



**SUSTAINABLE  
TOURISM**

## **How to address the complexity of the tourism sector, including local actors, decision-makers and consumers? Governance mechanisms to guide a wide variety of stakeholders towards a more sustainable and responsible tourism?**

Thematic Review #4, by the MED Sustainable Tourism Community

The development of long-term governance mechanisms contributes to a better coordination and monitoring of the tourism sector. It also contributes to further develop the interactions and synergies with other sectors in the Mediterranean region.

In this sense, it is of the utmost importance to tackle the lack of cooperation and common understanding among tourism actors. It is necessary to develop and implement collaborative partnerships at local and regional levels (public-private partnerships, multi stakeholders platforms). Some of the projects of the MED Sustainable Tourism Community have been working on such issues connected to governance and management approaches. Cases such as the #EnjoyRespectVenezia campaign and other similar sustainable tourism experiences could constitute food for thought and inspiration for our Community.

Other measures and strategies are providing the tourism sector in the Mediterranean to have a framework such as the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025. It contributes to boost a cooperative implementation of more sustainable tourism policies through integrated decision-making mechanisms and policy design processes, combining bottom-up and top-down approaches.

Further strategies, such as the Tourism4SDGs, aim at a better understanding of the concept of “sustainable development” itself among tourism stakeholders, while allowing them to cooperate towards the sustainability of the tourism sector and the achievement of the SDGs.

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## #EnjoyRespectVenezia campaign

*Venice's awareness campaign #EnjoyRespectVenezia constitutes food for thought for the MED Sustainable Tourism Community and the sustainability of tourism in Mediterranean destinations as a whole, as it provides different measures from sustainable itineraries to recycling guidance in order to ensure a viable and sound stay for both the tourists and the Venetian environment.*



(Rome, 21 March 2019) “A sustainable tourism - not altering the natural and artistic environment, and not obstructing the development of other social and economic activities in harmony with the daily life of residents - is necessary to preserve the extraordinary beauty and uniqueness of Venice” is the motive driving the City of Venice to ensure the sustainability of tourism, as stated on its [official tourism website](#). This is also the objective pursued by the MED Sustainable Tourism Community whose projects, of which Venice is part, aim at ensuring a viable and sound stay for both the tourists and the Venetian environment.

Some measures have been taken by the city of Venice and corroborate the work of different projects within the MED Sustainable Tourism Community.

This is the case, first for the discovery of the Venetian local cuisine and the traditional dishes, something on which the MEDFEST project is also working in eight other sustainable tourist destinations in the Mediterranean area by developing actions plans based on Mediterranean culinary heritage experiences; as well as for recycling indications and guidance for tourists staying in apartments provided by the city of Venice, something on which the BLUEISLANDS project is also working focused on seasonal variation of waste as effect of tourism in the Mediterranean islands.

Other measures, such as providing tourists with sustainable itineraries through a “detourism” campaign mirror the objectives of the ALTER ECO project, in which Venice actively takes part, and aims at developing alternative tourist strategies to enhance the local sustainable development of tourism by promoting Mediterranean identity.

As stated specifically for the City of Venice within this project: “Venice is one of the most sought-after tourist destinations in the world so that it is reached by over 4.600.000 tourists per year. Given its fragile naturalistic and sociocultural ecosystem, the greatest challenge that Venice is facing today is linked to the effects of mass tourism and tourism monoculture that are reflected in a constant decline in the number of residents, problems of overcrowding and congestion, loss of local values and traditions, detriment of the authenticity of local products and in general a decrease in the quality of the tourist attractions that this beautiful city is able to give to the whole world.”

This postulate explains the current public debate focused around the fixing of a maximum number of tourists identified through the development of a DSS that allows to identify the optimal level of tourist pressure that is bearable for Venice and to outline the appropriate tourist strategies, such as the possible introduction of a charged ticket to enter Venice city center.



## Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025: tourism sustainability as a tool to achieve social and economic development

*The Mediterranean strategy for sustainable development is a UNEP-MAP (United Nations Environment Programme - Mediterranean Action Plan Barcelona Convention) nine years plan aimed at investing in environmental sustainability to achieve social and economic development, something closely linked to the sustainable tourism sector and therefore to the MED Sustainable Tourism Community.*



(Rome, 28 May 2019) “With respect to tourism, the Action Plan provides operational objectives addressing: practices and solutions for efficient use of natural resources and reducing the environmental impacts of tourism, respecting the carrying capacities of the destination; regulatory, legislative and financial measures to mainstream sustainable consumption and production in tourism to reduce tourism seasonality and promote local community engagement and empowerment; and, awareness, capacities and skills to support sustainable destinations and green tourism services, and marketing schemes for a competitive and sustainable Mediterranean tourism sector”: so are the aims of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2015 in relation to sustainable tourism.

This strategy was built on the postulate, as exemplified by the assessment on the implementation of the previous strategy, that the situation of sustainable tourism was worsening and more actions were to be implemented to trigger both the protection and the growth needed for this important business sector.

The current strategy indeed highlights the potential of the tourism sector for economic opportunities, as this sector “dominates the economic development in the Mediterranean coastal regions”. Some issues are addressed by this strategy, and echo the ones developed by the MED Sustainable Tourism Community.

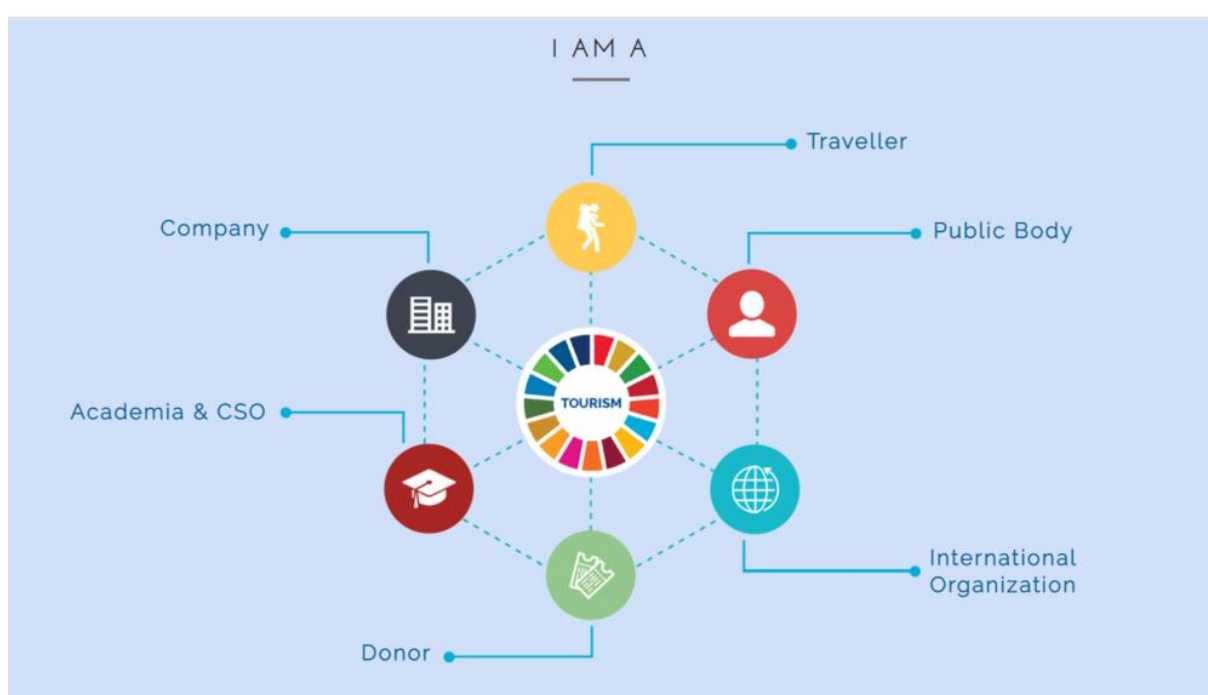
For example, ensuring sustainable development in marine and coastal areas is an issue addressed by this strategy. Among other objectives, it aims at addressing the unrestricted tourism development leading to a lack of protection and management of the Mediterranean coastlines. The water allocation in the tourism sector as well as the involvement of the local producers to the tourism market and the development of rural tourism that will alleviate overcrowding in coastal cities and resorts, are also addressed by this strategy, taking into account different aspects such as the environment, the economic development and the local society.

The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 aims at involving a wide range of tourism stakeholders, ranging from national and local authorities to the private sector and local population. It includes a variety of plans including as much local actions as legally-binding strategies. This would hopefully contribute to the development of long-term governance mechanisms, that will in turn lead to a better coordination and monitoring of the tourism sector.

This strategy, combined with the work undergone by the MED Sustainable Tourism Community will, eventually, lead to a better understanding of the concept of “sustainable development”.

## Tourism4SDGs platform: the learning, sharing and acting platform for tourism sector to boost sustainable growth

*In 2015, world leaders have agreed on 17 goals to promote sustainable global development, launching the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030. Since then, the tourism sector started to have a new role and the UNWTO has promoted a new platform to bring all the actors together and showcase their contribution to the achievement of the SDGs. The platform called Tourism4SDGs serves as a virtual archive to share knowledge, initiatives, tools and create cooperation, as well as to take action.*



(Rome, 28 May 2019) Tourism can provide a huge, direct and indirect, support to growth. For this reason, the international community raised the reflection on the need for a sustainable touristic activity, able to be inclusive and respect local communities. Following such invitation of the international community, the United Nations World Tourism Organization -UNWTO, has created a platform to provide a virtual space for any actor, public or private, individual or CSOs, government and other authorities, of the tourism sector, to support in achieving the SDGs: Tourism4SDG.

The platform, which is very complete, is based on 4 sections named respectively: learn, share, act, follow. Each of them provides respectively for:

- access to information about sustainable tourism from experts, professionals and travellers from all over the world
- a space for sharing events, initiatives, research, policy papers, company CSRs, education & training and stories
- inviting to see what each actor could be doing directly to contribute to the SDGs' achievement
- inviting to keep following the updates

The idea beyond the platform is that any actor could use it to show what they have been doing for the SDGs.

For this purpose, the projects of the MED Sustainable Tourism Community could bring the attention back to the initiatives they have been promoting, on the researches that they are realising or the pilot actions they have been implementing, to showcase them. Learn more on the platform and how the projects could benefit from it [here](#).