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Deliverable B.1

Regional Action Plan for the Region of Crete

Final version

In the framework of the project:



«Technical support provision services for the exchange, dissemination and communication of experiences and the development of a regional action plan in the context of Building Regional Actions for New Developments in Tourism - BRANDTour project implementation of INTERREG EUROPE»



Περιφέρεια Κρήτης

Region of Crete

Action Plan for the Region of Crete



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1. Executive summary in Greek

The present final version of the Action Plan for the Region of Crete is submitted in the framework of the «Building Regional Actions for New Developments in Tourism – BRANDTour» project of the Interreg Europe programme.

The three actions formed were based on three respective Good Practices, which were presented and discussed by the BRANDTour project partners at the Interregional Learning Events of Phase 1.

The proposed actions in this Action Plan are the following:

- Action 1: Tourism cluster policy in Crete
- Action 2: Exhibition for tourism innovation in Crete
- Action 3: Public-Private cooperation in traditional building of Crete

Each action is analysed in particular: its relevance to the project, the nature of the action, the stakeholders involved for the success of the action, its timeframe, indicative costs and funding sources for the implementation.

2. General information

Project: Building Regional Actions for New Developments in Tourism - BRANDTour

Partner organisation(s) concerned: Region of Crete

Country: Greece

NUTS2 region: Region of Crete

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3. Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact:

- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- European Territorial Cooperation programme
- Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument(s) addressed: Regional Operational Programme of Crete 2014-2020

4. Details of the actions envisaged

4.1 Action 1: Tourism cluster policy in Crete

4.1.1 *Relevance to the project*

The concept of the present action derived from the Good Practice (GP) “Cluster Policy in Latvia” which was presented by the Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Latvia during the 3rd ILE of BRANDTour project (09-10 October 2018) in Riga.

The aim of “Cluster Policy in Latvia” was to encourage businesses and research, education and knowledge transfer organizations and other institutions for cooperation at local and international levels. It is noted that cooperation contributes improving the competitiveness of the economic operators. Expected results from this cooperation is the increase of export volumes and the share of high value-added products and services in export.

Through clustering, SMEs can lower the costs of the production processes, perform marketing activities more integrated and cheaper, attract more tourists etc.

Region of Crete has many small-scale tourist businesses spread across its area. Region of Crete has selected the present action in an attempt of strengthening and connecting tourism enterprises to develop high quality innovative products and services.

The action targets to motivate tourism SMEs and other relevant stakeholders (institutions, organizations etc.) for cooperation in order to promote synergies between public and private stakeholders and create active clusters in the field of tourism sector.

Regional Operational Programme Crete 2014-2020 (ROP Crete 2014-2020) aims to enhance the competitiveness of SMEs through innovation, openness and the development of new areas. The promotion of innovation in businesses is related to the creation of an innovation culture in the business world, entrepreneurs and citizens of Crete. ROP Crete 2014-2020 supports synergies and the creation of clusters and regional networks focused on the enhancement of the competitiveness of the tourism-culture-environment-agri-food sectors.

Its main features are:

- A. To promote business partnerships with research institutes;
- B. To support innovation of enterprises through an integrated package of measures;

C. To support business through more competitive products in order to penetrate international markets

ROP Crete 2014-2020 focuses on SMEs and entrepreneurship of the tourism sector and aims to enhance tourism products and to promote tourism's SMEs through the innovation, clustering and diversification of tourism products.

The Region of Crete will act as a linking factor among the different stakeholders of the tourism sector in Crete, and in accordance and close networking with national and European policies.

The ROP Crete 2014-2020 will be improved through the implementation of new projects that will develop synergies among SMEs, research institutes, stakeholders, public authorities and end users including the local community and the visitors. These new projects selected in the framework of this present action will be selected for funding through ROP Crete 2014-2020.

4.1.2 Nature of the action

Region of Crete will prepare the open call for proposals for the creation of clusters in the field of tourism sector during which associations or other legal entities will submit their cluster project proposals. According to the criteria and priorities that will be stipulated by the Region of Crete, only the most relevant projects will be selected for funding.

The call for proposals will be launched in the framework of "PRIORITY AXIS 1: Strengthening competitiveness, innovation and entrepreneurship in Crete" of ROP Crete 2014-2020 which foresees the implementation of these kind of actions.

Indicative main cluster activities to be supported by the program will be the promotion of export and innovation, creation of new products, cluster internationalization, integration of RIS3, cluster excellency, etc.

The objectives of the action will be:

- To promote partnerships, synergies and complementarity between tourism SMEs and stakeholders.
- To stimulate cross-sectoral co-operation between tourism SMEs and other economic sectors.
- The economic growth of the tourism industry based on knowledge and sustainable specialization.

- Integrating new knowledge and innovation into existing and new products, services, productive systems of the tourism economy.
- To strengthen the tourism industry.

Applicant could be an association or foundation with the following indicative conditions:

- registered in one of the four Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Crete;
- represents not less than 5 not interlinked small (micro), small and medium-sized enterprises –cluster members – and ensure that in a year after approval at least 10 enterprises will be represented;
- total net turnover on average during the last three years is not less than 2 million per year;
- at least one of the research organisation and the dissemination of knowledge are involved.

The proposed selected sectors/areas of the cluster programme could be i) accommodation and catering services (tourism), ii) Health and social care and iii) Cross-sectoral. This selection was made following the proposals of key stakeholders of the tourism sector, which identified that the first two sectors (i and ii) can be developed and contribute high added value to the economy of Crete.

4.1.3 Stakeholders involved

Main stakeholders and beneficiaries will be the stakeholders themselves – tourism enterprises and institutions – as well as tourists and the destinations in general.

The stakeholders are going to be informed regarding the launch of the call and motivated to make synergies and submit proposal.

Indicatively beneficiaries of the policy could be:

- SMEs
- SME partnerships/Clusters
- Non-Profit Private Law Entities
- Chambers
- Academic and Research Institutions

4.1.4 *Timeframe*

- Meeting with stakeholders to inform about the intention of Region of Crete to launch the call and discuss about possible issues that will need to be addressed
- Preparation of the call for proposals: Jan 2020-September 2020
- Launch of the call for submission of proposals: October 2020
- Deadline for the submission of proposals: December 2020

4.1.5 *Indicative costs*

The estimation of the total costs of the present action is related to the political will of the Region of Crete and the level of the expression of interest on behalf of the beneficiaries.

An indicative budget of the program could be 5 million € which would split for 3 projects, redirecting approximately 1.6 million € to each project. The allocation of the budget between partners of each project will be declared at the submission of the proposal.

4.1.6 *Indicative funding sources*

The present action will be financed by the European Union ERDF fund through the Regional Operational Programme of Crete 2014-2020 policy instrument.

4.2 **Action 2: Exhibition for tourism innovation in Crete**

4.2.1 *Relevance to the project*

The concept of the idea for the present action derived from the Good Practice (GP) "BTO – Buy Tourism Online" which was presented by Tuscany Region's representatives during the 4th ILE of BRANDTour project (19-20 June 2018) in Crete.

Region of Crete's representatives were triggered by the idea of organizing a unique event-workshop regarding innovation in the tourism sector in Crete including online market segment, promotion of web-marketing, spreading of the web distribution channels, training of professionals through seminars and workshops. Since a large number of people are working in tourism sector, one of the most productive sectors in Crete, it is believed that an event of

this kind will attract the interest of tourism SMEs, employees, tourists and relevant local, national and probably international stakeholders, which are active in Crete.

Following Italy's paradigm, Region of Crete aims to create an important occasion of exchanging and updating ideas and experiences in the field of tourism, which will have an excellent position in the national scenery, that in addition will draw the attention of other relevant tourism stakeholders that would like to follow the success story of Crete in the tourism sector.

Region of Crete has selected the present action in an attempt of strengthening and connecting tourism enterprises to tourists and develop high quality innovative products and services.

Regional Operational Programme Crete 2014-2020 (ROP Crete 2014-2020) aims to enhance the competitiveness of SMEs through innovation, openness and the development of new areas. The promotion of innovation in businesses is related to the creation of an innovation culture in the business world, entrepreneurs and citizens of Crete.

ROP Crete 2014-2020 main features are:

- A. To promote business partnerships with research institutes;
- B. To support innovation of enterprises through an integrated package of measures;
- C. To support business through more competitive products in order to penetrate international markets

ROP Crete 2014-2020 focuses on SMEs and entrepreneurship of the tourism sector and aims to enhance tourism products and to promote tourism's SMEs through the innovation, clustering and diversification of tourism products. Through the implementation of this action, Region of Crete seeks the creation and dissemination of "innovative" ICT tourism products that will contribute to maintain the establishment of Crete in the global tourism market and consequently to the growth of the tourism economy of the island.

The Region of Crete will act as a linking factor among the different stakeholders of the tourism sector in Crete, and in accordance and close networking with national and European policies.

The ROP Crete 2014-2020 will be improved through the implementation of this new project that seeks to develop synergies among SMEs, research institutes, stakeholders, public

authorities and end users including the local community and the visitors. The present project will be co-financed through ROP Crete 2014-2020.

4.2.2 Nature of the action

The present action will be co-financed in the framework of "PRIORITY AXIS 1: Strengthening competitiveness, innovation and entrepreneurship in Crete" of ROP Crete 2014-2020, since it foresees the implementation of ICT related actions. Ideally, through this exhibition (or maybe kind of contest) "innovative" ICT tourism "products" will be identified and get known to the relevant tourism stakeholders and visitors.

Region of Crete will organize a unique event regarding innovation in the tourism sector in Crete including online market segment, promotion of web-marketing, spreading of the web distribution channels, training of professionals through seminars and workshops.

Following the lessons learnt from the BTO Good Practice in order to be successful, it is required that public bodies are willing to bet on the value of the "Exhibition for tourism innovation in Crete" and the development of a constructive relationship with private companies, who will be able to implement innovative proposals with a scientific and commercial relevance.

So, at first a focus group or stakeholder workshop will have to be organized with the most strategic stakeholders of the tourism sector in order to be identified the final theme and whether it is feasible to engage them to support this event with their participation and their financial support.

Aiming to the establishment and the successfulness of the event, Region of Crete will attempt to engage the involved public and private stakeholders to the organization of the event by proposing to sign a memorandum of cooperation, which will describe in detail the responsibilities and obligations of each party.

4.2.3 Stakeholders involved

The main stakeholders that will be involved in the organization and the participation of the exhibition are:

- public bodies (Region of Crete, Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Crete etc.)

- academic and research institutions (Technical University of Crete, University of Crete, Foundation for Research & Technology – Hellas (ITE) etc.)
- domestic tourism companies of Crete which will engage to participate and support the event (like hotel owners, tourism offices etc.)
- big companies of digital tourism such as Booking, Airbnb, TripAdvisor etc.
- social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, search engines (Google), ICT companies, specialised press and International Research Centres (potential invited stakeholders, depending on the scale of the organization of the event)

4.2.4 Timeframe

Organization of focus group – definition of the theme of the exhibition – January-April 2020

Preparation of memorandum of cooperation and signing – May-July 2020

Organization of the “Exhibition for tourism innovation in Crete” – until April 2021

Launch of the “Exhibition for tourism innovation in Crete” – May 2021-October 2021

4.2.5 Indicative costs

The organization and promotion costs for the “Exhibition for tourism innovation in Crete”, depending of course of its scale of participation may not exceed 50.000 € in total at least for its first organization. For instance, 10 key-note speakers might be invited covering their participation costs, while the budget cost should foresee to cover the participation of at least 400 people.

Travel and accommodation costs of key-note speakers: 10.000 €

Rental cost of the venue: 10.000 €

Promotional and dissemination costs of the exhibition: 30.000 €

4.2.6 Indicative funding sources

At least part of the present action will be financed by the European Union ERDF fund through the Regional Operational Programme of Crete 2014-2020 policy instrument, while the rest of

the cost will be covered by the cooperating stakeholders and probably entrance/participation fees of the event.

4.3 Action 3: Public-Private cooperation in traditional building of Crete

4.3.1 Relevance to the project

The concept of the idea for the present action derived from the Good Practice (GP) "Public-Private cooperation in the Butchers' Hall" which was presented by Economic Council of East Flanders during the 4th ILE of BRANDTour project (19-20 June 2018) in Crete.

During the presentation of the Good Practice, it emerged that East Flanders is a province famous for its large number of regional products, as is Crete. The presentation highlighted the creation of the promotional centre for the regional products, called the Butchers' Hall in Ghent. In addition, it highlighted that a cooperation between public partners and private companies (the producers of the products) can be successful and ongoing.

Region of Crete has selected the present action since, following the above-mentioned lessons learnt from the Good Practice, is willing to promote the traditional products of Crete, support the economy by storytelling and give the consumers and tourists visiting Crete unique experiences of its tradition and culture.

Regional Operational Programme Crete 2014-2020 (ROP Crete 2014-2020) aims to enhance the competitiveness of SMEs through innovation, openness and the development of new areas. The promotion of innovation in businesses is related to the creation of an innovation culture in the business world, entrepreneurs and citizens of Crete. ROP Crete 2014-2020 supports synergies and the creation of clusters and regional networks focused on the enhancement of the competitiveness of the tourism-culture-environment-agri-food sectors.

ROP Crete 2014-2020 focuses on SMEs and entrepreneurship of the tourism sector and aims to enhance tourism products and to promote tourism's SMEs through the innovation, clustering and diversification of tourism products.

The Region of Crete will act as a linking factor among the different stakeholders of the tourism sector in Crete, and in accordance and close networking with national and European policies.

The ROP Crete 2014-2020 will be improved through the implementation of the present project that aims to develop synergies among Commercial Chambers of Crete, clusters of agri-food sector of Crete, producers of local products, artists, craftsmen etc. This new project selected in the framework of this present action will be co-funded through ROP Crete 2014-2020.

4.3.2 Nature of the action

The present action will be co-financed in the framework of "PRIORITY AXIS 1: Strengthening competitiveness, innovation and entrepreneurship in Crete" of ROP Crete 2014-2020.

Region of Crete will search for a building (probably an abandoned one that is no longer in use) near a touristic attraction in Crete (Heraklion, Chania, Rethymno or Agios Nikolaos). Following the lessons learnt from the "Public-Private cooperation in the Butchers' Hall" Good Practice, a marketing plan and a business plan are required in order to set the aims and the strategy, analyse the market, the competition, defining the target groups-customers and elaborate a SWOT analysis. The marketing plan will define:

- the variety of the products for the shop and the restaurant,
- the competitive prices, taking into account the price of the surrounding business,
- the opening hours,
- the suppliers (of the products, tourism experiences etc),
- the promotion tools to be used for each target group (general public, guided groups, individual tourists)
- the needed personnel.

A public-private agreement will be signed, which will describe in detail the mutual commitments from the participating parties (Region authority, SMEs, Clusters etc.) regarding the operation of the building and the financial rules for the participation in the project.

The building will be a permanent centre to promote the traditional regional products of the participating SMEs of the agro-food sector. In the building a shop and restaurant will operate which will sell and serve exclusively these products made in Crete. The building will be a reference point of interest also for cultural initiatives and all type of exhibitions (workshops,

seminars etc.), which could take place in it and promote in parallel the Crete storytelling of nutrition and traditional products as well as the Cretan lifestyle.

4.3.3 Stakeholders involved

The main stakeholders that will be involved in the organization and the participation of the project are:

- Region of Crete
- Commercial Chambers of Crete
- Clusters of agri-food sector of Crete
- Producers of local products
- Artists, craftsmen etc.
- Visitors and tourists

4.3.4 Timeframe

Region of Crete will try to engage, at least, local Cretan clusters of agro-food sector, like “Wines of Crete” (31 members registered) and “Cheese & Dairy Cluster of Crete” (24 members registered) as suppliers.

- Invite involved stakeholders to express their interest in participating in the initiative - Until March 2020
- Preparation of public-private agreement and signing – Until June 2020
- Search for a building with touristic attraction in Crete (Heraklion, Chania, Rethymno or Agios Nikolaos) – Until December 2020
- Promotion of the initiative – continuous
 - Advertising of the initiative to local press
 - Invite more companies, producers, artists etc. participate to the initiative (for example through occasional organized thematic events or permanent “corner points”)

4.3.5 Indicative costs

Potential rental cost of the selected building - 40.000€/year

Human resources: Staff and administration team – 75.000€/year

Operational costs (electricity, water etc.) – 10.000€/year

4.3.6 Indicative funding sources

Initial potential rental (depending on the selected building) and operational costs (staff, electricity etc.) for the present action will be financed by the European Union ERDF fund through the Regional Operational Programme of Crete 2014-2020 policy instrument for a specific defined period.

Date:

Name of the organisation(s) :

Region of Crete

Signature(s) of representative of the relevant organisation(s): _____