ENI CBCMED
Cooperating across borders in the Mediterranean

Project funded by the EUROPEAN UNION

REGIONE AUTÒNOMA DE SARDIGNA
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA

RESTART MED!

Networking Strategy

CISP
COMITATO INTERNAZIONALE PER LO SVILUPPO DEI POPOLI

Cambra de Comerç de Barcelona

Generalitat de Catalunya
Government of Catalonia
Catalan Tourist Board

AUB
American University of Beirut

WWF

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Premises

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

need of an engagement in coordinating the different practices hold by the multiple projects in order to optimize the results as an operative network.

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 a networking strategy, the information, involvement and coordination of a large number of public/private actors within several domains is necessary.

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

Target and potential issues

- Due to its intrinsic characteristics, 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 primary recipients of the networking strategy are the local SMeS, even if it is crucial that the active inclusion of political decision makers in a networking strategy ensures sustainability through strengthening interaction, comparison and practices exchange.

NETWORKING STRATEGY

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF TERRITORY
+
TOURISM GOVERNANCE

TOURISM SMEs IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

1 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.

training, subgrant + accompaniment to certification: intrinsic conditions of RESTART MED! for networking in the Mediterranean

2

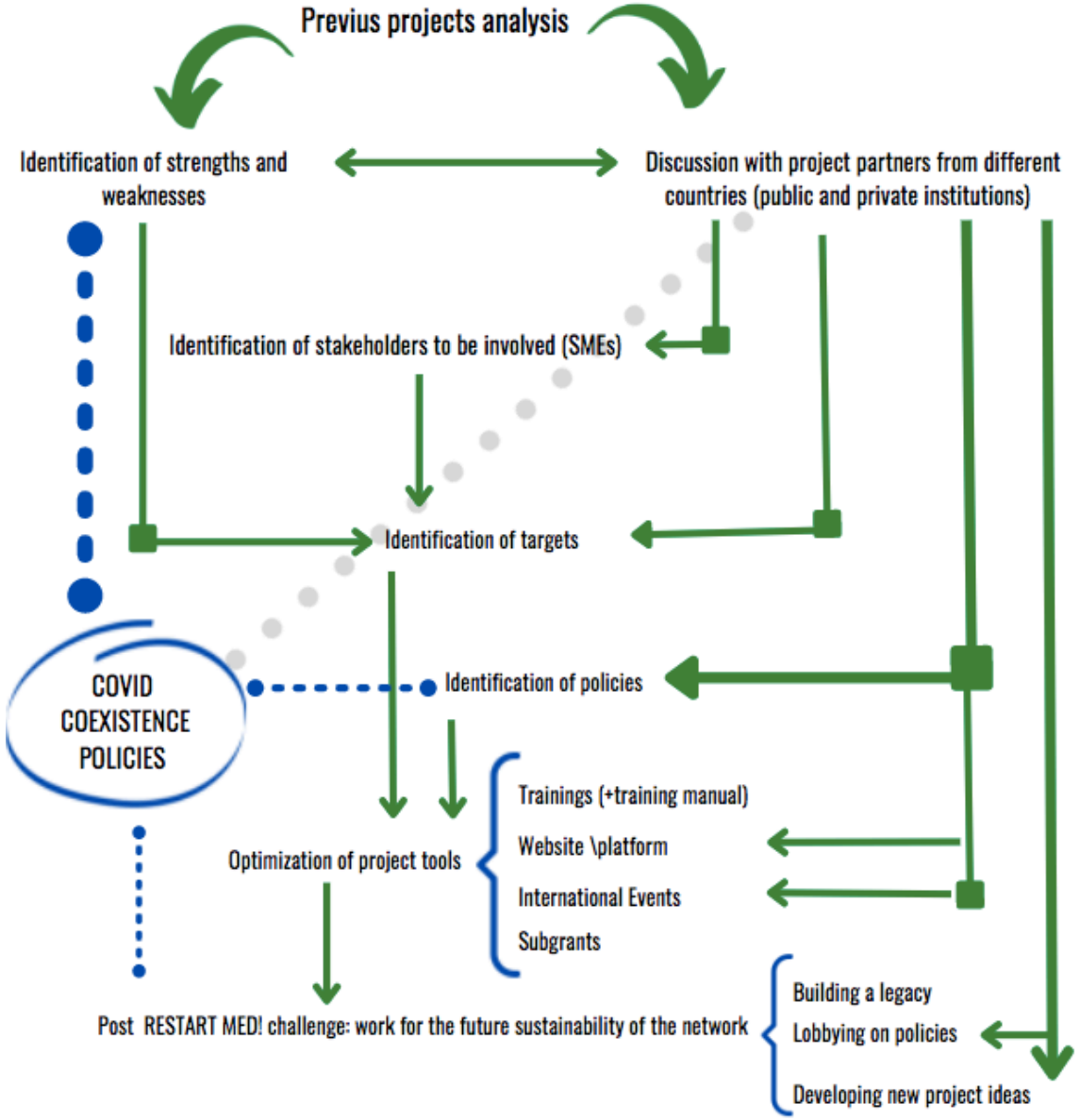
the second key point of the networking strategy is how to exploit these platforms \ sites in a profitable way without creating another virtual place

If it is true that the platform \ site is an important tool of the strategy, it is essential to include other points of the RESTART MED action plan as crucial! apparently irrelevant to the strategy but of inestimable value for creating cohesion and exchange between SMEs: trainings (and especially their reference manual) and international events.

3

The third part of the networking strategy is of course related to the pandemic 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 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.

COVID must be a school of life for future dramatic social, health and political events
that can suddenly at any moment affect the tourism sector, not least the war whose terrible images every day remind us of the precariousness of the status quo.


Previus projects analysis
Identification of strengths and weaknesses
Discussion with project partners from different countries (public and private institutions)
Identification of stakeholders to be involved (SMEs)
Identification of targets
COVID COEXISTENCE POLICIES
Identification of policies
Optimization of project tools
Trainings (+training manual)
Website \platform
International Events
Subgrants
Post RESTART MED! challenge: work for the future sustainability of the network
Building a legacy
Lobbying on policies
Developing new project ideas

Census of previus experiences of sustainable tourism projects and swot analisys

During the first phase of the project, **over twenty sustainable tourism projects have been analyzed** among those approved in the framework of various funding programs (MED, ENICBC MED, COSME, INTERREG ITALY TUNISIA, FISHERY FUNDS), most of them targeting the Mediterranean area, a small percentage also involving countries of Central -Northern Europe.

the RESTART MED! networking will be preparatory to defining which SMEs may be the most appropriate to be involved in the project activities, networking beyond the signing of agreements, networking applied to sharing management models of the territory that pass from training based on shared common values and on targeted investments

How to harmonise local and common strategies focusing on the SMEs specific target

The strategy should serve as a pilot for stable networking and a fruitful and constant dialogue between interlocutors working in the same sector.
BUT

The project is facing with a **heterogeneity** of the following:

- places: countries that have reached a certain level of tourism development and have certain problems, others that do not yet have a clear tourism legislation
- thematic tourism
- beneficiaries
- project representatives
- priority: areas where the strengthening of skills is the most urgent, areas where the focus is on the consolidation of a local brand and areas where there are gaps in marketing.
- -policies

Since in terms of EU members tourism is mostly managed at a regional level while in other countries it is still managed at a national level, it will be more complicated to manage networking at the policy level, the idea is to start dialogue in the regions that have a territorial proximity or a cultural and economic proximity and, only in a second phase, to think of working globally on the policies (just thinking of the case of Italy it would be impossible to have common policies in the field of tourism), what it is possible to do here, is to give directions on some themes. Such as the ratification of the **Faro and Landscape Conventions (COE)** or the **Glasgow Agreement**, sharing its added value between cou

RESTART MED! Networking strategy aims, among other objectives, to support tourism SMEs along the value chain in developing a sustainable approach of their businesses, while developing a monitoring framework to collect and analyses data and providing best practices to conduct the twin transition and sustainable transformation.

Tools for the networking: a common platform along with social networks to build a community or integrate an existing one

- The site can and must become an additional networking tool, even if a one-way site without real interaction with the sustainable tourism community, networking becomes possible thanks to the sharing of contents and experiences.

- Being able to draw from the same source (as in the case of the Training Manual which is also a starting point here) represents a valuable tool for participation. Observing and learning about similar experiences, and drawing inspiration from consolidated models allows companies, operators and universities to have common parameters that make them a network even without direct interaction.

- possibility of supporting platforms that are already functioning, with the aim of promoting the results obtained from the generating projects of RESTART MED! or to work with projects in progress on a common product

The trainings as tool of networking strategy

During trainings, the partners will bring together tourism SMEs of the sustainable tourism sector to work on the development of a sustainability strategy relevant to their specific territories, while sharing best practices and challenges at transnational level, in order also to provide capacity building, value chain insights and technical assistance to SMEs, by applying European sustainability frameworks and tools (such as Environmental footprint methods & EMAS)

One of the pillars of the networking strategy is the training manual published in the frame of the project because

- it represents the shared references for all the RESTART MED! trainings in each country
- it supply contents for the platform
- it ensures all the results and best practices achieved by the 4 standard projects

Coexistence policies with pandemic and measures to survive the crisis: digital and green transition

Key points

•SMEs are a common element of all projects; the strategy focuses on those willing to engage in digitisation and green transition

•Tourism SMEs can accelerate the economic upturn through a range of transformation: develop a strategy to attract more domestic tourists and be less dependent on the international context, diversify experiences and offers, create immersive experiences, develop a long-term customer relationship through social media.

•The sustainable tourism SMEs need to diversify their markets, products and services to anticipate future external shocks and fluctuations while taking into account the expectations of tourists towards the authenticity, proximity and sustainability of the activities.

•In addition, sustainable tourism SMEs need to adapt to the new customers' expectations: slow travel, transformative experiences that focus on helping others as well as helping oneself, authentic, unique and once-in-a-lifetime experiences, opportunities to immerse in the local culture and to 'feel like a local', discovering hidden gems, learning a new skill or experiencing a new way of thinking, ecological tours and extending the tour with additional services.

Initiatives to empower the networking and make it sustainable after the end of the project, let's create legacy.restart med! networking events

Beyond multimedia networking, political and economic networking which certainly have a more generalist perspective, the added value of RESTART MED! networking could be provided by the creation of durable tools and initiatives that network specific sustainable tourism actors by providing them with the necessary tools for dialogue.

leave a legacy of the project and not limit networking in time and space

The RESTART MED! project also includes the organisation of two international networking events in its action plan. 2 opportunities to integrate the discussion on policies, on sustainable tourism and to create the legacy that allows the sustainability of the project.

- Create basis of future cooperation strategies
- Ensure sustainability of the network

A strategy to be updated along the ride

- The networking strategy is the soul of the project because it guides all investments, efforts, and common and local actions towards the same goal.

- The strategy is vital to the project success, but, once drafted, the strategy cannot be considered exhausted because it will be a document in continuous evolution.

- The guidelines can be dictated, but the networking strategy, also being projected towards sustainability after the end of the two years of the project, must take into account the information that will arrive: from territories, from companies and private and public stakeholders, that have to be part of it.

- The intention is to start the path with the awareness that it may undergo deviations during the ride.

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THANK YOU!

WWF Tunisia

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