

**“Capitalization Event  
of all S.O.1.3. Priority projects  
funded by the Programme IPA CBC  
“Greece – Republic of North Macedonia 2014-2020”**

Thessaloniki, 6 July 2023  
The ONOMA Hotel



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### 13 Projects:

ABOVE  
advenTOUR  
ALTER TRIP  
Bike cities  
CINECULTURE  
CONNECT  
COunT  
EuroP@St & future  
HOLY WATER  
NETOURAL  
TERRA VINO  
ToCulter  
Wine-up

iTour project did not participate

Twelve (12) projects presented their achievements:

1. ABOVE,
2. advenTOUR,
3. ALTER TRIP,
4. Bike cities,
5. CINECULTURE,
6. COunT,
7. EuroP@St & future,
8. HOLY WATER,
9. NETOURAL,
10. TERRA VINO,
11. ToCulter,
12. Wine-up

40 Participants:  
36 attendants at ONOMA Hotel  
4 attendants via ZOOM of which 2 carried out report presentations

Significant Remarks about the PROGRAMME:

Low visibility of the activities and achievements to the local population

Zero synergies between the projects; Not even the experts on the field know the projects;

Huge need for synergies and visibility of actions; should be compulsory for both the M.A. and the beneficiaries

Sharing of best practices is crucial both the projects' durability and the Programme's impact

Such a capitalization event creates synergies and enhances cooperation and transferability potential; on the other hand, cooperation meetings do not seem to be useful in the early stages of implementation

Organisation Statistics:

42 Experts Invited  
40 Registered  
36 attendants in the event + 4 remote via ZOOM platform

## Major Conclusions of the Event

- This initiative of "ABOVE" was praised by all participants
- 12 projects with real outcomes
- Excellent communication with JS; projects' officers very helpful
- Some beneficiaries cannot distinguish outputs vs results
- The declared as "achieved" or "expected" numbers referring to the Outputs; Indicator O0104, are not quantified in many cases
- The declared as "achieved" or "expected" numbers referring to the Results Indicator R0104 do not seem that can be measured with reliable methodologies
- ABOVE committed to continue the project's actions after the completion of the funded activities; as of this, all projects were invited to send their promotional material and relevant links, as to be incorporated under the ABOVE and its partners websites and promo channels created in social media.

### What Projects stated as Main Outputs

*Tangible and visible results or products relating to project activities:*

#### a. Joint development of competitive niche tourism product

- 1 hour documentary covering the whole eligible area
- 5 Short movies targeted to tourism sub-sectors
- Development of 4 joint CBC touristic products, one-day or/and multi-day trips
- Development of 2 ready-to-market experiential tourist packages, including wellness and wellbeing activities.

#### b. Web based and digital marketing promotion

- Development of 8 Smartphone Apps
- 3D Model, Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality Apps
- Interactive Visual Space & Educational games,
- A Roadmap for branding and promoting the CB area as a Touristic destination for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility
- Mobile Application which offers accessible routes in Thessaloniki presenting the city's history, for people with disabilities
- City Tour App Self guided tour for persons with visual and hearing impairments
- Development of an online platform for volunteers training
- Promo campaigns in social media

#### c. Engagement of tourism stakeholders

- Participation in one Specialized International Fair in Italy
- One touristic forum with a strong impact on tourism for the extension of the touristic season
- 12 events promoting the area
- Fam trips for 10 tour operators

#### d. Capacity building of existing & perspective professionals

- 1 Capitalisation Event - Networking with all projects under the S.O. 1.3 exchanging best practices and delivering an overall mutual & shared outcome
- Innovative attraction events – 10 Pop-Up Resto with 202 influencers and bloggers each
- Organisation of Travel Blogger Experiences
- Organisation of multidisciplinary training and consulting laboratories "Experiential Labs" focused on innovative design and management of experiential tourism products.
- Seminars, Specialized training courses and awareness raising meetings
- Ad-hoc business support to start-ups on a person-to-person basis
- Production of a shareable and user-friendly Methodological Handbook dealing with product and project management for sustainable tourism.
- Development of a tourism marketing plan and brand development strategy for the cross-border region.
- Dissemination and Exploitation of the project results: constitution of a multi-actor network; public events organised or attended by the partners; project website; identification of opportunities foreseen by regional, national and European calls, to implement and transfer the project results to new contexts/territories.
- 2 multi-stakeholder workshops to promote the archaeological sites among the local communities and the role played by the local enterprises;

#### e. Infrastructure & Equipment

- Strumica's recreational bicycle playground "Velo Park"
- Mapping of Mountain and Road Cycling Routes
- Bike training camp
- Establishment of tourist info-points and permanent space for tourism promotion.
- Four (4) Natural landmarks/sites are arranged and attractive to visitors introducing new touristic outdoor content
- Conservation, rehabilitation and restoration of St. Ilija Church
- Information panel using the Braille writing system
- Ramps to allow access to people with kinetic problems
- Labelling and Mapping at the roads guiding to archeological sites
- Procurement and Installation of Equipment of the renewable energy system 40kW at the parking at Stobi

### What Projects Considered as Main Results

*Expected Results (direct and immediate effects resulting from the project)*

Conservation of antiquities

Increasing the number of self-employed and SMEs that produce products and services that can be exploited for tourism development and add value to the CB area.

Enhanced knowledge and skills including the exchange of experience and good practice, innovation, capacity building.

Support for new businesses in the crafts sector to increase employability and income by focusing on the Arts & Crafts sector

Creation of a resource centre for Tourism in Florina that will support the implementation of the project and will also be used as a co-working centre for supported businesses after the project.

10 young people have taken Certificates for tourist guides as a start up business, within the eligible are of the North Macedonia

139 reskilled professionals (GR) and 60 trained potential young entrepreneurs (NMK) in providing quality of services

Upskilling and reskilling of craftspeople in alignment with the twin transition

Facilitation and promotion of quality schemes where a general benefit is clear.

Improvement of the attractiveness of the touristic product, by mapping and organizing thematic touristic itineraries.

Encourage development of year-round tourism by diversifying the offer.

Supporting joint market initiatives and campaigns, and creative promotion of the available tourism offer throughout the year

Enhancement of clustering and networking among businesses participating in the touristic development, facilitation of the economic usage of new ideas and fostering the creation of new start-ups.

Increasing mobility of human resources to the rural areas in the sector of tourism.

Fostering a productive relationship between training and consulting providers and tourism professionals.

Creation of infrastructure to revitalize riverine areas and enhance urban spaces while hosting supported businesses.

### Achieved / Expects Indicators (as presented)

Outputs Indicator O0104: 400 existing and perspective enterprises involved

Results Indicator R0104: 141 achieved or expected new jobs

*The indicators claimed by the projects are very optimistic and a general concern was expressed on their achievement.*

### Major obstacles and problems faced:

COVID19 pandemic caused significant problems and delays

Long administrative procedures related to procurement, selection and contracting.

A lot of time-consuming processes on Public Procurement caused by changes of 4412/2016 GR law;

Grants' flow problems in some cases in the Republic of North Macedonia;

Lack of awareness over forms of disability and accessibility issues

Hesitation of stakeholders' involved in the tourism and hospitality sector to share information about accessibility infrastructures within their establishments

Studies' approvals, licences, and permission long lasting procedures

Significant challenges and delays with the authorities responsible for the cultural heritage