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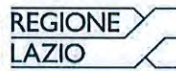
WP6 CAPITALISATION

Annex II of the Granada Charter

Roadmap – Towards the development a Mediterranean Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (NSTO)

**Project Partner: Conference of Peripheral Maritime
Regions – Intermediterranean Commission**

This roadmap has been developed by the IMC-CPMR, with the help of the BEST MED project partners.





Project BEST MED – 21st June 2022

DEVELOPING A NETWORK OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM OBSERVATORIES

Roadmap towards the development of a Mediterranean Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories

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INTRODUCTION

This roadmap is a working document in preparation for the last BEST MED International Political Workshop organised the 21st June 2022 in Rome & online, which continues the development efforts of a Mediterranean Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (MED NSTO), particularly discussing its implementation and governance. This roadmap is the final step in the reflection process and builds on the previous discussions and exchanges taken place during the "Technical Workshop" and the "BEST MED Seminar on NSTO development and data management standards" held in Rome on 9-10th December 2020 and 16th December 2021 respectively.

The main objective of this document is to detail the practical steps that BEST MED partners and observatories adhered to the MED NSTO initiative can take to consolidate and give continuity to the network of observatories after the conclusion of the BEST MED project in September 2022. The document provides guidelines on how to obtain new support and resources to power up the development of the key activities of the MED NSTO and continue its promotion.

To summarize, in the framework of the BEST MED project (2019-2022) the following steps towards the creation of the MED NSTO have been taken:

2020	Setting the knowledge basis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study phase of the BEST MED project (State of the art, gaps & needs on data collection, tourism observatories, big data & indicators – recommendations for regional policies)• 1st Technical workshop on Data Management for Sustainable Tourism, 9th & 10th December 2020• Elaboration of the MED NSTO Concept note
2021	Creation of the MED NSTO embryo & first steps
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set-up the Info Hub & first adhesions to the network• Elaboration of the MED NSTO Reflection Paper• 2nd workshop "Developing a Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories in the Mediterranean" in Rome, 16th December 2021
2022	Consolidating the MED NSTO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improvements in the Info hub• Conduction of the Local Coordination Meetings• Exchanges and coordination with key initiatives such as UNWTO INSTO• Integration of the MED NSTO as part of the Granada Charter• Elaboration of a MoU for BEST MED partners & observatories• Development of a Roadmap towards the development of the MED NSTO• Survey to gather observatories' needs in data collection, identification, analysis & use• Last MED NSTO International Political Workshop in Rome, 21st June 2022

The following lines of the document focus on the practical steps and efforts to undertake to continue this work beyond September 2022, official conclusion date of the BEST MED project.

NEXT STEPS FOR THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE MED NSTO

As a basis for the identification of the next steps, this roadmap builds on the [MED NSTO Reflection Paper](#) elaborated in December 2021 exploring previous experiences and defining some broad initial ideas for the consolidation of the network. The Reflection Paper suggested an evolutionary path for the MED NSTO to transit from a simple and less formal coordination system to a more structured organisation at multiple levels, a first abstract idea that this roadmap tries to concretise with specific steps.

During a **first phase** – last months of the BEST MED project and initial phase after its conclusion – the MED NSTO will continue to work with a non-legally formalized and “horizontal” structure, where an organization (or a tandem of) will take care of animating the network. This first phase that Regione Lazio (partner of BEST MED) is willing to lead, will rely much on the will of cooperation and own resources of the promoters and is key to identify and propose new cooperation and funding opportunities.

In order to consolidate this first phase, this roadmap sets some engaging actions taken before the end of the BEST MED project to ensure the cooperation of BEST MED Partners & joining observatories in the maintenance of the network, its promotion, the exploration of new schemes for cooperation and the set-up of a new joint plan for action (i.e., Granada Charter, MoU, Euro-MED Governance Projects).

Afterwards, the Reflection Paper envisages a **second phase** through the set-up of a specific consortium funded by EU and national-regional resources within a new project proposal to be submitted and focused on further articulating the MED NSTO working tools (e.g. knowledge center, gathering of data, analysis/studies, networking via events, etc.). In view of achieving this second operational and more structured phase, the roadmap suggests the submission of an Interreg Euro-MED Thematic Project.

In parallel, as already pointed out by the Reflection Paper, the MED NSTO is born with the vocation of being connected to other relevant initiatives in the field of sustainable tourism planning and data management. This roadmap therefore proposes a concrete framework for collaboration between the MED NSTO and the UNWTO INSTO. Moreover, the works of the MED NSTO are expected to contribute to other ongoing initiatives such as the EU Transition Pathway for tourism and the implementation of the Glasgow Declaration.

In the long run, a **third and more mature phase** could possibly follow with the coordination and management of the MED NSTO by a legally constituted subject or a similar arrangement, which could provide for instance a more stable organizational structure including a scientific committee and an annual budget to use for the main activities etc.

In the following sections, this roadmap sets concrete steps to consolidate the first phase, transition towards the second and some possibilities for the long-run.

- **STEPS TOWARDS THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE FIRST PHASE OF COOPERATION**

- 1) The Granada Charter: engaging a broader audience

The BEST MED partnership has drafted the “Granada Charter”, a document translating the information collected in the MED S&C Path Model into clear and simple political messages aimed at European policy design & for Maritime regions.

The final text of the Charter includes a section dedicated to data sharing, harmonization and interoperability, highlighting how a better and smarter connection of the existing Mediterranean Observatories could play a key role. As part of its policy recommendations, the Charter includes a direct reference to the MED NSTO with the aim of engaging stakeholders to boost the development of this Mediterranean Network.

This is a light but important commitment due to the broad scope of the Granada Charter that is targeting the different governance levels (public & private). It will be officially presented during the Final Event of the project on 14th September 2022 in Granada (Spain). All BEST MED partners will sign the document before the end of the project and the adherence to the Charter will then remain open through the BEST MED project website to any interested organisation.

- 2) The MED NSTO MoU: engaging BEST MED partners & observatories

An important first step for the consolidation of the network of observatories is the approval and signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between the partners of the BEST MED project (as promoters of the initiative) and the observatories or entities working with data that have so far manifested their will to be involved in the Med NSTO (and that will progressively formally join it).

This document is therefore intended to give concrete expression to the preliminary commitments of two types of actors towards the implementation of the MED NSTO:

- ✓ The BEST MED project partners
- ✓ The observatories/member organizations of the network gathered so far

Through this document, partners and observatories commit to -among others- recognise the MED NSTO as the framework for cooperation in future, to promote and mainstream the work of the MED NSTO or participate in ad-hoc meetings to agree on priorities and discuss the future cooperation of the members.

The engagement of each joining organization or entity will be based on the real competences on which each signatory can act upon, according to their functions and legal figure. For instance, BEST MED partners not directly working with data will be mainly engaged towards promotion and/or mainstreaming actions.

The final version of this document will be officially presented on 14th September 2022 in Granada (Spain) in the framework of the BEST MED Project Final Event. All BEST MED partners

will sign the document before the end of the project and will promote the MoU among the observatories in their territories that are already part of the MED NSTO, seeking their signature as well.

The engagement of key players via this MoU will strengthen the MED NSTO initiative giving it a more solid, consistent and participatory basis, and will at the same time help preparing the ground for the future collaboration and next concrete steps.

3) Interreg Euro-MED Governance projects: promotion & advocacy for the MED NSTO

In the framework of the new programming period 2021-2027, the European Territorial Cooperation Interreg Euro-MED Programme has launched two types of governance projects that offer opportunities for the consolidation of the MED NSTO. BEST MED partners participating in this call have integrated activities related to the MED NSTO development into their respective proposals whereby:

- On the one hand, the **Institutional Dialogue Project¹** (IDP) under the Sustainable Tourism mission will develop and implement an advocacy strategy specifically to continue the work of promoting the MED NSTO among national and regional observatories and key entities with the final aim of gaining new adhesions to the network. It will also build on the current Info Hub to map targets at the Programme level of receivers of best practices for data management for tourism planning, with particular attention set to tourism observatories.
- On the other hand, through the **Thematic Community Project²** (TCP) under the Sustainable Tourism mission will develop the so-call “Join the MED”, a knowledge hub and database monitoring and collecting knowledge and initiatives developed during the 2014-2020 period, among which the NSTO initiative and its related Info Hub. This “Join the MED platform” which will be built upon the current existing [Search the Med Tool](#) could also partially build on the current approach and division of the NSTO Info Hub (e.g., aiming to include links to other initiatives beyond Interreg projects, a section to connect experts in the field, etc.). Later in the project, when a thematic (“modular”) project develops the current Info Hub embryo into a more developed Knowledge Centre (see page 6 of this roadmap), the following step would be for the TCP to integrate or link the NSTO Knowledge Center as a concrete section of the “Join the MED platform”, bringing to it greater visibility and outreach and making it available for all the thematic (“modular”) projects of the community.

¹ Institutional Dialogue Projects will aim at supporting the work of transfer and mainstream of results into the practices and policies undertaken by the Thematic Community Projects on the Euro-MED territories by liaising activities and at improving the coordination with actors within and beyond the Euro-MED area ([Terms of References, CALL FOR PROPOSALS: EURO-MED01](#))

² Thematic Community Projects will aim at animating a community of projects to enable exchanges and synergies between projects and at favouring the technical transfer and mainstream of thematic projects’ results into the practices and policies of the Euro-MED territories ([Terms of References, CALL FOR PROPOSALS: EURO-MED01](#))

The official selection of the projects will be announced in September 2022 and the official start of their activities would be 1st November 2022, allowing for a certain temporal continuity with BEST MED, which will officially end in September 2022.

If approved, both projects will work in close cooperation until the 30th of June 2029, a period of 7 years which allows not only for a long-run support to the MED NSTO but also the possibility to integrate all the process and progress made by the network in the framework of the IDP's & TCP's advocacy and promotion efforts.

- **STEPS TO TRANSITION TOWARDS A SECOND PHASE OF COOPERATION**

- 1) Interreg Euro-MED Thematic project: more articulated working tools for the MED NSTO

The NSTO Info Hub – currently in an embryo phase- takes the form of a virtual web page integrated in the Interreg MED virtual platform (BEST MED section) and linked to all existing web platforms dealing with tourism (including the [UfM Blue Economy platform](#)). The Info Hub is an important operational arm of the MED NSTO as it is envisaged to be an online space for sharing general, technical, and sector-based knowledge relating to the monitoring and management of data on sustainable tourism, collecting and systematizing pertinent information and facilitating cooperation between experts. In other words, the Info Hub was designed to facilitate/offer permanent communication within the MED NSTO.

Converting the current Info Hub into a full-fledged Knowledge Center for the MED NSTO (e.g. ideally structured as a search engine for relevant resources) would require surely more financial, staff and time resources. These resources could be found via the Euro Med Program. Provide a more specific & thematic division of contents that could be better focused on the thematic priority areas identified by members of the MED NSTO.

- Create a research engine where contents can be browsed starting from keywords inserted by the user
- Offer the possibility to use meta data and develop (cumulative) maps and graphics, and or to consult maps/analysis made by the Observatory/its partners on specific relevant topics.

Once developed and initially fed, the idea for this Knowledge Center is to be linked/integrated to the TCP "Join the MED" platform given the relevance of sustainable tourism data for all the thematic ("modulars") projects being part of the TCP. In other words, while the thematic ("modular") project would develop and feed the Knowledge Center with key contents and MED NSTO results, the TCP could integrate it within its own platform as a specific section.

Moreover, this Thematic Project would be an opportunity to establish other operational tools to entrust and enhance the development of the key activities of the MED NSTO – and nourish the Knowledge Center, for example:

- Provide a framework for the MED NSTO observatories to set a common methodology for data collection and start the building process of a joint statistical “container” or toolbox integrated in the Knowledge Center. For this collection work, pilot experiences operating on the ground could be designed.
- The set-up of Local Working Groups facilitating regular exchange with local stakeholders and observatories continuing the first steps taken within BEST MED with the organisation of the Local Coordination Meetings³.
- Transform the data collected into analysis and studies ready to inform and feed tourism planning and policymaking in the Mediterranean and beyond.
- Establish an official framework for dialogue and networking between the observatories.

This project would allow to consolidate dynamics, start with the production of concrete results, reach a critical mass and a more concrete impact on mainstreaming and influence on tourism policies at all levels (E.g. at European Union level in relation with the European Commission works and the EU tourism pathway targets on tourism and data, at International level in connection with initiatives such as the Glasgow Declaration and Future of tourism coalition, at national, regional and local levels for the development and use of better decision support systems etc.).

The call for projects is open from the 27th of June 2022, and it will be open until the 27th of October 2022.

- **STEPS TOWARDS THE FORMALISATION OF THE UNWTO INSTO & MED NSTO LINK**

- 1) BEST MED Project & UNWTO: enhancing the cooperation between INSTO & MED NSTO

Building on and contributing to the goals and activities of the UNWTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (UNWTO-INSTO) is a clear objective of the MED NSTO. For this reason, exchanges with the UNWTO department in charge of the INSTO have been following since the creation phase of the MED NSTO, trying also to gather advice for the pre-establishment process of the MED NSTO itself.

To materialise this cooperation and link, the UNWTO & the BEST MED Partnership are committed to set a cooperation framework (be it a Memorandum of Understanding, a letter of Intents or a Cooperation Agreement – to be defined before the BEST MED closure). The main objectives of this cooperation will be to ensure coherence between both initiatives by regularly exchanging information, promoting each other’s results & triggering synergies.

³ Meetings organised by the BEST MED partners (March-May 2022) aimed at triggering a participatory approach and bringing together local, regional, and national tourism observatories and entities working on sustainable tourism data collection and monitoring for the consolidation of the MED NSTO. These meetings served both to attract and encourage new observatories to join the NSTO as well as to maintain contact and exchange with the observatories already part of the initiative, mainly updating them on the latest developments in the creation process and involving them in the next steps.

In this sense, the final cooperation framework should explore reciprocal commitment in capitalising the results of BEST MED (mainly the MED NSTO embryo & the Granada Charter) and the works of the UNWTO-INSTO, as well as concrete ways to ensure the regular dialogue and synergy. Example of actions that could be envisaged⁴:

- Disseminate and transfer the findings and the results of the networks in order to improve sustainable tourism planning and strategy (e.g., Include updates and news on the respective networks in respective communication channels (newsletter/ mailing list).
- Involve MED NSTO members in Global INSTO meetings.
- In the future, present relevant results of MED NSTO in the framework of INSTO Technical Meetings.

THE MED NSTO EVOLUTION IN THE LONG RUN

This document has outlined practical steps that can be taken in the immediate future to consolidate the MED NSTO. This proposal aims at considering the evolution of the MED NSTO at different levels.

On the one hand, a new thematic (testing) project of the Euro-MED Programme would allow to operationalise the most practical elements of the MED NSTO by working especially at the local level (e.g. through data collection in pilots) and at the same time transnationally.

On the other hand, the future governance projects of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme would allow to dwell more on the transnational level and facilitate inter-territorial dialogue on the topics addressed by the MED NSTO.

Both levels would be connected through the work of the Thematic Community Project and the integration of the Info Hub/Knowledge Centre in its "Join the MED" platform - the data, information and analyses built up from the MED NSTO pilot experiences would eventually be made available on this transnational platform. These first concrete results coming from the MED NSTO should also serve to progressively feed the MED NSTO - UNWTO INSTO collaboration.

These new cooperation opportunities and frameworks that would follow the BEST MED works in a first phase, could in turn prepare the ground to transition towards the third and more mature phase of the network: its institutionalisation.

Looking to the more long-term future, the MED NSTO will have to evolve and move towards the 2030 horizon by contributing to two key framing initiatives: the [EU Transition Pathway for Tourism](#) and its Topic 3 on Improving statistics and indicators for tourism & the [Glasgow Declaration](#) for Climate Action in Tourism particularly calling to measure tourism-related emissions. .

⁴ The final concrete actions to include in the cooperation framework will have to be discussed with UNWTO representatives in the weeks after the 21st June Workshop. The list of activities provided in this document is only indicative.