



Viable Solutions Towards Sustainable Tourism in Mediterranean Tourism Destinations

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Abstract

The Mediterranean region constitutes a complex and diverse environment that offers significant opportunities for tourism development. However, these opportunities are accompanied by barriers and challenges that hinder the sustainability of the tourism sector. These include pressures on the natural and built environment, uneven distribution of benefits, decreasing quality of life, loss of authenticity, alteration of local customs, exploitation of traditions for profit, and cultural homogenization. Additionally, the effects of major drivers such as climate change make it evident that tourism destinations are becoming increasingly vulnerable and require concrete solutions to overcome current challenges and transform into resilient spaces that offer a unique and integrated tourism product.

To ensure a sustainable path for tourism, the mobilization of both private and public actors is essential. Moreover, improvements in the policy framework, whether at the strategic or operational level, are necessary to effectively steer future tourism development. In this context, the INTERREG initiative provides a fertile ground for fostering collaboration among a wide range of stakeholders, driving significant progress in this direction.

Within this transformative path, a trial-and-error process is inevitable to identify practical solutions that best address the particularities of Mediterranean regions. The Mediterranean Tourism Community, evolving under the Sustainable Tourism Mission of the Euro-MED Programme, offers a platform for exchanging ideas and best practices. It highlights solutions that have been developed, tested, and replicated within Mediterranean destinations through numerous multipurpose projects.

This special session aims to discuss the challenges researchers face in developing tangible solutions for various aspects of tourism sustainability. The session welcomes papers showcasing the process of developing these solutions, as well as the results achieved or anticipated. Submissions should, among other elements, present the challenge under consideration, how the intervention was conceived, planned, and executed, and the results achieved or expected. Particular attention should be given to the methodological foundation of the solutions, accompanied by a critical discussion on their innovativeness and the conditions for replicability in other areas facing similar challenges.