
An example of results capitalization in maritime passenger transport: the CAPTAIN project

The midterm event of the CAPTAIN project (acronym of *Capitalization of Transport models in Adriatic-Ionian Network for supporting EUSAIR development*) - which took place in Rijeka (Croatia) on 15 September 2016 - was an opportunity to recap the work progress on capitalization activity planned within the project itself.

CAPTAIN answers a common need of improving accessibility and mobility in the Adriatic-Ionian (AI) basin and its hinterland, through the development of sustainable, safe, cross-border (CB), integrated transport services, as well as the upgrading of infrastructure.

Such capitalization involves three different projects carried out thanks to the financial support of the European program Adriatic IPA CBC 2007-2013, of which the first one is believed to have a "strategic importance": EA SEA-WAY, ADRIMOB and AdriaticMos.

The specific objectives of CAPTAIN project concern a) the promotion of analyses and feasibility studies; b) the creation of synergies aimed at developing a wider network of players in the transport sector, in order to consolidate their entrepreneurial ability; c) the development and transfer of instruments, models, experiences and best practices implemented in several projects. Moreover, it was attached importance to a greater impact of the three capitalized projects on national and regional policies in the Adriatic-Ionian area, with a view to stimulate macro-regional strategies and guarantee coordinated interventions intended to overcome problems, bottlenecks and missing links, both for passenger and freight transport. Special attention should be given to forms of cooperation with existing European and multilateral organizations having similar or convergent targets, in order to avoid overlapping with bodies and authorities already involved in this sector, and find synergic complementarity with the so-called "Berlin Process", a diplomatic initiative linked to EU enlargement to Western Balkan States.

CAPTAIN project capitalization is significant because of combined efforts in supporting the EUSAIR strategy and its objectives related to *Connecting the region* (Pillar 2), in particular the topics of maritime transport (Topic 1) and intermodal connections to the hinterland (Topic 2).

Furthermore, time and place of the event (half September, in Croatia) are to be kept into due consideration, in the light of an imminent launch of the first public notice concerning the cross-border program Italy-Croatia, which envisages - among its interesting priority axes - great attention to those aspects connected with maritime transport and mobility.

This event offered an opportunity to outline three activities carried out by the CAPTAIN project, mostly highlighting a remarkable sustainable potential for specific outputs to be capitalized.

The propositional action that undoubtedly shows a very clear impact on a regional level - by involving all Adriatic-Ionian basin - is the creation of an **Adriatic-Ionian maritime passenger transport Observatory**, on the whole EA SEA-WAY partnership's initiative, which signed a cross-border agreement for its realization (May 2016). In the CAPTAIN project, it was therefore a matter of formalizing such institution (a procedure still in progress) through its legal structuring as a EEIG (European Economic Interest Grouping), believed to be the most flexible and straightforward type of entity.

The Observatory aims at improving mobility in the maritime Adriatic-Ionian area, thanks to the promotion of territorial and cross-border cooperation, as well as the development of a constructive dialogue among specific key-players and policy makers in the aforesaid area, putting forward specially devised proposals on legal and technical issues. Moreover, it is to be hoped that this Observatory could carry out its activity on the same wavelength as similar organizations in the Mediterranean area, with a view to develop and share mutual solutions to the problems faced.

In particular, the Observatory set itself some specific objectives - considered to be especially interesting by those operators involved - such as:

- promoting territorial and cross-border cooperation for an integrated and sustainable system of passenger mobility;
- promoting the Adriatic-Ionian basin as a unique Mediterranean area;
- influencing national and regional/local political environments that share collective interests, by proposing common solutions on specific topics, also by means of some "lobby activity";
- supporting policy makers in facing and solving legal issues, by favoring standardized administrative procedures;
- providing high-level expertise on topics related to the maritime transport of people;
- submitting statistics concerning the Adriatic-Ionian area;
- representing the center for collecting and spreading acquired experiences and best practices related to the transport of people and mobility in broad terms;
- proposing solutions to technical problems, thanks to scientific studies, training offer and shared expertise;
- monitoring and disseminating information on European public notices.

The above-mentioned Observatory - made up of a limited number of founding members, corresponding to the present CAPTAIN partnership - is to be necessarily boosted through a direct involvement of other territorial players/entities having interests and competence related to specific objectives, such as public authorities, academic and research environments, development agencies, port management and administration, local economic stakeholders, etc.

The activity concerning studies and implementation of maritime transport in the Adriatic-Ionian region is an important support for the Observatory. Such work - started within the EA SEA-WAY project by a large academic team from Western Balkans, analyzing the present situation in which both passenger ferries and freight transport ferries quantitatively decrease - aims at exploring a possible development of the area mobility through forecasting models: this can be done by identifying peculiarities and stimulating factors, proposing a series of actions intended to boost maritime transport, increasing efficiency and integration with other means of transport in favor of real intermodality, planning the use of resources, hierarchizing needs and rationalizing processes.

Finally, the CAPTAIN project takes an opportunity to highlight how - thanks to different planning activities - it is possible to concretely achieve mobility implementation in the Adriatic-Ionian basin, also through the upgrading of port infrastructure and facilities. The specific example presented is passenger terminal at the Port of Bar, in Montenegro, for which the combination of different planning interventions (ADRIMOB and EA SEA-WAY) - with relevant financing - contributed in a common and cohesive way to its development, both in structural terms (wharf enlargement), and as regards improvement and efficiency of ferries and services offered to travelers.