



RESTART MED!

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# **SUSTAINABLE TOURISM SUMMIT**

Scaling up climate-resilient sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean

June 5 & 6, 2023  
Tunisia

**Concept Note**





**RESTART MED!** is a capitalisation project co-funded under the EU's ENI CBC MED programme. Its aim is to build on experiences and practices of previous international cooperation projects to further boost sustainability in tourism services. It aims to restart and revitalize tourism in the entire Mediterranean region - north and south shore - after the COVID19- pandemic, by promoting visibility initiatives and knowledge exchange within the community of sustainable tourism practitioners.

The Tunisia summit "Scaling up climate-resilient sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean" is organised by WWF North Africa and is an integral part of networking and community building component of RESTART MED! project and builds upon the continuity of the summit that took place in Italy in September 2022 and it is going to contribute to capitalise on the conclusions and recommendations that emerged from the previous summit.

## I. CONTEXT :

The international scientific community widely agrees that we are facing unprecedented environmental challenges that currently affect the planet, and which are expected to increase in the coming decades. In this context, promoting sustainable development has become more than a goal; it's a necessity.

Climate change is partly due to the production of greenhouse gases (GHG) by industrial activities of human origin, such as the combustion of hydrocarbons and deforestation. An increase in the concentration of these gases in the atmosphere prevents part of the heat provided by solar radiation from returning to space, thus increasing the temperature of the earth's surface. This accelerated warming has resulted in various climatic changes, which are expected to have far-reaching consequences on countries worldwide. As such, there is an urgent need to address climate change and mitigate its impacts.

The Mediterranean region is at risk of losing its unique natural and cultural heritage due to the impacts of climate change-

related events including sea level rise, forest fires, floods, extreme weather events, coral bleaching, droughts, dwindling drinking water resources, and soil salinization. The impacts weaken the ecosystems present, whereas these often constitute territories attractions for economic activities such as sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism heavily relies on the provision of essential services by continental and coastal ecosystems. These services include the biological and ecological support of forest and coastal landscapes, as well as the associated plant and animal species that enchant nature enthusiasts. Without these ecosystems, the sustainable tourism offer would be significantly impacted, as they provide a vital foundation for the sector.

At the same time, climate change has exacerbated the tourism paradox. Sustainable tourism is inherently linked to natural and cultural ecosystems but if it is misunderstood and implemented improperly it could also be a source of degradation of natural resources, thereby limiting the resilience of natural ecosystems to

changes in their environment and landscape.

Government, private and civil society actors will have to implement effective measures to enable the sustainable tourism industry to adapt to climate change. Additionally, legislative measures must be enforced to oversee sustainable tourism development and ensure the conservation of fragile ecosystems and landscapes.

The adaptations necessary for sustainable tourism to mitigate the effects of climate change can be categorised into various measures:

**Technological Adaptations:** include changes to physical infrastructure, supplies such as water, materials, and foodstuffs, among others.

**Behavioural Adaptations:** refers to changes in the habits and behaviours of tourists, the tourism industry, and local communities.

**Education-related adaptations:** Focuses on initiatives aimed at raising public awareness and educating communities, businesses, and governments on the impacts of climate change and the behaviours necessary to promote adaptation.

**Business management adaptations** involves changes made by tourism operators and managers to cope with climatic hazards.

**Policy adaptation measures relates** to changes made in government strategies and plans as well as in the establishment of regulatory frameworks.

## II. SUMMIT GOAL and OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of this summit is to evaluate the feasibility of implementing effective measures for monitoring and adapting to the impacts of climate change, both on the physical composition and ecological functions of ecosystems and landscapes. The summit will contribute to gain a deeper understanding of the threats faced by sustainable tourism development and ecosystem conservation, and to facilitate the integration of local communities into the decision-making and adaptation process. By doing so, we can improve the resilience of these ecosystems and ensure their long-term survival.

The Summit aims to contribute to the positioning of Mediterranean countries in the resilient sustainable tourism industry as a place of biodiverse, committed to the protection of the environment in the face of climate change while guaranteeing a competitive tourist offer on the world market. Recalling that the first summit on sustainable tourism organised during the month of September 2022 in Italy, focused on political prospects, and with the projection that the third event (Lebanon, 2023) will focus on commercial prospects, this summit will have a particular focus on the environmental aspects related to sustainable tourism and their links with national and regional strategies as well as entrepreneurship.

More specifically, this summit will have the following objectives:

- Raise awareness among public authorities and policymakers by promoting sustainable tourism practices and supporting their integration into policies.
- Unite sustainable tourism stakeholders around national and regional strategies on resilience and commitment to environmental



protection in the face of climate change.

- Integrate climate change adaptation into related policies, plans and processes.
- Promote climate-resilient mechanisms on sustainable tourism while emphasising the importance of networking and adopting a focus on sustainable and equitable social, environmental, and economic experiences.
- Promote the dissemination and implementation of best practices and results in sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean region.
- Identify and analyse the obstacles to the development of sustainable and resilient tourism in the Mediterranean.

### III. TARGET AUDIENCE

The summit is open to the participation of Mediterranean countries as well as partners who would be interested in sustainable tourism and mitigation strategies of climate change in sustainable tourism.

- representatives of local, regional and national public authorities
- destination managers
- academics, researchers, activists, and other civil society representatives
- community representatives of tourism locations
- tourism operators and entrepreneurs

The participation of young people such as students and activists in sustainability and tourism-related fields is strongly encouraged.

### IV. EXPECTED RESULTS

The expected results of the meeting are as follows:

- A reference note on good sustainable tourism practices to be undertaken for better management and presentation of sustainable tourism destinations in the Mediterranean in the face of the impacts of climate change.
- A mechanism that federates to the reference note.

### V. MAIN THEMES

The main themes that will be covered where participants will be offered a space for debate and interactions are:

#### **Theme 1. Paving the Way for Sustainable Tourism: Balancing Policy, Regulation, and Planning for Long-Term Sustainability.**

This theme will be explored through 2 panels. The first panel will consist of national and international experts and institutional professionals who will present the strategic aspects of sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean. This will be followed by two case studies on the impact of climate change and soil degradation on tourism, specifically in Tunisia and Lebanon.

#### **Theme 2. Measuring and Mitigating the Environmental Impacts of Tourism in Mediterranean Destinations.**

In the afternoon, experts will present methods for measuring the impact of climate change and provide recommendations for adapting tourism in the Mediterranean to climate change.

#### **Theme 3. Strategic process and recommendations for adaptation to climate change in the Mediterranean.**

This topic will be addressed through the organization of 3 workshops. The opening of each workshop will be ensured by the intervention of specialists. These workshops cover 3 main sub-themes:

##### **•Workshop 1:**

Accelerating climate change adaptation by regulations and standards. The debate will focus on standards, certifications, legislation and new incentives for more sustainable and eco-friendly leisure, tourism, and accommodation structures.

##### **•Workshop 2:**

Harnessing Innovation and Technology in the hospitality and tourism industry for Climate Change Adaptation. The debate will focus on innovative actions, technologies and organisational models that can help the tourism industry become more sustainable for climate change adaptation.

##### **•Workshop 3:**

Empowering territories for Climate Change Adaptation in the

Mediterranean: A sustainable Tourism Approach. The role of territories is becoming necessary in strategic decision-making in the tourism sector. It is therefore necessary to empower territorial managers with relevant and effective tools to adapt tourism activities to climate change and implement sustainable tourism development.





