevant outputs	Platform	1
Project results	Adoption of initiatives to digitise processes and improve the services offered by tourism enterprises and their quality.	
Description	Participation of economic operators in cross-border trade events was supported.	
Relevant outputs	Corporate events for business networks	2

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The added value of the CROSSDEV project lies in having valorised the role of NGOs in the framework of the activities implemented and, through them, having privileged the involvement of local communities in the processes of enhancing the places and cultural itineraries that pass through them. A significant boost was thus given to so-called proximity and community tourism: a form of tourism whose importance emerged later, as a result of the negative effects of the pandemic on mass tourism and national and international tourist flows.

Finally, the framework of the actors involved is completed with the Italian Ministry of Culture, involved in the partnership with the specific role of facilitator of the processes at national level and 'giver' for the transfer of good practices also in terms of governance.

CROSSDEV also focused on improving and strengthening skills and knowledge, contributing to better tourism practices for the benefit of socio-economic development and inclusion in local communities.

Programme	ENI CBC MED
Project name	MedArtSal - sustainable management model for Mediterranean Artisanal Salinas
Budget	EUR 3.2 million
Period	From 01/09/2019 to 31/08/2023
Countries involved	Italy, Lebanon, Spain, Tunisia
Italian partners	University Consortium for Industrial and Managerial Economics (lead partner) Mediterranean Sea and Coast Foundation
Website	https://www.enicbcmed.eu/projects/medartsal

Closing down, industrialising production or changing commercial orientation towards sustainable tourism and new artisanal products: this is the fate of the Mediterranean salt pans, increasingly subject to environmental pressure or competition from salt produced in lands with a lower market value. **MEDARTSAL** draws added value from the critical situation, even aiming at the economic, social and environmental revitalisation of the sector. It starts by defining a sustainable and adaptable management model for artisanal salt pans, including a marketing plan for promotion and a biodiversity strategy. The project addresses both salt-pan managers and institutional policy-makers. On the one hand, the former receive up-to-date training on how to run an artisanal salt works in order to remain competitive, especially by diversifying their products. On the other hand, institutional policy makers help build the management model. Finally, to capitalise on the results of the project in the long term, the creation of a network of artisanal Mediterranean salt pans is also planned. Thus, new businesses, products and related services (e.g. tourism or logistics) based precisely on the valorisation of salt products.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Participation and empowerment	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Training for practitioners	
Description	For the benefit of the artisanal salt pans identified in Italy, and more specifically in Emilia-Romagna and Sicily, specific business models have been prepared, with the involvement of the owners of the salt pans themselves, in order to combine the economic valorisation and tourist enhancement of the sites.	
Relevant outputs	Business Models	2
Notes	1 for the Cervia salt mine, 1 for the salt mine of Hector and Infersa	

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The most qualified element of the project is the experimentation in salt-pan management through a better use of natural resources, following a sustainable development model that is also consistent with the need to enhance these places and make them usable for tourism. This approach aims to improve and increase employment opportunities related to salt production, as well as to create greater awareness among communities and public institutions of the importance of salt pans for local economies.

Programme	ENI CBC MED
Project name	MED GAIMS - GAMIFICATION for Memorable tourist experiences
Budget	2.3 million
Period	From 01/09/2019 to 31/12/2022
Countries involved	Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Spain
Italian partners	Alghero Foundation
Website	https://www.enicbcmmed.eu/projects/med-gaims

The objective of the **MED GAIMS** project is to develop games in physical and virtual format to create real experiences for tourists, giving a necessary competitive edge to the attractiveness of lesser known sites. In this way, it seeks to increase tourist flows, covering all niches and segments such as off-season travellers, creating job opportunities and start-ups for entrepreneurs in the field of games. The concept of 'experiential tourism', centred on gamification, is therefore central. At a later stage, to conceptualise and implement the games, activities were carried out to involve local communities, and to develop self-entrepreneurship and start-up initiatives.

The aim is not only to create new job/commercial opportunities for young people, women and local SMEs, but also to improve the tourist consideration of destinations through culturally tested experiences, encouraging exploration of different sites, longer stays and returns.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption of initiatives and new instruments to strengthen the sustainability of tourism.	
Description	Thanks to the MED GAIMS project, the Alghero foundation realised 10 pilot initiatives identified in the digital and analogue games devised, now real cultural and tourist products for citizens and visitors 5 games were realised 'in-house' directly by the Fondazione Alghero, another 5 through a subgranting action provided for by the project, which saw the realisation of two 'competitions' - HACKATON- for young professionals, start-ups, creatives entering the world of gaming and gamification applied to cultural heritage. The hackathons and workshops were supposed to be held in presence, but due to covid were realised entirely online.	
Relevant outputs	Pilot initiatives (game applications developed for tourist sites).	10
Notes	Pilot initiatives - GAMES dedicated to the area's cultural heritage.	

Criteria	Participation and empowerment	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Training for practitioners	
Description	Workshops were set up for experts from different IT fields, such as software developers, programmers and graphic designers.	
Relevant outputs	Workshops	2
Notes	Kit of documents and best practices created at project level for anyone wishing to implement gamification practices.	
Relevant outputs	1 gamification toolkit to support current and future game entrepreneurs.	1
Description	Fondazione Alghero organised two public meetings: The aim of the initiative was to stimulate discussions between start-ups and game designers with cultural enterprises, institutions, organisations and bodies active in the tourism and cultural sector, interested in exploring tourism and audience development strategies through gamification.	
Relevant outputs	Gamification-for-Tourism fairs: an international meeting in each country dedicated to promoting awareness of the potential of gamification, to show evidence of its effectiveness and to further support clustering between private operators and/or the development of local partnerships between public and private stakeholders for the development of gamification initiatives.	2
Notes	The first, at the opening of the summer season, to publicly present the system of 10 games created called Play Alghero open to citizens and the tourist and cultural sector in the area. The second, more technical meeting took place in December and involved over 60 tourism and cultural operators from all over Sardinia. The meeting was attended by national and international game designers, invited to deepen their understanding of the role of gamification applied to tourism and cultural policies through the presentation of best practices and innovative projects in the sector. During the course of the day, the designers also presented the games they had created and supported interested parties in testing the game experiences.	

Criteria	Cultural and social innovation	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Development of entrepreneurial initiatives	
Relevant outputs	Creative and cultural competitions	2

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The MED GAIMS project constituted an important opportunity for growth and development for the Fondazione Alghero and for the activity it is called upon to perform as an instrumental body of the Municipality of Alghero. Growth thanks to a well-established partnership of organisations and people who, despite the two-year halt, have worked tirelessly, activating a system of mutual management and verification, suggestions and support with respect to a theme where we all found ourselves learning from the experiences we were trying to implement. From a management and operational point of view, this cultural and knowledge contamination I believe is one of the main points of the project. With regard to the sustainability of the project, Fondazione Alghero, from the outset, recognised the potential of gamification for the realisation of new visit modes and tourist products that would 'help' a destination such as Alghero to become more of a cultural destination rather than a mere seaside resort during the high season.

Programme	ENI CBC MED
Project name	MED PEARLS - The Mediterranean as an innovative, integral and unique destination for Slow Tourism initiatives
Budget	3.0 million
Period	From 01/09/2019 to 31/05/2023
Countries involved	Egypt, Jordan, Greece, Italy, Palestine, Spain
Italian partners	Mediterranean Pearls aps
Website	https://www.enicbcmed.eu/projects/med-pearls

The central theme in the **MED PEARLS** project is so-called Slow tourism, through which travellers are to be involved in the discovery of new destinations through knowledge of and direct contact with local communities.

The objective is to create new tourism products in the territories involved (for Italy, the Sabina Teatina and the Etna Alcantara) with the involvement of destination management companies and ICT companies, thanks to the financial and technical support called "Product Development and Innovation Facilities".

The idea is to design similar experiences, based on product types and themes agreed upon by the partners, to enable all travellers to have experiences of the same quality. These products, once tested and consolidated, will be the driving force for tourism promotion not only for local markets but also for international ones - such as the USA, Canada, Northern Europe, Russia or Asia - with the planning of inclusive marketing and market strategies.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption of initiatives and new instruments to strengthen the sustainability of tourism.	
Description	Action plans for the implementation of slow tourism strategies in pilot areas.	
Relevant outputs	Action plans	1
Description	Slow Tourism products and ICT solutions were realised.	
Relevant outputs	Products of Slow Tourism	26
	ICT solutions	6

Criteria	Partecipazione e empowerment	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Training for practitioners	
Description	Realisation of training courses on the development, marketing and promotion of Slow Tourism products.	
Relevant outputs	Training courses	1

Criteria	Cultural and social innovation	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Development of entrepreneurial initiatives	
Description	Creation of structures for product development and innovation in the area of slow tourism	
Relevant outputs	Structures created	1
Description	Marketing and visibility initiatives were implemented to promote the tourism products and destinations developed	
Relevant outputs	Initiatives realised	1

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The positive effects of MED PEARLS activities are linked to the creation of job opportunities resulting from the development of Slow Tourism products and the associated extension of the average length of stay of travellers in a territorial area of the Mediterranean space. On the one hand, lesser-known tourist areas are promoted by exploiting local resources in a sustainable and responsible manner; on the other hand, local communities and businesses play an essential role in the creation of TS products. But it is the 'cross-selling' strategy that ensures that the Mediterranean is marketed as an integral tourist destination, and not simply as the sum of different markets. With this approach, the aim is to train 390 people in the development, marketing and protection of Slow Tourism products. Other expected results are: 2 structures for product development and innovation in the TS sector, 26 sector products and 6 ICT solutions, 40 marketing and visibility initiatives to promote and develop tourism products and destinations, 13 action plans for the implementation of Slow Tourism strategies in pilot areas.

Programme	ENI CBC MED
Project name	MEDUSA - Development and promotion of Mediterranean Sustainable Adventure Tourism
Budget	3.3 million
Period	From 01/09/2019 to 30/04/2023
Countries involved	Jordan, Italy, Lebanon, Spain, Tunisia
Italian partners	Apulia Region
Website	https://www.enicbcmed.eu/projects/medusa

MEDUSA responds to the challenges of the tourism sector in the Mediterranean area by presenting a new offer of sustainable cross-border tourism products and services, based on the components of promotion of outdoor and sports activities, enhancement of natural heritage and experiential tourism. The project is therefore aimed at supporting the growth of the sector through the development of know-how for the operators involved, with a specific focus on the Adventure Tourism segment, which grew by 195% between 2010 and 2014. Through planning and a series of tests on roads and itineraries, the aim is to contribute to job creation (especially for women and young people) and to increase the turnover of local communities in the medium and long term. Targeted and interconnected development of both cross-border capacities and actions also brings with it an additional benefit: to discover little-known destinations and attract tourists all year round, thus supporting a more balanced distribution of flows in terms of seasonality and geographical areas.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Mainstreaming	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Development of complementarity with the main areas of national and regional programming.	
Description	Five tourist clusters have been identified in the Apulia region, which are representative of the entire regional territory and include parks and nature areas. The focus on adventure tourism has made it possible to further expand the regional strategies on the deseasonalisation of tourist flows. The outcome of the process thus led to the definition of an agreement between all stakeholders to strengthen regional governance in the field of sustainable tourism.	
Relevant outputs	Agreement with regional stakeholders	1

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The project focuses on the environmental footprint of tourism activities through the preservation of biodiversity, flora and fauna, natural resources and local communities. After an initial phase that led to the elaboration of an analytical report on adventure tourism, the direct involvement of local stakeholders, in particular SMEs in the tourism sector, was particularly relevant, also considering the provision of scholarships and participation in training courses and specialised fairs. The MEDUSA project thus contributed to the revival of the tourism sector, which was hard hit by the pandemic, by offering concrete opportunities to transform the tourism model into a sustainable and competitive patent. The driving force behind this approach was the opening of three cross-border adventure tourism routes, itineraries and day trips, plus a market strategy to establish relationships with tour operators and travel agencies.

Programme	ENI CBC MED
Project name	iHERITAGE: ICT Mediterranean platform for UNESCO cultural heritage
Budget	3.8 million
Period	From 15/09/2020 to 31/12/2023
Countries involved	Egypt, Jordan, Italy, Lebanon, Portugal, Spain
Italian partners	Sicily Region - Department of Tourism (lead partner) Circuit of castles and medieval villages University of Palermo - Department of Architecture
Website	https://www.enicbcmed.eu/projects/iheritage

The objective of the **IHERITAGE** project is to create a Mediterranean ICT platform for a better knowledge and valorisation of the UNESCO heritage sites in the territories involved in the project (for Italy, the Villa del Casale archaeological park in Piazza Armerina. This is based on close cooperation between industry and universities, the realisation of Living Labs and the creation of spin-offs.

The aim is to improve and enrich the level of understanding of UNESCO's cultural heritage in the Mediterranean by using 'Augmented Reality' (AR), 'Virtual Reality' (VR) and 'Mixed Reality' (MR) as the latest available ICT technologies to create an innovation-driven growth process for augmented and immersive experiences.

Last but not least, the project also aims to increase and improve employment opportunities by promoting the active involvement of young people (especially NEETs) and women, among the target groups of Living Labs, training courses and spin-off creation.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption of initiatives and new instruments to strengthen the sustainability of tourism.	
Relevant outputs	New innovative products/services to increase the valorisation of intangible cultural heritage.	1
	Creation of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding and Enhancement of the Mediterranean Intangible Cultural Heritage (CRESPIEM).	1
Criteria	Governance	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Strengthening Public Private Partnerships	
Relevant outputs	Research agreements between universities and enterprises	1

Criteria	Participation and empowerment	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Training for practitioners	
Relevant outputs	Prepared training programmes	1

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The iHERITAGE Project intercepts a need that emerged for the tourism sector following the crisis caused by the pandemic, i.e. to enable a different way of getting to know and enjoy cultural sites of particular value, specifically those on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

This objective, pursued through the use of new technologies and the development of innovative AR/VR/MR multimedia content, culminates in the creation of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding and Enhancement of the Mediterranean Intangible Cultural Heritage.

These are some of the world's most important tangible and intangible cultural assets, 6 of which are in Sicily, grouped in the first ICT cluster of the Mediterranean UNESCO cultural heritage, capable of stimulating the entrepreneurial skills of young people, staff of public institutions and researchers through training courses.



Project Evaluation Sheets

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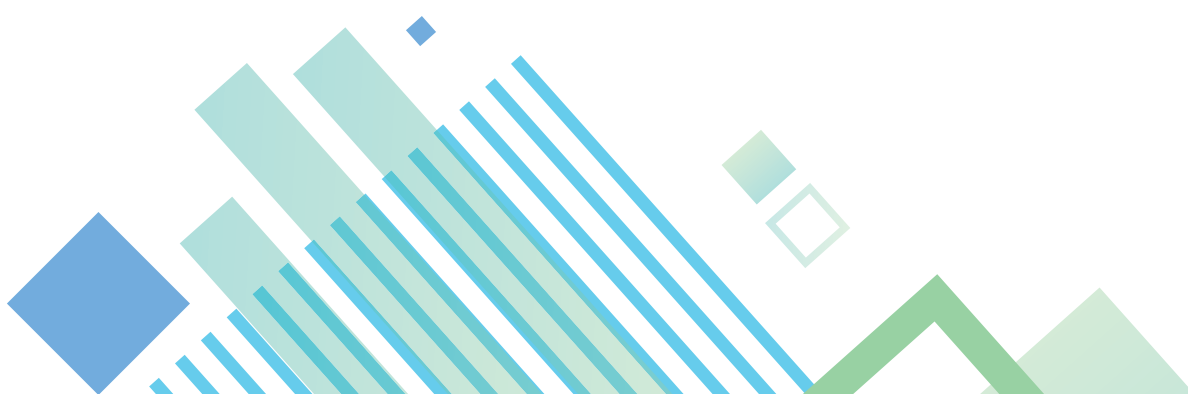


EUROPEAN UNION

ADRION

ADRIATIC-IONIAN

European Regional Development Fund - Instrument for Pre-Accession II Fund



ADRIATICAVES ADRIATICAVES PLUS



Programme	ADRION
Project name	ADRIATICAVES - Sustainable management and tourist promotion of natural and archaeological heritage in the Adriatic Caves ADRIATICAVES Plus - Sustainable management and tourist promotion of natural and archaeological heritage in the Adriatic Caves PLUS
Budget	ADRIATICAVES: 1.33 million euros; ADRIATICAVES Plus: EUR 0.17 million
Period	ADRIATICAVES: From 1 January 2018 to 31 March 2021 ADRIATICAVES Plus - From 1 January 2022 to 30 June 2022
Countries involved	Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia
Italian partners	Majella National Park Authority (lead partner) Parks and Biodiversity Management Authority - Romagna
Website	https://adriaticaves.adrioninterreg.eu/

The objective of the **ADRIATICAVES** project is to promote, also for tourism purposes, the natural and archaeological heritage in the caves in the territories participating in the project, to be networked, also through training activities and the transfer of good practices.

The promotion of caves passes through the development of a joint cross-border platform for sustainable tourism in the Adriatic area, aimed at the implementation of new sustainable tourism management models, functional to the reduction of the seasonality of tourism and the marketing of products and services.

The objective of the subsequent project, **ADRIATICAVES PLUS**, is to enhance and extend the impact of the ADRIATICAVES project and to introduce a pilot action to assess how digital innovation can support the enhancement of historical and natural sites.

The most important innovation of Adriaticaves Plus is a pilot action on the potential of digital innovation and, in particular, on 3D reconstructions of sites as an innovative tool to overcome travel and travel restrictions resulting from the Covid pandemic19.

3D reconstructions will be implemented in three caves in Italy belonging to the Majella National Park territory. Part of this innovation was developed in the last part of the Adriaticaves project and relates to the 3D reconstruction of Grotta Nera, Grotta Scura, Grotta delle Praje and Grotta del Cavallone.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption of initiatives and new instruments to strengthen the sustainability of tourism.	
Description	The Charter is a specification signed by 26 cave managers whereby they undertake to respect and implement the provisions of the Charter, which are aimed at ensuring tourist accessibility to the sites, while respecting the primary requirements of habitat conservation.	
Relevant outputs	The Cave Map	1
Description	Tourist packages are the operational tool to attract sustainable tourism to the sites, developed together with local tourism entrepreneurs.	
Relevant outputs	Tourist Packages.	3
Notes	1) Cave of Onferno - (1 day - Season: all year) 2) Grotta di Re Tiberio e Tanaccia (2 days - Season: from April to October) 3) Tanaccia, Re Tiberio and Onferno Caves (4 days - Season: April to October).	
Project results	Adoption of initiatives to digitise processes and improve the services offered by tourism businesses and their quality.	
Description	The use of 3D reproduction is intended to assess how and to what extent digital innovations can replace or support in-person visits on site. The experience of the pandemic and its impact on the tourism sector show that innovative solutions are possible to enjoy places, even if it is not possible to stay there.	
Relevant outputs	3D reconstruction of sites.	4
Notes	The reproductions involve 4 caves: Grotta Nera, Grotta Scura, Grotta delle Praje and Grotta del Cavallone, all in the Maiella National Park area.	
Criteria	Participation and empowerment	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Awareness-raising activities and involvement of local communities.	
Description	Questionnaires were administered to users and key figures (managers, tourism and digital innovation experts, public administrators) to provide feedback on operations.	
Relevant outputs	Interview questionnaires (visitors/tourists who have experienced caving) administered and completed.	64
Notes	ADRIATICAVES: 12 at the Onferno cave and 25 at the Tanaccia cave. ADRIATICAVES PLUS: 27 interview questionnaires administered and completed, of which: 20 on the evaluation of the effectiveness of the 3D representations of the caves and 7 on the evaluation of the workshops.	
Project results	Training for practitioners	
Relevant outputs	Training activities and transfer of good practices.	3
Notes	ADRIATICAVES: Training/update course for caver-guides - no. of participants: 16 ADRIATICAVES PLUS: n.2 Training/updating workshops on the importance of caves and their characteristics, management of tourist caves and caving techniques and good practices. No. of participants: 18.	

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The most important element of the two projects is the use of 3D technology to support better knowledge and enjoyment of the project's target sites. This not only allowed a more effective enhancement of the caves, but also intercepted a wider segment of tourists who were also actively involved in the activities. In particular, the administration of satisfaction questionnaires on the tourist experience conducted was an effective tool for evaluating and monitoring the initiatives implemented.

APPRODI APPRODI Plus



Programme	ADRION
Project name	APPRODI and APPRODI Plus
Budget	APPRODI: EUR 0.97 million APPRODI Plus: EUR 0.18 million
Period	APPRODI: 1 January 2018 to 28 February 2021 APPRODI Plus: 1 January to 30 June 2022
Countries involved	Albania, Croatia, Greece, Italy
Italian partners	APPRODI: University of Teramo (Lead Partner), Municipality of Ortona, Ca' Foscari University of Venice APPRODI Plus: University of Teramo (LP), Ca' Foscari University of Venice
Website	https://approdi.adrioninterreg.eu

The **APPRODI** project, included among the flagship Projects of the Agency for Territorial Cohesion, aims at enhancing the value of the ancient ports of the Adriatic-Ionian area. The territories involved, for Italy Venice (Torcello) and Ortona represent landing areas of ancient trade routes, often considered uninteresting from a tourist point of view. These landing places, in fact, are distinguished by a high unexpressed potential, especially as destinations of new forms of eco-sustainable tourism: a tourism that aims at the enhancement of the historical and cultural heritage and the protection of natural resources, through an active involvement of the community and local stakeholders. The project therefore intends to exploit and enhance the growth potential of these ancient port sites as cultural tourism destinations.

The identified sites were first subjected to geo-archaeological surveys and then new forms of cultural tourism were developed, including the active participation of stakeholders, local communities and tourists. In the case of the pilot area of the Early Medieval Port of Venice, the public and tourists were able to participate in the archaeological excavations and restoration processes, having the opportunity to interact with archaeologists and scientists, in a 'live archaeology' perspective. These activities also usefully enhanced the Torcello Archaeological Museum as a tourist destination, including it in the tourist circuit and tour operators' itineraries.

The **APPRODI PLUS** project is an extension of APPRODI, the impact of which it intends to strengthen and broaden, proposing innovative approaches for the identification of new models of tourism planning, also by resorting to the application of artificial intelligence models.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption of initiatives and new instruments to strengthen the sustainability of tourism.	
Relevant outputs	Dedicated web platform www.approdi.eu	1
	Creation of the Approdi brand (logo, corporate image)	1
	Five-year action plan	1
	Valorisation manual	1
	Online video courses and teaching materials to train operators in sustainable tourism.	18
	Archaeological excavations and underwater investigations	4

Criteria	Governance	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Improving heritage knowledge tools	
Description	The initial phase of the project was characterised by an intensive study activity that broadened and improved the knowledge of the sites, strengthening the capacity of the administrations and bodies involved to manage and promote them.	
Relevant outputs	GIS map of ancient harbours	1
	Interactive map of ancient harbours and related tourist attractions	1
	Monograph of ancient ports - Adrion Charter Routes ebook	1
	Promotional videos Landings	1
Project results	Strengthening Public Private Partnerships	
Relevant outputs	Creation of a network of traders and key stakeholders	10
	Creation of a memorandum of understanding - memorandum of understanding.	
Notes	Corfu, Durres, Dubrovnik, Ortona, Novigrad, Durres Port Authority, Municipality of Porto San Giorgio, Municipality of Mljet, Municipality of Konavle, Municipality of Lumbarda.	

Criteria	Partecipazione e empowerment	Indicators
Project results	Awareness-raising activities and involvement of local communities	(quantification)
Relevant outputs	Local focus groups (Landing) Questionnaire on the effects of the pandemic on the tourism sector (PLUS Landings).	5
Notes	The questionnaire was administered to the network of local stakeholders: the good practices that emerged were included in a new version of the Memorandum of Understanding.	
Project results	Training for practitioners	
Relevant outputs	Training courses (both in-person and online) to educate tour operators on the possibilities of new forms of sustainable tourism (Landing). Creation of an e-learning section in the Landings portal with video courses and teaching material dedicated to ancient ports and sustainable tourism.	

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The main challenge faced by the APPRODI project is that of enhancing the economic growth potential of ancient port sites that are often unused as ecotourism destinations, as they are considered marginal to the development of cities, and therefore unattractive to visitors. To achieve this objective, the project focused on the active involvement of local communities, whose participation in specific moments of the project, such as the excavation campaigns, is certainly the most relevant element that emerges from the analysis conducted.

Added to this activity are awareness-raising actions and thematic events aimed at commercial operators and key stakeholders to promote the new destinations and include them in existing tourist circuits.

Programme	ADRION
Project name	EMOUNDERGROUNDS - Emotional technologies for the cultural heritage valorisation within cross-border undergrounds
Budget	2.6 million
Period	1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022
Countries involved	Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Slovenia
Italian partners	Municipality of Nardò (lead partner), Municipality of Carpi
Website	https://emoundergrounds.adrioninterreg.eu/

The **EMOUNDERGROUNDS** project aimed to make a concrete contribution to enhancing the richness and potential of the cultural assets present in the territories concerned, in order to contribute to the sustainable, smart and inclusive growth of these territories, focusing on the cultural and creative industries sector.

The objective was pursued through the creation of a new common cultural-creative tourism product, through changes in public policies for the management of cultural heritage/tourism, the integration of tourism services and the involvement of the skills of the cultural-creative industries.

Project activities included the active involvement of all actors of the public-private system for a better management of the tourism product, the development of joint emotional paths between cultural sites, capacity building, intercultural contamination and dissemination.

The project proposed innovative solutions to increase the user experience potential through virtual reality rooms, smart mobile applications, holographic demonstrations, and interactive screens/projections.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Governance	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Strengthening Public Private Partnerships	
Description	Establishment of a network between creative cultural tourism operators (at project and cluster level), from 8 different states of the Adriatic-Ionian Regions, such as: Italy, Greece, Croatia, Slovenia, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia.	
Relevant outputs	Network	1
Notes	The moments of confrontation for the setting up of the Network were: ten Territorial Animation meetings in the project territories and one meeting at Transnational level among the operators of the creative and cultural tourism supply chain. Participants are: - Tourist service management bodies; - Cultural site management bodies; - Hospitality and SMEs; - Public authorities (local and national); - Interest groups, including NGOs; - Education/training centres/schools; - Sectoral agencies; - Higher education/research bodies.	

Criteria	Participation and empowerment	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Awareness-raising activities and involvement of local communities	
Description	In each project area, intercultural events were held that animated the local communities involved in the project ADRION areas, promoting their identity and local resources of the cultural and creative industries.	
Relevant outputs	Intercultural events	2
Notes	The events were realised over a time span from the first year of the project start-up (2020), until its conclusion (December 2022), in a mixed mode, live and live-streaming.	

Criteria	Investment and Financing	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Induced new investments	
Description	Ten cultural attractions upgraded, enhanced and promoted, thanks to small-scale investments consisting of pilot applications implemented throughout the life of the project with technological, multimedia and interactive installations for a better management, use and enhancement of the selected cultural sites.	
Relevant outputs	Small-scale investments	10
Notes	The pilot actions were implemented in Nardò and Carpi in Italy. These new diversified cultural emotional displays had a demonstrative character in that they were able to go beyond the experiential cultural tourism practices and techniques used at local level, thanks to pilot applications of advanced multimedia technologies such as virtual reality rooms, intelligent mobile applications, holographic demos, interactive projections able to bring historical or legendary characters to life, and cultural content related to these cultural attractions.	

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The qualifying element of the project is undoubtedly the establishment of the 'EMOUNDERGROUNDS NETWORK', a transnational network of creative and cultural industries (CCIs) and tourism stakeholders set up to promote a common transnational cultural-cultural tourism product. The partners sanctioned this collaboration by signing a Memorandum of Understanding in which public and private stakeholders from the cultural-creative and tourism sectors participate, working synergistically to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of the participating tourist destinations.

The Network was conceived as an open network created with a long-term perspective to improve performance in cultural tourism management, which guarantees not only the sustainability of the project as a whole but also the transfer of the results achieved.

Programme	ADRION
Project name	INNOXENIA - Innovation in Tourism in the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion
Budget	1.06 million
Period	From 01/01/2018 to 31/12/2020
Countries involved	Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Slovenia
Italian partners	University of Bologna, Punto Europa Consortium, Province of Rimini
Website	https://innoxenia.adrioninterreg.eu/#Phase1

The main objective of **INNOXENIA** is the creation of a Tourism Innovation Observatory, with which to network the actors of the quadruple helix in order to build strategies, policies and investments aimed at improving the sustainability and competitiveness of tourist destinations and businesses in the territories involved. To this end, a sustainable tourism model was identified by identifying the most appropriate areas of common interest, mapping existing research and innovation in the area and ensuring coordination with the Adriatic and Ionian region, regional and national RIS3 strategies, innovation governance initiatives and existing networks.

The Observatory is supported by a Decision Support Platform to assess the impact on the sustainability and competitiveness of tourist destinations of potential interventions on facilities and services. The project aims to improve the innovation capacity of the ADRION tourism sector, with a strong focus on innovative products, processes and services that can complement the natural and cultural offer. Following a process of consultation, sharing and stakeholder involvement, a Strategic Agenda on Tourism Innovation was produced, outlining the strategy for enhancing tourism innovation, further reinforced by an Action Plan with policy recommendations and guidelines for investments, as well as potential accessible funding.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption of initiatives and new instruments to strengthen the sustainability of tourism.	
Description	A Tourism Innovation Observatory was created as a platform for modelling innovative tourism ADRION, equipped with a Decision Support System on Tourism Innovation to assess the impact of potential interventions on the competitiveness and sustainability of tourist destinations, facilities and services.	
Relevant outputs	Tourism Innovation Observatory	1
Criteria	Governance	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Strengthening Public Private Partnerships	
Description	Through the Innoxenia Cafés, public and private bodies were involved to help define innovative tools and processes for sustainable tourism.	
Relevant outputs	Meetings with various stakeholders	4

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The INNOXENIA project aimed to impact on the definition of regional and local tourism strategies, focusing on technology transfer and capacity building of the public and private sector, leading to a regional tourism innovation system in the area. Also in the framework of the Observatory's creation, the use of the European Tourism Sustainability Indicator System (ETIS) and Good Practice Databases, such as NECSTouR's Network of European Regions for Sustainable and Competitive Tourism, was particularly relevant.

Innovation in the tourism sector was therefore identified as the key to ensuring the socio-economic growth of the area, which is only possible if it can cope with changes in demand and tourist behaviour and adapt to new emerging markets.

QNEST QNEST PLUS



Programme	ADRION
Project name	QNeST - Quality Network on Sustainable Tourism QNeST PLUS - Quality Network on Sustainable Tourism PLUS
Budget	QNeST - EUR 1.47 million QNeST PLUS - EUR 0.15 million
Period	QNeST - 01/01/2018 to 31 December 2020, QNeST Plus - from 01/01/2022 to 30 June 2022
Countries involved	QNeST - Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Slovenia QNeST PLUS - Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro
Italian partners	University of Salento (lead partner), Veneto Regional Union of Chambers of Commerce - Eurosportello, Labirinto Cooperativa Sociale ONLUS
Website	https://qnest.adrioninterreg.eu/

The main objective of the **QNEST** project is to enhance the cultural and environmental heritage and traditions of the Adriatic-Ionian area, through a participative, innovative and co-operative approach at transnational level, able to promote the interaction between public and private stakeholders, such as local and traditional operators, tourism service providers, craftsmen, sector experts, local communities, cultural, social and environmental institutions and associations.

Particular attention was paid to the ability to preserve and promote cultural heritage, to implement environmentally sustainable initiatives, to promote and valorise the food and wine traditions of the Mediterranean Diet and to enhance the development of accessible services.

Finally, the QNeST project identified a common strategy with the launch of demonstration and innovation initiatives to stimulate the exchange of information between project partners and an ICT platform to foster the exchange of information between network members.

The **QNeST PLUS** project aims to further disseminate the results achieved by the QNeST project by promoting closer co-operation between policy-makers and tourism operators in the Adriatic-Ionian region for the identification of cultural itineraries to be valorised also with a common brand. A further objective pursued with QNeST Plus is to improve the 'edutainment' experience for tourists, also through the QNeST platform, a strategic IT tool with which to reach the widest possible audience for the brand created.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption of initiatives to digitise processes and improve the services offered by tourism businesses and their quality.	
Description	As a tool for promoting the identified routes and the Qnest brand, a platform was created.	
Relevant outputs	QNeST platform	1

Criteria	Governance	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Strengthening Public Private Partnerships	
Description	Meetings, international events, videos and training material were organised.	
Relevant outputs	As part of the events, special attention was paid to raising the awareness of regional stakeholders on sustainable tourism issues and launching natural and cultural heritage itineraries in the region as a driver for the regeneration of sustainable tourism post-Covid.	1 Pilot route Abano Montegrotto
Project results	Strengthening Public Private Partnerships	
Description	The promotion of itineraries has been strengthened.	
Relevant outputs	Itineraries	4
Notes	The itineraries are: Wine and olive oil routes; the Ways of Merchants, Pilgrims and Travellers; the Stone Ways; the Waterways.	

Criteria	Participation and empowerment	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Awareness-raising activities and involvement of local communities.	
Description	Local participatory workshops were held to develop new quality tourism solutions based on co-design processes.	1
Notes	Workshop with Abano Montegrotto stakeholders	

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The QNEST project created and strengthened synergies and cooperation in the territories involved to capitalise on and share good practices; to improve awareness of tourism potential at transnational level; to disseminate innovative marketing techniques and methodologies to respond to changes in tourism demand; and to promote better communication and support for new quality initiatives.

Within this framework, the project's strong point was certainly that of having fostered greater collaboration between all the territorial actors involved in the design of environmentally friendly tourist packages, targeting niches of tourist demand at a local and transnational level. This result was also achieved through a better knowledge of the territories' tourism potential, through the mapping of cultural and natural resources and the identification of good practices.

Programme	ADRION
Project name	WONDER - Child friendly destinations
Budget	1.7 million
Period	From 01/02/2020 to 31/03/2022
Countries involved	Albania, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Slovenia
Italian partners	Municipality of Fano (leader), Municipality of Cervia
Website	https://wonder.adrioninterreg.eu/

The main general objective of the **WONDER** project is to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of the tourist destinations of the territories involved, through a child-friendly approach aimed at improving the liveability of cities and the tourist offer (governance, environment and services) through the development of new and innovative participative methods. These objectives were identified with reference to the need to identify tools to support the definition of a tourist offer specifically aimed at children and families through innovative participative methods and to improve and strengthen cooperation at local and transnational level between the tourism sector, local authorities, civil society organisations and citizens/children.

TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Criteria	Green and digital transition	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Adoption of initiatives and new instruments to strengthen the sustainability of tourism.	
Description	An action plan was drawn up to identify specific initiatives aimed at children and families and to embark on a path to create 'child-friendly destinations'.	
Relevant outputs	Wonder action plan	1

Criteria	Governance	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Strengthening Public Private Partnerships	
Description	The path to the creation of child-friendly destinations was also characterised by the creation of territorial networks, functional to the transnational one, which involved various groups, from the general public (including children), educational institutions, civil society and NGOs, public bodies and authorities, as well as the private sector, including companies in the tourism sector.	
Relevant outputs	Meetings with local stakeholders	4

Criteria	Participation and empowerment	Indicators (quantification)
Project results	Awareness-raising activities and involvement of local communities.	
Relevant outputs	Local events organised with schools and the Children's Council.	4

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The innovative element of the WONDER project, the only example in this sense among the projects analysed, consists in placing children and their families at the centre of the initiatives, as the main target audience, in order to highlight the need to outline around them a series of services and products, also of a tourist nature, capable of guaranteeing over time an offer that is such as to constitute a further parameter of evaluation of the quality and sustainability of the territories involved.

To achieve this, the WONDER project combined a top-down approach (decisions and strategies at local authority level) with a bottom-up approach (involvement of children, civil society, the business sector and the media) to develop an innovative approach for child-friendly destinations.



<https://progeu.regione.emilia-romagna.it/it/medncpitalia>



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