



SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Thematic Factsheet #1

MED Sustainable Tourism Community's Kick off Meeting

By BleuTourMed_C3

OUR CHALLENGE

Exploiting the full potential of tourism requires an innovative approach and sustainable basis. Therefore, effective strategies and targeted integrated actions should be developed and implemented across the Mediterranean region. With this common objective, 14 Modular Projects (MPs) are implemented under the Interreg Med Sustainable Tourism Community. Their aim is to study, test and capitalise innovative instruments and actions towards the enhancement of tourism sustainability in the Mediterranean.

EXPECTED RESULTS

After the completion of the projects it is expected that approximately:

- **17 instruments** will enhance the development of sustainable and responsible tourism
- **108 tourist destinations** will be covered by a sustainable tourism evaluation tool
- **11 strategies** will be applying sustainable tourism management criteria
- **144 regions and sub-regions** will be engaged in implementing sustainable tourism plans

A COMMUNITY FEATURED BY BleuTourMed_C3

Setting the goal of transforming the results of the 14 Modular projects into ready-to-use tools for the national and regional stakeholders in the Mediterranean, BleuTourMed_C3 acts as the bridge between the Modular Projects and the Axis 4 "Governance" of the Interreg Med Programme. The project is implemented under the collaboration of six partners and is based on three main structural pillars (**Community Building, Communication & Capitalization**).

THE KICK OFF MEETING

The Kick of Meeting of the Community took place in Marseille during 16-17 March 2017.

The broad spatial and institutional representation of Mediterranean tourism community provided the participants with the opportunity to engage in fruitful discussions regarding the challenges of obtaining a sustainable tourism sector in the MED area.

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Tourism Community](https://www.linkedin.com/company/interreg-med-sustainable-tourism-community)

[BleuTourMed Interreg MED](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

Total Participants	70
Participants per Country	
Spain	18
Italy	13
Greece	13
France	13
Croatia	7
Slovenia	2
Cyprus	1
Malta	1
Belgium	2
Participants per WG	
WG 1	21
WG 2	15
WG 3	17
Presentations	32

The introduction of all Modular Projects to the Community has set the scene for building collaborations among the project with common thematic, methodological and spatial objectives.

In total, 70 people participated in the meeting whereas 53 project representatives participated in the three Thematic Working Groups organized in the context of the event. The thematic focus of the working groups was on:

WG1 - Enhancing attractiveness and tourism offer in the Mediterranean region

The traditional 'sun and sea' patterns have long been part of Mediterranean's tourism development that has often led to mass tourism destinations. Therefore, the current challenge

for the region includes the identification and promotion of alternative and diversified sustainable tourism products based on the Mediterranean landscape and cultural identity. In this context, the aim is to increase the region's attractiveness and growth by improving the use of cultural and natural resources and extending the tourist season.

WG2 - Addressing tourism pressures in the Mediterranean region

The increased touristic flows in the Mediterranean region continue generating economic opportunities, however, they have also caused a series of pressures mostly related to the preservation of the natural ecosystems that reach or exceed the limits of their carrying capacity. Such pressures can be reflected, for example, through issues of water management and efficiency, waste management etc, posing the need for re-establishing the flows between coastal and maritime ecosystems and the hinterland and thus ensuring the extending of the tourist season.

WG3 - Strengthening planning and management practices towards sustainable tourism

The lack of integrated planning and management actions towards sustainability has often acted as a barrier for exploiting tourism opportunities in the Mediterranean in a sustainable way, especially in coastal and maritime regions. On the other hand, the current practices promoted by the policy framework in an international, European, Mediterranean level, such as Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Maritime Spatial Planning, suggest the adoption of decision-making processes that follow an ecosystem-based approach of natural and cultural environments, taking into account the particularities of the socio-economic activities along with the natural processes while being adaptive to future changes. Through the appropriate tools and mechanisms, knowledge and coordination gaps towards sustainable tourism could be effectively addressed.