

Transferring project for
Emblematic **M**editerranean **M**ountains
as **C**oastal destinations of excellence
(**EMbleMatiC PLUS**)

Project Ref:Project Ref:8139 | 10MED21_3.1_M3_009

D3.2.1. PP3 transferability diagnostic relying on Transfer Guide



Deliverable D3.2.1

Activity 3. Transferring process

A3.2 Conducting receivers diagnostic (cross analysis) relying on the transfer guide

Executive summary

This document summarises the whole coaching process with PP3 towards the creation of an own Eco-itinerary (as a physical route) to be promoted as an Ecojourney. This tourist product is expected to align with the EMM values, approach and previous experience, according to the [EMM Transfer Guide](#) from the EMbleMatic project. The aim of this document is to convey a picture of the state of things in PP3 Eco-itinerary, portraying strengths and weaknesses, and projecting potentialities and future possible threats. Contents from this document should feed the last step foreseen in A3, that is PP3's Local Implementation Action Plan (LIAP).

After an introduction about the context of the project and a brief description of the selected area, the process of coaching PP3 alongside the EMbleMatic Plus project is described, together with a short note about the assessment field visit. The core of this document are chapters 4 and 5, which offer a thorough analysis of the PP3 proposal for an Eco-itinerary, including a SWOT analysis (chapter 4) as well as a detailed description of the different characteristics according to the 30 attributes of the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Transfer Guide. The description contains a series of recommendations that PP3 might take into consideration when developing its LIAP. Two templates for this deliverable are provided as an appendix and a separate document.

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1. Contextual introduction

This document summarises the whole coaching process with PP3 towards the creation of an own Eco-itinerary (as a physical route) to be promoted as an Ecojourney. This tourist product is expected to align with the EMM values, approach and previous experience, according to the [EMM Transfer Guide](#) from the EMbleMatiC project.

This document therefore follows a comprehensive approach through the entire activity A3 (“Transferring”), starting with the webinars previous to the TNM1 and continuing with the Activity 3.2 about a follow-up of the common criteria assessment. Authors of this document coordinated the coaching process. LP1, PP1 and PP2 (the so-called “Givers”) also actively participated in this process, particularly in the preparation, execution and outcome of the assessment field visit.

The **aim** of this document is two-fold: (i) to convey a picture of the state of things in PP3 Eco-itinerary, portraying strengths and weaknesses, and projecting potentialities and future possible threats; (ii) to “translate” the results of the diagnosis into specific recommendations towards the last step foreseen in A3, that is PP3’s Local Implementation Action Plan (LIAP).

1.1.A transferring project: *EMbleMatiC Plus*

EMbleMatiC Plus is the follow-up project of the EMbleMatiC project. Being funded by the Interreg MED program, both projects are just one part of the activities that the **Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains (EMM) Network** undertakes. The Network was born in 2013 thanks to the LEADER funds. Being 4 initial members, the Network has grown across successive projects.

EMbleMatiC Plus involves 3 givers’ partners from the previous EMbleMatiC project, 4 new receivers’ partners and 7 associated partners. These partners are members of the **EMM network**. They wish to adopt a more responsible and sustainable tourism development model located in their hinterland coastal areas with strong rural and island characteristics.

Thus, EMbleMatiC PLUS project aims to deepen and extend the first project results by transferring to new territories the “Transferability guide for the implementation of an eco-itinerary”. These previously created eco-itineraries contribute to geographically rebalancing the visitors flows, to extend the seasonality, to reduce environmental impact whilst generating economical return for these low-density areas.

More specifically, this project aims to:

1. Maximise the impact of what was accomplished & worked with the EMbleMatiC project to new territories.
2. Work together in adjusting the initially produced Transfer Guide to fit receivers’ local context and to obtain their best Eco-itinerary local implementation plan.
3. Reinforce the Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains network by gathering key local stakeholders & managing authorities sharing same values, visions & know-how.

In addition to the 3 “Givers” and 4 “Receivers”, the project includes seven associated partners, six of them representing mountains territories (Vidova Gora in Croatia, Ida/Psiloritis in Greece, Gran Sasso and Monte Grappa in Italy, Kapela Vrh in Slovenia, and Pico del Torreón in Spain). They could not be retained as receivers for this project but benefit from following its progress closely .

1.2. A Receiver territory: Komovi represented by the Tourism Organisation of Podgorica

The **Tourism Organisation of Podgorica (TOP)** was selected by LP1, PP1 and PP2 (so-called “Givers”) to participate in the EMbleMatiC Plus as a “Receiver”. The TOP selected the area around the **Komovi** ([42°40'51"N 19°38'29"E](#)), one of the most prominent massifs of Montenegro, as territory for the transferring of the methodology previously used to create an Eco-itinerary. Komovi is located in the eastern part of the country, at the border to Albania and, further north-east, to Kosovo. The range, which includes 3 peaks above 2,400 m.a.s.l., is part of the Dinaric Alps and, specifically, of the Prokletije range. Administratively speaking, the area is divided into 3 municipalities: Podgorica at the South, Kolašin at the North and Andrijevica at the East.

Komovi lies at the crossroads of Mediterranean and Balkan worlds both in terms of nature and culture. The area is shaped by an alpine landscape with impressive beech forests. At the upper parts, Komovi hosts a number of so-called “katun”, temporary shepherd summer lodges that are an outstanding example of traditional nomadic cattle breeding in the mountain. In the lower parts, Andrijevica stands out as a small town in the Lim river valley. In the future, the whole area will be deeply affected by the construction of the Bar-Belgrade highway. This infrastructure will enable more visitors from the capital city and, therefore, might expose the area to more pressures. In this respect, it is important to highlight that Komovi was declared a natural park in 2018 due to its ecological significance and abundance of flora and fauna.

2. The coaching of the transferring process with PP3

2.1. The coaching of the transferring process

The transferring strategy unfolds in three phases to adapt the steps described within the “transfer guide” into a “transfer process” applied by each receiver and adjusted according to its own context or transferability potential. The chore know-how to transfer is the compliance of the 30 attributes from the previously applied TOR for the creation of eco-itineraries.

This document can be found in appendix 6.1

Phase 1 A 3.1 Givers’ dissemination to receivers of transfer guide & pasts achievements:

During a first stage, the Coaching Team (CT; external experts Ramon Serrat and Alexis Sancho) presented to receivers the contents of the guide and related past achievements from givers through two webinars: the first one held on the 14/9/21 “Welcome to EMM network”, the second one held on the 21/09/21 “Getting to know the transfer guide”

The thematic workshop held during the first transnational meeting in October, provided receivers with the opportunity to have their own visiting experience of two existing eco-itineraries and to provide their own feedback relying on the 30 attributes that eco-itinerary must comply with.

Phase 2 A3.2 Receivers’ transferability diagnostic relying on transfer guide:

Step 1: Receivers worked with CT on attribute compliance process

During TNM1 (October 5-7, 2022), the CT presented the coaching process along A3.2.0. The aim of this process was to assist Receivers during the conception phase of their Eco-itineraries, which had to comply with the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Transfer Guide (TG). In preparation for the TNM1, all receivers answered a self-assessment online questionnaire in order to rate the degree of difficulty that Receivers presumably will experience while dealing with ToR 30 attributes. On this outcome, the CT established a time schedule in order to enable a gradual complying process of the attributes. According to this proposal, Receivers completed three (3) reports between October and the end of 2022. In each report, Receivers were asked to provide evidence proving each attribute compliance. The completion process of each report (with their corresponding delivery date) was scheduled in parallel with a series of bilateral meetings between the CT and all Receivers. The whole process was conceived as an iterative exercise where both actors (the CT and each Receiver) were expected to communicate continuously in order to address all attributes as much as reliably as possible.

Step 2: Assessing team visited receiver for an on-site assessment visit

This on-site assessment visit constitutes the base of the project output: “Receiver’s transferability diagnostic relying on transfer guide”. It consists of an on-site cross-analysis & peer review (3 givers & 1 assessor) on the first attempt of the receiver to propose their initial proposal of potential eco-itinerary by applying the transfer process to their own local receiver context.

Phase 3: A3.3 Receiver’ local implementation action plan for their eco-itinerary:

For the third and final stage of the transferring process, the receiver will be asked to use the insights and personalised recommendations from this diagnosis, to elaborate and write an individualised local implementation action plan for the future creation of their eco-itinerary beyond the duration of this current project. This should

ultimately provide the receiver with a roadmap to create a new and alternative tourism product offer for its visitors.

2.2. PP3 engagement

PP3 engagement along the whole process cannot be put into question. This, however, does not necessarily mean a smooth monitoring process. Undoubtedly, PP3 tasks were marked by a series of structural difficulties when accessing the Komovi area. First, PP3 headquarters are in the city of Podgorica, and the subcontracted external expert is based in Zagreb, Croatia. Second, it took some time until PP3 started actively collaborating with the other municipalities where most of the Komovi range is located, notably Andrijevisa.

Nevertheless, the global balance is certainly positive, particularly after the assessment field visit, which showed how much engagement the local tourist office of Andrijevisa has in the project. This certainly reflects PP3 success in the field. The intensive discussions that took place before and during the visit were eventually fruitful as the adjustments in the design of its eco-itinerary by PP3 show. As a result, the project has become much sounder than initially was, since it now meets critical aspects of the ToR.

Completion process of the three reports was not as smooth as originally planned, particularly the first one. It took four online meetings to find a communication baseline in order to improve the initial proposal by PP3, which (as pointed out above) did not meet basic issues for an EMbleMatiC eco-itinerary, such as location, difficulty and accessibility. The inclusion of the city of Podgorica as starting point of the eco-itinerary and the site of Duklja as a part of the route were particularly problematic. Regardless of this important hurdle, PP3 managed to stay in the process of completion of the second and the third reports. Considering PP3 capacities and resources and (more notably) bearing in mind the state of the development of the itinerary, these reports were completed in a satisfactory way. All documents are available in the corresponding project Dropbox folder. The minutes of the online meetings with the Coaching Team were shared in the project Dropbox folder, too.

As of April 2022 and according to what has been internally shared, PP3 has celebrated two (2) stakeholder meetings in the context of EMbleMatiC Plus. This is less than the minimum of three (3) meetings that the CT suggested to all Receivers to be celebrated during the coaching process until the assessment field visits. All meetings were reported via written minutes, which are available at the corresponding project Dropbox folder.

3. On-site assessment field visit to Komovi

During three months, each receiver worked at bringing local stakeholders together and at exploring all aspects of their future eco-itinerary whilst periodically reporting on gathered evidence to check with the coaching team that suggested choices were complying with the 30 attributes from the TOR.

To welcome the assessing team, receivers were asked to put together a proposal of a two-day on-site assessment field visit that will reflect the main assets (choices of locations, activities, stakeholders and services) identified at that stage for the creation of their future eco-itinerary.

They were asked to provide a title and brief description of their eco-itinerary, and to indicate for each spot included on their visit:

-List of the attributes covered by this spot/activity: the numbers showing under each spot corresponds to the attributes detailed on the appendix 6.1 TOR.

-List of the emblematic dimension pre-set criteria covered by this spot/activity:

The numbers showing under each spot refers to:

1. Proud local people - 2. Institutional recognition - 3. Reputation - 4. Legends and myths - 5. Power of inspiration - 6. Picturesquelandscape - 7. Particularecosystem - 8. Mediterranean cultural identity - 9. Sustainability and anthropogenic environment - 10. Historic places

The following minutes were written by the receiver and summarise the chronological unfolding of the on-site assessment. As such they are a practical and factual account of what took place and was experienced and assessed by the assessing team.

3.1. Minutes from on-site-visit carried out based on receiver partner proposal

Foreseen title for future eco-itinerary: "Secrets of Komovi"

Brief summary of future eco-itinerary :

"Secrets of Komovi" Eco-itinerary is created to boost imagination but also connect visitors with wild beauty of Komovi area, including proud local people, numerous myths and legends that talk about rich cultural heritage, present and test local cuisine.

It consists of several components including visit to local archaeological site in Doclea, historical places such as Mojkovac and pure nature around Komovi.

Spot 1: Day1 -16th Feb - 16:00H Duklja (Doclea), Podgorica

The guided tour started in the largest and most important archaeological site in Montenegro, ancient Doclea, located four kilometres northwest of Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro. During the tour, local tourist guide has explained us the importance of Duklja in Montenegrin history. This historical site represents one of the oldest, most attractive and certainly the most valuable archaeological sites from the Old Age in Montenegro. It is on the list of UNESCO world heritage list and the site has the basic infrastructure, availability and enough information that allows tourists and all visitors in general, a comfortable and safe tour of the material remains of Duklja. After the visit we went to Museum and gallery of Podgorica where we were introduced to the museum's relatively rich collection of historical, archaeological, cultural-historical and ethnographic material. Also, we saw exhibition of local architect Svetlana Kana Radevic 'Post-war architecture between the centre and the periphery'. Her work represents an exceptional contribution to the affirmation and development of Montenegrin architecture and at the same time represents the greatest values of Yugoslav post-war modernist architecture.

List of the attributes covered by this spot: activity:1-2-3-4-6-7-9-10-11-26-28

List of the emblematic criteria covered by this spot/activity 1-10



Spot 2: Day1 -16th Feb - 20:00 h Restaurant ‘Pod Volat’, Podgorica

For dinner we went to authentic Montenegrin restaurant serving traditional dishes, always busy, mostly with locals. We have tasted local specialties such as homemade cheese and prosciutto from Njeguši, ćevapi (minced meat), Podgorički popečki (pork filed with ham and homemade creamy cheese “kaymak”), proja (kind of corn bread) and kačamak (maize porridge). During dinner we have enjoyed the company of Drago Đeković, director of the Agency for management of protected areas of Podgorica and local guide Dušan Drakić.

[List of the attributes covered by this spot/activity:13](#)

[List of the emblematic criteria covered by this spot/activity:3](#)



Spot 3: Day2 - 17th Feb - 12:00h Trešnjevik, Municipality of Andrijevica

We took a ride to Trešnjevik, which has a good road connection from the city of Podgorica. It is also connected with local established cycling trails. There we were admiring the landscape in the company of representatives from Tourism organisation of Andrijevica and Tourism agency Explorer. From the viewpoint you can see amazing view of Andrijevica and surrounding mountain peaks. Due to heavy snow, we were unable to reach Štavna by foot nor by car, so we were picked up and transferred with snowmobiles.

[List of the attributes covered by this spot/activity:2-5-6-7-8-11-12-19-23-26-27-28](#)

[List of the emblematic criteria covered by this spot/activity: 5-6-7](#)



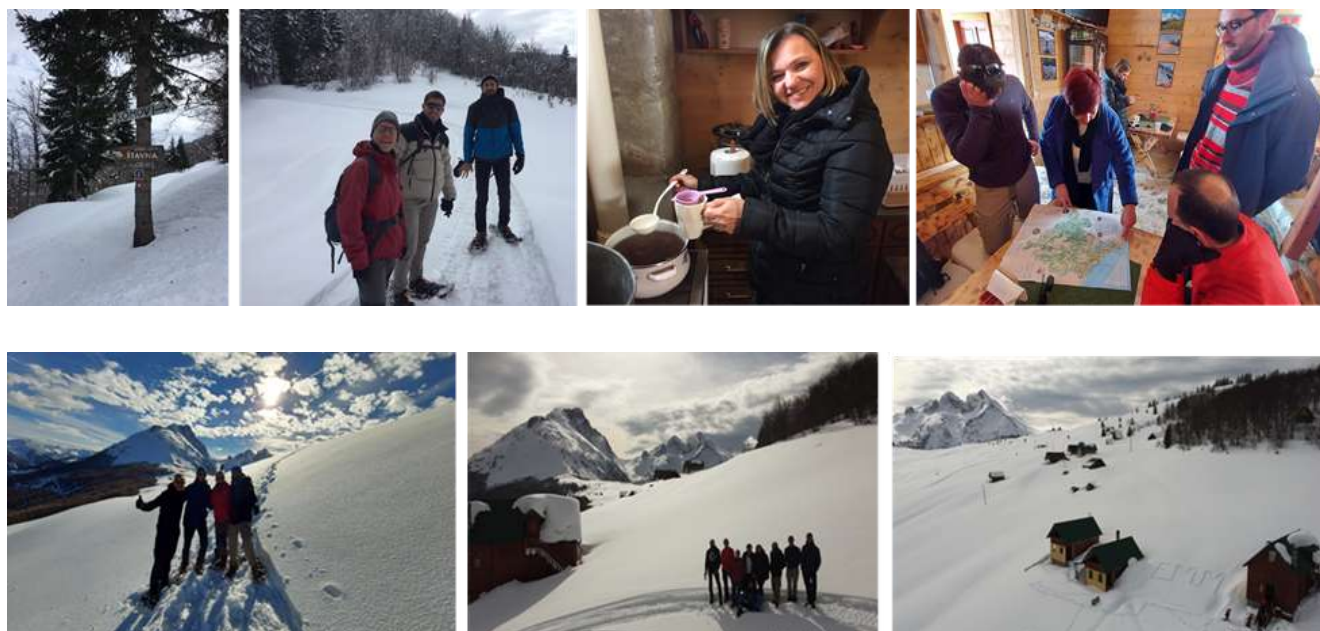
Spot 4: Day2 - 17th Feb - 14:00 h – 17:00 h Štavna, Municipality of Andrijevica

We have experienced snowmobile ride and walk with snowshoes to Katun Komovi - Štavna – Katun Božićki where we were welcomed by the eco-lodge and restaurant owner Miodrag Ćulafić. From this rural household, guests can enjoy a beautiful view of Komovi, and Prokletije and Čakor are in sight. It is an authentic Montenegrin katun in which visitors can still feel the spirit of old times and the way of life of Komovo mountaineers. The household contains several facilities - huts for tourist accommodation, ethno-style tasting room, barns, pens, poultry facilities and the like. In this household, they are mostly engaged in cattle breeding and agriculture. Visitors can participate in the preparation of food from exclusively local products, then enjoy panoramic tours of Komovi, while those who are more ambitious can try to conquer the very peaks of the mountain. Site is already recognized as eco destination where tourists can taste local food and make a reservation for accommodation at typical katun (former shepherds

lodge). We enjoyed excellent locally grown products and dishes such as homemade cheese, pickled vegetables and goulash.

[List of the attributes covered by this spot/activity:2-4-6-711-12-13-18-23-27-28-29](#)

[List of the emblematic criteria covered by this spot/activity:1-4-5-6-7-8](#)



Spot 5: Day2 - 17th Feb - 19:00 h Restaurant 'Most Bandovića', Andrijevica

We went for a dinner to restaurant 'Most Bandovića' with long tradition, tasty and fresh food and also offering accommodation in bungalows. Rich traditional gastronomic offer includes local cheese, ham, proja, domestic apple and pear juices, kačamak, cicvara (corn flour with cheese) and meat.

[List of the attributes covered by this spot/activity:1-2-3-4-13](#)

[List of the emblematic criteria covered by this spot/activity:1-](#)



Spot 6: Day3 - 18th Feb - 11:00 h Hotel Komovi, Andrijevica

Meeting with local producers was organized at the hotel komovi in Andrijevica. Dragana Dubak has showed us handmade knitted sheep's wool products made in the traditional way of knitting from exclusively domestic wool. We could touch and feel the material of knitted socks, hats and sweaters. Montenegrin wool sock is a traditional item of clothing that Dragana has put in modern context, without losing any of its authenticity and quality. Zoran Novović has explained us how he produces fresh homemade juices made from locally and organically grown fruits and vegetables. We were offered to taste the cold pressed beetroot, carrot, peach and apple juices. Also, except from juices from fruits and veggies that he grows, he offers cold pressing and packaging services for others who would like to use their products for juices.

List of the attributes covered by this spot/activity:1-2-3-4-14-18

List of the emblematic criteria covered by this spot/activity:1



Spot 7: Day3 - 18th Feb - 12:30 h Private accommodation Etno selo Koljeno, Andrijevica

Bratislav Vlahović, owner of the Etno selo Koljeno, picked us up with the trailer. During the drive to the etno selo Koljeno, we were served with homemade raki which is part of Montenegrin hospitality which dictates that guests entering the home be offered a glass of rakija. This local accommodation provider offers 8 bungalows, rafting, camping site, mobile bar, bungalow in the heart of the mountain and 4 lookouts overlooking the river Lim. While enjoying the view on the terrace, we were offered to try traditional products such as locally produced ham, cheese, proja, fresh juices made of pear and apple, traditional raki. Etno selo Koljeno is available on Booking.com to make a reservation.

List of the attributes covered by this spot/activity:1-2-3-4-16-17-18-19

List of the emblematic criteria covered by this spot/activity:1



Spot 8: Day3 - 18th Feb - 13:00 h Private accommodation Garni hotel and glamping Zvezdana dolina, Municipality of Andrijevica

At the second location we met with local accommodation provider Jasna Vlahović, owner of the Garni hotel and glamping Zvezdana dolina. Located in the Lim valley, surrounded by the mountains Komovi, Bjelasica and Prokletije, Hotel Zvezdana dolina is an ideal choice for those who want an active vacation in nature, and for those who dream of a peaceful, pleasant vacation, in peace and quiet of ambience. You can fully experience the rural way of life and customs of the local population, here you can participate in various activities of the hotel staff, including gardening, touring the rural household and the pet farm located close to the hotel. They have a restaurant where you can enjoy local cuisine, homemade juices and desserts.

List of the attributes covered by this spot/activity:1-2-3-4-16-17-18-19

List of the emblematic criteria covered by this spot/activity:1



Spot 9: Day3 - 18th Feb - 13:00 h Hostel Mojan, Village Japan, Municipality of Andrijevica

At the third location we have met local accommodation provider, owner of hostel Mojan. The hostel Mojan is situated in the building that once served as a border military base. This base housed up to 30 soldiers whose duty was to guard the border between the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Albania. It is converted into hostel that offers low-cost accommodation, biking, hiking, horseback riding, walking on snowshoes and other activities. Located in the small village of Japan on the slopes of the Komovi mountain and connected with local cycling routes it is ideal for active holiday and nature lovers.

[List of the attributes covered by this spot/activity:1-2-3-4-16-17-18-19](#)

[List of the emblematic criteria covered by this spot/activity:1-6-7-8-10](#)



Spot 10: Day3 - 18th Feb - 14:00 Bee keeper and honey producer, Municipality of Andrijevica

We have reached the House of Đurković and its host Dragan Đurković who is well-known beekeeper from Andrijevica. He is the president of the Montenegrin Beekeepers Association, winner of worldwide award for high quality honey and has been working for years on the promotion of homemade products and improvement of beekeeping sector. We had very warm welcome in his cosy home offering the homemade raki, honey and pastries. He has showed us the book that he wrote about the various applications of honey and its health benefits. Also, we went to see the bee hives in his yard while he explained the beekeeping processes, production of honey and other bee products, but also the importance of bees as beings responsible for the survival of nature. Except from his home, he offers degustation of homemade raki and honey to local and foreign visitors from his car on the way to Trešnjevik, as well as creams and balms made of ingredients from bee products and plants from the slopes of Komovi.

[List of the attributes covered by this spot/activity:1-2-3-4-16-17-18](#)

[List of the emblematic criteria covered by this spot/activity:1](#)



Spot 11: Day3 - 18th Feb - 17:00 h Veruša, Municipality of Podgorica

We went to see Veruša, the starting point of the eco-itinerary route, where we met Slobodan Vešović. Slobodan is local accommodation provider and owner of the Ribnjak restaurant in Veruša. The gastronomic offer of the Ribnjak Restaurant is based on traditional way of preparing fish specialties from its own ponds and on the delicious smoked meat, homemade cheese and local prosciutto. All the ingredients they use to prepare our dishes are grown by certified suppliers.

List of the attributes covered by this spot/activity: 1-2-3-4-16-17-18-19

List of the emblematic criteria covered by this spot/activity: 1

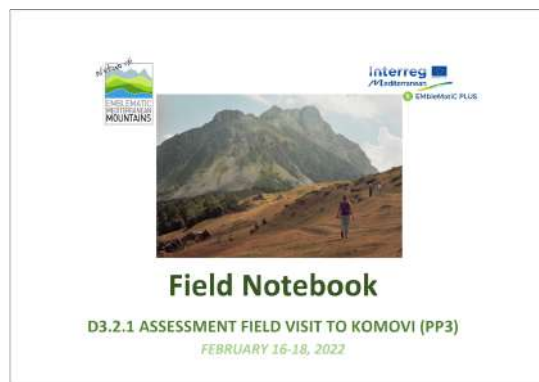


3.2. Assessment

process carried out during the field visit

The assessment field visit to Komovi took place on February 16-18, 2022. Representatives from LP1 (Florian Chardon and Alain Gensane), PP1 (Kostas Zapounidis), PP2 (Rosa Colomer) as well as external expert Alexis Sancho participated in the field visit. Host PP3 was represented by Nela Bosnić (Tourism Organisation of Podgorica) as well as Ivana Ostoić (subcontracted expert). In addition, representatives from the Tourism organisation of Andrijevica (Branco and Mladen) and Tourism agency Explorer accompanied us during most of the visit and acted as true ambassadors of the territory.

During the field visit, the CT and the Givers worked with two support documents that were tailor-made for this visit.



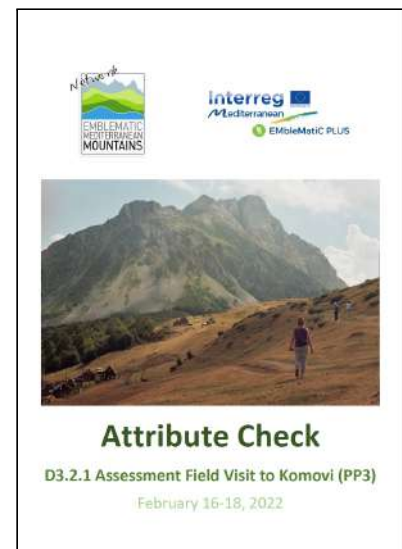
On the one hand, a Field Notebook where all ToR attributes were on-site assessed on the basis of the visit schedule that was previously provided by PP3 (see attached image- the schedule finally carried out on site is the one described on previous section 3.1. On site-visit programme proposed by receiver partner).

PP3 Assessment Visit Schedule

No.	Date	Name	Location	Attribute(s)
1	16/02	Hotel located in centre of Podgorica (or Hotel 201)	Ramada - Blv Save kovacevica 74, Podgorica 81000	
2	16/02	Transfer to Duklja	4 km from Podgorica	3,4,9,10,11,16,26
3	17/02	Local Restaurant	Podgorica	13, 23
4	17/02	Transfer to Andrijevica	-	
5	17/02	Komovi	Trešnjevik and Komovi	1, 2,10,11,12,17,23,26
6	17/02	Eko Katun Štavna	Located below the slopes of Komovi near Trešnjevik	13,18,23
7	17/02	Transfer	Andrijevica	19,23

On the other hand, an Attribute Check booklet was used immediately after the fieldwork, i.e. either during the field visit or immediately after the visit in order to translate all notes linked to each visit spot into a more structured document where information was organised around the ToR attributes and its topics (see attached image).

Upscaling strictly spatially-tied first impressions from the field (Field Notebook) into arguments showing the degree of compliance of each attribute (Attribute Check) was key to develop this diagnostic exercise.



4. Diagnosis of the Eco-itinerary proposal

This section consists of two parts. In the first one (4.1), the outcome from the assessment field visit is summarised in a series of bullets pointing out the main topics that will be resumed in section 5. The order of appearance of the topics is not indicative of any kind of hierarchy. In the second part of this section, a SWOT analysis (stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threads) is provided in order to orient PP3 in the next steps towards the creation of its eco-itinerary. The SWOT analysis was developed bearing in mind that the main issue is the eco-itinerary as a future tourist product; however, important aspects related to the itinerary's physical territory were included for self-explanatory reasons. Not least the routes are inserted in a given area and the ultimate reason for their creation is this area's development and its local population well-being.

4.1. PP3 proposal highlights

- After dealing with the advice from the CT (along the months previous to the field visit) and from the Givers (during the field visit itself), PP3 eventually proposed an Eco-itinerary that meets the required basic characteristics, i.e. Attributes 1, 2 and 3 (see section 5 for further details).
- The proposed itinerary manages to connect the low areas of the valleys with the elevated sectors of the Komovi massif through a linear itinerary that avoids leading to the mountain tops. At the same time, it establishes a starting point within the Komovi area (Opasanica and Veruša).
- Therefore, it seems that the original idea of setting the itinerary starting point in the capital city of Podgorica as well as including the ruins of Duklja (near Podgorica) in the itinerary has been abandoned.
- Although there exist some establishments (restaurants, accommodation), both Opasanica and Veruša are small hamlets and lack critical infrastructure as well as certain (public) facilities and services that are needed to become the entry point of the itinerary (for visitors coming from Podgorica).
- Seasonality is an important hurdle to implement the eco-itinerary. During the field visit, we experienced how difficult it was to do the route with snow conditions, which are usual during winter time. Accordingly, and since the area has no winter sports resorts, many facilities and services are closed, including private businesses and public facilities.
- The projected highway Bar-Belgrade will very soon connect Podgorica with Kolašin and in the future to Andrijevica. This infrastructure will radically reduce travel time from Podgorica to the itinerary entry points Opasanica and Veruša. However, and as long as the section leading to Andrijevica is not finished, at least 1,5 hours will be needed to get to the town of Andrijevica from Podgorica via the mountain pass of Trešnjevik.
- Manifold stakeholders were mobilised by PP3 and shown up during the field visit. However, only two stakeholder meetings have been celebrated so far, and the general feeling after the visit was that most of the local stakeholders are weakly involved in the planning of the eco-itinerary.
- There is much room for improvement in the inclusion of associated services (notably panoramic points and interpretation panels) as well as in promoting cultural aspects (both tangible and intangible ones).
- While being absolutely legitimate in the private sphere, showing off sensitive stuff related to Yugoslav war may be taken negatively by visitors, especially from German-speaking countries, which might be one of the main potential markets.

4.2. SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Special & unique attractiveness from not (yet) being crushed by the standards. • Strong sense of “authenticity” when dealing with locals, gastronomy and services. • Not saturated area (in terms of visitors), not even in the high season (with possible exception of tiny spots such as Štavna) • Enthusiastic local stakeholders, incl. local tourism offices, accommodation owners, and local producers. • Komovi is a strong landmark providing personality to the whole area. • No language barriers among people professionally linked with the tourist sector.	• Not-consolidated final shape of the eco-itinerary. • Extremely marked seasonality due to physical characteristics of the territory (high mountain) • Low availability of facilities and services in the low season (winter). • Weak cooperation culture between municipalities. • Weak support from public administrations to entrepreneurship. • Cultural elements underexploited or just ignored in the touristic promotion (religious and civil elements). • Weak link to Mediterranean character.
Opportunities	Threats
• High attractiveness because of preserved natural and cultural landscapes: ◦ Less altered wilderness. ◦ Well-preserved lifestyles. • Potential to exploit the image of an “unexplored” region. • Potential to exploit mountain livestock farming as a touristic product (“Katun culture”). • Potential to touristically exploit the Socialist past among visitors from Western countries.	• Uncertainty regarding the form of tourism that might evolve in the future. • Non-sustainable tourism activity as a possible development axis. • Potential environmental impact from increase of tourism activity. • Unclear management strategies between Podgorica and Andrijevica. • Language barriers when dealing with locals. • Identitarian issues related to Yugoslav Wars. • Impact of the current unstable worldwide situation on small Montenegro.

5. Recommendations for the local implementation Action Plan (LIAP)

The aim of this section is to inspire PP3 when developing its Local Implementation Action Plan (LIAP), which (according to the Application Form in its Deliverable no. A3.3) should become the main outcome of the EMbleMatic Plus project. To do so, this section summarises the most relevant aspects of this Diagnostic by following the Terms of Reference (ToR) inserted in the EMM Transfer Guide, i.e. the 30 attributes related to the following five topics:

- Itinerary basic characteristics
- Associated services
- Ethics and sustainability
- Management and Governance
- Marketing

The contents of this section are structured according to these topics and systematically linked to the 30 attributes composing the ToR. In order to make such linkages visible, mentions to the attributes (in brackets) are highlighted in **bold** letters. In the same way, specific recommendations to be incorporated into the LIAP are highlighted in **bold green** text.

A last, but not least, issue is that it corresponds to PP3 exclusively to decide whether and in which way this section's contents will be incorporated to the LIAP and eventually implemented on-site.

5.1. Basic characteristics of the eco-itinerary

The proposed eco-itinerary is composed of a single, linear route. Starting points are the hamlets of Veruša and Opananica, which lie at almost 1,200 m.a.s.l. The route reaches its highest point at Eko Selo Štavna at more than 1,700 m.a.s.l. and then drops to the town of Andrijevisa at 800 m.a.s.l. Considering that the highest peaks of Komovi lie at more than 2,400 m.a.s.l., we can consider that the itinerary connects the foothills from the valleys with some spots in the slopes, avoiding the summit (**Att. 1**). The route seems to be of medium difficulty and, thus, meets **Att. 2**.

In the future, **developing the itinerary by adding new routes is desirable**. Rather than turning the itinerary into a circular route, we suggest **adding sections that would allow to create partial loops** to involve more sites (and actors) in the product. All in all, **the eco-itinerary should consist of at least 3 days and 2 nights in order to explore the whole area**.

At least part of the proposed itinerary is based on existing paths around Komovi. We saw signposts between Trešnjevnik pass and Štavna, but it was not clear whether paths at the lower parts (both at the side of Veruša and Opananica as well as Andrijevisa) are properly signposted (**Att. 4**). If so, **investments are needed in order to signpost the totality of the route**. In this regard, it's important to remind that signposting might be physical or digital, too.

Since Komovi is a range with Alpine characteristics, snow is frequent during winter time. A critical infrastructure for the eco-itinerary is the road connecting Kolašin with Andrijevisa over the pass of Trešnjevnik. This road was not clean and only accessible with a 4-wheeler; and even so it was not easy to deal with, as we all experienced. There is therefore a physical hurdle regarding seasonality (**Att. 3**) which is probably unsurmountable. Besides, we found that some services and accommodation (e.g. Katun Štavna, Mojan hostel, restaurant and tourist office at Trešnjevnik...) were closed during the winter season.

As for viewpoints, the circular route offers magnificent views from the slopes of the range to the Komovi summits and to the surrounding ranges and valleys; however, we found no points being properly equipped with

interpretation material (**Att. 5**), neither in the valley. **An effort should be made in this respect.** A good way to start is to select and concentrate in one spot.

The itinerary takes advantage of the already existing infrastructure (paths, roads, monuments, lodges,...), as we stated on spot and through manifold promotion materials (**Att. 7**). On the other hand, **urgent action to deal with the trash problem is needed**, since it is present in many places.

It seems that no spots are saturated, even in summer time (**Att. 6**). The only one is Eko-Katun Štavna, but the limitation of beds ensures any danger of massification. However, the danger of overcrowding the premises of the spot exists as there is a free road access to the Katun. One option would be **to constrain the access by installing physical barriers or by introducing a fee.**

5.2. Associated services

The field visit didn't include visiting any on-site equipment or facility including environmental or landscape interpretation. For instance, we didn't see the premises of the tourism office of Andrijevica, so we can't evaluate the service they offer. While there is a huge potential for promoting nature and landscape, much is still to be done in this respect (**Att. 8**).

Also culture should play a role, but during the visit was deliberately ignored (no mention of any cultural visit, even when we saw churches, buildings and monuments connecting with the rich -and turbulent- past) (**Att. 9**). From the Andrijevica brochure, it can be stated that these elements are inventoried and to some extent promoted. Not least, we felt a kind of pride in the Yugoslavian past (the example from Mojan is crystal clear). On the other hand, the **story of Katuns should play a more prominent role.** They might potentially become the backbone of the Eco-itinerary, i.e. the attraction that eventually might attract visitors because it gives singularity to the area regarding the surrounding or other regions. **Storytelling might be developed in this respect.**

Non-tangible issues were also not mentioned (**Att. 10**). So, there is much room for improvement in this respect. Not much information about local music, festivals or traditions is provided and it is advisable if we want to give a good service to the visitors and to fill their agenda with activities. Of course, developing Att. 9 might happen hand-in-hand with Att. 10: for instance, **Katuns might offer the possibility to celebrate and promote events related to mountain herding.**

As for guidance services (**Att. 11**), we felt very well accompanied along the whole field visit. However, guidance requires professional guides that are able to offer landscape interpretation services. This topic **might become a concrete line of collaboration** between local/regional authorities or even at national level. **Personnel should be trained** in order to ensure enough offer. In contrast, leisure activities seem to be well covered: hiking, snowshoes, rafting, mountain biking (**Att. 12**). **More information on the availability** of this kind of services is, however, recommended.

Local gastronomy (**Att. 13**) is offered in all restaurants and hotels we visited. Products and receipts were suited to the spirit of place, not due to quality certification measures but due to not developed commercial circuits. This is part of the "untouched" character of the destination and is beneficial for the promotion of the eco-itinerary, but **efforts should be devoted to ensuring local gastronomy within high standards.** Therefore, **collaboration between administrations is needed and networking to existing initiatives is desirable.**

Related to attribute 13, local producers (**Att. 14**) exist and were mobilised during the visit. Yet, **they need support from the tourist office or the authorities** in order to adequate their facilities to host visitors and to organise

reliable tasting or tours; otherwise everything works exclusively in informal context (which, on the other hand, is part of the “spirit of the place”).

Last, picnic service (**Att.15**) was not offered during the visit and it seems hard to imagine this kind of service. In the future, **picnic packages might become part of the product related to the promotion of the Katun** (see section about Marketing below).

5.3. Ethics and sustainability

The fact that food (**Att. 13**) during the field visit was at least partially based on seasonal availability (e.g. potted vegetables) is a clear sign about sustainability values. Far from being a statement (it is probably just because of the above-mentioned lack of well-developed circuits into global markets), this is still an advantage when talking about an Eco-itinerary.

Mobility is an important issue in this eco-itinerary. The only possibility to get to the destination using collective transport (**Att. 16**) is an organised shuttle from Podgorica, otherwise cars are the only alternative. Carbon footprint offsetting (**Att. 16**) was not discussed and everyone agreed that it is too early to introduce this topic on-site. **However, PP3 might start thinking of ways of raising awareness among foreigner visitors using promotion elements as ways to convey the message.** On the other hand, mobility within the eco-itinerary (**Att. 17**) is also an open issue. Apart from walking (including snow shoes), only cars are acceptable. Snowmobiles are certainly an attraction for visitors and a practical means of transport for locals; however, **we don't recommend them as a means of transport within an eco-itinerary.**

PP3 and the tourist office of Andrijevica made an extraordinary effort to mobilise local stakeholders (**Att. 18**). This is the main point of what we mean “the spirit of the place”, which decisively contributes to convey an image of authenticity to the destination. Visit to Koljeno (raki tour, reception with local products and visiting the lodges) was probably the most emblematic visit and showed how interaction can work in spite of language barriers (if the visitor doesn't speak a Slavic language). Regardless of this, of course the major challenge for PP3 is to involve all these actors into the implementation of the eco-itinerary on the terrain. To do so, **further meetings should take place on-site.** And not least: **encounters between locals and visitors should become a main promotion factor** for the destination management organisations, including local tourist offices.

After visiting four accommodations and three restaurants, local ownership can be taken for granted (**Att. 19**). For sure there exists a big potential for improving their **performance in terms of sustainability.** This, however, requires a previous effort on educating those people who are supposed to convey the message locally.

The lack of signs communicating visitors' correct behaviour (**Att. 20**) might be interpreted as a sign of underdevelopment in protected areas' management. PP3 may (i) **contact the protected area managing authorities** and collaborate together, and (ii) **raise awareness** among both locals and visitors by e.g. using the materials available in the context of EMbleMatic Plus about responsible tourism best practices (**Att.21**).

5.4. Management and Governance

PP3 has already presented a first draft of its Plan of action (**Att.22**) that was reviewed by the CT and it seems a good basis for the future Local Implementation Action Plan (LIAP).

The general feeling after the field visit is that most of the stakeholders involved for the assessment visit are not really involved in the design of the eco-itinerary (**Att. 23**). PP3 has the chance to involve them in the

implementation on-site; however, to do so at least 2 points are crucial: (i) to **start a line of collaboration with the municipality of Andrijevica** (and particularly to the tourism office), including training personnel about the project and the Network values and aims; (ii) **plan a series of meetings with local stakeholders** in order to network them and to get familiar with the eco-itinerary and its aims. While the variety and the number of stakeholders we met during the visit is considerable, there is room for improvement in certain topics, e.g. cultural heritage (see section “Existing services above”).

As of sharing experiences within the EMM Network (**Att. 25**), we recommend to PP3 to exploit all possibilities, perhaps starting by the “almost neighbours” in Croatia (PP6) for strategic issues, and with other partners with whom parallels concerning the characteristics of the mountain are visible (e.g. PP2 Pedraforca).

Considering cooperation on the spot, it is absolutely necessary between the municipalities. Ideally, it should be a trilateral cooperation, although PP3 reported no interest to do so from the municipality of Kolašin. Further actors in the region, such as the [Regional Development Agency for Bjelasica, Komovi and Prokletije](#) should be considered (they seem to be active at least in the production of promotion material). The bottom line should be a **bilateral cooperation between Podgorica and Andrijevica**. The first priority should be **consolidating the entry point at Veruša and Opanonica**, where there is a lack of services in order to establish them as the entry gate for the eco-itinerary.

During the visit, some promotional material was distributed. It was mostly published by the TOP, but also local promotional material from Andrijevica (e.g. Katun, biodiversity, Mojan hostel). The main uncertainty is the capacity of the local tourism office to actively promote tourism on the spot. Communication in foreign languages (mainly English) may be an issue, particularly in the low season (**Att. 26**).

A final recommendation in terms of management and governance is that, PP3 **should lobby the corresponding authorities** to take strategic decisions related to the kind of tourism they want in the area, bearing in mind that certain activities that are particularly aggressive with nature and landscape might go against the goals and the spirit of the eco-itinerary. Examples are existing (4x4 safaris) and potential activities (ski lifts). Our suggestion is to get inspired by a very innovative tourist product in the Catalan Pyrenees we got to know during the first EMbleMatiC project. It's called “[El Cinquè Llac](#)”, and it was developed by local people around the story of local herders as an integrative project, i.e. not just for the sake of tourism promotion but for sustainable local development purposes. Interestingly, their storytelling is based on mountain herding and, thus, it might be of particular interest for PP3, at least in terms of exchange of experiences and points of view.

5.5. Marketing

Once again, since we didn't visit the premises of the tourist offices at Podgorica and Andrijevica, the following recommendation might not completely meet PP3 needs. However, our feeling is that a **joint promotion strategy should be established** and led by PP3 (TOP), who should become an ambassador of the Komovi area in the capital city of Podgorica, whereas the tourist office in Andrijevica should act as a local host. Existing **promotion material (Att.27) should be shared and** future material jointly **designed**. Both tourist offices should be aware of their importance when promoting mobility and sustainability aspects.

Several **target groups should be identified** in accordance with the general goal on positioning (**Att. 30**), which is an open issue (slow vs. mass tourism). The product will adapt to this decision and will comply with the EMM philosophy depending on this decision (**Att. 29**).

Some suggestions for the packages:

- “Country break”: short wilderness mountain exploration.

- “Mountain journey” for more visitors being more sensitive with sustainability aspects.

Some suggestions for further possible or potential products:

- “Komovi, the heart of the Balkan”
- “Back to the roots in Komovi”
- “Feeling mountain hospitality at the Katuns”
- “Following the herder footsteps”
-

Suggested target: individuals of all ages, groups of young people, couples between 30 and 50, families with grown-up children, mountain lovers.

6. Appendix

6.1. Terms of Reference (ToR) for the creation of an EmbleMatiC Eco-itinerary and its 30 attributes.

Topic	#	Attribute
Basics	1	Located in the foothills
	2	Low to medium difficulty
	3	Accessible all year around (excepting extreme weather episodes)
	4	Properly signposted (either with posts or digital tools)
	5	Including properly indicated panoramic viewpoints
	6	Favouring non-saturated spots
	7	Optimising existing infrastructure
Associated Services	8	Including environmental & landscape interpretation services/facilities
	9	Including visits on cultural heritage sites & monuments
	10	Including contents related with intangible heritage
	11	Offering local guidance services
	12	Providing eco-friendly leisure activities (sport, health & wellness...)
	13	Offering local gastronomy
	14	Offering the possibility to meet local producers with option to buy their products in the area
Ethics & Sustainability	15	When offering picnic take-away, promote sustainable and eco-friendly services
	16	Option to reach the destination with public transport and encouraging visitors in voluntary carbon offsetting
	17	Promoting eco-friendly mobility within the eco-itinerary
	18	Promoting interaction between visitors and local people
	19	Prioritising locally owned accommodation (e.g. through local quality agreements)
	20	Providing visual & clear information about visitors' correct behaviour in the area
	21	Raise awareness among stakeholders about responsible tourism best practices
Management & Governance	22	Implementing monitoring tools to improve the sustainable performance of the destination
	23	Involving local stakeholders in the design of the itinerary
	24	Using indicators to monitor and manage the impact of the itinerary
	25	Sharing experiences with other partners of the network periodically
	26	Providing interpretation material in at least local languages & English
Marketing	27	Informing about local available services
	28	Oriented both to local and coastal visitors as an alternative complementary activity
	29	Oriented to a common target group
	30	Promoting the common brand & marketing strategy

6.2. Local Implementation Action Plan (LIAP) template

Preliminary indication: One of the attributes from the Terms of Reference (ToR) included in the Transfer Guide (TG) is no. 22, entitled “Implementing monitoring tools to improve the sustainable performance of the destination”. A template of a plan of action was provided as evidence for this attribute fulfilment. Below, you can see the Attribute 22 template.

Attribute 22: Implementing monitoring tools to improve the sustainable performance of the destination							
Suggested evidence: Plan of action							
Template for a Plan of Action (contents are just an example of possible ones)							
OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE	COST	ACTION	FOLLOW UP/DEADLINE	INDICATOR	ACHIEVEMENT Y/N
Have at least one eco-friendly means of transport in 2020	Low	Local administration	Local administration budget	Contact local administration to show its necessity and the benefits for the project and the community	Meetings with the responsible administration/December 2020	Number of eco-friendly transport units	
Obtain carbon offsets from visitors	middle	Project Partners	100 €	Raise awareness among stakeholders	Collect data from stakeholders / October 2020	Number of visitors who have used any carbon offsetting tool	
		Stakeholders		Communicate carbon offsetting tools to visitors	Collect data from visitors / October 2020		
Increase the number of restaurants with any kind of food certification	High	Project Partners	Partner budget	Stimulate and assess stakeholders about obtaining a certification	Follow actively the certification process / December 2021	Number of new certifications obtained	
		Restaurants	Certification cost	Applying and obtaining a certification	Meet the scheduled certification requirements and deadlines / December 2021		

What is the LIAP?

For the third and final stage of the transferring process, the receivers are asked to use the insights and personalised recommendations from this diagnosis, to design an individualised local implementation action plan for the future creation of their eco-itinerary beyond the duration of this current project. This should ultimately provide the receiver with a roadmap to create a new and alternative tourism product offer for its visitors.

The LIAP is conceived to become a developed version of Attribute 22. It consists of two documents. The template that is provided below (“Template 1”) is a worksheet containing a series of features associated with an objective of your LIAP. You can reproduce this template for each objective you might establish. You can also adjust the provided template to your needs. For instance, you can add or remove as many features as needed.

Template 2 (screenshot and provided as a separate document) is a spreadsheet (“Excel” file) that reproduces the same structure of the worksheet, i.e. objective no. (rows) and features (columns). You can add all relevant information related to all objectives. The advantage of this spreadsheet is that it provides a main picture of all objectives and features; thus, comparisons are possible. For instance, several objectives might share common actions, responsible people, funding possibilities, involved actors, or time schedule.

Not least: in order to optimise your LIAP, we strongly recommend working in parallel with both templates.

Step 1: Introducing your LIAP.

1- The context

Short description of the context of the LIAP: The EMM Network (values, aim) and the EMbleMatiC Plus project (aim, structure, outcome).

2- The Eco-Itinerary

Please insert here a description of your Eco-itinerary consisting in :

(i) The proposed title of the Eco-itinerary.

(ii) A brief description highlighting the main focus, thematic, purpose of your future eco-itinerary (max.600 characters including space).

(iii) A map including all routes and the basic information.

3 -The LIAP

Please synthesise here the main contents of your LIAP, highlighting the overall aim. You might use the following overview table:

No.	Objective	Action 1	Action 2	Action 3	...
1	<i>[introduce here the name of the objective]</i>	<i>[introduce here the name of the Action]</i>			
2					
3					
4					
...					

Step 2: Developing your LIAP using Templates 1 and 2.

TEMPLATE 1 - WORKSHEET

We suggest dedicating a **separate worksheet** for **each** of the objectives of the LIAP. In the worksheet, all aspects related to the objective will be presented and described in detail. The worksheet might follow this template:

Objective 1: [Name of the objective]

Please indicate here the objective you pursue. Please try to announce it as simply and clearly as possible. You should explicitly differentiate between the objective and the action or actions that might be necessary to achieve the objective (see section "Action(s)" below).

Context

In order to understand the importance of your objective(s), you might include a previous section explaining the context, state of things, precedents etc.

Associated Attribute (ToR)

Specifying what attribute and topic from the ToR lies behind the objective will give more consistency to the LIAP as outcome from the EMbleMatiC Plus project. You may just include the name and number of the attribute as well as to which one of the five topics it belongs.

Degree of priority

How important is it for your organisation to reach this objective? As you might include more than one objective in your LIAP, you will need to establish a temporal hierarchy and, therefore, decide whether each objective has a high, medium, or low priority. You might decide this degree according to the field "deadline" as well as "follow-up" (see below)

Responsible

Please include the position within the company or institution and the contact (tel, email or postal address) of the person being responsible for the achievement and implementation of this objective. In order to avoid misunderstandings, it is highly recommended to indicate just one person.

Action(s)

Every one of the activities needed to reach the objective should be detailed described in this section. The number of actions may vary considerably. An objective might be achieved through the implementation of more than one action. You might particularly observe not to confuse an objective with an action, which is a means to reach the goal, i.e. the objective. Usually, an action is something that can be very well defined (both temporary and spatially).

Involved actors

The degree of execution of the actions very often relies on strong linkages with local/regional actors. You might indicate here which actors are relevant for your objective and actions, and in which way they should be involved.

Cost

You may indicate the total estimated costs of executing the actions. Obviously, this section will be much more informative if the numbers adjust to some realistic scenario, which is usually difficult to achieve. However, we consider that making an effort in this respect is crucial to make the objective feasible. Strong and precise data about cost will ease the following section.

Funding possibilities

Here, you might register what possibilities there exist within the funding landscape in your area. You might detail the different institutions, grants, funds... available, as well as the responsible organisation behind each source of funding (according to their nature -public or private-, range of action -local, regional, national, European,- etc.)

Time schedule

Like cost, time is a “must” if you want to achieve the objective. You might distinguish between the different milestones in a field called “follow-up” from the final deadline.

Indicators

There might be a series of signals showing whether the objective is being achieved, or not. These are indicators and are useful tools as long as they are well defined, e.g. including measurable data and/or signs that are easily identifiable (ideally by an external). When using indicators, you might refer to what you developed in the context of Attribute 24 (“using indicators to monitor and manage the impact of the itinerary).

Final check

The final step that ensures the actual achievement of the objective should always be to go through this list and, if everything is done, check this final field with a tick (✓) or just writing “achieved”.

TEMPLATE 2 - SPREADSHEET

A1	EMbleMatiC Plus														
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1	EMbleMatiC Plus														
2	A3.3 Finalizing receivers local implementation action plan for future eco-itinerary relying on transfer guide methodology														
3	D3.3.X - PPX Local Implementation Action Plan (LIAP)														
5															
6	*Please note: Some titles of the fields are simplified. You will find a detailed description in the word processor template.														
7	Some instructions to optimise the use of this spreadsheet: when filling in the cells, try to use the same wording, so that filter can work smoothly.														
8															
9		ToR	Priority	Responsible	Actions	Actors	Cost	Funding	Timeline	Indicator	Check				
10	[put here the name of objective 1]														
11	[put here the name of objective 2]														
12	[put here the name of objective 3]														
13	...														
14															
15															
16															
17															
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