

The S&T MED Destination Management Organization (DMO) model implemented by the pilot destinations: Aqaba (Jordan), Cabras (Italy) and Mahdia (Tunisia)

S&T MED (Sustainability and Tourism in the Mediterranean) is a strategic project co-funded by the European Union through the ENPI CBC “Mediterranean Basin” 2007-2013 Programme.

Aqaba (Jordan), Cabras (Italy) and Mahdia (Tunisia) are the S&T MED pilot destinations working on a daily basis to support the development of sustainable and responsible coastal tourism.

The S&T MED project aims to stimulate and strengthen the capabilities and awareness of local governments, the private sector, local communities and tourists.

The key of this network’s activities is the adoption of a mixed public/private *Destination Management Organization* (DMO) model, to foster sustainable management and to harness and promote destinations’ natural and cultural heritages following an harmonized approach. The S&T Med DMO model is based on a platform involving local, national and scientific actors. A flexible model adaptable to the various destinations involved, reflecting private and public priorities through the establishment of a permanent Forum that will guarantee a participatory and bottom up approach of the destination tourism policy.

A *Sustainable Tourism Transnational Observatory* will be developed as an innovative tool for promoting and monitoring sustainable tourism activities. The Observatory combines environmental, social and tourism indicators aiming to monitor the natural resources of the coastal ecosystems putting in value, at the same time, a sustainable and responsible tourism offer.

The S&T MED DMO model encourages and supports the creation of business alliances among local operators, with the aim of improving the quality of tourist-oriented services. Tourist usability is boosted by the creation of *tourist itineraries*

that put the spotlight on local areas and communities, so as to steer the supply chain of sustainable and responsible tourism towards specific target groups.

The coming step of the S&T MED project is to launch an international network of coastal destinations for sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean Basin. It will offer Mediterranean destinations the opportunity to implement online and offline tools to effectively implement the S&T MED DMO model, capitalising on the lessons learned by the three pilot destinations: Aqaba, Cabras and Mahdia.

Moreover, a *communication tool* will support the new coming destination to put in value the sustainable tourism development approach in order to reach the growing sustainable tourist demand.

Joining the S&T MED network entails the following key aspects:

1. implementing a specific DMO model tailored on the sustainable tourism destinations of the Mediterranean Basin;
2. putting local communities at the centre of territorial planning and development;
3. fostering new forms of sustainable tourism through the integration of local resources;
4. enhancing the destination's external image in terms of sustainability;
5. attracting new tourists to the destination all year round, avoiding the peak seasons;
6. meeting the growing demand for sustainable and responsible tourism;
7. involving and informing visitors through a holiday experience that respects the environment;
8. comparing and contrasting by means of environmental indicators;
9. developing synergies with other international organisations/destinations.
10. strengthening bargaining power when participating in international-level development processes.

Disclaimer

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Statement about the Programme

The 2007-2013 ENPI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme is a multilateral Cross-Border Cooperation initiative funded by the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). The Programme objective is to promote the sustainable and harmonious cooperation process at the Mediterranean Basin level by dealing with the common challenges and enhancing its endogenous potential. It finances cooperation projects as a contribution to the economic, social, environmental and cultural development of the Mediterranean region. The following 14 countries participate in the Programme: Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Palestine, Portugal, Spain, Syria (participation currently suspended), Tunisia. The Joint Managing Authority (JMA) is the Autonomous Region of Sardinia (Italy). Official Programme languages are Arabic, English and French (www.enpicbcmmed.eu).

General statement on the European Union

European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders".