

# Financial dialogue perspective for project ideas for 2021-2027 programming period

---

Final version of 30/06/2023

Output Number 3.2

Project Acronym	BOOST5
Project ID Number	10419539
Project Title	BOOST5 Leveraging results of 5 IT-HR projects to boost touristic valorisation of cultural, off-road, industrial and natural heritage
Priority Axis	3
Specific objective	3.1
Work Package Number	3
Work Package Title	Clustering Thematic Activities
Activity Number	3.2.
Activity Title	Contribution to the next programming period
Partner in Charge	Marche Region
Partners involved	All partners
Status	Final
Distribution	Public

## Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	3
About BOOSTS .....	3
1. Introduction.....	4
2. European Agenda for Tourism 2030.....	5
2.1 Resilience after the COVID Pandemic .....	5
2.2 The double transition of EU tourism: green and digital.....	6
2.3 The challenge of accessibility .....	6
3. European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social justice and resilience .....	8
3.1 Tourism and skills needs .....	9
3.2 Reskilling and upskilling of the workforce.....	9
3.3 Skills support for SMEs .....	10
3.4 BOOSTS contribution to skills development .....	10
4. EU funding sources for tourism .....	11
4.1 White Paper Identifying Financial Opportunities in the Next Programming Period for Tourism Sector Enhancement at IT - HR Territorial Level .....	12
5. European Territorial Cooperation (INTERREG).....	17
6. EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR).....	21
6.1 General Objective.....	22
6.1.1 Pillar 4: Sustainable tourism.....	22
7. The Transnational Co-design Labs methodology .....	28
8. Collection of project ideas .....	33
9. Examples of new thematic natural/cultural routes and connecting natural/cultural routes in EUSAIR .....	44
10. Contribution to the EUSAIR strategy .....	45
11. Conclusions.....	46

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Output 3.2 "Financial Dialogue Perspectives for Project Ideas for the Programming Period 2021-2027" is built upon the following documents elaborated within the BOOST5 project: the "White Paper Identifying Financial Opportunities in the Next Programming Period for Tourism Sector Enhancement at IT - HR Territorial Level" (D 3.2.1) and the "EUSAIR Pillar 4 "Air Cultural Routes" Flagship Paper" (D 3.2.2) (available on the official website of the project: <https://programming14-20.italy-croatia.eu/web/boost5>). After a general overview of the EU main policies and priorities linked to tourism, this document will outline the different financial instruments available for the tourism sector (with a focus on the Italy-Croatia CBC area) and offer a methodology for transnational co-creation of project ideas that can be further capitalised with the funds available within the programming period 2021-2027. The document will also provide four concrete examples of project ideas with contextual data and supporting methodology for planning future activities related to the promotion of culture and tourism in the programme area and beyond. This paper will be available online, on the project website, for consultation and download and will be shared with the members of the Cross Border Observatory for further dissemination. Transferability will be ensured through a wide range of communication strategies: press, releases, social media and other digital tools.

### About BOOST5

BOOST5 is a project funded within the Italy - Croatia Interreg Cluster Call for Proposals focusing on "Joint Development of Thematic Cultural Routes". It builds on the successful experience of five (5) previous projects: [ATLAS](#), [MADE IN LAND](#), [REVIVAL](#), [TEMPUS](#), [UNDERWATERMUSE](#).

These projects represented and still represent a positive example of cross-border cooperation between Italy and Croatia. The integrated benefits from the five (5) Italy-Croatia projects have been able to activate and improve the cooperation dynamic, which has allowed to produce significant outputs for the BOOST5 project.

By leveraging on these and other successful experiences, BOOST5 aims to accelerate the uptake and development of sustainable and innovative tourism ideas, starting from the results of the five (5) IT-HR projects as well as from other significant examples. The aim is to revitalise the diverse natural and cultural heritage of the Italy-Croatia cross-border area, in particular minor areas of forgotten spaces/lost heritage with a low and fragmented digital tourist offer. Balancing the fragmented tourist landscape paves the way for an innovative and sustainable tourism offer in a post-Covid era.

## 1. Introduction

Before the COVID 2019 pandemic crisis, international tourism was one of the fastest growing industries in Europe, with hundreds of millions of new tourists from the Far East and increasing competition from new emerging destinations outside Europe. Today, the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic and the conflict that broke out at the heart of Europe in February 2022, pose unprecedented challenges to the recovery of this delicate and fragile ecosystem.

Furthermore, navigating the world of financial opportunities available at EU level is somewhat complicated for tourism operators, as the European Union does not have a specific financial instrument for tourism, but it does provide important funding opportunities that explicitly support tourism as an economic factor through a number of different EU programmes.

In the following sections, the key EU policies and priority actions related to tourism are outlined, followed by the different EU financial instruments available for the tourism sector<sup>1</sup>.

A methodology for transnational co-creation of project ideas is then presented. The document will also provide four concrete examples of project ideas with contextual data and supporting methodology for planning future activities related to the promotion of culture and tourism in the programme area and beyond.

---

<sup>1</sup> The scope of this document focuses on financial instruments at EU level. More details on national and regional instruments in Italy and Croatia can be found in the Deliverable 3.2.1 [“White Paper Identifying Financial Opportunities in the Next Programming Period for Tourism Sector Enhancement at IT - HR Territorial Level”](#).

## 2. European Agenda for Tourism 2030

The European Union supports, coordinates and complements the activities of EU countries in the field of tourism. The EU's tourism policy aims to maintain Europe's position as the world's leading tourist destination and to make Europe a sustainable tourist destination, including its social and environmental aspects. In particular, it aims to maximise the industry's contribution to growth and employment, to promote cooperation between EU countries and to enhance the attractiveness of Europe as a tourist destination.

On December 2022, the Council of the European Union has adopted conclusions setting out a European Agenda for Tourism 2030<sup>2</sup>, which includes a multi-annual EU work plan to help member states, public authorities, the Commission and stakeholders make the tourism sector greener and more sustainable, resilient and digitalised. The Agenda is based on the [European Commission's Transition Pathway for Tourism](#) and includes a programme with actions to be taken by the EU countries, the Commission, as well as the tourism ecosystem.

The European Agenda for Tourism 2030 emphasises the need to protect the tourism sector and, at the same time, develop a forward-looking vision to take advantage of the willingness of many Europeans to change their travel and tourism habits so as to become more sustainable and responsible.

### 2.1 Resilience after the COVID Pandemic

The European tourism ecosystem has faced successive shocks, which it has managed to absorb and/or adapt to over the last 15 years. However, in terms of its intensity and duration, the COVID-19 pandemic was unprecedented. Increasing the resilience of the tourism ecosystem is therefore one of the objectives of EU action. The green transition, the digital transition and accessibility efforts are part of the solution. Further improvement of the regulatory environment and public funding can also increase the resilience of the tourism ecosystem.

EU actions aim to increase the resilience of the European tourism ecosystem, i.e. its capacity to absorb and/or adapt to shocks. Tourism resilience depends on many factors, such as

- business demography;
- the degree of diversification of the labour market;
- the degree of seasonality;
- regulatory environment;
- type/level of public support.

---

<sup>2</sup> For more details, please visit: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15441-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

The **green transition**, the **digital transition** and efforts on **accessibility** are ways to mitigate problems related to low diversification and high seasonality. Meanwhile, other EU actions focus on improving the regulatory environment and public funding for the tourism ecosystem.

## 2.2 The double transition of EU tourism: green and digital

The EU tourism ecosystem is highly diverse and complex, encompassing globalised and interconnected value chains. It includes businesses in several sectors, such as food and beverage services, online information and service providers (e.g. tourist offices or digital platforms), travel agents and tour operators, accommodation providers, destination management organisations, attractions and passenger transport (e.g. airlines and airports, trains, buses and boats).

Despite significant differences between EU countries, tourism is an important part of the EU economy as a whole. In 2019, it accounted for almost 10% of EU GDP and supported around 23 million jobs in the Union.

As for the other ecosystems, the update of the EU Industrial Strategy underlined the need to further accelerate the green and digital transitions and to increase the resilience of EU tourism. To this end, the European Commission proposed to develop a transition pathway together with industry, public authorities, social partners and other stakeholders.

As the tourism ecosystem was the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and faces major challenges in achieving the dual transition, it was the first industrial ecosystem to initiate the co-creation process:

- On 4 February 2022, the Commission published the transition pathway for tourism. The report identifies 27 areas of measures for the green and digital transition and for improving the resilience of EU tourism. The Pathway is structured on building blocks developed by the Industrial Forum Task Force and gathers elements identified by stakeholders and structures from over 30 meetings and workshops.
- On 1 December 2022, the Council of the European Union adopted the European agenda for tourism 2030. The agenda is based on the Commission's transition pathway for tourism and includes a multi-annual work plan with actions to be taken by the EU countries, the Commission and tourism stakeholders.

## 2.3 The challenge of accessibility

Accessibility of tourism for people with disabilities is quite broad and covers several elements. It includes, for example, the accessibility of infrastructure and services, the accessibility of information at destinations or on the Internet, information on the accessibility of tourism services, the need for accessible accommodation and the accessibility of new forms of tourism (e.g. eco-tourism). Several EU policies can be linked to the accessibility of tourism. For example, the [New European Bauhaus](#)

[initiative](#) or the accessibility requirements in the [European Accessibility Act](#) can contribute to improving accessibility and inclusion.

The development of innovative solutions can also improve the tourism experience of people with disabilities and ensure accessibility. For example, the development of accessible virtual reality and augmented reality solutions can provide alternative ways of accessing natural and cultural sites.

Making tourism accessible also brings benefits to the tourism ecosystem by increasing potential demand, promoting off-season tourism and offsetting seasonal effects, and enhancing the reputation of the ecosystem.



### 3. European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social justice and resilience

In 2020, the European Commission presented the [European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social justice and resilience](#). It sets ambitious quantitative targets for up-skilling (improving existing skills) and reskilling (training in new skills) to be achieved by 2025.

The aim was to ensure that the right to training and lifelong learning, enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights, becomes a reality across Europe, from cities to remote and rural areas, for the benefit of all. By putting skills at the heart of the EU's policy agenda, the Commission intended to steer investment in people and their skills towards a sustainable recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. Businesses need workers with the skills to manage the green and digital transitions, and people need the right education and training to thrive in life.

Through the following 12, the Skills Agenda aims to make skills more relevant in the EU to strengthen sustainable competitiveness, social equity and resilience:

#### The European Skills Agenda has 12 actions:

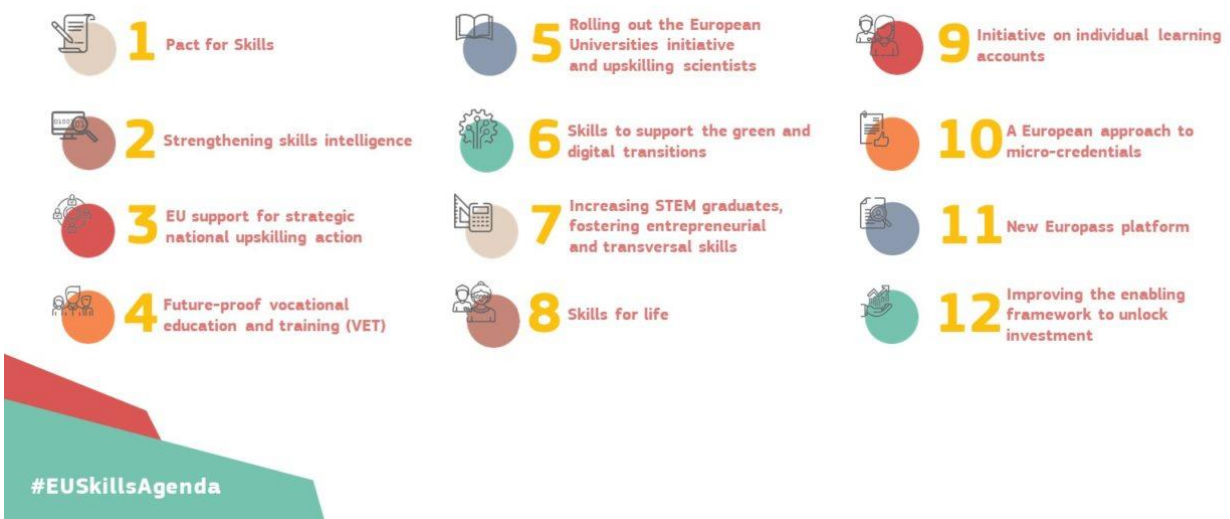


Figure 1: Actions of the European Skills Agenda. Source: <https://steamonedu.eu/news/european-skills-agenda-for-sustainable-competitiveness-social-fairness-and-resilience/>

In the [2022 State of the Union address](#), European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen designated 2023 as the [European Year of Skills](#), reaffirming that for the economic recovery to be socially fair, equitable and deliver real benefits, Europe must attract and involve all citizens, leaving no one behind. Skills development is more important than ever in the EU to enable citizens to make

the most of the green and digital transformation and economic recovery, and to address the skills gap to help businesses compete and grow sustainably. The European Year of Skills will give a new impetus to learning and to investment in skills across the EU. Special attention will be paid to the **active inclusion** of more people in the labour market, in particular **women and young people**, especially those not in education, employment or training.

### 3.1 Tourism and skills needs

The “transition pathway for tourism” identifies several skills that are needed in the tourism sector in order to meet the challenges that this ecosystem will face in the near future, including:

- **Green skills**, tourism stakeholders need skills to understand the elements of environmental sustainability and how to address sustainability challenges. These new skills could also open up new business opportunities with customers who are increasingly aware of environmental issues.
- **Digital skills**, to meet changing customer demands and expectations, skills in the use and strategic integration of digital tools into work processes can facilitate the development and implementation of more effective and higher quality services. Developing digital skills and jobs plays a key role in ensuring the long-term resilience of the tourism ecosystem.
- **Business skills**, in order to ensure that tourism SMEs remain competitive and resilient, it is important that workers also acquire strategic and innovative business skills, such as marketing, budgeting, adaptability and innovation, which will help tourism businesses to better understand the market sectors, the cultural, economic, environmental and social environment in which they operate, and the opportunities for creating sustainable and robust business planning.
- **Governance and strategic skills**, beyond SMEs and the tourism sector as a whole, strategic and administrative skills should be improved at the level of policy development and destination management. Awareness-raising and learning opportunities on sustainability, digital and strategic joint management of tourism ecosystems should be provided for national and regional authorities and all levels of destination management organisations.

### 3.2 Reskilling and upskilling of the workforce

Through the [EU Pact for Skills](#), the Commission invites public and private organisations to join forces and take action to upgrade and retrain the EU's tourism workforce. The Pact was launched in January 2022 and highlights the need to re-skill and up-skill the tourism workforce for the double transition and changing demands of tourism, and provides joint support, leadership and monitoring for tourism skills development among EU tourism stakeholders. There are currently skills shortages in several tourism sectors, particularly in the hospitality sector. New, effective and inclusive training approaches are needed to help integrate the new workforce quickly into the labour market,

benefiting from training opportunities combined with real work tasks. There is potential for recruiting new workers from the workforce leaving carbon-intensive sectors. Re-skilling these workers should be a priority to avoid overall job losses and to benefit the tourism sector. Particular attention should also be paid to the training of tourism professionals and managers at middle and senior levels.

### 3.3 Skills support for SMEs

Skills partnerships for tourism stakeholders under the Pact of Skills will provide training opportunities for tourism workers across the tourism ecosystem, including those working in or managing SMEs. Other skills support sources include:

- [Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs](#), this cross-border exchange programme gives new or aspiring entrepreneurs the chance to learn from experienced entrepreneurs running small businesses in other countries. This can provide learning and innovation experiences both for the new entrepreneur and the hosting experienced SME entrepreneur.
- [EU Digital Skills and Jobs platform](#), provides information, resources and training opportunities relating to digital skills, in collaboration with 25 national coalitions for digital skills.
- [Next Tourism Generation Alliance](#), provides skills resources relating to digital, social and green skills in tourism.
- [UNWTO Academy](#), provides information on courses, webinars and resources on tourism, for professionals and those who wish to become one.

### 3.4 BOOST5 contribution to skills development

In order to address tourism stakeholders' need for new methods and skills and to provide information and innovative methods to relaunch a tourist destination in different ways, with a sustainable approach, BOOST5 organised a Masterclass programme, where innovative topics discussed during the meetings focused on promoting and redeveloping a destination by raising the awareness of the stakeholders involved.

The designated target groups benefited from the engagement and learning process and the opportunity to acquire new skills. The topics of the Masterclasses included ways to address challenges and opportunities in the growing sustainable and competitive tourism sector. The full report about the Masterclass Programme is available on the [project website](#).

## 4. EU funding sources for tourism

The [2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework](#) (MFF) does not include a specific budget for tourism. Investment in tourism can be financed through several EU initiatives and programmes. For the 2014-2020 period, there were twelve programmes that could be used for the financing of actions in the tourism sector, both under direct management and under shared management. For the 2021-2027 period, the number of such programmes increases to 15, including the programmes for the mitigation of the effects of the COVID pandemic.

The European Commission has developed an [online guide](#) highlighting the wide range of funding programmes financed by the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and Next Generation EU (NGEU) and gives examples of projects that have been funded under different programmes. Please find below an overview:

	<b>EU funding programmes 2021-27 covered by the Guide on EU funding for tourism</b>	<b>MFF</b>	<b>NGEU</b>	<b>Total in billion EUR*</b>
1	Recovery and Resilience Facility		723,8	723,8
2	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund	274,0		274,0
3	European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)	99,3		99,3
4	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)	87,4	8,1	95,5
5	European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)	6,1		6,1
6	Programme for environment and climate action (LIFE)	5,4		5,4
7	Horizon Europe	86,1	5,4	95,5
8	Creative Europe Programme	1,8		2,5
9	Erasmus+	24,6		26,5
10	Just Transition Fund (JTF)	8,5	10,9	19,3
11	Digital Europe programme	7,6		7,6
12	Single Market Programme (SMP)	4,2		4,2
13	InvestEU Fund	3,1	6,1	10,3
14	REACT-EU		50,6	50,6
15	European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF)			1,5
	<b>Total budget in billion EUR</b>			<b>1.422,2</b>

\* all amounts rounded; for some programmes the total includes additional reinforcements

Sources: [DG EMPL \(2021\): European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers \(EGF\)](#)

Figure 2: EU funding programmes 2021-27 for tourism

#### 4.1 White Paper Identifying Financial Opportunities in the Next Programming Period for Tourism Sector Enhancement at IT - HR Territorial Level

Within the BOOST5 project, the [“White Paper Identifying Financial Opportunities in the Next Programming Period for Tourism Sector Enhancement at IT - HR Territorial Level”](#) has been developed to provide an overview of the main financial instruments available for the programming period 2021 - 2027 to support the tourism sector in its different dimensions.

The Document has been developed through a desk research phase focused on the analysis of the main financial instruments available at European level, with the aim of providing a comprehensive overview of the relevant instruments and the way in which they could potentially support the tourism sector in its different dimensions.

The desk analysis was complemented by a focus on the European Territorial Co-operation (INTERREG) programmes, which are available to strengthen the existing co-operation between Italian and Croatian partners at cross-border or transnational level.

In order to gain an understanding of the national and regional opportunities, a survey was organised among the partners through the development and submission of a questionnaire with the aim of collecting information on any financial support offered either at State or sub-State level. The collected questionnaires, complemented by additional desk research, have contributed to the overview presented in the sections "Financial instruments at national and regional level" and "Private contributions".

The results of the analysis, complemented by the contribution of the questionnaires, have been commented and reviewed by the partnership, which has also drafted a series of considerations on the policy framework and on how to approach the available instruments in order to find and obtain financial support for future project proposals.

As to be consistent with the methodology of the best practice catalogue and the other deliverables developed in the framework of BOOST5 project, the financial instruments have been assessed against their suitability to support actions in the identified six areas:

- **Accessibility strategies** (for less known in-land, underwater and industrial/urban areas - new transport networks)
- **Communicating niche destinations**
- **Innovative territorial management systems**
- **Regenerative tourism ideas-beyond sustainability**
- **Spreading the flow of tourists**
- **Creating future tourism routes**

The White Paper takes into account the EUSAIR Strategy Pillar 4 as a key reference point. The methodology also focuses on the interconnection of natural and cultural routes in the EUSAIR area and is in line with the objectives outlined in D 3.2.2 "EUSAIR Pillar 4 'Air Cultural Routes' Flagship Paper". Below an overview the main instruments with details about the scope and references:

MAIN EU FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS FOR TOURISM 2021-27		
Detailed overview		
Name of the Instrument	Scope of action	References and notes
<b>Recovery and Resilience Facility (RFF)</b>	<p><b>ITALY:</b> The Italian NRRP proposes to invest EUR 6.68 billion out of 68.9 billion to restart tourism and culture embracing digitalization and sustainability. Part of this sum is already allocated to specific projects indicated in the NRRP. Another part will be made available for regional and local authorities, tourism destination management organisations or tourism businesses via specific programmes or funds. The National Recovery and Resilience Plan - Ministry of Tourism. Tourism 4.0</p> <p><b>CROATIA:</b> Croatia's recovery and resilience plan responds to the urgent need of fostering a strong recovery and making Croatia future ready. The reforms and investments in the plan will help Croatia become more sustainable, resilient and better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the green and digital transitions. To this end, the plan consists of 146 investments and 76 reforms. They will be supported by €6.3billion in grants. 40.3% of the plan will support climate objectives and 20.4% of the plan will foster the digital transition</p>	<p><a href="https://www.ministeroturismo.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/PNRR-MITUR.pdf">https://www.ministeroturismo.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/PNRR-MITUR.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://planoporavka.gov.hr/">https://planoporavka.gov.hr/</a></p>
<b>European Regional Development</b>	<b>ERDF:</b> Investments to strengthen the environmental, socioeconomic sustainability and resilience of tourism in the	The ERDF legislative framework includes a specific policy objective related to sustainable

<b>Fund and Cohesion Fund (ERDF/CF)</b>	long term, transforming the sector by learning from innovative solutions. <b>CF:</b> tourism-related investments in environment and in the trans-European transport networks, in particular in regions with an economy heavily dependent on tourism	tourism. Besides this specific objective, sustainable tourism can be supported through any other policy objective as long as the investments contribute to achieving the corresponding objective and comply with applicable enabling conditions or requirements  <a href="https://www.agenziacoesione.gov.it/lacoesione/">https://www.agenziacoesione.gov.it/lacoesione/</a> <a href="https://mpgi.gov.hr/">https://mpgi.gov.hr/</a>
<b>European Social Fund (ESF+)</b>	Actions to support youth employment measures; accompanying the green and digital transitions by driving investment in jobs and skilling opportunities	<a href="https://www.fi-compass.eu/funds/esfplus">https://www.fi-compass.eu/funds/esfplus</a>
<b>European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)</b>	Tourism-related investments included in the national Common Agricultural Policy strategic plans	<a href="https://www.fi-compass.eu/funds/eafrd">https://www.fi-compass.eu/funds/eafrd</a>
<b>European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFF)</b>	Tourism-related projects such as eco-tourism, pesca-tourism, local gastronomy (fish and seafood restaurants), accommodation, tourist trails, diving, as well as supporting local partnerships in coastal tourism	<a href="https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/european-maritime-fisheries-and-aquaculture-fund_en">https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/european-maritime-fisheries-and-aquaculture-fund_en</a>
<b>LIFE Programme</b>	Tourism-related environmentally sustainable projects, especially those mitigating CO2 emissions through energy efficiency or renewable energy; projects that “marry” climate adaptation measures with tourism	<a href="https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en">https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en</a>
<b>Horizon Europe</b>	The development of new approaches, concepts and practices for sustainable,	<a href="https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-g-">https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-g-</a>

	accessible and inclusive cultural tourism (Cluster 2 research activities)	<a href="https://tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/horizon">tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/horizon</a>
<b>Creative Europe Programme</b>	European Capitals of Culture scheme; cooperation projects or platforms, including cultural events in the form of music or performing arts festivals; film festivals and markets; city branding through culture; development of the creative aspects of sustainable cultural tourism, the design and fashion sectors, and the promotion and representation of those sectors outside the EU	<a href="https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe">https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe</a>
<b>Erasmus+</b>	Projects covering mobility, developing competence and employability of young people in tourism, digital skills in cultural heritage, learning hospitality, and tourism research innovation	<a href="https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/it">https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/it</a>
<b>Just Transition Fund (JTF)</b>	Tourism SMEs: investments in fixed capital or immaterial assets. Supporting diversification of economic activity, creating new business opportunities and helping people adapt to a changing labour market	<a href="https://www.agenziacoesione.gov.it/just-transition-fund/?lang=en">https://www.agenziacoesione.gov.it/just-transition-fund/?lang=en</a>
<b>Digital Europe Programme</b>	Creation of data spaces: the European Common Data Space for Cultural Heritage - support to the digital transformation of Europe's cultural heritage sector; creation of data spaces: mobility – support to interoperability; Network of European Digital Innovation Hubs – support to tourism SMEs in digital transformation	<a href="https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/digital-programme">https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/digital-programme</a>
<b>Single Market Programme</b>	Improving the competitiveness of tourism sector enterprises, particularly SMEs, and supporting their access to markets.	<a href="https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/cpm/content/programmes-and-actions-single-market-programme_en">https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/cpm/content/programmes-and-actions-single-market-programme_en</a>



<b>InvestEU</b>	Investments to strengthen tourism’s competitiveness, sustainability, and value chains; sustainable, innovative and digital measures, which could help reduce the sector’s climate and environmental footprint	<a href="https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/growth-and-investment/invest-eu_en">https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/growth-and-investment/invest-eu_en</a>
<b>Support by European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)</b>	Inclusive Tourism Framework – investments in hotels and tourism operators; Integrated Cultural Heritage Framework - projects located near or within a cultural heritage site, enhancing commercialisation, sustainable management and operation, connectivity and accessibility, quality and availability of amenities, of municipal infrastructure, as well as projects achieving backward linkages; Advice for Small Business programme – support to tourism SMEs through the EBRD’s network of advisers and consultants	<a href="https://www.ebrd.com/property-and-tourism.html">https://www.ebrd.com/property-and-tourism.html</a>

Table 1: Main EU financial instruments for tourism 2021-27 detailed

This list may be subject to changes and new opportunities arising. Also, the eligibility and availability of funding depends on the specific proposal, the stage of the programming period, and the specific rules and priorities of each funding instrument.

## 5. European Territorial Cooperation (INTERREG)

Interreg is a key instrument of the European Union that strengthens cooperation between regions and countries within the EU. As part of the EU's cohesion policy, Interreg plays a vital role in promoting regional development, cohesion and reducing economic disparities.

For the period 2021-2027, Interreg is focused on addressing current challenges such as climate change, digital transformation and social inclusion and is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) with a budget of EUR 10.1 billion.

INTERREG main policy objectives to implement EU priorities across the borders for the period 2021-2027 are:

1. [A more competitive and smarter Europe \(PO1\)](#)
2. [A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe \(PO2\)](#)
3. [A more connected Europe \(PO3\)](#)
4. [A more social and inclusive Europe \(PO4\)](#)
5. [A Europe closer to citizens \(PO5\)](#)
6. [A better Cooperation governance \(ISO 1\)](#)
7. [A safer and more secure Europe \(ISO 2\)](#)

The last two specific objectives - for a better governance of cooperation and for a safer and more secure Europe - are new and have been introduced for the period 2021-2027.

The INTERREG programme consists of 4 strands:

- **Interreg Strand A: Cross Border Cooperation** - cross-border programmes are implemented within the EU and at the EU's external borders (Budget: **6.5 billion EUR**).
- **Interreg Strand B: Transnational Cooperation** - allows for cooperation over larger transnational territories or around sea basins (Budget: **1.5 billion EUR**).
- **Interreg Strand C: Interregional Cooperation** - aims at boosting the effectiveness of cohesion policy by promoting exchange of experiences, innovative approaches and capacity building between regions (Budget: **550 million EUR**).
- **Interreg D: Outermost Regions Programmes** - helps the Outermost regions to cooperate with neighbouring countries and territories in the most efficient and simple way (Budget: **280 million EUR**).

The Italy-Croatia cross-border area is supported by relevant Interreg Programmes in various sectors, including the Italy – Croatia CBC Programme 2021-2027, EURO-MED Programme 2021-2027 and ADRION 2021 - 2027.

INTERREG 2021-2027			
	Italy – Croatia CBC	EURO MED	ADRION
<b>Relevant SOs selected</b>	<u>SO4.6</u> the Programme will ensure the improvement of policies aimed to diversify and de-seasonalise tourist flows and support the social and economic development within the Programme area. Moreover, modernised policies of valorisation of the cultural heritage and innovative and sustainable integrated offers of coastal and island tourism will be implemented also able to enhance the wellbeing of the resident population	<u>the recovery of sustainable tourism is addressed transversally in all Programme priorities</u> <u>SO2.4</u> from an environmental, economic, social and cultural point of view, the promotion of a sustainable tourism model, to balance the effects of mass tourism, is a central issue to ensure a more respectful development of environment and resources <u>SO2.6</u> to answer the need to encourage the adoption of more sustainable economic model based on circular bioeconomy whilst fostering sustainable tourism	Sustainable tourism is addressed in: <u>SO1.1</u> Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies <u>SO2.7</u> Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution <u>SO2.8</u> Promoting sustainable multimodal urban mobility, as part of transition to a net zero carbon economy
<b>Actions supported</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Foster experiential tourism.</li> <li>- Develop marketing campaigns with a goal of boosting the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Foster sustainable tourism models which ensure the protection of the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop transnational Smart Specialization Strategies in the main areas of specialization of the Adriatic</li> </ul>

	<p>diversification of tourism in peripheral areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish cross-border sustainable brands and pilot projects</li> <li>- Organise training activities for public authorities and tour operators on sustainable tourism</li> <li>- Carry out joint assessment studies of trends and impacts of tourism</li> </ul>	<p>environment, including natural resources and cultural heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Changing tourism practices by promoting both existing and new solutions in a new innovative way: smart tourism, tourist flow management</li> </ul>	<p>Ionian area as health and quality of life, agri-food and safe nutrition, energy, sustainable tourism and creative economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exchange of good practices and testing of solutions for sustainable tourism through participatory approaches and multi-level governance</li> <li>- Set in place joint actions aimed at promoting the active involvement of citizens, tourism actors and economic operators in the development of sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMPs) both in cities and in functional urban area</li> </ul>
<b>Calendar of calls</b>	<p>I<sup>st</sup> Call : open – 80 M Euro</p> <p>II<sup>nd</sup> Call : II semester 2023 – 22M Euro</p> <p>III<sup>rd</sup> Call : I semester 2024 – 14,5 M Euro</p>	<p>I<sup>st</sup> call: Governance Projects – Closed (ISO 1 - 36 M€)</p> <p>II<sup>nd</sup> call: Thematic Projects – Closed (PO1/PO2 - 86 M€)</p> <p>III<sup>rd</sup> call: Governance Projects – Closed (ISO 1- 17 M€)</p>	<p>Information not yet available.</p> <p>I<sup>st</sup> call estimated for Spring 2023</p>

IV<sup>th</sup> Call : II semester 2024 – 45M  
Euro

IV<sup>th</sup> call: Thematic Projects (Strategic Territorial Projects only) Planned (PO1/PO2 - 28 M€ - 1st Semester 2024)

V<sup>th</sup> call: Thematic Projects – Planned (PO1/PO2 - 64 M€ - 2nd Semester 2024)

VI<sup>th</sup> call: Thematic Projects (Test projects) – Restricted – Planned (PO1/PO2 - 27 M€ - 2nd Semester 2025)

VII<sup>th</sup> call: Thematic Projects (Transfer projects) – Restricted -Planned (PO1/PO2 - 17 M€ - 1st Semester 2026)

VIII<sup>th</sup> call: Thematic Projects (Transfer projects) – Restricted-Planned (PO1/PO2 - 13 M€ - 2nd Semester 2027)

Table 2: INTERREG 2021-27 calls and financial opportunities.

## 6. EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)

The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) is a macro-regional strategy adopted by the European Commission and endorsed by the European Council in 2014. The Strategy has been jointly developed by the Commission and the countries and stakeholders of the Adriatic-Ionian Region, who have agreed to work together in areas of common interest for the benefit of each country and the region as a whole.

The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region is one of the four EU macro-regional strategies, along with the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (2009), the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (2011) and the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (2016). EUSAIR covers ten countries: four EU Member States (Croatia, Greece, Italy, Slovenia) and six non-EU countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, San Marino, Serbia).



Figure 3: Map of EUSAIR's geographical scope. Source: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/adriatic-ionicn\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/adriatic-ionicn_en)

## 6.1 General Objective

The overall objective of EUSAIR is to promote economic and social prosperity and growth in the region by enhancing its attractiveness, competitiveness and connectivity. Strengthening cooperation in the Adriatic-Ionian region helps to promote political and economic stability, thus creating a solid basis for the European integration process. As a flexible, non-regulatory framework for cooperation, it provides the space to address existing and emerging challenges in order to find common solutions. It achieves this by working on a multi-level governance structure, enabling conditions from the top down to the bottom up. In various meetings, such as the EUSAIR annual forums, financial dialogue meetings and others, government officials and representatives from civil society, academia, research, business or youth organisations meet to discuss project ideas, initiatives and financial opportunities to promote economic growth and prosperity.

Participating countries work together on common, but not exclusive, challenges agreed in the Action Plan. The countries aim to create synergies and promote coordination among all territories in the Adriatic-Ionian region in the four thematic areas/pillars:

1. **Blue Growth**, aiming at boosting innovative marine and maritime growth by promoting jobs and business opportunities in the Blue economy;
2. **Connecting the Region**, aiming at improving connectivity in terms of transport and energy;
3. **Environmental quality**, focusing on coastal and marine biodiversity and pollution of the sea, as well as on transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity;
4. **Sustainable tourism**, aiming at developing the full potential of the Region in terms of innovative quality tourism while boosting businesses and creating stable jobs.

Specifically, the BOOST5 project focuses on the latter pillar, which we will develop in more detail below.

### 6.1.1 Pillar 4: Sustainable tourism

This pillar focuses on the development of the sustainable and responsible tourism potential of the Adriatic-Ionian region through innovative and high-quality tourism products and services. It also aims to promote responsible tourism behaviour among all stakeholders (general public, local, regional and national private and public stakeholders, tourists/visitors) across the Region.

Facilitating socio-economic prospects, removing bureaucratic obstacles, creating business opportunities and improving the competitiveness of SMEs are essential for tourism development.

The specific objectives for this pillar are:

1. Diversification of the tourism products and services of the macro-region, together with tackling the seasonal nature of demand for inland, coastal and maritime tourism.

2. Improving the quality and innovation of the tourism offer and strengthening the sustainable and responsible tourism capacities of tourism stakeholders throughout the macro-region.

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives the pillar focuses on two topics:

Topic 1 - **Diversified tourism offer** (products and services);

Topic 2 - **Sustainable and responsible tourism management** (innovation and quality).

Pillar 4 - Sustainable Tourism proposes 5 Flagships with concrete actions that countries will meet at national level to pursue common objectives/solutions for the region: 2 Flagships specifically address Topic 1 (diversified tourism offer) and 3 Flagships address the topic of sustainable and responsible tourism management.

**Flagship 1 - AIR Cultural Routes:** follows the EUSAIR Thematic Priority to develop sustainable and thematic cultural routes/connect Cultural Routes in EUSAIR, meaning it addresses the need for harmonized distribution of tourism flows through macro-regional territories using Cultural Routes as tool for the creation of innovative diversified tourism products; supporting the development of cycling, walking/hiking and sailing routes that would better connect all EUSAIR Cultural routes. The challenge is to address regional connectivity of locally micro-managed routes.

**Flagship 2 - CulTourAir:** addresses the need for structured and harmonised data on cultural tourism demand in the Adriatic-Ionian region and the need to establish a unified and harmonised methodological framework for monitoring the characteristics of cultural tourism demand. The challenge is to enable joint regional and transnational entrepreneurial projects and research that could adequately track the so-called "cultural" tourists, their size and impact on local communities and economies, leading to new business opportunities, increased total number of tourist arrivals and overnight stays, increased tourism revenues. It is hereby presented as a response to the EUSAIR Thematic Priority of Research and Development for Improving the Performance of SMEs and Growth-Diversification.

**Flagship 3 - DES\_AIR:** In relation to the EUSAIR Thematic Priority on Training and Skills in Tourism Enterprises (vocational and entrepreneurial skills), this Flagship addresses the need for harmonised training and education programmes for responsible integrated tourism management. With the establishment of a Masters in Tourism Management, Hospitality and Services, using the same methodologies and approaches within the EUSAIR countries, as well as the establishment of new training programmes and new projects in the field of education it aims to increase the knowledge and skills of the workforce by providing in-service training for education professionals, flexible and continuous training for SME employees. The main objective is to increase the number of highly qualified employees and entrepreneurs in the tourism sector.



**Flagship 4 - CRUISAIR:** This Flagships addresses the need for better management of cruise destinations, both maritime and continental (rivers, lakes) and aims at the diversification of the tourism product by promoting and supporting the development of special interest tourism linked to cruising and other niche forms of tourism (e.g., MICE, rural, alternative, etc.). Through the exchange of good practice between stakeholders, this flagship aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals and overnight stays by offering a wider range of events, performances and fostering the development of entrepreneurship and SMEs linked to cruise tourism.

**F5 - Green Mapping for the Adriatic-Ionian Region - Supporting Development and Market Access for Responsible and Sustainable Tourism Destinations and Micro/SME Operations in the EUSAIR Region:** The Flagship addresses the need for macro-regional coherence in the field of a single system for measuring, mapping, managing, marketing and monitoring sustainable and responsible tourism, to be implemented in all countries through a unique ICT system defining its deepest level of impact. This will enable the whole region to act coherently in key areas of common interest. Support to the EUSAIR Thematic Priority on the development of the network of sustainable tourism businesses and clusters, including: networks of creative industries, networks promoting and exchanging best practices in environmental quality management, and tourism clusters for the implementation/adoption of the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), ETIS and other green (sustainable) certification schemes.

Please find below a schematic overview of the five flagships:

PILLAR 4: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM		
MACROREGIONAL CHALLENGE / NEED / STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE	OVERALL GOAL / EXPECTED IMPACT	REMARKS
<b>Flagship 1 - AIR Cultural Routes</b>		
Flagships addresses the need for <b>harmonized distribution of tourism flows</b> through macro-regional territories using Cultural Routes as tool for the creation of innovative diversified tourism products; supporting the development of cycling, walking/hiking and	Diversification of products; supporting: development of creative and cultural industry and SMEs, synergies between creative and cultural industries and the hospitality sector and sustainable tourism valorisation of coastal	Harmonized distribution of tourism flows through macro-regional territories using Cultural Routes as tool for the creation of innovative diversified tourism products. The challenge is to address regional connectivity of

<p>sailing routes that would better connect all EUSAIR Cultural routes. The challenge is to address regional connectivity of locally micro-managed routes.</p>	<p>and underwater cultural heritage</p>	<p>locally micro-managed routes.</p>
<p><b>Flagship 2 - CulTourAir</b></p>		
<p>Flagship addresses the need for <b>structured and harmonized data on cultural tourism</b> demand in Adriatic-Ionian Region and need for the establishment of a unified and harmonized methodological framework to monitor cultural tourism demand characteristics.</p> <p>The challenge is to enable joint regional and transnational entrepreneurial projects and researches, that could adequately track the so called “cultural” tourists, their size and impact on the local communities and economy leading to new business opportunities, increased number of total tourist arrivals and overnights, increase of tourism income.</p>	<p>Harmonized methodological framework for the survey on cultural tourism demand in Adriatic-Ionian Region that would enable Adriatic-Ionian Region countries to monitor cultural tourism demand characteristics and the impacts from tourist activities to cultural resources, local economy and society, establishing new cultural tourism products and possibly new national and transnational clusters and SMEs in the field of cultural tourism.</p>	<p>Survey on cultural tourism demand in Adriatic-Ionian Region to establish a unified and harmonized methodological framework that would enable AIR countries to monitor cultural tourism demand characteristics and the impacts from tourist activity to cultural resources, local economy and society, establishing new cultural tourism products</p>
<p><b>Flagship 3 - DES_AIR</b></p>		
<p>Flagships addresses the need for <b>harmonized training and educational programmes</b> for responsible integrated tourism management, establishing a Master program on tourism</p>	<p>Responsible tourism destination management - implementing new training and skills for all stakeholders in destinations as well as for tourism businesses to</p>	<p>Increasing the quality of integrated sustainable destination management through development of LLL training programs and Masters’ programmes:</p>

<p>management, hospitality and services, sharing the same methodologies and approaches, within EUSAIR countries as well as establishing new programmes for training and new projects in the field of education; the aim: provide in-service trainings for education professionals, flexible and continuous education of SME employees and to raise the knowledge and competence of unemployed; target: increased number of highly educated employees and entrepreneurs in the field of tourism</p>	<p>strengthened competitiveness of the EUSAIR countries by increasing the quality of integrated sustainable destination management through development of LLL training programs and Masters' programmes</p>	<p>implementation of new knowledge, trainings and skills in the field of tourism (for businesses) to strengthened competitiveness of the EUSAIR countries</p>
<p><b>Flagship 4 - CRUISAIR</b></p>		
<p>Flagships addresses the need for <b>better management of cruise destinations, both seaside and continental ones</b> (rivers, lakes), diversification of tourism product, promotion and support to the development of special interest tourism connected with cruising, and other niche tourism forms (MICE, rural, alternative tourism, etc.); exchange of good practices; targeting increased number of tourist arrivals and overnights; increased number of events, performances, entrepreneurships and SMEs in connection with cruise tourism.</p>	<p>The preparation of Destination Management Plans that are equivalent to strategic and action plans for sustainable tourism in Cruise destinations of the AIR (seaside, river, lakes)</p>	<p>The preparation of Destination Management Plans that are equivalent to strategic and action plans for sustainable tourism in Cruise destinations of the AIR</p>

F5 - Green Mapping for the Adriatic-Ionian Region - Supporting Development and Market Access for Responsible and Sustainable Tourism Destinations and Micro/SME Operations in the EUSAIR Region		
<p>The flagship addresses the needs for <b>macro-regional coherence</b> in the field of single sustainable &amp; responsible tourism measuring, mapping, managing, marketing and monitoring system, that should be implemented for all 8 countries through the unique ICT system defining its deepest level of impact.</p> <p>Thus, the whole region will be able to act coherently in key areas of common interest. Supporting: networks of creative industries, networks promoting and sharing best practices in environmental quality management and tourism clusters for the implementation/adoption of the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), ETIS and other Green (sustainable) Certification Schemes.</p>	<p>Support to the development and promotion of quality-assessed Micro &amp; SME tourism operations and destinations in the EUSAIR – to measure, map and improve their sustainability and competitiveness, give them visibility and market uptake</p>	<p>Support to the development and promotion of quality-assessed Micro &amp; SME tourism operations and destinations in the EUSAIR - to improve their sustainability and competitiveness, give them visibility and market uptake</p>

Table 3: EUSAIR Pillar IV – Sustainable tourism.

## 7. The Transnational Co-design Labs methodology

In order to support the generation of project ideas, a Transnational Co-design Labs methodology was developed and shared among the project partners in the project repository<sup>3</sup>.

The aim of the labs was to develop a new proposal process to design project ideas that could be implemented within the 2021-2027 programming period.

The main general topics of interest identified by the BOOST5 project partners include:

- Sustainable and inclusive tourism;
- Creative and digital economy;
- ICT systems and technologies;
- Education and training for the diffusion of digital technologies;
- Innovative business models and entrepreneurship support;
- Clustering and networking.

The Transnational Co-design Labs took **stakeholders feedback** into account in the design process and build on the Project's deliverables D 3.1.1 Inventory of heritage in minor territories and D3.1.2 Thematic best practices catalogue, which involved stakeholders from each partner to scale best practices on a local level based on ongoing local needs and initiatives, and D 3.2.1 White Paper which identifies financial opportunities in the next programming period for tourism sector enhancement at IT-HR territorial level.

The use of the Co-design Labs methodology was proposed to develop the four project ideas. Co-design labs are a space for "**creative collaboration**". It is rooted in participatory and user-centred design and aims to involve participants in the early stages of the process. The level of involvement can vary from being informed about the project to having the role of "user as partner" in the design, based on the idea that everyone can be creative. The emphasis is on designing with people rather than designing for people. It is a way of discovering and exploring possibilities rather than producing final solutions, and aims to stimulate discussion between participants. As such, co-design is a powerful way to improve design processes and generate a richness and diversity of ideas beyond what any one individual can produce.

In order to identify ideas, a questionnaire was created and sent to the project partners. Respondents to the questionnaire based their answers on the feedbacks and inputs provided by the consultations with their Stakeholders. The Target group of "Local, regional and national public authorities" was the most consulted by PPs, followed by Regional and Local Development Agencies and NGOs.

---

<sup>3</sup>For more information about the full methodology, please consult Deliverable 3.2.2 "[EUSAIR Pillar 4 "Air Cultural Routes" Flagship Paper](#)".

### Which Target Groups were involved in the consultation?

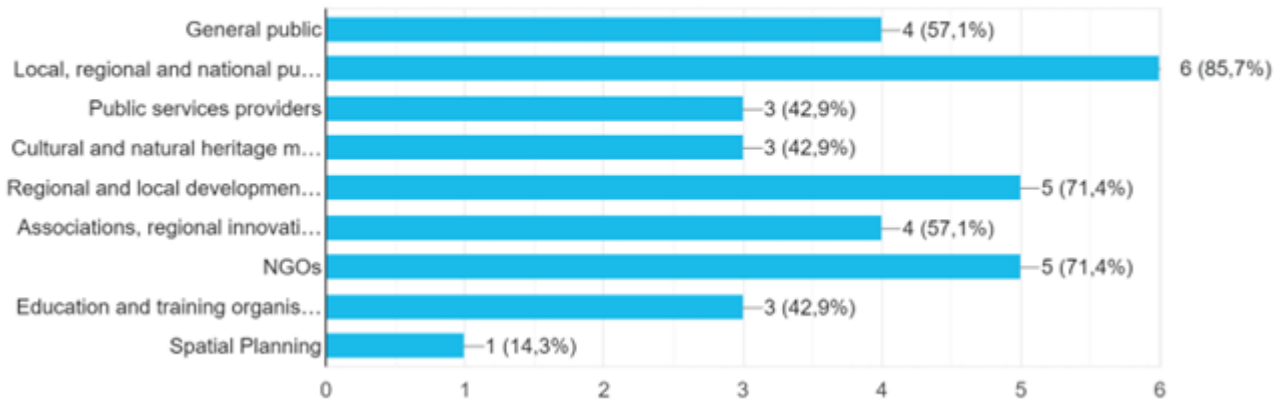


Figure 4: Target Groups' Involvement in consultations

All participants highlighted the key interest towards two main topics: “Sustainable and inclusive tourism” and “Creative and digital Economy”. The sector also stressed the importance of ICT technologies, Innovative Business models, as well as Clustering and Networking.

### Which of these general topics of interest emerged?

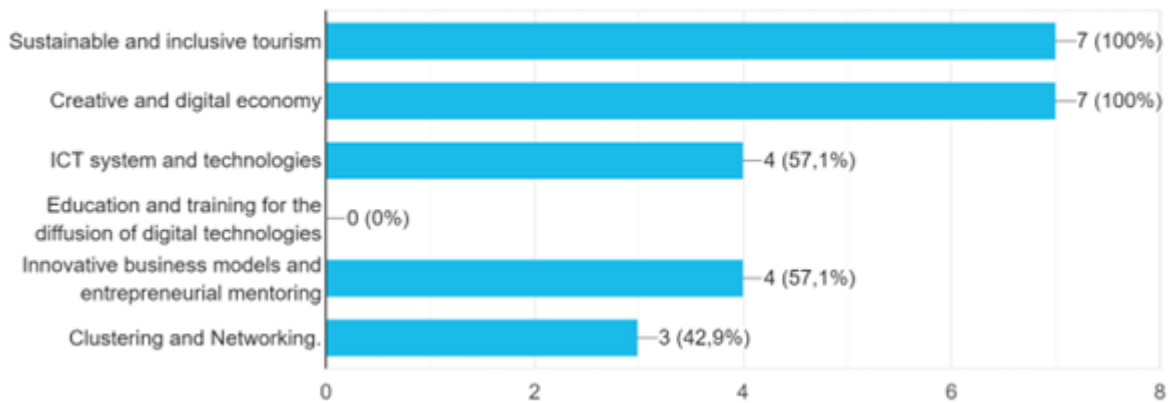


Figure 5: Topics of Interest

From the stakeholder consultations, some general findings emerged that are common to both Italy and Croatia. Specifically, the project partners stressed the need for better synergy and cooperation between all stakeholders present on the same area. **Actions will only be effective if all actors are actively on board.** This also means that all stakeholders need to be made aware of the values and assets of local territories, as their knowledge of the territory tends to remain confined to their own municipality/province. In this sense, a better knowledge of the potential of the territory would also increase the socio-economic opportunities of the territory itself. The interconnection of tourist and local infrastructures would be beneficial for both, increasing the quality of life and the attractiveness of the landscape.

Another need identified was the digitisation of tourism, for instance the need for specific and comprehensive regional digital portals, more interactive digital signs, tourist maps, etc. Some territories also highlighted the lack of more thematic cultural routes for sustainable tourism, focusing for example on: cycling tours, thematic rock music routes, lesser-known cultural heritage, cultural sites, food and wine, transport and new itineraries.

**Recommendations** came also from D 3.2.1, the [“White Paper identifying financial opportunities in the next programming period for tourism sector enhancement at IT – HR territorial level”](#) where it is highlighted that:

1. The best project ideas address **societal challenges**. Project results shall be beneficial for specific end-users and ideally have long-term effects. Projects create added value by introducing a new type of service, facilitating the development of a new product, or enhancing partnerships. An entity’s regular activities are usually not financed. Programme documents as well as local, regional, and national tourism strategies provide good guidance to relate projects ideas to societal issues and opportunities;
2. In order to select the best financial instrument that could potentially support the project idea, an assessment of the **relevance** of the proposal against the overall strategy of the financial instrument should be carried out. Whilst for sectoral instruments this could be a relatively simple exercise, when it comes to regional development instruments (INTERREG, ERDF, etc.) this could be potentially more complicated;
3. **Networking**: setting up the stakeholders’ context is essential. Some, especially small players such as local tourism agencies and SMEs, might find this challenging and could need help to develop project ideas and applications. Larger players, such as regional tourism boards, destination management organisations, and tourism agencies need to prepare themselves to support the smaller players in multiple ways and to take the lead in larger integrated projects that represent local and regional destinations. Networking and exchange also take place beyond funding programmes. European Regions for competitive and sustainable tourism are united in [NECSTouR](#). This network provides an important link between regional and wider European levels of

government, highlighting the importance of tourism as a driver for sustainable development and competitiveness. Network members have a common voice to highlight the need for funding and cooperation at European level;

4. When planning a project proposal, applicants shall always consider the **complementary funding approach for cultural heritage** toward tourism. As widely described in previous chapters of this document, tourism is mostly considered in a cross-sectoral approach and therefore a single tourism related action could be further split in smaller projects collecting funds from alternative sources.

The development of the EU tourism sector faces major challenges in the medium and long term, in particular with regard to its green transformation, digitalisation and integration of new technologies, competitiveness and resilience, while tourist behaviour is also evolving towards new patterns, reflecting some of the above challenges. Future tourism demand is likely to be driven by increasing environmental awareness, greater use of digital services and new technologies, a shift towards more personalised travel experiences, well-being and better interaction with local communities and culture, and growing concerns about safety and health protocols. Most of the financial instruments respond to these needs and challenges and therefore future project proposals should take these elements as a strong basis for their actions;

- Tourism stakeholders and ecosystems at local and regional level may not be familiar with the opportunities offered by EU-funded programmes. Local and regional tourism stakeholders may have good ideas but may not be aware of funding opportunities, hence the importance of promoting public-private-partnerships.
- Adopt circular economy principles as a general approach to new cultural heritage projects (reuse and regeneration - waste reduction - resource efficiency - cooperation - sustainable tourism - product life extension - material recycling - education and awareness - continuous improvement).

As outlined in the Transnational Co-design Labs Methodology, for the organisation of the labs, Project Partners have been divided into two teams according to their geographical scope and their previous experiences of cooperation in other Projects that are capitalised in BOOST5. In order to develop project ideas that could address the needs of local communities and stakeholders both in Croatia and in Italy, the teams were organised in order to have both countries equally represented in each team.



BOOST5 PARTNERS - DIVISION IN TEAMS	
TEAM A	TEAM B
LP – TECNOPOLIS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PARK	PP2 – SIPRO DEVELOPMENT AGENCY - FERRARA
PP1 – FRIULI INNOVATION CONSORTIUM	PP3 – STEP RI SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PARK OF THE UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA LTD
PP5 – ZADAR COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY ZADRA NOVA	PP4 – MARCHE REGION
PP7 – REGIONAL ISTITUTE FOR THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF AUTONOMOUS REGION OF FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA	PP6 – CITY OF RIJEKA

Table 4: BOOST5 PARTNERS - Division in Teams

Outcomes of the questionnaires also mirror this separation in teams:

1. Bike & Tour: A Circular System for Sustainable Tourism Development – including the development of cycling routes connecting coast with the hinterland, and involving local communities in innovative enhancement and management of Underwater Cultural Heritage (Team A);
2. Vouchers scheme to support creation of transnational cultural products and concrete business cooperation among Micro and SMEs in the sector (Team A);
3. The creation a macro-regional network of territories who share a similar heritage/tradition/cultural/natural asset for the sustainable development of the territory focused on the socio-economic development of territories; social inclusion (Team B);
4. Valorization of maritime industrial heritage in the Adriatic region (alternatively Creation of new itineraries and routes with a focus on a common historical background of religious tradition - Team B).

The two teams then held online meetings to define the project idea and organised the web-laboratories, at the end of which Project Partners compiled the “Project Idea Form” a common tool covering all the necessary aspects to be included in order to elaborate concrete project ideas.

## 8. Collection of project ideas

The BOOST5 partners organised a total of 4 transnational codesign laboratories during the month of March 2023, where stakeholders representing different actors in the territory were involved in the co-creation process. All four project ideas are focused on the Interreg Italy Croatia Cross Border Cooperation Area and the financial instrument, budget and timing are in line with the features defined by the 1st Call for Proposals for Standard and Small-scale projects that was open at the time of realisation of the laboratories. More details can be found at <https://www.italy-croatia.eu/web/italy-croatia/1st-call-for-proposals> and are illustrated below:

Feature	Standard project	Small-scale project
Max. n. of project proposals per applicant	2 as LP	2 as LP
Specific Objectives	SO 1.1, SO 1.2, SO 2.1, SO 2.2, SO 3.1 and SO 4.1	SO 2.2, SO 4.1 and SO 5.1
Min. n. of Partners	3 partners (at least 1 IT and 1 HR)	2 partners (at least 1 IT and 1 HR)
Max. n. of Partners	8 partners (at least 1 IT and 1 HR)	4 partners (at least 1 IT and 1 HR)
Min duration	24 months	12 months
Max duration	30 months	18 months
Indicative starting date	January 2024	July 2023
ERDF contribution	80%	80%
Min. financial size of each project (ERDF)	500.000,00 EUR	165.000,00 EUR
Max. financial size of each project (ERDF)	1.500.000,00 EUR for SO 1.1 and SO 1.2 2.200.000,00 EUR for all other SOs	200.000,00 EUR

Figure 6: Features of INTERREG IT-HR 1st Call for Proposals

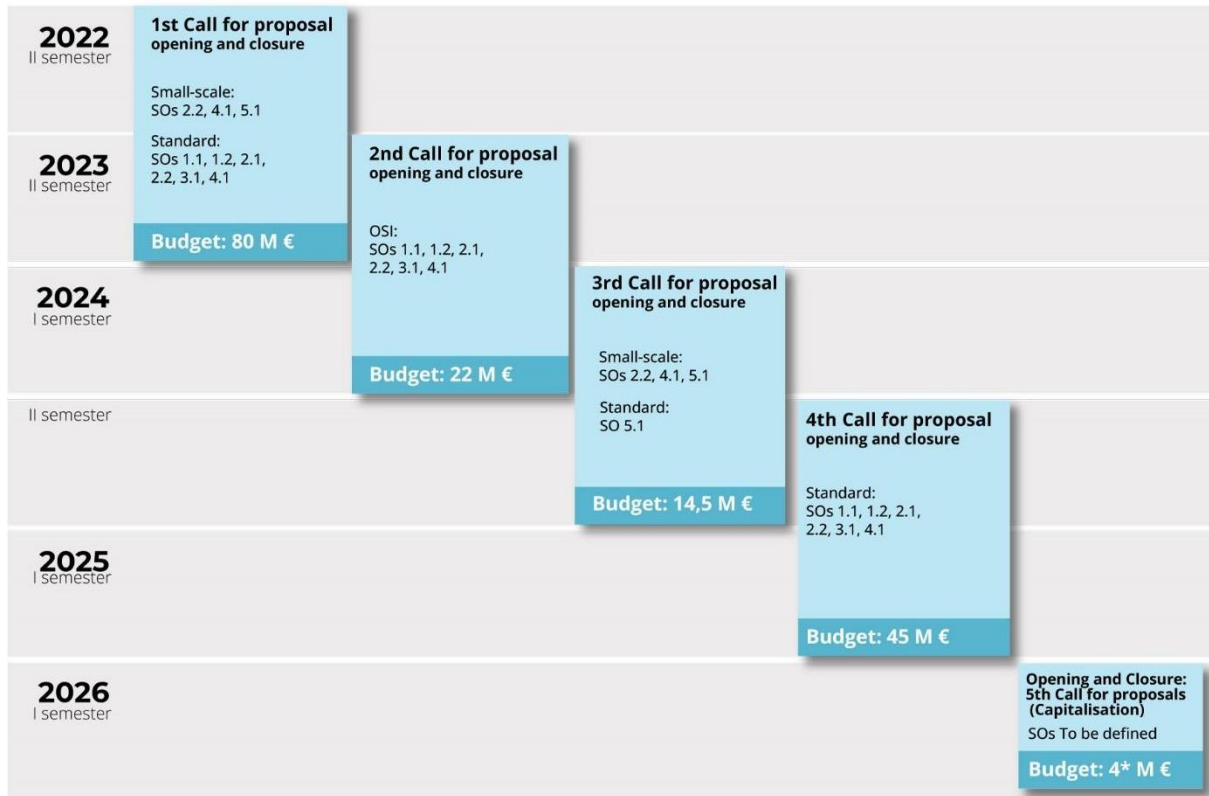


Figure 7: [Interreg IT-HR Plan of calls for proposals - Indicative Timeline](#)

With regard to the partnerships to be set up for the implementation of the projects, part of which will come from BOOST5 partners and the stakeholders involved, interested parties can also be involved thanks to the Cross-Border Observatory.

The four project ideas that emerged from the laboratories and that will be outlined in the following chapter are entitled:

**CIRCLETOUR:** Circular System for Eco-Sustainable Cycling Routes Linking the Coast and Hinterland, Engaging Local Communities in Underwater Cultural Heritage Enhancement and Management.

**DIGILOCAL:** Empowering Transnational Cultural and Business Collaboration: Leveraging Voucher Schemes and Innovative Strategies to Attract Digital Nomads (DNs) to Minor Territories.

**ACTUATOR:** Adriatic network of Cultural and natural heritage for the sustainable development of Inland tourism.

**VALORIAN:** Valorisation of maritime industrial heritage in the Adriatic region through uptake of new technologies.

Synergies with previous experiences and capitalisation of other EU projects were a key element that had to be present in all project ideas. In order to avoid repetition, the descriptions of the projects that were capitalised by more than one new project idea are presented below:

**ATLAS**: ATLAS project (Interreg IT-HR) capitalised on the basic methodology and tools developed by the IPA Adriatic SMART INNO project and aimed to support economic growth by stimulating innovative models of cultural tourism and leveraging the creation of innovative tourism products through digital technology tools, promoting new business ideas and improving infrastructure accessibility for disadvantaged groups, all of which will contribute to developing competitive tourist destinations and reducing seasonality. It is further capitalised in CIRCLETOUR and VALORIAN.

**MADE IN LAND**: The MADE IN-LAND project, funded by the Interreg Italy Croatia 2014/2020 European Programme, aimed to promote the protection and valorisation of the natural and cultural capital of inland areas in both Italy and Croatia by improving their accessibility and tourist use. The approach adopted by MADE IN-LAND defined the revitalisation of inland areas not only as a process of valorisation of their natural and cultural capital, but also as a process of functional, cultural and landscape reconnection of these assets with the communities (institutions, businesses, inhabitants) that preside over these spaces, as well as the valley and coastal areas connected to them. The result of the MADE IN-LAND project is the MoU for Permanent Cross-border Observatory. It is further capitalised in CIRCLETOUR and ACTUATOR.

**REVIVAL**: The project, funded through cross-border cooperation programme INTERREG V-A Italy - Croatia 2014-2020, aimed at transforming a lost heritage in a rediscovered heritage for attracting creative people as well as for cultural tourism market, capable to become one of the pillars of a more sustainable and balanced territorial development (undermined by the presence of many dismissed buildings/areas, especially in urban spaces, coasts and islands.) In all the Italian and Croatian towns involved in REVIVAL, there are many abandoned areas, buildings (e.g., summer camps, schools, barracks, military fortifications) and industrial complexes in a state of neglect and decay. This is a heritage that has been almost completely lost and that today, for a variety of reasons, needs to be rediscovered, revitalised and reused. REVIVAL aimed at transforming the lost cultural heritage into a lever for sustainable and more balanced territorial development, in which a relevant abandoned man-made heritage plays a central role. As the starting point is clear, the change that REVIVAL will bring is to put the lost heritage concerned at the centre of the attention of regional and local communities and potential investors, and to try to find creative and sustainable solutions for it. It is further capitalised in ACTUATOR and VALORIAN.

**S.LI.DES.**: The main aim of this IT-HR Interreg project is to promote cross-border cooperation between cultural destinations in the programme area and the joint planning of intelligent strategies

to support more sustainable and balanced territorial development through the promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, in particular those assets that shape the identity of the destinations. This project is further capitalised in ACTUATOR and VALORIAN.

TEMPUS: The TEMPUS Interreg IT-HT project aimed to promote the heritage of urban ports through a common approach, while strengthening the specificities of the different sites located between the two coasts of the Adriatic Sea. To this end, TEMPUS established a community of practice dedicated to heritage-based sustainable development and to the creation of common frameworks for visibility and valorisation, as well as on-site pop-up exhibitions that allowed visitors to gain knowledge and awareness of local port heritage and the close ties that bind the Adriatic port cities. Finally, an ad hoc ICT environment has been developed to support the TEMPUS community, to offer structured and suggestive virtual tourist itineraries, also meeting the needs of disadvantaged visitors, and to collect scientific people-sourced port CH contents. This project is further capitalised in ACTUATOR and VALORIAN.

UNDERWATERMUSE: The aim of the project (Interreg IT-HR) was to apply a methodological and technological protocol, based on research/knowledge and development/communication of a complex, multi-layered and highly diverse underwater archaeological site, to sample areas. The objective of the project was therefore to transform the site into an underwater archaeological park (or eco-museum), using innovative and/or experimental methods and techniques, in order to try to reduce the loss of important cultural heritage and to guarantee an economic spin-off deriving directly from the creation of a sector linked to the tourist-cultural promotion of the reference context. UNDERWATERMUSE is further capitalised in CIRCLETOUR and VALORIAN.

## SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT IDEAS

ACRONYM	FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT	OVERALL GOALS	MAIN ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED BENEFITS	CAPITALISATION OF PAST EXPERIENCES
<b>CIRCLETOUR</b>	Interreg Strand A: CBC IT-HR	<b>develop cycle tourism</b> in smaller areas; promote <b>cultural and natural heritage</b> of the region; <b>raise awareness</b> of environmentally friendly and sustainable tourism practices	engagement of all major tourism operators for the <b>creation of a single-track cycle route</b> ; creation of <b>new bike hire facilities</b> , development of <b>rest areas</b> and implementation of improved <b>signage and wayfinding</b> ; implementation of a common <b>system for collecting and</b>	<b>increased access</b> to and promotion of both underwater and terrestrial cultural sites; creation of <b>new cycling routes</b> and infrastructure with new services; increased <b>cooperation</b> between public and private stakeholders; development of <b>intermodality</b> ;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">FVG regional plan for cycling mobility Adria Bike Route</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Eurovelo 8</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">CICLOVIA ALPE ADRIA WEG</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Zadar Bike Magic</a></li> </ul>

			<p><b>analysing data on cycle tourism;</b> creation of a light infrastructure of <b>underwater cultural sites;</b> creation of a <b>shared platform</b> aimed at linking the supply and demand for cycle tourism in addressed IT-HR territories.</p>	<p>increased <b>awareness</b> of cultural and environmental sites in the area.</p>	
<b>DIGILOCAL</b>	Interreg Strand A: CBC IT-HR	<p><b>promote and empower transnational cultural and business collaboration,</b> leveraging voucher schemes and</p>	<p>development of a <b>welcome portal</b> to provide digital nomads with essential information for their stay;</p>	<p>Improved <b>digitalisation</b> of touristic offer; Unique <b>branding</b> of locations; Improved <b>data-driven decision-making:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Remote Working Community Programme ;</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">CARPE DIGEM;</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">AlpSatellites</a></li> </ul>

**innovative strategies** to attract digital nomads to minor territories; **connecting** local businesses, cultural institutions, and digital nomads; create a more **diverse and resilient local economy** by supporting the development of new businesses and collaborations and fostering cultural exchange and innovation.

implementation of **voucher schemes** to promote cultural experiences, local tours and accommodation; creation of **training programmes** for locals using digital nomads as knowledge providers; creation of **new cultural organisations and services**; development of digital maps, guides and apps to provide better information to tourists to

enhancement the **cultural offer** of the selected areas; better **coordination and collaboration** between stakeholders.



			<p><b>improve the digitalisation of tourism offers;</b> creation of a platform for stakeholders to <b>share information,</b> ideas, and best practices.</p>	
<b>ACTUATOR</b>	Interreg Strand A: CBC IT-HR	strengthen <b>active engagement of youth</b> in inland tourism by <b>sharing heritage values</b> and create a <b>network for shared sustainable development and tourism opportunities;</b>	<p><b>trainings</b> aimed at high schools in mountainous areas on new digital and green skills relevant to the EU double transition in tourism; <b>identify</b> common, lesser-known cultural heritage</p>	<p><b>Raise awareness,</b> through knowledge-sharing and education; <b>new skills development</b> for younger generations; <b>empower local community</b> as main actor on the territory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">MEDUSA - ENI CBC Med</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">S.T.A.R.T.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">TAKE IT SLOW</a></li> </ul>

definition of **new environmental and cultural itineraries** to diversify tourism flows;

and natural sites in IT-HR;  
creation of a **web platform** that networks lesser-known local heritage sites, creating new cultural routes;  
development of **communication initiatives** in lesser-known destinations, led by mixed consortia cross-border and involving the **youth**;  
strengthening **capacity-building** among key stakeholders.

inhabitants become active promoters of the heritage;  
diffusion of a widespread **knowledge** of the territories;  
more balanced **distribution of tourist streams** in terms of seasonality and geographical areas ;  
**establishment** of the knowledge, heritage, and **practice network** of Italy and Croatia

<b>VALORIAN</b>	Interreg Strand A: CBC IT-HR	development of tourism based on the <b>enhancement of the maritime industrial heritage</b> ; supporting the <b>creation of alternative tourist routes</b> with special interest themes, <b>linking the industrial heritage centres with the surrounding hinterland.</b>	Creation of a <b>catalogue of existing maritime industrial heritage</b> in the target regions/cities; proposals of <b>models and tools for cooperation</b> between international stakeholders; building a <b>network of stakeholders</b> involved in the valorisation of the maritime heritage in the Adriatic region and creating a <b>common strategy</b> ;	<b>Enhanced skills</b> of revitalization actors in solution design and uptake of new technologies/digitalisation; <b>better integration of hinterland/remote areas</b> into new tourism value chains based on maritime heritage; creating an incentive for <b>better interconnection</b> between the West and East Adriatic Coast;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">REFREsh</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">Forget Heritage</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">REMEMBER</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">ADRION 5 Senses</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">CHRISTA</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">FRAMEsPORT</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">European Route of Industrial Heritage</a>.</li> </ul>
-----------------	---------------------------------	---	---	--	--

	<p>organisation of multidisciplinary <b>workshops for policy makers, industry and tourism actors</b> to support the uptake of <b>new technologies</b> and the creation of <b>sustainable solutions</b> for the revitalisation of maritime industrial heritage.</p>	<p>development of <b>strategic and policy recommendations</b>; increased <b>awareness</b>.</p>
--	--	--

Table 5: Schematic representation of Project Ideas developed in BOOST5 Project.

A more comprehensive and detailed presentation of the individual project ideas can be found in Deliverable 3.2.2 ["EUSAIR Pillar 4 "Air Cultural Routes" Flagship Paper"](#).

## 9. Examples of new thematic natural/cultural routes and connecting natural/cultural routes in EUSAIR

The **CIRCLETOUR** project focuses on the development of new and environmentally sustainable cycling routes linking the coast and the hinterland and with the precious involvement of local communities in the valorisation and management of the underwater cultural heritage. In particular, this route would focus on the trans-border territories of Friuli Venezia Giulia and the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County but further actions could also involve other regions in the Adriatic area that share some common features, like Apulia and the and the Ravni Kotari/Zadar area.

Through the implementation of the **DIGILOCAL** project in several minor and undiscovered territories on both sides of the Adriatic Sea, the aim is to harmonise the distribution of tourism flows throughout the year by attracting a new type of visitors like digital nomads. We could also consider creating a dedicated “Digital Nomads Route” through a network of Italian and Croatian remote working communities in minor territories, with a programme to encourage digital nomads to move between these different communities.

**ACTUATOR** has a twofold objective: to create cultural and naturalistic itineraries linking different areas of the Adriatic mountains, and to involve young people as active citizens in the development of their own territory with a specific focus on the development of skills that are necessary in this complex tourism ecosystem. This route could link specific territories of the Apennines ( Emilia Romagna, Marche and Abruzzi) and the Gorski Kotar mountainous regions (Primorje-Gorski Kotar County and Karlovac County).

The vast maritime industrial heritage - unfortunately often neglected today - that characterises the Adriatic coast will be enhanced thanks to the VALORIAN project that works towards the creation of a cultural route connecting maritime industrial heritage as well as connecting the hinterland and the coast. This route would connect coastal territories of both Italy and Croatia who present a rich maritime industrial heritage, e.g., Ancona, Ravenna, Rijeka, Šibenik as well as smaller towns as Bakar, Chioggia, Trogir.

## 10. Contribution to the EUSAIR strategy

Thanks to the active and concrete involvement of key local stakeholders, BOOST5 contributes to the EUSAIR strategy, and in particular to the development of Pillar IV on Sustainable tourism. The methodology developed in BOOST5 for the organisation of the Transnational Codesign Laboratories represents a flexible and replicable tool to be used with stakeholders and provides an opportunity to exchange ideas between stakeholders from different backgrounds and from different territories within the Adriatic and Ionian region. During the confrontation, people were able to share their views, their concerns, their needs as well as the problems encountered during the implementation of previous EU projects, in order to better plan and address them within the 2021-2027 programming period.

The different project concepts developed during the laboratories present ideas for new cultural itineraries to be developed within the Adriatic Region, and specifically in the Italy-Croatia cross-border cooperation area, focusing on four different themes and objectives.

All the new project ideas point to sustainable, green and slow tourism development, integrating tourists and local communities to ensure the sustainable growth of the whole area, where tourism should be seen as a resource to be managed all year round.

The capitalisation and lessons learnt from the five projects capitalised in BOOST5 have been used to develop four new project ideas to contribute to EUSAIR Pillar IV - Flagship 1 - AIR Cultural Routes with new proposals for diversifying, de-seasonalising and delocalising tourist flows within the area and promoting new and innovative integrated coastal and inland tourism products to maintain the competitiveness of the sector.

## 11. Conclusions

In recent years, the tourism industry has been particularly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and pressing current challenges, such as the war in Ukraine, continue to affect the development of the sector. With the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and the Next Generation EU, there are important plans to revitalise this industry, which represents a strategic sector in the EU economy, employing a total of 27 million people and contributing up to 10% of EU GDP.

Tourism has shown resilience in times of crisis, but it is now crucial to reconcile the need for experiential tourism with environmental sustainability to achieve the double transition: green and digital (with a special focus on data sharing).

Stakeholder consultations throughout the BOOST5 project have highlighted the need for "better tourism", to maintain its high quality and to promote lesser-known destinations. Tourism can be a very effective tool to demonstrate the values of the EU and to promote who we are together, but professions in the sector should be upgraded through specific training to make them more attractive. It is also important for destination management organisations to show local communities the benefits of tourism in their daily lives, for example by jointly developing products to promote the area. In this respect, BOOST5 contributed with several activities, including: the organisation of local events to raise awareness among stakeholders; a high-level sectoral event and a transnational capacity building workshop; the creation of masterclasses for tourism stakeholders and the organisation of study visits for journalists to promote best practices in supporting territorial development through sustainable tourism.

The active collaboration between the different stakeholders within the BOOST5 project has highlighted the importance of strengthening the collaboration between all the actors in the territory in order to create innovative projects and better face the challenges affecting the sector. With this in mind, the BOOST5 project organised an high-level [Transnational Capacity Building Workshop for policy and decision makers on "The Pathways for Sustainable Tourism"](#) in order to raise the awareness of public policy/decision makers to: promote slow tourism and reduce mass tourism; monitor innovative tourism sectors to plan new approaches; stimulate uncovered niches for local sustainable tourism development; consider the opportunities/challenges for sustainable tourism in the framework of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregional Strategy.

With this Document, BOOST5 project aims to address these challenges by providing a clear overview of the financial instruments available, as well as a methodology and some examples of project ideas that have been co-created by cross-border partnerships, so as to support the economic development of the interested territories by creating new cultural routes. The results of this output

can be easily adapted to other areas, contexts and they could be transferred to other target categories, as they represent replicable working models and methodology for achieving concrete and effective results for the sustainable use of cultural assets for the growth of the tourism sector.