



Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains

As Coastal destinations of excellence

(EMbleMatiC)

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Project Handbook 1 "Project's Results"

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SUMMARY

The Project Handbook 1 on project's results constitutes the reference document describing the differentiation elements of the Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains network leading to the creation of nine ecojourneys, one in each involved mountain. The process includes the definition of the 10 common criteria, the presentation of the marketing brief and of the 30 attributes that an Emblematic ecojourney should comply with.

It was produced as a synopsis of specific project outputs compiled by Pieriki Anaptixiaki and CETT-UB.

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Introduction- The EMM network and Interreg Med EMbleMatiC project

EMM: The network of Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains

The "Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains" (EMM) Network dates back in the 2013-2015 period under an initiative within the framework of the Leader Rural Development Programme. Today the network consists of 9 members spread in 5 European countries (France, Greece, Italy, Spain and Albania) that are participating to the Interreg Med EMbleMatiC cooperation project.

Each member of the network represents an "emblematic" mountain area, i.e. a well-known mountain at regional, national and even international level, which is a consolidated tourism destination close to the Mediterranean coast, as seen in the map below:



Each mountain of the Network is a complex living character, the combined work of man and nature, evolving from past to future. Their visible and tangible character displays an iconic, unique and distinctive landmark. Their invisible and intangible character lies in the unique experience of living in an emblematic landscape. It becomes part of the inhabitant's identity, a matter of shared recognition and mirror of the locals.

All nine territories have **common challenges** that are critical for the Network. These common challenges are the **preservation of the patrimonial values** from endogenous and exogenous threats, the **sharing of positive experiences and good practices** and the increase of **international recognition**.





The **ambition of the Network** is to become a **wider Mediterranean Network** as long as its values are fully **respected** by the newcomers.

Indeed, since the 2013-2015 period the Network is committed to a dynamic of **constant improvement** putting its **ethics** and **values** in action to share and transmit them, whilst promoting public interest.

All these values of the Network remain clear and strong since 2013.

- First, a **sustainable approach** aiming at the preservation of the cultural and natural heritage is still one of the main pillars.
- Moreover, particular importance is also given to the constant orientation to **reassert** and **preserve** the **fragile patrimonial values** from endogenous and exogenous threats, as well as maintain the **intangible resources**.
- Beyond a shared ownership and responsibility of the **local people** to sustain and transmit the **inherited capital** to **future generations**, the mountains are **open** to visitors respecting certain **values** and **rules**.
- Last but not least, constant improvement, controlled and balanced development
 protecting the landscape as well as quality of experience, is the core of a pursued local
 development promoting public interest, enhancing the image and inspiring attachment
 to the place.

EMbleMatiC: the Interreg Med cooperation project to give life to the network

Between 2016 and 2019, the members of the EMM network are supported by the Interreg Med programme to actively cooperate within the project titled EMbleMatiC:

"Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains as Coastal Destinations of Excellence"

The **overall objective** of the project is to create and test a new and radically different tourism offer based on the features of the 9 mountains and to provide an alternative to the typical holidays on the beach.

The partnership includes five countries, nine mountains and one university (CETT-UB Barcelona):

- Syndicat Canigó Grand Site France / LRMP
- Métropole Aix Marseille- Ste Victoire Grand Site France / PACA
- Development agency of Berguedà Spain / Catalonia
- Consell Insular de Mallorca Spain / Balearic Islands
- Gal Terre dell'Etna e dell'Alcantara Italy / Sicily
- Gal Gran Sasso Velino Italy / Abruzzo
- Pieriki Anaptixiaki Greece /Central Macedonia
- Akomm-Psiloritis Greece / Crete
- Himara Municipality Albania
- CETT-UB School of Tourism, Hospitality and Gastronomy Spain /Catalonia







The project is organised around three strategic objectives:

- to **re-balance tourist flows** concentrations between the sea and the mountain, to **extend the season** and to improve **economic returns** for the territories;
- to co-build and experiment a slow tourism offer located in the hinterland coastal mountainous area by the creation of 9 eco-itineraries based on the emblematic singularities of each territory;
- to improve the **international recognition** of the singularities with **shared communication** actions to lead the territories toward the definition of an umbrella brand based on a **sustainable and responsible tourism** approach.

In practice, and as presented in the following chapters of this Handbook, the EMM network has implemented nine different eco-itineraries (called "ecojourneys" —see chapter 4) in the nine different involved mountains around the Meditteranean sea, based on the defined common criteria (see chapter 1), the common marketing brief (see chapter 2) and the same attributes that each "ecojourney" should adapt (see chapter 3).





1. The criteria composing the emblematic dimension of the EMM

A major outcome of the study process of the Interreg MED EMbleMatiC project was a concrete set of singularities and differentiating factors of the mountains of the Network. The singularities correspond to their rare and highly particular emblematic elements. Their ensemble addresses a great number of elements that robustly highlight the emblematic dimension of the hinterland territories. These singularities refer to the globally rare features, the assets with global significance, the extraordinary elements, "anything one and only". They also refer to the referenced sites and certifications, the tangible and intangible heritage, all the unforgetable and "incompatible" features and, moreover, the beauty and aesthetic appeal and the genuinely authentic Mediterranean character. The mountains' singularities as an integrated system of both rare and not rare features also correspond to highly appreciable features and practically to a distinctive tourism positioning. Summarising these differentiating factors and highly appreciable features of the mountains, led to the finalization of the 10 criteria (C1 – C10) characterizing the EMbleMatiC dimensioncommon to all mountain territoriesas presented below:

C1 Proud local people

This first criterion values the degree of identification of people with the mountain, the passion and love for the place, the pride for the origin and the emblematic characteristics. Pride corresponds to a sense of belonging to the territory, as well as pride to hold a global leadership and pride for the mountain being the marker of the territory.

C2 Institutional recognition

Institutional recognition of the mountain and/or parts of the mountainmay refer for instance to IUCN designations as Strict Nature Reserves or Wilderness Areas or National parks, UNESCO World Heritage Listed, World Network of Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks and awards such as European Destination of Excellence, European Diploma of Protected Area and Natura 2000.

C3 Reputation

The third criterion values the universal value, the national or regional reputation of the mountain territory.

C4 Legends and myths

This criterion values the mythology and elements such as the godly presence, unknown powers and supernatural phenomena, spiritual and symbolic interactions, heroic accomplishments and folktales.

C5 Power of inspiration

Power of inspiration is valued with respect to creativity such as fine arts and other inspiring expressions e.g. literature, painting, films, dance, music, photography etc.





C6 Picturesque landscape

For this criterion what is appreciated is the shape, the geological exceptional characteristics and elements such asthe steep slopes and topographic prominence, graphic and astonishing parts of the landscape, aesthetic enjoyment and visual integrity, as well as the cultural landscape and outstanding human features.

C7 Particular ecosystem

Criterion 7 values naturalness and intactness of the natural systems, the biotopes and geotopes, biodiversity and endemism, freshwater ecosystems, forest diversity, natural quietness, the conservation status of habitats, species and vulnerable areas.

C8 Mediterranean cultural identity

The criterion appreciates the shared Mediterranean identity and culture as revealed through the values and works of the local society, customs, music and dance, festivals, dietary habits, quality products, the mentality and temperament of the locals, religion andholy places, architectural works and elements of an archaeological nature.

C9Sustainability and anthropogenic environment

The criterion values the "footprint" of maninterventions, the environmental impact of human activity, the qualitative work carried out in relation to the conservation and management of the area, as well as the "urban" scenes, architectural features and aesthetics of settlements, the antiquities and notable public works of the past, the industrial heritage and authenticity of the anthropogenic environment.

C10 Historic places

The last criterion values elements such as the prehistoric and historic places and resources, landmarks and battle fields, emblematic personalities, historic towns and districts, as well as traditional and historic trails.



2. Marketing Brief

What is the Marketing Brief?

The Marketing brief aims at establishing a common framework for the commoditisation of the EMM Network tourism products into one common umbrella brand to be positioned as a single product into the market. This document acts as the "terms and conditions" for the local implementation of the pilot activities, i.e. it includes a model of technical form for tourism product locally adaptable, that each partner has adjusted and used for its own pilot activity i.e the creation of its own eco-itinerary. Lastly, the marketing brief leads to the implementation of *slow tourism* in the coastal Mediterranean mountains.

Whereas the marketing brief is mainly a document of "internal character", i.e. it is intended as a guide and orientation for the EMbleMatiC partners, it should also be understood as a result of collective efforts within the MED Community of the INTERREG Programme. Thus, it might be of interest for other projects within the Interreg Med Sustainable tourism community, and even for external actors involved in tourism promotional activities.

The EMM partners' commonalities:

Being part of a network, all individual tourism products are intended to share a series of common attributes allowing the network to commodify all of them as a single, i.e. unified product. These common attributes were investigated in the context of the EMbleMatiC project, as previously detailed in chapter 1 of this Handbook.

Lying behind, there is a set of values that the network shares:

- to apply asustainableapproach, bearing in mind the long-term perspective of any kind of process of natural and/or cultural character and the entanglements between the different geographic scales, from the very local one up to the global one.
- to preserve cultural and natural heritage, considering both the tangible and the nontangible dimension of the heritage elements and attending in a particular way planning aspects, including touristic, spatial and economic planning.
- to remain an open territory mountain area, gathering value through people, bearing in mind that only an approach based on an intensive exchange between locals and visitors can provide the groundings of openness.

Statement of Objectives

The marketing brief has a three-fold **aim**: (1) To re-balance tourist flows concentrations between the sea and the mountain, to extend the season and to improve economic returns for the territories; (2) To co-build and experiment a slow tourism offer located in the hinterland coastal mountainous area by the creation of 9 eco-itineraries based on the emblematic singularities of each territory; and (3) To improve the international recognition of the singularities with shared communication actions to lead the territories toward the definition of an umbrella brand based on a sustainable and responsible tourism.





The very specific **objectives** of the marketing strategy are the following:

(1) To set a common marketing strategy, i.e. a roadmap to be agreed and followed by all network members; (2) To project the values of the network, i.e. to be able to convey them when promoting the product; (3) To establish a common positioning, i.e. to find a market niche that fits at best to all network members; (4) To unify marketing criteria: common brand, common promotion, i.e. to use a single element (logo, motto, story) when promoting the individual products; and (5) To generate and communicate a differential proposal, i.e. to be able to convey our product in a way that can be identify as something different.

Marketing Actions

The above announced marketing objectives become reality only when concrete, well defined (both in terms of time and agency) and costumer-tailored marketing actions are executed. The following seven actions are thematically organised in seven aspects:

Target profile: Our products are conceived for a wide spectrum of visitants. Everyone is welcome to visit our areas, and since the itineraries provided are of low difficulty, the product is thought to attract various types of customers. However, the ideal visitor profile:

- is an adult between 30 and 55 years old with a middle socio-economic status.
- He/she can travel in couple or in family.
- He/she comes from abroad or visits the areas in his/her own country/region.
- He/she loves travelling in small groups of friends and/or families.
- He/she is a nature lover who equally appreciates heritage and cultural events.
- He/she like to move him/herself in a *sustainable* way, preferring to walk the area's paths.

Positioning: The following three main issues potentially differentiate our offer from the rest located in areas with similar characteristics and/or having similar assets:

- 1. We are **emblematic**, this is what differentiates us from others. The experience that we propose differs from other ecotouristic products in the sense that it will gather a set of values and characteristics that will make this experience exemplary and unique.
- We are Mediterranean, i.e. close to a sea that shapes our cultures and nature. To belong to the world's most connoted sea and to its landscapes, traditions, shared heritage, sense of community, music or gastronomy. Being impregnated by the Mediterranean breeze, our product also shows its commitment to improve and to preserve our common home.
- 3. We are **mountains**, this is our profile and the singularity of our territory and landscape. Being mountains is our main geographic singularity, what describes our territory, giving sense and identity to our network. Our experience is conceived for and around the mountain, exploiting all their potentialities and, at the same time, being aware of the fragility of their human and natural ecosystems.





The above three assets are intimately related to a group of attributes that characterise the network and are listed below:

- We are European
- We offer guide and welcome
- We stimulate (Re)Discoveries
- We foster local production
- We generate low impact
- We promote slow tourism
- We favour traditional activities
- We are a Network
- We appreciate living landscapes
- We bet for a better tomorrow

Storytelling: Whilst each partner is in charge to develop its own storytelling (which will be tailored to each case), the network needs a common storytelling for its product. This common piece of text provides the groundings for the individual storytelling, which are nothing else than the main positioning pillars announced in the previous section ("positioning"):

From Olympus to Etna,

admire and feel, in an Emblematic way, nine of the Mountains that have oriented and sheltered the Mediterranean people along their shared history. A journey through nine landscapes that still preserve the footprints and the spirit of their ancient cultures and gorgeous nature. Walk them step by step and meet their own people, their creations and festivities. Enjoy whilst contributing to keep and thrive this priceless legacy for the future generations.

Brand: The EMM Network is characterised by mountains offering guide and welcome, i.e. places that orient visitors, showing them a certain way to approach Mediterranean mountain, and simultaneously hosting them by offering the traditional mountainous protection and being open to welcome new and old visitors. This double feature on "Guide & Welcome" was intended to be symbolised by an element connecting sea and mountain and projecting a kind of light, be this a lighthouse, a beacon, a headlight, a lantern, a phare... On the other hand, the welcome dimension was related to the figure of a guardian, of a watchtower, of a refuge, of a shelter.

The way the products concretise themselves upon the land is a sequence of points (corresponding to the main attractions) connected each other in a way so that it has a start and an end. Such a sequence could have received different names, including itinerary (which was the one the Network used in the project proposal), route, trail, discovery, path, track, experience, walk, product, voyage, days. After a collective discussion process, we came to the word journey, which was adopted by adding the prefix "eco" (which synthesises the previous positioning) emblematic). *Ecojourney* is, therefore, the name of our product.





The suggested brand name is Mediterranean Mountains – Your Emblematic Ecojourney

And the adopted brand logo is the following:



Product: The Emblematic *Ecojourneys* are nine routes of experiential slow tourism across hinterland areas of European Mediterranean mountain regions. By enjoying these journeys, visitors have the chance to explore the areas' singularities and the activities offered by local providers. A journey where nature and culture meet and the experience with body and soul is such that it generously conveys the emblematic character of the territory.

Experience: The Emblematic *Ecojourneys* are thought for persons who are eager to live sustainably whilst experiencing the sense of place: not feeling forced to fulfil exhaustive experiences but, rather, to enjoy exclusive discoveries needing time, including meeting people, places, landscapes... that might inspire them to deal with their own lives... or maybe to make some changes to them. This is precisely what they will find in our EMbleMatiC *Ecojourneys*.

Price & Quality: Although the quality standards are similar, since our network includes manifold areas located in countries with different features, the network's products are within a relatively wide price range. On the other hand, the *Ecojourneys* can both be commercialised as part of a tourist package or just individually. Therefore, prices may change within the same *Ecojourney*, depending on what experience the visitor chooses.





3. Terms of Reference for the EMM network ecojourneys

Introduction

As stated in the previous chapters, each member of the Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains Network represents a mountain area in which a *slow tourism* product is developed. These products are eco-itineraries across the mountains hinterland areas and are called *Ecojourneys*. They have been designed so that they share a number of common characteristics allowing the network to commodify all of them as a single, i.e. unified product.

Even so the network's common values and criteria were previously established (*see chapters 1 and 2, respectively*), all partners worked initially together to agreed on a list of 30 common attributes that each of the partner had to comply with when conceiving and implementing their *Ecojourney*.

The aim was to ensure that any visitor coming to experience several or all of nine *Ecojourneys*, will enjoy an experience conveying similar qualities and approaches even so the components of each local offer will be specific to the profile of the territory visited.

A list of 30 attributes was structured around 5 topics: basic features of the itinerary, associated services, ethics & sustainability, management & network, and marketing issues.

To ensure the compliance of each ecojourney with each of the 30 attributes, our academic partner, the CETT, designed a list of 30 related evidences that partners had to submit to demonstrate their compliance with each of the commonly agreed attributes.

The following table shows the attributes and their corresponding evidence.

They are clustered in the above mentioned five topics.

1. Basic Features

#	EMbleMatiC Common Attribute	Suggested evidence to be provided
1	Located in the foothills	Map & description of the itinerary
2	Low to medium difficulty	Map & description of the itinerary
3	Accessible all year around (excepting extreme weather conditions: snow, risk of fire)	Itinerary opening schedule
4	Properly signposted (either with posts or digital tools)	Signposting project, pictures/video
5	Including properly indicated panoramic viewpoints	Map of the itinerary, description of the selected spots
6	Favouring non-saturated spots	Map & description of the itinerary explaining how the proposed itinerary avoids the most saturated spots
7	Optimising existing infrastructure	Catalogue of existing elements





2. Associated services

#	EMbleMatiC Common Attribute	Suggested evidence to be provided
8	Including environmental & landscape interpretation services/facilities	Brief description of the existing/planned facilities/services
9	Including visits on cultural heritage sites & monuments	Brief description of the planned itinerary activities
10	Including contents related to intangible heritage	Brief description of the planned itinerary activities (it may include calendar)
11	Offering local guidance services	List of the hired guide services including their relationship to the area in question
12	Providing eco-friendly leisure activities (sportive activities, health & wellness, bird watching)	List of optional activities
13	Offering local gastronomy	List of restaurants and catering services and (if applying), corresponding certifications (e.g. slow food, Km.0, organic, fair).
14	Offering the possibility to meet local producers with option to buy their products in the area (cooperatives, markets)	List of local producers and their relationship to the itinerary.
15	When offering picnic take-away, promote sustainable and eco-friendly services	Picnic guidelines for establishments.

3. Ethics & Sustainability

#	EMbleMatiC Common Attribute	Suggested evidence to be provided
16	Option to reach the destination with public transport and encouraging visitors in voluntary carbon offsetting.	Description of the existing public transportation possibilities and information for visitors on how they can voluntary offset their carbon footprint.
17	Promoting eco-friendly mobility within the route	Map & description of the itinerary. Those motorized itineraries should provide foreseen actions to implement eco-friendly mobility.
18	Promoting interaction between visitors and local people	Brief description of the possible interactions (e.g. through accommodation, leisure activities)
19	Prioritising locally owned accommodation (e.g. through local quality agreements)	List of establishments to be included in the future travel guide.





20	Providing visitors with visual & clear information about correct behaviour in the area	Rules for visitors
21	Raising awareness among stakeholders about responsible tourism best practices	Guidelines on Best Environmental Practices (BEP)

4. Management & Governance

#	EMbleMatiC Common Attribute	Suggested evidence to be provided
22	Implementing monitoring tools to improve the sustainable performance of the destination	Plan of Action
23	Involving local stakeholders participating in the itinerary (i.e. accommodation, restaurants, travel agencies, activities providers)	Stakeholder database, incl. their role in the designing process see
24	Collecting indicators to monitor and manage the impact of the itinerary	List of indicators to be used in the future
25	Sharing experiences with other partners of the network periodically	Schedule of face-to-face meetings or other sort of periodical communications
26	Providing interpretation material in at least local languages & English	List of materials to be produced (both in local language(s) and English)

5. Marketing aspects

#	EMbleMatiC Common Attribute	Suggested evidence to be provided
27	Informing about local available	List of services to be included in the travel
21	services	guide
28	Oriented both to local and coastal visitors as an alternative complementary activity	Marketing brief (see previous Chapter 2 of the current Project Handbook)
29	Oriented to a common target group	Marketing brief (see previous Chapter 2 of the current Project Handbook)
30	Promoting the common brand &	Marketing brief (see previous Chapter 2 of
30	marketing strategy	the current Project Handbook)





4. The EmbleMatiC Ecojourneys – A new sustainable tourism offer

As already described, one of the results of the Interreg MED project "EMbleMatiC" carried out by the Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains network was the creation of nine different ecojourneys. All network members worked together in order to offer a more intensive, authentic and sustainable travel experience. Every visitor can enjoy these experiences through nine distinct Ecojourneys, in order to discover with all senses, the hidden gems lying around some of the most amazing mountains across the Mediterranean basin.

Each Ecojourney offers a route or a group of routes across the hinterland area of these mountains. Whilst enjoying this journey on foot, biking or riding, or using public transports, visitors have a chance to explore the areas' singularities and to discover activities, creations and festivities offered by locals. All routes are perfectly integrated in landscapes that still preserve the footprints and the spirit of their ancient cultures and gorgeous nature.

Please read below a brief presentation of the In the nine Ecojourneys are briefly presented.

The foothills of the Canigó

Canigó, France

Come to explore, to taste and be amazed whilst enjoying everchanging views over the Sacred mountain of Catalans! The foothills of Canigó, the promise of a slow and curious walk full of natural scents. www.canigo-grandsite.fr



From Çika highlands to the beach

Çika, Albania

A scenic route running in parallel to Çika crest, enriched with a bouquet of 5 extending pathsto balconies and paysages, natural & cultural heritage and welcoming people, is the heart of this journey.



http://himara.gov.al/

The seven faces of Pedraforca mountain

Pedraforca, Spain

The seven faces of Pedraforca is a new tourist experience that will take you to discover all thesecrets hidden by this magical mountain. From one day up to seven days to impregnate yourself! www.elbergueda.cat / www.visitbergueda.cat







The Gran Sasso, a mountain of Saints and Warriors

Gran Sasso, Italy

Ascend from the Tirino Valley to the Gran Sasso, the highest peak of the Appennini Mountains. Enjoy an emotional journey through nature, ancient traditions, landscapes and tasty local products.

www.galgransassovelino.it / www.yesgransasso.com



"Olympios Zeus", Cultural Route

Olympus, Greece

A mythical route that combines grandiose environment with remarkable historical monuments in a unique harmony. Organized infrastructure and services offer an experience that is really worth the visit!

www.pieriki-anaptixiaki.qr



An ecojourney through pathways of Etna"Ginesta" and "Vineyard" flowered fields

Etna, Italy

Discover traditions that have not changed for hundred years. Live with the locals, experience their culture & everyday lifestyle whilst fallingin love with this very special part of the world.

www.galetnaalcantara.org



The route of Comte Mal

Serra de Tramuntana, Spain

Under the shelter of the majestic Mount Galatzo, that rises above the sea, you will wander on a land of legends, through an outstanding cultural landscape, shaped over centuries by proud local people. https://caminsdepedra.conselldemallorca.cat/en/-/la-ruta-del-comte-mal



On the Paths of Myth

(Psiloritis) Ida, Greece

Through the ecojourney of Mt Ida (Psiloritis) visitorscould discover the Paths of Myths, History, Cultural Heritage and Natural Wealth in order to meet the original side and timeless value of Crete.

www.psiloritisgeopark.gr/Home/2/1.html



In the mood for Sainte-Victoire

Sainte-Victoire, France

We want you to enjoy the unexpected Sainte-Victoire and share its authentic mood. Experienceour local way of life and meet people whoembody the spirit of our living territory.

www.fuveau-tourisme.com









Following the EMM values and the ToR attributes that have been presented in the previous chapters, all Ecojourneys observe sustainability related issues in a particular way, so that they...

- ✓ ...are located in hinterland areas that are outside of the usual (and overcrowded) touristic routes;
- ✓ ...have been conceived and developed mainly using and placing value on already existing infrastructure;
- ✓ ...area result of a participatory processes with local stakeholders who are aware of environmental good practices related to water and energy consumption, waste management, fostering local and seasonal products, and obtaining ecolabels;
- ✓ ...are conceived to favour interaction with local people and producers;
- ✓ ...will allow visitors to live for a while the essence of a Mediterranean mountain, its nature, its culture and its people and traditions.