



LOCAL ACTION PLAN

Country: Spain

Pilot area: Anogia

1. Introduction

This document is a project-level **Local Action Plan (LAP)** and compiles the main conclusions from the:

- Med Pearls Research Study on Slow Tourism International Trends and Innovations
- SWOT analysis of the Med Pearls Mediterranean Action Area
- SWOT analysis of *Anogia*
- Mapping of Natural and Cultural assets of *Anogia*

The aim of the LAP is to provide context, background and guidance to the local DMCs to align their proposals to the requirements of the Slow Tourism approach and the needs and specificities of the project pilot areas.

The LAP is based on the Med Pearls project findings after its first year of implementation and needs to be backed-up by local and regional public and private stakeholders to ensure a long-term impact.

2. About the Med Pearls project

Tourism is a key driver for the development of local economies in the Mediterranean, directly contributing to 7.7 million jobs and indirectly to 20 by 2012 (according to the Joint Operational Programme SWOT analysis of the ENI CBC MED Programme). Projections are really promising, especially in fields like ecotourism or other forms of sustainable tourism. The outstanding variety and richness of cultural & natural assets throughout the region is a competitive advantage compared to other destinations.

Nevertheless, some barriers are undermining the possibilities of utilizing its full potential and of increasing its contribution to local development in a sustainable way. The mainstream model deployed so far relies too much on 'sun & beach' offer, characterised by being large-scale & low-cost, with a lack of innovation, diversification & reinvestment of profits into local economies, while causing high environmental pressures. Situation worsens because of a demand shift caused by political instability. To address these challenges, Med Pearls' approach proposes an alternative model based on 4 pillars to reposition the area as a quality destination for Slow Tourism (ST):

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- i) Deseasonalization (taking advantage of the exceptional weather conditions);
- ii) Diversification (developing new tourist products & experiences for niches & new segments based on Slow Tourism and valorising the rich existing heritage);
- iii) Innovation (introducing ICT & digitalisation to bolster the most promising tourist product ideas coming from local MSMEs);
- iv) Local economy development (by supporting Slow Tourism, around 66% of the trip costs from packages remain in local destinations (as estimated by the ATTA 2014 Snapshot), thus at local stakeholders, while in mass tourism packages up to 80% of travellers expenditures go to airlines, hotels or other international companies, according to UNEP).

Med Pearls will work towards the integration of the Mediterranean diversity into a top quality & single brand for Slow Tourism, guaranteeing similar experiences to visitors based on regions' values & lifestyle.

Based on the above, the Project Objective is to internationally position the Mediterranean as an integral destination of quality and excellence for Slow Tourism by accelerating innovative initiatives built from public & private cooperation.

Med Pearls project is co-financed by the European Union under the European Neighbourhood Instrument cross-border cooperation program "Mediterranean Sea Basin" 2014-2020 (ENI CBC MED). It started on 1st September 2019 and has a duration of 36 months (until 31st August 2022). It counts on an overall budget of 3.015.132 EUR, which are co-financed at a 90% rate by the ENI CBC Med program.

It includes the following project partners:

- Lead Beneficiary: Spain: Catalan Tourist Board
- Project partner 1: Egypt: Confederation of Egyptian European Business Associations
- Project partner 2: Greece: Municipality of Thessaloniki
- Project partner 3: Jordan: Discovery Travel & Tourism LLC
- Project partner 4: Italy: APS Mediterranean Pearls
- Project partner 5: Palestine: Palestine information & communications technology incubator
- Project partner 6: Palestine: Palestine Wildlife Society
- Project partner 7: Egypt: Alexandria Chamber

More information is available at: <http://www.enicbcmed.eu/projects/med-pearls>

3. About Slow Tourism

➤ Definition of Slow Tourism

Although there is not a single definition, Slow Tourism is a type of tourism that:

“Sensitizes demand and supply of ethical values, allows to get possession of time again, relieves anxiety and stress caused by hectic paces, allows the guests to be back in tune with themselves and whatever surrounds them, creates a new form of awareness thanks to a deeper and involving experience and thus emphasizes sustainability, responsibility and eco-friendliness”.

According to some authors, it can only be called “Slow Tourism” if it satisfies six dimensions, both from the point of view of supply and demand. These are:

- Time
- Slowness (opposed to “time is money”)
- Otherness (sphere of relationships between individuals with different opinions, beliefs, knowledge and cultures)
- Authenticity
- Sustainability
- Emotion

To roll-out this LAP in the pilot area, it is strongly recommended to use the main findings and conclusions from the Med Pearls “**Research study on Slow Tourism international trends and innovations**” which can be downloaded from this [link](#); specific information on the Slow Tourism concept is given on pages 9 to 11.

➤ General Aspects of a Slow Tourist profile

As far as the slow tourist profile is concerned, information of interest can be found in the chapter “Conceptualization and Trends on Sustainable and Slow Tourism” of the before mentioned study.

In the following table a comparative profile of the slow tourist, in contrast to that of the “mainstream” tourist is presented.

	Slow Tourist	Mainstream Tourist
Inspiration	From travel books to Internet	Internet
Reservation	By phone or e-mail (for a more direct contact) but also Internet	Internet booking engines but also email
Use of tour operators	Only if not avoidable	Yes
Destination info & maps	From travel guides (paper) to smartphone	Smartphones or tablet
Taking pictures	Analogic camera, if possible – smartphones	Smartphones

Use of social networks to communicate trip or pictures	Growing trend	Yes, in every case
Personal attitude towards destination, people, and environment	“Disconnection” from the everyday world and full “connection” to the destination	Permanent connection with the everyday world (smartphone) and little (or none) connection with destination.
Apparel and clothes	Soft and essential. Probably buys local clothes at destination	Heavy (unnecessary apparel), bought and brought from origin
Means of transport to destination	Preference for alternative means of transport mainly train or bus. Also shared transport, environmentally friendly, and hurry-free...	Preference for low cost airlines and/or exclusive use vehicle
Means of transport in destination	Public transport, shared, environmentally friendly, and hurry-free...	Those that allow quick movement e.g. exclusive use vehicle
Accommodation	Local housing and/or small, friendly, and familiar business	Major hotel franchises
Meals	Local & traditional cuisine / eco-friendly foods and beverages	Fast food, hotel food, international food
Agenda	Flexible agenda or none.	Everything is within a programme
Activities	Prefers direct contact with nature, and/or local population. No intermediaries	Fully intermediated. Minimum contact with local population.

➤ Check list to develop a Slow Tourism product

This check list is available at the document “**Criteria and requirements to create Slow Tourism packages**” prepared specifically for the Med Pearls project with the aim to support the creation of Slow Tourism packages and experiences that are highly attractive to Incoming Travel Agencies and Tourists.

The document can be downloaded from the Med Pearls website, specifically from the following [Link](#).

The criteria are classified in the following sections: transport, accommodation, activities and food. In addition, there is a section devoted to general aspects such as the ones related to the package itself or the DMC or Incoming Travel Agency offering the package.

For a tour package to be considered Slow, it should meet a minimum of compulsory requirements. It is considered that a Slow Tourism package has to be coherent and balanced, so compliance with a minimum of 40% of requirements in each category is recommended. The more requirements the package meets, the more “Slow Tourism philosophy” will be. Each category details the minimum requirements to be met.

4. About the Pilot Area

Anoia has been selected for being one of the territories in Catalonia with a lower number of visitors but with distinct resources and elements to enhance slow tourism.

The area has an interesting mix of rural areas combined with natural environments and small cities with their own character. The county has also unique resources, be it at the level of natural, cultural and intangible heritage, or an array of local producers producing local crafts and gastronomic products.

In terms of tourism infrastructure, the area has growing potential with a varied accommodation offer that combines both hotels and smaller establishments that fit the slow tourism philosophy. Such as rural houses and lodges well integrated in the area where they are located. Furthermore, the area also offers visitors mobility options to move inside the destination through more eco-friendly and sustainable options such as public transport, bike renting and hiking routes.

Last, but not least, the area also offers events and activities throughout all the year that are respectful in representing the culture of the territory, as well as tourism activity providers that fit the slow tourism interest. Some examples are nature and active tourism providers, agrotourism activities, and wine and gastronomy tourism: visiting cellars, outdoors hikes, balloon tours, local gastronomy experiences, etc.

5. SWOT of the pilot area

STRENGTHS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Great variety and attractiveness of the cultural and natural resources. - Business willing to work on sustainable tourism (many companies are already working with Biosphere or other certifications). - Geographical proximity to the Barcelona Metropolitan Area and to beach and mountain areas. - Cohesion and willingness to work together on tourism between municipalities in the County. - Strong commitment of the County Council and "Anoia Turisme" to develop tourism in the county with SDGs criteria. - Existence of projects already being undertaken related to tourism sustainability and slow tourism. - County very well connected by road with important hotspots of Catalonia. "Transversal" axis and "Diagonal" axis (C-15 + C-37) and A-2 Barcelona – Lleida. - Proximity to well-known Montserrat Mountains. - Proximity to the Penedès County. - Existence of an aerodrome. Arrival of private planes. - Existence of train connection (see also "Weaknesses"). - Diversity of "cultural" landscapes: Alta Anoia (agricultural, forests); Òdena basin (industrial), Baixa Anoia (vineyards).
WEAKNESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individualism of tourist agents. - Lack of professionalism in the sector. - Lack of language skills of tourist agents. - Insufficient accommodation and restaurants in some areas of the County. - Parts of the region are part of the "empty Catalonia" without leisure or shops. - Lack of tourist accommodation and rural hotels, which include food service/restaurant to be able to structure tourist products and packages. - Lack of local product in the offer of restaurants of the County. - Low appreciation of the own local heritage. Lack of tourism sector awareness by the local population.



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- Lack of resources for the promotion and marketing of local tourist resources (also within the territory itself to gain awareness within the local population).
- Tourist seasonality: summer, holidays and weekends.
- Lack of branding as a tourist territory
- Lack of technological solutions to support the tourist offer (interactive guides on products, services, etc.)
- Lack of solutions for universal accessibility
- Poor railway and road infrastructure
- Limited opening hours of tourist information offices

OPPORTUNITIES

- Increasing awareness of the importance of sustainability in the tourism sector
- Growing international trends towards destinations linked to nature and cultural identity, not overcrowded.
- Growth of the Senior tourism and Family tourism markets.
- Growing use of new Blockchain technologies, artificial intelligence, augmented reality and Big Data in the tourism sector.
- Business tourism.
- The lack of hotel infrastructure in the area can be an opportunity to create a sustainable model from scratch.
- Adapt roads to make bike lanes.
- Possibility of joint actions with the Penedès neighbour county: wineries working together, cycling itineraries, shared hiking, etc.
- Development of the "Vies Blaves" (Blue Roads) project of trekking trails that will cross Anoia, connecting the Camí Ral (another trekking trail).
- Access to Montserrat Mountains from a less-known and less-crowded slope.
- Participation from the municipality of El Bruc in the initiative "The 4 portals of Montserrat" (the 4 municipalities conforming the Montserrat Mountains) .
- Anoia is conforming a hospitality and tourism sector county board, which would help professionalization.

THREATS

- High unemployment rate in the county.
- Fragile economic situation after the economic crisis and slow recovery. .
- Increased uncontrolled competition by online booking portals.
- Political instability in Catalonia/Spain.
- Excessive dependence on the Catalan visitors (metropolitan area)
- The most frequent type of visitor nowadays do not purchase products in the territory and practically do not interact with the territory.
- In neighbouring counties such as the Penedès, there is a trend of foreign investors acquiring properties and applying professional marketing strategies to get visitors = strong competitors.
- Covid-19 had a strong impact in this county with a lot of media repercussion.

6. Main cultural and natural assets of the pilot area

Regarding cultural heritage assets Anoia stands with different cultural and religious monuments like the *Montbui* and *Claramunt* castles or the old dry stone huts; historical and archaeological sites like the Popular Army Memorial; different museums such as the Capellades Paper Mill museum or the Miniature Train museum; and other assets like the Modernism or Gypsum routes.

In regards to intangible heritage the region is proud to have 2 traditional dishes (*vinyala* and *cigronet de l'Anoia* dish), different popular Catalan traditions (*Els Pastorets* Christmas play, live nativities, etc), and popular festivities and traditions (*Tres Tombs d'Iguala* and *Catalan Legends Festival*).

On the other hand, regarding natural heritage assets in the area we distinguish an important amount of assets related to rivers, waterfalls and lakes, as well as different mountains and hills and archaeological cultural sites. The main assets could be considered the *Pujalt* astronomic observatory, the Amphibian and Reptile Recovery Centre of Catalonia (CRAM), the mountains of Montserrat, the waterfall of *Cabrera*, the Anoiá river, and the “paleo routes” and geological heritage.

7. Key tourism players (stakeholders) in the pilot area

The main tourism stakeholders in the area, which are also in charge of promotion, are *Anoiá Turisme* (Anoiá Tourism Board) and the *Consell Comarcal de l’Anoiá* (the county’s government body).

8. Slow Tourism proposal in the Pilot Area

Below, some of the main experiences and products that can be identified as activities related to slow tourism:

- Hiking and routes to the different locations inside the destination, such as Montserrat.
- Cyclo-tourism routes and bike-renting activities.
- Wine and gastronomic experiences in local cellars and food producers.
- Aerostatic balloon tours.

9. Insertion of the Pilot area in the Med Pearls network

➤ SWOT of the Med Pearls Mediterranean Action Area

Besides the individual SWOT analysis conducted in each of the 13 Med Pearls Pilot Areas, further analysis has led to a global SWOT for the Mediterranean Action Area. In line with the project objective, the main goal is to internationally position the Mediterranean as an integral destination of quality and excellence for Slow Tourism, and hence the whole region is to be promoted and commercialised as a single tourism destination.

Thus, the Med Pearls SWOT analysis for the Mediterranean area is the following one:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well-established brand / destination name. - Tourism resources richness: cultural heritage, museums, archaeological sites, natural resources, landscape, unique flora and fauna. - Rich rural landscape in proximity - Rich local / traditional production - Diverse environment: financial, social and natural (biodiversity) - Variety of natural resources - Local cuisine which can be further enhanced - Strong and wide local market - Location, proximity to major urban centres and markets - Transportation alternatives - Proximity to well-known sites / established destinations - Access to organized health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited number of visitors due to insufficient tourism campaigns and / or low popularity - Shortage of specialized products providers (niche tourism) - Shortage of certified tourism service providers - Limited (or no) access to tourism information offices - Insufficiencies in urban infrastructure - Insufficient language and ICT skills - Insufficiencies in technological and digital tools and infrastructure - Limitations in disabled people accessibility - Inadequately funded local transportation - Limited accommodation options

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise public awareness on slow tourism and sustainability of tourism sector in general - International initiatives to promote and fund alternative / mild forms of tourism - Create new eco-tourism and slow tourism products - Strong mindset from population to accept further investments on tourism - New website for promotion - Potential development of new integrated itineraries and programs for activities and actions on slow tourism area - Potential traditional local festivals in an organized integrated schedule - New integrated market for local products - Structural capacity for further investments on accommodation infrastructure - Creation of new gastronomical contexts - COVID-19 – mass tourism restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unorganized, excessive competition among local entrepreneurs - Incomplete tourism market which leads to potential price imbalances and unfair wealth dissemination - Bureaucracy in various tourism actions and tourism initiatives - Constant economic crisis' phenomena in various sectors and activities (lack of resources and professionals in some instances)

➤ **Strengths and opportunities in common with other Med Pearls Pilot Areas**

Once the Med Pearls project concludes, a network of 26 Slow Tourism products or “Pearls”, enhanced by ICT technologies, will be put in place and enrich the Mediterranean tourism offer. These new Pearls will share common values across 6 countries. They will be inter-connected through shared elements like gastronomy, landscape, traditions, fauna, flora, etc. which link the different territories of the Mediterranean.

Additionally, they will all propose experiences based on the Slow Tourism concept, thus ensuring similar tourism experiences to people willing to visit the area. Since the Pearls have been developed following a common methodology, the resulting outcome will be standard experiences in 6 different countries but adapted to local realities.

This approach allows working as a network and facilitates the exploration of win-win approaches like ‘cross-selling strategies’. In fact, Med Pearls will allocate significant efforts to train the DMCs behind the Pearls to design and implement a cross-selling strategy and thus commercialize the 26 Pearls in all the 6 project countries.

➤ **Med Pearls actions to support promotion and commercialization of the Pearls**

Med Pearls foresees to roll out different actions to support the promotion and commercialization of the 26 new Slow Tourism products (Pearls) created in the fringes of the project. These actions have its own separate budget and will be managed by project partners, who will be acting as focal points in each country.

Thus, this section describes these tools and instruments that will enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of the Pilot Areas and the 26 pearls.

Med Pearls will draft a **Promotional & Commercialization Plan** that will guide both project partners and tourism destinations in the preparation and implementation of all the promotional and commercialization activities that will support the international positioning of the Mediterranean.



This plan will be fed by the findings of two research studies, the 'ST international demand. Data base of specialized operators' and the 'Guidelines on Most Innovative Practices on promotion and commercialization'.

The promotional and commercialization items are described below:

- **Med Pearls Online Platform**

The Med Pearls Online Platform is a cross-border tool to inform, promote & commercialize the Mediterranean as a Slow Tourism quality destination. The platform will inform about the Slow concept, about the 6 project countries and 13 destinations (stressing its main cultural & natural heritage assets) and about the 26 Pearls. Visitors interested in purchasing one of the holiday packages linked to a Pearl will be redirected to the DMC in charge of managing the Pearl and proceed with the booking process. Additional digital actions will complement the Platform in positioning the Med Pearls tourism offer.

- **International exhibitions**

Med Pearls will identify key international tourism exhibitions in which the Mediterranean and the 13 destinations should be promoted. Business missions combining representatives from the project partners and from the DMCs managing the Pearls will be organised, travelling to these exhibitions to gain international visibility, get in touch with tourism operators, DMOs, etc.

- **Fam & Blog trips**

Delegations of specialized tour operators, journalists, bloggers, etc. will be arranged so as they can visit the Med Pearls destinations and meet with the local stakeholders, notably the DMCs managing the Pearls. These visits will be coordinated by the project partners, possibly combining different countries in one single trip.