



Activity 2.2

Identification of tourism products and services, as well as destinations' marketing to promote

D2.2.2 - BRICS joint tourism path and destination marketing plan and campaigns





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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a key sector for the development of Inner Areas, as these regions possess a rich and widespread natural and cultural heritage that attracts millions seeking traditions, culture, and the environmental wealth they offer.

The Italian Government's National Strategy for Inner Areas aims to establish the foundations for developing tourism products in these regions, adapting to ongoing shifts. These changes include a global increase in tourism arrivals alongside an acceleration in trends that have existed within tourism landscapes for some time, such as:

- The increase and variety of new forms of production in the tourism sector;
- Rapid social and economic changes that have led to new tourism demands focused on continuously seeking unique and personalized experiences;
- The role of new technologies (Information and Communication Technologies).

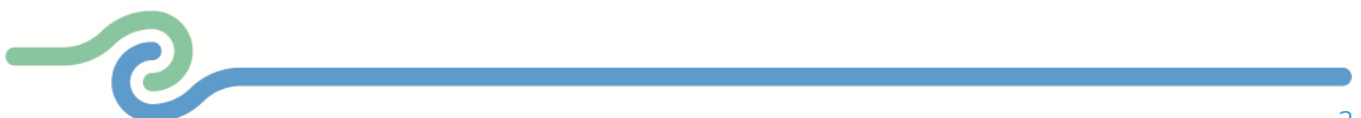
The future of tourism faces numerous challenges, which demand strategic solutions to ensure sustained growth and competitiveness in the global market.

Organizations equipped with innovative tools and networking within inner areas can be genuine resources, particularly for small communities, enabling them to convey a sense of community and belonging to visitors.

INTEGRATED VISION AND SHARED ACTIONS

The BRICS project partners operate in inner areas, which, while diverse, share the need for essential services in each small community, starting with healthcare, safe and adequate road connections, interventions to enhance the regional heritage, and maintaining educational institutions.

Firstly, it's crucial to highlight the importance of local associations and the need for local coalitions to create robust intermunicipal systems. This strengthens administrative and resource management capacities to implement essential projects, ensuring they reach from remote areas to urban centers.



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To reverse depopulation, it is essential to provide fundamental services, monitor the existing service network, explore solutions for ensuring service provision, assess accessibility and service quality, and evaluate the outcomes these solutions deliver for citizens. Necessary measures must be taken to enhance the system, including innovative service delivery approaches as needed.

Efforts should focus on fostering processes that drive territorial, economic, and socio-cultural development.

Tourism is the primary resource for inner areas, but it must be distinguished by specificity and appeal, sparking a desire among tourists to learn about the places they visit. The offerings should have unique elements and provide memorable experiences for tourists to take home.

Community tourism, with active citizen involvement, is a segment that generates development and resources in inner areas.

In this context, environmental protection is crucial, particularly in less populated areas. Effective conservation can mitigate natural disaster risks and promote sustainable development, providing ecosystem services that benefit society as a whole.

It's necessary to adopt differentiated policies, bearing in mind that "there is nothing more unjust than making equal divisions among unequals" (Don Lorenzo Milani).

The role of territorial systems is therefore vital. Areas genuinely committed to "regeneration" must create high-quality, experiential products marketable on national and international levels (as relying solely on the domestic market is often insufficient to sustain an economy year-round). These products should facilitate knowledge, emotion, and learning by combining, in varied ways, aesthetic, educational, escapist, and entertaining experiences.

Today, tourists do not buy vacations for the sake of vacationing alone, but for the attributes they encompass, such as relaxation, social interaction, cultural enrichment, and more, in alignment with their specific expectations of time, accessibility, and social engagement. Tourism products spontaneously managed—perhaps with goodwill but without dedicated engineering—are entering a mature phase, marked by reduced attraction in both high and shoulder seasons and greater competition among locations and ways of engaging with



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"tourism" as a resource. The positive trend in tourism demand seen over the past decades has not sufficiently rewarded the "classic" model.

Attention should therefore focus primarily on managing and enhancing distributed heritage and identifying optimal strategies for converting cultural and tourism demand from opportunity to reality. We should examine the attributes of different management models, highlighting successful approaches and encouraging dialogue about the risks and opportunities faced by areas that see cultural heritage as a tourism development asset.

Key elements include:

- **Human Factor:** It's essential to have motivated people in the area, particularly young people passionate about their land and work. Involving local communities in development projects is crucial through bottom-up participatory processes, which foster a sense of community and networking among various local entities.
- **Use Value:** A fundamental value is to make spaces available and accessible to local communities, optimally enhancing them and attributing new use value. Supporting design capacity and developing new management models, including the application or adaptation of existing models, is essential.
- **Experiential Value:** Direct engagement and emotional involvement in visitor experiences are central to the experiential demand today. Original and distinctive stories of places must be told, fostering connections between locals and visitors and addressing public needs through audience development activities. This approach should also stimulate new economies and relationships, not only focusing on culture and tourism but involving sectors like agriculture and craftsmanship.

An essential finding from local workshops within the BRICS project is the need for specific governance models for tourism interventions, reflecting a broader vision of tourism as an integrating factor across policies and institutional and private actors. Tourism as a system-integration factor enhances essential service delivery in inner areas, bolstering administrative capacity and economic growth.

To establish guidelines in this area, it would be helpful to consider the following questions about tourism governance:

- Are there local networks/associations of tourism operators?



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- What roles do they serve (animation, coordination, promotion, etc.)?
- How do they interact with larger system or regional entities?
- Who is responsible for tourism promotion in the area?
- What tourism-related connections exist at regional, national, or international levels?
- Are there local enterprises/associations active in the cultural sector?
- What roles do they serve (event organization, cultural heritage management, performances, library networks managed by public or private entities, etc.)?
- How do they relate to other enterprises/associations in the area or neighbouring territories?

PROMOTING DISTINCTIVE TOURISM

Inner areas are marked by extreme diversity and internal variation. To transform these distinctive characteristics into a desire for travel, stay, and/or enjoyment, it is essential to identify the area's real vocations, define the best market differentiation strategies, and develop specific interventions and product ideas. These should also evaluate the potential for forming local (and/or supra-local) alliances and implementing potential system actions.

Determining the area's vocation and distinctiveness is a priority for any region that genuinely aims to invest in tourism and culture. This process begins with a solid context analysis that focuses not only on supply but also on the cultural and tourism demand within the area and its broader context. The first set of characteristics to assess pertains to a "production chain" supported by technical and specialized knowledge, comprising the local landscape, agro-food products, and cultural heritage. Tourism can serve as a development driver, rooted in a preserved landscape that supports an agriculture able to offer unique and high-quality local products (such as native cultivars) and a cultural heritage ready for enhancement. The second set of characteristics pertains to the area's social quality: tourism can drive revitalization processes that positively impact local communities.

Within development policies, heritage and cultural activities serve as both infrastructure assets for residents, improving quality of life, and potential economic resources, given the significance of cultural and creative industries and other directly connected sectors like tourism. It has been noted that cultural and creative industries are among the most powerful economic drivers, generating revenue, creating employment, and boosting exports. Additionally, investments in culture help build new development pathways.



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The main tourism resources within the project areas are deeply rooted in rich natural, cultural, and historical heritage. The diverse landscapes provide various tourism opportunities, with traditions, gastronomy, and cycling activities common to the three areas, which can offer similar experiences in entirely different settings.

Coordinated promotion efforts should include actions on digital platforms, virtual tours, and apps to showcase places and inspire a desire to experience unique, memorable adventures that visitors can take home, with the hope of returning.

Developing coordinated thematic tourism packages that combine adventure with gastronomy, history with culture, traditions with events should be a key goal of the project.

Associations play a vital role in promoting the territory through shared efforts. Organizing unique and attractive events within a coordinated calendar can yield positive results. The organization of international "competitions" with three distinct venues should also be considered to ensure that each location benefits positively. Expanding partnerships between various entities enables better coordination of tourism activities, particularly in terms of joint marketing campaigns and participation in EU-funded projects supporting tourism development.

A concerted effort from all three areas to create "for all" accessibility interventions would help make these places accessible and inclusive, allowing everyone to enjoy a vacation and temporarily become citizens of these places. Programming workshops for creating tactile maps, smart benches, and virtual tours across the three areas is highly recommended.

Attractions should be valued within a network perspective, aiming for an innovative vision of tourism. For inner areas, community and convivial tourism allow citizens to become actors in the tourism process.

The major challenge of convivial tourism is allowing "Beauty" to reclaim its place in people's daily lives, blending with utility. Travel should open up revelations of new worlds that enrich us, leaving us transformed upon our return.

OPERATIONAL TOURISM ACTIONS

To ensure the activities carried out under the BRICS project are effective and yield measurable results, the shared actions to be implemented could include:



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1. Info Points for exchanging information among partners.
2. Virtual Tours of points of interest for each partner, accessible to all.
3. Mapping of Trails and a Schedule of Excursions.
4. Olympics of Traditional and Popular Games, rotating the hosting location.
5. Festival of Culinary Specialties (typical food and wine).
6. Joint Participation in Tourism Trade Fairs.
7. Enhancement of trail and cycling routes, such as Cammino dell'Acqua in Molise

MARKETING PLAN

From local meetings and study visits, it emerged that the element uniting the partnership in a cross-border action and forming the basis of a common strategy is slow tourism, with a focus on environmental tourism and pathways. Environmental, historical, artistic, and religious routes were identified, suitable for trekking or cycling.

In the Terre Ferraresi, Copparo emphasized the theme of cycle tourism, while Riva introduced the unique feature of Bike and Boat. These elements, combined with the tour of the metaphysical City of Tresigallo, can form a highly interesting tourist package that, when combined with the City of Ferrara, becomes a strong cultural tourism attraction.

The Union of Municipalities of the Biferno Springs has concentrated its tourist offering on pathways, particularly enhancing the Cammino dell'Acqua (Water Trail). This trail extends about 60 km, includes 12 municipalities, and highlights natural, scenic, and historical beauties (including Altilia and Civita di Boiano). Along the route, there are opportunities to taste local food products. The trail itself is a tourism proposal. Additionally, the area has developed the concept of a bio-trail “from village to village”, aimed at fostering community development and offering an alternative tourism proposal. The Cammino dell'Acqua is registered in the national catalogue of trails and is promoted via a dedicated website and Facebook page.

The main resource in the Dalmatian Zagora area, including the city of Dugopolje, lies in its rich tradition of hospitality, rural estates immersed in unspoiled nature, and the development of slow environmental tourism and pathways. The natural heritage of the Dugopolje area includes Mount Mosor, the Vranjača Cave—a protected geomorphological monument on the northern side of the mountain—and the King's Furnace, a unique cave with a wide entrance partially accessible to hikers.



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A territorial marketing plan and a shared tourism development strategy should lead to integrated tourist packages, combining the distinctive features of the regions, which are not in competition but collaborate for the development of the three internal areas.

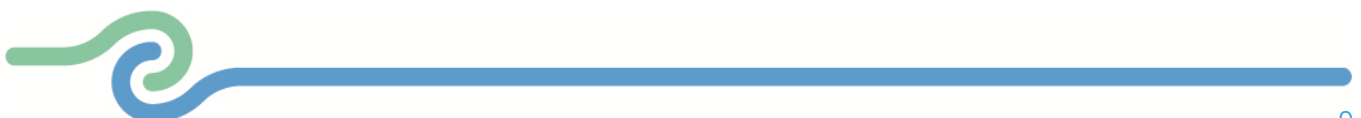
The Tourism Products emerging from the project activities:

- TERRE FERRARESI - A trekking or cycling circuit connecting Copparo, Riva, and Tresigallo with cultural, historical, and gastronomic tours.
- UNION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF THE BIFERNO SPRINGS - The Cammino dell'Acqua and the bio-trail are the two products at the core of the marketing strategy, offering environmental, historical, and cultural excursions combined with local gastronomic specialties. The offer can also be integrated with the Campitello Matese ski resort. The tourist package of the Union extends beyond their municipalities borders due to the proximity and affinities with neighbouring municipalities.
- DUGOPOLJE and DALMATIAN ZAGORA - The rural nature of this area supports a form of green tourism, focusing not only on pathways but also on “green markets” to promote local culture and products, enhancing interactions between tourists and the local community. Integrated Culture-Adventure packages aim to offer unique and authentic experiences that make the region more attractive.

Common elements that unite the three territories and strengthening the Cross-Border Activities:

- a) Thematic Tours: Organization of tourist packages with guided visits to historical sites such as fortresses, churches, and traditional villages, combined with adventurous activities like trekking, cycling, and caving.
- b) Participation in Local Activities: Giving tourists the opportunity to take part in local activities such as grape harvesting, preparing traditional dishes, olive oil production and fossil collection.
- c) Customized Routes: Designing tailored itineraries and packages to meet the specific needs of tourists.

Joint promotion of activities and offerings will take place via the websites of the respective regions, social media pages (such as Facebook) managed by the BRICS initiative and specific information points in each area.



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The tourism product aims to foster new forms of territorial economy, strengthening the role of cooperation, a necessity in combating depopulation. The proposals are rooted in the cultural enhancement of communities, viewing the future with fresh perspectives.

The shared actions and tourist product proposals represent the practical implementation of “community tourism”, where local residents play a key role in welcoming and guiding tourists.

From the activities carried out, the “BRICS community” has emerged, fostering sharing, hospitality, and promotion. It offers tourists an evocative and meaningful experience through storytelling, narratives, and active participation in activities. Tourists become citizens of the communities involved.

A groundbreaking feature of the proposed initiatives is that each community introduces participation workshops: the most appealing form of accessible tourism, free of obstacles and barriers, centered on active engagement and hospitality.

To reinforce this offering, the introduction of a “BRICS card” has been proposed. This card provides tourists with various discounts, with an added bonus for those who collect a “stamp” from all three project areas.

From BRICS, a new approach to convivial tourism has taken shape, encouraging each territory to exercise creativity and implement innovative actions that break away from static and traditional practices.

