

PP6 - MUNICIPALITY OF ALBENGA LOCAL VISION STATEMENT

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1. Foreword

The participation in the *NewPilgrimAge - 21th Century Reinterpretation of the St. Martin Related Shared Values and Cultural Heritage as a new Driver for Community-Sourced Hospitality Project*, approved and co-funded within the framework of the Interreg Central Europe Programme, provides the City of Albenga with an interesting opportunity for undertaking a transnational cooperation path which will result in a mid- and long-term strategy aimed at local development. The strategy, based on Saint Martin's values (inclusion, sharing, hospitality), will be able to increase the active participation of the local community and to propose a sustainable model for social and economic growth.

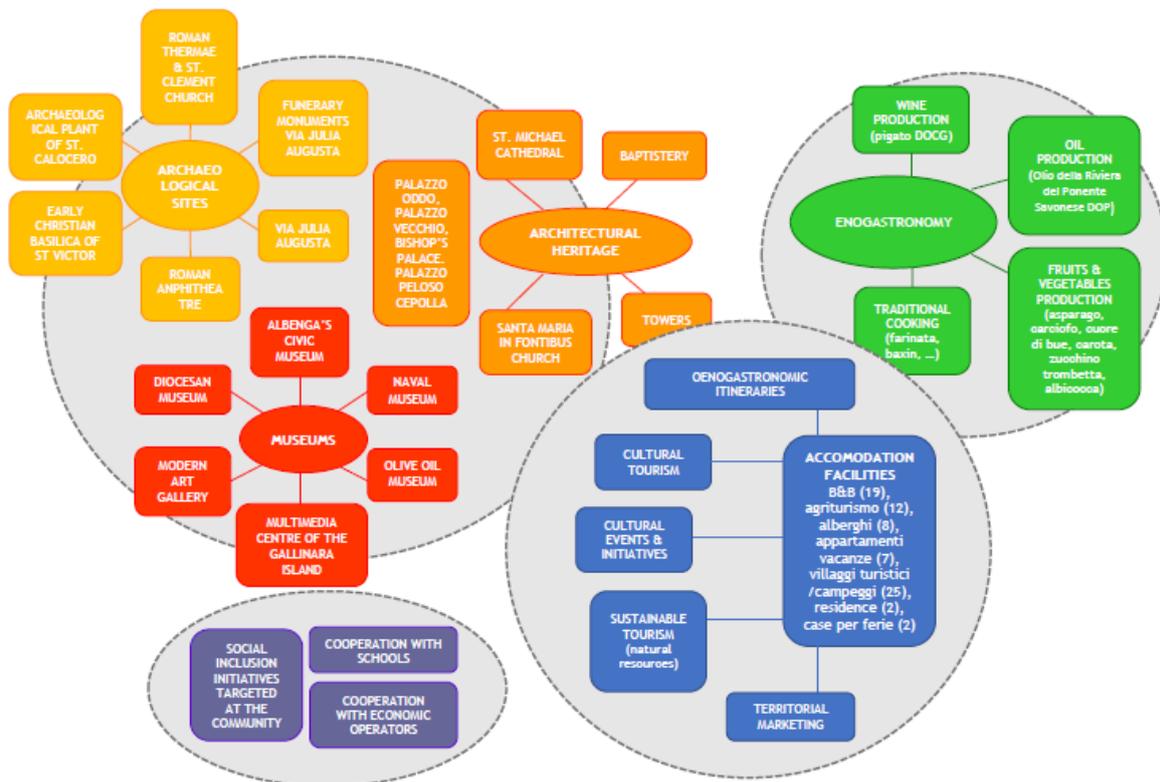
Within the framework of the activities to be implemented during project lifetime, particular relevance has the participative planning process involving local stakeholders in a co-decision process focusing on the objectives, the intervention domains and the actions to be implemented for paving the way to a shared strategy, which will be sustainable beyond the funding period.

The Local Vision was developed following the methodological guidelines agreed by transnational partners, and it took into account the experience and good practices in the field shared by project partners. The role of the project team, assisted by the Change Driver, was the one of supporting the local community in the identification, and subsequent analysis, of the overall strategy to be adopted, and in the selection of the actions to be implemented. On its side, the local authority (Municipality of Albenga) signified its full availability in supporting the implementation of the community-based strategy both in relation to the actions which are feasible in the short-term and the mid/long-term strategy which implies the activation of ad hoc policies and strategic actions.



2. The Starting Point: A State-of-the-Art Analysis

The starting point for reflecting on the Local Vision was the analysis of the resources available on the territory and that can form a system, thus allowing synergic and strategic actions aimed at a sustainable local development (please, make reference to the scheme below).



Albenga, for sure, represents an important community in the Western area of the Liguria region, with an economy mainly centred on agriculture (fruit and high-quality vegetables) and floricultural trade, but it also possesses a huge cultural and artistic heritage. In addition to this, the particularly mild weather allows to enjoy the natural resources all year round, with a hinterland that can easily support the development of sustainable and non-seasonal tourism.

From the analysis undertaken by the stakeholders, some vital main components emerged which will inform the sustainable local strategy shaped around Saint Martin's values and heritage. As shown in the previous scheme, four are the elements constituting the starting point for developing actions able to engage the local community in a development process, both under a social and an economical point of view, which has the potential of enhancing social regeneration (active engagement and empowerment of the local community) and local development. The four elements can be defined as follows:

- The 'museum system' and the architectural and cultural heritage
- The typical productions (agriculture/floriculture) and enogastronomy
- The bent for tourism (e.g. hospitality, events, ...)



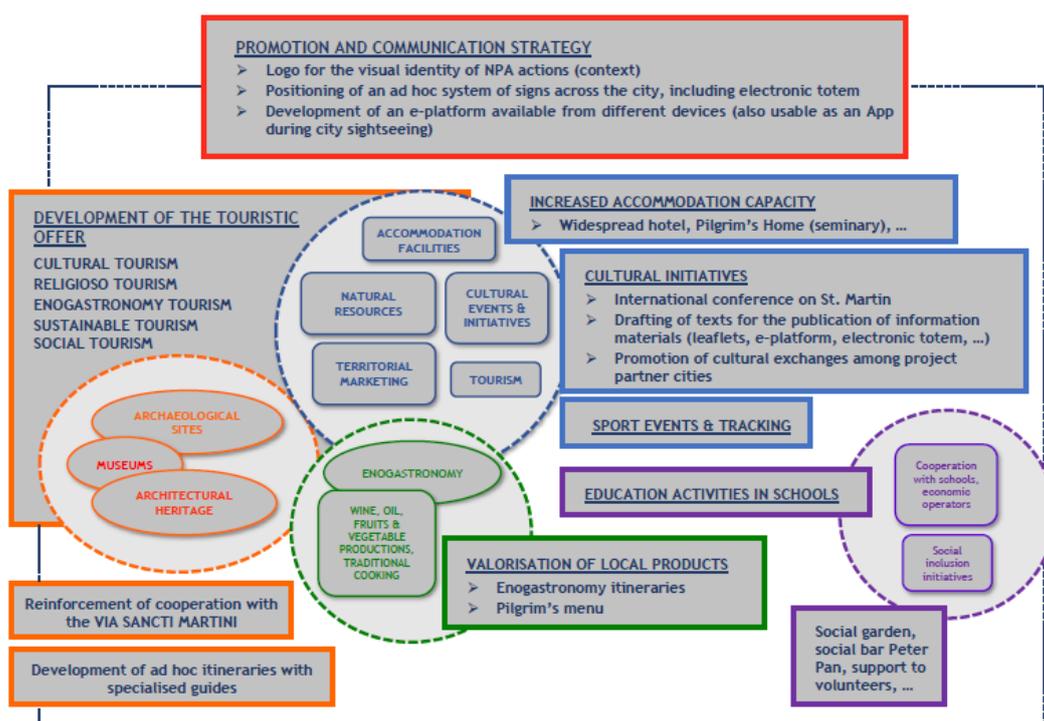
- The social inclusion initiatives, including local community engagement and empowerment.

Starting from these four elements, which are synergic but not yet exploited in a strategic way, the Local Vision developed by the Local Stakeholder Platform foresees a number of actions to be implemented in the fields of tourism, of the promotion of the territory and its high quality products, of the valorisation of the architectural and cultural heritage, and of social inclusion.

3. The Local Vision

The Local Vision is firstly focused on Saint Martin’s spiritual values and his presence on the Albenga’s territory. Even though no major traces of his presence are nowadays visible in the local architectural and artistic heritage, the period he spent on the Gallinara Island must be considered as an element able to support a sustainable local development, both under a social and economic point of view. The values handed out by Saint Martin (inclusion, sharing, and hospitality) inform the entire strategy, and his presence in Albenga must be used as an attractive element for further developing the touristic offer and enhancing the valorisation of the cultural and architectural heritage of Albenga.

All the actions included in the strategy envisage a social and economic impact (direct or indirect) on the local community, and are aimed at reinforcing the cooperation and active engagement of the local community (active citizenship) in a development strategy that, starting from short-term initiatives, will result in synergic policies to be implemented in the mid- and long-term. As shown in the scheme below, starting from the analysis of existing resources, the Local Stakeholder Platform identified the main areas of intervention.





Communication & Promotion

<p>Short-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development and implementation of communication strategy able to promote and disseminate the NPA Project’s objectives in a way that reinforces the local community engagement. Once the Local Vision will be finalised, for instance, a public event will be organised in order to share the strategy with the general public (all citizens). [<i>involved actors: stakeholders, local administration</i>] ➤ Development of a logo able to identify Albenga with Saint Martin and his heritage. The logo must provide a visual identity to all actions to be implemented. The same logo could have different colours depending on the thematic area covered by the actions, e.g. tourism, cultural initiatives, enogastronomy paths, etc. For the logo invention, an idea contest can be launched; two possible contests are proposed. The first option is the one of launching the competition among local secondary school and vocational centre students, the second one is to launch an international competition where participants should be invited to create a logo by taking the Saint Martin’s values as the inspiring element (guidelines to this aim must be developed) [<i>involved actors: local administration, panel of experts including representatives of the stakeholders, contest participants</i>]
<p>Mid-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of an ICT-based platform accessible from different devices and whose contents could be also available through an App to be used during the city sightseeing [<i>involved actors: local administration, experts of local history, archaeologists, museum directors, etc.</i>] ➤ Positioning of electronic totems across the city with information on the cultural heritage, itineraries, museums, events, typical productions, etc. [<i>involved actors: local administration</i>]
<p>Long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of an overarching strategy able to create synergic links among all the initiatives aimed at the touristic promotion of the city [<i>actors involved: local administration, social partners, other stakeholders, etc.</i>]



Development of the touristic offer

<p>Short-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of a brand linked to Saint Martin (<i>‘Albenga for Saint Martin’</i>) able to favour synergies with other cities involved in the NPA Project and the engagement of other local communities in common projects and initiatives [<i>involved actors: local administration, stakeholders, project partner cities</i>] ➤ Organisation of events focusing on Saint Martin and his legacy, as for example <i>‘Saint Martin’s Week’</i> (to be organised in the month of November), thematic festivals, etc. [<i>involved actors: local administration, stakeholders, cultural associations, theatre’s schools, economic operators, etc.</i>] ➤ Organisation of an international conference focusing on Saint Martin representing the final step of an historical research path aimed at documenting the presence of Saint Martin in the Albenga’s territory. This initiative is considered an essential element for initiating a strong cooperation with the Via Sancti Martini’s cultural centres that, for the time being, does not include actively the city of Albenga [<i>involved actors: local administration, Istituto Internazionale di Studi Liguri, other cultural associations</i>]
<p>Mid-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promotion of the local productions of excellence and of the local oenogastronomy aimed at developing oenogastronomy itineraries with specialised guides [<i>involved actors: local administration, producers’ associations, social partners, wine and olive oil producers, regional wine cellars, restaurateurs, etc.</i>] ➤ Development of tourist strategies based on the territory’s peculiarities, with particular regard to sustainable tourism and the enjoyment of natural resources (pathways’ system, open air sport, environment-linked paths), including the availability of specialised guides. This typology of action can be easily extended to the nearer hinterland [<i>involved actors: local administration, producers’ associations, sport associations, etc.</i>] ➤ Organisation of inclusive sport events
<p>Long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of the accommodation offer, for instance the <i>‘albergo diffuso’</i> (type of hotel with a central reception area and rooms in buildings scattered around a town) aimed at incrementing the hospitality capacity [<i>involved actors: local administration, hotelkeepers’ associations, camping associations, B&B keepers, etc.</i>] ➤ Launch of institutional discussions between the Municipality of Albenga and the Gallinara Island’s Property in order to make it possible to visit the island [<i>involved actors: local administration, Gallinara Island’ Property</i>]



Cultural Tourism	
Short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of ad hoc tourist services (itineraries, museums' card, cultural events, etc.) to be promoted through a specific system of signs to be installed in the historical centre and electronic totem scattered around the town [<i>involved actors: local administration, cultural associations, Istituto Internazionale Studi Liguri, museum directors, etc.</i>] ➤ Initiatives aimed at promoting folklore and the local traditions linked to Saint Martin (if any) [<i>involved actors: local administration, cultural associations</i>] ➤ Drafting of texts, based on recognised historic sources, to be used for developing information materials (brochures, texts to be published on the electronic platform, etc.) [<i>involved actors: Istituto Internazionale Studi Liguri, cultural associations</i>]
Mid-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strategic programme for the development of cultural tourism through the identification of itineraries able to valorise the artistic, architectural, historic and archaeological heritage of Albenga [<i>involved actors: local administration, cultural associations, Istituto Internazionale Studi Liguri, museum directors, social partners, etc.</i>] ➤ Promotion and enjoyment of the artistic, architectural, historic and archaeological heritage through the use of new technologies [<i>involved actors: local administration, cultural associations, Istituto Internazionale Studi Liguri, museum directors, etc.</i>] ➤ Reinforcement of the synergies with other European communities (firstly those involved in the NPA Project) through the organisation of common cultural events [<i>involved actors: local administration, cultural associations, Istituto Internazionale Studi Liguri, museum directors, etc.</i>]
Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Launch of institutional discussions between the Municipality of Albenga and the Gallinara Island's Property in order to make it possible to visit the island [<i>involved actors: local administration, Gallinara Island' Property</i>]



Religious tourism & synergies with the Via Sancti Martini

<p>Short-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of an ad hoc itinerary linked to Saint Martin winding along the religious monuments of the town and artistic production connected to Saint Martins and his values [<i>involved actors: local administration, cultural associations, Curia</i>] ➤ Identification of religious itineraries (not necessarily linked to Saint Martin only) to be proposed to pilgrims moving along the Via Sancti Martini route, and able to tempt them to spend at least few days in Albenga, thus enjoying the local cultural heritage (churches, museums, archaeological sites, etc.) [<i>involved actors: local administration, cultural associations, Curia, tourist operators</i>] ➤ Conceiving ad hoc touristic packages for pilgrims (special card for visiting all the town monuments, including museums; accommodation offers at special prices; pilgrim’s menu served in all restaurants; specialised tourist guides, etc.) [<i>involved actors: local administration, cultural associations, Curia, tourist operators, etc.</i>]
<p>Mid-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reinforcement of the links with the Via Sancti Martini in order to better positioning Albenga within the European pilgrims’ routes and thus benefitting of the already existing networks of cities and initiatives [<i>involved actors: local administration, cultural associations, Curia, Istituto Internazionale di Studi Liguri, tourist operators, etc.</i>] ➤ Video recreation of Saint Martin’s life on the Gallinara Island to be shown in the Albenga’s museums, with particular regard to the ‘Centro Multimediale Riserva Isola Gallinara’ hosted in the Genoese Fortress [<i>involved actors: local administration, Isola Gallinara’ Property, cultural associations, Curia, local community, theatre’s schools, etc.</i>] ➤ Creation of the Pilgrim’s House in the premises of the seminary, in cooperation with the Curia [<i>involved actors: local administration, Curia</i>] ➤ Launch of a formal path aimed at naming the ‘elleboro’ (a plant growing on the Gallinara Island) ‘Saint Martin Plant’. [<i>involved actors: local administration, Istituto Internazionale Studi Liguri, trade operators</i>]
<p>Long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Launch of institutional discussions between the Municipality of Albenga and the Gallinara Island’s Property in order to make it possible to visit the island [<i>involved actors: local administration, Gallinara Island’ Property</i>]



Other initiatives	
Short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Networking of all the initiatives of social inclusion currently running in the town (for instance the Social Kitchen Garden, the Social Bar, etc.) able to enhance the inclusion values handed down by Saint Martin and favouring an enhanced engagement of people at a disadvantage in the local community [<i>involved actors: local administration, volunteering associations, NGOs, Curia, etc.</i>] ➤ Promotion of inclusive sport events and/or able to create a link with the sharing values of Saint Martin [<i>involved actors: local administration, sport associations, Curia, sport federations, etc.</i>]
Mid-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Exchange and hospitality projects among the cities situated along the Via Sancti Martini, including projects involving schools of both NPA Project's partner cities and those along the Via Sancti Martini [<i>involved actors: local administration, cultural associations, schools, tour operators, social partners, trade associations, etc.</i>] ➤ Planning of initiatives targeted at young travellers having a low income [<i>involved actors: local administration, cultural associations, tourist operators, etc.</i>]
Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of social tourism based on the principle of social, environmental and economic sustainability. This kind of tourism favours services targeted at persons, promotes cultural diversity's and aims at valorising the local heritage, thus enhancing the local economic and employment growth. Associations and NGOs are the main actors of social tourism [<i>involved actors: local administration, associations, NGOs, social cooperatives, etc.</i>]