
Roundtable

“Social Economy in Tourism for a Sustainable Economic Development”

24 June 2022

Social economy organisations active in tourism implement an economy that benefits people, communities and local areas. A Tourism that is fair, responsible and driven by community. Diverse stakeholders shared about what does it take to create favourable conditions to strengthen links between tourism and social economy and why it is beneficial for us all.

On Friday 24th June, took place the Roundtable about Social Economy in Tourism for a Sustainable Economic Development.

The meeting was organised by Diesis Network (tag account) in the framework of the 3rd edition of the 'International Week of Fair and Sustainable Tourism for All' organised by ISTO.

Patrick Klein – Team Leader social economy

The European Commission action plan on social economy puts forward concrete measures to unlock the potential of social economy organizations and social enterprise:

1. To develop an enabling framework for the social economy. For example, policy and legal framework that need to be adapted to the specific business model. The role of state aid, public procurement, taxation etc. is also to be mentioned the action plan will seek to engage with all relevant authorities, stakeholders around this objective, national, regional and international level.
2. To reflect on how to better facilitate access to funding business support networks and create concrete support available to all the actors. For example, the Commission will increase its support beyond the €2.5 billion that were previously allocated to the social economy.
3. To raise awareness with policymakers and social partners to explain to them the importance and positive impact of all social economy stakeholders.

The Commission is currently developing the transition pathway for tourism, a co-creation phase dedicated to green and digital issues where experts were invited to develop possible solution to help greener practices and processes for the social economy. The stakeholders will work with the Commission to validate the implementations that will be key for the success of the transition. The Commission wants to support a new social economy that includes tourism actors, since many are already active in social economy.

Kirsti Ala-Mutka - Policy officer tourism

All the industrial ecosystems need to accelerate their green and digital transition and improve the resilience especially with the COVID crisis. The idea was that all the industrial ecosystems would develop a transition pathway in cooperation, collaboration with the stakeholders as joint road maps



to take until 2030. Since tourism was the ecosystem that was strongly hit, it was the one that started first.

The objective in this work was to engage with all the stakeholders and to take into account relationships that tourism actually have with several sectors, such as transport, hospitality, cultural and creative industries, travel agencies and so on.

The transition pathway policy report for tourism is now available in 22 languages. The document: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/404a8144-8892-11ec-8c40-01aa75ed71a1>

It outlines actions on several different areas and includes specific sections on funding and monitoring and co-implementation.

There are several aspects that have specific relevance or where social economy approaches could be very useful, including:

- Improving the collaborative and smart destination governance.
- Expanding the measurement and monitoring of the impact of tourism
- Improving the availability, understanding of what services are available and to whom to finding the matching people with big bodies available and providers.
- Creating more sustainable, more circular services and overall diversification of the tourism services based on the local strengths based on the local specificities, ensuring that they have positive impact both for the residents and the visitors.
- Networking, with the importance of sharing best practices

Community cooperatives, for example, could contribute to the promotion governance of the destination: coordination and management tourism flows between the different service providers, facilities sharing over infrastructure resources between tourism and service providers, co design, governance or mechanism as platforms that are related to bookings and reservations and management of tourism services, local supply chains for resources, local renewable energy projects and overall monitoring. The impact of the tourism to the local communities and environment is a very important matter that needs to advance towards positive and productive directions.

Roundtable discussion: a virtual tour to in-credible stories from social economy actors about...

Digital solutions and Cultural Heritage as a driver for sustainable tourism in small villages and rural areas: Coop Culture Italy/International – Giovanna Barni

Coop Culture is the largest cooperative working in the field of culture, cultural heritage and sustainable tourism in Italy. Coop Culture shares a value system that gives importance not only to the economic part but also to people and territories where the organization works. Coop Culture is also committed to protect the community and promote social cohesion. It has new approach to technology that puts the visitors in the center. It is collaborative because it focuses on interaction and on the cooperation among different stakeholders. It is sustainable because it is committed in achieving many sustainable development goals.

Coop Culture tries to develop an integrated digital ecosystem for sustainable tourism, something that creates a digital platform, to increase accessibility and social inclusion and to connect cultural heritage to people.



Some examples of the digital tools and the digital system are tools that allow to increase accessibility and social inclusion in order to overcome the educational gaps among visitors. For example, a remote archaeological site where Coop Culture helps visitors during their visit to recognize and to understand the ancient ruins in every part of Italy, a platform that offers visitors the opportunity to enter archaeological sites or museum even when the places are not accessible. The organization used this platform during the pandemic, to maintain the jobs.

This platform is also targeted to people with disabilities, to visitors that have no money to travel, and to schools.

Coop Culture has two relevant projects. One is a platform for territorial networks in order to promote rural internal area of the region. The other is a platform with didactic tools and audio guides.

So how the technology can be a useful solution for sustainable tourism in social economy? Coop Culture thinks about it as community method, mapping territories, networking, and social innovation. This is the challenge for cultural and touristic operations.

"Small steps lead to a big change – social economy creating sustainable development in local communities in West Pomerania": SZOWES (Poland) – Pawel Klimek

SZOWES network, actively engage in activities promoting the development of accessible tourism through the organization of training and consultancy in the field of accessibility among representatives of the social economy sector operating in the tourism sector.

The SZOWES network consistently cooperates with regional agendas for the adaptation of tourism development and promotion strategies with the use of social economy solutions. Partners of the SZOWES network, co-creating regeneration strategies at the local level, together with local authorities' direct strategic directions and activities aimed at using local tourism assets by social economy entities and social enterprises created at the bottom of the community. SZOWES organize and co-organize conferences and meetings devoted to local development with the use of social tourism solutions.

Digital platforms for a real sharing economy: redistributing wealth to local communities: Fair Bnb (International) – Jonathan Reyes

Fairbnb brings the idea of digital platforms to match with the social economy for a more sustainable way of tourism: a big network for local communities. This project was possible thanks to the partners. They really believed that the tourism and digital platforms can be driving for positive change and to really put communities in the center.

Fairbnb came from several cities and places around the world, to create an alternative technology that would be at the service of local communities. It would be governed by locals that would be accountable. How Fairbnb does it? Throughout 4 pilots: Local impact, Sustainable tourism, local sovereignty, transparency and lawfulness.

Fairbnb is a cooperative functioning with a democratic process, where the workers and the people affected by it can have a voice within the decision.



The big difference between Fairbnb and other platforms is that half of the booking price goes to the technology of the platform itself, and the other half goes to fund community projects. How does Fairbnb see regional tourism?

Fairbnb has a distributed model where they donate half of the revenues to fund social and community projects in every destination where they are present. They create local employment in every place where they are present and pay taxes locally. They promote a more localized economy where local ambassadors promote the local region and create a network of local cooperatives.

They collaborate with local authorities where they are compliant with the local regulation, the local ambassadors help in this work with dealing and working with local authorities. Fairbnb avoids the entrance of big multi owners who at the end have active impact in the housing industry in the housing market. They operate with the one house policy.

Fairbnb has a system to promote sustainable practices and rewards them between the host and the guests to promote a different way of traveling.

Sustainable, smart and beautiful tourism destinations: CEDRA SPLIT - Ranko Milic / Ministry of Tourism (Croatia) | City of Dubrovnik

CEDRA works with the urban planning and urban development. They are connected to the tourism development and destination management, they have connections with some of the new European policies like the New European Bauhaus and similar.

Cedra is cooperating with healthy and fair places, communities, municipalities, and management systems, through the cluster of organizations.

CEDRA aims to regenerate not only the natural ecosystems, but also social and economic ecosystems. They are trying to push this through social economy. CEDRA is for example now working with the Mediterranean region in order to create initiatives that can really help regenerating people, organizations, spaces and ecosystems using digital solutions as well.

How can social economy help tourism? It can bring human values back to the tourism and put it in the center of the development of people and values. Using agile environmental, social and governance investment models, CEDRA is helping cities, developing strategies for integrated value chain creation, together with other states sectors like agriculture.

CEDRA also works with smaller rural communities and worked on regeneration of places and in research and development innovation hubs, not just for tourism, but also for other interesting sectors for the communities.

Keynote speech: "Ecosystem Strategies for Regeneration in Tourism"

Prof. Lucía Hernández (Ouishare)

Regeneration is inspired by how nature works and how living systems work. It is interesting to understand how we can learn from nature in order to apply solutions to problems that we have as humans.

Systems like education, medicine, tourism are thinking isolated from each other. This can be improved with a more systemic way of thinking.



The pandemic showed us how that tourism sector is a fragile system. It needs a transformation, to create a win-win relationship with the actors involved and the environment: it can create strategies to regenerate the ecosystem.

Lucia Hernandez researched the intersections between platform design and regeneration. A platform business model is basically designed for an ecosystem of interconnected actors who coordinate their activity with a common goal. Creating the conditions for the whole to flourish and develop. Regeneration aims to restore damaged ecosystems or as a principle of design. It is challenging to standardize solutions because they are based on the location and specific context. It then needs to focus on the potential.

