

Output O2.1

ONE COMMON MODEL FOR THE MODERNISATION AND DIGITALISATION OF LOCAL SYSTEMS

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DOCUMENT AND PROJECT DETAILS

Project acronym	MedDiet GO
Work Package	2. Promote the capitalisation of MD.NET's high-quality results
Output Name	O2.1 ONE COMMON MODEL FOR THE MODERNISATION AND DIGITALISATION OF LOCAL SYSTEMS
Output Type	Key output
Responsible Partner	PP3 E-zavod
Lead Partner	LP CCSEV
Due date of Deliverable	31.12.2025
Status	Final version
Submission date	04.03.2026



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The MedDiet GO **Output 2.1 defines A COMMON MODEL** for the modernisation and digitalisation of rural tourism systems across seven Mediterranean partner territories. The model is built around three interconnected pillars: **INNOVATION INSTRUMENTS, ECOSYSTEM CONDITIONS, AND EXPECTED OUTPUTS.**

The main **INNOVATION INSTRUMENTS** are **Living Labs, One-Stop-Shops (OSS), and digital tools.** Living Labs as participatory, user-centred environments where stakeholders co-create, test, and evaluate solutions to real local challenges. Their work follows three phases: exploration (identifying problems, user needs, and baseline conditions), experimentation (testing prototypes and services in real-life settings), and evaluation (assessing impact, refining solutions, and deciding on scaling). Five principles guide the Living Labs: value, influence, sustainability, openness, and realism.

The OSS are conceived as permanent support structures that take ideas developed in Living Labs and turn them into practical services. They support SMEs, communities, and tourism actors through training, advisory services, digitalisation, access to quality schemes, and networking. In this way, Living Labs act as innovation spaces, while OSS provide continuity, governance, and long-term implementation. **A shared transnational digital platform** complements this model by enabling storytelling, peer learning, visibility, and collaboration across the Mediterranean territories.

The model depends on enabling **ECOSYSTEM CONDITIONS**, especially strong **stakeholder engagement through the quadruple helix cooperation:** public authorities, businesses, research institutions, and civil society.

The project also builds on **existing territorial assets developed in the earlier MD.net project**, such as the Mediterranean Diet brand strategy, regional action plans, good practices, stakeholder networks, and links to UNESCO and other international initiatives.

Outputs- across the seven territories—Andalusia, Catalonia, Slovenia, Puglia, North Aegean, Alentejo, and Vratsa County—Living Labs organised workshops during 2025 **to identify local priorities, develop services, test tourism concepts, and shape future OSS structures.** While each territory focused on its own context, common themes emerged: strengthening local identity, linking food heritage and tourism, improving digitalisation, building skills, and encouraging cross-sector cooperation. Examples included gastronomy-based tourism, heritage interpretation, digital storytelling, food walks, training for SMEs, youth engagement, and new tourism routes.



The feedback gathered from Living Lab managers and stakeholder's shows that the process was widely valued. Key lessons include the importance of open communication, intersectoral collaboration, participatory methods, flexibility, and continuous cooperation. Stakeholders especially appreciated practical support, networking, and the opportunity to link cultural heritage with digital innovation and sustainable tourism. Surveys also showed broad commitment to continue cooperation after the project ends, particularly in community empowerment, institutional cooperation, and skills development.

A second part of the document looks ahead by presenting mission-driven canvases for the future operation of Living Labs and OSS in each region. These canvases define future mission, value proposition, partners, activities, resources, beneficiaries, and communication channels. Although the territorial visions differ, they share a long-term ambition: to make Mediterranean Diet values a driver of sustainable tourism, local economic resilience, innovation, and territorial identity.

The final conclusions stress that the MedDiet GO model is not only about tourism promotion, but about creating integrated local systems that connect food, culture, heritage, nature, business, and governance. Its success depends on sustained political and financial support, stakeholder ownership, organisational capacity, market relevance, and balancing preservation with innovation.

Overall, Living Labs and OSS together offer a durable framework for modernising and digitalising rural tourism in ways that are economically viable, environmentally responsible, and culturally authentic.



2 STRUCTURE AND COMPONENTS OF THE MDG COMMON MODEL FOR MODERNISATION AND DIGITALISATION OF THE RURAL TOURISM

In the project framework of the project implementation, project partners identified the following core components of the MDG common model for modernisation and digitalisation of the rural tourism:

- 1. INSTRUMENTS FOR RURAL TOURISM INNOVATION:** Local living labs, One-stop shops and Digital tools.
- 2. ECOSYSTEM CONDITIONS:** Quadruple helix stakeholders' commitment and existing territorial assets.
- 3. EXPECTED OUTPUTS:** new services, concepts, models, training, networking.

2.1 INSTRUMENTS FOR RURAL TOURISM INNOVATION

2.1.1 LIVING LABS

Living Labs are defined as user-centred, multi-stakeholder environments where solutions to real-world challenges are co-created, tested, and evaluated in realistic settings to generate measurable societal value. Within the MedDiet GO framework, Living Labs serve as "think tank performers" that generate and validate innovative ideas, models, and practices for sustainable tourism products and services, which One-Stop-Shops subsequently implement.

The participatory approach underpinning Living Labs is essential for achieving social cohesion and ensuring that tourism innovations reflect the needs, aspirations, and knowledge of communities across science, politics, business, and civil society. This inclusive methodology fosters a sense of ownership among stakeholders, increases the quality of outcomes, and creates conditions for sustainable local action integrated with global best practices and market opportunities.

Living Labs within MedDiet GO enhance local synergies by sharing locations, resources, new technologies, and knowledge among diverse stakeholders. They facilitate the development of joint knowledge-based tools and activities that assess improved solutions and promote sustainable tourism explicitly connected to Mediterranean Diet opportunities. By combining local action with global perspective and enabling both horizontal exchange (between like-minded peers) and vertical exchange (between different organisational levels), Living Labs create the collaborative environment needed for holistic rural tourism development.



2.1.1.1 Operational model: the three innovation phases

The MedDiet GO Living Labs follow a structured methodology comprising three main innovation phases: exploration, experimentation, and evaluation. Each phase serves a distinct purpose and employs specific methods and tools to advance the co-creation process.

EXPLORATION PHASE

The exploration phase encompasses activities spanning from initial idea conception to prototype or concept development. During this phase, participants—including domain experts, users, and stakeholders—identify the main problems affecting tourism and local economies and co-design customised solutions.

The exploration phase pursues three primary objectives:

- 1. Understanding the existing state of the art:** This involves analysing current habits, practices, and problems of target users in specific contexts, employing observation, participation, and in-depth interviews to gain empirical insights.
- 2. Identifying user needs and wishes:** This step focuses on identifying opportunities to improve existing conditions. Brainstorming, ideation, and co-creation techniques help participants articulate both explicit and latent needs, culminating in concrete, co-created concepts ready for prototyping.
- 3. Establishing preliminary impact measurements:** Understanding the baseline state of current practices is critical for later measuring improvements and quantifying the impact of innovations. During exploration, preliminary metrics and success criteria are established.

EXPERIMENTATION PHASE

In the experimentation phase, customised solutions identified during exploration are tested in prototype form within real-life environments—a fundamental principle of the Living Lab approach. The degree and mode of real-world testing depend on prototype maturity.

Prototypes can take many forms, from tangible products (e.g., new tourism packages, accommodation facilities, transportation services) to intangible services (e.g., digital booking platforms, training curricula, governance models). The primary purpose of testing is to allow users to familiarise themselves with new solutions, which may trigger new habits, usage patterns, and behaviours.



The main objectives of the experimentation phase are to:

- Collect and understand users' reactions to proposed solutions in authentic contexts.
- Identify unexpected benefits, drawbacks, and user adaptations.
- Generate feedback on user experience, technical functionality, and social or cultural fit.
- Decide whether to return to exploration for refinement or proceed to evaluation.

EVALUATION PHASE

The evaluation phase assesses the innovation by comparing the existing state (from exploration) with the new state (achieved through experimentation and feedback). This comparative analysis reveals whether the proposed solution genuinely addresses identified needs and creates value for stakeholders. The key evaluation activities include:

- Use case evaluation and documentation of real-world applications.
- Management strategy development for scaling and sustaining innovations.
- Communication and dissemination of successful solutions.
- Quantification of the value proposition based on pre- and post-implementation measurements.
- Decision-making regarding full implementation or further iteration.

Stakeholders may commit to post-launch activities such as ongoing monitoring, redesign based on user feedback, feature additions aligned with citizen needs, and consideration of civil society, establishing pathways for continuous improvement and adaptation.

2.1.1.2 The use of the core principles of living labs

Five key principles guide the design, management, and assessment of Living Labs within MedDiet GO, ensuring alignment with European best practices and the project's strategic objectives.

Principle 1: Value

The overarching goal of any Living Lab is to create tangible value for all engaged stakeholders. This principle recognises that sustainable innovation requires understanding diverse stakeholder needs—customers, users, businesses, communities, researchers—and ensuring that solutions genuinely address those needs.

By focusing on real stakeholder value rather than abstract innovation metrics, Living Labs reduce the risk associated with innovation development and increase the likelihood of market adoption and social acceptance. Living Lab processes allow users to test and experience products or services in realistic contexts, providing



insights into how different stakeholders perceive value and what trade-offs matter most.

Principle 2: Influence

The influence principle emphasises that users must engage as active, competent partners in decision-making, not merely as passive recipients or data sources. Involving diverse stakeholders with decision-making power improves the quality of the services developed and ensures that innovations reflect actual user needs and preferences.

Decision-making influence differs conceptually from related notions of participation, involvement, or engagement. It implies that user contributions—suggestions, feedback, creative ideas—are traceable in the final concept, prototype, and finished product. A critical management challenge is ensuring that participation, influence, and responsibility are balanced and harmonised across different partner organisations.

Respecting participants' time investment—typically uncompensated—is essential for maintaining engagement. When participants' suggestions are not immediately incorporated, providing transparent feedback about prioritisation and timelines sustains their commitment to the innovation process.

Principle 3: Sustainability

Sustainability encompasses three dimensions critical to Living Lab success: environmental, economic, and social. Living Labs must take responsibility for their ecological, social, and economic impacts, ensuring that innovation processes explicitly address sustainability.

For tourism innovations, this means considering material choices, implementing environmentally friendly procedures, assessing social impacts on host communities, and evaluating economic viability for local stakeholders. Sustainability in Living Labs also refers to the Lab's long-term viability and its capacity to sustain continuous learning and community problem-solving over time.

The research component of each Living Lab is vital, as it transforms operational knowledge into replicable models, methods, and theories that can be transferred across regions and support continuous system improvement.

Principle 4: Openness

Openness emphasises that innovation processes should be as inclusive as possible, welcoming multiple perspectives, diverse expertise, and varied stakeholder viewpoints. Opening innovation processes can decrease time-to-market, better utilise collective creativity, and raise overall innovation capacity across collaborating organisations.



However, openness operates at multiple levels, and different stakeholders may require different degrees of information access, participation intensity, or decision-making influence based on their roles, capacities, and commitments. The principle does not mandate identical engagement for all parties but rather ensures that relevant perspectives are systematically sought and considered.

Cross-organisational and cross-sectoral collaboration within Living Labs enables stakeholders to learn from each other, build trust, and develop shared visions for sustainable tourism development.

Principle 5: Realism

The realism principle requires that innovation activities occur in natural, real-life settings—whether physical spaces (villages, markets, tourism sites) or digital environments (online platforms, social networks). This is critical because human experience and behaviour are contextually embedded; people cannot experience innovations in isolation from their real-world circumstances.

Orchestrating realistic use situations involves understanding how users behave, what constraints they face, and how they would authentically engage with proposed solutions. The principle does not distinguish between physical and online contexts; both are considered real and realistic to actors when they meaningfully reflect actual conditions.

IT-based tools can function as "twin-world mediators," facilitating the connection between real-world situations and their virtual counterparts, expanding the possibilities for realistic testing and feedback collection.

2.1.2 ONE-STOP-SHOPS

To ensure continuity, innovations move from Living Labs into One-Stop Shops (OSS)—permanent structures in each partner territory. They provide integrated support for SMEs and communities (business services, digital training, access to PDO/PGI/organic schemes, matchmaking with tourism), act as a visibility hub for consumers and investors, serve as a policy interface aligned with Smart Specialisation and Cohesion tools, and connect transnationally by linking seven OSS into a Eurocluster platform.

The two tools reinforce each other: Living Labs incubate innovation at the grassroots level; OSS stabilise it through ongoing services and governance. During the project implementation, this model has already delivered new itineraries, digital platforms, gastronomic events, and cross-sector business models—tested locally and scaled cluster-wide. Strategically, it sustains co-creation and community empowerment, equips SMEs, channels local innovation into Eurocluster branding and internationalisation, and aligns with EU/global frameworks (European Green Deal, Digital Decade, UNESCO Intangible Heritage, FAO GIAHS, ENoLL).



At the end of the project, all partner territories, together with the Living Lab stakeholders drafted the mission-driven canvases to identify and ensure a sustainable framework in each territory for the long-term operation of One-stop shops. The plans are presented in the chapter 4. *Outlook to future operation of partner's living labs and One-stop-shops.*

2.1.3 DIGITAL TOOLS

To support community empowerment across borders, MedDietGo project launched a transnational digital platform Mediterranean Eurocluster platform.

The platform hosts interactive fora, storytelling campaigns, and peer-to-peer learning communities, allowing rural actors, entrepreneurs, and citizens to connect, exchange practices, and co-create narratives around Mediterranean heritage. It provides visibility for local products and services while embedding them in a shared Mediterranean marketplace.

2.2 ECOSYSTEM CONDITIONS

2.2.1 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND THE QUADRUPLE HELIX MODEL

Effective Living Lab operations depend on systematic stakeholder identification, inclusive engagement, and collaborative governance. MedDiet GO adopts the "quadruple helix" model, ensuring representation and voice from four critical sectors:

- 1. Decision makers:** Representatives of local communities, municipal governments, and regional authorities responsible for policy, resource allocation, and governance.
- 2. Business stakeholders:** Tourism service providers, accommodation operators, food producers, artisans, and suppliers connected to local economic development.
- 3. Research institutions:** Universities, technical colleges, research centres, and innovation hubs supporting evidence-based tourism development and local economic innovation.
- 4. Civil society:** non-governmental organisations, cultural associations, heritage preservation societies, and community groups representing citizen interests and values.

To gain the best possible results from the stakeholder engagement, the MedDiet Go project followed the Bristol Approach. This well-documented stakeholder engagement methodology identifies seven critical lessons for managing stakeholder involvement:



- 1. Open, two-way communication:** Addressing community challenges requires patience, time, and genuine openness to diverse perspectives. Effective dialogue builds trust and reveals underlying concerns and aspirations.
- 2. Investigate different perspectives:** After identifying key challenges, systematically examine what information and knowledge already exist, what knowledge gaps need addressing, and who holds valuable experience or insights. Partnerships function best when participants have established networks and effective communication channels.
- 3. Prepare diverse activities:** Organise a range of engagement activities suited to diverse professional backgrounds and interests. Partnerships may include artists, academics, entrepreneurs, public sector representatives, technology specialists, and community leaders—each contributing unique expertise.
- 4. Design iteratively:** When developing new tourism products or services, test basic, functional prototypes rather than perfected single features. Organise regular workshops and co-creation sessions to gather authentic feedback. Ensure events are easily accessible to maximise participation.
- 5. Address user experience concerns:** Prioritise user experience over technical sophistication. Make engagement with new tools and concepts personal, fun, and engaging. Allocate time for explaining how technology or innovations work, considering participants' diverse backgrounds and knowledge levels.
- 6. Establish an engagement team:** Dedicate team members to support participants during prototype testing, skill-building activities, and feedback processes. Share findings with other communities addressing similar challenges to accelerate collective learning.
- 7. Celebrate achievements:** Acknowledge and celebrate milestones, contributions, and everyday work. Recognising participants' value maintains interest, commitment, and long-term engagement in the innovation process.

2.2.2 EXISTING TERRITORIAL ASSETS

The MedDiet Go (MDG) project builds on the results of the previous MD.net project to strengthen the territorial development understood as an integrated network of sustainable tourism itineraries rooted in local food systems, hospitality, production, logistics, agriculture, and governance. Rather than addressing tourism as a standalone sector, the approach frames Mediterranean Diet (MD) as a territorial development model connecting local communities, enterprises, institutions, and policy actors across regions.

MDG capitalises on earlier achievements, including the MD Declaration and MD Brand strategy, regional action plans, over 60 innovative local initiatives, international networking ideas, stakeholder databases, and cooperation linked to the Euro Cluster and UNESCO. These results provide a shared basis for reinforcing the visibility, coherence, and transferability of MD-related development paths. A key



territorial added value lies in the transnational connection of local communities, which helps stimulate creativity, strengthen local identity, and generate new cooperation opportunities across regions.

In the *Work package 1: Raise awareness of the MDG strategy (MD Branding) in partner regions* a central objective of project partners' work is to promote the existing territorial assets: successful practices and lessons learned to support the expansion of MD tourism integrated itineraries as drivers of regional sustainable development. This serves a dual purpose: first, to convince local stakeholders of the value of investing in MD circuits and second, to support policy makers in embedding these initiatives into mainstream regional strategies. In this sense, the activities contribute to shaping a common policy orientation for MD-based territorial development, grounded in evidence from projects as well as experiences from UNESCO, UNWTO, and FAO-GIAHS pilots. The systematic collection of good practices through a project catalogue, linked to the project knowledge map, enables the translation of practical experience into policy measures and recommendations. This supports a more coordinated policy framework across territories.



2.3 OUTPUTS: SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTED WORKSHOPS, DEVELOPED SERVICES, TRAININGS ACROSS SEVEN PARTNER TERRITORIES

MedDiet GO operates seven Living Labs across diverse Mediterranean regions, each led by local partner organisations with deep territorial knowledge and stakeholder networks:

- **Andalusia, Spain:** Chamber of Commerce of Seville (CCSEV)
- **Catalonia, Spain:** Mediterranean Diet Foundation (FDM)
- **Slovenia:** E-Zavod (innovation and social enterprise institute)
- **Puglia, Italy:** Puglia Region
- **North Aegean, Greece:** ELORIS
- **Alentejo, Portugal:** ADRAL—Alentejo Regional Development Agency
- **Vratsa County, Bulgaria:** Chamber of Commerce of Vratsa

Each Living Lab was tasked with organising four workshops during 2025 to identify territorial priorities, define One-Stop-Shop structures, and co-create sustainable tourism innovations.

Each territory was guided to align Living Lab activities with results from previous regional analyses conducted under **Work Package 1: Raise awareness of the MDG strategy (MD Branding) in partner regions**, including comparative reviews of prior projects, documentation of local success stories, identified heritage assets, cultural events, business initiatives, and effective policies.

Andalusia, Spain

The final Andalusian workshop reinforced the idea of the Mediterranean Diet as a holistic lifestyle model. It used experiential learning (including an olive-oil heritage visit) to connect cultural heritage, sustainability, and innovation, while also emphasising the Eurocluster's role in scaling collaboration.

Catalonia, Spain

Catalonia's Living Lab mission is to identify opportunities, challenges, and concrete lines of action to strengthen Mediterranean tourism as a driver of rural development, using a sustainable, participatory approach aligned with territorial values and the Mediterranean Diet. Its goals focus on mobilising quadruple-helix stakeholders for cross-sector dialogue, disseminating best practices in Mediterranean Diet, supporting wine and olive oil production, sustainable tourism, and entrepreneurship, and raising awareness of declining adherence to the Mediterranean Diet and the risks of less sustainable lifestyles.



Across three workshops (Madrid, Barcelona, Vilafranca del Penedès), participants highlighted that rural gastronomy-based tourism (oleo/wine tourism) must be built on authentic identity and storytelling, treating olive oil/wine not only as products but as part of the territory's landscape, biodiversity, history and traditions. Major constraints include rural connectivity/transport, uneven digitalisation, and the need for training tourism agents. Discussions in Barcelona reinforced the Mediterranean Diet as a scientifically supported healthy and sustainable model, calling for stronger education, communication and public policies, with emphasis on local production seasonality, responsible consumption and food waste reduction, and on reconnecting consumers with producers. Vilafranca stressed the Mediterranean Diet as a living cultural heritage and a strategic asset for slow tourism and rural entrepreneurship.

New collaborations emerged with a leading olive oil producers' association (to support the continuation of oleo-tourism work), a commitment to monthly follow-up meetings after the Barcelona session, and VINSEUM positioned as a regional hub for cultural agents to co-develop a unified strategy. Next steps include continuing strategy-building and developing practical solutions, such as sustainable weekly menus, education actions, innovations in packaging and logistics, and waste reduction, as well as communication campaigns or digital tools.

Slovenia

Slovenia defined its Living Lab mission around building an integrated approach to rural tourism development through quadruple-helix cooperation and participatory methods, while explicitly balancing tourism, environment, and local population needs.

The Slovenian workshops were strongly practice-oriented. One workshop built concrete skills in fermenting vegetables and fruits so that eco-farms and rural tourism providers could convert seasonal produce into higher-value, branded, shelf-stable products, with attention to food safety and basic labelling. Another workshop tested a full-day prototype tourism product at the Žička Carthusian Monastery, combining guided heritage interpretation with hands-on herb education and distillation experiences, and using citizen feedback to validate the perceived added value and refine operational details such as group size, timing, and retail touchpoints.

The final workshop focused on shaping the future mission and services of the local OSS, drafting a "mission canvas," developing a guided "green corridor" knowledge walk concept, and coordinating a follow-up event to promote further and consolidate earlier pilot results.



Puglia, Italy

Puglia framed its Living Lab around co-creating new services for a future “Med Diet Hub” anchored in the renovated Territorial Museum, with an emphasis on connecting food traditions, culture, and innovation. The Puglia process used a design-thinking and participatory planning approach, and it developed service concepts around several “personas” representing different user needs and ways an OSS-like hub could function. Early outputs included agreement to position the Museum as a narrative space for territorial identity and to develop a first pilot around a symbolic local food (“Pancotto”) as a culturally rooted, concrete starting point.

Subsequent workshops evolved the concepts into structured proposals, which were collectively evaluated for strengths, criticalities, and development potential. Later sessions brought in a broader set of disciplinary experts (including heritage and architecture specialists connected to the museum redevelopment) to deepen evaluation and strategic fit. The next steps in Puglia were described as moving into operational prototyping, establishing governance, strengthening the digital dimension, and connecting the museum hub more closely to the wider territory, with an explicit ambition to make the model replicable for other museums and contexts.

North Aegean, Greece

North Aegean positioned its Living Lab mission around building clusters and synergies across tourism, food and beverage, producers, and marketing/communication actors, to shape policies and develop an outward-looking culture of innovation.

The workshops included practical capacity building, live prototyping, and partner coordination. Early sessions focused on food photography skills to address fragmented marketing and promotion, and they reportedly established cooperation among producers and the municipality. Later activities prototyped and refined “guided food walks” in Mytilini that connect gastronomy with heritage sites, and produced concrete tools, including draft guides for organising and costing food walks, as well as media assets to support promotion.

A final workshop shifted toward volunteer training for food events, aiming to formalise recruitment, training, and deployment patterns while aligning sponsors and organisers for consistent visitor experiences during festivals and beyond.



Alentejo, Portugal

Alentejo described a broad, strategic mission that treats the Mediterranean Diet as a catalyst for innovation, identity, and rural resilience, with the OSS serving as a practical support hub offering digital tools, training, and guidance.

The first workshop used the World Café method to prioritise and translate discussions into micro-commitments and pilot directions across three domains: products, food service/hospitality, and experiences/visits. Outputs included proposals for traceability and origin communication through seals or QR codes, sensory validation pathways, a practical target for restaurants to integrate seasonal/local content into menus, and the design of immersive seasonal experiences that connect communities, heritage, and producers.

Further workshops moved into concrete route development and OSS pilot planning by finalising the “One Day in Alandroal” itinerary, agreeing on a first version of an authenticity and quality checklist, defining simple KPIs, and assigning owners and timelines for the first pilots. A subsequent pilot day tested the full route in practice and collected structured feedback through a questionnaire, with the intention of using the analysis report to refine the route and strengthen stakeholder coordination through the OSS.

Vratsa County, Bulgaria

Vratsa County framed its Living Lab mission around sustainable rural regeneration and resilient ecosystems linked to green and digital transitions, with a strong focus on cultural heritage, youth engagement, and digitalisation.

Workshops addressed declining transmission of local crafts and culinary traditions, seasonal tourism demand, weak branding and digital presence, and fragmented coordination among actors. Outputs include concepts for flagship itineraries that combine craft demonstrations, tastings, and folklore; plans for festivals that merge food and music; and designs for youth training and certification models.

Subsequent sessions focused explicitly on digital tools for tourism and storytelling, developing prototype ideas such as QR-enabled routes, video channels, and interactive maps with gamified elements, and they reinforced the need for a unified digital platform supported by the OSS to curate and maintain content over time.

The last workshop concentrated on gastronomy as a bridge between local identity and market-ready tourism products, producing route concepts, a cookbook idea focused on intergenerational knowledge transfer, and a proposal for a regional quality trademark to strengthen visibility and trust.



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Across all project regions, the strongest common thread is that sustainable tourism development should not be treated as a single product, but as a connected system that includes local food value chains, skills and training, authentic storytelling, quality assurance, digital communication, and coordination among diverse actors.



3.LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE OPERATION OF LIVING LABS

Sustainability in Living Labs and one-stop shops also refers to the Lab's long-term viability and its capacity to sustain continuous learning and community problem-solving over time.

The key successful factor of the collaboration of the Quadruple helix stakeholders is ongoing reflection and mutual learning, which raises capacities for future operation.

At the end of the implementation of the series of living labs workshops in 2025, we prepared feedback survey and collected the feedback about the cooperation experiences working in the framework of the local living labs from **living lab managers (local partner coordinators) and from the key involved stakeholders.**

The collected feedback summary serves as valuable knowledge base for further cooperation in the framework of one-stop-shops.

3.1 FEEDBACK SURVEY SUMMARY REFLECTION FROM LIVING LABS MANAGERS

1.Reflection about the set-up of living labs in 7 partner territories and about the recruitment of the stakeholders

Andalusia, Spain: An existing collaboration was already taken in place, and the project has been useful for the strengthening the results, there were no issues with recruitment of stakeholders.

Slovenia: Some of the stakeholders have been already collaborating, but also some new joined and we have managed to strengthen the collaboration in the field of the rural development and tourism sector.

Puglia region, Italy: the collaboration has been set up specifically for the project starting from a preliminary activity of one-to-one interviews with some relevant stakeholders. The stakeholders were pre-selected from specific groups considering the quadruple helix model and then other participants joined representing different groups.

North Aegean, Greece: the collaboration has been set up specifically for the project and no issues occurred during the recruitment process.

Alentejo, Portugal: the living lab was set-up with the group of people who are familiar with our regional cooperation and participated on the regional workshops in the past. There were no issues with engaging the stakeholders. We are used to implementing the "Quadruple Helix" methodology and it is very useful to us.



Vratsa county, Bulgaria: The Living Lab was set up building on an already existing collaboration of stakeholders in the Vratsa region. CCI Vratsa has long-standing partnerships with cultural institutions, tourism operators, Local Action Groups, producers, youth groups and NGOs. These existing networks were expanded and formalized for the purposes of the MedDiet GO project, strengthening cooperation around gastronomy, cultural heritage, digital tourism and sustainable development.

2. Reflection about the key lessons learned about the process of living lab operation

Andalusia, Spain

Key lessons from collaboration are the importance of enabling intersectoral cooperation, building common values and focusing on the integrated strategy.

Slovenia

Key lessons in our experience are maintaining open communication, identifying joint interests that connect the stakeholders and mutual support.

Puglia region, Italy

People like to get involved with cultural identity issues. Work through personal memories helps to directly involve participants. The entrepreneurs are available to participate in co-creation activities if they can envisage potential in terms of business. The main difficulty is ensuring the participation through the entire process.

North Aegean, Greece

To foster collaboration, there is a need for the continuous collaboration and flexibility.

Alentejo, Portugal

The living labs co-shaped shape the opinions of participants, contributing different perspectives, which is very enriching. Furthermore, it is very interesting that these contributions, made by experts in their respective fields, are already validated scientifically, culturally, and socially. Also, the stakeholders established rich relations generating the networking that the project aims for.

Vratsa county, Bulgaria

Participatory methods significantly increase ownership and creativity. World Café, design thinking and story mapping generated concrete product ideas, digital concepts and partnership commitments.

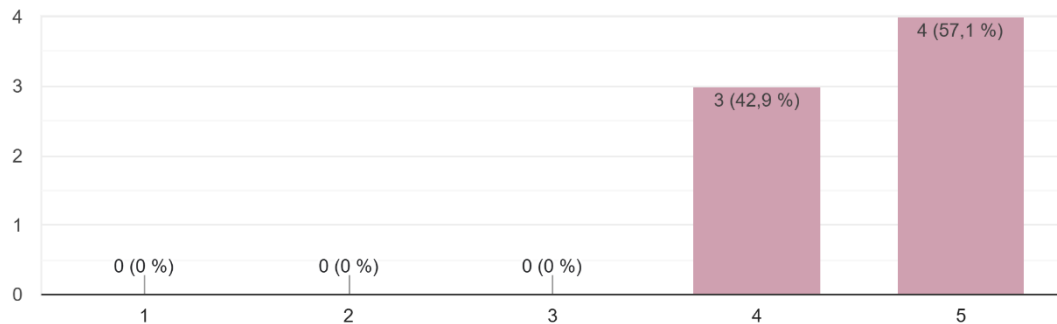


Cross-sector collaboration is essential. Combining cultural, digital, culinary and tourism actors lead to more holistic solutions for regional development. Real-life challenges must drive the process. Workshops worked best when participants addressed tangible needs—loss of traditions, lack of youth engagement, weak branding and insufficient digitalisation.

3. Reflection about the use of participatory approaches in the operation of the living labs, through the lens of considering living lab principles

1. KEY PRINCIPLE-VALUE. The primary goal of a Living Lab is to create value for all stakeholders involved. How would you rate the creation of value for all involved stakeholders during cooperation?

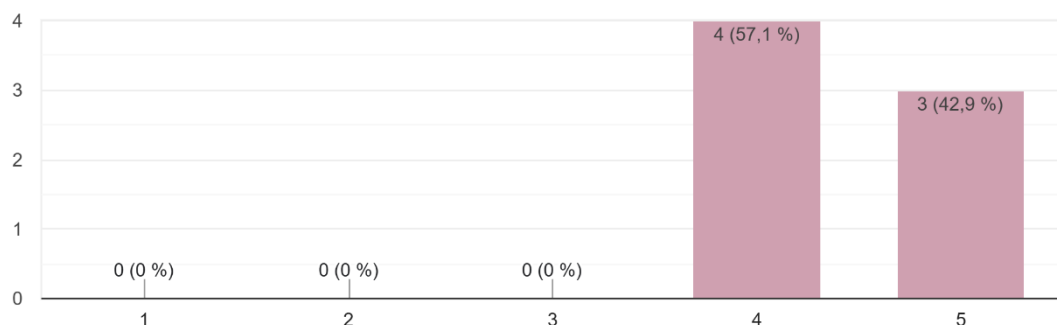
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Feedback: 57% of managers assess that the due to the involved stakeholders the creation of value for all involved stakeholders was excellent and 43% assess it was very good.

2. KEY PRINCIPLE -INFLUENCE. The principle of influence focuses on stakeholders' and end-users' engagement as active, competent partners. How would you rate the engagement of end-users in implementing Living Lab activities?

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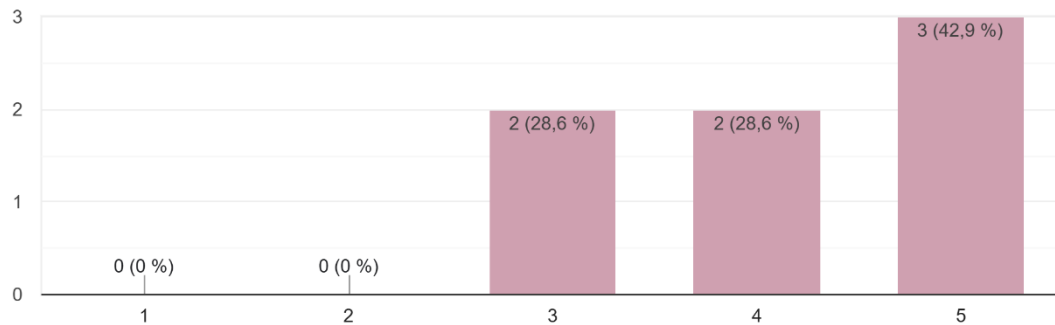




Feedback: 57 % of managers rate the stakeholder's' and end-users' influence is of key importance, 43% rate their influence important.

3. KEY PRINCIPLE -SUSTAINABILITY. Focusing on sustainability, Living Labs must take responsibility for the ecological, social, and econom...ciple during the implementation of the activities.

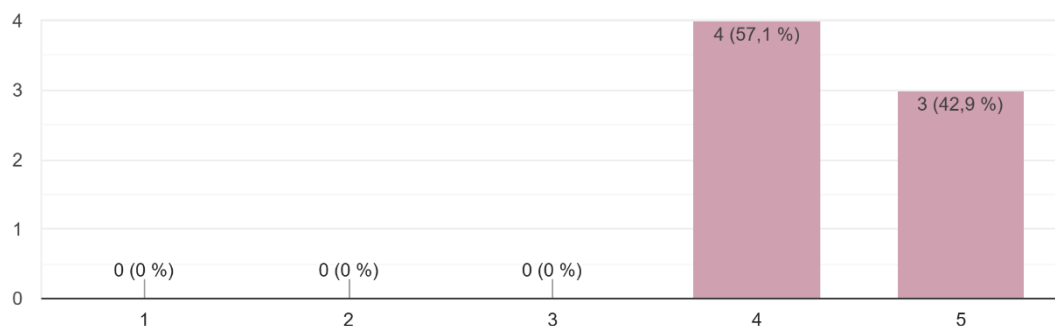
7 odgovorov



Feedback: 43% of managers rate that the sustainability principle for the ecological, social and economic was considered fully in all activities, 29% rate that it was considered in the most and 29% in some activities.

4. KEY PRINCIPLE -OPENNESS. The key principle of openness emphasises creating an innovation process that is as open as possible, considering th...ctives in developing and implementing activities?

7 odgovorov

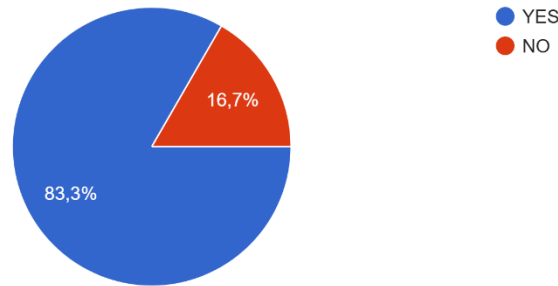


Feedback: 43% of managers assess that inclusion of the multiple perspectives in developing and implementing activities was fully respected, 57% assess it was mostly respected.



5. KEY PRINCIPLE -REALISM. The reality aspect considers co-designing and testing solutions with real users rather than relying on "personas". Did you...nage to test Living Lab solutions with real users?

6 odgovorov

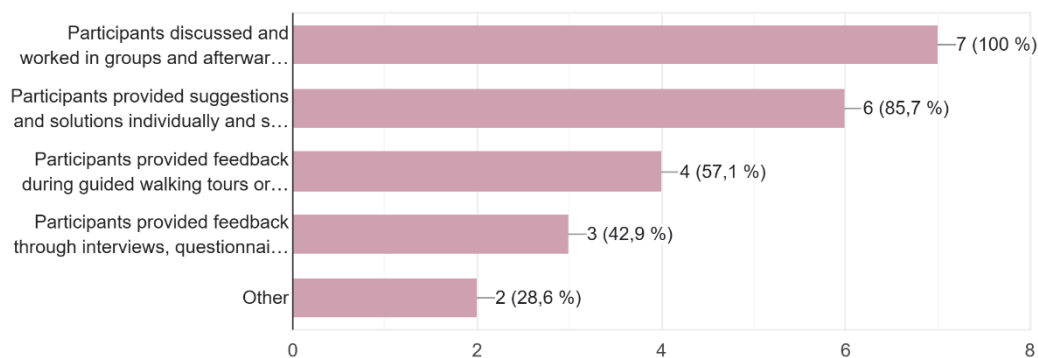


Feedback: In 83% of living labs activities, such as the co-design and testing of solutions, was implemented by including real users and in 17% the process had to rely on the using the "personas".

4. Reflection about the use of participant engagement methods in the implementation of the place labs workshops

1. How did you ensure the engagement of participants during the Living Labs workshops? (More options can be chosen.)

7 odgovorov



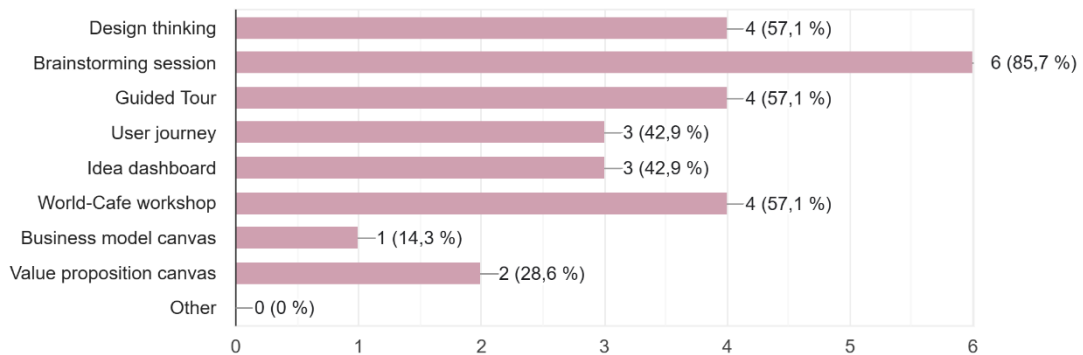
Feedback: In all implemented Living labs workshops, the participant engagement methods were used. The most widely used methods in the workshops are:
-participants discussed and worked in groups and afterwards shared the feedback with other participants.



- Participants provided suggestions and solutions individually and shared them with other participants.
- In the framework of some workshops, participants provided feedback during guided walking tours or during a showcase of good practices or through the interviews and questionnaires.

2. Did you use any specific engagement method to explore the challenges and solutions you addressed while implementing Living Labs activities? (More options can be chosen.)

7 odgovorov

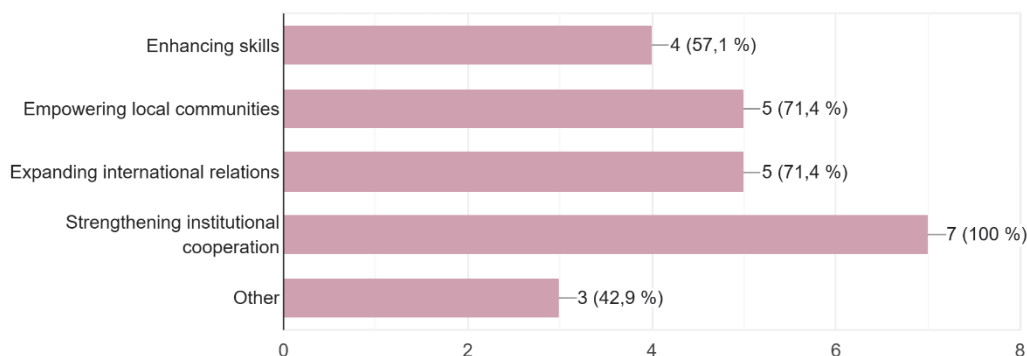


Feedback: The most used specific engagement methods during the workshops are brainstorming sessions, design thinking and guide tours.

5. Reflection about future cooperation

2. If YES, which activities will the cooperation focus on in the future? (More options can be chosen)

7 odgovorov



Feedback: In all living labs, the cooperation will continue after project's end. In all living labs the stakeholders will focus on the enhancing skills, empowering the local



communities and strengthening institutional cooperation. In most cases also on expanding the international relations.

3.2. FEEDBACK SURVEY SUMMARY REFLECTION FROM KEY STAKEHOLDERS

1. Reflection of stakeholders' motivation/reasons to join to the local living labs

- ✓ The observation that the fragmented support in the field of sustainable tourism does not work. It needs a wider collaboration.
- ✓ To provide our school and students connection with real economy sectors, to learn, to contribute.
- ✓ As a cultural and educational institution, the Regional Library "Hristo Botev" was motivated to join the Living Lab because the initiative aligns with our mission to preserve, promote, and make accessible the cultural and intangible heritage of the Vratsa region.
- ✓ Interest in the topic and its possible developments
- ✓ As ARED Vratsa, we were motivated to join the Living Lab because it aligns directly with our mission.
- ✓ To support regional development, strengthen local economies, and foster innovation in tourism, culture, gastronomy and digital transformation.
- ✓ The Living Lab offered a structured environment where we could: facilitate collaboration among diverse stakeholders, introduce participatory methods for co-creation, support the integration of Mediterranean Diet principles in local tourism, stimulate community-driven innovation.
- ✓ We saw strong potential for creating new tourism products, digital tools, and educational models, as reflected in the outcomes of the workshops.
- ✓ Due to the participants and the topics.
- ✓ As a protected natural area with an important role in sustainable tourism, conservation and environmental education, Natural Park "Vrachanski Balkan" was motivated to join the Living Lab because the initiative aligns closely with our mission. The Living Lab provided a platform to connect environmental expertise with cultural, gastronomic, digital and community perspectives, supporting holistic regional development.
- ✓ To contribute to the local network of stakeholders, since our agency is responsible for the regional development.
- ✓ The fact that it dealt with an aspect linked to the territory and its history.



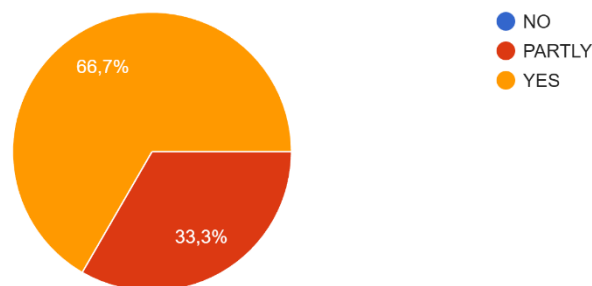
2. Reflection about the collaboration

All key involved stakeholders that filled the survey had previous experiences with participating in the local stakeholder groups. The prior experiences helped them:

- ✓ to know, what they can offer as a potential stakeholder.
- ✓ to understand that participation in the local and international networking groups is very important part of their mission.
- ✓ to Understand that collaboration can help to mobilize stakeholders quickly, facilitate effective dialogue, apply participatory formats such as World Café and design thinking, coordinate multi-sector groups.
- ✓ to enable to lay a strong foundation for the Living Lab's success.

4. Could you present and fulfil your organisation's key interests in the framework of LIVING LAB cooperation?

9 odgovorov



Feedback: 66,7% survey participants answered that they could present and fulfil their organization's interest in the framework of the Living Labc, 33,3% answered that only partly.

3. Reflection about Stakeholders' key lessons learned during the cooperation in the LIVING LABS

- ✓ The quality cooperation requires a lot of effort and fine-tuning.
- ✓ Local communities need to be supported by local institutions to strengthen their offer and to provide economic security to local people.
- ✓ Cultural heritage gains new value when connected to digital innovation.
- ✓ Working with tourism actors, digital experts, and producers showed how library collections and local knowledge can inspire new digital tools and experiences.
- ✓ Youth participation requires creative and interactive formats.



- ✓ Workshops confirmed that young people respond strongly to storytelling, video creation, gamification and interactive learning—areas where the library can actively contribute.
- ✓ Active involvement of local communities and stakeholders enhances knowledge transfer, authenticity, and long-term sustainability of the Living Lab activities. Interdisciplinary collaboration is crucial: combining archaeological knowledge with nutrition and community engagement enriches the understanding of the Mediterranean Diet as both a cultural and living heritage
- ✓ Participatory methods dramatically improve stakeholder engagement.
- ✓ World Café, design thinking, and future workshops encouraged diverse voices to contribute and helped generate high-quality, realistic ideas.
- ✓ Combining tradition with innovation leads to strong, community-supported concepts.
- ✓ The best results came when cultural heritage, crafts, folklore and culinary identity were merged with digital tools and modern storytelling.
- ✓ Youth involvement requires tailored engagement strategies.
- ✓ Youth participation increases creativity and sustainability of results, but it must be supported by digital formats, mentorship, and hands-on opportunities.
- ✓ Sharing good practices is essential, social economy is a key point in the agri food sector
- ✓ Sustainability must be embedded in all new ideas from the beginning.
- ✓ Cross-sector participation enriches tourism development.
- ✓ Experiential learning increases community engagement. Outdoor sessions, demonstrations and storytelling in natural settings effectively engage participants and help build a shared vision for sustainable tourism.
- ✓ To discuss openly about the challenges, if something does not work. To be fair and clear what kind of support our institution can offer.

4. Reflection about the future cooperation

Key stakeholders provided the following reasons to continue with the cooperation, after project's end:

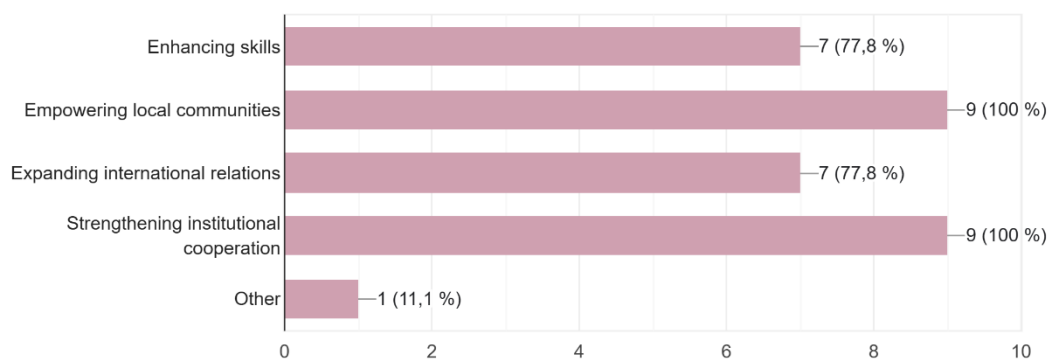
- ✓ The collaboration was well set-up, and it focuses on practical and realistic support.
- ✓ We believe we can contribute and learn a lot.
- ✓ The Regional Library "Hristo Botev" recognizes the Living Lab as an effective platform for community engagement, cultural preservation, innovation, and educational outreach.



- ✓ The cooperation supports our mission to promote regional identity, document local narratives, and make cultural heritage accessible to all generations.
- ✓ We would like to continue this cooperation because the Living Lab has demonstrated strong potential for long-term regional benefits. The participatory format proved highly effective in mobilising local actors, generating innovative ideas, and strengthening ties between tourism, gastronomy, cultural heritage, education, and digital sectors.
- ✓ The workshops showed that stakeholders are motivated and capable of co-creating sustainable tourism products, digital tools, and community-driven initiatives that will continue beyond the project's duration. The Living Lab provides a valuable platform for ongoing innovation, collaboration, and strategic development in the Vratsa region.
- ✓ The Living Lab created an effective space for cooperation that we would like to continue and expand.
- ✓ The cooperation proved to be very fruitful and is based on the good common interest.
- ✓ Because I believe that the effectiveness of such a process can be measured over the long term.

2. If you answered YES in the previous question, which activities related to the future cooperation would you like to focus on? (More options can be chosen)

9 odgovorov



Feedback: For future cooperation, stakeholders find the most important activities: empowering local communities, strengthening institutional cooperation, little bit less important: enhancing skills and expanding international relations.



4. OUTLOOK TO FUTURE OPERATION OF PARTNERS' LIVING LABS & ONE-STOP-SHOPS

In this chapter, we present an outlook for the future operation of the Living Labs and One-stop shops in partners' territories. The purpose of drafting the mission-driven canvases is to identify and ensure a sustainable framework in each territory for the long-term operation of One-stop shops.

For our project purpose, the mission-driven canvas works like a structured sketchpad, including the following steps:

STEP 1: Identifying and capturing the future mission/vision.

What change would we like to achieve through LL and One-stop-shop collaboration?

STEP 2: Mapping the value proposition of LL and the one-stop shop.

Why & how will solutions matter to participating stakeholders and to the community?

STEP 3: Identifying key collaborating partners.

Who will participate in the future activities? For example: SMEs, universities, consultants, citizens, and local authorities.

STEP4: Identifying key future activities.

What will be the key activities of LL and the One-stop-shop? On the local and transnational level?

STEP5: Identifying key resources.

Identifying human resources: Who will be responsible for managing the Living Lab and One-stop shop? Identifying financial resources: What kind of funding will be available (local/regional, EU funding)

STEP6: Identifying primary beneficiaries and stakeholders.

Who will benefit from the operation of the Living Lab and One-stop shop? For example: tourist services providers, local SMEs and farmers, local institutions, researchers, and tourists.

STEP 7: Identifying the communication channels for future collaboration.

Name the communication channels you will be using for the future operation of the LL and the one-stop shop.



MISSION DRIVEN CANVAS FOR LIVING LAB & ONE-STOP-SHOP, ANDALUSIA, SPAIN

THE FUTURE MISSION/VISION

Our goal is to transform rural Mediterranean regions into more resilient and competitive ecosystems. LLs and OSS will enable this by building collaborative networks, driving innovation and digitalisation, promoting integration between activities linked to Mediterranean diet and sustainable tourism, organising different players into coordinated value chains that create stable economic, social and environmental benefits.

VALUE PROPOSITION

LL and OSS are important because they strengthen connections among rural undertakings, boost the competitiveness of SMEs, preserve the Mediterranean values and promote sustainable tourism in less developed territories. The LL and OSS will create ongoing collaborative environments for innovation, digitalisation, capacity building, and coordinated value chains. Furthermore, stakeholders will have the opportunity to develop their skills, increase their visibility, and gain access to international markets, while communities will benefit from new employment opportunities, a shared awareness of long-term territorial resilience, and an improved quality of life through integration and cooperation.

KEY COLLABORATING PARTNERS

Future activities will engage the Quadruple Helix stakeholders specifically to improve innovation processes: SMEs, rural producers, tourism operators, universities, vocational education and training (VET) centres, research centres, consultants, local authorities, chambers of commerce, cultural organisations and citizens. Together, they will contribute to co-creation, training, innovation, and territorial promotion, and address societal and economic challenges toward more sustainable value chains connected to rural needs.

KEY FUTURE ACTIVITIES

1. Enhancing skills: Training for SMEs in sustainability, digitalisation and innovation, including itinerant workshops, cross-border learning, internships, applied research and community education on the values of the Mediterranean diet.
 2. Empowering local communities: Participatory co-design of territorial strategies, cultural and social innovation initiatives, and digital platforms for storytelling and peer learning.
 3. Expanding international relations: Joint internationalisation roadmap, collective branding and promotion under an Eurocluster label, business matchmaking, and international events, as well as cooperation with UNESCO, FAO, UNWTO and UfM.
 4. Strengthening institutional anchoring: Policy alignment with EU strategies; structured institutional dialogue; support for PDO/PGI and traceability schemes; and robust, multi-level governance and long-term investment frameworks.
-

KEY RESOURCES

Human Resources: Local Living Lab and One-Stop-Shop will be coordinated by a local management team.

Financial resources: Funding may come from a mix of local, regional, national, and international programmes, including tourism funds; EU cohesion policies; Smart Specialisation Strategies; Interregional programmes; and cluster-based initiatives.

BENEFICIARIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

The primary beneficiaries are local SMEs, farmers, producers and tourism operators, who will gain skills, visibility, market access and support for innovation. Other beneficiaries include municipalities, cultural organisations, universities, VET centres and researchers,



who benefit from collaboration and policy dialogue. On the other hand, citizens and tourists will enjoy higher-quality services, healthier food options, cultural preservation and sustainable territorial development.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION

MedDiet Go platform -a transnational digital platform- and forums created for collaboration, peer learning and community engagement. Local Living Lab services, events and documentation can be published and stored on the platform.

MedDiet Go website and social media channels can be used for storytelling, raising awareness and mobilising stakeholders. Newsletters and mailing lists can also be used for targeted communication with SMEs, institutions and citizens.

Physical events, fairs and itinerant workshops can be organised, as well as online meetings, webinars and virtual workshops.

MISSION DRIVEN CANVAS FOR LIVING LAB & ONE-STOP-SHOP, CATALONIA, SPAIN

THE FUTURE MISSION/VISION

- 1.Raising awareness of the potential of the Mediterranean Diet as a lifestyle.
- 2.Promoting international cooperation and the exchange of perspectives and experiences.
- 3.Showcasing how the Mediterranean Diet can contribute to the global projection of a territory through its cultural, social, and economic values.

VALUE PROPOSITION

Strengthening the visibility and impact of local initiatives, highlighting their contribution to the Mediterranean Diet lifestyle.

Encouraging active participation in local networks to foster knowledge sharing and collaboration around the Mediterranean Diet.

Facilitating engagement in interregional networks to promote best practices and the global projection of territories through the Mediterranean Diet.

KEY COLLABORATING PARTNERS

Representatives of public authorities and business associations.

Private companies in the agri-food, tourism, sustainability, and cultural heritage sectors.

Mass media.

KEY FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Enhance the potential of the Mediterranean Diet with public authorities and the private sector.

Provide tools to position the Mediterranean Diet internationally, specially through the Mediterranean Diet Euro Cluster.

Continue promoting and communicating the Mediterranean Diet.

KEY RESOURCES

Promoting the Mediterranean Diet is our focus, reinforcing its visibility and recognition.

Raising awareness of the Mediterranean Diet and its values through our public and private events.

Disseminating and promoting the Mediterranean Diet through our own communication channels.

BENEFICIARIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

Companies and entrepreneurs in the agri-food and tourism sectors.

Public authorities.



The Mediterranean Communities in all the participating regions.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION

Key communication channels for future collaboration include the Mediterranean Diet Foundation's website, newsletter, social media platforms, and email campaigns.

Direct contacts from the Mediterranean Diet Foundation's database.

These channels serve as our main tools to disseminate information and engage with partners and stakeholders.

MISSION DRIVEN CANVAS FOR LIVING LAB & ONE-STOP-SHOP, SLOVENIA

THE FUTURE MISSION/VISION

To build an integrated approach to rural tourism development through quadruple-helix cooperation and participatory methods, while explicitly balancing tourism, environment, and local population needs.

Expected change:

Stronger network and cooperation among local quadruple-helix stakeholders to better support rural tourism.

Raised awareness, capacities, and knowledge in rural tourism to strengthen the destination's product development, management, positioning, and market attractiveness.

To improve the balance between tourism, the environment, and the local population by integrating environmental sustainability and circular economy approaches into existing products and into potential new offerings.

VALUE PROPOSITION

To foster sustainable and strong local business models, which are based on the destination's product profiles which are distinctive and authentic.

To share a framework of joint development, experimentation, co-creation, and the testing of new ideas, products, and services in sustainable rural tourism.

To intensify the inclusion of cultural content and settings, as well as contemporary culinary and oenological portfolios in tourism products and destination management.

KEY COLLABORATING PARTNERS

Tourism and gastronomy local providers.

Local municipalities and local development agencies.

Support and Research institutions.

Local cultural institutions and NGOs.

KEY FUTURE ACTIVITIES

1. Enhancing skills: capacity building educational events for relevant stakeholders in rural sustainable tourism (product development, destination management, digital tools use).

2. Empowering local communities: providing a framework where stakeholders can develop, experiment, co-create, and test new ideas, products, and services in sustainable rural tourism.

3. Expanding international relations: enhancing transnational cooperation and development, and engagement of local stakeholders in the international cooperation.

4. Strengthening institutional dialogue and alignment: enhancing local and regional policy alignment to avoid a fragmented approach in further development of rural sustainable tourism in Slovenia.



KEY RESOURCES

E-zavod and RRA Podravje: coordination, stakeholder engagement, organisation of OSS services.

E-zavod, RRA Podravje and ZRS Bistra: project facilitation, business support, and economic development.

Academia: education support related to the digitalisation and data-driven tools

Tourism institutions and NGOs: creation of new potential services, itineraries, products

Local SMEs: testing, co-creation, implementation.

BENEFICIARIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

Tourism local SMEs

Local farmers and food producers

Hospitality and gastronomy sector

Tourism support institutions and NGOs

Local communities

Local and regional research institutions

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION

Personal communication through existing network and participation in the local, regional and national events.

Digital tools: email, social media.

MISSION DRIVEN CANVAS FOR LIVING LAB & ONE-STOP-SHOP, PUGLIA REGION, ITALY

THE FUTURE MISSION/VISION

Increased awareness about the value of the Mediterranean diet (MD).

Integration of Mediterranean diet (MD) in new touristic products/proposals.

Increased number of studies about the local traditions related to Mediterranean diet (MD).

VALUE PROPOSITION

Increased visibility of local projects through the platform.

Opportunity to participate in a local network about MD.

Opportunity to participate in an interregional network about MD.

KEY COLLABORATING PARTNERS

Experts (representatives of universities or professionals) in issues related to MD (traditions, agriculture, gastronomy etc

Experts in cultural value of the md (historians, writers, researchers...).

Students.

KEY FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Promote informative sessions for citizens and tourists.

Promote capacity building sessions for professionals.

Promote networking to create new touristic products.

Meetings to reinforce the network.

KEY RESOURCES

Museum of territory in the regional network of public libraries and museums – regional officers.

New funds by new etc projects and other EU programs.



BENEFICIARIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

Researchers in culture and tourism.

-Local SMEs in the field of food and touristic services

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION

-Mailing contact list of identified stakeholders.

-Direct contacts.

MISSION DRIVEN CANVAS FOR LIVING LAB & ONE-STOP-SHOP, NORTH AEGEAN REGION, GREECE

THE FUTURE MISSION/VISION

To establish the North Aegean Region as a leading Mediterranean hub for sustainable agri-food and tourism innovation, preserving and promoting Mediterranean Diet heritage while fostering economic resilience, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion across the islands.

Vision: The North Aegean islands—Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Ikaria, and Limnos—will be recognized as a living laboratory where traditional Mediterranean food systems, cultural heritage, and modern sustainable practices converge to create thriving, climate-resilient communities.

Change to achieve: Through Living Lab and One-Stop-Shop collaboration, we aim to: Reverse rural depopulation and brain drain by creating viable career paths in sustainable agriculture, tourism, and food sectors.

Strengthen the economic viability of traditional olive cultivation, beekeeping, cheese production, and local food systems.

Enhance climate resilience through regenerative agricultural practices.

Bridge the generational gap in agricultural knowledge and digital skills.

Connect with other Mediterranean partners in an active Cluster.

VALUE PROPOSITION

The Living Lab and One-Stop-Shop address critical challenges facing the North Aegean islands:

For farmers and producers: Access to technical knowledge on regenerative agriculture, organic certification support, soil health improvement, climate adaptation strategies, and fair market access.

For SMEs: Capacity building in digitalisation, sustainable production methods, circular economy practices, waste reduction.

For tourism operators: Integration of agri-food heritage with experiential tourism, development of food trails, culinary tourism packages, and sustainable hospitality models.

For local communities: Preservation of cultural identity, job creation, retention of young talent, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and social cohesion through shared Mediterranean Diet values.

For the environment: Protection of biodiversity, soil health restoration, sustainable water management, and climate resilience in ecologically fragile island ecosystems.

For consumers: Access to authentic, traceable, high-quality Mediterranean products with proven health benefits and sustainability credentials.



How solutions work:

Co-creation spaces where farmers, researchers, policymakers, and citizens design practical solutions together.

Participatory innovation through design-thinking workshops.

Peer-to-peer learning and demonstration farms showcasing best practices.

One-stop support for certification, market access, funding applications, and technical assistance.

Digital platform connecting islands and enabling knowledge exchange across borders.

KEY COLLABORATING PARTNERS

Local/Regional Partners:

Agri-Food Partnership of the Region of North Aegean (60+ founding members)

University of the Aegean

Hellenic Agricultural Organization ELGO DIMITRA - SWRI

Olive oil producers and mills

Local SMEs from agri-food, tourism, and catering sectors

Municipal and regional development agencies

Agricultural extension services

Local cultural heritage organizations

Schools and youth organizations

National Partners:

Greek Ministry of Rural Development and Food

Greek Ministry of Tourism

National Tourism Organisation

Greek certification bodies for organic and PDO/PGI products

Transnational Partners:

MED DIET EuroCluster partner regions

Other Mediterranean Living Labs (Sicily, Andalusia, Provence, Crete, etc.)

European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP)

Enterprise Europe Network (EEN)

Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage programme

International research institutions working on Mediterranean agriculture and soil health

KEY FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Local Level Activities: 1. Enhancing Skills

Tailored training programmes for olive farmers on regenerative agriculture, soil health management, water conservation, and climate adaptation.

Digital skills workshops for SMEs: e-commerce, digital marketing, traceability technologies, IoT applications for precision agriculture.

Certification support services: organic, PDO/PGI, sustainability labelling.

Youth internships and apprenticeships linking students from University of the Aegean with local producers.

Traditional knowledge documentation and intergenerational mentoring programmes

Food safety and HACCP training for Ho.Re.Ca. sector.

Sustainable tourism training: agritourism management, experiential tourism design, cultural heritage interpretation.

Circular economy and waste reduction workshops.

Marketing campaign on Mediterranean diet promotion.



2. Empowering Local Communities

Implementation of Med Diet Declaration across North Aegean municipalities and cooperatives.

Living Lab co-design sessions using design-thinking, world cafés, and future scenario planning for local challenges.

Development of island-specific "Local Quality Agreements" protecting traditional products and practices.

Community-driven cultural events: olive harvest festivals, honey festivals, cheese-making demonstrations, traditional cooking workshops-

Food trails and culinary tourism routes connecting producers, restaurants, and cultural sites.

School education programmes on Mediterranean Diet values, healthy eating, and local food heritage.

Support for women's entrepreneurship in agri-food and tourism.

Community gardens and urban agriculture initiatives in island towns.

3. Strengthening Local Production

Pilot demonstration projects on regenerative olive cultivation (expanding GOV4ALL model to more farms).

Soil health monitoring and improvement programmes.

Biodiversity conservation initiatives in agricultural landscapes.

Short supply chain development and local food procurement systems.

Support for cooperative marketing and collective bargaining.

Product innovation laboratories for value-added processing.

Transnational Level Activities:

1. Expanding International Relations

Joint internationalisation strategy with MED DIET EuroCluster partners.

Collective participation in international trade fairs (ANUGA, SIAL, World Travel Market).

Development of Mediterranean Diet brand tourism packages with other Living Lab regions.

Business matchmaking events connecting North Aegean producers with international buyers and distributors.

Export consortia for bundled PDO/PGI products (olive oil, cheese, honey).

Structured dialogue with UNESCO, FAO GIAHS, UNWTO on Mediterranean heritage safeguarding.

2. Peer Learning and Knowledge Exchange

Twinning schemes with other Mediterranean regions.

Staff mobility and exchange programmes.

Joint research projects on climate adaptation, soil health, and sustainable tourism with international partners.

Transnational thematic networks: olive cultivation network, honey producers' network, sustainable tourism network.

Virtual peer-to-peer learning communities via digital platform.

Joint publications and best practice guides.

3. Policy Influence and Institutional Anchoring

Active participation in EU policy consultations (Common Agricultural Policy, EU Biodiversity Strategy, Farm to Fork).

Contribution to blue/green economy initiatives.

Representation in European Cluster Collaboration Platform governance.



Input to UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage safeguarding plans.
Advocacy for island-specific agricultural support measures.
Integration of North Aegean Living Lab findings into Local and Regional Strategies.

4. Innovation and Research

Transnational applied research on climate-smart agriculture, sustainable tourism models, and circular economy in islands.

Joint development of digital tools and platforms for Mediterranean producers.

Innovation pilots on renewable energy integration in agri-food processing.

Collaborative product development and market testing across regions.

Joint monitoring and evaluation framework for Living Lab impacts.

KEY RESOURCES

Human Resources:

Living Lab Manager (Coordinator based in Lesvos)

One-Stop-Shop Facilitator for each island (5 positions)

Technical experts: agronomists, tourism specialists, digital innovation advisors

Agri-Food Partnership of the Region of North Aegean (coordination and networking)

University of the Aegean faculty and researchers

Soil and Water Resources Institute (SWRI) of Hellenic Agricultural Organization DIMITRA

Local facilitators from cooperatives and producer associations.

Financial Resources:

EU funding: Horizon Europe, INTERREG MED, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

Regional/National funding: Region of North Aegean budget, Greek Ministry of Rural Development and Food

Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) funds

Private sector co-investment from SMEs and producer cooperatives

Revenue from services: training fees, consultancy, certification support

European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) and ClusterXchange resources.

BENEFICIARIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

Primary Beneficiaries:

Olive farmers and olive oil producers (10+ million olive trees on Lesvos alone)

Beekeepers producing exceptional honey from wild herbs

Cheese producers (feta, Ladotyri, Kalathaki, Kathoura, Armogalo)

Small-scale farmers cultivating fruits, vegetables, legumes, and cereals

Organic farmers transitioning to regenerative practices

Tourism service providers (hotels, restaurants, tour operators)

Ho.Re.Ca. sector (hospitality, restaurants, catering)

Food artisans and traditional product makers

Young professionals and students seeking career paths in sustainable sectors

Women entrepreneurs in agri-food and tourism.

Key Stakeholders:

Region of North Aegean (governance and policy)

Agri-Food Partnership of the Region of North Aegean

University of the Aegean (research and education)

Soil and Water Resources Institute (SWRI) - DIMITRA

Municipal authorities (Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Ikaria, Limnos)

Producer cooperatives and associations

Chambers of Commerce



Agricultural cooperatives
Tourism boards and destination management organizations
Local cultural associations.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION

Digital Channels:

Transnational digital platform hosting interactive fora, storytelling campaigns, and peer-to-peer learning communities.

Dedicated website for North Aegean Living Lab and One-Stop-Shop.

Social media presence (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) showcasing success stories and innovations.

Regular e-newsletter for stakeholders.

Online webinars and virtual workshops.

Digital marketplace for North Aegean products.

Mobile app for farmers (technical resources, weather, market prices).

Blockchain/QR code traceability system for product authentication.

Physical Channels:

Living Lab hub on each island (community meeting spaces).

One-Stop-Shop physical offices providing face-to-face support.

Regular stakeholder assemblies (quarterly meetings).

Itinerant workshops rotating across islands.

Field demonstrations on pilot farms.

Participation in agricultural fairs and food festivals.

Organized study visits and farm tours.

Collaboration with local markets and producer outlets.

Institutional Channels:

Regional policy labs and consultation forums.

Integration into Regional Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) processes.

Partnership with chambers of commerce for business matchmaking.

Collaboration with VET providers for training delivery.



MISSION DRIVEN CANVAS FOR LIVING LAB & ONE-STOP-SHOP, ALENTEJO, PORTUGAL

THE FUTURE MISSION/VISION

Consolidate the Living Lab and the One-Stop-Shop in Alandroal as a permanent space for experimentation, co-creation and support to SMEs linked to the Mediterranean Diet (agri-food, gastronomy, tourism and culture), promoting sustainable economic development in Alentejo.

Strengthen the Mediterranean Diet as a strategic asset of the territory, connecting local production, cultural heritage, responsible tourism and healthy lifestyles, in line with regional Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) and with the MDG Eurocluster.

Create a cross-border collaborative ecosystem (Portugal-Spain / Mediterranean) that contributes, by 2030, to retaining talent, valuing endogenous resources and positioning Alentejo as a living laboratory for innovative solutions related to the Mediterranean Diet.

VALUE PROPOSITION

For SMEs and entrepreneurs: provide a single contact point for information, technical support and guidance to funding, as well as a space to test new products, services and business models associated with the Mediterranean Diet.

For the territory and local community: promote greater visibility and qualification of the offer (gastronomy, local products, tourism, cultural events), reinforcing the Mediterranean identity of Alentejo and contributing to job creation and population retention.

For institutional and academic partners: offer a real-life environment for experimentation, applied research and pilot projects, where solutions can be tested in areas such as sustainability, value chain digitalisation, circularity and health.

For the MDG Eurocluster: provide an active regional node that feeds the European network with practical cases, good practices, collaborative projects and contributions to the internationalisation of the Mediterranean Diet.

KEY COLLABORATING PARTNERS

Regional coordination: ADRAL – Alentejo Regional Development Agency.

Local authorities: Municipality of Alandroal and other municipalities in Alentejo interested in joining the Living Lab dynamic.

Economic fabric: agri-food SMEs, local producers, restaurants, accommodation providers, tour operators, cooperatives and business associations.

Knowledge sector: universities and polytechnic institutes in the region, research centres, and VET providers.

Civil society and culture: cultural associations, social organisations, youth organisations, gastronomic brotherhoods, schools, and citizen groups.

Transnational network: Mediterranean Diet Cluster led by the Seville Chamber of Commerce, MDG Eurocluster partners, chambers of commerce and other Mediterranean organisations.

KEY FUTURE ACTIVITIES

At local level

Maintenance and development of the One-Stop-Shop as a continuous support point for SMEs and entrepreneurs linked to the Mediterranean Diet (information, guidance, mentoring, access to funding programmes).

Organisation of thematic living labs (workshops, co-creation sessions, product/service testing) involving producers, restaurants, tourism, schools and the wider community.



Implementation of capacity-building actions (training on sustainability, local product valorisation, digitalisation, marketing, and gastronomic tourism).

Development and testing of Mediterranean routes (gastronomy, heritage, nature), events and cultural initiatives around the Mediterranean Diet.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the Living Lab's impact (indicators on participation, satisfaction, innovation, and local value creation).

At the transnational level (Eurocluster / MDG partners):

Participation in collaborative projects on innovation, internationalisation and SME upskilling within the MDG Eurocluster framework.

Exchange of good practices and twinning/exchange programmes between Living Labs and One-Stop-Shops in the different Mediterranean regions.

Joint organisation of international promotion actions (campaigns, fairs, events, business missions) under the Mediterranean Diet / MDG umbrella.

Contribution to the development of joint proposals to European programmes (I3, Interreg, etc.), aligned with the Mediterranean Diet and S3 priorities.

KEY RESOURCES

Human resources:

ADRAL's technical team is responsible for coordinating the Living Lab and the One-Stop-Shop.

Staff from the Municipality of Alandroal working in economic development, tourism, culture and social action.

External experts/consultants in areas such as agri-food, tourism, innovation, digitalisation, marketing and funding.

Collaboration of teachers, researchers and trainers from education and training entities.

Financial resources:

Funding from European programmes (e.g. MedDiet Go, future I3/Interreg/Eurocluster projects).

Own contributions from municipalities and other institutional partners.

Potential private sponsorships and partnerships with companies, business associations and chambers of commerce.

Articulation with regional/national programmes and funds related to smart specialisation, tourism, rural development and innovation.

Material and infrastructural resources:

One-Stop-Shop premises in Alandroal and other physical spaces made available by partners.

Digital platforms for communication, collaboration and promotion.

Equipment to support events, training actions and co-creation activities.

BENEFICIARIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

Agri-food SMEs, local producers, restaurants, accommodation providers and tour operators linked to the Mediterranean Diet.

Entrepreneurs and start-ups wishing to develop new products and services based on Mediterranean resources and values.

The local community (residents, associations, schools, young people, seniors), benefiting from new economic, educational and cultural opportunities.

Visitors and tourists, who find a qualified and authentic offer associated with the Mediterranean Diet in Alentejo.



Public entities and policy makers, who gain access to evidence, pilot projects and recommendations for territorial development, healthy eating and sustainable tourism policies.

MDG Eurocluster partners, who benefit from an active Living Lab and One-Stop-Shop case within the Mediterranean context.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION

Digital channels: ADRAL’s website, Alandroal Municipality’s website, MDG Eurocluster digital platform, social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) and e-newsletters.

Face-to-face channels: working meetings, local forums, workshops, tasting and demonstration events, regional and international fairs and conferences.

Media and institutional communication: press releases, articles in regional/national media, promotional materials (brochures, short videos, digital storytelling).

European networks and platforms: participation in cluster platforms, city/region networks, and European initiatives linked to the Mediterranean Diet, heritage, tourism and healthy eating.

MISSION DRIVEN CANVAS FOR LIVING LAB & ONE-STOP-SHOP, VRATSA COUNTY, BULGARIA

THE FUTURE MISSION/VISION

To establish a permanent regional platform where tourism SMEs, food producers, cultural institutions, youth groups, and digital innovators co-create sustainable, nature-based and gastronomy-driven tourism products inspired by the Mediterranean Diet.

The mission is to transform the Vratsa region into a living model of sustainable rural development, where local identity, cultural heritage, biodiversity, and digital innovation converge to generate economic opportunities, empower communities, and enhance quality of life.

Desired change:

Stronger regional cooperation and institutional alignment.

Better skills and capacities among SMEs, producers and youth.

Creation of high-value, low-impact tourism experiences.

Sustainable economic growth rooted in cultural, culinary, and natural heritage.

VALUE PROPOSITION

LL & OSS matter since:

They provide a shared space for experimentation, co-creation and testing new tourism, food, and cultural concepts.

They support digital transformation of local SMEs through tools, training and personalised advisory services.

They empower citizens, women, youth and vulnerable groups by providing access to knowledge, storytelling tools, and community-based initiatives.

They create bridges between nature, culture, gastronomy and innovation, integrating stakeholders who previously worked in isolation.

Benefit for the region:

New gastronomic routes, digital storytelling platforms, festivals, youth programmes and ecotourism experiences enrich the local tourism offer.

OSS provides easy access to information, market opportunities, EU programmes, digital tools and training.



Creates visibility for local artisans, farmers and micro-entrepreneurs.
Improves the resilience of rural areas by diversifying income streams.

KEY COLLABORATING PARTNERS

Local authorities (municipalities) and regional administration.
Cultural and educational partners: regional library, community centres (e.g. "Razvitie 1869"), schools and youth clubs.
Tourism & experience providers: guest houses, rafting and adventure tourism operators.
Tour route creators.
Nature and conservation actors: natural park "Vrachanski Balkan", environmental NGOs.
Food and gastronomy stakeholders: local producers and agro-entrepreneurs, culinary experts and chefs, wineries, dairies, traditional food artisans.
Digital and innovation partners.
Media.
Business support and institutional actors: CCI-Vratsa (lead facilitator), ARED (economic development partner).

KEY FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Local Level Activities:

Development of sustainable gastronomic routes ("Taste Vratsa", "From Nature to the Table").
Annual and seasonal cultural-gastronomic festivals ("Taste and Sound of Vratsa").
Youth initiatives ("Young Masters of Vratsa", digital storytelling labs, culinary apprenticeship programmes).
Digitisation of recipes, folklore, crafts and cultural assets.
Development of interactive digital tourism maps, QR/AR storytelling, VR experiences.
Training for SMEs in ESG, MED Diet values, sustainable tourism, digital marketing and innovation.
Support via OSS for business modelling, funding access, certification and networking.

Transnational Activities:

Twinning activities with other regions to exchange good practices.
Participation in international fairs and gastronomic events.
Cross-border youth mobility and training.
Joint development of Mediterranean Diet digital platforms and branding initiatives.
Collaboration with UNESCO, FAO GIAHS, UNWTO networks.

KEY RESOURCES

Human Resources

ARED: coordination, stakeholder engagement, organisation of OSS services.
CCI-Vratsa: project facilitation, business support, economic development.
Natural Park "Vrachanski Balkan": environmental expertise.
Cultural institutions: content and community outreach.
Local SMEs: testing, co-creation, implementation.

Financial Resources

EU funding programmes (Interreg, Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, EuroCluster schemes).
National development programmes.
Event-based revenue for sustainability (festivals, workshops, tours).

BENEFICIARIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

Primary Beneficiaries:

Tourism SMEs.
Local farmers and food producers.



Artisans and craft masters.
Hospitality and gastronomy sector.
Youth groups and students.
Local cultural organisations.
Tourists (domestic and international).
Community groups, households and vulnerable populations.

Secondary Beneficiaries:

Municipal and regional authorities.
Educational and training institutions.
Regional business ecosystems.
International partners attracted through MD EuroCluster networks.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION

Digital Channels:

Social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok)
OSS and partner websites
Mailing lists
Online storytelling and recipe platforms

Offline Channels:

Info kiosks and visitor centres
Community centres and libraries
School outreach and youth clubs
Workshops, festivals and public events.



5. KEY LEARNINGS AND CONCLUSIONS TO FOSTER THE MODERNISATION AND DIGITALISATION OF LOCAL TOURISM SYSTEMS

The transnationally tested experiences presented in previous chapters, along with the plans drafted by partners in the One-stop-shops mission canvases, enable us to identify the key learnings and conclusions related to the **One common model for the modernisation and digitalisation of local tourism systems**.

5.1 INTEGRATION OF MEDITERRANEAN DIET VALUES INTO TOURISM INNOVATIONS

A distinctive feature of MedDiet GO's approach is the explicit integration of Mediterranean Diet principles and values into all co-created tourism innovations. Rather than treating MD as a promotional theme, it serves as a substantive design criterion and strategic anchor.

For each new tourism product, service, or itinerary developed through Living Lab workshops, the community should consider the following:

1. **Define target user groups** and their specific needs, interests, and contexts.
2. **Map co-creation activities** required to develop the innovation with stakeholder participation.
3. **Identify responsible organisations** and individual roles in design, development, and implementation.
4. **Explicitly embed Mediterranean Diet values:** nutritional health, environmental sustainability, cultural heritage, social cohesion, local production, and biodiversity conservation.
5. **Integrate cultural heritage** features, local stories, artisanal traditions, and community identity.
6. **Demonstrate sustainability commitments:** environmental impacts, social benefits for host communities, and economic viability for local enterprises.
7. **Ensure authentic local grounding** rather than external imposition or generic "Mediterranean experience" commodification.

This integrated approach aligns MedDiet GO innovations with UNESCO and FAO recognition of the Mediterranean Diet as intangible cultural heritage and a globally significant agricultural heritage system, positioning tourism development to preserve and strengthen traditional practices rather than commercialise or dilute them.



5.2 ONE-STOP-SHOPS: FROM THINK TANK TO NETWORK FRAMEWORK

While Living Labs function as "think tank performers" generating and validating innovative ideas, One-Stop-Shops (OSS) serve as the implementation and operational arm, translating Lab insights into concrete tourism services and experiences.

The One-Stop-Shop concept envisions permanent, locally rooted support frameworks that enhance stakeholder networks interested in sustainable tourism while positively impacting rural economies. OSS have a cross-cutting character, connecting diverse sectors:

- **Agri-tourism and accommodation:** Rural lodging experiences integrated with agricultural activities and local production
- **Eco-transport:** Sustainable mobility options—cycling routes, public transit, car-sharing—for visitors and residents
- **Cultural events and heritage:** Festivals, workshops, tours, and educational programs celebrating local culture and history
- **Interactive communication tools:** Digital platforms enabling visitors to discover, book, and engage with MD-based tourism offerings
- **Local products and services:** Direct connection between visitors and local producers, artisans, and service providers

By functioning as permanent institutional structures (rather than time-limited projects), One-Stop-Shops create durable capacity for ongoing tourism innovation, stakeholder collaboration, and rural economic development aligned with Mediterranean Diet and sustainability principles.

5.3 KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND LEARNING TRANSFER AT LOCAL AND TRANSNATIONAL LEVEL

A critical success factor for MedDiet GO is systematic knowledge exchange and mutual learning across the seven territories and the broader European context. Key mechanisms include:

Transnational learning activities: Regular exchange visits, peer learning sessions, and virtual knowledge-sharing platforms enabling territories to learn from each other's experiences, adapt successful approaches, and avoid duplicating challenges.

Documentation and lesson-learned reporting: Structured capture of insights, challenges, solutions, and best practices throughout the 2025 workshop cycle, synthesised into lessons-learned reports to inform future implementation phases and other rural tourism initiatives.



Connection to MED DIET EuroCluster Joint Action plan ¹and European Networks: Engagement to MED DIET EuroCluster and Interreg programs, and broader EU rural development and tourism initiatives, ensuring MedDiet GO contributes to and learns from European innovation ecosystems.

Research and theory development: Support for academic research and theory-building activities analysing Living Lab outcomes, governance innovations, and rural tourism transformation, generating evidence that can inform policy and practice beyond the immediate project.

5.4 CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Several cross-cutting conditions are essential for sustainable One-stop-shops operations and lasting rural tourism transformation:

Political and financial commitment: Long-term political support from national and regional governments, sustained funding beyond project cycles, and integration of Living Lab approaches into regional development strategies.

Organisational capacity: Investment in training facilitation skills, innovation management capabilities, and cross-sectoral collaboration experience for local partners and participants.

Stakeholder trust and ownership: Genuine participatory processes ensuring stakeholder voice is heard and influences decisions, rather than merely consulting participants on predetermined solutions—transparent communication about decision-making, resource allocation, and progress.

Iterative approach: Recognition that innovation is non-linear and requires multiple cycles of learning, adaptation, and refinement—sufficient time and flexibility for genuine co-creation rather than rushed implementation of predetermined projects.

Connection to market and customers: Ensuring that Living Lab innovations are grounded in real market demand and customer needs, rather than isolated from commercial viability. Early engagement with tourism businesses, travel platforms, and target customer segments.

Balance between preservation and innovation: Protecting cultural heritage, agricultural practices, and environmental integrity while adapting to contemporary market realities and technologies, avoiding both stagnant preservation and homogenising modernisation.

¹ D3.1.1 Med Diet Euro Cluster Joint Action Plan



6. CONCLUSION

The MedDiet GO Output 2.1 represents an evidence-based approach to sustainable rural tourism development. By combining Living Lab methodology—proven across diverse European contexts—with the specific values and opportunities of the Mediterranean Diet, the project provides seven partner territories a framework to continue focusing on authentic, sustainable food and heritage tourism.

The emphasis on participatory processes, multi-stakeholder governance, and realistic innovation testing creates conditions for solutions that are simultaneously economically viable, environmentally responsible, culturally authentic, and genuinely valued by host communities. Rather than imposing external models or short-term interventions, Living Labs enable rural communities to define their own futures through collective intelligence, creativity, and commitment.

One-Stop-Shops operationalise these innovations into durable support structures, moving beyond project cycles to establish permanent capacity for continued rural development. By grounding tourism development in Mediterranean Diet principles—health, sustainability, social cohesion, and local production—MedDiet GO addresses both rural economic challenges and broader societal needs for sustainable, authentic human connection and experience.

The 2025 workshop cycle across seven territories yields valuable insights into participatory innovation processes, rural tourism development, and European rural-urban balance.

Future success will require sustained commitment from political leaders, local organisations, and community participants, but the potential to revitalise Mediterranean rural regions through authentic, sustainable tourism is substantial.



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