DESTIMED PROJECT

OPEN CALL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ECOTOURISM PILOT ACTIONS IN CROATIAN MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Terms of Reference

Procurement number: 3/04/2017; 4/04/2017
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1 BACKGROUND

According to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the Mediterranean is the world’s leading tourism destination, in terms of domestic and international tourism. The region receives more than 300 million international tourist arrivals, representing 30% of total world tourists for 2014: half of these arrivals are in coastal areas. International tourist arrivals have grown from 58 million in 1970 to nearly 314 million in 2014, with a forecast of 500 million by 2030. Tourism in the Mediterranean region is highly concentrated, both spatially and seasonally, with most visits occurring during the summer months. Coastal tourism is the largest sea-related economic activity in the Mediterranean, with 11.3 of the regional GDP. It is evident therefore that tourism represents an important source of revenues and employment in the Mediterranean area. At the same time it implicates enormous negative impacts for nature and society.

Large-scale studies of consumer tendencies and behavior (e.g. TripAdvisor, Travelocity-Sabre) have shown that there is a strong and growing preference by travelers for environmentally and socially responsible businesses and destinations. There is a strong desire to do no harm environmentally and to leave positive social benefits from their visits. Coupled with this, however, the studies have revealed a deep distrust of self-proclaimed sustainability claims by businesses and destinations.

Despite increasing international efforts to create harmonized concepts, agreed definitions and quality standards for ecotourism are still missing in the MED area where different organizations adopt different criteria and indicators of sustainability for ecotourism destinations.

Due to this lack of coherent planning and monitoring and seriously perceived promotion, ecotourism in the MED does not yet constitute a real alternative. This could be changed through a governance system for ecotourism in protected areas, e.g. constituted through a destination management organization (DMO). Such DMO could harmonize quality standards and tools to monitor compliance, propose attractive ecotourism offers promoted through a lasting brand, and this is where the project DestiMED comes into play.

DestiMED is an INTERREG MED project which aims to build the pre-conditions for a Mediterranean destination management organization (DMO) that will harmonize quality standards and tools to monitor compliance, propose attractive ecotourism offers promoted through a lasting brand. Specifically, the project aims to further develop and test ecotourism standards, offers and monitoring tools in 13 protected areas around the basin - forming the quality scheme of a future DMO. DestiMED builds on the results of the MEET (Mediterranean Ecotourism Experience) project that created and tested planning and marketing approaches, which will be enriched by a specific monitoring tool.

The partners of the DestiMED Project are the Lazio Region (coordinator, Italy), MedPAN (France), WWF Adria (Croatia), WWF Mediterranean (Italy), IUCN Mediterranean (Spain), Association for the Protection and Preservation of the Natural Environment (Albania), Federparchi (Italy) and Global Footprint Network (Belgium).

The countries covered by the project are France, Croatia, Greece, Spain, Albania and Italy. Pilot Actions will be implemented in these countries.

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WWF Adria is launching an Open Call for the development and the implementation of Pilot Actions related to ecotourism in Croatian MPAs.

*The Call is financed by the Interreg MED Programme.*

**EXPECTED RESULTS:**

- Mediterranean Ecotourism Destinations Standards: creating a “quality” framework at interregional level (standard and monitoring of Mediterranean ecotourism sustainability)
- Monitoring system to assess the sustainability of a park’s tourism offer: enhancing the responsible use of resources (local destinations’ sustainability checks and trainings)
- DestiMED ecotourism products: supporting local stakeholder engagement through an integrated, cross-sectoral and territorial cooperation approach.
- Guidelines for the establishment of ecotourism management plans for Mediterranean protected areas: preparing the framework of the forthcoming governance system (DMO) for Mediterranean ecotourism in protected areas.

**2 OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL**

Within the framework of the DestiMED Project, WWF Adria is responsible of the technical and financial coordination of a Pilot Action in Croatia. The aim of the call is therefore to **select two suitable Marine Protected Areas with which we will sign service contract to carry out the testing activities.** In particular, the specific objectives of the Pilot actions are the following:

- Design and test ecotourism packages in a participatory planning approach.
- Monitor the sustainability of local destinations to improve the ecological footprint of the packages created.
- Work as a network in 11 Mediterranean protected areas with a coordinated approach based on quality standards.

**3 TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS I: MAIN COMPONENTS OF THE PILOT ACTION**

The main components of a DestiMED Pilot Action are the following:

1. **Creation of a Local Ecotourism Cluster (LEC):** it must involve at least the MPA managing body and an Inbound Tour Operator (ITO). At a further stage, the LEC should also involve the service providers involved in the development of the DestiMED package.
The LEC must develop a new ecotourism product (“DestiMED package”) in the framework of the park’s tourism strategy, following the criteria described in the present ToR and the appended documents. It’s preferable that such LEC is embedded in a wider participatory planning tool, such as a “Forum” gathering the main tourism stakeholders of the park’s region.

2. **Definition of the needs to monitor tourism pressures and implementation of project monitoring tools:** this activity will be steered by WWF Adria. The MPA managing body must facilitate the collection of data with existing monitoring tools/systems as well as the distribution and collection of ad-hoc questionnaires prepared for the tourists visiting their facilities. The managing body must also attend the trainings organized by the project and implement the Improvement Plan of the package developed.

3. **Design of a pilot ecotourism package:** it must be designed by the LEC. It must be of at least 3 days (and 2 nights), organized in low tourism season, addressed preferably to small English-speaking groups (4 to 12 people) and respect the criteria and branding requirements set out in the present Rules and the appended documents. DestiMED Partnership will assess the sustainability of service providers throughout the duration of the Pilot Action. During the set up of the package, improvement of existing small tourism facilities in the MPA can be considered. **This must be mentioned in the Pilot Action proposal.**

4. **Two testing sessions of the ecotourism package:** two “tests” (as familiarization trips) will be planned by the Project Partnership in coordination with pilot protected areas. Independent ecotourism experts (selected by the Project Partnership) will become “testers” to assess customer satisfaction and potential positive impacts (environmental, economic and social) at local level, in order to support the final design of the pilot ecotourism package.

5. **Evaluation of test results and drafting of the Improvement Plan:** following each test, testers will provide their advices (through a questionnaire provided by the Project Partnership). WWF Adria will assess the ecological footprint of the two versions of the package (1st and 2nd versions related to the tests) through a specific software developed by the Project Partnership. The Project Partnership will evaluate the results of the first test and will draft the Improvement Plan. The LEC will have to apply the provisions indicated in this Plan and manage an improved version of the package during the 2nd test.

Two examples of ecotourism packages are described in the appendices.

4  **TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS II: MINIMUM STANDARDS REQUIRED AND ECOTOURISM PACKAGE DESCRIPTION**

4.1 **Minimum standards required**

Any submitted proposal will be assessed against the following criteria:
- Being consistent with and contributing to the official conservation and sustainable tourism goals of the protected area.
- Being consistent with sectoral sustainable development policies at national and local level.
- Describing the existing systems/tools/activities to monitor visitors-related flows/impacts/benefits, and declaring availability to test new tools as identified during the Pilot Action implementation.
- Demonstrating to have an existing participatory tourism planning system/tool where the main tourism-related stakeholders (both public and private ones) are involved, and how it will be involved in the DestiMED Pilot Action implementation;
- Explaining if and which type of relation the MPA managing body has with a local Inbound Tour Operator (ITO) for managing tourism local flows;
- Foreseeing communication activities towards the local community in order to ensure transparency (meeting announcements, diffusion of joint decisions, etc.) and awareness raising.
- Demonstrating – through the developed packages – of the benefits for the local tourism providers and contributing to local employment creation/enhancement.
- Designing at least one low-season ecotourism package (exceptions must be duly justified) of at least 3 days (and 2 nights), intended to English-speaking customers, to be tested twice during the Pilot Action.
- Inclusion of the management of two tests of the package through a familiarization trip approach (i.e. a free-of-charge trial of the package), with maximum 10 independent experts identified by the DestiMED Project.

4.2 Specific criteria concerning the eco-tourism package

The proposal must contain also a description of an ideal ecotourism package. Such theoretical package must be developed following the criteria exhaustively detailed in the “MEET Manual. A guide to discover the MEET approach”\(^2\), chapter 3 “Creating a MEET ecotourism product” particularly within the paragraph “How to meet the MEET criteria”, and chapter 4 “Marketing through the MEET Network” particularly within the paragraph “MEET branding”.

The package described in the proposal can become the basis for developing the DestiMED package along the Pilot Action in the case the concerned proposal will be selected, but it CAN NOT be compulsory in the implementation of such task.

5 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA – GROUNDS FOR EXCLUSION

Conditions for allowing any candidate Marine Protected Area to submit a proposal are the following:

1. Evidence of non-existence of the grounds for exclusion from public procurement (through a signed statement of person authorized for representation of the MPA)
2. To be established with public Act, which identifies a managing body (already existing, i.e. not to be established, which must be fully operational) and conservation goals

3. To be located in a region eligible for the Interreg MED Programme (see http://interreg-med.eu/en/cooperation-area/ for the list)

4. To be located in a coastal/marine area (following DestiMED focus);

5. To declare to have a specific MPA staff member (manager or officer) which is responsible of tourism planning/managing within the MPA, and to appoint this person as responsible of DestiMED Pilot Action implementation (i.e. attend the training activities, provide information, reply to emails…)

6 SELECTION PROCEDURE

Each candidate (an eligible MPA management body) must submit an offer describing the implementation of the expected Pilot Actions and the associated costs.

Offers (Pilot Actions) will be evaluated on the basis of the best value for money.

Absolute model of evaluation will be applied (evaluation score does not depend on other offers): Contractor assigns money value to all of selection criteria and total amount will be deducted from the offered price. That amount will be compared against the other offers.

Following elements will be assessed during evaluation:

- Eligibility on the basis of the criteria detailed in the present ToR.
- Experience of the MPA in sustainable tourism/ecotourism.
- Compliance with expected types of Pilot Action.
- Detailed methodology for the proper implementation of activities.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSESSED CRITERIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSESSED CRITERIA</th>
<th>APPLIED VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience of the MPA in sustainable tourism/ecotourism&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>No/None = 0 HRK&lt;br&gt;Poor/Some = - 10.000 HRK&lt;br&gt;Good/Satisfactory = - 30.000 HRK&lt;br&gt;Excellent/Complete = - 50.000 HRK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance with expected types of Pilot Action&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>No/None = 0 HRK&lt;br&gt;Poor/Some = - 10.000 HRK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<sup>3</sup> Poor – Basic experience, MPA Management can prove at least one monitoring of tourist activities, and existence of at least one official document of work on issues of sustainable/eco-tourism

Good – MPA Management can prove existence of a MPA run local stakeholder body for management/development of sustainable/eco-tourism

Excellent – MPA Management has ongoing sustainable/eco-tourism activities and an existing eco-tourism stakeholder cluster
The selection process will take place within one week following the closure date of the Open Call. During this period, additional information may be requested from the candidate. All candidates will be informed of the selection results via email.

7 FUNDING STRUCTURE OF THE PILOT ACTION

The maximum budget allocated for the implementation of a Pilot Action is 300.000 HRK with VAT included.

Two Pilot Actions may be selected during this Call for expressions of interest.

The expenses incurred (anticipated by each candidate) must be presented to WWF Adria with the technical reports. The related MPA will be reimbursed following the approval of at least one interim report and one final report submitted by the responsible of the Pilot Action and approved by WWF Adria.

Payments will be made according to the following schedule:
- 40%: after the signing of the contract, June 10th at the latest
- 30%: upon presentation of the interim report
- 30%: upon presentation of the final report

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4 Poor – MPA proposal follows the basic setup of expected pilot actions
Good – MPA shows good understanding of expected pilot actions through a detailed description of an ideal ecotourism package
Excellent – MPA shows good understanding of expected pilot actions through a detailed description of an ideal ecotourism package which is completely in line with MEET manual and approved ecotourism activities

5 Some – MPA proposal fulfills at least 3 requirements from 4.1 component of this ToR
Satisfactory – MPA proposal fulfills at least 6 requirements from 4.1 component of this ToR
Complete – MPA proposal fulfills at least 8 requirements from 4.1 component of this ToR
8 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

8.1 Capacity building

The selected MPA will receive support from the Project Partnership as part of the capacity building strategy of the DestiMED Project. The capacity building strategy is divided into thematic sections and foresees the organization of several training sessions:

- 1 regional training on tourism monitoring tools and systems, to be organized in June 2017\(^6\). This training will target the park (maximum 2 representatives).
- 1 regional training about the development of ecotourism products, to be organized in December 2017. This training will target the Local Ecotourism Cluster - LEC (1 representative of the park + 1 representative of the ITO).
- 1 LEC consolidation workshop in each MPA, to be organized in early 2018. This workshop will target the LEC and the local providers of the package.

More detailed information about the capacity building strategy will be provided to the selected Pilot Actions.

8.2 Sustainability Monitoring System

The applicant MPA must ensure its availability for:

- collecting data (e.g. by distributing surveys and encouraging service providers/tourists to fill them in) related to tourism and linked with the activities foreseen in the framework of DestiMED Pilot Actions,
- participating in a cooperative process with the partners of the DestiMed Project in order to improve the ecological footprint of the DestiMed packages
- and selecting in the best possible way the local service providers (in terms of sustainability) during the design phase of the packages.

8.3 Indicative timetable of the activities

Testing is planned to be implemented in 24 months of execution. The table below includes a list of actions concerning partially or solely the selected pilot PAs management bodies (and/or the Local Ecotourism Cluster). Responsibility and time span are indicated too.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contract signature</td>
<td>MPA Legal Responsible</td>
<td>June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal identification of local Inbound Tour Operator</td>
<td>MPA managing</td>
<td>June 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^6\) Dates may be subject to changes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Responsible Entity</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation to project training workshop on tourism monitoring (in Spain)</td>
<td>MPA managing body</td>
<td>June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal establishment of Local Ecotourism Cluster (LEC) and “launch” (public communication action) at local level of the DestiMED Pilot Action</td>
<td>MPA managing body</td>
<td>June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated survey on existing monitoring systems and tools in the Pilot MPA</td>
<td>MPA managing body</td>
<td>June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design of DestiMED pilot ecotourism package and planning of 1st test’s date (autumn 2017)</td>
<td>LEC</td>
<td>July 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of 1st test</td>
<td>LEC</td>
<td>September/October 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection and assessment (with a dedicated software) of the “customer satisfaction” and sustainability levels of the services involved in the pilot package during the 1st test</td>
<td>LEC + Concerned PP</td>
<td>September/October 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Action Interim Report Narrative</td>
<td>MPA managing body</td>
<td>November 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation to project training workshop on ecotourism product development, communication, branding and marketing (in Croatia)</td>
<td>LEC</td>
<td>December 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-days on-the-spot coaching workshop (trainer sent, and paid, by the project partnership in each pilot MPA)</td>
<td>LEC</td>
<td>January 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of the “Improvement Plan” (coming from the project partnership) for upgrading the package, and planning of 2nd test’s date (spring 2018)</td>
<td>LEC</td>
<td>January 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of 2nd test</td>
<td>LEC</td>
<td>May/June 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection and assessment (with a dedicated software) of the “customer satisfaction” and sustainability levels of the services involved in the pilot package during the 2nd test</td>
<td>LEC + Concerned PP</td>
<td>May/June 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of the “Improvement Plan” (coming from the project partnership) for upgrading the package</td>
<td>LEC</td>
<td>November 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Action Final Report Narrative</td>
<td>MPA managing body</td>
<td>December 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Action Final Report Financial</td>
<td>MPA</td>
<td>December 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 9 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

WWF Adria will be responsible for the technical and financial monitoring of Pilot Action in Croatia. The beneficiaries will sign a contract with WWF Adria. All Pilot Actions will be subject to a mandatory interim and final assessment. WWF Adria will provide a template for technical and financial interim and final reports. WWF Adria will ensure the direct monitoring of the Pilot Actions progress and may call in local or thematic consultants if needed during the monitoring.

### 10 PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

The Application Form must be submitted by post, in English, in printed form, in an enclosed envelope. All the appendices listed in the application form must be provided enclosed within the same envelope in a data storage device (USB, CD/DVD ROM…).

Envelope with the application has to be marked in a following way:

**BACK:**

WWF ADRIA  
Budmanijeva 5, 10000 Zagreb  
"Open Call for the implementation of Pilot Actions related to ecotourism in Croatian MPAs"  
Broj nabave: 3/04/2017;4/04/2017  
"NE OTVARAJ"

**FRONT:**

Name and address of the bidder

Only applications received within the following date and time will be accepted: **May 25th 2017 at 16:00 (Zagreb time)**.
11 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The consultation of the following documents is recommended.

- MEET Manual. A guide to discover the MEET approach
- Examples of ecotourism packages