

Interreg MED project
MEDFEST

**MED Culinary heritage experiences: how to create sustainable tourist
destinations**

Report on MEDFEST culinary experiences
Activity 4.2

Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts
Rural Development Association
Purpan Engineering School
University of Barcelona
In Loco Association. Intervention. Formation. Studies for local development
Agency for Rural Development of Istria Ltd. Pazin
Technical Institute of Heraklion, Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Troodos, Network Thematic Centres

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The report was prepared by all partners and describes **HOW** the action plan of each organization worked and contributed to every pilot area to becoming more sustainable tourism destination.

The report is made of three parts:

PART A: describes the culinary experience before and after the implementation of the project;

PART B: analyzes the SCENARIOS identified by MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences;

PART C: provides contribution to improve MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences;

and is based on the results reached with the pilot activities.

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REPORT: KRAS CARSO FOOD TOUR (Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts)

PART A

A1. Short description of the culinary event/service/product before the drafting and implementation of the action plan

Before the drafting of the Action Plan members of the Planta Association wished to develop culinary packages where they would offer typical high quality food of Karst cuisine. However, they did not know how to start creating and later promoting and marketing such culinary packages. Therefore, they were highly motivated to get involved in the MEDFEST project and they were also willing to contribute with their own resources. Their main aim was to prepare a boutique culinary offer in which they could present their best food and service. They were aware that in collaboration and mutual support they can provide rich and diverse culinary experience because two of their members were focused on traditional Karstic food, three members have been developing modernized Karst cuisine, one is wine producer and one is alongside the wine producer also herb grower.

Just before the beginning of the MEDFEST activities, the Planta Association got in contact with the local tourist institution - Komenski Kras, formed by the Municipality of Komen. This institution has been involved in developing and promoting sustainable tourism on Karst area. Also a guide was provided by them. Both mentioned actors were highly motivated to prepare new sustainable tourist product, based on culinary heritage, but promoted and developed in innovative ways. Other activities involving a broad spectrum of heritage in Karst area (e.g. guided tour in well preserved Štanjel town or other smaller typical Karst villages, through the vineyards etc.) will be incorporated in the experience as well.

A2. Overview on the newly created/improved culinary services/products as the result of pilot action plan implementation

The Kras Carso Food Tour are culinary packages aiming to bring tourists who are willing to pay more than an average tourist for the high end experience with the high quality food and service.

The culinary tour is taken place at the Karst region which lies above the Gulf of Trieste, where the Adriatic Sea curves into the land. Its most attractive natural treasures are seen in the mysterious underground world, in its numerous karst caves. Special adventures offer a walk through the villages of the Karst and the surrounding area and products, especially Karst prosciutto and Teran - a typical local wine.

In this culinary experience members of the Planta Association invite tourist to their homeland to reveal cultural specialties and to offer them the genuine, authentic Karst delicacies. The guests will be invited to the vineyard, to the closed stone Karst

house yard called “*borjač*” and in the kitchen, to the vine cellar and at the table, generously laid out with home made and local delicacies. Several professional culinary providers from different smaller Karst villages are included in the offer covering various topics and types (from traditional to modernize one) of delicious Karst food freshly made by local ingredients. There are 4 main topics to be experienced: herbs, prosciutto (raw ham) making, wine tasting and culinary. The shortest culinary experience takes 3-4 hours while the longest one takes 9-10 hours and includes wine tasting, cooking lectures and workshops, and a degustation menu with 5 courses.

A3. Most relevant progresses/innovation made in the pilot areas by taking into consideration the goals introduced in the MEDFEST initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences

Referring to the use of culinary tourism as resource of attracting new visitors and increasing economic activity during the off-season in MED space, the Kras Carso food tour will achieved the following improvements:

- Diversification of tourism offer in Karst area; this is particularly important during weekdays and in off-season period (autumn, winter) since many restaurants, guest houses and wine cellars are closed in that period;
- Rising awareness among domestic as well as foreign tourists on typical and modernized Karst cuisine, based on tradition and way of life of Karst people, as well as on traditional and organic wines;
- Providing options for further networking and additional linking other tourist offer in the area (e.g. transport services, local guiding tours, bicycle rentals etc.).

In order to enhance the usage of culinary tourism as a link between coastal tourist centres and less developed coastal hinterland, the newly developed culinary package Kras Carso Food Tour has a potential to mostly attract one-day visitors from Slovenian coast (e.g. tourist coming by international cruisers to the port town of Koper) and also from Ljubljana (who came by plane to near airport). However, further networking particularly with tourist agencies and accommodation providers will be needed and fostered.

The Kras Carso Food Tour contributes also to the usage of local natural, cultural and social resources – all food providers within the Planta Association mostly use locally grown and produced ingredients (up to vicinity to 70 km) and thus support also the local agriculture farms and other local peasants. Few members make prosciutto (raw ham) and all of them use local wild herbs to enrich the domestic/homemade taste. Like that members of the Planta associations help to encourage awareness about the use of herbs in culinary and herbal medicine. By growing and producing wine members of the Planta Association help to maintain typical Karst landscape, already recognized as cultural heritage and a part of local identity. In this ways also the traditional knowledge on wine growing and producing will be safeguard and transmitted to the future generation.

Culinary package is an important educational case study for other local residents to

see how to sustainably develop and utilize cultural tradition and culinary heritage for new tourist offer. Moreover, case studies are an important proof that the collaboration, mutual support and respect among different producers do not provide competition, but can contribute to better results and better internal relationships. Although it is very difficult to achieve a multi-level community network in the practice, the case study shows that the good collaboration among associations, entrepreneurs and experts is not mission impossible, but on the contrary. In case where all sectors have interest to work on common products, the innovative integrative approaches and linking top-down and bottom-up approaches can bring fruitful results and local impacts. Case study empowers also young generations, who hardly see the cultural and economic potentials of local cultural heritage and usually do not have a courage to start economy activities on the bases of family or community traditions.

PART B

B1. Based on the experiences developed in the pilot area, specify which integrations/adjustments should be made to the SCENARIOS described in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy that applies to the culinary experience you worked on. The following dimensions must be taken into consideration:

B1/a Stakeholder's network

During the implementation of different activities once again turned that stakeholders' network plays an important role. In the case of Kras Carso Food Tour, several steps involved the following additional stakeholders:

- a photographer and a text writer – they are both crucial in providing quality material for brochure, websites and other social media tools as well as blogs or short articles;
- a designer – to design promotional material;
- in case you provide activities in different locations, a driver providing transfer is crucial as well;
- a guide – it gives added value to the offer, specially if activities are in different locations and thus the whole package need a coordinator. This role could be taken also by a driver, but it is easier to organize a tour if a guide does not need to bother with driving (in this case e.g. a group can go off in one location and is picked at another location while doing a kind of circular sub-tour);
- a person or an organization taking care for marketing – it is crucial to have a relevant person selling the package and communicating with agencies, tourism providers, hotels etc. at one hand and visitors/tourists on the other.

B1/b - Role of cultural heritage

The Kras Carso Food Tour offers the interpretation of various characteristic specialities from the Karst region, from natural and cultural environments. Culinary heritage does not mean only culinary ingredients, food and old recipes, but it involves practices of producing the ingredients, ways of cultivating land, representations of the food, knowledge, skills of preparing food etc. Nowadays heritage also encompasses the practices of transmission of heritage from generation to generation, its response to the environment, interaction with nature and history, a sense of identity and continuity, respect for cultural diversity and human creativity and combining traditional, contemporary living at the same time. The culinary package Kras Carso Food Tour involves all these aspects. It promotes traditional Karst culinary recipes and dishes, such as *teranove supe* (stale bread dipped in milk and eggs, fried and then covered with Teran), *frtalja* (thick fried pancakes made with different herbs such as fennel, mint and melissa), making prosciutto (raw ham), growing herbs, making wine Teran and vinegar. Due to proximity to the sea and Mediterranean climate, Karst cuisine has been influenced by the Mediterranean culinary with its different aromas, spices and vegetables. Therefore it is not a surprising that the Kras Carso Food Tour includes also knowledge on growing and usage of local autochthonous herbs.

Another characteristic is that it presents and promotes the skills, knowledge and ways of cultivating land and consequently of making cultural environment, which is also valued as an important cultural heritage. The tourists can observe the work in the vineyards and in field can pick herbs and other vegetables. Moreover, they also get knowledge of the process of making prosciutto (raw ham) and taste it, as it is most characteristic food on Karst. In the past the prosciutto was made by the thighs of the brawny breeds of pigs and their crossbreeds, today some members of the Planta Association offer the prosciutto made from the only indigenous pig breed in Slovenia – pig from Krškopolje. Like that the culinary package encourages awareness of the indigenous breeds and like take the protection and safeguarding of the Slovenian cultural specialities. Since there is no Karst agriculture farms which do not produce a wine Teran, a wine tasty also characterise the culinary package and introduces viticulture in the Karst region which role has changed greatly over the years. The most famous Karst wine is Teran, an excellent red wine with a low alcohol content, which is grown on the red Karst soil from the *refošk* grape (Italian *Refosco*). Because of its permeable ingredients and lactic acid content it is actually regarded as having medicinal uses and is prescribed to people suffering from anaemia. Today the wine Teran has become an important culinary characteristic in the Karst region. It is a symbol of Karst identity too. Karst people are very proud of them and it is worth to continue its tradition of cultivation and transmission to younger generations.

Additionally, a visit of typical Karst villages, beautiful fortified village Štanjel with the medieval castle and other hidden places with reach tangible (architectural and horticultural objects) and intangible heritage (water managing in a dry Karst area) is added value to the tour. People do not only observe cultural and natural characteristic, but can also start to reflect how the Karst people survived in the

limestone land without surface water, poorly fertile soil and with unpleasant climate (strong wind – *burja* in the winter, dry summers etc.). These reflections can trigger the ideas for the sustainable development of the contemporary world, where natural resources are gradually disappearing. Moreover, the tourist offer, like Karst Carso Food Tour, which is based on the promotion of natural and cultural environments, can foster the reflection of the local people as well. Local people can recognise that they live in a valued landscape and because of that it is worth to sustainably preserve it and develop it.

B1/c Role of existing policies

In the case of Karst Carso Food Tour a bottom up approach was used. The members of the Planta Association were very proactive in designing and arranging culinary heritage experiences. They got involved with the local Komenski Kras Public Institute established by the Municipality of Komen aiming to foster marketing their culinary packages. The collaboration faced certain obstacles. The main challenge was the usage of different approaches and steps of working. The Planta Association wanted to speed up the process and followed the scheduled time line, while the Public Institute of Komenski Kras was delayed on several activities. However, the promotional culinary event organized for the journalists was very successful, the members of the Association really enjoyed in their activities. The new Mayor of the Municipality of Komen attended the event and he wished the association good work in the future. He also promised that in the following years he would stimulate the work of different cultural, heritage and tourist associations, both financially and morally. If this promise will become true, the bottom up and top down approaches will be link and like that the integrative approach in safeguarding the Karst culinary heritage will be established and achieved.

B2. In case the pilot action focused on ANOTHER scenario (not foreseen in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences), provide a description of the roles played by the stakeholder's network, cultural heritage and existing policies

In creation of Kras Carso Food Tour we used another scenario because the developer of a culinary experience is an association of 8 private holders all providing culinary experiences. This differs from the model of "classic/typical" association, particularly according to their motives; regarding the support gained from the regional public bodies and municipality. This new model is more similar to the C model (organizer: private holder), however, they are more similar regarding collaboration with other service providers. Since all private holders provide only culinary experience they need to involve other actors as well. Particularly this type of model requires collaboration with:

- a driver or transport company;
- a person who coordinates all culinary providers and other potential offer and guide visitors around different places;

- an expert from marketing, an expert who provides material (photo, texts);
- a designer who designs material into brochures and web site.

Since their main motive is not only a representation of culinary heritage experience, but also earning income through providing culinary heritage experience, it is crucial for them to have a good marketing strategy and a competitive offer.



**Text in red color indicates a temporary shortage in the Kras Carso Food Tour.*

PART C

C1. Present major steps/milestones in the whole process which were key in provisioning a success of the whole culinary package

Planned milestones:

M1: Interviews done and text/descriptions on services prepared; 31. 8. 2018

M2: Developed foodtour packages in Karst region; 31. 12. 2018

M3: Showcase event promoting foodtour packages in Karst region; 31. 5. 2019

Actual milestones:

M1: Gathering text material and ideas

This milestone was reached few months later than planned, in December 2018. For developing the final version, it was crucial that text material and beta version of culinary tourist package(s) were prepared by that time which enabled us to focus and start preparing the testing tour. Additionally, we also got an idea what kind of

photo material will be needed for the brochure and the website.

M2: Testing and evaluating the foodtour package

The testing tour in the beginning of February 2019 immediately showed us what functions and what we must, should and could improve. We interviewed (by phone) and evaluated all feedback from external visitors, the guide and Kras Carso Food Tour provided. Based on that, we identified the weakest points and made a plan how to overcome challenges (for example, we realized that the cooking class should be less complicated, that would be useful to prepare also shorter and cheaper food tour packages for those visitors who would like to experience lighter meal and would like to have additional activities and similar).

M3: Developed foodtour packages, brochures and web sites

Based on testing tour and evaluation on internal meeting with Planta Association we improved food tour packages, prepared quality photo material, a shorter text for website and even shorter messages for brochure which were written in three languages. Also this milestone was delayed (due to previous delay), it was reached only by the end of April 2019.

M4: Promotional event with relevant journalists, bloggers, representatives of tourist agencies and organizations, hotels etc.

This milestone was reached as planned, on May 9th 2019. It was an important step for Planta Association, however it turned out that many invited journalists and bloggers were not available/interested to come (even though the experience was free of charge and transportation from Ljubljana was arranged free of charge). Promotion and marketing of the Kras Carso Food Tour package seem to be the weakest point and since May we are now trying to improve it. Additionally, just before the event it came to a dispute between Planta Association and Komenski Kras Public Institute which was the main actor for promotion and marketing of the packages. Therefore, Planta Association has to network more, particularly with tourist agencies which could include food packages in their own offer. Additionally Planta Association has started to search and discuss with private bloggers, mostly from Italy, and german speaking countries because they believe that this is the most suitable channel to be recognized among more wealthier, aware and broad-minded tourist who usually seek a deeper holiday experience than just sitting at the beach and catching sun rays.

C2. Present key lessons learnt and, if identified, describe additional dimensions discovered during the implementation of the pilot activities that could be used to further define the SCENARIOS inserted in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences

The key lessons could be categorized in positive ones worth following and those one not to be repeated and should be improved in further development of culinary heritage experiences. According to this we highlight the following lessons learnt:

- Positive lessons:

- working with proactive and engaged organizer who is willing to contribute its own personal and financial resources and already has

- initial ideas;
- investing certain financial sources in getting high quality photo and video material – it is crucial for designing promotional paper and web based materials;
- testing a culinary package before implementing it in order to see what functions and what does not.
- Lessons that should be improved:
 - it is very hard, sometimes impossible to consolidate group of stakeholders due to their different expectations, motives, skills and knowledge;
 - it is too idealistic to expect that a public institution will get engaged and be successful in marketing, thus it would be better to include from the beginning an expert or a professional organization for marketing who will help to plan, design and the end sell culinary packages thus a question of coordination, logistics and marketing/selling the packages should be actively taken into account already from the beginning;
 - it is difficult to develop a more complex and diverse culinary heritage experience if the organizer is not willing to include and collaborate additional service providers.

REPORT: MUSHROOMS AND WILD HERBS - A CULTURAL AND CULINARY EVENT (Rural Development Association)

PART A

A1. Short description of the culinary event/service/product before the drafting and implementation of the action plan

The Conference-exhibit "Mushrooms and wild herbs" is a well-established cultural event organized at the end of October or beginning of November. It has been organized for more than 24 years and it has always attracted mainly locals interested in these natural resources. It must be said that picking mushrooms and wild herbs is a common practice in Spoleto; people do that on their free time for the pleasure of eating and making dishes with local "ingredients" and to spend time outdoors. Spoleto is rich in beautiful woods and fields that produce these natural resources. The event's programme, which in general lasted 2 days, was always focused on the promotion of scientific knowledge (disseminated in an educational manner in order to make the information accessible to wider public) about these resources through conferences and dedicated exhibits. Some collateral activities always took place such as guided excursions to collect these resources with the support of an expert, and the organization of a small fair (mainly in the last few years) with the participation of local craftsmen and some exhibitors. But in general the culinary valorisation of mushrooms and wild herbs was never considered nor developed. Gastronomic actors (such as restaurants, wine bars and "Italian fast food" businesses such as pizzeria, prosciutterie) never participated in the organization and promotion of the event. And also other actors such as small business owners, tourism operators and organizations active in the promotion and growth of the city were never really actively involved. The municipality has always supported the event (for example by giving for free the location to be used for the conference-exhibit) but it never saw it as an important initiative to be further developed to increase the tourism attractiveness level of Spoleto during low season. At last no external connections were established in the past with institutions, associations and municipalities that organize similar events in other territories. The only solid cooperation that characterized this event was between the organizer Pro Loco "A. Busetti" and the Mycological Group Valle Spoletana. The tourism value of the Conference-exhibit, especially thanks to its potential gastronomic appeal, was never developed in the past.

A2. Overview on the newly created/improved culinary services/products as the result of pilot action plan implementation

The event »Mushrooms and wild herbs« has always favoured its cultural dimension. This was clear also by the chosen name which was, since its very beginning, Conference-exhibit. Thanks to the implemented pilot action several relevant changes

occurred, to begin with the title: in fact during the 24th edition the event was called in several occasions: **mostra-mercato** (trade show). Another important aspect was the **location**: while in the previous editions the Conference-exhibit was organized in a cloister with no direct access to the historical centre (the most visited part of town) the 2018th edition took place in the heart of Spoleto (Piazza del Mercato and via Saffi). The choice of a different location was central also for the improvement of the culinary aspects of the event: in fact in the main square and in the street where the initiative was organized there are restaurants and shops. This aspect facilitated the involvement of food operators and other kinds of businesses.

In addition to the above, the following offers and services were improved thanks to the pilot activity:

- the availability of menus and dishes herbs and mushrooms based dedicated to the event (for the first time);
- their promotion by restaurant owners and by other kinds of gastronomic operators (Italian fast food places such as pizzeria, paninoteche, prosciutterie);
- the organization of a fair with typical local agro-food products (including mushrooms sellers, for the very first time);
- the creation of a new image for the event as cultural and culinary attraction to be offered to tour operators and travel agencies;
- the valorisation of mushrooms and wild herbs as culinary resources during the conferences;
- the cooperation level on these resources to be maximized as tourism attractors.

Mushrooms were also promoted during the event as local gastronomic resources by the shops (selling clothes, books, local crafts...) located down town: dry mushrooms were displayed to decorate the front store windows and they were also shown in their normal shape to adorn a variety of objects.

A3. Most relevant progresses/innovation made in the pilot areas by taking into consideration the goals introduced in the MEDFEST initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences

With reference to the **use of culinary tourism as means of attracting new visitors**, the pilot action implemented in Spoleto achieved the following progresses:

- Enhanced awareness level of food and tourism operators about the value of mushrooms and wild herbs as local gastronomic resources;
- Valorisation of mushrooms and wild herbs as local gastronomic attractors to be maximized during the event but also throughout the year. For the 24th edition this meant (for the first time ever) the creation of mushrooms and wild herbs based menus and dishes offered for the enhancement of the event;
- Creation of new ideas to increase the tourism use and gastronomic appeal of these resources to be implemented **for future editions**: multiple show cooking with the participation of chefs, but also with the active participation

of local lovers of traditional recipes, creation of taste experiences, food labs for children.

About the **growth of economic activity during the off-season** in MED space, the Conference-exhibit takes place at the end of October or beginning of November. Thanks to the increased attractiveness level of the event and through the cooperation established with tourism operators and with other organizations higher number of tourists visited Spoleto during the 4days of the initiative. This had positive impacts especially on the economic sustainability of restaurants but also on hotels, other small businesses located in the area where the event took place. It is expected that this trend will grow.

With reference to the use of **culinary tourism as a link between coastal tourist centres and less developed coastal hinterland**, more opportunities have been created thanks to the involvement of tour operators. (However the time of the year when the Mushrooms and wild herbs event is organized does not coincide with high tourism season, so no remarkable progress was made in this direction).

At last an important achievement was made to safeguard the use of the natural resources focus of the pilot action: thanks to the promotion of local recipes mushrooms and herbs based during the event but also throughout the year, **important culinary knowledge and traditions will be protected for future generation.**

PART B

B1. Based on the experiences developed in the pilot area, specify which integrations/adjustments should be made to the SCENARIOS described in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy that applies to the culinary experience you worked on. The following dimensions must be taken into consideration:

B1/a Stakeholder's network

The pilot activity we worked on belongs to **SCENARIO A**: the event was originally created by the Pro Loco to increase the cultural offers in Spoleto and it received the external support by the municipality. (The economic support by the municipality has been always limited, and it was often given "in kind", for example by giving for free the cloister was the event took place even though there was a charge for other services such as electricity, cleaning...). A similar dynamic was registered in the last 2 years, when the Pro Loco decided to develop the culinary aspects of the event.

With reference to the stakeholders, we registered a strong interest by **gastronomic operators** (especially restaurant owners) due to the fact that the culinary valorisation of mushrooms and wild herbs was seen as a good business opportunity. However, also **other kinds of enterprises** (clothes and household shops, café and bookstores) located near the square that hosted the event were very much interested in supporting the event and its gastronomic aspect. The motivation was that higher number of tourist would have visited and spent money in town if the event were more appealing.

Another important thing about stakeholders capable of having positive effects on the culinary experience is the establishment of connection with the organizers of similar events outside the region.

B1/b - Role of cultural heritage

Mushrooms and wild herbs have always found space in the event, but it was a cultural space. To begin with the exhibit and conferences, these natural resources have been linked to guided hikes to learn about their collection, but also to art display and different kinds of entertainments. The challenge of the pilot action was instead to rediscover the culinary value and appeal of these resources which are part of the local gastronomic tradition but they have never been explicitly valorised, especially during the event.

So the offer of dishes and menu herbs and mushrooms based and their promotion was an important part of the pilot activity, together with the cooking show and the gastronomic valorisation of these resources during the conferences. Also the fair with local agro-food exhibitors organized during the event was an improved aspect that contributed to enhancement of the Conference-exhibit also as gastronomic event.

Another important dimension was the identification of additional culinary activities to be implemented in future editions to be used as tourism attractors also by tour operators. In particular cooking classes, the creation of itineraries of taste and labs for children to learn about the smells and flavour of herbs.

New tourism packages that will include the event will be available in the market for the next edition.

B1/c Role of existing policies

The municipality provides a small support to local non-profit associations registered in Spoleto. The Pro Loco "A. Busetti" is among them. However the received financial resources do not cover all the expenses the Pro Loco supports to organize its major events, including the Mushrooms and wild herbs conference-exhibit. For this reason in order to organize the event a specific request of support is made every year. In general no additional economic resources are given, but the use of the location (or the public space as it was for the 2018th edition) is given for free. But this (top-down) support is not enough. For this reason two proposals were developed in order to grant a stable and sufficient backing of the event: the recognition of the Mushrooms and wild herbs conference-exhibit as regional fair and the creation of a new association: cities of mushrooms. Both actions should ensure greater economic support and a more consistent engagement for the growth of the event in the future.

B2. In case the pilot action focused on ANOTHER scenario (not foreseen in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences), provide a

description of the roles played by the stakeholder's network, cultural heritage and existing policies

N/A

PART C

C1. Present major steps/milestones in the whole process which were key in provisioning a success of the whole culinary package

The following three steps indicated that the designed pilot action was going in the right direction:

- **The active participation of restaurant owners and other food operators for the creation of a strong gastronomic image for mushrooms and wild herbs as local gastronomic resources.**

For the very first time since the launch of the event restaurants and other food providers were directly involved in the improvement of the Conference-exhibit. Thanks to their active participation (shown with the creation of dedicated mushrooms based menus and dishes but also with their promotion) it was possible to create a strong connection between mushrooms and wild herbs as cultural resources and as gastronomic local value. Without these stakeholders it would have not been possible to initiate the transformation of the event.

- **The interest of local entrepreneurs (small shops owners) and local association in the valorisation of the event.**

Another major milestone was the interest for the growth of the event shown by all the small businesses, especially those located in down-town Spoleto, where the conference-exhibit took place. Their contribution was about expressing the close connection between Spoleto and mushrooms thanks to dedicated decorations inspired by these natural resources. Thanks to their participation the city recognized the value and celebrated these cultural and gastronomic assets.

- **The intention of tourism operators to insert the experience in their catalogues for daily trip or tourism package.**

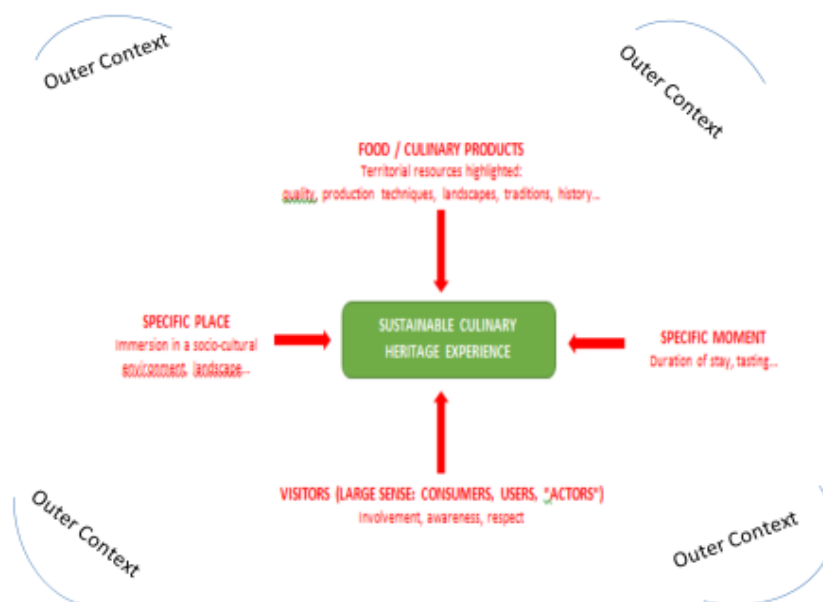
After the organization of the 24th edition meetings were organized with tourism operators in order to check on the feasibility of tourism proposals to increase the tourist's presence to the event for the coming years. Based on the positive results achieved during the 2018 edition thanks to the availability of culinary attractions, the organizations we spoke with showed commitments for the development of dedicated tourism offers.

C2. Present key lessons learnt and, if identified, describe additional dimensions discovered during the implementation of the pilot activities that could be used to further define the SCENARIOS inserted in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences

Three main lessons learnt:

- Different kinds of stakeholders can be involved in a SCHEMA, even organizations and businesses that apparently have nothing (or very little) to do with the culinary experience focus of intervention;
- The availability of local gastronomic resources is not enough for the growth/enhancement of sustainable culinary experiences. The creation of a strong appeal/identity is a key condition as well as its direct connection with a specific place;
- It's never too late to change the image of an event: the Mushroom and wild herbs conference exhibit has a long and consolidated reputation as cultural event. After 24 editions it was ready for a change, by maximizing the gastronomic value of these natural resources.

With reference to additional dimensions to be included in the SCENARIOS it could be useful to add the **OUTER CONTEXT**. While the SPECIFIC PLACE refers to a determined community (with peculiar socio-economic and cultural aspects), the **OUTER CONTEXT** refers to the dynamics (already existing or to be developed) with organizations, institutions outside the local context where the SCHEMA is implemented. The role of already existing or possible new connections with organizations that do not belong to the area but that could have an impact on the SCHEMA should also be taken into consideration. (For example the Italian national association of cities of truffle has positive influence on the gastronomic events that each city, members of the network, organizes. Hence the idea to create a national association of cities of mushrooms).



REPORT: MAR I MUNT CULINARY OFFERS (Purpan Engineering School)

PART A

A1. Short description of the culinary event/service/product before the drafting and implementation of the action plan

The culinary tourist offers created within the framework of the pilot activity were totally original and based on specific methodology. Due to its location, Purpan needed a real Mediterranean pilot area to implement its activities, organized through a visible and relevant institution. Thanks to previous projects and collaborations, the “Pays Pyrénées Méditerranée” (PPM, located in Occitanie Region, Catalan area) was thus contacted in the middle of 2017 and immediately recognized its concern for MEDFEST. Acting as an association representing public local authorities and able to involve all local stakeholders, the PPM was for Purpan a sort of “entrance door” into the pilot area, thanks to its knowledge of the issues and its skills in cooperation. Strongly engaged in activities bound to renewable energy, environment, biodiversity, education and culture, the PPM was finally willing to develop a skill in the topic of culinary tourism, intended to be a tool for rural development.

After a first meeting and several exchanges, the first collective working session was organized in February 2018, and brought together a significant number of stakeholders: PPM, local and regional authorities, tourist offices, restaurants, farmer’s organizations, tourism service providers, chamber of agriculture, local associations. Despite of different changes during the following months, this working group remained active until the end of the pilot activity and the achievement of objectives.

As a result of the strong interest and involvement of the tourist offices, the will to create new culinary tourism offers based on the cooperation of stakeholders appeared quickly. These offers were supposed to address a lack in the global offer of the area and to strengthen its attractiveness, especially during the middle tourist season (months of June and September). A culinary tourism expert – Territour Agency – was hired by Purpan to support the collective work of stakeholders. The School partner also decided to rely on a student’s internship, in charge of the realization of a territorial diagnose of the area and the identification of culinary tourism issues.

The governance of the pilot activity was ensured by Pays Pyrénées Méditerranée, with a strong and fruitful help of the most famous starred chef of the area: Jean Plouzenec. Due to his interest in the project, Jean Plouzenec has been a real “ambassador” of MEDFEST. His charism and his notoriety allowed leading all the other stakeholders behind him.

A2. Overview on the newly created/improved culinary services/products as the result of pilot action plan implementation

The tourist offers took the form of 1- or 2-days trips, gathering different sites and service providers involved in culinary activities (restaurants, farmers, wine cellars...) and highlighting the culinary heritage of the area, combined with other kinds of assets (history, architecture, landscapes, biodiversity). Based on the original slogan of “*Mar i Munt*” (“Sea and Mountain” in Catalan). The offers were progressively designed and marketed during the year 2018, with a first test during summer 2018. The finalization took place in Spring 2019. With the help of Purpan and of the external expert, the stakeholders proposed 4 different circuits, that are now commercialized by tourist offices:

- “Gourmet walk between sea and mountain” (3 hours) – hiking in forest, aromatic plants harvest, traditional meal, visit of wine cellar¹;
- “From waves to ridges” (1 day) – electric bike cycle ride, Mar I Munt meal, kayak;
- “Discover the flavours of Vallespir” (2 days) – bike, traditional Catalan meal, hiking and harvest, culinary workshop;
- “Mar I Munt circuit” (2 days) – visit of farms, artisans and cellar, culinary workshop, Mar I Munt meals.

In accordance with the principles of the MEDFEST project, these culinary offers are based on a strong involvement of visitors, who are immersed in a reality close to be authentic. This experiential dimension takes the form of tastings, cooking classes and exchanges with service providers. The target aimed by local stakeholders is mainly groups and employee representative committee.

From a methodological point of view, the working group was mainly built around institutional and/or representative stakeholders (tourist offices, restaurants associations, professional chambers), what might be called “level 1 stakeholders”. Thanks to their strategic positioning, these stakeholders managed to involve “level 2 stakeholders” (restaurants, farmers, other service providers, tourist agencies) in the design of the offers. This methodology led to a good appropriation of the initiative by many stakeholders.

¹In June 2019, this circuit was the first chosen by a group of 8 tourists.

A3. Most relevant progresses/innovation made in the pilot areas by taking into consideration the goals introduced in the MEDFEST initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences

Due to its Mediterranean location and its “classical” assets (sun, sea, landscapes), the area is attractive. The pilot activities contributed to highlight the culinary dimension of the area, which was not promoted enough according to the stakeholders. The combination between the classical assets and the culinary offers led to increase the potential attractiveness of the area, in particular during off-season. At this step, the impact in terms of job creation and economic development

remains modest. The offers need time to be integrated in the activity of stakeholders. In any case, the work created a strong will among partners to go further in cooperation and communication, in order to answer better to the visitor's expectations in terms of authenticity and diversity.

The Pays Pyrénées Méditerranée is characterized by a classical divide between coast (strong attractiveness, mass tourism) and hinterland (more fragile, less accessible, and more rural). In this situation, the tourist flows tend to remain concentrated in the coastline and not to benefit to hinterland. Based on "Mar I Munt" slogan, the culinary offers are a real hyphen between these two areas, which are now able to work together through innovative culinary experiences. The stakeholders also care to keep the control of the work done (content of the experiences, organization, governance, communication strategy).

In the design of the offers, the use of local resources was obvious, especially for farmers and restaurants. The resources considered are just as well physical (landscapes, biodiversity, raw materials) as intangible (history, culture, reputation). The stakeholders demonstrate a strong will to safeguard and to transmit this heritage. In the future, one of the main issues is to strengthen the sustainability of the culinary experience through the development of partnerships with key sectors such as education, health, energy and environment.

PART B

B1. Based on the experiences developed in the pilot area, specify which integrations/adjustments should be made to the SCENARIOS described in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy that applies to the culinary experience you worked on.

The following dimensions must be taken into consideration:

B1/a Stakeholder's network

The top down logic of the French pilot activity led to the methodology explained above and based on level 1 (tourist offices, local authorities) & 2 (service providers, restaurants) stakeholders. The level 1 stakeholders were those who built the culinary offers through the involvement of level 2 stakeholders.

The main weaknesses of the work done were the variable engagement of stakeholders: some tourist offices of the pilot area were never interested in participating, despite of numerous exchanges. Their reasons were the lack of time, or sometimes the fact that they did not believe in the relevance of the project.

Beyond the tourist offices, other stakeholders gradually disappeared from the working group, like professional chambers and regional authorities. Finally, the pilot activity remained dependant from Purpan's animation, through a constant work of reminders and "reboost" par e-mails and telephone.

Among the key factors of success of the pilot activity, the professional capacity of the tourist offices to design the offers through the exchanges with service providers. The support of the expert was nevertheless positive, given that tourist offices did not have a strong experience in culinary tourism. A significant progress has been done in

terms of storytelling and commercialization strategy. Another point related to the success of the pilot activity is the fact that some unexpected stakeholders played a decisive role. The best example is the starred chef Jean Plouzennec, the most famous chef of the Pyrénées Orientales Département. His important network was a key of the showcase and the press conference success and other chefs joined the project thanks to his involvement.

Finally, the main success of the pilot activity is not bound to the increase of tourist attendance (too soon to evaluate), but to the will of stakeholders to go further in the collective action and the development of new offers, in particular with the tourist offices not involved at the beginning. The main motivations of stakeholders are not necessarily economic, through the increase of turnover for example. The social link between service providers and visitors appears as a strong preoccupation, as seen during the showcase.

B1/b - Role of cultural heritage

The enhancement of the culinary heritage was ensured through an important work of storytelling made by tourist offices, with the support of the expert. This storytelling was bound on the combination between the food products and the other assets of the pilot area (biodiversity, landscapes, history). The “Mar I Munt” denomination symbolized the important identity dimension of the initiative.

The innovative nature of the culinary offers is bound to their experiential dimension. Each circuit was designed to involve the visitor into 4 different actions: the discovery of the area (through guided tours), the gathering or purchase of the food products, the cooking class and the tasting.

B1/c Role of existing policies

At this step, there is no strong connection between the pilot activity and the existing policies implemented by local authorities (especially municipalities), even though the topic of culinary heritage is totally in accordance with the issues and needs identified by stakeholders. Regarding the Pays Pyrénées Méditerranée (union of municipalities), a convention was signed with Purpan in order to formalize the partnership, to affirm the relevance of the pilot activity and to legitimate the PPM as the coordinator of pilot activity at local scale, in cooperation with tourist offices.

Now the pilot activity is almost finalized, the PPM launched an informal reflection to see how the results could be integrated in its development strategy: for the moment, culinary tourism is not yet considered as a priority topic. Within the framework of this reflection, the question of the governance of culinary tourism is important: which organisation is legitimate and relevant to manage this issue?

B2. In case the pilot action focused on ANOTHER scenario (not foreseen in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences), provide a description of the roles played by the stakeholder's network, cultural heritage and existing policies

N/A

PART C

C1. Present major steps/milestones in the whole process which were key in provisioning a success of the whole culinary package

Some keys success were already identified above:

- A rigorous methodology in the implementation of the pilot activity, based on a clear view of the final objectives and a relevant and exhaustive identification of stakeholders (level 1 & 2), this methodology led to a shared vision of the issues among stakeholders;
- A professional support from the expert on all the aspects of the design (animation, advices, storytelling, commercialization, prices...);
- A constant collective dynamic of the working group, despite of variable involvement of some stakeholders, and beyond this group, a strong involvement of "level 2" stakeholders (farmers, restaurants, tourist service providers);
- A strong support from Jean Plouzenec, starred chef, who played a role of ambassador for MEDFEST and welcomed the showcase and press conference;
- An identified organization in charge of the coordination of working group: the Pays Pyrénées Méditerranée;
- An external tourism agency in charge of selling the offers that gathered all stakeholders: no arguments and no conflict of interest.

Finally, a great (politic) support of elected representatives, who discovered through the showcase and press conference that a concrete and relevant activity was implemented thanks to MEDFEST.

C2. Present key lessons learnt and, if identified, describe additional dimensions discovered during the implementation of the pilot activities that could be used to further define the SCENARIOS inserted in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences

The main threat is the capacity of the collective dynamic to "stay alive" after the end of MEDFEST, of the showcase and the study visit, even if the MEDFEST funding for pilot activity were not important and were not the main point of motivation for stakeholders. The real success of the pilot activity is thus linked to the capacity of stakeholders to anticipate this phase. At this step, we are moderately optimistic about the durability of this collective dynamic: the farmers and the service providers

were strongly involved in the showcase and the study visit.

Another lesson learned is bound to the strong necessity for the success of the pilot activity to have good skills in project management, animation of working groups, but also on the topic of culinary tourism, and not only tourism in general, given the specificity of this sector.

Finally, the last point to underline is the lack of MEDFEST pilot activity in considering the visitor's expectations. The culinary offers were designed by the tourist offices from their knowledge about the visitors, their needs, their interest in culinary heritage and their willingness to pay. The implementation of a market study could have led to a strong added value for local stakeholders. Right now, the success of offers is not guaranteed.

REPORT: RUTES GASTRONÒMIQUES MENJA'T L'ALT URGELL (University of Barcelona)

PART A

A1. Short description of the culinary event/service/product before the drafting and implementation of the action plan

We chose this territory, Alt Urgell region because it fit perfectly with the characteristics that the MEDFEST project was looking for: inland zone, with some economic problems, and with depopulation.

Also because we have a colleague from the Anthropology Department of the University of Barcelona, Camila del Mármol, who has worked there for many years and who provided us with some contacts.

The design process of this product followed several steps:

- Meeting with the local administration (Turisme La Seu) and with the regional administration (Consell Comarcal). In this meeting we asked about the projects related to food heritage already carried out in the zone and how this field could be promoted or improved.

In this first meeting we could observe:

- A non direct communication between the regional administration and the producers;
- A non self-criticism of the local administration (Consell Comarcal de l'Alt Urgell and Turisme La Seu) of the results of the policies and actions carried out in the region that they have not worked out in the last years. Some questions arose: why they did not work out? How can we change or improve this situation?;
- They showed a passive attitude towards our project as they are stuck with the idea that nothing will work out rather than try to open new ways;
- The first reaction to our proposal was to keep a little bit of distance, probably because they felt that we were entering in their field of action;
- Finally, they understood the interest of the routes project and proposed to establish collaboration.

For this reason we decided to work more directly with the producers. In this phase, the following actions were undertaken:

- We visited all the agrarian and regional farms in the region to know the work developed by the small producers. They were asked about what they thought would be great to improve their tourist visibility.
- The answers of all producers interested in the project revealed that there was a great interest to move tourists to the farms.
- It was noticed that in the Catalonia region did not exist gastronomic routes that linked different products, with small mountain villages and local museums that promote the local history. Given the great diversity of artisan producers (wine, apple, dairy, lavender, beer, cheeses, infusions, jams...), we

decided to design gastronomic routes throughout the territory of Alt Urgell. During the initial meetings with the producers, certain disbelief was perceived concerning the impact of the project. This disbelief was in a sense of false expectation, like "we've already had other European projects and they've ended up with nothing concrete". In some way also for the fact that I was an "outsider" coming from the University of Barcelona and working on an European project, so very big and very far institutions for a people who work in a very local dynamic. After several meetings and encounters this relationship became much more direct, especially when they saw that my intention was first to listen their opinion and not impose anything from above.

However, after including their producers' association (Menja't l'Alt Urgell) in the process of design and implementation of the gastronomic routes, they realized the positive impact of this new tourist product. Since, the producers have been getting gradually involved into the project to the point that they themselves will manage the reservations, making a direct tourist boost. The local and regional administration will be only use as collaborators, but not as managers of the new tourism product. The most relevant achievement has been the active involvement of the producers and artisans on the gastronomic routes.

If the producers did not trust in the initiative, the routes would probably fail.

A2. Overview on the newly created/improved culinary services/products as the result of pilot action plan implementation

The gastronomic routes that we promote are unique and special because they are not only focus on a single product, but they join different villages and different producers who live in a beautiful landscape surrounded by the Pyrenees mountains. We worked directly with Menja't l'Alt Urgell association. The goal of the association is to promote and provide public outreach to the group of local quality products made in the Alt Urgell region, as well as to enhance the environment that surrounds them.

The routes are one-day trips and include tastings of different products and a programmed lunch. The price is 40 euros per person. The target group are couples, families, groups of friends. The routes are already available and can be booked through the website: www.menjatlalturgell.cat. In the next months the routes will be also available through some travel agencies of Andorra and Barcelona.

The contents of the routes are:

Route 1: The route of smells and the Trementinaires

Villages: Ossera, Tuixent.

Minimum 6 people, maximum 20

Season: May-October

Discover Ossera through the work of three artisan women. The ecological aromatic plants of Herboristeria Nogué, the artisanal goat cheese from Serrat gros, and the homemade jams of cal Casal. Lunch will be in the village of Tuixent in the restaurants Cal Gabriel or Peritxola. Finish the day with a visit to the Museum of the

Trementinaires, and get to know about the women who made healing creams based on aromatic plants.

Route 2: The route of the restoration and safeguarding of Food Heritage

Villages: Alàs, Bar, Calbinyà

Minimum 8 people, maximum 20

Season: year-round

The route starts at ca l'Andreu, in Alàs, an ecological livestock farm for veal. Then onto the Formatgeria Baridà, in Bar, to visit its workrooms and meet their goats. Lunch will be at cal Serni in the village of Calvinyà, a 15th-century country house where more than 80% of what is consumed is produced in the premises.

Route 3: The route of the heritage and pairing

Villages: La Penella, Coll de Nargó, Montanissell

Minimum 8 people, maximum 25

Season: year-round

Visit one of the oldest artisan dairies in the region, Castell-llebre in the La Penella farmhouse (Peramola). In the Coll de Nargó, discover the Museum of the Raiers, a now-extinct trade, where there is a tasting of Raiers' coca from Reig Bakery. In Montanissell, discover the Carisma wine, a high altitude white wine with aromas from the Pyrenees. Lunch will be an array of local products at Cal Borda restaurant.

Route 4: The route of the high altitude products and the dairy producers

Villages: Montan de Tost, la Reula

Minimum 10 people, maximum 25-30

Season: year-round (depending on snow in winter months)

Discover Montan de Tost through visits to Cal Margarit, a lavender production farm, and the Carisma winery, with its high-altitude vines. Lunch will be at the tasting space of the Mas d'Eroles artisanal cheese factory in Adrall. The route ends with a visit to La Reula dairy farm in The Pyrenees.

Route 5: The fermentation route: bread, beer and cheese

Villages: Montferrer, Bellestar, Arfa, Adrall

Minimum 6 people, maximum 20

Season: year-round

The visit starts at the Montferrer flour museum, which includes machinery from the 19th century. Then onto the Ecofranch farm, which produces cereal, spelt flour, potatoes, and cow milk. Afterwards, there is a guided tour to the VIP craft brewery in Bellestar. Lunch will be at the Mas d'Eroles cheese factory, followed by a visit of its workrooms and cellar.

Route 6: The route of cheeses and artisan chips potatoes

Villages: Oliana, Peramola, Masía La Penella

Minimum 6 people, maximum 25

Season: year-round

Discover the southern part of the region. In Oliana, visit the farmhouse of the l'Oliva cheese factory and its goat pens, as well as the workshop of the family-owned Sastret's potato chips business. Lunch will be at La Masia de Peramola restaurant, followed by a visit to the Castell-llebre cheese factory in the La Penella farmhouse, one of the oldest in the region.

Route 7: Route of the gastronomic heritage in Seu d'Urgell

Town of La Seu d'Urgell

Minimum 8 people, maximum 15

Season: year-round

Discover the region's capital. In the Espai Ermengol, visit Cooperativa del Cadí to get a taste of one of its cheeses paired with Pyrenean infusions made by l'Infús. Then visit the workrooms of the l'Abadessa cheese factory, located in the old town. Lunch will be at El Rastell, the restaurant of a local sausage producer. The route ends with a visit to the store Menja't l'Alt Urgell, carrying artisanal products from the whole region.

These routes will also create a more efficient network and will bring together all the producers and artisans.

A3. Most relevant progresses/innovation made in the pilot areas by taking into consideration the goals introduced in the MEDFEST initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences

The region of Alt Urgell historically has been one of the poorest areas in Catalonia. It is located in the Northwestern section of the country and on the steep slopes of the Pyrenean mountains. Several waves of depopulation affected the district since the end of the 19th century and continued to do until the 1980s. At the beginning of the 20th century, the area improved its connection to larger regional markets by developing a new production system based on specialization in dairy farming. Nowadays, the region is struggling to consolidate its economic development, fostering heritage policies, tourism and artisan productions.

Barcelona and the Costa Brava are mass tourism destinations in Catalonia. This project will help decentralize this massification and promote a high quality culinary and cultural heritage.

The main goal of this Gastronomic Routes is to revitalize and bolster the economic and social conditions of rural producers, and artisanal work in general. This is the reason for the 7 different routes implying the participation of: 25 producers, 17 villages, 9 farms and 4 local museums.

The routes also involve local restaurants, some local transport companies and guide services in foreign languages guides (collaboration with a local language school). Through these collaborations we can observe the impact of the routes on the territory.

L'Alt Urgell is near to Andorra, a tourist pole par excellence. We wanted to take advantage of this situation to promote the routes among several travel agencies of Andorra. Therefore, we invited these agencies to the pilot test. They are very happy with the gastronomic routes and are already negotiating with the producers to make the promotion of the routes by their own. We received the same reaction of a cultural and alternative tourism agency from Barcelona. This agency is also interested in the promotion of this sort of alternative tourism, related to the territory, the gastronomy and the local history.

The fact that the routes promote small farms working with local produce implies a greater knowledge of sustainable projects that protect not only the landscape but also the food heritage.

Among the agrifood producers present on the routes we find the recovery of apple and mountain wine, an ancestral process of cheese (dry cheese with alcohol to preserve), a traditional tuber that was being lost (tupinambus). Promoting this knowledge helps to preserve the heritage.

If the routes attract a lot of people this activity will have a very positive economic impact on the whole territory.

PART B

B1. Based on the experiences developed in the pilot area, specify which integrations/adjustments should be made to the SCENARIOS described in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy that applies to the culinary experience you worked on. The following dimensions must be taken into consideration:

B1/a Stakeholder's network

The Provincial Administration (Diputació de Lleida) has believed in the project since the first day they were introduced to it. They gave economical support in order to improve the promotion of the activities (promotional video and website).

The County Administration (Consell Comarcal) did not appreciate the fact that the producers Association (Menja't l'Alt Urgell) have received money for their website. They wanted to limit the use of this website to the gastronomic routes, despite the fact that the local producers manage the website and that it contains all the information regarding the producers, the routes, the villages and the shops where they sell their products.

For the producers, it was not coherent to have two websites considering that the routes are only one more additional activity for the association, supported by MEDFEST. The Diputació de Lleida was on the same position of the Consell Comarcal and the negotiations for the contents of the website have been tenser that we expected.

Concerning the external experts of the project and their institutions (Universitat de Girona and CETT, Campus de Turismo y Gastronomía of the Universitat de Barcelona), the experience has been really positive and they have been greatly involved. These external experts are analysing the possibility of sending their students to these gastronomic routes.

The implication of the local producers, the more active stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project, has been very positive. We have collaborated with them in the official presentations and press articles in newspapers and magazines. Furthermore, they have been invited to participate and to promote their products and gastronomic routes in the V International Congress of the Food Observatory and Alicia Foundation (June 2019).

B1/b - Role of cultural heritage

The culinary heritage is combined with cultural heritage visiting four local museums:

- A museum of flour, where we can find English machines from the nineteenth century moved by the force of the river to boost energy in the manufacture of flour.
- A museum dedicated to the traditional and ancestral knowledge of aromatic plants. This visit is accompanied by a workshop where the visitor can make their own moisturizing cream based on plants of the Pyrenees Mountains.
- A museum about an ancestral profession, the *raiers*. These professionals cut the wood in the forest, removed the branches and the foreshortening, threw them by the river and in the place where the waters were calm tied the trunks to make some boats and took them to the sea. There, they sold the wood.
- A museum dedicated to the local history of the region and especially to the presence of dairy cows that have given to the region a national recognition in the production of dairy products (cheese, butter, yogurt, cream...) with the oldest cattle cooperative in the state Spanish.

In addition to these museums, the visitor can experientially know the farms of the local producers: go by jeep up a mountain in order to observe the cows of a local farm, collect aromatic plants, learn to make jams, watch videos about the elaboration process, and taste all the products.

B1/c Role of existing policies

The relation of the gastronomic routes with the current policies is to promote the local products, the need to support the economic and environmental sustainability and to make known the territory. For this purpose, the local administration (concretely 'Turisme La Seu') has collaborated with the Menja't l'Alt Urgell website information and promoting the routes in their offices. The Consell Comarcal de l'Alt Urgell has also collaborated offering a specific budget to funding a tasting with local products during both presentations of the routes.

The approach used in the design of the culinary experience is the bottom up. The local producers associated with Menja't l'Alt Urgell, the direct beneficiaries of the project, have been included in all the decisions undertaken during the design and the implementation of the gastronomic routes. Their reactions have been very positive and the producers have become increasingly involved in the project to the point that they are going to manage the project.

We really think that it has been an approach that worked out very positively.

B2. In case the pilot action focused on ANOTHER scenario (not foreseen in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences), provide a description of the roles played by the stakeholder's network, cultural heritage and existing policies

N/A

PART C

C1. Present major steps/milestones in the whole process which were key in provisioning a success of the whole culinary package

- The most important achievement was to start the project from the bottom (the producers) and not from the administration or tour operators. In this way, the producers are more involved in the design of the itineraries and this allowed us to focus more directly on their needs.
- To have more than one product in the routes allows observing more production techniques and reaching a wide range of people.
- The association of the cultural local heritage (visiting the museums) with the local gastronomy has been an asset to the development of a better product.
- The displacement of the visitors among different small mountains villages with beautiful landscapes creates a better experience.
- To have an own website where it is possible to book the route gives more profit margin to the producers and more flexibility to the visitors.
- To promote the routes among important tourism agencies of Barcelona and Andorra will probably increase the number of visitors.

C2. Present key lessons learnt and, if identified, describe additional dimensions discovered during the implementation of the pilot activities that could be used to further define the SCENARIOS inserted in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences

It is interesting to have different partners (administration, private sector, associations, etc.) before launching a culinary experience because it is possible to beneficiate of different points of view.

To take care of some troubles and distrusting among the people involved in the project because it can affect negatively the creation and promotion of the culinary experience.

To define properly the target audience of the culinary experience. Some producers proposed to test the routes for some time with a general public, including families. It was said that the own experience would tell if the fact that there are children becomes harmful or not, due to the fact that they can break things, annoy other attendees, etc.

Try to manage the complementary activities that will be included in the culinary experience (transport, different language guides, meeting/tasting places, restaurants, hotels, etc.).

Be able to combine two different managements: private (travel agencies) and “free” routes in which people can make the routes by their own (using their car and contacting the producers directly).

REPORT: WHERE IS IT? THE BEST OF MEDITERRANEAN! (In Loco Association. Intervention. Formation. Studies for local development)

PART A

A1. Short description of the culinary event/service/product before the drafting and implementation of the action plan

As part of the pilot project developed in Portugal for the INTERREG MED "MEDFEST" Project, In loco Association launched the "Where is it ...? The best of the Mediterranean!", a national challenge to those responsible for sustainable gastronomic tourism experiences based in the Mediterranean cultural heritage, to present their projects and initiatives, making themselves known and integrating a network that shares the interest in valuing the Mediterranean lifestyle. Based on the best experiences identified and evaluated, the MEDFEST project team has built visiting proposals and interpretive circuits that connect them on trips to discover the territory and its culture through gastronomy.

Our first proposal, called "Magical Mystery Tour", runs through the south of the country, linking the Lisbon Region to the Alentejo and the Algarve, ending in Tavira, UNESCO's recognition representative community; another proposal links the country from north to south, in a territory rich in natural landscapes and popular traditions, which makes these experiences even more special, connecting 16 experiences of sustainable gastronomic tourism of excellent quality. The third selection of the best gastronomic experiences, see table 1, which are part of the pilot project that the In Loco Association promoted, will be highlighted in this report and are located in the south of Portugal, in the Algarve and Alentejo regions, with a greater incidence of experiences and a territory privileged by its millenarian Mediterranean heritage, expressed by its genuine local products, culture, communities, climate and history.

With the aim of preserving local gastronomy, culture and traditions, which have been increasingly threatened by mass tourism and by globalized cultural standards, the action "Where is it ...? The best of the Mediterranean!" promotes some local traditions and products and catalogue gastronomic experiences based on the Mediterranean diet. "Where is it", aims to guide tourists to make their itinerary according to their own choice of drive tourism, and to use sustainable gastronomic experiences in the Algarve region.

In addition to preserving local intangible heritage, these experiences strengthen the environmental and economic sustainability of the region, valuing the knowledge and practices of local food use, safeguarding the regional culture.

Tourists and interested people actively participate in the elaboration of traditional dishes in a traditional or modern way and can through these experiences awaken the aromas, textures, flavours and traditional knowledge. They can also choose to visit local markets, visits to the local producer, cooking workshops, oenological experiments, experiences where they assume the role of a fisherman, shellfisher, or

farmer, appropriating in the first person customs, traditions, products and local culture.

A2. Overview on the newly created/improved culinary services/products as the result of pilot action plan implementation

Within the scope of the MEDFEST project, In loco Association has identified and evaluated numerous sustainable gastronomic tourism experiences, compiled in a database with the common theme “Where is it ...? The best of the Mediterranean!” which aims to promote sustainable gastronomic experiences at national and regional level based on Mediterranean gastronomy. This initiative gives opportunity and greater visibility to the gastronomic experiences that exist in the Algarve. In addition to attracting visitors interested in sustainable tourism, “Where is it” emphasizes regional gastronomic itineraries and the economic, cultural and cultural values of the region. “Where is it” is an initiative to develop sustainable gastronomic tourism, on local food consumption and the valuation of rural inland areas.

More than 30 Mediterranean gastronomy sustainable tourism experiences, services, and products were catalogued by the project, promoting culture, gastronomy and local products through traditional culinary workshops, tastings, visits to local producers and gastronomic programs, almost always developed in rural areas.

With emphasis on the Mediterranean Diet, Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO), the catalogued gastronomic tourism experiences, have in common the respect for culture and tradition, healthy lifestyle, authenticity and sustainability, fresh local products and traditional wild herbs that give the dishes a unique and authentic taste of regional food.

Whether on the Seaside (Littoral), on the Limestone area (Barrocal) or on the schist mountains (Serra), a world of aromas allied to a nature of unmistakable beauty is what we can expect from the experiences carried out throughout Portuguese territory (north, central, south). The programs are usually done with small groups, for people with little or moderate culinary experience, fun and with local flavours and knowledge.

Local and regional actors, local producers, chefs, tourism, catering and gastronomy companies were involved from the beginning in the design of the final tourist product developed by the association In loco, which aims to reduce seasonality, increase regional sustainability, making known to the visitors the routes of sustainable gastronomic tourism existing in the region, based on the Mediterranean diet.

The “Where is it ...?” initiative focused on creating a database of sustainable gastronomic experiences based on the Mediterranean Diet in the country and on the Algarve region, design a visual identity for the itineraries; present possible itineraries connecting experiences between MED points from the future creation of an online platform; promote the itinerary and create a new sustainable tourism product that is an alternative complement and an alternative to mass tourism, focused on the low season and the interior rural territory.

More than 30 experiences are listed below in table 1, which strengthen the local

identity, linked to sustained tourism and having the Mediterranean diet as a cultural matrix in the Portuguese territory.

19 activities were selected from the process of definition of a new gastronomic tourism product “MEDSOUTH”, resulting from the selection - in the Algarve and Alentejo regions - of the best experiences of sustainable gastronomic tourism developed by the MEDFEST Project under “Where is it ...?”. Of these, 12 were classified as experiences and 7 as various tourist activities, all linked to the Mediterranean diet (see table 1).

This database, which can grow until the end of the MEDFEST project, is the basis for the creation of the “Where is it” platform, which aims to give greater visibility to gastronomic experiences and increase the offer of sustainable tourist options in MEDSOUTH. The platform “Where is it ...? The best of the Mediterranean!” intends to promote local traditions and products, guiding tourists to make their itinerary according to what they themselves decide (drive tourism), and to use the sustainable gastronomic experiences existing in MEDSOUTH - Portugal, as a territorial marketing strategy, a road map, to guide visitors and connect them to the rural world and the fishing communities that share this rich heritage cultural heritage that is the Mediterranean Diet.

A3. Most relevant progresses/innovation made in the pilot areas by taking into consideration the goals introduced in the MEDFEST initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences

It was possible through the initiative “Where is it ...? The best of the Mediterranean!” to realize that these experiences play a very important role in local communities, especially in the low density ones, because their activities favour the use of local products, the local culture, the preservation and enhancement of traditional knowledge, and of the gastronomic cultural heritage of the region and sustainability. Another very important role of these experiences put on the tourist or visitors is the creation of good memories through immersions in local communities, their customs, legends and traditions, as well as making them more environmentally conscious.

The “Where is it ...?” initiative also appears to reinforce the visibility and promotion of the local image, which also favours a number of complementary cultural and economic activities and the processes of sustainable local development.

Together with the Road map “Where is it ...?”, the location, time and intentions of the visitor and with the help of the platform “Where is it” and all the offer of experiences, a few dozen itinerary combinations can be generated making this an enthralling journey of discovery of gastronomic tourism sustained promoted by the Mediterranean diet.

PART B

B1. Based on the experiences developed in the pilot area, specify which integrations/adjustments should be made to the SCENARIOS described in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy that applies to the culinary experience you worked on. The following dimensions must be taken into consideration:

B1/a Stakeholder's network

“Where is it ...? The best of the Mediterranean!” was carried out in cooperation with representatives of local, regional and local public administrations, local producers and local tourism agents, actors and stakeholders who could develop and improve the offer of tourism experiences of sustainable gastronomy in the long term, facilitating the implementation of project actions.

Additional stakeholders have been identified, such as local chefs, small producers, and professionals in the gastronomic area, lodgings and hotels, tourism agents, local tourism services of some municipalities among others, essential partners for the creation and success of gastronomic experiences.

In the process of evaluation, selection and testing of sustainable gastronomic tourism experiences, there were some situations in which it was necessary to discard some proposals because of the lack of involvement or interest in some of these experiences or difficulties in making a commitment to cooperate with the MEDFEST project and the initiative “Where is it ...?”. We also identified less articulated experiences (without appropriate methodologies and planning), which can make the experience unpleasant; even experiences that cease to exist, for several factors. How does the MEDFEST project and the initiative “Where is it ...? The best of the Mediterranean!” Does not have exclusive control over experiences and partners, its sustainability is worrying and may require additional effort from local partners and the Medfest project, namely in the creation and implementation of an online platform that gives continuity to the tourist products created.

B1/b - Role of cultural heritage

More than 30 sustainable gastronomic tourism experiences based on the Mediterranean diet have been mobilized, where the use of fresh produce, respect for local culture, tradition and customs are valued. Most of these activities, combine local ethnobotanical knowledge, rural traditions and artisanal fishing, the geographic diversity of the region's landscapes (Serra, littoral, barrocal), as well as the history and architectural heritage so present in Portugal.

Tourists, visitors and interested people actively participate in the elaboration of traditional dishes in a traditional or creative way and can through these experiences awaken the aromas, textures, flavours and traditional wisdom. They can also choose to visit local markets, local producers, cooking workshops, wine experiments, or lifestyle experiences where they assume the role of a fisherman, shellfisher or farmer, appropriating in the first person customs, traditions, products and local

culture. In addition to preserving the local intangible heritage, these experiences strengthen the environmental and economic sustainability of the region, valuing knowledge and practices of local food use, safeguarding the regional culture.

“Where is it ...? The best of the Mediterranean!” is supported by an innovative collaboration platform among local operators because it offers the creation of a database of sustainable gastronomic experiences based on the Mediterranean diet, the country and the region; the creation of itineraries connecting experiences between the MED points; projection of a visual identity for the itineraries; promotion of the itinerary; creation of a new sustainable tourism product; creation of complementary and alternative offers to mass tourism and based on the achievement of these objectives, aims to guide and make known tourists and visitors of sustainable gastronomic experiences based on the Mediterranean diet in the Algarve region, as well as assist in strengthening the economy, cultural identity and local development.

B1/c Role of existing policies

The gastronomic tourism product proposal “MED South”, resulting from the selection, in the Algarve region, of the best experiences of sustainable gastronomic tourism developed by the MEDFEST Project in the scope “Where is it ...? The best of the Mediterranean!” falls within the objectives of the Action Plan and Safeguarding the Mediterranean Diet, 2018-2021 activity plan, integrated since 2013 in the UNESCO list. This plan underlines the need to ensure “the articulation between actions and activities in order to optimize the links and synergies between the partners, ensuring a concerted action at regional level and responding to the implementation of the Safeguard Plan” action that is fully in agreement with the MEDFEST action plan and the project “Where is it ...? The best of the Mediterranean!”.

The role of public policies within the 2018-2021 Plan of Action, Plan of Action and Safeguarding of the Mediterranean Diet - is intended to support its continuity in a sustainable way and to pass on to the generations to come the concept of the Mediterranean Diet. Efforts to enhance, promote and strengthen cultural and natural identity are seen as an additional opportunity for local socio-economic development; sustainable tourism be it nature or gastronomic and combat seasonality; walking in tune with the goals of the platform “Where is it ...? The best of the Mediterranean!”.

In addition, there is a Regional Mediterranean Diet Commission, set up in 2014, which aims to “follow the projects related to the Mediterranean Diet in the Algarve”. This commission includes, besides the CCDR Algarve, the University of Algarve, the Municipality of Tavira, the Regional Directorate of Culture of the Algarve, the Regional Directorate of Agriculture and Fisheries of the Algarve, the Algarve Tourist Region, Turismo de Portugal (Escola de Hotel and Tourism of the Algarve - Faro and Hospitality and Tourism School of Vila Real de Santo António), the In Loco Association, the Association of Hoteliers and Industrialists of the Algarve, the Confraternity of Gastronomists of the Algarve, the Confraternity of Enófilos and

Gastronomic of the Algarve , Tertulia Algarvia and the Portuguese Cardiology Foundation - Algarve. All these partners help consolidate the actions of the “Where is it ...? The best of the Mediterranean!” in conjunction with public policies in the Safeguarding of the Mediterranean Diet.

An excellent example of vertical integration of the objectives of the MEDFEST project into public policies and interventions is well illustrated by the organization at the main celebration event of the Mediterranean lifestyle, the Mediterranean Diet Fair, in which MEDFEST, through the In Loco Association, has a relevant role, integrating its organizing committee, which groups the regional administrations of agriculture, culture, tourism, municipalities, University, the regional coordination commission and many other partners. The MEDFEST team actively collaborates in the programming and implementation of the activity plan, namely in the organization of the producer and artisan market, the regional gastronomic demonstration showcase and the organization of the final event of the MEDFEST project, the international conference on sustainable food tourism in September of 2019.

B2. In case the pilot action focused on ANOTHER scenario (not foreseen in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences), provide a description of the roles played by the stakeholder’s network, cultural heritage and existing policies

N/A

PART C

C1. Present major steps/milestones in the whole process which were key in provisioning a success of the whole culinary package

The initial work was based on In loco's previous experience in supporting the creation of local companies and their organization in communities of action, grouping companies and entities that share common denominators. Based on this knowledge, it was possible to identify resources with potential to integrate a network of tourism providers responsible for sustainable gastronomic tourism experiences. To complete the territorial coverage of this type of activity, an intensive research was carried out by the MEDFEST team to identify operators who had the potential to implement gastronomic experiences or who already practiced in their agendas some type of action with the theme. For this, two actions were used that occurred in parallel. One of them was an intense search through search sites, where it was possible to make a first collection of information. The collected data were evaluated and submitted to a selection process, where the following criteria were analysed: physical structure, internal logistics capacity, appropriation of the project objectives, and compliance with the SCHEMA criteria; the other approach adopted was the launch and promotion of public calls, where the experiences and main stakeholders were identified. In both cases, the partners' interest in a commitment to cooperate with the MEDFEST project was verified.

In a subsequent phase, some of the identified sites were the subject of field visits, where the team evaluated “in situ” the conditions of use of the resource, its ability to articulate with others, its adequacy to the project objectives. Some of these experiences have been subject of testing activities, to validate their quality and ability to host visitors.

The selected experiments were integrated into the digital map of the MEDFEST project and the four best were invited to present themselves publicly in the 2018 regional show case during the Mediterranean Diet Fair and to participate in a field trip to the 5th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism, in San Sebastian (Spain).

Subsequently, itineraries and routes were also outlined and tested, articulating several of the experiences considered best prepared to integrate the MEDFEST thematic routes. Some of these routes were also subject to press trips with national and regional media, for the dissemination of the project and consolidation of the sustainable gastronomic tourism destination.

The initiative “Where is it ...? The best of the Mediterranean!” selected experiences and the routes created were innovative and offer new opportunities for sustainable tourism as it assists in the preservation of the local intangible heritage, strengthen the environmental and economic sustainability of the region, valuing knowledge and practices of local food use, safeguarding the regional culture. With the support of local producers, local tourism agents, local chefs, regional actors, professionals in the gastronomic area, lodging and hotels, local councils of tourism in some municipalities, among other interested parties who could develop and improve gastronomic tourist experiences offers sustainable development in the short and long term, and also facilitate the implementation of product actions “Where is it ...? The best of the Mediterranean!”, essential parts for the creation and success of this product.

C2. Present key lessons learnt and, if identified, describe additional dimensions discovered during the implementation of the pilot activities that could be used to further define the SCENARIOS inserted in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences

As the survey of the experiences of sustainable gastronomy tourism took place, it became clear that their number and quality is superior to the initial expectations. It was also possible to conclude that the work in support of the preparation of the experiences is very intense and continuous so that they can be enjoyed according to the principles of creative and sustainable tourism.

The design of packages of experiences that compose routes or itineraries is a demanding and meticulous task, and must be rigorously tested so that the final result is able to provide an unforgettable and enriching global experience for all the participants.

There is an activity that can be used to perpetuate the results of the pilot project and its sustainability: The creation of an evolutionary electronic platform to promote and commercialize the experiences and routes that connect them, integrating not only

those of the Portuguese pilot project but also the other partners of the MEDFEST project, allowing not only the selection of predetermined routes, but also the choice of itineraries by the visitor, according to their preferences, available time and distance to go.

REPORT: FROM FARM TO FORK (Agency for Rural Development of Istria Ltd. Pazin)

PART A

A1. Short description of the culinary event/service/product before the drafting and implementation of the action plan

The gastronomy experience is positioned on the historically significant location of Gortan Hill near Pazin, in the Educational Gastronomy Center of Istria. The Educational Gastronomy Center has been established within the Agency for Rural Development of Istria, with the purpose of revitalization and presentation of high-quality typical products of the Istrian peninsula. In order to preserve the Istrian culinary heritage and to appraise the autochthonous breeds, the didactic kitchen of the centre has become a place where local chefs, restaurant owners, and caterers have been educated. Workshops are organized in two cycles each year covering the topics from traditional to modern gastronomy and are based on the usage of local agricultural products. At the workshops, the participants get acquainted with the Istrian products and recipes and they participate in preparing typical Istrian dishes, in both traditional and modern way. From the very beginning of forming the workshops, each year outstanding results have been constantly achieved where was more than 1,000 participants in 100 workshops. Since Istria is recognized as a gastronomy destination and the visitors/tourists are looking for authentic experiences especially the ones connected to the culture and gastronomy heritage of the destination, AZRRI started to develop the culinary packages for visitors. At the culinary experience in the Educational Gastronomy Center of Istria, visitors through the workshop involvement learn about the Istrian customs, tradition and products and also taste local dishes that are prepared by professional chefs (truffles, olive oil, traditional pasta, and prosciutto) and wine produced by local winemakers. In order to present the Istrian way of life and the local agricultural products of the rural area of Istria, as a part of the gastronomy experience, visitors visit the local farm and agritourism.

A2. Overview on the newly created/improved culinary services/products as the result of pilot action plan implementation

AZRRI - Agency for Rural Development of Istria within the project MEDFEST has developed "From Farm to Fork", the gastronomy product/package that represents the improvement of existing services through an inventive offer which will develop a new segment of sustainable gastronomy tourism aiming at the promotion of rural areas and local agricultural products. The main idea was to represent the local autochthonous breeds and products and to valorise them through specific gastronomy experience in order to raise awareness about the importance of traceable local food. A significant part of the experience "From Farm to Fork" is a

storytelling concept with the strong educational elements, which give great potential to the sustainability of this kind of offer. The local and regional actors, stakeholders and producers from tourism, gastronomy and agricultural sector, have been included from the very start in the designing of the product “From Farm to Fork”. In the future, this kind of product can be easily transferred because has been developed on a real basis and needs of the local community. The gastronomic experience is designed in a way that tourists/visitors start their one-day culinary tour at Gortan Hill in Pazin and they become the active participants. Tourists/visitors are led through a story about the Istrian cattle — “Boškarin” and his value in the past, in the present and also in the future, after what they start a journey “along the paths of the Boškarin” during which they stop at a farm of Istrian autochthonous breeds located nearby. At the end of the farm tour, they return to the Educational Gastronomy Centre, where the culinary workshop is held by the local top-rated chefs and by their assistance the visitors engage in the preparation of traditional Istrian dishes. Afterwards, in the sensory and social experience, they enjoy with their senses in the dishes they have prepared, along with the traveling group. This type of tourist product allows visitors to connect with the territory and to increase their awareness about the traceability of Istrian products.

A3. Most relevant progresses/innovation made in the pilot areas by taking into consideration the goals introduced in the MEDFEST initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences

Sustainable tourist package “From Farm to Fork” presents an experiential gastronomy product based on local resources which adds value to local stakeholders and leads to overall prosperity of the local community. The tourists/visitors are seeking diverse experiences that match their interests and provide a sense of personal accomplishment, thereby creating their own unique memories. In line with that point, “From Farm to Fork” is giving the opportunity to the tourists/visitors to become a part of the community through a story of Istrian culture by exploring the food path from farm to a finished meal. This kind of package is merging the producers and stakeholders from the tourism and agricultural sector of the area through the multisector vertical integration, which is consequently leading to the expansion of the local economy. The designed experience can be offered during the whole year but the main emphasis is on the off-season because it has the goal of attracting the unique segment of travels, which are gastronomy lovers and are seeking for rural landscape experiences.

The gastronomy experience “From Farm to Fork” is concentrated on attracting tourist/visitors in the off-season but in a way that they are primarily captivated by the Istrian culinary and cultural heritage, tradition customs and legends, in general with the Istrian way of life and living. Istria is the largest peninsula of the Adriatic and the most foreign tourist nights are spent on the coast, so the main aim was to develop the tourist offer connected to the real treasure of Istria - the rural coastal hinterland. The culinary tourism product “From Farm to Fork” has all the prepositions to be sustainable, because it is manifesting the story of the entire

community integrated into the daily life of the local producers of Istria, which gives a greater dimension.

The objective of the Agency for Rural Development of Istria was to represent the culinary and cultural heritage of Istria by appraising local agricultural products through specific culinary experience in order to increase consciousness about the importance of traceable local food. Istrian culture is based on the traditional local resources and the touristic product “From Farm to Fork” is representing the new direction of sustainable tourism focusing on safeguarding the intangible and tangible heritage for future generations. With the developed gastronomy experience, which is representing the basis of the new sustainable offer in Istria, has derived to the raising of the awareness about the food quality in everyday use, especially in kindergartens, schools and other institutions in the Istrian region and beyond. This specific tourist package has developed the story about the Istrian cattle — Boškarin and its come-back, so it is used in a very original way which dates back to the past and it will be consequent in the future.

PART B

B1. Based on the experiences developed in the pilot area, specify which integrations/adjustments should be made to the SCENARIOS described in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy that applies to the culinary experience you worked on. The following dimensions must be taken into consideration:

B1/a Stakeholder’s network

The process of designing and developing the gastronomy experience “From Farm to Fork” was carried out in cooperation with the representatives of the regional and local self-government from tourism and agricultural sector, local associations and local tourist boards. They represent the actors who could further develop the sustainable culinary packages in the future, easily integrate them in the local and regional strategies but also act as a support system in transferring the knowledge and inputs about it. One of the additional stakeholders that have an important role in the creation of the culinary experience are the local chefs, caterers and culinary experts from the local restaurants and hotels in Istria. For the reason of the specificity of the created experience, the culinary product “From Farm to Fork” was developed and then tested by diverse stakeholders and applicants that could in the future offer this unique package. The main identified stakeholders for this kind of product are local tourist boards, tourist and gastronomy tour agencies, tour operators, hospitality house chains and local producers. In the process have occurred some unanticipated actions because of the stakeholder’s inability to be more involved. Since all of the stakeholders had a high motivation for creating the innovative product, the created culinary experience testing has shown that this kind of sustainable tourism package has the approval of the local stakeholders and they will work on creating their own products in the future.

B1/b - Role of cultural heritage

The gastronomy experience “From Farm to Fork” was established from the need to appraise the local autochthonous products and to preserve the Istrian heritage through the presentation of the rural landscape. This form of culinary workshop is unique in the area of Istria, where tourist/visitors aren’t consuming food in a classical way by going to the restaurant or other hospitality facilities. In a one day experience, tourists/visitors have a culinary tour consisting of the whole path of the food from farm to a finished meal, which is combining the geographical, cultural, natural and culinary sights of the area. The whole concept of the product is innovative because through a storytelling itinerary is merged the guided walking tour to a farm of Istrian indigenous breeds, interactive workshop led by the exceptional local chefs and tastings of the prepared dishes. Tourists/visitors are not only the active participants of the workshop, but they are also the producers of their gastronomic experience because they are involved in the preparation of the traditional dishes in a modern way and are learning about the Istrian way of life. Experiential tourism experience “From Farm to Fork” is offering the culinary pleasure to the participants in a way that they better understand the territory and most important the identity of Istria.

B1/c Role of existing policies

In the framework of the existing policy of Master Plan for Tourism Development in Istria from 2015 - 2025, a demand increase for unique, customized, personalized tourist product has been recorded and has identified the new segment of tourist/travellers, looking for authentic experiences, niche holidays with a didactic or cultural experience. Also, in the Master Plan above mentioned, gastronomy is stated as one of the five primary tourist products attracted by tourists to the rural/central areas of Istria. The Tourism Board of the Istria County and the local Tourism Boards are supporting and promoting the Istrian gastronomy development and specific culinary workshops offered in the Educational Gastronomy Center of Istria. The designed gastronomy experience “From Farm to Fork”, represents the innovative sustainable tourism package in Istria, where the focus is on the connection of tourists/visitors with the territory and on increasing their awareness about the traceability of Istrian autochthonous resources. Regarding to the concept of designed experience, in unity with the stakeholders involved, “From Farm to Fork” has the prepositions to be involved in the Master Plan for Tourism Development in Istria for the period 2015 – 2025, Development strategy of the Istria County for the period 2016 – 2020 and strategies of local Tourist Boards. The strategic framework of the Master Plan for Tourism Development in Istria for the period 2015 – 2025 is linked to the transformation of the model of mass tourism into specific tourism models but it still lacks detailed planning and indications. In the existing policy of the Development strategy of the Istria County for the period 2016 – 2020, are listed the tourism development indications related to the creation of the preconditions for all-year tourism offer diversified with innovative products related to the gastronomy of

the rural coastal hinterland of Istria. By the top-down approach in coordination with the actors of the regional and local self-government - tourism and agricultural sector, has been selected that the concept “From Farm to Fork” will be integrated and linked to the strategy of Tourist Board of Central Istria because this kind of gastronomy experiences aren’t elaborated in their future plans. It is envisaged that in the new implementation period of the Master Plan for Tourism Development in Istria and the Development strategy of the Istria County, the innovative culinary product “From Farm to Fork” will be integrated, but until then will be used the created “Action Plan From Farm to Fork”.

B2. In case the pilot action focused on ANOTHER scenario (not foreseen in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences), provide a description of the roles played by the stakeholder’s network, cultural heritage and existing policies

N/A

PART C

C1. Present major steps/milestones in the whole process which were key in provisioning a success of the whole culinary package

The Agency for Rural Development of Istria had a principal starting point, to develop a specific package representing the local autochthonous resources and valorise them through specific culinary experience in order to raise awareness about the importance of traceable local food. The touristic product “From Farm to Fork” is significant because it has paved the path for new sustainable tourism offer in Istria, focused on safeguarding the intangible and tangible heritage for future generations by offering it to the tourist/visitors. The main achievement of the designed culinary package is that this type of experience will not only contribute to the tourism offer differentiation and make a difference to mass tourism, but it will raise the whole Istrian territory and identity to a higher level. The stakeholders involved in the pilot activity are representatives of local and regional self-government - tourism and agricultural sector and one of the main actors who is supporting AZRRI from the very beginning: the Chamber of Crafts and Trades of Istrian Region. Through collaboration with the main actors involved in the creation of the product, their knowledge and experiences were crucial for developing the sustainable package. One of the important steps in the process was the opportunity of performing a market and field research and to develop an experience which could be the base for offering diversified experiences grounded on the renowned culinary heritage of rural Istria. The event which was articulated around the designed culinary package, where the participants had the opportunity have a culinary tour testing, consisted of the whole path of the food from farm to a finished meal, has resulted with great participant impressions. One of the major achievements of the gastronomy experience “From Farm to Fork” is good feedback of the local tourist agencies and tour operators who

have an important role in offering and presenting the brand new experience in the gastronomy and culture area.

C2. Present key lessons learnt and, if identified, describe additional dimensions discovered during the implementation of the pilot activities that could be used to further define the SCENARIOS inserted in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences

The development of a destination centred on gastronomy and culinary heritage tourism depends on cooperation across interests and between different actors and stakeholders. The rural coastal hinterland of the Istria County is combining the geographical, cultural, natural and culinary sights of the area, so the cooperation between main actors need to be mutually beneficial as well as tuned into market demands. In the case of culinary experience “From Farm to Fork”, the most important lesson learned is that without the substantial support of the actors and representatives of the local and regional scene, it would not be possible to create a foundation for the sustainability of the future gastronomy and tourism packages. The interested providers who would like to offer the tourism products based on the principle of the culinary experience will succeed only in cooperation with the local associations, producers, and tourist and tour boards, because of the wider dimension of this type of tourist product.

REPORT: SYSTEMATIZING LOCAL CULINARY SUSTAINABLE TOURISTIC OFFERS (Technical Institute of Heraklion, Chamber of Commerce and Industry)

PART A

A1. Short description of the culinary event/service/product before the drafting and implementation of the action plan

Although several efforts to diversify the tourism product have been developed in the last decade, in the region of Crete the culinary tourism landscape remains still fragmented by several different culinary products and services. One of the main problems of the stakeholders is that their offers are usually based in an unprofessional staff as they are based on the local producers who are not trained to deliver the level of services demanding by the international tourists. Another very important problem is that they have big fluctuations in the prices they charge as the product is not well formed making it difficult to compare between products having the same name but resulting to completely different experiences. Although there are a variety of culinary offers based on local products, they are offered in isolation and there is not a common understanding of the stakeholders on the culinary experience as a diversified unified product that the visitor can search for, since an overall experience has not been established as an offer.

A2. Overview on the newly created/improved culinary services/products as the result of pilot action plan implementation

In the framework of MEDFEST the local players that diversify the culinary tourism product were identified and assessed in order to enhance the potential for tourism products by networking initiatives. Sustainability of initiatives are always the scope in order to maintain the local potential for tourism offers enriched by or based on culinary and cultural experiences. The first step to identify the local stakeholders was followed by an assembly in which MEDFEST aims were presented and thoroughly explained. The touch point event for gathering the main stakeholders was the pan Cretan-forum <http://forum.ebeh.gr>, which is an institution formed by Heraklion chamber and is thriving for the last 8 years bringing together the local producers with the hoteliers.

The objectives were to create a decision-making stakeholder's network to discuss the common problems, to establish a common service offer catalogue, to create a common culinary description table, to involve local stakeholders to the culinary service experience to evaluate the initiative result via a pilot culinary event. As a result of the MEDFEST methodology application a local stakeholder's network was established to face their service providers' daily problems as also a common service offer catalogue, followed by the creation of a common culinary experience description table.

A3. Most relevant progresses/innovation made in the pilot areas by taking into consideration the goals introduced in the MEDFEST initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences

The creation of a culinary service provider network followed by a culinary experience event offers to the tourists a diversified destination full of culinary experiences accessed by them in a uniform and understandable way. The already existing routes linking coastal tourist centres like Malia and Hersonissos were given an opportunity to visit local culinary tourism providers in a holistic approach enriching the local tourism product. Traditionality was ensured by culinary offerings based on traditional Cretan diet as also on the local traditions and culture.

The involvement of the locals to the service offerings is also another factor that enriches the traditionality and authenticity of the events offered under a uniform common service catalogue.

PART B

B1. Based on the experiences developed in the pilot area, specify which integrations/adjustments should be made to the SCENARIOS described in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy that applies to the culinary experience you worked on. The following dimensions must be taken into consideration:

B1/a Stakeholder's network

The training of the culinary service providers seems to have an important role in the overall experience formation. Several existing stakeholders did not have the ability to adequately serve the culinary experiences offered by the culinary tourism agencies. The standardization of the offerings was crucial in order to identify the most probable products and services that fulfilled the tourists need. Local communities as also providers were involved during the formulation and delivery of the unified catalogue. In the framework of MEDFEST the local players that diversify the culinary tourism product were identified and assessed in order to enhance the potential for tourism products by networking initiatives. Sustainability of initiatives are always in scope in order to maintain the local potential for tourism offers enriched by or based on culinary and cultural experiences. The motivation of the stakeholders to participate in the common event and service planning was due to their need to create a common product that gradually will reach greater audiences making it visible to the mass tourism industry which now encounters for more than 80% of the total tourism in Crete.

B1/b - Role of cultural heritage

The culinary heritage focus of the action plan was comprised of already existing activities, such as the Cretan vegetables collecting and cooking activity performed by several local stakeholders. One of them, the "Hands on Cretan Diet Recipes

Teaching”, was the basis for establishing the common catalogue of services. The wine tasting routes was also one of the activities linked to the final event but also was used for the standardization of what a wine tasting would look like. The “Olive Taste and Collecting Paths” was also another destination that enriched the final event. Networking was also supported by the Cretan Winemakers Association Network, <http://www.winesofcrete.gr>, the Cretan Olive Oil Network, <https://www.cretan-oliveoil.gr>, the Association of Small Hotels, <http://www.increte.eu>, and other initiatives are only a few from the many taking place on the island of Crete.

B1/c Role of existing polices

A bottom up approach was followed in order to initiate the network and to create the unified service catalogue. All stakeholders gathered several times in workshops and discussions in order to decide the most appropriate processes to be followed as also the creation of a common understanding. The final products and services were of common acceptance as they were developed following their common needs.

B2. In case the pilot action focused on ANOTHER scenario (not foreseen in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences), provide a description of the roles played by the stakeholder’s network, cultural heritage and existing polices

N/A

PART C

C1. Present major steps/milestones in the whole process which were key in provisioning a success of the whole culinary package

- The first step was to identify the main stakeholders of the region offering culinary tourism services;
- The second was to create a workshop to introduce them to the MEDFEST approach;
- The third step was to run a workshop to identify their main problems and to develop possible solutions;
- The fourth step had 2 tasks as a result of the workshop in step 3 which they had to prepare to proceed to the fifth step;
 - The first task was to ask from the stakeholders to identify the contents of the services they are offering;
 - The second task was to create a common culinary experience description table;
- The fifth step was a workshop to accumulate all the created material and to develop a “Common Culinary Services and Experiences Guide”;
- The sixth was the creation of a culinary event to evaluate the “Common Local

- Cretan Culinary Services and Experiences Guide”;
- Final workshop on modifications and improvements of the “Common Local Cretan Culinary Services and Experiences Guide”.

C2. Present key lessons learnt and, if identified, describe additional dimensions discovered during the implementation of the pilot activities that could be used to further define the SCENARIOS inserted in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences

The main lesson learnt during the pilot activity implementation was that the common problems need networking for their facing. In local communities although stakeholders may be situated close to each other they are acting without communication resulting with a diversity of services but also obstacles to overcome. When a systematic approach is applied, they are willing to cooperate to solve the problems they have in common. Crucial in this stage is a networking is the codevelopment of ideas in the initial phase as also the participation as many local stakeholders as possible. Standardization of cultural heritage as also culinary services are objectives with which all stakeholders can interact and make concrete proposals.

REPORT: HONEY ROUTES IN RURAL LARNACA (Troodos, Network Thematic Centres)

PART A

A1. Short description of the culinary event/service/product before the drafting and implementation of the action plan

Troodos Network has worked on creating an entirely new culinary experience, involving 9 villages in Rural Larnaca, which have been branded as Honey Villages, thanks to MEDFEST project.

The new experience, branded as Honey Routes, has been created in an area with great potential and totally untouched by tourism.

The conditions and motivations that inspired the decision to be engaged on this project were the following:

- The rich culinary heritage related to honey;
- The unspoiled villages;
- The rich biodiversity which makes the honey of this area exceptional - winning international awards;
- The young and passionate beekeepers;
- The unique recipes;
- The huge potential which has not been touched;
- The national policies encouraging rural tourism;
- The number of hives in the area - more than any other part of the island;
- The challenge that we were offered to develop the area and make it sustainable;
- The healing properties of honey;
- The protection of the bees;
- The economic benefits to young entrepreneurs/beekeepers;
- The creation of a new culinary experience.

A2. Overview on the newly created/improved culinary services/products as the result of pilot action plan implementation

The Honey Routes are consisting from three Honey Festivals, organised by the nine villages in Rural Larnaca which became the Honey Villages, targeting a different audience at a different village so that there is always preparation, action and continuous development. The Honey Festivals start in May with the celebration of World Bee Day and Bee Festival which is implemented at the picturesque village of Ora in cooperation with the Commissioner of the Environment, the Technical University of Cyprus and the Pancyprian Beekeepers Association and professional beekeepers. It has educational as well as entertaining character and is a platform for culinary tourism with a lot of vendors selling everything made with honey, but also organic food as the day is focused on pollination and healthy environment for the

bees and the humans. A month later the Honey Villages organise the Honey and Beekeeping Festival in Odou (third weekend of June) which is the biggest festival in the area, attracting more than 3,000 people with very rich cultural program for all ages, with the biggest market of culinary treasures all made with honey. In September a Children's Honey Festival will be launched in Melini Honey Village, focusing on education and fun for children, gastronomy with honey, and food preparation classes with honey, aiming to attract families with young children in the area. Apart of the festivals the Honey Routes have a Honey Tours, starting from Vavla the first Honey Village on a geographic point of view, travelling from the coast to the mountains, with Ecophys offering beewax candle workshops, education about bees, Be a Beekeeper for a day experience, and outdoor activities with bees around the year. Our house the nearby Agrotourism establishment, offers home hospitality with seasonal homemade culinary experiences, with the possibility to see your food cooked in front of you, and a journey across the Honey Villages, leads you to Odou with a permanent Journey of Knowledge about the healing and therapeutic properties of honey and hive products across the village and a portion of traditional honey balls, at the local coffee shop.

A3. Most relevant progresses/innovation made in the pilot areas by taking into consideration the goals introduced in the MEDFEST initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences

Progresses/innovation made in the pilot areas:

- To use culinary tourism as means of attracting new visitors:
 - Special customized packages have been created for targeted groups and individuals;
 - So far three packages have been created and two of them have been implemented (for young beekeepers from Greece as a study visit for best practices, for female entrepreneurs from Qatar & Kuwait who wanted to experience agrotourism and honey, and a third customized one for women who want to learn the traditional recipes with honey);
 - Agreements with transportation companies for cost effective transportation of small groups to the Honey Villages, as the lack of public transport was a burden for the development of Honey Routes and attraction of tourists in the area;
 - Apart of the organized tours, free transportation for strategic points has been arranged for the Honey Festival;
 - Huge publicity strategy in cooperation with TV channels & Larnaca Board of Tourism.
- To use culinary tourism as a link between coastal tourist centres and less developed coastal hinterland:

This part is in development, and is planned to be implemented with the Larnaca Board of Tourism, in order to provide the packages to the tour operators so that they will offer them as half day or full day escape from the coast. However, there has been strong interest from TUI to integrate visits to

Honey Routes into their packages. Also from an organisation from Kuwait, who is dealing with agro and culinary tourism. They have participated at the pilot project, which was done in June and are coming back in September to make an agreement with the beekeepers and an agro tourism establishment.

- To maximize the use of local (natural and social) resources and help protect (and develop) culinary heritage for future generations:
 - Protection of bees - World Bee Day - Bee Festival & Save the Bees Campaign in cooperation with the Commissioner of the Environment & the Pancyprian Association of Beekeepers;
 - Enrichment of nature trails with honey plants and herbs and integration of activities in the tourism packages;
 - Plantation of bee herbs and creation of bee gardens in each village;
 - Network of bee hotels, customized in each village based on their heritage to attract tourists;
 - Encouragement and technical support to local women and beekeepers to offer traditional honey pies to visitors and tourists;
 - Organisation of three festivals, where local women create traditional honey recipes;
 - Network of bee hotels for the protection of solidarity bees;
 - New places for offering honey pies - the plan is for at list one in each Honey Village;
 - Training & capacity building for the whole village - too many young people participated.

PART B

B1. Based on the experiences developed in the pilot area, specify which integrations/adjustments should be made to the SCENARIOS described in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy that applies to the culinary experience you worked on. The following dimensions must be taken into consideration:

B1/a Stakeholder's network

Additional stakeholders having an important role in the culinary experiences were some women who joined the project on the way, as they took early retirement schemes, and wanted some part-time jobs/activities, so they have fulfilled the lack of human resources for the traditional honey sweets to be offered to the visitors. These untapped human resources are members of the family or extended family of the beekeepers and people having summer houses in the Honey Villages.

The unexpected positive dynamics came from Alpha TV channel, who is covering and supporting each and every festival and activity done in the Honey Villages, giving an enormous public awareness about the project, as well as the support of the Larnaca Board of Tourism who are fully devoted, and strongly believe to the development of rural tourism in the area based on the Honey Routes.

Their support creates a new dimension to the project, as they are appraising each

step through public media and are active members of the core committee who will managing the Honey Routes after the completion of MEDFEST. Their involvement, passion, and support were strong tools for integrating the Honey Routes in the National Strategy of Rural Tourism.

Another unforeseen dynamic was the awards that the Cyprus honey received at the International Competition in London. Receiving the gold and silver metals has empowered the stakeholders and the project as a whole.

B1/b - Role of cultural heritage

The trainings, capacity buildings and public awareness about the importance of honey and honey recipes as a part of our culinary heritage have created a lot of interest for the newly branded Honey Villages.

The new demand made people being more committed and engaged in preserving the old and creating new and innovative products which are listed below:

- A range of beeswax cosmetics;
- Improved quality of beeswax cosmetics with the use of pure essential oils;
- Diversification of beeswax cosmetics - for children-aches and pains – dermatitis-etc.;
- Artwork with honey wax (candles, boxes, icons etc.);
- Arts and crafts with bee motifs;
- Handmade clothes, especially for children with bee motifs;
- Bee hotels for households;
- Bee hotels for communities;
- Improved packaging and presentation;
- As far as new services are concerned;
- Honey pies are offered to visitors free of charge, at Oros Machaira Honey Factory;
- Candle making lessons are offered at Ecophysis;
- The Journey of Knowledge of Bees - a trail of knowledge in Odou Honey Village where the Honey & Beekeeping festival is held.

B1/c Role of existing policies

As the deputy Ministry of Tourism and Regional Boards of Tourism have a policy of developing rural tourism in Cyprus, the Honey Routes are aligned with their mission and vision therefore they have been embraced from day one and are supporting it with all their means.

The approach that was used was a bottom up approach, specifically the Structural Democratic Dialogue, which although it was very time consuming, as we involved all the stakeholders from nine communities plus the public sector and regional organisations and professional organisations, it succeeded 100% in engaging fully all the stakeholders as the action plan was designed by them, based on their needs, expectations and worries.

B2. In case the pilot action focused on ANOTHER scenario (not foreseen in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences), provide a description of the roles played by the stakeholder's network, cultural heritage and existing policies

N/A

PART C

C1. Present major steps/milestones in the whole process which were key in provisioning a success of the whole culinary package

The major steps/milestones were the following:

- Creation of three Honey Festivals with the participation of all 9 Honey Villages - World Bee Day (20th of May) - Honey & Beekeeping Festival in June & Children's Bee Festival in September. The festivals provide platforms for vendors and beekeepers to sell their honey and other products to the public. Even small beekeepers that have no access to big supermarkets can sell their products. Women of the area can sell traditional gastronomy products with honey to the public and a lot of tourists are attracted as they can find a huge variety of honey and traditional products of the area, they can buy on fair trade basis and they can experience the culture and the nature of a touristically virgin area, unknown even to local people.
- Network of bee hotels, one in each Honey Village, customized to promote the architectural heritage of the village using old doors, dried herbs etc. This is an added value to the tourism package, it's a new concept that has attracted a lot of tourists in the area and has created a lot of interest to the media, who have made special TV programs about them.
- In Ora Honey Village, where the World Bee Day is celebrated, each household has created their own bee hotel in cooperation with the Technical University of Cyprus, under the MEDFEST project. Working with 9 small villages, located close to each other, we had to create a distinct identity to each one, so that the tourists will visit all of them, this is why we invested so much on identity branding and this had a very positive impact.
- Capacity building, more than 100 delegates have been trained for making honey soaps, fresh honey cosmetics, candles with beeswax; Skill development, capacity building and empowerment, was very important for creating new products, packing and presenting the original and traditional ones in an attractive way, so that income will be generated as well as new innovative products, but also the traditional ones in modern and attractive packaging.
- Plantation of bee herbs and creation of small bee parks in each village; Honey, bees and the environment are interrelated, so bee parks apart of being an additional tourism attraction, they create the right environment for the bees to exist and produce honey.

- The journey of Knowledge of Bees in Odou;
Apart of giving precious knowledge to all visitors about honey and their wellbeing as well as the magical world of hive which tourists can explore by walking through Odou Honey Village, is an added value for the Honey & Beekeeping Festival which is held every year in Odou.
- Honey Tours and packages for special interest groups;
Three pilots have been implemented, for students, young beekeepers from abroad, and a group of mainly women from Qatar and Kuwait. The most complete was the last one, tested and ready to be used by travel agents.
- Integration of nature trails in the Honey Tours emphasizing the bee herbs;
As the area is blessed with nature trails their integration to tourism packages can attract another segment of tourists who enjoy hiking and walking as well as the local gastronomy.
- Creation of logos for each community and a general one for the destination branding;
To complete the identity of the Honey Villages a common logo has been designed for all the villages and the area as a whole. The Larnaca Tourism Board will place them.
- Continuous training of the beekeepers for new products and full exploration of resources;
Understanding the uniqueness of their product, the uniqueness of the area, and the great potential was vital for the success of the project, as well as teamwork which has been achieved, making it a best practice of nine villages working together.
- Safeguarding of local recipes and motivation of local tourism sector to use them;
Although a lot of women in the area are experts in local recipes based on honey, very few of them were continuing using them as people opted for alternatives. With the training about their importance and the income that was created from festivals, more and more of them are using them as a part of our heritage and civilization.
- Integration of restaurants and agro-tourism establishments into the Honey Routes, by using traditional and innovative honey recipes;
Understanding the value of Honey Routes, a lot of restaurants are now serving different dishes with honey, enriching the tourism experience and maintaining the sustainability of the project.

C2. Present key lessons learnt and, if identified, describe additional dimensions discovered during the implementation of the pilot activities that could be used to further define the SCENARIOS inserted in the MEDFEST Initial Strategy of planning sustainable culinary experiences

As Honey Routes have been one of our most successful projects, the lessons learned is that the key factors of success were the following:

- The bottom up approach that was used;

- The age group of stakeholders as we have applied similar policies to wine villages but had no success due to the aging population, where in the Honey Villages, we are in daily contact with the stakeholders who are so eager to develop;
- The fact that the project was aligned with the National Tourism Strategy;
- The creation of a core team with key actors for the sustainability of the project, as this was a major concern - What happens when MEDFEST project is over?