

Guidelines and Recommendations

D5.3.1

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1. Introduction

The final work package 5 of the RECOLOR project deals with “Transnational Strategy and Roadmap for future implementation”. The activity 5.3 “Development of Roadmap, including Guidelines and Recommendations for Adoption and Transferability” aims to develop a set of guidelines and recommendations how to apply and implement the joint transnational strategy in the partner regions and other programme areas, paving the way to its adoption on a wider scale. In particular, the present deliverable “D5.3.1 Guidelines and Recommendations” presents a set of guidelines and recommendations how to apply and implement the joint transnational strategy, in the partner and other programme areas.

The present document intends to transfer the lesson learnt during the implementation of RECOLOR, with the goal to help both the stakeholders of the RECOLOR partner areas, as well as other Croatian and Italian public administration to understand the overall philosophy of the project and take benefit from the experience and knowledge developed by the partners involved in its activities.

It is important to start reminding that RECOLOR was actuated in regions characterized by important mass tourist flows. The Montefeltro area is in the hinterland of Rimini Riviera (a destination recording 3% of the total overnight stays in Italy), Campobasso is in the hinterland of Termoli (0,1%), Cividale in that of Grado and Lignano Sabbiadoro (2%); while Zadar and Šibenik are themselves leading seaside destinations in Croatia (respectively 10% and 6% of the total overnight stays) and Labin in Istria (6% of the total overnight stays).

The six areas involved in the project are suffering from the typical problems of successful Mediterranean seaside destinations: they exceed carrying capacity during the summer season (from the 65% to the 80% of tourist fluxes concentrate in June, July and August) while for the rest of the year, the occupancy rate of bed places is low. Tourists spend their time in small section of the destination, usually the beach and the surrounding area, and tourism impacts positively on the local economy but presents environmental and socio-cultural sustainability issues.

The challenge tackled by RECOLOR was to re-balance the flows within these six Italian and Croatian areas, by increasing the attractiveness of rural and urban landscapes which have not yet been included in existing tourist circuits, despite their proximity to successful seaside destinations.

The strategy followed by RECOLOR to achieve the twofold goal of extending the tourist destinations boundaries (connecting the coast and the hinterland within a 50-80 km radius or about one hour drive) and increasing demand in low season, is based on the attempt of providing enjoyable cultural experiences in the hinterland throughout the whole year.

The RECOLOR project has developed an original model to enhance the natural and cultural heritage, based on the analysis of the landscape of available artistic sources (paintings, bas-reliefs, sculptures, architectural, archaeological, etc.), the identification of existing art landscape and the development of integrated cultural itineraries through these landscapes.

The project methodology, aimed at selecting and promoting the *RECOLOR Landscapes of art* (i.e., a real landscape depicted in some works of art) and creating art itineraries, represents an innovative and original idea. From the cultural point of view, RECOLOR aims to introduce tourists to the original landscapes, as present in ancient paintings, and then develop itineraries to visit the still-existing landscapes depicted in the works of art in the past. Walking through a real landscape, the one that inspired the works of art, the visitor can reconstruct (also with the help of digital technologies) the works of art themselves, comparing the present state with what have been cancelled and preserved over the centuries.

Visiting urban or rural places, tourist experiences a never-ending tension between past and present and between landscape permanence and transformation. Such experiences and itineraries make it possible to expand the tourist destinations boundary by focusing on the hinterland (Campobasso, Cividale del Friuli, Montefeltro) or on the peripheral area of the seaside resorts (Labin, Šibenik, Zadar).

Thus, creating amusing experiences able to attract “the serious and the casual cultural tourists” (that is the art lovers as well as the not acculturated people), these cultural tourism products become the key element to re-balance the tourist flows from the neighbouring seaside resorts to the hinterland and from the summer to the off-season months.

The project idea has been realized with the participation of the local stakeholders (municipalities, provinces, regions, universities, cultural institutions, public and private associations) and the local community as a whole. A participatory process has been carried out, involving the local community in enhancing the new cultural attractions. Our effort focused on involving local people in decisions about how their own landscape should develop in the future. Cultural landscape guides have been also involved and trained, to act as ambassadors for the area, informing the public about its scenic qualities. Local experts have been also involved in the identification of sites suitable for preserving the natural environment, that can serve as a counterbalance for nearby areas undergoing more intensive land development.

The RECOLOR partners are aware that transferring such a complex practise to colleagues who did not directly participate to the activities is a quite hard task. Therefore, we focused on providing the readers with a very concise set of information and short tips and suggestions to be used as a stimulus for implementing the RECOLOR model elsewhere. When is necessary to help decision makers taking a strategic decision, we guess that it is better not to overflow them with too many information: LESS is MORE!

2. How to implement the RECOLOR Transnational Strategy

The RECOLOR methodology can effectively contribute to the diversification of tourism products and services, improving the quality of tourism offer under the general vision of sustainable and responsible tourism. A major set of its activities directly targeted the tourism actors, to increase their existing skills, as well as develop new capacities and knowledge.

The common problem of partner areas - characterized by relevant mass tourist flows, and facing the typical problems of successful seaside destinations, i.e., a critical number of visitors during the summer season, and a limited flow for the rest of the year, an uneven occupancy rate of bed places, and an unbalanced distribution between close areas – has been tackled creating a stable infrastructure, adopting professional criteria for defining and implementing new management plans of less known natural and cultural heritage.

RECOLOR succeeded in combining the protection of natural landscape with the promotion of less developed areas from a tourist point of view, within a sustainable territorial development, supporting economic growth of local communities. The project methodology has identified, selected, and created tools and models improving the tourist experience with natural and cultural heritage in a sustainable way, accompanying the local tourist industry in setting up new organizational models for the existing services and supporting them in the creation of new ones, sharing the partners knowledge and launching capacity building actions.

This has been done also adopting a project management strategy already successfully applied in previous projects. RECOLOR has appointed a co-leader for each work package, with the role of supporting the WP coordinator, presenting a different point of view, as well as sharing ideas and proposals for better implementing the project activities. Aiming to maximise the impact of the project outputs, the two co-leaders have been selected to represent the two participating countries. In this way the project has more effectively contributed to improve the capacities of cultural institutions and creative industry for a sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and to the expected results of the Italy-Croatia programme, and in principle for the whole EUSAIR Region.

The innovative idea proposed by RECOLOR was the identification of tourist itineraries based on the analysis of figurative artworks and natural landscapes, with the goal to define, test and promote a joint enhancement of both natural and cultural heritage. Having this in mind, the RECOLOR partners have identified, selected, and developed tools and methodologies aiming to improve tourist exploitation of natural and cultural heritage in a sustainable way, defining a new organizational model for the facilities and services of existing sites, support the creation of new services.

We can then summarise that, the success factors coming from the implementation of the RECOLOR strategy are:

- Strengthen the capacity of the local community to define and implement policies, programmes, medium/long-term management plans consistent with sustainable territorial development, promoting an enhanced and respectful access and use of natural and cultural heritage.
- Diversify and enhance the cultural offer of the selected locations, creating opportunities for new audience (citizens with cultural interests, quality-oriented tourists, students involved in tourism education) and designing new routes.
- Engage with different social components in the active exploitation of natural and cultural heritage, promoting creativity, stimulating a new generation of services and products.

2.1. Timing and Roadmap for implementing the Transnational Strategy

The Gantt Chart of the following page represents the time plan of the overall project, and can be of great interest for both those local actors who did not participate directly to the development of the action, and would like to have a complete set of information about the logical process followed to reach the results, as well as those local and regional administration of the EUSAIR area interested to know something more about the project, in order to have all the background information useful to understand the effort requested to replicate RECOLOR in their area, and estimate the time and costs associated to its implementation.

The overall time necessary to implement the project has been strongly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, whose lockdown forced the staff involved in the project to a long period of difficult communication with the local stakeholders. Furthermore, the bureaucratic procedures for guaranteeing the public procurements and the full transparency of the activities have been stopped for many months. We guess that the full process can be replicated in about half of the time spent by the RECOLOR partners, taking benefits of the experience already acquired and without the disruptions created by the pandemic.

In particular, we can consider three core activities, necessary to manage the technical and organisational issues necessary for a successful replicability of the project.

The first activity started with a compared analysis of existing legislations, policies, strategic documents and implementation plans currently in force or recently launched in the partner areas concerned with the natural and cultural sites. According to the results of the analysis, a set of criteria have been prepared, selected on the basis of key elements arising from the survey and identified as a priority for the development of a common action plan.

The selected criteria have been used in the second step of this activity, whose objectives were the identification of the existing good practices, and secondly the definition of challenges still to be tackled and solved by the involved partners to reach the quality level defined by the selected criteria. A plan of study visits had been also designed to share knowledge and information about the best experiences, however they could not be run due to the pandemic. The expected objective should have been that the staff involved in the management of the service identified as a good practice had to present their experience to the colleagues coming from the other partner areas, initiating the mechanisms for promoting the adoption of similar practises elsewhere.

The activity has been finally completed by a SWOT analysis prepared by each project partner, considering to the previously defined criteria, and highlighting the constraints that could create an obstacle to the achievement of that criterion, as well as defining the key elements (e.g., further stakeholders to involve, awareness and training actions to be launched, new investments to be planned) necessary for its successful implementation.

The first step of the second activity consists of implementing at local level the transnational tools identified in the first activity. Each partner tailored them according to the specific characteristics of its local situation, inviting and training cultural stakeholders, cultural managers, media, associations, citizens, tourist and socio-economic decision makers to join the discussion, with the objective to create new services and guarantee their sustainability. Based on this collaborative design, one pilot action has been launched in each partner area, aiming to test one or more of the RECOLOR transnational tools. Even if carried out at local level, each pilot has been designed to provide all the other partners with the key elements necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the used tools and check how the local experience can be applied also elsewhere. The pilots have been then designed with two key issues in mind: their relevance to the local characteristics – so enhancing specificities but also complementarities of the partners - and the transferability of the pilot action in other contexts.

The third pillar of our effort is the model of the new transnational strategy implemented by the partners. All the partner administrations have approved the strategy as an element of their local policy. Training sessions have been organised, to create a common knowledge and disseminate the learning acquired, as well as capitalise the project results to a wider audience.

3. Lesson Learnt: What is Important for Implementing the RECOLOR Strategy

Even if the problem of increase the tourist period over the year is present everywhere, the answers given are so different that only a wider cooperation effort, and the exchange of knowledge and experience already successfully implemented can create that synergic effect able to pave the way to a mass implementation of effective methodologies and tools.

This is why RECOLOR started from the existing excellence, working on best practices developed in the partner areas, focusing on how to create a methodology to develop new cultural experiences throughout the year in the hinterland of tourist destinations suffering from a high tourist pressure.

This is perfectly in line with the brand-building of tourist products and services of the EUSAIR strategy, thanks to its contribution to the establishment of a tourist brand supporting the partner areas in matching the goal of a sustainable and responsible tourism responding to environmental, economic, and socio-cultural principles.

Thanks to their joint efforts, the project partners are now able to guarantee the long-term sustainability of the RECOLOR outputs and results, integrating their offer in several branches of tourism: not only coastal tourism but also sports tourism, ecotourism, nature tourism, agrotourism, rural tourism, capitalising on their cultural heritage. The construction of a common identity, based on collaborative actions, sharing experiences and resources, and networking, is the basis for a common vision maximising the benefits that each single area can achieve.

Since the Landscapes of Art are an innovative product, it is important to offer the service in different destinations to permit tourists to familiarize with it. In addition, the six experiences of Landscapes of Art (three in Italy and three in Croatia) realised by RECOLOR make it possible to set up the hotspot of new cultural and tourist itineraries that are expected to strengthen the economic and cultural cooperation between Italy and Croatia. The transferability of this experience is one of the main objectives of the exploitation strategy of the project, which aims to become a model for other regions. The wider and stronger the network is, the higher the benefits that will be achieved by each single member of the consortium.

3.1. Pills of Wisdom: Recommendations to be Always Kept in Mind

Define your model for managing natural and cultural heritage, enhancing potential for sustainable tourism

It is important to clearly define your specific local goal, keeping in mind that the first pillar consist of creating a sustainable and stable infrastructure able to define the organizational and professional criteria, necessary for your new plans for an integrated management of natural and cultural heritage. The new model is the basis for defining and implementing your future policy at local, regional, and even transregional level. Implementing the RECOLOR model means that you must combine the protection of natural landscape with the promotion of your area from a tourist and cultural point of view, within a sustainable territorial development, supporting economic growth of local communities and strengthening the role of creative industry and tourism services.

Select, develop, and implement tools for sustainable and responsible tourism services

The RECOLOR model has been created to help enhancing the exploitation of natural and urban landscape and cultural heritage, offering quality-oriented services, customized to different users. To achieve this goal, you must start with the identification of existing artistic landscapes, the analysis of existing landscape paintings and develop integrated cultural itineraries maximising the tourism potential of these landscapes. The design of innovative tools should focus in the creation of new routes, making natural and cultural sites more accessible, welcoming, inclusive, communicative and rich of educational contents.

After defining your ideas, launch a pilot action, with the first goal to upgrade, expand and enhance the existing tourist services, considering how reception, communication, dissemination, and marketing services can be improved. Keep in mind that your final objective is to increase the experience of visitors of all age groups, promoting an equal of access for all the social components, with a special attention to the disadvantaged ones.

Analyse how your framework takes into consideration all the assets and priorities of your area

Sustainable cultural tourism is a factor for economic, social, and cultural development for the benefit of local communities through the development of quality products and services. Remember that your framework for managing cultural tourism must:

- Take into account any existing development plans concerning your territory.
- Cover all aspects of the natural and the built environment and of social, cultural, and economic policies.
- Set general goals based on common aims, expressed through territorial strategies and specific action plans.

- Be devised in partnership with all sectors and actors concerned, in order to achieve a shared responsibility for their execution.

Responsibility for the conservation and enhancement of the cultural heritage should be shared between political leaders; cultural heritage experts; conservation specialists; tourism professionals and other economic agents; owners and managers of cultural heritage sites; population and the entire local communities, who are the primary custodians, heirs and managers of the heritage.

Define a specific framework for managing the relationship between tourism and cultural heritage

This is a general recommendation, essential in order to:

- Safeguard the heritage and maintain its authenticity as a priority both for its cultural value and as an irreplaceable asset of the tourism industry.
- Make cultural tourism an integral element of sustainable development.
- Diversify the supply of tourist activities in the historic environment and extend these activities over the year, in order to avoid the risk of excessive tourism at particular sites, with the aim of mitigating the adverse economic, cultural and social effects of the concentration of tourist flows on a small number of sites.
- Ensure that the specific features of the sites and their fragility set the conditions for access, thus enabling local people to welcome tourists and allow them to better understand the specific value of the cultural heritage. Group visits may require specific solutions on a larger scale, from encouragement to restriction in the case of excessive use; management arrangements may vary depending on the time of year.
- Restrict excessive tourist access liable to threaten priority uses of sites, for instance those of a religious and spiritual nature. Wherever it is necessary, for reasons of conservation or of respect for particular cultures, certain heritage sites should be more strictly protected and visited only for purposes of scientific research.
- Beware the risk of “overtourism”, i.e. the congestion or overcrowding from an excess of tourists, defined as "the impact of tourism on a destination that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and quality of visitor experiences in a negative way" (UNWTO). This definition shows how overtourism can be observed both among locals, who view tourism as a disruptive factor that increasingly burdens daily life, as well as visitors, who may regard high numbers of tourists as a nuisance.
- With the objective to tackle this risk, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has published a report explaining how to deal with it. The report defines 11 strategies to deal with this matter:
 - Increase the physical dispersion of crowds among different attractions within a city/destination.

- Increase the temporal dispersion of tourists (e.g., by encouraging off-season visits).
- Promote new and special-interest itineraries and attractions.
- Make effective use of regulations on tourism.
- Tailor activities to specific segments of the tourism market.
- Ensure that the communities and residents benefit from tourism.
- Create experiences beneficial to both tourists and residents.
- Expand infrastructure.
- Involve residents in tourism policymaking.
- Communicate with tourists about the potential impacts of tourism on communities.
- Use data to monitor and respond to problems related to overtourism.

Keep in mind the three pillars for the preparation of an effective management plan

The solid bases for the preparation of your management plan are:

- Analyse the tourism potential of the heritage concerned.
- Evaluate the short-, medium- and long-term effects of tourism development on all aspects of the historic, cultural, social, and economic environment.
- Assess the visitor capacity of the heritage concerned, particularly the maximum capacity at any one time, as the basis of defining acceptable limits.

Define an appropriate financial mechanism

Financial mechanisms should be introduced at all levels ensure that the tourist sector makes regular contributions towards:

- Conservation and maintenance of the heritage.
- Improvement of amenities for the public.
- Compensation for the additional costs generated by tourism.

Identify the constraints to be tackled and the enhancement necessary to add value to your heritage

Some examples of reflections to be carried out include:

- Set an appropriate perimeter, considering the area through which the site will be accessed and any others upon which tourism development will have an impact. Improvement and development projects should never be limited to the heritage site itself.
- Define specific actions designed to give tourists a better knowledge of the places they visit. These could include the creation of visitors' centres, the production of information brochures and educational documents adapted to different audiences and readily available. Quality information

should be provided concerning heritage sites where access is limited or when they are closed for conservation reasons.

- Plan for essential amenities for visitors. Their location and architecture must be no larger than necessary, such as not to detract from the cultural heritage or the historic environment. Priority should be given to the use of existing buildings and local products and services.
- Facilitate access to cultural heritage sites by non-polluting and appropriate public transport as an alternative to the car as the sole means of access.
- Evaluate periodically your plans, with a view to adapting the objectives, updating the priorities and revising the working methods or the actions planned, in the light of the past experience.

Stress the educational potential of your heritage

Tourism is a means of access to culture and nature. It is an opportunity for informal education, fostering mutual tolerance, learning about other cultures and peoples and their diversity, as well as for enjoyment, rest, and relaxation. Cultural tourism provides specific opportunities for learning about other cultures through direct experience of their heritage. All over Europe, cultural heritage tourism can help to forge the European identity, the European Union values, and develop awareness and respect of the cultural heritage of peoples.

Set up an appropriate communication campaign

Do not forget to mobilise and draw the attention of all the actors involved in the cultural heritage and tourism fields to the following series of objectives:

- Working with tourists and local population to develop partnerships and effective means of using cultural tourism to promote a better understanding of Europe's cultural heritage and diversity.
- Developing new means of improving awareness of cultural heritage, its nature, diversity and significance, not just at cultural tourism sites, but as a vital role of education at all levels.
- Providing appropriate training for personnel receiving tourists about the history and architecture of the site and the problems and possible solutions of heritage conservation.
- Drafting a code of good conduct to be given to individual visitors to enable them better to understand and respect the heritage they are visiting, in full awareness of its uniqueness and fragility.

3.2. Lesson Learnt: Let the partners talk

Polytechnic of Šibenik

- *invest more in people than in infrastructure.* The future of RECOLOR is probably more in exchanging the joint experiences, knowledge and practices, rather than in the creation of joint cultural route, but. Future pilot projects could be about implementing good practices from one location to other locations, organizing joint events and festivals in different locations, presenting locations in other cities using virtual technologies developed throughout RECOLOR, etc.
- *merge natural and cultural heritage.* Cultural and natural heritage are often viewed separately. In many countries, they are usually subject of care of different institutions and laws. In the real life – local nature is the part of the local tradition and way of life. It doesn't matter if it's natural, cultural, tangible or intangible – heritage should be treated altogether. RECOLOR is among the rare projects with that kind of the holistic approach and that could be the key point for the future plans.

Municipality of Campobasso

The pilot action of Campobasso, thanks to the organizations of different events aimed to promote the Monforte Hill and the old city centre to valorise their historical, architectural and environmental aspects, allowed to learn lessons that will be useful for the future and define recommendations to keep in consideration to improve tourist exploitations of natural and cultural heritage, in Campobasso, in a suitable way:

- *develop an integrated vision that combines history, art and nature.* It is necessary for a better enhancement of local places of interest that plays a key role in reaffirming and improving the social, cultural and tourist image of Campobasso both for citizens than tourists.
- *stress cooperation and participation with local stakeholders.* They have been the key elements for defining and realizing the pilot action. The engagement with stakeholders and citizen from the beginning of the event was useful to know the elements to promote in the action involved. The cooperation with cultural, environmental and touristic associations contributed to help the political decision makers to increase the quality of ecosystem and to contribute to a better linkage between local communities increasing the sustainability started with the project.
- *increase the local participation of stakeholders and citizens also for the future actions.* In fact, from a social point of view, the active participation of the abovementioned associations and local communities allowed to offer a new and unique shared identity of the town, in particular of the old city centre, with its different cultural values. The sense of participation will therefore increase.

- *use innovative tools to more effectively promote the environmental and historical cultural realities.* Innovative tools will be useful to develop new itineraries to visit the landscapes and heritage in Campobasso, encouraging a season adjustment and diversification of tourist offer.
- *protect natural and cultural heritage and resources and include them in the systems for environmental protection.*

Municipality of Cividale

- *Make a wise use of multimedia:* The use of multimedia technologies to create new immersive and engaging experiences that allow you to intercept the current demand, strongly oriented towards experiential tourism, but also the younger generations, with respect to which digital represents a tool for approach and engagement.
- *Enhance cooperation with creative cultural industries:* The enhancement of synergies with cultural and creative enterprises, in particular by creating contaminations with the performing arts for the enhancement of the results of the pilot actions carried out.
- *Promote jointly cultural and natural heritage:* The joint promotion of cultural heritage with natural heritage, a development lever for destinations located outside the circuits of mass tourism, but which can enhance sustainable tourist proposals that combine culture and natural landscape to be discovered in a slow and experiential way (cycle tourism , paths...).

City of Labin

The RECOLOR project made it possible for the key stakeholders in the development of the Dubrova Sculpture Park, which was the pilot location in the project, to agree on the development plan for the location, which was neglected from 2010 until 2018, and the location suffered permanent deterioration. The key lesson learnt from the project are:

- *find a good balance between digital tools and tangible content,* through monitoring the parameters of the use of the tools, and identifying the main patterns of behaviour of our visitors to the pilot location, which can tell us about attachment to the location and care for location, and that is what we wanted to achieve.

City of Zadar

The City of Zadar abounds in natural and cultural heritage sites, 65 of which are registered as protected or preventively protected cultural goods in the Registry of cultural goods in the Republic of Croatia. One of such sites, the 19th century park created by the prominent Croatian and Italian conservator, museologist and painter – Giovanni Smirich – is filled with elements that evoke the historicist and romantic ecstasy

characteristic of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Even though people use this public park every day, up until recently it was in a bad condition. With the help of project RECOLOR and numerous activities conducted, the park finally received its well-deserved praise. The activities included (among else): creation of a new touristic route and accompanying brochure, a website, a video, information tables, and lastly but most importantly, restoration of the sphinx sculpture.

RECOLOR has helped the city project management team to manage and fulfill several working aspects at once. We would hereby like to highlight the most important guidelines and recommendations:

- *Make sure to involve all groups of people:* younger and older, people with disabilities and others in the project activities. PP7 achieved it by creating information table with Braille letter for visually impaired people, creating project documentation for park landscaping which includes new paths which will provide better accessibility for people with physical impairment, organizing poetry night for older citizens as well as a concert of a famous Croatian pop group for younger citizens, among else.
- *Make sure to ensure visibility of project activities.* PP7 achieved it by creating a website, a brochure and a video (among else), all of which can be easily transferred and shared via modern platforms such as social media, Youtube etc. What is more, a constant cooperation with local media is key in spreading the information to wider population, locally, regionally and even nationally.
- *Make sure to include relevant stakeholders in making decisions.* PP7 achieved it by cooperating with Brodarica local committee, boatmen of Zadar (cro. Barkajoli), local NGOs, local tour guides, company for providing public area maintenance services in Zadar (cro. Nasadi) and others in order to utilize the full potential of the site, during the project implementation and afterwards, respecting the sustainability of its activities.