



Call for expression of interest for the establishment of a pool of mentors to guide and support the process of Sustainable Tourism product creation as part of the ENI CBC MED programme's Med Pearls project



1. Introduction

Med Pearls (The Mediterranean as an innovative, integral and unique destination for Slow Tourism initiatives) aims 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.

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 and the serious current global downturn in the tourism demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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):

- 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 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 will last for 36 months (until 31st August 2022). Its total budget amounts to 3.015.132 EUR, which is 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



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- Project partner 5: Palestine: Palestine information & communications technology incubator
- Project partner 6: Palestine: Palestine Wildlife Society
- Project partner 7: Egypt: Alexandria Chamber

Read more about Med Pearls at our website: <http://www.enicbmed.eu/projects/med-pearls>

2. Objective of the call of expression of interest

The Med Pearls project invites applications from individual experts to express interest in being included in the project's pool of mentors providing technical expertise.

The call for mentors relates to the Slow Tourism 'Product Development Facility' established by the Med Pearls project. Through this Facility, Med Pearls is providing financial support¹ and technical expertise to Destination Management Companies (DMCs) or Incoming Travel Agencies (sub-grant beneficiaries) to develop Slow Tourism products, also called "PEARLS". The "PEARLS" will be developed in the selected Med Pearls pilot areas in the 6 participating countries over a maximum of 6 months starting in Autumn 2021:

- 3 pilot areas in Catalonia, Spain: Ribera d'Ebre + Anoia + Garrigues
- 2 pilot areas in Thessaloniki, Greece: Imathia Veria + Olympos Pieria
- 2 pilot areas in Jordan: Al Salt + Deir Alla (Jordan Valley)
- 2 pilot areas in Italy: Etna-Alcantara + Sabina-Reatina
- 2 pilot areas in Palestine: Jenin + Bethlehem
- 2 pilot areas in Egypt: El-Montazah + Lakes Mariout and Edku

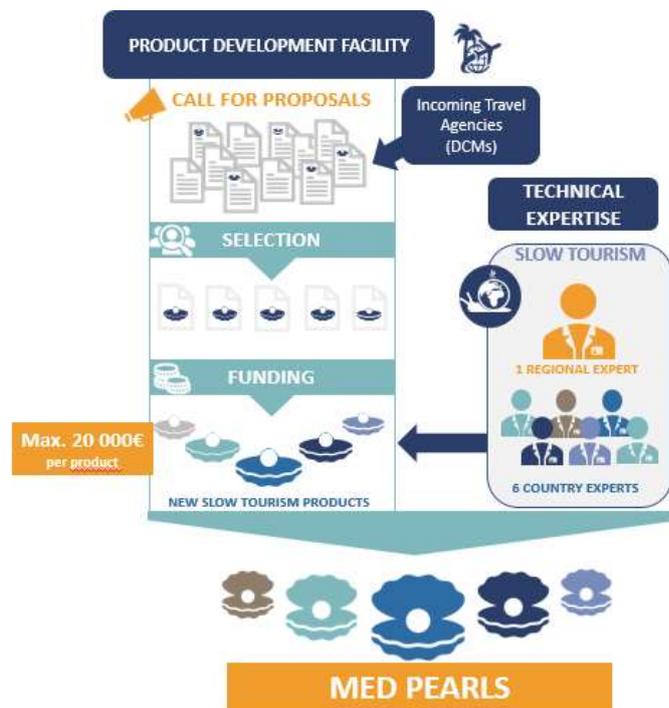
BOX 1: What is a Slow Tourism Product or "Pearl"?

As defined by UNWTO, a Tourism Product is "a combination of tangible and intangible elements, such as natural, cultural and man-made resources, attractions, facilities, services and activities around a specific center of interest which represents the core of the destination marketing mix and creates an overall visitor experience including emotional aspects for the potential customers. A tourism product is priced and sold through distribution channels and it has a life-cycle".

In the case of the type of products proposed by Med Pearls, these must be aligned with the following definition of Slow Tourism:

"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" (Dall'Aglio et al. (2011). *SLOW TOURISM Valorisation and promotion of slow tourist itineraries between Italy and Slovenia*)

¹ <http://www.enicbmed.eu/med-pearls-5-new-calls-proposals-slow-tourism-product-creation-egypt-italy-palestine-jordan-greece>
<http://www.enicbmed.eu/med-pearls-call-proposals-slow-tourism-product-creation-catalonia-spain>



2.1. Expected outputs of the Med Pearls Slow Tourism ‘Product Development Facility’

The “PEARLS” will be developed by the beneficiaries of the Sub-grants, and are expected to correspond to the following structure:

- A tourism product including at least 10 holiday packages involving at least 5 different type of companies of the pilot area²: accommodation, transportation, guides, experiential activities providers, cultural operators, gastronomy, etc.
- All holiday packages should include overnight stays.
- In order to comply with a Slow Tourism approach it is recommended to propose as much as possible long stay packages (i.e. of at least 6 nights / 7 days)
- These long stay packages may involve activities or over-night stays in other neighbouring areas.
- These long stay packages may link with main tourist entry points to the country/region to support in deconcentrating tourism flows from areas affected by mass tourism.
- In order to have a stronger impact on the economy of the Pilot Area is recommended to propose as

² At least 5 different type of companies for the whole Product. A specific package within the Product may have a lower number of companies involved.



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much overnight stays in the Pilot Area as possible³.

- Shorter versions of packages for 1 or 2 nights are also encouraged to complement the offer but also to respond to the increasing domestic tourist demand as a result to the COVID-19 crisis.
- The Slow Tourism products should include, as much as possible, services linked to soft mobility: use of public transport or other means already integrated in the product itself such as itineraries on foot, by bicycle, horseback rides, river routes, etc. To include luggage transfer between the different locations of the tourism itineraries, etc. And/or proposals on inter-modality: train + bicycle, bus + bicycle, etc.

2.2. Expected activities of selected mentors

Med Pearls is looking to elaborate a short-list of individual experts who will mentor the beneficiaries of the Product Development Facility. The experts selected from the pool will provide guidance to the beneficiaries relating to the quality of their PEARL product. Products deemed as not reaching a level of quality compatible with commercialisation by the Med Pearls project may see costs considered ineligible.

At least one national mentor will be assigned to each country (listed above) to guide beneficiaries in the implementation phase of conceiving and creating the new “PEARLS”. These ‘national mentors’ will be expected to fulfil the following activities **for each pilot site**:

- An introductory meeting with beneficiaries to identify and conceptualise their needs in developing the ‘PEARLS’. With the beneficiaries, the mentor will support the definition of the type of Slow Tourism product and adjust the originally planned timeline for the PEARLS’ development if needed (always less than 6 months). The mentor will share any supporting documentation, including a summary of their initial recommendations, and other product examples.
- Ongoing support over the implementation period, including providing feedback periodically on beneficiaries’ progress and participation in the mid-term evaluation exercise to ensure good progress and quality. This may on average be a monthly meeting to review progress.
- Coordination meetings every two months with the regional mentor to identify cross-border synergies in the Mediterranean region and to learn from others’ good practices. The first of these meetings will take place at the beginning of the implementation period to define regional priorities.

For national mentors assigned to countries with two pilot sites, the above activities are estimated to consist of 42 hours (including preparation hours) over a maximum of 6 months of implementation.

For national mentors assigned to Catalonia, with three pilot sites, the above activities are estimated to consist of 57 hours (including preparation hours) over a maximum of 6 months of implementation.

One mentor will coordinate at Mediterranean regional level all the national mentors to ensure alignment

³ Only in the case of pilot areas with no accommodation infrastructure, overnight stays may be arranged in neighbouring areas.



and cross-border coherence with the Slow Tourism objectives and Med Pearls' project principles. The 'regional mentor' will be expected to fulfil the following activities:

- An introductory meeting with all national mentor to define regional priorities for the development of the "PEARLS".
- A further two meetings meet with each national mentor to establish cross-border coherence with the progress made by each beneficiary and to provide any support to the national mentors.
- Participate in monthly progress meetings of the Med Pearls project.

The above activities for the regional mentor are estimated to consist of 48 hours (including preparation hours) over the 6 months of implementation.

3. Registration procedure

Individuals are invited to apply as independent experts by **submitting their applications to the following e-mail address: info@ceeba.org.**

The **subject field** of the email should mention "**Med Pearls Pool of Tourism Experts**"

Applications will be admitted on a rolling basis until the award of Product Development Facility to the DMC beneficiaries (expected in October 2021) and beyond if there is need for additional expert profiles.

Experts should submit:

- **An updated CV**, indicating how their areas of competences and professional experience correspond with the objectives of this call.
- **A cover letter** of 1-2 pages, describing in detail the relevancy of their professional experience and skills and indicating clearly if they are applying for the position of national and/or regional mentor.
- **References:** We recommend adding references of experiences that are relevant for this call.

It is possible to apply both for the country and for regional mentor roles, but eventually the expert will need to choose one of the roles to be contracted for.

Once confirmed, the Med Pearls project will evaluate the experts' applications and determine their eligibility in line with **point 5**. If the eligibility criteria is met, the individual expert will become part of the short-list of mentors of the Slow Tourism 'Product Development Facility' established by the Med Pearls project.

4. Selection of the mentors

The project partners will draw up a short-list of experts who meet the criteria set out at point 5. The project partners will then select six national mentors with the most relevant experience corresponding to each Med Pearls country. One regional mentor will be selected from the pool following the same short-list and final selection procedure by a panel of at least 3 project partners' representatives.

The Med Pearls project will facilitate the introduction of the national mentors to the corresponding beneficiaries so that support to implementation can begin.

5. Criteria for the inclusion in the short-list

5.1. Exclusion criteria:

Experts shall be excluded from participation if:

- (a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- (b) they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgement of a competent party of a Member State which has the force of *res judicata*;
- (c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting party can justify including by decisions of the European Investment Bank and international organizations;
- (d) they are not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting party or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- (e) they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been the subject of a judgement which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such an illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;
- (f) they are subject to an administrative penalty for being guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting party as a condition of participation in a procurement procedure or failing to supply information, or being declared to be in serious breach of their obligation under a contract covered by the budget;
- (g) they have a conflict of interest in connection with the contract; a conflict of interest could arise in particular as a result of economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional ties or any other relevant connection or shared interest.

Once the experts has been notified of their inclusion in the short-list, the expert must send a signed Sworn Statement to the address mentioned above that they are not in one of the situations of exclusion listed above. In case of doubt, they may be requested to provide supporting evidence of non-exclusion.

5.2 Selection criteria:

Country mentors

In order to be short-listed as country mentor, the individual experts must fulfil the following compulsory

requirements:

- have **at least three years of professional experience** in the creation of sustainable tourism products. This should include experience in developing budgets for tourism products and formalising commercialization activities;
- hold a **university degree** in a relevant field;
- have an excellent knowledge of **tourism markets**;
- have practical experience developing **communication strategies around tourism products**;
- Have an appropriate working knowledge **of English and fluency in the local language** of the project pilot sites (Catalan, Greek, Arabic (Egypt / Palestine / Jordan), Italian) according to the country for which the expert is applying.

For the shortlisted mentors, the following aspects will be evaluated for the final selection:

- (a) Experience in the creation of slow tourism products (1 point per product, max 5 points);
- (b) Have practical experience bringing tourism products to the international Med Pearls priority markets: United Kingdom, France, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, Sweden and the USA. (1 point per market experience, maximum 7 points)
- (c) Have good knowledge of or practical experience in the pilot areas of the country for which the expert is applying. (1 point per area)

Regional mentor

The regional mentor candidates must fulfil the following requirements:

- Have at least **5 years of professional experience** in the creation of sustainable tourism products. This should include experience in developing budgets for tourism products and formalising commercialization activities;
- hold a **university degree** in a relevant field;
- have an excellent knowledge of **tourism markets**;
- have an excellent knowledge of **Slow Tourism Trends**.
- have practical experience developing **communication strategies around tourism products**;
- Have an excellent working knowledge of **English**.



For the shortlisted mentors, the following aspects will be evaluated for the final selection of the regional mentor:

- (a) Have experience in the coordination of teams from different countries. (1 point per project, max 3 points)
- (b) Experience in the creation of slow tourism products. (1 point per product, max 5 points)
- (c) Have practical experience bringing tourism products to international Med Pearls priority markets: United Kingdom, France, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, Sweden and USA. (1 point per market, maximum 7 points)
- (d) Professional related experience in several Med Pearls countries (1 point per country, max 6 points)
- (e) Experience of having participated in a multi-country project (1 point per project, max 3 points)

6. Contracting

The selected mentors and the corresponding Med Pearls project partner will sign a “Mentor Agreement”⁴.

Regarding the national mentors, the agreement will indicate the expected role of the mentor as well as the number of hours calculated to fulfil the activities over the implementation period as detailed in Section 2.2 (42 hours for countries with two pilot sites and 57 hours for Catalonia with three pilot sites). The agreement will include a fixed rate of €100 per working hour all taxes included.

Regarding the regional mentor, the agreement will indicate the expected role of the mentor as well as the number of hours calculated to fulfil the activities over the implementation period as detailed in Section 2.2 (48 hours). The agreement will include a fixed rate of €110 per working hour all taxes included.

Mentors will be expected to report on the number of hours using timesheets.

7. Place of work

Tasks will be carried out remotely, using electronic communication tools.

8. Timetable

Stages	Dates
a) Deadline for submission of the applications	Rolling admission of mentors until at least the end of September 2021 or until all necessary profiles are covered adequately
b) Evaluation period*	October 2021
c) Information to applicants*	October / November 2021

*Indicative

⁴ To be provided

9. Processing of personal data

The reply to this call involved recording and processing of personal data (name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.