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RE-EXPERIENCING

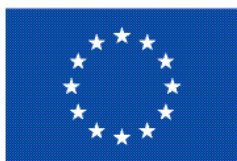
Manual on Experiential Tourism





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EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM

01



Introduction

In a world that is so interconnected and globalized, where it is possible to access any type of information through the internet, more and more people have started to look elsewhere, seeking something that the internet cannot provide: genuine life experiences.

This is where the concept of “experiential tourism” gains momentum, an innovative approach in the tourism industry that places the traveler’s personal experience at the center, focusing on immersion in new cultures, interaction with local communities, and the acquisition of authentic knowledge through engaging activities.

In this manual, we will delve into the key concepts of experiential tourism, its goals, and strategies for building a successful offering.

WHAT IS EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM?

Experiential tourism refers to a form of tourism that aims to offer travelers unique, intimate, unrepeatable, and value-rich experiences. This change in the way people travel is driven by increasingly conscious travelers who no longer settle for mere observation, taking beautiful souvenir photos, and buying trinkets. They want to be more active, have experiences, and return home with a wealth of emotions and memories.

This transition is from passive tourism, where the destination is the focus, to active tourism, where the focus is on the traveler who seeks meaningful experiences that enrich them emotionally and culturally.

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM?

Experiential tourism has several objectives, including:



PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

Experiential tourism is based on the concepts of social and environmental responsibility, aiming to minimize the negative impact of tourism activities on the destination and maximize the benefits for the local community.



FOSTERING INTERACTION BETWEEN TOURISTS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES:

Experiential tourism encourages travelers to fully immerse themselves in the culture, traditions, and history of a place and establish authentic connections with local residents.



VALUING CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE:

Experiential tourism promotes the conservation and appreciation of the cultural and natural heritage of destinations, urging visitors to understand and respect the history, art, architecture, and biodiversity of the places they visit.



HOW TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM OFFERING

To build a successful experiential tourism offering, it is essential to follow some key steps:



GUARANTEE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE EXPERIENCE:

It is important to identify the environmental, economic and social aspects that can make your events sustainable and respectful of the environment, the local community and allow you to evaluate the side effects caused by the experience.



IDENTIFY THE RESOURCES AND STRENGTHS OF THE DESTINATION:

It is important to identify the unique features and resources of the destination that can be enhanced through authentic experiences.



INVOLVE THE LOCAL COMMUNITY:

Active participation and involvement of the local community are crucial for creating successful experiential tourism. Private businesses and public organizations should collaborate with local residents to develop meaningful experiences that respect traditions, customs, and practices.



ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR (PPPS):

PPPs in tourism can take various forms, including the development of new attractions, the renovation of existing facilities, the provision of tourism-related services, and the promotion of tourism destinations.



CREATE EXPERIENTIAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES:

Develop activities and services that allow travellers to immerse themselves in the local culture, such as workshops, guided tours, tastings, cooking classes, and other engaging experiences.



COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION:

A proper communication and promotion strategy is essential to make the experiential tourism offering known and appreciated. Utilizing appropriate marketing channels, establishing partnerships with tourism operators, and participating in industry fairs and events can help successfully promote experiential tourism.



SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

02



Introduction

The chapter is dedicated to introducing the concept of sustainable tourism, the legal and operative requirements and suggesting a step-by-step procedure to plan and implement coherent tourist experiences.

DEFINITION

The tourism industry is one of the world's fastest-growing industries and is directly and indirectly related to socio-cultural and developmental aspects. Because of this, tourism was included and related to the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals launched in 2015 by the United Nations, with the aim of providing a new system of indicators for sustainable development. The agenda aims to fight and solve situations like extreme poverty, inequality and injustice highlighted in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, signed in September 2000.

Sustainable tourism takes into account the impact it generates on the current state of the economy, environment, societies and cultures by looking at the future and addressing the needs of those involved in the process, visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.

The first definition of Sustainable Tourism was introduced in 1988 by the World Trade Organization (WTO) following the growth and diffusion of Ecotourism in the 1980s. In 1995 after the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism held in Lanzarote, the Charter for Sustainable Tourism was published. The charter pointed out that tourism has great importance in nurturing markets and economies and has a great impact on environmental aspects, which should also be protected and preserved for future communities.

From then on, sustainable tourism became a priority and began to appear in numerous decisions of International Organizations and Nations, such as the [Millennium Declaration](#), and conferences were organized on this issue and some of its aspects.

An example is the [Conference of Rio+20](#), held at a distance of 20 years from the first conference of Rio. During the conference multiple topics related to the future of communities, and more generally humanity, were discussed. As an outcome of the conference was published the document “[In The Future We Want](#)” in which sustainable tourism is once again identified as a significant contributor to the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental. Therefore, Member States recognized the need to implement and support sustainable tourism activities and relevant capacity-building that could promote environmental awareness, conservation and protection of the environment, and respect local communities and ecosystems.

SCOPE

This paragraph strategies to apply for the implementation of replicable models of Sustainable Tourism allowing the stakeholders to know and spread the fundamental notions to respect the environment during the experiences offered.

The scopes of this paragraph are:



Influence policies and political attitudes towards sustainable tourism;



Creating guidelines to encourage the respect of social and environmental criteria even during recreational activities;



Transmitting the necessary skills for the creation, management, implementation, and communication of tourist experiences to increase the number of services available to users;



Promoting and organizing non-seasonal tourism in remote areas.

TARGET GROUP

The manual is directed towards a really varied pool of professionals working in the field of tourism, from local authorities to communities. All of them can benefit from sustainable tourism experiences. More specifically:



Local Authorities and Municipalities

influence economic resource allocation. Sustainable tourism fosters economic growth, job creation, and cultural heritage preservation while ensuring a resilient future for residents and visitors.



Tourism Departments

drive tourism development strategies.



Tourist Agencies and IAT

provide unique, resource-efficient experiences, ensuring sustainability and enhancing their reputation.



Non-Profit Organizations

benefit from sustainable tourism by promoting cultural diversity and economic development.



Local Communities'

involvement in decision-making protects against gentrification and promotes responsible, diversified, and culturally rich tourism.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The UNWTO is the United Nations' Office for Tourism and it was funded in 1975 to work for and promote sustainable, responsible and universally accessible tourism. It is currently composed of 159 Member States. The organization works for the achievement of different objectives of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (Agenda 2030), specifically n. 8, 12 and 14 since tourism is strictly connected with the environment, economy and development.

According to the UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organisation), sustainable tourism is characterized by the consequences it has on the destination.

It considers 3 different pillars of guiding principles that need to be balanced to guarantee its long-term sustainability. In particular:



Environmental sustainability:

making optimal use of environmental resources, preserving ecological processes and conserving natural heritage and biodiversity.



Social sustainability:

benefits toward the local communities and the future generations. Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, safeguarding their cultural heritage, and values, and promoting intercultural understanding.



Economic sustainability:

contribute to the economic development of local communities and support local businesses, benefiting all stakeholders with stable employment, income opportunities, and social services, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Principles coming from the analysis of the [3 pillars](#) are:

Environment	Social	Economic
Supporting the protection of the natural and cultural environment Minimizing environmental impacts, promoting conservation and environmental awareness	Enhancing the well-being of local communities Encouraging travellers to engage with local people to have a unique traveller experience Respecting and valuing the local culture, traditions, and communities of the destination Countering the gentrification	Contributing to the economic development of local communities encouraging travellers to support local businesses

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND EUROPEAN REGULATION AND INITIATIVES

At the EU level there is a specific [environmental regulation](#) and a [strategy for sustainable tourism](#).

The strategy, adopted on 25 March 2021, addresses four main points: the COVID-19 pandemic, the governance and policy in the sector, the transition to sustainable, responsible and smart tourism and lastly, the need for planning for the tourism industry.



European Agenda for Tourism 2030

The Council of the European Union has adopted the [European Tourism Agenda 2030](#), which includes a multi-annual EU work plan to help member states, public authorities, the Commission and stakeholders make the tourism sector greener and more sustainable, resilient and digitalised.

The strategy prioritizes to work on:



Enabling policy framework and governance

by creating a transparent EU market, promoting competition and consumer protection, creating opportunities and contributing to sustainable tourism and by improving sustainable tourism statistics.



Green transition

by mainly reducing the environmental footprint of tourism services and encouraging companies by taking a step toward a greener business.



Digital transition

by encouraging the use of digital tools in the sector and by participating in surveys regarding the topic.



Resilience and inclusion

by enhancing social and economic inclusion, taking into account the elderly, persons with disabilities and other groups with specific needs and by promoting the EU as a destination that meets the changing demands of tourism while maintaining the wellbeing of residents.



Skills and support

for transition by raising awareness on the constant changes this kind of business goes through and how it is recommended to adapt to those.



METHODOLOGIES

Introduction

The UNWTO and the European Commission decided to give managers of the different destination instruments to learn more about sustainable tourism and how to conduct a shift in the type of business. The European Commission started the process by involving in 2012 the UNWTO in the creation of a guidebook, and in 2013 created a series of indicators and a toolkit for the stakeholders to use, the ETIS system.

UNWTO, Guidebook on sustainable tourism

The guidebook: the idea behind it

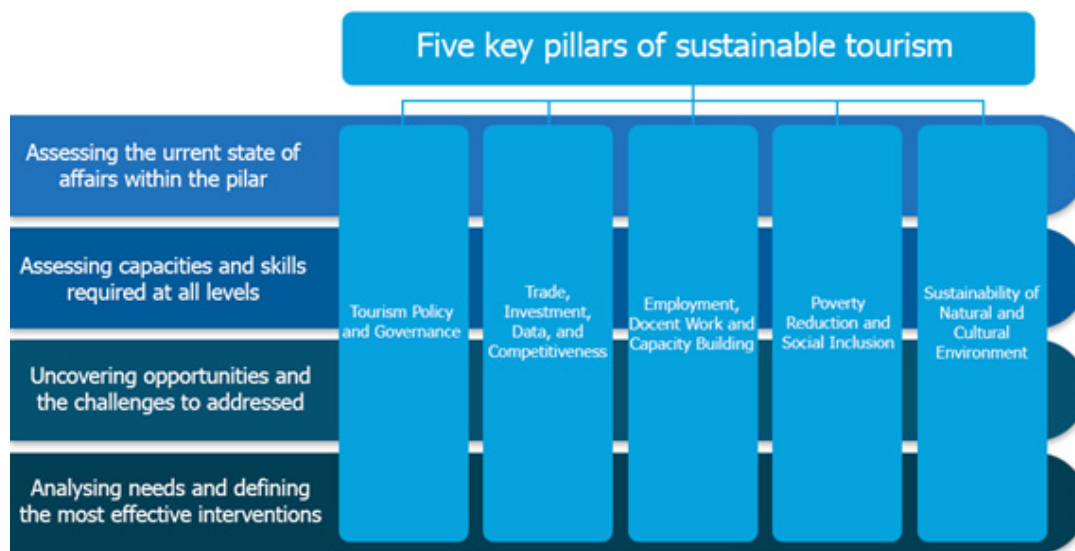
The guidebook is launched with the purpose of enhancing common understanding and commitment to Sustainable Tourism and showing how it can be used as a vehicle of social growth and economic development. The guidebook is mainly targeted to the European Union, other international organizations, and governments within developing countries.

The guidebook: how it is structured and how it can be used

The guidebook is divided into three parts: a guidance note, an explanation of the background, and the methodology.

The methodology used is quite interesting because addresses many aspects of sustainable tourism by posing different questions. Based on the answers given during the planning of the experiences, it can be understood if they respect the requirements to be classified as sustainable.

The questions are organized following the structure of five pillars, as shown in the following image.



Source: UNWTO website

Each questionnaire contributes to the analysis of different aspects of the touristic situation, but altogether those are used to:



Assess the current state of affairs within the pillar.



Assess capacities and skills.



Uncover opportunities and challenges that need to be addressed.



Analyze needs and define the most effective intervention.

The questionnaires are available on the UNWTO website, but you can find them listed below as well.



[Questionnaire 1](#)



[Questionnaire 2](#)



[Questionnaire 3](#)



[Questionnaire 4](#)



[Questionnaire 5](#)

The European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS), European Commission

What is the ETIS System?

It was launched in 2013 and revised in 2016. The system comprises a collection of Indicators, a toolkit, and a dataset. It is designed as a tool that any destination can easily adopt and put into practice without requiring specialized training. This system serves as a valuable means to monitor destination performance, make informed management decisions, and have an impact on the formulation of appropriate policies.

The system targets, as listed in “The European Tourism Indicator System” document:



A geographic area that is currently or potentially attractive to visitors/ tourists.



A place or area which is recognised and can easily be defined as a visitor destination and has a range of facilities and products in place for tourism purposes.



A place or area which is promoted as a destination.



A place or area where it is possible to measure the supply of and demand for tourism services, i.e. the visitor economy.



A place or area where the visitor management process usually includes a range of public and private sector stakeholders together with the host community.



Why is the implementation of such a system important?

The toolkit consists of 2 parts:



A seven-step guide was created to help the managers of the destinations explore the system and understand how the process works.



A system of indicators to monitor the performance of activities carried out.

The seven-step guide

To implement the ETIS system we need to follow 7 main steps:



Raise awareness



Creation of a destination profile



Creation of a stakeholder working group



Establishment of roles and responsibilities



Collection and keeping record of data



Analysis of results



Enable ongoing development and continuous improvement

Let's analyze the steps one by one:



Raising awareness means communicating well your activity and your actions so that other interested stakeholders can easily know about it and join in with you.



The creation of a destination profile is needed to create boundaries and inform other stakeholders, this can be done by using a form provided by the [European Commission's](#) website.



Collect a group of people, individuals or organizations in your locality that will form your SWG (Stakeholders Working Group) who will help gather enough data to be the right representative. It is recommended to involve the private sector as well as the authority for the tourism of the destination.



Establish the roles and different responsibilities, use a series of meetings and make an agreement on taking action and planning the achievement of what you planned as well as the targets.



Before starting the data collection, the SWG (Stakeholders Working Group) has to get to know better what are the needs of the destination; the next step is to choose indicators to set aims and objectives. After a pilot phase, it was recommended to not recoil data every year, but better do it in a range of 3 years.



Analyze the results and plan measures of improvement



To take action it is recommended to draw up a plan and spread it over the time of 3 years in which the SWG should not only apply the strategy developed but also continue monitoring data with the use of ETIS.

Those are briefly the steps that are needed to put into practice the ETIS and help understand the touristic impact of a destination. More information and the dataset of indicators can be found on the guide: [ETIS System](#).

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT SUSTAINABLE TOURIST EXPERIENCES

Introduction

The chapter gives practical guidance on the design and implementation of sustainable experiences.



Identify the audience to whom is dedicated the experience

While planning the experience or activity you want to implement in your destination, you need to take into consideration to whom you want to direct the experience and who will benefit from it.

Personalisation is the key to the success of the experience. The first procedure you need to do is to identify the target and as soon as the target is clear, it is easier to identify it with a buyer persona, which resumes the needs, interests and behavioural patterns of your ideal customer and creates a blueprint for you to start with.

To know better the buyer persona, here are some aspects to take into consideration:



The country origin



What kind of travel they like



Their interests



What kind of experiences they look for



Travel construction, if they are solo travelling, with their family or with a partner



Flexibility



Social media activity



Budget availability

After gaining all this information you will have a sort of “Identification sheet” of your buyer persona, that will help develop a tailored experience.

A tool that can be used to analyse the audience and build a great experience is the Value Proposition Canvas. It can be downloaded here: [Practical toolbox for sustainable tourism - Google Sheets](#).

The identification of the buyer persona will support the creation of the marketing strategy, deeply explained in Chapter 3



Assess the environmental and socio-cultural context of the experience

Other than considering the audience of your experience it is important to monitor and know about the environment where you want to start the experience, and the socio-cultural context of it. If those points are not taken into consideration the risk of your activity damaging the environment and causing problems to the ones living there is really high, and could end up in the creation of an experience that may not be sustainable.

The ETIS criteria can be used to analyze the context in which you are going to develop the experience, and not difficult at all to use.

In this phase, ask yourself:

- How does the experience affect the community and in which way does it have a social impact?
- Are there any issues with health and safety? Do tourists feel safe? Is there any threat to the health of people who inhabit and visit the place?
- Does your activity respect Gender Equality?
- Is the activity inclusive and accessible for everyone?
- Does the activity assign a value to the cultural heritage and traditions of the place it is developed in?
- How does the experience impact the transport? Does it contribute to the reduction of it?
- How does the activity impact climate change? Does it have a positive impact on it?
- How will you manage the disposal of solid waste? How will you treat the sewage?
- Water management: water is an important resource, how will you manage it?
- How will you manage your energetic resources? How will you reduce or implement the use of it?
- Will your experience guarantee the maintenance of the landscape of the destination? How will you do it? How will you protect the biodiversity of it?

With these questions, you can create a checklist to identify what you have just accomplished and what needs to be set up or improved. The checklist could be similar to this:

Enviromental and Socio-Cultural Context Assessment

QUESTION	TYPE OF ASSESSMENT		ACTION PLAN		Status
	Environment	Socio-cultural aspects	Current situation	Action needed	
How does the experience affect the community and in which way does it have a social impact?	More garbages to collect; plastic disposal for beverage and food	the concert coul stress the local population during to the lenght or the high volume	missing service providers with ecological standards	contact companies with high ecologic standards; find a place distant from the city centre	actions not started yet
Are there any issues with health and safety? Do tourists feel safe? Is there any threat to the health of people that inhabit and visit the place?					
Does your activity respect Gender Equality?					
Is the activity inclusive and accessible for everyone?					
Does the activity assign a value to the cultural heritage and traditions of the place it is developed in?					
How does the experience impact the transport? Does it contribute to the reduction of it?					
How does the activity impact climate change? Does it have a positive impact on it?					
How will you manage the disposal of solid waste? How will you treat the sewage?					
Water management: water is an important resource, how will you manage it?					
How will you manage your energetic resources? How will you reduce or implement the use of it?					
Will your experience guarantee the maintenance of the landscape of the destination? How will you do it? How will you protect the biodiversity of it?					

The checklist can be downloaded here: [Practical toolbox for sustainable tourism - Google Sheets](#)

Concept definition: creative sessions to define objectives, outcomes and activity

It is time to conceptualize what you want to realize! The concept of the experience relies basically on the definition of the activity you want to carry out and what you expect by doing so. This phase could be compared to a brainstorming phase, in which you write down and start to visualize, based on the context analysis and your objectives, the service you intend to offer.

The brainstorming phase should be realized in groups to allow the formulation of different ideas before selecting the most appropriate. After selecting one or a few ideas, build a service concept for each of them.

The [service concept](#) consists of four different elements:



SERVICE OPERATION:

How are you going to deliver your service?



SERVICE OUTCOME:

How will the user benefit from the experience?



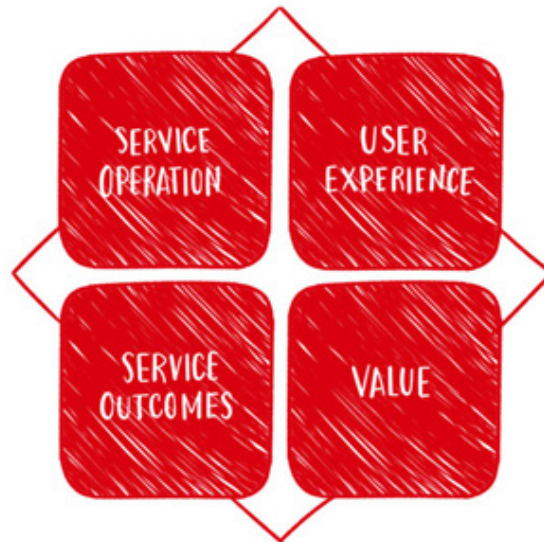
USER EXPERIENCE:

How does the user experience the service?



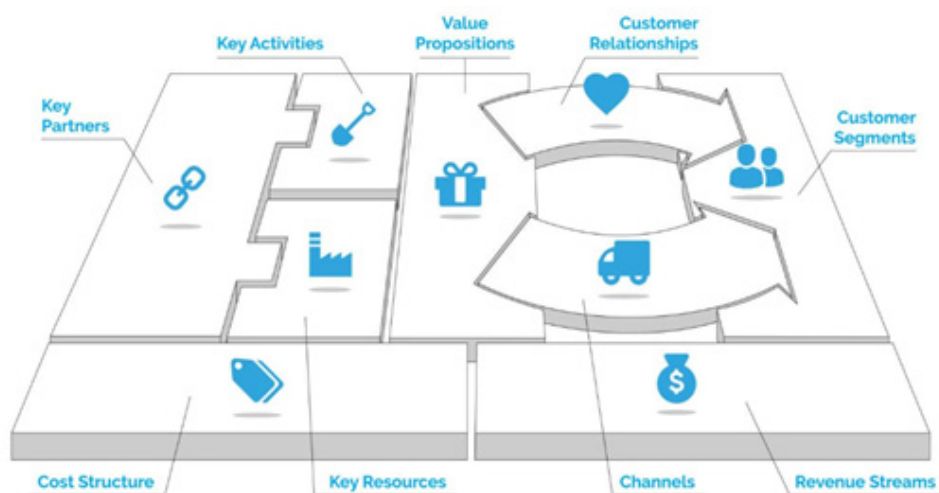
VALUE:

How is the cost-benefit ratio?



Those four dimensions interact with each other and need to be constantly monitored to make sure the service is operated in an efficient way and to reduce the distance between the user's expectations and the service delivery.

After comparing one or more service concepts, you can select the winning idea and deepen it by using the business model CANVAS.



The Business Model Canvas allows you to define the sustainable tourism experience by visualizing each component of the idea to implement: the offered values, and activities.

It can be downloaded here: [Practical toolbox for sustainable tourism - Google Sheets](#) key resources, clients/stakeholders relationships, partners, costs and revenues.

Define economic aspect: organization, logistics, service needed

Costs to consider are related to investments, human resources, materials, professional services and consultancy, interests etc.

Before defining the costs, define the activity. Break down the activities into sub-tasks to understand the expenditures that are necessary.

Monitoring and evaluation strategy: KPIs definition and measurement

To understand and measure the activity implemented, it should be set out a series of indicators, the so-called Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) address the performance in terms of their environmental, social, and economic sustainability. The indicators mentioned in the following paragraphs are in line with the analysis and list proposed by the WTO as we believe in the importance of harmonising the collection of data at the National and territorial levels to allow a coherent monitoring and evaluation with the European level.

Some examples of indicators

Economic factors concern:



Visitor flows

i.e. the extent to which current patterns of visitor flows will continue or change in the future.



Visitor expenditure

i.e. the extent to which current patterns of visitor expenditures will continue or change in the future.



Economic performance and structure of tourism businesses

i.e. the extent to which current patterns of visitor expenditures will continue or change in the future.



Produced assets, including infrastructure, used by tourism businesses

i.e. the extent to which the produced assets used to support tourism activity have sufficient capacity to supply goods and services to visitors in the future.



Employees of tourism businesses

i.e. the extent to which there are sufficient people with appropriate skills and experience (human capital) to supply goods and services to visitors in the future.

Environmental factors concern:



The use of natural resources

such as water and energy as an input to the production of tourism industries.



The use of the environment

more generally as the location in which tourism activity takes place.



The impacts and pressures

that tourism activity places on the environment.



The responses

that tourism industries implement to reduce environmental pressures and improve environmental outcomes.

The social dimensions are wider and more articulated to analyze because there are different perspectives from visitors, the host communities, tourism businesses and government; different concepts, among which the social dimension, including social capital, social inclusion and exclusion, social equity and welfare, workers' rights, social cohesion, empowerment and wellbeing.

To implement a better monitoring and evaluation system, the WTO (World Trade Organization) provided explanations and tables in the following document in the Statistical Framework For Measuring The Sustainability Of Tourism: [SF_MST_draft.pdf \(amazonaws.com\)](#) (2022).





Define a strategy for stakeholders' engagement: community, public sectors, institution, service providers

Now that you have a clear vision of the context of the area and the developmental plan of your activity, you can identify all the stakeholders that will be involved in the process of creating, promoting, and experiencing the activity.

Definition of stakeholders

A stakeholder is a subject that has a direct or indirect interest in the development of the activity. Those subjects can be an important resource to involve in your project since there is a common interest shared. They can also hinder the realization of the activity because the interest can be both positive and negative.

There are different kinds of stakeholders:



Community

the community of your destination can be directly involved in the development of your experience, like shop owners or those who work in contact with people.



Public Sectors



Institution



Service Providers

Even though there are different kinds of stakeholders, there is no need to involve every single one of those categories in the experience: you need to select the most relevant and effective for your scope.

To prioritize and identify them, it can be done a stakeholder analysis.

The stakeholder analysis can help you get a deeper knowledge on those you are interested in by following these steps:



Collecting information about possible stakeholders (description, contact data, generalities of the reference person).



Identify the interest that you have in involving them in the activity



Identify their interest in being involved in the activity



Identify possible risks or problems that could arise in the relationship.

N.	ACTOR	TYPOLOGY	COUNTRY	CITY	CONTACTS	DESCRIPTION OF ACTOR	DESIRED CONTRIBUTION IN THE PROJECT	ACTOR'S INTERESTS	RISKS AND POTENTIAL BONDS ABOUT INCLUDING THE ACTOR IN THE PROJECT
1	Municipality IV	Public Authority	Italy	City of Rome	Ms Alessia Rossi, president of the Municipality; alessia.rossi@muniv.org; +39 3271847658	it includes 10 urban areas and has a high population with low income	Permission to realise the activity; free use of the land for the concert	Visibility for sustainable tourism practices	They could impose strict obligations for the use of the land and reduce the number of people allowed at the concert
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									

You can find the model here: [Practical toolbox for sustainable tourism - Google Sheets](#)

As soon as you list all the possible stakeholders, you can prioritize them to understand who can be effectively included and who not.

To prioritize, you can assign a score from 0 to 5 to criteria of selection that are valuable for your sustainable activity. The score is assigned in consideration of the interest and problem identified in the stakeholders' analysis.

Example of indicators:

1. **The level of importance to include them in the project**
2. **The level of influence of them**
3. **The level of feasibility of their involvement in a due time or for reasons related to its social position**

N.	ACTOR	LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE	LEVEL OF INFLUENCE	LEVEL OF FEASIBILITY	Total score
1	Municipality IV	5	3	4	12
2					0
3					0
4					0
5					0
6					0
7					0
8					0
9					0
10					0
11					0
12					0
13					0
14					0
15					0
16					0
17					0

You can find the template here: [Practical toolbox for sustainable tourism - Google Sheets](#)

Funding strategy: sponsorship, fundraising, public funds, investors

There are many funding opportunities that can be used to give birth to your activity: they can be either public or privately organized and some of them can even be organized directly by you. Those opportunities are:



Sponsorship

It is a particular kind of investment that involves other private or public subjects in the activity you are developing. Basically, the subject contributes to the payment of some kind of service or by buying something that will be used in your experience as long as their logo is visible and their contribution is publicly acknowledged and known by the visitors.



Fundraising

i.e. the extent to which current patterns of visitor expenditures will continue or change in the future.



Public funds

It can be obtained by applying through calls and tenders. If the project presented results coherent with their evaluation criteria, it could be financially funded.



Investors

People or Companies that choose to financially contribute to the experience to gain something in exchange (rights on the activity, shares or stocks).

Implementation phase: creation of an implementation plan that outlines the necessary steps, timeline, and resources required

The [implementation plan](#) is the final document that allows you to realize a sustainable experience. It is based on the work previously done during the design and formulation of the experience. Based on the complexity of the project, it should contain the following aspects:

1. **Goal and objectives** - the main goal of your project and the achievements you will meet while developing it;
2. **Description of the activity;**
3. **Resource plan** - the resources you will need while implementing your experience, may those be human, materials or other kinds;
4. **Risk analysis** - use a risk assessment tool, like a [SWOT Analysis](#) that measures the level of risk something can happen while implementing the project.

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
INTERNAL	Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
EXTERNAL	Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)

You can find the model here: [Practical toolbox for sustainable tourism - Google Sheets](#)

5. **Timeline of the implementation** - this is basically your project timeline in which you will need to insert information on the timings of the activity/ies you are planning to develop.
6. **Milestones** - What are the key steps of your experience? Those are identified as milestones;
7. **Team roles and responsibilities** - You will need to assign tasks to other members of your team;
8. **Key Performance Indicators** - to control the progress of your implementation.

Implementation of a system of lesson learnt: what went well and what need improvement for future interventions

[Lesson learnt](#) is basically what you gained by participating (as organizer or user etc.) in the experience. Those lessons are useful to develop future projects.

The Project Management Institute (PMI) outlines its Lessons Learned Process in Project Management in five steps:

1. Identify the things you can learn from
2. Document the lessons learned
3. Analyze the information you got and create reports of it
4. Store those reports in a shared database
5. Retrieve that information and use it for future projects

Both during and after the activities, ask yourself:

1. Did you respect all the requirements of sustainable tourism?
2. What were our team's goals at the outset of this project? Does our current progress align with those goals? If not, how can we get back on track?
3. Which processes are working well? Which one can we build on?
4. Which processes need improvement? How can we improve them?
5. Do you need any additional resources to complete the project?
6. What has been the team's most significant achievement in this project so far?

After gathering the information, the next step is to write it down.

You can find many examples of reports at the following website: [Free Project Management Lessons Learned Templates | Smartsheet](#)

THE MARKETING STRATEGY IN EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM

03



Introduction

As in any other sector, marketing strategy plays a fundamental role. This is a comprehensive and structured plan that defines the long-term goals a company aims to achieve based on a deep understanding of the competitive environment and its own resources.

Only after defining the strategy can an operational plan be developed, which consists of specific actions designed to achieve the set goals.

HOW TO BUILD A MARKETING STRATEGY IN EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM

Constructing a marketing strategy in experiential tourism involves analyzing various key factors. One of the most commonly used tools for this purpose is the SWOT analysis.

Through the SWOT analysis (which stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), a range of internal and external variables that any company or public organization must consider before making decisions related to achieving a goal can be identified.

Starting with defining the objectives is the first step in this analysis. It is important that these objectives are:



Specific

Clear, and precisely defined.



Measurable

Quantifiable, to monitor progress.



Achievable

Realistic, within a given timeframe and available resources.



Relevant

Aligned with the vision, mission, and overall goals of the company or public organization.



Time-bound

To be achieved within a set deadline. Defining a time limit helps maintain focus and establish a sense of urgency for implementing strategies.

Once the objectives are set, the next step is to evaluate the internal environment, i.e., the strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths

In the context of experiential tourism, strengths are the unique features and distinctive elements of a destination that set it apart from others. To identify strengths, you can answer questions such as:

What is the competitive advantage of the location?

What are the local peculiarities?

What elements are most appreciated by tourists?

What reputation does the location have?

Is there public interest, and is the local community involved?

Weaknesses

Weaknesses represent the elements of a destination that may hinder the achievement of set objectives. Therefore, it is important to identify them promptly and take compensatory or corrective actions.

To identify weaknesses, you can answer questions like:

What could be improved?

What resources are lacking?

What do competitors do better?

The third step involves analyzing the external environment, specifically evaluating opportunities and threats.

Opportunities

Opportunities are external factors to the company or public organization that can be exploited to gain competitive advantages.

The questions to answer for identifying opportunities are as follows:

What elements in the external environment can be leveraged to one's advantage?

What are the weaknesses of competitors that can be targeted?

Are there new technologies, innovations, legislative changes, or trends that can be leveraged?

Threats

On the other hand, threats refer to external factors that could hinder the company or public organization, putting it at risk.

To identify threats, you can answer questions like:

Are there unfavourable regulatory changes?

What could competitors do to create difficulties?

Are there social changes that could pose a threat?

Are there external factors (such as climate) that could cause harm?

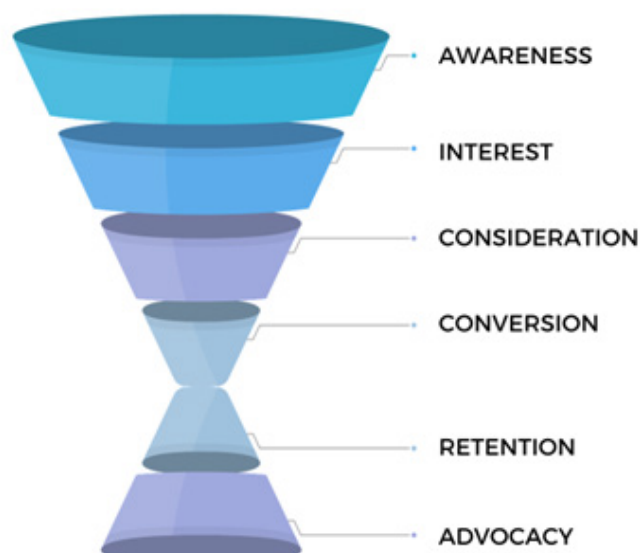
After defining the objectives and making these considerations, the next step is to incorporate this data into the so-called SWOT matrix, designing possible actions based on it.



THE MARKETING FUNNEL

The marketing funnel is a funnel-shaped model that represents the process through which a potential customer transforms into an actual customer.

In this way, it is possible to outline a series of actions to guide the potential customer to conversion while identifying areas for improvement or weaknesses in one's marketing strategy.



Below are the main stages of the marketing funnel, with actionable tips applicable in the context of experiential tourism



Awareness

In this stage, potential tourists are unaware of the destination and what it has to offer. The goal is to educate and raise awareness through actions such as:

- Creating a website and social media profiles to showcase the destination and its offerings.
- Establishing a blog within the website to communicate the destination's unique aspects in an engaging and informal manner.
- Defining an SEO and SEM strategy to increase visibility on search engines.



Interest

In this stage, potential tourists are aware of the destination and have shown interest. The objective is to increase engagement through actions like:

- Creating and sharing original and informative content such as articles, blogs, travel guides, videos, and podcasts highlighting attractions, local events, culture, cuisine, and unique experiences.
- Creating well-targeted landing pages, for example, to capture contact information.
- Encouraging past travellers to leave genuine and positive reviews on social media or review sites like TripAdvisor or Google Reviews, and promptly managing negative reviews with appropriate solutions or responses



Consideration

Even though potential tourists are aware of and interested in a destination, they continue to prefer competitors. The goal is to emphasize the destination's unique features, distinctive elements, and all the strengths defined in the SWOT analysis. Actions to take during consideration may include:

- Using social media to share engaging photos and videos showcasing the destination's unique features.
- Collaborating with industry influencers to promote the destination.
- Partnering with travel agencies and tour operators.
- Optimizing the website by providing detailed information about the destination, how to get there, and key activities.
- Harnessing the power of email marketing by sending offers, updates, and interesting news about the destination directly to potential tourists' inboxes.



Conversion

The potential tourist has become an actual tourist, perceiving that the activities and resources offered by a particular destination are better than those offered by competitors. In this stage, it's crucial to focus on making the experience as engaging as possible.



Retention

Once tourists have experienced what a destination has to offer, the goal is to maintain their interest and encourage them to return. Actions to take in this stage might include:

- Creating a loyalty program for frequent tourists, offering them discounts, special packages, or exclusive services to incentivize repeat visits and promote the destination.
- Sending newsletters to tourists who have visited the destination in the past, with a focus on information, upcoming events, updates on attractions, special offers, and tips to enhance their next visit.
- Organizing and sponsoring special events or seasonal promotions to attract tourists back to the destination.
- Implementing a referral program, providing incentives to tourists who invite others to visit the destination.

6

Advocacy

When a tourist reaches this stage, it means they are not only satisfied with the experience but are also willing to recommend it to others spontaneously. In this stage, communities play a crucial role, as they facilitate the exchange of opinions, information, and recommendations among users that can influence each other's choices.

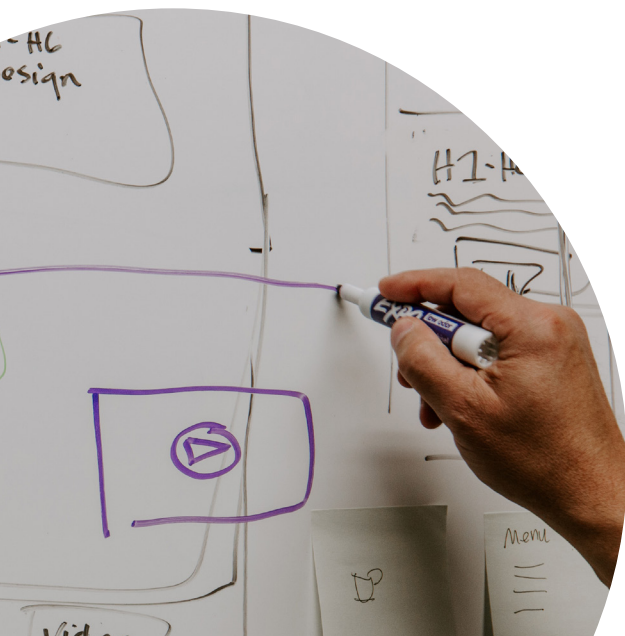
To maintain tourists' loyalty and encourage advocacy, actions in this stage can include:

- Encouraging tourists to share photos, videos, and reviews on social media using a dedicated hashtag or tagging the destination. It's essential to repost user-generated content on the destination's official page to increase visibility and interest.
- Collecting and publishing success stories and testimonials from satisfied tourists on social media through videos, articles, or interviews.

WHAT IS THE TARGET?

The term 'target' refers to a group of people with common characteristics to which a particular product or service is directed.

In the realm of experiential tourism, as well as in all other sectors, it is essential to identify your target audience as it provides a clear and well-defined understanding of the individuals to whom your offerings should be directed.





HOW TO DEFINE THE TARGET?

The following steps will be discussed to define the target.

Market Research

Market research is an activity involving the collection and analysis of information related to a specific sector, product, or service to understand better the target market and the needs and desires of potential tourists.

To conduct market research, it is necessary to:



Define the objectives

In this phase, specific research objectives are identified, which can include identifying traveler preferences, evaluating the market potential for new experiences, or analyzing competition within the industry.



Collect primary data

This involves gathering qualitative data that provides information on customer preferences, needs, and behaviors. This data can be collected through tools such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, and direct observation.



Collect secondary data

After qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis is performed, such as analyzing existing data on previous trips and statistics.



Analyze the data

The collected data is analyzed and interpreted to identify patterns, trends, correlations, and other significant information for making strategic decisions.

Market Segmentation

Once the necessary information about the target market has been collected, market segmentation can be carried out.

Market segmentation is the process of dividing a market into homogeneous groups of people with similar characteristics and behaviours. This helps businesses better understand their needs and preferences and create more targeted and effective marketing strategies.

Market segmentation can be based on various factors, including:



Demographics

In this case, the market division is based on factors such as age, gender, income, education level, occupation, and geographic location.



Psychographics

This segmentation is based on personality traits, lifestyle, opinions, motivations, attitudes, and values.



Behavioral

This type of segmentation focuses on people's purchasing behaviours, such as spending habits, brand loyalty, product life cycle, and price sensitivity.

In the context of experiential tourism, an example of market segmentation could be based on travellers' preferences for specific activities or interests. Consequently, segments could include:



Nature lovers

encompassing travellers seeking outdoor experiences like hiking, climbing, kayaking, rafting, e-biking, etc.



Culture and heritage enthusiasts

including travellers interested in cultural experiences.



Food and wine connoisseurs

comprising travelers looking for culinary experiences like cooking classes and food tours.



Wellness and relaxation seekers

involving travellers interested in activities like meditation, yoga, spiritual retreats, and other relaxation activities. They are looking for destinations that offer opportunities to relax, rejuvenate, and find a balance between mind, body, and spirit.



Sustainable tourism advocates

including travellers looking for environmentally and locally friendly tourism experiences. They are interested in eco-friendly destinations, agritourism, guided tours by local guides, and environmental conservation projects.

Evaluation and Monitoring

After conducting research and market segmentation, you will have a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of the typical tourist to target. Consequently, you can develop increasingly engaging and personalized activities that perfectly align with the identified target's desires.

However, this process is not an endpoint. It is important to repeat this analysis periodically because the factors previously analyzed change and evolve over time, as do the needs and desires of tourists. In such a dynamic industry as tourism, it is crucial to keep up with the times and intercept new trends and changes in tourist preferences as early as possible.

CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAP



After analyzing and understanding the individual stages of the process that lead a potential tourist to become a full-fledged tourist, it is important to understand in-depth how they interact with the business or public organization throughout the conversion process.

The tool to use in this regard is the customer journey map.

The customer journey map is a graphical representation of a customer's interactions with a company or public organization during their conversion process.

Its primary purpose is to provide a detailed overview of tourists' experiences along their journey, from the initial awareness of a destination to the selection and completion of specific activities, right up to their level of satisfaction and loyalty.

Among its advantages, the most important is that it allows for a more in-depth understanding of the behaviours and expectations of the typical tourist. Consequently, you can intervene promptly to enhance their experience and make it even more memorable.

How to build a customer journey map

To build a customer journey map, you need to follow some fundamental steps:



Identify the target

The first step is to identify the profile of the typical tourist to whom your offerings are directed. In this regard, you can refer to the work done in paragraph 3.5.



Identify the touchpoints

Touchpoints represent all the points of contact between the tourist and the company or public organisation throughout the entire purchase process. Defining them is essential as it allows you to improve all aspects related to that interaction, making it even more satisfying. Touchpoints can be physical (word of mouth, television, travel agencies, brochures, etc.) and digital (advertising campaigns, email marketing, websites, blogs, social media pages, etc.). Given that tourist behaviours are increasingly hybrid, it is crucial to adopt an omnichannel approach in this phase, focusing on both types. To identify touchpoints, data is required to better understand the desires, expectations, and issues of tourists at each point of contact. The data to be collected can be both qualitative (such as open-ended interviews, surveys, observations of behaviours, etc.) and quantitative (such as closed-ended surveys, market research, and data analysis tools like Google Analytics, etc.).



Create the Map

Based on the information and data collected, you can create the customer journey map. This can be presented in the form of a diagram, with the customer's journey plotted along the horizontal axis and the touchpoints along the vertical axis. Each touchpoint is associated with an emotion that the tourist experiences at that moment.



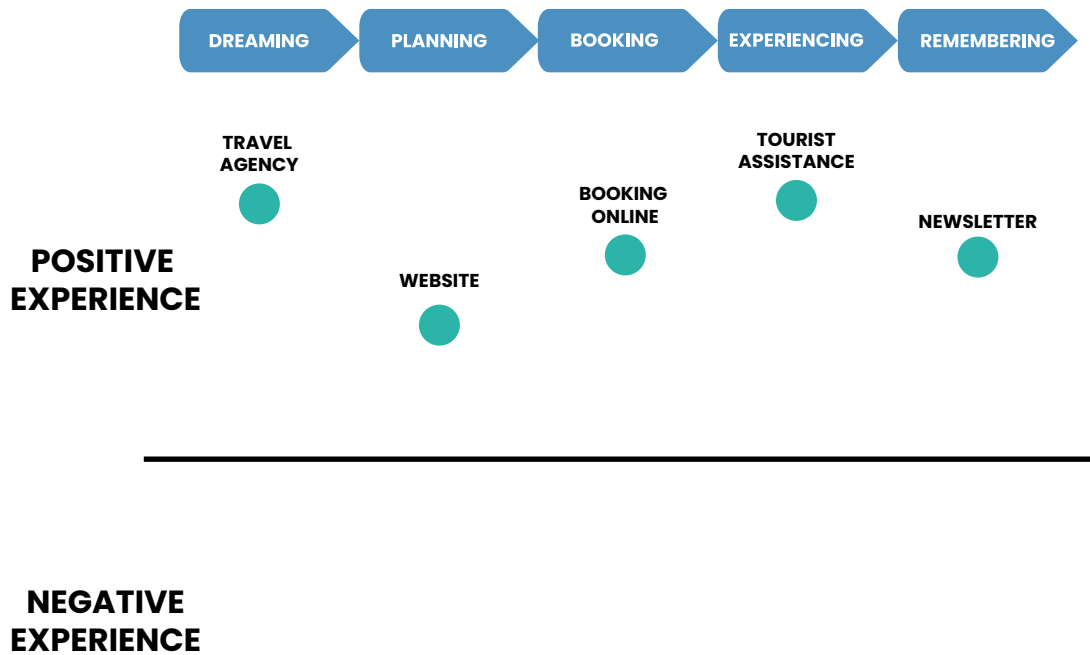
Identifying Critical Points and Designing Solutions

During the creation of the customer journey map, it is important to identify critical points where tourists may encounter problems or frustrations. Based on what is observed, it's essential to develop solutions to enhance the tourist experience through the implementation of new processes, technology updates, and more.

5

Continuous Monitoring

Once the customer journey map is outlined, it's important to continue monitoring and collecting data to assess the effectiveness of the implemented solutions. This allows for ongoing improvements to optimize the tourist's journey over time.



An example of a customer journey map

Touchpoints in the customer journey map of experiential tourism

As mentioned earlier, touchpoints represent all the points of contact between the tourist and the company or public organisation throughout the entire conversion process, and they can be both physical and digital.

Here is an example of possible touchpoints for each phase of the funnel:



Awareness (Dreaming)

In the initial phase, potential tourists are considering an experiential trip but are not yet aware of the destination and activities offered. Therefore, it's important to focus on touchpoints that can increase visibility, such as partnerships with travel agencies, brochures, advertising, websites, and social media profiles.



Interest (Planning)

In this phase, potential tourists are planning their trip and have become aware of the destination. It's essential to work on touchpoints like social media profiles, landing pages, websites, and blogs to provide useful information.



Consideration (Booking)

In this phase, potential tourists are about to make a booking decision. They are choosing between your destination and the competition. Therefore, it's crucial to optimize touchpoints like the website or any online booking platforms, partnerships with travel agencies, and email marketing.



Conversion (Experiencing)

The tourist has booked and is about to experience their adventure. In this phase, it's important to focus on touchpoints like the blog (to provide useful information for a great experience), guides, and tourist assistance.



Retention (Remembering)

The tourist has had the experience and returned home with many memories. During this phase, it's essential to keep those memories alive and encourage them to return. Work on touchpoints like email marketing, content marketing, and organizing new events.

**PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN PUBLIC
AND PRIVATE SECTORS (PPP)**

04



Introduction

This chapter is intended for anyone looking to collaborate with the public and private sector to create innovative and profitable tourism projects.

We will guide you on how to understand the concept of PPP, identify collaboration opportunities, structure PPP and find partners, all with practical advice and real-life examples.

Take your ideas and get ready for a journey into the world of PPP in experiential tourism, as we will lead you step-by-step towards success.



DEFINING TOURISM PPP

The public-private partnership (PPP) in tourism is a collaboration between the public sector and private sector to develop and manage tourism infrastructure, products, and services. In a PPP, the public sector provides various forms of support, such as land use rights, tax incentives, regulatory oversight, and financing, while the private sector provides funding, expertise, and other resources to develop and operate tourism facilities and services. PPPs in tourism can take various forms, including the development of new attractions, the renovation of existing facilities, the provision of tourism-related services, and the promotion of tourism destinations. Some examples of PPPs in tourism include the development of theme parks, hotels, cruise ship terminals, museums, and other cultural attractions.

TYPICAL TOURISM PPP PRODUCTS

Governments and tourism industries can collaborate regionally in various ways, such as developing tourism strategies, creating policy networks, and investing in cooperative marketing campaigns. The private sector plays a crucial role in delivering services to tourists, involving stakeholders like investors, developers, accommodations, attractions, tour companies, and more. Government agencies and tourism offices also collaborate with local community representatives.

Governments alone cannot develop tourism as they lack business operations, while the private sector may require assistance with regulations, resources, and funding. This is especially true in regional areas where the government controls natural attractions and locals lack the funds or skills for tourism development. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) serve as a means to bring together the necessary resources.

The development of tourism have been shaped by many factors among which Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) play a key role as they bring together government agencies and the public sector with representatives of the whole tourism value chain under the same goals of promoting socio-economic development, sustainability, job creation and international competitiveness through tourism.



Development and management of tourist accommodations such as hotels, resorts, and lodges.

In Italy, PPPs are used for the development of rural tourism and the promotion of rural areas as tourist destinations. Private entrepreneurs can invest in the renovation of rural houses, wineries, and farms, while the government provides support in preserving rural culture, infrastructure projects, and the promotion of local products. Good examples of best practice can be found in Italy's "[Albergo Diffuso](#)" is an innovative tourist reception model. It originated from renovating empty post-earthquake houses for tourism in Friuli (1976). This approach offers a unique experience by dispersing accommodations across the urban core, involving the entire community horizontally. It promotes sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism, especially in non-traditional destinations like historic centers and rural settlements. The model combats predatory tourism by preserving local customs and revitalizing old buildings. Some hotels have received ECOLABEL certification for promoting environmental activities and safeguarding cultural identity.



Construction and operation of tourism infrastructure.

Transport in the European Union accounted for 25% of greenhouse gas emissions in 2018, with road transport responsible for 72%. To promote sustainability, the European Union has focused on expanding bicycle infrastructure. Projects like the “Iron Curtain Trail” and EuroVelo’s network of 14 long-distance routes have been subsidized to improve European bicycle tourism. EuroVelo 8, spanning 3,300 km through 9 countries, offers an exciting cycling adventure. The [MEDCYCLETOUR](#) project, based on EuroVelo 8, aimed to boost cycling tourism in the Mediterranean region with a budget of over 2.5 million euros.

Benefits of bicycle tourism in the Mediterranean region include zero-impact transportation, support for local economies, and social sustainability for communities.



Creation and maintenance of tourist attractions such as theme parks, museums, and cultural heritage sites.

The [Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao](#) is a renowned contemporary art museum that was developed through a partnership between the Basque Government and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. The government provided the funding and infrastructure, while the foundation contributed its expertise and collection. This partnership has significantly boosted tourism in the region.



Promotion and marketing campaigns to attract tourists and boost tourism demand

[Rota Vicentina](#) is a 740 km trail in southern Portugal, featuring diverse landscapes, villages, and agriculture. It passes through the natural park of southwestern Alentejo and Costa Vicentina. Co-funded by the EU and national boards, Rota Vicentina offers a platform to plan sustainable trips, explore historic villages, and enjoy Portugal's famous coastal paths. The renowned Fishermen's Trail allows visitors to experience local culture by meeting fishermen, staying in guesthouses, and dining in seafood restaurants. The association promotes sustainability and certifies accommodations and restaurants as partners in preserving the project. Rota Vicentina stands out with its network of over two hundred local businesses investing in the project's principles of sustainability. There are numerous accommodation options, and the website provides a selection of events and activities to discover the local culture.



Development and management of tourist services and facilities, including visitor centers, information services, and tour guides

[The Special Nature Reserve Zasavica](#) (Serbia) of the 1st category is managed by the Goran Movement from Sremska Mitrovica. This is an excellent example of a public-private partnership (PPP), making it the first non-governmental organization in Serbia to manage a protected natural property. The central hub for tourists is the Visitor Center, which features an observatory, a souvenir shop, an ethno room, and an ethnological collection. The reserve offers various activities such as boat rides or small boat excursions, hiking tours, photo safaris, bird watching, sports and recreational activities, as well as the organization of seminars, workshops, and categorized camps.



Conservation and preservation projects for natural and cultural resources to ensure sustainable tourism practices

Mont-Saint-Michel is an iconic island commune in Normandy, France, known for its medieval abbey and picturesque architecture. A PPP was established to preserve and manage this UNESCO World Heritage site, involving collaboration between the French government, local authorities, and private stakeholders. The partnership focuses on sustainable development, visitor management, and conservation efforts to protect the unique cultural and natural heritage of [Mont-Saint-Michel](#).



Training and capacity building programs to enhance the skills of local communities and tourism industry stakeholders

The Visit Finland Education Network is a PPP initiative that focuses on training and capacity building in the tourism sector in Finland. It brings together educational institutions, tourism businesses, and government agencies to provide comprehensive training programs for tourism professionals. The network offers courses, workshops, and mentorship programs to enhance skills and promote innovation in the industry.



Tourism research and data collection initiatives to support evidence-based decision-making and planning

The [Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions \(NBTC\)](#) collaborates with various partners, including research agencies and private organizations, to conduct market research and gather data on tourism trends in the Netherlands. These partnerships play a crucial role in collecting comprehensive and reliable information to support evidence-based decision-making and strategic planning in the tourism sector.



Collaborative initiatives for destination management and planning, involving public and private stakeholders

The limited liability company Berlin Tourismus & Kongress GmbH, operating under the promotional name “VisitBerlin” promotes tourism services offered by the city of Berlin worldwide. It serves as a service agency for congress and tourism partners in various markets. [“VisitBerlin”](#) also distributes tourist information and provides comprehensive tourism services to visitors of the German capital. “VisitBerlin” has six shareholders composed of public and private entities such as VisitBerlin Partnerhotel eV, Investment Bank Berlin, City of Berlin, Berlin-Schönefeld Airport, Berlin Fair, and TMB Tourismus-Marketing Brandenburg GmbH.



Public amenities and facilities improvement projects, such as public parks, restrooms, and signage, to enhance the visitor experience.

[The Parco Dora project](#) in Turin, Italy is a notable example of a tourism PPP project. It involved the transformation of an abandoned industrial area into a vibrant urban park, aiming to enhance the city’s tourism offerings and provide recreational spaces for both locals and visitors. The project was implemented through a partnership between the public sector, private investors, and local communities. The park has become a popular destination for outdoor activities, events, and festivals, attracting both locals and tourists.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives in PPP in tourism are significant as they shape the direction and outcomes of collaborative efforts between public and private sectors. By aligning their efforts towards these objectives, PPPs in tourism can effectively leverage the expertise, resources, and innovative ideas of both sectors, leading to the development of vibrant and sustainable tourism destinations that benefit local communities, visitors, and the industry as a whole.



Promoting socio-economic development

PPPs aim to contribute to the economic growth and social well-being of the communities and regions involved in tourism. They seek to generate positive impacts on local economies, create employment opportunities, and support overall development.



Enhancing the visitor experience

PPPs strive to improve the quality and diversity of tourism offerings, ensuring that visitors have memorable and enjoyable experiences. This can include developing and maintaining attractive attractions, providing high-quality services, and enhancing infrastructure and facilities.



Fostering sustainability and responsible tourism practices

PPPs emphasize the importance of sustainable and responsible tourism development. They aim to minimize negative environmental impacts, preserve cultural heritage, promote community engagement, and support the principles of sustainable tourism.



Creating job opportunities

PPPs aim to generate employment opportunities within the tourism sector, contributing to job creation and reducing unemployment rates. By collaborating with the private sector, governments can leverage expertise and resources to stimulate job growth in areas such as accommodation, transportation, and tourism services.



Increasing international competitiveness

PPPs seek to enhance the competitiveness of destinations by improving their attractiveness and competitiveness in the global tourism market. This can involve marketing and promotional activities, infrastructure development, product diversification, and fostering innovation and technology adoption.



Stimulating overall economic growth in the tourism sector

PPPs aim to drive economic growth and increase the contribution of the tourism sector to the overall economy. By leveraging private sector investments and expertise, PPPs can stimulate investment, expand tourism infrastructure, and generate increased revenue for governments and local communities.

SCOPE

The scope of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in tourism is broad and encompasses various areas. Here are some key areas where PPPs play a significant role:



Infrastructure development

PPPs can involve the construction, operation, and management of tourism infrastructure such as airports, ports, roads, railways, and transportation systems. Private sector expertise and investment are crucial in developing and maintaining efficient and modern infrastructure to support tourism activities.



Accommodation facilities

PPPs can be formed to develop and manage tourist accommodations, including hotels, resorts, lodges, and eco-lodges. Private sector involvement ensures quality standards, innovative design, and efficient operations, while the government provides regulatory oversight and support.



Tourist attractions and amenities

PPPs can focus on the creation, maintenance, and operation of tourist attractions such as theme parks, museums, cultural heritage sites, nature reserves, and recreational facilities. The private sector brings expertise in attraction development and management, while the government ensures the preservation of cultural and natural heritage.



Destination marketing and promotion

Collaborative marketing campaigns and initiatives between public and private entities are essential for attracting tourists. PPPs can involve joint branding, advertising, digital marketing, and promotional activities to showcase destinations, events, and unique tourism experiences.



Capacity building and training

PPPs can support training and capacity-building programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of tourism industry stakeholders, including local communities, service providers, and entrepreneurs. Public and private partners can collaborate to develop training curricula, provide mentorship, and facilitate skills transfer.



Sustainable tourism development

PPPs can address sustainability challenges by implementing conservation and preservation projects for natural and cultural resources. This includes initiatives for responsible tourism practices, waste management, eco-certifications, biodiversity protection, and community engagement.



Destination management and planning

PPPs can play a vital role in destination management, involving public and private stakeholders in collaborative decision-making, strategic planning, and governance structures. This ensures the balanced development and long-term sustainability of tourist destinations.

MAIN AUDIENCE

The main audience for Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) consists of both public and private entities. The collaboration between these two audiences is essential for the successful implementation and long-term sustainability of PPP initiatives in sectors like tourism.

Public

It is crucial that national-level governments recognize the importance of tourism as a form of economic development. This means that in these countries, central and regional governments prioritize tourism, develop strategies, enact new laws, employ tourism advisors within newly established tourism ministries, and so on (OECD, 2012).

The second crucial thing of government involvement is the regional or local nature. Often, tourism focuses geographically on particular attractions. Therefore, central governments need to work with regional and local government agencies to ensure the efficient development of tourism at these destinations and within the national context. This collaboration will often centre on a particular project or PPP initiative. Partnerships are important because the necessary resources and expertise are sometimes less developed at a local government level and need to be accessed from national-level government agencies. This suggests that regional and local tourism governments and destinations may benefit from examples of good practices from places around the world dealing with similar problems.

Entities:

1. Ministries for tourism/infrastructure / local economy/ecology
2. National and regional tourism organizations
3. Chamber of Commerce
4. Cultural heritage departments
5. Investment agencies

Private sector

A tourism economy affects and is affected by other more traditional areas of government such as agriculture, transport, economic development, and regional planning so in many countries these linkages are being charted and responsibilities are being established. This requires collaboration between various central government organizations. It may also require interaction and perhaps partnerships with non-government agencies including the private sector.

The public sector may include government entities, non-profit organizations, or other public agencies, while the private sector may include businesses, investors, and other commercial entities

According to the World Tourism Organization, they classify the following service providers/potential partners (participants):

1. Accommodation for visitors;
2. Food and beverage - catering activities;
3. Road, railway, water and air passenger transport;
4. Transport equipment rental;
5. Travel agencies and other activities - reservation services;
6. Cultural activities;
7. Sports and recreational activities;
8. Trade of tourism-specific goods for a particular country;
9. Other activities that are specific to tourism for a particular country.

BENEFITS AND MOTIVATIONS FOR ENGAGING IN PPPS IN TOURISM

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the tourism sector have gained significant attention due to the numerous benefits and motivations they offer to all involved stakeholders. These partnerships bring together the resources, expertise, and strengths of both public and private entities, fostering collaboration and synergy to drive tourism development.



Access to private sector expertise

PPPs in tourism allow public sector entities to leverage the expertise, resources, and innovative ideas of private sector partners. This collaboration brings in specialized knowledge, industry best practices, and market insights that can contribute to the development and management of tourism projects or initiatives.



Innovation

PPPs foster innovation in the tourism sector by combining the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of the private sector with the regulatory framework and public resources of the government. This collaboration encourages the introduction of new ideas, technologies, and approaches, leading to the development of unique tourism products and experiences.



Risk sharing

Engaging in PPPs enables the sharing of risks between the public and private sectors. Both parties assume certain risks associated with the project, reducing the burden on either side. This risk-sharing arrangement provides greater financial security and encourages investment in tourism projects that may have higher uncertainties or long-term payback periods.



Cost savings

PPPs in tourism can lead to cost savings through efficient allocation and utilization of resources. Private sector partners often bring in their expertise in project management, cost control, and operational efficiency, resulting in streamlined processes and optimized resource utilization, ultimately reducing project costs.



Increased efficiency

Collaboration between public and private sectors in PPPs enhances operational efficiency in tourism projects. Private sector partners bring expertise in process optimization, technology adoption, and performance monitoring, leading to streamlined operations, improved service delivery, and enhanced visitor experiences.



Filling funding gaps

PPPs in tourism help bridge funding gaps by attracting private sector investment. The public sector may have limited financial resources to fully fund tourism projects, and private sector participation brings in additional funding and investment capital, enabling the implementation of projects that might not have been feasible otherwise.



Generating revenue

PPPs can generate revenue streams for both public and private sector partners. By developing and operating tourism-related infrastructure or services, such as hotels, attractions, or transportation systems, both parties can benefit from revenue sharing or other financial arrangements, contributing to sustainable funding for the project and its stakeholders.



Meeting tourism demand

PPPs can effectively respond to the evolving tourism demand and market dynamics. Through collaboration, public and private sector partners can identify and address specific tourism trends, develop new products or services, and cater to the changing preferences of tourists, ensuring that destinations remain competitive and meet the demands of the market.

RISKS

When engaging in Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the tourism sector, it is important to consider the potential risks involved. These risks can impact the success and sustainability of PPP projects and require careful assessment and management. Understanding and addressing risks in PPPs is crucial to ensure that both public and private partners can navigate challenges effectively and achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.



Financial risks

These risks refer to potential financial losses or failure to achieve expected financial outcomes. This may include lack of funding, unforeseen costs, revenue fluctuations, or changes in the market environment that impact the financial sustainability of the project.



Political risks

Politics can have a significant influence on tourism and PPPs. Political risks may involve changes in government policies, legislation or regulations, political instability, changes in power, or political decisions that adversely affect tourism operations or PPPs.



Operational risks

These risks relate to the failure to effectively manage and operate tourism projects. This may include poor planning, lack of management skills, inadequate capacity or resources, technical issues, or unforeseen events that disrupt the normal functioning of the project.



Legal risks

Legal risks involve potential legal disputes, inconsistencies or mismatches between contractual obligations, laws, and regulations. This may include a lack of clear and enforceable contracts, unforeseen legal issues, disagreements in the interpretation of contractual provisions, or changes in the legal environment that can impact PPPs.



Reputation risks

These risks pertain to the potential damage to the reputation or perception of the project or PPP participants. This can result from negative media coverage, poor crisis management, failure to adhere to sustainable practices, poor service quality, or other factors that can have a negative impact on public perception.

It is important to note that these risks are not exhaustive and can vary depending on the specific circumstances and context of PPPs in tourism.

PROCESS

Trends in experiential tourism are constantly evolving as travellers seek unique and authentic experiences. Here are some current trends in experiential tourism:



Local Immersion

Travelers are increasingly interested in immersing themselves in local culture and getting to know the destination from an insider's perspective. This includes engaging with local communities, participating in cultural activities, and learning traditional skills or crafts.



Nature and Adventure

Many travellers are drawn to experiential tourism that allows them to connect with nature and engage in adventurous activities. This includes hiking, wildlife encounters, eco-tourism initiatives, and sustainable outdoor experiences.



Food and Culinary Experiences

Culinary tourism continues to gain popularity, with travellers seeking authentic food experiences that go beyond dining in restaurants. This includes farm-to-table experiences, cooking classes, food tours, and visiting local markets.



Wellness and Mindfulness

Experiential tourism has also seen a rise in wellness-focused experiences. Travelers are seeking destinations that offer activities like yoga retreats, meditation workshops, spa treatments, and wellness-focused itineraries that promote relaxation and self-care.



Cultural Heritage

Exploring the cultural heritage of a destination remains a key aspect of experiential tourism. Travelers are interested in visiting historical sites, museums, and art galleries, and engaging with local traditions, festivals, and performances.



Sustainable and Responsible Tourism

There is a growing emphasis on sustainable and responsible tourism practices within the realm of experiential travel. Travelers are increasingly conscious of their impact on the environment and local communities, and they seek experiences that align with their values of sustainability, conservation, and social responsibility.



Technology Integration

Technology is playing a significant role in enhancing experiential tourism. Virtual reality, augmented reality, and mobile apps are being utilized to provide immersive and interactive experiences, enabling travellers to explore destinations in innovative ways.

Italy and Serbia have great potential for enhancing this form of tourism together, particularly in the segments of nature and adventure, food and culinary experiences, and rural tourism.

STRUCTURING A PPP: AVAILABLE PPP OPTIONS

Structuring a PPP (Public-Private Partnership) in the context of tourism involves the consideration of various available options to facilitate collaboration between the public and private sectors.

These partnerships aim to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, such as enhancing service quality, promoting sustainable tourism practices, and driving economic growth, with several options commonly utilized within the realm of tourism PPPs.

Each option presents distinct characteristics and benefits, allowing stakeholders to tailor their approach based on project requirements and objectives. In this paragraph, we will explore and describe these various PPP options, highlighting their key features and potential advantages for engaging in successful tourism initiatives.



Service Contract

This PPP option involves establishing a contract between a public authority and a private partner for the provision of specific services in tourism. The public authority may pay the private partner based on the services delivered, and the private partner assumes responsibility for management and operational activities in accordance with contractual obligations.



Management Contracts

This PPP option entails transferring certain management and operational authority over a tourism facility or destination to a private partner. The public authority retains ownership of the facility or destination, but the private partner assumes responsibility for its management and daily operations.



Concession Contracts

This PPP option grants a long-term right to use and exploit a specific tourism facility or resource to a private partner. The private partner may assume responsibility for the construction, management, and maintenance of the facility, and in return, may have the right to generate revenues from the activity over a specified period.



Build-Operate-Transfer

This PPP option involves a private partner constructing a tourism facility, operating it for a certain period, and then transferring it back to the public authority. During the operational period, the private partner assumes responsibility for the operational activities and has the right to revenues generated from the facility.



Joint Venture and Hybrid Arrangements

These PPP options involve collaboration between the public and private sectors through joint investment in a tourism project. The public authority and private partner jointly invest funds, resources, and expertise in the project and share the risks and rewards that arise from it. Hybrid arrangements combine elements of different PPP options to adapt to the specific needs and circumstances of the project.

FINANCING MODELS FOR PPP IN TOURISM

Financing is a crucial factor in the successful implementation of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in tourism. Various financing models provide opportunities for collaboration between the public and private sectors in realizing tourism projects. However, choosing the appropriate financing model for PPPs in tourism requires careful consideration to ensure maximum efficiency and project success. The importance of making the right choice in financing models is paramount, as each model carries specific characteristics, benefits, and risks. Different factors, such as the project type, financial capacity of the involved parties, expected revenues, and project duration, need to be taken into account when deciding on the appropriate financing model.

Therefore, in this paragraph, we will explore several key financing models for PPPs in tourism:



Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT)

In this model, the private partner is responsible for financing, designing, constructing, and operating the tourism project for a specified period. After the agreed-upon period, ownership and operation of the project are transferred back to the public authority.



Build-Own-Operate (BOO)

Under this model, the private partner finances, develops, owns, and operates the tourism project for a specified period. The private partner retains ownership throughout the project's lifecycle and is responsible for its operation.



Build-Transfer-Operate (BTO)

In the BTO model, the private partner finances and constructs the tourism project and transfers it to the public authority upon completion. The private partner then operates the project for a specific period under a contract with the public authority.



Lease

In this financing model, the public authority leases the tourism project to a private partner for a predetermined period. The private partner is responsible for financing, operating, and maintaining the project during the lease period.



Revenue Sharing

Under the revenue sharing model, the public authority and private partner enter into an agreement to share the revenue generated by the tourism project. The private partner typically provides the financing, operates the project, and shares a portion of the revenue with the public authority.

The choice of financing model depends on the specific project requirements, financial capabilities, and objectives of the parties involved, and these models provide different approaches to funding PPP projects in tourism, allowing for shared responsibilities and risks between the public and private sectors.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO PPPS IN TOURISM IN THE EU AND CANDIDATE COUNTRIES

EU legal framework

The European Union (EU) has established a legal framework that governs various aspects of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in tourism. This framework includes directives, regulations, and guidelines that aim to harmonize and streamline PPP practices across member states. The EU legal framework provides guidelines on procurement procedures, competition rules, transparency, and accountability in PPPs.

One of the key directives relevant to PPPs in the EU is the [Directive 2014/23/EU](#) on the award of concession contracts. This directive sets out rules and procedures for awarding concession contracts, including those related to tourism infrastructure and services. It aims to ensure transparency, equal treatment, and competition in the awarding of concessions.

States' own legal frameworks

In addition to the EU legal framework, individual member states and candidate countries have their own legal frameworks that regulate PPPs in tourism. These frameworks may vary in terms of specific laws, regulations, and policies governing PPPs within their respective jurisdictions. States' legal frameworks determine the legal requirements, procedures, and obligations that must be followed when entering into PPP agreements in the tourism sector.

The legal frameworks at both the EU and state levels play a crucial role in ensuring the legality, transparency, and effectiveness of PPP projects in tourism. They provide a set of rules and guidelines that govern the formation, implementation, and management of PPPs, protecting the interests of both public and private partners involved. These legal frameworks help establish a clear legal structure, define the rights and responsibilities of each party, and ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations throughout the PPP lifecycle.

THE CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING THE SUCCESS OF PPP IN TOURISM

Evaluating the success of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the tourism sector is essential to measure the effectiveness and impact of these collaborative initiatives. It involves assessing various aspects such as economic viability, social benefits, environmental sustainability, and stakeholder satisfaction. By conducting comprehensive evaluations, policymakers, investors, and other stakeholders can gain insights into the strengths, weaknesses, and overall outcomes of PPPs in tourism. This enables them to make informed decisions, refine strategies, and optimize future partnerships to maximize the positive impact on destination development and the tourism industry as a whole.

Financial factors

These criteria pertain to the economic aspects and outcomes of PPPs in tourism. They include:

Financial sustainability: Assessing whether the PPP is financially sustainable, i.e., capable of generating sufficient revenues to cover costs and achieve return on investment.

Efficient resource allocation: Evaluating whether resources are being utilized efficiently to achieve desired outcomes and goals of the PPP.

Financial transparency: Assessing the transparency of financial flows, costs, and revenues of the PPP to ensure public trust and stakeholder confidence.

Non-financial factors

These criteria focus on broader societal, environmental, and social aspects of PPPs in tourism. They include:

Contribution to local development: Evaluating whether the PPP contributes to the local economy, social development, and community sustainability.

Social responsibility: Assessing whether the PPP recognizes and responsibly manages social issues, including employment, training, and worker well-being.

Environmental sustainability: Evaluating whether the PPP has a positive impact on environmental protection, preservation of natural resources, and reduction of negative environmental impacts.

The evaluation of PPP success in tourism involves a combination of financial and non-financial factors to provide a comprehensive understanding of the outcomes and impacts of the PPP on various aspects of the tourism industry and the community. These criteria help assess whether the PPP has achieved its objectives, provided a return on investment, delivered social benefits, and contributed to sustainable tourism development.

TIPS AND TRICKS



Clearly defined objectives

Ensure that the objectives of the PPP in tourism are well-defined and aligned with the desired outcomes. This clarity helps guide the implementation and evaluation of the partnership.



Strong legal and regulatory framework

Establish a solid legal and regulatory framework that governs the PPP in tourism. This framework should provide clear guidelines, rights, and obligations for all involved parties, ensuring transparency and accountability.



Robust financial structure

Develop a strong financial structure for the PPP, considering the funding sources, budget allocation, and revenue generation mechanisms. This structure should be sustainable and capable of supporting the implementation and maintenance of tourism initiatives.



Effective risk management

Identify and assess potential risks associated with the PPP in tourism and develop strategies to mitigate them. This includes analyzing financial, operational, legal, and reputational risks, and implementing appropriate risk management measures.



Stakeholder engagement and communication

Foster effective communication and collaboration with all stakeholders involved in the PPP, including government agencies, private sector partners, local communities, and tourists. Engage stakeholders in decision-making processes and keep them informed about the progress and outcomes of the partnership.



Performance monitoring and evaluation

Establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the performance of the PPP in tourism. Regularly assess the achievement of objectives, measure the impact, and make necessary adjustments to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

CONCLUSION

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The manual on experiential tourism covers a wide range of topics, including the definition of experiential tourism, the aspects of sustainability, marketing strategies, and partnerships between the public and private sectors in the tourism industry.

This comprehensive guide equips readers with the knowledge and tools to understand, plan, and implement sustainable and engaging tourism experiences.

It emphasises the importance of considering environmental and socio-cultural aspects, defining clear objectives and economic aspects, monitoring progress, and fostering partnerships for the success of experiential tourism initiatives. With a focus on strategy, sustainability, and collaboration, the manual provides valuable insights for those looking to thrive in the experiential tourism sector.

Enjoy your journey in creating experiential tourism experiences!



RE-EXPERIENCING



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