

## **PILLAR 4: Sustainable Tourism**



## **ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT FOR YEAR 2020**

Prepared by Pillar Coordinators, supported by the relevant EUSAIR Facility Point Project Partner, and approved by TSG 4 members on 09.02.2021 through written procedure

**Background:**

As provided in the TSG Rules of Procedure (Point 8), every year, by end-February, Pillar Coordinators shall submit to the Governing Board an Annual Progress Report for the pillar concerned covering the preceding year (1<sup>st</sup> January-31<sup>st</sup> December).

The Annual Progress Report, jointly prepared by Pillar Coordinators, with the support of the relevant EUSAIR Facility Point Project Partner, is approved by the respective TSG prior to transmission to the Governing Board.

The Governing Board will be called to take note of the aforementioned reports, and, on that basis, to establish an Annual Progress Report for the EUSAIR as a whole, to be presented to the EU-28 High Level Group on macro-regional strategies and to the EUSAIR political/ministerial level.

**General remarks:**

The following table of content and the template itself show the sections that should be completed (none of them should be left blank or deleted from the report). If necessary and justified, additional (sub) sections could be added.

The report shall not exceed a maximum number of **5 pages (Arial 12 or equivalent)**.

Additionally, please note the following:

- The information should be well-structured within each of the sections and should be synthetic and to the point, addressing the content and not aiming for quantity.
- Do not include information which could be found elsewhere, e.g. minutes of the meetings or list of TSG members.
- The language should be direct and clear. Using acronyms, jargon or internal technicalities is not recommended.
- Refer to factual information, and be as concrete as possible. Vague and general comments (e.g. "the situation is progressing favourably and quite rapidly") without justification should be avoided.
- Any other important information (monitoring reports etc) should be added as annexes.

## **TSG PROCESS (GOVERNANCE)**

TSG governance process is defined by the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) and its Action Plan as key documents to implement sustainable development in the macro-region. Four Pillars that address the core challenges and opportunities for the macro-region are defined by the Action Plan. All pillars are co-chaired by EU and non-EU countries. According to this, Republic of Croatia and Republic of Albania are co-chairs of the Pillar 4 . Sustainable Tourism.

Since November 2020 a new co-chair for TSG4 for Albania, Mrs. Rovena Mocka, has been appointed. At the 12<sup>th</sup> TSG4 meeting representatives of the new EUSAIR member country- North Macedonia were welcomed.

Following the setting-up process of TSG4, all countries nominated their representatives in TSG4, and the Rules of Procedures of TSG4 were adopted in 2015. Most countries have also appointed their deputy representatives, and representatives of the national ministries of culture in line with their chosen priorities.

TSG4 organized two meetings in 2020: 12<sup>th</sup> meeting (9<sup>th</sup> June 2020, virtual online) and 13<sup>th</sup> meeting (6<sup>th</sup> October 2020, hybrid virtual online). Four EU countries and five non-EU participated on the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, and equally on the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**12<sup>th</sup> TSG4** virtual meeting was also attended by the representatives of: European Commission ((DG REGIO, DG NEAR and DG GROW, DG EAC)), Facility Point Lead Partner, ADRION, Council of Europe, Panoramad representative, FP Croatia Communication experts; ESP technical support

**13<sup>th</sup> TSG4** hybrid meeting in Zagreb was also attended by the European Commission (DG REGIO), Facility Point Lead Partner, ADRION, FP Croatia Communication experts; contracted experts for Strategic Project development and Monitoring and Evaluation, Mr. George Drakopoulos-EC contracted expert, ESP technical support

### **1) TSG4 - meetings:**

In the TSG4 meetings, the following key issues were discussed, in order to ensure an efficient implementation of EUSAIR and its Action Plan.

- **12<sup>th</sup> TSG4 meeting:** Due to the coronavirus pandemic, most of the planned spring events were postponed. The 12<sup>th</sup> TSG4 meeting, that was planned for 6-8 April in Thessaloniki (Greece) was first postponed then organised virtually on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020. At the meeting, the implementation of the 11<sup>th</sup> meetings conclusions, and annual reporting were discussed, reports from the Pillar Coordinators and GB meetings were presented and accepted, cooperation and activities with other initiatives and institutions were presented: CoE Routes4U, PANORAMED, AI-NURREC, and OIS AIR, participation at the 12th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum. DG NEAR and DG GROW briefly introduced their activities. The planned TSG2 and TSG4 event provisionally titled %Sustainable Cycling Tourism+ was announced to be organised in October 2020. Slovenian MS week was announced for September, and EU MRS Week for September/October with participation of TSG4 representatives.

Croatia proposed, in agreement with TSG3 and TSG2 a cross . pillar project with a tentative title %For Planet, for people+ that should assist countries in speeding up the implementation of Agenda 2030 in tourism as well as incorporating the EU Green Deal in their policies, plans and actions. Representative of Istra Inspirit briefly summarised the work on and the content of the %Manual for participatory tourism connecting community and culture through storytelling+. TSG4 members were invited to explore possibilities to further develop the concept of storytelling in their countries/destinations.

All five TSG4 proposed project ideas, flagships, including the newly, in May adopted, Audit Trail of AIR Cultural Routes were presented. They were also presented and approved at the 12<sup>th</sup> GB meeting, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2020. TSG4 members were informed that contracts for the first three strategic project ideas, to be developed, have been signed and that experts are already working on them. TSG4 members will be involved in their finalisation.

FP Croatia contracted communication expert to follow Croatia in EUSAIR, but more specifically the work of TSG4. Greek WP3 LP informed on the state of play and plans for 2020. Representative of the Adrion Programme shared extensive information on the results of the 2nd call relating to the tourism and culture projects. PANORAMED representative shared information on the finalisation of the Key Policy Paper (KPP). The BlueMed Initiative presentation was shared with TSG4 members.

DG REGIO engaged an expert, Mr. Drakopoulos, from Tourism generis, who explained research methodology and asked for cooperation of EUSAIR countries in generating the input on COVID-19 consequences.

TSG4 members were invited to actively seek national support to include proposed Pillar 4 flagship projects adequately, country specific, in the relevant programming documents.

**13<sup>th</sup> TSG4 meeting:** The Albanian coordinator was still missing from the meetings. North Macedonia has joined the TSG4 meeting and has nominated their representative for culture. The implementation of the 12<sup>th</sup> TSG4 meetings conclusions and implementation were discussed and approved. A short report on the GB meeting in September was given, as well as the information on the informal meeting of the Pillar coordinators.

After TSG4 meeting, members have sent their inputs to DG REGIO external expert on country specific national measures for tourism related to COVID-19 crisis. The expert explained the impacts and repercussions that the pandemic had and still has on travel and tourism (Deliverable 2) and presented report recommendations for cooperation in tourism industry during the pandemic crisis (Deliverable 2). TSG4 members were asked to provide feedback on report; which they later on, did.

Information on cooperation with other initiatives and institutions was given through the presentation of Routes4U final conference. DG REGIO briefly introduced next activities and events inviting TSG4 members to join EWRC: Regions and cities weeks, as well as Baltic Forum on October 20<sup>th</sup>, Danube Forum to be held on October 22nd, and the European Tourism Convention to be held on October 12<sup>th</sup>. Report was given on the thematic TSG2/TSG4 MRS event (Cycling and cultural routes tourism) held on 2nd October 2020 (hybrid in Zagreb). Greece reported on the Chairmanship of the Ministerial

Committee of the Council of Europe (May-November 2020), especially of the book on the Road+ booklet presenting the cultural routes in Greece. Croatia also presented a booklet on CoE Croatian cultural routes.

Pillar coordinator reported on strategic project ideas state of play for TSG4. All five mono-pillar projects were approved.

TSG4 members were informed that three mono-pillar project concepts development started. Two new mono-pillar project ideas proposed by Greece and Italy were approved (AIR Cultural Routes and CRUISAIR), and a new project idea *Living the Sea+* announced by Slovenia. The Issue paper final report on the *Manual for participatory tourism connecting community and culture through storytelling+* with results was presented, Greece reported on the draft proposal for cross-pillar project idea (STPDEU). The cross-pillar project was approved after the TSG4 meeting by silent approval. Also the fifth TSG4 cross-pillar project proposal *For Planet, for people+* was presented, and is to be drafted according to new rules, sent to TSG4 members for comments and approval. M&E experts reported on intensive gathering activities for the knowledge base, and informed TSG4 that all data have been sent to the WP3 LP, in Greece. Innovation expert procurement procedure was completed with no received candidates. Croatia contracted communication expert to follow Croatia in EUSAIR. Topics proposed for the next EUSAIR Serbia Forum were presented. Slovenia announced their future Presidency activities. TSG4 members were asked to actively seek national support to include proposed Pillar 4 flagship projects adequately, country specific, in the relevant programming documents.

## 2) TSG4 Round tables /seminars/ thematic events:

All Round tables on tourism and culture could not have been held back-to-back with TSG4 meeting because of COVID 19.

**Thematic EUSAIR/EUSDR event** was held on 2nd October 2020 (hybrid in Zagreb). It proved to be a very successful event on cycling tourism and cultural routes, prepared and shared by the two EUSAIR pillars: Pillar 2- connecting the region and Pillar 4 . sustainable tourism, providing an insight into the future visitors needs. Projects, initiatives and stakeholders in cycling tourism and cultural routes were presented focused on strategic approach; projects and initiatives within the Pillar IV and Pillar II stakeholders perspective, stressing the role of associations, networks, routes, private initiatives and cooperation in the EUSAIR and EUSDR regions.

## 3) TSG4 also contributed to the:

**5<sup>th</sup> EUSAIR Forum virtual from Belgrade** - the PANEL organization in cooperation with TSG4 members and SR presidency stressing EUSAIR Pillar IV Sustainable Tourism topic *New Trends in Sustainable Tourism . What does a modern tourist want+*

Participation of PC and thematic expert at:

- **EWCR Online workshop** *Cooperation in Tourism*, 14<sup>th</sup> September;
- **EWCR Panel** *Tourism Recovery through Cooperation*, panel 14<sup>th</sup> October.

## MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

### Main priorities actions

- **Green Mapping and CulTourAir** strategic mono-pillar project concepts have been developed, after the research and final reports;
- **DES\_AIR** strategic mono-pillar project concept is in the process of development;
- **3 Audit Trails** prepared and approved for **new mono-pillar** project ideas, (AIR Cultural Routes, CRUISE AIR, and ProDesAIR,);
- **Financial Dialogue Zagreb** - held 29.09. within Facility Point Project with the presentation of 5 mono-pillar strategic project concepts (Green Mapping, DES\_AIR and CulTourAir, AIR Cultural routes, CRUISEAIR) ;
- **TSG2/TSG4 JOINT EVENT** organized by EUSAIR, in cooperation with EUSDR  
%Cycling tourism and cultural routes+held on 2nd October 2020+);
- **Monitoring and evaluation WP T.3**  
The new TSG4 Pillar specific M&E external expert executed intensive gathering activities for the knowledge base, and sent all data to the WP3 LP;
- **Cultural Routes: Cooperation continued** with the Council of Europe with the EUSAIR/EUSDR TSG2/TSG4 workshop held %Cycling tourism and Cultural Routes+ as tools for post COVID 19 in EUSAIR and EUSDR region, held hybrid in Zagreb (October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020.);
- **Cooperation with DG REGIO** external expert . COVID-19 impacts and recommendations.

**Actions undertaken with regard to communication. Both internally between the TSGs members, and externally- and to visibility, participation at:**

- PANORAMED project (EUSAIR is associated partner) continues presence and activities sharing at every TSG4 meeting;
- BlueMed Initiative- focal point for cooperation (Greece), participation at events
- UNWTO- active participation in our thematic events - Joint TSG2/TSG4 event Thematic EUSAIR/EUSDR event held on 2nd October;
- EUSAIR Pillar Coordinators and Governing Board meetings, virtual, 17<sup>th</sup> September . participation with the information on previous and future work in TSG4, presenting plan of activities

**Visibility at events:**

1. **Videoconference** EUSAIR TSG-4, EEN Sector Group on Tourism & Cultural Heritage, EASME, DG GROW.H2 . 03 July;
2. **EWRC2020, workshop** "Cooperation in Tourism+presentation on 14<sup>th</sup>September
3. **EWRC2020, panel** Tourism Recovery Through Cooperation 14th October
4. **EUSDR Meeting** for inter MRS cooperation on tourism and culture, 28<sup>th</sup> October
5. **EUSALP Tourism Subgroup meeting** - presentation of flagships 10<sup>th</sup> Nov.
6. **Round Table** between EUSAIR representatives and the Italian MA, presentation on 16<sup>th</sup> October

**MAIN ISSUES/CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED**

- COVID-19 related restrictions (failure to hold live meetings, All round tables, storytelling workshops)
- The absence of Albanian Pillar Coordinator (until November 2020, when new Albanian PC was appointed)
- Keeping deadlines
- Stakeholder platform usage . human resources, getting private sector and civil society on board

## **THE WORK AHEAD**

Two meetings of TSG4 will be organized in the year 2021 the 14<sup>th</sup> in Greece and the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting in Croatia - is to be confirmed.

TSG4 workshops on national level will be held for further development of mono-pillar projects concepts under EUSAIR Facility Point project and inter-pillar projects concepts under Facility Point Plus with participation of TSG4 members.

TSG4 will actively participate at the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> EUSAIR Forum in January and May 2021 with organisation of the panel in collaboration with the organisers.

**Workshop on EUSAIR September 2021: Puglia Region**, Bari, Fiera del Levante. The aim of the workshop is to describe and explore the challenges and the opportunities of the projects and initiatives promoted within the EUSAIR Pillars.

**EUSAIR Pillar IV ad hoc meeting "Innovation in the field of cultural tourism"**- November 2021 IT . Puglia or Sicily - with objective to introduce innovative concepts in the context of the cultural and touristic routes.

**First regional Fair for culture and creativity** - IT - Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, Pordenone, second half of 2021.

**Workshop on EUSAIR: GR Ę Thessaloniki** %DMPs for Cruise destinations within the Adriatic-Ionian Region- The role of the Cruise sector in sustainable tourism development+ - second half of 2021.

### **In the year, 2021 TSG4 will mainly focus on:**

- Implementation of recommendations and conclusions of TSG4, Governing Board and EUSAIR Forum;
- Organisation of three TSG4 meetings according to the Rules of Procedure with eventual organization of back to back All Round table on the topic of Tourism & Culture if pandemic conditions allow;
- Further discussing actions/priorities that have macro-regional value in sustainable tourism at the next TSG4 meetings and presentation of the Issue Paper within one of the meetings;
- Contribution to the 14<sup>th</sup> TSG4 meeting to be held in Greece;
- Contributing to the 5<sup>th</sup> EUSAIR Forum virtual from Belgrade and 6<sup>th</sup> EUSAIR Forum in Portoro0, in accordance to the Agenda of the Forums, to be held;
- Further implementation of activities for development of Sustainable tourism in the Adriatic-Ionian region as continuation of the activities;
- Thematic ad hoc events - organisation of thematic and/or project oriented events/workshops (cross-pillar conference, MRS joint expert event, Innovation workshop, Financial dialogue, Capacity building, Students workshop);
- Further cooperation with CoE;
- Further cooperation with UNWTO;
- Cooperation with PANORAMED;

- Maintaining and improving cooperation among TSG4 members and between pillars to achieve the best output for all of them.



## ANNEX 1

### ATTENDANCE AT TSG 4 MEETINGS IN REPORTING YEAR 2020

Pillar 4. Sustainable Tourism	12 <sup>th</sup> TSG4 meeting		13 <sup>th</sup> TSG4 meeting	
	Virtual (GoToMeeting)		City: Zagreb, hybrid (GoToMeeting)	
	Date: 09 <sup>th</sup> June		Date: 6 <sup>th</sup> October	
EU Country	Tourism	Culture	Tourism	Culture
CROATIA	2	1	2	1
GREECE	2	1	4	1
ITALY	3	2	3	2
SLOVENIA	3	2	4	1
Non-EU Countries	Tourism	Culture	Tourism	Culture
ALBANIA	2	1	2	1
BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA	1			1
MONTENEGRO	1		2	1
SERBIA	1		2	2
NORTH MACEDONIA	2	1	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>11</b>

## ANNEX 2

### MACRO-REGIONAL PROJECT/MEASURES

<b>Project/measure title</b>	<b>Main activities</b> <i>Short description of the project/measure, what are the objectives, added value for the EUSAIR, envisioned period</i>	<b>Mono / Cross Pillar project</b> <i>Indicate, if the project has a mono or cross pillar approach, indicate the relevant pillar(s)</i>	<b>Status</b> <i>Describe the status of the project/measure (e.g. project idea/concept, mature project ready for implementation, project under implementation or completed, etc.)</i>	<b>Involvement of EUSAIR countries</b>	<b>(Targeted) funding sources</b>
Green mapping	<i>Green mapping project concept with the aim of mapping sustainable tourism businesses in EUSAIR region.</i>	<i>Pillar 4</i>	<i>Audit Trail approved by TSG4 members, ToR prepared, experts selected, project idea development completed</i>	<i>All EUSAIR Countries invited to participate</i>	<i>To be detected through project development</i>
CulTourAir	<i>CulTourAir project concept prepared with the aim of establishing the common methodology for the research and development of cultural tourism in EUSAIR countries</i>	<i>Pillar 4</i>	<i>Audit Trail approved by TSG4 members, ToR prepared, experts selected, project idea development completed</i>	<i>All EUSAIR Countries invited to participate</i>	<i>To be detected through project development</i>
Des_Air Project	<i>Project aims to develop new training and skills to strengthened EUSAIR countries competitiveness - increasing the quality of integrated sustainable destination management through development of LLL training programs and Mastersq programmes.</i>	<i>Pillar 4</i>	<i>The project concept prepared. Audit Trail approved, ToR prepared, procurement procedure completed, external expert selected, project idea under development.</i>	<i>All EUSAIR countries invited to participate</i>	<i>To be detected through project development</i>
AdrionCycleTour	<i>Project aims to fully exploit the advantages of the natural and cultural heritage developing the cyclo- route with a twofold function, serving as infrastructure, integrated with the public transport systems (railways, bus, sea), for cycle tourism and for a sustainable urban /inter-urban mobility.</i>	<i>Cross-pillar: Pillar 2 and Pillar 4</i>	<i>The project concept is prepared and was presented at the 10th TSG4 meeting. It is approved by both TSG 4 and TSG2, with Audit Trail approved by TSG members.</i>	<i>Greece, Italy, Croatia, and other interested EUSAIR countries are welcome to join</i>	<i>To be detected through project development</i>

CruiseAIR	<i>Project aims to provide sustainability of EUSAIR ports through the better management of cruise destinations, both seaside and continental ones (rivers, lakes), diversification of tourism product, activating creation of strategic and action plans for sustainable tourism in Cruise destinations of the AIR</i>	<i>Pillar 4</i>	<i>The project concept prepared. Audit Trail approved at 12<sup>th</sup> TSG4 meeting</i>	<i>All EUSAIR countries invited to participate</i>	<i>To be detected through project development</i>
AIR Cultural Routes	<i>Project aims to provide harmonized distribution of tourism flows through macro-regional territories using Cultural Routes as tool for the creation of innovative diversified tourism products. The challenge is to address regional connectivity of locally micro-managed routes.</i>	<i>Pillar 4</i>	<i>The project concept prepared. Audit Trail approved at 12<sup>th</sup> TSG4 meeting</i>	<i>All EUSAIR countries invited to participate</i>	<i>To be detected through project development</i>
AIR ProDest Strategy (MIQS)	<i>Project aims to provide strategic approach to destination management planning, supporting smart, participative and agile destination management able to respond to dynamic challenges fast &amp; cost-effectively</i>	<i>Pillar 4</i>	<i>The project concept prepared. Audit Trail approved by silent procedure</i>	<i>All EUSAIR countries invited to participate</i>	<i>To be detected through project development</i>
STPDEU	<i>The main objective of this project is to provide smooth and seamless access for all disabled to the seaside and beaches by installation of non-permanent infrastructure on the beaches which will enable people with disabilities to have access to the sea and other seaside facilities</i>	<i>Cross-pillar: Pillar 1 and Pillar 4</i>	<i>The project concept prepared. Audit Trail approved only by TSG4 silent procedure</i>	<i>All EUSAIR countries invited to participate</i>	<i>To be detected through project development</i>

## ANNEX3

### PILLAR / TSG EVENTS AT NATIONAL OR MACRO-REGIONAL LEVEL IN THE REPORTING PERIOD

Event / County / National or Macro-regional	Short description	Participants ( <i>what kind of participants</i> )	Main outputs
<b>TSG2/TSG4 Joint Macro-regional Interpillar thematic event</b> organized virtually on 2nd October 2020 by EUSAIR in cooperation with EUSDR	The event "Cycling tourism and cultural routes+ in co-organization with TSG2 was held with a special reference to cooperation between two EU macro-regional strategies (MRS in order to understand a bit more opportunities and challenges for both cycling and cultural tourism, making it easier for them to formulate policies and projects.	TSG and MRS members and representatives, national and international, representatives of international institutions (UNWTO), NCs, etc.	Exchange of invitations to participate at each other's TSG meetings
<b>Meetings on the national level Financial dialogue</b> , Zagreb, Croatia, 29th September 2020	The aim was to show how Operational Programs in the Republic of Croatia contribute to the implementation of EUSAIR, as well as to point out new regulations and the process of embedding adopted macro-regional flagship projects according to the thematic pillars of EUSAIR.	National TSG members, stakeholders in tourism, NGOs, NCs, etc. representatives of all Managing Authorities operating in Croatia	Exchange of knowledge, and visibility achieved.