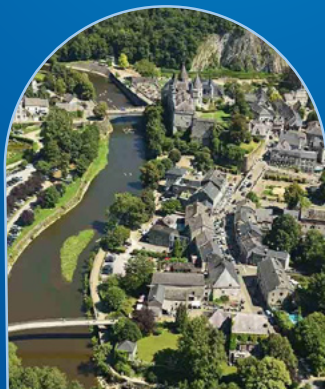# SUSTAINABLE TOURISM INDICATORS

MANUAL OF TRANSFER
OF BEST PRACTICES

CONTENTS

The manual is organised in four steps that you go through to learn about something and change your behaviour based on that learning

Take better informed policy decisions

Politicians and technical staff take decisions based on intuition, habits, external influences and limited information. This may lead to suboptimal policies that make your destination less competitive and sustainable.

You can help your destination take better management and policy decisions by contributing to collect better data, which can be used by a number of stakeholders to understand more clearly what are the impacts that tourism is causing in your destination.

Change can be daunting initially, but there are many benefits from reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of the current way of working, and seeking information that can help you create more positive impacts that benefit the totality of the population of your destination, while making a more sustainable use of your resources.

If you share this same desire, continue reading!

WHO SHOULD USE THIS MANUAL?

This manual will help politicians and technical staff in charge of the development and implementation of tourism policies to take better tourism management decisions, in order to improve the sustainability of the destinations they are responsible for.

MITOMED+ Models of Integrated Tourism in the MEDiterranean Plus is an Interreg MED funded project that supports involved regions in developing a responsible and sustainable maritime and coastal tourism. This manual includes 20 cases of good practice, including three from Mitomed+ project partners: Poreč (Istria County, Croatia), Almunecar (Granada, Spain)and Andalucia (Spain).

This manual aims to transfer best practices in the development, implementation and use of sustainable tourism indicators.

The manual takes a problem solving approach by identifying common challenges faced by tourism destination managers (both at political and technical level) at each of the stages of the development, implementation and usage of sustainable tourism indicators.

The data collected through interviews focuses on the evaluation of the motivations, triggers and barriers for municipal tourist boards and regional tourism government agencies to develop, implement and use sustainable tourism indicators.

The data is relevant to the most commonly used sustainable tourism indicators by destination management organisations, as well as the contextual factors that facilitate or impede the introduction of indicators and the practice of evidence-based decision making in tourism policy.

CASE STUDY MAP

1. Use data to support fundraising and public support proposals (Majjistral National Park, Malta) p8

2. Create a culture of trust and collaboration (Skyros Island, Aegean, Greece) p9

3. Relate questions in the visitor survey to the strategic objectives of the destination (Poreč, Istria County, Croatia) p11

4. Standardise data collected by businesses to improve destination-level monitoring (The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark, The Burren, Ireland) p12

5. Use sustainability indicators to create dialogue amongst stakeholders (South Sardinia, Italy) p14

6. Create the pre-conditions to develop a destination management organisation (Vlorë and Shkodër, Albania) p15

7. Measure what matters to the destination type and the specific location (Alexandroupoli and Keramoti, East Macedonia and Thrace, Greece) p18

8. Collaborate with local universities to kickstart the implementation of the indicators (Montecatini Terme, Tuscany, Italy) p20

9. Collate existing data sets to develop a cost-effective sustainability indicator set (Zagreb, Croatia) p21

10. Make the most of official statistics and administrative records to have continuous information at a minimum cost (Almuñecar, Granada, Spain) p23

11. Use indicators as a diagnostic and management tool (Gozo, Malta) p26

12. Develop an index to effectively plan and manage the land use deriving from tourism (The Azores, Portugal) p27

13. Coordinate and standardise the production of data between different statistical sources for an integrated tourism management (Barcelona, Spain) p29

14. Teach destination managers to continuously monitor tourism planning through indicators (Andalucia, Andalucia, Spain) p30

15. Build trust and momentum amongst local stakeholders by addressing their needs (Samaria National Park, Crete, Greece) p32

16. Use indicators to justify funding for sustainability measures (Durbuy, Wallonia, Belgium) p33

17. Use indicators as part of a national certification programme (Slovenia) p36

18. Use indicators to demonstrate that sustainability increases the competitiveness of your destination (Torroella de Montgrí-L'Estartit, Girona, Spain) p37

19. Design motivating sustainability policies to involve the private sector (Sant Llorenç des Cardassar, Majorca, Spain) p39

20. Make a census of your resources in your destination to innovate your tourism products (Terrae Anio Iubensanae, Lazio, Italy) p40

Step 1.
Learn about indicators

Develop routines to scan information, in cost-effective ways. The most important information needs to be used to determine your sustainability indicators.

Indicators inform readers about the state of environmental, social and economic performance and the management processes in place, in order to deliver forms of tourism that contribute to the sustainable management and development of a territory.

Indicators can simplify the complex reality in which we live. Especially in the sustainability field, they mean that policy makers can concretely understand related issues and consequently base their decisions on evidence.

You need to learn which useful information sources exist, and how to use them. It is more cost-effective to use data from reliable and inexpensive third party sources, than to collect your own. This means learning how to access published data, and how to determine its quality. And this means learning to collaborate with other stakeholders.

Collecting your own data can be expensive. First find out which information you already produce in-house, but you are not currently using. Collect new data only when you know that later on you can use it as indicators to inform decisions.

1.A. WHY GENERATE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION WITH SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS?

Sustainability indicators capture evidence about the economy, society, culture and/or environment of an organisation or place. Data is widely collected used across public and private sectors, for different purposes. Data is used for an indicator when it is used to diagnose or reveal something that is of particular value to someone.

There are many reasons why you may want to use more sustainability indicators in your job:

Collect baseline data: Indicators allow you to critically understand the actual and not the perceived current situation as the starting point for destination planning.

Demonstrate willingness to progress: The actual process of collecting indicators is in itself a demonstration of the willingness to take action for a more sustainable destination, and a sign of proactivity.

Create a culture of collaboration: Develop the habits of stakeholder dialogue and collaboration, engage them in the collection of data, the measurement of indicators and the culture of data-driven decisions.

Benchmark yourself: Data is essential to compare your destination with others. Comparative data is often the most effective to raise awareness of substandard performance, and to identify good practices to learn from.

Forecast: Use data to simulate future scenarios and to anticipate changes.

Measure progress: Indicators capture evidence of the progress made towards a goal, and whether the actions implemented to meet that goal are appropriate.

Identify the weakest links: The interpretation of indicators allows you to identify strengths and opportunities which are key assets for the destination, as well as priority areas for which immediate action is required.

Formalise current actions: By identifying concrete indicators and measuring data, you can formalise and make explicit a number of actions that may have been assumed or implicit, and as a result, not given the sufficient value.

Be accountable and visible: You may be required to provide evidence of how effective your actions are, and the progress made towards sustainability, by either your line manager, politicians, the media or citizens in general. This same data allows you to apply for awards and fulfil external reporting requirements of certification programmes.

CASE STUDY: MAJJISTRAL NATIONAL PARK, MALTA

Use data to support fundraising and public support proposals

OUR STORY

[Darren Saliba](#) (Manager, The Heritage Parks Federation) uses data from a variety of sources to create a business case to expand and improve the Majjistral National Park. The Heritage Parks Federation manages the Majjistral National Park on behalf of the Maltese government, with two full time and three part time staff, and volunteers. Despite being only 2.5km2 of coastal area, this is the largest protected area in Malta, where the main island is already 1/3 urbanised.

OUR ACTIONS

Darren's team uses a portfolio of data sources to make a business case to expand the national park, and to fundraise to set up visitor infrastructure. The team is proposing to expand the area of the park by a factor of six as part of an application to become a Geopark. They are also seeking funding to repurpose the military facilities as tourist infrastructure and park management offices.

The team uses data to support both investment proposals. Their low operational budget means they need to be creative with data collection, yet credible enough to convince funders and politicians, and to generate public support.

The rangers and volunteers collect visitor centre statistics, feedback from site visitors, site usage data on engagement in organised and desired activities as well as trampling and non-authorised activities. They also use independently published data on demand for ecotourism, as well as preliminary results from the Mediterranean Experience of Ecotourism (MEET) project development of ecotourism packages, to forecast demand for new services. Finally, they host university teams to collect peer-review published evidence on the geological and cultural significance of the site to support the heritage value of the site.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

· Be clear about what is the purpose of collecting data.

· Combine data sets to create a collective picture of your site.

· Present your data based on the needs and interests of the people that you want to influence.

CASE STUDY: SKYROS ISLAND, AEGEAN, GREECE

Create a culture of trust and collaboration

OUR STORY
Municipality of Skyros has assigned to Dr Ioannis Pappas (Green Evolution SA) a mission to create the baseline analysis and to develop the Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the destination. This requires getting local stakeholders to believe in the potential of sustainable tourism as a development tool for the island, and the ability of a consultancy team to lead on this process.

OUR ACTIONS
The process of collecting data from multiple stakeholders is being used to do more than to develop sustainability indicators that inform the sustainable tourism basics. Mapping stakeholders meant acknowledging the need to work collaboratively, and to include the voices of both those that are directly involved in tourism and those indirectly affected by it.

A culture of collaboration requires trust amongst these stakeholders, in order to have a functioning Destination Tourism Council that takes ownership for the implementation of the sustainable tourism strategy. This Council then holds the local government staff (municipality) to account for meeting sustainability objectives, measured with agreed sustainability indicators.

This is essential before considering how stakeholders ought to change their actions in order to achieve sustainability objectives. For example, the destination needs to broaden the scope of the role of the tourist council, to drive and implement the sustainable tourism strategy, to facilitate the development of new products, and to implement marketing actions beyond promotion.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS
- Identify methods to engage with local stakeholders that stakeholders are comfortable with, and not just that suit you.

- Avoid the use of jargon and formalisms.

- Explain aspects of sustainability in terms that are relatable to the stakeholders' experiences and needs.

- Become part of stakeholders life, be one of them, in order to be able to talk in their language.

1.B. WHAT INSTRUMENTS DO YOU USE TO COLLECT SUSTAINABILITY INFORMATION IN YOUR DESTINATION?

Sustainability indicators are part of a variety of instruments that you can use to better manage your destination. You can see examples of sustainability indicators in the European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS), and its adaptation for Mediterranean destinations, in Mitomed+.

Typical indicators currently collected are economic, and focus on volume. Every destination collects data about the volume of tourists per nationality, but often focused on hotel occupancy, with data from international arrivals by air. Data on domestic tourists, other types of accommodation or those arriving by other transport methods is less accurate. Every destination also collects data on the expenditure per person per night, often ignoring what percentage of this expenditure benefits the actual destination, and what percentage leaks out through imports and repatriated profits.

An increasing number of destinations use information on crowdedness, water quality, air quality and congestion in key locations, mostly public spaces and attractions, to determine carrying capacity. This will help manage the health and safety, and satisfaction, of tourists and residents.

Finally, few destinations create composite indicators that compare or aggregate several variables. For example, few places cross-reference the expenditure per guest per day, with the distance travelled by those tourists (or the carbon footprint generated).

You can probably list many more variables you can collect (and you probably already apply some of these). We increasingly have access to more data, and with some technical help, you can make use of open data that is already available. You can also access data that has been developed by public and private organisations, that maybe was not originally collected for tourism purposes, such as traffic, energy, water, waste data). You can or design and implement estimations from data that already exists, that help you calculate by approximation the information that you are seeking.

Nowadays, it is possible that much of this data is georeferenced, so you can identify where particular impacts occur, including tourist flows. Some of the more developed destinations may choose to invest in big data, to analyse in more detail tourist behaviour patterns.

The most expensive option is usually to design and implement new surveys. This should be reserved for specific data points that complement your regular data collection.

MITOMED+ CASE STUDY: INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM POREČ, ISTRIA COUNTY, CROATIA

Relate questions in the visitor survey to the strategic objectives of the destination

OUR STORY

Kristina Brščić (Head of Tourism Department, IPTPO) recorded tourist perceptions of Poreč to improve sustainability management at the local level. Her team were concerned that simply using an overall indicator of tourist satisfaction would not provide enough information for making future management decisions.

OUR ACTIONS

A survey was created by combining questions from the ETIS visitor survey with other questions of specific local relevance. Key questions asked about motivations for choosing Poreč, satisfaction with various destination features, and perceptions of destination sustainability. Trained students were tasked with conducting the survey, which was translated into six languages to account for the range of tourists' nationalities.

The data collected with survey has helped to identify the strengths and areas for improvement for sustainable management. Further, the data has led to an understanding that overall tourist satisfaction with a destination might be explained by two factors: offer and quality. Such results can be used to focus the questions of future tourist questionnaires, information from which can be used to generate better insight into how to target new policy initiatives.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

· Measure tourist satisfaction as a social indicator of sustainable tourism.

· For destination planning, divide questions about satisfaction into different questions relating to the different strategic objectives of the destination.

· Use empirical research to test the usefulness of and to revise indicators.

CASE STUDY: BURREN ECOTOURISM NETWORK AND THE BURREN AND CLIFFS OF MOHER GEOPARK, THE BURREN, IRELAND

Standardise data collected by businesses to improve destination-level monitoring

OUR STORY

Raquel Noboa (Marketing Coordinator of The Burren Ecotourism Network)was part of a small working group of Burren Ecotourism Members and Burren & Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark staff, which had the mission of creating a code of practice to ensure that all sustainability data will be gathered in the same format and network results can be monitored in addition to the progress of individual members.

OUR ACTIONS

In the past, members of the ecotourism network were required to have external sustainability certification. However, existing national certification programs were unable to cover all members of the ecotourism network, which includes a diverse range of service providers. Further, competing certification systems use different data types and formats, and few put emphasis on the sustainability of the destination as a whole, making it challenging to analyse the network's sustainability as a group.

A small working group, including local businesses and park staff, was set up to develop a locally appropriate measurement system, one based on the six principles guiding operations of the Geopark. The code can be adapted to fit specific businesses, with different performance measures becoming compulsory based on the type of organisation. The code now has an online interface to make it easy to enter data and assess performance at a destination level.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

· Use a consistent data format to simplify destination-level sustainability assessment.

· Create an online format to ease data entry and analysis.

1.C. WHAT KIND OF INDICATORS CAN WE ELABORATE IN THE MEASUREMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY?

We organise the expected benefits in relation to the four type of indicators most commonly used:

Input indicators: These measure the resources available and how they are used, traditionally referring to human, financial and equipment resources. In the case of sustainability, input indicators can also include natural, cultural and social capital, as well as data about the markets and the quality of your products. You can use these indicators to understand the cost-effectiveness of your organisation or destination, often by benchmarking yourself against locations with similar resources. A destination that is rich in resources and that is well connected should set itself higher targets.

Process indicators: These measure the activities carried out to achieve the objectives and target set. You will collect a range of sustainability indicators because in this day and age, your organisation can no longer be just a source of advertising and tourist information. Data is essential to the professionalisation of destination management organisations, for the wellbeing of your destination.

Output indicators: The results that can be attributed to these efforts/activities. You will be accountable for the cost-effective use of resources and for the allocation of benefits of your actions. You will capture evidence of how your organisation's actions have contributed to the sustainability and competitiveness of your destination.

Outcome indicators: The change or impact that the outputs of the project has caused in your area of interest. You should no longer measure only volume of international tourist arrivals and expenditure per tourist per day. Although these are important, they are not the only variables that matter. You will collect a broader range of indicators that reflect the consequences, intended and unintended, that tourism has on your destination because you need this to be responsible for both positive and negative impacts of tourism, and make the necessary improvements.

The underlying message is that indicators help you measure, think, organise yourself, collaborate, set joint targets, all for the common purpose of stimulating positive change.

CASE STUDY: VISIT SOUTH SARDINIA, SARDINIA, ITALY

Use sustainability indicators to create dialogue amongst stakeholders

OUR STORY

Prof. Patrizia Modica (project coordinator of Visit South Sardinia) has worked with five mayors to promote and to improve the competitiveness of their municipalities in collaboration, by making use of sustainability indicators. Five years of systematically collecting data on sustainability has facilitated a number of policy decisions.

OUR ACTIONS

Implementing the ETIS methodology meant that the five mayors had to meet with local stakeholders to discuss possible sustainability initiatives that could improve competitiveness and benefit the entire tourism industry. These meetings created a dialogue which raised awareness about unsustainable behaviours, improved their self-efficacy, gave them skills and created momentum. Having both local government and private sector at the same table meant that quick and effective decisions could be made.

Actions taken resulting from these meetings include 1) the adoption of an urban development plan in all five municipalities; 2) the establishment of a marine protected area; 3) the increase of cycle paths in Cagliari; 4) the establishment of a sustainability and environmental education centre to increase sustainability awareness to tourists and locals alike.

As a result, Visit South Sardinia was awarded as the best sustainable tourism destination among all destinations implementing ETIS in 2016.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use the ETIS seven-step guide to help you create dialogue amongst stakeholders.

- Create a participatory process in which both local government and private sector are present to accelerate policy implementation.

- Communicate the use of indicators as an instrument to convince local stakeholders to participate.

CASE STUDY: NATIONAL AGENCY FOR PROTECTED AREAS, VLORË AND SHKODËR, ALBANIA

Create the pre-conditions to develop a destination management organisation

OUR STORY

Tatjana Mëhillaj and Age Martini [Manager the Regional Administration of Protected Areas Vlorë, and Ecosystem Specialist at the Regional Administration of Protected Areas Shkodër] are working with local tourism stakeholders to measure the ecological footprint of ecotourism packages, as part of a larger project to learn how to create a destination management organisation.

OUR ACTIONS

Thirteen Mediterranean protected areas have created local ecotourism clusters, which bring together different stakeholders to develop attractive ecotourism offers with a low ecological footprint and high local benefits. The stakeholders are learning how to harmonise quality standards and how to use tools to monitor compliance. This work is funded by the Interreg Med DestiMED project, with technical support from IUCN and the Global Footprint Network, based on their Ecological Footprint framework.

They discovered that Food & Drinks and Accommodation have the highest share of the ecological footprint of these ecotourism packages. The local ecotourism clusters are learning how much footprint they can reduce by changing the Food & Drinks mode of production (conventional vs. organic) and transport (international, national vs. local). Also, they are learning that many of the small "authentic" suppliers had a higher energy footprint than large hotels, and how some of these suppliers can improve their performance.

Overall, Albanian businesses are learning how to design experiences with a more positive impact, and non-tourism suppliers get opportunities for income while maintaining their heritage. The protected area authorities are learning how to deliver some of the functions of a destination management organisation, including how to use data to help suppliers redesign their products, in this case in relation to ecological footprint and customer experience.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

· Present data that allows businesses to relate their choices to specific impacts measured.

· Use simple indicator data to visualise different alternatives of suppliers and activities.

· Ensure that there is a clear business case for the stakeholders giving up their time.

Step 2.
Adopt indicators

You now need to think how relevant this external information is to your organisation, and how you can make sense of what it means for you.

You need to learn how to choose which information is important in your tourist destination, and how that data can be organised in a way that it can become a useful set of indicators.

How successful your destination management organisation is does not depend on the quantity of the information that you collect, but on your capacity to understand what this information means in relation to the functions that your organisation currently has, and should have.

This means that you need to develop the ability to identify what is useful information, when, for whom and for what. You will learn to process data so it can be readily understood, processed, interpreted and distributed to the stakeholders that it is relevant to. Only then you have transformed data into valuable indicators.

Benchmarking can be very useful when interpreting your data. However, you have to be careful when comparing yourself to destinations in other countries. How do they collect data? Even if they have the same indicators, it doesn't guarantee you these are collected in the same way. Comparability needs to be there, both in terms of data collection, but also contextual factors.

2.A. HOW HAS THE SYSTEM OF INDICATORS BEEN ADJUSTED TO YOUR NEEDS AND YOUR TERRITORIAL REALITY?

Destinations across Europe often use ETIS as their starting point to experiment with indicators, which has created the awareness and provided the initial tools about the importance of destination management based on sustainability indicators. They then typically adapt ETIS to their needs, and this often means sourcing further ideas and expertise from elsewhere to start and maintain their sustainable tourism indicator systems. These can include Green Destinations , the UNWTO International Network for Sustainable Tourism Observatories, and NECSTouR amongst others.

The benefits of using a recognised indicator system are the reliability of a trusted system, the credibility of an established scheme, the comparability with other destinations and the access to advice from the scheme operators and from peers. Regardless of the instrument you use, you will find that not all indicators are appropriate to your needs. When you want to design new indicators, or adjust the current indicators with the data that is available in your destination, you will benefit from assessing whether your data can make a good indicator. Ideally, your data will be:

Robust: Reliable and statistically validated, based on internationally established criteria

Relevant: Directly measure the desired objective.

Normative: Easy to interpret, consensus on the meaning of change in the results.

Clear: Easily understood and unequivocal title and definition.

Reliable: The statistical source of the indicator is publicly available.

Measurable: The unit of measurement is appropriate and easily interpreted.

Feasible: The measurement should not be unnecessarily onerous.

Cost effective: The cost of data collection to elaborate the indicator needs to be reasonable.

Continuous: Data can be collected regularly, at least annually.

Comparable: Data allows comparisons between destinations by having the same method of calculation and interpretation.

Goal-driven: It is possible to establish a goal to quantify the achievement of a certain result.

CASE STUDY: ALEXANDROUPOLI AND KERAMOTI, EAST MACEDONIA AND THRACE, GREECE

Standardise data collected by businesses to improve destination-level monitoring

OUR STORY

Maria Hamiditou (Region of East Macedonia and Thrace Directorate of Technical Works- REMTH) , working with the University of Thessaly as part of the CO-EVOLVE project, uses a combination of indicators to monitor the specific sustainability needs of an individual tourist destination.

OUR ACTIONS

Along with other CO-EVOLVE partners, REMTH have developed an indicator system that is tailored to inform the strategic planning of the specific destinations of Alexandroupoli and Keramoti. In Alexandroupoli, for example, the risk of soil loss is local sustainability challenge due to a combination of port construction and urban expansion along the coast. On this account, the city monitors the percentage of shoreline subjected to erosion when other CO-EVOLVE partners do not.

On the other hand, because cruising is not an important part of the local tourism economy, neither Alexandroupoli nor Keramoti selected cruise-related indicators to track. In this way, the indicator set is customised to match the critical issues of each locality, ensuring that the management priorities of individual communities benefit from useful benchmarking data.

In addition to the destination-specific indicators, REMTH monitors indicators that reflect the general needs of coastal tourist destinations, like the percentage of beaches awarded a Blue Flag. These indicators facilitate more meaningful comparisons with peer destinations that face similar sustainability challenges. They also have a third tier of core indicators that are widely relevant to all tourist destinations, covering topics like visitor numbers and employment statistics. These indicators were drawn from the European Tourism Indicator System and allow for a high-level comparison across many types of destinations.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

· Develop indicators that allow for meaningful comparisons with related destinations.

· Identify the critical sustainability topics for a destination and find measures to monitor those place-specific issues.

2.B. HOW HAVE STAKEHOLDERS COLLABORATED IN THE COLLECTION AND TRANSFER OF THE NECESSARY DATA?

Stakeholders will only collaborate in the collection and transfer of data when you have clearly articulated a benefit to them, or when they have a legal mandate to do so. Even then, in most cases you will need to incentivise their participation.

You need to expect that this will be a time consuming process, that will often rely on personal contacts. This may also mean that your data is in pockets, with some information that comes from specific stakeholders being well developed, while other information will not be shared. For example, you may find that individual tourist attractions have a culture of collaboration and well developed systems for data collection, and that you need to estimate results from others.

You should start by becoming familiar with statistics collected at national, regional or provincial level. While this may not match exactly with your destination's geographical boundaries, it gives you an approximation to work with. Most destination managers are not familiar with national data, whether this is ready published or whether it requires making specific enquiries for data sets.

National data is however unlikely to be available at municipal level, hence the increasing need to georeferenced data and the use of "big data" to have a more granular analysis. The municipality itself will have access to some data about its use of the territory, its citizens and businesses. It is quite likely that each data set is held separately and that crossing data sets is time consuming. Tourism requires interdisciplinary teams that involve different departments in your municipality. Land use planning, waste collection, security, arts and culture, transport... all have a say in the delivery of services to both residents and tourists, and they need to be involved in the collection of tourist data.

The private sector has valuable data about tourism patterns, that they will however rarely share, for commercial and privacy reasons. There is more evidence about the number of private firms participating in sustainability projects (e.g. indicators on the number of certified firms, or firms attending sustainability training courses...).

You can use citizen-generated data (data individuals or their civil society organizations produce to directly monitor, demand or drive change on issues that affect them). This can complement official data, fill in data gaps for locations or topics of specific importance, and be used to monitor specific experiments in changes of policy.

CASE STUDY: MONTECATINI TERME, TUSCANY, ITALY

Collaborate with local universities to kickstart the implementation of the indicators

OUR STORY

Prof. Patrizia Romei, representing the University of Florence, has collaborated since 2010 with stakeholders at Montecatini Terme, a renowned thermal destination in the region of Tuscany, in the establishment of a Tourism Destination Observatory. The Observatory aims to monitor the tourism phenomena at local level in order to foster destination competitiveness and sustainability. This work is part of a larger project which involved more than 50 tourists' destinations in Tuscany in which a specially designed interactive platform was designed to allow benchmarking. After almost 10 years, Patrizia notes that the University has had a fundamental role in this process.

OUR ACTIONS

The University of Florence has kickstarted and coordinated the process of the Observatory during the first stages. Then, it gradually handed over its management as Montecatini Terme municipality has become ready to take ownership. The University's role has been to first provide scientific advice on the type of indicators to choose, suggesting those which the destination could best benefit from. Furthermore, the University has had a neutral role in mediating between the interests of the private sector and local government. This has resulted in positive dialogue and mutual understanding - a great change from a relation previously characterised by conflict and mistrust.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Engage with local universities delivering tourism programmes.
- Have the university take a coordination role in the first stage of implementing indicators.
- Take ownership once the pilot phase has terminated, though always maintain links to seek scientific advice when needed.

Collate existing data sets to develop a cost-effective sustainability indicator set

OUR STORY

The Institute for Tourism team, led by [Izidora Marković Vukadin](#) used already existing data sets to create a simple sustainability indicator set – Croatian Sustainable Tourism Observatory (CROSTO).

OUR ACTIONS

Joining the World Tourism Organization's International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO) gave their team momentum to step up their collaborations within Croatia to gather data. CROSTO helped formalize existing relationships between the Central Bureau of Statistics, the Ministry of Tourism, the National Tourism Board, the Agency for Environmental and Nature Protection and industry representatives.

The Institute collects data for 14 indicators common to ETIS and INSTO that they could gather at no cost from their partners listed above and other stakeholders. Much of this data was not previously published, and has required working with these partners to break down the data at regional level. The Institute's work is in data standardisation and checking its validity, and working with the partners to interpret the results and account for inconsistencies.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

· Make use of existing international systems on sustainable tourism indicators to create momentum and visibility. Once you have set up the system, you can have a cost-effective and reliable method of continuous data collection for some core indicators.

2.C. HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES OF CALCULATING INDICATORS?

You will need to be creative to combine various data sources. Combine them to fulfil your needs, taking a clear cost-benefit analysis, by using the quality tests set out earlier, as they apply to every source of data. Dedicate staff time to monitor and evaluate the sustainability of your destination, reorganising staff time and responsibilities.

First learn from other destinations' experiences. Read through the Agenda 21 and ETIS indicators and consider how relevant they are to you. You do not need to adapt these in full (or at all), but they will save you time in designing your own system. MITOMED+ now provides you with a concise set of indicators adapted to the Mediterranean needs.

Then research what data already exists. This is cost effective and allows comparisons. Bigger destinations, that have more staff and time, suggest that in the longer term it is better to have robust data, from which to then take decisions of what additional local level data is needed.

Smaller destinations, with few staff experienced in collecting data, will need to consider how to combine data from a variety of touchpoints. You may have data from traffic, parking usage, visitors to your local museum, volume of litter etc., all of which give you a more complete picture than individual data points.

You may find that you need your own municipal data. But as we said, collecting your own data is expensive, and there is little point in data that is collected just once. Consider how staff in customer facing roles can ask 2-3 questions that are particularly important. Use quizzes and games to collect data.

Create a dashboard to compare indicators: one variable at the time does not mean anything, so learn to compare and relate variables to each other. Knowing that crimes on tourists have gone down is good, but is this because the number of tourists went down, or because the police is more effective at preventing crime? Compare single variables over time, as well.

Follow the 20/80 rule. Which are the 20% of indicators that would give you a picture for 80% of the challenges faced by your destination? Don't aim for a comprehensive system. Only collect the data that you see there is a possibility to use. Start small. Identify a project for which many stakeholders agree you need a collective solution.

Be mindful of the Global Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) when you share data with other organisations or others offer to share theirs with you. Personal data should not be made available publicly without explicit consent and cannot be used to identify a subject.

MITOMED+ CASE STUDY: MUNICIPALITY OF ALMUÑECAR, GRANADA, SPAIN

Make the most of official statistics and administrative records to have continuous information at a minimum cost

OUR STORY

Felipe Puertas, Technical Director of the City of Almuñeca, considers it necessary to have a System of Indicators to manage the tourism sustainability of their destination. One of the main challenges they faced was to have this system continuously updated at a minimum cost.

OUR ACTIONS

In the development of the System, the first step was to take full advantage of all available statistical and documentary information, paying special attention to the information generated by the official statistical agencies as well as the information provided by the administrative records. Although much of this information is not originally designed for statistical exploitation, it can be an excellent source of data.

This is the case in the calculation of indicators on tourism employment. On a quarterly basis, the Regional Statistical Institute is asked for a tailor-made exploitation of the Registry of Affiliates to the Social Security for the tourism sector, specifying the CNAE-09 to 4 digits of the characteristic activities that compose it, according to recommendations of the World Tourism Organisation.

In this way, the municipality has access to data about the volume of people working in tourism, as well as a more detailed breakdown by gender, age groups, type of employment, type of contract or working hours.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

· Before starting up own measurements, analyze and make the most of all available information.

· Pay special attention to the information generated by official bodies and do not forget that administrative records can be a very interesting source of information for your destination.

· Propose a system of indicators that can be maintained over time, paying special attention to the cost-benefit of data collection.

Step 3.
Use indicators

Your organisation's long term success depends on your ability to use your indicators to reach consensus about the need to change and take informed decisions.

You will aim to combine your existing knowledge and organisational routines with the newly acquired knowledge from your indicators.

Successful organisations are brave enough to acknowledge when change is required, and flexible enough to reorganise themselves.

Using indicators to identify the need for change is one of the hardest things that an organisation needs to do. It is tempting to ignore information that contradicts our preconceived ideas, whether you are a politician or part of the technical team.

Because tourism policies rely on collaborations, you will need to explain to your team and your stakeholders why change is needed, what the risks of both changing (and not changing) are.

3.A. HOW HAVE YOU USED INDICATORS TO INFORM DECISION-MAKING?

Often municipalities and their tourist boards already use information to take decisions. This information would benefit from complying with the quality requirements set earlier. This quality control often does not happen at municipal level, creating data inconsistencies. For example, it is important that decision-makers can differentiate between which data sets refer to tourists, day visitors and/or residents.

Change the frame of thinking about what tourism development means. The key performance indicators that are used to assess success and reward performance must include sustainability aspects. This can then be used to rethink the importance of these sustainability indicators, from being "additional" information collected ad hoc, to being core aspects of the planned management system.

For example, when sustainable tourism indicators are incorporated into the municipality's Quality and Environmental Management System, we find that sustainable tourism gains more importance. The data generated by this management system is then discussed regularly at meetings between councillorsand civil servants in order to review performance and agree on actions.

We have seen examples of destination dashboards and reports with infographics being shared at municipal level to raise awareness, and at national/international level to gain recognition of the positive actions. We have also seen an

example of an online tool to benchmarking multiple destinations. This helps them interpret information from indicators and motivates them to take concrete action. By comparing themselves with the best practice destinations, they know what they have to do to reach there.

It is important to give different departments ownership of individual indicators, and to think how meeting the targets for such indicator helps both the department and the municipality. It is also important to help politicians see how meeting these targets can also be used in their electoral campaigning, to showcase the positive aspects of the territory which before they were not aware of.

Clarity and relevance are key to usability. Here are some tips:
· Avoid jargon, and present your data in a way that is easy to understand.
· Give clear recommendations on what to do about a certain issues, what financial resources it involves and what are the tangible benefits.
· We learn from examples, so show where it worked, and explain how it is relevant to your destination.
· Exploit the media interest in your data to gain stakeholder public commitment to action.
· Link evidence from indicators to emotional stories. Research shows storytelling to be successful to persuade policy makers.

CASE STUDY: TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE, MINISTRY FOR GOZO, MALTA

Photo credit: Terry Camilleri

Use indicators as a diagnostic and management tool

OUR STORY

Daniel Borg (Senior Policy Analyst, Ministry for Gozo) uses the QualityCoast international certification programme to identify the potential of promoting heritage and trekking holidays in Gozo, the second largest island in the Maltese archipelago.

OUR ACTIONS

Daniel has applied for the QualityCoast in 2011, 2015 and 2018. This system requires providing evidence of compliance to 100 criteria, and information for relevant indicators. This helps him identify data shortages in destination management and performance. In addition, the comparison across three submission dates allows him to build a picture of the destination, and to develop strategic proposals on how to capitalise on the destination's strengths and how to address the weaknesses.

The data collected for this application has helped Daniel to join the dots with information from different tourism and culture service providers, that can cater to residents and tourists alike. The Ministry of Gozo has substantially increased efforts by the local community to develop local festivals and cultural expressions. The Gozo cultural calendar now brings together a variety of activities, from opera and re-enactments to feasts and folk festivals.

The visitor data is also used to segment and target markets with lower seasonality, higher expenditure and more sustainable behaviours. The island's marketing has changed as a result of this data, targeting heritage and trekking markets, and demarketing to the beach market.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use your sustainability indicator system as a benchmark for data collection.

- Be selective with the products that you want to promote, based on the identity you want to create.

- Use your data to justify the investment in new offerings that can promote a sense of belonging amongst residents while also having a distinctive tourism offering.

Develop an index to effectively plan and manage the land use deriving from tourism

OUR STORY

Henrique Ramos (CEO of Sea-Expert, a maritime consulting firm) often works for the government of Azores to ensure the sustainability of its coastlines. Low-cost airlines have massively increased arrivals in the Azores, leading to uncontrolled tourism development in coastal areas. As a consequence, the Government's Marine Directorate has created a Monitoring Unit to ensure a more effective planning and protection of the maritime and coastal environment.

OUR ACTIONS

Under the guidelines of the European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Henrique Ramos has worked with the Marine Monitoring Unit to develop an index which measures the artificiality level of Azores coastal areas. In particular, it measures the current level of human alterations of the environment by assigning a number from 0 to 1 (0 being 100% natural and 1 being 100% artificial).

Based on this baseline, the government will now establish the maximum level of artificiality further allowed, at which the marine and coastal ecosystem will not be significantly affected. This level will be determined based on the characteristics of each administrative area (island, county and perish). In a context like the Azores where tourism places an intensive pressure to the environment, the government can now effectively plan and manage the previous uncontrolled land use deriving from tourism and local communities.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

· Compile and produce geographic information on human artificial structures.

· Define maximum levels of admitted human development according to the environmental sensitivity of your area.

3.B. HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR ORGANISATION TO OPTIMISE THE MANAGEMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY?

You need to ensure that the organisational structures are fit for purpose, that individuals and departments have the knowledge, time and resources to do their jobs, and that the structure that you have created is sufficiently flexible to respond to strategic and operational changes based on evidence. Here are some ideas of how to go about it.

Create a destination management organisation with public, private and civil society stakeholders. Tourist boards need to be adapted to become a destination management organisation. This involves the reorganisation of mandates, priorities, budgets, which makes it a complex task. It often means the creation of supra-institutional umbrellas, made up of different existing departments, rather than the redesign of current departments.

Allocate responsibilities. Delegate the data collection and the responsibility for meeting sustainability targets to different departments within the municipality, or stakeholders the sustainability management process to specific business unit or separate NGO, when the civil servants do not have the knowledge, mandate or appetite to take on the task.

Empower staff. Provide training to understand the relevance of sustainability to their jobs, and how specific sustainability indicators are relevant to them. Provide staff with the trust and resources to be able to take decisions within their own job role based on the evidence from sustainability data. From your system of sustainability indicators, identify those that can be linked to specific staff roles, and make them part of staff action plans and appraisals.

Allocate resources. Invest in the collection of data, at municipal level, but also at regional tourism observatories that can meet the municipal needs and the comparative benefits.

Create ownership of the data, and the value of data informed policies. Suggested policy reforms need to be sufficiently ambitious to arouse interest, but not so ambitious that require fundamental overhauling of organisational systems. Start with the data sets that confirm the current policy while still having sustainability benefits, to create precedents of evidence-based restructuring, before then tackling the more complex issues where data suggests a substantial change of policy.

Facilitate data transfer. Create a regular audit report and improvement plan as result from the indicators. Show information in a way that is easy to digest. This can include a sustainability dashboard with easy traffic light system.

CASE STUDY: OBSERVATORY OF TOURISM IN BARCELONA -CITY AND REGION-, BARCELONA, SPAIN

Coordinate and standardise the production of data between different statistical sources for an integrated tourism management

OUR STORY

Damià Serrano (Coordinator of the Observatory) works to integrate the vision of a mature destination, such as the city of Barcelona, with that of a much wider and more diverse territory, such as the province of Barcelona, through the generation of homogenized and quality tourism data.

OUR ACTIONS

The Observatory has been created to coordinate the statistical entities that generate tourist data of Barcelona at different territorial scales. The production of data so far had served to design separate tourism policies between the destination city of Barcelona and the rest of destinations (more than 300 municipalities) of the province of Barcelona.

The process of elaboration and updating of data of Barcelona city and Barcelona Province has been ordered, contributing to the economic and operative efficiency in its production and collection. In addition, the joint reading of data from the two territories makes it possible to have an interrelated tourism vision and facilitates coordinated decision making between different management entities, improving the articulation of tourism products and the management of information and impacts.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Identify the overlapping statistical entities in a destination-region and the data generation objectives that coincide with each other.

- Standardise data collection: the methodology to produce data and the period to collect it. Communicate data comparatively, between destinations, to facilitate that stakeholders understand what the data means and they consider possibilities for change as a result from interpreting the data.

MITOMED+ CASE STUDY: PUBLIC ENTERPRISE FOR TOURISM AND SPORT MANAGEMENT OF ANDALUCIA, ANDALUCIA, SPAIN.

Teach destination managers to continuously monitor tourism planning through indicators.

OUR STORY
The SAETA team (Area of Statistics and Market Research) has been working for more than 20 years to cover the tourism sector's information needs, either through the compilation of existing statistical and documentary information, or through the elaboration of its own statistics.

OUR ACTIONS
Thanks to this information system, it is possible to have a large number of indicators that cover different aspects of the destination and that are used to create scorecards, adjusted to the objectives of the different tourism plans developed in the region.

For these scorecards to be useful, they must be easy to understand or interpret by all interested parties. Therefore, one of the keys is to present these results in a friendly and intuitive way. To represent whether or not an indicator evolves favorably towards the objective in which it is framed, we opt for the

colours of the "traffic light". This ensures that managers receive a regular email with the update of these indicators that allows them to see quickly and easily what is the current situation of the destination with respect to the objectives set, providing alerts on those aspects where work can avoid unwanted deviations.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Identify those indicators that can serve as warning signals in the fulfillment of a strategic objective.

- Find a simple and intuitive way to present the results.

- Accustom your management team to receive a periodic update of the scorecard. So you help the indicators become part of their routine.

3.C. HOW HAVE YOU OVERCOME THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE USE OF SUSTAINABILITY DATA FOR TOURISM MANAGEMENT?

Policymaking processes and political decisions are frequently driven by values, not data. Some rational policies may be considered ideologically problematic when they do not align with a government's position, creating conflict between civil servants and politicians. The civil servant's best resource is to make arguments based on the rigour and quality of the data.

Relevance: Learn to make indicators audience-relevant. One of the greatest challenges is to fight the habit of the different departments in municipalities to work independently from each other. Learn how to use evidence from one set of data or project to feed into others.

Buy in: Identify an issue that most stakeholders agree is important at the same time. You will typically start with changes that promote sustainability for which there is already consensus, and that support new forms of additional development that creates more positive impacts without the same level of negative impacts. It will be more difficult to get consensus for regulation of current activities that are having sub-optimal impacts.

Focus: Avoid long lists of indicators and concentrate on few but relevant issues. Accept "good enough" data that is fit for purpose.

Benchmark: Compare with other destinations. Learn from others, but also identify areas where your own municipality can be an example for others.

Demonstration: Create new products that act as demonstration examples.

Cost: Find way of making the measure cost-neutral or for cost to be absorbed within general budgets. Learn how to bid for external funding for projects, and how to have continuity for the data collection after the upfront funding runs out.

Trust: Develop trust amongst stakeholders for the implementing body. You probably need to have some early wins before stakeholders give you more responsibilities and opportunities.

Time: Allocate expert input to manage the sustainability actions arising from your data.

Schedule: Organise events that highlight experiences from other destinations and that get your organisation to have to showcase their own work.

CASE STUDY: SAMARIA NATIONAL PARK, CRETE, GREECE

Build trust and momentum amongst local stakeholders by addressing their needs

OUR STORY

Antonis Barnias (Project Coordinator) uses data from customer surveys in the Samaria Gorge, the most popular walking trail in the Samaria National Park in Crete but with decreasing demand, to have headline information for the media, the public sector, residents and tourism business people to confirm their perceptions that this tourism product is saturated, and that there is a need to diversify the product offer.

OUR ACTIONS

This data has been used to create a momentum to get consensus amongst a number of stakeholders to act at the same time. With seed funding from two EU projects (MEET and DestiMED), the National Park team has improved the hiking infrastructure and help ten businesses create new, coordinated tourism offers that allow tourists to enjoy parts of the park previously unknown. Investments in very small scale infrastructure eventually changed the entire way visitors perceived the area. This has created an economic incentive for these businesses to act as a "local ecotourism cluster" that is now predisposed to tackle new challenges collectively.

The businesses are now more predisposed to listen to the National Park team when these have asked the businesses to provide data on the food, energy, water consumed and waste produced, amongst others, in order to calculate the ecological footprint of their products. Antonis and his team are now able to collect data from these businesses that will inform bottom-up sustainability benchmarks for local businesses. These businesses are now predisposed to listen to advice on sustainability actions, because they know that the National Park team has their interests at heart.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use data to mobilise businesses to work on problems all at the same time. Identify commercial opportunities for these businesses, so they see shared opportunities rather than threats of sharing knowledge with competitors.

- Use the goodwill that you generate to then set higher goals for this group.

CASE STUDY: DURBUY, WALLONIA, BELGIUM
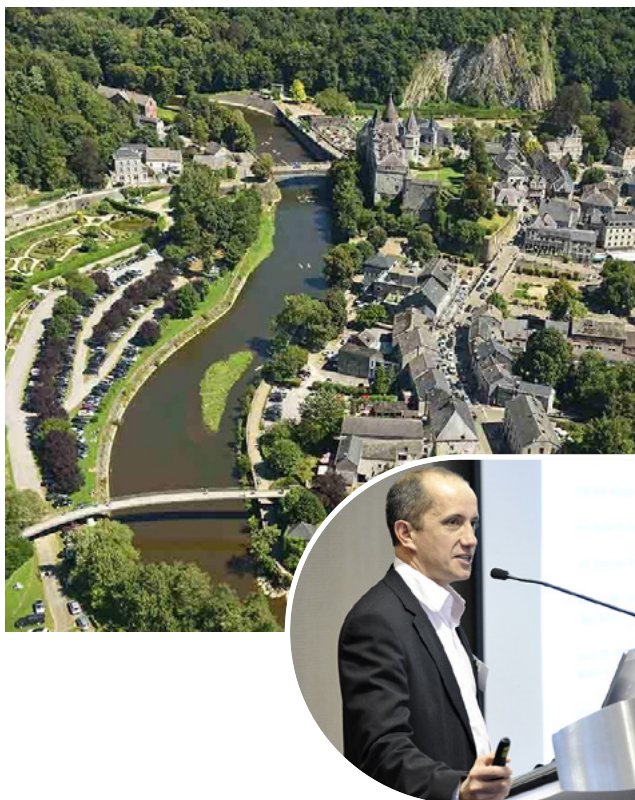
Use indicators to justify funding for sustainability measures

OUR STORY

Xavier Lechien is the director of the local development agency in Durbuy and helps the municipality to improve its sustainability. Durbuy is a little medieval city in the Ardennes, popular for its picturesque streets and castle. In recent years tourism has boomed, with Durbuy becoming the most visited location in Wallonia. Most tourists arrive by car causing congested roads and, thus higher air and noise pollution in the town centre.

OUR ACTIONS

The City Hall management has worked with the Wallonia regional government to decrease traffic. They have measured both visitors' and local stakeholders' feelings on tourism and identified traffic as one of the priorities for improvement. They also installed a traffic data collector to measure the number of vehicles entering the town centre each day. They used the evidence of a few months' data collection to justify funding for pro-environmental mobility measures.

After first removing various parking spaces, Durbuy decided to ban cars from the town centre. Additionally, the city has introduced a free shuttle which connects the centre to the urban perimeter. As a result, the quality of life of residents and experience of visitors has improved significantly, and road congestion, noise and air pollution have decreased. Future steps will seek to encourage visitors to arrive by public transport and bicycle.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a long-term vision of your destination by consulting local stakeholders. This helps changes to be understood and supported.

- Don't be too ambitious and try to realise everything in a short time. Durbuy began taking action on sustainability in 1990 and it still has areas identified for improvement.

Step 4.
Benefit from indicators

Destinations that regularly update their activities following long term goals become sustainable and competitive

Once you accept the need for continuous improvement, you need to be prepared to revise your policies, actions, budgets and staffing according to the evidence from your indicators. You will seek to implement activities that make your destination more competitive and sustainable in the long term, without prioritising short-term actions.

You will need to find ways that your indicators reflect the changes you have incorporated in your activities. You will benefit from implementing actions that can have a visible and monitorable positive impact, so stakeholders can become aware of the improvements.

Initially you will implement actions based on a business case, until eventually stakeholders trust you more, their values begin to change, and they learn accept a broader range of benefits as evidence of being a successful destination.

4.A. HOW DO YOU UPSCALE FROM AN INDIVIDUAL SUSTAINABILITY MEASURE TO A COMPLETE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY?

Many tourist boards are able to share examples of individual measures that were implemented in part as a result of the use of evidence from sustainability indicators. There are fewer examples of having been able to scale up evidence-based policy making to become an integral part of a destination's tourism strategy.

The politicians have also used evidence from indicators to speed up the implementation of actions that they already had committed to or intuitively saw positively. The indicators can be used to raise the awareness of, and quantify, the additional benefits that can be expected from that action. There is less willingness to acknowledge when indicators per se have changed the mind of politicians and technical staff.

Keep challenging today's values. Over time, you will realise that the values that are considered important in your organisation are changing. It is difficult to see this day by day, but it would be evident if you compared what you do now with what was considered normal ten years ago.

Contextualise your sustainability programme. Looking inwards, ensure that sustainability is written within the legal framework and or the organisational objectives. Introduce sustainability aspects to criteria for other teams, such as quality, health and safety, productivity…

to integrate sustainability indicators in broader policy debates. Looking outwards, link your sustainability strategy to the Sustainable Development Goals, to the criteria set by Green Destinations, ETIS, global footprinting, or other supra-regional programmes to be able to justify your actions, seek funding and have a framework to understand the logic of your activities.

Continuously reskill staff, to understand what sustainability, how unsustainable behaviour affects their lives as residents, and what they can do to improve the situation from within their job. The range here is vast, from short online training courses to one destination partnering with a university to create a master's programme in Tourism Sustainability monitoring and management.

Set targets, recognise and reward performance. Set publicly known targets and praise publicly the achievers, not just for the best performance, but also for the greatest improvement, and so on. You may want to have 50% of your accommodation as cyclist friendly, 80% organic composting, 90% of all tourist attractions as sustainably certified or 100% of your cafes selling Fairtrade coffee. Whatever it is, you will to provide incentives to change behaviour, from tax breaks to branding and marketing campaigns.

CASE STUDY: GREEN SCHEME SLOVENIA

Use indicators as part of a national certification programme

OUR STORY

Jana Apih, managing director of Good Place , an accredited partner of the Slovenian Tourism Board, is responsible for running the Green Scheme, a national certification programme which started in 2014 based on a set of indicators. By 2018, the Green Scheme has certified 37 destinations, 22 accommodation providers, 3 natural parks and 2 tourism agencies.

OUR ACTIONS

The benefits are evident even for a young programme. Firstly, destination stakeholders understand better what sustainable tourism means. This is the result of interaction between destinations and businesses that meet regularly to discuss about sustainability issues and share solutions, through a consortium developed by the Green Scheme. Secondly, destinations' decision makers are able to take concrete actions towards improving their sustainability level. This is possible thanks to the benchmarking tool the Green Scheme provides, which enables destinations to compare amongst themselves and get inspired by the best practice examples.

The data collection required by the Green Scheme, in the form of indicators, has increased consciousness about the need to manage the destinations' carrying capacity, waste production and water management. Now some destinations have strategies in place to manage visitor flows and they regularly run water and waste management training courses for tourism businesses.

A national programme with government support has greater credibility and buy in from destinations and businesses, with an annual increase in the number of destinations engaged, as they see the benefits (and also the peer pressure) from participation by other stakeholders.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

· Develop a benchmarking tool. It is important that destinations can compare among themselves. In this way, indicators can be interpreted and concrete actions can be taken by looking at strategies in place in best practice destinations.

· Have regular meeting between destinations in your region to discuss about similar problems and share solutions.

CASE STUDY: THE TORROELLA DE MONTGRÍ-L'ESTARTIT TOWN HALL, GIRONA, SPAIN

Use indicators to demonstrate that sustainability increases the competitiveness of your destination

OUR STORY

Josep Capellà (Advisor of the municipal tourism department) has used economic indicators to demonstrate the profitability of protecting nature for tourism, and used this data as a lever of local economic development. This has allowed the implementation of bold sustainability policies from the public sector, with the support of the business sector and citizens.

OUR ACTIONS

The Marine Reserve of the Medes Islands is one of the main tourist attractions of the destination, so the first data collected had to do with the economic impact of marine tourism activities (e.g., diving, snorkeling, kayaking and marine excursions). The 2015 data was unequivocal about the importance of this sector: these activities generated 12 million euros per year and more than 200 direct jobs.

This has given the companies providing marine recreation services the evidence needed to lobby the regional tourism agency to gain greater visibility in promotional campaigns. In addition, the quantification of the value of nature, the territory and landscapes has made it possible to differentiate the destination within the tourism brand Costa Brava and diversify the tourist offer.

At the same time, the Town Council has used the data to argue the reclassification of land with building permission (as per the Municipal Urban Plan) to be protected as green belt natural landscape. This has meant a change in the traditional urban and tourism growth model in favor of the protection of natural heritage.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Identify sustainable tourism resources in the destination and monitor their economic impact.

- Communicate the benefits generated by sustainable tourism activity to the stakeholders involved (public sector, private sector and citizens).

- Design sustainability policies that reinforce the give value to the natural and cultural resources that differentiate your destination.

4.B. WHAT ASPECTS OF YOUR DESTINATION HAVE IMPROVED AND IN WHAT WAY, THANKS TO THE USE OF INDICATORS?

The main way in which destination management organisations have changed is by now having a much greater awareness that we cannot grow at the expense of nature and society. It is easy to underestimate how important this change is, and how long it takes for stakeholders to change their values, and then to realign their actions to these new values.

While we can first be cynical about politicians using sustainability terminology in their political speeches and the destination plans, this is a necessary step towards the meaning of that concept to filter through, and from that, to support a change of behaviour. Yet we have seen that the use of indicators also gives confidence and strength to technical staff, who can use this data to clarify issues in front of politicians and industry.

Indicators are a key part of that change, because they help you realise what kind of change is occurring around us, and how your organisation can play a role in that change. Without these indicators, our values are informed by perceptions, assumptions, anecdotes, lobbying and fake news. You want to know that your values and actions are informed by reliable facts.

Indicators also allow different stakeholders to prioritise the same issue at the same time that this new data becomes available. Evidence-based debate is a great vehicle to generate stakeholder agreement and prioritise change.

The visibility gained from implementing ETIS, Mitomed+, Green Destinations and similar recognised systems creates political pressure to implement the actions that have been initiated and for which external stakeholders have praised the destination.

Healthy competition between comparable destinations also creates the need to change. No destination wants to be at the bottom of rankings, whatever these rankings are about. That includes sustainability.

Destination management organisations have broadened the scope of their activities, playing more active roles in the management of the destinations. Professionalising these institutions means that more management plans and action plans are developed in-house, which means that they are more realistic, and that there is the knowledge to implement them. Having more data has helped them make the case for the importance of tourism.

CASE STUDY: TOWN HALL OF SANT LLORENÇ DES CARDASSAR, MAJORCA, SPAIN

Design motivating sustainability policies to involve the private sector

OUR STORY

Mateu Frau (Environment Councillor) has used the periodic calculation of the weight of waste generated in the municipality to implement an incentive policy that has tripled the recycling in hotels. The waste management cost savings for the period of 2012-2017 have been 800,000 euros for the hotels, and 2 million euros for the municipal government.

OUR ACTIONS

Mateu and his team had experience in the use of municipal Agenda 21 indicators, and decided to make an effort to improve waste management at their destination. They selected to focus first on a single indicator (kilograms of waste generated), and have managed to establish a win-win strategy with the tourism sector, by reducing waste taxes according to the tons of organic waste that are disposed of separately from other waste streams by businesses.

This has resulted in considerable savings for hotels, shopping centers and restaurants, while reducing the cost of waste incineration for the municipality. The measure has been reinforced with an annual ceremony that rewards companies with best practices in waste management, which has generated a positive competitive environment among them.

Currently more than 60 hotels benefit from the bonuses and have significantly reduced their organic waste generated. The municipality has managed to raise awareness and involve the private sector in the management of the destination's sustainability, and success in this initiative will facilitate the acceptance of new strategies for the minimisation of other waste streams.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use simple and understandable indicators to set feasible short-term sustainability objectives.

- Identify business benefits from sustainability actions (in this case, financial savings and peer recognition) so the private sector engages voluntarily.

- Monitor and publicly acknowledge improvements, to set new future challenges.

CASE STUDY: TERRAE ANIO IUBENSANAE, LAZIO, ITALY

Make a census of your resources in your destination to innovate your tourism products

OUR STORY

[Marina Bresciani](#) (project coordinator of Terrae Anio Iubensanae) used indicators as a lever for development in the rural areas near Rome. Small municipalities alone do not have the know-how to innovate their tourism products and compete with strong destinations like Rome. ETIS equipped them with a clear methodology to improve their competitiveness.

OUR ACTIONS

Through the collection of indicators, they did a detailed census of the tourism sector: they mapped all cultural and natural sites of tourist interest, existing tourism service providers and developed the profiles of tourists coming to the area.

This data was shared with local tour operators which create new innovative products matched to the right tourist segment. They could put on the tourist map abandoned villas used by Roman emperors during holidays and open new museums, making their territory attractive to cultural tourists already visiting Rome.

As a result, a new destination brand was developed named "Terrae Anio Iubensanae" (lands of Aniene river and Giovenzano valley) reflecting the territory identity only discovered through the collection of indicators.

This allowed them to create new innovative products which matched their identity to the right tourist segment. It resulted in improved competitiveness with an increase of 5% tourists since the development of the new brand.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

• Collect indicators to have a clear picture of the tourism supply and demand.

• Merge information from indicators to develop innovative tourist products.

• Involve tour operators to make your products more market-oriented.

• Get recognition for the quality of your tourist products through certification processes.

Time for action

You can use this table to reflect on the process of policy making in your destinations, to better understand what has been done so far and what needs to be done next.

Step 1. Learn about indicators	What are you already doing?	What do you want to do?	What do you need to do it differently?
1.a. What instruments do you use to collect sustainability information in your destination?			
1.b. Why generate management information with sustainability indicators?			
1.c. What kind of indicators can we elaborate in the measurement of sustainability?			
Step 2. Adopt indicators	What are you already doing?	What do you want to do?	What do you need to do it differently?
2.a. How has the system of indicators been adjusted to your needs and your territorial reality?			
2.b. How have stakeholders collaborated in the collection / transfer of the necessary data?			
2.c. How did you overcome the challenges of calculating indicators?			
Step 3. Use indicators	What are you already doing?	What do you want to do?	What do you need to do it differently?
3.a. How have you used indicators to inform decision-making?			
3.b. How have you changed your organisation to optimise the management of sustainability?			
3.c. How have you overcome the difficulties in the use of sustainability data for tourism management?			
Step 4. Benefit from indicators	What are you already doing?	What do you want to do?	What do you need to do it differently?
4.a. What tourism sustainability measures have been applied in your destination thanks to the use of indicators?			
4.b. What aspects of your destination have improved and in what way, thanks to the use of indicators?			

Thank you case studies

Jana Apih, Managing Director of Good Place, Rimska 2b, Ljubljana, Slovenia, email: jana@goodplace.si, phone: +386 31331292

Antonis Barnias, Management Body of Samaria (White Mountains) National Park, 25 Nikolau Plastira St, 73134, Chania, Greece, email: antbarnias@yahoo.gr, phone: +30 2821045570

Daniel Borg, Senior Policy Analyst, Ministry for Gozo, St.Francis Square Victoria,Gozo; Malta VCT 1335, e-mail: daniel.g.borg@gov.mt

Marina Bresciani, CEO of Italia Executive, representing Terrae Anio Iubensanae, Via Sant'Anatolia, 00025, Gerano, Lazio, Italy, email: bresciani.bresciani@gmail.com, phone: +39 3274089916

Kristina Brščić, Department Head, Institute of Agriculture and Tourism, Karla Huguesa 8, 52440 Poreč, Croatia, email: kristina@iptpo.hr, phone: +385 52408303

Josep Capellà, Tourism Advisor to the Torroella de Montgrí-L'Estartit Town Hall, Plaça de la vila 1, 17257 Torroella de Montgrí, Girona, Spain, email: josep@decaba.com, phone: +34 605792900

Mateu Frau, Environment Councillor for Town Hall of Sant Llorenç des Cardassar, Plaça Ajuntament s/n, 07530 Sant Llorenç des Cardassar, Majorca, Spain, email: mfrau@santllorenc.es, phone: +34 971838393

Maria Hamiditou, Region of East Macedonia and Thrace Directorate of Technical Works, Environmental Structures Division Sismanoglou 78; 69100 Komotini, Greece, e-mail mariahamitidou@gmail.com, phone: +30 2531021644

Xavier Lechien, Director of Durbuy local development agency, Grand'Rue 24, 6940 Barvaux, Wallonia, Belgium, email: adl@durbuy.be, phone: +32 86219841

Zrinka Marušić and Neda Košuta, Institute for Tourism, Vrhovec 5, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia, emails: Zrinka.Marusic@iztzg.hr Neda.Kosuta@iztzg.hr phone: +385 +1/39 09655; 3909666

Tatjana Mëhillaj (Manager the Regional Administration of Protected Areas Vlorë) and **Age Martini** (Ecosystem Specialist at the Regional Administration of Protected Areas Shkodër), e-mails: tatjanamehillaj@yahoo.com and agemartini@yahoo.com

Patrizia Modica, Associate Professor at University of Cagliari and Visit South Sardinia coordinator, Via S.Ignazio 74 (2nd floor - room 17), 09123, Cagliari, Sardinia, Italy, email: modica@unica.it, phone: +39 070 675 3357

Raquel Noboa, Marketing Coordinator, The Burren Ecotourism Network, Burren Ecotourism Network; Clare Co. Council; Ennistymon Area Office; Co. Clare; Ireland, email: info@burrenecotourism.com, phone: +353 879603371

Ioannis Pappas, CEO, Green Evolution SA, 20 Karneadou Str, 163 46, Ilioupolis, Athens, Greece, e-mail: i.pappas@green-evolution.eu, phone: +30 2109942800

Felipe Puertas, Technical Director of Tourism. City Council of Almuñecar. Plaza de la Constitución 1. 18690 Almuñecar, Granada, Spain, email: fpuertas@almunecar.es, phone: +34 958838600.

Henrique Ramos, CEO of SeaExpert, Fisheries Services and Consultancy Ltd, Tv. do Farrobim 15, 9900-361 Feteira - HRT Azores - Portugal, email: henrique.ramos@seaexpert-azores.com , phone: +351 963500687

Patrizia Romei, Associate Professor at University of Florence, representing Montecatini Terme, Tuscany, Italy, Via delle Pandette 9, 50127 Florence, Italy, email: patrizia.romei@unifi.it, phone: +39 0552759604

SAETA team, Area of Statistics and Market Research, Public Enterprise for Tourism and Sport Management of Andalucia, Regional Government of Andalucia. Calle Compañía, 40, 29008 Málaga , Málaga, Spain, email: saeta@andalucia.org, phone: +34 951299300.

Darren Saliba, Manager, The Heritage Parks Federation, P.O. Box 9, Saint Paul's Bay; San Pawl il-Bahar; SPB 1000; Malta, e-mail: darren@majjistral.org, phone: +356 21521291

Damià Serrano, Coordinator, Barcelona Tourism Observatory, Recinte Maternitat. Pavelló Mestral, Travessera de les Corts, 131 – 159, 08028 Barcelona, Spain, email: serranomdm@diba.cat, phone: + 34 934022975

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM INDICATORS

Project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

For more information about MITOMED+:

mitomed@regione.toscana.it

mitomed-plus.interreg-med.eu