

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

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Marketing Brief for the EMbleMatiC Ecojourney (EMM Slow Tourism Product)

Deliverable D 4.3.1

WP4 – Testing

Activity A 4.3 -Preparatory activities to the design of tourism products

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SUMMARY

One of the main foreseen outcomes within the WP4 (devoted to testing) is a **marketing brief** as a tool for the EMM network that allows the commercialisation of its product(s). This document aims to create a common framework for the nine eco-products, so that they can be commodified as a single product (=Ecojourney). Based on the Study Report (see deliverable 3.3.4), in the marketing brief a series of common attributes are combined with the Network's common values and criteria. As a result, a common product (=Ecojourney) is developed on the basis of common target audiences and common marketing strategies (i.e. branding and storytelling). This deliverable contains the result of an intensive discussion process within the Network along 9 months. The result was adopted by the Consortium during the Transnational meeting 4 (TNM4), although some changes concerning the brand were made.

Author(s):

CETT-UB

Ramon Serrat i Mulà (ramon.serrat@cett.cat)

Alexis Sancho Reinoso (alexis.sancho@cett.cat)

Partners involved:

LP1- Syndicat Mixte du Canigó

E-mail: alain.gensane@canigo-grandsite.fr

PP2 - Agència de Desenvolupament del Berguedà

E-mail: colomeror@adbergueda.cat

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 For whom is this document?

This marketing brief has three different target audiences:

- First, the document is mainly intended as a guide and orientation for the EMbleMatiC partners on how to develop and market their own product within a collaborative network, showing their uniqueness while projecting its belonging to a community that shares values and objectives. Thus, this document has a main internal character.
- Second, this document should be also understood as a result of collective efforts within the MED Community of the Interreg Programme. During the writing process, the authors have consulted other projects from the MED Programm such as DESTIMED. Thus, it might be of interest for other projects within the Community as well as Horizontal Projects.
- Third, this document should also be of interest for actors involved in tourism promotion activities, particularly those established in our EMbleMatiC partners' nine areas. They might take advantage of several aspects, including the commoditisation of different touristic products into one common umbrella brand to be positioned as a single product into the market.

1.2 Who are we?

As of November 2018, the EMM¹ Network consists in 9 members spread in 5 European countries (France, Greece, Italy and Spain as EU-members and Albania as IPA country) (*Fig. 1*). Together with other partners, they benefit from an Interreg project called "EMbleMatiC: Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains as Coastal Destinations of Excellence". 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.

¹ EMM stands for "Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains".



Fig. 1: Location of the EMbleMatiC mountains. Author's own based on Google Maps and the partners' pictures.

In each one of these regions, each member intends to develop a slow tourism product to be able to attract some touristic flows from the coastal areas, which usually benefit (but simultaneously suffer) from the effects of mass tourism. The closeness between coast and mountain should lead to a win-win situation, in which the mountain area (typically suffering from the classic socioeconomic decline) benefits from the “deseasonalisation” of tourism flows, while the coastal area can promote their hinterland as a “new” attraction to be (re)discovered and, eventually, to foster certain profiles of visitors, which should be related to high quality offer and with sustainability.

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. The previous work undertaken in the context of the WP3 of this project led to a Study Report about the “emblematic dimension” of the Network’s touristic destinations (Deliverable 3.3.4). In other words: those characteristics that make each case unique while sharing some common groundings related to their “Mediterraneity”, but also to the business model. One main outcome from this report was that each mountain of the Network has a complex living character, which is the combined result of humans and nature, and which evolves from past to future. Their visible and tangible character displays an iconic, unique and distinctive landmark. On the other hand, their invisible and intangible character lies in the unique experience of living in an emblematic landscape. Altogether becomes part of the inhabitants’ identity, a matter of shared recognition and mirror of the locals. Short: one can argue that the Network members have one voice with 9 different accents.

1.3 Our common values

Another key outcome from the previous work within the project’s work package 3 is a series of values that the network share. These values can be summarised in the following 3 statements:

- To apply sustainability approach, i.e. to particularly bear 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, taking into account both the tangible and the non-tangible dimension of the heritage elements and attending in a particular way planning aspects, including touristic, spatial and economic planning.
- To be an open mountain, 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.

These 3 main statements content the Network's values, which constitute the groundings for any kind of common action within the network, including this marketing brief.

1.4 Our common criteria

The last key outcome from WP3 was the definition (after an intensive previous discussion among the partners) of ten criteria that characterises (and should characterise also in the future) the EMM Network. Herewith the criteria are announced. Their detailed description can be found on the above mentioned Study Report (D3.3.4).

1. Proud local people
2. Institutional recognition
3. Power of inspiration
4. Reputation
5. Legends and myths
6. Mediterranean cultural identity
7. Particular ecosystem
8. Picturesque landscape
9. Sustainability and anthropogenic environment
10. Historic places

2. STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

Each marketing brief should define its objectives to be reached. Before announcing them, mentioning the **network three-fold aim** seems worthwhile:

- 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.

The very **specific objectives** of the marketing strategy (announced in a logical time sequence, from the first to the fifth one) 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.
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*.

3. MARKETING ACTIONS

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

1. Target profile
2. Positioning
3. Storytelling
4. Brand
5. Product
6. Experience
7. Price & Quality

In the following, these seven aspects will be explained in detailed. They will be presented in a logical sequence of a marketing process, i.e. addressing firstly the profile of the desired target public; second, the description of the product in terms of the market positioning; third, the way the product is going to be told ("storytelling"); fourth, the visual component of the product (brand, logo, motto); fifth, the product itself; sixth, the experience related to the product; and seventh, the price and quality standards of the product.

3.1 Target profile

Our products are conceived a wide spectrum of visitants. Everyone is welcomed to visit our areas, and since the itineraries provided are of low difficulty, the product is thought to attract different sorts 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 travels 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.

3.2 Positioning

In terms of positioning, there are three issues that 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.
2. We are **Mediterranean**, i.e. close to a sea that shapes our cultures and nature. Te 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 in the mountain, exploiting all their potentialities and, at the same time, being aware of the fragility of their human and natural ecosystems.

On this basis, our product is shaped by a series of attributes characterising the network and intimately related to the previous three. They are the following:

We are European

Our project is developed within a European framework and is being supported by European institutions. Moreover, our customers might be mainly European. This sense of belonging, related to a common background and history, should be relevant in our product approach. We take advantage of the fact that we share the same cultural background and worldviews.

We offer guide and welcome

Mountains, as points being visible from a distance, have been historically a reference for travellers and we want them to continue being so. Likewise, they have also been a shelter for those feeling in danger and seeking refuge. This double nature of the mountains is still nowadays attracting people. Hikers and nature lovers enjoy their singularity, they like to have them in sight and feel their protection. Our product conveys this double-sided characteristic to promote and foster the attractiveness of our destinations.

We stimulate (Re)Discoveries

Our experience takes advantage of being located in mountains full of mysteries, hidden spots, colourful landscapes, vibrant places that will arouse the curiosity of our visitors, who are keen to explore the territory and make their own findings and personal discoveries. Lots of real historical facts, with their tangible or intangible remains, but also legends and myths enrich the experience, together with other creations of the local population to come upon.

We foster local production

Mountains have been traditionally places full of life, shaped by their height and isolation. Mountain peoples have often a special character which can be seen through distinctive creations, gastronomy, crafts and many other activities. Our journey allows visitors to rediscover the mountain products and provide new opportunities to local producers

We generate low impact

Mountainous environments are usually very attractive for visitors but at the same time very fragile. Many of these areas include protected areas where leisure activities are restricted. Our experiences promote activities integrated in the territory with low impact. In other words: our experiences adapt to the territory, not vice-versa. When our customers finish their itinerary, no trace should be left and, if any, a positive one.

We promote slow tourism

Our experiences match a way of living tourism based on recovering and enhancing traditional values. A relaxed rhythm, a desire to learn, to experiment, to share with others. Away from the haste and the collection of visits, just trying to enjoy the very precise moment even being simple or far from the spectacular.

In the end, it's not about reaching the summit of our mountains but about enjoying the itinerary. The important experience must be the path itself; not the goal.

We favour traditional activities

Mediterranean Mountain areas are ancestrally inhabited and are therefore shaped by the human activities, mainly related to agriculture, cattle raising and forestry. Our product contributes to enhance traditional practices related to these activities by improving their visibility and their appreciation from the visitors. This approach can be the best way to maintain people's way of life.

We generate shared experience

Traditionally, tourism activity has been developed turning its back on the reality of the visited territory. Instead, our itinerary proposal turns customers from mere spectators to proactive actors that share their experience among them and also with the local people developing their activities in the territory. Accordingly, our EMbleMatiC partners work together with local stakeholders to co-build a solid and common future for the region, including economic, social and ecological matters.

We are a Network

We have the support of a European Programme, we have the strength of nine different territories working together to achieve a common goal.

Certainly, each mountain has its own individuality but our product wouldn't make sense if we don't share ideas, experiences, expectations and everything that can benefit our community.

Despite the intrinsic difficulties of marketing nine different destinations, we're convinced of the benefits of turning this fact into an asset.

We appreciate living landscapes

One of the essential contributions of our project is favouring traditional activities in the visited territories. A number of Mediterranean mountain areas have declined in recent years in terms of population and economic activity. Our experience actively contributes to fight against such dynamic, because it fosters the interaction between locals and visitors. Visiting our areas means knowing their people and their activities that keep and enrich those landscapes we appreciate.

We bet for a better tomorrow

We run away from business as usual. We want to be pioneers by setting paths for an integrative sustainable mountain tourism that will be able to address the major challenges the Earth is facing. For instance, we strive to contribute to mitigate climate change by e.g. making efforts to build up a robust public transportation network and by encouraging visitors' footprint offsetting. We know the path might be stony at times, but we work for the long term with strong commitment.

3.3 Storytelling

While each partner is going to develop its own storytelling that 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 attributes announced in the previous section, being synthesised by "emblematic", "Mediterranean" and "mountain".

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 while contributing to keep and thrive this priceless legacy for the future generations.

3.4 The brand

Before presenting the brand, the process that led to the final result is shortly explained. The departure point was a reflection about how the aforementioned network values and aim, and how the network mountains features shape the product. Following this, two approaches were developed:

First, 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 mountains, and simultaneously hosting them by offering the traditional mountainous protection and being open to welcome new and old visitors. This double feature 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 “welcoming” dimension was related to the figure of a *guardian*, of a *watchtower*, of a *refuge*, of a *shelter*.

Second, the way the products materialise themselves upon territory is a sequence of points (corresponding to the main attractions) connected each other so that the customer can visit them. Such a sequence could have received different names, including *itinerary* (which was the one the Network used in the project proposal and in all documentation until this marketing brief), *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). **Ecojourney** is, therefore, the chosen name for our product.

Resulting from this process, a **brand** name was created, namely

Mediterranean Mountains – Your Emblematic Ecojourney

The two most “tangible” aspects of our positioning “Mediterranean” and “Mountains” are the main part of the brand name. The third aspect (“emblematic”) is included in the second part of the name to characterise the product we offer, i.e. an “ecojourney”. Finally, “your” is a simple but direct way to address the potential visitor.

Likewise, a product **logo** was conceived:



This logo is built upon the brand name, playing with the two initials of the words “Mediterranean” and “Mountains”, and putting them together representing a mountain range. The pale coloured lines under the big “Ms” symbolise the networked character of the product (i.e. connecting the different mountain areas placed along the Mediterranean coastline, including the islands). Finally, the second part of the brand name (“your emblematic ecojourney”) is placed at the basis in blue colour, representing the presence of the Mediterranean sea, being closed to our mountains.

Being received with interest and enthusiasm by the Consortium, this logo was, however, not adapted for the product for a pure pragmatic reason. The EMM network has already a logo (which can be seen at the header of each page of this document), and the Consortium considered that a completely new logo may create some confusion among the

customers, since there are no apparent similitudes between both logos. Therefore, the Consortium decided to adapt the proposed brand to the already existing EMM logo. The result is the following logo, which is based on the layout of the EMM logo and simply includes the name of the product at the top (“ecojourney”).



3.5 The Product

An **Emblematic Ecojourney** is a route 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.

3.6 The Experience

Our visitors are eager to live sustainably while 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.

3.7 Price/quality

Although the quality standards are similar, since our network includes manifold areas located in countries with different features, our products are within a relatively wide price span. On the other hand, our 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.