



PILOT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

IMPACT TOURISM

Project FOST INNO

FOSTERING TOURISM INNOVATION SYSTEM IN ADRIATIC-IONIAN REGION

Regional development agency of Northern Primorska Ltd. Nova Gorica

June 2019

1. Introduction

Project FOST INNO aims to contribute to the longterm growth of tourism in the Adriatic-Ionian region through innovations capacity building. Common challenges of the programme area as; prolonging tourism season, improving quality in tourism and fostering better tourism employment conditions, are going to be tackled in accordance with sustainability principles to reinforce region's competitive position. The overall objective of the project is to improve and ensure long term competitiveness of the Adriatic-Ionian area by enhancing innovation capacity in sustainable tourism.

In Februar 2019, partners of the project FOST INNO announced a public call, as the activity for selection of two best innovative ideas that will support and foster the development of sustainable tourism in the Adriatic-Ionian region. The subject of the call were innovative products (new or significantly improved product), innovative services (new or significantly improved service) and innovative business models or business processes (new or significantly improved business model or process, that is different from the existing ones and is an innovative way of performing business to achieve higher added value of the company or process).

Selection process of two ideas was based on criteria that had to have in mind originality, regional identity and potential for application in all Adriatic-Ionian countries. Special attention was placed on the innovation solution's impact regarding sustainable tourism principles. Management Council of the Adriatic-Ionian Tourism Innovation Centre prepared the followed 5 main criteria (which were divided in more subcriteria) to evaluate innovation ideas. The selection standards Maximum score that each idea could reach was 70 points.

From 25 ideas, that were received on the public call, the Management Council of the Adriatic-Ionian Innovation Centre selected the following ideas: MOVE HANDY and IMPACT TOURISM.

2. Description of the idea

2.1 Description of idea

Tourism will never be entirely "green" or fully socially responsible, since each tourist makes a certain negative impact. The trends of rapid rise in global tourism have brought forth the negative effects of tourism, which poses a serious global challenge. Various forms of sustainable and responsible tourism include responses to such challenges associated with environmental protection and preservation of natural and cultural heritage. Impact tourism represents their upgrade. In that context, "green" is considered as care for human wellbeing, nature and cultural environment. As a result, we are seeking opportunities to maximize the beneficial influence of tourists and its activation - all through the model of social entrepreneurship which is not driven solely by profit. The purpose of impact tourism is to offer both tourists and tourism product providers a helping hand in co-creating a social footprint together, but also a possibility to create measurable social impact while responding to various social challenges.

In recent years, among tourists and consumers in general, there is a growing trend of spending holidays that can provide authentic social experience, which they can share with the less privileged individuals with equal desire for personalization, including mass products/services. All of the above means the transition from "having" to "being". Impact tourism is an attempt to provide a holistic response to the dilemmas of modern tourism.

Impact Tourism as developed consist out of 3 main packages:

- Impact Tourism methodology
- Web portal www.impact-tourism.net
- Unformal network WITH - World Impact Tourism Habitat

Products are divided according to the product typology (experience, accommodation, transport, food / beverages, event, tour package, etc.) and can be found as such through the search engine. They can also be searched according to the location where the products are available.

Each product includes a summary and the story thereof, relevant information regarding its implementation and a description of its impacts. Since we seek to identify and describe the indicators and effects of each individual impact tourism product, the indicators have been marked (illuminated) accordingly depending on their type. The main intention thereof is to inform tourists about the individual indicators associated with tourism products. Our purpose, however, is not to certify the products or to differentiate between "more" and "less" useful tourism products.

Impact products are designed and developed on the basis of 10 + 1 economic, social and environmental indicators which are controlled and verified by the impact team. Potential tourists on our portal are thus given the opportunity to see various products with lighted or illuminated indicators that meet impact tourism conditions.

Products with multiple illuminated indicators are products with many positive effects on the local environment.

In order to scale up impact tourism and develop global business model we established WITH - World Impact Tourism Habitat, unformal network of key stakeholders, interested in developing IT around the globe.

As a pilot project IT is running in Slovenia with the support of the Slovenian Tourist Organisation STO and is going to be globalised in coming weeks. Namely IT was presented in March to the Liberty International Tourism Group on their annual event in Lago di Garda and planed is to include their offices as national partners in 59 countries.

At the same time European Economic and Social Committee is in 2019 for the first time in official EU documents including also Impact Tourism as a very promising social business model and proposing to the European Commission to support its development

2.2 Innovative part of the idea

For the first time we have a set of criteria's to evaluate impact of individual product and to "impactise" products in order to maximise their public beneficial inprint.



It consists out of 10+1 criterias, each of them includes 4 indicators.

Main innovation toward sustainable tourism and other business models known in tourism industry is, that within existing models priority is set to minimise the harm the tourism bring, while Impact Tourism offers tools to maximise impact of tourism products on tourists, local environment, challenges and society and to the tourism industry.

2.3 Regional and national significance

Adriatic Ionian countries will be testing field (based on the experience in Slovenia) due to fact that our partner Liberty Adriatic is present in all mentioned countries. At the same time IT is global business model appropriate for whole globe and will step by step become alternative to global tourism platforms. After testing period (limited to Slovenia for 2 years, app. 500 tourists included) we estimate app. 10.000 people being included into impact tourism in next 2 years in 10 countries. Region meets in many aspects almost all aspects that impact tourism deals with:

- quality of tourism products
- challenges of social responsibility and sustainability of tourism products - local impact of products
- lack of link between tourism products and local social challenges
- challenges related to innovation for higher unique experiences products
- mobilizing role of tourists and creation of his/her impact portfolio
- limitations with inclusion and accessibility of products
- limited tole of social and fair economy in tourism industry - lack of impact measurement tools/instruments

2.4 Financial/business prospects

Budget line*	EUR	Note/explanation
Staff costs	48.000 per year	2 person salaries, 2 years
External expert	10.000	6-8 external consultants
Equipment	3.000	2 laptops, IT costs
Promotion, marketing	10.000	IT marketing, fairs and presentations

With 15.000 sold impact tourism products in 3 years (10.000 in 2 years) with app. price of 50 EUR per product we estimate around 750.000 EUR turn over, app.

225.000 EUR (30%) remains within WITH network, the rest is payment for impact tourism products providers (“hosts”).

We also expect European Commission to finance pilot projects in the impact tourism field in year 2020/21. Amount not known yet.

Indeed impact tourism contributes to employment possibilities. Added value is that all national partners and we are including vulnerable groups. In Slovenia in pilot period we include victims of violence into the project development.

2.5 Sustainability

For each of three mentioned areas we have a set of criterias for products to fulfil:

LOCAL IMPACT

The local environment is involved in the development of the IT product. Its social benefit is enhanced by implementing the ITP in local environments which are not overburdened by tourism

The ITP is implemented in a partnership with local stakeholders (local tourist guides, providers of services in the supply chain, local transportation providers, etc.).

The ITP includes local products, local brands or PDOs, local food, local gifts (Impact Gifts made by social enterprises and NGOs).

The ITP includes local products, local brands or PDOs, local food, local gifts (Impact Gifts made by social enterprises and NGOs).

SUSTAINABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY: The ITP is fully integrated into the local environment and facilitates a genuine contact with the local environment and population.

The ITP includes measures and motivates the tourist (which includes an Impact Pledge option) towards sustainable and responsible conduct (energy saving and efficiency, low carbon footprint, zero waste, recycling, re-use).

The ITP includes measures that serve to conserve cultural, natural and social heritage.

Society-, environment- and nature-friendly products and services (plastic-free, etc.).

2The ITP informs on and promotes the use and uses local and public transport, bicycles, other forms of green mobility, etc.

VOLNURABLE GROUPS - ITP pays special attention to and facilitates the inclusion and accessibility of vulnerable groups or individuals.

The development and implementation of the ITP includes vulnerable groups or individuals (*definition provided in the appendix).

The ITP is specifically intended for and tailored to vulnerable groups/individuals and contributes to addressing challenges associated therewith.

The activities of the ITP facilitate accessible inclusion of vulnerable groups/individuals (facilities, transportation, performance of activities, etc.).

The ITP includes incentives and measures that promote the participation of vulnerable groups/individuals in the ITP (such as discounts, favourable conditions).

3. Instructions for testing

The main purpose of the concept IMPACT TOURISM is to develop products with beneficial social impact and increase tourist's awareness of sustainable travelling.

The purpose of impact tourism is to offer both tourists and tourism product providers a helping hand in co-creating a social footprint together, but also a possibility to create measurable social impact while responding to various social challenges. The IMPACT products should be developed in response to specific needs of society.

Based on the description of the idea, we propose the following phases:

- 1) 3 workshops for Impactisation of existing tourist products
- 2) Potential Impact tourism platform users' feedback
- 3) Development of an innovative product with IMPACT methodology - one of the cases applied on a public call
- 4) Testing of developed Impact product on specific population

3.1 3 workshops for Impactisation of existing tourist products

The existing platform of IMPACT TOURISM already includes a few products that went through the process of impactisation. The existing products are evaluated based on the Impact indicators, offering maximum of 11 points.

The indicators for developing an Impact product are:

- **QUALITY** - ITPS are high-quality tourism products.
- **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY** - The ITP includes measures that reduce negative impacts of tourism on society, the environment and nature as a whole.
- **LOCAL IMPACT** - The ITP is fully integrated into the local environment and facilitates a genuine contact with the local environment and population.
- **SOCIAL CHALLENGE** - The ITP is associated with and positively contributes to addressing a social challenge.
- **UNIQUE EXPERIENCE** - Subject to a unique recipe, the ITP is a social challenge-associated unique story which contributes to a personalised experience of the ITO and addressing of a social challenge.
- **IMPACT TOURIST** - The ITP facilitates an active and efficient socially beneficial footprint of the tourist and promotes a sustainable link with the social challenge.
- **INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY** - ITP pays special attention to and facilitates the inclusion and accessibility of vulnerable groups or individuals.
- **SOCIAL AND FAIR ECONOMY** - The provider and ITP are organised and implemented in a way that contributes to the objectives of social economy and fair trade.
- **IMPACT MEASUREMENT** - By empowering stakeholders, the provider efficiently evaluates social impacts and communicates them to the public.
- **VERIFICATION** - The ITP provider or ITP is included in various schemes that verify relevant indicators for achieving social impacts.
- **BEYOND THE HORIZON** - The provider implements the ITP in other innovative and efficient manners that significantly contribute to the social impacts of the ITP.

We propose in the testing phase Impactisation of at least 10 products through 3 workshops and individual consultations. The workshops are held for tourist providers, tourist information centres, etc. The workshops would be held in three different regions (Coastal-Karst, Goriška, Soča Valley).

The result of the Impactisation of existing products would be publication of the products on the Impact tourism platform where potential users could search for IT experiences and also arrange a stay/meal...

3.2 Potential Impact tourism platform users' feedback

Idea creators submit a list of information they would like to obtain from potential users. They define groups of potential users. The expert conducts a survey among the proposed potential user groups. Based on the research, he prepares a report and suggestions for improvement available to all project partners.

3.3 Development of an innovative product with IMPACT methodology

The concept of Impact tourism also includes the specific methodology to develop new impact products. In the testing phase of the project FOST INNO we would test the methodology on development of 1 specific product.

In agreement with the applicants, the RDA SP selects one non-selected product on a public call. Idea creators provide Impact tourism methodology to the RDA SP and to an external expert who will in accordance with the methodology prepare the product to be ready for pilot implementation. He will also prepare a report on the development of the product and its characteristics, which will be available to all project partners. The new product will be published on the Impact tourism online platform.

3.4 Testing of developed Impact product on specific population

The external expert tests the pilot implementation of an Impact product on a specific population, in accordance with financial and timing capabilities. The report should be available to all project partners.

4. Timeline of testing

Phase/Month	July	August	September
3 workshops for Impactisation of existing tourist products			
Potential Impact tourism platform users' feedback			
Development of an innovative product with IMPACT methodology			
Testing of developed Impact product on specific population			

5. Metrics of success

In order to evaluate the testing as successful, these are the established parameters:

1. 3 workshops for Impactisation of existing tourist products
Workshops should be organised in 3 different regions and at least 8 tourist providers should attend each of them. Based on Impact methodology at least 3 tourist products should be adapted on each workshop and published on the online platform.
2. Potential Impact tourism platform users' feedback
We should get at least 15 feedbacks from different platform users.
3. Development of an innovative product with IMPACT methodology
The external expert should adapt the non-selected innovative idea of the public call in accordance with the Impact methodology and the adapted idea should reach at least 9 points on the evaluation of the Impact indicators.
4. Testing of developed Impact product on specific population
The developed Impact product should be tested on at least 10 platform users.