

DATES RUNS THE FIRST VALIDATION WORKSHOP

30th of May was an important milestone for the DATES project. Even though the project had already run a series of data collection workshops with different stakeholders, this was the first one focused on validation of the project's results achieved so far.

That may seem a minor thing. You have done your work, you present it and then you tick the box that says "done". Not as easy as it seems. Investment in research & innovation projects may fall short of realizing the real impact of the developments in real life. This might be partially due to three reasons: i) sometimes there is no check of the feasibility of real deployments, ii) not enough investigation of whether the project fits the needs of at least an incipient market composed by frontrunner customers; and iii) a lack of exchanges and interaction with those organizations that may follow-up, invest, use or promote the results. Engaging users in development stages where they can shape the potential outcomes is thus key to foster adoption and acceptance.

That is why DATES has defined a program that uses engagement and participation of stakeholders as a pillar for the definition of contents, including requirements, business needs or use cases, leading to a better understanding of the market needs. DATES, being a flagship project in the domain of data spaces (in this particular case with the focus on designing the European Data Space for Tourism), presents additional specificities that emphasize the need for such interaction and engagement with the community of practice. Firstly, DATES is designing a product or a solution (we could even say a philosophy or a new way of doing things) that is "looking for a market", since data spaces still require good understanding of the motivation and incentives for organizations to share data. Secondly, DATES, as all the other actions designing data spaces, will be followed-up by a deployment phase that will require companies to make investments. If the project is to set up a base of convinced investors, providers, and users, then, adhering to the design principles of the data space becomes crucial.

Following this approach, DATES organized a validation workshop focused specifically on validating some elements worked out as part of the Context analysis and agreed components as well as the basis of the initial Governance and Business Framework. The session allowed the project to collect additional data and missing items from our study.

Participants were asked about data sharing initiatives in EU, specifically looking at some countries¹ where partners could not find many references. In addition, inputs for developing an use case addressing the challenge of "reaching potential clients without being fully dependent on Online Travel Agencies (OTAs)" were collected. Also, participants were asked which tourism stakeholders would be expected to share data for addressing this challenge. Finally, attendants confirmed that the main issues hindering back data sharing in the tourism sector are the incompleteness of data, the lack of interoperability, low workers data awareness & skills and low cooperation and coordination.

Looking at the basis for the definition of the governance framework for the data space, participants were confronted with contents like the identification of stakeholders and roles *vis-à-vis* the data space, elements that should be present in the governance and the understanding of the current - but evolving- regulatory landscape. This helped to specify additional or more segmented roles for the data space as well as to add new legal and regulatory initiatives that we had not initially

¹ Luxembourg, Romania, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovenia, and Croatia

considered. We also realized about the different maturity levels of knowledge and preparedness of stakeholders towards a potential engagement in a tourism data space.

All this strengthens the message about the need for engagement and discussions as well as the requirement to adapt and customize messages towards different typologies of stakeholders and different attitudes. It also shows that there is still a long path to go through until we see this vision of data spaces realized in a real production environment.

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