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RESTART MED!

REvitalization of Sustainable Tourism Across Regions in The MEDiterranean

Guideline to address & mainstream sustainability challenges in tourism policies

In Catalonia

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COMITATO INTERNAZIONALE PER LO SVILUPPO DEI POPOLI

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Abstract

This document aims to serve as a useful guideline to assess and monitor the consideration of sustainability in the development of tourism policies, and in particular, in Catalonia. The structure of the guideline comprises an overall framework of the most relevant policies at the European, Spanish, and Catalan level to contextualise and identify recurrent relevant topics to mainstream sustainability challenges in tourism policies. It then follows with a detailed explanation of the identified relevant topics classified within four main pillars, the transversal Governance one, and the three sustainability ones (Environmental, Socio-Cultural, Economical). After that, a Strength Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of key Catalan tourism policies and a Correct Adapt Maintain and Explore (CAME) analysis of key Catalan tourism territorial strategies and plans are provided. Following these analyses, two tools are detailed to assess the effectiveness of the tourism plans and policies for improving sustainable development. First, a checklist for policymakers is given to evaluate and improve sustainability in existing tourism policies or to take sustainability into account when designing new policies and strategies. Secondly, a list of 45 selected indicators is suggested to monitor the impact of implemented sustainable tourism policies. The guideline concludes with an overview of a recommended pathway for implementing sustainable tourism policies.

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INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations World Travel Organization (UNWTO) sustainable tourism is based on three pillars: make optimal use of environmental resources (Environmental), respect the socio-cultural authenticity of local communities and preserve cultural heritage (Socio-cultural), as well as ensure viable long-term economic operations (Economical)[1]. As a fundamental frame of reference for responsible and sustainable tourism, in 1999 the UN developed a Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, which comprises ten principles designed to guide key-players in tourism development[3]

Later, in 2005, with the "Making Tourism More Sustainable" report, UNWTO and the UN Environmental Programme identified twelve aims for sustainable tourism that would set out a broad sustainable tourism agenda[4]; and in 2014, UNWTO launched the 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on Sustainable Tourism Programme (STP) as part of the 10YFP on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns[4].

Different framings unfold until the adaptation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[5] that are currently being implemented by the tourism sector[6,7] but, despite all the efforts, there is a lack of instruments for the implementation of sustainable tourism policies as well as the lack of commitment[8].

Recently, the European Parliament resolution of 25th March 2021[9] gave new tools by establishing an EU strategy for sustainable tourism aiming to:

- **REBUILD** the tourism sector through COVID-19 impact response plans and ensure safe travel criteria.
- **REFOCUS** governance policy within the Union framework considering the transversal aspect of tourism sector.
- **STRENGHTHEN** the transition towards a more sustainable, responsible and smart tourism.
- **RETHINK** the future of the tourism industry plans incentivising the principles of circular economy.

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[3] 10 principles of the UN Global Code of Ethics for Tourism[2]: Respect between societies; Collective fulfilment; Sustainable development; User of cultural heritage; Beneficial activity for host countries; Obligations of stakeholders; Right to tourism; Liberty of movements; Fair working conditions; Implementation of code of ethics globally.

[4] 12 principles of the UN Environmental Programme for sustainable tourism[3]: Economic viability; Local prosperity; Employment quality; Social equity; Visitor fulfilment; Local control; Community wellbeing; Cultural richness; Physical integrity; Biological diversity; Resource efficiency; Environmental purity.

But what shall we care about the strategies and past frameworks or plans? What all the years of work have arguably taught us is that if tourism wants to become a resilient sustainable industry, international, national, regional, and local strategies require the implication of several actors starting from the coordination, incentive schemes and monitoring from public authorities; following up with the cooperation, facilitation, and innovation from the private sector; and involving the support and participation of civil society. In addition, academy is needed to further allow neutral decision makings based on a quantifiable and objective criteria, linked with a robust and trustful monitoring system[6]. Nevertheless, to take these actions into real good practices, different criteria and adaptable models need to be considered depending on specific socio-political and regional context.

Particularly for the Spanish context, the 2030 General Strategy on Sustainable Tourism aims this sector to be a main mean to preserve natural and cultural heritage of the country by preserving and recovering environmental assets while increasing competitive and attractive tourism. In addition, tourism should contribute to face national big challenges such as rural depopulation and inequality by looking for synergies between tourism benefits and local communities' needs. At the same time, the strategy considers keeping increasing the growth of the tourism sector following a more sustainable model by increasing quality as well as accelerating digital transition[10].

Specific challenges for the regional Catalan context include the current need of a more defined binding regulation as well as real cooperation between different governance levels. Outdated Catalan tourism law and strategic plans without specifying the principles of sustainability of the sector[11], as well as missing guidance on how to implement relevant actions in a synchronised territorial strategy, are complicating the transition towards a more sustainable tourism. To this end, the Catalan Government has already started the process to create a new tourism law[12] and existing non-binding plans of experienced touristic destinations are facilitating the transformation of the sector[13].

Currently, the tourism sector carries knowledge acquired through the: (1) development and implementation of former tourism plans; (2) the creation and implementation of current strategies and plans and (3) the feedback from tourism practitioners and stakeholders. This knowledge allows to argue that in order to achieve sustainable tourism, we need: firstly, ***a framework***, secondly, ***a strategy***, thirdly, ***the tools*** to carry it out, and finally, ***resources*** to implement it. As a first step to provide a framework and needed tools, this document aims to serve as a useful guideline to assess

and monitor the consideration of sustainability in the development of Catalan policies for tourism.

Therefore, next sections aim to provide an overall framework of the most relevant policies at the European, Spanish and Catalan level to contextualise and identify recurrent relevant topics to mainstream sustainability challenges in tourism policies. The guideline then follows with a detailed explanation of the identified relevant topics classified within four main pillars, the transversal Governance one, and the three sustainability ones (Environmental, Socio-Cultural, Economical).

After that, a Strength Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of key Catalan tourism policies and a Correct Adapt Maintain and Explore (CAME) analysis of key Catalan tourism territorial strategies and plans are provided. Following these analyses, two tools are detailed to assess the effectiveness of the tourism plans and policies for improving sustainable development. First, a checklist for policymakers is given to evaluate and improve sustainability in tourism policies or to take sustainability into account when designing new policies. Secondly, a list of 45 selected indicators is suggested to monitor the impact of implemented sustainable tourism policies. The guideline concludes with an overview of a recommended pathway for implementing sustainable tourism policies.

FRAMEWORK

Tourism's contributions to SDGs

The three pillars of sustainable tourism (Environmental, Socio-cultural and Economical) directly contribute to the seventeen SDGs[7]. Particularly, the SDGs make explicit mention to tourism in **Goal 8** *"decent work and economic growth"*, **Goal 12** *"responsible consumption and production"* and **Goal 14** *"the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources"*. Targets 8.9, 12.b and 14.7 are aimed at implementing sustainable tourism in terms of quality job creation and promotion of the local culture and products (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Contribution of tourism to the 17 SDGs linked with opportunities and risks.

PILLARS	SDGs	TOURISM CONTRIBUTIONS	
Environmental	6 Clean water and sanitation 7 Affordable and clean energy 13 Climate action 14 Life below water 15 Life on land	Tourism can contribute to the preservation of ecosystems and the mitigation of climate change impacts by the development of tourism models with lower footprints. At the same time, the upgrading of infrastructures propitiated by tourism investments can play a fundamental roll in achieving access to resources in a safest and eco-efficient way.	OPPORTUNITIES
		Tourism is responsible for an approximate 5% of the global GHGs emissions and 1% of the freshwater withdrawal. Tourism contributes to waste and wastewater production. At the same time, tourism is highly vulnerable to climate change as is closely related to the weather conditions, and the environment is often seen as a determining factor of the attractiveness of destinations.	RISKS
Socio-cultural	3 Good health and well-being 4 Quality education 5 Gender equality 10 Reduced inequalities 11 Sustainable cities and communities 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions	Taxes and benefits generated by tourism can be reinvested in services that benefit local communities, as for example health care services. If tourism seeks to provide quality products and services, local capacity building can play an important role in tourism destinations. Also, tourism can help to preserve the cultural and natural heritage assets, on which it depends, and promote tolerance and understanding between religions and cultures.	OPPORTUNITIES
		Tourism can propitiate the development of vandalism and crime and changes in traditional cultures and the host's way of live.	RISKS
Economical	1 No poverty 2 Zero Hunger 8 Decent work and economic growth 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure 12 Responsible consumption and production 17 Partnership for the goals	Tourism brings income through job creation at the local level. Additionally, as tourism is closely related with other economic sectors it is known that for each direct job created in tourism, one and a half more jobs are indirectly created. Tourism can sponsor public policies to upgrade and adapt infrastructure.	OPPORTUNITIES
		Up to 87% of tourism employment are seasonal low-skilled jobs with limited career opportunities that prevent workers to access stable and well-paid employment. Tourism can difficult access of locals to products and services due to price inflation originated by an increase of the demand.	RISKS

Referent documents: mapping & summary of current policies, strategies, and action plans

Having a broader level definition of Sustainable Tourism is the first step to being able to create a comprehensive framework. To develop the context useful at the regional level, this guideline is mainly based on the selected relevant topics (Table 2) based on definitions and recommendations about sustainable tourism that can be found in the following referent documents classified in three policy levels: i) Global and European, ii) National-Spanish, and iii) Regional-Catalan. The methodology used to find the reviewed referent documents was based on a Google search of the most relevant and updated ones at the three different level. To contextualise the current scenario and provide a background, a summary of the reviewed documents is provided below.

Policies at Global and European level

Global Sustainable Tourism Council's (GSTC) criteria

The GSTC criteria are the result of a worldwide effort to attain a global consensus on sustainable tourism and have been built on decades of prior work and experiences. There are two sets of criteria, for industry (i.e. hotels and tour operators) and for destinations (i.e. touristic areas). In turn, a number of performance indicators have been also indispensable to complement the criteria. These criteria are used for education and awareness-raising, policymaking for businesses and public authorities, evaluation, and a basis for certifications[14].

European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST) in Protected Areas

This guideline aims to increase awareness and ensure Europe's protected areas as well as improve the sustainable development and responsible management of tourism in such unique places. The main principles are: i) prioritise the protection, ii) contribute to sustainable development, iii) participation of all parts, iv) effective planning, and v) pursue the continuous improvement[15].

European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS)

ETIS aims to provide a measuring and monitoring tool for destinations wanting to adopt a sustainable management approach and to enhance their sustainability performances (i.e. user-friendly tool for any destination which wants to use it voluntarily). The toolkit is based on 27 core indicators and 40 optional ones. The core indicators are sub-classified in 4 general blocks such as destination management, economic value, social and cultural impact, and environmental impact. Supplementary

indicators tackle more specific areas and are grouped in 3 blocks (maritime and coastal, accessible tourism, and transnational cultural routes)[16].

Transition Pathway for Tourism

This report is the first one developed by the European Commission supporting specific industrial strategies as an essential collaborative process to further accelerate the green and digital transitions and increase the resilience of the EU industrial ecosystems. This has to be done through monitored and co-implemented regulations, effective public governance, and taking advantage of EU funding programmes. The tourism sector has been targeted as one of the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this pathway describes measures and results needed to accelerate the transition towards a more sustainable tourism being a result of a co-creative process by consulting over 200 stakeholders from 24 EU Member States, Norway and the UK, as well as considering tourism as a transversal business network[17].

Policies at National Spanish level

Sustainable Tourism Strategy in Destinations 2030

This strategy is the first of four axes to transform the tourism sector in Spain, including sustainable transition, digitalisation, resilience in extra peninsular territories, and competitiveness actions. This strategy differentiates and applies to different types of destinations to better organise and face different challenges (sun and beach, rural, and urban) from a transversal approach. There is not a prioritisation between categories of destination but subcategorised actions to take[10].

Policies at Regional Catalan level

13/2002 Catalan Law on Tourism and its partial modifications

This document is the most recent binding Catalan law applying on touristic resources, subjects, administration, activities, and services with the aim to a) protect and preserve the resources based on the sustainability principle; b) potentiate the creation, development and promotion of touristic resources; c) protect and respect touristic users; d) increase touristic currents with special attention to promote high quality tourism; e) inspire the development of new touristic products; f) promote tourism as culture and knowledge exchange; g) promote the quality and competitiveness of the services; h) modernise the sector; i) implement professional trainings; j) potentiate the digitalisation; k) promote the Catalan reality as a touristic brand; l) and look after the segmentation of the strong seasonal demand of the sector.

Despite the cited purposes of this law, the content focuses on the classification and definition of touristic areas with special emphasis on touristic accommodation and public competences on this field as well as the classification of sanctionable infractions without specifying relevant actions on how to implement and monitor the objectives of the law[11]. In addition, the last and partial modifications incorporated (Law 5/2020) have been in line with redefining the concept of touristic accommodation, associated infractions, and the regulation of new taxes[18].

Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Catalonia 2010-2026

With this document, the Government of Catalonia aims to respond to the international and European strategy for sustainable development commitments. To this end, tourism, alongside with agriculture and forestry, industry, construction, mobility, energy, trade and domestic governance, is a sector where major challenges to become more sustainable have been identified and classified in 7 pillars or ways of action transversally tackled by diverse and numerous sectorial plans. These pillars to drive Catalonia to be more sustainable correspond to consider that Catalonia needs to be: i) a biodiverse territory, ii) efficient in the use of energy, iii) smart mobility region, iv) eco-efficient, competitive and innovative, v) wisely consumer region, vi) civic, inclusive and caring region, and vii) participative region, closely engaged with its citizens[19].

Agreement and report on the development of the new Catalan Law on Tourism

This new law aims to solve the current problems regarding legal updates on Catalan tourism, the lack of criteria to have in place diverse tourism plans with a common sustainable strategy, the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector, and the correct representation and collaboration between all active agents in the governance of the tourism sector. There is a current will to stipulate a single but transversal regulation of the tourism sector by promoting a sustainable tourism, contribute to the competitiveness of the sector and create new business opportunities, and create a governance tool where all public-private actors can easily interact[12]. To be able to consider the opinion of different actors, a public consultation was carried out with 31 questions organised within 6 main blocks (general, sustainable development, tourism administration and governance, strengthen competitiveness, touristic accommodation, and data sharing). From a total of 149 received answers, the sub-topics which received higher suggestions are: Accommodation, Governance, Sustainability, Taxes, Mobility, Trainings, Work conditions, Competitiveness, Touristic guides, Wine tourism, Travel agencies, Digital platforms, Touristic planification, Security, Touristic municipalities, and Booking cancelations[20].

16/2017 Catalan Law on regulative measurements to mitigate and adapt to Climate Change in Catalonia

Article 25 of this law makes special emphasis on tourism, encouraging to promote a new model which evaluates the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the current state of the sector. It also encourages to carry out an integral (i.e. resources, products and destinations) transition towards sustainable tourism and set up staff and visitors awareness raising campaigns. In addition, the Government of Catalonia requires that municipalities classified as touristic (i.e. when the weighted mean of visitors is higher than the number of local residents and when the number of touristic accommodation and vacation homes is higher than the number of local residents - Law 13/2002) have a strategy that guarantee the basic municipal services during the touristic seasonal peak, including drinking water supply, energy supply, waste management, transport, wastewater treatment, and health care[21].

Tourism Strategic Plans in Catalonia (2013 & 2018)

In 2013, the tourism strategic plan in Catalonia[22] was approved and with the main challenge to balance the quantity with the quality of tourism with the implementation of a sustainable governance vision. Prioritised actions for the 2016 horizon were in line with improving the quality of tourism through competitiveness and sustainability criteria organised in 5 programmes (Governance system, Development of destinations, Development of products, Touristic administration and management, Excellence). Nevertheless, its validity ended in 2016 and therefore a new strategic plan is being developed (2018-2022).

The 2018 strategic plan[23] is the basis for the development of the new law in Catalan tourism the following years and put faith in a sustainable and responsible model, able to harmonise the interest of visitors, local community, private sector, and the environment aiming to achieve a tourism growth based on the avoidance of seasonality, the increment of expenses per tourist, and the diversification of touristic options to take into account the 3 pillars of sustainability. Within the 21 identified trends, only 4 are in line with sustainable tourism and are the following ones: i) the young tourism which promotes short stays out of season with unique and local experiences; ii) the ecological visitor who actively demands for eco-friendly experiences; iii) the new model of collaborative economy to promote innovative and responsible sustainable tourism best practices; and iv) local gastronomy by incentivising local markets and festivals to promote Catalan products. To this end, 7 key strategic directions (work axis) have been detailed (4 motor strategies and 3 facilitator actions). Within the motor strategies we can find the aim to consolidate an exceptional touristic experience, the attraction and retention of visitors, touristic investments, and smart tourism. On the other hand,

facilitator actions comprise promote competitiveness, improve territorial management, and re-think governance. Relevant sustainable tourism initiatives fall on the axis of consolidating an exceptional touristic experience by starting the programme "Catalonia experience" and implement the "Certification of touristic quality" programme. On the smart tourism axis 4 ambitious initiatives comprise the monitoring of an index of smart tourism, activate the programmes "Made in Catalonia", and implement a special program to reduce the ecological footprint.

Catalan Environmental Certifications

Catalan Environmental Certifications[24] specifically tackle different touristic accommodations such as campings, rural tourism, hotels and hostels and with the principal characteristics of being integrated in the landscape, introduce energy efficiency criteria, reduce noise, implement water savings principles, selective waste management and active tourist participation in environmental management and the promotion to keep the client well informed on local good practices.

In addition, quality oriented touristic accommodation service use the European Eco-label which takes into account different environmental aspects such as energy efficiency, water saving and waste water treatment, staff training on environmental issues, information for guests on local environmental facts, eco procurement of efficient equipment and eco-labelled products and non-disposable products, the use of non-dangerous chemical substances, the appropriate waste reduction, separation and management, and others such as no smoking areas, bioclimatic architecture, local and organic food products, use of rain and recycled water and EMAS or ISO 14001.

Relevant topics: mainstream sustainability challenges in tourism policies

Recurrent relevant topics included in the above-mentioned referent documents are classified within four main pillars, the transversal Governance one, and the three sustainability ones (Environmental, Socio-Cultural, Economical), to further mainstream sustainability challenges in tourism policies (Table 2).

Table 2. Relevant topics to mainstream sustainability challenges in tourism policies.

PILLARS	RELEVANT TOPICS
Governance	(1) Destination strategy (2) Responsible organisation (3) Involvement of key actors (4) Financial resources (5) Monitoring and evaluation plan
Environmental	(1) Climate change mitigation and adaptation (2) Biodiversity/natural resources conservation and restoration (3) Sustainable mobility development (4) Waste (5) Water use (6) Energy use (7) Pollution
Socio-cultural	(1) Community access to material and immaterial resources (2) Cultural heritage protection (3) Community engagement (4) Local capacity building (5) Secure living conditions (6) Discrimination
Economical	(1) Working conditions (2) Equal opportunities (3) Local employment (4) Competitiveness (5) Stakeholder cooperation (6) Economic profitability (7) Quality of the service

Governance

An engaged supportive governance model is key to ensure the correct leadership and implementation of sustainable tourism policies. Therefore, a multi-year destination strategy focused on sustainable tourism with a long-term commitment at political level is crucial to integrate and make sure that action plans have a real impact at local and regional level. This governance model should be transparent, inclusive, and participatory, comprising a territorial organisation responsible of managing tourism involving the quadruple helix actors. At the same time, the model should promote the sustainability pillars in a responsible way, ensuring enough financial resources and the monitoring and evaluation of the actions by investing in human resources. In addition, a good governance model should look after harmonised standards and encourage the obtaining of sustainable certifications based on the periodical monitoring and evaluation of specific indicators. All these aspects can only be achieved if there are

sufficient and specifically allocated financial resources for the implementation of action plans that promote sustainable tourism (Table 2) [7,13,14].

Environmental

(1) Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Tourism, as any other economic activity, has an environmental impact. With respect to Green House Gases (GHG) emissions, tourism is responsible for an approximate 5% of the global CO_2 emissions[25]. It is predicted that the sector would be one of the top GHG emitting industries due to the sectors' expansion with an increase of a 50% of international tourists and 49% of domestic tourists in Spain from 2016 to 2030 [26]. Today, in Spain, the GHG emissions of the tourism sector already account for up to a 10.6% of the national economy emissions[27].

The tourism sector not only has negative effects on the environment but is also a sector that is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Tourism is closely related to the climate, and the weather is often seen as a determining factor contributing to the attractiveness of a tourist destination[28,29]. In this regard, destinations need to have mitigation and adaptation strategies in place to face climate change impacts. To do so, first, the tourism sector should be able to measure and monitor its contribution to global warming and the consequences that is experiencing in the present and predict the ones that will come. Once there is data, solutions related to technological improvement as the use of more efficient technologies, initiatives to offset emissions and education schemes can be considered to mitigate climate change, as well as adaptation strategies as the transition towards other tourism forms.

(2) Biodiversity/natural resources conservation and restoration

Biodiversity and natural resources can be affected by tourism in different ways. Some tourism models use public natural spaces in a non-responsible way, leading to situations where biodiversity and natural resources are damaged. This environmental heritage, that are frequently seen as touristic attractions in destinations, can also suffer the outcomes of climate change and natural degradation due to overexploitation. Some example are the degradation of coral reefs and marine biodiversity caused by the sea surface temperature rise or archaeological assets and other natural resources deterioration as a result of heavy natural events, changes in the biodiversity and the soil, the loss of beach areas as a result of sea level rise, the decrease of the demand given by water shortages as a consequence of the reduction of precipitations, altered seasonality and increased health risks resulting from the rise of temperatures, or the increased frequency of heavy natural events, among others[30].

Destinations, and specially the tourism sector, should develop plans to support conservation programmes. This aid can be in the form of monetary support to fund specific conservation actions, awareness spreading among locals and visitors of the relevance of biodiversity preservation and the potential impacts that a tourist can impose on ecosystems, the education and encouragement of visitors to support these actions in an active and/or economical way, etc.

(3) Sustainable mobility development

Transport emissions represent 23% of all man-made CO_2 emissions, including passenger transport and freight transport. It is known that out of the total, 64% of CO_2 transport emissions are produced by passenger transport[26]. Air and car transportation are the transport modalities with the highest carbon intensity and bus and train are the least carbon intense means of transportation[31]. Regarding air transportation, the carbon intensity increases when transferring tourists in a hub. It is known that the GHG emissions are almost doubled in flights with different connections compared to a direct flight[32]. Indirect transport emissions are not deeply assessed in most studies but are known to be relevant in all transport modalities, when infrastructure is accounted GHG emissions can be 63%, 31% and 155% more for road, air and railway systems respective to the direct emissions[33]. It is known that transport is the main component contributing to tourism carbon footprint and means about 75%[34]. The modality of transport that contributes the most to this share is aviation (40%)[25].

In the case of transport, the transition to a more sustainable technology is a long-term goal, but some lines to work are the improvement of: (a) aircraft technologies; (b) the creation of more efficient vehicles in general; and (c) more infrastructures for those low carbon intensive transport modes, these being rail and electric public vehicles and private vehicles as buses, cars or motorbikes to encourage people to use them, as well as active mobility such as cycling and walking.

(4) Waste

Tourism imposes an increase in the amount of waste that is produced in a destination during certain times of the year. At the same time, it is known that the amount of waste generated per tourist can be higher than that generated by a local or the waste generated by the same tourist when he/she is at home[35].

Destinations should implement a system involving tourism public and private sector to reduce, reuse and recycle waste and that all the waste that cannot be circulated again is disposed in the safest and most sustainable possible way.

(5) Water use

Tourism accounts for a minor share of global water use, generally for less than 1% of the total water consumption [36]. Given the differences between countries, in most cases, agriculture accounts for a major part of freshwater use. However, the seasonality of tourism causes most tourism to be concentrated in the driest time of year, summer, when agriculture requires larger amounts of water. At the same time, tourism is mostly concentrated geographically in regions of the planet that have limited available amounts of fresh water[37,38].

In the case of water, one of the main impacts generated by tourism is the demand of considerable amounts of fresh water, directly related with the accommodation component and indirectly with food, fuels and energy production. It is widely known that people use larger quantities of water when they travel for leisure, sometimes because it is challenging to perform in an eco-efficient manner since tourism facilities and activities have not been designed contemplating environmental issues as a priority[39]. Tourism also has other impacts on water resources as the decrease of water quality.

There are various improvements that the tourism sector can perform in relation with water. In the first place, more efficient technologies can be applied to directly and indirectly reduce water consumption. Not only more efficient technologies can be applied, but there are also more efficient practices that can help to reduce freshwater consumption as for example landscaping practices that use native less water dependent and salt-tolerant species in gardens and golf-courts. It is also important to overcome the concept of accommodation modes with large pool systems, gardens and activities as golf that consume vast quantities of fresh water, particularly for the Mediterranean countries. Several policy instruments can also be implemented besides tourist taxes, such as the regulation of tourism flows in certain water scarce places, awareness campaigns, certification schemes and the differentiation of water prices, among others.

(6) Energy use

Tourism activities have intensive energy requirements. A major part of the energy demand comes from fossil fuel sources, that result in high quantities of GHG emitted, specially coming from transportation. Despite this, the second contributor to energy consumption in tourism are accommodation providers. Several factors affect the energy requirements of accommodations as the size, the category, the number of rooms, the profile of customers, the location, etc[40]. Depending on these factors, the use of heating and air-conditioning systems, restaurants, pool, electric appliances, lighting, etc. is going to vary and contribute more or less to energy consumption.

To overcome the issues related with the energy use of tourism, improvements with regards to technology efficiency can be implemented as the use of renewable

energy sources. In addition, not only more efficient technologies can be applied, but there are also more efficient practices that can help to reduce energy use.

(7) Pollution

Tourism, and especially certain modes of tourism, can cause different types of pollution such as light and noise pollution. These inputs can induce conflicts with ecosystems but also with the local human systems since they directly affect the well-being of the community and people's circadian rhythm.

Destinations should implement guidelines and regulations to minimize pollution and encourage tourism enterprises to follow these specifications.

Socio-cultural

(1) Community access to material and immaterial resources

Often, communities and the tourism sector share the use of the same material resources (natural and man-made) and have a mutual interest in protecting and enhancing the quantity and quality of local resources and infrastructures. Expanding operations carry the potential for conflict over natural material resources (e.g. water, forest, homelands). Similar situations can arise with regard immaterial resources, that include community services, intellectual property rights, freedom of expression and access to information. Tourism is an activity highly concentrated in space and time, and many destinations experience huge seasonal influx of tourists that outnumbers local residents. During their stay, tourists share the public spaces and public services with local residents.

Destinations should develop management plans for ensuring the sustainable use of resources and the access of the local community to natural and cultural patrimony as well as other services as health and education.

(2) Cultural heritage protection

Occasionally, tourism, as a highly globalized industry, can lead to the deterioration of the local cultural heritage and apply pressure to the right of the community members to pursue their cultural development. Cultural heritage includes language, social and religious practices, knowledge and traditional craftsmanship, as well as cultural spaces and objects (e.g. burial grounds).

Destinations' public and private organizations can more actively promote the preservation of cultural heritage by encouraging the sustainable use of traditional products, methods and activities.

(3) Community engagement

Many communities perceive that tourism brings a wide range of negative impacts on their overall well-being[41]. Community participation in decision-making is a fundamental aspect of sustainable development. Destinations should consider community stakeholder in relevant decision-making processes, particularly in those that affect local environment, health, and well-being.

The tourism sector has to engage with different stakeholders representing balanced community interests. Engaging local stakeholders it is also important for the tourism private sector since companies rely on the acceptance of communities to operate as well as to obtain healthy and skilled workforce.

(4) Local capacity building

The tourism industry has a reputation for employing a large share of low-skilled labour with few career opportunities, and education and training of employees remains a challenging task for most companies considering the micro- and small-sized company structure of the sector. For large-scale international chains, when local capabilities do not fit the competences for employment, it has been observed that companies are more likely recruiting well-educated staff from abroad instead of hiring and training existing local employees[42].

In this regard, touristic destinations should provide a tourism education and capacity building offer, especially for SMEs, to professionalise job positions and the local workforce which will derive in an overall improvement of the prosperity of the area.

(5) Secure living conditions

Along with tourism, issues related with the security of the living conditions in the destination may arise. This safety related problems include crime, social conflicts, increase of the cost of living due to rise of demand, emergence of health problems, etc.

Destinations need to have a system to monitor, prevent, publicly report, and respond to crime, health hazards and all the other economic and non-economic matters threatening the living conditions of the population.

(6) Discrimination

In some tourism context and determined destinations, the right to be treated fairly and the access to equal opportunities of visitors can be compromised on the basis of various discriminations. Nobody should be facing any kind of discrimination for reasons of gender, race, age, disabilities, religious or political beliefs or sexual orientation.

Destinations should place programs to raise awareness among the tourism sector enterprises and organizations to prevent discriminatory conducts regarding tourists and

people in general. Also, the tourism sector has to reinforce the inclusiveness of the destination by considering and providing options for different types of customers.

Economical

(1) Working conditions

When tackling working conditions, a broad range of topics with regards to workers well-being are included. Working conditions can have effects on workers' health and safety, compensation (wage), the ability to work freely, the freedom of association and collective bargaining, work-life balance, among others. In the tourism sector, employment data underlines the widespread existence of several of the aforementioned issues.

Destinations should work towards providing jobs with contracts that comply with regulations, that offer stable and fair salaries, that are compatible with the personal life and that procure a safe workplace.

(2) Equal opportunities

The lack of equal opportunities for everyone is a massive obstacle to sustainable development. As an example, gender equality is, first and foremost, a human right. Women are entitled to live in dignity and in freedom. Empowering women is also an indispensable tool for advancing development and reducing poverty. Empowered women contribute to the health and productivity of whole families and communities and to improved prospects for the next generation. It has been highlighted in several spaces that precariousness in tourism employment is especially related to gender inequalities[43].

Thus, destinations have to improve their performance on ensuring equal opportunities to access employment in tourism and to erase any kind of existing discrimination.

(3) Local employment

In the tourism sector, when a business hires from the local talent pool, it signals to the customers and clients the business commitment to invest in local growth. At the same time, local professionals have contextual and cultural knowledge of the region and are able to speak the local language, which are key assets to give a good service.

For these reasons, destinations have to develop or reinforce policies on local hiring preferences and be compromised on growing the local employment in the long-term.

(4) Competitiveness

The creation and maintenance of markets for destinations, tours, accommodation, and attractions that contribute to sustainability is a concern for many enterprises and destinations which wish to take advantage of perceived growing interest in their area. Overall marketing effort is expected to yield results in the form of greater stability, more sustainable tourism activity, and to promote particular types of tourism – such as low impact "green" or cultural tourism. Digital conversion is also a key aspect of the competitiveness of a destination and specifically the tourism sector still needs to join forces to increase the extent of digitalisation among SMEs and the public administration.

In this regard, destinations should implement plans to evolve toward the digital domain and robust marketing strategies for sustainable tourism.

(5) Stakeholder cooperation

Stakeholder cooperation in tourism is linked with the development of a local value chain and is important to improve the sectors performance on the three pillars of sustainability. Tourism can benefit from local supply to reduce its environmental impact related with transport and with the use of production processes more adequate to the resources available in the area. Also, purchasing locally is a way of ensuring supply, support a stable local economy and maintain community relations. Additionally, cooperation can bring the opportunities to share best practices among stakeholders and stimulate R&I investment and the adoption of new technologies and strategies in the tourism industry. Finally, stakeholder cooperation allows to agree on common practices, and to actively share tourism-related data to better study, monitor and manage the sector as whole.

To this end, destinations should work on the creation of spaces where tourism public and private stakeholders can cooperate and provide other tools to promote participation.

(6) Economic profitability

Tourism economic profitability corresponds to the part of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) generated by all industries directly in contact with visitors, but also all the indirect services that surround tourism destinations. Increasing the tourism economic profitability involves investment in tourism-related infrastructure (buildings, traffic networks and access to transport services, land take and supply service at destinations) and other advantages for the different stakeholder groups.

To enhance sectors economic benefit without compromising the environmental and social carrying capacity of a destination, economic data needs to be closely monitored and reported.

(7) Quality of the service

Consumers of tourism in the current millennium are demanding greater quality in their tourism products. Increasingly, tourists are expressing a desire for a clean environment, nature tourism experiences, adventure travel activities, and tourism products that include cultural, heritage, and history. In response, more destinations have become interested in developing higher-quality tourism products and have placed greater emphasis on the natural environment and the built environment, which includes historic heritage and cultural sites.

Worldwide, festivals and local special events are used as key elements within regional development strategies. Festivals and local special events are widely acknowledged to make an important contribution to the economic development of their local areas, as they provide opportunities for tourism promotion, commercial outcomes and increased inward investment in host regions and contribution to the extension of the tourism season.

SWOT ANALYSIS OF KEY CATALAN POLICIES

The Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT) analysis has been carried out to further evaluate key Catalan policies[11,19,22,44–46].

In general, main **Strengths** are:

- Governance:
  - Distinctive environmental quality certificate for touristic activities
  - Barcelona Certification Platinum of Biosphere Sustainable Lifestyle
- Environmental:
  - Specific strategy to promote cycling
  - Richness in touristic resources
- Socio-cultural:
  - European touristic area of reference
  - Growing demands on high quality tourism
  - Barcelona brand, one of the most valued one in the world
- Economical:
  - Areas defined as touristic are requested to have an integrated managing touristic network
  - Good connectivity with European markets
  - Mature business networks
  - High local touristic demand
  - High competitiveness

In turn, Weaknesses include:

- Governance:
  - No specification of the regulations about the sustainability principles (out-dated law)
  - Fragmentation of public-private coordination
- Environmental:
  - Natural heritage degradation
- Socio-cultural:
  - Currently the right to complaint is focused on visitors towards touristic places and not the other way around
- Economical:
  - Touristic model based on quantity

In addition, on one site, several Opportunities could rely on:

- Governance:
  - Develop aspects to address sustainability in a holistic way
  - Define how implement and develop the law objectives
  - Clarify responsibilities
- Environmental:
  - Aiming to implement more strict sustainable programmes and conservation plans
  - Link with territorial/land management plans
- Socio-cultural:
  - Promote touristic synergies
  - Value cultural heritage
  - Implement smart tourism model
- Economical:
  - Taxes in touristic accommodations and protected areas
  - Regulation of working conditions
  - Digitalization
  - EU funding

On the other site, current Threats are:

- Governance:
  - Concept of touristic municipalities not in line with concept of aseasonality (all municipalities/regions can be touristic)
  - Too ambitious strategies hard to accomplish
  - Bureaucracy and lack of shared vision
- Environmental:
  - Strong seasonality
  - Climate change
- Socio-cultural:

- The concentration of service demands
- Economical:
  - Non-cooperative competitiveness
  - Non-sustainable investments

CAME ANALYSIS TO CONSIDER SUSTAINABILITY IN CATALAN TOURISM STRATEGIES

A Correct Adapt Maintain Explore (CAME) analysis has been carried out to consider sustainability in Catalan tourism strategies[13,47–51].

In general, main potential **Corrections** could be:

- Governance:
  - Redistribution of visitors flows to reduce seasonality
  - Improvement of tourism actors' cooperation
- Environmental:
  - Well-articulated public transport network
  - Introduce new insulating materials
  - Take advantage of renewable energy
  - Optimum extraction of biomass in municipalities with dense forested areas
  - Creation and promotion of recycling and reusing centres
  - Reduce food and environmental waste
  - Control of water usages to respect ecological river flows
  - Production of artificial snow in a more efficient way
- Socio-cultural:
  - Individualism of key actors
  - Appreciation of local heritage
- Economical:
  - Promote touristic offers with added value
  - Plan the quantity of touristic places
  - Lack of touristic accommodation

In turn, in order to **Adapt** there is the need to:

- Governance:
  - Develop updated legislation
  - Create a community network of touristic actors
  - Promote the implementation of new plans
  - Control the territory capacity load
- Environmental:
  - Create environment for car-sharing
  - Awareness campaign for sustainable mobility options

- Limit the access of private vehicles in natural areas and ensure alternative options
- Maximise renewable energy production
- Preservation of landscape
- Develop climate change models and continuous data collection to adapt and mitigate risks (e.g. glaciers, fires, increase of sea level and extreme climatic events…)

- Socio-cultural:
  - Continued educational campaigns
  - Preservation of cultural heritage
  - Territorial values in line with a growing responsible tourism
- Economical:
  - Funding to improve buildings' insulation
  - Digital platform for proper management, coordination, sharing good practices,…

In addition, on one side, there is the need to **Maintain:**

- Governance:
  - Good communications between different key stakeholders
  - Political will
  - Human resources
- Environmental:
  - Green ways for cycling and connect areas
  - Sustainable management of natural protected areas
  - Places with environmental quality certifications
  - Areas leaders in waste management
  - Highly preserved natural areas
  - Good practices in renewable energy initiatives, water and mobility sustainable management
- Socio-cultural:
  - Good quality of local products
  - High number of protected cultural heritage
  - Local community sustainable awareness
- Economical:
  - High quality job positions
  - Identification and promotion of new touristic places

On the other site, there is the need to **Explore:**

- Governance:
  - Regular meetings with touristic actors for a better coordination
  - New regulations
  - Synergies of dispersed projects
  - Better management of visitors' fluxes

- Environmental:
  - Insist on waste recycling and reducing culture
  - Promote returnable packaging/material
  - Reduction of water consumption
  - Environmental certifications
  - Create a network of chargers for electric cars
  - Renovation of buildings
  - Neutral carbon footprint
- Socio-cultural:
  - Increase the consumption of local products
  - Jointly and coordinated awareness campaigns
  - Workshops to facilitate the green transition at all levels
- Economical:
  - Audits for sustainability
  - Increment visitors' expenses
  - Leaders in circular tourism
  - Support new sustainable and competent business models

TOOLS TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TOURISM PLANS AND POLICIES FOR IMPROVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The main goal of this guidelines is to provide tools to analyse the sustainability of tourism policies. Having a **CHECKLIST** is the first step towards analysing policies and ensuring that they include the needed criteria to tackle sustainability challenges. A second step is to ensure that the included criteria are being monitored. To do so, **INDICATORS** are needed. Therefore, this guideline also provides a first approach at specific indicators that would support to evaluate the implementation of the sustainability criteria.

CHECKLIST

This section provides a checklist to support the assessment of sustainability in binding and non-binding policies (**Table 3**). The user-friendly tool was created for specific regional (Catalan) and local (County and Municipal level) tourism action plans, but it can be easily extrapolated to other territories. Note that the checklist can support the assessment of sustainability in documents that: (1) are already in place and regularly updated or (2) are being created.

Once a specific policy is selected, the person or team who want to assess the sustainability of the targeted policy can go over the checklist with the aim to achieve as many "yes" answers as possible. The included "TO DO" aspects are related to the identified relevant topics (Table 2).

Depending on the level of application of these analysed policies, the "TO DO" actions are expected to be more or less detailed. In that sense, if the analysed document does not consider what is stated in the checklist, it is crucial to, at least, bond the mentioned actions to other available policies specifically tackling the topic and therefore, achieve a better understanding and interconnect tourism policies with sustainable principles.

INDICATORS

A group of indicators to assess the effectivity of policies to build a sustainable tourism sector have been developed. The indicators description and measurement method are detailed in Annex.

For each relevant topic, a set of two different indicators are proposed (except for the Governance pillar with only one set of more basic indicators). One indicator is assessed on a more basic level with a Yes/No reference scale. Additionally, an indicator with a more specified reference scale to measure the performance in detail has been developed (Table 4).

Table 3. Checklist to assess sustainability in binding and non-binding tourism policies.

PILLARS	TO DO – Does this policy…	Yes	In progress	No
Governance	…considers a multi-year destination strategy focused on sustainable tourism (tackling the environmental, socio-cultural and economic pillars)?			
	…clearly defines a territorial organisation responsible of managing tourism with competences for the implementation of action plans?			
	… builds on the participation and decision-making of the quadruple helix actors (public authorities, private sector, society, academia) of the specific territory defining a communication strategy to work together?			
	… counts with sufficient financial resources to implement the actions of the plan?			
	… establish a monitoring system with specific indicators for periodical evaluation?			
Environmental	…take into account climate change mitigation and adaptation actions?			
	…integrate biodiversity conservation and restoration programmes?			
	…consider a sustainable mobility development?			
	…tackle specific waste management strategies?			
	…involve the preservation of freshwater resources for drinking and leisure purposes?			
	…include the use of renewable energy sources?			
	…demand minimising light and noise pollution?			
Socio-cultural	…integrate actions to allow community access to material and immaterial resources?			
	…prioritize the protection of cultural heritage?			
	…comprise local community engagement and capacity building action plans?			
	…incorporate guidelines to ensure locals secure living conditions and social cohesion aspects?			
	…take into account tourists health and safety programmes?			
	…penalise discrimination movements?			
	…prioritize the quality of the service and transparency of taken actions?			
	…consider spreading awareness and promote social and environmental responsibility?			
Economic	…include plans for fair working conditions and equal opportunities prioritizing local employment?			
	…tackle stakeholder cooperation enhancing fair business competition and value chain capacity building programmes?			
	…integrate actions to move towards digitalisation and data sharing protocols?			
	…inform on available funding programmes?			

Table 4. Set of adapted and selected indicators (Annex) to assess the effectiveness of the tourism plans and policies for improving sustainable development.

PILLAR	RELEVANT TOPIC	INDICATOR
Governance	Destination strategy	Multi-year destination strategy focused on sustainable tourism
	Responsible organisation	Territorial organisation responsible of managing tourism
	Involvement of key actors	Involvement of the quadruple helix actors
	Financial resources	Financial resources for the responsible organisation
	Monitoring and evaluation plan	Monitoring system and periodical evaluation
Environmental	Climate change mitigation and adaptation	Program to educate and raise awareness among the public, tourism enterprises, and visitors about climate change
		Tourism enterprises involved in climate change mitigation schemes (%)
	Biodiversity/natural resource conservation and adaptation	Existence of a land use or development planning process including tourism
		Assessment of impacts on biodiversity
	Sustainable mobility development	Program to increase the use of low-impact transportation
		Tourists using public transport services to arrive at the destination (%)
	Waste	Program to assist enterprises to reduce, reuse, and recycle waste
		Municipal waste production per inhabitant in a destination's high season
	Water use	Program to assist enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report water usage
		Increase of the domestic water consumption in a destination with respect to zero tourism
	Energy use	Policies and incentives to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, improve energy efficiency, and encourage the adoption and use of renewable energy technologies
		Annual amount of energy consumed from renewable sources by the tourism sector (%)
	Pollution	Program to encourage enterprises to follow guidelines and regulations to minimize noise and light pollution
		Noise levels at site in decibels
Socio-cultural	Community access to material and immaterial resources	Programs to monitor, protect, and rehabilitate or restore public access by locals and domestic visitors to natural and cultural sites
		Access to tangible resources
	Cultural heritage protection	Program to protect and celebrate intangible cultural heritage (e.g., includes song, music, drama, skills and crafts)

		Existence of aesthetic considerations in planning approval process
	Community engagement	System for involving public, private, and community stakeholders in destination management planning and decision making
		Increase of the number of cultural associations
	Local capacity building	Training programs that provide equal access to decent jobs
		Program to support and build capacity of local and small- and medium-sized enterprises
	Secure living conditions	Publicly available crisis and emergency response plan that considers the tourism sector
		Proportion of housing available for touristic rental
	Discrimination	System for improving the supply and visibility of accessible tourism services for persons with disabilities
		System for reinforcing the inclusiveness of the destination
Economical	Working conditions	Program to raise awareness among tourism companies' managers of the importance of offering stable and decent employment
		Jobs seasonality
	Equal opportunities	Legislation or policies supporting equal opportunities in employment for all, including women, youth, disabled people, minorities, and other vulnerable populations
		Occupation rate of persons with disabilities
	Local employment	Strength of policies on local hiring preferences
		Population employed in the tourism sector (%)
	Competitiveness	Program to promote sustainable tourism
		Raising awareness of tourism SMEs on the benefits of digitalisation and on existing European, national and regional digitalisation programmes for SMEs
	Stakeholder cooperation	Program encourages enterprises to purchase goods and services locally
		Increase of the number of companies in the destination
	Economic profitability	Regular monitoring and reporting of visitor expenditure data, revenue per available room, employment and investment data
		Daily spending per tourist (€)
	Quality of the service	Practices related to customer satisfaction, including results of surveys measuring customer satisfaction
		Average stay (number of days)

RECOMMENDED PATHWAY FOR IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICIES

Many case studies and policy frameworks in European tourism, and more particularly in the Mediterranean region[49], have been reported and have proved that more sustainable tourism models can be developed and replicated in other destinations. Good practices implemented in Catalonia (e.g. Garrotxa[13], Berguedà[48], Barcelona[52], and Delta de l'Ebre[53]), as well as the provided tools of this guideline (i.e. the Checklist and Indicators), served to design a recommended pathway for implementing sustainable tourism policies (Figure 1).

Sustainable tourism policies should define how to tackle the sustainability pillars (Environmental, Socio-cultural, and Economic). To do so, the Governance model should provide the financial means and methodology for a good coordination and law implementation at all different levels. Therefore, a system is required to keep analysing and monitoring the implementation of the current policies in place to be able to efficiently adapt these laws and strategic plans (Figure 1).

The methodology should count on a multi-year cycle process overlapping the evaluation and implementation phases based on a long-term strategy focused on sustainable tourism and requiring a long-term political commitment. This strategy could rely on the checklist to assess sustainability provided in this guideline. To this end, a responsible organisation on tourism should be created and maintained to ensure the correct implementation of sustainable tourism policies as well as the involvement of relevant territorial actors (i.e., public authorities, private sector, society, and academia). In addition, specific objectives based on territorial needs should be defined and used to design specific action plans (Figure 1).

The territorial action plans should include a factsheet per specific objective with relevant information used as a guideline to be able to move towards a more sustainable tourism. The relevant information should detail the specific objective, a description, the timing plan, the responsible organisation and implicated actors, the funding type and budget, the human resources involved and the system explaining how to track the monitoring actions and specific impact indicators. In this case, the suggested selected indicators in this guideline could be used (Figure 1).

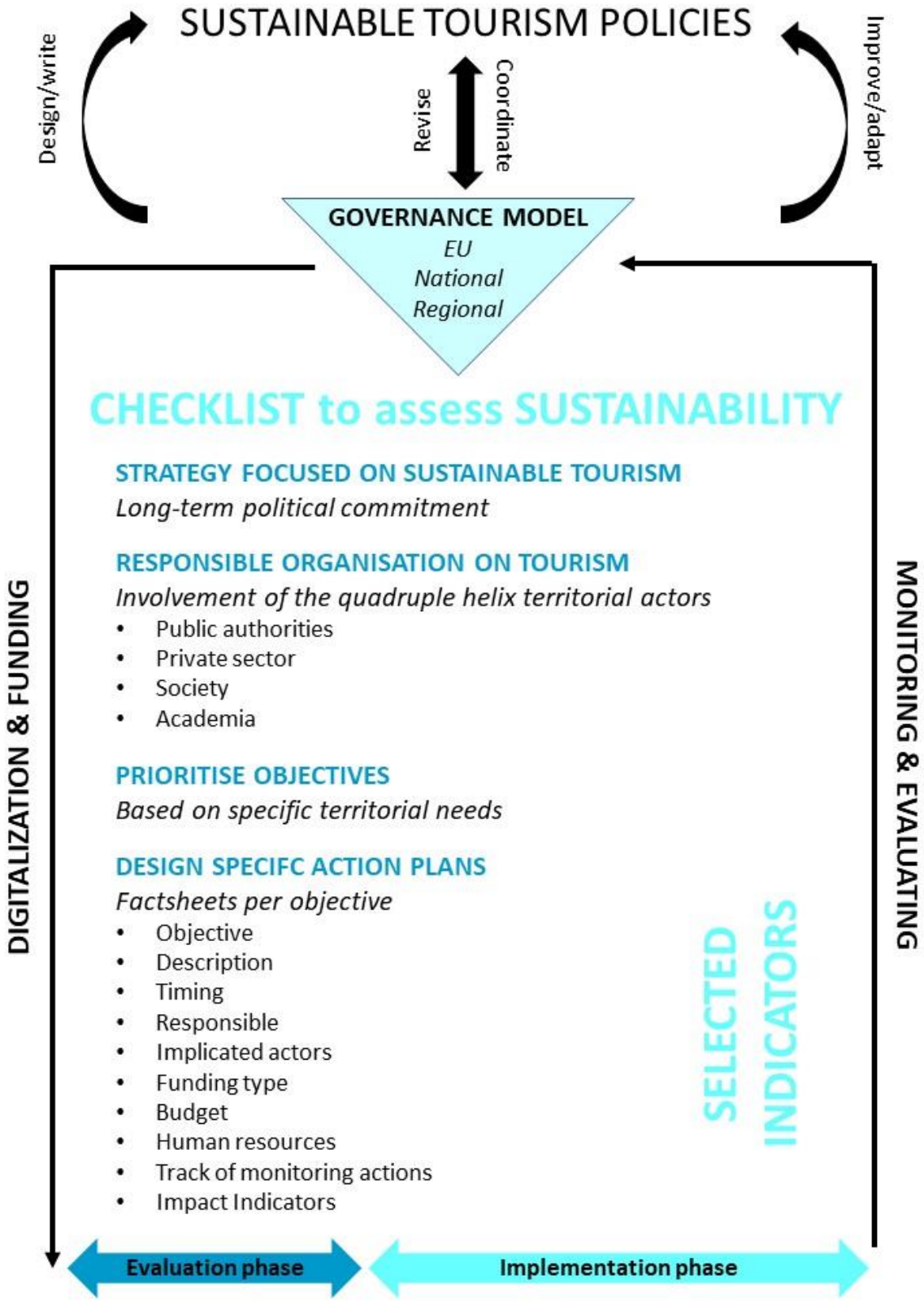

Figure 1. Diagram of the recommended pathway for implementing sustainable tourism policies.

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ANNEX

Governance

(1) Multi-year destination strategy focused on sustainable tourism

Topic	Multi-year destination strategy focused on sustainable tourism
Indicator	Multi-year destination strategy that includes a focus on sustainable tourism targeting environmental, economic, social, cultural, quality, health and safety issues
Definition	The destination has established and is implementing a multi-year destination management strategy and action plan that is publicly available, is suited to its scale, was developed with stakeholder engagement, and is based on sustainability principles. The strategy includes an identification and assessment of tourism assets and considers socio-economic, cultural and environmental issues and risks. The strategy relates to and influences wider sustainable development policy and action in the destination.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

(2) Territorial organisation responsible of managing tourism

Topic	Territorial organisation responsible of managing tourism
Indicator	An organisation has responsibility for a coordinated approach to the management of sustainable tourism
Definition	The destination has an effective organisation, department, group, or committee responsible for a coordinated approach to sustainable tourism. This group has defined responsibilities, oversight, and implementation capability for the management of socio- economic, cultural and environmental issues.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

(3) Involvement of the quadruple helix actors

Topic	Involvement of the quadruple helix actors
Indicator	Involvement of public authorities, private sector, society and academia in the organisation and coordination of tourism activities and participate in decision-making processes.
Definition	The territorial organisation group relies on the involvement and participation of all interested actors.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

(4) Financial resources for the responsible organisation

Topic	Financial resources for the responsible organisation
Indicator	The tourism organisation is appropriately funded to implement the action plans
Definition	The tourism organisation is adequately funded, works with a range of bodies in delivering destination management, has access to sufficient staffing (including personnel with experience in sustainability) and follows principles of sustainability and transparency in its operations and transactions.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

(5) Monitoring system and periodical evaluation

Topic	Monitoring system and periodical evaluation
Indicator	Monitoring system is reviewed and evaluated periodically
Definition	The destination is implementing a system to monitor and respond to socio-economic, cultural and environmental issues and impacts arising from tourism. Actions and outcomes are regularly monitored, evaluated, and publicly reported. The monitoring system is periodically reviewed.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Environmental

(1) Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Topic	Climate change mitigation and adaptation
Indicator	Program to educate and raise awareness among the public, tourism enterprises, and visitors about climate change
Definition	The extent to which a destination contributes to the sustainability and resilience of the tourism sector through public education on climate for both residents and tourists.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Climate change mitigation and adaptation
Indicator	Tourism enterprises involved in climate change mitigation schemes (%)
Definition	The number of tourism enterprises in the area involved in climate change mitigation schemes compared to the total number of tourism enterprises in the area. The reference scale is based on the number of organisations at a Catalan level that have taken part in the Program of Voluntary Agreements for the reduction of GHGs emissions compared to the total number of organizations in Catalonia.
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	>0.044 % of tourism enterprises involved in the program
+1	0.039-0.044 % of tourism enterprises involved in the program
0	0.036-0.039 % of tourism enterprises involved in the program
-1	0.033-0.036 % of tourism enterprises involved in the program
-2	<0.033 % of tourism enterprises involved in the program OR no data is available

(2) Biodiversity/natural resource conservation and adaptation

Topic	Biodiversity/natural resources conservation and restoration
Indicator	Existence of a land use or development planning process including tourism
Definition	The extent to which the destination has a system in place to guide development towards desired futures, and to influence the location, type and density of development making special mention to tourism development.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Biodiversity/natural resources conservation and restoration
Indicator	Sustainability assessment of the destination
Definition	The extent to which a destination assesses the direct and/or indirect impacts of their activities on biodiversity and on the environment and has a system in place to address them.
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	The impacts on biodiversity are assessed periodically, and actions based on the results of the assessment are implemented
+1	The impacts on biodiversity are assessed periodically
0	The impacts on biodiversity have been assessed occasionally
-1	The impacts on biodiversity have never been assessed but plans and strategies to evaluate it are being developed
-2	The impacts on biodiversity have never been assessed OR no data is available

(3) Sustainable mobility development

Topic	Sustainable mobility development
Indicator	Program to increase the use of low-impact transportation
Definition	The extent to which the destination promotes the use of transportation with a lower environmental impact, including public transportation and active transportation.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Sustainable mobility development
Indicator	Tourists using public transport services to arrive at the destination (%)
Definition	The ratio of tourists that arrive to the destination by public transport compared to the total number of tourists. The reference scale is based on the ratio of foreign tourists that arrive to Catalonia by train or bus.
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	>5.75 % of tourists using public transport services to arrive at the destination
+1	5.25-5.75 % of tourists using public transport services to arrive at the destination
0	4.76-5.25 % of tourists using public transport services to arrive at the destination
-1	4.35-4.76 % of tourists using public transport services to arrive at the destination
-2	<4.35 % of tourists using public transport services to arrive at the destination OR no data is available

(4) Waste

Topic	Waste
Indicator	Program to assist enterprises to reduce, reuse, and recycle waste
Definition	The extent to which a destination works towards the reduction of the amount of municipal waste produced through the implementation of programs that support tourism enterprises in the reduction of waste production.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Waste
Indicator	Municipal waste production per inhabitant in a destination's high season
Definition	The amount of waste produced in touristic season compared to the amount of waste produced in low season in the area per inhabitant. The references scale is based on the average amount of waste produced per inhabitant in Catalonia. If monthly specific data for the destination exists, the reference scale should be based on the amount of waste produced in low season per inhabitant.
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	<1.23 kg of municipal waste per inhabitant
+1	1.23-1.34 kg of municipal waste per inhabitant
0	1.34-1.48 kg of municipal waste per inhabitant
-1	1.48-1.62 kg of municipal waste per inhabitant
-2	>1.62 kg of municipal waste per inhabitant OR no data is available

(5) Water use

Topic	Water use
Indicator	Program to assist enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report water usage
Definition	The extent to which the destination implements programs to support tourism businesses to improve their performance with regard water consumption.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Water use
Indicator	Increase of the domestic water consumption in a destination with respect to zero tourism
Definition	The increase of the amount of water for domestic use consumed in a destination in high season in comparison with low season. The reference scale is based on the findings of Garcia C., et al. [54] on the assessment of water consumption associated to tourism in the Balearic Islands.
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	<5 % increase of domestic water consumption
+1	5-10 % increase of domestic water consumption
0	10-15 % increase of domestic water consumption
-1	15-20 % increase of domestic water consumption
-2	>20 % increase of domestic water consumption

(6) Energy use

Topic	Energy use
Indicator	Policies and incentives to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, improve energy efficiency, and encourage the adoption and use of renewable energy technologies
Definition	The extent to which a destination works towards the reduction of the environmental impact of energy consumption through incentivising the adoption of cleaner energy sources.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Energy use
Indicator	Annual amount of energy consumed from renewable sources by the tourism sector (%)
Definition	The amount of energy consumed from renewable sources compared to the total amount of energy consumed by the tourism sector in a destination. The reference scale is based on values of the type of energy consumed at Catalonia level.
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	>5.75 % of the energy consumed is from renewable sources
+1	5.25-5.75 % of the energy consumed is from renewable sources
0	4.76-5.25 % of the energy consumed is from renewable sources
-1	4.35-4.76 % of the energy consumed is from renewable sources
-2	<4.35 % of the energy consumed is from renewable sources OR no data is available

(7) Pollution

Topic	Pollution
Indicator	Program to encourage enterprises to follow guidelines and regulations to minimize noise and light pollution
Definition	The extent to which a destination implements programs and strategies to reduce the noise and light pollution derived from touristic activities.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Pollution
Indicator	Noise levels at site in decibels
Definition	The noise emission levels (dB) in residential areas. The reference scale is based on the values for the Zone of moderate acoustic sensitivity of the Acoustic capacity map developed by the Catalan government.
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	<57 dB (7 h – 23 h); 48 dB (23 h – 7 h)
+1	<62 dB (7 h – 23 h); 52 dB (23 h – 7 h)
0	65 dB (7 h – 23 h); 55 dB (23 h – 7 h)
-1	>65 dB (7 h – 23 h); 55 dB (23 h – 7 h) and a plan for improvement is in place
-2	>65 dB (7 h – 23 h); 55 dB (23 h – 7 h) and no plan for improvement is in place OR no data is available

Socio-cultural

(1) Community access to material and immaterial resources

Topic	Community access to material and immaterial resources
Indicator	Programs to monitor, protect, and rehabilitate or restore public access by locals and domestic visitors to natural and cultural sites
Definition	The extent to which a destination works to enhance the access of locals to natural and cultural key sites
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Community access to material and immaterial resources
Indicator	Access to tangible resources
Definition	The extent to which a destination works to prevent and mitigate adverse impacts on local communities or to restore and improve community access to tangible resources (e.g. water) and infrastructure
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	The destination has a programme in place to address the local community's access to tangible resources (beyond the requirements set in the local laws). Commitments, performance, improvements and effectiveness of programmes are disclosed publicly.
+1	The destination has a programme in place to address the local community's access to tangible resources (beyond the requirements set in the local laws).
0	No incidents of actual damage, adverse impacts or risks to the community's access to tangible resources have been discovered OR the destination has a system or mechanism in place to enforce the policy on the local community's access to tangible resources (in accordance with local laws).
-1	Incidents of actual damage, adverse impacts or risks to the community's access to tangible resources have been discovered, but a corrective action plan with a timeline for completion has been developed OR the destination has a policy to ensure the local community's access to tangible resources in accordance to local laws, but does not have a mechanism or system in place to enforce the policy.
-2	Incidents of actual damage, adverse impacts or risks to the community's access to tangible resources have been discovered, but a corrective action plan with a timeline for completion has not been developed.

(2) Cultural heritage protection

Topic	Cultural heritage protection
Indicator	Program to protect and celebrate intangible cultural heritage (e.g., includes song, music, drama, skills and crafts)
Definition	The extent to which a destination implements actions to protect intangible cultural heritage.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Cultural heritage protection
Indicator	Existence of aesthetic considerations in planning approval process
Definition	The extent to which a destination has a strategy in place to monitor and protect aesthetic values, that includes tourism development, and actions are being taken for this purpose.
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	Big efforts for a total integration and the beauty of the buildings/factory (care of the external parts, time, dedicated money, use of local and typical materials, etc.). Aesthetic integration can be considered fully implemented.
+1	Some actions implemented and results are visible (some efforts to preserve the heritage, appropriate colours, greenery, appearance of the buildings/factory or adjustments beyond the regulations). Specific actions with regard tourism infrastructures are developed.
0	A strategy is in place. Controls are in place to monitor aesthetic considerations. Projects are planned but not implemented.
-1	A strategy is in place but projects are neither planned nor implemented. No controls are in place to monitor landscaped considerations, but is planned to start controls soon.
-2	No strategy or action exists. No controls are in place to monitor aesthetic considerations.

(3) Community engagement

Topic	Community engagement
Indicator	System for involving public, private, and community stakeholders in destination management planning and decision making
Definition	The extent in which a destination engages the local community in public participation processes for the planning and decision making of the destination, and takes their point of view into consideration on an ongoing basis.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Community engagement
Indicator	Increase of the number of cultural associations
Definition	The extent to which a destination effort to preserve and promote culture through community engagement are reflected in the increasing number of cultural associations. The reference scale is based on the data provided by the Catalan Institute of Statistics. Each destination should compare the data at county level of one year with the year before by checking the information in the table (https://www.idescat.cat/pub/?id=aec&n=790&t=2021).
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	The number of cultural associations has increased more than a 5 % over the last year.
+1	The number of cultural associations has increased over the last year.
0	The number of cultural associations has remained the same over the last year.
-1	The number of cultural associations has decreased over the last year.
-2	The number of cultural associations has decreased more than a 5 % over the last year.

(4) Local capacity building

Topic	Local capacity building
Indicator	Training programs that provide equal access to decent jobs
Definition	The extent to which a destination provides trainings to vulnerable population (including women, youth, disabled people, minorities, etc) to enhance their access to decent employment in the tourism sector
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Local capacity building
Indicator	Program to support and build capacity of local and small- and medium-sized enterprises
Definition	The extent in which a destination dialogues, partnerships and develops projects with the local community.
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	Partnership and projects are robust implemented and running since the last 3 years. Dialogue is an activity with a defined frequency (>1 time per year). The destination has concrete plans for helping on the promotion of local events or local entrepreneurship and small businesses.
+1	Some activity is already implemented and in place, and dialogue exists. Results of dialogue are recorded and are part of management decisions once per year. The destination participates on the promotion of local events or local entrepreneurship and small businesses.
0	Some activity is already implemented and in place, and dialogue exists.
-1	Some partnership and/or project is planned but not implemented still.
-2	No information is available about the destination measures for involvement of the local community, no action started neither projects neither proactive communication.

(5) Secure living conditions

Topic	Secure living conditions
Indicator	Publicly available crisis and emergency response plan that considers the tourism sector
Definition	The extent to which a destination has a crisis and emergency response plan that is appropriate to the destination. Key elements are communicated to residents, visitors, and enterprises. The plan establishes procedures and provides resources and training for staff, visitors, and residents, and is updated on a regular basis.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Secure living conditions
Indicator	Proportion of housing available for touristic rental
Definition	The extent to which a destination ensures the access to decent and affordable housing for the local community. The reference scale is based on the map developed by DataHippo (https://www.eldiario.es/economia/concentracion-airbnb-manzana-viviendas-vacacional_1_1961096.html) that presents the percentage of housing advertised in Aribnb between May and June of 2018 compared to the total number of houses of each census tract.
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	<0.5 % of housing available for touristic rental
+1	0.5-2 % of housing available for touristic rental
0	2-6 % of housing available for touristic rental
-1	6-10 % of housing available for touristic rental
-2	>10 % of housing available for touristic rental OR no data is available

(6) Discrimination

Topic	Discrimination
Indicator	System for improving the supply and visibility of accessible tourism services for persons with disabilities
Definition	The extent to which a destination is compromised with the development of accessible and inclusive tourism by ensuring the supply of accessible tourism facilities and provide clear and accessible information about them to travellers planning and reserving their stays and activities.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Discrimination
Indicator	System for reinforcing the inclusiveness of the destination
Definition	The extent to which a destination considers different types of customers such as families or individuals, or people with different religious, spiritual or sexual orientations and works to ensure that no visitor is discriminated against for any of these reasons
Reference scale	
+2	The destination has a robust system in place, that includes awareness spreading and education among tourism enterprises in this matter, to prevent discrimination against customers
+1	Actions are taken occasionally at the destination to prevent discrimination issues
0	No cases of discrimination have been reported
-1	Cases of discrimination have been reported at the destination and actions have been taken to solve the problem
-2	Cases of discrimination have been reported at the destination, but no action has been taken to solve the problem

Economical

(1) Working conditions

Topic	Working conditions
Indicator	Program to raise awareness among tourism companies' managers of the importance of offering stable and decent employment
Definition	The extent to which a destination guides companies to improve their performance with regard their responsibility of offering stable and decent employment with fair and equal pay, full social security coverage, respect of workers' rights to organise and to bargain collectively, working contracts and gender equality, etc.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Working conditions
Indicator	Jobs seasonality
Definition	Unemployment variation as a percentage of the low season (October-March) with respect to the high season (April-September). The reference scale is based on unemployment data at Catalan level from the Labor Observatory of Productive Model of the Catalan government. Monthly data at municipal and county level can be retrieved from the same source.
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	<6 % increase of unemployment in low season compared to high season
+1	6-6.5 % increase of unemployment in low season compared to high season
0	6.5-7.5 % increase of unemployment in low season compared to high season
-1	7.5-8 % increase of unemployment in low season compared to high season
-2	>8 % increase of unemployment in low season compared to high season

(2) Equal opportunities

Topic	Equal opportunities
Indicator	Legislation or policies supporting equal opportunities in employment for all, including women, youth, disabled people, minorities, and other vulnerable populations
Definition	The extent to which a destination educates its enterprises to provide equal employment, training opportunities, occupational safety, and fair wages for all
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Equal opportunities
Indicator	Occupation rate of persons with disabilities
Definition	The extent to which a destination works to improve the quality of life and promotes the social integration of people with disabilities at risk of exclusion through real and dignified employment. The reference scale is based on the occupation rate of people with disabilities at a Catalan level.
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	>32 % occupation rate of people with disabilities
+1	29-32 % occupation rate of people with disabilities
0	26-29 % occupation rate of people with disabilities
-1	24-26 % occupation rate of people with disabilities
-2	<24 % occupation rate of people with disabilities OR no data is available

(3) Local employment

Topic	Local employment
Indicator	Strength of policies on local hiring preferences
Definition	The extent to which a destination has a strategy to spread awareness among tourism enterprises of the importance of employing local people to have a positive impact on the place where they carry out their economic activity, even if this includes having to allocate more resources to staff training.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Local employment
Indicator	Population employed in the tourism sector (%)
Definition	Proportion of the population that works in the tourism sector normalised by the proportion of population unemployed. The reference scale is based on data at Catalan level.
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	>13.5 %
+1	12.5-13.5 %
0	11.5-12.5 %
-1	10.5-11.5 %
-2	<10.5 %

(4) Competitiveness

Topic	Competitiveness
Indicator	Program to promote sustainable tourism
Definition	The extent to which a destination has a strategy in place, involving the private and the public sector, to promote sustainable tourism among potential customers using marketing skills and techniques.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Competitiveness
Indicator	Raising awareness of tourism SMEs on the benefits of digitalisation and on existing European, national and regional digitalisation programmes for SMEs
Definition	The extent to which a destination provides to tourism SMEs skills and infrastructure to assess and integrate digital tools in tourism services not only to improve the marketing but also the efficiency and sustainability of their processes and encourage the development of innovative and improved services.
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	The destination has a permanent system in place to aid tourism SMEs in the development of digital skills that can also involve economic support
+1	The destination has a permanent system in place to aid tourism SMEs in the development of digital skills
0	The destination has occasionally aid tourism SMEs in the development of digital skills
-1	The destination does not have a system in place to aid tourism SMEs on their way to digitalisation, but they have plans to work in this line in the near future
-2	The destination does not have a system in place to aid tourism SMEs on their way to digitalisation

(5) Stakeholder cooperation

Topic	Stakeholder cooperation
Indicator	Program encourages enterprises to purchase goods and services locally
Definition	The extent to which a destination has a program in place to encourage tourism companies to source themselves through local suppliers as a way of ensuring supply, support a stable local economy, and maintain community relations.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Stakeholder cooperation
Indicator	Increase of the number of companies in the destination
Definition	The increase of the number of companies in a destination compared to the previous year. The reference scale is based on data at a Catalan level. Data at a county or municipal level should be compared against the reference scale.
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	>2 % increase of the number of companies
+1	1-2 % increase of the number of companies
0	0 % increase of the number of companies
-1	1-2 % decrease of the number of companies
-2	>2 % decrease of the number of companies

(6) Economic profitability

Topic	Economic profitability
Indicator	Regular monitoring and reporting of visitor expenditure data, revenue per available room, employment and investment data
Definition	The extent to which a destination monitors the direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism and detailed information is publicly reported.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Economic profitability
Indicator	Daily spending per tourist (€)
Definition	The increase on the amount of money spent per tourist per day on the destination. The reference scale is based on data of the average daily increase of international tourists spending at Catalan level.
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	>8 % increase of spending per tourist per day at the destination
+1	6-8 % increase of spending per tourist per day at the destination
0	4-6 % increase of spending per tourist per day at the destination
-1	2-4 % increase of spending per tourist per day at the destination
-2	<2 % increase of spending per tourist per day at the destination

(7) Quality of the service

Topic	Quality of the service
Indicator	Practices related to customer satisfaction, including results of surveys measuring customer satisfaction
Definition	The extent to which a destination has mechanisms for customers to provide feedback and monitors the results to improve its performance.
	Yes
	No OR no data is available

Topic	Quality of the service
Indicator	Average stay (number of days)
Definition	The average number of days that tourists stay at the destination. The reference scale is based on the average stay in days of tourists in Spain.
Reference scale	Reference scale description
+2	>4 days
+1	3.5-4 days
0	3-3.5 days
-1	2.5-3 days
-2	<2.5 days

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