

Output Factsheet

Output title:

Output 3.1: Integrated Sustainable Tourism Strategy Guidelines

Summary of the output (max. 2500 characters)

INSiGHTS project provides three transnational guidelines for integrated regional sustainable tourism developing through three different stages: self-assessment, vision development and strategy building. All three stages are interlinked and built on previous knowledge. All tools are based on an international literature review and include international key publications such as indicator systems by the European commission, the German tourism association or the World Tourism Organisation.

The self-assessment tool embraces all main fields of sustainable tourism development such as
I) Destination strategy, cooperation and management structure;
II) Environment and land use heritage;
III) Socio-economic benefits and regional development;
IV) Socio-cultural and built heritage as well as
V) Quality of visitor experiences and product development.

Therefore, it is in line with international frameworks. The guidelines for regional visions have been developed using the self-assessment manual analysing whether and if yes, which desired conditions apply, thus facilitating this difficult planning step. The third tool is shaped based on the theoretic framework of strengths-based strategy building, operationalising the steps from a critical analysis to the definition of clear strategic goals, work and action plans.

Comparing the presented transnational guidelines to other ones in this field, such as Indicators of sustainable Development for Tourism destinations by the WTO (2004) or the compilation by Hashemkhani Zolfani et al. (2015) on more than 150 approaches, one significant difference is easy to recognise; most frameworks focus on the evaluation and monitoring of the given situation. In our case – and this is the added value compared to other tools – the self-assessment has already been designed to discuss the current situation but also to agree on a defined future (e.g. see page 32 in the self-assessment manual). This planning and management orientation implemented in all three tools is perceived as a specific added value and will be highlighted in the scientific dissemination.

Contribution to the project and Programme objectives (max. 1500 characters)

The Output 3.1 is in line with the Programme Objectives, especially with the Programme Specific Objective 2: Foster sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources.

The document helps to reach the project main objective: fostering sustainable utilisation of natural and cultural heritage in order to preserve and upgrade the intact local resources providing an outstanding potential to make regions attractive destinations for healthy and slow tourism. It also helps to reach the specific objectives, because it covers the 3 thematic

pillars corresponding to the specific objectives of INSiGHTS: 1. integrated multi-stakeholder governance, 2. coordinated slow, green & healthy tourism product development and 3. promotion of green & healthy lifestyle through sustainable tourism services.

The scope of all three tools is to enhance the difficult stakeholder involvement in all respective partner countries. Furthermore, the tools enhance a critical inventory and awareness of strengths and weaknesses. Clear and transparent steps, templates, checklists and illustrated examples facilitate the application and help to understand the necessary steps towards new sustainable tourism products based on a general strategy and vision.

Based on the Output 3.1. the Integrated Sustainable Strategies will be created in the piloting partners' regions. Based on these strategies partners will develop projects, that can make regions attractive destinations for healthy and slow tourism.

Transnational impact (max. 1500 characters)

The framework supports a joint learning process and a learning from each other. The process contributes to increase the respective awareness on sustainable tourism development in the partners' project regions in different countries of the Danube region.

Moreover, the Guidelines will be published on the INSiGHTS website, thus will be available for downloading and could be used by anyone even outside of the Danube region.

The framework can function as a good basis for the regional development in different countries and regions. It has easy-to understand language, so can be used not only by academics, but also by regional and tourism developers.

Contribution to EUSDR actions and/or targets (max. 1500 characters)

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) tries to enhance sustainable development across the partner countries. The process within INSiGHTS contributes to a sustainable product development in tourism and it increases the awareness of the respective indicators and criteria. The Guidelines support the improvement of the quality of tourism products and their development, they help to develop wellness and activity tourism in nature.

Performed testing, if applicable (max. 1000 characters)

The implementation together with the stakeholders and their feedback proved an excellent applicability. The high amount of illustration and figures was a good „investment“.

Integration and use of the output by the target group (max. 2000 characters)

All three tools are characterised by a clear structure, providing templates and tools, which are based on a short literature review that helps to understand the theoretical background.

Furthermore, the tools are designed so that they can be used in different national contexts and regions and by different stakeholder groups. The applicability is perceived as a crucial factor to achieve the desired participatory planning and the impact on sustainable tourism development. In order to facilitate the applications and to attract the stakeholders, the three tools are designed not too complex. Especially the guidelines on strategic goals include figures to ease the communication with the stakeholders in this important phase.

Geographical coverage and transferability (max. 1500 characters)

The transferability to other destinations in Nordic countries as well as in the Mediterranean area is given. The analysis of international frameworks and tools were very helpful in this respect. Geographical limitations have not been perceived. However, a stakeholder involvement and a sense for theoretical approaches are certainly needed. It applies therefore for all developed countries but not for developing countries.

Durability (max. 1500 characters)

The developed concept can be tailor-made to the respective destination and its specific requirements. Therefore, it can be used in the coming decade to improve the sustainability of the destination to monitor processes and to use the tools for a follow-up self-assessment. The provided instruments are also helpful to create new tourism products in the future.

Synergies with other projects/ initiatives and / or alignment with current EU policies/ directives/ regulations, if applicable (max. 1500 characters)

The Guidelines contribute to tourism development and maintenance of the natural environment. However, we perceive that the involvement of the cultural heritage is also often included in this strategy. Therefore, we see synergies with CultPlatForm_21.

The exchange based on the Guidelines improved the cooperation and strengthened the partnership for European Tourism which is one aim of e.g. Com (2006) 134.

The Guidelines support EU strategies to enhance the implementation and applicability of sustainable tourism goals such as the Tourism Sustainability Group announced by Com (2003) 716 or the Agenda built upon the recommendations of the TSG (Com (2007) 621).

Output integration in the current political/ economic/ social/ technological/ environmental/ legal/ regulatory framework (max. 2000 characters)

The Guidelines contribute to the overall goal of enhanced sustainable tourism. Therefore, positive effects on economic, social and ecological development can be expected. This output is in line with the European and national policy.

Some of the stakeholders involved during the participatory processes in the pilot regions in applying the Guidelines, are local and regional decision-makers of their countries and can implement the gained ideas into new strategies and frameworks.