MAINSTREAMING OF SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES IN TOURISM POLICIES IN SICILY

within the project

RESTART MED! Ref. n. C_A.1.3_0054, financed in the framework of the ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme 2014-2020

DRAFT POLICY REVIEW

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13 April 2023

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Introduction

This work, conducted between February and March 2023, was part of a consultancy provided to the Restart Med! Project[1] to produce a policy review on the status of sustainable tourism in Sicily and build a roadmap for local policymakers to mainstream sustainability challenges in tourism policies, in continuity with what has also been done in the other countries of implementation of the project.

The work pursued by the RESTART MED! Project is urgent and cogent. Tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors in Sicily. The halt posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, contrary to public perception, was quickly averted, and today tourism is gradually, if not already, going "back to normal". The current policy review discusses the extent to which this "back to normal" constitutes a sustainable development path for the people, the territory and the economy, and proposes specifically concrete ways in which local policy-making can stir the course of this growing sector towards more sustainable models.

Tourism is in fact often portrayed as a monolithic fact, benefiting the economy and providing an unmissable chance for Sicily to "catch up" in terms of economic growth. Indeed, on the positive side, tourism provides a growing source of opportunities for enterprise development and employment creation as well as stimulating investment and support for local services, and if rightly done so, even in quite remote communities. It can bring tangible economic value to natural and cultural resources, that would otherwise not be valorised, with direct income from visitor spending used as a force for good for their conservation.

[1] ITB "Consultancy for mainstreaming of sustainability challenges in tourism policies in Sicily" in the framework of the ENICBCMED Project RESTART MED! Ref. n. C_A.1.3_0054 (Service Contract) External consultancy - Rome, 23rd December 2022 - Issued by CISP

At the same time, to have a realistic and responsible picture, one has to take well into account that the current tourism model has significant negative externalities that have to be reckoned with. In terms of environmental degradation, tourism places direct pressure on fragile ecosystems causing degradation of the physical environment and competing for the use of scarce resources, notably land and water. From a socio-cultural perspective, it exerts considerable pressure on local communities and leads to the dislocation of traditional societies, especially in already fragile communities, while from an economic point of view, it is often associated with an unstable source of income, as it is often susceptible to actual or perceived changes to the environmental and social conditions of destinations.

To address such a delicate balancing act in the specific Sicilian context has been the specific task of the work hereby presented, which has been articulated in three connected steps, namely:

1. A desk analysis phase on the main trends, policies and developments from a national and regional perspective was conducted as a first step to build the methodology and identify key focus areas of the work. This phase is built on output projects such as the *Tourism Sector and Policy Development Framework in Italy* research and other documents relating to the specificities of tourism policy-making in Italy and Sicily.

2. A consultation phase with local stakeholders, in the form of focus groups as described in this report, was carried out in order to shed light on the main challenges for sustainable tourism development in the region and understand how to tackle them.

3. An analysis and recommendation-development phase, with a view of gathering and synthesizing the results of the consultations and of the desk analysis, addressing the main tools and strategies to advance the sustainability agenda in local tourism policies

The following policy review paper constitutes the final milestone of this process.

Sicily's tourism sector review

Current state of tourism in Sicily

When it comes to selling proposition, on a macro-regional level, **Sicily is heavily reliant on a dominant tourism product: coast, sea and sun**. In Sicily in 2014, 77,3% of tourists (both local, national and foreign) confirmed that the primary reason for their travel was linked to coastal tourism.

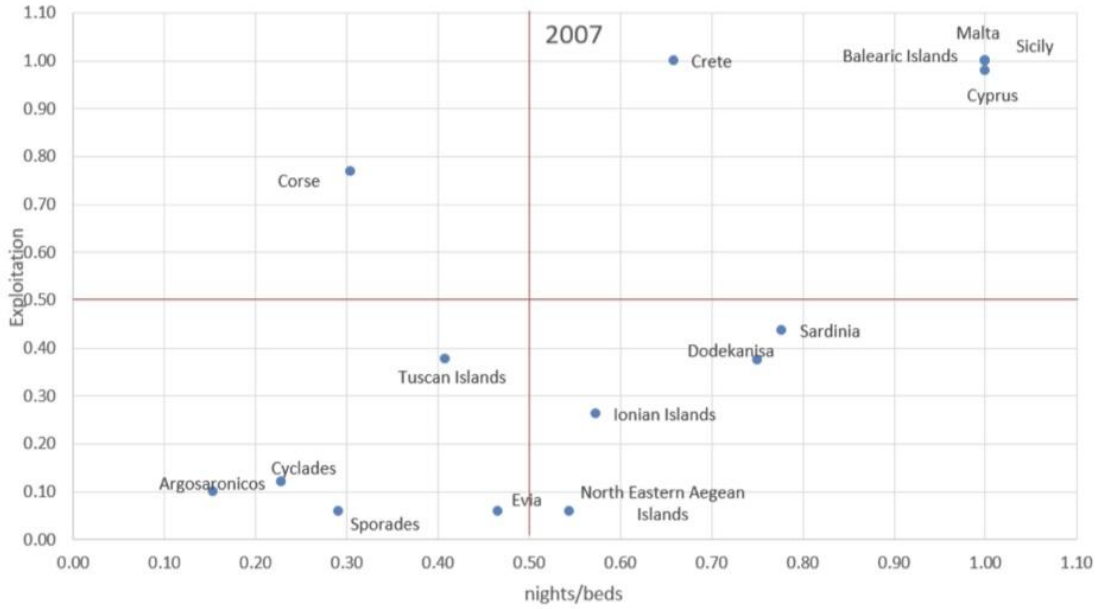
For coastal tourism destinations, on average, 45% of all tourists are foreign rather than domestic, a percentage that is significantly higher compared to other tourism areas (Böhme et al. 2021). This creates a very **high dependency on international markets** as well as on aerial connections. In 2018 and 2019 international presences were slightly higher in Sicily than domestic ones: 7.698 million against 7.436, with a share of 50.9% against 49.1% (Becheri, Becheri, and Rana 2020). Moreover, a study on tourism trends in Sicily from 2008 to 2018 shows how the island is growing in terms of international arrivals, but has been gradually declining in terms of domestic presence, from 4.0% in 2008 to 3.5% in 2018 (Becheri, Becheri, and Rana 2020).

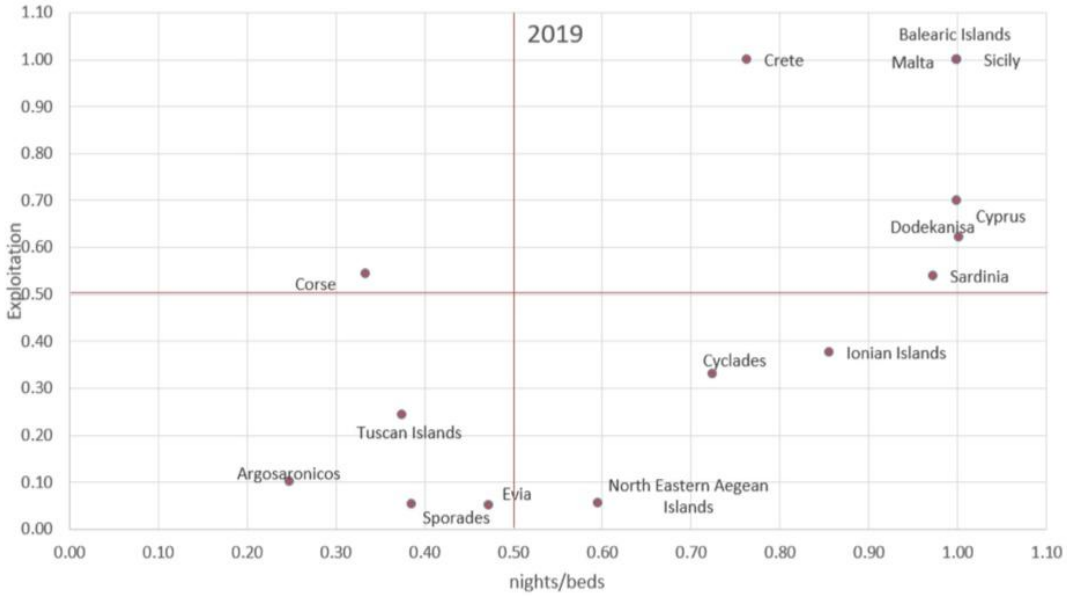
Yet, if international tourism is crucial for the Sicilian market, another equally important fact emerges when analysing the domestic share of tourists in Sicily in more detail. In fact, 38.8% of the total national presences in the region is Sicilian, making **Sicily the first region in Italy for proximity tourism**. Only 45.5% of domestic flows in Sicily come from the central and northern regions. The remaining 54.5% comes entirely from the regions of the South (1).

Another key and determining characteristic of the coastal and maritime tourism diffused in the Mediterranean is its **significant correlation to mass tourism and to high levels of seasonality** compared to other types of tourism (Böhme et al. 2021).

Despite the extension and diversity of the island, tourism in Sicily is strongly centralised in specific localities. The top ten localities for tourism in Sicily activate around a half of the total market share (Becheri, Becheri, and Rana 2020). An even more staggering fact is in the difference between the provinces of Enna and Messina in terms of foreign presences: 1.1% against 63%. Furthermore, of that 63%, Taormina counts for more than 80% of the total foreign presences in the province of Messina and for 12% of the total regional foreign presences (Becheri, Becheri, and Rana 2020). The weight of tourism is therefore very different not only from province to province but from locality to locality. **Sicily is thus subject to an unsustainable mixture of over-tourism and under-tourism, with some areas of the island hyper-saturated with tourists influx while others remain completely neglected**.

According to a comparative study on sustainable tourism in Mediterranean islands, Sicily is one of the worst-positioned destinations when it comes to touristic pressure on the territory, as measured by the territorial exploitation index, in relation to production efficiency (figure xx). Moreover, as it emerges clearly from the study, unsustainable touristic pressure on the two islands is a problem that well precedes the COVID pandemic (Ruggieri, Calò 2022).





Source: Observatory on Tourism in European Islands (OTIE)

Various initiatives and projects have been prototyped and implemented in Sicily to increase its sustainability as a tourism destination. Annex 2 contains the mapping of all ENICBC MED, Interreg Med and Italy-Tunisia projects implemented in Sicily on sustainable tourism from 2013 to the current programming period. From the mapping conducted, it emerged that a total of 27 projects were implemented through Mediterranean cross-border partnerships in Sicily, ranging from fishing tourism, craftmanship and local artisans networks, wine itineraries, valorisation of archaeological sites, management of coastal sites and so on.

Governance Structure

At national level, as to 2021, the Italian Council of Ministers has approved a decree that reorganizes the ministries' powers, resulting in the creation of the Ministry of Tourism. This ministry is responsible for developing, coordinating, and promoting national tourism policies in partnership with the State, Regions, Local Authorities, MAECI, European Institutions, supranational organizations, trade associations, and companies.

The governance structure for the tourism sector in Italy actually places a significant role on the Regions in planning and coordinating tourism-related activities. This involves functions and tasks that relate to sustainable and competitive development, innovation of the regional tourism offer, homogeneity of services, tourism promotion, knowledge dissemination, implementation and financing of projects, and organization of tourism statistics. The bulk of the activity at the regional level is carried out through **three-year plans** and **annual programs**, which define strategic objectives and guidelines for tourism offer qualification and financing sources. Local authorities, private territorial organizations, business organizations, and trade union organizations are involved in regional planning acts to varying degrees, consistent with the principle of subsidiarity.

In 2005 a regional law established the so-called *Tourism Districts,* with the specific task of developing autonomous tourism promotion strategies based on geographical or thematic affinity. These were only activated in 2012, with the creation of 25 thematic districts. The operation proved to be a complete failure. Of the 25 created, a dozen did not produce any projects with 12 million euros remaining untouched, while the only money that was spent, just over 12 million, served mainly for 'local' initiatives, which, according to the Regione Siciliana, "penalised the island in terms of visibility and lack of synergy in the use of resources".

The Tourism Districts were hence reduced from 25 to 7 and rebranded as *Destination Management Organisations* in 2017, which as of today have remained completely inactive.

Main policy instruments at the regional level

When reviewing regional policies and strategies, it clearly emerges that the urgency of embedding sustainability in the tourism development plan had not been reflected in Sicily's programmatic vision in the past decade. The dominant concern with the economic growth of the tourism industry was already evident from the Osservatorio Turistico della Regione Siciliana's document on the Strategic Planning for Touristic Development 2014-2020, where the main challenge there identified was indeed that of returning to the economic levels of the pre-2008 crisis, which signalled the start of a slow but sure decline in tourism development, with performance indicators focussing on the economic turnover of the touristic sector rather than pointing towards a change in vision.

As of today, the current regional tourism landscape is delineated by the regional authorities' Three-Year Tourism Development Programme 2019-2021 (PTSTR 2019/2021) and the Tourism Development Regional Strategic Plan 2019-2023 (PSRST 2019/2023).

Sustainability is one of the general objectives mentioned in the plan, together with growth, deseasonalisation, and mitigation of regional disparities. Sustainability is then further declined in **increased economic sustainability** for tourism operators, i**ncreased quality of work** and **sound use of natural and cultural resources**.

The primary way to achieve the general objectives, according to the plan, is through increased competitiveness, which presupposes that specific actions should aim at:

- Increasing accessibility, that is, strengthening connections between Sicily and the main countries of the tourism market as well as local mobility.
- Increasing attractiveness, through the development of tourism products highly requested in the market (coastal destinations and "diffused presence of resorts" is mentioned here), diversification of the offer to match various client profiles and enhancement of the quality of the offer
- Strengthening the "Brand Sicilia", by increasing the notoriety of Sicily as a tourist destination.
- Increasing the visibility of touristic products, especially with reference to digital platforms.

The table below summarises the key priorities identified by the document responding to the four dimensions of competitiveness:

ACCESSIBILITY	ATTRACTIVENESS	BRAND	VISIBILITY
Aerial connections	Coastal tourism	Saliency of the brand	Connections with major tour operators
Local mobility	Quantity of tourism products		Communication strategies for the private sectors
	Diversification to		Reputation of the

	capture more tourism niches		touristic offer on digital platforms

The current programming line following this logic, treats the tourism phenomenon in traditional terms, with policy-making at the regional level leaning decisively towards **interventions with a clear impact on promotional and marketing activities**, and in particular through the strengthening of the Brand Sicilia. Despite sustainability being one of the general objectives of the strategic document, the documents provide few references as to how specific actions linked to sustainability would be pursued. Rather **the document implies that the primary way to achieve the general objectives is through increased economic competitiveness of the tourism sector**, thus prioritising a purely economic reading of tourism development.

Moreover, the document shows quite a few advancements in how to support innovative models of tourism, that are more sustainable for the people and the territory. The contextual analysis supporting the strategic documents, for example, provides an in depth analysis of growth trends in terms of arrivals, private sector performances and economic returns from the tourism sector. But **no section addresses the negative externalities of tourism on the local social and natural ecosystems**, nor does it provide an indication of the "load capacity" of the region in terms of touristic pressure.

Proposed "sustainable" models of tourism are limited primarily to experiential tourism and agri-tourism, treated as integrative forms of tourism, to amplify a touristic offer that remains well ingrained in traditional drivers primarily linked to coastal tourism. As we read in the document: "In a market where the most relevant product is still the seaside, the enhancement of cultural heritage is primarily a distinctive and integrative factor, but not a substitute in a perspective of growth in flows".

Alternative sustainable tourism models for Sicily

The consultations conducted within the framework of this policy review were a key step to identifying the areas of most relevance to local stakeholders with regard to sustainable tourism, delineating a possible vision while collecting important feedback on the degree of satisfaction with the current mainstream position of policy-making with regards to tourism.

Methodological note on the consultation phase

The consultations with local stakeholders have been based on a strategy agreed together with CISP (the contracting authority), of which the key features can be summarised here:

Geographical focus

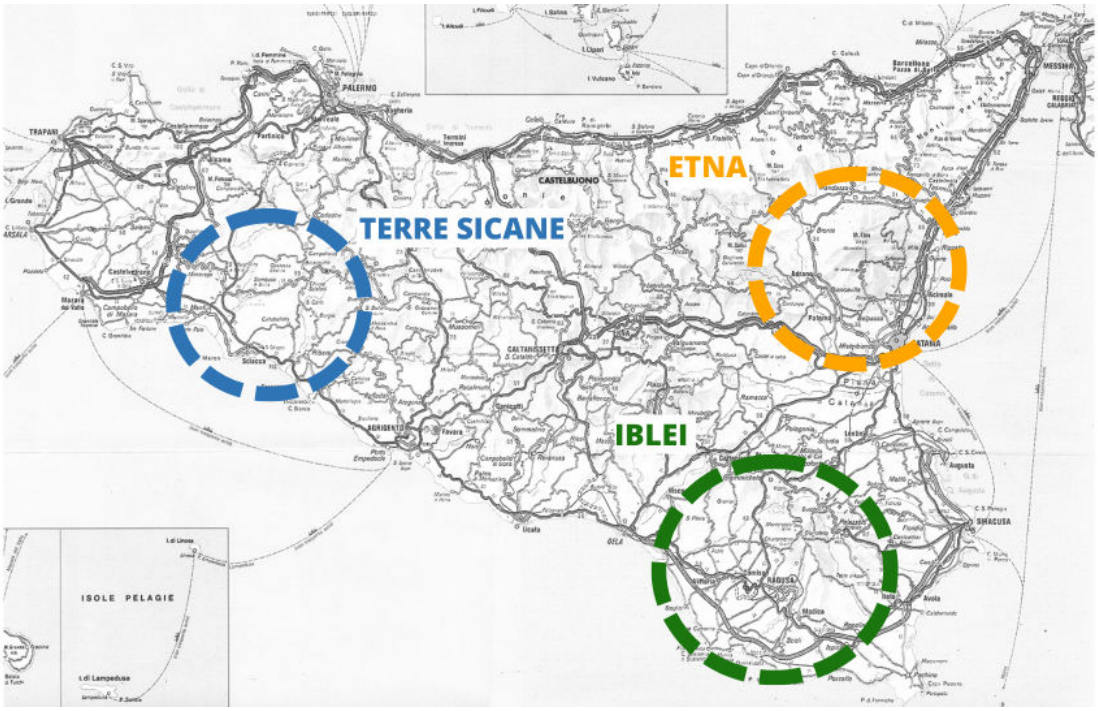
It was decided to widen the scope of the research from the implementation area - which aimed at consolidating the results of the CROSSDEV project in the Terre Sicane area, Via Selinuntina, in particular - to other areas in the region. This decision was motivated primarily by the need to understand how different contexts affect sustainable tourism development, hence moving from a local to a regional dimension. The specificities of the economic, social and environmental local ecosystems in the three areas selected - Terre Sicane, Iblei area and Etna - vary greatly and are symptomatic of different stages of tourism industry development, thereby returning a comprehensive and truthful picture of a varied and inhomogeneous regional ecosystem.

Thematic Focus - Cities of Identity

In terms of thematic focus, particular attention was placed on understanding how the phenomenon of *cities of identity* in Sicily affects tourism development. The largest of such associations in Sicily is **Strade del Vino**, which organises promotional activities using the strengths of gastronomic and agricultural products to valorize the identity of rural areas

and optimise the investment of more municipalities in joint actions. Another association promoting the idea of *cities of identity* in the **Borghi Più Belli d'Italia** initiative, promoted by the Italian government through the Ministry of Culture, by allocating large sums to small municipalities, in the initiative Italian "BORGHI" (about 760 million euros), to promote, as less-known destinations several forms of sustainable tourism, where the village represents the ideal representation of the sustainable urban concept and expression of the Italian lifestyle. Finally, the impact of **UNESCO sites** (7 in total in the region) was also factored in in the territorial analysis. The table shows the degree to which each of the geographical focus areas selected reflects this identitarian dimension:

Geographical Area	Strade Del Vino	Borghi Più Belli d'Italia	UNESCO Sites
Terre Sicane	Strade del Vino Terre Sicane	Sambuca di Sicilia	
Iblei area	Strade del Vino Val di Noto	Ferla	Ragusa and Scicli
Etna Area	Strade del Vino dell'Etna		Mount Etna



Composition

In terms of composition, each of the consultation conducted aimed at engaging a heterogeneous set of stakeholder, such as: tourism operators, both traditional and sustainability-driven; institutional stakeholders, such as municipalities, public-private partnership programmes and administrative bodies; the research sector, both universities and private research institutes and territorial associations.

The broad picture

From the joint reading of the results of the three focus groups (see Annex), a set of "pre-conditions" have been identified, which, despite specific differences, can be seen as constituting the backbone for the achievement of a solid sustainable tourism sector in Sicily. These are:

1. the area's human capital has the right opportunities, skills and awareness to embark on projects for the touristic valorisation of the local heritage
2. the existence of initiatives for sustainable tourism in the area
3. tourism operators have sufficient competencies to scale their sustainable projects
4. tourism operators are working in synergy and with a common promotional strategy
5. territorial identities are solid and valorised in the local tourism value chain
6. the natural, cultural and social heritage is favourable for the development of a sustainable tourism strategy
7. general infrastructure and services are adequate to support the development of a sustainable tourism market
8. local public institutions are active in the valorisation of sustainable assets and in the construction of integrated tourism strategies

The focus groups have shown how the degree of maturity of each of these factors can significantly vary from area to area. This great variation, together with the specificities of the territory, open up the possibility of imagining different models of sustainable tourism development, that can aid policymakers in delineating local and relevant development strategies, according to the main challenges faced and the specific strengths of a territory.

By contextualising the results of the focus group in the specific historical, geographical and social specificities of the territory, three models, or visions, of sustainable tourism development have been here proposed. These are to be thought as modular, scalable and fluid frameworks to lead programmatic actions.

1. The territory as a shared identity project - the case of Terre Sicane

Context

The Terre Sicane area located in the centre of Sicily and composed of 12 municipalities, but that also interests other municipalities in the Valle del Belice area. The area in question includes a large portion of territory located in the central-southern part of the region, assuming a central position in the province of Agrigento.

For its specific characteristics, the Terre Sicane area has been interested by The National Strategy for Inland Areas (SNAI), a national development and territorial cohesion policy that aims to counter the marginalisation and demographic decline phenomena specific to the inland areas of our country. Indeed many are the factor that renders the Terre Sicane area a marginal and fragile territory. Analysis reports show that the Sicani Inland Area suffers a continuous demographic decline due to low birth rates and continuous emigration, with a population where the over-65s account for 24.60 per cent (ISTAT 2017 data) of the inhabitants, a higher percentage than that of Sicily's other inland areas.

Due to their geomorphologic characteristics, the Sicani are characterised by territorial isolation, which is amplified by an inefficient and articulated internal road system. Travel between the municipalities within the same area is difficult, with very long journey times. The accessibility of the area through public transport is decidedly lacking, also due to the absence of the railway network, which does not facilitate travel to the large urban centres.

To date, the tourism sector does not represent a real economic sector, since it is undersized and complementary services are almost completely absent, with the area's tourism rate staying low at 0.64%. Still, despite the under-development of the sector, tourism has become a priority in the collective imagination, as it is assumed that given the area's

potential, this booming sector could enable traditional economic activities to be revitalised and local cultural specificities to be enhanced, while also offering young people new employment opportunities and thus curbing the rural exodus. This is well reflected in the Terre Sicani SNAI, which places revitalisation of the local tourism offer as one of its specific objectives.

In this perspective, the area's natural heritage represents one of the macro-environments for the area's development, together with the local heritage and traditional festivities and the high quality and uniqueness of the agricultural production which also includes at least 5 marks of origin of excellence. In particular, from the point of view of entrepreneurial demography, we can see that the area's production system is still characterised, and despite the massive agricultural emigration of the countryside over the last 50 years, by a clear prevalence of agricultural activities. The wine sector is also a key attractor for the territory, with many initiatives supporting the development of this sector, such as Strade del Vino Terre Sicane and Iter Vitis.

But also of particular interest is the new element that sees various municipalities engaging in new and innovative forms of touristic fruition, that defy the traditional tourism model and lean towards forms of community-based tourism. The municipality of Cianciana for example, has embarked on a project that now sees itself as a destination for several individuals who have purchased disused homes in order to stay in the area and immerse themselves in the local community for a new experience. Over the past few years, 120 foreign families have both houses in the area and they now make up more than 10 per cent of the resident population of the town. These models pursued also through the Case a un Euro policy, have seen previously abandoned areas revitalised by the fresh wave of new residents, as with the example of new residents opening a community kitchen in Mussomeli.

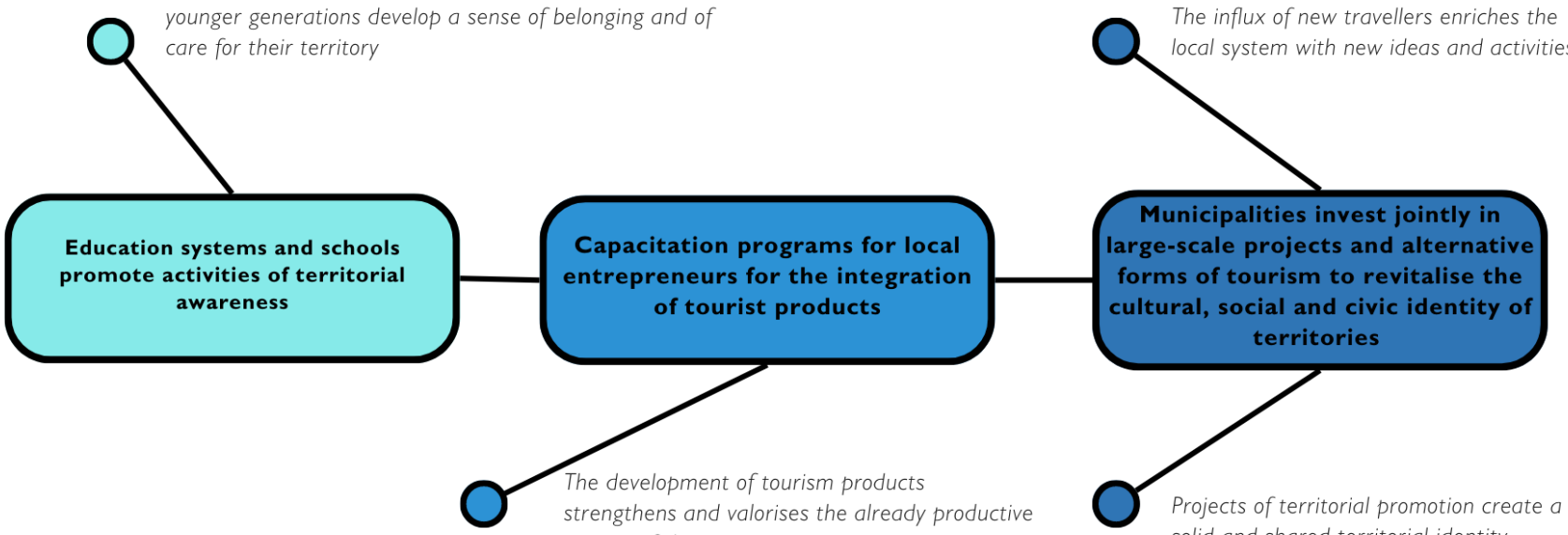
Following this trend the Terre Sicane SNAI is based on a *relational tourism model*, naturally oriented towards a niche reception, based on *slowness* and *authenticity*.

Delineating the model

In the case of the Terre Sicane, what emerged most predominantly from the focus group is the need to retrieve a sense of civic attachment and care for the territory, which could stimulate the regain of ownership of the territory in the local community.

We see that the rightful identification of the Terre Sicane as a marginal territory has initiated a trend of gradual disinterest in the future of this area. The local community does not see this territory as a project, through which they can grow and prosper, and find a sense of purpose. The state-of-the-art shows that people in the Terre Sicane are consciously or unconsciously, unaware of the potential attractiveness of the area. In these scenarios, tourism can act as an important driver through which the external validation of the endogenous and unique value of the territory can act as an awareness-raising call for the local population as well. A model of tourism that has such characteristics should relentlessly place its evaluation standards not on tourists' satisfaction, but on the local community's quality of life and ownership of the territory. A model of such kind could hence be delineated as such:

THE TERRITORY AS A SHARED IDENTITY PROJECT



2. Sustainability as a unique selling point - the case of the Iblei

The Iblei area refers to the territory interested by the Hyblaean Mountains, a mountain range located in the south-eastern part of Sicily, between the free municipal consortium of Ragusa, the free municipal consortium of Siracusa and, to a lesser extent, in the metropolitan city of Catania. The Iblei are home to a total population of about 800,000 inhabitants, about 1/5 of the total population of Sicily, extending across 40 municipalities.

In some ways, the relative isolation of this area has preserved this land from the phenomena of mass modernisation, so much so that even today all the imprints of the historical and anthropological traits of this province are still evident. Together with the excellent zootechny, which produces 60% of Sicilian milk and cheeses appreciated throughout the world, the province has succeeded in developing quality agriculture, both in terms of greenhouse production and organic and certified marks of origin products and, at the same time, a dense fabric of small and medium-sized industries, placing itself as one of the areas with the highest rate of development in the Sicilian region.

In particular, the Iblei area is home to one of the most lively tourism private sectors of the region. According to regional documents, the province of Ragusa leads regional rankings for quality and hospitality standards, with a quality index of hotel facilities of 45.9, 16 points higher than the second-best performing province at 29.0. In addition, together with Catania, Ragusa is the province most dedicated to rural tourism: together they account for 34% of farm stays in the region. Various initiatives have insisted on this vivacity of the sector to promote the Iblei area as the forerunner of sustainable tourism in the region, not least the very recently launched project of TripSicilia, financed by the Rural Development Programma of the Regione Sicilia 2014/2020 (PSR) implemented by GAL Natiblei and promoted by the entrepreneurial network of Smart Land Iblei. The inclusion of Ragusa,

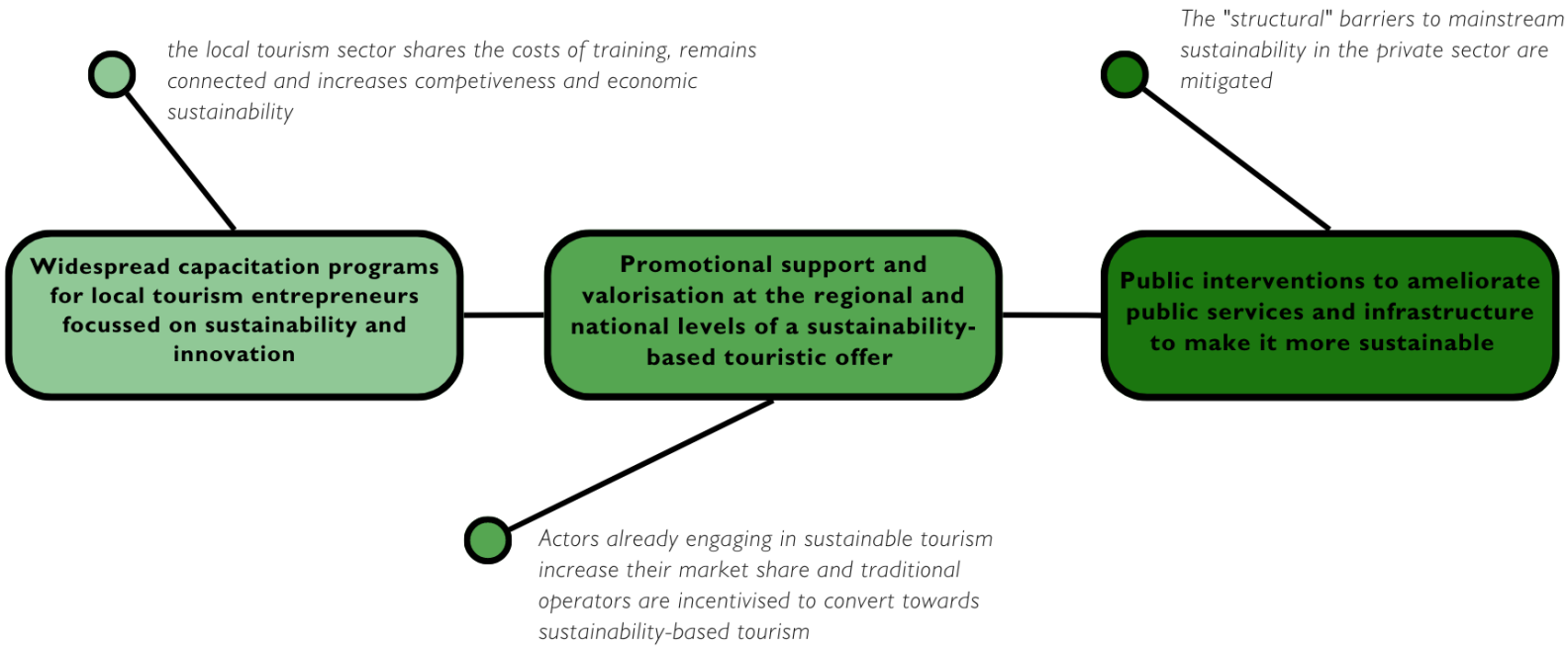
Modica and Scicli as 'world heritage sites' on the World Heritage List, but also the creation of a serendipitous and clear destination identity (the *Montalbano phenomenon*) have contributed to the rapid but disorderly growth of the tourism industry, made possible by the proliferation of entrepreneurship, crucially, not backed by adequate support and regulatory policies.

The analysis of the needs of the Hyblaean context revealed how, in the face of the considerable and valuable individual local peculiarities (in terms of environmental values historical and cultural values, valuable craftsmanship and quality agri-foodstuffs) there is a general weakness of the local entrepreneurial fabric, attributable mainly due to the extreme fragmentation and self-referentiality of the system of productions and goods and services, both public and private, that make the Iblean context a vast homogeneous area that is largely underused, although retains a "high potential capacity for development', due to its intrinsic values (territorial capital), which are increasingly sought after by the markets.

Delineating the model

By comparing contextual analysis with the results of the consultations (Annex 2), what we see in the case of the Iblei then, is a territory characterised by significant levels of activity in the private sector which is not adequately valorised and, for lack of systemic organisation, risks to generate aggressive forms of tourism. Benchmarking and mainstreaming sustainability in the local tourism sector becomes an opportunity to, on the one hand, avoid an extractive and aggressive form of tourism displacing the social organisation of the local community, on the other hand, to capitalise on the many initiatives already promoting sustainable forms of tourism and create a strong selling point that can remain competitive in the long run:

SUSTAINABILITY AS A UNIQUE SELLING POINT



3. Setting the standards right - the case of Etna

The Metropolitan City of Catania today represents one of the region's most important poles from an economic, administrative, and infrastructural point of view. 20% of Sicilian companies are in fact located in the province of Catania.

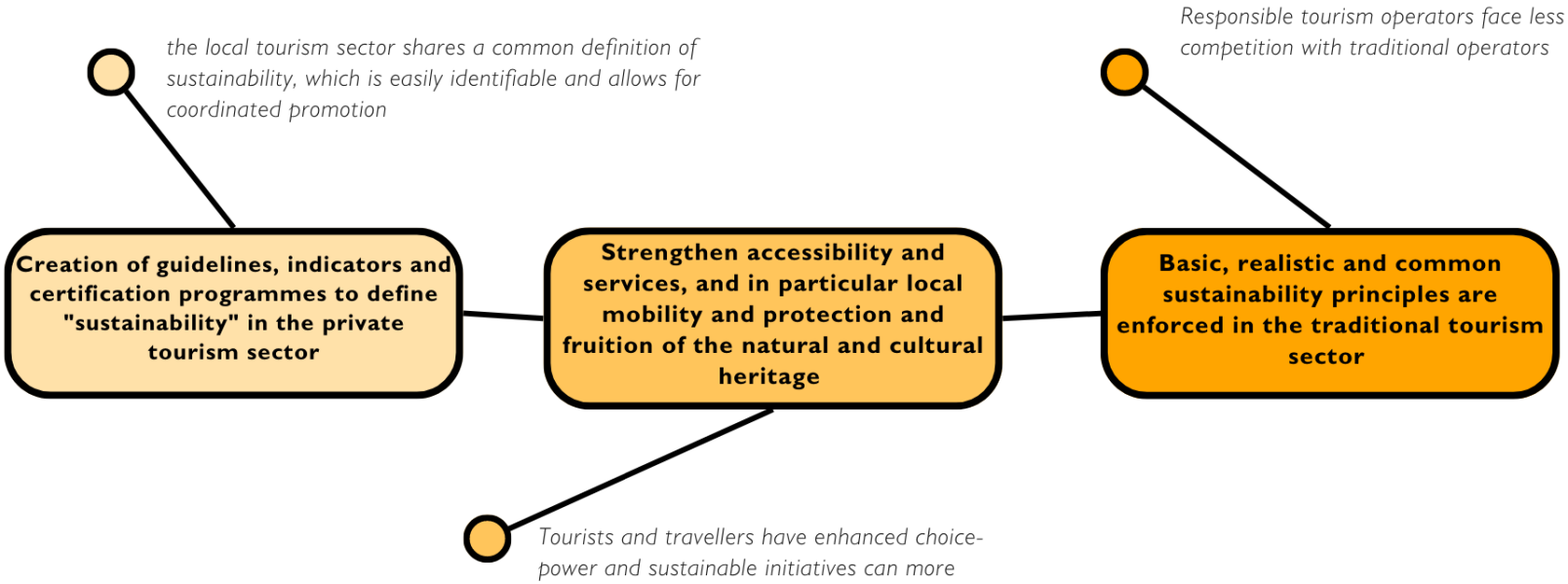
According to a study conducted by E-Dreams, in 2022 Catania was leading the ranking of the most popular destinations in Europe for Christmas, followed by Paris and London. Compared to other popular destinations in Sicily, Catania is indeed among the most diversified in terms of tourism offerings, and hence not as tied to the coastal tourism paradigm. Importantly, Mount Etna represents an important attractor for the area, where a bubbling environment of rural, wine and experiential tourism is developing. According to Trip Advisor rankings, this is the most sought-after destination for tourists in the region, followed by the cultural heritage of the historical centre of Catania. As reported by Giornale di Sicilia, according to a 2022 sociometric report, Catania was the 14th municipality at the national level in terms of tourism, right after Palermo in the 13th position.

At the same time, and notwithstanding its potential, Catania is seriously underdeveloped in terms of services, infrastructure and quality of life: according to the Il Sole 24 Ore ranking on the quality of life in Italian provinces, Catania was 91st out of 107th. Particularly relevant is that it was the very last among all Italian provinces with regards to “urban ecosystem”, an aggregate of 18 parameters across 5 macro areas: air quality, water quality, waste management, local mobility and environment. This data shows a serious mismatch between the potential of tourism attractiveness of the area and the actual performance in terms of quality, accessibility and tourist satisfaction.

An exemplary case of such a mismatch is Mount Etna, a UNESCO World Heritage site since 2013. According to an OTIE research[2], tour guides authorised to conduct visits to the sites confirmed that the perception of the UNESCO brand significantly influences the choice to visit these sites. At the same time, it was found that there was consensus regarding serious shortcomings in Sicilian UNESCO sites, such as inadequate signposting, difficult accessibility, the lack of staff speaking several languages, and difficulty encountered in the management of tourist flows. Moreover, as emerged in the present study, staff shortages, poor regulation of allowed activities on site and lack of adequate regulation are seriously posing a threat to the natural site of Mount Etna not only in terms of tourism but of protection and conservation of the site itself.

[2] See OTIE, "Economia del turismo in Sicilia. Filiera 5: il turismo nei siti UNESCO"

SETTING THE STANDARDS RIGHT



Mainstreaming actions from an Environmental, Socio-Cultural and Economic perspective

Taking into account the contextual analysis conducted, the review of the policies and governance frameworks and the outputs of the local consultations, the following chapter explores specific actions and opportunities for the mainstreaming opportunities of sustainability challenges in local tourism policies along the three dimensions of sustainability addressed by the RESTART MED! Project.

Delineating the model

By comparing contextual analysis with the results of the consultations (Annex 2), what we see in the case of the Etna area then, is a territory characterised by significant levels of activity in the private sector and a growing demand for tourism products which is primarily growing out of competition logic, due significantly to a poor programmatic effort. The "mainstream" attractors are generating a growing bubble of traditional tourism products, which place little consideration to sustainability, while niche segments of the economy are trying to valorise a tourism offering based on responsible and sustainable fruition and are struggling to compete on an economic level with the cheaper and more established traditional offering, while from an accessibility perspective are struggling with the extremely poor urban ecosystem in the area. Moreover, even in these niche segments, there appears to be great fragmentation as to what "sustainability" means, how it should be carried out, and what are the main benchmarking strategies to adopt. A strong consensus emerged from the consultations regarding the need to create joint minimum standards and excellence brands to measure and define sustainability (such as it happened in the wine sector with the SOStain initiative), that could in the long run become benchmarks for the traditional tourism sector as well

Environmental sustainability

According to the UWTO, environmental sustainability in tourism entails making optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.

With particular reference with the Sicilian context, the main strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities in this respect are as following:

Strengths

- Sicily is rich in nature-based itineraries and biodiversity.
- The climate is favourable to limit energy consumption and integrating energetic self-sufficiency, for example through solar panels.
- Sicily abounds in micro-agricultural enterprises that predilect natural and traditional forms of agriculture, even if not certified as “organic”, with “genuinity” benign a core and informal standard for quality products in Sicily.

Weakenesses

- Lack of integrated regulatory framework regarding the limits of use of natural resources for tourism consumption.
- Lack of environmental quality performance indicators
- Local mobility is inadequate throughout the region, making it necessary for tourists to rent cars.
- Sicilian regional parks and reserves are witnessing uncontrolled forms of land use that are incompatible with environmental values, such as, for example, the use of motorised vehicles along trails that pass through even the most fragile areas of the reserve. Few sites have a Territorial Plan, surveillance and maintenance is lacking

and the staffing is critically unqualified while key technical expertise is lacking. Overall the management of natural reserves is inconsistent, with various levels of management depending on the site, and bureaucratically overly complex.

Threats

- Historical centres, where most tourism activities are located, are obsolete in terms of environmental efficiency and transition towards greener configurations is particularly costly.
- Environmental sensibility is not an engrained value in the local population and in administrative bodies. As a way of example, Sicily is the last region in Italy for recycling and for circularity.
- Climate change and rising temperatures will progressively negatively impact on the current tourism-induced revenues in the summer months. The Horizon project Soclimpact conducted in-depth research on the topic and concluded that we can estimate that overall tourism expenditure at the end of the century will be 59% lower in Sardinia and 38% lower in Sicily.

Opportunities

- Sicily is particularly well positioned with regard to nature-based forms of tourism, which can become a benchmark for the environmental performance of the sector. Natural assets are considered by local stakeholders key drivers of experiential tourism offerings.
- More tourism activities are growing out of the diversification of agricultural activities in rural contexts, with farm stays becoming a booming industry in the region.
- Sicily is very well positioned with regards to mainstreaming of short supply chains in the tourism industry, which significantly reduce the emissions linked both to transportation and intensive forms of farming.

On the basis of the above analysis, the following key priority actions are reccomended to boost mainstreaming of sustainability in local policy making:

Type of action	Intervention	Feasibility
Correct	Implement environmental education plans	Medium-term
	Revise Territorial Plans for natural reserves and adopt environmental quality performance indicators	Medium-term
Adapt	Move away from summer-bound tourism and promote tourism models which specifically address climate-change adaptation (for example night-tourism)	Long-term
Maintain	Valorise green itineraries within the centralised promotional strategy of the Sicily Brand	Medium-term
	Facilitate and incentivise the implementation of energetic self-sufficiency in tourism facilities	Medium-term
	Increase incentives to obtain certifications of organic farming.	Short-term
Exploit	Support the capacitation of agro-turist operators especially with regards to efficient energy and resource use	Short-term
	Foster the creation of local networks to mainstream the use of short supply chains in the tourism sector, based on KM0 and certified productions	Medium-term
	Increase synergies between the agricultural and tourism sector in joint programmes (eg. the Rural Development Strategy (PSR))	Medium-term

Socio-cultural sustainability

According to the UNWTO, socio-cultural sustainability in tourism entails respecting the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserving their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contributing to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.

With particular reference with the Sicilian context, the main strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities in this respect are as following:

Strengths

- The "authenticity" of Sicily is perceived as a unique selling point to be protected by a small but rising segment of inbound travellers, and in particular the *analogue* qualities of the way of living, the *tactility* of the territory and the *slowness*.

Weaknesses

- Sicily is perceived and promoted as a one-dimensional destination. The centralisation of the system reinforces the disbalance between marginal areas and established touristic ones, hindering the valorisation of local assets.
- Aggressive forms of tourism are leading to "touristic gentrification" in some historical centres, displacing local populations.

Threats

- The rising use of P2P platforms for tourism activities is causing artificially inflated property values in touristic destinations.
- Globalisation and depopulation in marginal areas is causing the loss of traditional practices, arts and intangible cultural heritage.

Opportunities

- Marginal territories offer unexpected opportunities to experiment with unconventional forms of *relational tourism,* such as with the *Case a un Euro* initiatives.
- Sicily is the first region in Italy for proximity tourism, a more accessible market for lesser known destinations.
- European funds can be leveraged to develop and strengthen unconventional tourism offerings.

Type of Action	Intervention	Feasibility
Correct	Streamline new territorial narratives into the mainstream regional promotion of the Sicily Brand	Medium-term
	Implement policies of urban planning against tourism gentrification	Long-term
Adapt	Develop fairer and community-owned platforms of tourism demand management (eg. Albergo Diffuso)	Medium-term
	Incentivise the protection of cultural intangible heritage through as well as its valorisation in contemporary culture	Short-term
Maintain	Focus on promotional activities that aim at attracting quality tourism over quantity tourism, that values the authenticity of destinations.	Medium-term
Exploit	Promote new forms of touristic fruition for marginal areas	Medium-term
	Promote intra-regional mobility (proximity tourism) towards “marginal areas” through better regional promotion	Short-term
	Leverage European funding to experiment new de-seasonalised and unconventional forms of tourism	Short-term

Economic sustainability

According to the UWTO, environmental sustainability in tourism entails ensuring viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

With particular reference to the Sicilian context, the main strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities are as follows:

Strengths

- The agricultural and wine sector is diversifying activities to include tourism, promoting synergetic development between economic sectors.
- De-seasonalised cultural tourism is on the rise, and recent experiences show that it can be leveraged to attract quality-tourism, as for example in the Manifesta 12 case in Palermo.

Weaknesses

- Due to price competition, traditional tourism operators offer non-local, cheaper products, rather than working in synergy with local supply chains. This prevents economic returns from being evenly distributed in other productive sectors.
- The marked dominance of coastal tourism leads to seasonal fluctuations in touristic demand, generating unstable and seasonal labour.
- Isolation and inadequate mobility infrastructure concentrate tourism activity in few connected localities.

Threats

- The gap in innovation, digitalisation and business skills compared to other regions will increasingly hinder the competitiveness of the tourism sector.

- The development of the tourism sector in cheaper destinations in the Mediterranean can pose Sicily at a competitive loss.
- The rising use of P2P platforms for tourism activities is causing artificially inflated property values in touristic destinations and unfair competition with tourism professional operators.

Opportunities

- European funds can be leveraged to develop and strengthen unconventional tourism offerings

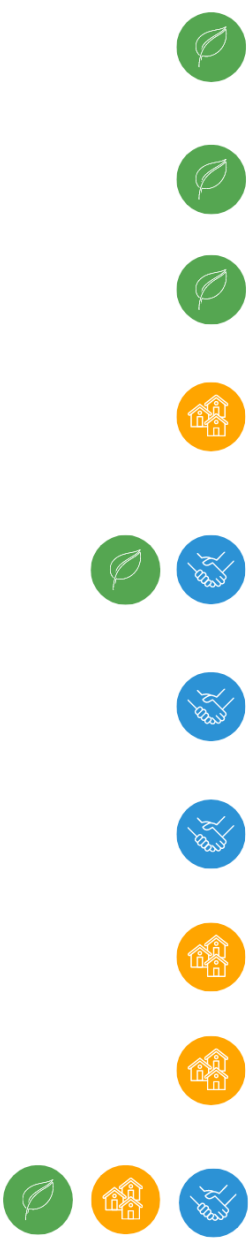
Type of action	Intervention	Feasibility
Correct	Streamline new territorial narratives into the mainstream regional promotion of the Sicily Brand	Medium-term
	Foster the creation of local networks to mainstream the use of short supply chains in the tourism sector, based on KM0 and certified productions	Medium -term
Adapt	Work in synergy with other Mediterranean countries to create cross-border integrated tourism offerings	Long-term
	Adopt promotional strategies that valorise territorial identities as a unique selling point for Sicily	Short-term
	Develop fairer and community-owned platforms of tourism demand management (eg. Albergo Diffuso)	Medium-term
Maintain	Support the capacitation of agro-tourism operators and the diversification of activities in the agricultural sector	Short-term
	Increase synergies between the agricultural and tourism sector in joint programmes (eg. the Rural Development Strategy (PSR))	Medium-term
	Prioritise the support to festivals and manifestations of	Medium-term

	contemporary relevance that attract quality-tourism	
Exploit	Leverage European funding to experiment new de-seasonalised and unconventional forms of tourism	Short-term

List of recommendations

from an environmental socio-cultural and economic perspective

- Implement environmental education plans
- Revise Territorial Plans for natural reserves and adopt environmental quality performance indicators
- Streamline new territorial narratives into the mainstream regional promotion of the Sicily Brand
- Implement policies of urban planning against tourism gentrification
- Foster the creation of local networks to mainstream the use of short supply chains in the tourism sector, based on KM0 and certified productions.
- Move away from summer-bound tourism and promote tourism models which specifically address climate-change adaptation (for example night-tourism)
- Develop fairer and community-owned platforms of tourism demand management (eg. Albergo Diffuso)
- Incentivise the protection of intangible cultural heritage through as well as its valorisation in contemporary culture.
- Work in synergy with other Mediterranean countries to create cross-border integrated tourism offerings.



- Valorise green itineraries within the centralised promotional strategy of the Sicily Brand
- Facilitate and incentivise the implementation of energetic self-sufficiency in tourism facilities
- Increase incentives to obtain certifications of organic farming.
- Focus on promotional activities that aim at attracting quality tourism over quantity tourism, that values the authenticity of destinations.
- Support the capacitation of agro-tourism operators and the diversification of activities in the agricultural sector
- Increase synergies between the agricultural and tourism sector in joint programmes (eg. the Rural Development Strategy (PSR))
- Prioritise the support to festivals and manifestations of contemporary relevance that attract quality-tourism
- Promote new forms of touristic fruition for marginal areas
- Promote intra-regional mobility (proximity tourism) towards "marginal areas" through better regional promotion
- Leverage European funding to experiment new, de-seasonalised and unconventional forms of tourism

The full list of recommendations is also available in Annex 1 of this document.

Learnings and synergies in a Mediterranean perspective

The preliminary results of this policy review have been shared with the other experts carrying out a similar study in the other countries of implementation of the RESTART MED! Project, in a meeting that took place online on the 6th of April 2023, from 12.00 to 13.30 CET. The outputs of the meeting contributed to updating and/or consolidating the results achieved at crossborder level and also set the groundwork for capitalisation activities, for example through the summits that the project will be organising in Lebanon and Tunisia.

The following experts participated in the meeting[3]:

- Elisabetta Carrubba Sicily, Italy
- Ayman Harb, Jordan
- Azza Temessek, Tunisia
- Anna Parcerisa, Catalonia, Spain

Overall, the experts' meeting has confirmed that, notwithstanding different levels of effectiveness of tourism regulation policies, challenges remain similar across the Mediterranean countries. In particular: stereotyped promotional strategies based on "mono-product" models, the existence of overly saturated touristic locations and marginal and underdeveloped ones, the mismatch between touristic services and public services and the risk of loss of local indigenous identities due to tourism gentrification.

The following key strategic recommendations have emerged from the meeting, which could constitute an important starting point for exchanging experiences, having more details

[3] Jad Arrange from Lebanon was not able to take part in the meeting

about different Mediterranean countries' contexts and identifying further reflection on sustainable tourism initiatives in a Mediterranean perspective:

- **Mainstreaming the concept of sustainability in education, to create an organic and shared understanding of, and endorsement for, sustainability in tourism**
  Crucially, the concept of sustainability in the tourism sector is still not clear and is interpreted differently from context to context, according to different levels of development and sensitiveness on the issue. This leaves a wide margin for social and greenwashing, both in the civic, private and public spheres of influence, further complicating the recognition and development of effective sustainable tourism policies. The development of a "civic chorus", or critical mass, which is able to discern and implement the meaning of sustainability is thus a common and important urgency for the Mediterranean area.

- **Promoting new models of tourism fruition such as community-owned practices, based on the culture of hospitality and sharing**
  Interestingly, all experts pointed out that the critical step in generating a serious public discourse on sustainable tourism begins with questioning the traditional model of tourism. Examples from the various interventions have shown that such an approach, rather than negating tourism itself, could open up new scenarios which are an emanation of a Mediterranean way of approaching the topic, and which is in part in discontinuity with the "traditional" way. For example, the Jordan case has opened up the discussion towards new models of tourism fruition such as **community-owned practices**, based on the culture of hospitality and sharing, which is well engrained in the Mediterranean culture, and in discontinuity with models based on price competitiveness.

- **Developing and implementing policies based on the "tourism load capacity" of a territory**

  With the exception of Catalonia, which actively pursues monitoring activities regarding the impacts of the tourism sector, others confirmed that there is a clear lack of understanding, both at the institutional level and at public perception, of the actual negative impacts of tourism. This is a critical aspect to be addressed, as it carries the risk of generating legislative frameworks, which albeit positive in theory are out of step with the reality on the ground, such as testified by the Tunisia case. **Systematic studies on the " tourism load capacity" of a territory should constitute the basis of any policy action.**

- **Setting out indicators to evaluate policies addressing tourism, from a Mediterranean perspective to reinforce accountability in the public sector.**

  The discussions confirmed that there is a real urgency of defining what sustainable tourism means and how it could be implemented in policy. The policy review in the different Mediterranean contexts - with the exception of Catalonia - have shown a similar problem as that found in Sicily: namely, sustainability in tourism is treated as a general aspiration in policy documents, but it is then not declined in programmatic efforts. From this perspective, the work conducted by the Catalan Tourism Board in their document "Guideline to address & mainstream sustainability challenges in tourism policies in Catalonia", **setting out indicators to evaluate policies addressing tourism**, is potentially adaptable and scalable in a Mediterranean perspective.

Annexes

Recommendations for mainstreaming sustainability in tourism policies at local level in Sicily

List of cross-border projects on sustainable tourism in Sicily

Technical Report on the results of the focus group "Policies for Sustainable Tourism" in the Etna Area

Technical Report on the results of the focus group "Policies for Sustainable Tourism" in the Iblei Area

Technical Report on the results of the focus group "Policies for Sustainable Tourism" in the Terre Sicane Area

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABILITY IN TOURISM POLICIES

IN SICILY

for

- environmental sustainability
- socio-cultural sustainability
- economic sustainability

Implement environmental education plans

Revise Territorial Plans for natural reserves and adopt environmental quality performance indicators

Streamline new territorial narratives into the mainstream regional promotion of the Sicily Brand

Implement policies of urban planning against tourism gentrification

Foster the creation of local networks to mainstream the use of short supply chains in the tourism sector, based on KM0 and certified productions.

Move away from summer-bound tourism and promote tourism models which specifically address climate-change adaptation (for example night-tourism)

Develop fairer and community-owned platforms of tourism demand management (eg. Albergo Diffuso)

Incentivise the protection of intangible cultural heritage through as well as its valorisation in contemporary culture.

Work in synergy with other Mediterranean countries to create cross-border integrated tourism offerings.

Valorise green itineraries within the centralised promotional strategy of the Sicily Brand

Facilitate and incentivise the implementation of energetic self-sufficiency in tourism facilities

Increase incentives to obtain certifications of organic farming.

Focus on promotional activities that aim at attracting quality tourism over quantity tourism, that values the authenticity of destinations.

Support the capacitation of agro-tourism operators and the diversification of activities in the agricultural sector

Increase synergies between the agricultural and tourism sector in joint programmes (eg. the Rural Development Strategy (PSR))

Prioritise the support to festivals and manifestations of contemporary relevance that attract quality-tourism

Promote new forms of touristic fruition for marginal areas

Promote intra-regional mobility (proximity tourism) towards "marginal areas" through better regional promotion

Leverage European funding to experiment new, de-seasonalised and unconventional forms of tourism

Annex 2 - List of cross-border cooperation projects on sustainable tourism in Sicily

Here considered are the projects financed under the following programmes:

- ENI CBC MED
- Interreg MED
- Italy - Tunisia

In the programming periods 2007 - 2013 and 2014 - 2020.

ENI CBC MED

2014 - 2020 Mediterranean Sea Basin ENI CBC	
CROSS DEV: Cultural Routes for Sustainable Social and economic Development in Mediterranean	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli - CISP
Specific objective	CROSSDEV expects to increase tourism competitiveness and attractiveness of less known destinations and rural areas, enhancing the Cultural Routes experiences such as those of the Council of Europe (e.g. Phoenicians Route and IterVitis), Palestine (Palestinian Heritage Trail) and Jordan (Jordan Trail).
Cooperation area	Italy - Jordan - Lebanon - Palestine
Period	2019 - 2023
Total budget	EUR 2 500 000.00
Website	https://www.enicbcmed.eu/projects/crossdev
iHERITAGE: ICT Mediterranean platform for UNESCO cultural heritage	

Partner(s) working in Sicily	Università degli Studi di Palermo - Dipartimento di Architettura Castles and Medieval Towns Circuit Association REGIONE SICILIANA - ASSESSORATO DEL TURISMO, DELLO SPORT E DELLO SPETTACOLO
Specific objective	iHERITAGE will improve access to UNESCO cultural heritage, on site and off site, and will contribute to the establishment of the Regional Centre for Safeguarding and Valorisation of Mediterranean Intangible Cultural Heritage
Cooperation area	Italy - Spain - Portugal - Egypt - Jordan - Lebanon
Period	2020 - 2023
Total budget	EUR 3 874 287.06
Website	http://www.enicbcmed.eu/projects/iheritage
Med Pearls: The Mediterranean as an innovative, integral and unique destination for Slow Tourism initiatives	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	APS MEDITERRANEAN PEARLS
Specific objective	Med Pearls aims at internationally positioning the Mediterranean as a unique and integral destination to experience the Med lifestyle through SlowTourism (ST)
Cooperation area	Italy - Spain - Egypt - Palestine - Jordan - Greece
Period	2019 - 2022
Total budget	EUR 3 015 132.67
Website	http://www.enicbcmed.eu/projects/med-pearls

2007 - 2013 Mediterranean Sea Basin ENPI CBC	
ArcheoMED: Cultural and Archaeological heritage in the Mediterranean Basin	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Academic Pole of the Province of Agrigento

Specific objective	ArcheoMed focuses on the devolvement of an integrated regional policy, building on the concept of a "Mediterranean Cultural District", with a view of promoting shared ideas and initiatives based on a single communication and marketing strategy.
Cooperation area	Italy - Spain - Jordan - Israel
Period	2011 - 2013
Total budget	EUR 1 350 072.00
Website	N/A
MARAKANDA	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Municipality of Favara Service XII
Specific objective	MARAKANDA aims at preserving typical Mediterranean markets through the setting-up of a cross-border cluster to promote the integration of high quality agro-food/handicraft production chains and improve governance processes among private and public actors in city markets.
Cooperation area	Italy - Egypt - Lebanon - Spain - Cyprus - Greece
Period	2012 - 2015
Total budget	EUR 1 355 000.00
Website	N/A
MEDNETA: Mediterranean cultural network to promote creativity in the arts, crafts and design for communities' regeneration in historical cities	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Social and Economic Research Centre for the South of Italy - CRESM
Specific objective	In the belief that the economic improvement and the urban liveliness should insist on the creative industries revitalization and on the valorization of traditional heritage, MEDNETA project aims to support creativity in ACDs as a means for the regeneration of the communities inhabiting historical districts
Cooperation area	Spain - Italy - Tunisia - Greece - Lebanon - Palestine
Period	2013 - 2015

Total budget	EUR 1 985 553.89
Website	N/A
NEWCIMED: NEW CITIES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA BASIN	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Environment and Culture Heritage, Long Learning Education and Modern Art and Architecture Department of the Culture Heritage and Education Council. Sicily Regional Government Association for the documentation, preservation and enhancement of the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Heritage (HERIMED)
Specific objective	The NEWCIMED project focuses on the enhancement of the cultural heritage and territorial planning capacities of the so-called "New Towns", a urban phenomenon which is diffused in the Mediterranean area. A new town is a city or community that was carefully planned from its inception and is typically constructed in a previously undeveloped area.
Cooperation area	Italy - Greece - Lebanon - Jordan - Tunisia
Period	2011 - 2015
Total budget	EUR 1 991 955.00
Website	N/A
ONMEST 2: Open Network for Mediterranean Sustainable Tourism 2	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Municipality of Ispica
Specific objective	In order to contribute to the diversification of tourism offer, ONMEST 2 project aims to enhance minor destinations such as Ispica (Italy), Kalavrita (Greece), Alcaraz (Spain), Kadisha Valley (Lebanon), Birzeit (Palestine), Umm Qais (Jordan) and Béja (Tunisia), and turn them into 'Centers of Local Culture' as privileged places of sustainable tourism.
Cooperation area	Italy - Greece - Spain - Lebanon - Palestine - Jordan - Tunisia
Period	2013 - 2016
Total budget	EUR 1 726 846.14
Website	N/A

SLOWMED: Food as a means of dialogue in Mediterranean Contexts	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Department of health activities of Sicilian Region (DASOE) Centre for Creative Development Danilo Dolci (CSC DD)
Specific objective	SLOWMED project aims to promote creative intercultural dialogue with a view to consolidating a Mediterranean cultural identity based on its culinary heritage and to encourage the intergenerational transfer of traditions to young people.
Cooperation area	Spain - Portugal - Italy - Lebanon - Egypt
Period	2014 - 2015
Total budget	EUR 1 054 598.60
Website	N/A
SMOT: Sustainable Mediterranean Old Towns	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Euromediterranean Center for the Sustainable Development, SVI.MED Municipality of Ragusa
Specific objective	Considering the need to improve waste management in medinas, SMOT project will develop tailored solutions and specific models for five target areas located in Córdoba (Spain), Ragusa (Italy), Sfax (Tunisia), Al-Salt (Jordan) and Alexandria (Egypt).
Cooperation area	Spain - Italy - Tunisia - Jordan - Egypt
Period	2013 - 2015
Total budget	EUR 1 324 119.83
Website	N/A
UMAYYAD: Improvement of Mediterranean territorial cohesion through setup of tourist-cultural itinerary	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Castles and Medieval Towns Circuit Association
Specific objective	To contribute to the improvement of territorial cohesion in order to overcome the seasonal misbalances in tourism sector within the

	Mediterranean territory through promotion of sustainable tourism based on synergies derived from the design of a cultural itinerary focusing on the Umayyad heritage.
Cooperation area	Portugal - Spain - Italy - Tunisia - Egypt - Lebanon - Jordan
Period	2012 - 2016
Total budget	EUR 4 153 653.80
Website	N/A

Interreg Med

2014 - 2020 INTERREG VB Mediterranean	
CONSUME LESS: Consume Less in Mediterranean Touristic Communities	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	SVIMED
Specific objective	To enhance the development of a sustainable and responsible coastal and maritime tourism in the MED area
Cooperation area	Malta - Italy - Spain - Albania - Greece
Period	2016 - 2020
Total budget	EUR 2 635 000.00
Website	https://www.consumelessmed.org/
ALTER ECO: Alternative tourist strategies to enhance the local sustainable development of tourism by promoting Mediterranean Identity	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Tourism Observatory in European islands
Specific objective	ALTER ECO enhances the local sustainable development of tourism by promoting Mediterranean Identity through the implementation of

	alternative tourist strategies in 6 pilots co-designed and implemented by public and private stakeholders.
Cooperation area	Spain - Italy - Croatia - France - Cyprus - Greece
Period	2016 - 2019
Total budget	EUR 2 293 630.00
Website	N/A
COASTING: Coastal INtegrated Governance for Sustainable Tourism	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Sicilian Region - Department of Cultural Heritage and of Sicilian Identity
Specific objective	COASTING transnational partnership will activate synergies and cooperation to share specific solutions for an integrated and responsible management of coastal areas, particularly invested by tourism criticalities.
Cooperation area	Spain - Italy - Croatia - France - Malta - Greece
Period	2018 - 2020
Total budget	EUR 975 522.50
Website	N/A
EMbleMatiC: Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains as Coastal destinations of excellence	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Gal Terre dell'Etna e dell'Alcantara S.C.C.A.R.L
Specific objective	To enhance the development of a sustainable and responsible coastal and maritime tourism in the MED area
Cooperation area	Spain - Italy - France - Albania - Greece
Period	2016 - 2019
Total budget	EUR 2 975 571.49
Website	N/A

EMbleMatiC Plus: Transfer and dissemination of the values of sustainable tourism carried by the network of emblematic mountains of the Mediterranean hinterland through the process of developing eco-itineraries set up as part of the EMbleMatiC project.	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	GAL TIRRENO EOLIE SCARL
Specific objective	To maximise the impact of what was accomplished & worked with the EMbleMatiC project to new Med territories, and adjust the initially produced transfer guide to fit receivers' local context and to obtain their best eco-itinerary local implementation plan
Cooperation area	Spain - Italy - France - Albania - Greece
Period	2021 - 2022
Total budget	EUR 400 000.00
Website	N/A
TOURISMED: Fishing TOURIsm for a Sustainable tourism development in the MEDiterranean area	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Municipality of Trabia Promimpresa srl International Promotion Sicily-World - PRISM
Specific objective	TOURISMED is a project aimed at testing and transferring a fishing tourism business model in the coastal territories of Italy, Cyprus, Greece,Albania,France and Spain as a way to promote a sustainable approach to tourism,while fostering the preservation of the marine ecosystem and traditional fishing culture of the MED region.
Cooperation area	Spain - Italy - France - Albania - Greece - Cyprus
Period	2017 - 2019
Total budget	EUR 2 157 900.00
Website	N/A

TOURISMED MED PLUS: Fishing Tourism Model Multiplied and Mainstreamed at MED Level	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	PRISM Social Enterprise srl
Specific objective	The fishing Tourism Business Model(BM) proposed under TOURISMED will be capitalized in this project as a theoretical basis for the creation of draft policies for fishing tourism in the receiving territories(Molise,Montenegro and Bosnia).
Cooperation area	Spain - Italy - France - Bosnia-Heregovina - Montenegro
Period	2021 - 2022
Total budget	EUR 399 590.50
Website	N/A

ITALY - TUNISIA

2014 - 2020 Italy - Tunisia ENI CBC	
CEFEL: Public Archaeology: Community, education, training, economy and work	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Consorzio Universitario della Provincia di Agrigento Parco Archeologico e Paesaggistico della Valle dei Templi di Agrigento
Specific objective	The project aims at coordinating businesses operating in the cultural tourism sector, cultural site management organisations and vocational training to address both the need for sound management of cultural assets and the creation of jobs for young people.
Cooperation area	Italy - Tunisia

Period	2019 - 2023
Total budget	EUR 1 003 601.50
Website	https://projetcefel.eu/
LA.THEM: Quality Labels and Thematic Tourism: actions for the structuring and growth of networks of cross-border SMEs.	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Istituto Euro-Mediterraneo di Scienza e Tecnologia IEMEST Consorzio Universitario Provincia di Trapani CONSUNITP Consorzio Ecodomus - Edilizia sostenibile, risparmio energetico e tecnologie alimentate da fonti rinnovabili
Specific objective	The LATHEM project aims at creating in Tunisia, and consolidating in Sicily, networks of micro enterprises for the promotion of high-quality tourism products in the family tourism segments (children, sports and gastronomy).
Cooperation area	Italy - Tunisia
Period	2021 - 2023
Total budget	EUR 1 395 917.62
Website	https://projetlathem.eu/it/
Meditheatres: Great music in ancient Mediterranean theatres	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Ente Luglio Musicale Trapanese Distretto Turistico Sicilia Occidentale Associazione Amici della Musica
Specific objective	Creation and promotion of an integrated thematic tourism route, mainly related to opera and symphonic music; creation of a specific "Meditheatre" label for the joint development of integrated cross-border routes of sustainable cultural tourism and the enhancement and promotion of the common archaeological heritage
Cooperation area	Italy - Tunisia

Period	2020 - 2023
Total budget	EUR 843 538.84
Website	https://meditheatres.eu/fr/home-fr/

2007 - 2013 Italy - Tunisia ENPI CBC	
A.P.E.R: Punic, Hellenistic and Roman Domestic architecture: safeguard and development	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Università degli Studi di Palermo – C.G.A.A.C. «Polo didattico di Agrigento» Polo Universitario della Provincia di Agrigento
Specific objective	The project is based on the conservation and development of the involved archaeological and architectural sites (Kerkouane and Pupput in Tunisia, Agrigento in Sicily), overlapping Punic, Hellenistic and Roman cultures
Cooperation area	Italy - Tunisia
Period	2011 - 2014
Total budget	EUR 752 782.56
Website	N/A
DASF: Artisans without borders	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	CNA Associazione Provinciale di Ragusa CNA Associazione Provinciale di Trapani CNA Associazione Provinciale di Agrigento
Specific objective	The establishment of a transnational artisan district that stimulates tourist activity by creating a Sicilian-Tunisian macro region, combining the enhancement of local crafts with the creation of tourist itineraries seasonally adjusted.

Cooperation area	Italy - Tunisia
Period	2013 - 2015
Total budget	EUR 744 000.17
Website	N/A
EQUIMEDEV: The development of the economy and tourism in rural areas through the development of the horse	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Istituto Incremento Ippico per la Sicilia Regione Siciliana - Dipartimento Interventi Infrastrutturali per l'Agricoltura Provincia Regionale di Trapani
Specific objective	The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the sustainable development of cross-border territories of Tunisia and Italy through the development of economic sectors linked to breeding and training of the horse and the promotion of a joint offer of integrated Mediterranean tourism in rural areas.
Cooperation area	Italy - Tunisia
Period	2013 - 2015
Total budget	EUR 720 248.90
Website	N/A
HOLOGRAMME: Harmonize opportunities related to new guidelines for management of Mediterranean archaeological resources and networking of experiences	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Comune di CALATAFIMI SEGESTA Associazione CICI Comune di Salemi Associazione culturale Sabah
Specific objective	The construction of a cross-border network of Italian-Tunisian

	archaeological resources through the use of new technologies.
Cooperation area	Italy - Tunisia
Period	2013 - 2015
Total budget	EUR 577 738.00
Website	N/A
MAGON: The path of the Mediterranean vineyard in the footsteps of Magon between Sicily and Tunisia	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Associazione Strada del Vino Terre Sicane
Specific objective	To create a cross-border cultural tourist circuit based on the combined enhancement of the archaeological heritage and food and wine traditions.
Cooperation area	Italy - Tunisia
Period	2013 - 2015
Total budget	EUR 784 471.04
Website	N/A
LVDLC: The journeys of knowledge	
Partner(s) working in Sicily	Agenzia di Sviluppo per la Programmazione e Pianificazione delle risorse locali della Sicilia Centro Meridionale- PROPITER Associazione PlataniQuisquina GAL/OC dellaQuisquina Comune di Modica Castles and Medieval Towns Circuit Association Gal Eloro Società consortilemista a r.l. Gal Elimos
Specific objective	The project will integrate competitiveness and marketing in the craftsmanship sector, through their integration with tourism, creating a cooperation network between Tunisia and Sicily, in order to

	strengthen dialogue and sustainable collaboration to develop common strategies.
Cooperation area	Italy - Tunisia
Period	2011 - 2014
Total budget	EUR 778 766.00
Website	N/A