

# Summary of the EDP Focus Group on Tourism in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace\*

## INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the main outcomes of the third Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) focus group focusing on tourism, which took place at Alexandroupolis (Hotel Astir Egnatia) on February 11 2015. This event was based on the approach followed for the first two EDP focus groups (wine industry, dairy and meat products). It aimed to expose participants (representing all the strands of the triple helix) to key innovations in the value chain of the tourism sector at both national and European levels and at the same time to stimulate idea generation for business development. These objectives were achieved via plenary sessions for knowledge diffusion and focused parallel sessions that addressed more specific topics.

The focus group meeting combined plenary and parallel sessions, with interventions by regional, national, and international experts. Within the tourism sector, the following a priori themes for discussion were identified:

- 1) Four seasons tourism
- 2) Tourism and cultural heritage
- 3) ICT and tourism
- 4) Gastrotourism

In the opening session, the aims and approach of the preparatory action on REMTh were set out by JRC-IPTS. Aiming to facilitate the refinement and implementation of the RIS3 strategy in a region heavily hit by the crisis, while also serving as a model for other convergence regions in Greece and Europe, the project centres on the provision of “hands-on” support to the RIS3 implementation process in REMTh. In addition to developing the process, the envisaged outcomes include the support for the launch of concrete projects in the region and consequent absorption of structural funds. In view of this primary aim, this event represents an important step along this path.

Two concrete concerns for the EDP were emphasised by JRC-IPTS in the introductory session. First was the issue of whether it is best for ideas to match the funding available or whether a more ambitious search for ideas should be undertaken based on potential, for which it is better to then seek appropriate funding. Second, the need to better engage with international networks was emphasised.

In order to fully explore the value chain of tourism, a variety of international and national experts were invited to make presentations centred on each of the four themes identified above. To further examine ideas and opportunities in each of these areas, parallel working groups were organised, following a common participatory methodology. These centred on the generation of ideas, and the selection of the most feasible for further discussion. Moderators and rapporteurs were appointed for each group to oversee the application of the methodology and report the outcomes.

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The participation and engagement in the event, in terms of both level and quality, were high. More than 120 stakeholders from within the region and beyond participated. Both the plenary and parallel sessions saw active engagement by both invited experts and stakeholders from the region and beyond. One key point that differentiated the specific event from the two previous EDP focus groups is the participation of a great number of international experts, mainly due to the organisation of the Peer Review of the REMTh RIS3, starting later the same day at the same venue.

The generation and exchange of ideas were the key elements of the meeting. The outcomes of the working groups were highly constructive, with a number of feasible ideas, proposed and thought through during the second day. The participatory process used for this worked smoothly, with participants actively engaging in the tasks, and with lessons emerging for its refinement in the subsequent such events envisaged under the preparatory action. The overall perception of participants was highly positive.

A key issue of the meeting was the making and reinforcement of linkages, and the importance of subsequent joint efforts, on both bilateral and multilateral bases. The good levels of engagement between the stakeholders provide a good basis for further work.

## PARTICIPATION

In planning the event, a broad mix of potential participants was identified, based on an initial value chain analysis. The main stakeholder groups included:

- 1) Hoteliers
- 2) Other hospitality stakeholders
- 3) Restaurant owners
- 4) Local tourist operators
- 5) Representatives of other value chains that provide win-win opportunities, i.e. culture and leisure activities, wine and food industries, etc.
- 6) ICT sector representatives
- 7) Regional Administration officers

The local members of the above-mentioned groups were identified with the collaboration of the five regional Chambers of Commerce and the Regional Managing Authority. Some of the entrepreneurs suggested that additional members of their staff should also attend the workshop, on the basis of their technical skills, competences and functional roles.

The second pool of participants consisted of national and international experts that would share their knowledge and expertise on:

- Supporting SMEs in tourism
- Regional touristic strategy – the case of the Balears
- The selected 4 areas of the EDP.

Totally 10 experts covered the above issues, 5 international and 5 local/national.

In addition to personal invitations, an open invitation was published in the local press and online by the Regional Government, encouraging parties to attend. The workshop was attended by 121 participants (excluding JRC/IPTS and MA REMTh staff), 105 of them local/national and 16 international.

## OUTCOMES: PARALLEL WORKING GROUPS

The most important element of the workshop was the Participatory Exercise that took place within the parallel sessions by 4 working groups (WGs). The formation of the 4 WGs corresponded to the 4 thematic areas and was based on the preference expressed by all participants during the prior on-line registration process. The exercise included the following stages:

- An introductory presentation by a local/national expert on the area examined as an ignition for the discussion followed.
- A brainstorming session in which each member of the group was asked to generate an idea under the thematic area of the work group (task 1).
- The presentation of the ideas by each participant to the rest of the group (task 2).
- The discussion and selection of most favourable ideas leading to the formation of “innovation partnerships”, in other words, sub-groups within the main work group (task 3).
- The development of ideas by the partnerships and initial reflections on issues that they had to tackle for the ideas to be transformed into sound projects (task 4).
- The further refinement of the ideas based on a set of guiding questions (task 5).

A detailed presentation of the methodology of the exercise was given to all participants during the plenary session. Prior to the exercise, a moderator and a rapporteur had been appointed and were also provided by instructions towards the effective implementation of the tasks. It must be noted that neither the moderators nor the rapporteurs were involved in the various partnerships.

The four parallel sessions were attended by 89 participants (excluding moderators and rapporteurs) representing the following stakeholder groups:

- 37 from industry
- 15 from research and/or academic community
- 37 from public administration (national and/or regional)

It must also be noted that 16 participants from other EU Member States attended the parallel sessions.

Table 1 presents a summary of the main outcomes of each group, while the remaining sections set out the outcomes, based on the minutes compiled by the rapporteurs during the process.

**Table 1: Main outcomes of the participatory exercise**

Working Group	Idea/Partnership Name	Brief description	Expected results/outcomes
4 Seasons Tourism	Managing & Coordinating the touristic product at the regional or local level	The idea is about organising regional organization for managing and co-ordinating the touristic product in REMTh.	Promote a co-operation culture among the elements of the triple helix.  "Cluster-support structure" in support and support of local/regional assets (natural; cultural, etc.).  Integrated tourism-enterprise support services (cluster-like).
	Extending the season of under-utilised regional assets.	The idea is about organising off-season cultural and athletic events to extend the touristic season. Rehabilitation tourism is included within the specific concept.	Exploitation of existing and upgrading relevant infrastructure and capacity building for athletic tourism.  Put existing infrastructure to other uses during the low season.  Establish periodic venues targeting specific segments of the touristic market (for example fishing and scuba cup).
	Improve Eco-Tourism and Nature Activities in REMTh	The idea is about improving the infrastructure in support of eco-tourism and nature activities (hiking, climbing, bird-watching, mountain bike, hunting, camping, 4x4 racing, herbal tourism, etc), especially within the boundaries of the Region's four National Parks.	To raise awareness about the richness of local natural assets.  Improve infrastructure in National Parks (paths, hides) mainly in support to birdwatching; improve accessibility, mainly fly & drive.
Tourism and cultural heritage	Innovative management of cultural heritage	The idea is about the exploitation of local cultural assets with the implementation of innovative digital tools and applications in order to create new forms/models of business applications within the tourism industry.	To increase level of publicity and awareness on REMTh rich cultural heritage.  To promote education among tourism stakeholders on cultural tourism.  To add value to REMTh visitors' experience.

Working Group	Idea/Partnership Name	Brief description	Expected results/outcomes
	Innovative applications of touristic touring with emphasis on cultural heritage	The idea is about the formation of solid co-operation among the elements of the triple helix for the creation of modern ICT based applications for thematic itineraries.	<p>To improve the capabilities of professional touristic guides.</p> <p>To apply the concept of personalised guides based on specific touristic interests.</p> <p>To establish a Destination Management Organization with the participation of both public and private sector.</p>
ICT and tourism	Digital platform to support personalised tourism services	The idea is about the creation of platform to exploit currently available digitised repository and offer innovative services like visit planning & execution, aid/guidance, promotion/advertisements, wherein a provider can plug or make available individual services, with a participatory operating model to support business sustainability.	<p>To create personalized recommendation and itinerary planning service for tourism, linked with professionals and supporting booking options.</p> <p>To create networked service of digital signage with possible back-end hosted by Regional Authorities and front-end at multiple points of interest, with localisation and advertisement services to support sustainable operation.</p> <p>To develop and host Mobile application for personalised and mass tourism with itinerary recommendations.</p>
	Development of high added value digital tools for key tourism sectors	The idea is about the development of high added value digital tools for hospitality and food/gastronomy businesses & professionals with a range of offered end products and services to support quality personalised experience.	<p>To support smart building management, with multiple targets, including energy efficiency and comfort optimisation for hotel facilities.</p> <p>To create personalised services targeting regular visitors (for example professionals) and supporting visit and preferences data recording and management.</p> <p>To support basic information provisioning tailored to food/gastronomy offerings and used also by hospitality services units</p>
	Establishment of an organisation to offer support for digital business innovation in tourism	The idea refers to a horizontal intervention that will incorporate regional regional-level data recording and management, innovation awards and destination management services.	<p>To offer multi-stakeholder targeting educational support for improving tourism services and acceleration services for innovative business ideas.</p> <p>To manage the idea of REMTh as a touristic destination with support</p>

Working Group	Idea/Partnership Name	Brief description	Expected results/outcomes
			<p>for delivering tourism system analysis.</p> <p>To attract visits, promote offerings, support visit management and offer post-visit services by setting quality targets and priorities.</p>
Gastrotourism	Enhancement the knowledge aspect to support local actors	The idea is about the formation of a regional culinary centre to develop local cuisine capabilities in accordance with key tourism objectives (through a PPP)	<p>To set a Regional Quality Agreement for all the actors of the value chain of agro-food and tourism.</p> <p>To enhance the aspect of collaboration with neighbouring regions.</p> <p>To increase the involvement of citizens within the establishment of gastronomy - tourism projects.</p> <p>To develop a platform that might combine local ingredients with re-cepies towards exchange of information on local cuisine (especially Med cuisine).</p>
	Development of co-operative projects for linking locality, history and gastronomy	The idea is about the creation of a structure to design a gastronomy-tourism strategy that will influence the touristic promotion of REMTh.	<p>To associate history and cuisine - the recreation of ancient EMTh and more recent history and cuisine - Fusion of different cuisines (GR, TR, BG, etc.).</p> <p>The promotion of local dishes associated with local myths, recepies, etc. and connect the above with famous chefs, local events etc.</p> <p>The organisation of a competition of gastronomy city of EMTh with relevant awarding scheme.</p> <p>The development of visitability of destinations of the agro-food value chains</p>

## 1. WORKING GROUP ON 4 SEASONS TOURISM

Moderator:	Mr Vasileios PITSINIGKOS
Presentation by:	Mr Nikos DRAKONAKIS – ETAM SA
Industry:	17 representatives
Public Administration:	11 representatives (5 international)
Total participants of the 2 days:	28

In addition to the moderator and the rapporteur, there were 28 participants in WG1 on Innovation focusing on four-seasons tourism. Of them, seventeen (17) were entrepreneurs from the region including three that represented two Chambers and one professional organisation; eleven (11) participants represented the Government sector (5 regional government, 1 national government, two representatives of the Bulgarian government, one representative of a publicly-held development agency in Turkey and the remaining representing, as observers of the process, various agencies of the European Commission). The Research sector was not represented. Most of the participants, especially entrepreneurs, attended the WG.

The WG activity started by a brief introduction to the subject by Mr Nikos Drakonakis (etam S.A., Heraklion, Crete).

In the initial brainstorming session the following ideas were generated and presented:

1. Bird-watching hides; Private-sector tourism information centres to support public ones, using same ICT infrastructure
2. Improve infrastructure in National Parks (paths, hides) mainly in support to bird watching; improve accessibility, mainly fly & drive
3. "Smart promotion"; Itineraries; network of volunteers and local businesses in support of itineraries
4. Cost reduction through renewables for tourism enterprises;
5. Promote a co-operation culture among the elements of the triple helix; 72h visas; electronic signage
6. Infokiosks in all entry points
7. Less queues in the border with Turkey; comfortable transportation opportunities 4 families; consider seaplanes; consider all-inclusive model
8. Support athletic tourism; infrastructure/capacity upgrades
9. "Cluster-support structure" in support and support of local/regional assets (natural; cultural; ...)
10. Organising and supporting athletic/outdoor activities within the Rodopi National Park; information support services to visitors
11. Fishing cup / scuba cup
12. Herbal tourism; mushroom-fests;
13. Rehabilitation tourism
14. Integrated tourism-enterprise support services (cluster-like), including mainstreaming of the results of pilot projects; hotel management education;
15. Collaboration pacts across the tourism value chain.
16. Establish a paraglide park in the north of Drama (Falacro Mt.)
17. Trans-border information centre; cross-border network of tourism enterprises; spa trans-border tourism.

From the above 17 ideas, five candidate partnerships were agreed through dialogue and consensus building. They were put into a vote to select three partnerships to be further elaborated (indicated in bold in the following table).

**Table 2: Ideas emerging for WG1**

IDEA/PARTICIPANT & STAKEHOLDER GROUP
1. <b>Improve Eco-Tourism &amp; Nature Activities</b>
2. <b>Put existing infrastructure to other uses during the low season</b>
3. <b>Managing &amp; Coordinating the touristic product at the local &amp; regional level</b>
4. Social Innovations / Enterprises in Tourism: "Smart promotion"; Itineraries; network of volunteers and local businesses in support of itineraries
5. Cost reduction through renewables for tourism enterprises

Next step was the discussion on preferred ideas (ideas 1-3) according to given methodology. The main outcomes of these discussions are described below.

#### 1.1 MANAGING & COORDINATING THE TOURISTIC PRODUCT AT THE REGIONAL OR LOCAL LEVEL (IDEA 3)

*Partnership composition: 3 from industry and 1 from public administration*

##### 1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea is about organising regional organization for managing and coordinating the touristic product in REMTh.

##### 2. Contribution of the different partners

To implement the idea, all stakeholders in the regional tourism value chain should contribute, including: municipalities and the regional government, hoteliers, managing bodies of National Parks, tourist agents, chambers of commerce, networks of local food/beverage producers and Higher Education Institutions.

##### 3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education etc.

According to the group's opinions there seems to be no legal / administrative issues to be tackled. The vehicle for implementing the idea will probably be a non-profit organisation with a staff in the range of 3-5 people, hence a small and flexible scheme. For the formation and early operations of the proposed scheme adaptation and implementation of best practices from Greece and abroad would be a solid approach.

##### 4. First financial considerations

It is estimated that a core operating expenditure should be kept below €100k within the first four years of operation for a scheme at the prefectural level. Additional funding could be based on revenue sharing schemes and / or co-ordination of tourism development projects.

##### 5. Identification of first "next" steps

A consultation at the local (=prefectural) level is the first step to identify multi-partner interventions. The mandate and the bylaws of the non-profit organisation should be agreed and signed by all interested parties. A board of directors should be elected and a detailed business plan should be later elaborated.

## 1.2 EXTENDING THE SEASON OF UNDER-UTILISED REGIONAL ASSETS (IDEA 2)

*Partnership composition: 2 from public administration, 1 from industry*

### 1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea is about organising off-season cultural and athletic events to extend the touristic season. Rehabilitation tourism is included within the specific concept.

### 2. Contribution of the different partners

To implement the idea, all stakeholders in the regional tourism value chain should contribute, including: Regional government and municipalities, hoteliers, Chambers of commerce, the Physical Education and Sports Dept of Democritus Univ. Thrace, local sports associations and teams. The implementation of this idea would benefit by an organisation that would co-ordinate tourism activities at the prefectural level.

### 3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education etc.

Some types of events require permits from the relevant authorities (i.e., scuba fishing, 4x4 competitions within the boundaries of National Parks, etc). In the case of medical tourism, various types of certification and bilateral agreements with foreign social security organisations will be also needed. There is some knowhow on athletic tourism around Xanthi, but there's considerable room for improvement in terms of skills and headcount. Finally the issue of a 72h visa would help attract visitors from Turkey, probably the most promising touristic market for REMTh.

### 4. First financial considerations

No estimation was given by the group.

### 5. Identification of first "next" steps

First step would be the mapping of the under-utilised assets and the use of creativity techniques to find new uses. The co-ordination with other interested parties to put new uses in a wider context would follow. The investigation of possible arrangements regarding permits and other types of necessary authorizations is also necessary. Finally the design and implementation of publicity and marketing plans is a key task for the success of the project.

## 1.3 IMPROVE ECO-TOURISM AND NATURE ACTIVITIES IN REMTH (IDEA 1)

*Partnership composition: 2 from industry, 1 from public administration*

### 1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea is about improving the infrastructure in support of eco-tourism and nature activities (hiking, climbing, bird-watching, mountain bike, hunting, camping, 4x4 racing, herbal tourism, etc), especially within the boundaries of the Region's four National Parks.

### 2. Contribution of the different partners

Partnership would involve the majority of the stakeholders of the tourism value chain. The Managing Authorities of the Region's four National Parks are needed to establish and enforce region-wide, common

rules and terms for what types of activity are permitted within National Park. Entrepreneurs will design, market and implement outdoor activities in line with the framework imposed by the National Park MAs and share with them a part of their revenues. Finally the Regional Administration could intervene so that the aforementioned parties reach a win-win agreement.

3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education etc.

The legal framework for the National Parks is rather cumbersome, thus creating red tape and reducing the propensity of joint public-private initiatives.

4. First financial considerations

There is a rough estimation of approximately €1mil of public funding to upgrade infrastructure within National Parks (paths and signage, mapping-on paper and electronic, bird-watching towers, etc).

5. Identification of first “next” steps

A memorandum of understanding among the four national park managing authorities on means and modalities for exploiting their natural resources should be drafted and made publicly available. Additionally a new revenue sharing model between National Parks and enterprises making use of their assets should be put in place.

## 2. WORKING GROUP TOURISM AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Moderator:	Mr Yannis KESANLIS
Presentation by:	Mr Dimitris KARAVASILIS – General Manager Astir Egnatia Alexandroupolis Hotel
Industry:	6 representatives
Academic / Research community:	3 representative
Public Administration:	12 representative
Total participants for the 2 days:	21

The specific working group did not exactly follow the process of idea generation and partnership creation. The participants openly discussed (without brainstorming) many different issues regarding tourism and cultural heritage. Some of the issues that were raised include:

1. Legal framework conditions
2. The role of different public and/or regional bodies responsible for cultural and environmental assets of REMTh
3. Needs for education
4. The role of ICT and other modern technologies for the promotion of cultural heritage
5. Possible co-operation between public administration and societal bodies with proved contribution to cultural heritage.

Finally they decided to form two groups for further investigating possible partnerships.

The main outcomes of these discussions are described below.

### 2.1 INNOVATIVE MANAGEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE (IDEA 1)

*Partnership composition: 2 from industry, 1 researcher and 3 from public administration*

#### 1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea is about the exploitation of local cultural assets with the implementation of innovative digital tools and applications in order to create new forms/models of business applications within the tourism industry. The proposed idea would contribute: (a) to increase the level of publicity and awareness on REMTh rich cultural heritage, (b) to promote education among tourism stakeholders on cultural tourism and (c) to add value to REMTh visitors' experience.

#### 2. Contribution of the different partners

The following key partners are needed to implement the idea:

- Regional/local bodies that are responsible for the management of cultural heritage assets
- Entrepreneurs from the creation industries
- ICT companies and social media experts
- Social groups/organisations that can support the idea by implementing new forms of social innovation.

#### 3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education etc.

The regional administration would initiate first round of co-operation activities by forming suitable MOUs among interested parties. Issues regarding the availability of human capital to support the concept should be examined although it is estimated that regional capabilities could cover all relevant HR issues.

#### 4. First financial considerations

Initial assumptions regarding financial aspects of the project raise the cost to €1m.

#### 5. Identification of first “next” steps

The first (and most important) step is the creation of a management structure (of scheme) including all key stakeholders, for example the ministry of Culture, Regional Authorities, ATHENA Research and Innovation Centre and local Chambers of Commerce.

## 2.2 INNOVATIVE APPLICATIONS OF TOURISTIC TOURING WITH EMPHASIS ON CULTURAL HERITAGE (IDEA 2)

*Partnership composition: 3 from industry, 2 researcher and 6 from public administration*

### 1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea is about the formation of solid co-operation among the components of the triple helix for the creation of modern ICT based applications for thematic itineraries. The proposed idea would assist: (a) to improve the capabilities of professional touristic guides, (b) to apply the concept of personalised guides based on specific touristic interests and (c) to establish a Destination Management Organization with the participation of both public and private sector.

### 2. Contribution of the different partners

The following key partners are needed to implement the idea:

- Public bodies and Academia to assist with the legal aspects and the open data issues respectively
- The private sector in order to establish the desired Destination Management Organization.

### 3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education etc.

Improved skills for tour guides are needed. This calls for training as well as certification issues.

### 4. First financial considerations

No estimation was given by the group.

### 5. Identification of first “next” steps

The following steps have been identified for the implementation of the project:

- 1) Establishment of suitable supporting structure
- 2) Creation of a brand name and its promotion/enhancement
- 3) Collection of market data; consolidation and report creation
- 4) Development of content with relevant data and supporting material
- 5) HR selection and training.

### 3. WORKING GROUP ON ICT AND TOURISM

Moderator:	Mr Panagiotis KOUDOUMAKIS
Presentation by:	Mr Christos PARTSIAS – Regional Development Fund, REMTh
Industry:	9 representatives
Academic / Research community:	4 representative
Public Administration:	7 representative
Total participants for the 2 days:	20

A good mix of stakeholders participated in the working group, inclusive of professionals (approximately 50%), governmental authorities representatives (both national and regional), as well as representatives of academic/research/innovation bodies. The following 15 ideas were initially generated and presented (tasks 1&2):

- 1) Mobile application for personalised and mass tourism with itinerary recommendations
- 2) Service for E6 route, including mapping, data collection, off-line map availability, itinerary and accommodation planning, localisation support chip, and waterproof map for usage while on the trail
- 3) Exploitation of currently available digitised repository and usage in virtual environments / gaming in the context of creative applications to support tourism
- 4) Networked service of digital signage with possible back-end hosted by Regional Authorities and front-end at multiple points of interest, with localisation and advertisement services to support sustainable operation
- 5) Recording and management of tourists and visitors data to serve innovative applications that target application service adaptation, social network-enabled applications and promotion/advertisement
- 6) myVisitplanner.com 2.0: personalized recommendation and itinerary planning service for tourism, linked with professionals and supporting booking options
- 7) ICT innovation to support smart building management, with multiple targets, including energy efficiency and comfort optimisation for hotel facilities
- 8) Personalised service targeting regular visitors (for example professionals) using QR codes and supporting visit and preferences data recording and management
- 9) Application using QR codes to support basic information provisioning tailored to food/gastronomy offerings and used also by hospitality services units
- 10) Tourism Innovation Awards to push forward best promising initiatives
- 11) Multi-stakeholder targeting educational support for improving tourism services and acceleration services for innovative business ideas
- 12) Organisation to support tourism projects sustainability (results take-up)
- 13) A new initiative to attract visits, promote offerings, support visit management and offer post-visit services, backed by setting up an appropriate organisation with responsibilities for setting quality targets and priorities
- 14) Organisation at regional level for the requirements set at idea #13. Specifications of quality requirements

15) Destination management organisation with support for delivering tourism system analysis.

The participants agreed to form three working sub-groups, one focusing on aspects of ICT supporting tools development, one related to services for professionals in the hospitality and food / gastronomy businesses and one on horizontal supporting measures. Although all participants expressed specific interest in the activities relevant to each sub-group, they agreed to be divided in the three sub-groups to facilitate further development of ideas, yet retaining a cross-subgroup interest for the parallel sub-groups. There was no ranking of the initial ideas by the participants.

Next step was the discussion on the above ideas/partnerships according to given methodology. The main outcomes of these discussions are described below.

### 3.1 DIGITAL PLATFORM TO SUPPORT PERSONALISED TOURISM SERVICES – (IDEAS 1-6)

*Partnership composition: 2 from industry, 1 researcher and 2 from public administration*

#### 1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea is about the creation of platform to exploit currently available digitised repository and offer innovative services like visit planning & execution, aid/guidance, promotion/advertisements, wherein a provider can plug or make available individual services, with a participatory operating model to support business sustainability.

#### 2. Contribution of the different partners

For the effective implementation of the project the participation of the following groups is required: ICT contributors (academic/research and private organisations), hospitality professionals/hotels, marketing professionals, NGOs and local/regional cultural organisations, tourism consulting and professionals.

#### 3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education etc.

There are several issues that should be taken into account:

- IPR management mainly for issues relating to content
- Data management issues (e.g. privacy, data protection)
- Human capital for the implementation of the project for instance technicians, researchers, ICT experts, etc.

#### 4. First financial considerations

The formation of an initial ICT-related projects cluster to implement the project would require several hundreds of €.

#### 5. Identification of first “next” steps

- 1) Identification of a co-ordinating organisation
- 2) Dissemination to and mobilisation of stakeholders
- 3) Development of initial pilot applications and services.

### 3.2 DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH ADDED VALUE DIGITAL TOOLS FOR KEY TOURISM SECTORS (IDEAS 7-9)

*Partnership composition: 2 from industry, 1 researcher and 2 from public administration*

### 1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea is about the development of high added value digital tools for hospitality and food/gastronomy businesses & professionals with a range of offered end products and services to support quality personalised experience. Main expected outcomes are:

- The support of smart building management, with multiple targets, including energy efficiency and comfort optimisation for hotel facilities
- The creation of personalised services targeting regular visitors (for example professionals) and supporting visit and preferences data recording and management
- The support of basic information provisioning tailored to food/gastronomy offerings and used also by hospitality services units.

### 2. Contribution of the different partners

The following key partners are essential to implement the idea:

- Engineering/technical companies and professionals
- ICT contributors (academic/research and private organisations)
- Regional/local producers of food / gastronomy products.

### 3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education, etc.

There are some issues that should be taken into account:

- Data management issues (e.g. privacy, data protection)
- Energy/environmental normative and legislative issues.

### 4. First financial considerations

Initially setting up a limited number of pilot projects (1 small scale, 1 medium scale and 1 large scale) in hotels, would require a respective budget of 1M€. E-menu development project would require an additional budget of 100k€ and an extra 200k€ are projected for linking professionals with myvisitplanner.com services.

### 5. Identification of first “next” steps

- 1) Business plan development
- 2) Funding scheme development plan
- 3) Stakeholders networking and forming of value/supply chain.

## 3.3 ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ORGANISATION TO OFFER SUPPORT FOR DIGITAL BUSINESS INNOVATION IN TOURISM (IDEAS 10-15)

*Partnership composition: 3 from industry, 1 researcher, 1 from public administration*

### 1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea refers to a horizontal intervention that will incorporate regional regional-level data recording and management, innovation awards and destination management services. This can offer multi-stakeholder

educational support for improving tourism services and acceleration services for innovative business ideas.

## 2. Contribution of the different partners

There is a need for engagement from different stakeholders groups. The most important are:

- 1) Regional/local producers
- 2) Tourism industry/professionals/service providers
- 3) Regional public authorities and organisations
- 4) Cultural organisations
- 5) Research/academia community.

## 3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education, etc.

The most important issue relates to the development of the legal basis/framework to set up a Destination Management Organisation (DMO).

## 4. First financial considerations

No estimations were expressed due to the fact that the project is scale dependent.

## 5. Identification of first “next” steps

- 1) Develop collaboration culture
- 2) Education and training of regional stakeholders
- 3) Analyse and develop the legal framework of the wrapper DMO organisation
- 4) Networking of stakeholders and carry out development labs.

#### 4. GASTROTOURISM

Moderator:	Mr Petros SOUKOULIAS
Presentation by:	Mr Pedro PALACIOS – General Director of “Capital Española de la Gastronomía”
Industry:	5 representatives (1 international)
Academic / Research community:	8 representatives (6 international)
Public Administration:	7 representatives (3 international)
Total participants for the 2 days:	20

A good mix of stakeholders participated in the specific workshop with the unique characteristic (comparing to the other 3 working groups) of the participation of 10 international individuals from 5 EU countries.

The following 15 ideas were initially generated and presented (tasks 1&2):

- 1) Involvement of citizens within the establishment of gastronomy - tourism projects
- 2) Gastronomy and knowledge / innovation
- 3) Development of a platform that might combine local ingredients with recipes towards exchange of information on local cuisine (especially Med cuisine)
- 4) The Thrace culinary centre and the aspect of collaboration with neighbouring regions
- 5) Associate history and cuisine - the recreation of ancient EMTh and more recent history and cuisine - Fusion of different cuisines (GR, TR, BG, etc.)
- 6) Promotion of local dishes associated with local myths, recipes, etc. and connect the above with famous chefs, local events etc.
- 7) Organisation of a competition of gastronomy city of EMTh with relevant awarding scheme
- 8) Development of an interactive workshop (experience workshop for the tourists) dealing with local dishes/cuisine
- 9) Development of visitability of destinations of the agro-food value chains
- 10) Development of new sets of products based on local recipes and ingredients from ancient times till now
- 11) Regional Quality Agreement for all the actors of the value chain of agro-food and tourism
- 12) The local breakfast concept
- 13) Eating in the field (slow-food concept)
- 14) Tasting experience workshop development
- 15) Health and food: food is the best medicine you can get!!!

The participants identified obvious connections between proposed ideas and felt it was more productive not to rank differently very similar proposals. Instead they agreed to form two working sub-groups. There was no ranking of the initial ideas by the participants.

Next step was the discussion on the above ideas/partnerships according to given methodology. It is interesting the fact that among the members of the proposed partnerships, 7 were international participants and only three were local/national representatives.

The main outcomes of these discussions are described below.

#### 4.1 ENHANCEMENT THE KNOWLEDGE ASPECT TO SUPPORT LOCAL ACTORS (IDEA 1)

*Partnership composition: 4 researchers, 1 from public administration (4 international)*

##### 1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea is about the formation of a regional culinary centre to develop local cuisine capabilities in accordance with key tourism objectives (through a PPP). The idea's main goals are:

- To set a Regional Quality Agreement for all the actors of the value chain of agro-food and tourism.
- To enhance the aspect of collaboration with neighbouring regions.
- To increase the involvement of citizens within the establishment of gastronomy - tourism projects.
- To develop a platform that might combine local ingredients with recipes towards exchange of information on local cuisine (especially Med cuisine).

##### 2. Contribution of the different partners

Different partner groups may contribute to the project accordingly:

- Local/Regional authorities would assist for the initial set-up and the administration tasks
- Agrofood producers for the necessary supplies
- Research and Education for setting quality protocols
- Entrepreneurs (mainly hoteliers and restaurant owners) to follow main strategy and promote the concept.

##### 3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education, etc.

Adequate stakeholders mix (with the respective investment in time and money) would resolve all critical issues.

##### 4. First financial considerations

Hard to estimate. It is size dependent. Another critical factor is the "ownership" of the centre.

##### 5. Identification of first "next" steps

- 1) Scoping exercise
- 2) Feasibility study before setting-up the centre.

#### 4.2 DEVELOPMENT OF CO-OPERATIVE PROJECTS FOR LINKING LOCALITY, HISTORY AND GASTRONOMY (IDEA 2)

*Partnership composition: 1 from industry, 1 researcher, 3 from public administration (3 international)*

##### 1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea is about the creation of a structure to design a gastronomy-tourism strategy that will influence the touristic promotion of REMTh. The idea's main goals are:

- To associate history and cuisine - the recreation of ancient EMTh and more recent history and cuisine - Fusion of different cuisines (GR, TR, BG, etc.)
- The promotion of local dishes associated with local myths, recepies, etc. and connect the above with famous chefs, local events etc.
- The organisation of a competition of gastronomy city of EMTh with relevant awarding scheme
- The development of visitability of destinations of the agro-food value chains.

## 2. Contribution of the different partners

Different partner groups including municipal/regional authorities, gastronomy/culinary professionals (hospitality professionals, restaurants), producers of local food and wind/spirit products, local HEI departments, research centres (history, anthropology, gastronomy), training facilities.

## 3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education, etc.

The most critical issue is the establishment of an entity with a defined governance to plan and control the various projects.

## 4. First financial considerations

Hard to estimate. Only after a business plan is drafted the necessary capital requirements and relevant revenues would become clear.

## 5. Identification of first “next” steps

- 1) Organizational design and planning after bringing together all relevant stakeholders with Regional Authority
- 2) Start a pilot action/project at EU level
- 3) Creation of collaborative schemes by involving public and private actors
- 4) Develop a business plan for the actions to be implemented.