



# **RESTART MED**

## **NETWORKING STRATEGY**

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### INTRODUCTION

History, people, landscape, nature, gastronomy and of course sea...the ingredients that make the Mediterranean basin a unique tourism destination, so similar and so different in all the countries surrounding the two shores.

Slow tourism, adventure tourism, gastronomic tourism, seaside tourism, middle season tourism, cultural tourism and so on: does it exist a topic related to tourism that some consortium didn't already exploited to support the development of sustainable tourism?

Apparently not and the projects have been in most cases successful, but too often not sustainable after the end of the EU funding and the partnership didn't last enough to guarantee a future to some too short term actions...And moreover we didn't saw an engagement in coordinating the different practices hold by the multiple projects in order to optimize the results as an unique network.

The RESTART MED! project by its nature and by the assumptions on which it has already been written expresses the primary desire to propose a common strategy for sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean area. The innovative character of bringing together the 4 projects already committed in the tourism sector, approved during within the same call, for a common capitalization, instead of proposing a self-referential capitalization is already representing a strong tool of networking, moreover RESTART MED expresses the intention of wanting to optimize all the efforts present in the Mediterranean basin in order to be able to guarantee the sustainability of the actions already undertaken with the standard projects in the medium term. Going further, the project also aims to involve in the capitalization an important number of other projects engaged in the same sector but on different micro-themes (from landscape, to gastronomy, to technological innovation) to identify the best products developed in the last 5 years.

The RESTART MED! strategy model has to aim to set up a network for the development of a sustainable territorial model of tourism around the existing virtuous experiences. To implement this networking strategy, the information, involvement and coordination of a large number of public/private actors within several domains is necessary.



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RESTART MED! also aims to collect and highlight the existing sustainable (cultural, natural, community) tourism products heritage in the Mediterranean area through a valid marketing channel.

Tourism and even more sustainable tourism is a particularly transversal sector, whose activities are linked to culture, agriculture, industry, cohesion territory, regional planning, transport, sport, health, but also to multiple territories such as the sea, the mountains, the city, so together public and private, it is made up of administrations, establishments and agencies set up by the public authorities. The role of public authorities is to integrate, develop and protect supply and demand within a strategy territorial. The tourist territory is a "destination", which does not correspond automatically to a politico-administrative territory, but to several, even to a part. This reality obliges the public authorities to put in place appropriate management systems. hoc, and to design territorial tourism strategies based on specific cases, including landscapes, infrastructures, gastronomy, customs and residents. The Governance is a concept that defines “the exercise of managing political, economic and administrative authority over a given territory”. In the context of tourism, the difficulties of governance are heavy, because the given territory is not defined and several political, administrative and economic authorities must not only manage part of the tourist territory but also work with private tourism stakeholders, residents and tourists who evolve in the destination. Due to its characteristics intrinsic, namely the multitude of actors and areas concerned, identify the ins and outs of the governance of the tourism is a particularly difficult exercise that request a big effort of networking.

The RESTART MED networking strategy will be based on the relationship between, on the one hand, the sustainable management of the natural, cultural and human territory and, on the other, the management of the tourism industry which will be defined in the terms “tourism governance”.

The very first part of the networking strategy is based on the primary desire to really take a census of previous experiences, looking for a minimum common denominator but maintaining the clarity of capitalizing on the most suitable actions at a local level. Respecting the social, economic, geographical and political reality, always with the idea of a unique Mediterranean with a thousand facets.

The analyzes carried out so far will be studied and a summary will be provided. Further clarifications, if necessary, will be requested from the partners of the projects already chosen



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at the common and local level for capitalization, thus coming to be able to indicate a macro networking strategy and micro area strategies.

Particular attention will be given to the feedback from the beneficiaries of the projects in order to effectively build a networking strategy based on current needs and not only on previous results. Even just a year away can have marked significant changes

It will be important to respect the needs of the individual partner projects in the common networking strategy, respecting the expectations of the partners and if they are not clear to identify them in order not to face disappointment during the project. Above all for the strategic orientation of trainings and subgrants, the global (common strategy) but also the particular (regional strategy) must be taken into account in order to satisfy the needs of the territory as much as possible and ensure that even territories starting from different levels of expertise can come close to each other. Also insist on a research of sustainable and slow tourism certifications present in the project areas and outside the project areas, to give destinations the tools to deal with the certification processes and become part of supranational networks that increase their visibility.

All four projects involved as partners, underlying the partnership and almost all the projects indicated as capitalizable, have developed or are developing a platform for the promotion and sometimes marketing of their products, the second key point of the networking strategy is how to exploit these platforms \ sites in a profitable way without creating another virtual place that, due to lack of adequate communal support, risks becoming another *cul de sac* in the so called *web cemetery*. How to work on a useful product, not a replica of previous experiences, that can have adequate visibility and above all based on the needs assessment what do the territories really need? A place for sale, a place for exchanging experiences, a showcase... Which is the best technology? On the one hand, a needs analysis oriented towards the most technological part is required and a presentation of the state of the art of the sites \ platforms online or on the verge of going online, which also selects the most virtuous ones based on their frequentation and actual usefulness, always linking the analysis to the wishes of the partners in a democratic process of reasoned and reasonable choice.

The third part of the networking strategy is be of course related to our daily nightmare since two years, the writing of the RESTART MED project is part of a dramatic historical period for the world economy but also tragic for the tourism economy, therefore the already virtuous exercise of style of bringing together the best practices developed so far in a single project must also deal with the need for a strategy that can provide for a salvific coexistence with the pandemic, given that the definition *post covid* has proved to be unrealistic until today. How



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adequate networking can help transform the difficult situation into an opportunity, insist on sustainable tourism and proximity as a key to understanding tourism that coexists with COVID, do not stop traveling but relearn how to travel.

We therefore investigate the policies applied by the various countries and try to capitalize on them too, outside the project reports, what has worked, what is believed to work.

Therefore, with the three parts of the strategy, the three pillars of the public, private and managing authority project are also brought into being. We wanted them to become co-authors of the strategy before becoming protagonists.

The very last part of the strategy contains a series of recommendations relating to actions that can be launched in order to guarantee sustainability to the strategy itself, the lack of dialogue between projects and between actors in the supply chain cannot be overcome in two years of strategy and above all the strategy need for continuous updating, the pandemic and now also the recent war have shown us the futility and instability of all possible strategies that must be constantly fed, enriched and updated, to whom will pass the *baton* RESTART MED! Our strategy, favoring the meeting of strategic actors in these two years, can easily structure a passing of the relay and facilitate future dialogue

For the strategy they were interviewed between February 20 and March 5 from the WWF designated expert:

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