TAKE IT SLOW
Smart and Slow Tourism Supporting Adriatic Heritage for Tomorrow

PILOTING MATCHMAKING ACTIONS

D4.4.4. WP 4 - SMART STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR INNOVATIVE ADRIATIC TOURISM DESTINATION, PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Molise Region

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Project Acronym:	TAKE IT SLOW
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Project Title:	Smart and Slow Tourism Supporting Adriatic Heritage for Tomorrow
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Work Package Number:	4
Work Package Title:	Smart strategic framework for innovative Adriatic Tourism destination, products & services
Activity Number:	4.4.
Activity Title:	Development of marketing for sustainable Adriatic tourism products/services
Partner in Charge:	PP2/SKC
Partners involved:	PP10/MOL
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Adriatic region is a territory rich of cultural and natural heritage, although that slow, sustainable, accessible tourism that wants to be promoted in the area is not particularly exploited as source of economy. The main tourist offer is concentrated in the seaside area while the internal area is not well known. The aim of *TAKE IT SLOW* project is to present the Adriatic region as a sustainable and innovative area with a rich natural and cultural heritage that is best to be explored and experienced through the concept of slow tourism.

Along the Adriatic Sea festivals, concerts, exhibitions, trade fairs and conferences are periodically organized, and these activities have given rise to the development of agencies and companies involved in organizing activities for local people and tourists. During the spring/summer period, many activities are organized such as tastings, hiking, cycling carrying tourists a little bit far from the seaside, recognizing and appreciating the environmental biodiversity. In any case, most of the activities carried out along the Adriatic Sea in the peripheral areas are usually undertaken by a minority of residents and by a small number of tourists, despite the potential for tourism exploitation being wide.

The economic crisis, greatly worsened by the pandemic emergency, has posed a range of major challenges for the tourism industry of the Adriatic region that launched several different initiatives in order to support its territory.

According to the Destination Marketing Plan the following document is based on a clear and defined strategy aims to attract target groups to promote at its best the Adriatic Region.

2. DATA ANALYSIS

Taking into account the destination marketing created by the PP2 and all the documents connected with the work, this document stems from the need to create concrete actions in order to support the plan itself.

During the last TTG Travel experience, one of the most important fairs about tourism in Italy, data from the Ministry of Tourism has been shared[1]. One of this says that one Italian out of four experienced slow tourism about small towns, nature, and local cuisine.

This data has an extraordinary value, related to the fact that the Covid-19 pandemic promoted the so-called proximity tourism, which gave small towns the chance to be known and appreciated, in the Italian context.

2022 has been characterized by proximity and national tourism, but there will be an increase in international tourism in Italy, mainly because of two factors:
1.Less restrictions to international mobility.
2.Global increase in vaccination, and a greater trust in traveling.

Escaping from daily routine, resting, and regenerating is a trend that exploded in 2021, and kept on growing in 2022, this gives less importance to the season[2]. Rather than talking about loss of season importance, we have to consider that, in a good amount of tourism destination, a process of holiday extension has already begun. The micro-vacation tendency, especially in spring and autumn, will continue in the next years. This means that there is a need to find open destinations, with hospitality, restaurants, and tourist activities open. This tendency will keep on going, because micro-vacations become an important part in people life. Many people say that even the simple pleasures, like enjoying the sun, or watching a water mirror can immediately help their mood.

A study conducted by Booking[3] and published in October 2021 reveals how the 'pandemic effect' could finally tip sustainable travel intent into impactful action.

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[1] Data presented by the Italian Ministry of Tourism on the occasion of the signing of the memorandum of understanding with Enel and Trenitalia for sustainable holidays, July 2022

[2] "Le vere tendenze turistiche per l'anno 2022" https://www.ftourism.it/le-vere-tendenze-turistiche-per-il-2022/

[3] "Booking. Sustainable Traveller Report 2021"
https://globalnews.booking.com/download/1037578/booking.comsustainabletravelreport2021.pdf

- **83%** of global travelers think **sustainable travel is vital**, with 61% saying the pandemic has made them **want to travel more sustainably in the future**
- Almost half (**49%) still believe that in 2021, there aren't enough sustainable travel** options available, with 53% admitting they get annoyed if somewhere they are staying stops them from being sustainable, for example by not providing recycling facilities
- While **3 out of 4** accommodation providers say they have **implemented at least some kind of sustainability practices** at their property, only one-third actively communicate about their efforts proactively to potential guests

According to the findings, travelers' day-to-day sustainable commitments are consistent with their intentions for future trips with **84% wanting to reduce general waste**, **83% wanting to reduce their energy consumption** and **79% wanting to use more environmentally friendly modes of transport such as walking, cycling or public transport over taxis or rental cars**.

Respect for the local community is also high on the list as almost three quarters (**73%**) want to **have authentic experiences** that are representative of the local culture when they travel, 84% believe increasing cultural understanding and **preservation of cultural heritage** is crucial and 76% want to ensure the economic impact of the industry is spread equally in all levels of society. Furthermore, 69% will go as far as avoiding popular destinations and attractions to ensure they aren't contributing to overcrowding challenges and helping do their part to disperse the positive benefits of travel to less frequently visited destinations and communities.[4]

Society is becoming day by day more sensitive to sustainability. Environmental concern and the awakening of tourist consciousness, means that there is a move toward more conscious tourism demand. This translates into more valuable destinations. That is, those that will have proposals with care and respect toward the environment, in the use of local products and the famous felling of authenticity.

Taking into account the data analysed above, we can define a series of targeted actions in accordance with the three principles of the destination marketing plan:

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[4] "Booking. Sustainable Traveller Report 2021"
https://globalnews.booking.com/download/1037578/booking.comsustainabletravelreport2021.pdf

1. *Identity of the Adriatic*: the actions should contribute to strengthening the identity of the Adriatic through the Take It Slow Brand (online and offline marketing campaigns, influencer marketing).

2. *Perfect Destination of Slow Tourism*: strategies, interventions and actions must contribute to see the Adriatic area as a perfect destination to slow tourism.

3. *Adriatic experience, slow tourism*: strategies, interventions and actions must contribute to systematically strengthen the physical and cultural accessibility of places and territories open to tourism enhancement. This term has several meanings, covering: accessibility to tourist enjoyment for all people regardless of their age or health conditions; accessibility of places and territories through sustainable mobility systems; and the possibility given to visitors to understand and interpret the history, complexity and variety of the heritage visited (cultural permeability).

3. PILOTING MATCHMAKING ACTIONS

Each partner has defined a pilot project on its territory in order to promote slow, sustainable and accessible tourism.

With reference to the goals identified in the Destination Marketing Plan, the matchmaking actions that we will detail will have as main focus:

> ➢ The valorisation of natural and cultural heritage of the Adriatic;
> ➢ The Pace, promoting the Adriatic region as the centre of slow tourism;
> ➢ Adriatic experience, slow and smart tourism offered as a driver for sustainable development.

3.1. Project Output – Pilot area and similarities

The pilot areas chosen by each partner tell the best of the Adriatic region. The slow, sustainable and accessible peculiarities of the different areas are promoted.

The goal of the entire project is to present the Adriatic region as an ideal destination for those who want to discover unknown places, to explore as a local and not as a tourist, to lost in nature within thinking about the time. The Adriatic region represents the pace to fully appreciate the natural and cultural heritage. All the Pilot Projects offer specific activities and embrace a detailed target group, such as: nature lover; foodies; history and art lover; etc.

To promote at its best this destination is extremely important improving:

> ➢ Accessibility; not only as logistics and information, but as accessible places for everyone;
> ➢ Adequately valorising, utilising, and promoting the ecclesiastical heritage of the Adriatic that includes churches, monastery complexes and hermitages;
> ➢ Promoting authentic products of Adriatic culinary, the Mediterranean diet is recognised and protected by UNESCO, and the Adriatic one is part of it.

The piloting matchmaking actions aim to create a strong collaboration and innovative synergies through the exchange of information and good practice between the Adriatic actors.

The actions are in line with the branding concept of the Adriatic region, trying to reduce the seasonality of the tourist offer in the pilot projects on the Adriatic. The element of cross-border cooperation and networking of all tangible and intangible aspects makes up the tourist offer of the Adriatic.

In order to better define and develop the pilot action and its objectives, targets and specific initiatives, is strictly important to consider the action range, which depends on the characteristics of the pilot area, the selection of stakeholders and the final user of the action. Three objectives must be followed:
  ➢ stimulate new tourist practices and, at the same time, to improve the experience of visiting tourists and residents living in the city;
  ➢ to manage tourist flows in a more conscious and sustainable way;
  ➢ to contribute to enhancing less-known cultural resources.

The idea is to implement four piloting matchmaking actions promoted under the Take It Slow brand.

Actions	Content
Educational Tours	- promote "educational tours" for journalists, bloggers and operators to discover the new itineraries of the Adriatic Region. - At least 1 educational tour must be implemented by each partner to fully improve their pilot action.
Training Days / Workshops	- Al least 2 training days dedicated to tour operators, to help them in better promoting the territory among tourists, including citizens and stakeholders. A marketing campaign can be organized to attract new visitors.
Thematic itineraries	- identify thematic cross border itineraries that have the possibility to be totally custom made by the

	tourist through the technological contents and devices, especially using the CB platform.
Tourism Fairs	- Participation of national and international fairs to promote the Adriatic area under the Take It Slow brand

At least, we suggest a multidimensional data analytics system, which can help to collect a large amount of data (for example on tourist flow; attractiveness; mobility and accessibility).