Report on

OPEN TOURISM PLUS
Demonstration Project

Index

The Open Tourism Demonstration Project Report has been produced by:

Unione dei Comuni Terre del Mare e del Sole

- Antonio Mezzolla –Open Tourism RUP – Unione dei Comuni Terre del Mare e del Sole
- Aldo Marino – Open Tourism Financial Manager – Unione dei Comuni Terre del Mare e del Sole
- Giovanni Bursi – Open Tourism Project Manager
- Alice Toni – Open Tourism Project Manager Assistant
- Aldo Summa – Open Tourism Territorial animator

Old Royal Capital Cetinje

- Miloš Ivanišević – Open Tourism RUP – Adviser for EU and Other Donor Projects – Municipality of Cetinje

CEDIR

- Florian Bilali – Open Tourism RUP – CEDIR Executive Director

Introduction

The OPEN TOURISM Demonstration Project Report intends to present the method, the path and the actions activated to demonstrate the qualities of the OPEN TOURISM Service (Products, Circuit and governance model), making it more accessible and therefore usable by potential users.

The Report also wants to present the results obtained by the Demonstration Project, describing how it was able to:

- further motivate operators and territories on the goodness and the need to have an innovative and transnational model of tourist information and welcoming;
- increase awareness of the importance of having high-performance, digital and functional information tools for the quality of the tourist offer that interesting territories can offer;
- promote a quality, experiential and integrated offer to increase the tourist flows of the territory.

The Demonstration Project was based on the results obtained from the first phase of Open Tourism. We refer to important results that have allowed us to:

- develop a concrete and effective transnational cooperation model, based on the establishment and implementation of a Board composed of representatives of the interested bodies;
- activate a Circuit of public and private operators, composed of about 200 members, as terminal and territorial points of the widespread information and welcoming model;
- design and equip operators with innovative and digital information tools such as integrated maps, videos, photos, apps, training courses and more;
- adopt a brand (OPEN TOURISM) that represents and constitutes the identity of a new way of doing tourism.

The Report is divided into three parts.

In the first part, the preliminary elements are presented and above all:

- results obtained during the first phase of Open Tourism. Let's start from where we arrived, from what we have built because this is fundamental to design the development of the project Open Tourism Plus.
- the method and processes that have been put in place to carry out the Demonstration Project, focusing above all on the relational aspects and involvement of the Stakeholders.

In the second part, the path achieved and the results obtained with Open Tourism Plus are presented and above all:

- the testing carried out in the field through the direct and active involvement of public and private operators in the territories concerned;
- the evaluation process put in place to validate the model and to collect further elements of strengthening and development of the Open Tourism Service.

Finally, in the last part, called 'Next steps', we want to point out that thanks to the strong participation by three territories involved in the project in the events proposed, the partners (Unione dei Comuni Terre del Mare e del Sole, Municipality of Cetinje and Albanian Municipalities involved by Cedir) have decided to ensure the continuation of the service thanks to the signing of a cooperation agreement between the parties that incorporates the decisions and operating methods to follow up effectively and efficiently the work started.

FIRST PART – METHODOLOGY AND STRATEGY

1. The Open Tourism Service

1.1. Aim & Governance

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) and it was built upon an international partnership composed of the Unione dei Comuni Terre del Mare e del Sole (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), 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 was 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 aimed 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, could improve significantly.

1.2. Actors & Territories

The Open Tourism Circuit sees the involvement of 18 local communities from 3 countries and 5 regions and the participation of about 200 public and private operators. The Circuit has already aroused interest and curiosity in various public and private interlocutors, probably responding to

the need that arose and strengthened by the sad story of Covid-19 to network and aggregate skills to face the difficult challenge of quickly relaunching tourism to restart the territories that depend mainly or exclusively on this type of economy.

The 18 Italian, Montenegrin and Albanian municipalities belonging to the partner institutions of the project are:

- Unione dei Comuni Terre del Mare e del Sole: Avetrana, Fragagnano, Leporano, Lizzano, Maruggio, Pulsano, Torricella.
- Unione Comuni 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).

The Open Tourism Circuit is opened to other entities and territories of Italy, Montenegro and Albania and other public and private operators of:

- Cultural Sector, e.g. Museums, Cultural centers, Places of attraction, …
- Environmental Sector, e.g.: Protected areas, Parks, Green spaces, …
- Commercial and Hospitality Sector, for example: Shops, Pharmacies, Restaurants, Bars, B & Bs, Hotels, …
- Tour operators, e.g.: Iat, public bodies, associations, volunteers, …

1.3. Products & Tools

During the first phase of the project, information and training and communication tools were developed with which to enhance the territorial tourist offer. The operators member of Open Tourism Circuit received information, promotion, capacity-building and marketing services developed by the project and in particular:

1) They received the **OPEN TOURISM 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 the operators' window
   - Purchase of gadgets
   - Promotional brochures of the territories

2) They were able to promote their business on the **OPEN TOURISM APP** by uploading:
   - their logo
   - Photos of their business

- Opening time
- Description of their business
- Geo-referencing of their business

3) They were able to participate in the **OT WORKSHOP** and have operational information on:
   - Funding opportunities
   - New markets
   - New ways of relating to tourists
   - Safe management of tourists
   - Sustainability

4) They could participate in the **OPEN TOURISM MARKETING** 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)

1.4. Engagement strategy

During the first phase of the project, actions of relationship, communication and collaboration were put in place to facilitate the involvement of people interested in the project at all levels.

The path created through the Focus Groups made locally (n. 14) and Round Tables activated across borders (n. 8) made it possible to define the governance structure of the OT Service. a document entitled Statue and Settlement was created in which the operating bodies of the model, the participants, the roles and more were indicated.

The governance model of the Open Tourism Service was launched with the establishment and calling of the three meetings of the Open Tourism Board (05/05/2021; 14/05/2021; 11/06/2021). Then, the Campaign for joining the Open Tourism Circuit has made it possible to create a network of public and private operators in the territories by promoting synergies and collaborations

1.5. At a glance

In summary, if at the end of the first phase, the Open Tourism Service was activated in its entirety with the activation of the *governance* model, the establishment of the Circuit and the provision of products, what was missing – especially due to Covid – was the full appropriation of the model by operators and territories and its diffusion beyond the boundaries of the areas involved in the experimentation. Open Tourism Plus started from here.

2. The Demonstration Project

2.1. Introduction

The Open Tourism Demonstration Project has intended to give value to the contents, tools and relationships created during the first phase of the project. The Project started from a deep action to raise awareness of public and private operators in the territories involved in order to motivate them to participate in the proposed activities and to appropriate the tools made available.

The project pursued three specific objectives: (i) to promote raising awarness and collaboration between public and private operators of the OT Circuit; (ii) to deveop a common tourist identity valorizing the OT model to increase the number of tourists in the territories. (iii) to strengthen the relationship system between public and private operators developing that "community of operators" that is the basis of the OT.

The Open Tourism test, validation and dissemination took place through different operational tools:

− The **organization of several B2B** to share the meaning and goodness of OT tools and to create planning and commercial relationships between participants in the logic of strengthening the reception system and the cross-border tourist offer;
− The **organization of Workshops** to share development strategies between territories and between public and private organizations active in the promotion and management of the territorial tourist offer;
− The **administration of a validation questionnaire** to a sample of Italian, Albanian and Montenegrin public and private operators to evaluate the different components of the model;
− The **activation of a social and media communication strategy** to disseminate and raise awareness all territorial actors to the strategic and operational perspective proposed by OT.

The Project intended to enhance what is produced by actively contributing to the strengthening and innovation of the tourist offer of the cooperation area, and to the creation and activation of a territorial marketing strategy based on the values of responsibility and sustainability.

2.2. Objectives & results

The OPEN TOURISM PLUS project focused on two specific objectives.

The first objective was **to test the Open Tourism Model to support and improve local and national tourism offers.** All countries in the program area still use the mass tourism approach when it concerns tourism offers, while only a small number of municipalities have adopted a model of a more quality-based tourism offer. Through OPEN TOURISM PLUS, we were able to inform public and

private stakeholders about the possibilities of adopting OPEN TOURISM model which is focused on local resources, cultural and natural heritage, gastronomy, and primarily on the tourists to make them feel more like citizens instead of visitors. Both local and national stakeholders were shown the possibilities of adopting the new tourism model and cooperating with their local operators in providing information and support to visitors. This is an important element for local economic development as well as the improvement of the attractiveness of the territory.

The second objective was **to improve stakeholder cross-border cooperation by sharing ideas, offers, and experience through the enhancement of the Open Tourism Service.** Through the connection of the operators from all three countries, we boosted and started spreading the Open Tourism Service through best practices sharing and the development of common strategies and action plans. This approach opened new opportunities as well as the dissemination of the OPEN TOURISM main elements. By being part of a common vision, the operators had the possibility of participating in the promotion of their territory also using OPEN TOURISM tools and materials. Cooperation between operators can furtherly boost the economic development of the program area, as well as improve the individual tourist flow in all three countries.

OPEN TOURISM PLUS, in particular, aimed **to test, validate and disseminate the OPEN TOURISM model** by expanding the network of participating actors / territories and enhancing the economic, social, cultural and environmental potential of the local tourist offer.

The intention was to define a Common action Plans of the Open Tourism Plus Partnership for the smart management of tourist destinations to be adopted by the public authorities of the project area. The project in fact improved and spread the quality and the potentiality of tourism information and welcome service promoting products, services and governance of the OPEN TOURISM model.

This final result was the further strengthening of the OPEN TOURISM cross-border public-private network, aimed at enhancing local cultural and natural heritage through the development of new tourism promotion strategies and actions

2.3. Targets & Processes

The Open Tourism Plus project involved the following target groups:

- *Local public authority*: the project aimed to involve local authorities of partnership territories given the relevance of the project activities aimed at promoting a systemic strategy strongly impacting at territorial level. Local authorities of neighboring regions will also be informed.
- *Interest groups*: the project aimed to involve no-profit organizations connected with the tourism sector and in the management / promotion of natural and cultural heritage.
- *SME*: the project intended to involve local operators by enhancing them as tourist infopoints.

- *Business support organisation*: the project aimed to involve the economic world in the process of enhancing a new open tourism model. Trade associations could be involved as a bridge to reach local operators.

2.4. Strategy and actions

The project intended to pursue the specific objectives indicated by activating an effective and pervasive intervention strategy that concretely allows to support and improve the tourist offer in a cross-border perspective, improving cooperation between the stakeholders involved and sharing ideas, offers and experiences through the adoption of the Open Tourism Service.

To this end, 2 routes have been organized:

- the first, consisting of 4 Incoming & B2B missions, that have allowed stakeholders, above all operators of the three areas, to see and learn about OT tourist itineraries and all related tools (Apps, kits, brands, etc.). For each Incoming & B2B mission, a final report has been produced and it contains the indications, observations and evaluations brought by the participants. During these technical meetings, results were evaluated and validated valorizing the methodologies already used in OPEN TOURISM.
- the second, consisting of 2 Workshops, that have allowed stakeholders – both public and private – to share the positive aspects, potential, peculiarities of the OT Service, thus spreading its value.

Unlike workshops, which primarily aimed at increasing knowledge, skills and competences of participants, B2Bs primarily aimed at increasing the interaction among economic operators, especially SMEs, while bringing together individuals of different countries.

The project then sees the activation of two parallel functions: communication/engagement and Evaluation/Validation.

The communication activity and to support the engagement of stakeholders as well as being aimed at disseminating the activities and results obtained. It is based on:

- Enhancement of the project site;

- Enhancement of the Open Tourism facebook page;

- Journalistic support for media relations activities (press releases, articles, interviews, ...);

- Activation of a territorial animator.

B2B & Workshos Expected Results

N.	Country	Data	Type	Topic	Tot.	AL	ME	IT
1	ME	09/05/2023	B2B	Sustainable tourism	10	2	6	2
2	AL	11/05/2023	B2B	Cultural itineraries	10	6	2	2
3	IT	30/05/2023	B2B	Gastronomic itineraries	10	2	2	6
4	IT	31/05/2023	B2B	Experiential tourism	10	2	2	6
5	IT	22/06/2023	Workshop	Territorial marketing and promotion strategies of the Open Tourism Circuit	40	Online	Online	40
6	ME	26/06/2023	Workshop	Potential of Open Tourism Services: the management model and responsible tourism	40	Online	40	Online

B2B & Workshos Achieved Results

N.	Country	Data	Type	Topic	Tot.	AL	ME	IT
1	ME	09/05/2023	B2B	Sustainable tourism	27	3	19	5
2	AL	11/05/2023	B2B	Cultural itineraries	44	39	2	3
3	IT	30/05/2023	B2B	Gastronomic itineraries	25	5	3	17
4	IT	31/05/2023	B2B	Experiential tourism	28	4	3	21
5	IT	22/06/2023	Workshop	Territorial marketing and promotion strategies of the Open Tourism Circuit	48	Online	Online	48
6	ME	26/06/2023	Workshop	Potential of Open Tourism Services: the management model and responsible tourism	44	Online	44	Online

Compared to the **40** participants foreseen by the programming, the 4 B2B saw a participation of **124** public and private operators.

Compared to the **80** participants foreseen by the programming, the 2 Workshops saw a total participation of **92** public and private stakeholders.

The monitoring activities allows to verify and identify what has been achieved with respect to what was planned, capturing the level of feasibility of the objectives identified in the initial planning phase. Monitoring, in particular, makes it possible to detect the activity implemented, the products produced and the results in relation to what was originally planned. This activity makes it possible to understand the reasons for any deviations (of content and time), suggesting possible changes. The ongoing monitoring also allows an initial analysis of the impact of the project on the beneficiaries identified:

−   The evaluation activity makes it possible to verify the effectiveness, efficiency, impact and possibility of the actions implemented, expressing an opinion on the strategic objectives

pursued, the sustainability implications and the possible replicability of the results ascertained[1]. The evaluation is a process through which it is established, through data and indicators, that the performances and conditions proposed in the object of validation have been achieved and are adequate to their premises.

- The Validation concerns the acknowledgment of the functionality of the service and the results produced made available. It translates into a narrative intervention, a consequence of the evaluation, in which the functionalities and processes activated are explained in order to make them more understandable and visible. Above all, it must favor the dissemination of the results achieved by the System within the entire Environment (N. Luhmann)[2].

The evaluation and validation strategy of the OT Service was to verify the quality of the planned actions, the achievement of the planned objectives, the impacts and effects produced on the territories. The strategy aimed in particular to validate the processes and tools used, thus providing indications and opportunities to develop and replicate the model in the territories involved and outside them.

---

[1] L. Leone, M. Prezza, *Costruire e valutare i progetti nel sociale*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2012
[2] Cfr. "System" in Baraldi C., Corsi G., Esposito E., *Luhmann In Glossario*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2007

2.5. The information base

From an operational point of view, the evaluation and validation of the model is based on two types of information:

- On the one hand, those obtained in the field by the evaluator through the analysis of the results emerging from the activities and the collection of data and information through contacts and interviews typical of participatory evaluation

- On the other hand, those collected directly from the administration of a Validation Questionnaire to the operators involved in the B2B (Following the questionnaire).

SECOND PART – TESTING AND VALIDATION

3. The strategic areas

Open Toursim Plus has activated a participatory testing and validation process. It started from a profound action of involvement of public and private operators (stakeholder engagement) that implemented by territorial animators who leveraged the quality of the Open Tourism service as a response to territorial needs and requirements to motivate people to actively participate in the proposed process.

The Open Tourism project saw the realization of 4 B2B and Incoming meetings, with the presence of about 70 operators, and 2 Workshops, which were attended by about 100 participants, both in presence and connected in streaming.

During the activities, in particular, the following strategic areas of the OPEN TOURISM PLUS model were tested:

– **Area 1 – Operators' awareness and collaboration** – Public and Private actors involved aware of the value of the OT Service.

– **Area 2 – Promotion of a common tourist identity** – The experience demonstrates that the OT model (Governance, Circuit, Model, ...) allow to develop a common identity of the territories, to increase the number of tourists in the territories involved and to promote responsible and sustainable tourism.

– **Area 3 – Strengthening public-private cross-border collaboration** - Local operators create synergies and cross-border collaborations.

4. Area 1 – Operators' awareness and collaboration

4.1. Sustainable itineraries (B2B n. 1 – Montenegro)

The first Incoming missions & B2B meeting, held in Italy on the 9th May 2023, entitled "Sustainable tourism", focused especially on the Gastronomy Itineraries of the OPEN TOURISM project.

The objective was to present and share them among participants, and to use them as starting point to discuss all the main elements of the previous project: products, Circuit and governance model.

Information about the B2B

Title	Sustainable tourism
Data	09/05/2023
Location	Cetinije (Montenegro)
Italian participants	5
Montenegrin participants	19
Albanian participants	3
Brochure	Agenda

The B2B forum in Cetinje successfully attracted 28 stakeholders from Italy, Albania, and Montenegro. These participants included representatives from local government authorities, local operators active in the tourism sector, associations promoting local territories, tour operators, and other relevant professionals. The diverse range of participants contributed to enriching discussions and fostering collaboration across borders.

The event was organized in the Conference Hall of the Agency for Business Development and Support, and it was divided into two parts. The first part started with the intervention of different speakers: representatives of the Old Royal Capital Cetinje, a Local Tourist organization, and two External Experts who shared information about the OPEN TOURISM project in general and on

sustainable tourism. These interventions allowed to sharing of the peculiarities in terms of food and wine of the territories involved in Italy, Albania, and Montenegro and emphasized the importance of gastronomy tourism for local economies, cultural preservation, and sustainable development.

Afterward, participants from the three partner Countries were divided into two groups, where they discussed the OPEN TOURISM tools and how they could be promoted and improved. The fact of being divided into two small groups allowed them to be engaged in focused discussions on relevant topics, facilitate knowledge sharing, identify challenges and opportunities, and foster collaboration among the participants. The groups were encouraged to propose innovative strategies and

collaborative initiatives to enhance the tourism sector in the region and the enhancement of the OPEN TOURISM tools.

4.2. Cultural itineraries (B2B n. 2 – Albania)

The second Incoming missions & B2B meeting, held in the cities of Tirana, Durres and Berat on the 11st May 2023, entitled "Cultural itineraries", focused especially on the Cultural Itineraries of the OPEN TOURISM project.

This itinerary has been produced by the partner CEDIR along side with other two tematich itineraries. The cities selected for this FAM trip of cultural sites are those of the most importance related to the Albanian territory.

The objective was to present and share them among participants, and to use them as starting point to discuss all the main elements of the previous project: products, Circuit and governance model.

Information about the B2B

Title	Cultural itineraries
Data	11/05/2023
Location	Tirana, Durres, Berat
Italian participants	3 Participants
Montenegrin participants	2 Participants
Albanian participants	39 Participants
Brochure	Agenda

ù

4.3. The eno-gastronomic itineraries (B2B n. 3 – Italy)

The third Incoming missions & B2B meeting, held in Italy on the 30th May 2023, entitled "How to promote the OPEN TOURISM gastronomy itineraries", focused especially on the Gastronomy Itineraries of the OPEN TOURISM project.

The objective was to present and share them among participants, and to use them as starting point to discuss all the main elements of the previous project: products, Circuit and governance model.

Information about the B2B

Title	How to promote the OPEN TOURISM gastronomy itineraries
Data	30/05/2023
Location	Italy
Italian participants	17
Montenegrin participants	3
Albanian participants	5
Brochure	Agenda

The event proved to be highly successful in achieving its objectives and fostering collaboration among the stakeholders. Several key outcomes and achievements are highlighted below:

- Knowledge Exchange: The interventions and presentations provided valuable insights into the OPEN TOURISM project, the tools and the Circuit developed, while the focus groups enabled participants to discuss, exchange idea and play an active role in the further promotion of OT and of the cross-border tourism.

- Collaboration: The group discussions facilitated productive exchanges among stakeholders, leading to the identification of shared challenges and the formulation of collaborative strategies to overcome them. The event acted as a catalyst for future partnerships and joint initiatives among participants.

- Networking: The event provided a conducive environment for participants to network and establish meaningful connections. The shared interest in tourism promotion, with focus on gastronomy, and the diverse backgrounds of the attendees created opportunities for collaborations and knowledge sharing.

- Cultural Exchange: The experiential activities allowed participants to immerse themselves in the local culture and taste the region's culinary specialties. This cultural exchange enhanced participants' appreciation for the gastronomic heritage of the region and encouraged them to promote it within their respective communities

Interreg - IPA CBC
Italy - Albania - Montenegro
EUROPEAN UNION
OPEN TOURISM

Interreg - IPA CBC
Italy - Albania - Montenegro
CAPITALISATION
LEADER

4.4. The experiential itineraries (B2B n. 4 – Italia)

The fourth Incoming missions & B2B meeting held in Italy on the 31st May 2023, entitled "How to promote the OPEN TOURISM experiential itineraries" focused especially on the Experiential elements of the OPEN TOURISM Itineraries.

The objective was to present and share them among participants, and to use them as starting point to discuss all the main elements of the previous project: products, Circuit and governance model.

Information about

Title	How to promote the OPEN TOURISM experiential itineraries
Data	31/05/2023
Location	Italy
Italian participants	21
Montenegrini participants	3
Albanian participants	4
Brochure	Agenda

The Experiential Itineraries brought together stakeholders from Italy, Albania, and Montenegro to test, validate, and disseminate the OPEN TOURISM output and results. Through a combination of informative presentations, focused discussions, and experiential activities, the event fostered collaboration, knowledge exchange, and engagement among participants.

The event provided the opportunity for public and private operators in the environmental, cultural, and tourist welcoming sectors to understand and embrace the innovative approaches proposed by the OPEN TOURISM project. These discussions resulted in practical insights and actionable recommendations that will contribute to a further successful implementation of the project's outcomes.

By actively involving participants in a traditional culinary experience, the event fostered a deeper connection to the local culture, heritage, and community. This experiential aspect of the event showcased the potential of OPEN TOURISM to offer immersive and authentic experiences to tourists, thereby contributing to the sustainable development of the region

5. Area 2 – Promotion of a common tourist identity

5.1. Methodological introduction

The validation of the Open Tourism model also took place by administering a test to a sample of public and private operators involved in the project process.

In particular, the test aimed to investigate the goodness and effectiveness of the different components of the model itself and proposed the evaluation of 19 items collected within 4 questions. Each item could be answered with a vote from 1 to 10, where 1 represented disagreement with the item and 10 full agreement with the item.

The validation test was administered to a sample of 29 operators including 18 Italians, 6 Albanians and 5 Montenegrins.

The processing of the data made it possible to evaluate the excellent quality and good functioning of the various components of the Open Tourism model, also pointing out slight differences between the three countries involved.

5.2. The Tools to promote the Itineraries

The first question focused on the theme of Open Touris itineraries. The following four items were investigated in particular:

- The Open Tourism itineraries contain interesting information for tourists
- The Open Tourism itineraries have pleasant graphics
- The Open Tourism itineraries are easy to consult
- The Open Tourism itineraries are useful for planning tourist activities

Open Tourism provides operators with information, promotion, capacity-building and marketing services, concrete tools with which to enhance the development capacity of the territories of the cooperation area.

Among the various tools developed, the OT promotional KIT is particularly useful and practical. The OT promotional kit was delivered to all the operators of the project partner territories who joined the OT Circuit. These are therefore the operators of the 17 Italian Municipalities, of the 2 Albanian territorial contexts and of Montenegro. The Kit provides operators with a series of products aimed at raising awareness and informing tourists about the cultural, environmental and food and wine potential of all the territories involved in the project.

The idea is to encourage mutual promotion at a cross-border level and to support the movement of tourists in the cooperation area Italy, Albania and Montenegro.

Each operator who has received the Kit finds inside:

- the **Sticker** of the Open Tourism Circuit to be applied outside your shop or facility as a sign of membership in the Circuit and of recognition for tourists;

- the **Thematic itineraries**, with which to promote the gastronomy, culture and natural themes of one's territory;

- a **USB key** that presents videos, photos and itineraries of the Italian, Albanian and Montenegrin territories that are partners of the project. Inside the key there are in particular: 17 itineraries of which 6 in Italy (Union of the Municipalities Terre del Mare and del Sole, Union of the Municipalities Sorgenti del Biferno and AMP Porto Cesareo), 6 in Albania (Fier and Tirana) and 3 in Montenegro (Cetinje). The key also contains 12 videos (2 for each of the 6 project partners involved), hundreds of photographs of the territories and other promotional tools; 6 brochures presenting the partner territories of the project.

- a **Gadget** with the QR code of the Open Tourism App, where you can enter your data and promote your business.

The Kit also contains the Open Tourism flyer, which contains information on the objectives, aims and tools, as well as the Open Tourism Modules with which it is possible to integrate with the Open Tourism Circuit and the Open Tourism App.

With the Open Tourism project, the following products have been created for the Open Tourism Kit:

- 17 new itineraries on Culture, Nature and Food
- 6 new promotional videos of the territories
- 12,000 itineraries printed in English and in the languages of the 3 countries
- 5,000 promotional flyers printed
- 200 stickers printed for joining the project
- 400 posters printed
- Made 200 USB sticks with videos, images, itineraries, flyers and more inside
- 200 shoppers with the project logo produced
- 12 videos of Open Tourism (6 Italians, 6 Albanians, 3 Montenegrins) for approximately 30 minutes last.

The question relating to Open Tourism Itineraries has therefore made it possible to evaluate the quality of this tourist offer in a precise and punctual manner as shown in the following table.

	ITALIA		MONTENEGRO		ALBANIA		TOTALE	
1) With respect to the **OPEN TOURISM ITINERARIES**, we ask you to express your degree of agreement with the following statements with a vote from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (completely agree):	TOTALE	Media	TOTALE	media	TOTALE	Media	TOTALE SOMMATO	Media
The Open Tourism itineraries contain interesting information for tourists	167	9,28	50	10,00	58	9,67	275	9,48
The Open Tourism itineraries have pleasant graphics	170	9,44	50	10,00	59	9,83	279	9,62
The Open Tourism itineraries are easy to consult	170	9,44	50	10,00	58	9,67	278	9,59
The Open Tourism itineraries are useful for planning tourist activities	168	9,33	50	10,00	59	9,83	277	9,55
* Total answers: 29 (Italy: 18; Montenegro: 5; Albania; 6)								

The following considerations stand out in particular:

− The graphics of the itineraries are the most appreciated by operators, scoring an average score higher than the other components of the model (9.62).

− Usability (9.59) and functionality (9.55) are also highly appreciated, scoring very high average scores in this case too.

− Slightly lower than the other items is instead the vote attributed to the contents of the itienerari that could be improved and refined.

− In the comparison between countries, Montenegrins show the highest scores followed by Alabanese and Italians, who are slightly more critical.

Interesting, finally, the comments brought by the operators to their votes:

− Working on tour operators in the territory of municipalities

− Operators who offer experiences need to be included more clearly in itineraries

- A single itinerary should be planned between Albania, Montenegro and Italy

- Find out more about travel, festivals and cultural exchanges

- The itineraries are developed on a one-off basis but should be developed continuously according to the requests and suggestions of entrepreneurs

- Expand the network of stakeholders

5.3. The Open Tourism App

The second question focused on the theme of Open Touris APP.

The following four items were investigated in particular:

- The Open Tourism App presents interesting information
- The Open Tourism App has pleasant graphics
- The Open Tourism App is easy to consult
- The Open Tourism App is useful for planning tourist activities

The presence in the OT APP requires the provision of the data and information indicated here.

Undersigned	
Photos	*Provide 5 photos (at least 1)*
Logo	*Provide the Operator's logo*
Slogan	
Typology	☐ **Cultural** ☐ **Nature** ☐ **Food** ☐ **Tourism** ☐ **Other**
City	
Social Media Link	*Facebook* *Instagram* *Web site*
Working hours	Monday *open* .... */ closed* .... Tuesday *open* .... */ closed* .... Wednesday *open* .... */ closed* .... Thursday *open* .... */ closed* .... Friday *open* .... */ closed* .... Saturday *open* .... */ closed* .... Sunday *open* .... */ closed* ....
Phone number *(*)*	

Interreg - IPA CBC
Italy - Albania - Montenegro
OPEN TOURISM
EUROPEAN UNION

CAPITALISATION
LEADER
Interreg - IPA CBC
Italy - Albania - Montenegro

Mail *(*)*	
Description *(*)*	
Target	*Indicate with a X the type of users/clients you mainly work with* ☐ **Families** ☐ **Elderly people** ☐ **Couples** ☐ **Disable people** ☐ **People with animals** **Other**...
Video	*Provide a video*

(*) Information mandatory

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

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. The characteristics of the 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.

These tools do not overlap with those existing at local / regional level but are strategically integrated with them where present. The choice to develop a platform and a APP was born from the decision to work on new, complete, intuitive, easy to use and increasingly important tools to attract and support tourists.

The question relating to Open Tourism APP has therefore made it possible to evaluate the quality of this tourist offer in a precise and punctual manner as shown in the following table.

	ITALIA		MONTENEGRO		ALBANIA		TOTALE	
2) With respect to the **OPEN TOURISM APP**, we ask you to express your degree of agreement with the following statements with a vote from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (completely agree):	TOTALE	Media	TOTALE	media	TOTALE	Media	TOTALE SOMMATO	Media
The Open Tourism App presents interesting information	138	9,20	50	10,00	58	9,67	246	9,46
The Open Tourism App has pleasant graphics	138	9,20	50	10,00	59	9,83	247	9,50
The Open Tourism App is easy to consult	139	9,27	50	10,00	56	9,33	245	9,42
The Open Tourism App is useful for planning tourist activities	141	9,40	50	10,00	59	9,83	250	9,62

* Total answers: 26 (Italy: 15; Montenegro: 5; Albania; 6)

The following considerations stand out in particular:

− The functionality of the APP related to the design of tourist activities is the most appreciated by operators, scoring an average score higher than the other components of the model (9.62).

− Also Graphisc (9.50) and the content (9.46) are also highly appreciated by the operators.

− Slightly lower than the other items is instead the vote attributed to the easy to consult (9,42) that could be improved and refined.

− In the comparison between countries, Montenegrins show the highest scores followed by Alabanese and Italians, who are slightly more critical.

Interesting, finally, the comments brought by the operators to their votes:

− The APP is very efficient in facilitating trips and itineraries

− The overall project is very interesting

− I think it is an APP that should be made more known

− It must be developed better and further with another project that gives continuity

− It is essential to make the APP available to everyone

− Spread the APP as much as possible

5.4. The Open Tourism Circuit

The third question focused on the theme of Open Touris CIRCUIT.

The following four items were investigated in particular:

- The Open Tourism Circuit can promote trade between operators
- The Open Tourism Circuit can promote the network between local authorities
- The Open Tourism Circuit can improve tourist information
- The Open Tourism Circuit can help the operators' skills grow

The presence in the OT CIRCUIT requires the provision of the data and information indicated here.

Undersigned	
Type of operator	☐ **Cultural** ☐ **Environmental** ☐ **Commercial** ☐ **Touristic** ☐ **Other** ....
Name	
Mail	
Phone Number	
Ask	☐ **to join the Open Tourism Circuit**
Ask	☐ **to receive for free the Open Tourism Kit**
Ask	☐ **to be included in the Open Tourism APP** **In this case, I undertake to provide the information request and contained in the** **Form App: Be present in the Open Tourism App**
Ask	☐ **to be informed about capacity-building opportunities (OPEN TOURISM WORKSHOP)**
Ask	☐ **to be informed about the MARKETING actions that will be activated**

Date e venue ....   **Sign**..

I authorize the use of the aforementioned information exclusively for the purposes of the objectives of the Circuit.

The question relating to Open Tourism CIRCUIT has therefore made it possible to evaluate the quality of this tourist offer in a precise and punctual manner as shown in the following table.

	ITALIA		MONTENEGRO		ALBANIA		TOTALE	
3) With respect to the **OPEN TOURISM CIRCUIT**, we ask you to express your degree of agreement with the following statements with a vote from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (completely agree):	TOTALE	Media	TOTALE	media	TOTALE	Media	TOTALE SOMMATO	Media
The Open Tourism Circuit can promote trade between operators	172	9,56	50	10,00	58	9,67	280	9,66
The Open Tourism Circuit can promote the network between local authorities	168	9,33	50	10,00	59	9,83	277	9,55
The Open Tourism Circuit can improve tourist information	171	9,50	50	10,00	54	9,00	275	9,48
The Open Tourism Circuit can help the operators' skills grow	171	9,50	50	10,00	57	9,50	278	9,59
* Total answers: 29 (Italy: 18; Montenegro: 5; Albania; 6)								

The following considerations stand out in particular:

− The item *OT Circuit can promote trade between operators* functionality gets the highest average score (9.66).

− Score very high l'item *OT Circuit can help the operators 'skills grow* (9.59).

− Slightly lower than the other items is instead the vote attributed to the promote network (9.55) e to the improvement of the tourist information (9.48).

− In the comparison between countries, Montenegrins show the highest scores followed by Alabanese and Italians, who are slightly more critical.

Interesting, finally, the comments brought by the operators to their votes:

− The APP is very efficient in facilitating trips and itineraries

− The overall project is very interesting

− I think it is an APP that should be made more known

− It must be developed better and further with another project that gives continuity

− It is essential to make the APP available to everyone

− Spread the APP as much as possible

5.5. The Brand identity and Tourist's needs

The third question focused on the theme of Open Touris CIRCUIT.

The following four items were investigated in particular:

- Tourist itineraries must be disseminated online

- Tourist itineraries must be disseminated locally with printed maps

- Accommodation and commercial facilities must promote themselves with their own website

- Accommodation and commercial facilities must promote themselves with social media

- Accommodation and commercial facilities must promote themselves by word of mouth

- Accommodation and commercial facilities can promote themselves with the OT brand

- The Open Tourism brand can promote tourism between Italy-Albania-Montenegro

A specific brand and a dedicated marketing strategy have been developed to make the Destinations, the Service and the OT Circuit stronger and more identifiable. PPs can better cooperate with a common identity which can improve their relationship.

Furthermore, the brand could be linked to specific themes or cultural / natural assets, thus enhancing the resources present in the area. The brand is very important because it must enhance all destinations to communicate the shared approach and common values of Open Tourism regarding a new idea of tourism linked to the concept of 'temporary citizen'.

It was decided to confirm the name of the project (Open Tourism) as Brand of the Circuit and Service, changing only the part linked to the graphic image. In fact, it is believed that this is the best strategy 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. …

Through branding, the project will promote integration and the tourist offer shared in different geographical areas united by a single cooperative model of information and hospitality for tourists.

From an operational point of view:

- The brand promotion strategy was developed.
- The brand monitoring strategy was developed.

The question relating to Open Tourism BRAND & NEEDS has therefore made it possible to evaluate the quality of this tourist offer in a precise and punctual manner as shown in the following table.

	ITALIA		MONTENEGRO		ALBANIA		TOTALE	
4) Regarding the **TOURIST'S NEEDS**, we ask you to express your degree of agreement with the following statements with a vote from 1 strongly disagree) to 10 (completely agree):	TOTALE	Media	TOTALE	media	TOTALE	Media	TOTALE SOMMATO	Media
Tourist itineraries must be disseminated online	170	9,44	50	10,00	58	9,67	278	9,59
Tourist itineraries must be disseminated locally with printed maps	165	9,17	50	10,00	54	9,00	269	9,28
Accommodation and commercial facilities must promote themselves with their own website	175	9,72	50	10,00	55	9,17	280	9,66
Accommodation and commercial facilities must promote themselves with social media	173	9,61	50	10,00	58	9,67	281	9,69
Accommodation and commercial facilities must promote themselves by word of mouth	161	8,94	50	10,00	40	6,67	251	8,66
Accommodation and commercial facilities can promote themselves with the OT brand	170	9,44	50	10,00	58	9,67	278	9,59
The Open Tourism brand can promote tourism between Italy-Albania-Montenegro	179	9,94	50	10,00	60	10,00	289	9,97
* Total answers: 29 (Italy: 18; Montenegro: 5; Albania; 6)								

The following considerations stand out in particular:

− The item *The Open Tourism brand can promote tourism between Italy-Albania-Montenegro* gets the highest average score (9.97).

   All items are above 9 except The accommodation and commercial facilities must promote themselves by word of mouth which instead totals a score of 8.66.

− In the comparison between countries, Montenegrins show the highest scores followed by Alabanese and Italians, who are slightly more critical.

Interesting, finally, the comments brought by the operators to their votes:

− Promoting cross-border wine tourism circuits

− Create new services such as, for example: detailed maps with precise information, additional information focused on the tourist experience, more widespread app and within the reach of the tourist

− Design services related to travel

6. Area 3 – Strengthening public-private cross-border collaboration

6.1. Network, communication and territorial relations

The first Workshop was held held in Italy on the 22nd June 2023, about "Territorial marketing and promotion strategies of the Open Tourism Circuit, with n. 48 of participants. The second one was held in Montenegro on the 26th of June, about "Potential of Open Tourism Services: the management model and responsible tourism", with n. 44 participants.

The communication activities made it possible to disseminate information on the project outside the partnership organizations at local, regional, national and transnational level. This has allowed a wider public to know and benefit from the results obtained and the efforts made for achieve the expected goals.

The communication has allowed to increase the awareness of participants and other stakeholders, to promote involvement and participation, to disseminate what has been achieved by promoting its transferability. Through an integrated communication strategy, various tools were put in place in order to reach the main target groups of the project in a targeted manner in order to promote the cultural and natural heritage of the territory and the new OT model.

The communication strategy started from a Communication and Dissemination Plan that was implemented using the website, social networks, press releases, events and countless promotional tools. For the design and implementation of the communication strategy, external expertise will be involved for the development and implementation of more effective strategies and for specific products.

The partnership decided to enhance the website made available to the program and, at the same time, to activate a Facebook page as a hub for the communication process. These two communication channels were used above all in the launch and implementation phase of the Service in order to support its impact and dissemination.

On the website you can find all the information about the project. In the Output category, all the maps and itineraries produced (on the three paths Culture, Nature and Food) and the descriptive brochures of the territories and their potential have been loaded. Furthermore, in the Multimedia category, hundreds of photographs of the project territories are available in the Photo gallery category and the promotional videos produced in the Video Gallery category. The site also presents numerous news relating above all to the implementation phase of the Service.

OT website address: https://opentourism.italy-albania-montenegro.eu/

A Social strategy has been activated to further disseminate the information and tools connected to the service. The central point of the Social strategy is the Facebook page 'Open Tourism 2021'.

The use of social media has made it possible to inform and involve stakeholders, promoting the exchange of ideas and collecting suggestions and feedback.

The streaming of the main promoted events (especially the final event) connected to the promotional campaign made it possible to intercept stakeholders and effectively promote the OT Service by favoring the use of products.

In fact, social media have also been activated with the intention of encouraging the development of an online community of interested parties.

Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/opentourism21

6.2. The result of the workshop: a new agreement

To promote the project, give continuity to the actions carried out and make the service sustainable, the project partners shared and decided to sign a new cooperation agreement.

It was signed during the Workshop in Maruggio the 21st of June 2023 with the objectives of:

1. to cooperate closely to intensify cross-border exchanges in order to develop the Open Tourism model;

2. to promote and encourage membership of the Open Tourism Circuit;

3. to work in favor of local development and to pay particular attention to the areas of cooperation related to eno-gastronomic, green, cultural and experiential tourism;

4. to encourage greater concertation in the joint use of European territorial cooperation programmes.

THIRD PART – NEXT SPEPS

7. New strategic areas

7.1. More and better dialogue between public and private 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.

7.2. More 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.

7.3. 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).

7.4. 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 App 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 OT App 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.

7.5. 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.

The *Governance* of the Open Tourism Circuit is fundamental to nourish the network of relationships with which to manage and develop the Open Tourism Service. In particular, a rigorous planning of the moments of coordination, both at local and cross-border level, is needed to facilitate that flow of communication and that strategic passage of information that alone can guarantee the definition of specific objectives and the consequent identification of activities.

8. Statements and visions

8.1. From Italy

Mayor of Leporano, Vincenzo Damiano: " We need to increase relations between public, private and social operators, both locally and across borders, so that tourists can appreciate our beauties of our territories".

President of the Unione dei Comuni Terre del Mare e del Sole, Giuseppe Fischetti: "The OPEN TOURISM PLUS project aims above all to develop intangible assets, in particular the creation of a network of relationships, which allows you to go beyond a type of tourism that is linked only to the sea and that therefore is more seasonal".

Secretary of the Unione dei Comuni Terre del Mare e del Sole, Antonio Mezzolla: "We have to rethink the way we do tourism: today the world can be reached with a click, we must therefore relate to the new ways of doing tourism".

Iolanda Lotta, Councilor for Tourism of the Municipality of Leporano: "The OPEN TOURISM project with its App offers the opportunity to all operators – not only tourism operators, but also economic operators – to get online, so that, on the one hand, operators are all engaged to support the visitor as an added value for the area; and, on the other hand, visitors can appreciate the beauty of the area in its different aspects".

Aldo Summa (OPEN TOURISM Italy): "In recent years, a step forward has been taken. People are no longer satisfied with taking a dip in the sea, but want to enjoy the territory. And local organizations are working hard to offer and enhance all the peculiarities of the area".

8.2. From Montenegro

Miloš Ivanišević (Municipality of Cetinje – OPEN TOURISM Montenegro): "The aim of OPEN TOURISM is to make the tourist a citizen, to make him/her feel like a local. The idea is that the tourist should not only come to appreciate only the cultural heritage, but also nature and gastronomy".

Miloš Ivanišević (Municipality of Cetinje – OPEN TOURISM Montenegro): "With the OPEN TOURISM project we have created many tools to promote tourism: maps, the App with operators and the Circuit of operators, which are important to enhance tourism. We must continue to create tools for our operators".

8.3. From Albania

Florian Bilali (NGO Cedir – OPEN TOURISM Albania): "We are working on the construction and development of a circuit of operators based on OPEN TOURISM tools and which does territorial marketing and we need to continue our cross-border collaboration to make this Circuit be more and more extended and effective".

9. The New Agreement (2023-2026)

COOPERATION AGREEMENT

FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OPEN TOURISM CIRCUIT

Among

The partners of the OPEN TOURISM PLUS project

- UNIONE DEI COMUNI "TERRE DEL MARE E DEL SOLE" – Fascia orientale della provincia di Taranto (UNION OF MUNICIPALITIES "LANDS OF SEA AND SUN" - Eastern area of the province of Taranto), Corso Europa, 37/39, 74020 Lizzano (TA), Italy

  Represented by its President Mr. Giuseppe Fischetti

- Prijestonica Cetinje (Old Royal Capital Cetinje), Baja Pivljanina street 2, 81250 Cetinje, Montenegro

  Represented by its Mayor Mr Nikola Đurašković

- Qendra për Zhvillim Ekonomik & Marrëdhënie Ndërkombëtare (Center for Economic Development & International Relations - CEDIR), Rr.Him Kolli, Pall.33, Ap.6, Tirana, Albania

  Represented by its Executive Director Mr Florian Bilali

Given that

- The OPEN TOURISM project, coordinated by Unione dei Comuni Terre del Mare e del Sole, was financed by the Interreg Ipa-Cbc Italy-Albania-Montenegro program (First Call For Standard Projects, 1^ Ord 189 - OPEN TOURISM) and relied on an international partnership composed, among others, by Unione dei Comuni Terre del Mare e del Sole (Italy, Lead Partner), the Old Royal Capital Cetinje (Montenegro) and CEDIR (Albania);

- The objective of the OPEN TOURISM project is to develop and implement a public-private cross-border cooperation strategy which allows for the development of an innovative model of tourist information and welcoming based on a widespread network of information points animated by local operators;

- This has made it possible to improve the quality of the tourist information and welcoming service in the project partner territories as well as a diversification of the offer and tourist flows;

- OPEN TOURISM envisaged the creation and/or strengthening of a local public-private Circuit of cross-border operators in order to develop a common model of tourism promotion capable of: (i) highlighting local attractions, (ii) involve the local community (tourist operators, but also economic operators, including hotels, restaurants, pharmacies, local craft shops, etc.) and (iii) create cross-sectoral synergies;

- OPEN TOURISM made it possible to make a cross-border governance model available to the Circuit of operators and a set of innovative products (App, itineraries, brand, etc.)

- The OPEN TOURISM project, which was carried out in the period 2019-2021, was selected in 2022 as one of the best projects financed by the European Interreg IPA CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro program and received the mention of merit of "Capitalization Leader" which has allowed to carry out a further project phase (called OPEN TOURISM PLUS) to disseminate and promote the results;

- This second phase of capitalization made it possible to relaunch the project's activities and to strengthen the network of partner territories and operators in Italy, Albania and Montenegro through a series of B2B and Incoming Missions which involved overall around 70 operators;

- The OPEN TOURISM PLUS phase ends, as planned, on 30 June 2023.

Considering that

- OPEN TOURISM is an open circuit addressed to:

    o Cultural operators (e.g. museums, cultural centres, places of attraction, etc.)

    o Environmental operators (e.g. protected areas, parks, green spaces, etc.)

    o Commercial and hospitality operators (e.g. Shops, Restaurants, Bars, B&Bs, Hotels, etc.)

    o Tourist operators, (e.g.: Public bodies, Associations, Pro loco, Volunteering, …)

- The services offered to participating operators are:

    o OPEN TOURISM Kit or information tools such as: maps, itineraries, brochures, videos, promotional images of the territories involved (downloadable from the project website);

- OPEN TOURISM APP where OPEN TOURISM operators can be entered by uploading: their logo, photos, opening hours, description of their business, georeferencing of their business.

- OPEN TOURISM WORKSHOP and B2B and Incoming Missions to get operational information on: Financing opportunities, New markets, New ways of relating with tourists, Safe management of tourists, ..

- OPEN TOURISM MARKETING to obtain strategic information on: new requests from tourists, new proposals and new ideas on how to improve their services and how to improve their image, marketing and communication actions (OPEN TOURISM website, app and social media).

All this having been said, the parties, as represented above, agree and stipulate the following

Art. 1 – Object

UNIONE DEI COMUNI "TERRE DEL MARE E DEL SOLE" – Fascia orientale della provincia di Taranto (UNION OF MUNICIPALITIES "LANDS OF SEA AND SUN" - Eastern area of the province of Taranto) (Italy), Qendra për Zhvillim Ekonomik & Marrëdhënie Ndërkombëtare (Center for Economic Development & International Relations) (Albania), and Prijestonica Cetinje (Old Royal Capital Cetinje) (Montenegro), hereinafter referred to as the Parties, decide, with this Agreement:

1. to cooperate closely to intensify cross-border exchanges in order to develop the OPEN TOURISM model;

2. to promote and encourage membership in the OPEN TOURISM Circuit;

3. to work in favor of local development and to pay particular attention to the areas of cooperation connected to food and wine, environmental, cultural and experiential tourism;

4. to encourage greater concertation in the common use of European territorial cooperation programmes.

Art. 2 –Open Tourism Board

The OPEN TOURISM Board is established, in charge of the implementation of the Agreement.

The Board is made up of two representatives of each of the signatory Parties to the Agreement.

The Board meets online or, if in presence, alternatively in the three cooperation areas involved.

Experts in specific sectors may possibly be invited to Board meetings.

Art. 3 – Action plan for cross-border cooperation

In order to respond to the objectives set out in the Agreement, in particular, to the cooperation areas listed, the Parties undertake to develop joint initiatives and projects which will be defined in an Action Plan for cross-border cooperation.

Art. 4 – Territorial scope of action

The Parties undertake to seek the appropriate funding for the implementation of the Action Plan by extending relations, if necessary, to other partners in a logic full of cross-border cooperation.

Each of the Parties is responsible for pursuing the objectives and developing the activities in its own territory.

Art. 5 – Validity of the Agreement

This Agreement enters into force on the day of signature by the legal representatives of the Parties.

It is valid for two years and is renewed by explicit agreement among the Parties.

Either Party may terminate this Agreement at any time by mail on six months' notice.

UNIONE DEI COMUNI "TERRE DEL MARE E DEL SOLE" – Fascia orientale della provincia di Taranto (UNION OF MUNICIPALITIES "LANDS OF SEA AND SUN" - Eastern area of the province of Taranto) (Italy)

Name of the Legal Representative   _____

Signature   _____

Place and date _____

Prijestonica Cetinje (Old Royal Capital Cetinje) (Montenegro)

Name of the Legal Representative   Nikola Đurašković

Signature _____

Place and date _____

Qendra për Zhvillim Ekonomik & Marrëdhënie Ndërkombëtare (Center for Economic Development & International Relations) (Albania)

Name of the Legal Representative _____

Signature _____

Place and date _____