

CONCRETE VACA[c]TIONS New Tourism Paradigms Assessing the Built Coastline

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Coastline, Landscape, Built Heritage, Tourism, Reuse

Partner Institutions

ICEA UniPD, Padua, Italy

DICEA UniNA Federico II, Napoli, Italy | *ReLOAD_ UniNA*,
TAM UTH, Vólos, Greece | *Urban Design Lab* (being constituted)

Expected Future Partner Institutions

Turismo de Portugal - I.P.,

OPC - Italian National Coastal Observatory by Legambiente

ΤΑΙΠΕΔ - Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund

OBJECTIVES

The strategic guidelines identified by the European Union for 2050 set the **redevelopment of the built estate as the main objective for the entire construction sector**, with radical repercussions on land and waste management. The tourism built asset is a convenient context where to concentrate architectural and urban investigative efforts for different reasons: **the peculiar hospitality industry property structure**, the tourism industry **high impact on national economies** of the Southern Europe, the **climate change challenges** affecting coastal settlements with related land planning and management strategies, **the restart after the Covid-19 pandemic**, and **the huge theme of vacations to the south**, from the Grand Tour of the past to the Global Tour of nowadays, enriched and modified by the interesting and **very recent dynamic of the so-called "digital nomads"**. A reformulation on accommodations (applied to abandoned, obsolete, inadequate, endangered buildings, etc.) in relation to coastal urbanity and landscape may support operational experiences aimed at the seasonal adjustment of seashore tourism, useful for the safety, care and construction of a more solid territorial economies. Proposing updating paradigms for hospitality means trying to instill the germ for a **new kind of coastal urbanization** able to trigger off the potential leading to transform and overhaul sites and buildings that currently appear to offer spurned and unappealing features.

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ABSTRACT + IMAGES

The proposed investigation follows up from the PhD thesis [1] and several post-doc research programme experiences [2] **exploring underused buildings and infrastructure as main resources** for the transformation and management of a sustainable anthropic territory. These previous activities allow vast and deep knowledge of the field of research and several forms of expression, while enabling the testing and consolidation of two methodological basis (the typo-morphological lecture by the Portuguese research team of *formaurbis LAB* and the compositive-morphological one by the P.I.) applicable to the theme of coastal settlements. The stretches of coastline around the Mediterranean basin and the Portuguese southern waterfronts – besides being graced with distinctive features – bristle with tourism facilities, *objets trouvés*, ordinary forms and materials, **unacknowledged architectures and eyesores impacting the territory**, often enmeshed in complex issues of environmental risks and wavering territorial policies. At the same time, this built stuff is the scattered landscape of the contemporaneity where (within 50 km of major masses of water) by 2050 over half of the world's population will live. If the present trend continued, over the following 50 years, such percentage would climax to more than 75%. Recently, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimated that 680 million people currently live in the low-lying coastal zone and projected this number to reach more than one billion by 2050 (IPCC, 2019). The population potentially exposed to coastal flooding due to sea level rise is projected, in 100 years, to increase by about 20% (IPCC, 2022). A phenomenon, in terms of quantity, according to which it is licit to recognize as a compulsory situation, and not of just an uncalled for theoretical disquisition. The European Union produced The Floods Directive, which «requires Member States to engage their government departments, agencies and other bodies to draw up a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment. This assessment has to consider impacts on human health and life, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity» (EU, 2007). In Portugal there are already fears of bills no longer allocating economic compensation to owners who will not move their built volumes beyond a certain safe distance from the shoreline after the 2050. In these changing times in which the consolidated urban planning laws presents a non-negligible level of uncertainty, it is better to **focus on more immune to sudden changes scenarios**.

What will be done with all the coastal buildings at risk? Is it at all possible to hypothesize the demolition of a great amount of buildings along the coastal areas? How to manage the clearing out and hoarding of further billions of square meters of hardly recyclable rubble? Is it financially sustainable? Is it culturally correct?

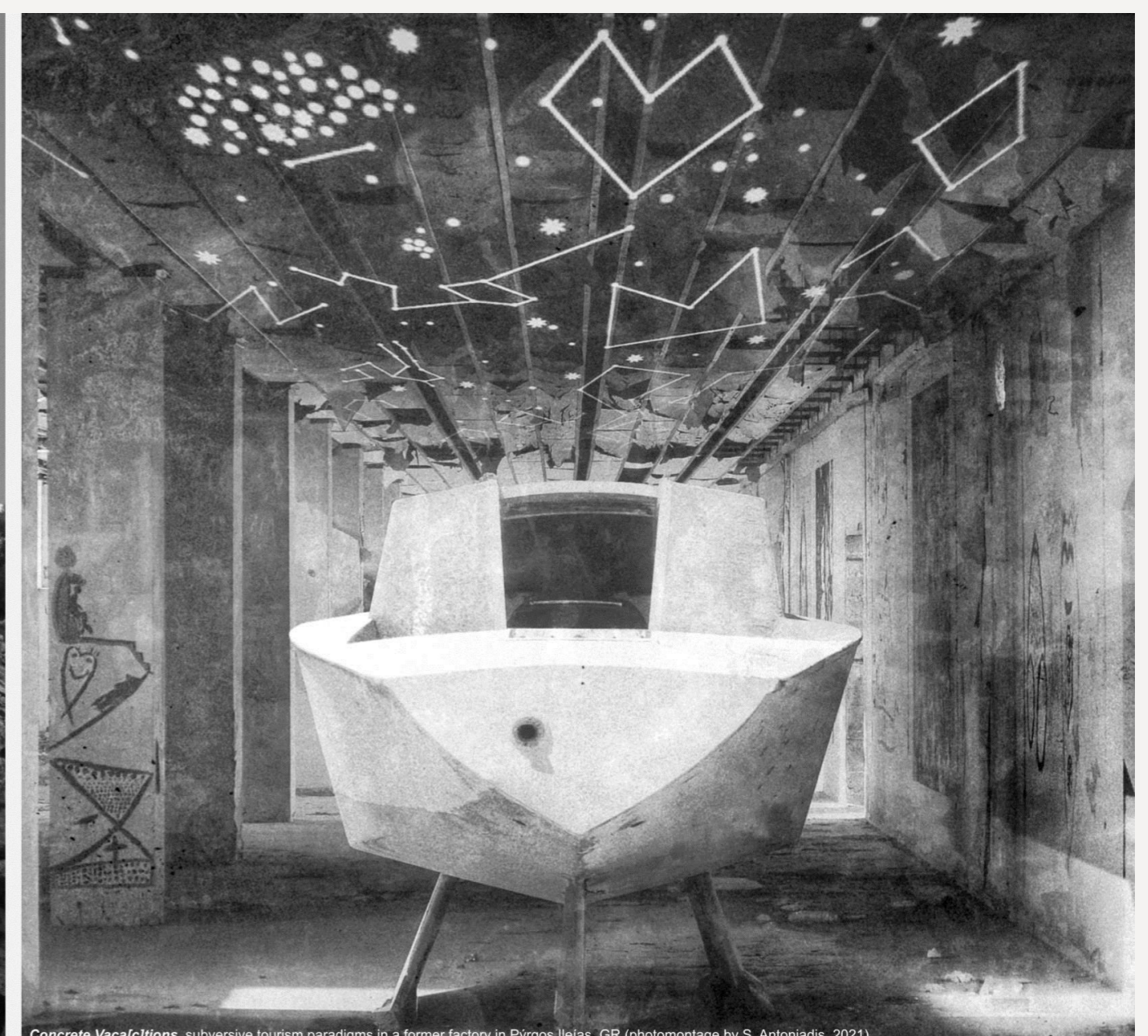
Downstream of these arguments, **"acknowledging" the existing built coastline**, both in terms of recalling/inventing a sort of **heritage component and its effective reusing potentials**, can antidote to obsolescence and reduce the number of constructions to be demolished and, therefore, the production of waste (of which the building process is the first cause in the world). Nowadays, the will to restart after the pandemic provides for **strong and coordinated initiatives of financial injections** for the revitalization of the affected assets (tourism, due to the very limited mobility, was one of the most devastated). For this reason, a speculative reasoning on the formal aspect can amplify a qualitative and sustainable transformation effect of the entire seashore. The objective of the research is to focus on and trigger off the potential leading to transform and overhaul sites that appear to offer spurned and unappealing features. Studying the re-asses tourism landscape means to bring to the notice of owners, decision-takers, tourists and citizens in general the topic so as to avoid total demolitions, waste production and improve an active awareness of the contemporary lands. A reinterpretation of coastal buildings suitable for tourism, that typically included many eyesores, villages with outdated appearance and social paradigms, would also free all this stock from the aesthetic and ethic prejudices that afflict the unacknowledged built coastline, inviting more reading, scenarios and solutions, and **unleashing the potential for reuse and re-signification intrinsic to architecture**.

[1] Antoniadis, S., *The Form of the Unacknowledged Built Coastline: Objects and Informal Settlements along the Mediterranean Waterfronts between Geography, Landscape and Architecture*. DD PhD Thesis, DRACo PhD Programme, UniRoma1 Sapienza (supervisor Luigi Stendardo) + FA.U LISBOA PhD Programme (supervisor Carlos Dias Coelho), 2017.

[2] The first: Regional Operational Programme 'Veneto' 2014-2020 DATA_Developing Abandoned Transurban Areas, DGR n.2216 13/12/2016, project code 2105-114-2216-2016, funded by ESF, UniPD (P.I. Luigi Stendardo; Post-doc Research Fellow Stefanos Antoniadis); the second: Regional Operational Programme 'Veneto' 2014-2020 iWRECKS_Industrial Wrecks: Reusing Enhancing aCKnowledging Sheds, DGR n.11 05/01/2018, project code 2105-59-11-2018, funded by ESF, UniPD (P.I.: Luigi Stendardo; Post-doc Research Fellow: Stefanos Antoniadis); the last: Regional Operational Programme 'Veneto' 2014-2020 S.O.L.E.H. - Sustainable Operation Low Cost Energy for Hotels, DGR n.1463 08/10/2019, project code 2105-0014-1463-2019, funded by ESF, UniPD (P.I.: Angelo Bertolazzi; Advanced Fellowship Visiting: Stefanos Antoniadis).



Coastal Crowning, decommissioned hotel in Sesimbra, Setúbal, PT (photo by S. Antoniadis, 2022).



Concrete Vaca[c]tions, subversive tourism paradigms in a former factory in Pyrgos Iteias, GR (photomontage by S. Antoniadis, 2021).



Athens in a Shed, statue of the Greek Goddess in a decommissioned port storage in Girga, Almadi, IT (photomontage by S. Antoniadis, 2021).



Goodmorning Eyesore, camping and enjoying the monster, Almuri, Naples, IT (photomontage by S. Antoniadis, 2022).

SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE FOR THE DISCIPLINE

The **vocabulary of objects** sprawled throughout the coastal segments **has been considerably enriched**. Nowadays the seashore is dotted with infrastructural junctions, pylons, antennas, cranes, shipyards, quarries, smoking stacks, piezometric towers, hanging water deposits, silos, freight yards, huge tourist facilities, eyesore, unfinished buildings... This amount is an unappealing buildings inventory whose frequent state of neglect is due not only to dubious dealings, but now also to climate change. It is the time to formulate hypotheses for **going beyond the acknowledged cultural tangible heritage** to update the tables of elements that now, in their own way, constitute a new cultural asset by contributing to the formation of an interesting and peculiar contemporary landscape. These intellectual speculations, accompanied by systematic attempts to conduct the theoretical frame to scenarios and projects, can also help to build an **attractive value for the tourism asset** and the new smart workers. Researching on the sector of hotels and accommodation represents an effective methodological opportunity for the **transfer of know-how and results** in the field of architectural and urban design, especially housing, in general. While housing is characterized by the property fragmentation, the hospitality asset embodies solutions and characteristics similar to those of residential buildings but with homogeneous interlocutors whom perceive needs, accuse common problems and await solutions to be applied in series. The effect of applied research strategies is therefore **more quickly and effectively measurable and transferable** to other fields of the discipline.

EXPECTED ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT

The **strategic guidelines identified by the European Union** for 2050 have established the **redevelopment of the built heritage** as the main objective for the entire construction sector, with a radical impact on land management, the training of professionals and the awareness of property owners. The objective of the research is to **focus on and trigger off the potential leading to transform** and overhaul sites that appear to offer spurned and unappealing features. Studying the re-asses tourism landscape means to bring to the notice of **owners, decision-takers, tourists and citizens in general** the topic so as to avoid total demolitions, **waste production** and improve an active awareness of the contemporary lands. A reformulation on coastal accommodations (especially applied to abandoned, obsolete, inadequate, endangered buildings, etc.) in relation to coastal urbanity and landscape may support operational experiences aimed at the seasonal adjustment of coastal tourism, useful for the safety, care and construction of a **more solid territorial economies**. Offering new formal paradigms for accommodating new displaced workers means fostering the dissolution of boundaries between tourist enclaves, accommodation infrastructures and the inhabited fabric, with **social and cultural improvements and exchanges for the communities**.

RESEARCH PLAN AND TASKS

CONCRETE VACA[c]CTIONS research plan in a nutshell

Turning on the spotlight of research on the coastal tourism asset to outline strategies to **guide investments** is the key to a dynamic and innovative territory remaining competitive on the global market. A team of young and senior ULisboa + UniNA + UniPD + UTH researchers and advisors will work to identify coastal segments and obsolete, underused, decommissioned buildings, and outline transformation scenarios, producing pilot architectural projects on concrete case studies, combining the knowledge of the territory and the proper theoretical methodologies of the network of scholars involved. CONCRETE VACA[c]CTIONS is also project **open to listening** to the needs of those involved in the dynamics of innovation and to the pro-activeness of those who manage the tourism industry, and for this reason it will be important to set up intersections with institutions and network partners in the sector.

It is intended that the process can cross teaching experience in which the topic and the methods can be seen as pedagogic tools that supports and informs creative and innovative processes of **reading and re-writing the contemporary landscape**, as well as urban and architectural intervention.

I. case studies atlas

A successful research project cannot be separated from the identification of case studies chosen from the most interesting and contradictory locations, not by chance represented by the partner network (especially ULisboa, UniNA, UTH): **Central/Southern Portugal ("Mediterranean Portugal")**, **Southern Italy, Greece**.

It will be optimal to proceed with a **paradigmatic selection of a building for each typical formal category of the tourism estate**, drawing from eyesore to a brutal and scenic presence (towers and huge buildings), single or cluster objects sometimes minute and muffled (medium and small-size resorts), and settlements more similar to urban fabrics (holiday villages in the second half of the 20th century), embodying on the one hand categories such as abstraction, rationalist or metaphysical, monumentalism, and on the other hand a certain *naïveté* typical of Southern Europe ascendancy.

Each case study will be represented according to the previously stabilized methodology, goals and to define the selection and representation criteria of the case studies.

However, it is essential that the selected cases **using the same criteria and drawings**, in digital format, for documenting, comparing, and architectural-urban designing. This task can be developed over a period of three months. It is useful to consider taking advantage of the great buildings atlas set up within the Research Project "Building Typology - Morphological Inventory of the Portuguese City", financed by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (ref. PTDC / ART-DAQ / 30110/2017) and developed at the Lisbon School of Architecture of the Universidade de Lisboa by the research group *formaurbis LAB*. This database creates the opportunity to access themes and a vast documentary material aimed at the entire national territory.

II. method

In-depth study of upgraded urban analysis methodologies: surveys; morphological

reading in time and space; **logics of aggregation; spatial principles; formation and constitution processes; compositional reading of elements and layers of the territory; interactions between the building and the context.**

Comparative study and descriptive synthesis of the case studies through "ideogrammatic" drawings and photos: redefinition and reconfiguration of spaces, functions and activities; identification of new ways of touring/inhabiting the contemporary seashore; processes of urban and architectural regeneration and reconfiguration).

Reporting and writing goals and considerations: intermediate and final moments of reflection and sharing with the national and international scientific community through an intensive design lab and an appropriate number of **presentations/publications** for a research project of short duration (one year); checking intersections and stimulations for **new research lines and topics**.

III. sharing visions

Exercising gathering fragments of contemporaneity (by surveys, photographic campaigns, drawings and scenarios), in the form of an **up-cycled atlas of elements** composing a possible vocabulary, the systematic comparing of disregarded and decommissioned buildings of the present with cases of the past awarded of dignity, **the unveiling of formal dialogues between point-like elements** – genetically heterogeneous – of the different coastal fronts may represent an observation in order to overcome mere refurbishment benchmark practices. The study of the re-asses tourism landscape, combined with a strong outputs dissemination, means to bring to the notice of owners, decision-takers, tourists and citizens in general the topic so as to avoid total demolitions, waste production, or the whole displacements of volumes, and improve an active awareness of the contemporary landscape. Some proposals, **in the form of scenarios**, can come out of an intensive workshop on the research case studies, **displayed in an exhibition and conveyed by publications**.

Workshop: some team meetings will be held, in a workshop format, to consolidate the proposed methodology, as well as to determent the case studies to be worked on. One of the events may be open to the students and teachers participation to introduce in the form of a intensive international design lab to be held in Lisbon or in another academic partner location.

Exhibition: an exhibition will be held to present final results. The exhibition will be supported by the graphic elements drawn along the programme, as well as workshop outputs (design plates, sketch-models. etc.), and will be set up in a frequented space of the Faculty of Architecture (FA.U.Lisboa), such as the Nave or the main Atriums. **Research dissemination: publication activity is essential in order to disseminate and discuss the results with the scientific community**, with stakeholders and society in general. an appropriate number of publications for a research project of short duration will be produced not only at the end of the activities, but also during the process to facilitate sharing, mid-term evaluation, review, and adjustment of research activities in progress. The publications will be conveniently differentiated by range and target,

consistent with the speed and circulation of the eligible journals. The most important output will be an indexed scientific publication, checking intersections and stimulations for new research lines and topics. In this last task, it is intended to build a synthesis of the work, with the development of a scientific paper that includes interpretative and theoretical texts, selections of photos, drawings and diagrams.

IV. involved scholars' skills and tasks

The integrated, collaborating and external members of the research team are selected on the basis of experience and skills specific to the project.

Stefanos Antoniadis [FA.U.Lisboa]: during the DD PhD investigation and the four post-doc grant research fellowships developed interests and skills related to the present proposal: the built coastline made of objects, infrastructure and settlements between geography, landscape and architecture. Such studies have traced a line of research predominantly dealing with the reading of **seashore unacknowledged settlements, eyesores and dismissed or fallen-in-disrepair buildings**.

João Silva Leite [FA.U.Lisboa | *formaurbis LAB*]: scholar in the field of urban morphology and fresh from his on-going post-doc research activity on the use of **intermediate spaces between buildings and mobility infrastructures** with the supervision by Portuguese geographer Álvaro Domingues, whose unbiased approach to the perception of the contemporary territory constitutes an added value and update on techniques.

José Miguel Silva [FA.U.Lisboa | *formaurbis LAB*]: scholar who, since his PhD thesis, has been dealing with the **processes of heritage invention**. Such intellectual speculations are of fundamental importance for the overcoming of established coastal heritage.

Rui Justo [FA.U.Lisboa | *formaurbis LAB*]: PhD candidate studying the built environment **at the scale of the building** and has held tutoring roles in design workshops.

João Rafael Santos [FA.U.Lisboa | *URBinLAB*]: awarded scholar at the territorial scale, P.I. of Metro Public Net research project (PTDC / ART-DAQ / 0919/2020), helpful for supervising the systemization **among clusters of tourism activities and inhabited centers**, essential field of investigation for paradigms that increasingly see the boundary between inhabitant and traveler (digital nomads) dissolving.

Maria Rita Pais [FA.U.Lisboa]: scholar currently involved in the international and multidisciplinary research project "SOS Climate Waterfront" (EU Commission Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions sosclimatewaterfront 823901); her experience is helpful to frame **next future challenges related to the built stock** of the coastal tourism asset.

Luigi Stendardo [DICEA UniNA | *ReLOAD_UniNA*]: P.I. of several international research projects (ROP ESF D.A.T.A., ROP ESF IWRECKS) related to the **transformation, reuse and re-signification of existent decommissioned areas and buildings**.

Angelo Bertolazzi [ICEA UniPD]: P.I. of the recent international research programme on the **refurbishment strategies** in the Mediterranean area among technology, architecture and communication ROP ESF "S.O.L.E.H." (2105-0014-1463-2019), helpful scholar in the field of the transformation of tourism buildings.

Fabiano Micocci [TAM UTH | *Urban Design Lab*]: advisor of the ROP ESF "S.O.L.E.H." for the **Greek partnership** and helpful for the case studies search.

EXPECTED SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

This work allow vast and deep knowledge of the field of work and several forms of expression, while enabling the **testing and consolidation of methodological basis** (the typo-morphological lecture by the Portuguese research team of *formaurbis LAB* and the compositivo-morphological one by the P.I.) applicable to the theme of coastal tourism settlements.

It is intended that the process can cross and flow in teaching experience in which the same topic and the methods can be seen as **pedagogic tools in undergraduate courses** and laboratories that supports and informs creative and innovative processes of reading and writing the contemporary landscape, as well as urban and architectural intervention.

To disseminate the research outcomes – in progress and at the end – it is stated, in addition to the exhibition, to exploit scientific magazines of belonging as a scientific and editorial board member, as well as other indexed journals of course. Such published reflections could **spill out from the academic walls and support operational experiences** aimed at the seasonal adjustment of coastal tourism, useful for the safety, care and construction of a more solid territorial communities and economies.

BUDGET: € 7.500,00

The expenses to be carried out in the development of the research project aims at the best execution of each task, considering human resources, missions, workshops, exhibitions and scientific dissemination. Thus, the following expenses are expected: 1) *Human resources*: as part of the activities described in task I and III, a scholarship holder will be included for a period of 6 months, with full-time employment. A total outlay of € 5.500 (73%) is expected. 2) *Missions for local surveys and scholarly exchanges*: the missions are external activities carry out to observed, research and collect data, as well as to set up brief exchange and training mobilities between research team members. A maximum of € 900 (12%) is expected for their implementation, also considering that they are likely to move across Portuguese national borders. 3) *Design lab activities*: minimally supporting the invitation of an advisor as a tutor or professor to assist or teach in an intensive workshop, and printing a lab-booklet for a limited number of participants – plus some posters of the event – as well as the graphic bases related to the pilot case studies, a budget of € 400 (5%) is stated. 4) *Exhibition*: to print the poster, the best outputs of the research project conjointly with the best scenarios from the workshop, is conceivable to produce hardback prints – dimension to be yet defined – with a total value of € 450 (7%). 5) *Dissemination*: to cover some – or at least a part - of scientific publications fees, typical for some high-impact journals, € 250 (3%) are allocated.