

CO-EVOLVE

Promoting the co-evolution of human activities and natural systems for the
development of sustainable coastal and maritime tourism

Deliverable 4.9.1-R1

Report on advancement of Pilot actions implementation



Activity 4.9

Pilot action n°7 NERETVA RIVER DELTA

**DUBROVNIK NERETVA
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY DUNE**

Table of contents

1. <i>Scope of the document</i>	3
2. <i>CO-EVOLVE and the objectives of WP4</i>	3
3. <i>The strategic planning of Pilot area</i>	3
4. <i>Brief description of the Pilot area</i>	5
5. <i>Planning SET-UP in the pilot area</i>	5
6. <i>Building knowledge framework in the pilot area</i>	6
7. <i>Defining vision-goals-objectives</i>	8

1. *Scope of the document*

This document is the report on advancement on pilot actions implementation and corresponds to Deliverable 4.9.1. It's based on concept described in the deliverable 3.18.1 "Guidelines for Tourism-driven strategic Planning" and contains the advancement of activities foreseen in the pilot area Neretva River Delta for the final formulation of local Action Plans on sustainable tourism. The main scope of the Document foreseen for development as part of act. 4.9. is elaboration of the methodology for integral protection of rural landscapes and sustainable development of the tourism of the Neretva River Delta.

2. *CO-EVOLVE and the objectives of WP4*

The WP4 (M2-Testing) translates in practice the findings of WP3 in order to implement Pilot Actions (plans, concrete actions and measures), setting the conditions for a sustainable tourism in coastal areas and related maritime space and promoting robust and transparent decision-making processes. CO-EVOLVE recognizes as a key challenge for sustainable coastal and maritime tourism development the strengthening of cooperation among Regions and the joint development and transferring of approaches, tools, guidelines and best practices. The actions envisaged are systemic, ecosystem-based and dynamic, taking into account future scenarios of natural (i.e. climate change) and anthropogenic changes. The Pilot Actions embrace a wide range of case in the Med area, from coastal urbanized or exploited areas (including port areas, structured waterfronts, different kind of beaches with tourism facilities, etc.) to natural protected areas (Natura 200, Ramsar, SIC&ZPS, etc). Fields of intervention are the **integrated planning of coast-maritime space, governance and management of conflicts between different uses, recovery and valorization of natural areas, developing of integrated tourist offers and deseasonalization of tourist fluxes.**

WP4 has two main specific objectives:

- **Define and test training tools for implementing sustainable tourism** and for sensitizing local administrators / tourism operators. (Output 4.1);
- **Formulate local Action Plans and implement actions for sustainable tourism** in the Pilot Areas, with the participation of main stakeholders and local coastal communities (Output 4.2);

WP4' results and practice experiences on the field, constitute the basis of good practices contribution to the "Transferability Plans" at pilot areas and regional scale (WP5).

WP4 starts on month 02-2018 and end on month 05-2019 **and represents the Module 2 "Testing" of CO-EVOLVE, according to the modular structure of Interreg MED projects.**

3. *The strategic planning of Pilot area*

The strategic planning process guides development in the direction of those strategic priorities identified by all stakeholders through a consultative process. In particular, on coastal area, a tourism-driven strategic plan for sustainable development of coastal areas have to integrate main principles and goals provided by the Integrated Coastal Zone Management recommendations

(UNEP/MAP/PAPRAC Guidelines for ICMZ, 2012) and the Sustainable Coastal tourism approach guidelines (UNEP, 2009).

The methodology proposed by deliverable 3.18.1 for a definition a strategic planning tourism based on a pilot area is organized in different consequential steps that constitutes an adaptive and cyclical process. It consists of 6 major phases, each of which includes key tasks and steps. The iterative process of tourism-driven strategic planning in coastal areas is reported in figure below.



The current development of tourism activities in the Neretva cluster area cannot be assessed with high marks. In other words, existing tourism resources are not used in an optimally and economically rational way, and what is most closely related to the fact that it is a space historically oriented mainly to agriculture or maritime transport (port of Ploče), while tourism business development by local development stakeholders was not recognized as one of the possible generators of additional economic growth and development. Thus, with the exception of the development of the capacity of family accommodation in Slivno municipality, there have been no significant investments in tourism infra and suprastructure in this area for the last 30 years, which ultimately reflected the lagging behind in the tourist development of the whole area compared to the rest Dubrovnik-Neretva County, but also in relation to other tourist receptive areas in Croatia. Regardless of the relative neglect of the tourist offer and taking into account the potential of the available tourist resource-attraction base,

the growing interest in products of special interest on the global level as well as a number of market-ready tourist products destined for one-day excursion, executive holders in the local self- should be further engaged in order to stimulate long-term sustainable tourism activities throughout the project area.

4. *Brief description of the Pilot area*

PA 7 NERETVA RIVER DELTA – Neretva Cluster – consists of seven units of local self-government in the southeastern part of the Republic of Croatia on a wider area along the Neretva River. These are 3 cities of Metković, Opuzen and Ploče and 4 municipalities of Kula Norinska, Slivno, Zažablje and Pojezerje. The Cluster is located on the territory of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County near the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Neretva cluster is spread over an area of 412.56 km² representing 23.15% of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County area. Neretva Delta is the river delta of the Neretva, a river that flows through Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia and empties in the Adriatic Sea. Due to very specific way of life of local people who have co-existed with the wetland through centuries, Neretva Delta represents the unique landscape in Europe. It is characterized by diversity of wetland habitats mixed with agricultural land surrounded by karst hills as well as with the sea at the river mouth. In many ways, the Neretva delta is different from other parts of coastal Croatia. Furthermore, Neretva is the only river in this region with a delta at its mouth. In spite of the conversion of wilderness into tamed waters and arable land, the landscape around the Neretva delta has preserved its beauty and romance. The alluvial plains in the carst setting have become both the inspiration for artists and a topic of scientific research. The unique landscape and the specific culture have made the Neretva delta an attraction for both Croatian and international tourists. According to the review of the landscape units of Croatia as stated in the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Protection of Biological and Landscape Diversity (OG 81/99) and the Spatial Planning Strategy of the Republic of Croatia, the cluster area belongs to the Neretva Landscape Unit - LOWER NERETVA and its delta are unique in terms of landscapes. A total of 1,620 ha of the delta are designated protected areas: ornithological reserves (Prud, Orepak and Podgredom), ornithological and ichthyologic reserve at the river mouth protected landscape (lake Modro oko). The major part of the area is under NATURA 2000 protection. The lowland wetlands, protected by the Ramsar Convention and cultivated areas surrounded by hills and connected to the sea shore and the sea, are a peculiar feature in national frameworks which is still not sufficiently exploited, particularly in the context of (long-term sustainable) tourism business.

5. *Planning SET-UP in the pilot area*

The main aim of this phase, that can be considered the most important pre-planning phase, is to create the needed bases for the subsequent implementation of the whole planning process. Pre-planning phase has been implemented with Dubrovnik Neretva County Institute for Spatial Planning. It is now in waiting phase sic

Please report here all the preparatory work you've done for your pilot area putting in evidence:

- *The definition of the working team: the main working team is DUNE project team but in collaboration with Dubrovnik Neretva County Institute for Spatial Planning.*
- *The definition of the territorial scope: territorial scope has been identified in the communication with Dubrovnik Neretva County Institute for Spatial Planning.*
- *1 training course with 7 local government units of the PA: the identification of the stakeholders has been done through a carefully understanding of the priorities, weakness and qualities of the whole area*
- *Construction of the work plan and definition of milestones: working plan is in delay because we are waiting for the 1st payment from the Programme.*
- **Public procurement procedure started BUT NOT YET PUBLISHED BECAUSE OF THE DELAY OF THE PAYMENT.**

6. Building knowledge framework in the pilot area

The overall aim of the step “Building Knowledge framework” is to analyze the area, in a coherent and integrated way, in order to build up the knowledge to support the decision-making process and the participatory process

Collect here all the information already gathered by WP3 pilot area analysis focusing on

- *Threat and enabling factors*
 - *Coastline is subject to erosion*
 - *Future sea rise may be higher due to local subsidence*
 - *Alarm for loss of natural habitats due to exploitation of the territory intensive agriculture*
 - *The use of space is the main conflict between uses*
 - *The pilot area is at risk of flooding*
- *Definition of sustainable toolkit*

Tourism in the area is currently underdeveloped and further constrained by major gaps in data availability. The results partly show a trend to change the current development patterns and redirect tourism development to the hinterland. Sustainability involves ensuring that allocation and use of land and other resources is based on balanced social, economic and environmental priorities, with the aim of balancing the needs of present and future generations. As reported by the analysis in deliverable 3.17.2, special attention should be given in measuring and monitoring socioeconomic aspects and key assets for the development of cultural and ecotourism activities at pilot area level as well as to mechanisms regarding the evaluation and monitoring of future plans and policies.

Please add info on analysis of existing planning and procedures on pilot area/s

N/A

7. *Defining vision-goals-objectives in the pilot area*

The starting point to create an effective strategy for sustainable tourism development in coastal areas is to set the main direction to which we want to move: the vision and its related objectives. The construction of the vision for the area and the identification of strategic specific objectives must be constructed, on one hand, addressing the strategic issues emerged from the analytical phase, and, on the other hand ensuring the coherence and compliance with ICMZ and Sustainable tourism principles and main goals.

State of the art

Considering the quality of the resource-attraction bases of the Neretva cluster, the protected parts of nature and the Natura 2000 network, in particular the Neretva river basin, the relatively long and turntable seaside, Baćinska jezera, favorable climatic, ichthyologic / ornithologically interesting and suitably protected wetland areas, numerous caves and karst phenomena, the centuries-old tradition of life and work culture, interesting history and peculiar material and immaterial cultural heritage, main portfolios of Neretva cluster tourism products should be in the domain of sustainable tourism (rural tourism, cultural tourism, ecotourism, cyclotourism, bird watching, enogastronomic tourism, hiking, sports and adventure tourism), where diversification of tourist experience and increased satisfaction potential visitors and the basis for the dynamism of tourism development. The most important emission market for the Neretva cluster is currently the domestic market. Namely, according to official CBS data, domestic tourists realized 19% of overnight stays and 30% of arrivals during 2013. Out of overseas markets, the most important markets are Poland, the Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany and Slovakia. During 2013, domestic tourists and tourists with the five previously listed foreign broadcasting markets realized about 71% of overnight stays and about 68% of arrivals. The analysis of tourist traffic by types of accommodation shows that in the Neretva valley most of the overnight stays (75%) and tourist arrivals (53%) are realized in private accommodation, followed by hotels with a 9% share and tourist apartments with a share of 8%. According to the data of the Tourist Board of the Dubrovnik Neretva County, in the area of all seven units of the local self-government of the Neretva cluster there were about 25.9 thousand arrivals and about 185 thousand overnight stays of tourists in 2014, out of which about 66.7 thousand overnight stays were realized in their own "cottages". According to local Tourist Boards data, in the total touristic turnover realized in the Dubrovnik Neretva County area in 2014, Neretva cluster participated with 1.9% arrivals and 2.9% overnight stays. According to local Tourist Boards data, in the total touristic turnover realized in the Dubrovnik Neretva County area in 2014, Neretva cluster participated with 1.9% arrivals and 2.9% overnight stays. The current development of tourism activities in the Neretva cluster area cannot be assessed with high marks. In other words, existing tourism resources are not used in an optimally and economically rational way, and what is most closely related to the fact that it is a space historically oriented mainly to agriculture or maritime transport (port of Ploče), while tourism business development by local development stakeholders was not recognized as one of the possible generators of additional economic growth and development. Thus, with the exception of the development of the capacity of family accommodation in Slivno municipality, there have been no significant investments in tourism infra and suprastructure in this area for the last 30 years, which ultimately reflected the lagging behind in the tourist development of the whole area compared to the rest Dubrovnik-Neretva County, but also in relation to other tourist receptive areas in Croatia. Regardless of the relative neglect of the tourist offer and taking into account the potential of the available tourist resource-attraction base, the growing interest in products of special interest on the global level as well as a number of market-ready tourist products destined for one-day excursion, executive holders in the local self- should be further engaged in order to stimulate long-term sustainable tourism activities throughout the project area.

Tourism development vision for PA 7

It is necessary to develop new forms of tourism, tourist offerings and educational content that are sustainable in the long term, which preserve natural and cultural resources with the aim of strengthening the competitiveness of donor tourism in general and the creation of recognizable tourist facilities and destinations on the international market. The diversification of the existing tourist offer with emphasis on rural and ecotourism and the contents specific to the Neretva Valley area would result in the extension of the tourist season, increase of the number of nights and visitors and at the same time enable growth of the economy and prevention of depopulation, contributing to the vision of the Neretva tourist cluster defined by the Neretva Tourism Development Plan 2015 - 2025, which says:

"In the year 2020, the entire Neretva cluster area will be an internationally affirmed tourist destination, recognizable mainly by preserved ecosystem along the Neretva River, through a wide range of products destined for different market segments of special interest, as well as active sun and sea vacation. The richness and emotional charge of the experience, combined with the original beauty of the landscape, the authenticity of the catering offer, the gentle Mediterranean climate and a peculiar palette of events throughout the whole year, will represent key distinctive elements and a good basis for establishing a unique touristic brand. Dynamic and spatially balanced tourism development for Neretva cluster will be the result of a stimulating business climate, responsible destination management as well as successful collaboration between the public and private sector."

ICZM

The future of this area should be based on balancing the need for further development and the need to protect natural resources. It is also necessary to coordinate the development of different and sometimes conflicting activities and needs, such as agriculture, tourism, water management, infrastructure construction, industry, increasing the quality of life etc. As defined in Report 3.18.1., almost all coastal and marine areas produce or support multiple products and services. Sectoral solutions usually "transfer" the problem between resources, products and services. Tourism will not flourish if the area loses its attraction to visitors; fisheries are usually on the receiving end of everyone else's problems. Industry and energy facilities can degrade the environment for all other activities (WWF, 2000). There is, therefore, a need to bring sectoral activities together to achieve a commonly acceptable coastal management framework. Major source of conflict in environmental disputes include the existence of competing resource demands, differences in human values regarding the relative worth of resources, and inadequate knowledge or understanding of the costs, benefits, and risks involved in proposed actions. As a result of high demand for coastal resources, and the limited supply of resources to be exploited, conflicts are inherent to coastal areas. Therefore, an effective integrated management for the sustainable development of coastal areas, has to fall within this category, and will need to anticipate, avoid and resolve conflicts as part and parcel of the process of its implementation. As pressures increase, problems can no longer be transferred and overlooked but need to be addressed. The transfers of coastal erosion down shore, or water pollution downstream, or air pollution dispersed further inland by ever higher smoke stacks are not acceptable solutions to coastal conflicts. Mechanisms have to be created within economic and social systems to ensure that environmental costs are incorporated into economic evaluations and not passed on to other areas or to future generations. These mechanisms will need to fit the complexity of coastal systems. An integrated approach aims to bring together the conflicting demands of society for products and services, anticipating current and future short-, medium- and long-term interests (Clark, 1992, 1996), It has to keep options open for alternative future uses of marine and coastal resources and be capable of responding to uncertainty.