Med Lab Group: Innovative Practices in Coastal Tourism.

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Report

Author(s)   Mercedes Acitores.

Introduction.

Last 13th of May 2019, at the city of Palermo the Interact's Med Lab Group held its annual meeting. In this occasion the topic was related to Innovative Practices in Costal Tourism. This event was divided in 2 parts, the Conference in the morning and in the afternoon a study visit to Tourismed in Trabia, 30 Km from Palermo .

•Some Key Figures:
- 46 attendees.
- 5 EU funds operating in the Mediterranean regarding Coastal Tourism shared their approaches; Interreg, ENI, LIFE, H2020, EMFF- maritime and fisheries and COSME.
- 8 Mediterranean Interreg and ENI were present:
- 4TN (all those in the Mediterranean) Interreg Med, Interreg Balkan Mediterranean, Interreg Adrion and ENI CBC Med
- 4 CBC (all those involved in the West Med Initiative +CBC involved Adriatic Ionian MRS): Interreg Italy Malta , Interreg Italy France Maritime, Interreg Italy Croatia, . ENI Italy Tunisia.
- 13 project discussed possible solutions on Threats and Opportunities of Coastal Tourism.

- Who else participated? European Commission (DG Mare and EASME), National focal points for WestMED (France and Morocco), Institutions such as Arco Latino and CPMR..

The Conference.

Context:
1. During the previous Med Lab Group meeting (2018) the most common topic for Mediterranean programmes (Interreg, ENI) was Coastal Tourism (in a direct or indirect way)

2. Interact's Med Lab Group is observer to the WestMed Initiative and Associate partner to Panoramed, in this sense we support both actions with our events.
3. Having WEstMed a focus on Coastal Tourism, it was a suitable time for them since they are designing some proposals on this matter. Besides, Interact's event was back to back to the WestMed Steering Committee meeting and Hackathons (Blue Economy Contribution to the summit of the Two Shores held in Marseille)
4. New calls were being launched by the programmes in the area. In particular, to mention the Strategic calls for Panoramed focused directly on Coastal Tourism.

Objectives:
1. To share innovative experiences in coastal tourism in the Mediterranean tackling its main threats but also its opportunities as an attractive economic sector in the Mediterranean area: NETWORKING and KNOWLEDGE
2. *To break silos on the different funding opportunities and approaches (Interreg, ENI and H2020, LIFE, COSME, LIFE) towards a more effective and efficient coastal tourism, in addition to provide a platform to capitalise on their results, allowing the possibility of exchanging know how and improve the cooperation in this field.* *CAPITALISATION AND SYNERGIES.*

Summary:
Few introductory remarks by Luca Marangoni (DG Regio) explaining DG Mare's approach to Coastal tourism- Blue Economy and its importance in the WestMed Initiative, while Jordi Ficapal opened the debate framing the Conference with some reflexions on how to make costal tourism more intelligent:
✓ Intelligent promotion, from only promotion tourism policies to promotion policies as a part of the city tourism management. Experience management as a public-private cooperation policy. Their is no dreamming turistic destination without a good tourism management.
✓ Are we using intelligent systems data and technologies to make decisions, are we measuring tourists' satisfaction, well-being? what should we measure? No. of visitors, expenditure, etc.
✓ intelligent communication and relationships (Intelligent governance),
✓ intelligent leaderships built upon a shared vision of the future
✓ intelligent consumers= intelligent tourists.

Solutions were provided by the projects participating in the round table about <u>**threats in coastal tourism.**</u>
• ALTER ECO and RESPONSEABLE for **seasonality,**
• MELTEMI for **marine litter,**
• CASTWATER and Consumeless on **lack of resources benefit**s.

    ✓ Reduction and better management by preventing mass tourism in the Mediterranean and working more in the concept of "Mediterranean Identity" by promoting business opportunities (Social sustainability) will have a direct effect on **seasonality.**

- ✓ There is no need for reinventing the wheel to improve sustainability in the Mediterranean, we only need to preserve the key features of a classic Mediterranean city model (accessibility+lower consumption of resources)
- ✓ Energy, waste and **Water scarcity** are common challenges when talking about Tourism. The correct management of these services, as well as public administrations and citizens' awareness is needed to develop a sustainable tourism model. Nevertheless, it's the lack of water, especially in the summer season what it is faced with higher difficulty in the Mediterranean Coast.
- ✓ High need to focus on **changing consumer habits** to protect the oceans and use their resources in sustainable way (Ocean literacy). Information, education and training are key.
- ✓ Bottom up approaches to find solutions for coastal tourism.

About the question regarding **cooperation**, there was no doubt that through cooperation projects, common challenges are not only shared but also better tackled. Nevertheless, it takes long time to build trust. Cooperation mustn't be taken for granted.

Highlights on the **opportunities of Coastal Tourism** were discussed by the following projects.
- • INTENSE, BLUETOURMED, CULTURAS and STRATUS for **Attractiveness**
- • MEDCOAST4BG, CO-EVOLVE, MEET, DESTIMED and SMARTIC for **Blue Growth**

- ✓ While on the one hand it was explained how attractiveness and Blue Growth can be tricky matters in what sustainability refers. On the other, there is an assumption to support sustainability by several actions: increasing local and regional competitiveness, adapting the touristic industry and promoting Quality tourism linked to brands and concepts such as *"Conscious traveller"*.
- ✓ Attractiveness linked to natural, cultural and historical heritage + accessibility.
- ✓ Attractiveness = Increase socioeconomic and environmental benefits to the local communities. Optimize the value chain, reduce resources, reduce seasonality, promote stable, qualified and inclusive jobs.
- ✓ Ecotourism and Cycling tourism as a sustainable ways of tourism for northern and southern Mediterranean. However, its main challenge is also seasonality.

As a general reflection is that it is too soon to know about the **impact** of the results in the territory. However, yes there are cases where the local and regional partners are including their project results in their policies and actions. For example, the introduction of the Tirrenica cycle route to the Italian national interest bicycle routes, or labelling quality and sustainability.

Finally, participants stated that for a realistic and real impact two key elements are needed:
- • Public and private partnerships.
- • Projects based on existing regional/local strategies.

Regarding the question about **synergies,** few highlights:
- • Synergies and complementary among projects in the same programme and similar topics, participants highlighted the lack of time to maximise the projects' effect by working more together, which should be more encouraged by the programmes. However, most of the projects are built on the ground of a first project. This "project

building" or "Project chain" system is crucial for long term strategies, where many steps are to be taken as it is in Protected Areas.

- There is no doubt that communication is a key tool for capitalisation. Drawing common messages supported by a group of stakeholders gives the power needed for things to be changed.

To carry out an **effective Coastal Tourism Plan or Strategy** is very costly and complex. Within this context there are different kind of funds that would cover different approaches of Coastal Tourism. To complete the picture of existing funds supporting Coastal Tourism, EASME explained other 3:

- a. EMFF(Maritime and Fishery Fund) supporting Blue Economy.
- b. COSME supporting SME's, giving tourism a boost, starting a tourism business.
- c. LIFE supporting the marine environment and climate change mitigation.

The final idea is to demonstrate how a Coastal Tourism Strategy could and should be built based on a combination of funds.

Useful links:
Coastal and maritime tourism – EC – DG MARE
https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/coastal_tourism_en
 EMFF funding opportunities - EASME
https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/funding-opportunities
EMFF project database - EASME
https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/emff-projects

The **future of coastal tourism in Interreg and ENI.** During this session, the programmes authorities of **CBC Italy France Maritime, Italy Malta, Italy Croatia, ENI CBC Med and Italy Tunisia, as well as Med and Adrion** informed about their approach on Coastal Tourism and on their next coming calls. They highlighted that Coastal Sustainable Tourism is more a cross cutting topic rather than a specific objective.

EU Cooperation Next Comming Calls		
Interreg MARITTIMO-IT FR-MARITIME	2019: **Open** • Blue and Green economy. Cross-border services for business, • Passenger transports • Harbours' air quality.	http://interreg-maritime.eu
Interreg Italia-Malta	2019: **Open**. Exchanges of researchers.. (Blue Growth)CBC mobility and networks (blue conomy, biotechnology and environmental protection sustainable tourism. Protection of the land and marine biodiversity. Innovative dissemination of natural heritage (land and marine ecosystems).Climate change mitigation	http://www.italiamalta.eu
ITALIETUNISIE	2019-2020: **Open**. Business and SME development. Support to education, R&I, Environment protection, climate change mitigation.	http://www.italietunisie.eu
ENI CBCMED	2020: **To be Open** Capitalization Call.	http://www.enicbcmed.eu/
Interreg Mediterranean	2019: **Closed**.	https://interreg-med.eu/
Interreg Sudoe	2019-2020: **Open**. Innovation Capacity for a sustainable and Smart growth. Environmental Protection & Resource efficiency.	https://interreg-sudoe.eu/
Interreg ADRION ADRIATIC-IONIAN	2019: **Open**. Blue Growth on S3. Social Innovation. Maritime Transport and City Transport	https://www.adrioninterreg.eu
Interreg Italy - Croatia	2020: **To be Open** Strategic Call.	https://www.italy-croatia.eu
Interreg Balkan-Mediterranean	2019: **Closed**.	http://www.interreg-balkanmed.eu

About their funding opportunities in this theme, most of the programmes are in their last **calls** for the current programming period. Here below find a table with the state of play on end of June 2019.

Regarding the questions on the participation of **third countries**, the speakers stated how important it is to take them on board in order to achieve a realist impact in our coasts, however the programmes were cautious for this programming period. Some of them would remain silent, others would give them a status as associated partners. The reasons that hampers being more open to 3rd countries are in the one hand the bureaucratic constrains and in the other, that is a decision to be taken by the Monitoring Committees. For post 2020 programmes are open to see how this will be developed.

- Conclusion: Key Words for Innovative Coastal Tourism in the Mediterranean.

The Med Lab Group network at TOURISMED project.

- **The project.**
  https://tourismed.interreg-med.eu/
  TOURISMED is a project aimed at testing and transferring a fishing tourism business model in the coastal territories of Italy, Cyprus, Greece, Albania, France and Spain as a way to promote a sustainable approach to tourism, while fostering the preservation of the marine ecosystem and traditional fishing culture of the MED region.

  These areas face the common challenge of finding new solution for the worrying depletion of marine resources, the decline of the artisanal fishing sector and the negative impacts of tourism such as social dislocation, loss of cultural heritage and ecological degradation.

  As a response, the project objective is **to promote fishing tourism as a sustainable coastal and maritime tourism practice in the MED are**a. Expected changes concern an improved use of resources by artisanal fishers, a diversification of income in the sector and a better valorisation of coastal traditional heritage and local seafood.

  Fishing tourism can be defined as a set of tourism-related activities carried out by professional fishermen in order to differentiate their incomes, promote and valorise their profession and territorial socio-cultural heritage, and enhance a sustainable use of marine ecosystems, by means of boarding non-crew individuals on fishing vessels.

- **The visit.**
  On May 13th 2019, within the INTERACT event "Med Lab Group: Innovative Practices in Coastal Tourism" that took place in Palermo, a delegation of participants, made up

  of a delegation of EU programmes representatives, academics and other stakeholders, visited the Interreg Med project "TOURISMED" in Trabia, a small fishing village near Palermo, which has been promoter of a pioneering project to launch fishing-tourism in the Mediterranean."

  During this visit Trabia Local Council and the local fishermen signed an agreement to continue the pilot activity of Fishing Tourism beyond the projects life.

After, the fishermen despite of the weather took to the members of the delegation to the port and showed them the improvements and adaptations in their vessels in order to be able to gather tourists. Finally, most of the members of the delegation experienced a short tourist routes along the coast of Trabia

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