

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF COVID-19 IMPACTS ON COASTAL AND ISLAND DESTINATIONS

SA_COVID-19

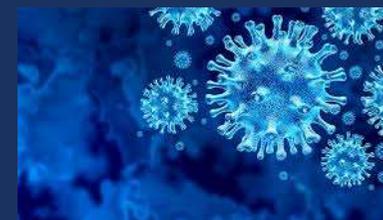
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PROJECT PROPOSAL - IPTPO INITIATIVE

- COVID-19 pandemic has caused many changes in people's everyday life and especially business life all over the world.
- **Tourism** has been recognized as an important industry **contributing to the global economy** since the second half of the 20th century.
- The economic sector of travel and tourism encompasses many other industries that are directly or indirectly linked to the travel and tourism sector. **In 2019**, this sector achieved **10.4% of GDP** as a percentage of global GDP (WTTC, 2019).
- The impact of the pandemic on the tourism industry is still difficult to assess. However, UNWTO emphasizes that the **COVID-19 has hit the tourism sector the most**, with an estimated loss of US \$ 30 to 50 billion in spending by international visitors (WTO, 2020).
- **The problem of over-tourism** in a very short time become the problem of **NO tourism** and **under-tourism**.

Role of local governments in tourism development and planning

- **Governments** have a central role in **tourism development and planning** (Wang and Bramwell, 2012).
- Much of **the responsibility** of managing and developing tourism rely on **local governments** (Elliot, 1997; Ruhanen, 2013).
- **Local governments** face different challenges in achieving sustainable tourism. Some of these challenges are the excessive influence of local government in tourism development, and this **can inhibit sustainable tourism development** (Nunkoo, 2015, Ruhanen, 2013).

What can we learn from COVID-19 crisis?

- Different **measures** have been taken to **mitigate** the effects of COVID-19 crisis.
- **The idea of the initiative is to analyse** the **measures** taken in a time of COVID-19 pandemic and shortly after crises by **local and regional self-government units** in the **coastal area and islands** in Croatia as well as other tourism destinations in the Mediterranean.
- **Tourism** has a vital role in coastal and islands destinations, and in the short term can bring **benefit and recovery** to these areas.
- Now is a **chance** to develop **sustainable tourism** that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts.
- **Health** has become **an essential pillar of sustainability** – to provide a healthy environment for locals, employees and tourists.

The importance of developing sustainable tourism in the crisis and after

- **Sustainable tourism** development is **crucial** for the maintenance of **the tourism industry** and the level of **tourist satisfaction** (Mendoza-González et al., 2018).
- The growing trend of coastal and maritime tourism in the tourism sector in last years emphasised the need for planning tourism activity to avoid the **negative consequences** of its growth, which are inevitable if there is **a lack of awareness** of the importance **of planning** (Papageourgiou, 2016; Drius et al., 2019).
- For the **successful sustainable tourism policy** implementation, it is necessary to include **stakeholders, better education, effective leadership** and integration of tourism and sustainability in **all levels of policy and government bodies** (Dodds, 2007).
- One of the identified problems towards more effective sustainable development is **the lack of knowledge** about the concept of sustainability in practice **by the local government** (Godfrey, 1998; Ruhanen, 2013).

Research area in Croatia

- The **Croatian coast is 6.278 kilometres** long (CNTB, 2019) and **consists of 718 islands** and islets, 289 rocks and 78 reefs along the coastline.
- The coastal part of the Republic of Croatia consists of **seven counties** of 21 in total, which in 2018 had **a total number of beds 1,211,478** out of 1,266,785 beds in the entire Republic of Croatia and **114,813 hotel beds** out of a total of 128,536 in Croatia.
- The number of arrivals in 2019 in the whole of **Adriatic Croatia** is **16 924 064**, which makes **86.5% of the total** number of arrivals in the Republic of Croatia, that is, in the territory of the Adriatic Croatia, realised **94.6% of overnight stays** (CBS, 2020).
- **The share of tourism** revenue in **GDP in 2019 was 19.5%** (CNB, 2020), which makes Croatia as one of the EU countries with the highest share of tourism in the GDP.

OBJECTIVES

- UNWTO emphasises the importance of communication and cooperation of affected countries and areas in dealing with the very challenging crisis due to COVID-19 (<https://www.unwto.org/tourism-covid-19>).
- For the research, several specific objectives are defined:
 - identify the form of **crisis communication** that the **local and regional self-unit governments** have been using and evaluate their impact on the **stakeholders** in **coastal and islands tourism destinations**,
 - identify the **measures** that have been implemented in **coastal and islands** tourism destinations by local and regional self-unites **to help the recovery** of tourism activities in their destinations,
 - determine **the level of trust** in **public institutions** and **local and regional governments** by **stakeholders** that are creating and offering tourism services in the destinations,

OBJECTIVES

- determine **the difference in destinations management** among different destinations,
- **compare** measures regarding tourism in coastal and islands destinations in **Croatia** and other **Mediterranean destinations**, and especially **islands**,
- determine the level of benefit of implemented **measures that have helped stakeholders** in tourism service and **what actions they need to recover** from COVID-19 pandemic,
- identify **the level of trust in local and regional governments after one tourist season** to identify if measures have influenced tested destinations,
- **discuss and share** the results with **the scientific community** and broader **professional community** throughout the involvement of international **partners** and **professional networks in tourism**.

WINTER MED aims to deliver an integrated transnational strategy for the development of all year round sustainable and responsible tourism in Mediterranean island destinations, through joint planning and cooperation between involved regions.

The project will implement capacity building and policy learning, supported by a transnational exchange of experiences and capitalisation actions to facilitate the transition from the current summer overexploitation of insular destinations to an alternative, sustainable, all year round use of territories.

Project partners

ANCI Tuscany
ITALY (LP)

EGTC EXFINI POLI
GREECE

Development Agency
of South Aegean Region
GREECE

Institute of Agriculture
and Tourism
CROATIA

Larnaca-Famagusta
District Development Agency
CYPRUS

Dubrovnik Neretva
Regional Development Agency
CROATIA

Confesercanti
Toscana
ITALY

Corsiacan Tourist
Agency
FRANCE

Conference of Peripheral
Maritime Regions of Europe
FRANCE

Agency for Tourism
of the Balearic Islands
SPAIN

Chamber of
Commerce of Mallorca
SPAIN



Associated partners

Tuscany Region - ITALY

South Aegean Region - GREECE

Croatian National Tourism Board - CROATIA

Thessaly Region - GREECE

NECSTouR - BELGIUM

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EXPECTED RESULTS

- Obtained results from the planned researches can contribute to a better understanding of measure impacts on the coastal and islands tourism destinations and potentially can create new solutions in monitoring the level of trust in public institutions during and after the crises.
- Practical use of the results is to share knowledge among stakeholders and the local and regional public units in order to improve understanding, quality communication and increase mutual trust.
- The research could identify the best and most effective good practices and measures that have been used to recover tourism in time and after the crisis.

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MITOMED+

Models of Integrated Tourism in the MEDiterranean Plus is a Interreg MED funded project that supports involved regions in developing a responsible and sustainable maritime and coastal (M&C) tourism. (2017-2020)

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