

TOURISMED

Fishing Tourism for a Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean area

Deliverable 3.5.4: *Study Visit Report*

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Purpose of the study visit

The project “Fishing tourism for a sustainable development in the Mediterranean area” (TOURISMED) was aimed at testing and transferring a fishing tourism business model in coastal areas of Italy, Cyprus, Greece, Albania, France and Spain as a tool to promote sustainable fishing tourism and to foster the preservation of the marine environment and the traditional fishing culture across the Mediterranean.

Within the framework of the Work Package 3, referred to the testing of the fishing tourism business model, the project gave a strong importance to the Exchange of information (Activity 3.5) between partners. The scope of this activity was to facilitate the sharing of best practices while valorizing the peculiarities of each territory and strengthening the sense of networking among fishermen and fishing tourism operators.

The activity included a series of study visits carried out by the partners involved in the pilot tests in order to learn how it was being adopted in another partner country. Around 4 stakeholders (balanced between fishing associations and tourism operators) of each sending partner had to participate in this activity.

This deliverable 3.5.4 is the Report of the Study visit organized by the Partner Valenciaport Foundation (*sending Partner*) for visiting the coastal area of Mola di Bari-Fasano (Torre Canne and Savelletri), in Puglia region, thanks to the facilitation of the Partner Halieus (*hosting partner*).

This report is aimed at gathering information and conclusions from the activities developed during the study visit.

1 Participants

The delegation was composed by 7 members:

- 3 persons from the fishing sector, involved in the implementation of Tourismmed in 2 ports (Castellón and Xàbia). They all work with trawlers. Two of them are fishermen while the third person is involved in the management and commercialization of fishing tourism activities offered in Castellón.
- 1 person from the tourism sector, involved in the implementation of Tourismmed as trainer as well as in the promotion and commercialization of fishing tourism activities in the Valencian Region;
- 1 tourism advisor from a local administration of a port town in which Tourismmed is being implemented (Vinaròs).
- 2 persons from Valenciaport Foundation (sending organization).

The composition of the Delegation allowed to somehow cover all the port communities and all the actors involved in the project implementation at regional level. The selection criteria was oriented to balance the composition of the group, trying to reach the main target profiles identified in the business model, and providing at the same time a good geographical coverage, as Tourismmed is being implemented in four different locations within the Valencian Region.

All the persons have been involved in the project during the testing phase, attending the training actions and collaborating in the development of the pilot actions.

2 Description of the visit

The study visit included guided tours, visits to fishing ports, exchanges with local fishermen and a fishing tourism activity. During the transfers the guides gave explanations about the territory that helped the participants to interpret it and understand the local links between tourism, fishing, nature and cultural heritage.

In addition to Haliéus staff (Mr. Settanni), the whole visit was facilitated by Serapia¹. The local team therefore consisted of the local Haliéus project's liaison staff, and two Serapia's guides. One of the guides acted also as translator. The initial agenda had to be slightly modified due to the sea conditions. Nevertheless, practically all the activities initially foreseen were carried out satisfactorily.

The detailed agenda and the activities developed during the study visit were the following:

¹Serapia is a cooperative that deals with sustainable tourism, hiking and environmental education, as well as research and scientific advice in the Apulian territory. Serapia was involved by is the local partner of Haliéus for the implementation of Tourismmed in Puglia Region .

7 November 2018

09:30 Arrival at the Airport of Bari. Welcome by one of the guides and transfer to Monopoli.

10:30 Arrival to Monopoli and check-in at the hotel. Guided visit to the old city of Monopoli with a special focus on the links with the fishing and maritime heritage. Transfer to the port of Savellettri and interpretation of the territory.

12:30 Arrival to Savellettri. Briefing with explication of the territory, project approach and connection Haliéus/Serapia/local fishery cooperatives, carried out by Serapia. Exchange with some of the fishermen involved in the project – some of whom already operating fishing tourism – both in touristic areas and in the marine protected area of Torre Guaceto. The activity included an onboard simulation of the explanations given to tourists about local artisanal fishing.

During the activity the participants had the opportunity to discuss about several business model issues such as services on board, timetable of the activity, reservations and pricing policies, and legal-administrative requirements to carry out the activity, among others. Transfer to Forcatella.



Photo 1. The group at the port of Savellettri.

14:00 Lunch at an inn managed by a fisherman's family, who also runs an *ichthyotourism* business. The group had the opportunity to observe a boat that is being arranged for fishing tourism within the project. Participants exchanged impressions about the diversification of fishing activity and on the different importance given to several species captured in Puglia and in Valencian Region. Transfer to the port of Mola di Bari.

16:15 Visit to the fishing port and fish market of Mola di Bari, guided by Matteo and Anna Maria, local fishermen, and Serapia's staff. The group attended the fish unload from their

fishing vessel(a trawler), and exchanged experiences about their daily work and the approach of fishing tourism in each country (eg. trawlers are not allowed to perform fishing tourism activities in Italy).

The visit to the fish market also allowed to check the differences between the commercialization of fresh fish and other aspects of the fishermen's work between Italy and Spain that spark off the interest of participants.



Photo 2. The group at the port of Mola di Bari

18:30 Arrival to Monopoli and spare time.

8 November 2018

10:00 Transfer to the port of Savellettri. The group embarked in the fishing vessel visited the day before for a fishing tourism trip. The initial itinerary was changed due to the sea conditions, and it finalized in Torre Canne instead of in Polignano a Mare as initially planned. The local fishermen performed a demonstration activity with trammel gears during the trip. Once anchored at Torre Canne's, the crew served an appetizer on board with local fresh products. Transfer to Polignano a Mare.



Photo 3. Fishing trip

13:30 Guided visit to the old city of Polignano a Mare. Lunch at Pescaria, a successful fish restaurant launched by a local fisherman with the collaboration of a local creative agency, that was born from a small fish store. Walk along the coastal stretch of Incina Tower and cove – Sella cave. Transfer to Monopoli.

16.30 Visit to the port of Monopoli. The group attended the fish unload and sale, and exchanged with local fishermen. The visit was assisted by the president of one of the fishermen cooperatives of Monopoli.



Photo 4. Exchange at the port of Monopoli.

18:30 Spare time.

9 November 2018

5.30 Transfer to the airport. End of the visit.

3 Lessons learnt and restitution plan

Despite the common background and similarities between the fishing activity in Valencian Region and in Puglia (eg. fishing gears, species), the group verified big differences between the fishing communities, especially as for the way they are organized, the work shifts and, in particular, as for the fishing tourism regulation and approach.

The main differences concerning the fishing tourism activity are the following:

- Fishing tourism in Puglia is conceived as a demonstration activity while in the Valencian Region the tourist embark and accompany the fishermen in a regular working day. The demonstration activity is not completely regulated in Valencia, as there the Regional Decree regulating the fishing tourism foresees a further regulation for demonstration activities. Nonetheless, some aspects as number of tourists allowed to embark are fixed and equal for both modalities in Valencian regulations.
- In this sense, the number of tourists allowed to embark in artisanal fishing boats can be higher in Puglia than in Valencian Region.

In Puglia, the Regional Law on fishing tourism only states that the maximum number of persons allowed to embark is 12 (plus the crew); the number may vary depending on different elements (technical characteristics of the vessel and safety equipment) and it is determined by a technical body (RINA) and then confirmed by the Port Authority. Meanwhile, in Valencian Region the maximum number of tourists allowed to embark is stated depending on the boat's length.

- Artisanal fishing is not subject to work day limitations in Puglia, while in Valencian Region the activity must be developed between Sunday at noon (to set the nets) and Friday afternoon. Fishing is allowed from Monday to Friday and, in general terms, it has to finish no later 15:00 h.
- The above factors allow in Puglia a more flexible organization of the fishing tourism activity, while in the Valencian Region, for the moment, the current regulation drives the activity to different coordinates. Apart from the conclusions that could emerge due to a more detailed analysis on the pros and cons of the different modalities given the current legal constraints, and from the fishing demonstration future regulation, the limits on the number of tourists allowed to embark seem a key factor in the development of the different fishing tourism modalities.

- Although allowed, fishing tourism is very hard for trawlers to be performed, since any activity with general public must be done without the fishing gears on board for security reasons.

The above differences condition, in some way, the conception of the activity in both territories.

However, the participants identified some elements during the study visit that can help to build the fishing tourism product in Valencian Region. Among the most relevant ones were the following:

- The communication skills of the fishermen performing fishing tourism, since a proper dealing with the tourists is key for success. In this sense, the crew that performed the fishing tourism activity seemed to know well how to drive the fishing tour, being closer to tourists in certain phases of the trip and leaving them with their own space to enjoy themselves in certain others;
- The onboard furniture to accommodate the tourists during the trip, that was appropriate and very versatile;
- The potential of linking the fishing tourism activities with other tourism activities in the surroundings. This can provide / help the tourist to have a genuine experience, linking different cultural and territorial elements.

On other matters, the participants considered that the communication of the pricing policy applied by the local fishermen, being so adaptive to the different activities, would need to be more transparent (at least in the Valencian Region) in order to avoid mistrust among potential clients.

Finally, as for the attitude and feedbacks from participants, all them shown great interest in deepen and understand the particularities and differences between the fishing and fishing tourism activities performed in both regions, being quite active during the visit.

The overall assessment of the study visit was very positive and the main lessons learnt were transmitted in turn, by the participants, to the rest of actors involved in each port community.