



Enhancing SUSTainable tourism attraction in small fascinating Med TOWNS

SuSTowns

Priority Axis 3: Protecting and promoting Mediterranean natural and cultural resources
3.1: To enhance the development of sustainable and responsible coastal and maritime tourism
in the MED Area

Local planning manual for sustainable tourism rejuvenation of small, fascinating Mediterranean towns

***Methodology based on total quality management for
governance and the management of sustainable tourism***

Lead project partner: MUSOL Foundation
Partners involved: All

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First version author: Marta Domper

Author of new texts and modifications in the version updated according to the results of the SuSTowns project pilots: Francesco Filippi

Publication coordinator: Francesco Filippi, project director and quality manager for the MUSOL Foundation

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1. INTRODUCTION

Context

This methodology has been developed as part of the ‘Enhancing SUSTainable tourism attraction in small fascinating med towns – **SuSTowns**’ project (hereinafter, SuSTowns), financed by ERDF and IPA funds as part of the third call for modular projects within the Interreg MED 2014-20 (EU) programme. The project has been implemented by a consortium of nine partners, led by ANCI Lazio, and has a duration of 32 months – from 01/11/19 to 30/06/22.

The project seeks to develop tools for the planning and management of tourism in order to prevent its decline in small, fascinating Mediterranean towns – promoting sustainable and quality tourism. By making use of existing tools and applying the most innovative total quality management techniques to public policies (Total Quality Management Methodology), the project has promoted participatory planning and promotional processes for small, fascinating Mediterranean towns, based on the principle of sustainability and the enhancement of local cultural heritage.

The consortium is composed of:

- ANCI Lazio (Italy)
- MUSOL Foundation (Spain)
- BSC, Business Support Centre, Kranj (Slovenia)
- Development agency of eastern Thessaloniki’s local authorities – Centre for the development of human resources and the support of local economy (Greece)
- Association of Albanian Municipalities (Albania)
- The most beautiful villages of Italy (Italy)
- Aragonese Federation of Municipalities, Counties and Provinces (Spain)
- Island Development Agency Ltd (Croatia)
- University of Algarve (Portugal)
- Make it Better, Association for Innovation & Social Economy (Portugal)

The project is directed towards 445 key players distributed within public entities at a local, regional and national level, as well as civil organisations, in Italy, Spain, Albania, Greece, Slovenia, Croatia and Portugal. The project consists of four separate work packages. As part of the third work package for Testing (WP3), the partners have promoted a total of

19 pilots (two to three for each partner), in partnership with local authorities, in which local development plans to prevent and tackle tourism decline have been developed using the total quality management methodology and a participative approach. In accordance with local action plans, a sustainable-tourist product/package/itinerary has been developed in each pilot municipality, which has been promoted through marketing campaigns. Later, in the Transfer WP4, the lessons learned in pilot municipalities have been shared at a national and international level, through seminars, courses and by offering advice to new municipalities who wish to join the project. Furthermore, in the Capitalisation WP5, said learnings will be systematised and incorporated into a comprehensive sustainable-tourism model to be proposed to regional and state authorities, together with recommendations for improving sustainable-tourism public policies. Both the model and the recommendations will be shared.

Methodology objectives

To understand the scope and objective of this methodology, it is important to underline the complementarity between WP3 and WP5 of the SuSTowns project, and the general logic of said project. WP3 is a work package focused on testing a methodology intended to prevent tourism decline in small Mediterranean towns. In this sense, WP3 centres on a specific phase in the life cycle of tourism destinations, as theorised by Butler (1980) – specifically, the tourism destination’s phase of rejuvenation in order to avoid decline, which is described in more detail below.

WP3 sought to avoid tourism decline in the pilot municipalities by encouraging the rejuvenation of each destination through sustainable tourism, via a participative exercise in local planning. More precisely, this document offers **a local-planning methodology with the aim of obtaining a sustainable-tourism plan, aimed at the rejuvenation of tourism destinations, and of small, fascinating Mediterranean towns in particular.**

The methodology on which said participative exercise was based incorporates a comprehensive model for the management and governance of sustainable tourism in small Mediterranean towns, which covers all phases of a tourist destination’s life cycle. The creation of said comprehensive model is provided for in WP5 of the SuSTowns project. Said model incorporates both the tested methodology of WP3, as presented in this document, along with tools to tackle the other phases of the tourist destination’s life cycle, derived from other projects and initiatives in general.

The first version of this methodology was developed at the beginning of the project and has been applied by the partners in the various pilot municipalities – all small Mediterranean tourist towns. After the completion of the activities in the pilot municipalities and – more specifically – once the local sustainable-tourism action plans

had been developed for the rejuvenation of said destinations, the results of the pilots and of the methodology's application, as initially formulated, were assessed. The methodology has been updated according to the lessons and conclusions derived from the pilots.

The updated version of the methodology is presented in this document, incorporating the key conclusions established from the pilots' assessment.

The MUSOL Foundation, responsible for the coordination of the entire Testing WP3, has developed the initial version of the methodology and has incorporated the conclusions drawn from the pilots' assessment within this updated version. Furthermore, the methodology incorporates and capitalises on the lessons learned, the practices for promoting quality, and the tools produced by the partners in other projects financed by the EU, as well as through other experiences referenced in this document.

Use of this methodology

This methodology aims to serve as a useful tool, not just for the pilot municipalities of the SuSTowns project, but also for all local entities and other stakeholders interested in managing (in the broadest sense: strategic planning, governing, etc.) a tourist destination with a strategic long-term vision capable of identifying risks and signs of decline and implementing measures for the rejuvenation of said destination. In this sense, the methodology is intended to be easily replicable, particularly within small, fascinating Mediterranean towns.

The initial users of this methodology were the SuSTowns project partners, in partnership with the local authorities of the pilot municipalities of said project. Based on these pilot experiences, various learnings have been systematised and incorporated into this version of the methodology, with much broader target groups: local authorities of small Mediterranean tourist centres interested in strategic management of sustainable tourism, intended to prevent decline and rejuvenate the destination; regional and national authorities who wish to promote strategic management of tourism in small towns, with an interest in the policy recommendations included in this document; and tourism experts who advise local authorities in the management of sustainable tourism. Finally, the managers and directors in charge of managing tourist destinations and all kinds of tourism stakeholders interested in following this guidance document in order to apply it to other municipalities with similar problems.

The aim of this methodology was to be easily applicable by authorities and other stakeholders in small, fascinating Mediterranean towns. During the execution of the SuSTowns pilots, applying the first version of this methodology, it became clear that the

complexity of tourist-destination planning often far exceeded the capabilities of local authorities. Simplifying the methodology and its tools to adapt them to the capabilities of local authorities risked reducing its efficacy. As such, authorities were recommended to first assess whether or not the process suggested by the methodology would be feasible and executable with their own means or if they would need to hire specialist staff to facilitate the process.

This publication is divided into three parts: the first part, relating to the common framework in which the methodology's concepts and the theoretical approach are explained; the second part, focused on stakeholders, their involvement and the governance of tourism in small, fascinating Mediterranean towns in general, representing the key players in this methodology; and, finally, the steps required to develop the action plan for the destination's rejuvenation. Following these sections, the means of applying the methodology is simple:

- Read the theoretical framework to ensure a common understanding of sustainable tourism and the theoretical paradigms on which the methodology is based (section 2: Theoretical Framework).
- Understand the importance of the stakeholders, who they should be and the role they will have, as well as the integration of the destination's governance plan (section 3: Stakeholders, Governance and Step 1).
- Follow the steps to develop the plan (Step 2, Step 3 and Step 4).
- Understand the need to monitor the plan's implementation (step 5) in order to continuously improve the impact of actions taken.
- Communicate with destination stakeholders in order to ensure the plan's implementation (step 6).

This document is a guide – a method to simplify the development of an action plan – and as such, each municipality may adapt it according to their own characteristics, needs and resources. At the end of the methodology, in the action plan summary subsection, you will find a checklist for the minimum elements that must be included in the action plan. By applying the methodology, an action plan will be developed to promote sustainable and quality tourism. This will be the main document to be followed in order to tackle tourism decline in these towns.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It is recommended that a consensus is established with regard to the basic concepts on which this methodology is based. The definitions are derived from the 'European Tourism: recent developments and future challenges' study (Weston et al., 2019).

What is tourism?

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) defines tourism as “The activities of people identified as visitors. A visitor is someone who makes a visit to a destination outside of their usual environment for less than a year and for any purpose [including] holidays, leisure and recreation, business, health, education, or other purposes ...” This scope is much wider than the traditional understanding of tourists, which only includes those travelling for pleasure. (UNWTO, 2010)

Tourism includes the private and professional activities of individuals and companies who offer services to visitors, as well as the activities carried out by the visitors themselves during their visit and stay outside of the area in which they normally live or work.

Who are visitors?

Visitors are generally divided into two groups:

1. **Tourists**, visitors who are away from their home (or usual residence) for at least one night. These include national and international visitors.
2. Day **visitors**, also known as **excursionists**. These visitors spend at least three hours away from their home and, although they are normally national, may include cross-border or international journeys. This group can also be subdivided into two groups. Those who spend:
 - over three hours away from their home, who normally visit areas outside of their usual environment, and
 - less than three hours away from their home, and who are more likely to visit their local area.

The people within these three groups may visit a destination for holiday, leisure, recreation or business purposes, among others.

What is a tourist destination?

An area which is individually identified and promoted to tourists as a place to visit, and within which the tourist product is coordinated by one or more authorities or organisations.

What does the tourism industry involve?

The tourism industry is not a single industry, but a group of classifications of industries, which depend to a greater or lesser degree on tourism as their main source of income.

The WTO's list of industries (or activities) associated with tourism are:

1. Visitor accommodation
2. Food and drink service activities
3. Passenger rail transport
4. Passenger road transport
5. Passenger maritime transport
6. Passenger air transport
7. Rental of transport vehicles
8. Travel agencies and other booking service activities
9. Cultural activities
10. Sporting and recreational activities
11. Retail trade concerning a country's typical tourism goods
12. Other typical tourism activities in the destination country

Tourism Area Life Cycle

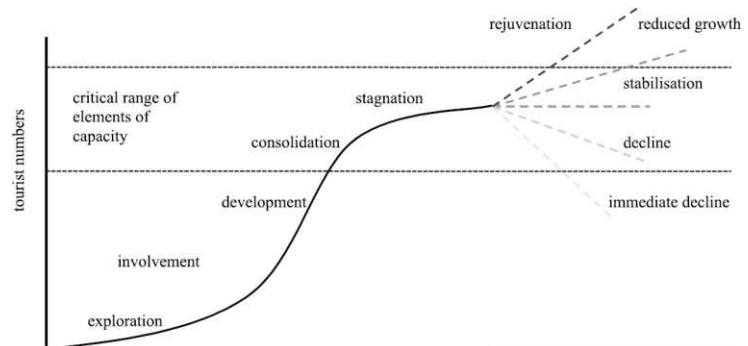
Aside from basic definitions, the methodology is focused on tackling tourism decline. For this, it is necessary to understand what decline means and, therefore, explain the evolution of a tourist destination according to Richard Butler's theory of the life cycle of a tourism area (although other theoretical¹ models exist for the development and evolution of a tourist destination).

The 'Tourism Area Life Cycle' was first mentioned as a term in Butler's model. The model, one of the most used and cited in the world of tourism research, has been highly influential in tourism and quite clearly represents significant applications for sustainable tourism. In general terms, the model establishes a positive relationship between the increase in number of visitors and tourism development, particularly in terms of accommodation. The model also suggests the existence of a hierarchy of tourist centres based on their level of development, the type of accommodation available, the degree of participation of local and foreign entrepreneurs, and the status (purchasing power) of the visitors.

¹Other theoretical models include those developed by Biossec, Chadeaud, Gormsen, Plog, Cohen and Santana.

The model has six phases:

1. Exploration
2. Involvement
3. Development
4. Consolidation
5. Stagnation
6. Post-stagnation



See graphic in Illustration

1: Butler's model of the tourism area life cycle.

Illustration 1: Butler's model of the tourism area life cycle

Evolution depends on many factors – both internal and external – and, in particular, the model suggests that each stage of the cycle has implications resulting from the flow of tourists, the relation between residents and visitors, the changing rank of the destination and the participation of external stakeholders. As a destination passes through each stage, the evolution of influencing factors will become increasingly complex to analyse, as interconnections increase between different areas and sectors not included in tourist governance and/or which fall outside of the control, access or information of tourist managers. The difficulty arises in diagnosing the current stage, by measuring the correct set of variables.

Incorrect use of data or poorly directed analysis can easily result in an irrelevant diagnosis of the current stage and, as a consequence, a poorly directed marketing strategy. Resources and valuable time will be wasted, and the solution to tackle any possible decline lost (Avdimiotis, 2009).

Proactive management of a tourist destination and appropriate tourism planning are vital to understanding the factors that direct the evolution of a tourist destination. Tourism planning is an essential project for local areas as tourist product – understood as the sum of very different realities (landscape, companies, infrastructure, equipment, social environment, heritage, etc.) that guarantees, on the one hand, the proper integration of tourism within the local economy, society, culture and environment, and, on the other hand, the appropriate satisfaction of tourist demand, an essential element for the economic viability of tourism projects within a tourism market with growing competition (Schulte, 2003).

The SuSTowns project focuses on the post-stagnation stage, which, according to Butler's model², includes the phases of decline and rejuvenation. These are detailed below:

Decline

Starting from a position of stagnation, there are two basic possibilities going forward: Decline in various forms, or rejuvenation (destination regeneration). Decline can be slow or fast. In decline, it is common for regular visitors to be replaced by people looking for cheap relaxation and disconnection, or day-trippers. Rejuvenation generally involves more effort on the part of those responsible for tourism, with a comprehensive approach, and an injection of resources is usually necessary – whether by a private company, the government, or any other source (including micro-financing campaigns or crowdfunding) – in order to develop more sustainable regeneration strategies for the destination, encouraging renewed interest among tourists.

Destinations in decline have been redefined as “destinations with a certain tradition in the provision of tourism services, but characterised by one or more negative tendencies”. This means that the negative tendency does not necessarily refer to a reduction in demand, as in the original life cycle model, but may be associated with various factors.

For example, some **signs of decline** may be represented by:

- A reduction in the elements that define the destination's quality – in the case of the small, fascinating towns addressed by the SuSTowns project, this is defined by the criteria of beautiful village associations' quality charters, as summarised in Table 5: Quality criteria.
- A reduction in the destination's competitive success (reduced market share).
- Difficulty securing a sustainable tourism offer.
- A reduction in the average expenditure per tourist.
- A reduction in the number of arrivals.
- A reduction in foreign investment.
- Difficulty facing seasonality.

Later on, we will return to discuss the indicators that may be considered in order to alert stakeholders of a tourist destination's possible decline.

²R. W. Butler: The Concept of a Tourist Area Cycle of Evolution: Implications for Management of Resources. Canadian Geographer, 24, 5 (1980)

Destinations that continue to make profits may also be stagnating or under an acute threat of decline. As such, the decline of tourist destinations will be considered from a structural point of view. The reasons for decline may vary according to different situations.

Decline, as previously mentioned, may be caused both by external factors, essentially linked to changes in the global tourist market or exogenous factors, or by internal factors, inherent to the specific destination – such as, for example:

External factors:

- Causes outside of our control (war, epidemics, earthquakes and other natural catastrophes, effects of climate change, social and political unrest, terrorist attacks, etc.), such as the current situation produced because of COVID-19, which affects the majority of countries across the world.
- The appearance of new emerging or competing destinations, presenting a new offer, with more competitive quality or prices. In fact, a competitive price with good marketing can have a faster impact on an established destination, and as such, knowing our competitors' strategies (even though we cannot change them) will be an advantage in better planning our destination.
- Negative publicity, which is on the rise as a result of social networks which can see a post go viral in just a few hours and make false content appear true.
- The growth of low-cost airlines and cheaper accommodation in new emerging markets.

Internal factors:

Product obsolescence with regard to demand requirements. In the last few years, new trends have been established in tourist demand, with a preference for:

- Journeys planned individually instead of purchasing tourist packages. People want to decide what to do for themselves, without being limited to tourist operators' plans, looking for separate and individual products designed according to the tourist's individual needs.
- The quality of traditional or mature destinations' tourist services.
- Experiencing the 'real' and 'authentic', instead of a mass, artificial tourist experience.
- Visiting areas whose environment has not been damaged and discovering sustainable locations, and tourism and mobility models aligned with the fight against climate change.
- Activity-based holidays. Many tourists are not just looking to sunbathe and enjoy the nightlife – they want complementary activities (day trips, cultural tours, sports, etc.).

- Healthy and sustainable experience offers, with a close link between physical activity, health and wellbeing – associated with the sector known as LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability).
- Avoiding deteriorated locations: The growing physical deterioration/degradation of the environment and natural heritage, such as beaches covered in waste and plastic.
- Avoiding locations with too many tourists: reaching/exceeding capacity, which is common not only in cities but also in small towns, villages, and municipalities.

In the case of small islands, competition can be strong, due to the mass-tourism model widely developed in the past. The lack of differentiation between tourist products places small islands in a global competition, where ‘price’ makes the difference³. Effective destination planning and management implies the use of any tool available to detect early signs of decline⁴ and taking preventative measures in order to rejuvenate the destination. Of course, the policies that may be applied can vary greatly according to the nature of the factors provoking decline. Some of them, particularly external factors, are not predictable, and so cannot be managed in advance. In these situations, an effective communication process may be useful in order to improve the destination’s image among current and potential visitors. In other cases, it is possible to identify the trends that may lead to decline.

In the case of ‘sun and beach’ destinations, other considerations should be taken into account. In general, tourist destinations are advancing through their life cycles much more quickly than they did several decades ago (Butler, 2007). Among other factors that have provoked this evolution, some relate specifically to destinations whose principal attraction is focused on sun and beaches. Tourists today can visit a destination and get to know its attractions in a shorter time. This reduces the need and desire to return, allowing them to explore new destinations every year. The former model of limited access from urban centres to coastal areas is obsolete in the majority of sites, and a tourist can potentially arrive at any tourist destination in under 24 hours. The likelihood of a tourist returning year after year to a relatively nearby tourist destination has reduced, except in the case of those travellers particularly motivated to do so (Butler, 2007). For many ‘sun and beach’ Mediterranean destinations, these changes represent a challenge of adaptation in order to attract new tourists each year, as they can no longer rely on huge flows of tourists returning year after year to holiday in the same location.

³ I. Spilanis, H. Vayanni, P. Spyropoulos, I. Syrakis: The Position of the Greek Tourist Product in the European Market. 2006

⁴ See the Early-Warning System in STEP 2 – of section 4. Methodology

Rejuvenation

Once a destination arrives at the stagnation phase – if the mature destination wants to avoid decline – they can opt for several solutions:

- Stabilisation, through the application of piecemeal measures that address only the most obvious effects, rather than the root problems.
- Rejuvenation – a radical approach that requires the adoption of measures that imply a new tourism model, which, in this methodology, we suggest should be based on sustainability and the integration of tourism with the local environment, economy and population; a regeneration project directed by the action plan derived from this methodology.

The evolution of a tourist destination's life cycle depends on the following characteristics, among others⁵:

- The means of tourism development (mass tourism, alternative means, etc.).
- Investment (private, foreign, local entrepreneurs).
- Demand trends (solo travellers, authenticity, explorers, adventurers, seniors, adult only, etc.).
- Planning, politics and tourism management in the destination.
- Governmental policies (open data, transparency and innovation in governance).
- Destination accessibility.
- Positive and negative impacts of tourism in the destination.
- Competition from other destinations.

Although the model of a tourist destination's life cycle has been widely used and applied, it has also been criticised for not identifying the causes of a destination's evolution. This methodology seeks to focus precisely on a critical phase of the cycle, when a destination can either return to growth via a process of rejuvenation or become stagnant and enter a situation of tourism decline.

Identifying which factors may facilitate or impede the destination's regeneration requires a detailed analysis of the forces at play, formal and factual power relations, and other factors that can often be hard to detect and which are linked to deep-rooted habits and the *modus operandi* of various stakeholders, both public and private.

⁵ C. Cooper, J. Fletcher, D. Gilbert, S. Wanhill: Tourism: Principles and Practice. Essex: Pearson Education Ltd., 1998

Said factors may be beneficial and facilitate the regeneration of the destination or may provoke inertia and render its rejuvenation difficult.

The analysis of said factors is closely linked to the type of destination under analysis. The tourist destination is a physical place, of greater or lesser size, featuring attractions, and which people – tourists – decide to visit. The destination is the veritable product that the tourist chooses and values, and the most significant classification of the destination may be – for the purposes of this manual – that based on the nature of the product, which may be distinguished between a ‘corporate’ destination and a ‘community’ destination. ‘Corporate’ destinations are similar to companies: for example, a ski resort or a theme park. They only, or mainly, offer one service, and are directed by a manager appointed by the owners. ‘Community’ destinations are local communities and are much more complex. Among other characteristics, ‘community’ destinations offer various goods and services – some private (hotels, restaurants, etc.), some public (mobility, cleaning, etc.) and shared (climate, snow, etc.). ‘Community’ destinations are exposed to asymmetric information: the tourist seeks an authentically human experience, and demands and values goods and services offered as a whole; while, on the other hand, ‘producers’ focus on offering specific services. Nobody is capable of, seeks to or can ‘produce’ the destination alone. In ‘community’ destinations, a business strategy cannot be as easily implemented as in ‘corporate’ destinations. In ‘community’ destinations, a problem of coordination arises: who can transform a set of heterogeneous goods and services into a homogenous destination product to be offered to tourists, and how? ‘Community’ destinations cannot rely on the free market and the actions of a business owner, nor can a mayor impose a vision of the destination, as goods and products from both public and private stakeholders coexist within it. The stakeholders of a destination must be convened, listened to and involved (Magliulo, 2012, 53-54).

Analysis of the factors that may facilitate or impede the destination’s regeneration is not straightforward, particularly when said analysis is carried out within a ‘community’ destination, such as the pilot destinations of the SuSTowns project and the small, fascinating towns to which this methodology is principally directed, which are – by definition – ‘community destinations. Said towns are ‘community’ destinations whose borders are quite clearly defined, which is an advantage given the frequent difficulty of marking out a ‘community’ destination which, by definition, has variable ‘borders (Magliulo, 2012, 53). However, we should remember that small, fascinating towns are integrated within wider contexts and that within a global context many tourists travel to visit a continent (Europe, for example), a country or a region, and not just a small town.

This factor creates further complexity in managing a destination, even for relatively well-delimited destinations such as small, fascinating towns, and blurs the boundaries of said destination and its ‘management’. At the same time, this factor increases the importance of coordinating the promotion of a small destination – such as a small, fascinating Mediterranean town – with the promotion of a region, country or continent, giving appropriate visibility to small urban areas in the positioning strategy of a wider destination. In this sense, multi-level governance plays a fundamental role.

In the pilot tourist destinations of the SuSTowns project, in which the first version of this methodology has been experimentally applied, different tendencies were identified linked to the specific characteristics of each locality – some facilitating rejuvenation, some limiting it. Tourist destinations that are firmly established with regard to tourist flows, often affected by strong seasonality of flows and closely linked to the traditional ‘sun and beach’ model, show the greatest reticence and difficulty in visualising and defining a rejuvenation process. The tourism crisis caused by COVID-19 temporarily increased interest in the process, which has been seen in many cases as a change to promote a faster recovery of tourism. However, a reluctance towards innovation still persisted in many cases – for example, the resistance of the private sector to strengthening alliances with other companies to extend the tourist season and reduce seasonality (difficulties in private-private collaboration) and, more generally, difficulties in public-private collaborations. Although specific cases were identified with particularly positive results in this regard, in general, the collaboration and coordination between stakeholders has presented itself as a difficulty when it comes to redefining tourist destinations for rejuvenation: these are small but complex destinations, composed of a set of goods and services which are partly private and partly public and shared.

In SuSTowns, it has been confirmed in practice that the management of a ‘community’ destination is complex, as it has proven extremely complicated to convene and involve all stakeholders in order to achieve a consensus as to how to regenerate the destination and generate a firm enough collaboration between key players so as to allow them to work towards the same objective, with the same mission, vision and strategy for the destination, agreed by all parties in order to ensure regeneration. The SuSTowns project has definitively confirmed that the regeneration of a destination is based on the collaboration of a wide set of stakeholders: no matter how small the destination is, this is the key difficulty and challenge in the process. We will elaborate on this process of consensus and coordination and offer guidelines on how to achieve this, based on real experience, in the description of the specific steps of this methodology, presented in chapter 4.

In particular, based on the analysis of pilot experiences and a review of the bibliography – though this is partial and incomplete in that it focuses exclusively on the practical applicability for the project’s target groups and contexts, and because this document is not intended to provide academic value – this updated version of the methodology collects and intends to respond, in a practical and applied way, to one of the key weaknesses of the tourism area life cycle model: the most pertinent and valid criticism of the model is that it has limited value, given that, according to Butler himself, it is essentially a descriptive instrument. Furthermore, the tourism area life cycle model is very limited in the identification of agents of change that influence the evolution of tourist destinations (Butler, 2007). The SuSTowns project, which from the outset has sought to focus on the phase of rejuvenation, has suffered from this weakness of the Butler model. The difficulties related to this weakness have been felt in the real experiences of pilot municipalities. A theoretical support, as well as a theoretical and practical proposal to mitigate this problem, have been found in Butler’s work itself (2007). In particular, if we want Butler’s tourism area life cycle model to serve not only as a descriptive model but also as a tool to successfully intervene in the management of destinations, we must systematically analyse the forces – briefly described above in reference to cases from the SuSTowns project – that facilitate or render difficult the regeneration of a destination, in order to understand how they can be directed towards a common goal. Said forces and factors generally vary from destination to destination. This characteristic asserts the relevance of the SuSTowns project’s approach, which has largely been local: it is at this local level that, without excluding relations at other levels (institutional, partnership, etc.), it is possible to take action to rejuvenate a destination by working on a process of analysis and consensus with a specific scope, based on the specificities of each destination. Butler himself states that of all the potential positive forces (that promote the rejuvenation of the destination) that may be identified, proactive destination management is the most effective overall (Butler, 2007). In chapter 4, we offer a few tools – such as ‘force field analysis’ or Weaver and Opperman’s (2000) four cell matrix, which may be used to analyse the forces that prevent or encourage the rejuvenation of a destination in risk of decline and take the appropriate measures to try to align said forces through dialogue and the formation of a consensus regarding the direction a destination must take in order to achieve its rejuvenation.

Sustainable Tourism

The concept of sustainable tourism has been gaining ground since its first appearance in the 1990s, producing offshoots – such as responsible tourism, eco-tourism and solo tourism – as the concept has evolved, although different interpretations somewhat conflate the various ideas that surround it.

However, the common denominator among all definitions is the fundamental role of visitors and their objectives, motivations and activities that impact the region visited.

The most widely accepted definition of ‘Sustainable Tourism’ is as follows: “Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities”. (WTO, 2019c)

At the same time, the term sustainable aims to ensure sustainability, which is achieved through responsibility. This is followed by responsible tourism, which requires a responsible attitude on the part of the travellers and, in particular, the tourist-industry professionals, who must develop a business model that contributes to the conservation of natural, socio-cultural, and economic resources within the region. However, there is a gap between the concept of sustainability and its application in the real world, which became evident in the second decade of the last decade.



Balancing the three dimensions of sustainability without risking the concept of sustainability itself, and recognising the different interests of the concerned parties – which often appear contradictory – is not an easy task; as such, a specific study is required for each case in order to ensure a balance of the three dimensions (environmental, economic, and socio-cultural).

The importance of this action is such that the United Nations designated the year 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, in order to promote work towards goal 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals included in the United Nation’s 2030 Agenda.

Some tourist data

According to WTO data: Global tourism has grown over the last nine years, with international arrivals reaching 1,400 million in 2018 – two years before expected.

According to the WTTC, tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing sectors in the global economy. Its value in 2018 amounted to 8.8 billion dollars (around 7.9 billion euros), outperforming the global economy for the eighth year running. (WTTC, 2019). Europe is the number one destination in the world when it comes to international arrivals – with 713 million in 2018, more than half the global total – with growth of 6% in 2018.

As well as being the number one destination in the world, visits to EU countries are not distributed equally, as the three leading destination countries (France, Spain, and Italy) account for around 40% of total visitors. The south of Europe and the Mediterranean zone is the region that has experienced the greatest growth, with an 8% increase in arrivals (289.4 M in 2018) and a 7% increase in income (187 M in 2018). It should be noted that around 80% of tourist arrivals originate from the same region, and as such around 530 million journeys are made by Europeans visiting other European destinations (WTO, 2019a).



Illustration 2: European regions with the most tourist arrivals in 2017 (Source: Eurostat)

Tourism is responsible for 5% of global CO₂ emissions, around 75% of which is produced by the transport sector; air travel alone represents 40% of emissions within the industry. More than half of all journeys are made by air (58%), an increase of 12% compared to the year 2000, predominantly at the expense of land-based travel, which has fallen 10% in the same period to 37% (WTO, 2019a). With this information, concern for sustainability is increasing, both in terms of capacity and in environmental impact.

Tourism plays an important role in the European economy, not just with regard to economic growth, through travellers' spending, but also contributing to regional development and employment. As such, tourism has repercussions and interdependencies in many spheres, including transport, the environment, consumer protection and regional development.

Policies in these areas have not always been coordinated in considering the possible impacts on tourism, and as such, recognising that sustainable tourism is crucial in order to achieve the goals of the EU's energy and climate policies, among others, and rethinking the industry to ensure responsible tourism will help to achieve actions coordinated between different sectors. It should be noted that the economic benefits of tourism have been made much more visible via the introduction of the Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA)⁶.

In reality, the challenge is to create appropriate strategies, solutions, and business models to address the estimated data foreseen for the coming years. The industry must adapt to new ways of thinking and, more importantly, acting. The aim is to develop plans to ensure that tourists are more environmentally sustainable and socially respectful when they travel (from the moment they start planning the trip until the experience has been completed), as well as to involve residents and encourage them to participate.

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a drastic and sudden reduction in tourism. Considering the period between January and October 2020 on a global level, on average, the arrival of tourists has fallen by 72% compared to same period in the previous year. In April and May, the reduction reached almost 100% (97% and 96% respectively). In line with global data, a 70% reduction has been recorded in the Mediterranean and a 69% overall reduction in Europe as a whole (WTO, <https://www.unwto.org/international-tourism-and-covid-19>). This is an unprecedented collapse that may be described much more comprehensively and with much more data.

The drastic reduction in tourism has not affected all sectors equally. The partial data available at the end of 2020 regarding rural tourism highlights that in various Mediterranean countries, small urban centres and rural tourism have recorded an increase of tourist flows with respect to the previous year, once the strictest mobility restrictions were lifted. In Spain, for example, according to Hosteltur information (available at https://www.hosteltur.com/140181_como-ha-impactado-la-covid-19-en-el-turismo-rural-espanol.html), rural tourism was one of the most successful sectors in summer 2020, as travellers opted for natural destinations and accommodation that ensured social distancing. Once the state of alarm was lifted, half of rural accommodation increased their demand in comparison with figures recorded prior to the pandemic. In fact, 45.9% stated that they experienced more demand than before the health crisis, and 27.5% retained their pre-pandemic levels. In Italy, the data describes similar trends.

⁶ Tourism Satellite Accounts are the main statistical instrument for measuring the economic value of tourism. They take into account both direct tourist spending and the contributions of tourism offers (employment, business expenses, etc.).

According to Coldiretti (available at <https://www.coldiretti.it/economia/il-covid-porta-nei-borghi-2-turisti-su-3>), 66% of Italians visited small tourist centres in summer 2020, and 25% opted to spend their holidays in a small town. In France, Interface (2020) detected this trend in May 2020 as they confirmed that rural and nature tourism was the number-one option for 72% of French people planning holidays during the pandemic.

The European Commission (Marques et al., 2020) came to similar conclusions when analysing tourism trends in 2020 and changes in tourists' preferences caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In Europe, the regions most affected by the reduction in tourism caused by the pandemic are the destinations with the greatest concentration of tourism in summer, along with urban destinations, as tourists in summer 2020 presented new preferences: low-intensity tourist destinations and outdoor activities, far from large cities. For some rural areas, the COVID-19 crisis may be an opportunity to strengthen their economies, not just as a result of the aforementioned new trends, but also due to the greater interest of consumers in sustainability and ecology. The preferences of consumers are changing, leaving mass tourism behind and directing themselves towards less busy tourist destinations. A greater dispersion of tourism in the area may help mitigate the adverse effects of mass tourism (in cities, tourist resorts, famous nature destinations, etc.), and not just the problems derived from the pandemic. These trends may also contribute to local development in remote and less advanced areas, reversing population decline by creating a new momentum for telecommuting. In accordance with new tourist preferences, the tourism crisis is also an opportunity for the sector to improve its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Tourism has been expressly included in SDG 8, 12 and 14, but has the potential to contribute to all SDGs (Marques et al., 2020,28).

These trends contribute to dispelling the doubt as to whether or not sustainability is a luxury that, particularly for smaller destinations, cannot be permitted in times of crisis if they want to remain competitive. The competitiveness of a tourist destination depends on two factors: its capital and its ability to use this – that means, the ability to transform this into a range of tourist goods and services (Magliulo, 2012, 55). Capital is the sum of various resources: natural, cultural, intellectual, etc. A destination may have significant capital and not be capable of exploiting it. Or it may be able to develop itself, but only by 'consuming' the capital. Destinations that do not protect the environment, the region, local traditions, the quality of work and other local activities are destinations facing decline. For all these reasons, sustainability of a tourist destination is not just not in conflict with the destination's competitiveness, but is also a condition with which the destination must comply in order to be competitive and remain as such in the long term (Magliulo, 2012, 56).

Total quality management (TQM)

Total Quality Management (TQM) is defined as a management approach for long-term success via a customer-focused management system. In the TQM system, all members of an organisation (managers and employees) participate in the improvement of processes, products and services. TQM offers and provides the appropriate environment to encourage employees to continuously improve their skills and abilities, in order to offer high-added-value products and services to customers. 'Total' means bringing together different departments in order to improve operations and ensure cooperation between these, and 'Management' implies to executives and managers that they must see quality as a responsibility for improvement through financing and investment, training, coaching, sales targets and the creation of cross-functional teams, as well as the participation of management to guarantee these internal practices. TQM uses effective strategies, data and communication to integrate the discipline of quality within the organisation's culture and activities. Quality is defined by the customers' requirements, and as such it is necessary to make use of tools such as checklists, control charts, histograms, and cause and effect or scatter diagrams, among others, to ensure sufficient data to analyse and take the correct decisions. The TQM system is a continuous process for the detection and reduction or elimination of errors within the production or supply chain, while improving customer service and guaranteeing employees' continuous learning.



Illustration 3: Principles of total quality management

Many of these concepts are present in quality models such as ISO 9001:2015 and the European Foundation's Quality Management Model (EFQM).

TQM is differentiated from other quality approaches (such as the ‘quality-assurance’ approach) by several aspects. TQM is an executive strategy based on the involvement of top-level management. It is a quality approach based on the definition of a strategy to satisfy all interested parties: in other words, strategic management is a fundamental part of TQM, alongside the mapping, involvement and management of stakeholders. The importance of local and global contextual analysis should be noted, as well as that of an approach which remains ‘open to the external context’, aiming to ensure the satisfaction of all interested parties – not just customers, but also local communities and providers, among others. The satisfaction of all interested parties necessarily requires the company to consider all aspects of sustainability: not just the economic sustainability required by internal interested parties, such as shareholders, but also social and environmental sustainability to ensure the satisfaction of local communities and other interested parties. The TQM-based quality-management system includes many characteristics of CSR management systems. Therefore, the application of TQM in tourism-sector companies is the most appropriate quality approach for introducing sustainability within management systems. This is not the only reason for which the SuSTowns project has opted to incorporate TQM in its methodology. TQM prioritises the evolution of the local and global context, and the adaptation of companies to rapidly changing markets. This approach is fundamental for the tourism sector to understand when the signs of decline arise and a rejuvenation process is required.

According to the WTO (WTO, 2007:9), the main reasons for implementing a management model should be:

- Ensuring sustainability in tourism.
- Establishing a competitive advantage.
- Sharing the benefits of tourism.
- Improving tourism performance.
- Constructing a strong brand identity.

Furthermore, the factor of environmental governance is essential for the development of a project, whose fundamental base is the preservation of the environment and everything this implies: economic growth, public and private inclusion, and, of course, respect for the local people who inhabit this space and the tourists who visit it (BleuTourMed, 2017). The TQM system is a quality-management approach that may be applied both in the private sector (both for profit and non-profit organisations) and in the public sector.

The most noteworthy characteristics of TQM are key factors for governance, and in particular for the local governance of a tourist destination, in order to act in a coordinated way to avoid tourism decline and initiate a rejuvenation process. For example, if a local authority implements a management system based on TQM (or at least partially inspired by it), it will pay greater attention to the evolution of local/global contexts, as well as the satisfaction of all interested parties, implying reinforced communication with these parties. All of the above are key factors for suitable governance of a sustainable tourist destination.

In fact, there are parallelisms between the evolution of public administration and the evolution of quality management. Public administrations have moved from a bureaucratic approach, upon which the democratic, social and legal state has been created, to new public management (reforms of the 1970s and 90s) focused on efficiency and effectiveness, and, finally, from the 1990s onwards, to a new approach that we may call Governance (Prats i Catala, 2005, cited by Filippi, 2016), based on intense interrelations with all public and private stakeholders within the territory and across the world – interrelations which imply collaborative design and co-implementation of public policies. Quality management has moved from a quality-control approach (based on empirical quality control of a product according to a fixed standard), to quality assurance (focused on ensuring quality products by improving internal processes) and finally to total quality management (oriented towards the satisfaction of all stakeholders, their involvement, and attention to the evolution of the global and local context in order to ensure continuous improvement of products and services).

The management of a tourist destination, and in particular of a 'community' tourist destination according to the aforementioned categorisation, requires a system of governance which manages to catalyse the complexity, heterogeneity and diversity of stakeholders and forces that intervene in the management of a destination. A public authority alone cannot determine this space. The intense and permanent relation with other stakeholders must be constant in order to ensure proactive destination management. In this sense, for the management of a tourist destination, it is natural to opt for the new focus that we have named Governance (Prats i Catala, 2005, cited by Filippi, 2016). For this to take form, function and allow for proactive destination management, the focus of Total Quality Management offers highly useful tools. In this sense, the project not only proposes the Total Quality Management for companies, as a useful tool for continuous improvement and the pursuit of excellence in business management.

The project also proposes the TQM approach as a tool for public management, in particular for the management of tourist destinations. In fact, all the tools proposed in this manual are coherent with TQM, in its adaptation for the management of a tourist destination.

Bearing this in mind, there are various factors that should be considered for the development of governance in a tourist destination – all coherent with TQM: the first of these is **balance**, based on the creation of an independent organism that guarantees process coordination, co-ownership, and support for policies that promote the established objectives. This requires a multiple governance approach that may be developed with horizontal and vertical coordination in order to help structure the complex challenges they will face. The second factor is **inclusion** and, for this, it is necessary to consider an open and transparent (authentic) dialogue, and the active participation of all individuals or groups involved. Last but not least: **empowerment**. This should point to assertive leadership and participative processes that help explain the complex elements necessary in order to make these a reality. It is also necessary to come to a **contractual agreement** which encourages collaboration and compromise in order to achieve the objectives (Wilson, BleuTourMed 2019).

Next, we will detail the eight principles of total quality management and how these may be applied to the sustainable management and governance of tourist destinations:

Principle	Description	Application to a sustainable tourist destination
Focused on the customer	The customer determines the final quality level. Regardless of what an organisation does to promote an improvement to quality, it is the customer who determines whether or not these efforts have been worthwhile.	<p>The destination should consider the profile of its target audience, the visitors. Among the customer stakeholders, destinations will need to define at least three profiles in order to then develop products and experiences according to said profiles (type of person, when they are likely to travel, how much they will spend, dissemination channels, etc.).</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourist seeking disconnection: short stay to relax and disconnect from the urban area. - Excursionist, only occasionally visiting: visits the town for half a day for several reasons such as cuisine, heritage or an event, etc. - Active visitor: mainly adult couples or groups of friends interested in nature or sporting, or even adventure activities. <p>Passionate tourist: generally, families or seniors who love the idea of being in a peaceful location and enjoying what the municipality has to offer (cuisine, traditions, heritage, etc.) and exploring the surroundings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging the customer tourist's new requirements and preferences is essential for adapting business, at a micro level, but also for adapting the tourist destination in general – periodically reformulating the destination's vision and therefore ensuring its rejuvenation and regeneration. Capturing new customer-tourist trends is only possible with pro-active destination management, with companies led by a management team attentive to both global and local evolution. This methodology is a tool to capture said trends through participation and incorporate these into the shared vision of the tourist destination.

Employee participation	<p>All employees participate by working towards common goals. Total commitment from employees can only be obtained after fear has been removed from the workplace, when empowerment is generated and when management has provided the suitable environment for said commitment. High-performance working systems integrate efforts for continuous improvement with normal commercial operations. Self-managed working teams are a form of empowerment.</p>	<p>It's also important to count on the commitment of stakeholders and to give them a voice and means of expressing their needs and opinions. Local focus groups – which we suggest in this methodology to rejuvenate destinations – can be fed by the opinions of tourist-company employees, as well as those of their executive management.</p> <p>Then, the common vision of the destination – which this methodology seeks to obtain – can be shared across the region, in order to promote its appropriation by public and private employees working in direct tourist-facing roles, in particular.</p>
Focused on the process	<p>A fundamental element of TQM is a focus on the process. A process is a series of steps that take inputs from providers (both internal and external) and transform these into results to be delivered to customers (internal and external). The necessary steps to carry out the process are defined and the performance measurements continuously monitored in order to detect any unexpected variations.</p>	<p>The rejuvenation or regeneration of a destination is a continuous process which this methodology seeks to systematise and simplify within a process of participative planning which, furthermore, places emphasis on the monitoring of the action plan produced through the process, in order to fuel the development of future plans to continue the regeneration of destinations.</p>

Integrated system	<p>Although an organisation may consist of various different functional specialities, often organised into vertically structured departments, these functions are connected by horizontal processes, which represent the focus of the TQM system.</p> <p>Each organisation has a unique working culture, and it is practically impossible to achieve excellence in products and services unless a <u>culture of good quality is encouraged</u>. As such, an integrated system connects business-improvement elements with the aim of improving and continuously exceeding the expectations of customers, employees and other interested parties.</p>	<p>Integrity and transversality are two of the main characteristics of proactive and efficient management of a destination and its governance. The destination-governance model must be comprehensive, in the sense of involving various stakeholders to ensure the legitimacy of decisions taken. Bearing in mind that regenerating a tourist destination requires that local stakeholders and forces be aligned and working in the same direction: this can only be achieved by comprehensively addressing the destination region and its stakeholders. Different subsectors, both public and private, related with tourist-destination development must work in the same direction in order to achieve the vision of the destination.</p>
Strategic and systematic approach	<p>A critical part of quality management is the strategic and systematic approach to achieving the vision, mission and goals of an organisation. This process, known as strategic planning or strategic management, includes the formulation of a strategic plan that includes quality as a central component.</p>	<p>In order to achieve regeneration, a destination must be led by proactive management. The entity in charge of the destination's governance can only achieve this by applying a strategic vision to destination management, avoiding a purely short-term focus. Said strategic vision must also be systematic: the local and global context evolves so rapidly that only the frequent systematic exercising of strategic planning for the destination's regeneration can avoid its decline. This manual offers a methodology to ensure this.</p>

<p>Continuous improvement</p>	<p>A significant element of TQM is continuous process improvement. Continuous improvement drives an organisation to be both analytic and creative in order to find ways of becoming more competitive and efficient, meeting the expectations of interested parties.</p> <p>Among the most frequently used tools for the continuous-improvement model, we have a four-step quality-guarantee method – the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle:</p> <p>Plan: identify an opportunity and plan the change.</p> <p>Do: implement the change on a small scale.</p> <p>Check: use data to analyse the results of the change and determine if a difference has been achieved.</p> <p>Act: if the change has been successful, implement it on a larger scale and continuously evaluate its results. If the change did not work, start the cycle again.</p>	<p>Continuous improvement in destination governance, associated with a strategic approach, requires the ability to monitor progress in a destination's regeneration by measuring indicators or analysing its measurement by others. It is for this reason that our methodology places emphasis on the importance of monitoring the destination's rejuvenation plan. Lessons may be learned from its performance, enabling continuous improvement.</p>
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Fact-based decision making	<p>To know how well an organisation is performing, data measuring its performance is required. The TQM system requires an organisation to continuously compile and analyse data in order to improve precision in decision making, achieving a consensus and facilitating estimations based on historical performance.</p>	<p><i>We cannot manage what we cannot measure</i> (NECSTouR).</p> <p>Initial data (a baseline) is required, as well as periodic data, in order to get to know the destination's situation and obtain an overall vision through which to make decisions.</p> <p>Indicators should also measure quality, and then ensure progress with innovation.</p> <p>An evaluation system coordinated with other entities may be useful in order to ensure that said data is available to the destination's governance bodies. It is precisely the difficulty in obtaining data broken down at a regional level that has emerged as a limiting factor in the SuSTowns project's pilot municipalities.</p>
Communication	<p>During times of organisational change, as well as during daily operations, effective communication plays an important role in maintaining moral and motivating employees across all levels. Communications involve strategy, methods and opportunities.</p>	<p>The implementation of changes is required. However, in order to keep staff motivated, it is important to ensure transparency and continual updating of the progress report among all individuals involved. A clear message with regard to the main goal can involve more interested parties and raise awareness among residents and tourists. In order to achieve a destination's rejuvenation, its key players must be aligned according to a shared and previously agreed vision. The communication of this shared vision of the destination, as we have already noted, is fundamental in order to encourage its appropriation.</p>

Satisfaction of all interested parties	<p>The satisfaction of all interested parties is a goal of total quality management which requires close partnership between both internal and external interested parties.</p>	<p>In a tourist destination, interested parties are usually residents, associations, environmental associations, and cultural associations, among others. It's important to bear in mind all axes of sustainability in order to satisfy all stakeholders. Through the satisfaction of all stakeholders, total quality management requires us to pay attention to all axes of sustainability, because satisfying residents, customer-tourists, local environmental associations and the private sector requires effort at the level of the destination's governance in order to shape a joint vision of the destination, capable of satisfying and/or managing all expectations. This methodology seeks to combine the regeneration of a tourist destination with sustainability, through the satisfaction and involvement of all stakeholders.</p>
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Table 1: Table with the principles of total quality management

All aspects of the TQM system are included in the various stages of the methodology, as essential characteristics for the development of an action plan.

The implementation of a total quality management plan within destinations will affect all aspects of their performance. The documented benefits of a quality-management system include:

- ✓ Meeting tourists' requirements helps to build confidence in the destination's management, which subsequently generates more customers, more sales and more repeated visits.
- ✓ Complying with the town's quality criteria, as well as with legal and public tax requirements, guarantees compliance with regulations and the provision of products and services in a more efficient way with regard to costs and resources, creating space for expansion, growth and profits.

These benefits can offer additional advantages, including:

- Defining, improving, and controlling processes through the incorporation of management with a broad vision of the destination.
- Cost reduction thanks to the reduction of waste and prevention of errors.

- Facilitating and identifying training opportunities.
- Engaging and involving workers and more residents.
- Communicating willingness to produce consistent results.
- Communicating the destination's current situation (with regard to its offer vs that of the competition, or issues regarding tourist staff, etc.) influences the production of consistent results among different stakeholders.

3. STAKEHOLDERS and GOVERNANCE

A tourist destination is a complex ecosystem generally split into two principal areas – residents and visitors – although there are many other parties that should be considered in order to obtain an accurate vision of the destination and, consequently, plan and act accordingly.

To begin, we have the base and shared space which is the territory itself, in which everything is interconnected and everything takes place. As such, human impacts and activities (both positive and negative) will affect this territory that must be preserved and protected for future generations. In said territory, the community lives, works and enjoys its free time, and tourism must continue to contribute to improving its well-being without risking its current and future comfort (Espinosa, 2019).

With the territory considered as the stage in which everything takes place, it is essential to indicate that mentioned in the 'The Invisible Burden' report (Epler Wood et al., 2019): "The invisible burden is defined as the destination's unaccounted costs of providing infrastructure and protecting environmental and sociocultural systems for tourists and the local population". What appears basic, and is taken for granted in Western countries, are services such as electricity, energy, internet connectivity, water and sewage systems, the health system, and food security, etc. As global tourism grows, all this basic infrastructure threatens natural and cultural icons. What's more, it is not just residents who use these infrastructures, as tourists also benefit from them, meaning that this should be taken into consideration for sustainable development and environmental impact. As such, in order to involve residents, it will be necessary that investment in tourist facilities, services or goods guarantee benefits for local communities, as these offer an essential contribution to the tourism industry (for example, mobility services, food, traditions, crafts, etc.).

On the other hand, we have the visitors, who must ideally enjoy the destination in a responsible way, spending money on local activities and businesses to contribute to the well-being of the host community.

However, in this great ecosystem, many interested parties intervene who do not always share the sustainable vision or tourism awareness regarding the enormous impact this has in the territory, as well as for the economic and sustainable development of destinations. As such, in order to design an effective action plan for the rejuvenation of a tourist destination, the first step is to clearly identify all stakeholders within a tourist ecosystem, in order to sit them down and speak together to define the needs and challenges implied in changing the behaviour of all parties, starting with local authorities through the application of flexible management and an innovative model of governance, and ending with visitors, in order to protect, preserve and positively impact the territory.

Keeping in mind this image of the destination's ecosystem, who should be the target audience in order to achieve the methodology's implementation and, as such, define the action plan and its performance?

In accordance with the WTO's Code of Ethics, the interested parties in the tourist development include:

- National governments.
- Local governments with specific authority in tourist issues.
- Tourist establishments and businesses, including associations.
- Institutions dedicated to financing tourism projects.
- Tourism employees and professionals.
- Tourism employee unions.
- Tourists and excursionists.
- Local populations and host communities in tourist destinations, through their representatives.
- Other legal and physical persons with an interest in the development of tourism, including non-governmental organisations specialising in tourism and directly involved in tourism projects and the provision of tourist services.

In addition to the above list, there are various target audiences who should be included, given their relevance:

- Representatives of European institutions (DG MARE, DG Growth, DG ENV, DG EASME, etc.) to advocate and apply financing measures and programmes at a European level and promote their application.
- Authorities and representatives of other European partnership programmes such as ENI-CBC-MED or other Interreg programmes to advocate for the financing of

programmes and promote more exchanges and capitalisation of the project's results.

- EU member states' and other Mediterranean countries' ministries of tourism, in order to promote measures in their respective countries that encourage its implementation.
- Academic representatives (for example, researchers and professors) who will inform countries, regions and local destinations of the model and guide its implementation.
- Civil-society associations that operate in sectors directly or indirectly affected by tourism.



The SuSTowns project focuses on small, fascinating towns. For this, we must focus on a local level, with local authorities playing an important role in involving interested parties within the destination and ensuring leadership throughout the duration of the action plan, guaranteeing the co-ownership of the process among all stakeholders involved in order to implement said action plans. The project proposes (see step 1 of chapter 4) the creation of 'local focus groups' (LFGs) as a form of initiating a process that involves different levels of government and different regional and/or local stakeholders to achieve a common vision regarding the development of sustainable tourism, based on their identity, value and vision, in taking advance of historic, natural, culinary, authentic and cultural heritage in order to ensure a competitive advantage on the global market.

In the Culatra 2030 initiative, the following principles are defined in order to ensure the participative approach:

- Based on key players: heterogenous so as to attract interests and visions of the entire region.

- Based on the region: social and historic relations between the region and its key players.
- Dynamic: adaptable to complexity, with two perspectives – supporting the positive impact and mitigating negative impacts.
- Systemic: understanding the complex ecosystem and its interdependencies with other territories such as similar towns, the region, or the country.
- Multisectoral: integration of different sectors, including the environmental, social, economic, political, and cultural sectors.
- Multilevel: integration of different scales in governance, facilitating the incorporation of new governance models.
- Participative and negotiated: strengthening dialogue and trust through the increased power of negotiation.

(Make It Better, 2009)

To empower interested parties in the design, planning, and implementation of tourist activities within the region and develop effective collaboration between them, the shared vision among sustainable tourism destinations must be clear and comprehensive for all. As such, in order to share a clear and more complete idea, we recommend carrying out **training sessions** (courses) to provide the concepts, vision and meaning of the theoretical framework upon which the destination's rejuvenation process is based.

Next, we have included an indicative list of interested parties who should be involved in the process of developing an action plan for the destination's sustainable rejuvenation:

Local government with influence in tourism	The department and offices in charge of tourism at a local and municipal level.
Local government without direct influence in tourism	Representatives of other local government areas and departments: economic development, urban planning, mobility, energy, agriculture, regulation, taxes, etc. The more departments participating, the more different forms of facing challenges and more powerful agreements may be achieved by the destination. Keeping in mind that sustainable tourism is connected with several public policies (urban planning, mobility, waste, etc.) it is important that the concerned municipal departments are represented.

Local DMOs (Destination Marketing Organisation) or DMCs (Destination Management Company)	<p>DMO or leading public, private or mixed entity that until now has fully or partially administered the destination.</p> <p>Destination management organisations play an important role in the coordination and integration of the development and implementation of EU policies and strategies across all national sectors and within the different levels of government (Spyriadis, Buhalis and Fyall, 2011).</p>
National, regional and/or provincial authorities with influence in tourism	At least in the initial meetings, it will be helpful to have the person responsible above the local level present to involve them in the engagement of the action plan and to exchange points of view in order to ensure alignment with the vision of sustainable destination management.
Other local organisations within the region	Town-centre management organisations; authorities for parks and protected coastal areas; natural-parks organisations; public-transport agencies; NGOs related with tourism; and heads of sharing-economy platforms, among others.
Interested parties within the private tourism sector	<p>Tourism management: welcoming agencies, tourist guides, etc.</p> <p>Accommodation: hotels, campsites, hostels, sharing-economy associations, etc.</p> <p>Technological SMEs: companies that offer solutions to the tourism sector.</p> <p>Sports: entities that offer activities. Establishments: souvenir shops, studios and crafts. Other tourist businesses.</p>
Institutions dedicated to financing tourism projects	Large companies in the area (province or region), bank CSR organisations, banking services, other private initiatives and experts in foreign investment.
Tourism employees and professionals, and tourism-employee unions	Individual employees, groups of specific tourism workers (such as air stewards, cleaners, entertainers, etc.) and tourism associations and unions.

Residents	Local populations and host communities in tourist destinations, when possible, including those local residents for whom the destination is a second residence. In particular, the residents (who live with the pressures of tourism on a daily basis) may intervene not just in decision making, but also in planning and management.
Academic representatives and research organisations	Having professors and researchers within interested parties guarantees state-of-the-art approaches and knowledge and, furthermore, a horizontal approach in order to adopt innovation; additionally, business schools and the educational sector to broaden the skills necessary within the tourism sector.
Consultants and experts in different fields	A change manager, a tourism-governance consultant, a sustainable-tourism consultant, an expert in the circular economy, and a mentor for digital transformation, among others, who can guide and support the action plan's design and implementation.

Table 2: Interested parties to be included in the action plan

As well as all the interested parties mentioned in the table above, we must pay particular attention to **visitors (tourists)** who play an important role. However, it is very difficult to obtain their participation in the action plan's development. Nonetheless, it will be very valuable to obtain their opinion on planned actions, as well as their opinion on their own experience within the municipalities. For this, questionnaires or surveys will need to be distributed between the accommodation sites and the tourism service providers in order to passively collect the opinion of visitors and bear this in mind for improvements in the action plan. These surveys should be systematised so that the action-plan supervisor can include them in the process of design and supervision.

It is not enough to simply identify interested parties who should participate. All voices must be listened to; this methodology emphasises a bottom-up approach, as those closest to the actions (or who suffer the impact or run the concerned businesses) are those with the most to win or lose, meaning that they are more motivated and, therefore, more committed to implementing the plan.

Both local public authorities and regional and national authorities should exercise leadership and provide a link between the different levels of governance, avoiding any restrictions in order to facilitate coordination and flexible governance processes to incorporate the wishes and concerns of residents and the private sector (including SMEs and the self-employed as well as large companies) working in tourism.

Involving the different stakeholders in the process will ensure that a *‘Better places to live, better places to visit’* state is achieved (Barcelona NECSTouR Declaration, 2019).

Local tourist-destination governance

With respect to **destination governance**, several different concepts should be clarified. With the term ‘governance’, we refer to the institutions and rules that establish the limits and incentives for the construction and functioning of interdependent networks of stakeholders (governmental, private sector and civil society) that act in specific social scopes (Velasco, 2008) – in our case, in the management of a tourist destination. This concept is coherent with the evolution of public administration, as explained in the ‘Total Quality Management (TQM)’ chapter. In this sense, governance will be “a new style of governance, different from the model of hierarchical control and characterised by a greater degree of cooperation and by the interaction between the state and non-state stakeholders within mixed public and private decision-making networks” (Mayntz, 2000). Tourism offers a fertile environment for the observation of the true dynamic of the concept of governance (Velasco, 2008). As we have explained in the ‘Tourism area life cycle’ chapter, ‘community’ tourist destinations, in particular, require intense public-private collaboration for proactive management and in order to carry out destination planning, essential for avoiding decline and promoting regeneration. As explained by Velasco (2008): firstly, boosting tourism requires collaboration between the public and private sectors. For its development, it is essential to use public resources managed by various levels of government (natural, cultural and regional resources, among others). Secondly, it is also necessary to involve the host society within the destination to ensure its proper development; in terms of governance, this will require the involvement of civil society. The third argument is that tourism is eminently transversal. Its proper development will require the involvement of various business subsectors (accommodation, hospitality, transport, intermediation, etc.) with independent and, in many cases contradictory, logics. Fourthly, it is a common daily working practice for tourist agents to use elements outside of the traditional functional division, according to the logic of intervention. In the case of tourism, it will be the destination that acts as the unifying element for the space of action.

Although the concept of ‘destination’ may be controversial, it encompasses opposing sectors, levels of government and interests, and is the most unshakeable unit for work in this regard.

This final argument from Velasco (2008) allows us to reiterate the relevance of addressing the governance (and management) of a tourist destination, based on its complex but necessary local territorial delimitation. Although we have explained that delimiting a community destination may be complicated, in the case of the destinations referred to in this methodology (small, fascinating Mediterranean towns), this is a viable exercise as these are clearly constrained from a territorial point of view, containing an articulated set of public and private stakeholders that may be complex but clearly defined. This does not mean that we should ignore the fact that small, fascinating Mediterranean towns are located within regions, countries and a continent which are also tourist destinations in themselves. In this sense, we should also consider the different levels of government, business, regional and state associations, and the European Union itself. The relations with said levels must be considered within the destination’s governance, fully incorporating its representatives in the destination-governance body and properly maintaining the necessary relations to coordinate proactive destination management (multi-level coordination). However, it is essentially a local level that we suggest should be addressed in the governance of the destinations forming the subject of this methodology. It is at this level that proximity facilitates the participation and coordination of different stakeholders operating within the destination; it is at a local level that we can ensure sufficient simplification to map out and manage the different and at times opposing forces that have contributed to the destination’s rejuvenation in order to avoid its decline. And finally, it is the local level of the territory that must find its space within the strong local, regional and international competition of tourism destinations, adding to the management of the tourist destination, region, country or Europe, in order to increase the attraction of the whole (region, island, country or continent), while preserving and increasing the visibility of its specific added value.

Various studies exist regarding the different models of governance for tourist destinations, although the literature on the governance of smaller community tourist destinations – such as these fascinating Mediterranean towns – is not extensive. Queiroz (2015) summarises the key factors of the different models of destination governance as follows:

Table 2 – Theoretical dimensions for the Governance of Touristic Destinations

Dimensions	Delimitation	Key factors
Who?	Stakeholder identification Participation of diverse stakeholders (public and private sectors, other organisations, citizens)	Legitimacy and representativity Capacity to motivate participation of diverse stakeholders Collective goals
What?	According to areas of activity (planning, product design, promotion and marketing) According to means of participation in decision-making process (consultation, proposing alternatives, choosing alternatives, execution and evaluation) Variable: according to the activities carried out by stakeholders	Training Engagement Financial resources Time to participate Technological resources
How?	Transparency and accountability: participation in the cycle of tourism policies (situation identification, design, implementation and evaluation)	Capacity to respect rules Control mechanisms and sanctions Capacity for accountability Instruments: multilevel networks and coordination (national, regional, local), DMO Website, forums, boards, councils, planning Regulatory aspects and incentives Supervisory authorities Votes and public consultation Annual calendar of activities

Source: Queiroz, 2015, 53.

Queiroz's (2015) conclusions match and reinforce the lessons learned in the execution of the SuSTowns project. Although the project does not intend to invest in the governance of tourist destinations, the existence or lack of bodies facilitating said governance and its variety have had an impact on the project's implementation. In destinations where governance was weaker, as no organisations existed to facilitate it or because these did not function correctly, the planning exercise supported by the project – based on the first version of this methodology – proved to be much more innovative for local stakeholders. In some cases, the participation techniques, such as those suggested in chapter 4, were difficult to apply, as the stakeholders were not accustomed to said processes. Despite these difficulties, in said destinations – which formed the majority of pilot municipalities – the project offered greater added value by implementing an innovative process for local stakeholders that not only allowed for the development of a previously non-existent planning instrument (the action plan), but also opened up new perspectives for public-private collaboration.

For example, in the Ses Salines (Majorca, Spain) pilot, following the first meetings with the destination stakeholders, the town council and the association of local tourist entrepreneurs opted to launch a campaign for the destination's promotion on their own, based on private-public collaboration. Other pilots worked with bodies that facilitated governance, established by national legislation. In these destinations, which were in the minority, the project offered a methodology which proved to be less innovative in comparison to the majority of the pilots carried out. The project allowed these destinations to focus on the destination's regeneration, but as these were destinations already accustomed to strategic planning, this was not as innovative an exercise as in other pilots. Of course, the project offered a new vision of management and planning, but did not offer as much added value as in other destinations. It's important to note that these destinations are not characterised by being more or less developed from a touristic point of view, but are characteristic by having a more defined model of destination governance that encourages proactive and strategic destination management. These elements extracted from the evaluation of SuSTowns project pilots corroborates the importance of destination governance for regeneration, and for strategic and proactive management in general.

Among the models encountered by the SuSTowns project in the performance of its pilots, the Croatian model in particular stands out. The relevance of said model has been reflected in the performance of the SuSTowns project in the Cres and Mali Lošinj pilots, and has been expressed by the Croatian project partner OTRA d.o.o. Said partner, in particular, stated that the general situation of weak destination governance was not present among Croatian pilots, who were already applying a local governance model enforced at a state level. The OTRA partner also noted possible overlaps between the governance body in force and the LFG created by the project, an aspect which we will address in the following section. In the Croatian model of local tourism governance, local tourism boards are established by law at a municipal level or by grouping together several municipalities. The representatives of the local tourism boards form part of the respective regional boards. The boards are defined as local tourist-destination management organisations. Local boards have certain powers, including tourism destination planning, and are formed not only by the local public authority, but also by representatives essentially derived from the private tourist sector. In particular, companies (individuals or legal persons) within the tourist sector are mandatory members of the local tourism board's assembly. Other persons (physical or legal) may be voluntary members of the board, but their admission depends on the board meeting's decision. One of the board's most noteworthy powers, defined by law, is the ability to agree on the joint use of tourist tax funds remitted to the local authority.

As stated by Queiroz (2015), the availability of resources is a key factor, and, in the Croatian model, the local tourism board's capacity to define the use of collected municipal tourist taxes is coherent with said factor. The fact that the law defines the participative character of the local tourism board is positive and brings the model closer to the governance approach, making it much easier to come to an agreement on a shared vision of the destination. The importance of the local level in the Croatian model is a hugely important element as it allows for the tourist destination to be clearly delimited and for its management and development to be planned in line with reality and local circumstances. At the same time, the model allows local boards to choose the representatives that form part of regional boards, facilitating vertical multi-level coordination. On the other hand, by limiting obligatory membership to private business stakeholder within the tourism sector, the Croatian model may end up diluting the influence of other interested parties in the tourist destination's management, particularly residents, who would only be represented if they request this and are accepted by the assembly. Despite this, the Croatian model of local tourism boards facilitates tourist destination governance and proactive management, and is an advantage in processes of rejuvenation such as that established in the SuSTowns project. In 2001, Italy passed the National Tourism Legislation Reform Law of 29 March 2001 (No 135), whose Article 5 provided the possibility to create 'local tourist systems' that were not necessarily delimited by municipal and regional boundaries, but constructed around homogenous territories understood as a tourist destination, which may include more municipalities and different regions. Local tourist systems provide for the creation of spaces for public-private cooperation aimed fundamentally at tourism promotion. The aforementioned law does not refer to powers in destination planning, although it may be understood that this forms part of their duties.

Policy recommendation regarding local governance of tourist destinations.

The implementation of tourist governance bodies, based on the creation of public-private decision-making spaces at a local level for the destination's management, with clear powers and associated with resource management – such as the collection of tourist taxes – is a policy recommendation for regional and state authorities which has very clearly emerged from the SuSTowns project's execution. The Croatian model may serve as an example, although the specific characteristics must be adapted to the context and administrative structures, etc., of each country. The local character and participation of the governance model proposed is particularly successful in the proactive management of small, fascinating Mediterranean towns, which run the risk of not having the proper management, visibility and promotion when diluted within broader, territory-wide strategies. Only a local participative model can ensure that said towns are proactively managed as tourist destinations based on a shared vision, agreed upon by all local stakeholders. Ensuring that this body is properly connected with other levels (regional and state) will ensure adequate multi-level coordination.

Governance of the tourist destination's rejuvenation plan

As explained above, this methodology allows for the development of a rejuvenation plan for a small, fascinating Mediterranean towns. From the first formulation of this methodology, said process has been structured in a participative manner, by providing for the mapping of the tourist destination's stakeholders, their prioritisation according to the criteria suggested in step 1 of chapter 4, and their inclusion within a local focus group (LFG). The creation and functioning of said group has been facilitated by the SuSTowns project's staff – although from the start it has been the local authority (normally the mayor) who has exercised leadership in convening, opening and closing meetings, etc. Said group offers an outline or non-institutionalised body of local tourism governance which, in the pilot towns, has allowed for local rejuvenation plans to be developed for the destination, based on sustainable tourism. In the implementation of the SuSTowns project pilots, the need to further elaborate the plan's governance has emerged. Although the groups created at the beginning of the project have fulfilled their purpose – developing the plan – a particular concern has been arisen, seeking to structure the body responsible for the monitoring and execution of the plan, and to fully connect with the governance bodies already in existence in some destinations.

With respect to this latter aspect, the conclusion reached is that the plan must be integrated with the destination's governance bodies, if these exist, right from the start – in order to avoid any overlap or potential conflict and, on the other hand, to contribute to reinforcing the existing model of local tourism governance. Furthermore, the rejuvenation plan's execution must be directed by said bodies. Where no such bodies exist – as in the majority of pilot municipalities – leadership corresponds to the local authority (normally the town council or similar organisation), but it is clear that this is not sufficient for the plan's execution. Despite its institutional legitimacy, any plan will require intense collaboration with the private sector and other regional stakeholders. As such, institutionalising the local group formed to create the plan may be a solution in those contexts in which no local tourism governance bodies are provided by local regulations. Legislation usually limits the possibility of involving stakeholders outside of the local authority in the creation of public policies. As such, the means of involving stakeholders external to the local council must be clearly defined on a case-by-case basis and, more generally, said involvement will take on more of a consultative nature. For example, in Spain, the Organisation, Functioning and Legal Regime of Local Authorities Regulation, approved by RD 2568/86 provides for the creation of participative bodies within the municipality through sectorial councils. The plenary decides to create said bodies and approves their regulation. Said bodies do not have decision-making powers, but they can provide a significant forum for participation. As such, the Plenary could create a sectorial council for Tourism.

This recommendation does not intend to dilute the role of the local authority, city council or any similar body. In fact, one lesson learnt from the SuSTowns project is that the most successful pilot municipalities are those municipalities in which the local authority has demonstrated more engagement in the process of the plan's development, with the aim of rejuvenating the destination in general. Furthermore, said lesson is coherent with the principle of TQM, which considers the involvement of top-level management essential; extrapolating this to a small town, said top-level management would be the mayor. In some SuSTowns project pilots where said engagement or where the capacities of local authorities were not so strong, the private sector has sought to fill in, in the form of formal associations or informal 'cluster-type' groups of tourist businesses.

In general, the experience of the SuSTowns project pilots has confirmed that, save for some exceptions, the governance of tourist destinations at a local level is still a little-considered and implemented aspect in small, fascinating Mediterranean towns. As such, this is a factor that hinders proactive and unanimously agreed management and, as a result, the rejuvenation of these destinations.

This is a weak point of small, fascinating Mediterranean towns as *“Governance directly affects how real progress is achieved in ensuring the economic, sociocultural and environmental goals of sustainable-tourism development. Within the Mediterranean context, tourist destinations have a lot to gain if they adopt a sustainable governance approach, in which tourism is understood as part of a broader urban or regional eco-system, and the tourist destination is conceived as a quality place to live, work and visit”* (Wilson, BleuTourMed, 2019:13).

4.METHODOLOGY

Vision

The vision of this methodology links the rejuvenation of destinations with sustainable tourism and the need for strategic destination planning: “Tourism planning certainly holds the key to the sustainable management of a tourism destination” (Conaghan, Hanrahan and McLoughlin, 2015:103).

The initial version of this methodology was developed before the pandemic (drafted between November 2019 and April 2020), when – in accordance with global tourism growth – 500 million international tourist arrivals were expected in Southern Europe and the Mediterranean for 2030, half of which in coastal areas. As such, it is vital that we adopt measures in tourism planning with the aim of allowing destinations to chart a course to becoming sustainable tourist destinations and avoid decline caused by the rapid evolution of tourism preferences.

This methodology has been applied in the SuSTowns project pilots during the pandemic, which has drastically changed tourist flows and resulted in uncertain forecasts for the future, as confirmed by the data described above in the ‘Sustainable tourism’ section. The decline of tourism in the SuSTowns project pilot towns, as theorised by Butler’s model of the life cycle of tourist destinations, occurred suddenly and drastically. Rejuvenating the destination in order to relaunch it on the market was no longer a question of preventing possible decline, but rather an urgent need that, furthermore, would potentially allow the destination to take advantage of new tourist preferences in the pandemic’s post-lockdown period. This meant ‘taking advantage’ of the post COVID-19 tourism preference for small, nearby towns, perceived as being safer as they are less overcrowded, and for active and nature tourism. All of the above are features that may potentially favour the target group of this methodology: small, fascinating Mediterranean towns.

These dizzyingly rapid changes have challenged small, fascinating Mediterranean towns to redevelop their identity as tourist destinations: on the one hand, in order to capture post COVID-19 tourist flows and, on the other hand, to contribute to new trends becoming established over both the medium and long term – that is to say, contributing to ensuring that tourists continue to consider these destinations, even after tourism returns to a path of growth in terms of numbers. Tourists’ increased attention to sustainability and ecology after COVID-19 (Marques, 2020) are new features that small, fascinating Mediterranean towns can take advantage of, if they manage to reconstruct their vision of the destination in accordance with the principles of sustainable tourism.

In summary, the radical evolution of tourism as a result of COVID-19 has not detracted from the relevance of this methodology, and has in fact strengthened this and anticipated the need for small, fascinating Mediterranean towns to reposition themselves through strategic destination planning in order to make the most of new trends and benefit from these through a process of rejuvenation.

What’s more, the methodology very clearly states that if we want tourism to provide economic development, drive the local economy and benefit both residents and visitors, we must follow the mantra of “Better places to live, better places to visit”, as posited by the Declaration of Barcelona (NECSTouR, 2019). For this, a change of mentality will be required from all interested parties, as well as innovative actions in terms of governance and management in order to preserve the uniqueness of Mediterranean history and the natural and cultural assets that have transformed the region into the world’s leading tourist destination.

Objective

The objective of this methodology is to describe the steps required in order to create action plans at a local level, avoiding the decline of small, fascinating Mediterranean towns, in accordance with the criteria of sustainable tourism. In this way, the methodology considers global tourism trends and takes into account the five most important topics in European tourism management as highlighted in the stakeholders’ consultation carried out as part of the European Parliament’s ‘European Tourism: recent development and future challenges’⁷ study, and also includes the challenges for more sustainable European tourism as described in the European Commission report ‘Action for more sustainable European tourism’ (European Commission, 2007).

⁷ Weston et al (2019)

Furthermore, as repeatedly indicated, COVID-19 has radically changed tourist preferences and this methodology hopes to contribute to ensuring that small, fascinating Mediterranean towns benefit from said new trends, while also helping to reinforce tourists' growing concern for sustainable tourism.

On the other hand, the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) have been considered in the methodology's theoretical background. Tourism has been expressly included in the following goals: 8) Inclusive and sustainable economic growth, 12) Sustainable consumption and production and 14) Sustainable use of the oceans and marine resources; but also plays an important role in many other areas, and therefore in achieving the other SDGs. The methodology has also considered the WTO's Code of Ethics for Tourism: the Convention on Tourism Ethics⁸, which transforms the nine basic principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism into an international convention with the aim of reinforcing its effectiveness and application.

Description

The methodology includes six steps, which may be summarised as follows and which we will later describe in more detail.

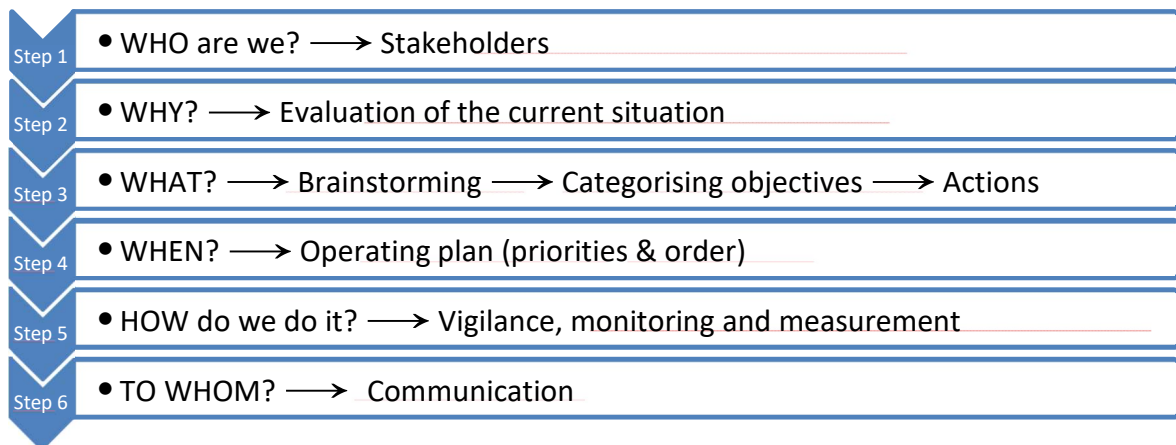


Illustration 4: Methodology steps

⁸ <https://www.unwto.org/ethics-convention>

STEP 1 – LOCAL PARTICIPATION

In chapter 3 ‘STAKEHOLDERS and GOVERNANCE’, we have explained in depth the need for a space for the participation of all stakeholders in order to develop the plan, as well as the importance of the plan’s governance during its implementation. All this is closely related to the models of tourist-destination governance already in existence in some countries, and lacking in others. As such, this step of the methodology suggests that, in general, we should map out all destination stakeholders in order to prioritise these and form a local focus group with priority stakeholders, led by the local authority (council or similar).

The creation of the local focus group is recommended in small, fascinating towns that lack destination-governance bodies, or in those destinations whose management bodies do not guarantee the required participation, considered to be essential in order to come to an agreement on the plan for the destination’s rejuvenation.

For those destinations with governance bodies, we recommend mapping out and prioritising stakeholders to be involved in the plan’s development. It is fundamental that we analyse whether or not the existing destination-governance bodies guarantee the participation of all priority stakeholders; if any are missing, we recommend making agreements so that the body accepts the participation of additional stakeholders in the process for the plan’s development, in order to therefore involve all priority stakeholders. In any case, if destination-governance bodies exist, the external formation of the local focus group for the plan must agree with said body in order to avoid conflicts and overlaps.

In the development of the plan, it should be established who will be the governance body for said plan – that is to say, the body that will take decisions on its implementation and will ensure its monitoring and performance, relying on the participation of priority stakeholders. In small, fascinating towns that lack destination-governance bodies, the local authority (council or similar) must officially recognise the role of the local focus group in the plan’s performance. In general, legislation limits the ability to involve external stakeholders in the performance of municipal policies beyond a role of information and consultancy. As such, the way in which the plan’s ‘co-implementation’ may be realised should be studied on a case-by-case basis. In those towns with destination-governance bodies, it is highly recommended that said body assumes responsibility for the plan.

We will now describe the specific actions of step 1 in more detail.

In accordance with the instructions of section 3, ‘STAKEHOLDERS and GOVERNANCE’, regarding who should be considered for the design of the action plan, an exhaustive list of the small, fascinating Mediterranean town’s stakeholders must be created, noting at least the following information:

STAKEHOLDER INFO		POWER/INFLUENCE ON THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL ACTION PLANS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM (LOW-HIGH)	INTEREST IN THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL ACTION PLANS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM (LOW-HIGH)	HOW COULD THE STAKEHOLDER CONTRIBUTE TO DESIGNING AND LATER IMPLEMENTING LOCAL ACTION PLANS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM?	HOW COULD THE STAKEHOLDER BLOCK LOCAL ACTION PLANS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM?
Stakeholder name	Contact persons				
	Name, tel. ...				

Once the list has been prepared, we face the complicated reality of this large number of stakeholders. In order to facilitate the choice of stakeholders to form the local focus group for the action plan's development, we suggest applying the following criteria:

Establish the stakeholder's interest:

- Power/influence in the design or implementation of local action plans for sustainable tourism? Is it high or low?
- Interest in the design and implementation of local action plans for sustainable tourism? Is it high or low?

How could the stakeholder...

- contribute to the design and implementation of the local action plans for sustainable tourism?
- block local action plans for sustainable tourism?

The aim is to create a matrix in which we can locate interested parties in accordance with the previous responses, in order to easily choose those with the greatest power and interest. Please see the example in the following figure

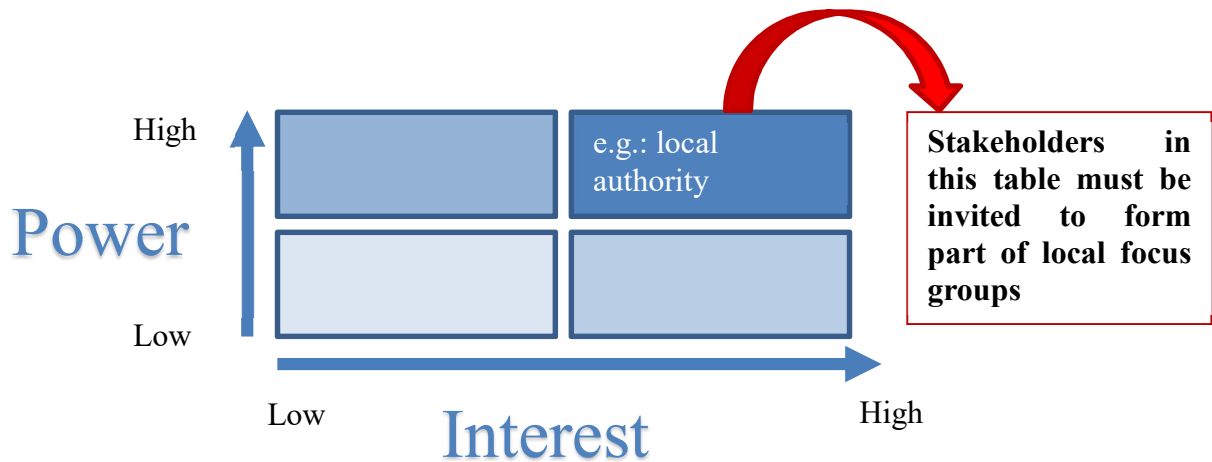


Illustration 5: Stakeholder matrix

The local authority (council or similar) of the small, fascinating Mediterranean town must be included among the priority stakeholders and take leadership of the local group. Leadership of the group will correspond to the mayor. However, the council may participate in the local group through various departments relating to tourism – whether directly or indirectly – with the aim of facilitating the comprehensive and transversal approximation of the plan to all public policies relating to tourism (urban planning, mobility, etc.).

Once the selection of stakeholders to be invited to form part of the local group has been completed, if appropriate, the local authority will proceed to convene said interested parties and form the local group. The first local focus group meetings must focus on the following points:

- Explaining the **aims of the Action Plan's development** and of the focus group, as well as the steps planned and the envisaged timeline. It's important to have a plan of the process prepared in advance in order to offer stakeholders a vision of the whole and to allow them to note the dates of following meetings, if possible.
- **Training on the concept of sustainable tourism, the TALC model and the TQM approach.** The theoretical paradigms of the methodology through which the plan will be developed must be clear. As such, we recommend offering the local group a training plan which covers at least the concept of sustainable tourism, Butler's TALC model and the TQM approach. Bearing in mind what the most common profile of the stakeholders is, it is suggested that a theoretical-practical approach is adopted,

clarifying concepts while offering practical examples that may also inspire stakeholders in the following steps of the process.

- **Getting to know the stakeholders:** creating a climate of trust and partnership in the action group is important. As well as introducing each member, explaining their experience/interest in the tourist sector and the reason for which they are taking part in this participative process, specific team-building techniques may be applied.
- ✓ Tip: Digital platforms may be used to upload process information and documentation, or to carry out online voting and participation processes to accompany in-person group meetings.

STEP 2 – EVALUATION

As in any situation in which we hope to act and get involved in the design of a common strategy to tackle specific objectives, data and figures are required in order to understand the current situation – that is to say, the starting point of the municipality or village in which the action plan will be implemented.

The aim of this step is to evaluate the destination's current situation, because, as NECSTouR explains, "We cannot manage what we cannot measure". As such, the first step for the action plan is to get to know the current situation of the municipality in which we will plan where we want to go, by answering the question: where are we now? And then: where do we want to go? Offering data evidence will allow the destination to understand whether or not the town is in a situation of decline or if it runs the risk of entering decline, and will offer precise information about the town while ensuring an objective method to acquire data, accompanied by the field experience of residents, tourist experts and stakeholders. The aim is not simply to obtain quantitative data, but also to systematise qualitative data.

Objective:

- To evaluate the town/municipality's current situation, including information about both visible and invisible forces acting within the destination which may promote or inhibit its regeneration.
- To identify symptoms of decline.
- To list current tourist products (offer portfolio).

Tools:

- DPSIR, SWOT, GAP Analysis or Spider Plot. Four Cell Matrix or Force Field

Analysis (FFA). Participant observation.

- Online tourist-indicator platforms.
- Quality charters (standard criteria).
- Early-alert system for the detection of symptoms of decline with Balanced Scorecard adapted to the destinations.
- List of existing and potential tourist products.

Result:

Overall vision of the current destination situation with data/indicators and systematised qualitative information.

The process within this step must be carried out as follows:

2.1 Participative collection and analysis of qualitative destination information. The local focus group or, if appropriate, the external expert who facilitates the process, will need to choose the most appropriate tools among those offered by this methodology (DPSIR, SWOT, GAP Analysis, Spider Plot) or other similar tools, in order to obtain the relevant qualitative information regarding the town's current situation. The functioning of said tools is explained later in this text, as well as the information that may be obtained. Based on the chosen tool, one or more focus-group workshops will be scheduled in order to compile information. All of the proposed tools are participative, as the information required in this step is found in the unwritten knowledge of destination stakeholders. For the collection of destination information, in accordance with the suggestions of SuSTowns project partner the University of Algarve – based on the experience of the Lagos (Algarve, Portugal) pilot – special importance is given to analysis of the forces that promote or act as an obstacle for destination rejuvenation in small, fascinating towns. For this, we propose two techniques (four cell matrix and force field analysis) that may be used to study the information obtained in workshops and in visits to the destination. This type of information is difficult to obtain and, as such, observation of the destination and of interactions between its stakeholders, among other factors, is essential in order to identify the forces at play – the elements that positively or negatively influence its rejuvenation. Beyond the cited tools, in order to obtain said information, visits or prolonged stays may be carried out in the region, holding an informal dialogue with its stakeholders. This technique is analogous to a simplified form of 'participant observation' and was particularly useful in Italy in the Castel di Tora pilot, in which an expert from ANCI Lazio opted to stay in the town for a prolonged period in 2020, facilitating the destination's evaluation.

2.2. Destination analysis through the prism of sustainable tourism. Beyond the qualitative information that may be collected in the previous step, analysis of the small, fascinating town must be carried out through the prism of sustainable tourism. For this, although there is no universally accepted set of criteria or indicators, there are various suggestions of criteria and indicators available that may be highly useful, as we will detail below. Through the local authorities and a process of secondary-source research, the necessary data will be collected in order to complete the basic set of indicators (plus those applicable to destination type), as suggested in a later section of this methodology. The experience of the SuSTowns pilots demonstrates that this is a complex task, given the lack of information broken down at a municipal level. Below, we will tackle this issue and present possible solutions.

2.3 Destination analysis in accordance with quality criteria which reflect the specificities of small, fascinating towns. This methodology is specifically directed towards small, fascinating towns. Said tourist destinations have very particular characteristics and their sustainable competitiveness depends on specific factors that other destinations neither have nor need to care for, preserve or promote in their rejuvenation strategy. As such, the criteria of sustainable tourism analysed in the previous section must be complemented by additional specific criteria, specifically designed for small, fascinating towns. Inspired by the experience of small, fascinating towns associations such as ‘Los Pueblos Más Bonitos de España’ and ‘I Borge Più Belli d’Italia’, and by the total quality management approach, we propose the analysis of small, fascinating towns based on a set of specific criteria, which we will call quality criteria and will explain later on in this methodology. The information for this analysis may be obtained from local authorities and from interviews with key stakeholders.

2.4 Analysis of the destination’s possible symptoms of decline. This methodology focuses on a specific phase of the life cycle of the tourist destination – the destination’s rejuvenation in order to avoid decline. To ensure proactive destination management, decline should ideally be detected in advance in order to begin the process of rejuvenation in time. Using a balanced scorecard or similar tools, according to a set of indicators that we will describe below, it is important to carry out analysis that will facilitate the detection of the early symptoms of possible decline.

2.5 Updating or developing a list of tourist products. It is important to accompany local authorities and LFGs so that they may identify or update a list of current products and potential resources that may be included in the future action plan. It’s likely that the local authority already has an inventory of this type and all that will be necessary is to update or order it.

2.6 Sharing of destination evaluation information. The results are shared in a local group meeting, in which – or over the course of various sessions – a common vision of the destination will be agreed upon in order to transform the current situation and rejuvenate the destination. This action allows for the evaluation to be linked to the proposal phase, which will be further developed in later stages. It allows the LFG to visualise how they want to transform the destination and understand that this diagnosis work is closely linked to rejuvenation.

2.7 Developing the destination evaluation document. A document that summarises the results of step 2, and which will form part and serve as the basis of the action plan.

Explanation of the tools suggested for actions in step 2:

The tools proposed below should be used in parallel. On the one hand, tools such as DPSIR, SWOT, GAP Analysis or Spider Plot aim to carry out an evaluation of the initial situation. On the other hand, tourist indicators and quality-standard criteria require data from local authorities and official sources. All these tools together offer a general and reliable overview in order to continue towards the next steps of the overall approach within a local focus group. Above all, the application of the various tools will allow for the required information to be obtained, in order to then design the plan for the destination's rejuvenation.

Tools for action 2.1: DPSIR, SWOT, GAP Analysis or Spider Plot

Participant observation

For action 2.1 of step 2, we suggest the following techniques:

DPSIR

DPSIR (drivers, pressures, state, impact and response model of intervention) is a causal framework for describing interactions between society and the environment: the human impact on the environment and vice versa, due to the interdependence of the components. The aim is to apply this model to the town in which the action plan is developed.

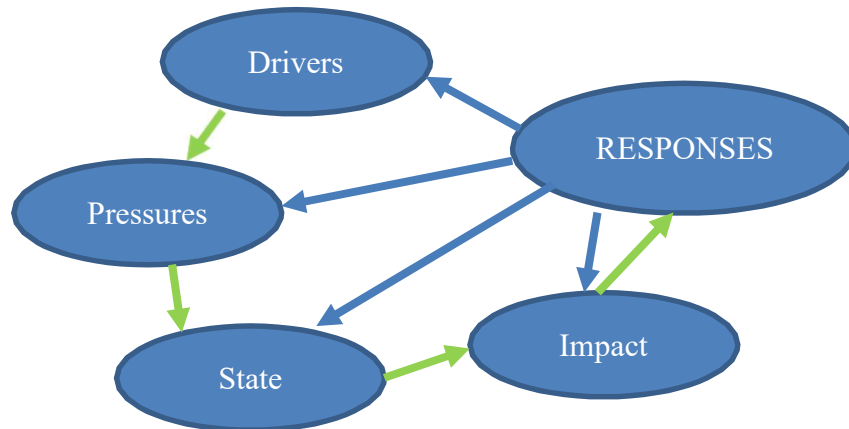


Illustration 6: DPSIR model

Driving forces: external aspects, such as global trends and European challenges, including consumer trends, industry, tourism, and economic growth which affect the destination.

Pressures: external aspects that imply a threat for the region, current lifestyles or even for business models or human behaviour – such as contamination, change in the use of the land, and demographic growth – and which have a significant impact.

States: the current situation surrounding us or around the town, such as the quality of water, earth or air; the habitat; or vegetation, etc.

Impacts: situations created by humans today, such as excessive tourism, low-cost airlines, new traveller profiles, global diseases affecting the movement of people and public health, fragmentation of the environment, economic crisis, environmental damage and the loss of biodiversity.

Responses: actions (generally the responsibility of public authorities) that may tackle the above elements in order to force a change in human impact, such as taxes, environmental laws and regulations on specific activities, etc.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is normally applied to companies, but may also be applied to any situation that needs to be assessed. The aim is to bring together information regarding four factors: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, which will allow for a complete understanding of the situation before any decisions are taken, whether this concerns a change of strategy, a resources plan, the renovation of internal policies, or any new action. SWOT analysis is a useful tool for new recommendations and strategies, focusing on making the most of strengths and opportunities in order to overcome weaknesses and threats.



Illustration 7: SWOT Analysis

GAP Analysis

GAP analysis is an analysis of deficiencies, also used by companies as a formal study of what the company is currently doing and where it wants to go in the future, but can also be applied to a destination. This analysis may be carried out at a strategic or operational level within an organisation (or both). It may be carried out in the following way:

- Identify the current status or situation: where we are.
- Define the ideal or desired situation: where we want to go.
- Identify the gap – that is to say, what’s missing in order to reach the ideal situation: what we can improve.
- Close the gap: categorise what is necessary in order to achieve the ideal situation, bearing in mind the current situation – this is the action plan.

Gap Analysis



Illustration 8: GAP Analysis

In summary, gap analysis is a comparison of the current situation with a potential or desired situation. Once a general expectation of the town as a tourist destination is understood, it is possible to compare this expectation with the municipalities current level of 'performance'. This comparison becomes the GAP analysis.

Spider Plot or Radar Chart

A radar chart is a graphic method of displaying multivariate data in a two-dimensional chart of three or more quantitative variables represented in axes which originate from the same starting point. The relative position or angle of the axes are generally not informative, but various heuristics may be applied, such as algorithms which trace data like the maximum total area, in order to classify the variables (axes) in relative positions which reveal correlations, various trade-offs, and a multitude of other comparative measurements. Radar charts are a useful means of showing multivariate observations with an arbitrary number of variables.

One application of radar charts is to manage quality improvements in order to reveal the performance metrics of any ongoing programme. They can also be used in any other field to visualise strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities. For example, in tourism, each axis may be a priority for the sustainable tourist destination, such as the number of visitors, the load capacity (tourists/residents), the percentage of tourism within the destination's economy, innovation of the tourism offer, the number of public-private associations, resident satisfaction with regard to visitors and investment in tourism, among other factors.

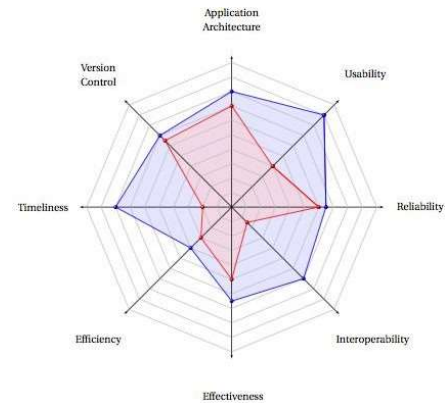


Illustration 9: Example of a spider plot

Participant observation

This technique, or at least an approximation thereof, has been added to the root methodology of the SuSTowns project pilots, in particular as a result of the experience in Castel di Tora – a pilot led by the partner ANCI Lazio in which the expert responsible for diagnosis opted to reside in the town. This option can complement the information obtained from LFGs with information extracted from direct observation and everyday interaction with key players in the town. Said information is much richer and complete, and allows for less visible aspects to be detected which the LFGs may struggle to express—for example, the forces at play in favour or against the process of rejuvenation, forces that we suggest should be analysed using the tools described in the next section.

The participant observation technique is a form of research which involves social interaction between the researchers and the subjects observed, all of whom influence each other. Through this, data is collected systematically and non-intrusively. In participant observation techniques, the data-collection instrument is the researcher themselves. The use of these types of techniques may be flexible and adapted to the situation. As such, the researcher will select a set of informants, whom they must observe and with whom they must interact. The researcher may also apply techniques such as interviews, surveys and document reviews, etc. In the field diary, the researcher will note impressions of what they experience and see, in order to subsequently organise and analyse these. The research design will be developed as the research progresses: first, the researcher will enter the field of study in order to gradually learn what questions to ask

and how to ask them (Ruiz Mitjana, SF). This technique is particularly useful when the diagnosis process for the small, fascinating town is carried out by an actor external to the town. However, it will be useful and can also be carried out by an individual/researcher who permanently resides in the town; in this case, the participant observation is carried out by a 'close observer'. Here, reactivity is lower, as the observer is someone close to the observed subject – someone within their environment. On the other hand, observation biases (errors) are greater than those experienced with an external, expert observer (Ruiz Mitjana, SF).

Tools for the analysis of forces in action 2.1: Four Cell Matrix and Force Field Analysis

In action 2.1 of step 2, it is necessary to understand the forces that operate within the destination and which affect the interaction of the different elements making up the destination's current situation, diagnosed in the previous phases of this step. This means that it is necessary to make an effort to understand the forces that may make some destination resources useful for the destination's rejuvenation, and not others, although sometimes it will be precisely these other resources that appear the most promising.

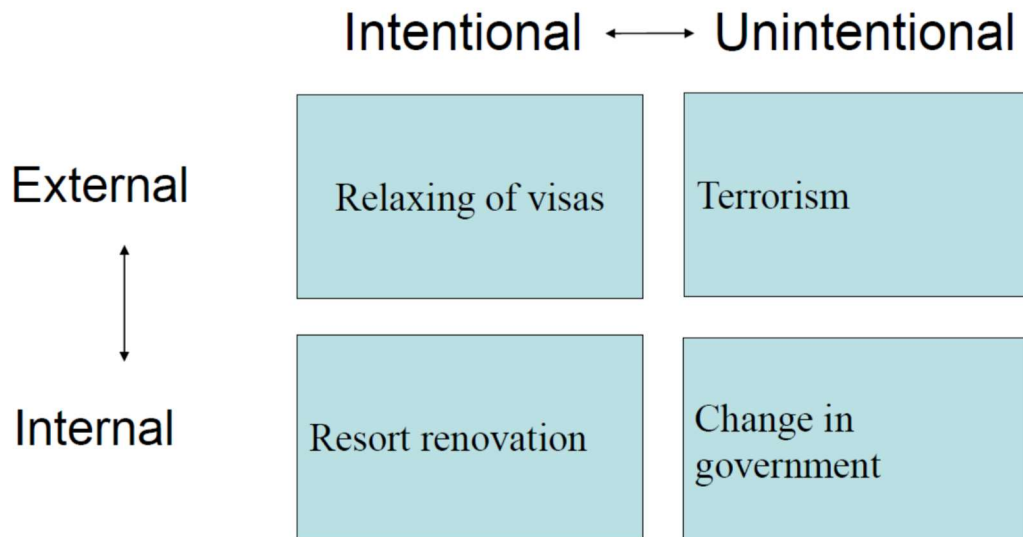
The need to equip the methodology with a specific tool for the analysis of correlations between forces in a small, fascinating town has been demonstrated by the University of Algarve through the findings generated in the Lagos pilot municipality in Portugal, as part of the SuSTowns project.

Said analysis is highly relevant in any case, and particularly when the process of the destination-rejuvenation plan's development is carried out by people external to the destination, given that the forces that may swing the scales towards rejuvenation or decline are recognisable and somewhat formal forces, or may be real forces, acting informally.

Butler himself, the author of the tourism area life cycle model considered as one of the theoretical bases of this methodology, identifies the need to complement his model with an analysis of forces of change operating within the destination in order to work with a certain degree of foresight and anticipation in promoting its rejuvenation (Butler, 2007). In fact, Butler (2007) cites two tools both applied by other authors (Weaver and Oppermann, 2000) which we suggest as useful tools to decipher the forces that may impede or facilitate the rejuvenation of a small, fascinating Mediterranean town.

Firstly, Weaver and Oppermann (2000) propose the use of a four-cell matrix, in which the following criteria are analysed in order to categorise the agents of change which influence tourism development: endogenous and exogenous forces, both intentional and unintentional.

Four Cell Matrix



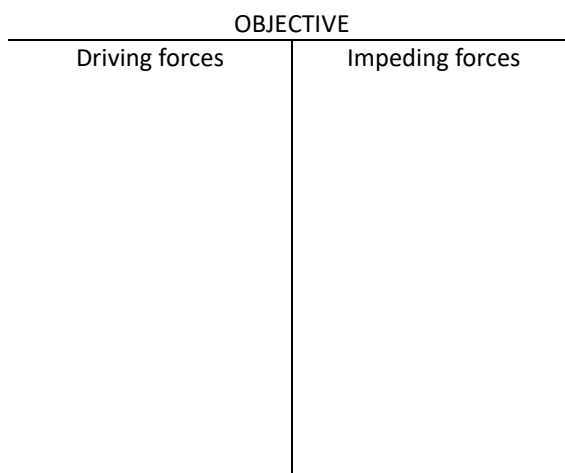
After Weaver & Oppermann, 2000

This approximation allows for simplified analysis of the forces at play and effectively illustrates the interrelations between them, shedding more light on how to articulate and align said factors so that they may contribute to the destination's regeneration and control the forces that impede the process.

Secondly, Butler (2007) suggests that the identification and analysis of the forces that impede or drive a destination's rejuvenation may be carried out by applying the Force Field Analysis technique (FFA). We refer to the vast literature on FFA for a detailed description of this tool and below we present a very summarised description of the approach.

Put simply, **Kurt Lewin's Force Field Analysis tool** is used as follows:

- 1.- Begin by writing a T on a sheet or paper or board.
- 2.- Write the intended objective above the T. For example, 'I want to write 1 article a month to collaborate in a journal'.
- 3.- First, analyse the forces that drive us towards our objective – whether internal or external – and write them on the bottom left side of the T.
- 4.- Then analyse the forces preventing us from achieving the objective or which stop us from getting started, and write them on the right side of the T.



Driving and impeding forces for change

5.- Finally, prioritise the driving forces that may be strengthened and which will bring you towards your objective faster and more consistently, and identify the repressive forces that will facilitate change if eliminated or offset. In this point, it is important to ask ourselves which driving force could be used to counteract each repressive force, or which action could be carried out to eliminate or reduce said repressive force. For driving forces, establish reinforcement strategies (Escuela de mentoring, 2020).

Regardless of which specific tool is employed, what is important for the purposes of this manual is that whoever leads the process considers the need to identify and analyse the forces intervening in the process of a destination's rejuvenation. Without this, it will be difficult to achieve proactive destination management. Awareness of the existence of these forces, whether visible or hidden, is fundamental. There are no simple tools for this, and they are all based on a detailed and almost lived experience of the destination.

Tools for action 2.2: Online tourist-indicator platforms

Although no consensus has been achieved to date and, as such, there is no single tool for tourist indicators provided by the European Parliament, Eurostat and the EU Commission, we can make use of available tools defined by experts, as well as sustainable-tourism initiatives, such as the sustainable-tourism projects of the Interreg MED programme. Today, various solutions are available online which include economic, environmental, social and cultural destination indicators. Likewise, it is important to consider all the knowledge collected through the Interreg MED 2014-20's Sustainable Tourism Community. Next, we will present a list of the most useful and easy-to-use online platforms. We recommend consulting these platforms as it is often possible to find information regarding the region, area, or even the destination itself.

Project	Online Tool
MITOMED+	<p>Observation and monitoring of the tourist-data indicators for measuring the sustainability of tourist activities through the development of an online indicator system and platform.</p> <p>https://mitomedplus.andalucia.org/mitomedplus/index.html</p> <p>List of indicators</p>
HERIT-DATA	<p>Innovative solutions for improved management of tourist flows impacting cultural and natural heritage sites through technology and big data.</p> <p>https://herit-data.interreg-med.eu/</p>
CASTWATER	<p>Water management focuses on supporting sustainable tourism policies and practices regarding efficient use of water in coastal areas through improving the monitoring and evaluation of results in terms of the sustainability of water within the tourism sector.</p> <p>https://castwater.interreg-med.eu/</p>
DestiMED	<p>Environmental-footprint methodology with an innovative approach to measuring and reducing the environmental impact of tourism.</p> <p>https://destimed.interreg-med.eu/</p>
ShapeTourism	<p>Interactive maps of tourism dynamics based on four dimensions: Reputation, Attraction, Competitiveness and Sustainability, covering the 52 regions of the Mediterranean.</p> <p>http://www.shapetourism.eu/main- output/shapetourism-observatory/</p>
COASTING	<p>COASTING is a capitalisation project based on the application of the principles of the ICZM, which seeks to improve the effectiveness of a governance instrument at various levels – such as the Bay Contract (<i>Contrat de Baie</i>) – providing a shared methodology centred principally on the participation of interested parties and focusing instruments and measurements most intensively on sustainability and the qualification of the tourism sector.</p> <p>https://coasting.interreg-med.eu/</p>

ALTER ECO	<p>Tourist strategies to improve local sustainable-tourism development through the promotion of the Mediterranean identity.</p> <p>Load capacity.</p> <p>https://quantitas.it/dev/med/cc/ro.html</p>
CO-EVOLVE	<p>Analyses and promotes the co-development of human activities and natural systems in coastal tourist areas, allowing for the sustainable development of tourist activities based on the standards of integrated coastal-area management, together with marine spatial management.</p> <p>https://co-evolve.interreg-med.eu/</p>

Table 3: Online tourist-indicator platforms

Below (and also in Annex 2: Table of Sustainable-Tourism Indicators), you will find a list of the main indicators recommended for inclusion as part of evaluation. The list of indicators is based on the ETIS and on the aforementioned projects. They are divided into four categories (destination management, economic value, social and cultural impact, and environmental impact). The ETIS proposal, which includes 40 optional indicators⁹, may be considered in order to add certain complementary indicators according to the particularities of the towns in question. We recommend adding indicators suited to the type of destination, relevant for evaluating its current situation.

The most important thing to consider is that the indicator itself does not offer much information – it is through comparison over the years, alongside comparison with other similar destinations, that we will be able to see progress and take decisions for improvement.

⁹ ETIS Toolkit https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/sustainable/indicators_en

Number	Indicator type	Criteria	Description
1	Destination management (general)	Sustainable-tourism public policy	Existence of a strategy for sustainable tourism in the tourism planning documents. Percentage of the destination with a sustainable-tourism action plan, with a monitoring agreement, development management and established evaluation (%).
2			Number of policies focused on the aims of sustainable development in the 2030 Agenda.
3		Satisfaction	Percentage of visitors satisfied with their overall experience at the destination.
4			Percentage of residents satisfied with the tourist activity in general and its management in the destination.
5		Gender balance	Percentage of interested parties with plans to ensure gender balance.
6			Percentage of women working in tourism.
7			Average salary of women in tourism in comparison with men's employment.
8	Economic Value	Regulation	Official (and updated) register of tourist accommodation licences (including those of the sharing economy, such as Airbnb).
9			Percentage of tourist establishments in the destination that use a voluntary and verified certification/label for environmental/quality/sustainability and/or CSR measures.
10		Tourism flow (volume and value) and yield within the destination	Relative contribution of tourism to the destination's economy (% GDP).
11			Average tourist stay duration (nights).
12			Number of overnight stays per month.

13			Rate of occupation in commercial accommodation* per month and average for the year.
14			Direct employment in tourism as a percentage of the total employment per month.
15			Daily tourist expenditure (accommodation, food and drink, other services).
16		Quantity of work	Variation (%) of the unemployment rate between months to evaluate low and high season.
17		Suppliers	Percentage of locally produced food, drinks, products and services acquired by tourist destinations in the destination.
18	Socio-cultural	Social/community impact	Load capacity: number of tourists per resident.
19			Number of second homes/rentals per home (1 to 1 ratio).
20			Number of beds available in commercial accommodation* compared to residents (1 to 1 ratio).
21			Percentage of visitors who prolong their stay.
22			Percentage of visitors who return to the destination.
23			Percentage of visitors who participate in a cultural or traditional activity in the destination.
24		Inclusion and accessibility	Percentage of tourist attractions accessible to people with mobility and sensory disabilities and/or which participate in recognised accessibility plans.

25		Protection and enhancement of cultural heritage, local identity and cultural goods	Number of sites and cultural practices under some label of protection and number of sites and cultural practices recognised as 'at risk'.
26	Environmental	Climate change and protection of biodiversity	Carbon footprint per euro spent (if desired, another indicator for the average carbon-footprint of journeys made to visit the destination) (kg).
27			Percentage of tourist companies participating in programmes to mitigate climate change, such as carbon offsetting, low-energy systems, etc. And in climate change adaptation measures.
28			Percentage of accommodation and tourist attraction infrastructure in vulnerable or fragile areas.
29			Percentage of the destination (surface area in km ²) designated to protection.
30			Percentage of the destination area falling under a biodiversity-protection plan.
31			Use of the land: % developed, % land for construction, % land designated as not for construction.
32			Percentage of visitors who use non-polluting transport (such as bicycles or electric cars) to travel around the destination.
33		Management of waste and consumption and management of water and energy	Solid urban waste produced by destination (tonnes per person between low and high season).
34			Volume of solid urban waste recycled (relation between low and high season).

35			Consumption of water (litres) per person (relation between low and high season).
36			Energy consumption (KWh) per person and per day (relation between low and high season).
37			Percentage of electrical energy consumed by renewable sources.
38			Percentage of accommodation promoting eco-friendly attitudes (recycling, renewable energy systems without water, etc.).

Table 4: Sustainable tourism indicators

Tools for action 2.3: Quality charters for towns

The aim of the quality standards for towns is to ensure some common criteria based on the protection, promotion and development of small towns through tourism. On the one hand, several requirements must be met relating to the town's natural, cultural, urban and architectural heritage. And, on the other hand, certain criteria must be included for enhancement, development, promotion and events in one of the existing quality standards in different countries or regions.

Apart from '*I Borghi più belli d'Italia*' and '*Los Pueblos Más Bonitos de España*' ('The Most Beautiful Towns' in Italy and Spain, respectively), both quality standards provided by SuSTowns project partners, another initiative exists as part of a European partnership project named 'CHARM – Immersion experiences in charming European villages' which has carried out a comparative assessment of the 'beautiful' or 'charming' towns initiatives across the world in order to provide a first draft of how the criteria for the minimum requirements of the towns under the CHARM programme may be established, and to what degree they may be applied to the SuSTowns pilot municipalities. As such, the list provided is attached to these three documents. The governing principle for these criteria is that they must be practical, simple and not too limiting for the municipality, but at the same time focused on the types of municipalities that have been selected as pilot towns for the SuSTowns project.

The criteria (also following the CHARM project proposal) are divided into mandatory criteria (in bold) and additional criteria (in italics). With respect to the definition of what we consider as small, fascinating towns, there are two criteria that should be adapted to the characteristics of minor tourist destinations in each country, in order to avoid these becoming too exclusive. These are the criteria of population (towns with < 8000

inhabitants) and ‘rurality’ (min. 10 km by car from the next municipality). These two criteria have not been included in the table as they depend on the characteristics of minor tourist destinations in each country, and because proactive destination management does not influence these. The criteria we have included in the table may be modified/checked/preserved with destination management, although this transcends tourist management in the strict sense and addresses other public policies (urban planning, mobility, etc.). This is unavoidable and, in fact, in the description of step 3 we go into further detail as to the need for sustainable-tourism management’s intersection with other local public policies.

Category	Goal	Criteria (measurement)
Town – Physical Appearance	In order to ensure that only towns that fit the quality standard in terms of size and appearance are considered	<p>1. The town has a harmonious and homogeneous architecture and/or an appearance/character that is typical of the region.</p> <p>2. Integration of the town within the countryside/attractive access to the municipality.</p>
Town – Community	To ensure that only villages with a ‘local life’ – an intangible experience that makes the village interesting – are considered	<p>3. Local crafts, manual trades. agriculture, etc. – activities that may be experienced.</p> <p>4. <i>Living traditions and culture manifested through local associations, clubs and public, genuine events.</i></p>
Tourist infrastructure	To provide a base upon which to start constructing a sustainable tourist product	<p>5. Accommodation in the town.</p> <p>6. Restaurant(s) in the town.</p> <p>7. First aid/Health emergency information.</p> <p>8. <i>Existing tourist products, routes (hiking, cycling), including signage*.</i></p> <p>9. <i>Tourist information and/or alternative supply of information.</i></p> <p>10. <i>Food shops within a 10 km radius.</i></p> <p>11. <i>Public toilets.</i></p>

Cultural and natural assets	To ensure that the villages considered have activities and attractions to offer potential visitors	<p>12. Accessible ‘cultural’ attractions (churches, museums, historic buildings, etc.) within the town.</p> <p><i>13. Accessibility and activities to experience cultural sites of interest and nature in the surroundings.</i></p>
Planning processes	To ensure that the quality standards may be based on the existing organisational structures and processes	<p>14. Person/institution responsible for tourism, to act as a contact person.</p> <p>15. Enhancement and conservation plan (having grants to preserve historic buildings is an asset).</p> <p><i>16. Existence of a plan/concept of local tourism development and/or cooperation with national/international tourist authorities.</i></p>
Quality, Sustainability, Accessibility	For a sustainable tourist product	<p><i>17. Proof of accommodation and services’ good quality.</i></p> <p><i>18. Accessible via public transport or other models of sustainable mobility.</i></p> <p>19. Sustainability is part of the tourism strategy (with updated tourist indicators).</p>
		20. Accessible tourism experiences.
Technological requirements	To ensure that the town addresses technology and digital transformation	<p>21. The existence of a website for tourism in the town (preferably in English), offering ‘reasons to visit’ (heritage, competitive difference, etc.).</p> <p>22. Local Wi-Fi or good mobile data reception in the town.</p> <p>23. Mobile applications relating to the town (such as GPS tracks in Oruxmaps, Geocaching, TripAdvisor, etc.).</p>

Table 5: Quality criteria

*As part of evaluation, it is essential to make a list of current tourist products existing in the municipality – on the one hand, to analyse how sustainable they are or how to improve them, and, on the other hand, to visualise the starting point in order to develop new products and experiences in accordance with the desired destination.

In Annex 3: Tourist Indicators vs Quality Criteria a correlation between the quality criteria and the tourist indicators proposed is provided.

***Tools for action 2.4: Early-alert system for the detection of symptoms of decline with
Balanced Scorecard adapted to the destinations***

Given that one of the project's objectives is to identify whether or not the town is in a situation of decline, this early-alert system tool brings together indicators in two categories: the current situation and beyond the current state of the art. This is a dynamic analysis, which should allow for the destination's demand, offer and resources to be analysed, as well as innovation and organisation. The early-alert system offers a spider plot to visualise a destination's situation; however, in order to go beyond evaluation, we suggest using a comprehensive scorecard: the **Balanced Scorecard (BSC)**. BSC is a useful tool to answer the question of how we can measure whether or not our performance is satisfactory, at any given time. It offers a means of summarising the most critical performance measurements into a single management report linking vision/strategy, communication, business planning, feedback and learning. The following figure illustrates the BSC, adapted to tourist destinations. For example, imagine that a destination has planned a vision for family-friendly tourism and has defined a strategy to move from a youth-oriented target to a family target, in such a way that the different elements associated with resources, demand, offer and communication must answer the questions of whether or not the tourist destination is offering the necessary services for the new target tourist; if the services have been adapted to the objective and if they have been delivered in a sustainable way; if the providers have adapted their offer to the new objective; and if communication is reaching the new target market. As such, it will be necessary to support this information with data and figures.

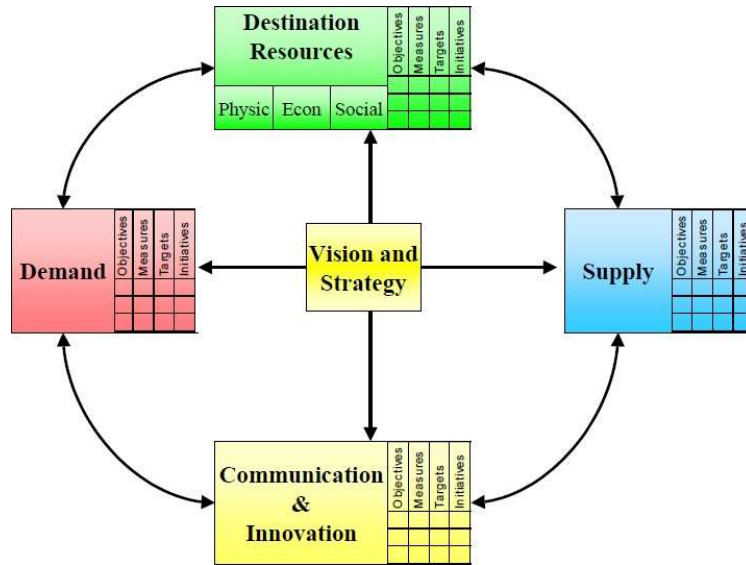


Illustration 10: BSC for tourist destinations

Although a BSC on its own can offer a comprehensive method for evaluation, we suggest using the guidelines of the Early-Alert System to identify the characteristics of decline – however, the development of the complete BSC is not recommended, as this will draw out the evaluation stage and will require duplicating information that has already been collected in other instruments (tourism indicators, quality criteria, etc.). Furthermore, this is discouraged as the aim of this methodology is to provide easier steps for the production of an action plan, without overly complicating the process.

With the aim of supporting the detection of symptoms of decline, below, we will present a set of measures (that form part of the previously defined tourism indicators and quality criteria) that should be periodically collected (at least once per high season or more if the destination enjoys year-round tourism) in order to make use of this early-alert system:

- Related with the number of elements that define the tourism offer and the destination's quality:
 - Craftspersons and local crafts, popular festivals and agriculture that is accessible and may be experienced.
 - Restaurant(s) in the town.
 - Quantity of officially registered tourist accommodation.
 - Tourist information and/or alternative supply of information.
 - Percentage of visitors who participate in a cultural or traditional activity in the destination.

If all these figures decrease or if there are no new products or services, this is a clear symptom of a situation of decline.

➤ Related with the growth of the economy and competitiveness:

- Number of arrivals.
- Relative contribution of tourism to the destination's economy (% GDP).
- Average tourist stay duration (nights).
- Rate of occupation in commercial accommodation per month and average for the year.
- Direct employment in tourism as a percentage of the total employment per month.
- Daily tourist expenditure (accommodation, food and drink, other services).
- Percentage of visitors who return to the destination.
- Variation (%) of the unemployment rate between months to evaluate low and high season.

If all these figures decrease, this is a clear symptom of a situation of decline.

➤ In terms of sustainable tourism:

- Load capacity: Number of tourists per resident (more than 100 inhabitants).
- Number of beds available in commercial accommodation compared to residents (1 to 1 ratio).
- Percentage of visitors satisfied with their overall experience at the destination.
- Percentage of residents satisfied with the tourist activity and management in general in the destination.
- Percentage of tourist establishments in the destination that use a voluntary and verified certification/label for the environment/quality/sustainability.
- Volume of solid urban waste recycled (relation between low and high season).
- Consumption of water (litres) per person (relation between low and high season).

If this data is lower than the previously collected data (except for environmental data, which should be the opposite), this may indicate difficulty in ensuring a sustainable tourism offer, as well as seasonality – hence, a possible situation of decline.

Tools for action 2.5: Tourism offer

To complete the evaluation, it is vital to make use of a list of the current tourist offer, which must include the available products and infrastructure. The aim is to ensure a general overview of the destination's attraction and to identify the resources that may act as potential products to be added to the future marketing strategy for subsequent exploitation. The set of products (together with a new advertising strategy) will contribute to driving rejuvenation.

Taking Arade's Destination Tourism Strategy classification (Arade, 2006), products may be classified as strategic (current and/or main sites/monuments), complementary (those that contribute to diversifying the offer) or secondary (those that are only relevant for small niches, but which may improve and broaden the future tourist offer). The capacity to attract reduces from the first to the third group, but through an action plan, the offer may be modified in order to become more attractive and, as such, change from one group to one of greater attraction or interest. Then, the product may be classified into different categories: environment (mountains, caves, viewpoints, etc.), heritage (history, ethnography, cuisine, etc.), recreation and events (sport, events, cultural traditions, etc.), and other categories depending on the characteristics of the destination.

Difficulties in collecting data and the importance of a local breakdown of tourist information

In applying the first version of this methodology to the pilot small, fascinating towns of the SuSTowns project, many partner projects noted difficulties in collecting information for diagnosis. Said difficulties were not so much related to limitations provoked by the pandemic in the work carried out with LFGs. On the contrary, all partners continued to form and revitalise LFGs by adapting to the pandemic and confirming that said groups functioned for the aims of the methodology, as the information produced by the LFGs was the most valuable for diagnosis and for the pilot towns' plans. The main difficulty was in obtaining information broken down by municipality in order to analyse the criteria and indicators for the destination's analysis through the prism of sustainable tourism, and for the development of a scorecard to detect the symptoms of tourism decline.

The lack of information broken down at a local level impeded smaller towns from understanding their own tourist dynamics, undermining their capacity for proactive destination management and diluting the data on tourism to a broader territorial level, in which large centres and coastal areas skew data that cannot be extrapolated to smaller

towns. Initiatives like that of the government of Portugal for the creation of sustainable-tourism observatories in regions of Portugal may be highly useful for smaller centres to access data about tourism in their destinations.

Policy recommendation for access to data broken down at a local level

Countries' statistical systems and tourism-observatory or similar initiatives must consider that smaller tourist centres – particularly small, fascinating towns – cannot strategically plan and, more generally, ensure proactive destination management without the necessary information. The state and/or regional authorities must ensure that said information, in particular that required for the tourism indicators described above, is accessible in a form broken down at a local level.

Conclusions on step 2.

The final evaluation will be a summary of the information collected through:

- Analysis of the current situation carried out with a tool (DPSIR, SWOT, GAP, Spider Plot).
- Analysis of both formal and informal forces that facilitate or obstruct the destination's regeneration.
- The table of tourism indicators (where possible, for different periods or years in order to obtain an idea of progress made).
- The data highlighted in the relevant indicators and quality criteria for the evaluation of the situation in decline.
- List of the current tourist offer, in which the current products and potential resources that may be included in a future action plan are detailed.
- And any other relevant quality information offered by the Local Focus Group (LFG).

The collection of all this information will result from Step 2 – Evaluation, together with the conclusions established by the LFG during the meeting in which the results are shared. It should be specified that the LFG may be convened more than once, depending on the complexity of the destination and the need to consult the assembled stakeholders in order to obtain the necessary information.

Once the table has been completed, meaning that full knowledge has been obtained of the destination's current situation, it is time to look towards the future and continue on to the next step.

It's important to keep in mind that evaluation is vital in order to ensure precise analysis of the destination and establish the starting point from which to make the change towards

rejuvenation. As such, the process must take the time necessary to collect all information and carry out precise evaluation.

At the same time, based on the experience of the SuSTowns project pilot municipalities, many tools and actions suggested in this step ended up being too complex to be applied independently by the authorities or other stakeholders in the small, fascinating towns. Clearly, these are complex tools that many local authorities are not accustomed to. In these cases, it is vital to turn to the services of an external team of experts. In any event, it must be assumed that a diagnosis process will be a complex process, even if the town is small, and any attempt at excessive simplification will end up affecting the quality of the action plan for the destination's rejuvenation. These considerations apply both to the evaluation tools and to the following steps. A simplification exercise has already been carried out for all of them. More simplification would undermine the quality of the plan.

In conclusion, it is important to note that some authors (Faulkner, 1997) have applied chaos theory to tourism, arguing that the successive steps of Butler's life cycle of a tourist destination may be understood as being caused by a set of random events. We hope that the recommendations for the destination's diagnosis, including the analysis of local forces, will allow for said chaos to be untangled and provide tools for proactive and effective destination management.

STEP 3 – OBJECTIVES

Once the municipality has obtained an image of the actual situation, it is time to decide what will be required in order to overcome or avoid decline and promote rejuvenation in a sustainable, responsible and intelligent way.

The previous sections of this document have highlighted the global trends and challenges facing tourism, in line with European guidelines in terms of climate change, the European Green Deal objectives, and the commitments of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development; the challenge of sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery; and the opportunities offered for small, fascinating Mediterranean towns in view of the new post COVID-19 tourist preferences, among others.

The **main objective** of this step is:

- **To decide what type of destinations we want to create, avoiding decline and promoting rejuvenation in a process resulting from the agreement of stakeholders within the small, fascinating town.**

To achieve a consensus within the LFG between all stakeholders regarding what kind of destination should be created and how to stand out from other destinations in the local

and global environment (destination's differential value), highlighting those deemed to be the principal characteristics and most suitable to rejuvenate the destination by connecting with the most promising tourism trends. This vision's development is essential, and must be achieved between steps 2 and 3, as a prerequisite for the definition of specific rejuvenation-plan objectives and for the subsequent development of a working plan.

In order to decide what kind of destination we want to become, and what kind of tourism we would like to obtain, we recommend reviewing the different types and forms of tourism:

There are three basic types of tourism: domestic tourism (activities carried out by a resident visitor within the country in question), inbound tourism (activities carried out by a visitor who is not a resident of the country in question), and outbound tourism (activities carried out by a resident visitor outside of the country in question).

Based on the purpose of the visit, tourism may be **leisure or business**, and other forms of alternative tourism (set aside and separate) may be considered in some way as a form of leisure. Then, depending on the principal activities that will be carried out in the destination, the type of tourism may be: cultural, family, natural and rural, adventure, culinary, medical or religious, etc.¹⁰ As more tourism niches and segmentation are defined, more forms of tourism emerge. For example: slow tourism – which blends ecotourism with environmental, natural, health and culinary tourism. However, the vocabulary surrounding these types of tourism is continuously evolving in order to adapt to market preferences – a very important consideration for proactive destination management seeking to capture new trends in order to take advantage of them or adapt to their requirements. As we have previously mentioned in the analysis of tourism's evolution, before the COVID-19 pandemic, the forms of tourism most related with small, fascinating towns were already beginning to increase (slow tourism, food and wine tourism, nature tourism, etc.) and the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced said trends.

The most common categories of tourism according to travel purpose are:

- 1) Social and family leisure: recreational or leisure holidays take a person/family away from their daily routine. People usually spend leisure time in mountains or beaches, etc.
- 2) Cultural: cultural tourism satisfies cultural and intellectual curiosity and implies visits to ancient monuments, historical heritage, cultural events, and sites of religious importance, etc.
- 3) Sports/Adventure: people who wish to practise sports such as golf, skiing, hiking

¹⁰ Click here to view more types of tourism: https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Categor%C3%ADa:Tipos_de_turismo

and scuba diving, or take part in racing or sporting events, etc.

4) Health: people travel to receive medical treatment or visit places with curative abilities – for example, thermal springs, spas, yoga retreats, etc.

5) MICE: business travel, people attending conferences, exhibitions or conventions for their business, profession or interest, in order to widen their network of contacts and clients and for professional purposes.

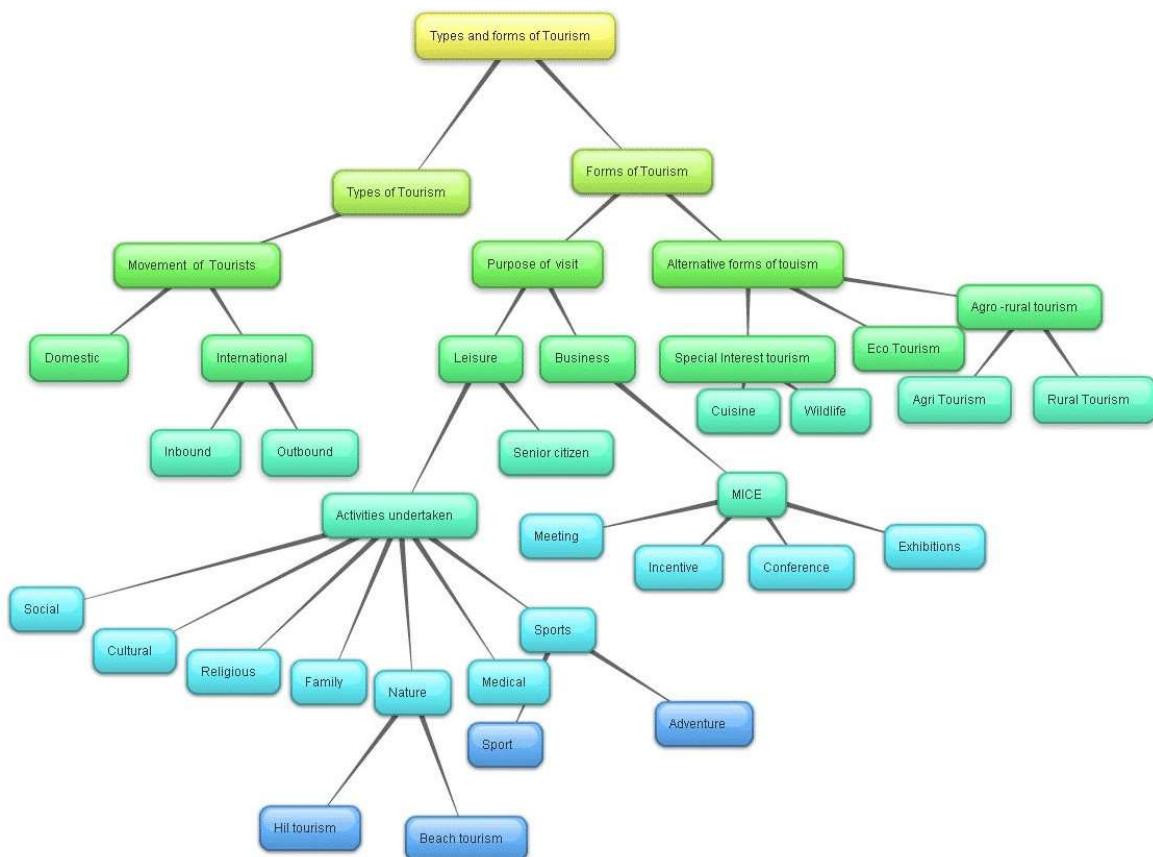


Illustration 11: Types and forms of tourism

The types and forms of tourism evolve very quickly. Therefore, when undertaking a planning process for rejuvenation, it is very important to monitor the situation and the forecasts of international organisations, in order to study these and present different options and trends during the workshops – taking into consideration at least those most closely associated with the type of destination in question. For example, in the execution of the SuSTowns project pilots, the workshops with LFGs explained other current tourism trends particularly related with small, fascinating Mediterranean towns. Trends that may be taken advantage of in order to regenerate the target destinations of the SuSTowns project include:

- The affirmation of experiential tourism, i.e., tourism based on the emotions and feelings of visitors as the basis of the activities carried out and which ensures that the individual enjoys a satisfactory experience and attributes a certain meaning to said experience.
- The growth of 'LOHAS' tourists (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability). This refers to a market segment which is very closely related with a form of sustainable living and eco-friendly initiatives – generally a segment with a relatively high economic and educational level. It should be recalled that, according to Marques (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced tourists' attention with regard to sustainability, motivated by an increased awareness caused by the pandemic with regard to the negative effects of globalisation (Marques, 2020, 45).
- Slow tourism, in contrast to mass tourism, prioritises spending more time in the destination, in order to get to know the inhabitants and traditions, explore and interact with natural sites and travel through impressive landscapes in a more immersive way.

Tools to define the vision, objectives and sub-objectives of the action plan.

How do we define the main objective and sub-objectives of the action plan?

The steps for this proposal are:

- Collect all ideas from the various stakeholders by using one of the tools (explained above).
- Share a communal vision of the action plan's main objective.
- Visualise clear objectives and establish priorities among the interested parties.
- Hold dialogues in order to reach a consensus within the Local Focus Group that will participate in the action plan's implementation.

More specifically, considering the evaluation carried out in the previous step, and the future challenges that the destination must face, the following questions should be answered: does the destination seek to offer natural tourism? Or family-friendly tourism? Or sport? Cultural? Taking into consideration the list of tourist assets available in the municipality, the tourist indicators, quality criteria and some form of analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, what is the main characteristic we want to highlight? What is the value proposition offered by all stakeholders involved? The destination must be willing to commit resources, time and ad-hoc promotion in order to reach this objective. Is this idea, the established value proposition, aimed at rejuvenation?

A more in-depth analysis of the list of the current tourist offers and potential resources, bearing in mind the type of tourism the destination hopes to ensure, may help find new means of exploitation for the value proposition and, as such, different ways of using these assets for the destination's communal benefit. Were these resources undervalued?

Why have these resources deteriorated? What is the value for residents? What changes are necessary in order to clean up their image, revitalise them and offer them renewed attraction? When will it be possible to visit the site? Will it make it possible to extend the season? What will be the most important asset for taking measures to contribute to rejuvenation? What could have an impact on the number of visitors in the short to medium term? Do these visitors align with the type of tourists intended to be attracted by the destination?

In conclusion, the main objective of the action plan must tackle rejuvenation while addressing the year-round offer and a sustainable and responsible form of diversification. It is important to note the importance of deseasonalisation in order to rejuvenate markedly seasonal destinations.

Tip: If the town defines a creative and attractive slogan/motto¹¹ for the main objective (like 'What Happens in Vegas, Stays in Vegas', or other closer and more recent examples like 'I Feel Slovenia', Croatia's 'Full of Life' or Switzerland's 'Go Natural', etc.) this may help to create a sense of place among interested parties and keep the objective in mind while defining sub-objectives for the action plan.

If we are specific in the definition of our main objective, it will be easier to find suitable actions and measures to achieve it.

A tourist destination's rejuvenation plan based on sustainable tourism is related with multiple public policies (urban planning, mobility, etc.) and local services (waste, etc.). For this, in section 3 regarding stakeholders and governance, we state the need to involve all municipal departments related with tourism, even if this relation is indirect. In small, fascinating towns – the target of this methodology – these considerations assume even greater relevance. As stated by the mayor of the Montüiri pilot municipality (Majorca, Spain), carried out by MUSOL, a local authority that does not take care of the preservation of its landscapes and historic centres through urban-planning and territorial-planning policies will end up damaging the town from a tourism perspective. The long-term vision imposed by sustainable tourism may support the local authority when it comes to adopting unpopular decisions that restrict the ability to build, or which strongly regulate

¹¹ Be inspired by others: <https://www.sloganlist.com/Tours-Slogans> <https://www.farandwide.com/s/europe-travel-slogans-b9729f276bb54ac7>

construction. At the same time, public services in small towns may be more harshly affected by a sudden increase in demand as a result of an increase in tourists, or may become more easily oversized in the case of tourism decline.

Policy recommendation regarding the intersectionality of tourism in small, fascinating towns

Regardless of whether or not a small, fascinating town uses this methodology to plan its rejuvenation, the transversality of tourism in local public policies must be considered in the everyday management of local authorities.

When it comes to designing public policies not directly linked to tourism, the long-term vision and impact on sustainable tourism – i.e., the impact on the various indicators and criteria we have detailed in step 2 – must be considered by local authorities.

Launching, consolidating or rejuvenating a tourist destination is not just a question of marketing and communication. The decisions taken in various fields will positively or negatively affect the tourist destination and its evolution, potentially conditioning its rejuvenation.

Next, we will describe some specific tools that may be used in workshops with LFGs to complete this step and achieve its objectives:

- Brainstorming
- The Three Gold method
- Visual and design thinking
- Lego Serious Play

To order and summarise ideas:

- Table of sub-objectives

The tools suggested must be implemented during a meeting with all interested parties.

This meeting is of great importance in order to ensure that all voices of private entities, residents and different stakeholders across the value chain are considered, along with their opinions, thoughts and expectations, in order to shape the destination's future.

According to time and resources, the Action Plan should select a tool in order to gather the interested parties' points of view regarding the evaluation and ideas for the objectives.

In the illustration below, the different steps are detailed for the process of collecting ideas which, as appropriate, will be transformed into objectives that will form the core of the action plan.

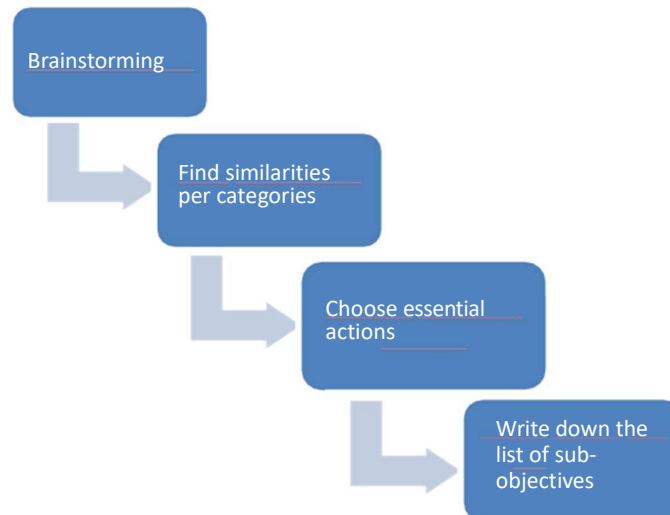


Illustration 12: Ideas-process breakdown

To facilitate the exchanging of ideas, the following topics should be considered, offering questions and reflections regarding:

- New technologies: the emergence of new technologies offers a significant opportunity to connect with tourists in a new way, but emphasis must be placed on providing the skills to foster an Attraction and Dispersal policy and the digital transformation of the sector, including products and skills for individuals.
- What resources are used for the conservation of cultural and natural heritage? How is this carried out? Are some undervalued? Or deteriorated?
- Tourist pressures in the Mediterranean: load capacity, types of tourism and tourists.
- The problems of urban development and types of licences for businesses in the municipality.
- Mobility challenges: cars, bikes, electric vehicles, scooters, caravan parks, transport to reach the destination.
- Waste management: dependence on external providers – could we transition towards more eco-friendly providers, could local authorities incentivise more eco-friendly behaviour (through tax reductions)?
- Pollution and climate change: all actions must be aligned with the climate change goals and the EU Green Deal.

- Reduction of negative cultural impacts: bearing in mind the evaluation (step 2), what needs to be changed completely, what could be offered to minimise these negative impacts?
- Managing social divide is another factor that may be rethought by generating diversification of assets in the destination and, likewise, seeking the participation of both old and new generations in this change (young people, women, socially excluded groups, etc); and ensuring that the groups of residents have direct channels for the decision-making process and the appropriate resources to be trained in this process.
- Innovation as a driving force that supports long-term collaboration between the public and private sectors.
- And a greater knowledge of the sector and the promotion of research and development.
- What new niches could be explored with the destination's characteristics? How can this micro-segmentation contribute to low-season tourism? Some infrastructures are only used for a short time – can they be opened up to other tourist activities?
- Can current products be improved to become more sustainable, or can they be offered integrated with another, different product in order to increase their attraction?

What type of product would help differentiate the destination from the competition?

- Can local authorities contribute to improving tourism assets through the creation of new infrastructures? Giving grants for business initiatives? Encouraging training in new skills and talent retention? Supporting companies that apply a circular economy in their activities?
- Promotion of quality job roles for men and women.

Below, we will very briefly describe the cited tools and refer to the huge bibliography available to go into further depth for each one:

The Three Gold method

Give three post-it notes to each participant for each question and allow them 30 seconds to respond to each of them:

- What are the three most important objectives to ensure a sustainable destination, in your opinion?
- What are the three main value propositions that you would like to highlight?
- What kind of tourists would you prefer (adults, families, solo travellers, adventurers, etc.)? And what kind of tourism (leisure, health, sport, etc.)?
- Within the existing tourist offer, what asset could contribute to diversifying tourism?
- What place or tradition would you most like to convert into a hidden gem to attract new tourists (new niche)?
- According to the tourist indicators, what is the figure that requires the most attention and effort to change and improve?

The person leading the meeting chooses the four questions that most closely apply to the destination.

Visual and design thinking

When possible, invite a visual-thinking and/or design-thinking facilitator to guide a session in order to identify or draw out significant steps to achieving the main objective. Visual thinking helps to provoke innovative ideas and convert these into optimal, co-created solutions.

Design Thinking: Steps

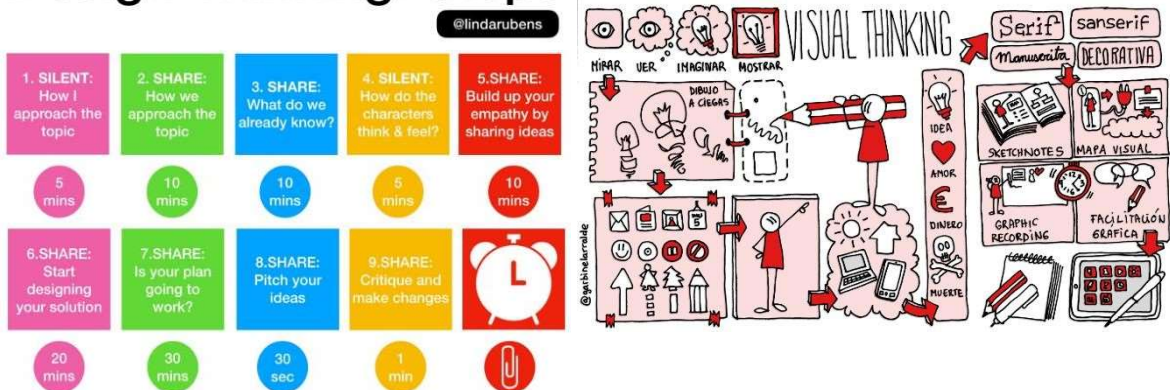


Illustration 13: Design and visual-thinking techniques

The questions that should normally be addressed within this exercise are those previously offered in brainstorming, such as:

- Regarding the figures related to the number of elements defining the quality of the destination (do we have enough local crafts to enhance value? Many/few restaurants, accommodation, etc.); Regarding competitiveness and economic growth, although we must be sustainable (how can the destination manage the number of arrivals throughout the year? How will it work if we have more tourist employees and greater income?)
- In terms of sustainable tourism: Load capacity, resident and visitor satisfaction, sustainable strategy from suppliers and service providers, energy and water consumption, new technological solutions, etc.

In the Portuguese pilots, the SuSTowns project partners Make It Better and the University of Algarve made successful use of design thinking and visualisation techniques such as simulating the front-page of famous newspapers dedicated to the small, fascinating town in order to collectively decide how the destination should be recognised and presented.

Lego Serious Play

The LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology is an innovative and experimental process designed to improve innovation and business performance. This method is used for group problem-resolution processes in which participants are led through a series of questions, going into the issue in increasing depth. Each participant constructs their own 3D LEGO® model in response to the facilitator's questions. These 3D models serve as the base for group discussion, the exchange of knowledge, resolution of problems and decision making. The method provides a common language, regardless of culture or position. (LEGO Group 2020)



Illustration 14: Lego Serious Game Session

For this tool, the facilitator should have prepared the type of questions previously indicated in the above tools and, to begin with, guide participants through producing ideas intended to rejuvenate the destination, as well as concerns regarding data collection for evaluation and possible measures that may be employed in order to move towards a more diverse and deseasonalised offer.

The aforementioned tools facilitate brainstorming and, once all ideas have been collected, these should be assembled into categories. For example, one for each area of intervention for which the '3 for the action' have already been created; by combining those ideas that relate to mobility or transport, those focusing more on the environment, and others related with marketing; or by combining suggestions related to cultural and historical heritage, and ideas or new products that have not yet been explored, etc. The aim of this categorisation is to find similarities in order to conclude with the minimum number of ideas possible, which will then be converted into actions (specific objectives) that will allow the municipality to advance towards rejuvenation and, as such, specific actions that the town will need to take in order to ensure that it achieves its desired goal. **The collection of specific objectives will form the action plan and represent an essential part of the result of this methodology in order to achieve the destination's desired situation.**

Table of Sub-Objectives

Then, we should ensure that each sub-objective is a SMART objective.

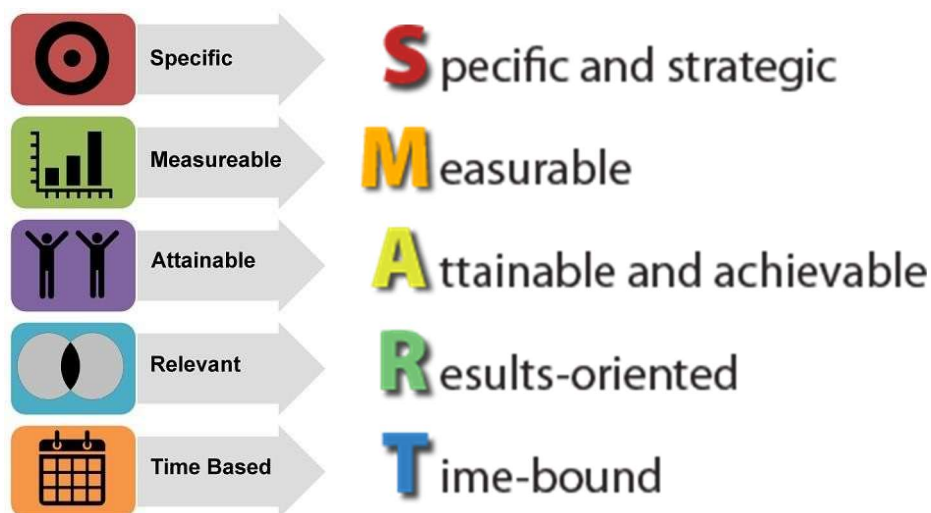


Illustration 15: SMART objectives

If an objective cannot specifically respond to one of these characteristics, it must be written or reimagined in order to be as relevant as possible.

Then, in order to transform ideas into planned actions to be included in the action plan, we will need a broader description of each objective so as to bridge the gap between the current situation and that desired. As such, for each specific objective, we recommend defining all possible details included in the table below. The table includes an explanation of the different fields and serves as a template that may be reproduced as often as required according to the sub-objectives defined.

Specific Objective	Specific details to be identified	
Sub-objective number and title	People	For each sub-objective, we will need to identify a person within the LFG as being responsible for the group, as well as the group of people with whom they will cooperate – with names, where possible, and not just functions or positions.
	Skills and Knowledge	Do we have sufficient information to carry out the tasks or will training or other skills or knowledge be required? If yes, will the people selected for this objective be sufficient, or will they need some external training? Or technical or ancillary support?
	Resources	Estimate the budget required. Identify the areas of intervention, infrastructure and equipment necessary. Will extra investment be required? By whom? On what or whom does it specifically depend?
	Metric (optional)	Define clear KPIs to monitor the objective's correct performance. Depending on the objective, this KPI may be one included in the list of basic indicators or in the quality criteria, or any other that may be used to evaluate the performance of the defined sub-objective.

Table 6: Detailed information regarding the specific objectives

This table is a tool to support the Action Plan Leader, as well as the LFG, to visualise what will be needed for each objective and offer the information for easy progress monitoring, but may be carried out specifically for the objectives by focusing on the people, skills and resources necessary – and again to identify the overall restrictions and KPIs for the action plan as a whole.

In addition to the previous table, additional information may be provided regarding the limitations or restrictions and the indicators.

For the limitations, restrictions or obstacles, two approaches will be required:

- One to define a mitigation plan for the principal limitations.
- Another to define a contingency plan for more significant risks. To define a limitation-mitigation plan and a risk-contingency plan, the risks or dangers associated with different objectives must be identified, as well as their degree of probability (low = 1; medium = 2; high = 3), the level of impact upon the project's main objective in the event that the risk materialises (low = 1; medium = 2; high = 3; severe = 4), and its severity (Probability x Impact). If the resulting degree of severity is less than or equal to 4, then the severity of the risk is low/medium, and as such, a mitigation plan will be implemented. A mitigation plan will require a series of actions aimed at reducing the possibility that the risk will materialise. If the resulting degree of severity is greater than 4, then the severity of the risk is medium/high, and as such, a contingency plan will be implemented. A contingency plan is understood as a series of measures that will be applied once the risk materialises. The tables below will be used to evaluate the limitations and risks identified.

Risk/limitation description	Probability A	Impact B	Severity (AxB)	Mitigation action plan	What is affected?
					Which goals?

Table 7: Mitigation plan

Risk description	Probability A	Impact B	Severity (AxB)	Contingency action plan	What is affected?
					Which goals?

Table 8: Contingency plan

Legend:

Probability: Low = 1; medium = 2, high = 3 Impact: low = 1; medium = 2; high = 3; severe = 4

Severity: Probability x Impact \leq 4 → Mitigation plan; Probability x Impact \geq 4 → Contingency plan

Thinking ‘outside the box’ to regenerate the destination

The aforementioned techniques, all with a participative nature, allow for each stakeholder’s knowledge regarding the destination to be mobilised, facilitating a process of consensus regarding what destination should be constructed in order to rejuvenate and connect with the most promising tourism trends, coherent with the aims of sustainability. In the SuSTowns project pilots, said tools have allowed for the development of rejuvenation plans. However, some SuSTowns project partners, in accordance with the specific characteristics of their pilots, have detected the need to use certain techniques – some of which related to creativity – to ensure that workshops with local groups are more effective. In particular, said techniques aim to ensure that stakeholders ‘think outside of the box’ when it comes to imagining how to rejuvenate the tourist destination, to encourage more innovative workshop conclusions. Regenerating a destination requires the stakeholders of the small, fascinating town to imagine a different way of ‘doing tourism’ – not only by modifying the town’s tourism model towards sustainability, but also by looking among the existing products and identifying potential new combinations and synergies, new initiatives and even new products that may connect with the most appropriate tourism markets for the town.

Among the most relevant best practices collected by the partners of the SuSTowns project, we refer to the following. These are techniques, references to methodologies or practices that have allowed certain pilots to be particularly innovative when it comes to developing their plans. In some cases, these are practices that have inspired policy recommendations.

The World Café technique

SuSTowns project partners, such as the Federation of Aragonese Municipalities, Counties and Provinces in their Aragón (Spain) pilots and Make It Better in their Algarve and Alentejo (Portugal) pilots, have successfully implemented the World Café technique. In accordance with The World Café Community Foundation (2015), this is an easy-to-use method for creating ‘living networks’ of collaborative dialogue around issues that matter. The World Café was developed based on the assumptions that people already have the knowledge and creativity within them to confront challenges (even the most difficult ones); that the responses needed are available; and that we are smarter together than we are individually.

Within the SuSTowns project, said groups were created around questions related to the regeneration of small, fascinating town tourist designations. This technique may be applied using the following steps.

- Sit four-five people at small tables (like café tables) or in conversation groups.

- Establish progressive rounds of conversation (at least three), lasting approximately 20 minutes each.
- Ask questions or invite people to join in the dialogue regarding topics that genuinely affect their lives, work or communities. In our case, questions related to the tourist destination's regeneration.
- Encourage participants to write, record and draw key ideas on the tablecloths (and/or write down key ideas on large sheets or individual tablecloths in the centre of the table).
- After completing the first conversation round, you can ask one person to stay on the table as a 'table host' for the next round, while the rest play the role of travellers or 'ambassadors of meaning'. Travellers bring key ideas, topics and questions to their new conversations, while the table host welcomes the new group of arriving travellers.
- By offering the opportunity for people to move around in various conversation rounds, ideas, questions and topics start to become linked and connected. At the end of the second or third round, all tables or conversation groups in the room will become 'cross-pollinated' with information from previous conversations.
- In the final conversation round, individuals can return to their first table to synthesise their discoveries, or can continue travelling to new tables.
- You may use the same question for one or more conversation rounds, or you can raise different suggestions in each round, in order to build on them and help deepen exploration.
- After (at least) three conversation rounds, initiate a stage for sharing discoveries and ideas in a group plenary conversation. It is in these plenary conversations (in the style of a citizen forum) that patterns may be identified, collective knowledge grows and possibilities for action emerge.

In applying the technique, there are a few important principles which are particularly relevant when using the World Café for the process forming the subject of this methodology. Among other principles, we note the significance of bringing together different perspectives. The opportunity to move between tables, get to know new people, actively contribute to thought and link the essence of the discoveries with increasingly broad circles of thought, is one of the distinctive characteristics of the Café. As participants bring ideas or key issues to new tables, they exchange perspectives, which gradually enriches the possibility of new and surprising discoveries (The World Café Community Foundation, 2015). In forming groups, it is important to ensure that the different types of stakeholders making up the LFG are represented.

Mixing town council staff, businesses from different sectors and civil-society organisations will allow for the enrichment of discussion in all groups, with different points of view.

Creativity applied to processes of innovation: capitalisation of CRAINNOVATION project tools (Interreg MED 2014-20)

The lead partner of the SuSTowns project, ANCI Lazio, opted to encourage innovation in local groups within its pilots in Lazio (Italy), as well as among the companies of its pilot tourist destinations. In local groups, innovation was directed at developing local plans that were truly capable of regenerating the destination with a new vision of the town; in the business sector, specifically, innovation was aimed at encouraging the creation of tourist products, coherent with the plans, which would offer added value in respect to existing products and contribute to the new vision of the destination.

For this, ANCI Lazio opted to capitalise on the tools generated as part of the CRAINNOVATION project (Interreg MED 2014-20). Said methodological tools are described in detail in the deliverables for said project, available on the project's website at <https://creainnovation.interreg-med.eu/>. Below, we will briefly summarise the main instruments applicable to the processes of rejuvenation in a small, fascinating town and the underlying logic of the processes supported by said techniques.

Based on the need detected in the SuSTowns project to produce derivative plans and initiatives that truly escape the idea of 'business as usual' and, at the same time, are also viable and capable of rejuvenating the destination, the decision was made to apply creativity to the process of innovation involved in planning the rejuvenation of a tourist destination. Creativity and innovation are often used indiscriminately, but, in reality, they are complementary skills. Creativity is the ability or the act of conceiving something original or unusual, while innovation is the implementation of something new. Within an organisation, there may be a great deal of creativity and little or no innovation. Creativity may offer many new ideas, but these ideas do not constitute innovation until they are implemented. Someone must take the risk of converting an idea into innovation. When the two things are combined, the result is usually positive (SRC Bistra Ptuj, 2020, 5). These considerations may be extrapolated and applied to a tourist destination, particularly when said destination is clearly marked out territorially, and its size is relatively small, such as a small, fascinating town. Through the experience of the SuSTowns project in some pilot small, fascinating towns, several different situations arose in the various participative spaces. In some cases, it was creativity that was missing: the stakeholders convened had difficulty expressing truly original ideas, or at least different from those that had already been applied in the town. In other cases, said ideas arose, but their implementation proved complicated – more specifically, it was difficult to convert these into innovation,

through a lack of agreement, through a phenomenon by which the promoters of said ideas were marginalised, and as a result of other relations between the forces operating in the town. This is discussed in more detail in the following section.

Capitalising on the learnings of the CRAINNOVATION project, the decision was taken to use techniques that facilitated the process of creativity in a structured way, looking to view things from a new perspective, produce new ideas or concepts and/or establish new relations between different elements (CCB, 2019,3) – for example, tourist products within the territory. Based on the experience of the CRAINNOVATION project, different techniques may be used in the tourist destinations. For a detailed description of these, we refer to the following CRAINNOVATION project documents:

Cambra de Comerç de Barcelona - CCB (2019). *Create sustainable Innovation in SMEs using creative methods and processes CrealInnovation*. Available at: https://interreg-med.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Sites/Green_Growth/Projects/CreaiInnovation/D_3.4.1_Handbook_for_CrealInnovation_Labs_design_management_and_implementation_Crealnovation_PR4_FINAL.pdf (viewed 04/01/2021).

SRC Bistra Ptuj (2020). *Create sustainable Innovation in SMEs using creative methods and processes CrealInnovation*. Available at: https://interreg-med.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Sites/Green_Growth/Projects/CreaiInnovation/D_4.1.1_International_Handbook_on_CrealInnovation_Labs_PR5.pdf (viewed 04/01/2021).

The methodology we have opted to summarise in this document is based on neurolinguistic programming. Neurolinguistic programming is a modern technique which involves psychology, communication and linguistics, with extraordinary results in terms of improved communication; improved relations and cooperation; and with regard to leadership, management and the achievement of objectives and success (SRC, 2020, 25). More specifically, the work was organised into various groups during a workshop with the various stakeholders involved. Each of these worked according to the following phases:

Phase 1:

- a) Get to know each other and relax.
- b) Choose a challenge, which in the case of tourist destinations may be the different challenges for the destination's rejuvenation.

Phase 2:

Creative techniques to find solutions to solve the challenge:

a) Mental maps: Mind Mapping is a creative and perceptive methodology based on Visual Thinking and Associative Thinking, developed by the British psychologist Tony Buzan. It serves to organise and represent the information in a quick, organised and structured way. This allows us to view things from a different perspective and can be used to manage and promote the flow of information within our brains, as it enables the structuring and classification of ideas.

Mental Maps are diagrams with a tree structure that represents ideas, tasks, or other concepts, linked, and organised around a key word or central idea. They are constructed in a personal way, using colours, drawing, images, and symbols. They encourage imagination, association, visualisation of ideas, and the channelling of creativity.

They are an expression of Radiant Thinking and reflect our natural way of thinking as they are based on the brain's neural functioning, which – with its radial structure – establishes multiple relations or branching associations derived from or connected to a central point. In this way, the human being can make multidirectional perceptions in order to simultaneously process diverse information.

A Mind Map brings together the use of both hemispheres of the brain, playing with image and word, reason, and imagination. This way, it encourages Lateral Thinking, a term coined by Edward De Bono to represent all those alternative paths we are not used to taking when it comes to finding solutions to a problem, as they are not visible at first glance. The potential of the human brain is practically unlimited, and radiant thinking, imagination and creativity are closely related.

b) SCAMPER: a team brainstorming technique used to develop or improve products or services. SCAMPER is an acronym for Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Proposition, Eliminate and Reorganise/Reverse, and the brainstorm centres around one of the following questions:

- Substitute: What can be replaced?
- Combine: What can be combined?
- Adapt: What can be added?
- Modify: What can be modified?
- Proposition: Could the product serve another use?
- Eliminate or minimise: What can be eliminated or simplified?
- Reinvent: What would happen if the product-production process was reversed?
What can be changed or turned around?

Example: fast-food restaurants reorder the typical model of eating and then paying, by reversing this to paying and then eating.

Phase 3:

Disney creativity strategy.

This aims to help small groups of four to six people develop new ideas and solutions. For this, they will use three roles that Walt Disney developed throughout his creative process. In the role of 'Dreamer', he would express creative thinking without limits. In the next phase, he became a complete 'Realist', analysing his own ideas to determine whether or not they were doable. Finally, Disney used his role of 'Critic' asking questions like: 'Do my ideas make sense?' and 'Are they necessary?' This way, Disney was able to see his ideas from different perspectives. Each of these three roles appears in a different phase. Each phase lasts 30 minutes. It is important that all participants adopt the same role in each phase. A change of scenery for each of the phases will be very helpful, as it helps participants to adopt the new role.

In the first phase, the only thing that matters is the idea: Dreamers let their creativity run free. It is important to remember that, in this phase, all ideas are good ideas. The team can either express their ideas out loud and discuss these together, or each participant may come up with ideas alone and then exchange them with the rest of the group.

In the second phase, the ideas will be questioned. It's time for the realists: What would we need to implement this? Are there any failings? Can this really be implemented? The aim is to filter the initial ideas and develop them.

Finally, we have the critic. They take an idea and flip it, evaluating its risks and possible errors: What are its weaknesses? Does it suit the company or the customer? Can we allow this? Does it suit the target group? Could it cause a controversy or scandal? If the idea passes the test, it is ready to be developed for the customer.

It is highly recommended that you hire an external facilitator with specific expertise in the matter in order to make use of these techniques.

Beyond these specific techniques, which complement and enrich those explained above, the CRAINNOVATION project offers other ideas that may contribute to the regeneration of tourist destinations. Remember that the rejuvenation of tourist destinations is a process that must be repeated periodically, and that the role of public authorities is essential for this.

Policy recommendation regarding creativity laboratories applied to tourism

The CRAINNOVATION project has promoted creativity laboratories (CCB, 2019), describing their characteristics in detail. Creativity is essential in order to encourage periodic processes for the rejuvenation of tourist destinations, and it is particularly useful in the case of small, well-defined destinations and when it comes to the stakeholders involved. In small, fascinating towns, having spaces such as creativity laboratories may be a successful factor in promoting the destination's rejuvenation. Said laboratories may be useful in the phases of deep destination rejuvenation, carried out through processes such as the planning exercise described in this document. However, creativity laboratories may be highly useful in ensuring that specific stakeholders can carry out specific creativity and innovation exercises, as part of the rejuvenation strategies agreed by all stakeholders. In particular, we refer to companies, who may take advantage of creativity laboratories to promote new tourist packages or new synergies and partnerships, etc. Bearing in mind that many towns have public spaces that may be easily adapted to become creativity laboratories (libraries, civic centres, etc.), local authorities may periodically promote workshops facilitated by experts in said premises.

Initiatives leading change

Despite the fact that, in this manual, we refer to small towns with a relatively limited number of stakeholders, the design and – above all – the implementation of a destination's rejuvenation are not simple processes. They require the alignment of multiple stakeholders and sometimes divergent forces. They require a change in habits (for business, government, etc.), working methods and sometimes ingrained ways of living, by convincing many people and showing them the benefits of these changes. Inertia and resistance are inevitable, even when the diagnosis and need to rejuvenate the destination are shared by the majority. In many towns, there are precursor initiatives that have, for various reasons (personal motivation, particular awareness for sustainability, long-term business vision, etc.), been ahead of the curve in terms of 'collective' awareness regarding the need to change and regenerate tourism in the town. These are successful and innovative practices, aligned with our rejuvenation objectives, that should be taken advantage of. Offering visibility throughout the entire process described in this manual, highlighting the various benefits of said experiences and relying on these to pave the way are essential elements for the rejuvenation process. Said initiatives may even lead the implementation of the plan's activities or bring together other companies and initiatives and represent specific work packages for the plan itself. According to the experience of the University of Algarve's Lagos pilot (Algarve, Portugal), it is important to value and rely on these initiatives that spontaneously lead change in order to motivate stakeholders and carry out the destination's rejuvenation plan.

Policy recommendation regarding the promotion of innovation within the field of tourism

Within post COVID-19 recovery strategies, tourism will play a fundamental role, having been one of the sectors most affected by the crisis and the limitations on mobility, and because it faces major challenges regarding the evolution of post-pandemic tourist preferences and as a result of the clear limitations of the pre-pandemic tourism model.

Pioneering initiatives may lead this paradigm shift, encouraging innovation and serving as an example for other companies. In those small towns, original ideas frequently arise which may be implemented and transformed into innovations in the field of tourism. Many of them may be aligned with the objectives of the European Union's Next Generation plan, clearly framed within the digitalisation and environmental sustainability of the tourism sector.

The support schemes implemented by public bodies struggle to support creativity as they are not designed to support truly creative initiatives and, as such, there exists a certain risk of failure. For example, the regulations governing grants normally have strict technical and economic justification rules, which does not allow for the 'failure' of a subsidised initiative. Reforming said initiatives and, in particular, adequately designing calls for grants in the tourism sector in order to allow these to finance the commissioning of creative ideas is vital for the implementation of public policies that encourage innovation.

Translating plan objectives into tourism packages

The SuSTowns project has not been limited to supplying pilot towns with sustainable-tourism action plans for the destination's rejuvenation, through the application of this methodology. Once said plans have been developed, the project has worked with tourist companies within the pilot towns to develop marketable tourism packages, aligned with the priorities defined by the sustainable-tourism action plans. This way, it has managed to materialise the ideas within the pilot destinations' plans with concrete products that have demonstrated to private stakeholders the viability of the destination's rejuvenation process and its positive consequences from a financial, environmental and social perspective. This phase encouraged private stakeholders to participate in the process as a whole. Tourist products were designed to serve the model for other pilot town companies and their marketing was carried out by the companies involved.

In Italy, the 'Anci – Lazio' and 'Borghi più belli d'Italia' partners opted to capitalise on tools promoting partnerships between companies already tested in the CRAINNOVATION project, which allowed for some local companies to come together and collaborate in order to market tourism packages for which they all provided services.

Regardless of the methodologies used for the development of each partner's tourism packages, this section allowed for the impact of action plans to be materialised in commercial and business terms, raising visibility for the economic potential of sustainable tourism.

Crisis management

Having stated that any plan must consider limitations and risks, due to the current situation caused by COVID-19, it is necessary to include a specific section addressing crisis management.

As noted in the decline section, there are external factors that are out of our control, such as wars, pandemics, earthquakes, climate change, political changes, terrorism, etc., which cause a rapid fall in tourism, resulting in a situation of drastic (and completely unexpected) decline. As such, these require a rapid reaction in order to manage the effect of the crisis and, in a tourist destination, manage both tourists and the tourism strategy.

There are two types of consequences derived from a crisis:

- Indirect

This occurs when a crisis situation affects a region other than the destination (for example: a volcanic eruption on an island or a terrorist attack in another city). In this case, the destination is not directly affected, but may benefit (or not) depending on its strategy. If the emergency or crisis occurs far from the destination, it may be possible to attract those tourists who planned to go to the affected area, which implies having the capacity to launch promotional campaigns together with the interested parties in order to offer coherent messages with the aim of attracting tourists who usually go to competitor destinations. If the destination is near the affected area or is similar (imagine another island with a volcano, for example, or a town that has already suffered a terrorist attack), the idea of attracting a tourist flow is still applicable, but the message should be more centred on differentiation and the safety offered for the tourist in the destination at that time.

- Direct

This occurs when the destination is directly affected by a crisis or emergency. In this case, the first action must be containment, to save lives and reassure people, listening and offering attention to cover basic needs; this means providing infrastructure and resources to healthcare professionals to the extent possible in order to manage this in a coordinated way.

An important question to be considered as soon as possible is communication, in order to offer a coherent message to clients, employees, residents and interested parties, with a limited number of very clear ideas, guiding people towards the steps necessary to overcome the first phase of the crisis. The second step should be damage limitation. For example, after an earthquake, there may be a building that is not safe to stay in – as such, the next step would be to move people to a safer location. In the third step, we address economic measures to support the people and businesses affected. Therefore, as part of communication, the package of financial crisis measures should be announced in order to allow people to see the light at the end of the tunnel and offer hope for the future. Investing in good communication management is crucial in these situations, in order to avoid confusion, incorrect messages or doubts, as communication is the face of crisis management. As such, keeping people informed regarding what has happened and what is happening to overcome the situation is essential in order to keep the crisis under control. When the first wave of actions has been implemented, it is time to think towards the future for a recovery plan, and rethink post-crisis actions. The recommendation at this point is to take the crisis as an opportunity to improve relations between stakeholders and strengthen the network of providers and suppliers throughout the value chain of your activity. Better cooperation means more profits for the destination.

Specific management for COVID-19

The COVID-19 crisis has heightened awareness regarding the strategical importance of maintaining entire value chains within Europe and as close as possible to the destination's location. The tourism sector has always worked with large value chains, but what has been noted is the vulnerability and dependence of activity in these fixed value chains. As such, if the stakeholders within a value chain are closer to the destination and therefore more flexible, this reinforces the independence and resilience of our sector faced with unexpected events and crises, guaranteeing adaptation to new products and services for residents and visitors.

What's more, the economic recession resulting from the COVID-19 crisis has had (and continues to have) very serious economic consequences for businesses, regions and countries. Clearly, this has drastically reduced tourism income in 2020 and will continue to affect this in 2021, at least. However, the crisis should be taken advantage of as an opportunity to change our way of tackling global objectives in a more sustainable, intelligent and responsible way. As such, encouraging economic growth after the coronavirus lockdown does not mean that green objectives should be put to one side.

The coronavirus lockdown (and the state of alarm) should represent a turn towards sustainability, circularity, capacity for recovery, intelligent and digital technology, and greater social inclusion (at all levels). Truly responsible revival of our economy will require networks of confidence, local engagement, conservation of jobs, successful innovation, a tourist offer with renewed attractions, and a commitment to skills enhancement and digital solutions: all accompanied with a conducive regulatory framework and a financial plan that will allow the tourism industry to adapt to this new paradigm.

Maintaining competitiveness and employment is a challenge for European tourism, and in particular for the Mediterranean region. The current COVID-19 crisis clearly demonstrates the strategical importance of having solid but flexible supply chains, which share the same values in order to ensure the same objective and all work in the same direction to reconstruct the region's strategy – initially to support essential services, and then to sustain economic activity and create new opportunities, because tourism embraces development, promotes solidarity and encourages cohesion within nations.

The WTO recently published a report to support employment and economies through travel and tourism, entitled 'A Call for Action to Mitigate the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 and Accelerate Recovery', in which a number of guidelines are offered for facing this crisis and supporting governments, the private sector and the international community in order to navigate the incomparable social and economic emergency that is COVID-19. The recommendations that appear below will contribute to mitigating the effects of the crisis, guaranteeing (and, where possible, accelerating) the recovery of tourism and allowing the sector to help drive broader social recovery.

The recommendations are divided into three fundamental spheres:

1. Crisis management and mitigation of its effects.
2. Providing stimulus and accelerating recovery.
3. Preparing for the future.

Among the 23 recommendations suggested by the WTO, this methodology seeks to highlight those that may be most relevant for application in small, fascinating towns interested in tourism rejuvenation in order to combat this dual situation: the decline or risk/prediction of decline existing before this situation, and the actual crisis caused by COVID-19.

Firstly, as in any unexpected situation, we must accept what has happened. This seems easy, but it is crucial in order to make progress with conviction and leave behind fear, as fear can stand in the way of thinking and action to create something new.

As such, part of this acceptance is becoming aware of the fact that we live in uncertainty – nobody knows exactly how the virus will evolve and what restrictions will be imposed regarding free mobility, commercial regulations in the service industry, or how long the economic recession will last. However, the inability to predict the future does not mean that we cannot plan, as we can learn from the past; furthermore, this type of pause in tourist activity offers us the chance to rethink our value proposition.

Clearly, any towns carrying out a planning exercise for rejuvenation in this highly complicated phase of tourism, must ask themselves: What do we want future tourism to look like? How will we measure success?

To effectively encourage change in order to achieve rejuvenation and, at the same time, become a greener, more responsible, intelligent, and accessible destination, decisions must be taken at this time of uncertainty.

What should we do if our destination has an economy based on tourism?

In short, the aim is to tackle the three Ps (people, profit and the planet) which must be protected by any economic activity. At first glance, the planet has not changed as a result of COVID-19 – beaches, monuments and mountains remain quiet without people, and await their return. As such, the main actions will focus on people and profit – which are very closely linked, as people are the true asset that ensures that a company is successful. Therefore, retaining employees can guarantee the continuation of a company's future activity and, as a result, its future profit. As a result, the measures suggested below may be applied by a government (national, regional or local) or by a company, with regard to citizens, residents or companies. Next, which measures should be adopted and how these would function.

1. Incentivising employee retention, supporting self-employed workers and protecting the most vulnerable groups, by:
2. Financially supporting companies with soft loans and delaying some payments.
 - Postponing taxes and fees and offering fiscal benefits for the most affected sectors (such as tourism).
 - Developing special support plans for self-employed workers, such as exemptions, delays or reductions in social security and tax payments.
 - Incentivising the training of employees in the new skills required for the future (digital skills, soft skills, health and sanitary skills, etc.).

Tip: How to handle a transition from offline to online in a rapid reaction (with no time for an exhaustive communications plan).

- 1.- Choose the best candidate within the organisation to support the transition (this may be a hotel chef or the spinning trainer, for example – there is always someone who understands social networks).
- 2.- Choose the platform to be prioritised (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.), focusing on one in particular.
- 3.- Following the prior objectives of containment and subsequent recovery, start to share information regarding the management of this essential containment work, after a few days or weeks (depending on the evolution of the crisis). You can start to share ideas for recovery and what you are doing with your employees to better meet the needs of your customers.
- 4.- Support the public by sharing information through webinars, such as a secret to your value proposition. This may be multiplied if you advertise together with another influential person – your social media assistant should identify someone who may help maximise the impact of your posts.
- 5.- Recreate your offer. If people cannot physically visit you, for example, you can bring them a little closer to your destination through a game or competition, and by including a chatbot on your main website to help visitors.
- 6.- Maintain loyalty through promotions and competitions.
- 7.- Take advantage of this new paradigm to create new relations that may form part of your value chain, as social networks are a unique location – you may find your new partner who will help you go further in your business.

Create new value chains

This crisis has forced the tourism sector to realise its vulnerability. Many destinations depend on airports or ferries, a limited number of providers and the same types of visitors, with much information for tracking and managing the activity still recorded offline. As such, now is the time to redefine the destination's network of stakeholders (that which we hope to create).

- Get in touch with other destinations with similar characteristics to your own.
- Explore various more local, more eco-friendly, younger and technological providers, and make new connections.

Invite other economic sectors to co-create solutions together – consider who could be a key partner in the short to medium-term future. For example, do you need an agreement with pharmacies? To create new products, why not create a summer camp together with schools and universities that were unable to complete the school year? An intersectional collaboration is usually a situation that offers benefits for everyone.

- The more knowledge is shared, the more lessons are acquired. As such, participating in web seminars, discussions and panels to exchange ideas and reflections can allow you to discover interesting ideas that would not have been possible alone.
- By including technology in your destination, you can make it more attractive, the offer can be doubly exploited (physically and virtually), you can obtain data to support decision making and the destination will become more resilient. Innovation with technology is the perfect combination for competitiveness.
- Make public-public, public-private and private-private alliances: supporting each other through difficult times is much better than being alone. Co-design new sustainable and circular business models.
- The presence of complete and strong value chains, close to the destination, is essential in order to increase resilience in both the territory and society itself (residents, businesses and visitors) faced with unexpected events and crises that may modify global commercial exchanges, like that seen today with the COVID-19 pandemic. Our collective ambition will be to bring the production of essential goods geographically closer to end users.

Stimulate recovery

- Diversify services: open new markets that have not yet been explored. What if you design a product that will attract different market segments – for example, if a destination is aimed at families, why not try something for solo travellers? Study the needs of the new market.
- Explore the undervalued destination assets surrounding the destination, such as inland or rural areas, old buildings, routes or areas that may be transformed for another activity. Invite residents that may have a special interest (and pride in their municipality) to participate in this new co-creation.
- Promote more values and emotions and less specific tourism packages (to clean up the destination's previous image of mass tourism, for example).
- Use new channels. Discover who is influential on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.
- Rethink strategy to make visitors and interested parties trust you.

- Provide financial plans for investment in tourism.
- Continue to reward greener behaviour and sustainability in pursuit of the SDGs and the adoption of digital technologies.
- Invest in talent to offer tourism-sector workers the set of skills required to drive transformation (at all levels of the organisation, with particular attention paid to workers in lower hierarchical roles) and define new working profiles according to the needs of the new market.

The current health crisis also demonstrates that decision making based on data, creativity and innovation offers the best solutions, even more so in extreme circumstances. Tourism may be a key driving force for relaunching the European economy after COVID-19 and demonstrating its willingness to rethink tourism business models through commitment to sustainability, climate change, accessibility, inclusion, competitiveness, innovation and, above all, collective resilience.

The new normality is continuous change. As such, destination must learn to adapt, have strong (but not dependent) relations with interested parties and diversify and extend the offer throughout the entire year; then, we can follow the route towards the tourism of tomorrow more confidently, as the DNA of the new destination has been constructed on the basis of resilience.

STEP 4 – WORKING PLAN

This step aims to:

- Define the order of performance for the specific objectives.
- See the viability of its implementation.
- Establish milestones and intermediate deadlines.
- Visualise what is more or less important.

It is important to view the viability of different specific objectives, in order to distinguish between priorities and sequences and establish the best order in which to achieve the described objectives. We recommend establishing milestones between the different objectives in order to ensure the correct development of the different actions. What's more, it will be necessary to define the duration of each objective, as well as the intermediate deadlines required to continue making progress at a suitable rhythm.

In order to visualise the set of actions to be implemented, some tools are suggested:

- Asana, Trello, Airtable¹² → Easy-to-use online platforms for planning tasks.

These all provide various visualisations of the planned work.

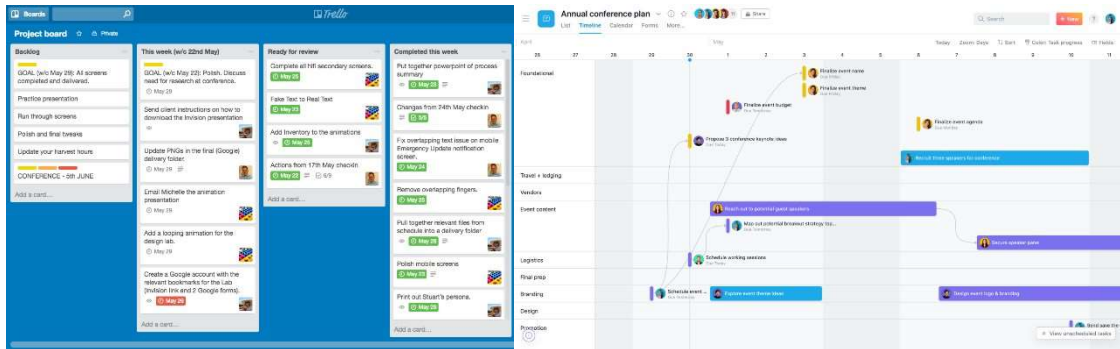


Illustration 16: Screenshots of the work-organisation online platforms

- Excel → Basic tool with potential for work planning.

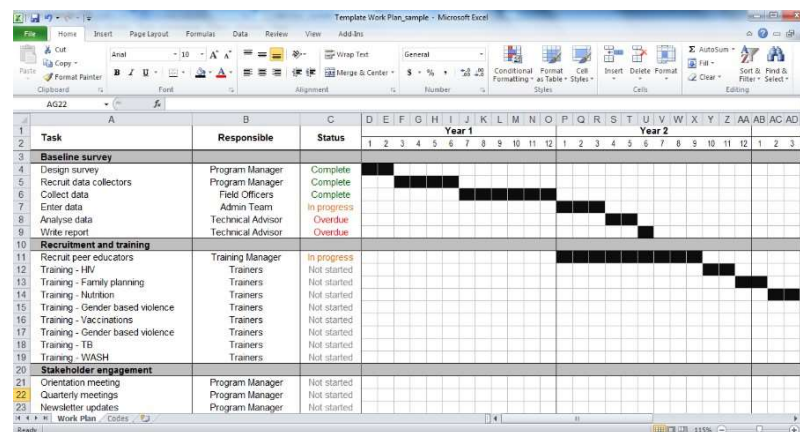


Illustration 17: Planning with Microsoft Excel

- Political agenda → Please keep in mind the political activities and public events within the town (or even in the region, or any main national events) in order to plan the proper execution of objectives, as the majority of objectives will require joint public, private and citizen collaboration for their successful achievement.

A plan may be used to establish a deadline that will drive everyone to achieve the objective within this timeline. However, this may be adapted if any limitation or risk arises. As such, the LFG should keep this in mind and remain flexible in the event that deadlines require adjustment.

¹² Asana <https://asana.com/guide> Trello <https://trello.com/> (paid platforms), Airtable <https://airtable.com/>

Some meetings should be added to the plan (whether in person or virtual¹³) in order to continue monitoring its execution. While it is true that the action plan already includes the persons responsible for coordinating each objective, with a clear calendar for its completion, meetings are a useful way of discovering whether or not any deviations have arisen, and the status of achievements made.

A calendar may be used to support the process of achieving specific processes, but if this is not realistic or achievable, it will contribute to creating more pressure and stress on the people responsible for implementing this. As such, it is important to be reasonable when establishing the duration and deadlines for objectives.

In this step, as previously mentioned, it is very important to define which body will ensure the plan's governance, take decisions regarding its execution, review its progress in accordance with step 5 and ensure that each stakeholder responsible performs as planned. The SuSTowns project opted to create LFGs with priority stakeholders in its pilot municipalities. Said groups may be formed as groups for the plan's governance. However, as explained in chapter 3, if organisation-governance bodies already exist within the town, it is important to consider that these bodies should manage the plan, or that there is at least full coordination and integration between these bodies and the LFGs created. Any duplications and overlaps that may cause conflict must be avoided.

STEP 5 – MONITORING and EVALUATION

Once the plan is scheduled and written with the consensus of all interested parties, it is time to act and begin its implementation. Then, within a period of three months and according to the intermediate deadlines, carry out progress monitoring and make adjustments and readjustments of plan priorities in order to adapt planned tasks faced with the emergence of limitations or new needs, applying the mitigation or contingency plans provided in Step 4 where necessary. For this, it is necessary to measure sub-objective performance to ensure that their implementation is heading towards the main objective.

For this, we have:

¹³ Various software is available on the market: Skype, GoToMeeting, Zoom, Webex, Adobe Connect, JoinMe or even WhatsApp

- The first evaluation (carried out in Step 2).
- The table of tourist indicators or KPIs defined in the table of specific objectives (Step 3).
- The working plan (Step 4), which together will facilitate supervision of the action plan's implementation.



The result of this should be a report on the status of tasks regarding the action plan, or an updated version of the plan itself, integrating the key performance indicators to maintain monitoring throughout the next period. The person designated in step 1 as responsible for the action plan should supervise the performance of step 5.

STEP 6 – COMMUNICATION

This step is an extra step; it is not directly related with the project's communication plan, however, it should be aligned with and contribute in some way to promotion, though in a different way. This step focuses on internal communication to ensure transparency between the action plan participants. The people referenced in the 'people' field of the specific objectives table should know what is happening and the status of all actions, in order to understand whether or not something may affect other actions or objectives. Apart from internal communication between all interested parties participating in the execution of the action plan, information should be collected regarding good practices and learnings extracted from the pilot projects, in order to transfer this valuable information to the future towns in which the results of SuSTowns will be capitalised. These good practices and lessons learned may be requested in advance during stage 5 of the methodology, while progress of the action plan is being supervised, or this task may be assigned to the person responsible for the project's communication so that they may assume responsibility for collecting this information at least once a year.

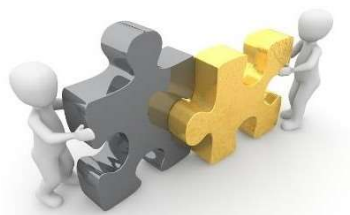
What's more, good practices and lessons learned are intended to encourage citizen awareness, as well as the engagement of other residents and interested parties not yet involved, and create a sense of place to love and value what they have – taking measures to protect and promote responsible tourism. Today, social networks provide a powerful communication tool to reach residents and tourists.

As such, the plan's communication plan and/or the municipalities tourism authorities may include this information in the material to be shared online.

Last but not least, the good practices and lessons learned should be converted into a tool to ensure a common standard among tourism workers, staff and the entire value chain, and should also be used as material for future training in the capitalisation phase.

ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

Creating an action plan is a complex task if the people involved are not sufficiently motivated or convinced of the need for changes to encourage a shift towards sustainable tourism. For this, it is important to offer training to all involved interested parties in order to share a strong and clear message, offering them empowerment and creating engagement among all those responsible for developing and implementing the action plan.



PARTICIPATION
=
IMPLICATION
+
MOTIVATION

An action plan based on this methodology must contain the following content: General description of the destination.

Interest groups:

- List of interested parties.
- Names of persons forming the local focus group (and, where possible, the three for the action groups).

Evaluation:

- Tourism indicators.
- Quality criteria.
- List of tourism resources and offers.
- Analysis using one of the suggested tools (DPSIR, SWOT, GAP, etc.).
- Evaluation of the situation of decline.

Action plan objectives:

- Summary of the brainstorming session.
- Needs identified.
- Type and form of tourism selected to rejuvenate the destination.
- Objectives defined for people and resources required for implementation.
- Mitigation and contingency plan.
- Principal KPIs to monitor progress.
- (Optional) Collection of good practices for inspiration.

Working plan:

- Calendar with milestones and deliverables.
- Monitoring report dates.
- Monitoring tools (tourism indicators, quality criteria, etc.).
- Description of the plan's governance: bodies responsible for the plan.

This list may be found in Annex 7 as a checklist to support the main person responsible for producing the effective action plan, in accordance with this methodology.

A good action plan will ensure:

- ✓ Effective governance.
- ✓ Exchange of policies, vision and mission.
- ✓ Positive impact.
- ✓ Improvement of the destination's image.
- ✓ A culture of innovation.
- ✓ Coordination and cooperation between interested parties for effective and efficient management.
- ✓ Sense of place.
- ✓ Measurement indicators for evaluation and monitoring implementation.
- ✓ Transparency in communication and data.
- ✓ Innovation in processes (also in governance for decision making).
- ✓ Adoption of technology and digital transformation.
- ✓ New skills and training.

Deliverable 3.1.1. – Methodology to apply the total quality management approach in governance and the management of sustainable tourism

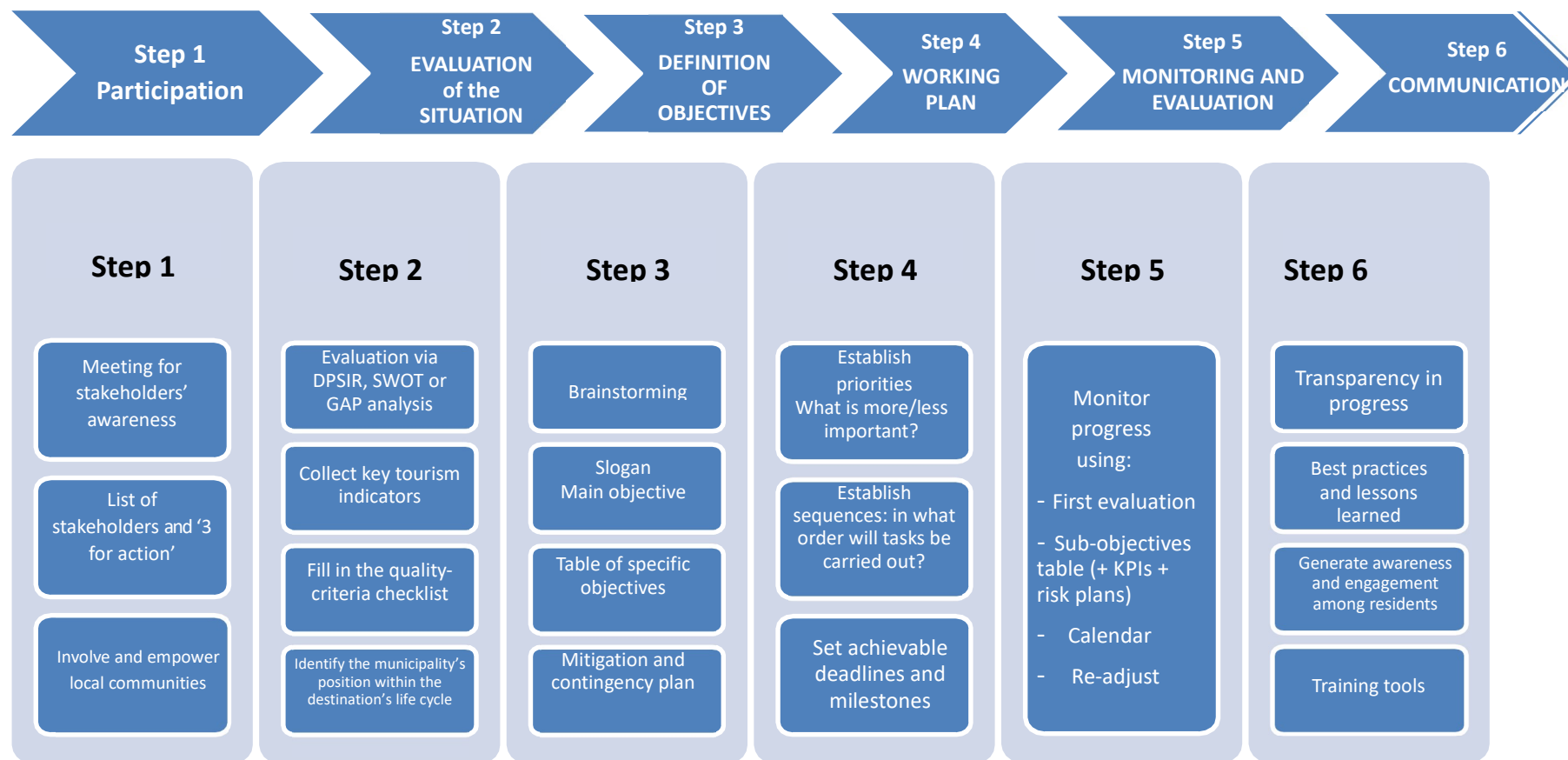


Illustration 18: Action plan summary

Deliverable 3.1.1. – Methodology to apply the total quality management approach in governance and the management of sustainable tourism

GLOSSARY and ABBREVIATIONS

BSC	Balanced Scorecard: an approach which is considered as a new form of measuring the performance of companies – an alternative to unilateral financial-performance measurement. BSC links four important company management functions: the translation of the vision/strategy, communication among performance networks (departments), business planning, feedback and learning.
Load capacity	The maximum number of tourists a destination can sustain, beyond which damage may be caused to the destination itself. Load capacity is characterised by three dimensions (environmental, economic and social).
Sustainable Development	A broad political aim which addresses the intention to avoid activities that cause long-term damage to the environment and the desire to guarantee a suitable quality of life for present and future generations.
DMO	Destination Management Organisations: these play a fundamental role in tourism development at a local level and plan the general management of tourist activities in the area, taking into account the concerns of interested parties and residents.
ETIS	European Tourism Indicator System: European system for tourist indicators.
Destination management	A management approach aimed at enabling the destination to compete in the global tourism market through suitable structures and policies.
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management: a resource-management system which follows a comprehensive and holistic approach and an interactive planning process to tackle complicated questions of coastal-zone management. ¹⁴
KPI	Key Performance Indicator

¹⁴ Job Dronkers (2019): Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).
[http://www.vliz.be/wiki/Integrated_Coastal_Zone_Management_\(ICZM\)#cite_note-1](http://www.vliz.be/wiki/Integrated_Coastal_Zone_Management_(ICZM)#cite_note-1)

LFG	Local Focus Group
NECSTouR	Network of European Regions for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism
PDCA	Plan-do-check-act
Town/Village/Municipality	There does not appear to be any legal definition of a 'town' within the EU, nor in member states, although there are usually definitions for larger urban units through 'cities'. As such, in general terms, a town is a settlement/community in a rural area which is smaller than a 'city'.
STC	Sustainable Tourism Community
TALC	Tourism Area Life Cycle Model
TQM	Total Quality Management
Rural Area	'Rural areas', according to the official Eurostat definition, are 'all areas outside of urban agglomerations'. This means that 'rurality' is defined ONLY by population density and the region's periphery, and NOT by other factors – such as economy/agriculture or coastal/in-land/mountain location. Source: https://ec.europa.eu/75uropa75t/web/rural-development/methodology ; https://ec.europa.eu/75uropa75t/documents/35209/35256/Urban_rural_poster_3levels_A1_Aug2013.pdf ; https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/mapapps/urban/degurba.html

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USEFUL ONLINE MATERIALS AND TOOLS TO DRAW INSPIRATION FROM

CREAINNOVATION: <https://creainnovation.interreg-med.eu/>

NECSTouR – Network of European Regions for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism
www.necstour.eu (full of knowledge and good practices)

Sustainable Tourism Community (where Interreg MED Modular projects are capitalised)
<https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/> Here you will find the catalogue of outcomes from the previous projects and the link to their webpages

MITOMED+ <https://mitomed-plus.interreg-med.eu/> ALTER-ECO <http://alterecotips.com/>

HERIT-DATA <https://herit-data.interreg-med.eu/> CO-EVOLVE <https://co-evolve.interreg-med.eu/>

SHAPETOURISM project, a participative Decision Support System
<http://www.shapetourism.eu/main-output/> <https://shapetourism.interreg-med.eu/main-outputs>

SDGs How to contribute to its achievement and to get inspired SDG Toolkit
<http://sdgtoolkit.org/>

Make Europe Sustainable for all <https://makeeuropesustainableforall.org/> Tourism for SDGs travellers. <http://tourism4sdgs.org/>

Maritime Spatial Planning and Good Practices
https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/maritime_spatial_planning_en

CHARM - Discovering charming villages (Experiences for rural and isolated villages)
<https://www.charmingvillages.eu/>

Handbook of successful and innovative practices for a sustainable tourism inside Protected Areas
<https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/Handbook-Sustainable-Tourism-EN-CEETO-Interreg.pdf>

SUMP Self-Assessment Tool by European Platform on Sustainable Mobility Plans
<https://www.sump-assessment.eu/start>

Carbon Footprint <https://www.cstt.nl/carmacal>

Quality Standards (extra recommendations) <https://iqmdestination.com/>

Investment

Anima <http://www.animaweb.org/fr/missions> CAST Network <https://castnetwork.eu/>

FEMIP <https://www.eib.org/en/proyectos/regions/med/trust-fund/index.htm>

MED Urban Tool – Like a marketplace full of materials and tools aiming to rethink city development in the Mediterranean <http://medurbantools.com/>

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Acknowledgements and thanks

This methodology gives acknowledgement to existing declarations, standards and outcomes of previous projects and documents related to sustainable and responsible tourism and governance.

We acknowledge the importance and relevance of the following sources and are grateful for the assistance they have provided in the preparation of this methodology.

Existing declarations, standards, outcomes of previous projects and documents related to sustainable and responsible tourism and governance.

The quality standards of 'Los Pueblos Más Bonitos de España' and 'I Borghi più belli d'Italia', as well as the GSTC Destination Criteria and the 'Charming Villages' (COSME) criteria.

The 2017 Athens Declaration, as well as all documentation published (factsheets, outcomes and recommendations) by the MED Sustainable Tourism Community which aims to move towards sustainable coastal and maritime tourism by capitalising on project results and lessons learned.

The Barcelona Declaration of Tourism and Cultural Heritage: 'Better Places To Live, Better Places To Visit' (2018) by NECSTouR, in cooperation with Europa Nostra, ETC and ECTN.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in particular:

- Target 8.9: By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.
- Target 12.B: Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that create jobs and promote local culture and products.
- Target 14.7: By 2030, increase the economic benefits from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism for Small Island Developing States and the least developed countries.

The 10 principles addressed in the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted by the UNWTO General Assembly in 1999 and approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 2001 regarding the economic, social, cultural and environmental components of travel and tourism and calling special attention to Articles 3 and 6, which reference tourism as a factor of sustainable development and affirm the obligations of stakeholders in tourism

development respectively, bearing in mind the UNWTO Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics developed in 2017, constructed around the core principles indicated in the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and working towards the advancement of a more sustainable and ethical tourism.

The Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean (ICZM) Protocol, and in particular Economic activities Art.9d: i) To encourage sustainable coastal tourism that preserves coastal ecosystems, natural resources, cultural heritage and landscapes; ii) To promote specific forms of coastal tourism, including cultural, rural and ecotourism, while respecting the traditions of local populations; and the MSP Principles, as well as the *BLUEMED Initiative's SRIA* (The BLUEMED Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA)), and in line with the Maritime Spatial Planning, the Ecosystem-Based Management principles and the Zoning approach for planning and managing tourism areas.

The European Green Deal, having taken into consideration the European Circular Economy Action Plan and the European Strategy for Plastics as part of the Circular Economy Package.

The Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean: Objective 3.1: Develop and promote practices and solutions to ensure efficient use of natural resources and reduce environmental impacts of tourism, respecting spatial, ecological, and socio-cultural carrying capacities of the destination; Objective 3.2: Promote regulatory, legislative and financial measures to mainstream SCP in the tourism consumption and production area, to reduce tourism seasonality creating green and decent jobs and to promote local community engagement and empowerment; Objective 3.3: Raise awareness, capacities and technical skills to support sustainable destinations and green tourism services and promote the development of appropriate marketing and communication tools to ensure a competitive, sustainable Mediterranean Tourism.

The 2011 White Paper: Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource-efficient transport system: although tourism is not specifically mentioned, this white paper addresses the need to make travel more sustainable, safe, secure and efficient. It also aims to connect different modes of transport and to increase capacity in order to carry a growing number of passengers and reduce traffic congestion.

The European Tourism Manifesto for Growth and Jobs: Point No 35: maintain long-term employment in the tourism sector with fair working conditions for all, especially in key sub-sectors where recruitment and retention remain a challenge (e.g., social protection, remuneration, equal opportunities, equal treatment etc.).

Annex 2: Table of Sustainable-Tourism Indicators

List of the main indicators based on ETIS, MITOMED+, HERIT-DATA and our own research:

Num ber	Indicator type	Criteria	Description
1	Destination management (general)	Sustainable-tourism public policy	Existence of a strategy for sustainable tourism in the tourism planning documents. Percentage of the destination with a sustainable-tourism action plan, with a monitoring agreement, development management and established evaluation (%).
2			Number of policies focused on the sustainable development goals (SDG).
3		Satisfaction	Percentage of visitors satisfied with their overall experience at the destination.
4			Percentage of residents satisfied with the tourist activity in general and its management in the destination.
5		Gender balance	Percentage of interested parties with plans to ensure gender balance.
6			Percentage of women working in tourism.
7			Average salary of women in tourism in comparison with men's employment.
8	Economic Value	Regulation	Official (and updated) register of tourist accommodation licences (including those of the sharing economy*).
9			Percentage of tourist establishments in the destination that use a voluntary and verified certification/label for environmental/quality/sustainability and/or CSR measures.

10		Tourism flow (volume and value) and yield within the destination	Relative contribution of tourism to the destination's economy (% GDP).
11			Average tourist stay duration (nights).
12			Number of overnight stays per month.
13			Rate of occupation in commercial accommodation* per month and average for the year.
14			Direct employment in tourism as a percentage of the total employment per month.
15			Daily tourist expenditure (accommodation, food and drink, other services).
16		Quantity of work	Variation (%) of the unemployment rate between months to evaluate low and high season.
17		Suppliers	Percentage of locally produced food, drinks, products and services acquired by tourist destinations in the destination.
18	Socio-cultural	Social/community impact	Load capacity: number of tourists per resident.
19			Number of second homes/rentals per home (1 to 1 ratio).
20			Number of beds available in commercial accommodation* compared to residents (1 to 1 ratio).
21			Percentage of visitors who prolong their stay.
22			Percentage of visitors who return to the destination.
23			Percentage of visitors who participate in a cultural or traditional activity in the destination.

24		Inclusion and accessibility	Percentage of tourist attractions accessible to people with mobility and sensory disabilities and/or which participate in recognised accessibility plans.
25		Protection and enhancement of cultural heritage, local identity and cultural goods	Number of sites and cultural practices under some label of protection and number of sites and cultural practices recognised as 'at risk'.
26	Environmental	Climate change and protection of biodiversity	Carbon footprint per euro spent (if desired, another indicator for the average carbon-footprint of journeys made to visit the destination) (kg).
27			Percentage of tourist companies participating in programmes to mitigate climate change, such as carbon offsetting, low-energy systems, etc. And in climate change adaptation measures.
28			Percentage of accommodation and tourist attraction infrastructure in vulnerable or fragile areas.
29			Percentage of the destination (surface area in km ²) designated to protection.
30			Percentage of the destination area falling under a biodiversity-protection plan.
31			Use of the land: % developed, % land for construction, % land designated as not for construction.
32			Percentage of visitors who use non-polluting transport (such as bicycles or electric cars) to travel around the destination.

33			Solid urban waste produced by destination (tonnes per person between low and high season).
34			Volume of solid urban waste recycled (relation between low and high season).
35		Management of waste and	Consumption of water (litres) per person (relation between low and high season).
36		consumption and management of water and energy	Energy consumption (KWh) per person and per day (relation between low and high season).
37			Percentage of electrical energy consumed by renewable sources.
38			Percentage of accommodation promoting eco-friendly attitudes (recycling, renewable energy systems without water, etc.).

With regard to these 38 indicators, local authorities should verify whether or not they can obtain data to fill these in periodically. If not, some of them may be deleted, and other additional indicators may be added.

Some additional indicators suggested by ETIS are:

Accessible tourism	
Sustainable tourism policy	Percentage of the destination with an accessible tourism strategy/action plan, with agreed monitoring, development control and evaluation arrangement
Equality/accessibility	Percentage of commercial accommodation with rooms accessible to people with disabilities and/or participating in recognised accessibility information schemes
	Does the destination have an identified accessibility management office or person available to the public?
	Percentage of businesses that have a budget for accessibility improvements
Reducing transport impact	Percentage of each category of transport in the destination that is accessible, i.e. public transport and private hire coaches, minibuses, taxis or minicabs
Transnational cultural routes	
Destination management survey	Is your destination part of a cultural route certified by the Council of Europe?
	If yes, is there any policy in place for the cultural route's visibility?
	If yes, does the local community participate in this policy?
	Do cultural/tourist events linked to the cultural route take place in your destination?
	Is the logo of the cultural route of the Council of Europe present on the documents or visible in tourist offices?
	Percentage of tourist offers available in your destination highlighting the theme of the cultural route
Enterprise survey	Is your enterprise located along a cultural route certified by the Council of Europe?
	If yes, are the products of your enterprise linked within the theme/activities of the cultural route?
	If yes, is the communication on your enterprise/products mentioning the links with the cultural route?
	Is the cultural route promoting/making visible your enterprise/products?
Resident survey	Benefits for the community from the cultural route involving my destination
	Is the community informed about the cultural route?
	Is the local community involved in the actions organised within the framework of the cultural route's activities?
	Are there benefits for me from the cultural route involving my destination?
	Percentage of residents satisfied with their involvement and their influence in the planning and development of the cultural route
	Percentage of residents who have positive or negative views on the impact of the cultural route on my destination's identity
	Effect of the cultural route on the distinctiveness and local identity, culture and heritage of the destination
	Effect of the cultural route on the quality of life in the destination
	Percentage of residents who have positive views on the impact of the cultural route on tourism
	Effect of the cultural route on cultural and tourism offers of the destination

Annex 3: Tourist Indicators vs Quality Criteria

Below, we will present a correlation between the tourist indicators suggested, linked with the quality-standard criteria for the towns:

No	Indicator type	Criteria	Description	Quality criterion
1	Destination management (general)	Sustainable-tourism public policy	Existence of a strategy for sustainable tourism in the tourism planning documents. Percentage of the destination with a sustainable-tourism action plan, with a monitoring agreement, development management and established evaluation (%).	11. Tourist information and/or alternative supply of information. 21. Sustainability is part of the tourism strategy (with updated tourist indicators).
2			Number of policies focused on SDGs.	21. Sustainability is part of the tourism strategy (with updated tourist indicators).
3		Satisfaction	Percentage of visitors satisfied with their overall experience at the destination.	6. Living traditions and culture manifested through local associations, clubs and public, genuine events.
4			Percentage of residents satisfied with the tourist activity in general and its management in the destination.	6. Living traditions and culture manifested through local associations, clubs and public, genuine events.
5		Gender balance	Percentage of interested parties with plans to ensure gender balance.	
6			Percentage of women working in tourism.	
7			Average salary of women in tourism in comparison with men's employment.	

8	Eco Value	Regulation	Official (and updated) register of tourist accommodation licences (including those of the sharing economy*).	
9			Percentage of tourist establishments in the destination that use a voluntary and verified certification/label for environmental/quality/sustainability and/or CSR measures.	5. Local crafts, manual trades and agriculture – activities which are accessible and may be experienced.
10		Tourism flow (volume and value) and yield within the destination	Relative contribution of tourism to the destination's economy (% GDP).	5. Local crafts, manual trades and agriculture – activities which are accessible and may be experienced. 8. Restaurant(s) in the town.
11			Average tourist stay duration (nights).	
12			Number of overnight stays per month.	
13			Rate of occupation in commercial accommodation* per month and average for the year.	7. Accommodation in the town.
14			Direct employment in tourism as a percentage of the total employment per month.	
15			Daily tourist expenditure (accommodation, food and drink, other services).	10. Existing tourist products, routes (hiking, cycling).
16		Quantity of work	Variation (%) of the unemployment rate between months to evaluate low and high season.	

17		Suppliers	Percentage of locally produced food, drinks, products and services acquired by tourist destinations in the destination.	
18	Socio-cultural	Social/community impact	Load capacity: number of tourists per resident.	
19			Number of second homes/rentals per home (1 to 1 ratio).	
20			Number of beds available in commercial accommodation* compared to residents (1 to 1 ratio).	
21			Percentage of visitors who prolong their stay.	19. Proof of accommodation and services' good quality.
22			Percentage of repeat visitors to the destination's cultural or traditional sites.	19. Proof of the good quality of accommodation and services, local associations, clubs and public, genuine events.
23				
24		Inclusion and accessibility	Percentage of tourist attractions accessible to people with mobility and sensory disabilities and/or which participate in recognised accessibility plans.	5. Local crafts, manual trades and agriculture – activities which are accessible and may be experienced. 14. Accessible 'cultural' attractions (churches, museums, historic buildings, etc.) within the town. 15. Accessibility and activities to experience cultural sites of interest and nature in the surroundings. 22. Sustainable tourism experiences.

25		Protection and enhancement of cultural heritage, local identity and cultural goods	Number of sites and cultural practices under some label of protection and number of sites and cultural practices recognised as 'at risk'.	
26	Environmental	Climate change and protection of biodiversity	Carbon footprint per euro spent (if desired, another indicator for the average carbon-footprint of journeys made to visit the destination) (kg).	20. Destination accessible via public transport or other models of sustainable mobility.
27			Percentage of tourist companies participating in programmes to mitigate climate change, such as carbon offsetting, low-energy systems, etc. And in climate change adaptation measures.	
28			Percentage of accommodation and tourist attraction infrastructure in vulnerable or fragile areas.	
29			Percentage of the destination (surface area in km ²) designated to protection.	

30			<p>Percentage of the destination area falling under a biodiversity-protection plan.</p> <p>Use of the land: % developed, % land for construction, % land designated as not for construction.</p>	
31				
32				
33		<p>Management of waste and consumption and management of water and energy</p>	<p>Solid urban waste produced by destination (tonnes per person between low and high season).</p>	<p>20. Destination accessible via public transport or other models of sustainable mobility.</p>
34			<p>Volume of solid urban waste recycled (relation between low and high season).</p>	
35			<p>Consumption of water (litres) per person (relation between low and high season).</p>	

36			Energy consumption (KWh) per person and per day (relation between low and high season).	
37			Percentage of electrical energy consumed by renewable sources.	
38			Percentage of accommodation promoting eco-friendly attitudes (recycling, renewable energy systems without water, etc.).	

