



Activity 1.2

Inner areas stakeholders engagement

D1.2.1 – Stakeholder engagement meeting report





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Stakeholder engagement information

Date and Place:	24.01.2024.	Development agency of Dugopolje municipality
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List of Participants

<u>NAME AND SURNAME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
Anita Ževrnja	Development agency of Dugopolje municipality	Senior associate
Marija Čipčić	Municipality of Dugopolje	Senior adviser
Ana Vržina	Development agency of Dugopolje municipality	Associate
Kristina Ćosić	Tourist board of Dugopolje municipality	expert associate in tourism
Marijana Botić	Local action group Zagora	head of LAG office
Denis Doždor	Doždor apartments	private accommodation provider
Anka Smodlaka	Smodlaka apartment	private accommodation provider
Antonia Radica	Municipality of Dugopolje	employee on the BRICS project
Silvija Badrov	Municipality of Dugopolje	employee on the BRICS project
Goran Čipčić	Trade Peculiari	owner
Tomislav Radina	association DAR	volunteer
Toni Braović	Cultural and artistic society Pleter	leader of the dance ensemble
Matea Radan	Municipality of Dicmo	associate in the implementation of EU projects
Daniela Puović	Municipality of Dugopolje	employee on the BRICS project

Agenda TIME	
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14:00 – 14:30	Registration
14:30-14:45	Institutional Greetings Marija Čipčić
14:45-15:15	Presentation of the BRICS project and the living lab of the Dugopolje area: Identifying common solutions for tourism promotion and governance mechanisms Anita Ževrnja
15:15-16:00	Debate with participants and setting up the Living Labs group
16:00-16:30	Local development strategy of Local action group Zagora; through tourism Marijana Botić Rogošić
16:30-17:10	Good practice: Visitor centar Hidden Dalmatia Kristina Ćosić
17:10-17:20	Results of study visits to Molise and Dugopolje, next steps of the project Anita Ževrnja

Key topics presented, discussion and conclusion

The involvement of key stakeholder of tourism and non-tourism sector (SMEs, hosting facilities managers, restaurateurs, cultural or tourism associations, citizens etc.) is essential to implement the territorial requests and complete the desk analyses. The objective is therefore twofold: on the one hand to outline the project objectives and preliminary studies; on the other one, actively involve the representatives of the inner areas in the Living Labs in the Activity 3, to find out solutions in terms of tourism governance mechanisms, highly responsive to the real community needs, as mandatory step to improve the cross-border cooperation.

	Elements of reflection
Discussion	<p>Topic 1: Presentation of the BRICS project and the living lab of the Dugopolje area: Identifying common solutions for tourism promotion and governance mechanisms</p> <p>During the introductory session, the primary challenges, objectives,</p>



and underlying concepts of the project were presented. Participants were made aware of issues such as legal and administrative obstacles that hinder cross-border cooperation between different regions, as well as visibility and capacity issues that limit Dugopolje, as well as areas of the Basso Ferrarese and the Matese Inner Area in promoting their tourist and cultural assets externally. Additionally, the project and its activities were outlined to demonstrate how they will ultimately ensure the development of unique tourism governance mechanisms and enhance the capacities of local public administrators in strategic planning and participation in joint cross-border initiatives. Public sector representatives highlighted the daily challenges they encounter in tourism management. Meanwhile, stakeholders from smaller enterprises noted the previous lack of opportunities to engage in development initiatives, a situation that has been gradually improving through participatory planning in recent developmental initiatives. Additionally, the lack of opportunities for collaboration and knowledge exchange with regions abroad facing similar issues was also identified as a challenge. Stakeholders commended such international cooperation and partnerships as valuable opportunities to jointly address and overcome these problems.

Topic 2: Debate with participants and setting up the Living Labs group

During this session, participants were introduced to the concept of living labs, a model that serves as a mechanism for co-creation and ideation within the project. All interested participants with ideas for identifying solutions and developing tourism governance mechanisms were invited to join the living lab. Based on the participants' interest, key stakeholders for the living labs were selected. Participants also shared their initial ideas as potential solutions, which were earmarked for further consideration before the first living lab meeting.

Topic 3: Local development strategy of Local action group Zagora; through tourism

LAG Zagora plays an important role in rural development of middle Dalmatia hinterland. The purpose of LAG activities is to improve the quality of life of all residents and strengthen the capacities of local



stakeholders. It currently comprises 38 members from seven local self-government units, and through its activities, LAG strengthens the bonds between its members, recognizing them as equal partners in initiatives aimed at developing the region. Therefore, new local development strategy (2023-2027), built based on innovative approach to local development, was tailored to the unique characteristics of the local area, with the bottom-up - community involvement approach. Strategic activities outline measures and financing opportunities through ERDF funds directly via LAG tenders. These tenders support entrepreneurial efforts to develop tourism offerings and content, aiming to create a destination that is architecturally, scenically, culturally, and gastronomically distinctive. All stakeholders concurred on the deficiency of entrepreneurial products and services within the local community. Consequently, the new strategy is particularly important for supporting the development of diverse activities and enhancing the networking of supply and stakeholders. This approach provides substantial employment prospects and also opens doors to participation in cross-border initiatives focusing on tourism.

Topic 4: Good practice: Visitor centre Hidden Dalmatia

The Dugopolje Visitor Center, established in 2023, aims to manage and promote sustainable tourism, facilitate planned development, and enhance the tourist valorization of the largely untapped Mosor mountain area. Despite its rich natural values, the area has historically been underexplored in terms of tourism, with limited awareness among the local population. Uniqueness of Centre makes it a model of good practice, as it brings together all the attractions of Dugopolje into a cohesive and singular experience. Another thing that sets this project apart is its collaborative nature, involving seven partners including: county's institution for the management of protected areas of nature, municipality of Dugopolje, cities of Kaštela and Split, tourist boards of Dugopolje, Kaštela and Split. During discussions, participants emphasized the transformative impact of such cooperation, highlighting its ability to strengthen operational and administrative frameworks. They agreed that this collaborative approach represents a promising model for future endeavours, fostering greater cohesion and effectiveness in advancing tourism development initiatives.



	<p>Topic 5: Results of study visits to Molise and Dugopolje, next steps of the project</p> <p>The presentation covered main initiatives observed at visited sites such as Altilia Saepinum, WWF Oasis Guardiaregia-Campochiaro, and Matese Mountains. Additionally, key recommendations and findings from the study in Molise were highlighted. These included enhancing local governance through better coordination among municipalities and stakeholders, implementing educational programs for visitors and tourism operators, promoting eco-tourism initiatives, addressing seasonality challenges by diversifying offerings through the creation of seasonal packages and targeting different customer segments, etc. Also, the next steps of the project were presented; the organisation of the Living Labs with the stakeholders at the local level (most of them being present at this meeting), as part of co-participation development of tourism governance mechanisms. The idea of organising labs is aimed at finding the solution for channelling territorial assets and promoting them with as unique offer for the entire inner area.</p>
<p>Expected objective for tourism in the area</p>	<p>The development of tourism based on the sustainability of the area, valorizing the natural values of the landscape - the Mosor mountain, the traditional values of the coast and the Dalmatian Zagora, the joint cooperation of stakeholders from the tourism sector, from the civil, private to the public sector, which at the same time represents the main strength of future tourism development and a factor improvement of the tourist offer (<i>by cooperation to the point of unity in the creation of new tourist content and products</i>).</p>
<p>Main recommendation and Next Step:</p> <p>- Key actors involved in tourism governance mechanisms</p>	<p>The well-developed tourism in nearby coastal areas presents an opportunity, as many tourists are now seeking more peaceful vacation spots in the hinterland. This presents an opportunity to highlight the hinterland's unique values to visitors and enhance the region's overall tourism offering. The coastal area features numerous cultural attractions, including heritage sites, historic cities, beach tourism, festivals, and various events. In contrast, the hinterland offers lush green spaces, recreational activities, thematic hiking trails, and significant natural heritage. By integrating these diverse elements, the entire region can offer a more comprehensive and</p>



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<p>- Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for tourism in the area</p> <p>- Next Steps (actors involved in Living Lab)</p>	<p>complementary tourism experience. However, this also poses a potential threat if proper governance and planning mechanisms are not implemented. Without comprehensive and sustainable tourism development, many settlements in Dugopolje and its surroundings risk becoming mere investment hubs focused on constructing accommodation facilities, rather than fostering sustainable tourism growth.</p> <p>The primary deficiency in current tourism governance is the insufficient collaboration among key stakeholders. Most actors are focused on their individual activities, resulting in a lack of synergy. For example, producers at family farms (OPGs) sell their products directly without integration into or promotion within the hinterland tourism market. Additionally, while the Visitor Center effectively highlights local natural and cultural heritage and engages with public sector representatives at the county level, it lacks comprehensive collaboration with private sector stakeholders in Dugopolje. Given the incipient stages of tourism development and governance, it is essential to provide support and capacity-building initiatives to all stakeholders. Emphasizing collaborative activities is particularly crucial to enhance the impact of ongoing initiatives. Because of the above, key stakeholders in the tourism sector were recognized and will be gathered and encouraged to actively participate with their ideas in the Living Lab workshops. The structure of the Living Lab comprises representatives from institutions of special importance for tourism development in the area, notably the Dugopolje Municipality and the Dugopolje Tourist Board. The Tourist Board, tasked with area promotion and partnership establishment, and the Municipality, overseeing infrastructure projects and serving as the primary administrative entity, assume central roles. Additionally, the Hidden Dalmacija Visitor Center provides expertise in coastal heritage interpretation. Representatives from the Odraz development agency and LAG Zagora are important because of their role in supporting development initiatives. LAG also serves as an advocate for initiatives from associations and other bodies focused on empowering the local community. Representing the private sector, apartment renters and proprietors of OPGs will be prominently involved.</p>
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