

Final Report

Contribution in the development of the REGLPORIS Area Brand that will encompass a set of marketing and communication methods that will help to distinguish REGLPORIS touristic product (destinations, routes, activities, etc) and create a lasting impression in the minds of tourists, toolbox include its identity, brand communication (e.g. logos and trademarks), brand awareness, brand loyalty (defined as positive feelings towards REGLPORIS brand and dedication to its products or services repeatedly with profound benefits”, *në kuadër të projektit* “Nautical Tourism Development and Promotion of Regional Ports (REGLPORIS)/No. 250/ 1st call for standard projects

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1. Introduction: General overview

Background information

When the Covid-19 pandemic first hit Europe last year, no country was truly ready.

Amid lockdowns, curfews, businesses shutting down, the economic damage was felt across the continent. The tourism sector, reliant on the freedom of movement and on the hospitality sector being able to operate, was hit especially hard.

This year, countries in the region are trying to ensure that they are better prepared for the upcoming tourist season. Being seen as a safe destination is a priority, and in doing so they hope to attract more visitors than in 2020.

Meanwhile, the European Commission has unveiled plans for a Digital Green Certificate, a proof of vaccination or negative test result or Covid-19 recovery, that would allow for free movement within the EU and the European Economic Area. EU officials are planning to roll-out the certificate before the summer tourist season begins, which might be good news for Italy who is an EU member.

In Montenegro, there is currently a curfew from 9pm to 5am, although certain measures differ from city to city based on the local epidemiological conditions.

Montenegro hopes to be communicate that they're a safe travel destination ahead of the summer tourist season. In both countries, tourism is highly seasonal, which means that the summer months see the lion's share of overnight stays and therefore profits.

Meanwhile, the government has begun with measures aimed at helping the struggling tourism sector. They include travel vouchers for doctors and teachers valued at a total of 5.5 million euros. Under the aid package, those in the tourism sector can apply for a subsidy on the reprogramming of credit, a measure aimed at increasing liquidity in the sector.

However, on the ground, those in tourist trade seem unsatisfied. The liquidation of Montenegro Airlines, and the new government cutting the Tourism Ministry didn't seem to help.

Like Montenegro, Albania seems to be relying on vaccination as a means to ensure a safe tourism season. Vaccination started in the country in January, but was slow until mid-March when doses of the Chinese-developed Sinopharm vaccine finally arrived from Turkey. So far, around 250,000 people have been jabbed in Albania – the elderly, healthcare staff and schoolteachers.

A further 500,000 doses of the Chinese Sinovac vaccine are slated to be delivered within the next two months. Whether or not the doses will be enough to ensure a healthy tourist season – in every sense of the word – remains to be seen.

General overview

Tourism is considered as an engine for the local development of our local areas: all the models that are based on community and tourism potentials will allow to favor a smart and sustainable management of this sector and of local cultural and natural heritage, because through cross-border exchange of experiences, practices, knowledge, skills and cooperation, economic, social and territorial cohesion among partners will be favored.

Hence, the overall objective of the Project is to develop a common model for the smart and sustainable NT management through integrated development plans. REGLPORTS aims to provide a holistic approach by (a) connecting the coastal areas with the rich inland's assets, (b) emerging and promoting the interconnected areas (Area Brand, Thematic Routes), and (c) upgrading tourism supporting services and products.

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to provide The REGLPORTS Area Brand (O.T2.1) will define the trademark of REGLPORTS' approach, including, yet not limited to, a high set of standards for tourism services and products. This brand will still characterize the tourism destinations of the intervention area, after the Project's lifetime and, could be expanded in order to include other areas and/or services; thus, securing the viability of the whole concept.

- Reglports brand will be supported and promoted by centers;
- Reglports centers will constitute the permanent structures that will secure, during and after the project's completion, the success, durability and sustainability;
- Promotion of Brand, by the centers;

The implementation of the objectives mentioned above is required the selection in outsourcing of a proficiency service provider (the Consultant) for the award of this Services Contract, under the Reglports Project financing and consequently according to the rules of project implementation.

Project Partner Ministry of Tourism and Environment of Albania; Ministria e Turizmit dhe Mjedisit (MITUDM)

Competences

MITUDM is responsible for drafting and implementing government policies for the tourism, and environment with a view to create a new economic model that will bring sustainable economic growth in Albania. Therefore, the main topics of the Project, namely Nautical tourism and development, fall exactly into MITUDM's direct interests and its capacities/responsibilities nationwide.

Benefit Description

The role of coordinate the with its vast the nautical tourism its territorial MITUDM will information and envisaged contribute communication



MITUDM will be to actions in Albania and experience to facilitate development of management plans in domain. In addition, provide the essential services for the studies, as well as to significantly to the and dissemination of

the Project. MITUDM to benefit from REGLPORTS Project through the development of sustainable tourism plans that will capitalize significant assets of Albania through nautical tourism and their interconnection with mild tourist activities in the hinterland. It also expects to gain benefits by the newly developed ICT tools, which facilitate environmental sustainability and upgrade of tourism services and products. MITUDM does not perform any economic activity within the Project or as a result of it.

2. Cross Border Cooperation

EU support for cross-border cooperation on the external borders of the European Union. Cross-border cooperation (CBC) on the external borders of the EU is a key priority in the European Neighbourhood Policy.

In the Mediterranean region, with maritime rather than land borders with the EU, CBC remains relatively less developed, though substantial experience has been gained under ENPI building on regional and sub-national cooperation within the Horizon 2020 Initiative to depollute the Mediterranean sea, within the Barcelona Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean marine environment and coastal region and within the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).

The Mediterranean sea-basin is characterised inter alia by striking economic and social contrasts between its Southern and Northern shores, as per capita income levels in the South

are still well below those in EU Member States. Sea borders offer particular opportunities, while issues such as migration (both legal and illegal), organised crime, security issues, environmental challenges or economic growth and job creation are important challenges across the whole sea-basin.

3. Tourism Area Branding

Geographic locations, like products and people, can also be branded. In this case, the power of branding is in making people aware of the location and then linking desirable associations. Increasing mobility of both people and business and growth in the tourism industry have contributed to the rise of place marketing (Keller 2003). It is in the context of tourism that a geographic location is (or includes) a destination brand. A destination brand is defined as a 'name, symbol, logo, word or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of destination experience' (Kerr 2006, 277). The product of tourism, more complex than most products, is an experience rather than a tangible good (Gartner 1986, 643). According to Baker and Cameron, the effect of globalization has been that the place marketing (of a country, region, city) represents a very important strategic process, because of the existence of the competition between many destinations that wish to attract investors and visitors. Destination branding has a significant importance nowadays, because there is a need for a particular destination (a region, country, city) to be positioned in buyers' and stakeholders' awareness (Baker and Cameron 2008, 88). The author identifies a problem concerning destination branding. It refers to a claim that the same destination product can be Tourism Branding Strategy of the Mediterranean Region perceived differently depending on target groups (Hankinson 2005, 12). The aim of this work is to define: (1) what are the main

attributes of a brand image of the Mediterranean region that are important for the younger population (from 18 to 30 years old), as well as (2) what are the differences between the examinees according to the criteria of choosing a destination depending on the country they are living in, age, gender, employment, marital status and frequency of traveling, and (3) what ways of communication regarding the tourism offer are the most preferred by people from 18 to 30 years old?

4. Description and objectives of the project REGLPORTS

Current situation in the sector

The Adriatic Sea is characterized by a unique coastal environment with significant potential for tourism development. However, this potential is not fully exploited, while tourist activities are mainly focused on a seasonal “sun, sea and sand” approach. Nevertheless, there are alternative forms of tourism which could prolong the tourist season, tap new markets and overall, provide the essential conditions for regional economic growth. Nautical Tourism (NT) is a dynamically expanded form of tourism, consisting an industry of high added value with strong clientele growth tendencies in the Adriatic Sea. In general, NT is seasonal, however, if combined properly with other mild tourism activities it may be prolonged with profound positive impact to local economies. Despite its high potential, NT is not sufficiently developed in the intervention area and its connection with the assets of the hinterland is insufficient. Hence, the overall objective of the Project is to develop a common model for the smart and sustainable NT management through integrated development plans. REGLPORTS aims to provide a holistic approach by (a) connecting the coastal areas with the rich inland’s assets, (b) emerging and promoting the interconnected areas (Area Brand, Thematic Routes), and (c) upgrading tourism supporting services and products.

The envisaged plan will constitute an innovative approach in tourism industry, which cannot be successfully tackled by individual national strategies. The Project will increase tourism population, regional economic growth and therefore contribute significantly to the accomplishment of Programme's result indicators. REGLPORIS foresees to facilitate the sustainable NT management, considering as a top priority the environmental sustainability.

The anticipated impact will substantially benefit stakeholders in the intervention area, including local communities, national and/or regional organizations and tourism related businesses. Creation of networking among cultural and historical heritage and natural landscapes.

REGLPORIS main specific objectives are:

The overall objective of the Project is the development of common models and plans for the enhancement of NT in the intervention area. The envisaged plans, are expected to improve smart and sustainable economic development and significantly boost the attractiveness of natural and cultural assets which are related to REGLPORIS ports; hence directly impacting the fulfilment of Programme's Specific Objective (SO 2.1). Within this in mind, the main objectives include (a) the capitalization of inland's natural and cultural assets which could lead to diversified tourism products and services, (b) the preservation of environmental sustainability and, (c) the effective use of smart ICT tools that will substantially upgrade the existing tourism facilities and services. The main expected Outputs include: a) operational CBC nautical tourism development plan b) pollution monitoring installations c) operational platform with common tourism services d) reglports centers established e) tools for tourism

skills upgrading Overall, the main expected results are envisaged to facilitate smart and sustainable tourism management, thus increase tourism population, boost financial growth and reduce unemployment at local/regional scale. The above results will be achieved without jeopardizing environmental sustainability; hence, preservation of natural resources and environmental protection of natural habitats is a key prerequisite for the Project's success and one of the main expected results. In addition, REGLPORTS foresees to increase the use of ICT technologies and enhance the "low-tech" profile of the CB region, support the intervention area in successfully competing with other Mediterranean tourist destinations and, ultimately interconnect coastal with inland areas and fully valorise their unexploited potential.

2. Duties of an Area Promotion Strategy

Marketing plan is considered as a foreshadowing of brand promotion strategy. A marketing strategy should be developed for the promotion and branding of Reglports network functioning as a system which incorporate and share the common value of common stakeholders and actors. From the development perspective it is important to highlight that REGLPORTS aims to provide a holistic approach by (a) connecting the coastal areas with the rich inland's assets, (b) emerging and promoting the interconnected areas (Area Brand, Thematic Routes), and (c) upgrading tourism supporting services and products.

Duties for a brand promotion strategy are:

- *Typology of Reglports Model:* branding it as a product, service, and model of business, new way of management, and a model of entrepreneurial efforts based on networking and partnership. Reglports is a platform, networking, and a structure that aims to achieve some goals at the private public management levels, to realize some benefits for all actors involved and to optimize the use of this brand from targeted markets. Because branding and marketing strategies relate and refer in particular to the following factors, it is important to analyze in advance whether the brand marketing strategy refers to: products, process, business model, new management, a new concept of entrepreneurship.
- In parallel, it aims to link the selected ports with alternative tourism activities related to inland's natural and cultural assets, including areas of high aesthetical and ecological value, sports and leisure activities, archaeological sites and historical monuments, as well as multiple thematic destinations focused on gastronomy, religion and culture.

- As a result, the Project will develop a common integrated tourism development plan encompassing attractive tourism packages, through a sustainable approach with respect to the natural and anthropogenic environment. An integral part of this approach, is the upgrade of services through the utilization of new technologies which are expected to substantially increase tourism share in the selected areas (coastal and adjacent inland).
 - The envisaged technological advancements include an Informative Destination System (IDS), able to deliver critical information about the selected REGLPORTS ports (e.g. facilities, weather conditions, etc) & an on-line booking system for ships (mooring position, availability, cost, etc) in order to facilitate berthing. In addition, two selected pilot ports will be equipped with a Port Monitoring System (PMS) that will monitor in real-time the quality status of seawater, thus securing environmental sustainability.
 - Finally, the Project foresees the development of an intelligent mobile app (i-Tourist Guide) for trip planning within the REGLPORTS thematic routes (ports and inland) based on user-defined criteria. The Project targets the strong clientele of Nautical tourism; however, yet the overall REGLPORTS approach is far more holistic and is not limited strictly to Nautical tourism activities but further encompasses thematic destinations linked with inland's natural and cultural assets.
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- a) Main target audience
 - b) Positioning and launching the product Reglports
 - c) Growth strategies of business

- d) Branding product;
- e) Open Tourism as a niche product.

□ *Identified Brand Value Construction Process: Reglports Value Proposed.* A combined of some marketing activities, brand images, capital of branding with economic value will be follow. Value proposed that underline the Reglports is part of this concept. Also, the positioning of the Area brand is done in particular to expand the proposed value.

3. A Marketing Plan and Promotion Strategy

A marketing strategy should be developed for the promotion and branding of Reglports area, functioning as a system which incorporate and share the common value of common stakeholders and actors, resulting in a value proposed for all targets.

From the development perspective it is important to highlight that the project's approach is innovative and original in line with the projects's main outcomes as it brings together 5 pioneering elements in terms of:

- a) OPERATIONAL CBC NAUTICAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN
- b) POLLUTION MONITORING INSTALLATIONS
- c) OPERATIONAL PLATFORM WITH COMMON TOURISM SERVICES
- d) REGLPORTS CENTERS ESTABLISHED
- e) TOOLS FOR TOURISM SKILLS UPGRADING

Based on this general idea, the elements that necessary should be included in the marketing plan and/or strategy, and that should be brand as a whole are:

- Community
- Territory
- Tourist (report with the local people, habitats, values, etc.)
- Local governance
- Partnership

- Networking.

4. A rigorous «change agenda»

In order to achieve the goals set, we should previously consider a number of key issues related both to the increase in the value of the supply and to marketing management, and apply a stringent change agenda in each case. The plan identifies ten key issues that must be addressed, in four different lines of work:

a. Value design

1. Reglports area brand. How can we boost the value of the Reglports brand? We must abandon the current confusing network of destination and product brands and establish a consistent architecture of brands under the umbrella of a powerful Reglports brand.
2. Differentiated offer. How can we support Reglports's tourism offer and win market share by offering greater differentiation? We need to steer away from our current undifferentiated commodities offer (easily replaceable by other destinations) towards a more differentiated portfolio of offers in a state of constant innovation.
3. Services to tourists. How can more value be brought to tourists during the entire cycle of their travels, both online and offline? We would do well to provide services before, during and after the trip, integrated in a single online point of access, instead of offering only basic services during the trip.

b. Communication of value

4. Communication. How can we leverage online or mobile media to achieve a more efficient and segmented communication? The current communication strategy is scattered and mostly uses traditional tools. We must switch to a 360°, eminently emotional communication that uses innovative tools.

c. Value selling

5. Selling system. How can the Catalan tourism offer be made easily accessible to consumers? The Catalan offer must be available 100% online, and the offer currently online should be improved in terms of quality and accessibility.

6. Business development. How can we determine the right online intermediation and increase turnover for the Reglports brand? We need to go from a sales model aimed mainly at mass customers to another one geared toward a mix of mass and selective customers.

7. Loyalty. How can we build relationships with customers to encourage them to recommend and come back to Reglports? Our current marketing is based on customer acquisition and must evolve into an optimal acquisition/retention relationship.

d. Marketing management

8. Intelligence. How can we identify the best business opportunities and monitor Reglports area's tourism development? Marketing decisions must be based on "scientific" parameters and not only on opinions.

9. Industry services. How can we become a leader in tourism marketing for the sector and boost competitiveness? The Catalan Tourism Board, which currently provides basic

services to part of the Catalan tourism sector, has to become the tourism marketing benchmark for the entire industry.

10. Cooperation and coordination. How can we optimize the results of Reglports tourism marketing through better public and public-private cooperation and coordination? Low participation and coordination within the industry has to give way to an optimal model of co-management and co-financing of Reglports's tourism marketing

Duties for a marketing plan

The services under this assignment include the following key duties:

1. Conduct *market research* and *market segmentation* in order to identify key markets and most effective market outreach strategies. A marketing plan will be based on a market research where the needs for such platforms (as Reglports) are necessary and missing;;
2. Develop *marketing plan* for selected key markets identifying major promotional and marketing campaigns and events;
3. Develop *full framework* for use of Reglports brand including label use, management, verification;
4. Facilitate full *participatory consultations* with key stakeholders for development of the marketing strategy and plan, and brand development;
5. Identify *core management requirements* for long-term Reglports brand management in marketing delivery and ensure close coordination with team leading the management and business model development effort.

Why branding is important in marketing

Branding is a vital activity for network and models like Reglports because:

- Distinguish one company's products or offer to the customer from another;

- Brands express the unity of a company's value proposition by creating a relationship with the customer or customer;
- The ability of brands to create recognition, the success of a brand can be defined as the degree of brand recognition;
- Brands can build and enhance trust, and reduce the perception of risk associated with potential cognitive dissonance.
- Another reason for the importance of the brand can be found in the ability of brands to create recognition and consequently, the success of a brand can be defined as the degree of brand recognition. Brand recognition occurs when consumers recognize the brand and its qualities, and consumers tend to remember those with high recognition more easily.

Another factor of brand successes is the way a **brand communicates**. In order to be successful, the Reglports brand must be able to express its identity by examining the brand as a product, an organization, a person and a symbol. The purpose for these levels of scrutiny is justified by helping "the strategy consider different elements and models of brands that can help clarify,

enrich and differentiate identity," but not all brand identities should use all or even some of these perspectives. So, at the end, regard to specifics of Reglports area Branding, we must underline and conclude that:

- The Reglports brand is an important communication tool between organizations to build strong customer relationships;
- The Reglports brand creates meaning and place in the minds of stakeholders as they cope with the physical properties of the products;
- The mission statement clearly states the purpose of the Reglports network;
- The most important success factor is the gathering, analysis and use of marketing information.

Marketing plan as a foreshadowing of brand promotion strategy

A marketing study will precede establishment of an Reglports as a common brand, to make destinations distinctive and memorable in relation to others. As stakeholders do not have a CB tourism management cooperation yet, the common identity cannot be derived by how visitors perceive all these areas as a whole. Moreover, the brand can not be linked to specific theme or cultural/natural assets.

Brand development will be very delicate as it has to valorize all destinations and be linked to of Reglports shared approach. It will be important to clarify who will be the main potential visitors, in order to meet the needs and tastes. The brand characteristics will be balance and

flexible in order to respond to different targets. Once the brand will be defined (name, logo, coordinated image), a promotion strategy will be developed to spread it at local, regional, national and transnational level through networking, social media and marketing campaigns, presentation in tourist events and fairs, collaboration with tour operators, etc. It will be important to promote the brand among different stakeholders in various economic, political and community sectors. The marketing strategy will exploit the economies of scale linked to cross-border cooperation. In line with the concept of Reglports, local communities will be informed and involved in the promotion of the brand as an element favoring the general economic and social growth of the area.

Branding of Reglports and identify a special brand in whole marketing concept of OT will have the following impact:

- Crucial role in gaining customer attention;
- Not just a logo to stand out from the competition;
- Powerful communication tool to build customer relationships;

- Communicate the quality of a product to consumers;
- Communicate the organization's philosophy, mission and vision.

Internal definition of brand for Reglports focuses on functional elements and physical differentiation: logotype, name, font, color, shapes, signs, and symbols. Combining marketing with design allows the Open Tourism network to express its personality through the product or service. This way the differentiation function is realized.

The strategy concern the promotion of the brand and of its products and services through local, regional, national and transnational networking and promotion through the brand social media, marketing campaigns, events, fairs, collaboration with tour operators, etc. and the idea is that part of this brand strategy is to promote the main growth strategies for products/services/networks that are part of Reglports, as a whole entrepreneurial tourism model. The typology of OT should be considered as a powerful concept within a brand name; which means that understanding and considering Reglports Brand means to analyze the different way of considering, treating and profiting by branding. In order to have impact is necessary to measure it. The impact of the brand will be monitored with brand-tracking surveys, consumer researches, visitor satisfaction surveys and benchmarking surveys in the short, medium and long run. This will allow to adopt corrective measures if necessary.

4. Typology of Reglports as new business/products

Some goals and objectives

REGLPORIS' main results are anticipated to enhance smart and sustainable tourism management in the intervention area, through the development of NT. The foreseen development plan will constitute a holistic framework for tourism development in the entire intervention area; however, it will be constituted by customized individual plans that will embrace the specific territorial characteristics, demands and stresses of the involved regions (ports and related inland). It is evident that the Project's main results including all the available studies, models, tools (IDS, PMS, web-based GIS) and applications, could be easily adopted and capitalized on by the local/regional/national stakeholders and public authorities, during and after the end of the Project (through Centers and Networks); hence, they significantly contribute to the achievement of the Result Indicator 2.1.

Reglports brand area goals and objectives:

- Common CB Nautical Tourism development plan;
- Use of smart ICT tools and upgrade of tourism services;
- Preservation of environmental sustainability;
- To serve as a powerful marketing element for the entire network;
- To be recognized internationally.

Reglports is a platform, networking, and a structure that aims to achieve some goals at the private public management levels, to realize some benefits for all actors involved and to optimize the use of this brand from targeted markets. Because branding and marketing

strategies relate and refer in particular to the following factors, it is important to analyze in advance whether the brand marketing strategy refers to:

- The products
- The process
- The business model
- The new management
- A new concept of entrepreneurship.

Brand promotion strategy is a plan of action and arguments where all the elements and details are analyzed. So, a deeper understanding of Open Tourism Branding will include firstly, the necessity of a deeper understanding of Open Tourism as a product, a new business model, a form of smart management or a process. Analyzed of all viewpoint of Open Tourism will underline the main dimensions which will clearly specify the proposed value of Open Tourism in order to better develop and manage the launching, positioning and segmenting process of open tourism branding.

6. Brand promotion strategy as part of a Marketing Plan for Reglports

Marketing and Branding Strategies for New Businesses

Brand promotion Strategy is part of Marketing of Reglports product. So, considering open tourism as a product means that all the necessary elements of this products should be consider. Branding elements and consideration are part of marketing of open tourism, which means that a detailed and careful marketing plan will follow up with a necessity to underline a brand promotion strategy, which at the end with serve as a guide to implementing all the

rules and criteria in developing and using the brand of Reglports and its benefits from marketing.

The benefits of branding in perceiving a new value for the product Reglports. As we analyze Reglports as a synergy of many actors and factors united in a common network, it is important to note that brand definition for this product is a process that ultimately adds value not only to this product port all network, community and public private partnership that has supported it.

A marketing plan is not enough for Reglports: multiple marketing plans are needed

This is addressed by the following: The established REGLPORIS Centers (located in 3 pilot ports in Italy, Albania and Montenegro) will secure the successful implementation of the developed plans, the smooth operation of the ICT tools, the maintenance and operation of the monitoring system and, the provision of information and guidance to tourists and tourism related actors. The Centers will be hosted on Partners' existing infrastructures, supported by their staff and equipped by the Project. Partners associated with the establishment and operation of the Centers, are committed to sustain the Centers' operation at least five years, beyond the Project's duration, by disposing all necessary resources (human and other). The IDS, PMS systems and the other ICT Tools (i-Tourist Guide, web-GIS), developed within the context of the Project, will be maintained and supported by the REGLPORIS Centers. The establishment of the REGLPORIS Network will generate ties, synergies and links amongst the involved parties and stakeholders, and is going to be a critical positive factor to the Project's sustainability. Project outputs will be open-access to all, even outside the Project's Partnership, including Public Services, Authorities, NGOs and citizens. Communication Activities will raise awareness of Organizations, Authorities, and the public, which in turn will enhance the Project's sustainability. Moreover, the Durability and Sustainability Report,

foreseen amongst the Project's Deliverables, will analyze conditions, and provide directions regarding the Project's sustainability

7. *Reglports area Branding Marketing Strategy*

Visit Reglports (VR) strategic approach will be grounded on two principles:

#1. Communications and messaging will hinge around Reglports's unique Brand Point of View on the world – the emotional truth that makes Reglports unique. VR's campaign will highlight what makes Reglports different – what it feels like to be in Reglports and what visitors will feel and experience while they are visiting and afterwards. The emotional truth we want to convey and what Reglports can uniquely deliver: “The Best Vacations Don't Just Relax You, They Revive You” This brand point of view will be at the crux of almost every piece of communication this year.

#2. Maximize the impact of every euro / dollar. VR is a smaller player, budget-wise, competing in a highly competitive space. We, therefore, need to adopt an operating principle of: FEWER, BIGGER, BETTER: We will ensure that we stretch our budget as much as possible by focusing on what will have the biggest impact on our business goals.

Primary Objective: Increase overnight bookings, the most efficient way to increase revenue for all VR constituents

Secondary Objective: Drive day visitors to convert to overnight

Visit Reglports Geographic Focus

In order to meet our objectives we need to shift priority of who we target, organizing around targeting consumers that have highest propensity to stay overnight in Reglports. Based on our analysis, we have developed the following target prioritization:

1. The Long Drive Market (specifically Montenegro – Albania coastline)
2. Sail markets – focus on key routes: Italian, Montenegrin, and Albanian ports
3. The Short Drive Market (specifically Italian ports, part of Reglports area)

Messaging Architecture

A key competitive advantage is the sheer variety of activities available to visitors of Reglports. To leverage this most effectively, we need to leverage an emotional truth about Reglports and use that as the umbrella platform/idea to both drive overall brand communication and provide context to pillar-specific (activity-specific) communication. Our emotional truth for Reglports: “The Best Vacations Revive You” This will be the backbone of the campaign and will act the strategic umbrella over all of the pillars / reasons-to-believe for Reglports. Point of Emotional Resonance: what unites all audiences; the emotional benefit of Reglports. Pillars: Outdoor & Recreation, Food, Arts & Culture, Wellnes

Marketing Channel Strategy

We plans to keep proven channels at the core of VR’s media, while adding experimentation as necessary.

Always on Paid Search: This is the bread and butter channel to meet our goal collecting lowest funnel users with the highest potential to convert to visiting Reglports.

Baseline Brand: Executed through display and retargeting, these will be hard hitting pieces of communication designed to drive conversion using messages around the Reglports experience and the emotional connection visitors can build with Reglports.

Pillar Focused: To drive conversion among those whose interests we can identify, we will deliver messages that align with said interests.

Incremental to Drive Opportunistic: This bucket will drive visitors by focusing on a specific event either planned (i.e. Wine Festival, Film Festival, Theatre events), or opportunistic (i.e. Record breaking rain in February, films that were filmed in the Reglports areas), or high-impact co-op opportunities.

Visit Reglports - Marketing Plan

Experimentation and Optimization Plan:

To help take a quantitative approach to outstanding questions and help provide focus throughout the year, we will employ best practice procedures for experimentation and optimization of messaging and media mix. That way, in this world of performance driven thinking and expansive measurement, we can have empirical evidence to steer our decision-making.

Website

Objective: Utilize a touristic Reglports website to convert the “Undecided Traveler” to choose Reglports above other destinations within the competitive set.

STRATEGIES:

- Utilize tools within the new site to continually provide strong visuals and authentic storytelling, inspiring travelers to select Reglports as their destination of choice.
- Highlight captivating, destination specific visuals so visitors get a true sense of the destination.

- Develop unique and compelling content that differentiates Reglports from other coastal cities.
- Create and leverage fresh itineraries on an ongoing basis as fuel for potential visitors to imagine what a day (or several days) of living “the Reglports life” would look and feel like.
- Routinely upload images to Reglports Snapshots to provide authentic views of Reglports area offerings.
- Create a minimum of 5 in-language itineraries for VR’s top non-English speaking International Markets.
- Create a robust SEO strategy to target and direct consumers to our website for those looking to decide on a vacation destination.

SUCCESS METRICS:

- Increased traffic from international markets.
- User engagement - including traffic to, average time on, and scroll depth to bottom of page on key pages and areas of the site.
- Ongoing monitoring and optimizing of site SEO & keywords for maximum performance across search engines.

Social Media

Objective 1: Extend visitor stay and convert day trippers into overnight visitors.

STRATEGIES:

- Independent of the brand campaign, Visit Reglports’s social media channels will have an increased focus on fly markets.
- Social channels will promote dedicated itineraries hosted on our website within the social content calendar to provide additional inspiration and ideas on all there is to do in Reglports, and that one day is not enough.

- Focus on an integrated approach that utilizes social media extensions dedicated to help amplify new ad campaign messaging.
- Social media campaign extensions will incorporate fly market cities and segments beyond geography to increase awareness.
- SUCCESS METRICS*:
 - Increased fan growth in Area Markets.
 - Increased fan growth in International Markets.
 - Increased traffic to booking site.
 - Additional success will be measured by number of impressions from social platforms utilized within the campaign.

Objective 2: Drive occupancy during need periods (November – March).

STRATEGIES:

- Create seasonally shifted content, advertising and promotional campaigns dedicated to increasing visitation during key need periods.
- Create “value for experience” messaging that targets the price conscious consumer.

For Reglports / Drive Markets

- Focus on local interest and events to attract drive market users to make a weekend trip to Reglports. For example, but not limited to: Reglports International Film Festival and Film Feast, concerts, other artistic events.
- Leverage Facebook events platform to promote local happenings and encourage attendance.
- Experiment with behaviorally segmented advertising to reach niche audiences such as:
 - o Users who are visiting Reglports area.
 - o Users who live in Reglports area and have birthdays or anniversaries.
 - o Empty nesters who may prefer to travel during the holidays.

o Users who live throughout Montenegro, Italy, Albania, but may be from, or attended school in Reglports.

- Identify key social media influencers within drive markets to extend campaign reach and amplify messaging.

SUCCESS METRICS:

- Creation of new content/platforms for real-time engagement to drive interest and awareness to target markets during need periods.
- Partnerships with influencers in key markets.
- Creation of custom content pieces to target niche audiences.
- Increased video views across all platforms.
- Additional success will be measured by number of impressions from social platforms utilized within the campaign

Pr & Communications

Department Overview The Public Relations & Communications creates demand for visitation through earned media coverage that excites and inspires travelers, while elevating brand awareness and enforcing key messages about the Adriatic Nautical tourism ports. It further supports all Visit Reglports platforms through communication and creative content development.

Generate increased press and public awareness of the Adriatic South Coast in targeted national, international (EU, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus) and regional markets. Increase the number of destination-specific stories in A-list travel, lifestyle and niche publications. Share compelling reasons for off-season and mid-week travel, as well as inducements for extending stays.

STRATEGIES:

- Procure a PR firm to assist with securing national press coverage and key projects.
- Develop new story pitches and thoughtful campaigns that differentiate the destination with angles that expressly support mid-week and off-season travel to all target segments and markets. Pitch a minimum of 15 key contacts a month.

- Press releases and assets:
 - o Write and distribute press releases on Visit Reglports promotions, including Film Feast, and timely, off-season story ideas.
 - o Write and distribute quarterly What's New media update of new and seasonal attractions.
 - o Update and maintain online Press Room, including press section of photo/video library, up-to-date news releases and destination fact sheets. Distribute original content and assets to communicate news and story ideas.

- Press trips:
 - o Host a minimum of 50 domestic and 30 international individual press trips, creating customized itineraries to showcase the destination.
 - o Produce a minimum of two group press trips in conjunction with local partners to showcase niche themes.
 - o Partner with existing tourism, established entities (such as the Agenzia Nazionale Turismo, Agjencia Kombetare e Rurizmit and the Montenegro Tours Agency) and other Reglports destinations to host domestic and international press trips.
- Leverage additional Visit Reglports domestic and international earned media opportunities, such as collaborative pitches and media events.
- Generate coverage that integrates Visit Reglports's marketing channels when possible:

o Encourage hosted journalists to cover their stay in real time on social media and use Visit Reglports's handles and hashtags.

SUCCESS METRICS:

- Track the volume of media coverage, audience reached and paid advertising equivalent value.
- Achieve a minimum of 650 placements, 375 million impressions and \$10 million in paid advertising equivalent (PAE).
- Track the pick-up of specific story idea themes, with a minimum of 25% of total coverage reflecting specific Visit Reglports pitches, top angles and promotional campaigns.

Travel Trade

Department Overview Travel Trade assists with the planning of individual and group trips to Reglports offering a variety of complimentary services. Travel agents, receptive tour operators and international tour operators look to the Travel Trade team to assist with FIT or group hotel leads, arranging customized excursions or itineraries, or simply making connections with attractions, restaurants, wineries, transportation and more.

Objective 1: Increase group tour and contracted leisure business opportunities for Reglports hotels and attractions in mid-week and November - March off-peak time periods.

STRATEGIES:

- Develop and execute a sales action plan concentrating on key domestic and international receptive operators, tour operators and travel agents selling California product. Key international markets are: UK, Canada, Germany, China and Australia.
- Educate prospective clients on Reglports product offerings available.
- Participate in marketing campaigns for specific to high producing travel trade companies.
- Work with travel trade companies to promote new product offerings/itineraries. SUCCESS

Metrics:

- Reported bookings increases from receptive operators
- Increased number of products offered by tour operators for Reglports
- 20,000 room nights generated annually

Objective 2: Extend visitor stays and convert day trip visitors to overnight.

Strategies:

- Explore a return visit booking promotion specific for Reglports cruise ship passengers.
- Partner with member hotels and attractions to offer a promotion for an additional night free or value add to extend stay.
- Provide incentive for operators and agents to increase number of bookings for Reglports product.

Success metrics:

- Tracking any new bookings tied to promotions

Objective 3: Expand the VR brand through relationship building and client engagement.

Strategies:

- Educate tour operators and travel agents through face-to-face opportunities to experience Reglports in-market and out of market in targeted areas.
- Host **educational familiarization (FAM)** tours for qualified clients.
- Conduct individualized site visits.
- Present and train on Reglports to travel trade companies' reservation and travel agent centers.
- Attend industry tradeshow like IPW and Go West Summit.

- Participate in sales missions in designated target markets.
- Serve as an expert resource for destination information, collateral and materials.
- Leverage exposure through strategic alliances with industry associations and key distribution channel partners.
- Collaborate with international agencies to educate and promote the Reglports brand to travel trade companies.

Success Metrics:

- 30 individualized site tours annually
- 25 group FAM trips annually