

D3.4.2 SWOT and Impact Analysis on the Adoption of Water Efficiency and Management Solutions by the Tourism Sector

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Please give a general description of the analysis:

The objective of this WP 3.4 was to make a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) of the territorial context in the Med coastal areas for the assessment of water efficiency context on one side and to assess the impact of water efficiency measures on the MED coastal areas socio-economic and environmental issues on the other side. These factors were selected and organised according to the PESTEL methodology (Political, Economical, Socio-cultural, Technological, Environmental, Legal). For each partner, several respondents from different professional positions were requested.

Strengths:

- Water efficiency oriented local policies
- Incitative water prices and special pricing (progressive, seasonal)
- Growing trends in the number of tourists
- Good knowledge about the resource and existing solutions
- Awareness (of policy makers, tourism staff, tourists)
- Traditional value of scarce water
- Water sharing culture
- Good condition of water infrastructures
- Good availability of technology to measure water and to reduce water consumption
- Availability of water recycling technologies

Weaknesses:

- Low water price (low incentives)
- Growing trends in tourism standards (more water intensive)

Cultural perception of water resources as unlimited

- Cultural reluctance to water reuse
- Little interest to promote sustainable tourism image of the territory
- Aging and leaking water infrastructures (necessary renewal)
- Poorly developed technology to recover rainwater
- Slow development of technology for water reuse
- Available supply of alternative water resources as a demotivator for efficiency

Opportunities:

- Existing sustainable development policies at national level
- Existing international sustainable tourism development policies
- Adoption of internal policies of tourism operators, certification programs
- Effective framework for water governance, with participation of water users and integrated planning
- Reasonable return on investment for water saving devices
- Scarce water resources in an increasingly vulnerable region to climate change consequences (trends and extreme events)
- Vulnerable ecosystems highly dependent on water flows
- Most water stressed season is the most intensive for tourism

Threats:

Four categories of threats have been put in light:

- Competition with touristic destinations with more water supply
- Lack of coordination between urban planning and water use planning
- Possible legal barriers to water reuse
- Weak enforcement of regulations

Recommendations:

Among the main favorable elements of the context on which these strategies can be built are the recognized importance of local policies and a good knowledge of the water issue locally. Water pricing is a complex issue which is crucial to have an incentive effect for water efficiency measures. Awareness is another way to raise the value of scarce water. Tourism activity is growing, but is still oriented towards the 3S (Sea, Sun, Sand) model of mass tourism, with raising standards developing for more water intensive activities. Sustainable development policies, as well as increased international awareness of the need for sustainable tourism practices present opportunities to transform this model of tourism. However the threats to touristic competitiveness, in an increasingly vulnerable region to climate change is a factor that raises concern and needs to be tackled. The competitiveness aspect was also the most concerning one in the impact analysis of water efficiency measures, where most of impacts were considered as positive.