Actions of digitization of natural and cultural heritage in Western Greece during pandemic period: selected cases, conclusions and perspectives – Innovative digital tools arising during COVID-19 period for sustainable cultural heritage and touristic development

Greece

Dimitris KARADIMAS – Electrical Engineer
Christos PANAGIOTOU – Computer Engineer
University of Patras

Online March 01, 2022
Introduction

- Digitization of natural and cultural heritage constitutes a strategic goal and a firm concept within the public organizations (regional authorities, research bodies), private entities and citizens’ groups and social organizations.

- During the previous programming period (2014-2020) apart CD-ETA there are a few more projects – active in Western Greece and from various European frameworks – tackle the issue:
  - **HERIT-DATA**: Sustainable Heritage Management towards Mass Tourism Impact thanks to a holistic use of Big and Open Data - [https://herit-data.interreg-med.eu/](https://herit-data.interreg-med.eu/)
  - **CI-NOVATEC**: Customer Intelligence for innovations Tourism Ecosystems - [https://interregcinovatec.eu/](https://interregcinovatec.eu/)
  - **InnoXenia**: Innovation in Tourism in the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion - [https://innoxenia.adrioninterreg.eu/](https://innoxenia.adrioninterreg.eu/)
Introduction

• Natural and Cultural heritage is always tightly connected with:
  • other widely recognized tourist spots (archeological, leisure, etc. sites and landmarks)
  • dynamic anthropogenic activities & creative industry products (festivals, art exhibitions, culinary events, combined activities such as sporting events, trade fairs, etc.)

• All above aspects constitutes the Local/Regional Tourism Product of a region while their recognition and acceptance depends on tourism/visitors' attraction

• **BUT** COVID-19 imposed all related activities to a “deep freeze”
Western Greece during COVID-19

Regional authority immediate reaction to COVID-19 implied situation, following the worldwide campaign, #STAY HOME STAY SAFE delivered a web portal aggregating digitized resources regarding natural and cultural heritage

https://menoumedytikiellada.gr/
The case of Interreg CI-Novatec

• CI-NOVATEC focuses upon Local Tourism Clusters (LTCs) which formulate one of the most significant boosting factors for regional economic growth of the CBC (GR-IT) area.

• CI-NOVATEC activities and project methodology resulted to the following tangible outputs:
  • A registry with the Points of Interest for each participating Region
  • An ICT-based system for collecting result-driven, bottom-up data, enhancing Customer Intelligence in Tourism Clusters of SMEs.
  • A scalable Customer Intelligence platform consisting of Mobile Applications & a backend Big Data Management system
  • Datasets of visitors’ experience related data attributed with locality and chronological coordinates
  • Training seminars & material for Tourism Ecosystem members on Local Tourism Clustering & Customer Intelligence
  • A Cross Border synthesis report on visitors' satisfaction, highlighting best practices, weaknesses, conclusions and proposal, based upon at least 9000 tourist reports
  • A Cross border LTC performance improvement study taking into consideration thematic (Cultural, Natural & Historical) & geographical (mountainous, coastal, rural, urban) characteristics of the pilot areas, addressed towards SMEs, creative industry, natural & historical sites managers.
  • Three regional Tourism development policy papers ie. guides for future investments, according to identified shortages, prospects, trends etc., addressed towards policy making actors & authorities ie. Chambers, Municipalities & Regions.
The case of Interreg CI-Novatec

222 digitized items for the pilot area of Kalavrita (province of Achaia) in the touristic thematic of: Archeological, Cultural, Historical, Landmark and Natural
The case of Interreg CI-Novatec

144 digitized items for the pilot area of Ancient Olympia (province of Ilia) in the touristic thematic of: Archeological, Cultural, Historical, Landmark and Natural
The case of Interreg CI-Novatec

364 digitized items for the pilot area of Nafpaktos (province of Aitoloakarnania) in the touristic thematic of: Cultural, Historical, Landmark and Natural
The case of Interreg CI-Novatec

CI-Novatec figures

339 Points Of Interest
1135 Small Medium Enterprises
173 Events
209 Regional Networks Members
214 Questions
413 Visitors
19239 Visitors' Responses
146 Regional Networks Users
The case of Interreg CI-Novatec

• Key Point of CI-Novatec was **Regional Networks** (RNs), comprised of representatives from the Local Tourism Clusters:
  • representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises
  • managers of widely recognized sites (historic & natural heritage) and anthropogenic activities (culture heritage)
  • representatives of municipalities, chambers, development agencies and other local institutions.

• Partners’ reaction to COVID-19 situation delivered a web platform for continuing interaction with the Regional Networks in form of Webinars and remote hands-on training on delivered ICT tools - [https://interregcinovatec.eu/en/webinar/join.html](https://interregcinovatec.eu/en/webinar/join.html)
The case of DiscoverKalavrita.gr

Municipality of Kalavrita designed the touristic web portal promoting local **natural heritage** (example screenshot)
The case of DiscoverKalavrita.gr and cultural heritage (example screenshot)
The case of DiscoverKalavrita.gr

supporting also 3D tour of selected sights (example screenshot)
The case of DiscoverKalavrita.gr
More digital tools of Western Greece

Official web portals promoting touristic development:

• Touristic guide of Western Greece region
  https://western-greece.com/

• Municipality of Patras touristic guide
  https://explore.patras.gr/

• Touristic portal of Aigialeia
  https://www.discoveraigialeia.gr/
Conclusions and Perspectives

FACTS:

• ICT tools for content digitization regarding natural and cultural heritage do exist
• COVID-19 imposed a high-demand for more digitization
  • More people looking for digital information
  • More digital representations of information is desired

KEY POINT:

• integrated management of the scattered digital information
• pathways need to be defined for transferring experiential experience in the digitization of the cultural heritage
Thank you!

Dimitris KARADIMAS
karadimas@upatras.gr