



# Land-Sea

Interreg Europe




Land-Sea focuses on regional policies for sustainable management of coastal ecosystems and stimulates implementation of territorial strategies for ecotourism development.

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An interregional cooperation project for improving natural and cultural heritage policies.

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ecotourism development  
territorial strategies for  
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## INTRODUCTION

The Land - Sea project “*Sustainability of the Land-sea System for Ecotourism Strategies*” has contributed to tackling the problem of coastal management policies, focusing in particular on the protection of the terrestrial ecosystem and its sustainable development for socio-economic development linked to ecotourism strategies. The project brought together partners from different countries. Basin Authority of the rivers Liri – Garigliano and Volturno/ Southern Apennines Basin District (Italy); Regional Administration Varna (Bulgaria); Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg – Senate Chancellery (Germany); Regione Molise (Italy); General Governement of Catalonia (Spain); Barcelona Urban Ecology Agency (Spain).

The **main objective** of the project is to develop more comprehensive, effective and efficient regional governance processes in order to increase and promote the creation of institutional competencies and skills for the development of a sustainable coastal system capable of preserving natural habitats and contextually supporting the development of regional ecotourism strategies. For coastal areas, we mean a complex system identified not only with the coastline itself, but also with its various subsystems and connections to river basins. In fact, EU coastal zones are fragile and vulnerable systems. The consequences are found in emergencies of environmental degradation, water scarcity, hydrogeological risks, loss of biodiversity and the effects of climate change.

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world and is a major source of income for many countries. As a people-oriented industry, tourism also provides many jobs that have helped revitalize local economies. In essence, the tourism sector has the potential to offer a viable combination of environmental and cultural protection, improving awareness of the protection of natural and cultural features. However, tourism can also cause problems such as social dislocation, loss of cultural heritage, economic dependence and environmental degradation. Moreover, like any industry, tourism will never be completely sustainable. But it can work to make it more sustainable and provide "positive impacts" by supporting sustainable development in other socio-economic sectors.

Ecotourism, organized in a sustainable way and in harmony with the interests of local communities, reduces prejudice, promotes goodwill, builds tolerance, promotes cross-cultural interaction and understanding.

The methodological approach of the Land-Sea project is based on participation in the process of interregional training based on the exchange of experience, and on this basis 4 Action Plans have been prepared and finalized (each region has prepared one). Their activities have been implemented in the last two years, mainly within the Operational Structural Funds and Programs of the respective regions. As a result, 4 regional policy instruments have been improved through better governance. This change is specific to stakeholders, managing authorities as well as interested local and regional directorates, beneficiaries of selected programs / plans ( local authorities, economic operators in the ecotourism sector and coastal zone environmental management authorities).

### ***INFORMATION FOR THE FIRST SEMESTER, MOLISE REGION***

During the first phase of the project, interregional trainings were held, in which the regional policies of each of the partners in relation to the overall objectives of the project were identified and evaluated.

The first interregional meeting of the project was held by the lead partner asin Authority of the rivers Liri – Garigliano and Volturno/ Southern Apennines Basin District. The seminar was held in Caserta and Termoli, Italy from 26 to 28 April 2017 and presented knowledge and analysis of the coastal areas of Molise, as well as and provided details to the Molise Regional Operational Program 2014-2020.

The Molise region of Italy is characterized by the availability of important natural resources and a diverse environment, creating optimal conditions for the development of ecotourism in the region. The coast of Molise is characterized by the presence of coastal areas and is one of the most important sandy coastal ecosystems in the Italian Adriatic due to its biodiversity. The coast of Molise is 36 km long and is characterized by low shores. From 1954 to 2007, the total retreat of the coastline caused a loss of about 1,000,000 m<sup>2</sup> of coastal area. About 19 km of beaches (53% of the total coastline) are actually at risk of erosion. Coastal defense traditionally relies on the construction of solid coastal defense facilities.

The inner part of the coastal zone has a strong agricultural purpose with a spread of rural areas, covering about 85% of the territory. Several parts of the region are included in the European Nature 2000 network. In particular, the entire southern coast and much of the northern

coast are classified as Sites of Community Importance (SIC). The entire coast of Molise is extremely rich in dunes and therefore has a high ecological value at the national level.

The coastal areas of Molise represent only a small part of the entire Italian coastal system (7500 km) and the Basin region of the Southern Apennines (2200 km). However, due to its specificities, it can provide good practices for land and sea management in order to promote sustainable development. The success of the LAND-SEA project, as well as the implementation of related operational actions through the presence of the Southern Apennine Basin, has made it easier to transfer policies to other regional instruments.



The Regional Operational Program "POR FESR FSE 2014-2020" is of major importance for the Molise region. It was approved by the European Commission in 2015 by Decision of 14 July 2015 and has a total budget of € 153,607,454 (ERDF: € 105,900,993 and ESF: € 47,706,460). Under the so-called POR Molise program, Priority Axis 5 allocates 13% of ERDF resources. In particular, Action 5.1.1 provides for interventions in protected areas in both terrestrial and marine environments to promote and sustain the growth process. The action maintains integrated intervention plans and is addressed to private and public bodies responsible for protected areas (municipalities, consortia, associations, etc.). Interventions can relate to mapping of emergencies, implementation of control / monitoring systems, ecological

restoration of sites, improvement of infrastructure and services for the development of the eco-tourism sector.

During the first interregional meeting, a study visit was held, presenting the port of Termoli. It covers a total area of 45,000 square meters and employs about a thousand workers. The port of Termoli is divided into two separate zones:

1) Old area, characterized by an indoor pool for about 120 fishing boats, a passenger pier and a shipyard. The main flow of passengers is over 240,000 units per year and more than 1,200 tons of fish are processed each year.

2) New area "Marina di San Pietro", built under the fortress walls of the historic center and open to the public since September 2009. It is considered the ideal base for reaching top destinations in the southern center of the Adriatic. The islands of Tremiti, Cape Gargano, Lastovo, Vis are the closest and easiest destinations. "Marina di San Pietro" can accommodate up to 300 ships from 8 to 30 meters. The commercial port area (passenger and fishing) is involved in the implementation of two important projects. The first was dedicated to increasing the depth of the seabed at the outer port from 4.5 to 6 meters. The work, which was completed in May 2003, made port navigation safer and facilitated access for ferries connecting Termoli with the Tremiti Islands and the Croatian coast. The total value of the intervention, funded by the resources of the Molise Regional Operational Program (ROP) is about 1.3 million euros. The project was overseen by the province of Campobasso. The second intervention, which was completed at the end of 2003, involved the construction of a road and junctions connecting the port with a state road №. 16 (Adriatic). The project also includes a covered section, over which bicycle lanes and pedestrian zones have been built. The aim of the intervention is to improve the safe movement of both vehicles and pedestrians entering the port area. The secondary effect is the elimination of traffic from the city center and the subsequent improvement and reduction of air quality in case of noise pollution. The total value of the investments controlled by the municipality of Termoli is about 5.7 million euros, financed through the Molise Regional Operational Program (ROP).

The port is subject to clogging, the length of the quays and the direction of the coastline leads to the accumulation of sludge. The materials that accumulate near the entrances to the port are mostly sand, which is transported by coastal currents. In a coastline such as that of Molise, the opening of an underwater canal to facilitate the access of ships to the port results in

a change in the morphology of the seabed, which is inevitably short-lived as the movement of waves lifts and carries away underwater sand. This way clogs the channel and restores the original situation of the seabed. The best way to remove the sand clogging the canal is to use it to fill eroding beaches near the port entrance.



One of the beaches that have been saved from erosion is the small municipality of Petachato, a significant part of the untouched nature of the ecosystems of the Molise coast. The clean sand, together with the vast dunes, rich in vegetation and dense pine forest, are the main features of this extremely representative Mediterranean coastal zone. In fact, the area includes an important habitat of public interest called Foce Trigno - Marina di Petacciat, which in turn includes the Petacciato Marine Reserve, with a total area of 747 hectares and a maximum altitude of 50 m.

## ***INFORMATION FOR THE SECOND SEMESTER, VARNA REGION***

The second meeting of the Project Steering Committee was held in Varna (Bulgaria) on 13-15 December 2017, the meeting of the expert panel, the Interregional Conference and the International Thematic Seminar, as well as the study visit. The second partnership meeting of the Land-Sea project in Varna showed that the project covers a wide range of issues.

During the events, the Land-Sea project partners exchanged experiences with a number of stakeholders, users, scientists and experts from public institutions.

The following stakeholders from the Bulgarian project partner took part in the Interregional Conference: Public-Private Partnership for Prevention and Resolution of Neuralgic Threats for the Development of Ecotourism:

- Presentation on the topic: "Best and worst practices in the field of coastline protection, marine hydraulic engineering and consolidation of landslides on the Black Sea coast" was presented by Eng. Krassimir Marinov, Project Troy Ltd .;
- Presentation on the topic: "Identification of all indicators related to the threats of erosion and landslides, for balancing and protection of environmental components for the development of sustainable ecotourism" - a representative of the RIEW - Varna;
- Presentation on the topic: "Flood risk management in the Black Sea region for water basin management" - a representative of the Basin Directorate Black Sea Region Varna;
- Presentation on the topic: "Coastal strategies for risk assessment and disaster management" - a representative of the Institute of Oceanology - BAS.





The Land-Sea project uses a holistic approach, analyzing ecotourism strategies. Some specific objectives between the regional partners were highlighted. The idea is to focus on a limited number of selected areas, as we believe this will increase the project's potential to have a significant impact on regional policies.

For the conduct and development of tourism, respectively ecotourism, as well as for the protection of natural landmarks, which are an attractive place for many tourists, it is necessary to implement activities to protect the coastline. Interregional cooperation through shared knowledge and experience will contribute to increasing regional and local capacity for sustainable management of coastal ecosystems.

The Land-Sea project illustrates the joint efforts of the six partners from four European regions to promote an integrated approach to improving policies for the sustainable management of land-sea ecosystems.

In terms of ecotourism, Varna region has some of the most attractive natural and anthropogenic tourist resources in the country, with a unique combination of natural resources (beaches, mineral waters) on the one hand and cultural heritage and traditions on the other. This has led to the rapid development of tourism in general, but also to enormous urban pressure. Ecotourism is used as a tool to promote disadvantaged municipalities in the Varna region and their social and economic development. However, significant potential in the region remains untapped or underutilized, and businesses and people there cannot reap the benefits of tourism.

During the official opening of the international conference in Varna, the Governor of Varna Stoyan Pasev presented the main expected benefits of the Varna Regional Administration for the region - development of prevention of the sea to continue to conquer coastal areas and the Administration's intentions to conquer Black sea and thus create additional good conditions for tourism and investment.

The specific objectives are to link the protection and promotion of natural and cultural heritage with coastal protection plans, risk assessment - mapping and development of tools for monitoring cultural and natural heritage, early warning and protection measures, green jobs in tourism, realization of unexplored potential of cultural and eco-tourism.

Within the framework of the forum, organized by the District Administration of Varna, extremely useful practices were exchanged - on topics related to the development and promotion of sustainable ecotourism, protection, restoration and sustainable management of

coastal marine areas, development of plans and strategies for ecotourism and management through sustainable institutions. As the main and most important problem facing the District Administration of Varna is related to critical landslides.



The meeting was based on the transfer of experience from other project partners affected by similar issues. Suggestions and recommendations can be systematized as follows:

- The proposal of the Agency for Urban Ecology in Barcelona is to obtain resources for coastal protection by establishing legal protection figures at environmental level, especially at European level (Nature 2000 Network). In order to achieve this, possible natural areas of interest at European level must be described and cataloged.
- The proposal of the Regional Government of Catalonia was found as a solution that allows maximum maintenance of current conditions and morphology. In addition, it is compatible with the maintenance of both habitats and ecosystems with high value and human activity, which in this place should be of lower intensity. Given that the area of experience in the Catalan region is not risk prevention but environmental impact assessment and the protection of habitats and species, the following recommendations were made:

- The raw material of ecotourism is nature and therefore it is necessary to plan and act for its protection and improvement. This should be a strategic goal in spatial planning;
  - When planning, the Varna coast should be zoned along two main axes: geological risks and natural value;
  - Hard shore infrastructure is not always the best solution, as it is very expensive, complex and uncertain. In this sense, it is not advisable to act on the principle of trial and error, as the consequences for the coast are often irreversible;
  - New infrastructures should be planned on the second shoreline, at a distance where they will not be affected by geological risks;
  - Soft, adaptive solutions based on the plasticity of the geological and biological elements of the coast would be most suitable for an important part of the coastline of Varna region.
- The Molise Region considers that the administrative instruments that can lead to a change in territorial management policy can be:
    - coastline management plan;
    - landslide and flood risk management plan.

These 2 plans could indicate the areas where construction should be prohibited and the places and types of interventions to be undertaken.

Coastal and marine planning and management (especially in terms of conservation or environmental sustainability) are the main strategies for mapping emergencies, implementing effective control / monitoring systems, coordinating the restoration of environmental sites, improving infrastructure and services for the ecotourism sector.

The regions of Molise, Catalonia and Varna are very crowded in certain areas and / or at certain times of the year, especially along the coast in summer. That is why the study of the dynamics of tourism and its development over the years is an important relationship between the partners. The distribution of the population in the coastal zones in the region can be analyzed from the visible point of the beginning of life and a significant comparison can be made. Changing coastal dynamics through the construction of breakwaters, ports and other structures at sea can be seen as another important point of connection and the exchange of good practices

here is highly recommended. The partners agreed that the main focus should be on tourism development, ensuring the integration of different types of tourism specific to the region.

The final conclusions, as a Bulgarian partner in the Land-Sea Project at the Second Project Meeting in Varna (Bulgaria), held on 13-15 December 2017, can be systematized as follows: Impact instruments to promote sustainable development through responsible management of natural resources and adequate care for the environment can be summarized as the following institutional measure - preparation of a proposal to the Regional Development Council of Varna through the Regional Development Council of Varna to establish a Regional Tourism Strategy.





### ***INFORMATION FO THE THIRD SEMESTER, CATALONIA***

The first of two planned visits to Catalonia took place during the third semester of the Land-Sea project. It included a meeting of the partners, a seminar in Barcelona and a trip to the Delta del Ebro Natural Park. The internal meeting was used to assess the state of the project after the first of three years.

Evaluation of the work to be completed at the end of the second semester and start preparing the work for the third semester.

In the technical seminar, experts from the 4 participating countries made a total of 10 reports related to the following 3 topics, which were highlighted at the meeting:

- 1) management of natural risks on the coast;
- 2) ecotourism as an economic engine
- 3) public-private partnerships to strengthen this emerging sector.

During the first of two planned visits to Catalonia as part of the Interreg Europe land-to-sea project, one of the most important wetlands in Europe, the Ebro Delta, was visited. The purpose of this visit is to show how the natural assets of the delta are managed and the relationship with the socio-economic activities that take place in the area. Special emphasis was

placed on ecotourism activities promoted by private stakeholders (private foundation and association of SMEs in ecotourism). The study visit was attended by over 40 people (partners, experts and stakeholders) from the four partner countries of the Land-Sea project.

The trip to the delta began with a visit to the private facilities of the Món Natura Delta de l'Ebre, run by the Catalonia-La Pedrera Foundation, a private company set up for nature conservation. The strategy of the foundation is to buy spaces of high natural value and make them accessible to the public through ecotourism activities, together with their protection. These lands have been rehabilitated from the former salt marshes of La Tankada and cover an area of 41.2 hectares. During the visit, attendees learned various aspects of the Ebro Delta: the ecological value of the area (through their habitats, their flora and fauna), their traditional activities and the main natural and socio-economic problems solved (settlement, salinization of crops, loss the contribution of soil from the Ebro River due to upstream dams, over-fertilization, carrying capacity of fragile land-sea ecosystems, sea level rise, loss of job opportunities, etc.). Various areas for entertainment and education were presented, giving people a better idea of the importance of this lagoon area: salt production, traditional fishing and bird watching.



The second visit was the Barra del Trabucador, a small dune that separates the sea from the Gulf of Alfaki. The director of the Ebro Delta Nature Park, Francesc Vidal, explained the changes that Barra has had in relation to the coastal dynamics and the problems that the park has had to face.



The third visit took place in one of the two green filters of the company AcuaMed Technical, which operates in the Ebro Delta. This is a biological purification system, consisting of the use of aquatic vegetation to eliminate nutrients from the water entering it, from rice fields. After spending a few days in these artificial lagoons, the water that comes out is thrown into the bay cleaner.

The tour included a boat trip on the Ebro River to its mouth, to the island of Buda Nature Reserve. During the trip, interesting facts were explained about the observed regression phenomena affecting the Ebro delta, which cause loss of surface area and salinization of land.

Study visits in connection with the construction and management of a nature park in the Ebro Delta are a good example of preserving the natural and cultural heritage through the

implementation of environmentally friendly construction, emphasizing the importance and development of local business.

In conclusion, it can be concluded that public-private partnerships are essential for achieving sustainability and development, an ecological model of ecotourism for the protection of natural and cultural values to a rapidly developing segment of the economy, such as tourism. By creating an initiative to engage all stakeholders, not only economic but also social impact on local communities is generated. All participants focused on a sustainable economy, growth with the environment and improving the quality of life of local people and local communities. The approach to governance through the involvement of local people, local actors, non-governmental and governmental institutions through various initiatives can be borrowed. Public-private partnerships are possible in order to develop economic activity that is sustainable in natural areas. This model can easily be adopted by other regions as a means of developing the local economy and therefore improving the sustainability and protection of the territory and its natural values. It is a partnership between different stakeholders to offer a common basis for cooperation for a sustainable ecotourism model.

Another good example presented by Barcelona is related to water purification. The use of chemicals has a negative impact on nature, which is why environmental solutions to environmental problems are applied. In order to reduce the inflow of domestic wastewater to Lake Fukene, a green filter has been created in the Ebro Delta - as a system for sustainable wastewater treatment. As an alternative to traditional wastewater treatment plants, green filters have the advantage of not consuming energy. In addition to having a low negative impact on the environment, they contribute significantly to improving the aesthetics of the





The partnership meeting in Barcelona included a thematic seminar with presentations by all partners, including project stakeholders. Extremely useful and fruitful visit, which can be summarized as follows:

- Coastal management and the concept of ecotourism is an extremely complex and multifactorial process, as evidenced by several examples:
- In Bulgaria, the public sector and private business are trying to base their tourism sector on natural values that no longer exist because they have been destroyed or rejected due to environmentally friendly solutions.
- In Italy, they are well aware of the consequences of the construction of ports and other solid infrastructures in the coastal dynamics, among which the loss of sand on the beaches stands out. At the same time, in the same region, it is proposed to expand the port for tourist promotion and build more submerged structures in order to avoid it. In most cases, natural coastal habitats do not need protection against floods or storms, because their existence is precisely a consequence of the effects of these natural phenomena.

In this sense, their protection with heavy infrastructure is a mismatch. Land-to-sea natural risk management, ecotourism as an economic engine for rural and coastal areas; and public-private partnerships (PPPs) and governance are three dimensions that are strongly interlinked and need to be fully and collectively managed.



## ***INFORMATION FOR THE FOURTH SEMESTER, HAMBURG***

In the fourth semester of the project, the partnership was hosted by Hamburg, a city with diverse interests in flood protection, coastal management and tourism. Faced with a number of water level issues, the visit was divided into two: "Flood protection" and a visit to the Hamburgisches Wattenmeer National Park, in order to obtain information on coastal protection and environmental protection.



## ***INFORMATION FOR THE FIFTH SEMESTER., AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY OF CATALONIA***

In the 5th semester of the project, the second of the two planned visits to Catalonia under the Land-Sea project took place, visiting the Mongri Natural Park, the Medes Islands and the Bikes Ter. It is a protected marine and terrestrial area, recognized worldwide for its submerged natural values, a destination for divers from all over Europe. The Mongri Natural Park, the Medes Islands and the Bikes Ter are located in the north-eastern corner of the Iberian Peninsula, in the province of Girona, between the counties of Alt Empordà and Baix Empordà. It is part of the so-called Costa Brava, a name that comes from its steep relief with an abundance of sea rocks. The park is clearly divided into three physical-geographical units:

- "The Mongri Massif, a mountain range that ends in spectacular cliffs above the Mediterranean.";

- The Medes Islands, the diversity of environments and the exceptional biodiversity of the waters surrounding this small archipelago of seven islands, located one mile from the town of L'Estartit, in the middle of the Costa Brava, are a unique place and one of the most iconic in the Mediterranean;

- The Bikes Terre River Basin, a vast agricultural plain with several coastal wetlands, rice fields and vast sandy beaches.



In late 1969, the Spanish Federation of Underwater Activities launched a project to propose the creation of an underwater park on the Medes Islands, but the first protection laws arrived only in the 1980s, when the Catalan government issued an order banning fishing and extraction of living marine resources off the coast of the Medes Islands. In 1990, this protection was extended to include the conservation of the fauna and flora of the seabed of the Medes Islands, the implementation of which led to the creation of a protected area on the Medes Islands.

In 2010, by a decision of the Parliament of Catalonia, the Medes Islands were declared a natural park, along with the Mongri Massif, the Baix Ter wetlands, the Mongri Nature Park, the Medes and Baix Ter islands. The nature park includes: one nature reserve in the Medes Islands area, two partial nature reserves (one on the Medes Islands and one in Baix Ter), one in the peripheral area of the partial marine nature reserve and one in the agricultural area.

The main economic activity in the visited area is tourism, which is based on coastal and marine natural values. Since 2014, the nature park has been working on the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, an initiative that has the interest and support of most of the territory.

Within the park there is a very important area covered with rice fields, agricultural activity, which is also beneficial for bird populations. Rice fields remain virtually flooded throughout the year, becoming a feeding and resting place for migratory birds.

Fishing and any kind of extraction of natural resources are prohibited in the strictly protected area of the Medes Islands. As regards the area around the strictly protected area, professional fishing is authorized for fishermen registered with L'Estartit. Some fishermen are collaborating on the Sepia project, an initiative to protect cephalopods in a nature park.

The purpose of the visit is for the project partners to get acquainted with experience in two thematic areas, namely:

- Analysis of the capacity of the tourist area: opportunities for improvement through strategic planning;
- Strategies for modifying and improving the impact of the landscape caused by the growth of tourism.

### ***INFORMATION FOR THE SIXTH SEMESTER, MEETING IN TERMOLI, ITALY.***

In the 6th semester, the last conference on the Land - Sea project took place in Termoli, Italy. The meeting summarized all aspects and activities carried out during the first phase of the project (2017 - 2019) and presented the most important results obtained from its implementation: Regional Action Plans developed by each project partner Land - Sea. These Coastal Zone Action Plans are able to ensure the proper development and strategies for the realization of the tourist and recreational goals to be imposed at national and European level. The action plans are practical and effective methods to enable the development of the regions for which they are drawn up. The financial aspect of the Partners' Action Plans is of great importance, as if the documents remain linked only from a practical point of view, they could remain useless.

At the meeting held on November 20, 2019 in the town of Termoli, each of the partners developed presentations to present the latest aspects of the Action Plans prepared by them. In this way, their presentation to the general public took place.

## **1. MOLISE REGION ACTION PLAN.**

The Molise Region Action Plan presents coastal areas of great naturalistic value as one of the most important sandy coastal ecosystems in Italy and the Adriatic because of its biodiversity. In this context, the implementation of the Land - Sea Action Plan has helped to ensure sustainable economic growth in these important naturalistic areas, using ecotourism as a prerequisite for positive and increasing development.

General objectives of the Molise Region Action Plan:

- (a) developing a strategy for sustainable ecotourism;
- (b) promoting the internationalization of tourism in the region;

(c) enhancing the region's economic growth through tourism development based on the naturalistic value of the coast, offering sustainable wildlife tourism and protected coastal areas. The Action Plan takes into account key international and European directives related to integrated coastal zone management: the Birds Directive (2009/147 / EC); Habitats Directive (92/43 / EEC); Water Framework Directive (2000/60 / EC); Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56 / EC); Flood Risk Management Directive (2007/60 / EC).

The action plan is not theoretical, but effective, as it relates to the real economic feasibility of the region interested in its development. In particular, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Operational Program 2014-2020 of Molise. Axis 3.2.1 Axis 5.1.1. Axis 5.3.1. of the Termoli Urban Strategy. Termoli's Urban Strategy 2014-2020 is interested in the Dolphin Coast as part of the National Coastal Zone Strategy. The coast of the dolphins includes the municipality of Termoli, the municipality of Campomarino, the municipality of Gulionesi and San the municipality of Giacomo della Schiavoni. The Action Plan also addresses the Molise Regional Strategic Tourism Development Plan.

Strategic objectives of the Action Plan:

- (a) improving the training and awareness of professionals involved in the ecotourism sector in order to promote the sustainability and competitiveness of the ecotourism sector;
- (b) improving the quality and sustainability of coastal facilities, in particular the development and implementation of ecotourism facilities;
- c.) adopting an innovative approach to the creation of ecotourism experiences and their promotion;

(d) improving the coordination and involvement of agents involved in the planning and management of ecotourism off the coast of Molise, especially in Natura 2000 sites;

(e) advertising, conservation and restoration of the coastal zone, paying special attention to resources of ecotourism value in Natura 2000 sites.

The Molise Action Plan consists of five actions that develop different activities. Brief details of the actions are described in the following lines.

**ACTION 1 - Identify and plan training and promotion of ecotourism off the coast of Molise.**

The tourism sector needs to be encouraged and improved, as during the land-sea staff exchange. The basis for growth must be the identification and planning of training activities and the promotion of ecotourism in Molise. This action aims to spread the knowledge of ecotourism and its benefits in the tourism sector (from SMEs to professionals and tour operators). The activities consist in developing the framework for the formation of: organizing training and modernization courses for tour operators, economic operators, SMEs and all beneficiaries belonging to the tourism sector and its industries; preparation of information calendars for existing companies; preparation of information calendars for start-ups; marketing of these companies in the international framework of ecotourism according to Action 2 and Action 3. The participants in this action are training institutions; Molise University; SMEs; professionals; tour operators; economic operators.

**ACTION 2 - Qualification of the tourist offers on the territory of the town of Termoli.**

The Molise region has identified shortcomings in promoting ecotourism products and services. This action encourages and supports the realization of innovative tourist products and services of business companies operating in the hotel industry in the town of Termoli.

The publication of a call to stimulate tourism proposals in the town of Termoli, which also includes the coastal area of Molise from Action 1 and the Regional Strategic Plan for Tourism Development. Therefore, the activities that have access to this funding are aimed at encouraging and supporting the creation and implementation of innovative tourism products



and services in tourist destinations. As an example: "Dynamic packages" - an online interface used for booking travel packages that allow users to create custom packages; "Intervention for accommodation": sustainable rehabilitation, home automation and building automation; "Marketing network" of products or services from the manufacturer directly to the end user also through a network of independent distributors; Interventions of the "tourism information system" system; Intervention "customer relationship management"; Security interventions and information sharing (cloud computing), such as information on e-bookings, e-commerce, applications, etc .; Organizational innovations needed to obtain a certificate in environmental management, social responsibility, ethical tourism.

The participants in the development and implementation of this action are individual companies; microenterprises; SMEs; economic operators in an associated form of consortia, networks of companies and other groups of legally recognized companies. All beneficiaries must belong to the tourism sector and its industries.

### **ACTION 3 - Zoning of SMEs in the tourism sector and interconnection to the international ecotourism market.**

Networking between the various SME SMEs working in the ecotourism sector. The examples given by Catalonia and Varna can be used to allocate different SMEs in the right ecotourism sector to meet their needs for environmental development and the possibility of joining an international network. This action will be implemented through the development of the following activities:

- Selection of travel companies;
- Formation of the market of these companies for ecotourism;
- Establishment of a network of ecotourism enterprises in Molise;
- Entering this network on the international market, joining the website [www.wildsea.eu](http://www.wildsea.eu), for example, following the Catalan experience.

### **ACTION 4 - Marketing actions for integrated use of cultural and natural resources and promotion of tourist destinations.**

The Molise region, according to the needs of stakeholders arising from the local events of the Land-Sea project and according to the "Costa de Delphini Plan" presented by the city

administration of Termoli, took action to competitively reposition the ecotourism destinations of Molise, especially in the coastal zone.

The activities that have access to this funding are all aimed at ensuring an increase in the flow of tourists in the territory of Molise, not only in the summer season, but year-round, which will contribute to the competitiveness of the tourism sector. The following activities will be implemented:

- Update of the website implemented by INTERREG Hericoast for natural and cultural attractions of the "Dolphin Coast".

- Use of the Dolphin Coast brand for the international eco-tourism platform, combined with Action 3

- Implementation of tourist packages integrating products and services related to culture, nature, gastronomy (food and wine);

- Development of a catalog of ecotourism packages based on international experience, which will be developed and located in at least two important areas for the protection of the Molise coast.

- Participate in a project for awards / grants in the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism to bring measurable economic, social and environmental benefits to well-managed sustainable tourism, as well as to gain international recognition and improve Action 3.

The participating players are Termoli Municipality; Municipality of Gulionezi; Municipality of San Giacomo delle Schiavoni; Municipality of Campomarino; Municipality of Petachato; Municipality of Montenero di Bisacha; The University of Molise as a technical research body for the development of projects for accession to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism.

### **ACTION 5 - Expansion of the coast and restoration of the coastal pine forest in Campomarino Lido.**

Ecotourism planning and management must take into account that biodiversity of resources is crucial. These resources are important in terms of aesthetic value, functional values in terms of economic value (eg ecosystem services).

This action will be implemented through the development of the following activities:

- Ecological restoration of beaches and pine forest with ecological techniques.

- Periodic cleaning of the coastal pine forest and control.
- Creating areas dedicated to children.
- Implementation of the already existing "Percorso Natura" in Campomarino Lido.
- Realization of an adventure park.
- Construction of a museum of biodiversity in the Pine Forest, built of recycled wood.

This action is also being developed according to the Molise Regional Strategy for Tourism Development on the promotion of Percorso Natura and the reclassification of natural areas.

The participating players will be the municipality of Campomarino and the Molise region.

## **2. ACTION PLAN REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION VARNA.**

This action plan is a detailed set of instructions that must be followed in order to solve the problems in Varna district for the development and promotion of sustainable ecotourism, protection, restoration and sustainable management of coastal marine areas.

### **ACTION 1 - Maintenance, improvement and promotion of protected areas and places by promoting ecotourism, follow the principles the Regional strategy for development of Varna region 2014-2020.**

This action will be implemented by developing the following activities:

- Preparation and printing of brochures for ecotourism destinations and thematic routes in Varna region. The brochures will be distributed to the citizens during their visit to the Regional Administration Varna.

- Cleaning of the Pasha Dere area / protected area /. Pasha Dere is an area that covers a pristine beach with a length of 1.5 km. It is located south of Varna's Galata district, close to the Chernomorets campsite and the hut of the same name. To the west Pasha Dere borders the protected area Rakitnik, and to the south of the beach is the protected area Liman, which is home to many rare and protected species of plants and animals. Pasha Dere is one of the few places on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast that have not yet been affected by human activity. The lack of urbanization and construction, the pristine beach and the wild nature attract wild camping enthusiasts every year during the summer months. Throughout the summer season on

the beach and in the forest above it can be seen many tents and bivouacs, which recreate the atmosphere of the protected areas Irakli and Kara Dere.

- Cleaning of the Longoza protected area around the Kamchia reserve. The Longoza Protected Area is the former buffer zone around the Kamchia Reserve. The total area is 230 hectares, 70 of which are afforested forests and preserved longzoic forests (riparian forests in the lower reaches of the Black Sea rivers), and 160 hectares are agricultural lands. The relief of the Kamchia reserve and the protected area is flat, slopes only in the northern parts and close to the sea. As the level of the Kamchia River rises during the spring season, the usual floods of the Longozoic Forest occur. Various plant and animal species are found in the protected area of Longoza. Tourist trips are allowed from the beginning of the Kamchia River to the borders of the reserve, but tourists must comply with certain requirements.

Participants in these activities: the mayors of municipalities in Varna district, regional development agencies; regional structures of branch business organizations, representatives of universities and research organizations; Non-governmental organizations.

### **ACTION 2 - Establishment of a new strategic document - Regional strategy for tourism development in Varna region.**

Tourism is a priority sector for the economy of Varna district. Varna District has some of the most attractive natural and anthropogenic tourist resources in the country, which has led to a serious development of the tourist function. The natural conditions and resources in the region create an environment conducive to habitat and the development of resort and recreational functions. The sea area and the coastline offer very good opportunities for water sports and swimming. Rocky areas and sandy beaches alternate with different thermal and bioclimatic conditions. The mineral springs have a significant flow rate and have very good healing properties. Forests and forest parks in suburban areas and inland are rich. The potential of the region in the field of natural and anthropogenic tourist resources is characterized by a unique combination of natural resources (beaches, mineral waters) and cultural and historical heritage and traditions.

This action is also dictated by the Plan for the Promotion of Natural Tourism in the Protected Areas of Catalonia. The documents that caught our attention are the Strategic Tourism Plan 2013-2016 and the Catalan Tourism Directives 2020. These documents are to improve the

use of natural and cultural resources in the tourism industry. The goal of the plan is for Catalonia to become a leader in nature tourism in the Mediterranean region by 2020. This goal will be achieved by optimizing the value of its natural, cultural and landscape resources and contributing to local and regional development. The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism is a tool for natural tourism planning and dialogue with regional actors to stimulate local economic development. Due to its clear methodology, it is considered a voluntary accreditation system. The system of accession to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism is a voluntary agreement that obliges supporters to implement a local strategy in favor of sustainable tourism. There are currently six parks accredited by the European Charter in Catalonia.

The main principles that are substantiated in the Regional Strategy for Tourism Development are:

- The natural, untouched environment;
- ecological and cultural sustainability;
- Contribution to conservation;
- Education, training and interpretation;
- Providing local benefits and participation;
- Satisfaction of visitors;
- Responsible marketing.

The vision of the strategy is for Varna region to be a preferred destination for sustainable tourism.

The mission of the strategy is through the development of sustainable tourism to offer year-round tourism products and services based on our nature, traditions and customs, history and way of life.

#### **PRIORITY AREAS:**

- Conservation and sustainable use of development resources;
- Achieving economic sustainability and competitiveness;
- Improving the quality of life and well-being of local communities and their active participation in the formation of a policy for sustainable development of tourism.

Participants: the mayors of municipalities in Varna region, members of the regional council for development of Varna district. Stakeholders are: regional development agencies;

regional structures of branch business organizations, representatives of universities and research organizations; NGOs

**ACTION 3 - Establishment of a platform for cooperation and exchange of good practices between all eco-tourism stakeholders.**

The shared experience with the project partners is very important to us and we offer periodic Skype calls within the existing cooperation. The aim is to seek comprehensive, effective and efficient regional governance that is able to protect natural habitats and contextually support the development of ecotourism through open dialogue.

This action will be implemented by developing the following activities:

- Creation of a website for ecotourism in the Varna region, which will upload all legal and strategic documents, forums held by the regional governor, as well as questions from citizens and inquiries to the Regional Administration of Varna.

- Conduct studies to improve information services for consumers of ecotourism products and services. Four studies will be conducted in six months. It is expected to cover 1,500 to 2,400 people.

Participants: the mayors of the municipalities of Varna district, members of the regional council for development of Varna district, members of the regional council for development of the northeastern region. Stakeholders are: regional development agencies; regional structures of branch business organizations, representatives of universities and research organizations; Non-governmental organizations.

**3. HAMBURG ACTION PLAN.**

In the Land-Sea project, Hamburg identifies the Climate Plan of 2015 as a political tool. This climate plan is the most comprehensive document in Hamburg outlining the transition to sustainability. Climate planning in Hamburg follows the circular logic of: development, implementation, monitoring, adjustment.

**ACTION 1 - The Hamburg Climate Plan.**

In the updated version of the Hamburg Climate Plan, published in early December 2019, the concept of the coastline is more widely understood. The adaptation chapter says: "Climate

change is an existential challenge for Hamburg. Flood protection must be based on the latest scientific discoveries "and yet adaptation cannot be limited to rising sea levels.

In the second phase of the Land-Sea project, Hamburg seeks to implement the measure described in the updated climate document by receiving funding for a pilot project on "Urban Planning for Water", which in turn will lead to a broader understanding of governance of coastal areas. Based on the experience of EU-funded projects (eg H2020 Clever Cities, H2020 RECONNECT, H2020 FORCE, H2020 MySmartLife), the city of Hamburg can benefit greatly from such projects, especially in new areas not yet fully identified.

Participants in the action:

- Senate Office / Department of European Affairs;
- Ministry of environment;
- Other institutions related to the free and Hanseatic city of Hamburg.

#### **ACTION 2 - A climate friendly seafront in the Central District.**

As a second action, Hamburg aims to integrate a broader understanding of the coast into the new Central Region climate protection plan.

#### **4. CATALONIA ACTION PLAN.**

The 2019-2021 Action Plan for the Ebro Delta within the framework of the Land-Sea Interreg Europe project is associated with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (ECST) of the Ebro Delta Objective 1. Improve the coordination and participation of the agents involved in the planning and management of ecotourism in the Ebro Delta, especially in the scope of the Natural Park. Objective 2. Preserve and recover the heritage of the delta, paying special attention to resources with ecotourism value. Objective 3. Improve the quality and sustainability of the Ebro Delta's facilities, particularly ecotourism facilities. Objective 4. Adopt an innovative approach to the creation of ecotourism experiences and their promotion. Objective 5. Improve the training and awareness of professionals related to the ecotourism sector in order to favour the sustainability and competitiveness of the tourism sector.

Fulfilling the above-described objectives, the following lines describe the actions planned for each of them:

### **ACTION 1. Improvement of the coordination and participation of agents.**

- 1.1. Improvement of participation in the Ebro Delta Sustainable Tourism Forum;
- 1.2. Development of tourism business associations and renewal of companies adhered to the ECST;
- 1.3. Organisation of the ENS | Ecotourism, Nature and Sustainability Forum for ecotourism professionals in the Ebro Delta;
- 1.4. Promotion of synergies between the ECST and Biosphere Reserve Certificates.

### **ACTION 2. Preservation and recovery of deltaic heritage**

- 2.1. Monitoring of visitors and increased supervision of public activity in El Delta de l'Ebre Natural Park (PNDE);
- 2.2. Planning, protection and recovery of natural enclaves open to the public;
- 2.3. Planning of tourist activities along the River Ebro and on the beaches.

### **ACTION 3. Improvement of the quality and sustainability of the ecotourism facilities of the Ebro Delta**

- 3.1 Improvement of accessibility and interpretation for people with special needs;
- 3.2 Promotion of the bicycle as a sustainable means of transport;
- 3.3 Pilot project to foster the contribution of tourism to conservation;
- 3.4 Optimisation of public facilities in the Natural Park and the Ebro Delta.

### **ACTION 4. Creation of ecotourism experiences and promotion**

- 4.1 Knowledge of the Ebro Delta's tourism supply and demand;
- 4.2 Development of ecotourism experiences in the Ebro Delta;
- 4.3 Preparation of guidelines for the responsible promotion of El Delta del'Ebre Natural Park.

### **ACTION 5. Training and awareness for sustainable tourism**

- 5.1 Coordination and execution of a training programme for the tourism sector;
- 5.2 Park expert course and accreditation of PNDE guides.



## **CONCLUSION:**

Ecotourism has an impact in three areas - social, economic and environmental. In the modern world, these influences are becoming a necessity. In fact, tourists are looking for new ways to discover territories. Ecotourism is the key to meeting expectations, as well as sustainable development related to the vision for a better future. Also, small initiatives can have a major impact on the development of coastal areas. Therefore, such actions should be encouraged in order to attract more tourists.