D.T1.2.2

Open Tourism Cross-Border Model Statute and Settlement

Analysis of public-private models at local level and design of the Open Tourism Cross-Border Model

T1 – Open Tourism Cross-Border Model for sustainable tourism Activity T1.2 - Design of the Open Tourism Cross-Border Model
• *D.T1.2.1 Cross-border round table*
• ***D.T1.2.2 Open Tourism Cross-Border Model Statute and Settlement***

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PREMISE the nature of the Open Tourism Service

1. The scope and the objectives

The Open Tourism project was financed by the Interreg Programme Ipa-Cbc Italy-Albania-Montenegro (First Call For Standard Projects, 1^ Ord 189 - Open Tourism – Cup E79c18000030005) and it was built upon an international partnership composed of the Union of Municipalities "lands of sea and sun" (Italy, lead partner), the Union of Municipalities of Biferno springs (Italy), the Book City Foundation (Italy) – replaced during the project by the Consortium Protected Marine Area of Porto Cesareo (Italy) –, the Municipality of Fier (Albania), the CEDIR – Center for Economic Development & International Relations – (Albania), and the Old Royal Capital Cetinje (Montenegro).

The project aimed at designing a new approach to tourism based on the sharing of information, relations and emotions among the visitor and the local community. It is an innovative and original idea of tourism where territory is considered as a community and the tourist as a citizen.

Open Tourism envisaged the empowerment – and sometimes the creation as well – of public-private networks, and the collection of ideas and needs to be shared at cross-border level, leading to the design and adoption of a common model for the promotion of tourism capable to enhance natural and cultural assets, to involve and encourage responsibility of the local community (especially tourist and economic operators, such as hotels, restaurants, pharmacies, gas stations, old shops, etc.) and to create transversal synergies.

The main objective of the project is to develop and implement a cross-border public-private cooperation strategy in order to promote and enhance the cultural and natural heritage and the sustainable economic and social development of the territories involved. To do so, the project aims at creating a widespread tourist information and welcome service based on a new cross-border governance model, a set of shared innovative products (Platform, App, itineraries, brand, etc.) and a Circuit of informal information and welcome points constituted by economic operators in partner territories. As a consequence, the quality of tourism information and welcome service in the cooperation area, as well as the diversification of tourist flows and offers, are expected to improve significantly.

2. The path carried out on the territories

The development of the Open Tourism Cross-Border Model was based on a double-level analysis – at local and cross-border level – of models for the promotion and protection of cultural and natural resources and the management of sustainable tourism as well as institutional and public-private relations in this sector.

The analysis of the public-private models was carried out in all the four territories involved in the project, that is: the Union of Municipalities "lands of sea and sun" (Italy), the Union of Municipalities of Biferno springs (Italy), the Municipality of Fier (Albania), and the Old Royal Capital Cetinje (Montenegro). The technical partners of the project – CEDIR (Albania) and the Book City Foundation (Italy) as well as the Consortium Protected Marine Area of Porto Cesareo (Italy) – gave their methodological support.

At a local level, the analysis was based on the organization of Focus Groups that detected the state-of-the-art of existing models for the promotion of tourism and collected the main needs and suggestions of the project partners in order to design the Open Tourism Cross-Border Model.

The results of this analysis were brought at cross-border level through the organization of Round Tables involving all the project partners and interested stakeholders as well. The dialogue between territories led to the design of the Open Tourism Cross-Border Model and to the definition of its double-level governance structure: local (Open Tourism Local Committees) and cross-border (Open Tourism Board).

As its first action, the project envisaged the analysis of the public-private local models. The analysis was conducted consistently with the *Open Tourism action Analysis of models of institutional and public-private relations at local level* (A.T1.1) and *Design of the Open Tourism Cross-Border Model* (A.T1.2). Moreover, it followed the Guidelines elaborated by the Union of Municipalities "lands of sea and sun" and submitted to the partnership during the SCOM held in Albania on 13-14 June 2019.

The analysis strategy considered the organization of local Focus Groups in the four territories taking part in the project. Each Focus Group involved the local stakeholders interested in issues linked to tourism promotion, such as public bodies, local tourist organizations, museums, ONGs, associations, tourist operators, etc.

Focus Groups mainly focused on local issues but also on the possibility to develop cross-border synergies, which laid the groundwork for cross-border Round Tables too.

This process led to the elaboration of:

- the report on the analysis of public-private models;

- the material delivered by the 4 Focus Groups organized in the territories (Work schedules, Minutes, Slides, Photos, etc.);

- analysis reports containing information, data and suggestions related to the development of cooperative processes aiming at the promotion of tourism information and welcome services.

The path of analysis of the local public-private models was designed to collect ideas and suggestions from the project partner territories in order to define a cooperation model that could improve the information and welcome services through the provision of adequate methods, tools and products.

The methodology for the detection of existing models was elaborated on the basis of particular guidelines that accurately defined the specific objectives, the expected results, the outputs, the timing and the procedure for the detection and elaboration of information.

The methodology was developed by using the tools and methods typical of social research, and it included all the tools for the detection of information useful for the analysis and the drafting of the reports.

The main work tool was the Focus Group, a social research and marketing technique used to investigate phenomena in a participative, qualitative and quantitative way. It was introduced in the US in the 40s, thanks to a series of experiments conducted by the American sociologist Paul Felix Lazarsfeld, the German sociologist and social psychologist Kurt Lewin, and the functionalist sociologist Robert Merton.

The methodology of Focus Groups is based on the exchange of ideas over a specific issue between a group of individuals considered "experts" of such issue and coming from different sectors (public and private).

In this context, the term "expert" means that the individuals selected must be able to share with other participants their specific experience with the topic discussed, and not only a theoretic knowledge of the phenomenon.

The main advantages of Focus Groups were the following:

- the participative process of knowledge-building gave the participants the possibility to develop further points of reflection by discussing their opinions with other people;

- the exchange between participants also encouraged individuals to express their views in a richer and clearer way;

- the spontaneity, the interactivity of the meeting and the possibility to express freely their opinion fostered the participants' capability to make use of self-reflection and relationality;

- the building of a favorable atmosphere for collaboration ensured the exposure of the strongest and most interesting ideas.

The use of Focus Groups in the analysis of public-private models was fundamental to point out the tourist potentialities of existing natural and cultural assets, and to highlight the management and promotion procedures of those resources in relation to the tools and strategies employed by public and private entities.

First of all, the Focus Groups enabled private and public bodies interested in tourist promotion to connect with each other and establish an effective exchange of information, competences and good practices.

Moreover, the Focus Groups led to the elaboration and sharing of ideas, solutions and suggestions to design focused and innovative actions, by highlighting the most useful indications to improve the local and cross-border governance, the cross-border cooperation and the tourist offer. In particular, the exchange between partners encouraged the design of an operative structure of cross-border cooperation which should promote – on the one hand – the widest involvement of entities and individuals, and – on the other – the decision-making capability necessary to develop sectorial policies. This last element found its translation in the building of the Open Tourism Board as the landing point of the cooperation model envisaged by the project.

3. The cross-border path

Eight Round Tables were organized in order to collect at cross-border level the reflections over the indications that emerged locally during the Focus Groups concerning the development of a cross-border model for cooperation in the field of tourist information and reception.

Round Tables are meetings organized at cross-border level that aim to develop and share new perspectives and models for tourist promotion.

In particular, thanks to these meetings, the situation of public and private entities interested in tourist promotion was brought to the fore, and an effective exchange of information, competences and good practices was implemented.

Moreover, the Round Tables fostered the elaboration of ideas, solutions and suggestions to design focused and innovative actions in order to contribute to the empowerment of the local and cross-border governance, the cross-border cooperation and the tourist offer.

The final output of these meeting is represented by the design of the Open Tourism Cross-Border Model (see "D.T1.2.2 – Open Tourism Cross-Border Model Statue and Settlement"), which included – on the one hand – indications to empower the national and local governance, and – on the other – practical tools and strategies to improve the tourist offer.

Below, the Round Tables carried out with specific indication of: object of the meeting, date and place/modality of realization. In contrast with what the Application Form envisaged – that is the organization of 4 Round Tables, 2 of whom in presence and 2 online –, 8 meetings were held, 1 of whom in presence and 7 online. This was due to the burst of COVID-19 pandemic between February and March 2020, which obliged project partners to hold the Round Tables online. However, even if many meetings were not organized in presence, it is also true that the digital mode allowed project partners to hold more Round Tables than the Application Form initially foresaw.

Round Table	Date and place
1 – SWOT Analysis of the local tourist promotion	13/06/2019 – Tirana
2 – Exchange of reflections and indications emerged during the first Focus Groups over the topic of tourist information and welcome services	22/11/2019 – Skype
3 – Discussion about the state-of-play of Focus Groups: main content and future perspectives	08/04/2020 – Skype
4 – Open Tourism Cross-Border Model: the development of the products and of the Open Tourism Circuit	24/04/2020 – Skype
5 – Open Tourism Cross-Border Model: Focus Groups, territorial reports and operative proposals	29/05/2020 – Skype
6 – Open Tourism Cross-Border Model (OT Board)	31/07/2020 – Skype
7 – Open Tourism Cross-Border Model (OT Board)	25/09/2020 – Skype
8 – Open Tourism Cross-Border Model (OT Board)	23/12/2020 – Skype

During the Round Tables, project partners agreed on the necessity to realize and implement a series of tools and products in order to facilitate the creation of a cross-border Circuit for the promotion of tourist information and reception.

Among these:

- A joint brand that has to be exhibited in the information and welcome centers as to make the places where the tourist can find information and suggestions easily identifiable. The brand will have to be complemented by an efficient marketing strategy relying on: brochures

and leaflets, communication and dissemination activities through newspapers, radio, tv, websites, social networks and participation to events;

- Maps that emphasize territorial excellence – both in the local language and in English – and that suggest thematic itineraries to local and foreign visitors;

- Promotional videos of the territories – both in the local language and in English – containing images and captions that illustrate local peculiarities: through sliding photos, indeed, tourists can discover unknown places and implicitly obtain suggestions about new attractions and destinations;

- A WebApp collecting maps and information sheets about the attractions and the services explicitly devoted to tourists (museums, parks, hotels, restaurants, places of interest, information and welcome offices, etc.), indications about info points, events and suggested itineraries – all of these both in the local language and in English.

Round Tables shed light on a series of common challenges for the cooperation area that will guide the design of the Open Tourism Cross-Border Model in terms of: practical strategies to be developed jointly in order to improve the tourist offer (innovative products and services); tools to implement these strategies; governance models (at local and cross-border level) for the management of the strategies and tools identified.

The main contents of the Round Tables – which reflect and delve into the issues that emerged during the Focus Groups – are listed below.

CONSIDERED the identification need comes from the territories

4. Union of Municipalities Terre del Mare e del Sole: key elements

In the territory, the lack of a more structured and long-lasting tourist offer was pointed out: in recent years, public bodies have only delegated the task of managing local attractions and organizing the activities connected to marketing and holiday experience to local Associations. Nonetheless, these Associations have complained about the lack of moments of confrontation leading to a clear and shared strategy with both the administrations and other economic operators. Communication between the municipalities belonging to this vast territory is unfruitful too: each territorial reality pursues different tourist policies, often in competition with each other. Moreover, the meetings highlighted a lack of accessibility for the majority of the attractions: either they are not available or, if they are accessible, there is no certainty of the times at which public visits are allowed. The same thing can be said with regard to the information and welcome services, whose management is often entrusted to volunteers without an adequate selection of the operators.

On the other hand, it was reminded that the tourist usually chooses these places according to the long wave of regional promotional policies (e.g. Pugliapromozione) and, above all, because it is situated between two most publicized territories (Salento and Matera), or for the fame of local products and landscapes. In order to overcome stagnation and excessive fragmentation, many economic operators have built autonomous networks of collaboration with the Associations of the territory and with private entrepreneurs as well. Furthermore, the Associations have learned to structure diverse experiential packages for the different types of user, organizing a series of guided tours along urban and rural routes, which often end with tasting sessions at mills or local wineries, in an appreciated correspondence between food and wine and the beauties of the territory. The most widely used information channels are mainly social networks and websites, since they allow operators to constantly reach potential users at a very low cost. In order to dematerialize as much as possible, applications to be downloaded on the visitors' smartphone are being studied. Finally, free English courses for both adults and commercial operators have been organized as to qualify the tourist information service.

As a consequence, the Focus Groups identified the necessity of a more integrated collaboration and coordination between the public and the private world in local tourism policies, the need for new promotional materials (routes, maps, videos of the territory) and digital marketing (sites, social, apps, etc.), and for the improvement of the skills of reception operators.

5.   Union of Municipalities Sorgenti del Biferno: key elements

Regarding the issues of tourist information and reception, the state of the art of good practices – with its strengths and weaknesses – was noted, and the needs and suggestions to design the Open Tourism Cross-Border Model were taken into account.

Key findings are in line with those of the Union of Municipalities "lands of sea and sun". Indeed, the main weaknesses result from the lack of coordination between public and private sectors – and among private bodies as well – both in the management of territorial attractions and in the organization of the activities connected with the holiday experience. Tourists often struggle to access places of interest due to unclear or absent indication of opening times. Even IAT offices and information centers do not observe regular hours, and the management of these places is entrusted to Associations called on to provide an essential service despite many logistical difficulties and resource shortages. For the drafting, development and printing of promotional material, public administrations face the economic difficulties dictated by budgets. In some cases, there is a lack of brochures, guides and any other particular paper or digital support useful for advertising places and services.

These municipalities too are often "indirect" tourist destinations, since they are located in proximity to more known and promoted territories for their local productions, eno-gastronomy and landscapes. An increasing tendency of local economic operators – including private entrepreneurs – to create solid and long-lasting networks in order to cooperate with local Associations was also noted. Coordinated Associations and hospitality and catering facility operators are engaged in actions to sensitize the whole community with respect to this type of enterprise.

From these observations, the participants pointed out the need for a network of tourist operators acting in a stronger synergy and the necessity that these operators are adequately trained for tourist reception.

6.   Municipality of Cetinje: key elements

When it comes to the Municipality of Cetinje, the Focus Groups highlighted the poor valorization of cultural and natural resources despite their potential and the lack of efficient tools for the promotion of less-known destinations. Moreover, local stakeholders are scarcely involved in the activities related to tourist promotion and only few of them actively cooperate with public bodies and private operators. Participants also pointed out the poor quality of promotional campaigns as

well as the lack of touristic signage and directions that properly address to the towns' main attractions.

In order to overcome these challenges, it is fundamental to develop a public-private network capable of promoting joint tourism policies and to design and implement innovative products and services, as to emphasize local uniqueness and attractiveness. In particular, the development of a database for the collection of useful information about the most visited places and the elaboration of joint tourist offers are especially sought.

7. Municipality of Fier: key elements

During the Focus Groups, the participants underlined the fact that Fier tourism destinations are not well-known in the country as well as to foreign travelers. This is probably due not only to the scarcity of tourist infrastructures, but also to the lack of a mentality addressed towards the reception of tourists and the promotion of natural and cultural assets of the territory. For these reasons, three itineraries were designed during the meetings: if adequately publicized, these routes may represent a first step to the development of the abovementioned tourist mentality.

Finally, few useful actions were identified in order to support project realization, namely: the delivery of a monthly digital magazine, the presentation of the itineraries elaborated during the Focus Groups, the organization of joint online conferences with tourism stakeholders, the development of sensibilization campaigns to raise public awareness on Fier's main assets and destinations in order to build support on future Open Tourism interventions in the region.

SAW the the common cross-border issues

8. More and better dialogue between public and private sectors in tourist policies

One of the main weaknesses discussed during the meetings is the lack of structured dialogue and collaboration between public and private operators in the management of tourist policies, which would promote the creation of synergies and networks and stimulate the development of a more suitable tourist offer.

Furthermore, there is a clear necessity to: (i) update the lists of tourist and commercial operators; (ii) promote the development of structured relations between these operators and the local administration; (iii) organize public campaigns and events aiming at raising the operators' awareness on the tourist potentialities offered by the territory.

These elements represent the groundwork of the Open Tourism Circuit, based on a widespread network of info points – that will eventually turn into real information and welcome offices – and many other local tourist or commercial entities that will provide reception, information and orientation to visitors.

This will foster the development of better relations and mutual trust between private operators and the local administration, and it will contribute to local development and to the empowerment of a coherent, integrated and efficient territorial system.

9. More and better collaboration between private operators in marketing activities

The participants also pointed out the poor collaboration between private operators. This is the case, for instance, of B&Bs that, nowadays, are the major territorial structures specialized in the reception of tourists. Only few of them decided to create structured and long-lasting collaborations and synergies to improve the tourist offer. Many others are still afraid of losing their autonomy or of finding themselves in an unfavorable economic condition.

As a consequence, it is desirable to widen these networks by encouraging B&Bs to jointly take action in order for them to be able to better deal with the competition coming from other territories.

Moreover, it seems necessary to suggest the creation of associations bringing together reception structures and/or local private operators, as to develop territorial strategies and a joint brand that

will make them easily identifiable. This would benefit both tourist operators and visitors, and Open Tourism would represent the perfect starting point for this process.

10. Simplify the acquisition of information in the territory

The information about local tourist activities is extremely hard to find, since there is not a specific center devoted to tourism. In the cooperation area, there are few information points – both public and private – that are available only at certain hours, leaving the visitors without a reference point for most of the day. This is the case of "eat and go tourists" that stay only a few hours or days and risk having no chance of getting the information they need when they need it.

From this point of view, Open Tourism – which promotes collaboration between the information points that take part in its Circuit – represents a permanent, regular and efficient reception service that never leaves the tourist alone and allows him to get the information he needs at any time.

Besides the compliance with the timetable indicated, the widespread network of information points belonging to the Open Tourism Circuit will dispose of a sufficient supply of paper material. This material will provide in a concise, correct and comprehensible way – both in the local language and in English – the most interesting and relevant information (phone or instant messaging numbers, or email addresses to inquire, request availability and book).

11. Simplify the acquisition of information online

The use of internet and social networks to promote local attractions and offer tourist services to visitors is still scarcely common in the project partner territories.

This appears particularly troublesome nowadays, when most of the information is conveyed through websites and social networks, which are free and direct tools able to reach many users.

For this reason, it would be highly useful to invest more in the "virtual" promotion of territories. In this sense, the Open Tourism WebApp – whose production is currently in progress – would be the perfect tool to deal with this challenge. The App will be addressed both to tourist operators – who will introduce and publicize their offers – and to visitors, who will be able to better organize their holidays.

The WebApp will contain all the relevant information concerning useful and essential services (addresses and opening hours), the mapping of places of interest (with the opening hours and

references of those who may carry out the visit service), but also suggestions for organized routes, lists of visiting experiences or experiential workshops, supplemented with short explanatory videos.

There is also an additional potential: to obtain data regarding the flows and tastes of visitors – which can then be analyzed –, to evaluate the results of the season and to plan for the next one by optimizing any inconvenience. Given the complexity of such a digital tool, the App will be linked to a more structured website.

12. Develop coordination at local and cross-border level

Open Tourism governance is developed at cross-border level through the creation of a specific coordination area called Open Tourism Board, and at local level through the dynamic evolution of Open Tourism Local Committees activated by local Focus Groups.

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│   Union of       │     │ Consortium       │     │   Union of       │
│ Municipalities   │     │ Protected        │     │ Municipalities   │
│ "land of sea     │     │ Marine Area of   │     │ of Biferno       │
│ and sun"         │     │ Porto Cesareo    │     │ springs          │
│   LOCAL          │     │   LOCAL          │     │   LOCAL          │
│ COMMITTEE        │     │ COMMITTEE        │     │ COMMITTEE        │
└──────────────────┘     └──────────────────┘     └──────────────────┘

              ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │    OPEN TOURISM          │
              │    BOARD                 │
              └──────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐
│   Cetinje        │     │   Cedir          │     │   Fier           │
│   LOCAL          │     │   LOCAL          │     │   LOCAL          │
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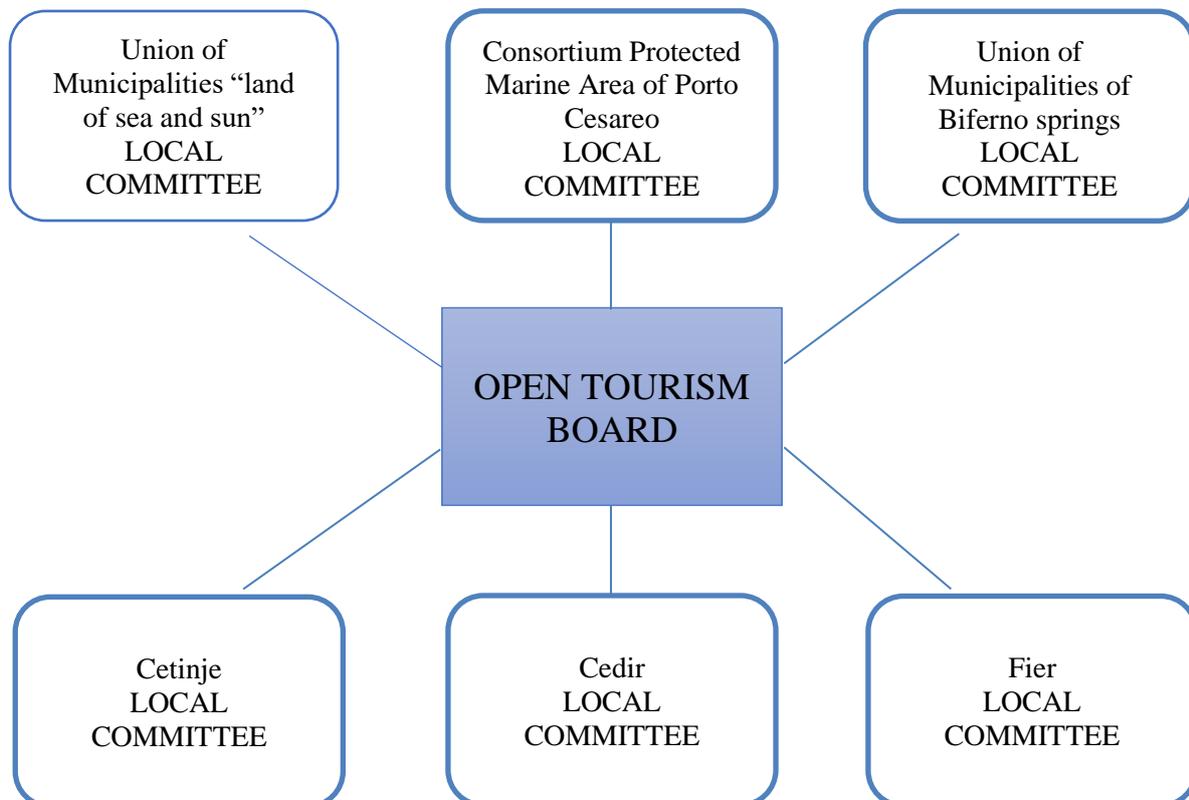
ARTICLES of the Statue and Settlement

CHAPTER I – GENERAL PROVISIONS

Art. 1: The Object

1. The public and private bodies partners of the Open Tourism project (Interreg Ipa-Cbc Italy-Albania-Montenegro Programme, First Call For Standard Projects, I Ord.189 - Open Tourism) constitute and regulate the functioning of the Open Tourism Service (hereinafter OT Service).

2. This Statute and Settlement is open to subsequent accessions by other public and private bodies and to changes and additions according to the needs that may actually arise over time.

3. The OT Service is reserved for public and private bodies active in the cooperation area envisaged by the Interreg CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro program.

4. The public and private entities that are partners of Open Tourism undertake to guarantee the sustainability of the objectives and give continuity to the Open Tourism Service even after the conclusion of the project financed by the Interreg Ipa-Cbc Italy-Albania-Montenegro program (First Call for Projects Standard, 1 ^ Ord 189 - Open Tourism - Cup E79c18000030005)

Art. 2: The Purpose

1. The OT Service is a new information and welcome service for tourists animated by a network of public and private territorial operators that make up the Open Toursim Circuit (hereinafter OT Circuit).

2. The OT Circuit is open to the touristic, cultural, environmental and economic operators of the territories member of the OT Service committed to enhancing the natural and cultural beauties of the area.

3. Each operator member of the OT Circuit activates an information and welcome points and – becoming a sort of Open Tourism Ambassadors – is able to provide timely and punctual information on the opportunities of the territories belonging to the Circuit.

4. The OT Circuit offers a new vision of the tourist, who sees him more and more as a temporary citizen of our communities, looking for experiences to live and relationships to build. The OT Circuit also offers new communication, training and promotion tools, increasingly digital and interactive, contained in the Open Tourism Kit, the Open Tourism APP and the Open Tourism Site that the project makes available to the territories and operators who want to join. to the Circuit.

Art. 3: The Objectives

1. Open Tourism aims at offering innovative services in order to: create a more comfortable and welcoming territory for local and foreign tourists; set up public-private synergies and territorial networks able to provide adequate information and orientation; help commercial activities to support visitors. The project objective is to bring out, make known, promote and publicize the territory and its major tourist attractions by strengthening the activities of information, reception and orientation that the territorial system as a whole offer to visitors.

2. Open Tourism attempts to improve the attractivity and welcoming capability of the territory, through the creation and the enlargement of a widespread network of info points located in tourist offices, commercial activities and other key places that usually mark the visitors' travel experience (museums, cultural centres, youth centres, restaurants, hotels, bars, newsagents, gas stations and other places that tourist usually visit). Open Tourism network of info points can represent both the focal point of an integrated system for tourism promotion and the opportunity to strengthen the operators' ability to meet the visitors' needs (for example, by offering training devoted to increasing the operators' knowledge of the territory they represent, or specific lectures to improve their knowledge of foreign languages and digital tools).

Art. 4: The Funds

1. In the starting phase, joining the Open Tourism Circuit is completely free because the OT Service is realized with the fund of thee Open Tourism project coordinated by the Union of Municipalities Terre del Mare e del Sole (Italy) and funded by the Interreg IPA CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro program.

2. After the end of the Open Tourism project, the Open Tourism Board defined in art. XX could decide to introduce revenues strategy such as:

    a. Public funds (European, national, regional, local):

b. Other donations from members;

c. Donations from all types of persons and Institutions;

d. Membership fees;

3. The funds collected may only be used for the purposes provided for in these Statutes.

CHAPTER II – MEMBERS

Art. 5: The Institutional Member

1. Public bodies and private organization could be Institutional Member of the OT Service.

2. The public and private bodies partners of the Open Tourism project are founders of the OT Service. They are: Union of Municipalities Terre del Mare e del Sole (Italy), Union of Municipalities Sorgenti del Biferno (Italy), Area Marina Protetta Porto Cesareo (Italy), Municipality of Cetinje (Montenegro), Municipality of Fier (Albania), CEDIR (Albania).

3. In the starting phase, the Open Tourism Service concerns the 18 Italian, Montenegrin and Albanian municipalities belonging to the partner institutions of the project, in particular:

- Union of Municipalities Terre del Mare e del Sole: Avetrana, Fragagnano, Leporano, Lizzano, Maruggio, Pulsano, Torricella.

- Union of Municipalities Sorgenti del Biferno: Bojano, San Massimo, Spinete, Campochiaro, Colle d'Anchise, Guardiaregia e San Polo Matese.

- Area Marina Protetta Porto Cesareo: Comuni di Porto Cesareo, Nardò e la Provincia di Lecce

- Municipality of Cetinje (Montenegro).

- Municipality of Fier (Albania).

4. The OT Service is opened to other public and private bodies of the cooperation area envisaged by the Interreg CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro program.

5. The application for adhesion of new public and private bodies to the services and commitments governed by this agreement must be submitted to the Open Tourism Board defined in Chapter III.

6. The new adhering bodies undertake to respect the rules set out in this Statute.

Art. 6: The Operative Member

1. Public and private operators could be Operative Member of the OT Service.

2. Public and private operators who refer to the founding bodies of OT Service can join the OT Circuit.

3. Can be join to the OT Circuit: Cultural operators (e.g. Museums, Cultural centers, Places of attraction, ...), Environmental operators (e.g.: Protected areas, Parks, Green spaces, ...), Commercial and welcome operators (for example: Shops, Pharmacies, Restaurants, Bars, B & Bs, Hotels, ...), Tour and touristic operators (e.g.: Iat, public bodies, associations, volunteers, ...).

4. Membership of the Circuit can take place in the following ways: 1) by filling out the membership form for the Circuit; 2) by participating in the OT Workshops.

5. The OT Circuit is opened to other public and private operators resident in the territories of the public bodies adhering to the OT Service.

7. The application for adhesion of new public and private bodies to the services and commitments governed by this agreement must be submitted to the Open Tourism Board defined in Chapter III.

6. The new adhering bodies undertake to respect the rules set out in this Statute.

Art. 7: The Rights and Duties of the Members

1. The public and private bodies adhering to the OT Service must promote the aims and purposes set out in this statute.

2. The public and private operators adhering to the OT Circuit undertake to:

   a) Use the materials that will be provided

   b) Provide information to tourists

   c) Participate in the proposed activities

   d) Promote open, sustainable and safe tourism

3. All the Members of the OT Service and Circuit are required to respect these Statutes and the decisions taken by the organs under these Statutes.

CHAPTER III – GOVERNING BODIES OF THE OPEN TOURISM SERVICE

Art. 8: Organs of the governance

1. The OT Service is managed by the following bodies: the Open Tourism Board (hereinafter referred to as the "OT Board"), the Open Tourism Open Tourism Local Committees (hereinafter referred to as the "OT Local Committees").

2. The OT Board is the decision-making body of the Open Tourism network founded by the partners of the project itself. The Board manages the functions of guidance, strategic coordination and control of the cross-border cooperation processes concerning the issues related to tourist information and reception.

3. The OT Local Committees: initially set up in the territories involved in the project and eventually enlarged to all the territories that will decide to join the Open Tourism Circuit, they are designed to encourage the coordination of common actions, synergies and tourism promotion activities directly in the territories involved.

Art. 9: The Open Tourism Board: principles

1. Open Tourism Board (hereinafter OT Board) is the decision-making body of the Open Tourism Service.

2. OT Board is composed of one representative for each project partner. The Open Tourism Board is initially composed of one representative from each project partner founder, namely:

   - Union of Municipalities Terre del Mare e del Sole (Italy)
   - Union of Municipalities Sorgenti del Biferno (Italy)
   - Consortium Protected Marine Area of Porto Cesareo (Italy)
   - Municipality of Fier
   - Municipality of Cetinje
   - CEDIR

3. In the starting phase, the coordinator of the OT Board is the Union of Municipalities Terre del Mare e del Sole as Lead Partner of the Open Tourism project.

4. Each territory that becomes an Institutional Member has the right to appoint its own representative within the OT Board.

5. In the starting phase, the coordinator of the OT Board is the Union of Municipalities Terre del Mare e del Sole as Lead Partner of the Open Tourism project.

6. The OT Board is aimed at: (i) the promotion of the Open Tourism brand as the engine of processes and actions devoted to tourism promotion; (ii) the exchange of good practices among stakeholders in order to encourage the development of synergies and collaborations; (iii) the planning of tourism policies, namely aimed at the activation of experimental projects in the sector; (iv) the implementation of effective communication actions in order to boost the dissemination of the results obtained.

Art. 10: The Open Tourism Board: operating rules

1. The coordinator of the Open Tourism Board convenes and manages the meetings of the Board.

2. The OT Board takes its decisions by a majority of its members.

3. The OT Board is also supported by technicians operating in the organizations involved in order to draft the dossiers that will be agreed and implemented during the meetings. To this end, the technicians will activate remote working processes aimed at the exchange of information, knowledge, skills and practices concerning the cross-border network, such as, for instance: new products and common services; the integrations of new territories in the network; the identification of new contents and common challenges for the cooperation area.

4. The technicians will then draw up contents and proposals that will be analyzed during the meetings of the Board, which will subsequently make the necessary decisions.

5. During the first meeting of the OT Board, the following elements will be discussed, integrated and shared: (i) the objectives and functions of the Board; (ii) the composition of the Board; (iii), the distribution of roles; (iv) the operating procedures.

6. At the end of the project, the OT Board will be convened normally twice a year.

Art. 11: The Open Tourism Local Committee: principles

1. The OT Local Committees are set up in the single territories member of the OT Service in order to encourage the coordination of common actions and synergies among territorial initiatives, the development of tools and pilot projects to support the processes of tourist information and reception and the implementation of actions for tourism promotion.

1. Each Institutional Member of the OT Service promotes moments of confrontation and work at local level between public e private bodies.

2. Representatives of the organizations which took part in the Focus Group meetings are invited first. Representatives of other local territorial organizations interested in the issue of tourist information and reception may also be invited.

Art. 12: The Open Tourism Local Committee: operating rules

1. Each founding territory of the OT Service activates a Local OT Committee.

2. A representative of the Institutional member of the OT Service coordinates the Local OT Committee.

3. Each other OT Local Committees sets up in the cooperation area (Italy-Albania-Montenegro) is coordinated by the entity that applies for activation.

4. The way each OT Local Committee operates is defined in relation to its specific conditions and purposes.

5. The OT Local Committees are convened at least twice a year in order to coincide with the convocation of the Open Tourism Board.

Chapter IV – THE TOOLS OF THE OPEN TOURISM SERVICE

Art. 13: The tools for the operators

1. The Operative Members of OT Circuit receive information, promotion, training and marketing services developed by the project.

2. They receive the OT Promotional Kit containing: Maps and itineraries of the territories involved in the Circuit; Promotional videos of the territories involved in the Circuit; USB pen drive; Sticker to be applied on your window; Purchase of gadgets; promotional brochures of the territories

3. They receive OT Marketing tools to promote their business: their logo; brand, logo, social network, marketing strategy.

4. They participate to the OT Workshop and have operational information on: Funding opportunities; New markets; New ways of relating to tourists; Safe management of tourists; Sustainability.

5. They participate in the OT Innovation actions and get information on: New requests from tourists; New proposals and new ideas; How to improve your services; How to improve your image; Marketing and communication actions (site, app and social channels Open Tourism).

Art. 14: The Open Tourism APP and Platform

1. The OT APP and OT Platform disseminate information on the territories on the web and promote them digitally. The information contained in the OT App and in the OT Platform concerns the natural and cultural heritage, tourist information points, territorial characteristics, tourist itineraries and more.

2. The APP and the OT Platform have been designed, tested, shared and validated and can be continuously fed over time with the insertion of further information.

3. The characteristics of the OT Platform and the OT APP were defined with the help of experts and through joint discussions, benchmarking and formulation of strategic and operational plans and active and continuous collaboration and consultation with all interested parties' stakeholders.

4. The Operative Member can promote their business on the OT APP uploading: their logo; photos of their business; Opening time; Description of their business; Geo-referencing of their business.

Art. 15: The Open Tourism Brand

1. A specific OT Brand and a dedicated marketing strategy are developed to promote the OT Service and the Circuit making them stronger and more identifiable.

2. The OT Brand is linked to specific themes or cultural / natural assets, thus enhancing the resources present in the area.

3. The OT Brand confirm the name of the project (Open Tourism) as Brand of the Service and the Circuit, changing only the part linked to the graphic image, to remind the relation with the OT project.

4. Each Institutional and Operative Members has to promote the brand at local, regional, national and transnational level, through social networks, in marketing campaigns, in presentations at events and tourist fairs, to promote collaborations with tour operators, etc. …

Chapter V – COMMON CHALLEGES

Art. 16: Enlargement of the Circuit

1. The governance model was designed to meet the project partners' necessity to increase the attractivity of their territories and to guarantee a greater capability for the information and reception services to address the needs of tourists.

2. Since this model is easily applicable also to other territories that were not included initially in the Open Tourism project, the first objective is to extend the network to other territorial systems.

3. Indeed, the more widespread information points that are set up in the different territories, the greater the effectiveness of a model that aims precisely at encouraging the development of synergies among entities in order to welcome visitors and offer them comprehensive tourist packages.

4. To this end, marketing operations – as well as communication activities related to the project and the results that the application of the two-level governance will produce in the partner territories – are indispensable.

Art. 17: Digital promotion of the Circuit

1. The impact of digital tools in the capability of information points to properly welcome and inform tourists about the opportunities offered by the territory has been repeatedly emphasized.

2. If at first the creation of maps and brochures containing suggested itineraries and places of interest will allow an initial improvement of the tourist reception services, it is also true that the development of the Open Tourism WebApp will mark the turning point of the project.

3. The strengthening of the digital strategy clearly depends on the implementation of this digital application accessible to anyone for free.

4. The Open Tourism WebApp must become a sort of pocket-sized, geo-referenced, info points to be consulted at any time to find suggested itineraries, to check the availability of seats in a restaurant, to book a B&B, or even to get indications on the commercial activities of the area where you can buy typical products.

Art. 18: Exploitation of funding

1. The end of the 2014-2020 programming was characterized by the burst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely hit the tourist sector in Europe causing a significant reduction in revenue that, according to the European Commission, is estimated to reach 85% compared to the previous year.

2. However, the crisis has paved the way for a series of investments to revitalize – among others – the tourism sector, with particular emphasis on funds coming from the 2021-2027 programming period and those related to the Next Generation EU.

3. It is therefore essential for the project partners to get ready in the best possible way to exploit and take advantage of the considerable resources that in following months will be allocated among European partner countries, in order to keep investing in tourism promotion and in the enlargement of the Open Tourism network.

Art. 19: Investing in operators' skills

1. The participatory process set up at local and cross-border level strongly emphasized the lack of preparation of tourist operators, especially in the case of information centers workers, who are often not specifically trained for their role of link between the territory and visitors.

2. For this reason, it is recommended to invest more in the training of tourist operators, namely as regards the knowledge of cultural, environmental and eno-gastronimic resources of the cooperation area.

3. In addition, in order to encourage foreign tourists to visit these territories, it is essential for tourist operators to learn at least a second language among those related to the countries of origin of the majority of visitors.

4. In general, the operator must be motivated, prepared qualified and must know how to relate to visitors: it is not only a question of knowledge, but also of communication skills and love for one's own territory.

Art. 20: Investing in operators' digital skills

1. Digital tools for the promotion of tourist offer are not well exploited also because both public bodies and private operators generally have limited knowledge of the new technologies and of their functioning. As a consequence, they tend to underestimate the opportunities that these instruments can offer.

2. This deficiency has a negative impact on both demand and supply: on the one hand, potential visitors – especially foreign ones, but not exclusively – find it difficult to obtain information about the opportunities offered by the territory, whose attractiveness is inevitable reduced; on the other hand, operators are not only unable to help them, but they can't even exploit the internet to publicize their own offer, which could also be combined with packages elaborated by other local entities thanks to these tools.

3. It is, therefore, necessary to invest in the improvement of the digital skills of public and private operators. This investment should be aimed at increasing their knowledge of the internet and of social networks, with a particular focus on the opportunities that these instruments can provide them in promoting their activities.

Art. 21: Enhancing the potential of the territory

1. The abovementioned participatory process set up at local and cross-border level also revealed a lack of awareness of the potential of the cooperation area not directly linked to tourism, which could – on the one hand – extend the period of stay of tourists, and – on the other – give rise to new types of tourist flows. This is probably due to the fact that this potential has never been adequately estimated and exploited.

2. For instance, traditional culinary products should be better promoted and known by local operators in order, not only to encourage visitors to spend more time in the area, but also to

create a real eno-gastronomic tourism based on suggested itineraries combining local beauty and culinary delights.

Art. 22: Developing tools for the assessment of tourists' demands

1. Tourists' needs – as well as their preferences – are constantly evolving. It is therefore necessary to keep updated with visitors' desires and to keep track of these wishes through specific tools designed to monitor the sales performance.

2. Thanks to this mapping activity it will be possible to identify and submit to visitors preferential tourist itineraries.

Art. 23: Qualifying the relationship with the tourist

1. Finally, the sustainable development and promotion of a territory requires awareness of its value and values. This process must involve all local actors first (citizens, economic operators, institutions, etc.) and then tourists.

2. As a matter of fact, the tourist's experience of a territory is highly influenced by the type of welcoming he receives: it is the people that the visitor comes into contact with who help him understand the territory – in terms of potential, knowledge and wealth – and who support him in its search for a personal travel experience.

3. The territory must therefore know how to support and involve the tourist, thus providing an additional service: information and involvement. At the same time, this relationship allows the tourist to get to know and respect the place he visits in the best possible way, to become a "temporary citizen" and to consider other non-primary tourist opportunities that the area offers.

CHAPTER VI – FINAL PROVISIONS

Art. 24: Dissolution Of The Open Tourism Service

1. The dissolution of the Open Tourism Service and Circuit may only be decided by an extraordinary OT Board by a two-thirds majority of the Institutional Members present.

2. An invitation to this extraordinary OT Board shall be extended to each member at least 21 days before the date of the meeting.

3. This extraordinary OT Board must have been organized specifically for the purpose of dissolving the Open Tourism Service. This purpose must be indicated in the invitation.

Art. 25: Amendments To The Statutes Of The Open Tourism Service

1. Amendments to the Statue and Settlement require a two-thirds majority of the Institutional Members present or represented at the OT Board.

2. Requests to amend the Articles must be submitted to the Institutional Members present or represented at the OT Board at least two weeks before.

ANNEXES – THE WORK TOOLS

I – Technical issue

Identification of potential stakeholders

Each project partner involved in these Focus Groups has identified potential stakeholders (public and private). To do so, they had to take advantage of local databases containing a full list of public and private bodies that operated in the tourist sector and, in particular, in the promotion of natural and cultural heritage.

From an operational point of view, the potential stakeholders had to fill in a Stakeholder Form (see Tool 1) if they represented: public entities; local development agencies; local tourist organizations; museums; public, private or no profit stakeholders operating in the tourist, naturalistic or cultural sectors; associations; local tourist operators; etc.

The selection and invitation of participants. In order to organize the Focus Groups, each partner selected the participant. First of all, they identified the potential stakeholders that could meet the abovementioned requirements by exploiting the information points available in the territories, such as local authorities' database or project forms.

After ensuring the availability of all participants to Focus Groups – which was sometimes even agreed with the public administrative bodies (the Mayor, the Assessor or any other public official) – , the project partners sent an official invitation letter to the participants containing all the technical specifications (project references, objective of the meeting, date and place of the meeting, etc.).

A few days before the Focus Groups was held, the project partners verified once again the availability of the stakeholders they had identified and they collected the confirmation of participation.

Logistic and preparation of the premise. In order to efficiently carry out the Focus Groups, the project partners verified the conditions and the characteristics of the premises in which the meetings had to be held. It was important to keep in mind that the participants had to sit in circle and to be able to write.

Moreover, before the meeting, the organizers had to make sure that the room was adequately equipped to carry out the Focus Groups, or that it had at least: Enough chairs for all the participants to sit in circle; A flipchart; A PC to project slides; A specific space for the Assistant to record the answers of the participants.

Focus Groups were initially carried out in presence. Nonetheless, after the burst of COVID-19 pandemic, the meetings had to be held online, which required the arrangement of laboratories equipped with all the necessary tools (PC, internet connection, etc.).

Preparation of the material

The participants were provided with the following material: A form with specific questions for the participants (see Tool 1); Few pens for the participants to fill in the survey; Other material (leaflets, local material, etc.); Slides with information concerning the topic of the meeting.

The participative process

The management of Focus Groups is assigned to the Facilitator, a specific figure with significant experience in the field of social research and, in particular, in the promotion of participative processes, who conducted the entire research phase with the support of the Assistant. Both the Facilitator and the Assistant used the work schedule in order to collect the participants' signatures, to draft the meeting reports and to elaborate the Territorial Reports by incorporating the results of the Focus Groups.

The output of each Focus Group was a Report containing: the information that emerged from the answers given by the participants during the meetings, the suggestions pointed out during the debate and the strategical recommendations to be shared with the project partner territories in order to design and develop the Open Tourism Cross-Border Model. Furthermore, the Facilitator also drafted an analysis report for each Focus Group as to share with participants and territories anything that emerged from the meetings.

Timetable of the Local Activity

	Activity	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
1	Distribute the Grid for Stakeholder	██				
2	Fill in the Grid for Stakeholder	██				
3	Send the database Stakeholder to the Content expert	██				
4	Selection to the participants to the Focus Group		██			
5	Organization and Implementation of the I Focus Group		██			
6	Send Minutes of the Focus Group to the Content expert		██			
7	Organization and Implementation of the II Focus Group			██		
8	Send Minutes of the Focus Group to the Content expert			██		
9	Organization and Implementation of the III Focus Group				██	
10	Send Minutes of the Focus Group to the Content expert				██	
11	Organization and Implementation of the IV Focus Group					██
12	Send Minutes of the Focus Group to the Content expert					██
13	Elaborate/send the Local Report to the Content expert					██
14	Presentation of the Local Report during II SCOM					██

II – Stakeholder selection form

Stakeholder n. _____	
Organization Name	
Type of organization	| __ | Public Body | __ | NGO | __ | Private
Legal Representative First name and Last name	
Legal Representative Email	
Legal Representative Telephone	
Contact Person First name and Last name	
Contact Person Email	
Contact Person Telephone	
Which are the organization's thematic competences and experiences/projects relevant for the Open Tourism project?	

III – Agenda for the Focus Group Meetings

General Information

- Each Focus Group meeting lasted indicatively 2 hours;

- About 20 people participated in each Focus Group meeting;

- Each Focus Group meeting was managed by a Facilitator/expert in group management.

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1. Agenda Focus Group Meeting n. 1 – Presentation of the project and participants	
Period	July 2019
Themes	• Presentation of participants • Presentation of Open Tourism project financed by the European Program • First exchange of information on the OPEN TOURISM topic • Delivery and presentation of the good practice survey form
Notes	It is necessary to take minutes of the meeting (also in a synthetic way)

2. Agenda Focus Group Meeting n. 2 – Presentation good practice	
Period	August 2019

Themes	• Presentation of characteristics of the Open Tourism good practice
	• Participants are asked two questions:
	  − Which are the strengths of the Open Tourism good practice?
	  − Which are the weaknesses of the Open Tourism good practice?

Notes	It is necessary to take minutes of the meeting (also in a synthetic way)

3. Agenda Focus Group Meeting n. 3 – Sharing and define Open Tourism Policy Recommendations	
Period	August 2019
Themes	• Individuate Open Tourism Policy Recommendations • Sharing Open Tourism Policy Recommendations • Select Open Tourism Policy Recommendations
Notes	It is necessary to take minutes of the meeting (also in a synthetic way)

4. Agenda Focus Group Meeting n. 4 – Approval of the Open Tourism Local Report	
Period	October 2019
Themes	• Drafting of the local Report (elaborated by the partner) • Confrontation on the local good practice described and the policy recommendations • Approval of the Report
Notes	It is necessary to take minutes of the meeting (also in a synthetic way)

IV – Open Tourism good practices form

Title of the Good Practice	
Promoter	• *Name – Type (public body, Ngo, private)*
Partner Involved	• *N. 1 - Name – Type (public body, Ngo, private)* • *N. 2 - Name – Type (public body, Ngo, private)* • *N. 3 - Name – Type (public body, Ngo, private)* • *N. x - Name – Type (public body, Ngo, private)*
Governance of the good practice	*(Please, briefly who and how manages the good practice)*
Period of application from when to when	
Area of belonging	□ Cultural and Sustainable Tourism □ Cultural Tourism □ Sustainable Tourism □ Other (_____)
Level of application	□ Local level □ Regional level □ National level □ Other (_____)
Target	*(Please, briefly describe the target involved)*
Type of action	*(Please, briefly describe the main actions and, if available, qualitative and / or qualitative elements using indicators)*
Reference site	
Documents to be shared	

V – Work programme

Organization	Activities to do
Union of Municipalities "land of sea and sun" (with City Book Foundation)	• Promote n. 1 Focus Group • Involve n. 10 / 20 people in the Focus Group • Organize n. 4 Meetings Focus Group • Draw up n. 4 Minutes (one for each meeting) • Elaborate n. 1 Local Report • Participate in 4 Round Tables (2 skype and 2 in presence)
Union of Municipalities of Biferno springs	• Promote n. 1 Focus Group • Involve n. 10 / 20 people in the Focus Group • Organize n. 4 Meetings Focus Group • Draw up n. 4 Minutes (one for each meeting) • Elaborate n. 1 Local Report • Participate in 4 Round Tables (2 skype and 2 in presence)
Municipality of Fier (with CEDIR)	• Promote n. 1 Focus Group • Involve n. 10 / 20 people in the Focus Group • Organize n. 4 Meetings Focus Group • Draw up n. 4 Minutes (one for each meeting) • Elaborate n. 1 Local Report • Participate in 4 Round Tables (2 skype and 2 in presence)
Municipality of Cetinje	• Promote n. 1 Focus Group • Involve n. 10 / 20 people in the Focus Group • Organize n. 4 Meetings Focus Group • Draw up n. 4 Minutes (one for each meeting) • Elaborate n. 1 Local Report • Participate in 4 Round Tables (2 skype and 2 in presence)
OPEN TOURISM PROJECT	• Promote n. 4 Focus Group • Involve n. 40 / 80 people involved in the Focus Group • Organize n. 4 Meetings Focus Group

	- Draw up n. 16 Minutes (one for each meeting) - Elaborate n. 4 Local Report - Elaborate n. 1 Analysis Report - Implement 4 Round Tables (2 skype and 2 in presence)