

**E**mblematic **M**editerranean **M**ountains  
as **C**oastal destinations of excellence  
**(EMbleMatiC)**

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**STUDY REPORT ON THE EMBLEMATIC  
DIMENSION OF THE COASTAL  
MEDITERRANEAN MOUNTAINS  
Part III of III SYNTHESIS**

**Deliverable D 334**

**WP3 – Studying**

**Activity A3.3 In depth study of the criteria composing the  
emblematic dimension of EMM**

***Final Version, 10/04/2018***

## SUMMARY

The Synthesis Report constitutes the reference document of the singularities of the Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains Network and is part of the Final Report on the in-depth study of the emblematic dimension of our tourism destinations (D.3.3.4), drafted in the framework of the WP3 “Studying” of EMbleMatic project.

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## Introduction

The term “**emblematic**” finds its origins in the ancient Greek verb “εμβάλλω” [emvalo] and the Latin “emblem” and it stands for a symbol, a sign or an icon. Obviously the emblem dates back from ancient times and it has been used as a symbol of towns, dynasties, nobility titles, royal families, nations, states etc.

Nowadays, the “emblematic” can be used for something that symbolically embodies a place, a culture, an era or an idea. The use of the term is wide (albeit not so frequent) and it can be traced in the terminology of several fields like the theory of art, architecture, cultural studies, anthropology and elsewhere. Therefore, emblematic can be defined as an ensemble of stimuli that emanates from something special, something not usual that stimulates the imagination and generates strong feelings.

The elaboration of a **Study** for recording and analyzing the emblematic dimension of the nine (9) mountainous territories participating in the project “**Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains as Coastal Destinations of Excellence - EMbleMatiC**” and are members of the Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains Network, was the core of an exclusive study stage of the project under the name “Studying”.

The present **Synthesis** is the reference document regarding the **Network and its values**, the **methodology and results of the Study** with respect to the **mountains’ singularities**, the **creation of eco-itineraries** and the **evaluation process for future members** of the Network.

## 1. EMM: The network of Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains

The “**Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains**” (**EMM**) **Network** dates back in the 2013-2015 period under the initiative of three rural areas in France, Greece and Bulgaria working within the framework of the Leader rural development programme. The members of the Network created a **Charter** of common values in order to define and interpret the **emblematic dimension** of the mountains, as well as a guide of six (6) **common criteria** for the validation of the emblematic quality of the mountainous areas.

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**.

The **common challenges** of the territories are rather important for the Network. These common challenges refer to 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 totally **respected** by the newcomers.

## 2. The values shared by the network

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.

- **TO APPLY SUSTAINABLE APPROACH**

Strongly supported is the view that the management of the hinterland territories requires a **global approach** that allows a synthesis between the principles of **sustainable development** combining all aspects of the landscape such as **biodiversity, historical and cultural heritage, social and economic practices**.

- **TO PRESERVE CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

Preserving the **cultural and natural heritage** as well as the experience associated to it is rather important. The challenge of the **local strategy** and **land use planning** is to combine the preservation of **the substance of the site** with maintaining the **intangible elements** of its precious **symbolism** and **living character**.

- **TO BE AN OPEN MOUNTAIN**

Each mountain has to be an **open mountain** gathering **value through people**. Visitors must be able to **freely explore** the hinterland territories, to **share the spirit of the place** whilst respecting **local rules** and conscious of technical constraints. **Local people** are seen as the **guarantors** of the transmission of the **inherited capital** of their emblematic landscape to **future generations** and to **visitors**.

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 has also 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**.

### 3. EMbleMatiC: the Interreg Med cooperation to give life to the network

The **Interreg MED EMbleMatiC project**, approved on September 2016, belongs to the Priority Axis 3 “*Protecting and promoting Mediterranean natural and cultural resources*” and to the Specific Objective 3.1 “*To enhance the development of a sustainable and responsible coastal and maritime tourism in the MED area*” of the INTERREG MED operational programme.

The project is product of the continuity and development of the 2013-2015 Network in 5 Mediterranean countries (France, Spain, Italy, Greece and Albania) representing 9 emblematic mountains:

|    | Mountain            | Country/Region                       | Organisation  | Participating Partner: PP |
|----|---------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1  | Canigó              | France / Occitanie                   | SyndicatCanigó Grand Site                             | LP1                       |
| 2  | Sainte Victoire     | France / PACA                        | Métropole Aix Marseille- Ste Victoire Grand Site      | PP16                      |
| 3  | Pedraforca          | Spain / Catalonia                    | Development agency of Berguedà                        | PP2                       |
| 4  | Serra de Tramuntana | Spain / Balearic Islands             | Consell Insular de Mallorca                           | PP6                       |
| 5  | Etna                | Italy/ Sicily                        | Gal Terre dell'Etna e dell'Alcantara                  | PP5                       |
| 6  | Gran Sasso          | Italy / Abruzzo                      | Gal Gran SassoVelino                                  | PP3                       |
| 7  | Olympus             | Greece / Central Macedonia- Thessaly | PierikiAnaptixiaki                                    | PP4                       |
| 8  | Psiloritis          | Greece / Crete                       | Akomm-Psiloritis                                      | PP7                       |
| 9  | Cika                | Albania                              | Himara Municipality                                   | PP1                       |
| 10 |                     | Spain / Catalonia                    | CETT-UB School of Tourism, Hospitality and Gastronomy | PP8                       |



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 provide an alternative to the typical holidays on the beach.

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.

For the 2014-2020 period, the MED cooperation programme allows project partners to set up projects based on different “modules” therefore the project is organised around a “modular approach” articulated around a sequence of three stages: “**Studying**”, “**Testing**” and “**Transferring**”.

**“Studying”** deals with the in-depth study of the EMbleMatiC dimension of the 9 mountains to qualify and reveal precisely the common components characterizing the emblematic dimension of each involved coastal mountainous territory, before consolidating them into a set of shared values underlying the singularity of the Network, with the view of using them at different operational levels. The aim is to grasp what constitutes the common foundation of this emblematic dimension as a factor of differentiation in sustainable tourism positioning.

**“Testing”** focuses on the development of a Marketing Brief for an EMbleMatiC slow tourism product by capitalising on the results of the study towards a more operational shared frame of reference for each partner to launch its own pilot action. Moreover, focuses on the creation of 9 emblematic slow tourism eco-itineraries each one developing the emblematic dimension specific to each partner territory.

**“Transferring”** deals with the development of a transfer guide to allow future Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains to implement their own eco-itineraries. It will aim at disseminating the project learnings and the practical recommendations.

## 4. Study on the EMbleMatiC dimension of the EMM

### 4.1 Purpose

The **aim of this in-depth study** was to qualify and reveal precisely the **common components** characterizing the **emblematic dimension** of each involved coastal mountainous territory, before consolidating them into **a set of shared values** underlying the **singularity** of the **Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains network**, with the view of using them at different operational levels. The aim was to grasp what constitutes the common foundation of this emblematic dimension on all aspects: environmental, social, economic, societal/sociological and cultural/heritage.

To this end, the project sought an external expertise on its 2013-2015 attempt to define the common Emblematic dimension, in order to enhance it in the interest of the network, of the project and moreover:

- To define the common foundation of the network as a factor of differentiation when defining a common positioning in relation to sustainable tourism.
- To have concrete advices and operational recommendations on future eco-tourism products to better manage flows and returns in our respective hinterland coastal territories.

The results of the study aim to serve as the main differentiator for tourism positioning, on which the stage of **“Testing”** will be implemented to co-build and experiment a slow tourism offer located in the coastal mountainous areas.

## **4.2 Methodology / study process**

The starting point of the “**Studying**” stage was the development of the **operativemethodological framework** for the process of emblematic singularities qualification which included 10 identifier criteria.

The next stage of work was the **elaboration of a set of tools** needed for the project partners to test the criteria locally. The tools to be used locally by each partner included **common guidances to organize a participative local meeting**, the **template for the meeting minutes** and the **template for a case study** for each mountain.

The input of **9 local meetings** aiming at a bottom-up participative consultation and the development of **9 case studies** aiming at the characterization of the emblematic dimension in relation to each territory was the stage of revealing **a structured profile of the areas** and their **emblematic assets**.

Then an **on-site research** was carried out at the mountains of the network by a team of experts in order to capture a “live” **sense of place** and add to a complete view on the territories.

These successive steps led to a comprehensive **Study Report** on recording and analyzing the emblematic dimension of the nine (9) regions participating in the project.

A core part of the methodological framework was the **elaboration of the emblematic dimension criteria**.

During the Leader programme period of the Network (2013-2015), the following 6 common criteria of the emblematic dimension were specified:

1. Picturesque landscape,
2. Myths and legends,
3. Power of inspiration,
4. Historical sites,
5. Excellent biodiversity
6. Specific local services.

In the current project, after consideration, assessment and further elaboration of these 6 common criteria, dynamically processing and fine tuning them in parallel with the rest of the work on the Study Report, new creative input and contributions during meetings and discussions held among the partners, led to the finalization of the 10 criteria (C1 – C10) characterizing the emblematic dimension common to all mountain territories as 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 mountain may 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 as the 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 and holy places, architectural works and elements of an archaeological nature.

### **C9 Sustainability and anthropogenic environment**

The criterion values the “footprint” of man interventions, 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.

### **4.3 Results**

A major outcome of the Study Report 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 unforgettable 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 gives the following picture of strong assets:

### Examples of the emblematic dimension of the mountains

| Criteria                     | Power assets  | Indicative examples   |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| C1 Proud local people        | Strong pride and sense of belonging to the territory  | Local people across the 9 hinterland territories that strongly identify with the mountains.   |
| C2 Institutional recognition | Certifications, designations and awards   | <p>"Countries of Art and History" (Canigó)</p> <p>"Most beautiful villages of France" (Canigó)</p> <p>Grand Site de France certification (Canigó, Sainte Victoire)</p> <p>Listed among the most beautiful villages (Canigó, Gran Sasso)</p> <p>UNESCO Geopark (Psiloritis), UNESCO heritage (Canigó, Gran Sasso, Etna, Serra de Tramuntana, Psiloritis), UNESCO Storage of Biosphere (Olympus)</p>  |
| C3 Reputation                | Globally known and popular mountains  | Globally known (Etna and Olympus), Highest and only active volcano in Europe (Etna), Thousands of visitors  |
| C4 Legends and myths         | Mythology and legendary references  | <p>Sacred mountain of Catalans, Dragons and 7 men of Canigó</p> <p>Paths of Forgiveness (Gran Sasso)</p> <p>Ancient Dion sacred city (Olympus)</p> <p>"witch's mountain" (Pedraforca)</p> <p>Greek mythology (Olympus, Psiloritis, Etna)</p>  |
| C5 Power of inspiration      | Strongly inspired creativity<br>Associated with emblematic personalities  | <p>"a Cezanne's site", Pablo Ruiz Picasso residence (Sainte Victoire)</p> <p>Artists and writers (Serra de Tramuntana)</p> <p>Incompatible traditional poetry, music and dance (Psiloritis)</p> <p>John Paul II (Gran Sasso)</p> <p>Lord Byron (Cika)</p> <p>Homer (Olympus)</p>  |
| C6 Picturesque landscape     | High altitudes and alpine characteristics<br>Superlative features<br>Unforgettable spots and unique shapes<br>Aesthetic enjoyment | <p>5 peaks above 2,000 meters (Psiloritis)</p> <p>Begins to rise at sea level (Cika)</p> <p>Highest of Apennines (Gran Sasso), Highest peak of the Ceraunian range (Cika), Second highest mountain in the Balkans (Olympus)</p> <p>Lunar/desert landscape and forest/fertile land (Etna)</p> <p>Prominence of 1,563 meters (Cika)</p> <p>Referenced by Ptolemy, Strabo and Pausanias (Cika)</p> <p>Terraces landscape (Serra de Tramuntana), unusual flat terraces on high altitudes (Canigó)</p> |

| Criteria  | Power assets   | Indicative examples  |
|---|--|--|
| C7 Particular ecosystem                         | Territories consisting of a large variety of habitats with high ecological value     | <p>Natural parks : Catalan Pyrenees, Etna, Gran Sasso e Monti dellaLaga, Olympus, Serra de Tramuntana</p> <p>World reference for botanists (Canigó), highest number of plants across Europe (Gran Sasso), 25% of the Greek flora (Olympus), 20% of French fauna and flora (Sainte Victoire)</p> <p>Astrotourism (Pedraforca)</p> <p>Granite reserves (Canigó)</p> <p>Grotta del gelo (cave of the ice) (Etna), Second southernmost glacier in Europe (Gran Sasso)</p> <p>Monumental trees with spectacular sizes (Pedraforca)</p> <p>Speleopark (Psiloritis)</p> |
| C8 Mediterranean cultural identity              | <p>Naturally connected with the Mediterranean Sea</p> <p>Cultural richness</p>       | <p>400 PDO wine cellars in a single territory (Etna)</p> <p>Cradle of Catalanity (Canigó, Pedraforca)</p> <p>Dry stone technique (Serra de Tramuntana, Psiloritis, Canigó)</p> <p>Fire-related events (Pedraforca)</p> <p>Mountain marathon races (Olympus, Etna, Psiloritis, Canigó)</p> <p>Picasso way (60 km cultural route) (Pedraforca)</p> <p>Traditional wedding receptions (Psiloritis)</p> <p>Bear festival (Canigó)</p> <p>Ancient Dion (Olympus)</p> <p>Necropolis of Fossa (Gran Sasso)</p>  |
| C9 Sustainability and anthropogenic environment | <p>Conservation and management of the area</p> <p>Man-made authentic features</p>    | <p>320 km route (Gran Sasso)</p> <p>Dry Stone Route hiking trail (Serra de Tramuntana)</p> <p>Mining tradition and museums (Pedraforca, Sainte Victoire, Canigó)</p>   |
| C10 Historic places                             | <p>Prehistoric and historic places</p> <p>Landmarks and emblematic personalities</p> | <p>Mountain linked with two Popes (Gran Sasso)</p> <p>Paleontological site (Pedraforca, Sainte Victoire)</p> <p>World war II Holocaust town (Psiloritis)</p> <p>Medieval towns (Gran Sasso, Etna)</p>  |

## 5. Concrete use of the study results

### 5.1 Creation of eco-itineraries on each territory

The specification of a robust set of recommendations on how to build an eco-itinerary based on the singularities of our emblematic dimension was a necessary step of work particularly important for the next stages of the project: *testing* and *transferring*.

In the context of the project an eco-itinerary is a planned route of experience tourism with certain or uncertain duration and stops, along hinterland area attractions and possibilities for activities offered by local providers. It might be an existent or newly designed trail. A trail though where ecological content is dominant and the experience with body and mind is such that it generously conveys the emblematic character of the territory.

What the project first of all recommended as paramount is every eco-itinerary to robustly promote the particular elements of the emblematic dimension of the mountain, i.e.:

- ☒ **Outstanding universal values, principal factors for reputation and highly esteemed characteristics.**
- ☒ **Institutional recognitions, designations and awards.**
- ☒ **Particularly authentic features.**
- ☒ **Legends and myths, supernatural phenomena, spiritual and symbolic elements.**
- ☒ **Arts of any kind (painting, sculpture, architecture, music, literature, dance, photography, design, mosaics etc).**
- ☒ **Panoramic view points, long distance views and graphic settlements, picturesque and grandiose landscapes, spectacular formations, geotopes and topographic prominence, scenic pastures, gorges and valleys.**
- ☒ **Unique ecosystems, endemism, species richness, threatened species, emblematic plants and animals.**

- ☑ **Freshwater ecosystems, forest diversity, remarkable trees, high nature value farmland.**
- ☑ **Particular cultural identity, values and works of the local society, cultural richness, customs, festivals, gastronomy, quality and designated products, artisanal production, traditional professions, peoples' special attitude and temperament, pride of local people, folklore, religion, holy places, intangible cultural heritage.**
- ☑ **Architectural features, pleasing urban scenes and industrial heritage.**
- ☑ **Prehistoric and historic places, historic monuments, landmarks, battle fields, heroic accomplishments, emblematic personalities, historic towns and sanctuaries.**

Moreover a broader set of recommendations should be examined whether they are already or not satisfied within the territory. In other words each attempt to establish an eco-itinerary should examine particular fields (e.g. Modalities, Strategy, Design, Local Community and Stakeholders, Market and Promotion, Management) that any interested body should follow. The next paragraphs is a set of concrete advice for entities planning an emblematic eco-itinerary:

## **MODALITIES**

- ☑ Consider two possible modalities: LINEAR eco-itinerary (with a starting point and a finishing one) or ORBITAL eco-itinerary (series of emblematic elements/ingredients located in the hinterland area that the visitor can discover and combine following his taste and feeling).

## **STRATEGY**

- ☑ Get support to develop a multi-year strategy for the destination; carry out necessary studies; reassess your strategy periodically; creatively adopt already applied successful initiatives.
- ☑ Support small businesses investments close or along the itinerary to enrich local services, boost demand for local production and generation of income.

## DESIGN

- ☑ Secure quality readiness, infrastructure availability, diverse activities during day and night and number of beds.
- ☑ Provide an integrated offer (eat-see-sleep-visit-services-activities...); design as much as possible a multi-experience of “seeing”, “tasting”, “watching” “participating”, “learning”, “buying”, “touring”, “having fun” etc.
- ☑ Ensure a friendly entry with availability of information about the itinerary; create different lengths and degrees of difficulty in order to provide high-quality experiences to different types of visitors; match the degrees of difficulty and the selected target groups.
- ☑ Build sustainable infrastructure and integrate it in harmony to the wider territory and with other types of tourism and sectors of the economy; create connections and linkages to other itineraries, facilities and attractions.
- ☑ Enhance the accessibility and provide resting areas and other soft infrastructure (toilets, refuges) as well as reasonable accommodation offer for people with disabilities and seniors.
- ☑ Provide access to the most important features while avoiding very sensitive ecosystems or wildlife habitats; enrich educational features, interpretation and learning experience for the visitors.
- ☑ Grade the difficulty of the different parts of the eco-itinerary, mark the respective routes, use clear, visible and frequent marking and information boards with rich interpretive information.
- ☑ Provide opportunities for fun and activities, diverse experience and variety of alternatives along the eco-itinerary; provide year round activities; enhance existent possibilities for entertainment and socialization activities.
- ☑ Provide opportunities to visitors to meet and interact with locals.
- ☑ Satisfy hiking beginners, as well as seniors and children by including parts with not long length and altitude differences.

## LOCAL COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDERS

- ☑ Think about the locals as much as the visitors; put emphasis on the harmonious coexistence of locals and tourists; respect the daily life and convenience of the local people; ensure that the eco-itinerary supports and does not deteriorate the quality of life of local residents.
- ☑ Identify immediate and long term potential partners; promote the participation of the local community and entrepreneurship in the tourism offer; organise suppliers, develop partnerships with mountain practitioners as well as mobilise the indifferent local actors.
- ☑ Strongly involve tour operators to gain from their good sense of the market and maintain in a long term a collaborative relationship with them.
- ☑ Educate business operators and upgrade professionalization.

## MARKET AND PROMOTION

- ☑ Interpret market trends and attitude of tourists and tour operators.
- ☑ Define how many and what kind of tourists are welcomed; define and prioritise the target groups, understand the users' needs and respond to their modern needs.
- ☑ Provide complete and accurate pre-trip information.
- ☑ Facilitate the stay of visitors by offering information related to accommodation, facilities, activities, purchasing and entertainment.
- ☑ Facilitate the use of on-line and mobile tools and applications, exploit the internet and mobile technologies to promote effectively the itinerary and the wider territory.
- ☑ Exploit all possibilities for communication aiming to enhance the flows from coastal areas to the hinterland; place information boards at crowded coastal areas guiding towards the eco-itineraries; communicate and cooperate with hoteliers, local travel agencies, tourist bus services etc.
- ☑ Target and attract nationals, new groups and nationalities to diversify demand.
- ☑ Emphasize on what easily brings popularity and publicity (e.g. major events, mountain races, inviting travel journalists).

- ☑ Take advantage of wider (regional or national) fam trips for travel journalists, travel and lifestyle columnists, travel bloggers, alternative travel and e-journalists, tour operators and travel agents.

## MANAGEMENT

- ☑ Plan the means for feedback management and collection of data on visitor satisfaction; emphasise on the repeatability of travelers.
- ☑ Plan the route maintenance and regular update of information.
- ☑ Facilitate and promote all season use, as well as manage the carrying capacity of the area in the high season; estimate the destination's carrying capacity and the variables that affect the maximum capacity; monitor and influence visitor flows to reduce negative impacts.
- ☑ Prioritise and organise a system to communicate, monitor and respond to safety hazards; enhance safety and emergency response and engage rescuers and well-trained guides.
- ☑ Ensure readiness for extreme weather conditions.
- ☑ Take measures to minimize by all means the impact of the visitors on nature; manage car traffic and noise; raise awareness about the fragile environment of the mountain ecosystem and contribute to conservation of ecosystems and socio-cultural authenticity; engage travelers to conservation with guidelines for proper visitor behavior; make sure that visitors are adequately informed about relevant sustainability issues in the destination including environmental, cultural and social issues.
- ☑ Support sustainable transport, soft and eco-friendly mobility (e.g. electric cars, bicycles, frequent public transport) for a low impact transportation.
- ☑ Create conditions to attract and spread the visitors across the territory.

## 5.2 Evaluation process to welcome new members to the network

Looking further than this cooperation project, the network wants to remain open to future members. Therefore, this project capitalizes on the findings of this study to design an evaluation process to welcome future members. This process gives particular importance to certain **qualitative prerequisites** which precede and balance the quantitative scoring which is planned to follow then. According to this qualitative approach for the future applicants to enter the network, a two (2) stages and four (4) steps process is designed.

### Stage 1

#### ☑ **Step 1: Compliance with Eligibility map**

Only mountains within the eligible area are accepted to submit application. For the North Med area, the Interreg-Med programme eligible area will be applied while for the South Med area the ENI CBC Med programme eligible area.

#### ☑ **Step 2: Letter of motivation to join the network**

Future applicants will have the obligation to submit a letter of motivation including a declaration to respect the values of the network:

- To apply global sustainable approach
- To preserve cultural and natural heritage
- To be an open mountain

#### ☑ **Step 3: Well developed and illustrated arguments**

The applicant should address well developed and illustrated arguments justifying how it is actively expressing these values on the policies developed and implemented on its territory.

As soon as the applicants complete step 1 to 3 and the assessors of the Network are satisfied with those first three steps, they ask the applicants to complete Step 4 on criteria answers and apply the self-scoring.

## Stage 2

### ☑ **Step4: Criteria assessment**

The applicants will have to argue for the 10 criteria with concrete arguments on how well their mountain satisfies the necessary emblematic dimension as well as exercise a self-assessment and the respective scoring scale.

Regarding the **quantitative assessment**, each candidate mountain will be evaluated by **keymembers of the existing Network or assigned experts** first with **Individual Evaluation Reports** and then with a **Consensus Report**.

Rejected applicants will be **encouraged to apply again** in the future if they wish to and correct if possible the fields that substantiated the reasons for which they were initially rejected.

This evaluation process is summarized on the next page into a flow chart diagram.

Readers willing to understand it in a more detailed manner are invited to read chapter 5 of Part I of III Final report.

### Evaluation process flow chart diagram

