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NaTour4CChange

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR CLIMATE ACTION IN DESTINATION DUGI OTOK

The Consortium:

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Project overview

The Mediterranean region is one of the most vulnerable hotspots in the current biodiversity and climate crises, warming 20% faster than the global average and being the second biodiversity hotspot in the world. The increase of severe climate events is also likely to influence the choice of destinations and time to travel for its over 510 million inhabitants. The effects of climate change will put additional pressure on already strained ecosystems and vulnerable economies and societies, with Tourism being one of the most affected economic sectors.

The recent Transition Pathway for Tourism and the Glasgow Declaration are building a global momentum for Climate Action in Tourism, but policymakers and destinations need support to better develop efficient climate mitigation and adaptation policies using ecosystem-based approaches and improved multi-level governance structures, including robust planning and ensure the long-term engagement of the private sector and citizens. Indeed, ecosystem-based management is considered a good practice to effectively deal with these threats as it considers the different stakeholders and factors affecting ecosystems and the mechanisms involved, in order to find solutions.

NaTour4CChange builds on and capitalises on successful experiences at the Mediterranean and global level to test solutions for increasing the resilience of coastal destinations in the Mediterranean. The project will aim to set common methods to allow participating regions to assess their tourism-related climate adaptation and mitigation priorities, and take climate action via plans and strategies, supported by cooperative governance.

In coastal destinations, cross-sector teams will deliver specific tourism climate Action Plans, focusing on climate adaptation, where Nature-based Solutions (NbS) will be tested to ensure their feasibility. At the same time, innovative destination marketing and communication approaches will engage private stakeholders, visitors, and residents in climate action.

The project will also ensure cross-fertilisation among participating regions and destinations, to achieve common methods and to compare the different tested plans and solutions, leading to lessons, best practices, and policy.

Glossary

Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) means anticipating the adverse effects of climate change and taking appropriate measures to prevent or minimise the damage they may cause, or to take advantage of the opportunities that may arise.

Climate Change Mitigation (CCM) means making the impacts of climate change less severe by reducing the sources of emission of greenhouse gases (GHG) into the atmosphere or by improving the storage of these gases.

Ecosystem Services (ES) are the benefits that an ecosystem brings to society and that improve people's health, economy, and quality of life.

Ecosystem-based Approaches (EbA) focus on managing biodiversity and ecological systems in a holistic way to maintain and enhance ecosystem services benefits and functions.

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) encompasses all actions that rely on ecosystems and the services they provide to respond to various societal challenges such as climate change, food security, resource management, or disaster risk.

User-Generated Content (UGC) is any content, including text, images, videos, reviews, or comments, that is created and shared by users instead of organisations or professional creators. It facilitates participation, collaboration, and the exchange of information within digital platforms and communities.

1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This Marketing and Communication Strategy for Climate Action in Destination Dugi Otok has been developed within the framework of the NaTour4CChange project - Governing Sustainable Tourism in Territories with High Environmental Value, funded through the Interreg Euro-MED Programme. The strategy serves as a communication framework supporting the implementation of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) for Dugi Otok and translates identified climate risks and adaptation measures into practical communication activities aimed at visitors, tourism businesses, and the local community.

While the Climate Action Plan defines priority risks, objectives, and adaptation measures, this strategy focuses on how those measures can be communicated effectively, understood by stakeholders, and translated into meaningful behavioural change. Its purpose is to ensure that climate adaptation becomes an integral part of the visitor experience and destination management rather than a separate environmental initiative.

1.1. Destination profile

Table 1 Destination profile

Characteristic	Data	Communication Significance
Permanent population	~1,700 residents (declining)	Small local community — strong interpersonal ties, high sensitivity to destination image
Tourist arrivals	~120,000 per year (growing ~5% p.a.)	High seasonal pressure on infrastructure and ecosystems
Type of tourism	Nautical, swimming, ecotourism, cycling	Different target groups with specific communication needs
Season	June - September (>85% of annual traffic)	Short communication window — high intensity
Nature protection	**Significant landscape "The northwestern part of Dugi Otok"**, Telašćica Nature Park, Natura 2000 sites, marine protected areas	Strong ecological identity and sustainability narrative
Water resources	Limited local supply; dependence on imported water from	Critical climate vulnerability requiring

	the land (water supply carriers)	targeted communication
Mobility	Limited public transport; strong cycling and walking potential	Opportunity to promote low-carbon mobility
Destination brand	Embraced by Nature	Existing brand platform for climate and sustainability communication

Dugi Otok is one of the most distinctive islands of the Zadar archipelago in northern Dalmatia, Croatia. Located in the Adriatic Sea, the island stretches approximately 45 kilometres from northwest to southeast and covers an area of 113 km², making it the seventh-largest island in Croatia. Despite its size, the island is home to only aprox. 1,700 permanent residents distributed across twelve settlements: Sali, Zaglav, Žman, Luka, Savar, Brbinj, Dragove, Božava, Soline, Verunić, Polje, and Veli Rat.

The island's largest settlement and administrative centre is Sali, a community whose identity has been shaped by more than a thousand years of fishing tradition. Maritime heritage remains a defining characteristic of local life, complemented by olive growing, agriculture, and small-scale tourism. Cultural events such as the Saljske Užance festival celebrate this heritage and contribute to the preservation of local identity in an increasingly globalised tourism environment.

Dugi Otok's tourism appeal is rooted primarily in its exceptional natural environment. The island is internationally recognised for its protected landscapes and biodiversity, which form the foundation of its destination identity. The southern part of the island is occupied by Telašćica Nature Park, one of Croatia's most valuable protected coastal areas, renowned for its dramatic cliffs rising above the open Adriatic, the deeply indented Telašćica Bay, and the saltwater Lake Mir. Immediately beyond Telašćica lies Kornati National Park, positioning Dugi Otok as a gateway to one of the Mediterranean's most remarkable marine landscapes.

Other iconic attractions include Sakarun Beach, famous for its white sand and turquoise waters; the historic Veli Rat Lighthouse, the tallest lighthouse on the Adriatic coast (both part of Significant landscape “The northwestern part of Dugi Otok”); Golubinka Sea Cave; Veli Žal Beach; the Special Botanical Reserve of Saljsko Polje; and an extensive network of cycling routes, hiking trails, diving sites, and secluded coves. The island's coastal and marine ecosystems are particularly valuable due to the presence of *Posidonia oceanica* seagrass meadows, one of the Mediterranean's most important habitats, providing coastal protection, carbon sequestration, and exceptional water quality.

The destination's existing slogan, **"Embraced by Nature"**, captures the essence of Dugi Otok's identity and competitive advantage. Unlike destinations whose appeal is based primarily on tourism infrastructure, Dugi Otok offers visitors a close connection with preserved landscapes, authentic island communities,

and a slower pace of life. This strategy therefore does not seek to redefine the destination brand but rather to strengthen and operationalise it through climate-conscious communication and visitor engagement.

Tourism is one of the island's most important economic activities. Annual visitor numbers are estimated at approximately 120,000 arrivals, with more than 85% of tourism activity concentrated between June and September. This pronounced seasonality creates significant pressure on local infrastructure, water resources, waste management systems, and fragile coastal ecosystems during the same period when climate-related risks are most severe.

1.2. Link with NaTour4CChange and the Climate Action Plan

NaTour4CChange (Governing Sustainable Tourism in Territories with High Environmental Value) is co-funded through the Interreg Euro-MED programme and implemented through a Mediterranean consortium. It aims to increase the resilience of coastal destinations through ecosystem-based approaches, cooperative governance, and climate action planning.

NATURA-JADERA, as the lead partner for the Dugi Otok destination, coordinates the Climate Action Taskforce, which brings together the Tourist Board, Nature Park Telašćica, the Municipality of Sali, tourism businesses, and civil society organisations. The Taskforce is both the governance body for the CAP and the primary stakeholder group for this communication strategy.

NaTour4CChange promotes climate-resilient tourism development in Mediterranean destinations through ecosystem-based adaptation, collaborative governance, and Nature-based Solutions (NbS). As a pilot destination within the project, Dugi Otok is developing practical approaches that integrate climate adaptation into tourism planning, destination management, and visitor communication.

Climate change presents a growing challenge for Dugi Otok. Increasing temperatures, prolonged drought periods, water scarcity, ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss, and seasonal concentration of visitor flows all have direct implications for the destination's environmental quality and tourism competitiveness.

At the same time, the island's natural environment is its most valuable tourism asset. Protecting ecosystems, conserving resources, and building resilience to climate impacts are therefore not only environmental priorities but also essential prerequisites for maintaining the long-term attractiveness and viability of the tourism sector.

This Strategy operationalises the communication dimensions of the CAP. It does not develop new adaptation measures but translates existing ones into messages and campaigns that drive visitor and stakeholder behaviour change.

1.3. The Role of Communication in Supporting Adaptation and Influencing Visitor Behavior

Communication plays a critical role in transforming climate objectives into practical action. Many of the adaptation measures identified in the Climate Action Plan including water conservation initiatives, protection of Posidonia meadows and banquettes, sustainable mobility measures, and visitor management interventions can only achieve their intended outcomes if visitors understand their purpose and actively support them.

The role of communication is not to focus on restrictions or environmental problems. Instead, it should demonstrate how responsible behaviour enhances the visitor experience while contributing to the preservation of the island's unique natural and cultural heritage.

This strategy adopts a behaviour-change approach, recognising that successful climate communication is measured not only by increased awareness but by tangible actions. Choosing to refill a reusable water bottle, cycling instead of driving, respecting designated anchoring zones, or staying on marked paths are all examples of behaviours that contribute directly to climate resilience and ecosystem protection.

1.4. How the Strategy Supports the CAP and NbS Measures

The Marketing and Communication Strategy operationalises the communication dimensions of measures already identified in the Climate Action Plan. Each communication objective, message, and campaign in this strategy maps directly to one or more CAP actions.

Particular emphasis is placed on communicating Nature-based Solutions (NbS), which use healthy ecosystems to address climate challenges while delivering environmental, social, and economic benefits. Relevant examples for Dugi Otok include the protection of Posidonia seagrass meadows and banquettes, conservation of coastal habitats, sustainable visitor management within sensitive natural areas, and the promotion of low-carbon mobility options. Communication therefore acts as a bridge between climate action, visitor experience, and destination identity, helping translate technical adaptation measures into meaningful stories and behaviours.

The document logic follows a coherent flow from risk to action:

- Step 1 Climate Risks: Identify and prioritise the risks most relevant for visitor communication
- Step 2 Communication Implications: Define what needs to be communicated, to whom, and why
- Step 3 Strategic Objectives: Set measurable, behaviour-focused communication goals
- Step 4 Target Groups: Define priority audience segments

- Step 5 Key Messages: Develop specific, actionable, location-grounded messages
- Step 6 Channels: Map messages to visitor journey touchpoints
- Step 7 Campaigns: Describe concrete campaign actions
- Step 8 Stakeholders: Define roles, coordination, and consistency mechanisms
- Step 9 Monitoring: Define indicators and evaluation methods
- Step 10 Implementation: Set a realistic timeline and identify prerequisites

1.5. Overview of Existing Tourism Marketing and Communication Practices

Table 2 Overview of Existing Tourism Marketing and Communication Practices

Communication Channel	Current Status	Potential for Climate Communication
Destination website	Exists; focus on attractions and accommodation	HIGH — possible climate landing page and practical visitor guidelines
Social media (Instagram, Facebook)	Active; visual content of nature and sea	HIGH — storytelling, short video, UGC campaigns
Visitor centres (NP Telascica, Sali)	Basic information and brochures	MEDIUM — educational panels, QR codes, interactive content
On-site signage	Partial, mainly navigational	HIGH — integration of climate messages alongside navigational ones
Accommodation provider communication	Unsystematic, individual initiative	HIGH — welcome kit with ready-made messages for guests
Nautical channels (marinas, harbour)	Mainly safety information	MEDIUM — distribution of anchoring zone maps, climate guidelines

Dugi Otok already benefits from a strong destination image centred on pristine nature, outdoor recreation, cultural authenticity, and island tranquillity. Existing communication efforts by the Tourist Board, Telašćica Nature Park, Natura-Jadera, tourism businesses, and local stakeholders successfully promote the island's landscapes, attractions, activities, and lifestyle.

However, climate adaptation and sustainability messages are not yet systematically integrated into destination marketing and communication. Most communication remains focused on destination promotion and visitor inspiration, while information related to resource conservation, ecosystem protection, and climate resilience is fragmented, location-specific, or communicated primarily through environmental institutions.

This gap represents a significant opportunity. Rather than creating a new destination narrative, climate communication can build directly upon the existing brand promise, "Embraced by Nature." The slogan provides a powerful foundation for positioning visitors not only as guests of the island but also as temporary stewards of its natural heritage. In this way, climate action becomes

a natural extension of the destination experience and a shared responsibility between residents, businesses, and visitors.

2. CLIMATE RISKS AND COMMUNICATION IMPLICATIONS

2.1. Priority Climate Risks and Communication Implications

Dugi Otok's tourism offer is fundamentally dependent on the quality and resilience of its natural heritage. The island's beaches, marine ecosystems, protected landscapes, and outdoor recreation opportunities constitute the foundation of its tourism appeal, while also representing some of its most climate-sensitive natural assets. Climate change therefore represents not only an environmental challenge but also a strategic tourism management challenge.

Building on the findings of the Identification and Assessment of the Main Coastal Tourism-Related Issues Concerning Climate Change Adaptation of Destination Dugi Otok and the Climate Action Plan for the Tourism Destination of Dugi Otok, three priority climate risks have been identified as particularly relevant for tourism and visitor communication:

1. Water scarcity and pressure on limited freshwater resources;
2. Coastal ecosystem degradation and erosion, including impacts on Posidonia meadows and banquettes as well as on coastal habitats;
3. Heatwaves and increasing seasonal concentration of tourism demand.

For each risk, communication plays a dual role: increasing awareness of climate-related challenges while supporting the implementation of adaptation measures and Nature-based Solutions (NbS) through positive visitor behaviour.

Table 3 Climate risks - communication needs

Climate Risk	Impact on Tourism	Communication Sensitivity	Communication Need / Visitor Behaviour Relevance
WATER SCARCITY Decline in groundwater levels, reduced precipitation, dependence on water imports	Dugi Otok has limited freshwater resources and remains dependent on water imported from the mainland. Prolonged drought periods, reduced precipitation, and increasing summer demand place growing pressure on water supply systems. Water shortages may affect visitor comfort, increase operational costs for tourism businesses, and impact natural	Water scarcity is often perceived as a sensitive topic because stakeholders fear that discussing resource limitations could damage the destination's image or discourage visitors from travelling to the island. Tourism businesses may therefore be reluctant to communicate openly about the issue.	Communication should position water as a valuable island resource rather than a limitation. Visitors should be encouraged to adopt simple water-saving practices without feeling restricted. Key behaviours include using refill stations, carrying reusable water bottles, reducing unnecessary water consumption in accommodation, reporting leaks, and supporting businesses that implement water-saving measures.

	attractions such as Lake Mir and other water-dependent environments.		
COASTAL EROSION AND ECOSYSTEM DEGRADATION Sea level rise, intensified waves; degradation of Posidonia meadows; sea level rise, intensified waves; degradation of Posidonia meadows; removal and destruction of Posidonia banquettes; fire risk; fire risk	Rising sea levels, stronger wave action, increasing fire risk, and pressure from tourism activities threaten coastal habitats and marine ecosystems. Posidonia oceanica meadows, which play a crucial role in carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, and coastal protection, are particularly vulnerable. In addition, the removal and degradation of Posidonia banquettes reduce the natural protection of beaches against wave action and accelerate coastal erosion, as observed at Sakarun Beach. Degradation of these ecosystems can reduce beach quality, affect marine biodiversity, and diminish the attractiveness of key tourism assets such as Telašćica Nature Park, diving sites, and coastal landscapes.	Communication may encounter resistance where adaptation measures are perceived as restrictions on visitor activities. Anchoring regulations, visitor management measures, and coastal protection interventions can be politically sensitive and may face opposition from parts of the nautical sector beach users, business owners related to tourist beach activities and owners or bars/restaurants as well as accommodation providers.	Explain the importance of non-removal of Posidonia banquettes and guide visitor behaviour. Visitor behaviour: stay on marked paths; respect anchoring zones; do not disturb Posidonia meadows or banquettes. Communication should explain why Posidonia banquettes are left on beaches and highlight their role in protecting coastlines from erosion, supporting biodiversity, and maintaining healthy coastal ecosystems. Priority messages should promote respect for marked trails, designated anchoring zones, and protected habitats. Visitors should understand that protecting Posidonia meadows and banquettes, coastal vegetation, and other sensitive habitats contributes directly to preserving the landscapes and experiences they value.
HEATWAVES AND SEASONAL COMPRESSION Temperature rise (+1.5-2 deg C on the	Climate projections indicate increasing temperatures, more frequent heatwaves, and longer dry periods across the Adriatic	Tourism stakeholders may be hesitant to discuss heat-related risks because they appear to conflict	Communication should focus on practical adaptation and positive destination experiences rather than risk messaging alone. Visitors should be encouraged to

Adriatic by 2050); longer dry periods; extreme heat in July-August	region. These trends may reduce visitor comfort during peak summer months, increase health and safety risks, place additional pressure on local infrastructure, and further concentrate tourism demand into short periods.	with traditional "sun and sea" marketing narratives. There is often concern that highlighting climate impacts could negatively influence visitor perceptions.	plan activities during cooler morning and evening hours, use shaded routes, stay hydrated, and consider travelling during the shoulder seasons. Communication should also promote June, September, and October as attractive periods offering a more comfortable climate, authentic experiences, and reduced visitor pressure.

2.2 Priority Climate Adaptation Measures and Nature-based Solutions

The Climate Action Plan identifies several adaptation measures that require active communication support in order to achieve behavioural change and public acceptance. Particular emphasis is placed on Nature-based Solutions (NbS), which work with natural systems to reduce climate risks while delivering environmental and tourism benefits.

Priority measures relevant for communication include:

- **Protection of Posidonia Meadows, Posidonia Banquettes, and Coastal Habitats**

Posidonia oceanica meadows represent one of the Mediterranean's most valuable ecosystems, providing water clarity, coastal protection, carbon storage, and critical habitat for marine species. At Sakarun Beach, six years of morphological monitoring (Pikelj, 2026) have established that the removal of Posidonia banquettes, the deposits of dead seagrass leaves that accumulate naturally on the shore , is the primary driver of sand loss. The key Nature-based Solution (NbS) for Sakarun is therefore not a constructed infrastructure measure but a management policy: the year-round non-removal of Posidonia banquettes. Banquettes act as a natural barrier that absorbs wave energy, traps sand, and rebuilds the beach profile between seasons. There are indications that sand loss has somewhat decreased in recent years since the non-removal policy was applied, reinforcing its effectiveness. Additional measures include designated anchoring zones to protect offshore Posidonia meadows, and limiting further commercialisation of the beach to maintain or reduce current visitor numbers.

Communication priority: The central message at Sakarun is that Posidonia banquettes are not waste — they are the beach's natural defence against erosion. Visitors must understand that the brown seagrass deposits on the shore actively protect the white sand they came to enjoy: without banquettes, the beach loses sand. Communication should focus on two specific behaviours: (1) do not disturb, step on, or request removal of banquettes; (2) report any unauthorised removal. Catering facilities and beach operators are a priority communication channel, as they are in direct daily contact with beachgoers and can reinforce the message in real time. Interpretation signage at Sakarun

should explain the banquette-erosion link concretely and positively, connecting the banquette policy to the beach's long-term survival.

- **Sustainable Visitor Management in Sensitive Areas**

Measures such as marked pathways, visitor flow management, and interpretation infrastructure aim to reduce pressure on vulnerable natural areas while maintaining visitor access.

Communication priority: Explain that visitor management measures enhance protection without reducing the quality of the visitor experience.

- **Water Conservation and Resource Efficiency**

Water-saving infrastructure, refill stations, awareness campaigns, and responsible resource management measures aim to reduce pressure on limited island water supplies.

Communication priority: Promote water stewardship as part of the authentic island experience and encourage visitors to participate in resource conservation.

- **Low-Carbon and Active Mobility**

Cycling, walking, and other low-carbon transport options contribute to climate adaptation and improve visitor experiences by reducing congestion and pressure on local infrastructure.

Communication priority: Position cycling and walking as enjoyable ways to discover the island while contributing to its long-term sustainability.

2.3 Communication Challenges and Message Barriers

In addition to the specific sensitivities associated with each climate risk, several structural barriers may limit the effectiveness of climate communication in the destination.

1. Economic Dependence on Seasonal Tourism

Many local businesses rely heavily on income generated during a short summer season. As a result, there may be concerns that climate-related messages could be interpreted as warnings or restrictions that discourage visitation.

2. Diverse Stakeholder Interests

Destination management involves a wide range of stakeholders, including tourism businesses, accommodation providers, nautical operators, public authorities, protected area managers, and local residents. Their priorities do not always align, making coordinated communication challenging.

3. Limited Time for Visitor Engagement

Most visitors spend only a limited amount of time at key locations, while day-trippers often have only a few hours on the island. Climate messages therefore need to be concise, practical, visually engaging, and linked to immediate actions.

4. International Visitor Audience

The majority of visitors are international tourists with varying levels of environmental awareness and limited knowledge of local ecological issues.

Complex climate concepts must therefore be translated into simple, clear, and action-oriented messages.

5. Variable Communication Capacity

Many tourism businesses are small-scale family enterprises with limited time and resources for communication activities. Successful implementation will require ready-made materials, simple tools, and easy-to-use communication templates.

2.4 Implications for Communication Strategy

The analysis of climate risks and adaptation measures highlights a central strategic principle: communication should focus on enabling positive action rather than emphasising restrictions or threats.

For Dugi Otok, effective climate communication should:

- Connect climate action to the destination's existing brand promise, **"Embraced by Nature."**
- Explain how adaptation measures help preserve the island's most valuable tourism assets.
- Promote practical behaviours that visitors can easily adopt.
- Support acceptance of Nature-based Solutions and conservation measures.
- Encourage stewardship rather than compliance.
- Reinforce the idea that every visitor contributes to protecting the landscapes, ecosystems, and island way of life that make Dugi Otok unique.

In this way, communication becomes a key mechanism for translating climate adaptation objectives into tangible actions that strengthen both destination resilience and visitor experience.

3. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

Objectives are focused on concrete, measurable changes in visitor and stakeholder behaviour not just on raising general awareness. Each objective is directly linked to a climate risk and to specific CAP actions. The communication objectives presented below are directly linked to the priority climate risks identified in Chapter 2 and to the adaptation measures outlined in the Climate Action Plan. They reflect a behaviour-change approach, recognising that visitors, tourism businesses, and other stakeholders can actively contribute to climate resilience through everyday decisions and actions.

The strategic framework is guided by a simple principle:

Successful communication is measured by what people do differently, not only by what they know.

For this reason, each communication objective is associated with a clearly defined behavioural outcome that can be monitored and evaluated throughout the implementation period.

Table 4 Communication objective to behaviour change

#	Communication Objective	Target Behaviour Change	Link to Climate Risk | Timeframe
1	Increase visitor awareness of water scarcity and promote responsible water consumption	Use of water refill stations; reduced water consumption in accommodation; visitors bringing reusable bottles	Water scarcity (Risk 1) | 2026–2028
2	Promote low-carbon mobility within the destination	Use of cycling or walking as the primary mode of transport for trips up to 10 km; reduction in private vehicle use	Heatwaves; CO2 emissions from tourism | 2026–2030
3	Reduce the use of single-use plastic at key tourist locations	Bringing personal water bottles; using available refill stations; reducing plastic waste at beaches	Ecosystem degradation; coastal erosion (Risk 2) | 2026–2028
4	Promote responsible visitor behaviour to protect Posidonia meadows, banquettes, and coastal habitats.	Moving along marked paths; respecting designated anchoring zones; avoiding disturbance or removal of Posidonia meadows and banquettes; respecting protected coastal habitats and site-specific conservation guidance.	Coastal erosion and ecosystem degradation (Risk 2) | 2026–2030
5	Ensure systematic and coordinated climate communication by all tourism stakeholders throughout the destination	Use of shared climate messages and materials by tourism businesses; consistent messaging at all visitor touchpoints	All climate risks (prerequisite for effectiveness) | 2026–2027

These priorities directly support the destination's existing brand promise, **"Embraced by Nature."** They position climate action not as a separate

environmental agenda but as an integral part of the visitor experience and of the long-term sustainability of tourism on Dugi Otok.

4. TARGET GROUPS

Effective climate communication requires a focused approach. While many different audiences interact with Dugi Otok, communication resources are limited and visitor attention spans are short, particularly during the peak summer season. For this reason, the strategy prioritises a small number of target groups that have the greatest influence on climate-related pressures, the highest potential for behaviour change, and the strongest capacity to support the implementation of adaptation measures.

The selected target groups are directly linked to the priority climate risks identified in Chapter 2 and to the behavioural objectives outlined in Chapter 3. Together, they represent the audiences whose actions can have the greatest positive impact on water conservation, ecosystem protection, low-carbon mobility, and support for Nature-based Solutions (NbS).

4.1. Target Groups

Table 5 Target groups

Target Group	Why Important	Priority Behaviour	Specificity for Dugi Otok
1. DAY-TRIPPERS (nautical tourists, excursionists from Zadar/Biograd)	Highest volumes of short-term ecosystem pressure; lowest personal sense of responsibility for long-term impacts	Plastic reduction; staying on marked paths; respecting anchoring zones and Posidonia areas	Short communication window, the message must be visible in the right place at the right time (port, signage, QR codes)
2. INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS WITH LONGER STAYS (5 - 14 days, mainly Germany, Austria, Netherlands)	Higher share of total overnight stays; high level of environmental awareness; longer stay allows multiple touchpoints	Low-carbon mobility (cycling, walking); water conservation in accommodation; shoulder-season visits; ecosystem protection	They know ecological values but don't know the specifics of local ecosystems (e.g. why Posidonia banquettes must not be removed)
3. TOURISM BUSINESSES accommodation providers, SME sector (accommodation,	Key multipliers: in direct contact with guests and have high potential to transfer messages; shape the physical visitor experience	Consistent climate communication with guests; application of water-saving guidelines; distribution of ready-made materials	Limited communication capacity, they need ready-made materials and simple, one-

boats, bicycles, catering)			click implementation

1. Day-Trippers and Excursion Visitors

This group includes nautical tourists, organised excursion participants, visitors arriving from Zadar and surrounding coastal destinations, and other travellers who spend only a few hours on the island.

Although their stay is relatively short, day-trippers create a disproportionate impact on sensitive coastal areas, beaches, ports, and protected natural sites. Because they often do not stay overnight, they may feel less connected to the destination and less aware of their environmental footprint.

The challenge is not a lack of goodwill, but a lack of time. Communication therefore needs to be immediate, highly visible, and linked directly to decision-making moments.

Why this group is important

- High volume of visitors during peak season.
- Significant pressure on beaches, coastal habitats, and visitor infrastructure.
- Frequent users of sensitive natural areas.
- Limited opportunity for long-form education.

Priority behaviours

- Respect designated anchoring zones.
- Leave Posidonia banquettes undisturbed — they protect the beach from erosion.
- Dispose of waste responsibly.
- Reduce single-use plastic consumption.
- Avoid disturbing Posidonia banquettes and coastal vegetation.

Communication approach

Messages should be delivered at key arrival and decision points, including ports, marinas, beaches, visitor centres, and trail entrances. Visual communication, signage, QR codes, and short multilingual messages are likely to be most effective.

2. International Tourists Staying on the Island

This segment includes visitors staying in accommodation facilities for several days or weeks, particularly guests from Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and other key European markets.

These visitors represent the largest share of overnight stays and have multiple opportunities to engage with destination messages throughout their visit. Research consistently shows that many international visitors already hold positive attitudes towards environmental protection and sustainable tourism, making them receptive to climate-related messages when these are framed positively.

However, while many visitors understand general sustainability principles, they are often unfamiliar with the ecological specificities of Dugi Otok, such as the importance of Posidonia meadows and banquettes, water scarcity challenges, or the role of protected coastal habitats.

Why this group is important

- Longer stays create greater cumulative resource consumption.
- Multiple communication touchpoints throughout the visitor journey.
- Higher likelihood of adopting sustainable behaviours.
- Potential to influence other visitors through social norms and examples.

Priority behaviours

- Use refill stations and reusable water bottles.
- Reduce water consumption in accommodation.
- Choose walking and cycling where possible.
- Respect protected ecosystems and visitor management measures.
- Consider visiting during shoulder-season periods.

Communication approach

Messages should focus on connecting existing environmental values with local realities. Communication should emphasise that visitors can actively contribute to preserving the island's natural heritage through simple actions during their stay.

A useful communication principle for this audience is:

"You already care about nature. Here is how you can help protect it on Dugi Otok."

3. Tourism Businesses and Accommodation Providers

Tourism businesses are not only a target audience but also one of the destination's most important communication channels. Accommodation providers, restaurants, bicycle rental operators, excursion providers, marina operators, and other tourism enterprises interact directly with visitors and influence many of their decisions.

As trusted sources of local information, businesses can significantly amplify climate-related messages and encourage sustainable visitor behaviour. Their role is particularly important because many visitor decisions are made after arrival rather than during trip planning.

However, most tourism businesses on Dugi Otok are small and medium-sized enterprises with limited time and communication capacity. Effective engagement therefore depends on providing practical, ready-to-use materials that require minimal effort to implement.

Why this group is important

- Direct daily contact with visitors.
- Ability to reinforce messages at critical visitor touchpoints.
- Influence over visitor choices and experiences.
- Essential partners for implementing the Climate Action Plan.

Priority behaviours

- Use consistent destination-wide climate messages.
- Promote water-saving practices.

- Encourage refill station use and plastic reduction.
- Inform visitors about protected areas and responsible behaviour.
- Display communication materials provided through the destination network.

Communication approach

Rather than creating additional workload, communication tools should be simple, practical, and ready for immediate use. Examples include welcome kits, room cards, digital content packages, QR codes, and approved message templates that businesses can easily integrate into existing guest communications.

These three groups are mutually complementary and influence one another: tourism businesses convey messages to international tourists, who in turn can influence day-trippers through social norms (e.g. if the majority of visitors use refill stations, new arrivals are more likely to follow).

4.2 Secondary Audiences

While communication efforts will primarily focus on the three groups above, several secondary audiences remain important for long-term success.

Local Residents

Residents play a key role as hosts, informal ambassadors, and custodians of local natural and cultural heritage. Their support is essential for maintaining the credibility of climate messages and ensuring acceptance of adaptation measures.

Young People and Event Participants

Visitors attending festivals, cultural events, and community activities can be effectively engaged through interactive communication formats, social media campaigns, and participatory activities linked to environmental stewardship.

Nature-Based Visitors

Hikers, cyclists, divers, birdwatchers, and other nature-oriented travellers are already highly engaged with the island's natural environment and may be particularly receptive to conservation and citizen stewardship initiatives.

4.3 Audience Prioritization and Behavioural Insights

The three priority groups are mutually reinforcing and influence one another throughout the visitor journey.

Tourism businesses communicate directly with overnight visitors. Overnight visitors help establish social norms through visible behaviours such as carrying reusable bottles, using refill stations, or choosing bicycles. Day-trippers then encounter these behaviours and are more likely to follow them.

This creates an opportunity to use behavioural insights as part of destination communication:

- Make the sustainable option the easiest option. Refill stations, marked trails, bicycle routes, and waste facilities should be highly visible and easy to use.

- Connect climate action to the visitor experience. Messages should focus on preserving what visitors value rather than emphasising restrictions.
- Use positive social norms. Visitors are more likely to adopt sustainable behaviours when they perceive them as common and expected.
- Provide simple and immediate actions. Short visits require short messages and clear behavioural guidance.

By concentrating communication resources on these three priority audiences, Dugi Otok can maximise the effectiveness of its climate communication efforts while maintaining a realistic and achievable implementation approach.

5. KEY MESSAGES AND NARRATIVE

5.1 Building on the Destination Brand: "Embraced by Nature"

Dugi Otok already possesses a strong and distinctive destination identity expressed through its existing brand promise:

Embraced by Nature

This strategy does not seek to create a new destination narrative. Instead, it builds upon and strengthens the existing brand by connecting it to climate resilience, environmental stewardship, and responsible visitor behaviour.

The slogan reflects what makes Dugi Otok unique: preserved landscapes, authentic island communities, exceptional biodiversity, and a way of life closely connected to natural rhythms and resources. Climate communication should therefore feel like a natural extension of the destination experience rather than a separate environmental campaign.

Visitors are not asked to change their behaviour because they are causing problems. They are invited to become part of what makes Dugi Otok special.

5.2 The Destination Narrative

The overarching narrative for climate communication is:

"Embraced by Nature means caring for the nature that embraces us."

Dugi Otok is more than a holiday destination. It is an island where nature shapes everyday life from the water that arrives from the mainland, to the Posidonia meadows that keep the sea crystal clear, to the trails that connect villages, bays, and protected landscapes.

Every visitor becomes part of this story. Small actions like refilling a water bottle, cycling instead of driving, staying on marked paths, respecting marine habitats help preserve the island's natural beauty and ensure that future generations can experience the same landscapes and traditions.

The communication approach therefore positions visitors not simply as consumers of tourism experiences, but as temporary stewards of a place that welcomes them.

5.3 Narrative and Tone of Voice Principles

The communication approach follows the principles outlined in the Manual on Destination Marketing and Communication for Climate Action.

Table 6 Principles of communication and applications

Principle	Application on Dugi Otok
Positive framing	Focus on solutions, benefits, and opportunities rather than risks and restrictions.
Place-based storytelling	Connect every message to the island's landscapes, traditions, communities, and ecosystems.
Simple actions	Provide practical guidance visitors can immediately follow.

Social norms	Show that responsible behaviour is already common and expected.
Benefits-led communication	Emphasise how sustainable choices improve the visitor experience and protect what people value.
Non-judgemental tone	Guide and encourage rather than blame or shame.

Messages should feel welcoming, practical, and authentic. They should reflect the character of the island and avoid technical climate terminology wherever possible.

Preferred Tone

- Friendly and inviting
- Authentic and locally grounded
- Informative but concise
- Positive and empowering
- Respectful of visitor motivations

Avoid

- Alarmist language
- Guilt-based messaging
- Technical climate jargon
- Excessive focus on restrictions or prohibitions

5.4 Key Climate Messages

The following core messages support the behavioural objectives identified in Chapter 3 and the climate risks described in Chapter 2.

Message 1: Every Drop Matters

Priority Behaviour: Water conservation and refill station use.

Core Message: "Water reaches Dugi Otok by sea. Every drop matters."

Supporting Messages:

- *Refill your bottle and reduce plastic waste.*
- *Use water thoughtfully during your stay.*
- *Small actions help preserve island resources.*

Why it works:

The message is specific to Dugi Otok's reality and transforms water conservation from an environmental obligation into a shared island value.

Message 2: Protect What Makes This Place Special

Priority Behaviour: Protection of ecosystems and sensitive habitats.

Core Message: *"Stay on the path. Nature will show you the way."*

Supporting Messages

- Marked trails help protect fragile habitats.

- Respect protected areas and coastal vegetation.
- Your footsteps help shape the future of these landscapes.

Why it works:
The message connects visitor behaviour directly to the preservation of the scenery and experiences visitors have come to enjoy.

Message 3a: The Sea Begins Beneath the Surface

Priority Behaviour: Protection of Posidonia meadows and responsible nautical behaviour.

Core Message: *"Anchor with care. Posidonia keeps our sea alive."*

Supporting Messages

- Posidonia meadows keep the water clear.
- Healthy marine habitats protect the coastline.
- Posidonia banquettes on the shore protect the beach from sand erosion — leave them as they are.
- Respect designated anchoring zones.

Why it works:
Most visitors do not know what Posidonia is. The message links an unfamiliar ecosystem to a visible benefit: the beauty of the sea itself.

Message 3b: The Beach Begins Here — Posidonia Banquettes and Coastal Protection

Priority Behaviour: Do not disturb, step on, or request the removal of Posidonia banquettes at Sakarun Beach or any other beach on Dugi Otok.

Core Message: "The brown cushions on the shore are not waste — they are why this beach still exists. Posidonia banquettes protect Sakarun from sand erosion. Leave them as they are."

Supporting Messages:

- The banquettes on this beach are doing a job — protecting the sand under your feet.
- What looks like seaweed is actually a natural sea wall. Please do not move it.
- Sakarun's white sand exists because Posidonia has been protecting it for centuries. Help keep it here.
- If you see someone removing banquettes, please report it to beach staff or the Nature Park.

Why It Works:

Visitors at Sakarun frequently perceive banquettes as unsightly waste and either move them or pressure beach operators to remove them. This message directly addresses that misperception by linking the banquette, a concrete, visible thing the visitor can see and touch, to the loss of sand, which is also concrete and visible. The message does not ask for environmental sacrifice: it explains that the visitor's enjoyment of the beach (its white sand, its turquoise water, its width) depends on the banquette being left in place. The causal chain is short and legible: banquettes stay → sand stays → beach stays.

Message 4: Explore Slowly, Discover More

Priority Behaviour: Walking, cycling, and low-carbon mobility.

Core Message: *"Explore by bike. Discover Dugi Otok at nature's pace."*

Supporting Messages

- Enjoy the island without traffic or parking stress.
- Discover hidden beaches, villages, and viewpoints.
- Experience more while leaving a lighter footprint.

Why it works:
The message promotes a desirable experience rather than environmental sacrifice.

Message 5: The Best Season Is Not Always the Busiest

Priority Behaviour: Shoulder-season travel and adaptation to heatwaves.

Core Message: *"Spring and autumn reveal another side of Dugi Otok."*

Supporting Messages

- Enjoy cooler temperatures and quieter landscapes.
- Experience local life beyond the summer peak.
- Discover nature at its most comfortable.

Why it works:
The message reframes seasonality as an opportunity rather than a climate challenge.

5.5 Message Adaptation by Target Group

Day-Trippers

Messages should be highly visible, action-oriented, and linked to immediate decisions.

Examples:

"Refill here — protect our sea."

"The path starts here. Thank you for staying on it."

"Anchor only in marked zones."

"Take your memories home, not your waste."

Communication channels:

- Ports and ferry terminals
- Beaches
- Trail entrances
- QR codes and information panels

International Tourists

Messages can provide more context and connect sustainability values with local realities.

Examples:

"Water reaches Dugi Otok by boat. Every refill helps."
"Posidonia keeps our sea crystal clear—help us protect it."
"Most guests explore the island by bike. Join them."
"September is our hidden season."
Communication channels:

- Accommodation
- Destination website
- Social media
- Visitor guides
- Welcome materials

Tourism Businesses and Accommodation Providers

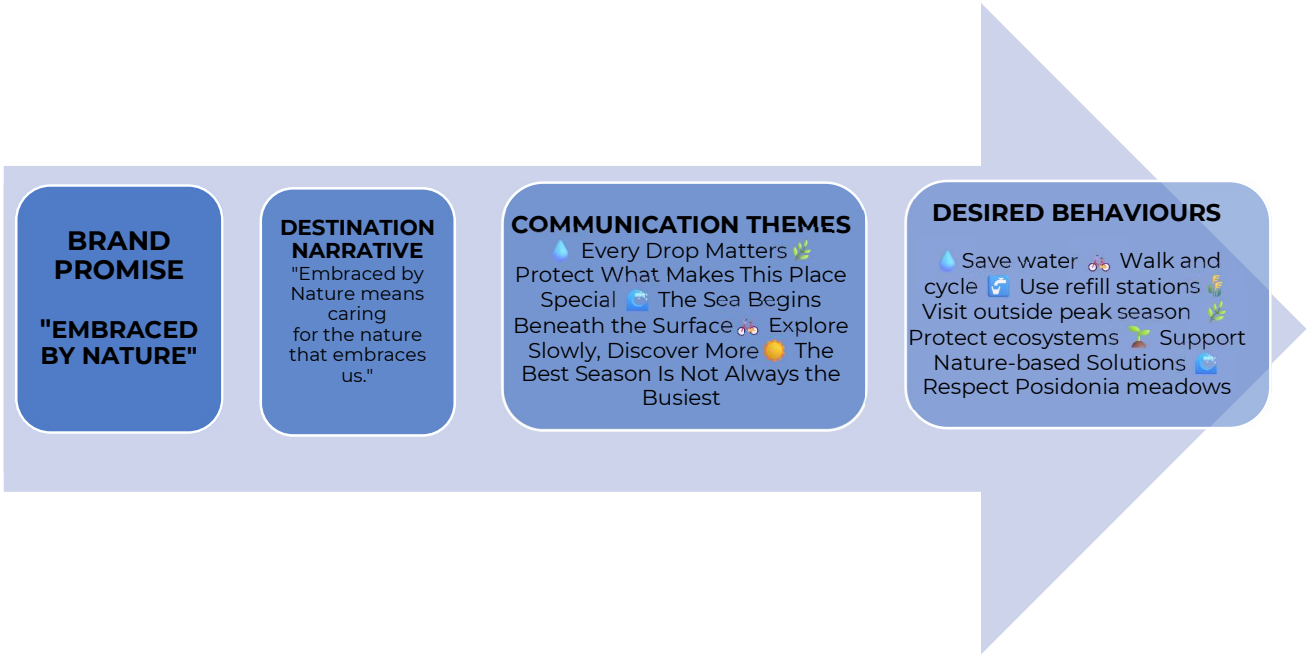
Messages should focus on enabling businesses to communicate consistently and easily.
Examples:
"Help guests refill, not landfill."
"Share the island story through every guest interaction."
"A simple sustainability tip can improve the guest experience."
"Together we keep Dugi Otok embraced by nature."
Communication channels:

- Welcome kits
- Digital communication toolkits
- Staff briefings
- Stakeholder workshops

5.6 Message Hierarchy

The communication architecture for the destination can be summarised as follows:

FIGURE 1 MESSAGE HIERARCHY



6. COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND TOUCHPOINTS

Effective climate communication depends not only on what is communicated, but also on where and when messages are delivered. Visitors make decisions throughout their journey—from planning their trip to sharing experiences after returning home. Each stage offers opportunities to encourage behaviours that support climate adaptation and the protection of Dugi Otok's natural assets.

The strategy builds on existing destination communication channels rather than creating new communication structures. This approach reflects the limited capacity of local stakeholders and ensures that climate messages can be integrated into established visitor communication systems.

To maximise effectiveness and maintain consistency, communication activities should focus primarily on two flagship behavioural themes throughout the visitor journey:

Protect Nature

- Respect Posidonia meadows and coastal ecosystems.
- Stay on marked paths and designated routes.
- Support Nature-based Solutions and conservation measures.

Use Resources Responsibly

- Conserve water.
- Use refill stations and reusable bottles.
- Reduce unnecessary waste and single-use plastics.

These themes should appear consistently across all visitor touchpoints, adapted to the visitor's location, needs, and stage of the journey.

6.1 Existing Communication Channels

Dugi Otok already benefits from a range of communication channels managed by the Tourist Board, Telašćica Nature Park, accommodation providers, local authorities, and tourism businesses.

Existing channels include:

- Destination website and tourism portal
- Social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube)
- Accommodation provider communications
- Visitor information centres
- Printed maps and brochures
- Interpretive panels and visitor signage
- Protected area communication infrastructure
- Tourism business websites and digital platforms
- Booking confirmations and guest information materials

- Local events and community initiatives

The opportunity is not to create new channels but to systematically integrate climate-related messages into these existing communication points.

6.2 Visitor Journey Map and Climate Communication Opportunities

Before Travel

During the planning phase, visitors are actively searching for information and making decisions about transport, activities, accommodation, and travel timing. Communication at this stage should introduce the destination's sustainability values and prepare visitors for responsible behaviour during their stay.

Table 7 Climate Communication Opportunities Before Travel

Touchpoint	Climate Communication Opportunity	Responsible Stakeholders
Destination website	Dedicated "Embraced by Nature" sustainability page; practical visitor guidance; information on protected areas and climate initiatives	Tourist Board
Social media	Storytelling about Posidonia meadows, local water resources, cycling routes, and seasonal experiences	Tourist Board + Natura-Jadera
Booking confirmations	Short climate messages and practical visitor tips	Accommodation providers
Accommodation websites	Information on water conservation, refill stations, cycling opportunities, and visitor guidelines	Tourism businesses
Digital campaigns	Promotion of shoulder-season travel and responsible visitor experiences	Tourist Board

Priority messages

- Water is a precious island resource.
- Discover the island by bike or on foot.
- Help protect the landscapes that make Dugi Otok unique.
- Consider travelling outside the peak season.

Arrival

Arrival is a critical behavioural moment. Visitors are forming first impressions and making immediate decisions about movement, resource use, and activities.

Table 8 Climate Communication Opportunities Upon Arrival

Touchpoint	Climate Communication Opportunity	Responsible Stakeholders
Ferry port (Brbinj)	Welcome signage; refill station visibility; sustainability map	Municipality; Tourist Board
Marinas and nautical entry points	Anchoring guidance; Posidonia information; QR codes	Harbour Authorities; Marina Operators
Public transport stops	Sustainable mobility information	Municipality
Visitor information points	Climate-friendly visitor guides	Tourist Board

Priority messages

- Welcome to Dugi Otok—Embraced by Nature.
- Refill before you explore.
- Respect protected areas and marked routes.
- Discover the island responsibly.

During the Stay

The stay phase provides the greatest opportunity to influence behaviour because visitors are actively interacting with the destination's natural and cultural assets.

Accommodation

Table 9 Climate Communication Opportunities in Accommodation

Touchpoint	Climate Communication Opportunity
Welcome folder	Sustainability information and practical visitor guidance
Guest welcome message	Water-saving tips and refill station information
QR codes	Maps, cycling routes, and climate-friendly recommendations
Information boards	Climate actions and local conservation initiatives

Priority behaviours

- Use refill stations.
- Reduce water consumption.
- Explore by bicycle or on foot.

Natural Attractions and Protected Areas

Table 10 Climate Communication Opportunities at Natural Attractions and Protected Areas

Touchpoint	Climate Communication Opportunity
Beaches	Signage about waste reduction and ecosystem protection
Hiking trails	Trail markers and conservation messages
Telašćica Nature Park	Interpretation panels explaining Nature-based Solutions
Scenic viewpoints	Storytelling about landscape conservation and climate resilience
Visitor centres	Interactive exhibits and educational materials

Priority behaviours

- Stay on designated paths.
- Protect coastal vegetation.
- Respect protected habitats.
- Do not remove, disturb, or walk on Posidonia banquettes.
- Understand that Posidonia banquettes protect beaches from erosion and support coastal ecosystems.
- Leave no trace.

Nautical Tourism

Table 11 Climate Communication Opportunities for Nautical Tourism

Touchpoint	Climate Communication Opportunity
Marina reception areas	Anchoring guidance and marine protection information
Vessel information packs	Posidonia awareness materials
Mooring zones	Signage and QR codes
Boat rental operators	Responsible boating guidance

Priority behaviours

- Use designated anchoring zones.
- Avoid damaging Posidonia meadows.
- Respect marine protected areas.

Departure

The departure phase offers an opportunity to reinforce positive behaviour and encourage future engagement.

Table 12 Climate Communication Opportunities at Departure

Touchpoint	Climate Communication Opportunity	Responsible Stakeholders
Ferry terminals	Thank-you messages; QR-code survey	Tourist Board
Marinas	Visitor feedback collection	Marina operators
Accommodation checkout	Sustainability reminder and invitation to return	Accommodation providers

Priority messages

- Thank you for helping protect Dugi Otok.
- Share your experience.
- Return and discover the island in another season.

After the Visit

Communication should continue beyond the visitor's stay to strengthen loyalty and encourage repeat visitation.

Table 13 Climate Communication Opportunities After the Visit

Touchpoint	Climate Communication Opportunity	Responsible Stakeholders
Follow-up e-mails	Thank-you message and sustainability impact stories	Accommodation providers
Social media	User-generated content campaigns and storytelling	Tourist Board
Visitor surveys	Feedback on climate communication effectiveness	Tourist Board

Seasonal campaigns	Promotion of spring and autumn travel	Tourist Board

Priority messages

- You helped preserve what makes Dugi Otok special.
- Experience another side of the island next season.
- Stay connected with nature and the destination community.

6.3 Channel Prioritisation

Given the limited financial and human resources available, communication efforts should focus on channels that combine high visitor reach with relatively low implementation costs.

Table 14 Priority Communication Channels for Climate Action Implementation

Channel	Priority	Implementation Cost	Rationale
On-site signage (ports, beaches, trails, protected areas)	High	Medium (one-time investment)	Delivers messages at the exact moment behaviour occurs
Accommodation welcome kit (digital and printable)	High	Low	Reaches visitors repeatedly during their stay
Destination website sustainability section	High	Medium	Influences visitor decisions before arrival
QR codes at key locations	Medium	Low	Flexible and easy to update
Booking confirmation messages	Medium	Low	Direct contact during trip planning
Social media storytelling	Medium	Low	Supports destination image and visitor engagement
Visitor centre interpretation	Medium	Medium	High-quality educational experience but lower reach
Printed brochures and maps	Low	Medium	Useful support channel but declining importance

6.4 Strategic Recommendation

Rather than attempting to communicate every climate issue at every touchpoint, Dugi Otok should adopt a focused communication approach centred on a small number of recurring messages and behaviours.

Across all communication channels, visitors should consistently encounter two core ideas:

1. Protect Nature

Protect the ecosystems, landscapes, and biodiversity that make Dugi Otok unique.

2. Use Resources Responsibly

Use water thoughtfully, reduce waste, and travel lightly.

Repeating these simple messages throughout the visitor journey will increase recognition, strengthen behavioural adoption, and support the implementation of the Climate Action Plan more effectively than a large number of fragmented communication initiatives.

7. KEY CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

The communication strategy is implemented through a portfolio of targeted campaigns designed to support the Climate Action Plan, encourage measurable behaviour change, and strengthen the destination's identity as a place that is genuinely **Embraced by Nature**.

Rather than developing a large number of communication initiatives, the strategy focuses on three practical and achievable campaigns that directly address selected priority climate risks and behavioural objectives identified in Chapters 2 and 3. Each campaign combines awareness-raising with specific behavioural actions, ensuring that communication contributes directly to climate adaptation and the protection of natural resources. The three campaigns operationalise selected priority objectives of the Climate Action Plan through clearly defined visitor behaviours. Other strategic objectives, including low-carbon mobility, stakeholder coordination and broader sustainable tourism practices, are addressed as cross-cutting communication themes through the wider communication activities of the destination rather than through separate standalone campaigns.

7.1 Campaign 1: "Refill Here. Protect Our Sea."

Campaign Rationale

Water scarcity and plastic pollution represent two interconnected challenges for Dugi Otok. As an island with limited freshwater resources and a tourism offer strongly dependent on a clean marine environment, reducing single-use plastics and encouraging responsible water use can generate immediate environmental benefits while supporting climate resilience.

The campaign promotes a visible and easy behaviour: choosing refill stations instead of purchasing bottled water.

Behaviour Objective

Increase the use of water refill stations and reusable bottles while reducing single-use plastic consumption in beaches, ports, public spaces, and accommodation facilities.

Target Audience

Primary audience

- Day-trippers
- Nautical tourists
- Excursion visitors

Secondary audience

- International tourists staying on the island
- Accommodation providers

Key Message

"Refill Here. Protect Our Sea."

Supporting messages:

- Every refill helps protect our sea and coastline.
- Water is a precious island resource.
- Small everyday choices help preserve nature for everyone.

Communication Channels

- Refill station branding and signage
- Ferry port information panels
- Accommodation welcome kits
- Destination website
- Social media content
- QR-code maps showing refill locations
- Visitor information centres

Key Partners

- NATURA-JADERA
- Municipality of Sali
- Tourist Board
- Accommodation providers
- Ferry operators
- Marina operators
- Local businesses

Timeline

Table 15 Timeline of campaign 1

Phase	Period
Preparation	January–April 2027
Launch	June 2027
Implementation	June–September annually
Evaluation	October annually

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Number of refill station users.
- Number of refill stations actively promoted.

- Percentage of accommodation providers displaying campaign materials.
- Visitor awareness of refill stations.
- Reduction in visible plastic bottle waste at monitored locations.
- Social media engagement and reach.

7.2 Campaign 2: "Nature Protects Our Beach."

Campaign Rationale

Sakarun Beach is one of Dugi Otok's most valuable natural attractions. However, coastal erosion, increasing visitor pressure, and the historical removal of Posidonia banquettes have contributed to the loss of natural beach protection. Posidonia banquettes are not waste; they are an essential part of the coastal ecosystem that reduces wave energy, helps retain beach sediment, supports biodiversity, and strengthens climate resilience.

The campaign explains why Posidonia banquettes remain on the beach and encourages visitors to respect them as a natural coastal protection measure.

Behaviour Objective

Increase visitor understanding and acceptance of the non-removal of Posidonia banquettes while encouraging behaviours that protect coastal habitats and reduce beach erosion.

Target Audience

Primary audience

- Beach visitors
- Day-trippers
- Families
- Nautical tourists

Secondary audience

- Accommodation providers
- Beach concessionaires
- Local businesses
- Tour guides

Key Message

"Nature Protects Our Beach."

Supporting messages:

- Posidonia banquettes protect Sakarun from erosion.
- They are a natural part of a healthy beach.

- Help nature protect the coast—leave Posidonia where it belongs.

Communication Channels

- Beach interpretation panels
- Information boards at Sakarun
- QR codes linking to educational content
- Destination website
- Social media
- Accommodation welcome materials
- Visitor centres

Key Partners

- NATURA-JADERA
- Municipality of Sali
- Tourist Board
- Telašćica Nature Park
- Beach concessionaires
- Accommodation providers

Timeline

Table 16 Timeline of campaign 2

Phase	Period
Preparation	January–April annually
Pilot Activities	May annually
Main Campaign	May–September
Evaluation	October annually

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Visitor awareness of the ecological role of Posidonia banquettes.
- Reduction in complaints regarding Posidonia banquettes.
- Percentage of visitors recognising Posidonia as natural beach protection.
- Number of educational panels installed.
- QR code scans.
- Social media reach.

7.3 Campaign 3: "June: The Island's Best-Kept Secret"

Campaign Rationale

Climate projections indicate increasing heat stress during the peak summer months, while tourism pressure remains highly concentrated in July and August. Encouraging travel during the shoulder season supports adaptation goals, reduces pressure on infrastructure and ecosystems, and provides visitors with a more authentic and comfortable experience.

The campaign reframes deseasonalisation as a benefit rather than a management objective.

Behaviour Objective

Increase visitor demand during May, June, September, and October while encouraging visitors to consider alternatives to peak-season travel.

Target Audience

Primary audience

- Couples
- Active travellers
- Nature-oriented visitors
- Digital nomads
- Retired travellers

Secondary audience

- Returning visitors
- Accommodation providers

Key Message

"June: The Island's Best-Kept Secret."

Alternative seasonal messages:

- "Warm sea. Quiet trails. More space to explore."
- "Experience Dugi Otok beyond the summer rush."
- "Nature moves at a different pace here."

Communication Channels

- Destination website
- Social media campaigns
- Visitor testimonials
- Accommodation provider newsletters
- Blog content and storytelling
- Booking platform partnerships
- Influencer and media collaborations

Key Partners

- Tourist Board

- Accommodation providers
- Telašćica Nature Park
- Local tourism businesses
- Regional tourism organisations

Timeline

Table 17 Timeline of campaign 3

Phase	Period
Campaign Development	January – March annually
Promotion Phase	March – May annually
Seasonal Reinforcement	August – October annually
Evaluation	November annually

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Growth in overnight stays during May, June, September, and October.
- Number of returning visitors outside peak season.
- Reach and engagement of seasonal content.
- Website traffic to shoulder-season pages.
- Accommodation occupancy rates during target months.

7.4 Campaign Portfolio Overview

Table 18 Campaign Portfolio Overview and Target Behaviour Changes

Campaign	Climate Priority	Main Behaviour Change
Refill Here. Protect Our Sea.	Water scarcity and waste reduction	Use refill stations and reusable bottles
Nature Protects Our Beach.	Coastal erosion, ecosystem protection and visitor pressure	Respect Posidonia banquettes and avoid their removal
June: The Island's Best-Kept Secret.	Heatwave adaptation and deseasonalisation	Travel outside peak summer periods

Low-carbon mobility remains an important strategic objective and a cross-cutting communication theme. Walking, cycling and other low-carbon mobility options can therefore be promoted through destination content, visitor information, maps, itineraries, social media and campaign materials where relevant. This approach allows mobility messages to support all three campaigns without creating an additional standalone campaign.

Together, the three campaigns translate the destination narrative "Embraced by Nature" into practical actions that visitors can easily adopt. They focus on behaviours that are visible, measurable and achievable while supporting the implementation of the Climate Action Plan and strengthening Dugi Otok's position as a resilient and sustainable island destination.

8. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Climate communication can only be effective if it is coordinated across the destination and consistently delivered by all organisations that interact with visitors. On Dugi Otok, visitors receive information from multiple sources—from accommodation providers and tourism businesses to ferry operators, visitor centres, protected area managers, and digital channels. To avoid fragmented or contradictory messaging, climate communication should be developed and implemented through a shared destination-wide approach.

The objective of stakeholder engagement is therefore not only to inform stakeholders about climate-related issues, but also to actively involve them in the co-creation, delivery, and continuous improvement of communication activities.

8.1 Key Stakeholders and Communication Roles

The implementation of this strategy requires collaboration between public authorities, tourism businesses, protected area managers, community organisations, and local residents. Each stakeholder group contributes to climate communication through different touchpoints and levels of influence.

Table 19 Key Stakeholders and Their Roles in Climate Communication

Stakeholder	Role in Climate Communication
NATURA-JADERA Public Institution	Overall coordination of the strategy; coordination of stakeholders; development of communication materials; monitoring and reporting
Tourist Board of Dugi Otok	Lead communication partner; management of digital channels; campaign implementation; content creation; visitor communication before and after travel
Nature Park Telašćica	Interpretation and communication within protected areas; visitor guidance; promotion of Nature-based Solutions; educational activities
Municipality of Sali	Support for public communication infrastructure, signage, refill stations, and policy alignment
Accommodation Providers and Tourism Businesses	Direct communication with visitors; distribution of welcome materials; reinforcement of key messages during the stay
Transport Providers and Nautical Operators	Communication at arrival points and within the nautical tourism sector; dissemination of responsible behaviour messages

Local Associations and Community Groups	Community engagement, local storytelling, and support for awareness-raising activities
Schools and Youth Groups	Youth ambassadors; development of local stewardship and intergenerational awareness

Together, these stakeholders create a destination-wide communication ecosystem that reinforces consistent messages throughout the visitor journey.

8.2 Stakeholder Engagement Mechanisms

To ensure active participation and local ownership, stakeholders should be involved throughout the planning and implementation process.

Stakeholder Workshops and Co-Creation

Annual stakeholder workshops should be organised to:

- Review communication priorities.
- Develop and test key messages.
- Discuss campaign concepts and visitor feedback.
- Share examples of good practice.
- Strengthen ownership of climate communication activities.

Particular attention should be given to involving tourism businesses, as they have the most frequent direct contact with visitors.

Coordination Meetings

A simple coordination structure is recommended:

- Strategic coordination meetings twice per year.
- Seasonal operational briefings before the start of the tourism season.
- Regular communication between key implementation partners throughout campaign periods.

These meetings should focus on practical implementation issues, visitor feedback, and opportunities for joint communication activities.

Capacity Building

Many tourism businesses have limited communication capacity and time available. For this reason, training activities should be concise, practical, and directly applicable.

Recommended topics include:

- Climate storytelling and destination narratives.
- Behaviour-change communication techniques.
- Visitor engagement methods.

- Use of communication materials and templates.
- Communicating Nature-based Solutions.

Informal Feedback and Learning

Continuous improvement should be supported through:

- Short stakeholder surveys.
- Informal feedback channels.
- Pilot testing of messages and signage.
- Collection of visitor feedback.
- Sharing lessons learned at the end of each season.

8.3 Ensuring Message Consistency

Consistency is essential for building trust and reinforcing behavioural messages.

All stakeholders should use a shared communication framework based on the destination narrative:

"Embraced by Nature means caring for the nature that embraces us."

To support consistency, a Destination Climate Communication Toolkit should be developed containing:

- Core messages and slogans.
- Visual identity guidelines.
- Social media templates.
- Welcome kit materials.
- QR-code content and visitor information.
- Guidance on communication tone and language.

The toolkit should be made available to all partners and updated annually.

NATURA-JADERA should act as the lead coordinator for climate communication, while the Tourist Board should oversee implementation across destination marketing channels.

Through a shared narrative, coordinated partnerships, and practical communication tools, climate communication can become a visible and consistent part of the Dugi Otok visitor experience.

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation are essential for understanding whether communication activities are reaching visitors, influencing awareness, and encouraging the desired behaviours. Given the limited capacity of the destination, the monitoring framework should remain simple, practical, and focused on a limited number of meaningful indicators.

The monitoring system follows four levels of evaluation:

1. Communication reach.
2. Visitor awareness and understanding.
3. Behaviour change.
4. Stakeholder participation.

9.1 Monitoring Framework

Table 20 Monitoring Framework for Climate Communication Implementation

Objective	Indicator	Measurement Method	Frequency	Responsible Organisation
Increase visibility of climate communication	Social media reach and engagement	Meta and website analytics	Monthly	Tourist Board
Increase use of digital information tools	QR-code scans and landing-page visits	Web analytics	Monthly (weekly in season)	Tourist Board
Improve visitor awareness of climate issues	Percentage of visitors familiar with key climate messages	Visitor survey	Twice per season	Tourist Board / NATURA-JADERA
Improve message recognition	Percentage of visitors recognising campaign slogans	Visitor survey	Twice per season	Tourist Board
Reduce plastic waste and encourage refill behaviour	Number of refill station uses	Manual counts or digital counters	Weekly in season	Municipality / NATURA-JADERA
Promote low-carbon mobility	Number of bicycle rentals and route downloads	Rental records and analytics	Seasonal	Tourist Board
Improve protection of sensitive ecosystems	Observed compliance with marked paths and visitor guidance	Field observations	Seasonal	Nature Park Telašćica

Increase stakeholder participation	Percentage of tourism businesses using communication materials	Stakeholder survey	Annual	NATURA-JADERA
Strengthen collaboration	Participation in workshops and coordination meetings	Attendance records	Annual	NATURA-JADERA

9.2 Data Collection Tools

The monitoring framework should rely primarily on simple and low-cost tools:

- Website and social media analytics.
- QR-code tracking.
- Short visitor surveys (5–8 questions).
- Accommodation provider feedback.
- Observation by Nature Park staff.
- Attendance records from workshops and events.

Where direct measurement of behaviour is not possible, proxy indicators should be used. For example, refill station use can indicate reduced consumption of single-use plastic bottles, while bicycle rental data can indicate shifts toward low-carbon mobility.

9.3 Reporting and Review

Monitoring results should be reviewed regularly to support adaptive management.

Table 21 Monitoring Framework for Climate Communication Implementation

Reporting Period	Purpose
Monthly during season	Review communication performance and visitor engagement
End of season	Assess campaign effectiveness and identify improvements
Annual review	Evaluate progress towards communication objectives and Climate Action Plan targets

Mid-term review (2028)	Assess overall strategy effectiveness and adjust priorities if necessary
Final review (2030)	Evaluate long-term outcomes and inform the next strategy cycle

Findings should be shared with all stakeholders to support learning, accountability, and continuous improvement.

10. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (2026–2030)

The implementation of this strategy follows a phased approach aligned with the seasonal dynamics of tourism on Dugi Otok. Activities are designed to be realistic, scalable, and achievable within the available capacities of destination stakeholders.

10.1 Implementation Timeline

Spring (March–May)

Preparation and mobilisation phase:

- Update destination website and digital communication channels.
- Develop campaign materials and welcome kits.
- Install or update visitor signage and QR codes.
- Organise stakeholder workshops and seasonal briefings.
- Launch pre-season communication activities.

Summer (June–September)

Peak implementation phase:

- Activate seasonal campaigns.
- Deliver on-site communication at beaches, ports, trails, and protected areas.
- Conduct visitor surveys.
- Monitor campaign performance and visitor engagement.
- Maintain active social media communication.

Autumn (October-November)

Evaluation and learning phase:

- Analyse campaign results and visitor feedback.
- Review monitoring data and KPIs.
- Identify improvements for the following season.
- Share findings with stakeholders.

Winter (December–February)

Planning and preparation phase:

- Update communication materials.
- Strengthen partnerships.
- Develop new content.
- Prepare seasonal campaigns and budgets.
- Integrate lessons learned into future activities.

10.2 Quick Wins

Several actions can be implemented immediately using existing resources and communication channels.

Quick Win 1: Responsible Visitor Page

Create a dedicated section on the destination website presenting practical visitor guidance on water conservation, refill stations, protected areas, cycling routes, and responsible behaviour.

Quick Win 2: Accommodation Welcome Kit

Distribute a digital welcome kit to accommodation providers containing:

- Visitor guidelines.
- Refill station map.
- Cycling routes.
- Climate messages.
- QR codes.

Quick Win 3: Social Media Storytelling Series

Launch a series of posts highlighting:

- Posidonia meadows and banquettes.
- Water as a precious island resource.
- Sustainable mobility.
- Local conservation initiatives.

Quick Win 4: Nautical Visitor Information

Develop a simple information leaflet and digital guide explaining anchoring zones and the ecological importance of Posidonia.

Quick Win 5: Climate QR Codes

Install QR codes at key visitor locations linking to practical climate guidance and visitor information.

10.3 Key Requirements for Successful Implementation

Successful implementation depends on four enabling factors.

Human Resources

A designated communication coordinator should oversee implementation, stakeholder coordination, and monitoring activities. Additional support is required from the Tourist Board, Nature Park Telašćica, and tourism businesses.

Financial Resources

Funding is required for:

- Campaign materials.
- Signage and interpretation.
- Digital communication.
- Monitoring activities.
- Stakeholder workshops.

Initial implementation can build on support provided through the NaTour4CChange project, while longer-term funding should be integrated into destination management and tourism development budgets.

Technical Resources

Required tools include:

- Website management systems.
- Social media platforms.
- Analytics and monitoring tools.
- QR-code systems.
- Survey platforms.
- Visitor signage infrastructure.

Partnerships

The success of the strategy depends on strong cooperation between NATURA-JADERA, the Tourist Board, Nature Park Telašćica, the Municipality of Sali, tourism businesses, and community organisations.

By building on existing structures and focusing on practical, achievable actions, Dugi Otok can establish a coordinated climate communication system that supports both visitor experience and long-term destination resilience.

CONCLUSION: FROM STRATEGY TO ACTION

A strategy is only as good as the moment someone decides to act on it. This document has mapped the climate risks facing Dugi Otok, defined the behaviours that matter most, identified who needs to communicate what and to whom, and set out a realistic five-year plan for doing so. What remains is the decision to begin.

Dugi Otok does not need a new identity to communicate about climate. It already has one. 'Embraced by Nature' is not a slogan invented for a brochure; it is an accurate description of what visitors experience when they arrive: a sea that is still clear, a coastline that is still intact, and a pace of life that still belongs to the island. The task of this strategy is to protect what that promise is made of.

This Marketing and Communication Strategy represents a shared commitment to safeguarding the natural and cultural heritage that defines Dugi Otok. Over the period 2026–2030, it provides a practical framework for ensuring that visitors not only experience the island's exceptional landscapes and traditions, but also understand how their choices can contribute to their protection and long-term resilience in the face of climate change.

The strategy is founded on a simple premise: people who come to Dugi Otok because of its pristine sea, ancient olive groves, authentic communities, and unspoiled coastline can become active partners in preserving these values when they receive the right information, at the right time, and in ways that are meaningful and easy to follow.

It does not ask visitors to compromise their experience. Rather, it invites them to experience the island more deeply and responsibly: to refill a bottle instead of purchasing single-use plastic, to walk along marked paths that protect fragile habitats, to respect designated anchoring zones that safeguard centuries-old Posidonia meadows, or to discover the island during the quieter and more comfortable months of June and September. These are not limitations, but opportunities to connect more authentically with what makes Dugi Otok unique within the Mediterranean.

Over the five-year implementation period, the strategy delivers three interconnected outcomes.

1. A Shared Voice for Climate Action

For the first time, Dugi Otok will communicate through a common climate narrative, supported by shared messages, visual materials, and practical tools used consistently by all key stakeholders, including the Tourist Board, accommodation providers, Nature Park Telašćica, NATURA-JADERA, the Municipality of Sali, nautical operators, and tourism businesses. Together, the destination will speak with one voice about the issues that matter most: water conservation, Posidonia protection, sustainable mobility, and the long-term health of the island's ecosystems.

2. Measurable Behavioural Change

The strategy translates communication into tangible and measurable action. Progress will be monitored through the indicators defined in the monitoring and evaluation framework, including visitor awareness, engagement with campaign messages, use of refill infrastructure, understanding of Posidonia protection measures, seasonal visitor patterns, and the uptake of sustainable mobility options. Rather than relying on communication reach alone, the strategy focuses on whether communication contributes to changes in visitor knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. The monitoring framework provides the basis for tracking progress over time and for adapting communication activities where results indicate that additional action is needed.

3. Communication as an Integral Part of Nature-based Solutions

Nature-based Solutions can only achieve their full potential when people understand and support them. The non-removal of Posidonia banquettes at Sakarun Beach, ecological mooring systems in Telašćica, water refill stations, and sustainable visitor infrastructure depend not only on physical investment, but also on effective communication that explains their purpose and encourages appropriate use. This strategy therefore positions communication not as a supplementary activity, but as a fundamental component of implementing the Climate Action Plan and supporting lasting adaptation outcomes.

What Success Looks Like in 2030

By 2030, Dugi Otok is recognised as a destination where sustainability is not a marketing claim, but a lived experience. Visitors arrive knowing what makes the island special and how they can help protect it. Local hosts communicate confidently about water, ecosystems, and climate resilience. Communication contributes to greater understanding of Posidonia and supports measures designed to reduce pressures on Sakarun Beach and strengthen the natural protection provided by coastal ecosystems.

Visitor flows are more evenly distributed throughout the year, with the shoulder season continuing to develop as an attractive alternative to peak summer travel. Sustainable mobility options are increasingly visible and accessible, while visitors receive clearer information that enables them to make lower-impact choices during their stay.

From the largest tourism operator to the smallest family apartment, stakeholders work together through a shared commitment to safeguarding the island's natural assets and strengthening its resilience.

The destination brand promise, Embraced by Nature, remains at the heart of this vision. This strategy ensures that the nature doing the embracing continues to thrive for today's visitors, for local communities, and for the generations that will follow.

The nature that embraces Dugi Otok does not need marketing. It needs the people who love it to understand it well enough to protect it. That is what this strategy is for.



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ANNEX: Attendance list for 4th Meeting of the Dugi Otok Tourism Climate Action Task Force – Workshop on Developing the Marketing and Communication Strategy for Climate Action in the Dugi Otok Destination

NaTour4CChange | Interreg Euro-MED | Co-funded by the European Union

Attendance list / Potpisna lista: 4. sastanak Radne grupe za klimatske akcije u turizmu Dugog otoka - radionica za izradu Marketinške i komunikacijske strategije za klimatsku akciju destinacije Dugi otok. **Date/datum:** 2. 6. 2026.

	Name and surname / Ime i prezime	Institution / Organizacija	E-mail	Phone no. / Telefon	Signature / Potpis	Consent for data processing and sharing / Pristanak za obradu i dijeljenje podataka *		
						(1)Contacting / kontaktiranje (✓/×)	2)Photographing and filming / Fotografiranje i snimanje (✓/×)	(3)Reporting / Izvještavanje (✓/×)
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Attendance list / Potpisna lista: 4. sastanak Radne grupe za klimatske akcije u turizmu Dugog otoka - radionica za izradu Marketinške i komunikacijske strategije za klimatsku akciju destinacije Dugi otok **Date/datum:** 2. 6 .2026.

	Name and surname / Ime i prezime	Institution / Organizacija	E-mail	Phone no. / Telefon	Signature / Potpis	Consent for data processing and sharing / Pristanak za obradu i dijeljenje podataka *		
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