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# FOCUS PAPER

## Ensuring long-lasting results Replicability of Sustainable Tourism Solutions

by *Community4Tourism*





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## About this series

This series of Focus Papers is produced by Community4Tourism (C4T), the Thematic Community project of the Interreg Euro-MED Sustainable Tourism Mission. The Mission supports sustainable tourism development and the transition towards a climate-neutral and resilient Mediterranean through transnational cooperation and multi-level governance. The Focus Papers are short, practical documents that collect and synthesise results, knowledge and good practices from the Mission's Study, Test and Transfer projects. They highlight tools, methods and solutions that can be shared, adapted and used in different territorial contexts. The series provide clear insights to support learning, practical implementation and policy uptake. By bringing together project results and peer experience, the Focus Papers aim to strengthen cooperation, encourage replication and increase the long-term impact of the Mission. This first Focus Paper explores how to ensure long-lasting results through the replicability of sustainable tourism solutions, focusing on what makes solutions transferable, adaptable and ready to use beyond their original context.

## 1 Replicability in a nutshell

### 1.1 What do we mean by replicability?

In the framework of the **Sustainable Tourism Mission** of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme, replicability refers to the ability to **transfer and reuse solutions, tools, methods and practices** developed in one territory and **apply them successfully in another**, while respecting local specificities. Replicability is not about copying actions “as they are”, but about **adapting what works** to new territorial, social and governance contexts. This perspective is fully aligned with the Interreg Euro-MED Programme Manual, which states that all protocols and results must be transferable within the programme cooperation area and that deliverables, including outputs and results, should therefore be replicable and/or adaptable.

In practice, replicability is closely linked to **knowledge transfer**: the process through which experience, know-how and lessons learned move from one place or group to another. This process is **dynamic, interactive and multi-level**, involving individuals, organisations and networks of territories. Effective replicability therefore requires both *technical readiness* and *human engagement*.



## 1.2 Key building blocks of replicability

Set of **core components** make replication possible and meaningful:

- **Context awareness**  
Successful replication starts with understanding the local context of the receiving territory: governance structures, policy frameworks, tourism characteristics, socio-economic and environmental conditions and community values. Solutions must align with these realities to be accepted and effective.
- **Stakeholder engagement**  
Replicability works best when **local authorities, tourism actors, communities, NGOs and knowledge institutions** are involved from the start. Engagement builds ownership, trust and long-term commitment.
- **Clear and usable knowledge**  
Knowledge must be **clear, credible and actionable**. Tools, methodologies and practices should be presented in simple language, with practical guidance on *what to do* and *how to do it*.
- **Capacity and skills**  
Replication depends on the **capacity of people and organisations** to absorb and apply new knowledge. Training, peer learning and continuous support are essential, especially for small tourism businesses and local administrations.
- **Flexibility and modularity**  
Replicable solutions need to be **flexible and modular**, allowing adaptation to different scales (local, regional, national) and levels of technological maturity. Modularity enables territories to adopt only what fits their needs and resources.
- **Impact orientation**  
Replicability is strengthened when results can be **measured and demonstrated**. Clear indicators and monitoring mechanisms help assess environmental, social and economic impacts over time.

## 1.3 Main barriers to replicability

Despite its potential, the replicability of solutions developed through EU-funded tourism projects faces several recurring barriers:

- **Limited access to knowledge**  
Project results and tools may be difficult to access, fragmented across platforms or presented in overly technical or academic language, reducing their usability for external stakeholders.



- **Lack of capacity and motivation**  
Insufficient skills, time constraints or low motivation among stakeholders can slow down the transfer, adaptation and uptake of practices and solutions developed within project frameworks.
- **Weak organisational support**  
Competing interests, limited resources, staff turnover or unclear roles can undermine replication efforts, particularly when no structure is designated to carry results forward after project completion.
- **Insufficient financial continuity**  
Replication may be hindered once project funding ends if no follow-up resources or financing mechanisms are secured to sustain or scale the results.
- **Limited political ownership**  
Limited involvement of public authorities or decision-makers can weaken the policy, strategic and regulatory support needed for long-term replication.
- **Poor communication**  
One-size-fits-all messages, information overload or the absence of tailored communication strategies reduce understanding, engagement and the willingness of new territories to adopt tested solutions.
- **Misalignment with local priorities**  
When replicated solutions do not clearly respond to local needs, values or perceived benefits, they risk low social acceptance and resistance from communities.



## 1.4 Why replicability matters for the Sustainable Tourism Mission

Replicability is a **cornerstone of the Sustainable Tourism Mission**. It allows tested solutions from more than 22 projects to travel across the Mediterranean and beyond, **scaling up impact**, avoiding duplication of efforts and fostering collective ownership of results. By focusing on adaptation, engagement and learning, replicability turns individual project outputs into **shared Mission achievements**.

### AT A GLANCE

#### Replicability means:

- ❖ Sharing what works
- ❖ Adapting it to local realities
- ❖ Engaging local actors
- ❖ Creating lasting impact

#### A replicable solution:

- ✓ Works beyond its pilot area
- ✓ Can be adjusted to different scales
- ✓ Responds to local tourism needs
- ✓ Builds on cooperation and trust

#### Common barriers to watch out for

- ⚠ Knowledge too complex or fragmented
- ⚠ Lack of skills or time
- ⚠ Weak organisational support
- ⚠ Poor communication
- ⚠ Low community acceptance

#### Successful replicability starts with people, not tools.

Engagement, cross-sector collaboration and learning are as important as technical solutions.

## 2. Assessing replicability: process and criteria

### 2.1 A shared approach to measure replicability

To support the upscaling of Sustainable Tourism Mission results, Community4Tourism applies a **common and transparent approach** to assess the replicability of thematic projects' outputs. The objective



is to understand **how easily a tool, method or solution can be replicated** to other territories, and **under which conditions**.

Replicability is assessed through a **set of qualitative criteria**, combined with a **simple scoring system**. This approach allows:

- comparability across projects' outputs,
- identification of strengths and weaknesses,
- and clear guidance for adaptation and improvement.

The assessment does not aim to “rank” outputs, but to **support learning, adaptation and adoption**.

### Replicability criteria – what we assess

Each project output is assessed against five key dimensions:

#### GOVERNANCE

- Can the output align with different policy and development frameworks?
- Are key stakeholders clearly identified and involved?
- Are capacity-building actions needed?

#### FLEXIBILITY

- Can the output work at different territorial scales?
- Can it be adapted to local tourism needs and contexts?

#### FEASIBILITY

- Are financial requirements manageable?
- Are technological needs realistic for most territories?

#### MEASURABILITY

- Can impacts be measured today?
- Can results be monitored over time?

#### SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE

- Is the output aligned with local traditions, values and identity?
- Does it generate clear benefits for local communities?

## 2.2 A simple 3-step approach to assess replicability

### STEP 1 – Assess adaptability and acceptance

Assessing how easily the outputs can be adapted to other territories, considering:

- governance alignment,
- flexibility across scales and contexts,
- measurability of impacts,
- social acceptance.



## STEP 2 – Identify resources and capacities needed

Assessing what is needed to replicate the outputs in another territory, focusing on:

- stakeholder involvement,
- capacity-building needs,
- financial and technological requirements.

## STEP 3 – Define the overall replicability score

Results from the two steps are combined into **one overall score**, which indicates whether an output is:

- High demanding
- Resource-intensive
- Moderately flexible
- Easily adaptable
- Ready to use

**The assessment uses a simple 1–5 scale**, where higher scores indicate greater ease of replication and lower resource needs.

### How to use the results

Replicability assessment is not only an analytical exercise but a practical decision-support tool. It aims to analyse project results against key criteria to provide a clear overview of what can realistically be transferred. By identifying strengths, gaps and enabling conditions, the assessment helps stakeholders identify the outputs that are ready to use, the adaptation requirements and the conditions that must be strengthened to ensure effective uptake in new contexts. It, therefore, supports the creation of an enabling environment for replication activities and informs strategic choices for scaling and capitalisation.

### The replicability assessment helps to:

- identify outputs ready for replication, highlighting concrete solutions that can be reused by other territories.
- highlight adaptation and support needs, clarifying which elements require additional resources.
- guide peer learning between territories, also by matching territories that have transferable practices with those seeking tested solutions.
- support upscaling beyond the Mission, contributing to wider dissemination, capitalisation and policy uptake.

### Replicability is a pathway, not a label.

Even outputs with low replicability score can be replicated through adaptation and support.



### 3. Examples from the Sustainable Tourism Mission

**Example 1** – *EMBLEMATIC MED-Routes Transferability Guidelines for the creation of eco-itineraries*

**Project:** MED-Routes (Transfer project)

#### Project snapshot

The [MED-Routes](#) project aims to enhance the sustainability of tourism development by capitalising on four Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe as drivers for local development. The project focuses on eco-itineraries as a tool to reduce tourism pressure, promote territorial balance and strengthen the link between cultural heritage, local communities and tourism services. MED-Routes builds on the results of previous projects and supports knowledge transfer, capacity building and cooperation among Mediterranean destinations to promote more resilient and sustainable cultural tourism models.

#### Why this example is relevant

This example shows how **replicability can be operationalised through a transfer-oriented output**. The MED-Routes guidelines were explicitly designed to support the **transfer of a sustainable tourism model** across different territories. They demonstrate how a **shared methodology**, supported by common values and practical guidance, can travel across contexts while remaining adaptable.

#### A clear step-by-step transfer logic

The guidelines propose a **simple and replicable pathway** that destinations can follow to develop eco-itineraries:

1. Involve local stakeholders from the start, using co-creation and collaboration.
2. Design the itinerary, based on shared sustainability principles and local assets.
3. Implement on the ground, adapting to local legal, financial and operational conditions.
4. Create a tourism product, with clear positioning, storytelling and branding.
5. Monitor and improve, using feedback, indicators and continuous learning.

This step-by-step logic makes the replication process **understandable, manageable and actionable** for destinations with different levels of experience and capacity.

#### Alignment with replicability criteria

The guidelines reflect the key dimensions that enable successful



replication, demonstrating that **replicability is embedded in the design of the output**, rather than added as a separate exercise:

- **Governance:** a clear role for local authorities and destination management organisations, combined with strong stakeholder involvement.
- **Flexibility:** adaptability across different Cultural Routes, territorial scales and tourism profiles.
- **Feasibility:** emphasis on gradual implementation, capacity building and realistic resource requirements.
- **Measurability:** integration of monitoring, indicators and continuous improvement mechanisms.
- **Social acceptance:** strong focus on local identity, cultural heritage and community engagement.

### Contribution to Mission objectives

This example illustrates how **Mission results can be shared and reused across territories** by:

- focusing on **processes rather than fixed solutions**,
- supporting **local adaptation** while maintaining common principles,
- embedding **learning, monitoring and improvement** into tourism practices.

It provides a concrete illustration of how the Sustainable Tourism Mission can **turn project outputs into collective assets**.

#### Key takeaway

Replicability is strongest when solutions are shared as clear, adaptable processes that support learning, local ownership and long-term impact

### Example 2 – Joint Guide for Defining Action Plans

**Project:** MED-GIAHS (Transfer project)

#### Project snapshot

The [MED-GIAHS](#) project aims to create a network of Mediterranean GIAHS sites that have valuable agricultural, landscape, cultural and natural heritage and resilient ecosystems but face serious threats such as climate change, depopulation and loss of biodiversity. To achieve this, the project will develop a common framework for sustainable agricultural tourism, including a MED-GIAHS strategy, a joint guide for action plans, study visits and mutual learning, a training plan, and sustainable tourism catalogues. These outputs can be used by other agricultural heritage systems to support sustainable tourism valorisation and foster resilient livelihoods that combine tradition and innovation.



### Why this example is relevant

This example shows how **replicability can be supported through a shared planning methodology**. The Guide was developed to help different territories design, implement and monitor **Action Plans for the Dynamic Conservation of the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems**, building on FAO GIAHS principles while remaining adaptable to diverse institutional and territorial contexts. Rather than prescribing specific actions, the guide provides a **common structure and process** that territories can reuse and tailor, making it a strong example of methodological transfer within the Community.

### A clear step-by-step transfer logic

The guide proposes a **structured pathway** that can be replicated across territories:

1. Define a shared vision, mission and values, grounded in the specific characteristics of the territory.
2. Analyse context and challenges by identifying threats, opportunities and key dynamics, while aligning with relevant public policies and strategies.
3. Translate analysis into clear objectives and priority lines of action.
4. Define realistic actions, responsibilities, timelines, budget and impact indicators.
5. Apply actions, monitor progress, evaluate results and adapt over time through continuous learning.

This approach makes the guide **easy to understand and replicate**, even in territories with different governance models and capacities.

### Alignment with replicability criteria

The guide reflects the core conditions needed for successful replication, demonstrating that replicability is **built into the methodology** rather than added as a separate element:

- **Governance:** strong emphasis on stakeholder identification, participatory processes and adaptation to different institutional realities.
- **Flexibility:** applicable to different types of territories, scales and governance arrangements.
- **Feasibility:** focuses on realistic planning, available resources and gradual implementation.
- **Measurability:** integrates indicators, monitoring and evaluation as core components of action planning.
- **Social acceptance:** places community participation, local knowledge and beneficiaries at the center of the process.

### Contribution to Mission objectives



This example illustrates how the Sustainable Tourism Mission can **support replication through shared methods** by:

- facilitating **learning** across territories,
- improving **consistency** while allowing **local adaptation**,
- strengthening the **long-term impact** of project results.

It demonstrates that **replicability can start from how projects plan and govern actions**, not only from what they implement.

#### Key takeaway

Shared methodologies enable territories to move in the same direction, while adapting solutions to their own context and capacity.

## 4. Concluding remarks

The examples presented in this paper show that **replicability already happens within the Community**, even when projects follow different approaches and formats. What they have in common is a focus on **processes, people and learning**, rather than on fixed solutions.

Whether through thematic guidance or shared planning methodologies, these experiences demonstrate that replicability is strongest when:

- supported by clear and structured pathways,
- solutions are designed to be adapted to local contexts,
- stakeholders and communities are actively involved,
- and learning continues beyond project boundaries.

Together, these examples confirm that **replicability is not a one-size-fits-all exercise**, but a practical and evolving process. By building on such experiences, the Sustainable Tourism Mission can turn individual project outputs into **collective assets**, supporting upscaling, cooperation and long-term impact across territories.

When considered alongside the process and criteria for assessing replicability, these examples help clarify **what makes replication work in practice** and how the proposed criteria can be used to **support, strengthen and scale** similar initiatives in the future.



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#### **AUTHORS:**

*Aspasia Antonia Koutsopoulou, Spyros Niavis, Theodora Papatheochari  
University of Thessaly*

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