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## **WP6 CAPITALISATION**

### **Activity 6.2. – Network of National and Regional Sustainable Tourism Observatories Del. 6.2.1**

#### **Memorandum of Understanding**

**Project Partner: Lazio Region**

This Memorandum of Understanding has been developed by the Lazio Region, through the external expertise of SL&A Turismo e Territorio and with the help of the BEST MED project partners.



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## PREAMBLE

The in-depth analysis carried out during BEST MED project<sup>1</sup> and various technical seminars<sup>2</sup> examined the existing methodological approaches to the collection and management of tourism data and outlined the main results and guidance of previous MED projects and other European and international initiatives concerning the issue of data management, with the aim of improving its availability, transparency, comparability, interoperability, and systemisation for greater support in decision-making.

Based on this experience, a series of structural and instrumental shortcomings are highlighted in the system for collecting and analysing tourism data. Specifically:

- Lack of coordination between the various requirements and the different methods of data collection and analysis.
- Different approaches in the use of tools and the reporting of results.
- Gaps in the availability of information and in the interoperability of the various existing systems.

In order to develop appropriate policies for the planning and management of sustainable tourism on the basis of “solid” information, it is necessary to apply methodologies that are shared by all parties involved in the collection and analysis of tourism data.

WHEREAS, the Parties desire to encourage an atmosphere of collaboration and alliance in the support of an effective and efficient partnership; and

WHEREAS, the Parties desire to collaborate to establish and maintain objectives and commitments with regards to all matters related to sustainable tourism data collection and analysis;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises, the Signatories agree to set up the NSTO as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Deliverable 3.2.1 Proposal for a standard system of Big Data sets available at Med level <https://best-med.interreg-med.eu/what-we-achieve/deliverables-database/>

<sup>2</sup> Report on Technical Workshop "Data Management for Sustainable Tourism - Moving towards a network of tourism observatories for a better governance in the Mediterranean" - Work Package n 3 Studying

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

To facilitate multi-level cooperation between all parties involved in data collection and analysis and to share standards, tools and solutions geared to a common direction, the BEST MED Project decided to kick-start a path towards a more methodological type of sharing. In detail, the project's activities highlighted that the implementation of innovative strategies and initiatives, requires:

- a) Broad, comprehensive, and homogeneous dissemination of information;
- b) The improvement of human resources' skills;
- c) Equitable sharing of tools, standard procedures, opportunities, technologies, and data.

Moreover, it is considered necessary to set up a Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (NSTO) in the MED area, with the aim of:

- a) Cooperating in the sharing of data management strategies and models relating to sustainable tourism.
- b) Sharing information, specific tools, and best practices to develop capacity building actions encouraging knowledge transfer in line with sector skills.
- c) Developing joint projects and activities, including in relation to funding opportunities available at EU, national, regional, and local level.
- d) Further developing the existing info hub<sup>3</sup> already integrated in the BEST MED web portal, to collect and systemise in a dedicated "resource centre" key information, documents, news, events, and general knowledge related to data monitoring and management in the field of sustainable tourism, to pave the way for the creation of the MED NSTO.
- e) Collecting (re-usable) data on sustainable tourism relevant for the Mediterranean NSTO in real time and use it to elaborate new documents, studies, or analysis.
- f) Contributing to the goals and activities of UNWTO INSTO and the EU works on sustainable tourism data (e.g., connect with and power up activities, help collect information, give advice, support the implementation of strategies, etc.).

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<sup>3</sup> Link to the Info hub <https://best-med.interreg-med.eu/info-hub/introduction/>

## COMMITMENTS

The signatories of this MoU commit to:

- 1) adopt and promote the principles of the Granada Charter;
- 2) share ideas, methodologies, and strategies for the collection and common management of data in the field of sustainable tourism to use data collection methods validated by the NSTO, to employ data-sharing tools common to all components of the NSTO, to update on developments in tools and solutions in the field of data management;
- 3) disseminate and transfer the findings and the results of the network, in order to improve sustainable tourism planning and strategy in the MED area;
- 4) promote the NSTO's work and mainstream its practices at all levels (into local, regional, national policies), by trying to actively obtain new adhesions, in order to consolidate the network;
- 5) participate in ad-hoc meetings that might be organised to agree on priorities and discuss the future cooperation of the members;
- 6) recognise the MED NSTO as the framework for the signatories to cooperate in future joint initiatives and projects.

However, these commitments will be subject to the real competences on which each signatory can act according to their functions and legal figure.

## **THE PARTIES**

BEST MED Partners are promoters of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The parties involved are tourism observatories and other public or private bodies (e.g., employment agencies collecting data on employment in tourism, bodies handling big data, etc.).

Specifically, this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is an agreement

### **BETWEEN**

BEST MED Partners (exclusively as promoters)

and

the Observatories / Organisations / Entities that meet one of the following conditions:

- ✓ Operate in the field of tourism data collection related to Eurostat or other national / regional, public, or private statistical bodies.
- ✓ Be an official (sustainable) tourism observatory operating in the Mediterranean basin.
- ✓ Be an observatory / body / organisation operating in the Mediterranean basin that handles and monitors data on sustainable tourism, even if not formally recognised.
- ✓ Be an observatory / body / organisation operating in the Mediterranean basin that handles and monitors data on tourism in general and is interested in and committed to operating also in the field of sustainable tourism, even if not formally recognised.
- ✓ Be an observatory / organisation participating in the MITOMED+ project or other Interreg MED projects related to sustainable tourism.
- ✓ Be an observatory / organisation involved with the partners of BEST MED Project activities (PLS, Focus Groups, Living Lab, etc.).

## IMPLEMENTATION

The NSTO will work with a non-legally formalized and “horizontal” structure, where an organisation/entity (or a tandem of) can animate the network, exchange, and capitalize on existing opportunities. NSTO would rely much on the will of cooperation and own resources of the BEST MED Partners promoters and signatories.

Tasks could be distributed according to the will of participating organizations and based on a jointly developed road map or work plan, and leadership could be refreshed each year or biannually. At first, Lazio Region will coordinate the NSTO.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NSTO IS PROGRAMMED TO HAVE A LONG TERM STRATEGY AND TO PROCEED AS FOLLOWS<sup>4</sup>:

- *A second phase*, could power up and entrust the development of the MED NSTO’s key activities (e.g., knowledge centre, gathering of data, analysis/studies, networking via events, information etc.) to a specific consortium. EU and national-regional resources could fund the consortium’s activities within new project proposals to be submitted, for instance, to the Euro-Med Interreg programme (e.g., institutional, horizontal, or modular testing/transferring project). This 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.

- *A third phase*, could foresee the coordination and management of the NSTO by a legally constituted subject, which could provide for instance an organizational structure with a scientific committee and an annual budget. The source of the budget should be defined together with the components of the network, it could be a mixture between the participation/contribution from the different observatories and EU National funds obtained in competitive bids.

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<sup>4</sup> According to the Road Map for the NSTO



## TOOLS

The management system is currently based on the “embryo” created with the “info hub” of the BEST MED platform. The “resource centre” currently takes the form of a virtual web page<sup>5</sup>, 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 intention is that the Info Hub currently allocated at the Best MED webpage will be operative and developed to a more advanced level during the Euro-MED Programming period already launched with the objectives of:

- Tourism data management tools, platforms (eg Mitomed+ Data Platform, BEST MED Data Platform etc), best practices, studies and research, etc.
- A constantly updated map showing all the network’s participants, distinguished by theme and type, and indicating their websites, contact details, and their specialisations in terms of the type of data collected.
- Relevant results of all projects of the MED Programme (such as SMARTMED and the Sustainable Tourism Community), and other relevant EU programmes.
- Strategic vision for sustainable tourism planning.

The info hub should effectively act as an online space for sharing knowledge about sustainable tourism data management and monitoring, and for collecting and systemising pertinent information.

Progressively, depending on potential additional funding support and collaboration among partners, the info hub could further evolve transforming the “resource centre” into a more developed “knowledge centre” providing the possibilities to use meta data and develop maps and graphs, and to consult maps/analysis made by the Observatory/its partners on specific relevant topics.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://best-med.interreg-med.eu/info-hub/introduction/>

### **DURATION**

This MOU is at-will and may be modified by mutual consent of the signatories. This MOU shall become effective upon signature by all Parties and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by any one of the partners by mutual consent.

### **LANGUAGE**

The language of this MoU is English and will be the only valid version of it. Nevertheless, the Parties can produce and provide to the new Signatory courtesy translations in all the necessary languages.