



*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*

Land-Sea
Interreg Europe



EUROPE INTERREG

PROJECT LAND-SEA

“Sustainability of the Land-sea System for Ecotourism Strategies”

1ST SEMESTER

FOLLOW-UP PAPER





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*

Abstract

This Follow-up paper presents a summary of the responses received during the first partnership meeting in Italy (i.e the Steering Committee meeting, the study visit and, primarily, the Interregional thematic seminars). During the event, the Land-Sea Project partners engaged with a wide range of stakeholders comprising preparers, users, auditors, regulators, academics, expert and policy makers from European countries involved.

Overall, respondents and attendees at the events indicated that alternative interpretations of preservation of the Land-Sea system have emerged. This is physiologically due to existing territorial disparities between project partners, even though many common ground have been found. Therefore, the project is a chance to experience a path of good practices exchange addressed on a Land-Sea system with very different characteristics but very similar objective. Based on the results derived by the review framework of the local economic-environmental-social emergencies and by the “stakeholders interviews”, a preliminary environmentally and socio-economically sustainable best-case scenario is constructed for each region involved.

The work emphasizes the importance of cooperation in realizing ecotourism strategies, prioritizing policy adaptation goals in a interregional framework through a path of good practices exchange addressed on the land-sea system.





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*



Index

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Abstract..... | 2 |
| 1. Introduction..... | 4 |
| 2. The Ecotourism..... | 5 |
| 3. Priority axes and territorial context..... | 7 |
| 3.1. MOLISE..... | 7 |
| 3.2. CATALONIA | 10 |
| 3.3. HAMBURG..... | 12 |
| 3.4. VARNA..... | 15 |
| 4. Preliminary assessment of opportunity from Interregional cooperation | 18 |
| 4.1. Molise/Catalonia/Varna | 20 |
| 4.2. Molise/Varna/Hamburg..... | 20 |
| 4.3. Catalonia/Hamburg/Varna | 21 |
| 5. Discussion and Conclusion..... | 22 |
| References | 24 |





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*



1. Introduction

The European coastal areas represent fragile and vulnerable systems in physical, territorial, anthropic, social and economic terms. The real challenge of the next future is to turn "defensive" measures into "proactive" occasions for promoting interventions of regional growth in the field of the ecotourism sector and its connected fields.

The project LAND-SEA -Sustainability of the Land-Sea System for Ecotourism strategies - contributes to tackle these issues, by especially addressing the management policies for the coastal areas in the perspective of the land-sea ecosystem preservation and its sustainable fruition. In particular, the project is devoted to favour a more inclusive, effective and efficient processes of regional governance able to preserve natural habitats and contextually to support the development of regional ecotourism.

The project see the participation of the River Basin Authority of the rivers Liri – Garigliano and Volturno/ Southern Apennines River Basin District acting as Leader partner, the Molise Region (Italy), the Regional Administration Varna (Bulgaria), the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg – Senate Chancellery (Germany), the General Government of Catalonia and the Barcelona Urban Ecology Agency (Spain).

Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries and is a major source of income for many countries. Being a people-oriented industry, tourism also provides many jobs which have helped revitalise local economies. For its nature, the touristic sector has the potential to offer a viable combination of environmental and cultural protection, increase local awareness of the value of preserving the natural and cultural features. However, tourism can also cause its share of problems, such as social dislocation, loss of cultural heritage, economic dependence and ecological degradation. Moreover, as every industry has impacts, tourism will never be fully sustainable. But it can work towards becoming more sustainable and to provide some "positive impacts", aiding in a sustainable development in others socio-economic sectors. Many times, in fact, it has been demonstrated how the pursuit of one great value, required the others. Sustainable development, with its dual emphasis on the most recent concerns—development and environment—is typical of such efforts.





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*



2. The Ecotourism

As known, sustainable development has been defined in many ways, but the most frequently quoted definition is from “Our Common Future” [1], also known as the Brundtland Report:

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The Report highlights the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.

But this most widely accepted definition could be creatively ambiguous and flawed, and two major observations emerge. The first is the inherent malleability of our actual concept of “needs”. Surely needs of the world's poor (or, in general, of the less developed/underdeveloped region) are very different from the needs of the richer countries. “Development” means economic growth to most nations, especially the developing ones. But that just makes the sustainability problem worse, since the economic system is already unsustainable. “Development” should mean both qualitative and quantitative growth. Qualitative growth (an increase in quality of life) can be very sustainable. But quantitative growth (economic growth) cannot be sustainable once it passes its limit, which (probably) it already has.

A second observation is that far too little effort was made in order to clarify the time period in which sustainable development should be considered. Despite the emphasis in the standard definition on intergenerational equity, there seems in most indicator efforts a focus on the present or the very short term. Some exceptions, however, are worth noting: the UN Commission on Sustainable Development uses some development indicators defined in terms of a single generation (15–25 years) [2], and the Global Scenario Group computes its scenarios through 2050 (approximately two generations). Overall, these diverse indicator efforts reflect the ambiguous time horizon of the standard definition—“now and in the future.”





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*



Notwithstanding these evaluations, each definitional attempt is an important part of an ongoing discussion. Sustainable development draws much of its creativity, power, resonance from its very ambiguity.

Just like the concept “developed” it has shifted to focus more on economic development and socio-cultural development, the term “sustainable” is associated to the environmental protection for future generations and to an ecological approach for human activities. In this vein, the last result of the holistic approach related to sustainability and sustainable development, it is represented by the Sustainable (development of) tourism, also known as ecotourism. The World Tourism Organization defines it as *“Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”* [3]. A wide range of governmental as well as nongovernmental organizations have embraced this definition as a new paradigm of economic development. In fact, while the all-encompassing nature of the concept gives it political strength, its current formulation contains significant weaknesses. These include an incomplete perception of the problems of poverty and environmental degradation, and confusion about the role of economic growth and about the concepts of sustainability and participation [e.g. 4]. As well as the Sustainable Development, if ecotourism strategies are to have a fundamental impact, politically expedient fuzziness will have to be given up in favour of more concrete actions with intellectual clarity and rigor.

As former US President John F. Kennedy put it, *“travel has become one of the great forces for peace and understanding in our time. As people move throughout the world and learn to know each other’s customs and to appreciate the qualities of individuals of each nation, we are building a level of international understanding which can sharply improve the atmosphere for world peace”*.

Ecotourism, organized under a sustainable approach and in harmony with the interests of local communities, reduces prejudice, promotes goodwill, builds tolerance, fosters cross-cultural interaction and understanding.

For all these reasons, the methodological approach of project Land-Sea is founded on a participated process of interregional learning, based on the exchange of experience and knowledge, finalized to the production of the 4 action plans. These instrument will be





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*



implemented, during the last period, mainly within the Structural Funds Operational Programmes of the concerned regions. The expected result is the improvement of the 4 chosen regional Policy Instruments, thanks to a better governance of the Instruments and to the proposal of new projects and/or new measures of intervention. This change will be concrete and will interest both the Managing Authorities, the concerned directorates, the individuated stakeholders and the beneficiaries of the chosen Programmes/Plans (i.e. local authorities, economic operators in the field of the ecotourism sector and of the environmental management of the coastal areas).

3. Priority axes and territorial context

The LAND-SEA Project covers the territory of Molise Region, Varna Region, Catalan Region and the City of Hamburg.

The regional diversity in the territorial context, where regions have vastly different characteristics, opportunities and needs, requires going beyond 'one-size-fits-all' policies. It calls for a place-based approach that gives regions the ability and means to deliver policies that meet their specific needs [see also 5]. At the same time, this diversity is an asset allowing each place to develop to its own strengths while benefitting from other regions through various forms of interaction. The character of each region lays the foundation for its role in Europe's push for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, as also auspicated by the EU Commission [6]. All the partners have exposed their main challenge with particular reference to a sustainable development of tourism. Therefore, the programme will address the thematic objectives here briefly described.

3.1. MOLISE

Molise is a region of Southern Italy. The region covers 4,438 square kilometres and has a population of 313,348. The region is split into two provinces, named after their respective





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*

capitals Campobasso and Isernia. Campobasso also serves as the regional capital. Territory of Molise is mostly mountainous with 55% of mountains and 45% of hills that goes down till the sea. Agriculture, involving small and micro holdings, is currently offering high-quality products. The agricultural holdings produce wine, cereals, olive oil, vegetables, fruits and dairy products. Though there is a large Fiat plant (Termoli), the industrial sector is dominated by the farming industry with small and medium-sized farms spread widely throughout the region. Another important industry is food processing: pasta, meat, milk products, oil and wine are the traditional products of the region. In the services sector the most important industries are distribution, hotels and catering, followed by transport and communications, banking and insurance. With few exceptions, in all sectors firms are small, and this explains the difficulties encountered when marketing products on a national scale. International tourism is becoming more evident largely as a result of the international flights from other European states, Great Britain, and North America which enter Pescara not far to the north in Abruzzo. The tourists are attracted by large expanses of unspoilt beaches, a relative lack of congestion, and the gentle pace of life.

The region is characterized by the presence of important natural resources and a variety of environmental elements, creating optimal condition for the ecotourism development in the region. The inner portion of littoral coastal area has a strong agricultural vocation with an incidence of rural areas covering approximate 85% of the territory. The 36 km long Molise coast is characterized by a great naturalistic value and is one of the most important sandy coastal ecosystems in the Italian Adriatic Sea for its biodiversity. The coast behaves altogether as a low coast system, because the cliffs limiting the high coast to the sea are located, except for the promontory of Termoli, at variable distance from the shoreline. Several portion of the region have been included in the European Nature 2000 Network. In particular, all of the southern coast and much of the northern one have been classified as Site of Community Importance (SIC). The coastal areas of Molise represent only a small part of the whole Italian coastal system (7500 km) and of the Southern Apennines River Basin District (2200 km). Nonetheless, the littoral zone represents the most important tourist resource for the region. However, the recent growth in the coastal touristic sector has followed by an uncontrolled exploitation and seasonal overpopulation (whit its business





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*



activities of seasonal nature) of coast in recent decades. These stress upon the coastal environment, so seasonally excessive, are showing all the vulnerability of the coastal system. From 1954 to 2007, the general shoreline retreat caused a total loss of ca. 1.000.000 m² of coastal area. About 19 km of beaches (53% of total coastline) are actually under erosion risks.

With particular reference to coastal stretches used for tourism-recreational purposes, interventions against coastal erosion phenomena implemented in the past consisted essentially of the installation of breakwater cliffs parallel to the coast line. These measures does not seem to have produced the expected outcomes indeed they have simply shifted the coastal erosion problem closer to the works themselves, thus creating a domino effect. The erosive phenomena can be attributed to the particular disposition of the barriers, which have in fact created a preferential marine channel, where subshaped longshore currents intensify their intensity and duration at concomitant congestion, paradoxically leading to effects that are contrary to those for which they were built.

Furthermore, those rigid infrastructures they have contributed to accentuating certain environmental issues associated with the quality of bathing water. In particular, the reduced circulation of marine waters between the coast line and the breakwater cliffs does not allow an optimal dilution / dispersion of pollutants from the river mouths, favoring increased bacterial proliferation leading to a fall in the bathing water quality class. Lastly, with regard to the criticalities associated with water purification, especially during the summer months, there are frequent crisis moments of sewage plants, both due to the increased number of users served and the implant obsolescence.

In addition to this issue, there is a deterioration of the landscape and furthermore the sand covers up the harbour areas. In fact, the building of hard defence works for port activities (starting from the late '70s), has been already proved to have a heavy visual impact and strong influence on coastal dynamics. In particular, Termoli's port is affected by important flooding phenomena, intensified by an unfavorable concomitance of dominant solid transport in the NW-SE direction and wavering phenomena sometimes coming from the opposite direction, pushing the material right into the basin. The material is mostly





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*



made up of the sediment of erosion beaches set in the north section, now drifting along the coast and transported by coastal currents.

Among the main actions envisaged there are those aimed at streamlining water collection and sewerage systems, ensuring adequate environmental monitoring aimed at safeguarding marine-coastal water bodies also through proper management of recreational activities. Specific measures are planned to mitigate the effects of alterations in the natural sedimentary dynamics that characterize the morphogenetic and evolutionary patterns of the coast line and river mouths. Finally, an integrated approach at a regional scale of beaches and sediment is strongly recommended.

3.2. CATALONIA

Catalonia, the roughly triangular region in Spain's far north-east corner, is one of Spain's richest and most highly industrialised regions. In the north-east it is separated by the Pyrenean Mountains from southern France, with which it has close historical ties. It is bordered by Andorra to the north-west, the Mediterranean Sea to the east, and the Spanish autonomous communities of Aragon to the west and Valencia to the south. From the late 1950s through to the early 1970s, Catalonia saw rapid economic growth, drawing many workers from across Spain, making Barcelona one of Europe's largest industrial metropolitan areas and turning Catalonia into a major tourist destination. Since the Spanish transition to democracy (1975–1982), Catalonia has regained some political and cultural autonomy and is now one of the most economically dynamic communities of Spain. The capital and largest city is Barcelona, the second-most populated municipality in Spain and the core of the seventh-most populous urban area in the European Union. In Barcelona, the mean winter temperature is 9.2 °C, and the mean summer temperature is 24.4 °C. The use of Catalan - a language as close to regional languages of southern France like Occitan as it is to Castilian Spanish - has equal status with Castilian and is now actively encouraged in education, official use and the media. However, Castilian predominates in Barcelona, and is still the first language of a narrow majority of Catalans, who are nearly all bilingual.





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*

Most of the region's population lives in Barcelona, which also represents the political and economic hub as well as a popular European travel destination.

Holiday-makers also flock to the Mediterranean beaches of the Costa Brava and Costa Daurada/Dorada, and the Pyrenees (hosting several ski resort, most near Leida) are popular with hikers, making tourism an important part of Catalonia's economy.

Catalonia has given to the world many important figures in the area of the art and of architecture, and there are several UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Surely, the beaches represent the natural tourist resource par excellence in the region. For a few years now, on the Catalan coast, the sand of many beaches is disappearing due to the sea storms, a natural phenomenon that with climate change is expected to be more violent and recurrent in the future. However, not only the beaches disappearance is considered problematic. Great importance has been recently devoted to the coastal management issues, hence related to a more efficacy town/coastal planning, better governance model and promotion strategies.

The proposed solutions range from the enhancing the role of citizens in coastal management, the creation of complementary form of administrative authorizations to facilitate the private control of public places for environmental and / or ecotourism purposes, and new strategies in order to redirect tourist in place/beaches able to host them (beach load capacity approach). In particular, the role of master plan of coastal system as well as the importance of tourism promotion by social media in the distribution of population in coastal zones has been recently demonstrated, and many activities and strategies are taking form.

Generally speaking, several instruments are able to certify the quality beaches (Blue Flag, ISO9000 and ISO14000, EMAS...), but they insist more on services given to people than on the conservation of beaches as natural spaces. Obtaining this certification implies to enable a parking area next to the beach, to have the sand clean, the installation of litter bins, toilets, access for the disabled, surveillance tower, but nothing is done about specific measures for the conservation and improvement of coastal habitats. A possible solution could be to promote a certification for natural beaches where the priority is the beach and not the tourist. In some municipalities that have sufficient number of beaches, they are already implementing this, like in Ametlla de Mar (Tarragona).





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*

Catalonia is one of only a few parts of Europe where there is strong "sun and beach tourism" to have a tax, started on 1 November 2012. The Catalonia Tourist Tax applies to any hostelry facility i.e. hotel or self-catering accommodation, hostels, campsites and even cruise ships. When it was introduced, the Catalan Government expected the tax to raise €180million per year. The tax fees are used to finance the newly founded Tourism Development Fund, to be split between the Catalan Tourism Agency, local tourism boards and town halls. Hence, the revenue should be used to promote tourism, and to maintain and upgrade tourism-related infrastructure. However, as well as tourism tax along European countries, a certain percentage of the revenue is spread directly for tourism locality, the remaining percentage will be for other projects, though none of this is clear. Therefore, a better distribution of the tourist tax should be made in all areas related to tourism: from the promotion of destinations in the improvement of infrastructure to the management and improvement of natural areas as priority ecotourism resources. For instance, resources by tourists should not only focus on the publication of leaflets with all languages, the construction of visitor centers or infrastructures for their correct channelling, but also on the restoration of habitats and the conservation of species directly or indirectly affected for the visits.

3.3. HAMBURG

Hamburg, officially the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, is the second smallest of the 16 *Länder* of Germany, with a territory of only 292 square miles (755 square km). With a population of over 1.7 million people, It is also the most populous city in Germany after Berlin and has one of the largest and busiest ports in Europe. Hamburg and Bremen (the smallest of the *Länder*) are, in fact, the only German city-states that still keep something of their medieval independence. The characteristic individuality of Hamburg has been proudly maintained by its people so that, in many spheres of public and private life, the city's culture has retained its uniqueness and has not succumbed to the general trend of standardization. Hamburg, nonetheless, is a cosmopolitan city in its





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*

outlook. Although comparatively few foreigners live there, many pass through it. The city has dealings with a large number of nations, and it has more consulates than any other city in the world, except New York City. Shipping and trade have been Hamburg's lifeblood for centuries. Not surprisingly, its harbour has remained the city's most important feature. Among Hamburg's many other facets are a network of canals reminiscent of Amsterdam; lakes, parks, and verdant suburbs full of gracious houses; elegant shopping arcades; richly endowed museums; and a vibrant cultural life. These are among the attractions that have contributed to a growing tourist industry. Hamburg stands at the northern extremity of the lower Elbe valley, which at that point is between 8 and 13 km wide. To the southeast of the old city, the Elbe divides itself into two branches, the *Norderelbe* and the *Süderelbe*, but these branches meet again opposite Altona, just west of the old city, to form the *Unterelbe*, which flows into the North Sea some 110 km downstream from Hamburg. Two other rivers flow into the Elbe at Hamburg—the Alster from the north and the Bille from the east. At the heart of Hamburg is a lake, measuring 455 acres (184 hectares), formed by the damming of the Alster and divided by the Lombardsbrücke into the Binnenalster (Inner Alster) and the Aussenalster (Outer Alster). Many waterways, navigable by pleasure boats, run into the Aussenalster. Having absorbed Altona, Harburg, and Wandsbek in 1937, Hamburg has become Germany's major industrial city. All processing and manufacturing industries are represented there. Hamburg treats most of the country's copper supplies, and the Norddeutsche Affinerie, on Veddel, is Europe's second largest copperworks. The chemical, steel, and shipbuilding industries are also important. Nuclear plants at Krümmel and Brunsbüttel provide power at a reasonable cost to the industries bordering the Unterelbe and to parts of Hamburg. Chief among imports are vegetable oils and fats, tea, coffee, petroleum, tropical fruit, and uncured tobacco. Exports include machinery, electrotechnical products, processed petroleum fuel and lubricants, copper, and pharmaceutical products. The mean winter temperature is 1.2 °C and the mean summer temperature is 16.9 °C.

In the night from 16 to 17 February 1962, the city was flooded, after which additional flood protection measures have been carried out. The North Sea flood of 1962 was a natural disaster affecting mainly the coastal regions of Germany. The flood was caused by a low-pressure system approaching the German Bight (Deutsche Bucht), coming from the





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*

southern Polar Sea. A storm with a wind force of 9 Beaufort and peak wind speeds of 200 km/h pushed water into the German Bight, leading to a water surge the dikes could not withstand. The water reached a level of NN + 5,70 m, which was 0,46 m higher than the highest water level up to then (registered in 1825). Breaches along the coast and the rivers Elbe and Weser led to widespread flooding of huge areas. Especially dikes that had not been heightened after the storm surge of 1952 were heavily damaged while most sea dikes withstood the surge. More than 60 breaches occurred in the dikes with a total length of about 1.5 kilometres. The flooded area amounted 12 500 hectares, about 1/6th of the total area of Hamburg [7].

Emergency plans were implemented later and dikes were shortened and strengthened, leaving some river arms and bays detached from the sea. The design water retaining height was raised up to NN + 6,70 m and many dikes were reinforced, also in horizontal direction with more gentle slopes. In January 1976 a storm surge exceeded the one of 1962, leading to a water level of NN + 6,45 m. The reinforced dikes, however, were sufficiently high and stable to withstand this water, but there was much damage in the less protected harbour area. The erection of a storm surge barrier in the Elbe mouth (near Brokdorf) was studied, but could not be agreed upon by the various Bundesländer. In the mid-90s, a flood protection construction programme was started to raise the retaining height with about one metre (to NN + 7,30 at St. Pauli, about 2 km West of Hamburg). The calculation method was more sophisticated now, taking local hydraulic conditions like wave run-up into account per dike section. This led to varying retaining heights of NN + 7,50 m up to NN + 9,25 m [7]. It is important to note as, over the past 50 years or so, large sections of Hamburg's port have been deepened to accommodate container ships. This process has kept some jobs in the city, but it has come at an ecological price. Deepened channels have encouraged the tides to sweep further down the river mouth, pushing the freshwater zone—and the flora and fauna that thrive there—further inland and turning the waters more brackish. Riverine wildlife has been pushed into retreat.

With sea levels rising, floods risk getting more frequent and more damaging, and therefore a huge scheme to raise 103 kilometres of the levees around the to keep rising tides and seasonal high waters at bay. But this is more than simply building the river walls





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*

higher, which will happen gradually between 2020 and 2050. The city's other weapon against rising tides is much more in tune with nature. By building the walls farther inland than where they stand today, the plan will create a new floodplain of water meadows to act as a sponge when the river spills over. This will allow the Elbe's waters to safely breach their banks without causing destruction, relieving pressure elsewhere and helping to restore a more natural appearance to this heavily exploited waterway. Simply put, instead of shutting the waters out, Hamburg will find a way to make room for them. This new floodplain could kick-start the process of restoring some natural balance to a dockland area under severe stress. Over the past 50 years or so, large sections of Hamburg's port have been deepened to accommodate container ships. This process has kept some jobs in the city, but it has come at an ecological price. Deepened channels have encouraged the tides to sweep further down the river mouth, pushing the freshwater zone—and the flora and fauna that thrive there—further inland and turning the waters more brackish. Riverine wildlife has been pushed into retreat.

Moreover, in 2000 a start was made with a project of the redevelopment of an old harbour area in between the Speicherstadt and the Elbe. This new area, the HafenCity, is intended for work, living, retail-trade, recreation, gastronomy and culture and it is expected to become a new touristic attraction for Hamburg. The HafenCity area, however, is located outside the area protected by dikes, which is what gives the area much of its charm, being so near to large expanses of water. By elevating the buildings on plinths made of mounds, HafenCity is connected with the existing city. All new buildings stand on artificial bases eight meters above sea level - safe for the most extreme flooding. The HafenCity can continue to function virtually without restriction even during a flood and despite its 'island' situation.

3.4. VARNA





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*



Varna is the third largest city in Bulgaria and the largest city and seaside resort on the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast. Situated strategically in the Gulf of Varna, the city has been a major economic, social and cultural centre for almost three millennia. The city is referred to as the maritime capital of Bulgaria and headquarters the Bulgarian Navy and merchant marine. Commercial shipping facilities are being relocated inland into the lakes and canals, while the bay remains a recreation area; almost all the waterfront is parkland. In 2008, Varna was designated seat of the Black Sea Euro-Region by the Council of Europe. In 2014, Varna was awarded the title of European Youth Capital 2017, being among the best-performing and fastest-growing Bulgarian cities. The population of Varna District is 472,926, of which 73% are residents of Varna. The city occupies 238 km² on verdant terraces (Varna monocline of the Moesian platform) descending from the calcareous Franga Plateau (height 356 m) on the north and Avren Plateau on the south, along the horseshoe-shaped Varna Bay of the Black Sea, the elongated Lake Varna, and two artificial waterways connecting the bay and the lake and bridged by the Asparuhov. The mean winter temperature is 1.9 °C, and the mean summer temperature is 22.4 °C.

From a largely agricultural country with a predominantly rural population in 1948, by the 1980s Bulgaria had transformed into an industrial economy with scientific and technological research at the top of its budgetary expenditure priorities. Of the services sector, tourism is the most significant contributor to economic growth, generating 10% of GDP in the region.. In recent years, Bulgaria has emerged as a travelling destination with its inexpensive resorts and beaches outside the reach of the tourist industry. The significant potential for the development of maritime tourism is due to - temperate climate, wide beach stripes, fine sand. To this can be added also the abundance of fruits and vegetables - direct production, which reveals new opportunities for strengthening health. These precious natural resources are a prerequisite for the deployment of extensive recreational, therapeutic and prophylactic programs. The renovation of the Black Sea hotels and the construction of new modern and modern hotel bases in recent years, with a tendency to offer balneological and SPA programs, further extend the services and the demand. The inclusion of mineral water in combination with other physical factors (physiotherapy, physiotherapy, reflexology with massages, some non-traditional methods, etc.) can not only





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*



supplement sea treatment but in some cases have some advantages. New emphasis is put on the development of alternative tourism, including cultural or religious sites of interest, as well as rural tourism (provincial or traditional Bulgarian way of life). In addition, the beauty of nature is more used to eco-tourism.

Behind positive regional developments, negative environmental impacts over the last few decades have been experienced. The use of resources is unsustainable and the state of the natural environment of the basin is deteriorating in terms of already limited resources, biodiversity, aesthetics and recreational value. Scientists identify several serious problems depending on the type of pollution:

- Biological pollution due to sewerage and ballast water, as result of the poorly treated sewage water, causing microbiological infections and human health risks.
- chemical pollution, due to the excessive use of fertilizers containing nitrogen and phosphorus as well as other toxic substances contamination, such as pesticides and heavy metals (cadmium, copper, chromium and lead) associated with heavy industrial waste and the coal-fired powerhouse for power generation;
- oil pollution as a result of operational or incidental spills, as well as poorly treated wastewater from land-based sources;
- solid waste discharged into the sea by vessels and some coastal towns. All wastes that are floating or semi-submerged are inevitably thrown out on the beach. Therefore, on the shores of the Bulgarian Black Sea coast many waste is collected, which is unpleasant, puts at risk the health of the people and the marine species and is bad advertisement for the Bulgarian Tourism.
- waste water on vessels, where re-entering the sea leads to deteriorated microbiological indicators.

Therefore, the striving of the Varna Regional Administration is towards:

- reducing the environmental impact of so-called pollution sources, mainly industrial, domestic and agricultural systems, on environmental systems in order to reduce the



negative impacts of tourism development in the region and the region as a whole through institutional measures.

- Stimulating eco-tourism, which will lead to job creation in the future, will increase local employment especially in the poorer municipalities of Varna region. Green tourism, in turn, would provide significant environmental benefits, including a reduction in water, electricity and CO2 consumption. Eco tourists are a "business-friendly" target group in terms of predictability in their behaviour combined with the profile of travellers. Moreover, the absence of a need to build a dedicated infrastructure around eco destinations greatly facilitates the tourism industry to meet the expectations of these visitors.
- use of tourism as an effective tool for promoting the social and economic development of disadvantaged municipalities in Varna region. The considerable potential of much of the country's territory remains unused or poorly used, and businesses and the population there cannot benefit from the benefits of tourism. Using sea tourism as a "driver" for less well-trained species such as rural tourism.
- Organization of meetings, events and forums, exchange of knowledge and experience among the participants, networking will lead to the promotion of tourism and awareness-raising in public, private and non-governmental organizations in the field of ecotourism, rural, golf, etc. Tourism. Advertising has a significant influence on the choice of an eco-tourism destination, and in this sense it can play a key role in promoting it as long as it reaches its target audiences.
- Support decision making at local and regional level by the state administration to limit the negative impacts of the exploitation, production, consumption and destruction of natural resources as well as to limit the generation and disposal of waste.

4. Preliminary assessment of opportunity from Interregional cooperation





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*

Europe remains the region with the most international arrivals per year, thanks in part to its rich cultural resources, world-class tourism service infrastructure, strong health and hygiene conditions, and—notably with the Schengen Area—high degree of international openness and integration.

The European tourism industry continues to grow quickly, and new trends are emerging. The so called “ecotourism” sector is providing growth opportunities for all countries, regardless of their wealth, and offers job opportunities at all skill levels. However, the countries performing better in the ecotourism competitiveness are those that are better equipped to capture the opportunities they bring. The sustainable development of the tourism industry is complex, requiring inter-ministerial coordination, and often international and public-private partnerships. The need of balancing Economic Development and Environmental Sustainability is increasing its strategic relevance at the European level. The importance of the natural environment for providing an attractive location for tourism cannot be overstated, so policies and factors enhancing environmental sustainability are an important competitive advantage in ensuring a country’s future attractiveness as a destination.

The needs analysis shows that partners regions are dealing with a wide range of policy issues related to sustainable and inclusive growth. Here the Land-Sea project can bring added value by offering the opportunity for policy learning and transfer of good practices.

Albeit the Land-Sea project intends to analyse the ecotourism strategies as a whole, some specific cross-thematic objectives between Partner Region have been highlighted. The idea to focus on a limited number of selected fields increases the Project potential to make a substantial impact on regional policies.

In this context, a preliminary assessment of cross-opportunity from the cooperation within the Project partners is described in the next.





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*



4.1. Molise/Catalonia/Varna

In the previous chapter has been highlighted as Molise, Catalonia and Varna regions experience a very large tourist overcrowding in certain areas and/or at some times of the year, especially on the coast in the summer. Therefore, the study of tourism dynamics and its evolution in the course of the years represent an important interconnection point between the partners. The population distribution in coastal zones over the regions could be analysed in the perspective of the life styles and significant comparison could be assessed. Tools for reaching a balance through the definition of the state of the ecosystem and the internal conditions could be investigated together and performance scenario by simulation model could be applied for similar coastal zones. Proposals in the context of eco-tourism could be analysed in conjunction, as well as creation of bike roads, the wine roads, the eno-gastronomy roads, and the use of last technology for better managing the touristic flows.

Finally, alteration of coastal dynamics by the construction of breakwaters, ports and other structures in the sea can be considered as another important connection point and the exchange of good practices is strongly recommended.

4.2. Molise/Varna/Hamburg

The development of a specific brand identity for these regions, thus creating tourist spots with an emphasis on alternative tourism (culture, adventure, yachting, wine, gourmet, etc) represent probably the main objective to growth the tourism sector.

Moreover, the goal to provide the conditions for reducing the environmental impact of so-called pollution sources, mainly industrial, domestic and agricultural systems, represent a common result which have to be raised in the next years.

Ecological concerns and environmental impacts of port development and harbor operations represent very important issues for both the regions, albeit with scale of analysis quite different. Furthermore, the Molise region, Hamburg and Varna areas should begin an exchange of good practices related to strategies for preserving cultures through ecotourism. Ecotourism, in fact, is a search for the authentic. This certainly applies to the





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*

authenticity of the landscape and wildlife, but it also applies to the cultures and traditions native to an area. Visitors can enjoy a taste of local norms, traditions and cuisine set against the backdrop of an ecologically diverse area. Respecting and valuing the ways of living of these communities, is an extension of a tourist's overall experience.

4.3.Catalonia/Hamburg/Varna

Improving the role of citizens in coastal management and the need of reducing the negative impacts of the exploitation, production, consumption and destruction of natural resources as well as to limit the generation and disposal of waste is the key goal for these regions.

Major emphasis should be devoted to the development of specialized tourism products that have the potential to overcome seasonality and create a special emotional connection. In particular, the development of tourism by ensuring the integration of different types of tourism specific to the area, e.g enhancing Spa and wellness resorts, water sport tourism, wildlife and nature-based tourism etc. seems a promising solution. The planning and management of the coastal and marine environment (especially from the point of view of conservation or environmental sustainability), is the main strategies for mapping of emergencies, realize effective control/monitoring systems, coordinate the environmental restoration of sites, improve infrastructures and services for the eco-tourism sector.



5. Discussion and Conclusion

In the past decades tourism and its enabling ecosystem have proven to be significant drivers of economic growth. The industry continues to be a force for good, providing unique opportunities to move up the value chain. The sector has shown surprising resilience to geopolitical tensions, threats of terrorism, global pandemics and sluggish economic growth in advanced economies. In fact, while international tourist arrivals are correlated with economic fluctuations and sensitive to security issues, these tend to impact specific countries or regions; if one country is hit by instability, others will receive more tourists. Globally, the trend for growth seems unstoppable. Increasing the competitiveness of the tourism sector can produce both short-term economic effects and long-term spillover effects on the wider economy. In this scenario, tourism is going to be one of more impacting sector in the world. Therefore, the need to balance economic development and environmental sustainability became of primary importance.

The goal of achieving a sustainable and inclusive tourism industry is not new, but solutions need to be both global and local, ensuring full societal inclusion and require more support from Interregional Cooperation Projects, aiming to improve the implementation of regional policies and programmes related to sustainable development issues.

The natural environment as source of an attractive location for tourism cannot be underestimated, so policies and factors enhancing environmental sustainability are an important competitive advantage in ensuring a country's future attractiveness as a destination.

However, the conservation efforts at are promoted by ecotourism are not the unique core values. The essential role in ecotourism is promoting local community welfare. In fact, ecotourism conserves cultural traditions in areas that are at risk of losing touch with their ancestral customs and cultural roots. Visiting locals in host countries and learning about their heritage and cultural traditions is fascinating and thought provoking. The landscape and environmental conservation represents well and truly an integral part of this local community promotion approach, but the need of more pragmatic solutions is highlighted.





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*

In this context, the project Land-Sea is providing a platform for interregional dialogue with the objective of achieving a strong and sustainable tourism industry capable of contributing effectively to a resilient national development.

One important step toward cooperation is the exchange of experience on thematic objectives among partners and on the identification and dissemination of good practice with a view to their transfer principally to operational programmes.

Another major step is the practical promotion of four action plans to implement, during the last period, mainly within the Structural Funds Operational Programmes of the concerned regions. The expected result is the improvement of the 4 chosen regional Policy Instruments, thanks to a better governance of the Instruments and to the proposal of new projects and/or new measures of intervention. This change will be concrete and will interest both the Managing Authorities, the concerned directorates, the individuated stakeholders and the beneficiaries of the chosen Programmes/Plans.

The present report give an overview of the region's potential and weaknesses, and some cooperation opportunity are drawn, In addition, a significant number of proposed activities and strategies have been shown. More proposals will be presented and discussed during the next meeting in Barcelona.

In particular, the inherent sense of responsibility related to (eco)tourism has been pointed out. This cultural challenge for tourist sector include the understanding that the sensation we should feel while visiting a site by posing the least amount of impact on a site and be as eco-friendly and respectful towards the locals as we can, should be normal. And it should be clear as paying to visit a natural site reverts to the improvement of these spaces and at the same time the visitor's awareness of their value. This is the concept of inclusive growth, in the meaning that we are even willing to pay more for a life-changing experience.

Ecotourism is no panacea when it comes to preserving cultural history and natural resources. But, it is a powerful opportunity to show local community that the world is interested in the spectacular message they have to share.





*Autorità di Bacino Distrettuale
dell'Appennino Meridionale*

Land-Sea
Interreg Europe



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

References

1. World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), Our Common Future (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 8.
2. For a thorough review of internationally negotiated targets related to sustainable development, see T. M. Parris, "Toward a Sustainability Transition: The International Consensus," Environment, January/February 2003, 12.
3. World Tourism Organization, Sustainable Development of Tourism. Available online. <http://sdt.unwto.org/content/about-us-5> (accessed on 27 June 2017).
4. Lélé, S. M. (1991). Sustainable development: a critical review. *World development*, 19(6), 607-621.
5. Investing in Europe's future. 5th report on economic, social and territorial cohesion. European Commission (2010).
6. European Commission (2014). INTERREG EUROPE 2014-2020, Cooperation Programme document, final draft.
7. Landesbetrieb SBG (2012). Sturmflutschutz in Hamburg. Gestern - heute - morgen. Berichte des Landesbetriebes Strassen, Bruecken und Gewaesser Nr. 10/2012.

Uncited references

- Robert, K. W., Parris, T. M., & Leiserowitz, A. A. (2005). What is sustainable development? Goals, indicators, values, and practice. *Environment: science and policy for sustainable development*, 47(3), 8-21.
- UNESCO | Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future. Available online. <http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/index.html> (accessed on 27 June 2017).
- The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017, Available online <http://www.weforum.org/reports/the-travel-tourism-competitiveness-report-2017> (accessed on 27 June 2017).
- Hunter, C. (1997). Sustainable tourism as an adaptive paradigm. *Annals of tourism research*, 24(4), 850-867.
- Pigram, J. J., & Wahab, S. (Eds.). (2005). *Tourism, development and growth: the challenge of sustainability*. Routledge.
- Sharpley, R. (2000). Tourism and sustainable development: Exploring the theoretical divide. *Journal of Sustainable tourism*, 8(1), 1-19.
- Tavallae, S., Asadi, A., Abya, H., & Ebrahimi, M. (2014). Tourism planning: an integrated and sustainable development approach. *Management Science Letters*, 4(12), 2495-2502.