



Interreg Italy-Croatia 2021-2027 Programme  
Priority 4 - Culture and tourism for sustainable development  
Special Objective 4.1 - Culture and sustainable tourism

## GUSTI - Gastro UpScaled Tourist Itinerary in rural regions of Croatia and Italy

D.1.2.2. Cross-border focus group online meetings held (4)

A.1.2.

WP 1





Work Package:	WP1 Comprehensive Analysis
Activity:	A.1.2. Capitalization of the results from project "Take It Slow" and creation of Joint Cross-border Destination Management Strategy
Deliverable:	D.1.2.2. Cross-border focus group online meetings held (4)
WP Leader:	Regional agency DUNEA – PP2
Responsible partner:	Regional agency DUNEA – PP2
Involved partner:	PP2, PP3, PP4



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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Overall objective

As part of the preparation of *D.1.2.3 Plan for the capitalization of the project TAKE IT SLOW results created*, several key steps were undertaken to ensure a strategic and inclusive approach. Capitalization refers to the process of ensuring that the results and achievements of the TAKE IT SLOW project are not only preserved, but also effectively utilized and further developed within the GUSTI project, as well as in future projects, policies and initiatives. Following a structured methodology, the Plan aims to leverage the TAKE IT SLOW results by integrating them into new projects, tourism strategies and, most importantly, reinforcing ongoing cross-border collaboration within the GUSTI framework.

The main contributors to the development of the Capitalization Plan were the stakeholders engaged by PP2, Regional Agency DUNEA, acting on behalf of Dubrovnik-Neretva County as the Lead Partner in the TAKE IT SLOW project, together with PP3, Emilia-Romagna Region, and PP4, Puglia Culture. These three project partners established a cross-border focus group and held four focus group meetings, which served as a platform to collect stakeholder input essential for the preparation of a comprehensive Capitalization Plan.

Each partner initially organized individual online meetings with their respective stakeholders involved in the TAKE IT SLOW project. Depending on the partner's stakeholder engagement approach, focus group meetings were conducted in both online and in-person formats. These meetings aimed to facilitate internal reflection, gather feedback, and evaluate the potential for further capitalization of existing project outcomes. Following these internal sessions, a joint cross-border meeting was held to collectively discuss, analyse and summarize stakeholder responses, including the findings from a shared stakeholder questionnaire. This meeting fostered open and constructive dialogue, allowing participants to identify common themes, align perspectives and jointly define the conclusions of the Capitalization Plan.

Specifically, PP2/DUNEA held its internal online focus group on 11 November 2024, PP4/Puglia Culture an in-person meeting on 13 February 2025, and PP3/RER an online meeting on 17 March 2025. The final joint cross-border online meeting on 25 March 2025 brought together all partners and stakeholders, presenting the outcomes of the individual meetings and resulting in joint conclusions that serve as a key input for the Capitalization Plan.



## 1.2. Methodological approach

The organization of the focus group meetings followed a structured methodological approach aimed at ensuring balanced stakeholder participation and effective knowledge exchange across the project area. Each partner first conducted an internal focus group meeting with stakeholders involved in the TAKE IT SLOW project in order to gather initial feedback and identify opportunities for further capitalization of project results.

The meetings were supported by a structured stakeholder questionnaire designed to assess the level of awareness of the TAKE IT SLOW results, identify their replication potential, and collect stakeholder perspectives regarding challenges and opportunities for further development.

The findings from these internal meetings were subsequently presented and discussed during a joint cross-border focus group meeting, which enabled partners to compare results, identify common priorities and define joint conclusions to be incorporated into the Capitalization Plan.

## 2. Overview of focus group meetings

As part of the GUSTI project implementation, four focus group meetings were held to gather valuable insights from key stakeholders, including public institutions, tourism organizations, private sector actors, and local communities. The meetings, organized by the project partners in both online and in-person formats, facilitated the exchange of experiences, identification of key challenges, and definition of opportunities for the capitalization of results from the previous TAKE IT SLOW project.

The following table provides an overview of all meetings, including dates, formats, organizers, and the number of participants:

Meeting	Date	Format	Organized by	No of participants
PP2 focus group meeting	11 Nov 2025	Online	DUNEA	6
PP3 focus group meeting	17 Mar 2025	Online	Emilia-Romagna Region	8
PP4 focus group meeting	13 Feb 2025	In-person	Puglia Culture	26
Joint cross-border meeting	25 Mar 2025	Online	All partners	15



## 2.1. Key findings from focus group meetings

The focus group meetings provided valuable insights from stakeholders representing public institutions, tourism organizations, the private sector and civil society from the participating regions. Through the exchange of experiences and perspectives, several common themes and challenges related to sustainable tourism development and gastronomy-based destination promotion were identified.

One of the key findings highlighted during the discussions was the growing importance of gastronomy as a driver of sustainable tourism development. Participants emphasized that local food traditions, regional products and authentic culinary experiences play a crucial role in differentiating destinations and enhancing their attractiveness for visitors. At the same time, stakeholders stressed the need to better integrate local producers, gastronomy providers and tourism operators into coordinated destination management initiatives.

Another important topic raised by the participants concerned the preservation and promotion of local identity and cultural heritage. Stakeholders noted that traditional food production, culinary knowledge and rural lifestyles represent valuable assets for tourism development. However, maintaining these traditions requires stronger cooperation between tourism actors, cultural institutions and local communities.

The discussions also revealed several challenges faced by rural and peripheral destinations, including seasonality, limited visibility of local products in tourism supply chains, and insufficient coordination between stakeholders operating in different sectors. Participants underlined the need for improved networking, knowledge exchange and joint promotion activities in order to strengthen the position of local gastronomy within tourism offerings.

A further key finding relates to the importance of cross-border cooperation and knowledge sharing. The focus group meetings enabled stakeholders from different regions to exchange good practices and identify common development opportunities. Participants expressed strong interest in learning from successful initiatives implemented in other territories, particularly in relation to gastronomic routes, destination branding and the promotion of high-quality local products.

Finally, stakeholders highlighted the relevance of strategic planning and long-term cooperation mechanisms that could ensure continuity beyond the duration of the project. In this context, the focus group meetings contributed to identifying priorities and practical recommendations that will support the development of the Capitalization Plan and the wider objective of strengthening sustainable gastronomy tourism across the project area.



Overall, the focus group discussions confirmed that strengthening collaboration among tourism stakeholders, promoting authentic local products and fostering cross-border knowledge exchange represent key elements for enhancing the sustainability and competitiveness of the destinations involved in the project.

Key thematic areas identified during the discussions were:

- sustainable gastronomy and local products
- preservation of cultural and culinary heritage
- strengthening cooperation among tourism stakeholders
- cross-border exchange of good practices
- development of gastronomy-based tourism products

### 3. PP2 Focus group meeting

#### 3.1. Meeting Agenda

#### Joint Focus Group meeting

Microsoft Teams 11/11/2024, 10:00 – 11:30

10:00 – 10:10	<u>Introduction to the meeting and presentation of the GUSTI project</u>
10:10 – 10:20	<u>Presentation of relevant TAKE IT SLOW project results</u>
10:20 – 10:30	<u>Introduction to the stakeholder questionnaire</u>
10:30 – 11:00	<u>Review of stakeholder questionnaire responses</u>
11:00 – 11:20	<u>Discussion on the capitalization potential of project results</u>
11:20 – 11:30	<u>Next steps and closing remarks</u>



### 3.2. Minutes of the meeting

After establishing the cross-border focus group, PP2/ Regional Agency DUNEA organized an internal online focus group meeting on 11 November 2024 at 10:00 a.m. with key decision makers from Ston (pilot area in TAKE IT SLOW project). The participants at the online meeting were the representative of Municipality of Ston, representative of Tourist Board of Ston and the director of the Ston Development Agency RAST. They were first of all familiarized with the GUSTI project, following the recap of the main activities realized within the TAKE IT SLOW project that were connected to the pilot area of Ston. After that the questionnaire has been discussed and distributed.

#### Summary of questionnaire:

##### Introduction:

The purpose of this questionnaire was to gather valuable insights from key stakeholders regarding the potential capitalization of the results achieved through the TAKE IT SLOW project. The questionnaire was distributed to various public bodies, private entities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in tourism and heritage sectors. Through their responses, we aimed to assess their level of awareness, identify opportunities for further integration of project outcomes, understand challenges and see the interest in future collaboration. The findings presented in this summary will serve as a foundation for shaping future initiatives, ensuring the sustainability and broader impact of the TAKE IT SLOW project results within the framework of the GUSTI project. For easier understanding the questionnaire has been translated in Croatian language and distributed via email communication as well as Google form to make it more accessible to the stakeholders.

##### Results:

#### 1. Respondent Information

Respondents include public sector bodies (2), private sector entities (2), and one NGO. Their roles vary from managers/directors, OPG holder, to project associates.

#### 2. Awareness of TAKE IT SLOW Project

- 4 out of 5 respondents are familiar with the TAKE IT SLOW project and its results
- 1 respondent is partially familiar

#### 3. Familiarity with Project Results



The most recognized project results include:

- Cross-border platform (CB platform)
- Improved accessibility of heritage sites
- Green certificates / eco-labels
- Tourist routes

#### 4. Capitalization Potential

Respondents identified the following results as having the highest potential for further capitalization:

- Green certificates / eco-labels
- Cross-border platform
- Digital tourism tools
- Tourist routes
- Activities for local population

#### 5. Integration of Results

Suggested ways to integrate TAKE IT SLOW results into ongoing initiatives:

- Adoption of green certificates
- Promotion of tourist routes
- Usage of CB platform
- Replication of good practices
- Linking with existing local and regional activities

#### 6. Benefits of Capitalization

Respondents highlighted key benefits of capitalization:

- Stakeholder networking
- Application of best practices in tourism (via CB platform)
- Promotion of sustainable tourism
- Improved accessibility of cultural and natural heritage sites

#### 7. Interest in Future Cooperation

- 4 respondents answered “YES”, showing clear interest in future cooperation based on TAKE IT SLOW results.
- 1 respondent answered “MAYBE”.



## 8. Challenges

Challenges identified for successful capitalization include:

- Weak stakeholder networking
- Undefined expectations and goals
- Poor infrastructure (internet, mobile signal)
- Lack of clearly defined cooperation model

## 9. Needed Support

Respondents indicated the following support is needed:

- Financial support
- Technical assistance
- Training and workshops
- Networking opportunities

## 10. Stakeholder-Specific Questions

- Most respondents do not currently possess green certificates, or consider them not applicable.
- Some use digital tools, though these are not widely applied.
- Common difficulties include lack of funding, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient promotion.

## 11. Cross-border Cooperation

The most frequently suggested forms of cross-border cooperation include:

- Joint marketing and promotion activities
- Sharing best practices
- Knowledge exchange
- Development of cross-border tourist routes

## 12. Final Contributions

Suggestions and feedback for future action:

- Establishment of long-term partnerships
- Greater visibility and dissemination of project results
- Completion of all planned project phases



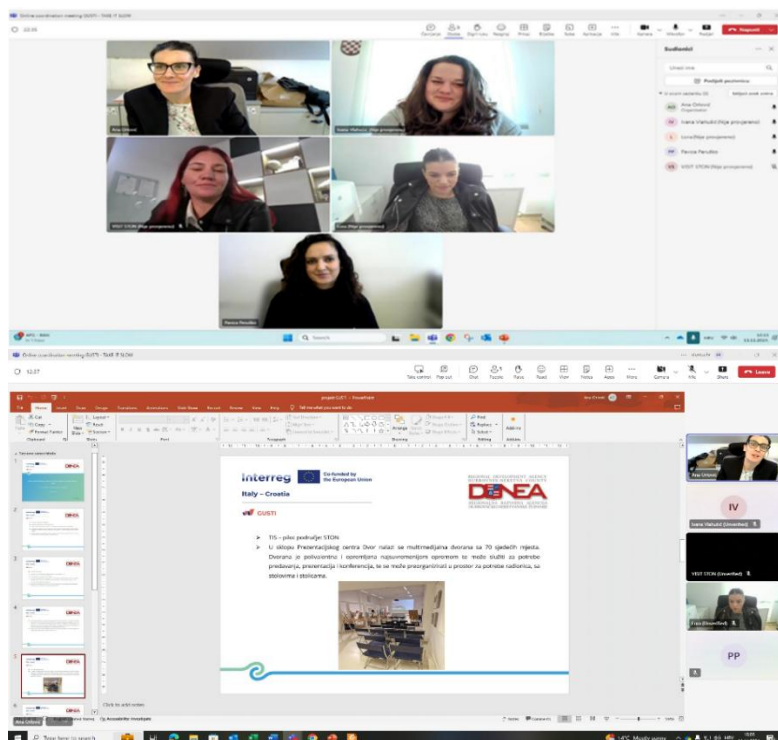


- All respondents expressed interest in participating in future workshops and focus groups

### 3.3. Participants List

STAKEHOLDER and PP	REPRESENTATIVE
Municipality of Ston	Ivana Vlahušić
Tourist Board of Ston	Fani Slade
Tourist Board of Ston	Sanja Hladilo Bubalo
Ston Development Agency RAST	Lora Bušković
PP Regional Agency DUNEA	Ana Orlović
PP Regional Agency DUNEA	Pavica Peruško

### 3.4. Photos of the meeting



## 4. PP3 Focus group meeting

### 4.1. Meeting Agenda

#### **D1.2.2. Cross-border focus group online meeting held\_PP3 RER Monday 17/03/2025 capitalization of Take It Slow 15:30 – 16:45**

- 1) Presentation of the GUSTI to the stakeholders of the Take It Slow project
- 2) Illustration of the questionnaire
- 3) Answers by all focus group members
- 4) Capitalization potential

### 4.2. Minutes of the meeting

The online meeting, held on 17 March 2025, commenced at 15:30 and concluded at 16:45. The session served as a collaborative platform to align the objectives of the GUSTI project with the ongoing efforts of the TAKE IT SLOW project stakeholders.

Following a presentation of the GUSTI project's core goals and expected outcomes, the floor was handed over to Agenda 21. They proceeded to outline the structure and purpose of the stakeholder questionnaire. To ensure high-quality data collection, the session transitioned into an interactive workshop format.

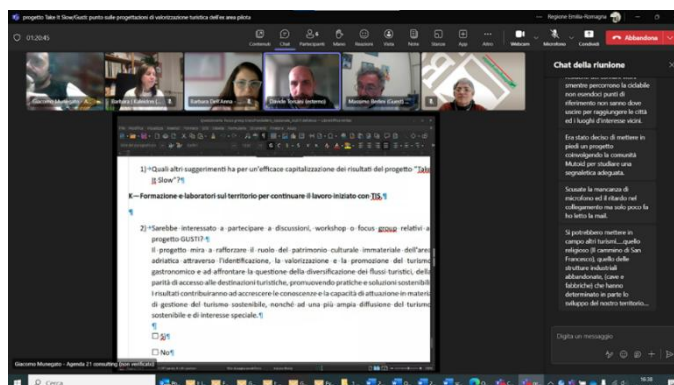
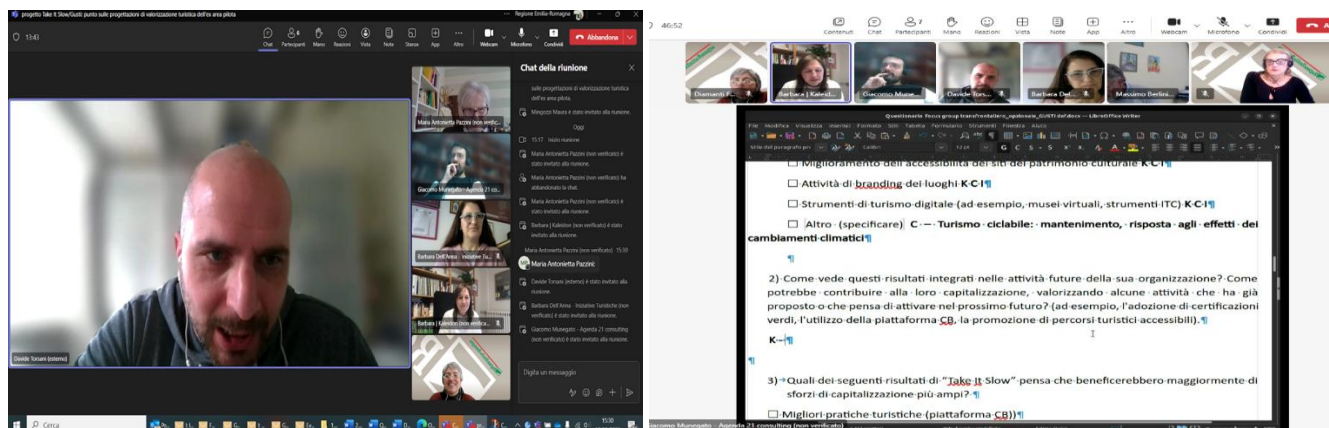
Question by question, participants were invited to provide immediate feedback, clarify ambiguities, and share their professional insights. This methodical approach allowed for a diverse range of perspectives from the various stakeholder categories, ensuring that the final responses would accurately reflect the local and regional realities of sustainable tourism and rural development. The meeting concluded with a discussion on capitalization potential, summary of the next steps and a timeline for the final submission of the questionnaire.



### 4.3. List of participants

STAKEHOLDER and PP	REPRESENTATIVE
Verucchio Municipality	Maria Antonietta Pazzini, Councillor for Culture and Tourism
Municipality of Santarcangelo	Davide Torsani
Kaleidon	Barbara Montespini
Iniziative Turistiche	Barbara Dell'Anna
Confesercenti Bellaria/Igea Marina	Massimo Berlino
Agenda 21	Giacomo Munegato
RER	Maura Mingozi
RER	Federica Diamanti

### 4.4. Photos of the meeting



## 5. PP4 Focus group meeting

### 5.1. Meeting Agenda

#### "In-person Focus group meeting"

**13/02/2025**

**Location: Regional Natural Park Authority of the 'Coastal Dunes from Torre Canne to Torre S. Leonardo'**

**17.30 – 20.00 Introduction of Interreg GUSTI project**

**Discussion on key points of sustainable development in the area**

**Discussion on questionnaire findings**

**Capitalization opportunities**

### 5.2. Minutes of the meeting

In-person meeting was held on 13 February 2025 at 17.30 and ended at 19.45.

The meeting was hosted by the Regional Natural Park Authority of the 'Coastal Dunes from Torre Canne to Torre S. Leonardo', in the new Visitor Centre Casa del Mare.

The coordinator of the GUSTI project activities in the pilot area of Terre di Fasano, as well as coordinator of the Local Community of Practice of the TAKE IT SLOW project, introduced the Interreg GUSTI project and the capitalization of the results of the previous project for the sustainable development of the territory to the participants.

The meeting was attended by a network of public and private operators, associations and tourist guides who, for over a year, have been engaged in a virtuous process of participation aimed at defining new strategies for the sustainable development of tourism in the Coastal Dunes Park and the Municipalities of Ostuni and Fasano (pilot area of the GUSTI and TAKE IT SLOW projects), within the framework of the Park Authority's certification with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas Part 1 (certification of the protected area) and Part 2 (certification of economic operators).



The aim is to integrate the purposes of the GUSTI project with the sustainable tourism development strategies in place in the pilot area, to involve several other public and private operators and to expand the network of beneficiaries of the project's development activities.

After an initial discussion about the key points of sustainable development in the area and how to best apply the objectives of the projects involved with the strategies and developments in place, questionnaires were sent by email to the operators who had been involved in the activities related to the Interreg TAKE IT SLOW project in the past, including the Municipality of Fasano (pilot area of the project), the creators of the Terre di Fasano.net Business Network and other operators involved in stakeholder engagement processes and practical activities, such as the study visit to the Fasano area held in February 2023.

Below is a report of the most interesting answers received from the completed questionnaires, which are also attached to this document.

In the *Awareness of 'TAKE IT SLOW' Project* section, according to the operators interviewed, the most tangible results were:

- place branding activities
- tourism routes
- cross-border platform

In the *Capitalization Potential* section, the results with the highest potential for replication, or further development, are:

- ecolabels and green certifications
- accessibility improvements at heritage sites
- place branding strategies
- digital tourism tools

While, again in the same section, the results that could benefit most from broader capitalization efforts are:

- enhanced tourism infrastructure
- stakeholder networking
- promotion of sustainable tourism

In the *Opportunities for Collaboration* section, the most interesting sectors for operators to collaborate in are:

- joint tourism promotion initiatives
- improving accessibility at tourism sites



- cross-border stakeholder platforms
- research and knowledge sharing

Whereas, in the *Challenges and Needs* section, operators believe they would receive further support to implement the project results in the following fields:

- technical assistance
- training/workshops
- networking opportunities

Finally, in the *Cross-border focus* section, operators believe that cross-border collaboration could help to further capitalize on the following results:

- sharing of best practices
- joint policy development
- infrastructure and sustainability improvements

### 5.3. List of participants

STAKEHOLDER	REPRESENTATIVE
Tecnopolis Science and Technology Park	Valerio Palasciano
Torre Canne	Elisa Castillo
Torre Canne	Giuseppe Tedeschi
Laureto	Giulia Masi
Marina di Ostuni	Antonia Gallo
Masseria Paradiso	Patrizia D'abramo
Masseria Capece	Franco Romito
Archeolido	Antonio Sardella
S.T. Morelli	Anna Flavia
S.T. Morelli	Angelo Morelli
Scuola windsurf Puglia	Tommaso Potenza
Panificio L'angolo piu Gusto	Donato Potenza



MC Nautica	Marco Carani
Coop Gaia Tours	Maria Franca Mangano
Masseria Mozzone	Floriana Fanizza
Lubus	Gianpiero Cardone
Bebe Casa Amali	Mauro Ancona
Masseria San Martino	Teresa Baldassarre
ITET	Paola Francioso
Onda Blu	Pasqva Gallo
Centro Ippico Parco di Mare	Quirico Santoro
ITET Pantanelli Monnet	Anna Maria Galizia
Forfly srl	Paola Bicciato
Parco Dune	Mariflo Magli
Madera bike	Daniele Pomes

#### 5.4. Photos of the meeting



## 6. Mutual Cross-border Focus group meeting

### 6.1. Meeting Agenda

#### Joint Focus Group meeting

Microsoft Teams 25/03/2025, 10:00 – 11:30 h

10:00 – 11:30	<p><b>1. Overview of the outcomes of internal focus group meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PP2:</b> Internal meeting results and questionnaire findings</li> <li>• <b>PP3:</b> Internal meeting results and questionnaire findings</li> <li>• <b>PP4:</b> Internal meeting results and questionnaire findings</li> </ul> <p><b>2. All partners and focus group members: Discussion on key thematic areas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of the TAKE IT SLOW project results</li> <li>• Capitalization potential of identified project outputs</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration among stakeholders</li> <li>• Challenges and support needs for further implementation</li> <li>• Opportunities for cross-border cooperation</li> </ul> <p><b>3. All partners and focus group members:</b> Comparative evaluation of stakeholder inputs across regions</p> <p><b>4. All partners and focus group members:</b> Identification of common priorities and opportunities for cooperation</p> <p><b>5. All partners and focus group members:</b> Formulation of joint conclusions supporting the development of the Capitalization Plan</p>
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### 6.2. Minutes of the meeting

The three project partners, together with focus groups members, began the joint cross-border focus group meeting on 25 March 2025 at 10:00. During the session, each partner presented the outcomes of their internal focus group meetings, including stakeholder feedback and the results of the distributed questionnaire.



The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect insights from key stakeholders regarding the potential capitalization of the results achieved through the TAKE IT SLOW project. The questionnaire was shared with a range of public bodies, private entities and non-governmental organizations involved within the tourism and heritage sectors. Through their responses, the partners aimed to assess the level of stakeholder awareness of the TAKE IT SLOW project results, identify opportunities for further integration of project outcomes, understand potential challenges related to their implementation, and determine the level of interest in future collaboration.

The meeting continued with a stakeholder discussion focused on the findings presented by each partner. Participants exchanged views on common challenges, opportunities for cooperation and possible approaches for further capitalization of the project results.

The insights gathered during the discussion served as an important basis for the formulation of joint conclusions, which will support the preparation of the Capitalization Plan and provide key insights for the development of the Joint Cross-border Destination Management Strategy within the framework of the GUSTI project.

The following summary evaluates both the similarities and differences among the partners and outlines a joint conclusion aimed at integrating the findings into the Capitalization Plan:

*The questionnaire is provided in Annex 1, with detailed responses available in Annex 2 of this document.*

## 1. Awareness of the TAKE IT SLOW project

All stakeholders were generally aware of the TAKE IT SLOW project and its key outcomes.

The most recognized results across partners include:

- Place branding activities (e.g., Terre di Fasano, Views from the Sea)
- Tourism routes and digital tourism tools
- Cross-border platform

## 2. Capitalization potential

Stakeholders across all three partners identified the following as having high potential for replication:

- Ecolabels and green certifications
- Improved accessibility at heritage sites
- Place branding strategies



- Digital tourism tools

Results that could benefit most from broader capitalization efforts:

- Enhanced tourism infrastructure
- Stakeholder networking
- Promotion of sustainable tourism

### 3. Collaboration opportunities

Common areas of interest for collaboration include:

- Joint tourism promotion initiatives
- Improving accessibility at tourism sites
- Cross-border stakeholder platforms
- Research and knowledge sharing

### 4. Challenges and support needs

Challenges identified:

- Lack of targeted communication and widespread promotion of results
- Need for quality infrastructure and better maintenance
- Limited funding and resources for long-term sustainability

Requested support:

- Financial support
- Technical assistance
- Training and workshops
- Networking opportunities

### 5. Cross-border collaboration

Stakeholders agree that cross-border cooperation could enhance capitalization through:

- Sharing of best practices
- Joint policy development
- Infrastructure and sustainability improvements
- Marketing and joint promotion
- Evaluation and Comparison



## Evaluation and comparison

### Common Trends:

- All three partners recognize the importance of branding activities, sustainable tourism and digital tools
- There is a strong interest in joint tourism promotion and stakeholder networking
- Financial and technical support remain key needs across all stakeholders

### Differences:

- Some partners prioritize infrastructure improvements (e.g. signage, accessibility features), while others emphasize knowledge-sharing and training
- Stakeholders in one region favour cross-border policy development, whereas others focus on direct tourism initiatives

## Joint conclusion

The analysis of stakeholder responses highlights a unified commitment to sustaining and expanding the results of the TAKE IT SLOW project. Capitalization efforts should focus on:

- Strengthening stakeholder networks through enhanced communication and collaboration
- Integrating digital tourism tools and branding initiatives across regions
- Improving tourism infrastructure and accessibility to promote inclusive tourism
- Securing financial and technical support to maintain and expand project outcomes
- Leveraging cross-border cooperation for joint marketing, policy alignment, and sustainable tourism development

The results of the questionnaire clearly indicate a strong recognition of the value and potential of the TAKE IT SLOW project outcomes among stakeholders which emphasized the importance of cross-border cooperation and the adoption of sustainable tourism practices. While several challenges were identified, stakeholders expressed readiness to overcome these barriers through financial and technical support, capacity-building activities and networking opportunities. The expressed willingness to engage in future partnerships and initiatives reflects a shared commitment to continuing the legacy of TAKE IT SLOW, fostering sustainable tourism development, and enhancing regional cooperation. By integrating these findings into the Capitalization Plan, the GUSTI project can ensure a lasting impact on sustainable tourism growth and stakeholder engagement across the involved regions.

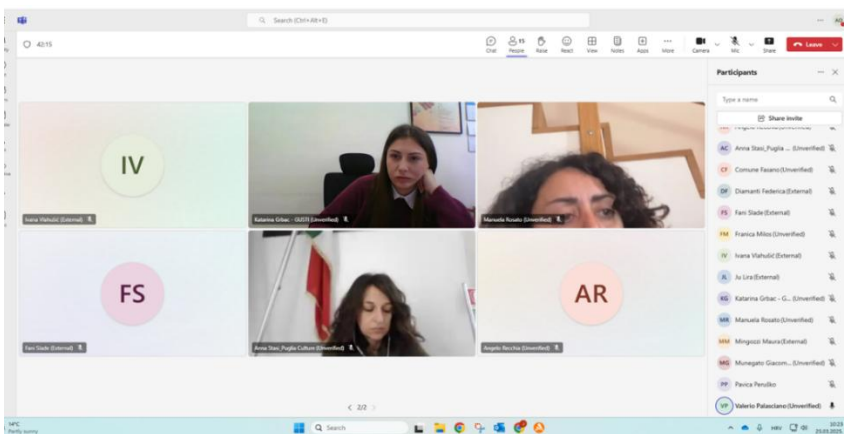
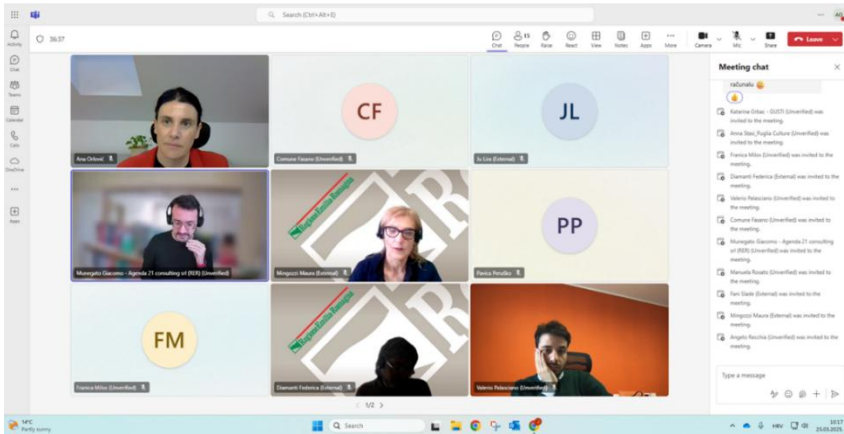


## 6.3. Participants list

STAKEHOLDER	REPRESENTATIVE
Municipality of Ston (PP2/DUNEA)	Ivana Vlahušić
Tourist Board of Ston (PP2/DUNEA)	Fani Slade
FLAG Šabakun (PP2/DUNEA)	Franica Miloš
PP2 Regional Agency DUNEA	Ana Orlović
PP2 Regional Agency DUNEA	Pavica Peruško
Tecnopolis Science and Technology Park (PP4/Puglia Culture)	Valerio Palasciano
Municipality of Fasano (PP4/Puglia Culture)	Concetta Boggia
B&B Villa Rosato (PP4/Puglia Culture)	Manuela Rosato
Masseria Fragnale (PP4/Puglia Culture)	Angelo Recchia
PP4 Puglia Culture	Anna Stasi
Agenda 21 consulting srl (PP3/Emilia-Romagna Region)	Munegato Giacomo
PP3 Emilia-Romagna Region	Mingozzi Maura
PP3 Emilia-Romagna Region	Diamanti Federica
Public Institution Development Agency of Lika-Senj County – LIRA on behalf of LP	Marko Mataija
LP Lika-Senj County	Katarina Grbac



## 6.4. Photos of the meeting



## 7. Summary

Deliverable *D.1.2.2. Cross-border focus group online meetings held (4)* provides a consolidated overview of the insights gathered across the four cross-border focus group meetings. The meetings enabled partners to gather structured feedback from stakeholders, identify key opportunities and challenges for the capitalization of the TAKE IT SLOW project results, and define joint priorities for the preparation of the Capitalization Plan (D.1.2.3).

The analysis of stakeholder contributions demonstrates a shared commitment to sustaining, enhancing, and expanding the results achieved within the TAKE IT SLOW project. The discussions consistently emphasized that capitalization efforts should focus on the following strategic directions:



- Strengthening stakeholder networks through enhanced communication, coordination and long-term collaboration mechanisms
- Integrating digital tourism tools and branding initiatives in a cross-border manner
- Improving tourism infrastructure and accessibility to support inclusive and high-quality visitor experiences
- Ensuring financial and technical support for upgrading and scaling project outputs.
- Leveraging cross-border cooperation for joint promotion, policy alignment and the development of sustainable gastro-cultural tourism.

Key conclusions from the cross-border focus group meetings include:

- strong stakeholder interest in further cross-border cooperation between Italy and Croatia
- tourism infrastructure, branding activities and digital tools were identified as the results with the highest capitalization potential
- stakeholders highlighted the importance of joint promotion and knowledge exchange
- financial support and stronger stakeholder networking were identified as key prerequisites for successful capitalization
- participants expressed strong willingness to engage in future initiatives within the GUSTI project framework

The insights collected through the focus group meetings represent an important analytical input for the preparation of the *Joint Cross-border Destination Management Strategy* under Activity A.1.2.

In particular, stakeholder feedback helped to identify key thematic priorities that should be addressed within the strategy, including the development of gastronomy-based tourism products, improved integration of local producers into tourism value chains, strengthening cross-border promotion and the need for better coordination among tourism stakeholders.

The discussions also highlighted several structural challenges, such as limited visibility of local products, insufficient infrastructure and the need for stronger networking mechanisms. These findings will directly inform the strategic priorities and proposed actions within the Destination Management Strategy, ensuring that the strategy reflects the practical needs and perspectives of stakeholders operating in the project regions.

By incorporating these insights, the strategy will support the long-term capitalization of TAKE IT SLOW project results and strengthen cross-border cooperation in sustainable gastro-cultural tourism.



## 8. Annex 1 – Questionnaire

Here is an optional list of questions you can use to prepare a **questionnaire for relevant stakeholders**, to gather insights for the **capitalization of the "Take It Slow" project results** within the GUSTI project. This questionnaire will help identify the level of awareness, interest and potential for collaboration among stakeholders, as well as uncover challenges and support needs for successful capitalization of the project results. You can adapt these questions further depending on the specific goals of the GUSTI project.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1) What is the name of your organization?
- 2) What sector does your organization represent?

- Public sector
- Private sector
- NGO
- Academia/Scientific
- Tourism operator
- Other (please specify)

- 3) What is your role in the organization?

- Manager/Director
- Tourism professional
- Policy-maker
- Researcher
- Project assistant
- Other (please specify)



**AWARENESS OF "TAKE IT SLOW" PROJECT**

1) Are you familiar with the "Take It Slow" project and its outcomes?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

2) Which of the following project results are you aware of?

- Cross-border platform (CB Platform)
- Green certifications/ecolabels
- Improved accessibility of heritage sites
- Place branding activities (e.g., "Terre di Fasano")
- Digital and virtual heritage experiences
- Tourism routes (e.g., cycle routes, slow trails)
- Other (please specify)

**CAPITALIZATION POTENTIAL**

1) Which results from the "Take It Slow" project do you think have the highest potential for replication or further development? (Rank in order of priority or select multiple)

- Cross-border platform
- Ecolabels and green certifications
- Accessibility improvements at heritage sites
- Place branding strategies
- Digital tourism tools (e.g., virtual museums, ICT tools)
- Other (please specify)



2) How do you see these results being integrated into your organization's future activities?  
(e.g., adopting green certifications, using the CB platform, promoting accessible tourism routes)

3) Which of the following "Take It Slow" outcomes do you think would benefit most from wider capitalization efforts?

- Tourism best practices (CB platform)
- Green certifications and ecolabels
- Enhanced tourism infrastructure
- Stakeholder networking
- Promotion of sustainable tourism
- Other (please specify)

#### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION**

1) Would you be interested in collaborating on future initiatives that build on the results of the "Take It Slow" project?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

2) In which areas would you be most interested in collaborating?

- Joint tourism promotion initiatives
- Eco-certification and sustainability practices
- Improving accessibility at tourism sites
- Cross-border stakeholder platforms
- Research and knowledge sharing
- Other (please specify)



3) Would your organization be interested in sharing its own best practices on the CB Platform?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

#### **CHALLENGES AND NEEDS**

1) What challenges do you foresee in the capitalization of the "Take It Slow" project results in your organization or region? (e.g., lack of funding, low stakeholder engagement, regulatory barriers)

2) What additional support would you require to implement the project results:

- Financial support
- Technical assistance
- Training/workshops
- Networking opportunities
- Other (please specify)

#### **STAKEHOLDER-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**

1) If your organization has obtained a green certification or ecolabel, what were the main benefits you experienced? (e.g., increased visibility, higher tourist satisfaction, operational improvements)

2) If your organization is involved in tourism infrastructure, what improvements have been most successful in increasing accessibility for tourists?

3) Do you use digital tools (e.g., virtual museums, ICT platforms) for promoting cultural heritage in your region? If yes, how effective have they been?



**CROSS-BORDER FOCUS**

1) How do you think cross-border collaboration (e.g., between Italy and Croatia) can help further capitalize on the project results?

- Joint marketing and promotion
- Sharing of best practices
- Joint policy development
- Infrastructure and sustainability improvements
- Other (please specify)

2) Are there specific cross-border opportunities (tourism routes, heritage sites, etc.) you would like to see developed further based on the "Take It Slow" project?

**FINAL INPUT**

1) What other suggestions do you have for the effective capitalization of the "Take It Slow" project results?

2) Would you be interested in participating in follow-up discussions, workshops, or focus groups related to the GUSTI project?

- Yes
- No

## 9. Annex 2 – Detailed answers



Stakeholders%20an  
swers\_%20Question

