



Activity 1.5.

Definition of solutions and actions for tourism governance mechanisms in inner areas and cross-border cooperation.

D1.5.1 Solution Summary Reports



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1. Context analysis: tourism potential and flows

1.1. *Union of Municipalities of Lands and Rivers*

Tourism is a constantly evolving market, both on the supply side and on the demand side. The offer of the territory changes, both in terms of accommodation and tourist product and in terms of what tourists ask for. A market whose global economic impact in 2023 is around 570 billion dollars (+45% compared to 2022) and which, despite the high cost of living, in Italy has an enormous impact on GDP (13%). Very positive numbers, which have brought the sector back to the pre-pandemic level and the presences in the hotels at +12% compared to 2022: a very good data, if you consider that in Europe the average is 8%. At the BIT in Milan, the International Tourism Exchange held from 4 to 6 February 2024, over a thousand exhibitors from 66 Countries and 26 new Destinations spoke about this: flows, trends and opportunities in the tourism industry.

In 2023, Italy ranked second in terms of number of international presences, totalling 118 million arrivals (60,5 million foreigners + 57,8 million Italians) and 412 million presences (215 million foreigners + 197 million Italians). The flows are mostly recorded during big events and among the most requested products there are culture and environment. For this reason, there are excellent prospects for Green Tourism, which has a good market among those with a high spending capacity, but also for Adventure and Family, two emerging tourism segments whose potential should not be underestimated. Also not to be underestimated are the niche tourist segments and the locations chosen as film sets for films and TV series, which have great attractive power.

Travellers' habits are also constantly evolving. Today tourists increasingly tend to go on holiday in the low season, to seek mild and fresh climates and to be the first-person protagonists of the holiday (vis-actor). For this reason, when we design the tourist offer, we must take into consideration deseasonalisation and digitalisation.



But what can administrators and tourism operators do to the needs of such a varied market, whose trends are constantly changing and the winning models of yesterday must necessarily be rethought today?

Currently the main topics around which the market moves are sustainability (environmental, economic and social), authenticity, accessibility, emotionality, personalization of experiences and psycho-physical well-being. These elements are found in various tourism products: Wellness & Outdoor, Food & Culture and Big Events.

BRICS attempts to answer these and other questions and find solutions, in the logic of cross-border cooperation between the areas affected by the Project: Union of Lands and Rivers (Emilia-Romagna), Union of Municipalities of Biferno (Molise) and Municipality of Dugopolje (Croatia).

The three areas affected by the Project are characterised by the presence of different tourist attractors which can be grouped into two macro-categories: Nature and Landscape and Art, History and Architecture. Elements that can be connected to each other for the creation of an integrated tourist offer in line with the main market trends, as nature and culture go well together in Green and Slow packages and products, where cycling and trekking on foot become the sustainable means of transport to discover the area. There are also different tourist flows, which however attest to a concrete difficulty in positioning the localities as tourist destinations, even within the single Region.

The Lands and Rivers Union includes the Municipalities of Copparo, Riva del Po and Tresignana:

- Copparo – geographically located between Ferrara and Comacchio – excels for cycle and cycle tourism routes (on its territory there are 12 km of cycle paths and 14 km of itineraries) ;
- Riva del Po hosts the bed of the river from which it takes its name – an element to be taken into consideration in the construction of bike and boat products - where is Mulino sul Po, a real floating museum part of the 19



Museums of Taste of the Emilia-Romagna Region which influenced Riccardo Bacchelli in the choice of these lands for the setting of the film *Il Mulino sul Po*;

- Tresignana is a well-preserved example of rationalist architecture with its Tresigallo, the “Metaphysical City” par excellence.

Heterogeneous strengths which could be systematized in the creation of tourist packages with the aim to create a network with the territories of neighbouring municipalities, also with a view to shared planning on similar themes (think, for example, of the efforts that Forlì and Cesena – two cities that are part of the Romagna Destination – have been working in recent years to recover rationalist architecture in their territory).

Moreover, we can point out, grouped by category and divided by Municipality, the following attractors which could be relevant in the construction of tourist packages focused on the Outdoors:

- Municipality of Copparo: Town Hall (ex Delizia Estense), Estense Tower, Villa “La Mensa”, Tenuta di Zenzalino [Historical – Architectural Heritage]; Church of San Pietro e Paolo (here there are works by Scarsella), Church of Santa Maria di Savonazzo (here there are works by the Bolognese School), Church of San Michele Arcangelo (here there is an important nineteenth-century organ) [Religious Heritage and Sacred Art]; “Alda Costa” Civic Gallery of Contemporary Art, Museum of Rural Civilization “La Tratta” (on the cultivation and uses of wheat and hemp and on the production of wine), Bigli House (the house of a local artist) [Museums and Places of Art].

- Municipality of Riva del Po: Church of San Giacomo, Church of the Assumption of the Santissima Maria Guarda Ferrarese, Sanctuary of Galvana, Church of San Francesco d’Assisi [Religious Heritage]; Museum of Arts and Crafts of the Lands of the Mill [Museums and Places of Art]; Sant’Antonio Way (5th stage), Germanica Way (limited to the variant involving Polesella and Ferrara), Destra Po [Walking routes].



- Municipality of Tresignana: Church of Sant'Apollinare [Religious Heritage]; Ex Cel.na. factory bound by the Ministry [Industrial archaeology].

In addition to this, the area's offer is completed by the presence of some accommodation facilities which, according to ISTAT survey for 2022, show this situation: 2 hotel facilities, for a total of 49 rooms, 83 beds and 55 bathrooms (both on the territory of the Municipality of Copparo) and 14 non-hotel accommodation facilities, for a total of 38 rooms, 85 beds and 31 bathrooms (distributed across the three Municipalities) . About the territory, there are tourist surveys that allow us to trace the flow trend, which is mainly recorded between June and October with a strong predilection for September. The years taken as reference – both for arrivals and for presences – range from 2019 to 2023 (latest available data which looks at the entire year) and allow us to trace an overview of the trend in demand, both domestic and international. As regards arrivals, we can say that in 2023 we returned to pre-pandemic levels, also recording a slight increase (4.282 total arrivals in 2019, against 4.506 total arrivals in 2023). We have a similar increase for presences in 2023 compared to pre-pandemic: ranging from 10.078 total presences in 2019 to 11.691 total presences in 2023 . It is above all Italians who choose the Lands and Rivers Union for their holidays, who in the pre-pandemic period mainly came from Lombardy, Piedmont and Emilia-Romagna, while among the foreigners the presence of Chinese stood out. Most of these people chose the Municipalities of Copparo and Tresignana as their place of stay, which are also those with the greatest accommodation capacity.

The performance of 2023 helps to outline the regional picture, which is overall positive. In fact, in Emilia-Romagna there are 62 million presences and 14,5 million arrivals: estimates give rise to hope that by 2030 the tourism sector will be able to generate 16% of the overall GDP in the Region. Compared to 2022, arrivals and presences are increasing both in the Cities of Art (+10,4% of arrivals, +9,5% of presences), which had suffered a significant decline during the Covid years, and in the Apennines (+5,5% of arrivals, +3,7% of presences), which, on the other hand, had seen a significant increase during



the pandemic; the Riviera product and the Terme product, instead, continue to hold the line without any particular deviations.

1.2. Union of Municipalities of Biferno springs

The Region of Molise, located in central Italy, remains one of the country's lesser-known treasures. Among its many attractions, the Matese Mountain and the Biferno River area stand out for their natural beauty, cultural heritage, and potential for sustainable tourism. The inner area composed by Matese mountain and Biferno river has tourism potential in terms of tourist flow. The objective of this paragraph is to highlight opportunities and challenges.

As far as concern the geographic and environmental point of views, Matese Mountain is part of the Apennine mountain and the territory is spread among two Italian Regions, Campania and Molise. The Matese Mountain reaches an elevation of 2,050 meters at its highest peak, Monte Miletto. The area is characterized by lush forests, diverse wildlife, and picturesque landscapes, making it a prime spot for outdoor activities such as hiking, skiing, and mountain biking. The Biferno river is originate from the Matese Mountains, the Biferno River flows southeast for 84 kilometers before emptying into the Adriatic Sea. The river supports a variety of ecosystems along its course and is a crucial water source for local agriculture. The riverbanks offer opportunities for fishing, kayaking, and nature walks.

Both areas have tourism potentialities in terms of natural attractions, cultural and historical sites, gastronomy and eco-tourism.

The main natural attractions allow outdoor Activities. The Matese Mountains offer year-round recreational activities. In winter, ski resorts like Campitello Matese attract tourists for skiing and snowboarding. In warmer months, the mountain trails are ideal for hiking, bird watching, and mountain biking. The Biferno river's clear waters and natural surroundings are perfect for kayaking, fishing, and picnicking. The river's biodiversity also appeals to eco-tourists and bird watchers.



In the inner area there are cultural and archaeological sites with ancient Samnite ruins and Roman artifacts. Sites such as the ancient city of Saepinum provide a glimpse into the region's past.

As far as concern local traditions, the small villages around the mountain and the river still maintain some traditional crafts and as far as concern the cuisine and they are able to offer an unique experience to tourist. The local cousin is known for its hearty cuisine, featuring dishes made from locally sourced ingredients. Specialty foods include truffles, olive oil, and the Molise wine, Tintilia.

Agritourism is well developed and some farms offer tours, tastings, and farm-to-table dining experiences.

The natural environment provides excellent opportunities for eco-tourism. Initiatives such as guided nature tours, wildlife conservation programs, and eco-friendly accommodations can attract environmentally conscious travelers.

The current tourism flows in the Matese Mountain and Biferno River area is currently modest but growing. Visitor statistics indicate a rise in domestic tourists, particularly from neighbouring regions. However, international tourist numbers remain low, highlighting an opportunity for increased marketing and infrastructure development. In term of domestic tourism, the region sees a significant influx of visitors during the ski season and summer holidays. Domestic tourists are primarily from nearby regions mainly from Puglia, Campania and Lazio, the proximity to larger urban areas in Campania, such as Naples and Caserta, makes the area a popular destination for weekend getaways trips.

International tourism is not well developed, since there is a limited international awareness of the inner area of Molise and so efforts to promote the region in international markets could help the increase of the number of tourists. The area's natural and cultural attractions could appeal to niche markets such as adventure tourists, history enthusiasts, and eco-tourists.

There are some tourism potentialities and opportunities for growth of the sector:



Italy – Croatia



- Infrastructure Development: Improving transportation links, such as roads and public transport, can make the region more accessible. Additionally, developing more accommodation options, including eco-lodges, can cater to a diverse range of tourists.
- Marketing and Promotion: Strategic marketing campaigns targeting both domestic and international audiences can raise awareness of the region's attractions. Collaborations with travel agencies and participation in travel expos can also be beneficial.
- Sustainable Practices: Emphasizing sustainable tourism practices can enhance the region's appeal to eco-conscious travelers. Initiatives such as conservation projects, eco-certifications for businesses, and community-based tourism can support sustainable growth.
- Cultural Events and Festivals: Promoting local festivals and cultural events can attract tourists and provide an immersive experience.
- Better services for tourists: Service and receptions skills need to be improved, especially in the small villages.
- European Funds: The EU cohesion funds that insists in the areas are mainly managed by Molise Region. The financial resources should be assigned with a strategic visions and not spread among different beneficiaries without responding to the real needs of the inner area.
- Production of local organic products. The valorisation of typical products with the recognition of IGP and DOP should be promoted and increased.

Natural

- Systematisation of the use of "Tratturi", as a tourist route and destination. The Tratturi are ancient pathways used for transhumance. The Tratturi routes, often several kilometres wide, were traditionally used by shepherds to drive their herds between lowland winter pastures and highland summer pastures. The Molise Region is investing financial resources and efforts for promoting these natural routes as tourist destinations. Some Tratturi insists in this specific inner area of Molise.

In conclusion, the main challenges are:



- Limited Infrastructure: The current infrastructure may not be sufficient to handle a significant increase in tourism. Investment in roads, public transport, and tourist facilities is needed.
- Seasonality: Tourism in the area is highly seasonal, which can lead to economic fluctuations. Developing year-round attractions and promoting off-season tourism can mitigate this issue.
- Environmental Impact: Ensuring that tourism development does not harm the natural environment is crucial. Implementing strict environmental regulations and promoting responsible tourism practices are essential steps.

So that, the Matese Mountain and Biferno River area in Molise holds significant potential for tourism development. By leveraging its natural beauty, cultural heritage, and opportunities for sustainable tourism, the region can attract a diverse range of visitors. Strategic investments in infrastructure, marketing, and sustainable practices are essential to unlock this potential and ensure long-term success. With careful planning and promotion, the Matese Mountain and Biferno River area can become a premier destination in Italy, offering a unique and enriching experience for all visitors.

1.3. Municipality of Dugopolje

Dugopolje Municipality is located in Dalmatia - an estimable Mediterranean region attracting an increasing number of tourists each year with its beaches, indented coastline, islands, and historic cities rich in cultural heritage. As one of the most important branches of the Split-Dalmatia County economy, almost 30 % of gross added value (GVA) created in Split-Dalmatia County comes from the activities of wholesale and retail trade, transport and storage, accommodation, preparation and servicing food, which are activities closely related to tourism (GDP in the Republic of Croatia, 2021). Only in 2023, Split-Dalmatia County recorded over 3.5 million arrivals and approximately 18 million overnight stays. While the broader region is celebrated for its sun, sea, and scenic beauty, Dugopolje and other municipalities in the Dalmatian



Zagora, the hinterland of the Dalmatia region, are actively striving to demonstrate their full potential. These efforts aim to highlight the unique attributes of the area and extend the traditional boundaries of Dalmatia's tourist belt. It is important to note that currently less than 5% of the total arrivals and overnight stays pertain to the hinterland area, with even smaller figures for the municipality of Dugopolje. The number of tourist arrivals in 2011. was 11 thousands and the number of overnight stays was 13 thousands, while in 2021 Dugopolje recorded over 46 thousands arrivals and approximately 13,000 overnight stays, showing a gradual increase in tourist activity. According to the data from the Dugopolje Tourist Board, there is one hotel and 23 apartments and vacation homes in the municipality, with vacation homes being dominant. There are also 221 permanent beds and 56 extra beds registered in the municipality, according to the data from the Croatian Bureau of Statistics. A good indicator of the tourist development of an area is also the number of tourist facilities per square kilometre. This metric also reflects the strain on local infrastructure, particularly during the summer months when tourist arrivals peak. In the territory of Split-Dalmatia County, in the coastal part of the local self-government units, there are municipalities with more than 100 tourist facilities per square kilometre (like the City of Makarska), while the smallest number of facilities are in the hinterland of the area, where this number, as a rule, does not exceed more than one building per square kilometre, and the situation is the same in Dugopolje Municipality. However, the significant economic impact experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic further underscores the need to lessen the region's economic dependence on tourism. It is imperative to diversify activities and content, extending beyond the coastal areas and islands to encompass the entire region. In the current economic context, agricultural activities dominate much of the hinterland region, whereas Dugopolje stands out for its significant entrepreneurial activity, hosting one of the largest economic zones in the Republic of Croatia.

The foremost asset of the Zagora region lies in rich tradition of hospitality, its rural estates nestled in untouched nature, and the unique opportunity it offers for a tranquil retreat from the busy everyday life, allowing visitors to reconnect



with nature and a slower pace of life. The Dugopolje area's natural heritage includes Mount Mosor with Vranjača Cave, a protected geomorphologic monument located on the northern side of the mountain and the King's Furnace, a unique cave with a wide entrance that is partially accessible to hikers despite lacking arranged paths. Thematic trails, paths and roads are also a valuable element of the tourist infrastructure. Due to the relief breakdown and the proximity of the nearby highlands and mountains, mountain paths and routes on Mosor are a valued element of the offer. An increasingly widespread form of the offer is also the wine trails that have started to emerge along the nearby hinterland areas. Regarding the development of sustainable and eco-tourism, there are initiatives involved in sustainable development and environmental protection, such as arrangement of small tourist infrastructure along with themed walking and cycling trails using natural materials and renewable energy sources. The Tourist Board also subsidizes local businesses and the production of local products, fostering a connection between agriculture and tourism. Enhancing the tourist experience is the Visitors' Centre "Hidden Dalmatia," a multimedia and educational centre that interprets the natural heritage of Dalmatian Zagora with a focus on Mount Mosor. The most prominent elements of the cultural heritage of the Municipality of Dugopolje are: Roman road - thematic hiking trail preserved in length of 1.5 Roman mile (about 2 km) which stretches along the margins of the municipalities of Dugopolje and Klis, and sacral buildings – seven famous sacral buildings are located within boundaries of the municipality. Alongside ecotourism, there are also excellent conditions for the development of sports tourism. Two important infrastructure facilities for the development of sports tourism are the Sports Centre "Croatian Knights" and the Economic Zone "PODI" which abounds in numerous facilities, some of which are intended for the development of tourism, namely the aforementioned Visitor's Centre as well as the hotel, shops, restaurants, bars and educational conference hall intended for the development of congress tourism.





Figure 1: Position of Dugopolje and main tourist resources



2. Tourism mechanisms governance

2.1. *Union of Municipalities of Lands and Rivers*

Lands and Rivers Union, Union of Municipalities of Biferno and Municipality of Dugopolje present various governance mechanisms, as identified within D.1.1. “Analysis and identification of the main administrative issues of tourism mechanisms governance”, both in terms of organization and purposes and mechanisms of collaboration and coordination. From their analysis it emerges that the Union of Lands and Rivers is a structured area, although there are still many steps to be taken to develop tourism. This is because the territory is in a Region that invests in the sector (it has its weight in the GDP) and which over the years has created a promotional-marketing structure capable of positioning the Region on the markets.

In the Municipalities of the Lower Ferrarese area covered by the study, tourism governance is the responsibility of the Union of Lands and Rivers (art. 4 of Regional Law 4/2016, which states that the Municipalities or Union of Municipalities must ensure basic tourist services relating to hospitality, i.e. assistance to tourists and local information, as well as organizing or participating in the organization of events and tourism promotion initiatives). For this the Union of Lands and Rivers complains the lack of funds and human resources that can be used in the tourism sector, with all the relevant difficulties that exist in Italy for the establishment of new IATs in the case of municipalities that do not have a considerable number of inhabitants . Despite this, to help tourists in enjoying the territory it has created a tourist portal (www.terrefiumidavivere.it) with the presentation of the main historical-architectural emergencies and the digital version of free downloadable maps to help cycle tourists to discover the area. This site, unfortunately, is not very well known even among the residents of the same municipalities. In addition to this, at a private level there is no collaboration that would be desirable and



there is a significant lack of services, an element that does not make it easy to create tourist packages to offer on the markets.

All this is part of a much more complex regional context, which affects both the Region as a whole and the sub-regional and urban level.

At a regional level there is the Tourism and Commerce Councillorship, which plays an administrative role, and APT Servizi, a network of companies belonging to the various DMCs, which plays an operational role dealing with the tourism promotion and marketing of Emilia-Romagna in the world. Precisely for this reason, APT Servizi is very attentive to the exhibition sector: it has a Fairs and Workshops Office which prepares the annual Fairs Plan and develops the “Charter of Fairs and Workshops Services”, mechanisms that allow private individuals to obtain accreditation – via the portal – to the trade fair events of their interest. The sub-regional level, regulated by regional law, is made up of 2 DMOs (Emilia and Romagna), the Bologna-Modena Tourist Territory and other public and private entities. The urban level, instead, is made up of 2 DMCs (Bologna Welcome and Rimini Welcome), the APT Network, the Rimini Riviera Convention Bureau and other public bodies dealing with tourism. We can therefore say that it is an integrated model that aims to coordinate regional activities with local ones: this, for example, does not happen in Molise, where there is a model based on public administrations. According to this integrated model, the DMO expresses a deliberate and shared strategy with the territories, carries out a function of direction, coordination and support to the various local stakeholders, with the main purpose of using economic resources in the most efficient way possible, but above all of overseeing the territory. Both regional and sub-regional levels pay attention to destination marketing and management functions and refer to the Three-Year Guidelines for Regional Tourism Promotion-Marketing (the 2022-2024 strategic plan is currently in place). According to this plan and the various regional laws issued over the years, the products on which the Region works and invests are included into 8 macro product categories: Riviera, Spa & Wellness, Sport, Wellness Valley, Art & Culture, Nature & Outdoor, Food Valley and Motor Valley. The Motor Valley Fest, the Ravenna Festival and the Major Sporting



Events (elements transversal to different areas) are part of the macro categories. Besides, APT Servizi has created these transversal products (very important at the end of the Covid-19 pandemic): Emilia-Romagna Bike, Golf Experience, Paths of the Spirit and Ways of Pilgrimage, Castles – Historic Houses – Historic Villages, Film tourism and great filmmakers from Emilia-Romagna, Via Emilia of Music, Luxury Tourism and Affordable Luxury. Also very interesting are the products that involve different Regions or different areas of the same Region, such as: The Ways of Dante (between Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany), Piero della Francesca Lands (between Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, Marche and Umbria), The Great Delta (between Emilia-Romagna and Veneto), Guercino Routes and Jewish Itineraries (they consist of discovery itineraries and a set of guided tours linked to the art and painting of Emilia-Romagna).

The UTF is included within the DMO Romagna (<https://destinazioneromagna.emr.it/>), which has jurisdiction over the Provinces of Ferrara, Forlì-Cesena, Ravenna and Rimini. Established pursuant to article 12 of the regional law of 25 March 2016, n. 4 “Ordinamento turistico regionale – Sistema organizzativo e politiche di sostegno alla valorizzazione e promo-commercializzazione turistica”, is a public body instrumental to local authorities pursuant to article 11-ter of the legislative decree of 23 June 2011, n. 118 (Disposizioni in materia di armonizzazione dei sistemi contabili e degli schemi di bilancio delle Regioni, degli Enti Locali e dei loro organismi, a norma degli articoli 1 e 2 della Legge 5 Maggio 2009, n. 42) and carries out the functions provided for by law regional n. 4 of 2016 and any other function in tourism matters conferred by the Region or by the participating public bodies. Towards the end of the year, the Visit Romagna Members’ Assembly is called to approve the Annual Program of Tourist Activities for the following year and the budget for the activities . It is built considering the three-year regional strategic lines for tourism promotion and marketing and the 2024 Program is currently in force, which provides for an allocation of 6 million euros for the improvement and strengthening of brand identity and communication. The main themes of which the Program focuses are: Sea and bathing offers,



Villages - Castles - New Thematic Itineraries, Sports Tourism, Wellness and Slow Tourism, Food & Experience.

Analysing the portal (<https://www.visitromagna.it/>), the presence of the Lands and Rivers Union is still marginal today. It is therefore necessary to invest in interconnections between neighbouring areas, with greater flows: this to open a dialogue for the structuring of integrated products that have the same common thread.

2.2. Union of Municipalities of Biferno springs

As identified in the BRICS Deliverable “D.1.1. Analysis and identification of the main administrative issues of tourism mechanisms governance,” several governance problems hinder tourism development in the Matese and Biferno area. Tourism in the Union of Municipalities of Biferno is mainly governed by the Molise Region and its Regional Tourism Authority, which coordinates activities in compliance with the national strategy for internal areas. This coordination is combined with the efforts of the Unions and individual Municipalities.

The strategy adopted for promoting tourism involves coordinating activities under the “Matese strategy.” Recently, small communities have begun cooperating for local tourism development.

However, a significant issue remains the lack of a unified governance model across various institutional levels. Although the regional authority should lead tourism promotion, conflicting proposals and strategies from different management levels often nullify planned interventions.

Moreover, the system is weakened by limited human resources with insufficient skills in tourism, scarce economic resources, an unclear promotion strategy, and bureaucratic hurdles that slow down the implementation of innovative strategies. Additionally, there is a lack of public-private partnerships and community engagement. For example, there is no single Tourist Office



responsible for promoting the entire area, the infrastructures are underdeveloped.

The lack of financial resources dedicated to campaigns for promotion of the whole area, participation in international events and a clear marketing strategy limits a lot the effectiveness of tourist promotion.

The lack of capacities to identify and involving local private stakeholders to conduct participatory activities requires several resources in terms of time, space and specific knowledge represents another challenge for tourism development.

At local level, so it is necessary to overcome several problems in the current tourism governance mainly for avoiding insufficient collaboration among key involved stakeholders and overcoming the lack of synergies. The current fragmented administrative organization in the tourism sector requires a more integrated tourism governance mechanisms at the local level. The regulatory framework at regional level should encourage the creation of unified structures that facilitate collaboration among public and private stakeholders.

2.3. Municipality of Dugopolje

As identified within D.1.1. Analysis and identification of the main administrative issues of tourism mechanisms governance, there are several administrative problems that hinder Dugopolje tourism development. These challenges are rooted in the undeveloped mechanisms of governance and cooperation which contribute to the limited visibility and recognition of destination. Also, lack of resources dedicated to advertising campaigns, participation in international events, and digital marketing efforts limits the reach and effectiveness of external promotion. Furthermore, long and complex bureaucratic processes within administrative bodies slow down or impede tourism development initiatives. Lengthy approval procedures, complex permitting systems, and other obstacles can discourage both local



administrators and potential investors from pursuing tourism projects. 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.

As national and international initiatives often base their development on engagement of wide array of stakeholders from public, private and civil sector and their collaboration and co-creation, lack of expertise with these activities tend to prevent the Municipality of Dugopolje of taking part in the dialogue at broader scale. Lack of capacities to identify, involve and actively manage larger number of stakeholders, as well as to conduct participatory activities that require resources in terms of time, space and specific knowledge represent a challenge for tourism cross-border cooperation.

Challenges in capacity building in organizational and human resources also affect the participation of Municipality of Dugopolje in national and international initiatives. There are several actors that work in capacity building, such as local action group "Zagora" which conducts capacity building activities through various workshops including those focusing on the development of specific tourism types related to agriculture, as rural and cultural tourism, but still, strengthening of those types of activities is necessary to enable and facilitate participation at broader scale. With that in mind, it is necessary to implement awareness-raising activities regarding the importance of sustainable tourism development based on valorisation and interpretation of natural heritage, as well as activities related to involving and encouraging stakeholders to participate and cooperate in implementation of tourism strategies.

At local level, it is also necessary to overcome several primary deficiencies in current tourism governance, such as 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 local 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.

In the last few years, several bodies which operate in the area of Dugopolje have actively participated in encouraging dialogue between the private sector and public institutions regarding the resolution of development issues in tourism. The Odras Development Agency operates on the territory of the municipality, whose task is to provide professional and technical assistance in stimulating the economy, tourism, agriculture and civil society organizations in the municipality. For example, the agency participates in the design and implementation of programs for the development of entrepreneurial infrastructure, encouraging the development of small and medium-sized businesses, and promoting the economy and tourism of the Municipality of Dugopolje. It therefore cooperates with the public, private and civil sectors and provides support to all development stakeholders in strengthening the activities they carry out. Also, the local action group "Zagora", which operates on a spatial scale that includes the Municipality of Dugopolje, conducts capacity building activities and workshops. Most of the activities are related to the strengthening of agricultural activities, however, there are also a large number of those that focus on the development of special forms of tourism, such as rural and cultural tourism. The aforementioned workshops also include different models of knowledge transfer between different stakeholders, for example learning based on experiences. Most of the activities are carried out within the framework of projects in which LAG participates, and through which it tries to activate and engage a wider range of local stakeholders. At the same time, LAG encourages stakeholders to think about new ways of valorising local area and values that could be used as resources in tourism, in these projects the emphasis should also be on the synergistic action of different sectors, each of which could use its knowledge and skills for common contribution to sustainable tourism development. For example, the LAG recently conducted workshops that included informing and educating local stakeholders about practical knowledge and experiences on projects in the domain of cultural heritage, workshops were conducted that included familiarization with the



basic elements and activities of the INTERREG cross-border cooperation program, and the participants were presented with Croatian cultural potential heritage as a driving force for the development of cultural tourism. Special emphasis is placed on the use of archaeological heritage as a starting point in writing project proposals that can be financed through INTERREG cross-border cooperation programs to develop ideas of targeted tourist development through joint dialogue. The Tourist Board also strives to connect private entities in tourism with public institutions that are responsible for tourist infrastructure in the area of LGUs, however, it is primarily about connecting through joint promotion, and to a lesser extent about connecting with the aim of solving common challenges in the aspect of tourism and strategic thinking of tourism development.

Furthermore, enhancing the regulatory framework for the tourism sector can create basis for overcoming existing challenges. Several key improvements can be considered. Firstly, there is a need to empower local entities with greater decision-making authority within the regulatory framework. By devolving certain responsibilities to the local level, administrative bodies can respond more effectively to the unique needs and opportunities of their specific areas. This involves decentralizing decision-making processes related to tourism planning, development, and promotion. Next, to address the issue of limited funds for tourism development at the local level, the regulatory framework should ensure greater financial resources for local level tourist associations. This involves reevaluating budgetary allocations so as the local organizations are left with more money for governance and development activities after settling salaries and necessary administrative expenses. Creating a dedicated fund for local tourism initiatives can also secure needed resources at the local level. The lack of resources could also be substituted by introducing incentives that encourage private sector participation in tourism development and forming public-private partnerships. Furthermore, simplifying and streamlining bureaucratic processes within the regulatory framework is essential to expedite tourism development initiatives. This includes revising approval procedures and permitting systems to be more efficient, transparent and conducive to



investment. Also, current fragmented administrative organization in the tourism sector calls for the establishment of a more integrated tourism governance mechanisms at the territorial level. The regulatory framework should encourage the creation of unified structures that facilitate collaboration among various stakeholders, ensuring a cohesive approach to tourism management and promotion.

3. Potential and critical issues of tourism

3.1. Union of Municipalities of Lands and Rivers

The territory of the Union of Lands and Rivers is an area of the Lower Ferrarese where tourism has not yet taken off, despite the potential present in the three municipalities that make it up. The flows, although present, do not reach very high levels and the critical issues highlighted by the stakeholders make the development of new and more advanced projects complex. However, it is the will of the Municipalities and the Union to work towards the tourist development of the territory and to encourage dialogue with private individuals as much as possible, with a view to involving the whole community for participatory and sustainable planning, in line with market trends.

3.1.1. The comparison with the stakeholders

From the discussion with the stakeholders some critical aspects emerge – as in other internal and Apennines areas of the country – among which one of the main ones is the aging of the population, which translates into a lack of generational turnover also in the management of many commercial and in the thinning out of the services. In fact, young people and families tend to move abroad or to the city of Ferrara where there are greater work and recreational opportunities. Another negative element highlighted is the “affection” that



those who remain have for their territory, which often translates into a weak will to improve services and to work towards making it more attractive and hospitable for tourists: there are various cases of urban regeneration that remain empty containers because no one takes on the burden of filling and “animating” them. For its part, the public apparatus, despite declaring a lack of specific skills in the field of tourism promotion and marketing, is committed to promoting actions for the tourism development of the area (e.g. participation in tenders to obtain funding, creation of the tourist portal) which, in the absence of collaboration from private operators, have not been able to activate new tourist flows directed towards the area. On the other hand, many operators show a poor spirit of collaboration and participation and complain about the lack of support and resources to be able to invest in improving the quality of the services they offer to tourists and visitors. It is therefore an area where it is difficult to go out to dinner since there are a few businesses and those that exist have limited opening hours. Furthermore, many of the local attractions, such as Villa Mensa or Tresigallo metaphysical heritage, are owned or managed by private entities. This also makes it difficult for travel agencies to build packages to promote on the markets, a market which is made up mostly of domestic tourism and a small part of foreign tourism. It is also noted that, at a communication level, the potential of the web is not exploited: many accommodation facilities do not have websites or social channels and when they exist, they are not used to their full potential for promotion and marketing. Moreover, about offline communication, according to a survey conducted by JFC, there is no speed in responses and these, although polite, are often neither complete nor personalized, in addition to the fact that they lack completely the information part on what to see in the area and surrounding areas.

This does not mean that there is no potential to be valorised and systematised, as the territory recognizes itself in three fundamental elements which outline its contours and define the areas of intervention with regards to tourism development and projects future: **flat territory, waterways** and rediscovery of one’s **roots**.



3.1.2. *Potential "teaser products"*

Today the main market trends around which tourism moves are sustainability (environmental, economic and social), authenticity, accessibility, emotionally, personalization of experiences and psycho-physical well-being. These elements are found in various tourism products: Wellness & Outdoor, Food & Culture and Big Events. But how does the tourism offer of the Union of Lands and Rivers fit into this framework?

According to a comparative analysis conducted by JFC between the result of the difference between growth potential and level of maturation and uniqueness, the following classification is outlined regarding the development of tourism products in the area: 1) Cycle tourism, 2) Integrated bike and boat experiences, 3) River tourism, 4) Experience nature slowly, 5) Rationalist architecture, 6) History and culture, 7) Active sports tourism, 8) Food and wine, 9) Traditions – folklore - local craftsmanship, 10) Events, 11) Film tourism. According to this classification, it is concluded that the three themes with the greatest potential for tourism development are **landscape**, **rationalism** and **film tourism** as an innovative element. Keeping these issues in mind, the "teaser products" according to the stakeholders involved in the Living Labs of June 2024, are: **Bike & Boat**, because the use of the bicycle, the presence of cycle paths and the Po River are elements that characterize this area, the Metaphysics of **Tresigallo** for its rationalist architecture which makes it the "Metaphysical City" par excellence and **the water, the plain** and **the Mill on the Po**, film set for the film of the same name, as an element for the development of related proposals to the world of film tourism¹. These products are also in line with the 2024 programming of the Romagna Tourist

¹ About this, in a nearby Municipality in the Lower Ferrarese area, Jolanda di Savoia, there is the Gherardi Cinema Village, where the walls of the houses tell the story of Italian Cinema with images. This project to regenerate a small village through street art is part of the "Ferrara Città del Cinema" product and has the aim of becoming a pilot project to demonstrate how art and culture can breathe new life into internal areas burdened by depopulation. The further objective is to redevelop the existing buildings so that they can host training courses and workshops related to the world of cinema, as well as a student residence for those who will come to this small village in the Ferrara area to study.



Destination, where the Union is included, as the Bike & Boat product is included in Slow Tourism, Tresigallo can fit into both the programming for the events and for the Thematic Itineraries (the topic is the rationalist architecture, which has the potential to attract all the enthusiasts of this architectural genre to the area) and the Mill on the Po can also have a connection as regards the New Thematic Itineraries, because connecting to the claim “Ferrara City Cinema” interesting routes could be developed that connect the city with the Lands and Rivers Union and the Municipality of Jolanda di Savoia. Products also attributable to the Guidelines for Regional Tourist Promotion-Marketing 2022-2024, because among the 8 macro-categories of products in which the Region invests there are also Art & Culture, a macro-category which can include both the innovative Thematic Itineraries linked to the world of cinema and the valorisation of the rationalist architecture of Tresigallo, and Nature & Outdoor, where the Bike & Boat product is inserted².

3.2. Union of Municipalities of Biferno springs

3.2.1. The comparison with the stakeholders

During the BRICS meetings organized with local stakeholders (living lab and stakeholder engagement meeting), several critical issues and challenges have emerged from the discussion, that are often common to other internal areas of the Italian Apennines. The need to work as a network emerged from the discussion and also the opportunity to have fewer administrative references. For the stakeholder it will be also important to improve and consolidate their competencies in terms of tourism marketing.

They also demand for a single body responsible at local level for the territorial marketing activities. The tourist offer should be developed by tourism experts,

² The latter also has a connection with the experiential product created by APT Servizi “Emilia-Romagna Bike”, in which a lot was invested at the end of the Covid-19 pandemic.



with tourism operators participating in training programs to ensure they are well-equipped to deliver high-quality services.

The representatives of public entities, particularly the municipalities in the area, have complained about the lack of human resources in their offices, also stating the lack of specific skills in tourism promotion and marketing.

The phenomenon of depopulation and the aging population leads to a lack of generational turnover in the management of many commercial and tourist activities, resulting in a fragmentation of services in the territory.

Stakeholders would like to improve services for tourism to make it more attractive and welcoming for tourists, but at the same time, they emphasize that it is difficult to find local individuals willing to take on the responsibility of animating existing tourism support structures, such as tourist information centers.

Other operators highlight the lack of collaboration and participation, complaining about the lack of support and resources to invest in improving the quality of services they offer to tourists and visitors.

Another critical issue concerns the potential of the web, which is not being fully exploited since many accommodations do not have websites or social media channels, and when they do exist, they are not used to their full potential for promotion and marketing.

Despite these difficulties, the municipalities and private entities would like to commit more to promoting actions for the tourism development of the area. Regarding the positioning in the tourism market of the union of municipalities, it should position itself as a destination for cultural and natural tourism and invest more in rural, gastronomic and experimental tourism. The goal should be to enhance its cultural, historical, and natural heritage by also investing resources in cultural events and new forms of experiential tourism offer.

3.2.2. *Potential "teaser products"*



The living lab organized at the office of the Union of Municipalities of Biferno sprin was a brainstorming session that help to identify some tourism promotion solutions that should be in line with the Matese Internal Area National Strategy (Strategia Nazionale Area Interna del Matese). This document considers tourism as a fundamental component for the development of the territory, highlighting various strategies and initiatives to enhance it and make it more attractive.

The Internal Strategy considers:

- **Experiential tourism and seasonal diversification:** The importance of experiential tourism is emphasized, allowing visitors to deeply immerse themselves in local culture and traditions. This type of tourism can occur during non-traditional times of the year, promoting temporal and geographical diversification of travel experiences.
- **Integrated Tourism Model:** The strategy proposes a tourism model that integrates local resources, enhancing both existing and new economic activities. This approach aims to create a tourism offer that highlights the unique features of each municipality, connecting them in a unified network that values the cultural and environmental heritage of the Matese and Biferno area.
- **Specific projects:** Thematic Paths and Trails Initiatives like the Castelpetroso - Cercemaggiore Path (Cammino dell'Acqua), which crosses 11 municipalities, aim to promote sustainable tourism and territorial enhancement through cooperation among local entities and stakeholders and Campitello Matese Ski Resort. This project, integrated with other mountain tourism initiatives, aims to de-seasonalize tourist flows and improve the environmental compatibility of the resort.

The Matese Internal Area National Strategy identifies also challenges and objectives, such as:

- **Governance and offer structuring:** The need for unified and strategic management of cultural and environmental resources is highlighted to counteract the significant decline in tourist arrivals.



- **Enhancement of Archaeological Heritage:** The archaeological site of Altilia is identified as a point of great historical interest but currently underutilized. The strategy aims to develop a tourism offer that broadens the visitor base, differentiating interests and visitation periods.
- **Alternative Mobility and Accessibility:** Improving accessibility and the tourist experience through the promotion of alternative mobility, such as bike paths and trails, allowing full appreciation of the scenic value of the territory.

In summary, the document proposes a vision of tourism in the Matese that focuses on sustainability, the enhancement of local resources, and the creation of an integrated and diversified offer.

The participants of the living labs appreciated the underlying ideas of the strategy and in the brainstorm sessions proposed some potential "teaser products" for tourism development in the area of Matese and Biferno river, such as:

- **Thematic paths and trails.** For instance by improving the Cammino dell'Acqua (Castelpetroso-Cercemaggiore Path), which is already part of the Cammini d'Europa and crosses 11 municipalities of the area touching also the archeological site of Altilia. This includes the promotion of natural, rural, and village-based tourism, offering deeper travel experiences beyond traditional periods.
- **Cultural and Integrate offer in Campitello Matese Ski Resort:** For instance by relaunching the Ski Resort with cultural initiatives and integrate tourist offer with other mountain tourism initiatives that aims to de-seasonalize tourist flows and improve environmental compatibility.
- **Themed Tours with an integrate offer:** package tours featuring visits to natural and historical sites such as archaeological sites, fortresses, villages, churches, combined with adventure and sport activities like cycling and mountain biking, spelunking, trekking trails, rock climbing, paragliding, zip-lining and rafting.



- **Gastronomy and Natural Tours:** Guided tours focused on spotting local culinary tradition combining with experience in cooking and/or natatorial activities such trekking, learning activities about the ecosystem. Experiences that showcase local cuisine, including farm-to-table dining, wine tasting, and culinary workshops.
- **Cultural Experiences:** Opportunities to visit traditional villages, experience local crafts and participate in cultural workshops.
- **Eco-Tourism and conservation projects:** Opportunities for tourists to engage in conservation efforts, learn about sustainability, and participate in eco-friendly activities. Attractions that include natural area and also historical landmarks.

3.3. Municipality of Dugopolje

3.3.1. The comparison with the stakeholders

The structure of the Living Labs comprised from the institutional representatives 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 Odras 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 were prominently involved.

In the Dalmatia region, the excessive development of tourism poses significant challenges, negatively impacting infrastructure and the environment while leading to economic monoculture. Conversely, certain parts of the region,



particularly the hinterland areas, do not fully benefit from tourism's positive effects, aside from the recent trend of expanding apartment offerings from coastal areas.

Participants in project workshops and living labs indicated that enhancing (fine-tuning) tourism is essential for improving its quality and sustainability. To achieve sustainable tourism, it is necessary to diversify and enrich the tourist offerings in less developed hinterland areas, including Dugopolje, thereby fostering conditions for year-round tourism. The potential for joint branding of the entire region was also emphasized, which would enhance the visibility and appeal of its diverse tourist offerings. This includes positioning the region as a destination for cultural tourism, tourism based on cultural and historical heritage, wine-gastronomic and rural tourism, various forms of active vacations, and a host of organized events.

The core idea of the desired development of the area was also formed in cooperation with the stakeholders: 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 (by cooperation to the point of unity in the creation of new tourist content and products).

3.3.2. Potential "teaser products"

As part of participatory pathways organized with key local stakeholders of tourism and non-tourism sector, these shortcomings have been taken into account to find out solutions which are highly responsive to real community needs in terms of tourism governance mechanisms, as mandatory steps to improve cross-border cooperation. Organized living labs served as a tool for brainstorming sessions to generate ideas and develop tourism promotion



solutions, such as: Integrated Tourist Information System – to enhance the accessibility and visibility of tourist information, facilitating trip planning to Dalmatia Hinterland, Sustainable rural transport – to increase accessibility to rural tourist locations, reduce traffic congestion, and environmental footprint, Green market and event center – to promote local culture and products by increasing the interaction between tourists and the local community, Cultural-adventure packages – to offer unique and authentic experiences to enhance the attractiveness of Dalmatia Hinterland as a tourist destination.

All stakeholders expressed significant interest in the project's topics and the potential for enhanced collaboration to improve tourism management. For each proposed solution, prototype elements were developed as foundational concepts for further refinement. One notable proposal involved the development of specialized tourist packages that integrate cultural, historical, and adventure activities, aiming to offer unique and authentic experiences to boost the appeal of the Dalmatian Hinterland as a tourist destination.

The prototype elements included:

- Themed Tours: package tours featuring visits to historical sites such as fortresses, churches, and traditional villages, combined with adventure activities like hiking, cycling, and spelunking.
- Participation in Local Activities: opportunities for tourists to engage in local activities, such as grape picking, preparing traditional dishes, or producing olive oil.
- Personalized Routes: customizable routes tailored to specific visitor interests and preferences.

The ideas from local stakeholders also included additional proposals, which would enable more successful implementation of all other activities aimed at strengthening management mechanisms in tourism, such as: establishment of a joint coordinating body involving representatives from all relevant stakeholders; development of a digital platform for communication and coordination among tourism entities; educational workshops for local administrators on best practices in tourism management; creation of a series



of promotional videos showcasing unique aspects of Dalmatia Hinterland (e.g., natural beauty, cultural events, local customs); launching a social media campaign using influencers to promote the destination; organization of virtual tours and events allowing potential visitors to "experience" the destination before arrival. These initiatives could form the foundation for further development and implementation of concrete solutions to enhance tourism offerings and management in the Dalmatian Hinterland. By fostering strong collaboration between the Municipality of Dugopolje, the local Tourist Board, the Local Action Group (LAG) Zagora, and maintaining good relationships with managers of tourist attractions and the "Hidden Dalmatia" visitor center, these potentials can be effectively realised. This synergy between the municipality, tourism entities, and local operators will be crucial in implementing and promoting these initiatives successfully.



4. A new life for tourism governance in internal area

4.1. *Union of Municipalities of Lands and Rivers*

Considering all above, it can be concluded that the territory of the Union of Lands and Rivers has within itself tourist potential which, if well networked and systematized with neighbouring territories, can contribute to encouraging tourist flows in the area, as they are very interesting attractors. The reasoning to be made, therefore, is from the **perspective of a vast area and collaboration between different bodies**, working to increase and encourage collaboration between the public and private sectors, which is essential to give life to both a Widespread IAT and an Area Brand, two models of tourism governance that could respond to the needs expressed by this territory.

In the context of the Lands and Rivers Union, in fact, following the various working tables and meetings with stakeholders, this need emerges: to collaborate with the City of Ferrara, Romagna Destination and the Associations of Category, which have a leading role in the involvement of private companies and which could help the Union, through their Research Offices, in the analysis of supply and demand for the area. This to develop both the “teaser products” mentioned above and to enhance the identity elements of the territory: being on the plain, the presence of the Po River and the recovery of the historical and cultural roots common to everything the Ferrarese

4.1.1. *The landmarks of the area*

The products mentioned above fit into three large blocks:

1. **Outdoor, environment and landscape**, a category that can include both material and immaterial aspects characteristics of the rural area, which includes the Bike & Boat product;
2. **Architecture and metaphysics**, a category which refers to the urban part of the territory and which includes within it the already



recognized and established element of the rationalist architecture of Tresigallo;

3. **Rural and historical heritage**, a category that includes the material and immaterial cultural elements identifying the area, in which the Mill on the Po can be located.

A categorisation which is also found in the identity elements in which the territory recognizes itself, the three fundamental elements which outline its contours and define the areas of intervention in which the participants in the working groups would like to see more investment as far as concerns tourism development and future projects: **flat territory, waterways** and rediscovery of one's **roots**.

The territory of the Union of Lands and Rivers sees its being a flat land as a potential, an element which – if well exploited – would facilitate the development of cycle tourism, because the non-existent difference in altitude could encourage even older people or less fit people and families with children to go cycling³. Cycle tourism is therefore the first tourist segment on which the territory would like to focus, a segment on which some actions have already been taken and which would allow the development of direct connections with Ferrara, the City of Bicycles par excellence. A sector that is growing in Italy⁴ and which is perfectly in line with market trends, since cycle tourism fits into the Outdoor macro category and allows you to build packages and develop itineraries that combine the discovery of scenic beauty with possible stops to make tasting and/or going to visit historic buildings.

Another element in which the stakeholders identify is the liquid one, the waterway constituted by the Po River and in particular the entire area of the

³ Furthermore, the flat dimension arouses a romantic vision of the area in the Living Lab participants, since the lack of relief allow you to enjoy splendid sunsets, which could attract not only couples in love, but also photography enthusiasts to capture the sunlight which is reflected on the Po and in the immense green expanses.

⁴ According to the latest ISNART-Legambiente report, in 2023, 57 million presences were registered in Italy, corresponding to 6,7% of the total presences registered in the country, which generated a turnover of over 5,5 billion euros. The average expenditure for each person is around 95 euros par day for the purchase of goods and services, an amount that rises to 104,5 euros for foreigners. It is therefore an attractive and interesting market for many territories, as it can generate a good economic impact.



Right Po, because this allows to create connections with other territories, such as the city of Ferrara and the coast, and to insert integrated Bike and Boat routes, since some cycle routes start from the boat moorings and some of them allows you to load your own bicycle on board, encouraging sustainable mobility and interesting the territory of the Union into an enlarged dimension of enjoyment and discovery of the territory. Moorings, river transport services, services for cycle tourists are all areas of intervention in which the participants at the working table would like more to be done to develop Slow Tourism and enhance the territory.

Aware of the fame of Tresigallo as a “Metaphysical City”, those who participated in the working groups underlined how important it is to network and systematize the architecture and the Delizie Estensi that exist in this area and in the neighbouring territories, but above all how important it is to remember your “roots”. A return to the roots understood both as a rediscovery of the places of the ancestors, but also as a rediscovered ability to reclaim. The Lower Ferrarese, in fact, is the result of numerous reclamation actions, activities in which the inhabitants of these lands were masters, so much able to go to other places to teach this art. So, with a view to recovering intangible heritage, the valorisation of this history could lead to museum tours and tourist and cultural exchanges between this area and the towns where the people of Ferrara went to teach them how to reclaim the soil.

Having highlighted the main products and the possible connections between areas and projects, the participants at the working groups identified the products “**Città Metafisica**” and “**Acqua e Mulino sul Po**” as priorities in terms of product potential and feasibility: the first is a “rough diamond” on which to work with the aim of creating a network of ancillary services; the second is an enormous potential that connects the liquid element with the cultural aspect. But how to stand out from another tourist offers and attract your target? People present at the meeting agree that the “tourist package” is an antiquated and expensive tool to manage, therefore they underline how to “stand out” it is necessary to valorise the small local treasures, which from marginal can become success stories.



Finally, we can say that the stakeholders were able to define the main landmarks of the area, the material and immaterial elements to always have in mind in the tourist planning of the area, since they are current, but above all they are identifying; therefore, the inhabitants recognize themselves in them. Making the community feel involved, an active part of a nascent tourism renewal project, is the first step towards involving them in the governance system, which presents various critical issues at a local level.

4.1.2. Guideline for tourism governance

As already mentioned in the previous paragraphs, although the tourism governance of Emilia-Romagna is more structured than that of Molise and Croatia, in the context of the Union of Lands and Rivers there are still elements to be strengthened. The Union itself has repeatedly indicated that there are no adequate resources and that the staff is not sufficiently trained and prepared to be able to involve the territory in tourism planning and to respond to the needs of the market, a dynamic and constantly changing market that requires attention and constant analysis⁵.

Tourism development for a public administration requires on the one hand to promote, enhance and financially support the tourist offer of the territory, on the other to define the necessary requirements for carrying out private activities in the tourism sector, together with the verification functions and control of the requirements themselves. In Italy tourism is a much more complex and multifaceted activity that involves different sectors, from territorial governance to the management of tax revenues, through the organization of transport, the construction and maintenance of works public, the valorisation and protection of the landscape and the historical-architectural heritage, etc. Therefore, with the aim of facilitating the work of Local Administrations, with the reform of Title V of the Constitution of the Italian

⁵ The lack of an office responsible for analysing market trends and flow trends is another critical issue that is underlined, and which constitutes an element of weakness compared to other destinations: constantly analysing supply and demand allows us to develop projects in line with real market demands.



Republic the Regions have maintained a central role of planning and coordination of tourism activities (which happens in Emilia-Romagna, where the Region issues the three-year guidelines for promotional-marketing planning and the territory has been organized at a macro level into DMO, DMC, Tourist Territory, APT networks and Convention Bureau). The Local Administrations, then, can organize tourist management in an associated form, both in Unions or Municipalities and with other forms of inter-municipal collaboration, such as the Conventions governed by the art. 30 of the TUEL or by stipulating Program Agreements between Municipalities, Provinces and Regions.

Finally, we underline how is important the collaboration with private entities.

Considering this, below are described three systems that can be implemented in the Union, and which can concretely contribute to improving the tourism governance of this territorial context.

The Interinstitutional Agreement

A tourism governance model that aims at collaboration between the public and private worlds is the Interinstitutional Agreement, an example of which can be found in the Reggio Emilia Apennines, where the Union of Municipalities, the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines National Park and the Chamber of Commerce have created a partnership to create a Local Tourist System of the Apennines⁶. The object of this Agreement is **the integrated and shared management of territorial tourism promotion and planning activities**, with reference to the valorisation of tourist attractors. In this system, the annual program is defined at the Tourism Conference and describes objectives, events, promotional activities and ways of qualifying businesses and their offers, and each of the subscribing bodies has its own role to play:

⁶ The agreement dates to 3 August 2016 and concerns the Municipalities of Carpineti, Casine, Castelnovo ne' Monti, Toano, Ventasso, Vetto and Villa Minozzo, which are all part of the Mountain Union of Municipalities of the Reggio Emilia Apennines. Synergy that has allowed them to develop 5 projects in the tourism sector for a total value of 4.650.000,00 euros.



- The Union of Municipalities has the task of managing and strengthening the district Tourist Information Office, also ensuring the organizational and coordination activities necessary for the management of the agreement and the connection with the Municipalities involved;
- The Chamber of Commerce makes its Research Office and the Reggio Apennines Observatory available, also taking initiatives to participate in programs for the qualification of companies, in territorial marketing actions and in the promotion of local offers;
- The National Park intervenes on the network of information points and visitor centres, opening more to the promotion of the territory.

But how did all this come about? At the operational level, a Coordination Committee for Apennines Tourism (CCTA) promoted a first conference and managed the subsequent joint actions which were selected and identified in the annual conference and in the same time developing a discussion and collaboration with the Emilia-Romagna Region and with APT Servizi.

The Intermunicipal Territorial Tourist System: The Widespread IAT

Another model of tourism governance that aims at cooperation between various public and private actors is the Intermunicipal Territorial System (STTI). We can find an interesting example of this in Province of Modena, where lowland and mountain municipalities are involved in it. “*Maranello+*” – this is the name of this System, which has its centre in the IAT of the Ferrari Museum in Maranello – involves the Municipalities of Maranello, Fiorano Modenese, Formigine, Frassinoro, Montefiorino, Palagano and Prignano sulla Secchia in a project of valorisation and promotion integration of the attractors of these areas. One of the main objectives of this partnership is to create a Widespread IAT, because in the Apennines Municipalities there are not sufficient resources to guarantee the opening to the public of an institutional tourist information point, an operation which – at present current facts – it would be economically unsustainable. In addition to this, there are other



reasons that have pushed these Municipalities to lean towards this choice: provide information on the historical-cultural heritage, activities and tourist services present in the area; support the tourist vocation of small villages and places with low human impact; enrich the knowledge of operators in the tourism, commercial and artisan sectors regarding the tourist, cultural riches, traditions and typical products of their territory in order to raise their awareness and make them active protagonists of the Tourist Information and Reception System.

The Widespread IATs are therefore tourist information points which are based on a collaboration agreement between the Municipality or the Union of Municipalities and the Tourist, Commerce and Craft Operators and are recognized by the Emilia-Romagna Region. In this System, the Local Authority has the task of guaranteeing a free update plan for the operators, while the Operators are responsible for carrying out, in parallel with their activities, initial reception activities by providing information on the tourist and cultural opportunities of the area. To obtain recognition, certain requirements must be met, and a specific line of action must be followed to create this kind of system:

- Identification of operators interested in carrying out the role of Widespread IAT;
- Verify that the premises of private operators guarantee access to all, therefore that all architectural barriers are removed;
- Stipulation of an Agreement between public and private (the private party can also be a Social Promotion Association, a Pro Loco or other eligible entity on the basis of what is established by law);
- Operators having successfully completed and passed the training course with the aim to obtain the certification (this course must last at least 20 hours and includes annual refresher courses lasting at least 10 hours);
- Once the qualification has been obtained, operators will have to carry out, in parallel with their normal activity, the role of IAT free of charge, display the IAT identification mark, guarantee a free



internet connection that can be made available to the visitor/tourist (even better if Wi-Fi) and activate a Google My Business Account.

The Area Brand and the Product Club⁷

Finally, we mention two other tourism governance models: the Area Brand, which involves both the public and private systems, and the Product Club, specifically designed for private individuals. Their primary objective is the sale of a territory through a specific tourism product, in the logic of territorial marketing serving a pre-determinate target and segment. This is because there is strength in unity and presenting yourself on the market as a unicum allows you to better channel your energies and be more recognizable as a destination and point of reference and a guarantee of quality for the selected tourism product/market segment.

The Area Brand has two advantages: towards the internal market it favours communication between operators, promotes collaboration and allows the exploitation of positive synergies by sharing common policies (from marketing to the management of tourist flows, to the study of customer expectations and their satisfaction); it conveys the entire tourist offer externally with the use of a brand that recalls shared values and affirms the reputation of the Municipality (or Municipalities), generating a purchasing and consumption process by the tourist. An example of an Area Brand is “*Terre fra Adige e Po*”, which includes 22 entities including public bodies, production associations and cultural bodies in the Middle Polesine area. The Project, supported by the Cassa di Risparmio di Padova-Rovigo Foundation and the Venice-Rovigo Chamber of Commerce, is coordinated by the Veneto Region and has the aim of creating a more attractive tourist offer to work towards a shared vision of territory and to think strategically in terms of product.

⁷ These two models are efficient if the private operators want make tourism: they could be a input to feel themselves involved, but the public system has to encourage this. These could be adopted to develop the Bike and Boat product and to create a circuit of Delizie Estensi.



The Product Club, on the other hand, has the objective of bringing together products and experiences designed for a specific tourist segment in a single container to develop a destination catalogue useful for the promotion and marketing of the area. In this case, all tourist, economic and other operators who want to be part of a system of products, skills and contacts aimed at increasing competitiveness to sell their products on both domestic and international markets can join. An example of this is “*Finale Family*”, in the Municipality of Finale Ligure (SV), where the objective is to include the tourist offers of the area in a single container, attentive to the needs of families with children and then sell them on the market as a unique one. In this model, the advantages for operators are: information services relating to targets and reference markets, differentiated promotion services such as product clubs and as participating activities on the destination portal, inclusion in the nascent integrated booking system on the destination portal.

Discussing about these governance solutions, stakeholders and public institutions suggest creating a “**Widespread IAT**” to manage the tourist products.

4.2. *Union of Municipalities of Biferno spring*

4.2.1. *The landmarks of the area*

The products mentioned above fit into three large blocks of landmarks:

-**Natural Landmarks**, a category that includes different natural destinations and attractions mainly located in the Matese Mountains, one of the most important mountain groups in the Apennines and a popular spot for hiking, tracking, picnics, etc.

A true natural heritage pure and uncontaminated and rich in biodiversity thanks to lush vegetation and the presence of pure springs that give rise to the Biferno river.



Among them, Mount Miletto and Monte Mutria exceeds 2,000 meters in altitude. The mountain offers stunning panoramic views and is a popular destination for hikers and mountaineers. The Matese is also famous for the phenomenon of karstification, which has given rise to caves and cavities of great speleological interest and spectacular landscapes, such as the canyon of the Quirino torrent, the San Nicola waterfall, the caves of Pozzo della Neve and Cul di Bove in the WWF Oasis of Guardiaregia Campochiaro. The Oasis of Guardiaregia is a natural area managed by the Environmental Association WWF to protect and promote the portion of a Site of Community Interest. The area is about 3,135 hectares on the eastern slope of the Matese mountain range and its walking trails vary in difficulty, and absolutely pristine landscapes, the reserve is stunning in every season.

Another favourite destination for natural enthusiastic and winter sports practitioners is Campitello Matese with its facilities and 40 kilometres of slopes for alpine skiing.

-Historical and Cultural Landmarks and Traditional Villages, a category that may include some tourist spots such as the archeological site of Altilia in Sepino, an ancient Roman town with well-preserved ruins. It was an important Roman city dating back to 290 BC and it is located on the slopes of the Matese, on the valley of the river. Inside the archeological site there are still visible and well preserved the city walls, the forum, the basilica, the baths and the theatre used also for cultural activities. Another spot is the mediaeval Castel of Guardiaregia with ruins which offers a glimpse into the region's medieval past and provides panoramic views of the surrounding area.

Near the Biferno area is also located the Santuario dell'Addolorata di Castelpetroso, a stunning neo-Gothic sanctuary in the municipality of Castelpetroso. It is a pilgrimage site dedicated to the Virgin Mary and features beautiful architecture and serene surroundings. Also the other municipalities of the Union can offer a unique blend of history, culture, and natural beauty, making them some of the most beautiful villages to visit in Molise Region.



Among them Civita di Bojano has an ancient origins, with connections to the Samnites, a pre-Roman people who inhabited this region. The area has archaeological significance due to its historical role in Samnite and later Roman times and also medieval character. Small Villages could be an ideal destination for those interested in history, nature, and experiencing the authentic charm of slow living in Molise.

-Outdoor Activities and Attractions, a category that may include Campitello Matese as favorite destination for winter sports enthusiasts with its facilities and 40 kilometres of slopes for alpine skiing. Campitello Matese is already a well-known ski resort in center-south Italy which attract tourists from other regions bordering Molise. It offers a wide range of winter sports like skiing, snowboarding, as well as summer activities such as hiking and mountain biking. Recently Campitello Matese launched, during the summer period, different cultural initiatives to integrate the tourist offer.

As outdoor activities, there are some thematic paths and trails. For instance the Cammino dell'Acqua (Castelpetroso-Cercemaggiore Path), which is already part of the Cammini d'Europa and crosses 11 municipalities of the area touching also the archeological site of Altilia. This includes the promotion of natural, rural, and village-based tourism, offering deeper travel experiences beyond traditional periods.

Other adventure and sport activities like cycling and mountain biking, spelunking, trekking trails, rock climbing, paragliding, zip-lining and rafting can be done in the area.

Especially in the Matese Regional Park, a protected area shared with Campania Region, that encompasses much of the Matese range, offering a variety of outdoor activities such as hiking, birdwatching, and exploring diverse flora and fauna. Also cycling and Hiking Trails can be performed in the Matese Mountains thanks to numerous trails suitable for hiking, mountain biking, and cycling with different levels of difficulty.



The natural beauty and tranquil environment of the Matese Mountains and Biferno River make them two ideal location for picnics and leisurely nature walks.

Having highlighted the main products and the possible landmarks, the participants of the Living lab identified such products as priorities in terms of product potential and feasibility.

All of them are products and tourists destinations on which to work with the aim of creating an integrate network and tourist services.

The participants reflect also on how to stand out from other similar tourist offers and attract target audience. The participants agree that traditional "tourist packages" are seen as outdated and it will be better to focus on the unique, authentic, and often underappreciated aspects of the destinations. They suggest to:

- **Highlight Local Experiences:** Focus on the rich cultural heritage, traditions, and local customs. Offer experiences that allow tourists to engage directly with the local community, such as workshops on traditional crafts and cooking classes.
- **Storytelling:** Use storytelling to bring the history of the area, highlighting the unique narratives behind the sites, people, and traditions, which can resonate emotionally with visitor. Use for instance digital storytelling in social media and videos to share stories, experiences, and testimonials from visitors. Authentic user-generated content can be particularly effective in attracting interest.
- **Develop Authentic and Personalized Experiences** by customized some itineraries, for instance by offering customizable experiences (gastronomy, nature or adventure) so the personalized approach can make tourists feel special and catered to.
- **Promote sustainable and responsible Tourism** with eco-friendly initiatives that emphasize conservation efforts, such as farm-to-table dining, or low-impact accommodations, or support Local Economy.



- **Build Partnerships with local stakeholders** such as artisans, farmers, guides, and businesses to create a network of offerings that enhance the overall experience.
- **Focus on niche markets** by targeting specific interests such as the Religious tourism (linked with already existing path and churches) and adventure tourism combined with cultural and natural tourism. A tailor offer should be developed for these specific groups.

4.2.2. *Guideline for tourism governance*

For the development of tourism in the Biferno and Matese area it is necessary to adopt some specific measures:

- Utilize the potential of the Union of Municipalities, which, being an already existing network in the Biferno River and Matese area, has the potential to expand its collaborative network to include other tourism stakeholders in the territory, both public and private;
- Establish a unified coordination body with all public and private territorial entities, involving all key players with the aim of sharing information, resources, best practices, and developing common strategies;
- Define a memorandum of understanding with the network, suggesting to Molise Region the elimination of all existing overlaps that currently cause fragmentation in the decision-making chain;
- In line with the internal area strategy, adopt a strategic development document specifically dedicated to local tourism of the area, which includes the promotion of places as well as traditions, crafts, local production and typical products;
- Activate an info point structure in the area in the form of an I.A.T. (Tourist Information and Reception Office) possibly in a municipality that is central to the area of the union, such as the municipality of Bojano;
- Train tourism operators in active reception practices;
- Develop knowledge and dissemination of the universal accessibility model to tourist and cultural sites.



4.3. Municipality of Dugopolje

4.3.1. The landmarks of the area

The "Hidden Dalmatia" Visitor Center

In the Dugopolje area, the Hidden Dalmatia Visitor Center stands as a main educational, multimedia, and interpretive facility, featuring educational trails and outdoor and indoor spaces for school classes. This distinctive tourist infrastructure offers an unprecedented presentation of the hidden beauties of Dalmatian Zagora. Its goal is to familiarize visitors with this lesser-known part of the region and enhance the recognition of hinterland localities often overshadowed by tourist activities concentrated along the narrow coastal belt. The Center aims to align complementary offerings with the growing demand for diverse forms of selective tourism, particularly in the interpretation of natural heritage. Since its opening in late 2022, the Center has been warmly received by both visitors and local residents. Considering the fact that the area of the Interpretation Center is the starting and main gathering point for visitors in the area of Dugopolje, but also in the wider northern area, and considering the insufficient recognition and visibility of other segments of the offer in the area of the municipality, the Tourist Board and other stakeholders in tourism from the area of Dugopolje realized that a central accurate information and provision of information point about other contents and offers, could be an interpretation center. The idea is to use the smaller workspaces that are part of the interpretation center as a one-stop shop to create a gateway that would allow full promotion of tourism assets and providers' products and services. The spaces will be made available to the local tourism community, which, in coordination with other tourism stakeholders in the area, will provide essential information to both tourists and stakeholders. This approach ensures that information is disseminated efficiently, serving multiple purposes with a single source, thus streamlining business operations and enhancing the overall effectiveness of the tourism infrastructure.



This solution is particularly significant as it is expected to boost visitor engagement and is practical to implement, given that these spaces are already intended for information and tourism use. All other offerings in the Dugopolje municipality, including those from private entities and local agricultural producers (OPGs), especially those in gastro-tourism, would be promoted at these locations. Tourists would be directed to other local attractions based on their interests and impressions formed at the interpretation center, leading to the creation of comprehensive tourist packages. These packages would include full-service options with professional guides, various accommodation choices, and additional activities designed to immerse visitors in the natural and cultural beauty of Dalmatian Zagora.

Achieving this goal, however, requires shift in government attitudes towards regulations that impact daily operations. The success of establishing a one-stop shop will also depend on the level of cooperation and coordination among organizations, ensuring they can work together effectively to better serve tourists and businesses. Furthermore, communication and technological considerations are of special importance. Standard industry communication methods need to be adopted wherever possible, and opportunities for interoperability should be identified early in the design phase of the one-stop shop. This approach will ensure integration and enhanced functionality, ultimately improving the overall tourism experience in the Dugopolje area.

The one-stop shop will also be connected to the 'Green Line'. This is a tourist bus line that departs daily at 12 noon in the early and late season from the center of the largest city in Dalmatia and the center of tourist events - Split - in the direction of Dalmatian Zagora. The visitor center in Dugopolje is both the first stop and the starting point for excursions to Dalmatian Zagora. In this case, the "one-stop shop" as an information center will serve tourism agencies to promote all their offers (from gastronomy and adventure to religious and historical tours) and welcome guests and guide them for five to six hours to Dalmatian Zagora.





Figure 2: Interpretation centre "Hidden Dalmatia"

The increasing visitor interest in this initiative demonstrates a significant and growing interest to explore the hinterland. This trend additionally highlights the necessity for collaborative efforts to ensure the provision of comprehensive and high-quality services to visitors.

Given that the visitor infrastructure of the "Hidden Dalmatia" center in Dugopolje has been established, it forms an increasingly recognizable part of the regional tourist offer, and is also becoming an increasingly important link in the tourist chain that connects the hinterland and the coast. The existence and intended purpose of part of the ground floor of the Center for the purpose of a one-stop shop, the initiatives of the tourist board, as well as local stakeholders, mainly private entities in tourism, which have been expressed in the framework of Living Labs, indicate the level of interest and readiness for the establishment of a one-stop shop at a high level. The possibility of establishment therefore largely depends on the formal establishment and organization of bodies and organizations at the local level, through the publication of public invitations, which can be realized in the coming months (until the end of October), by which time the duration of the tourist season in Dalmatia is the most intense. This initiative would enable interested tourism stakeholders to come together and form a unified cluster by the end of the season. In collaboration with the tourist community, they can design a cohesive strategy and operational model for the one-stop shop. The goal is to commence its operations by the start of the next tourist season, with



preparatory testing of the services and gauging interest during the off-season months.

Green market and the event centre

Development of one-stop shop also allows opening towards other interconnected solutions. This is for instance establishment of green market and event centre in the area nearby "Hidden Dalmatia" centre.

The idea is to integrate tourism and agriculture by establishing a small green market for selling local products, making it an essential part of the tourist offering. This market in Dugopolje will feature multifunctional spaces for events, culinary workshops, tastings, and promotional activities. This setup would transform the market into a central hub for agricultural producers, their customers, and tourists, enhancing the region's appeal. To further popularize local culture and products and increase interaction between visitors and the local community, thematic days such as wine festivals and olive oil days will be organized. This initiative will not only showcase Dugopolje's rich agricultural heritage but also offer a vibrant, immersive experience for all who visit.

The rationale for the above lies in the fact that sustainability is becoming an increasingly important topic in all aspects of activity and lifestyle, and as such it is becoming an indispensable part of tourist activities. Visitors are increasingly interested in original, authentic experiences, as well as local products. This segment is also connected with the gastronomic and culinary offer that is recognizable and related to the area of Dalmatia, i.e. the Mediterranean diet, which forms part of the cultural identity, heritage and sustainable way of life. The Mediterranean diet is recognized as one of the healthiest diets in the world, and living in harmony with natural benefits is the basis of such a life and diet. A large number of agricultural producers from the area of Dugopolje base their agricultural production on traditional knowledge, and natural conditions have influenced that production takes place in a preserved area, suitable for the future development of ecological agriculture. The lack of well-developed short supply chains, which would allow local products to reach a broad customer base in coastal areas, is a current issue.



Recognizing that a shift towards sustainable consumption requires the engagement of all parties involved—not just consumers, but also organizations and governments—this challenge will be addressed a green market establishment. The municipality has recognized the importance of this initiative and is in the process of implementing preparatory actions for the establishment of the market, and it is assumed that the opening of the market could happen at the end of 2024 or during 2025. The products available at the market, along with the associated events, could be integrated into the one-stop shop arrangement or included as part of organized tours. Regular vendors could collaborate to create packages of local products, which would be offered in private accommodations. These packages, carefully assembled through collaboration, could offer guests surprise upon arrival, all with the aim of forming better offer and the overall tourist experience, while presenting Dugopolje as an authentic and welcoming destination.

4.3.2. *Guideline for tourism governance*

The main model of one-stop shops are based on providing either individual or integrated services (or both), based on user needs. They generally tend to be central “umbrella” portals across tourism government mechanisms, although more specialised ones can exist in concert with other individually focussed one-stop shops. Usually there is an amount of central management and oversight which ensures that service delivery transitions seamlessly for users, depending on the services required. A one-stop shop brings together a range of information requirements in a physical and/or virtual location. One-stop shop at the "Hidden Dalmatia" Visitor Center location is primarily conceived as physical one-stop shops, delivering several services under the same roof. Given that one-stop shops are focussed on service delivery, the orientation of "Hidden Dalmatia" Visitor Center will also be primarily user-centred.

Before establishing a one-stop shop, several essential steps must be taken and considerations made. These include informing the public and tourism stakeholders about the opportunity to showcase their tourist products and



packages at the Skrivena Dalmacija interpretation center. It's crucial to familiarize them with visitor interests and explore the feasibility of including complementary offerings in a unified tourist package. The tourist board, as the overarching tourism organization and driver of tourism development initiatives, will play an important role in this process. Its characteristic as a leader in tourism development makes it a valuable resource for other stakeholders striving to create integrated and innovative tourism products.

To effectively develop a governance structure for one-stop shops involving all participating agencies and ensuring high-level commitment, it is crucial to establish robust communication between political leadership, administrative levels and tourism stakeholders throughout the process of development, implementation, and enhancement of these facility. Once the one-stop shop is operational, conducting public consultations with users, particularly tourists, becomes essential to take into account their perspectives on whether these facilities are indeed the optimal solution. This feedback will be instrumental in refining and improving the one-stop shop model to better serve the needs and expectations of tourists efficiently.

Apart from the physical form, it is predicted that further development and cooperation that would be established during the formation of this one-stop shop could result in the development of a unique digital system integrating all tourist information about Dalmatia Hinterland onto one platform. The development of a unified digital platform for a touristic area would involve creating a centralized hub that offers comprehensive information and services tailored specifically to tourists and local tourism stakeholders. This platform would provide detailed information about various procedures required to comply with local tourism regulations, such as obtaining permits for tourist activities, adhering to environmental guidelines, and meeting safety standards. Tourists and tourism operators could interact with the platform to get answers to their questions through features like FAQ sections, and direct messaging with relevant authorities. This ensures that visitors can easily find information on local attractions, events, accommodations, dining options, and cultural experiences.



By centralizing information and services from different agencies, the platform would ensure that all necessary information is pooled together, making it easier for users to navigate the tourism landscape. A central organization can manage the information on the platform, or a distribution model can be created, allowing various government and private entities to contribute their information. Ultimately, the unified digital platform would enhance the overall tourism experience by simplifying access to information, streamlining administrative procedures, and promoting local attractions and services effectively.

Establishing a one-stop shop will engage local businesses, tourism operators, and community groups in the planning and implementation process of cross-border collaboration. This will also facilitate the creation of clear roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes to ensure efficient governance. Additionally, the one-stop shop will help develop a unified brand identity for the cross-border tourism area, enhancing its appeal and coherence.

The establishment of a green market with a focus on strengthening the tourist offer and improving the tourism management system requires a thorough methodology to ensure a successful and sustainable implementation. The first step in this process includes a detailed analysis of the current situation, which includes in-depth market research to understand the needs of tourists and local residents, as well as a competitive evaluation. Furthermore, it is crucial to assess the location with regard to connections to the main tourist attractions. Defining a clear market concept plays a key role in project development. This includes setting the market's mission (e.g. promoting locally grown organic products) and selecting the optimal product and service offerings that will attract target groups of visitors and local residents. An important aspect of the methodology is the development of a marketing and promotion strategy, aimed at raising awareness of the new green market concept and attracting visitors.



Project implementation includes the establishment of the necessary administrative and operational structures and active cooperation with local stakeholders, including farmers and artisans. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the results enable the market to be adjusted according to the dynamic demands of the market and to achieve the goals of strengthening the tourist attraction of the destination and encouraging the sustainable development of the local community.

The green market project will be key to improving the tourism management system with a special emphasis on cross-border participation. Through the integration of local producers, artisans and tourist communities, the market will encourage cooperation and the exchange of resources between different regions, thus strengthening coordination and efficiency in the management of tourist destinations. The promotion of locally grown organic products and ecological practices will not only raise awareness of sustainable tourism, but also contribute to the development of sustainable tourism development strategies. Economic aspects also play an important role, since stimulating local economic activity through the market will strengthen tourism management capacities in less developed areas. The improvement of tourist infrastructure through the diversification of the offer will further strengthen the management of tourist resources and attract a new profile of visitors, thus contributing to the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of cross-border tourist destinations. Through all these aspects, the green market project will actively support the strategic objectives of tourism management, promoting a synergistic approach and an integrated strategy for the sustainable development of tourism at the level of regions and cross-border areas.

