

Transnational Cooperation Programme Interreg
Balkan-Mediterranean 2014-2020
1st CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Priority Axis 1: Entrepreneurship & Innovation

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.2: INNOVATIVE TERRITORIES

Unleashing territorial potential improving the transnational innovation capacity of
the business sector

BMP/1.2/2619/2017/INNOVIMENTOR



Generating SME product and process innovation with a new tourism mobility model, stakeholder alliances and skills alliances to facilitate the market uptake of local enterprises in remote and sparsely populated areas.

SME TRAINING PROGRAMME & VIRTUAL DESK

M4: DESTINATION BRANDING



DOMI DEVELOPMENT PC



CONTRIBUTOR

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Fig. 01: Grand Master's Palace: Greece
Source: Author

PROJECT SUMMARY

INNOViMENTOR supports the capacity of tourism SMEs in remote, peripheral and sparsely populated areas to grow in regional, national and international markets and to engage in innovation processes in the tourism sector. To enhance the capacity of tourism SMEs towards entrepreneurial, social and business innovation skill needs of tourism actors and demand-supply trends are mapped. Stakeholder fragmentation is addressed in order to achieved cross sector cooperation for product and process innovation. To build the capacity of tourism

SMEs embrace innovation and business transformation a work based learning training for major stakeholders and key players results in the EQF certification of tourism professionals.

A new business model on customer insights, key experiences and stakeholder participation is applied to advance the tourism competitiveness in the project area. The iCLOUD MUSEUM supports tourism SMES in remote peripheral and sparsely populated areas to exploit growth assets and access key markets by delivering



process and product innovation in the highly competitive tourism market respective COP21 agreement on climate changes and resource efficiency.

Fully in the spirit of the Grand Societal Challenges 2020 INNOVIMENTOR designs, delivers and packages a full scale creative tourism product to enter the global tourism market with 80 unique selling points reforming and reshaping both the demand and supply pattern. The iCLOUD MUSEUM designs, delivers and packages a full scale creative tourism product to enter the global

tourism market in 2018. A creative tourism route with 60 unique selling points first hand authentic experiences; a booking app and an iBook for iOS and Android users and a new byer-community is established by 2018. A permanent tourism business network exploits project Legacy with 176 highly replicable deliverables, the Roving Business School with 8 branches in the Project Area and the Creative Tourism Network ensure the sustainability of achieved results, the post project operations and the follow-up activities.

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1 INTRODUCTION

M4 DESTINATION BRANDING provides a road map that will help the INNOVIMENTOR Transnational Partnership and the cooperating SMEs identify, engage and communicate with the Project Area ID and the iCLOUD MUSEUM along the way. The process of destination branding doesn't happen in isolation. It involves a range of sectors, stakeholder groups and delivery partners — such as government agencies, communities and business groups —

working collaboratively to deliver their part of the picture. A holistic destination management approach that includes planning, implementation, regular reviews and assessment is needed. Also to consider and manage the unique natural environments, the cultural attributes and the community of interest at the heart of the tourism destination, is a prerequisite for success.



Fig. 02: London, UK
Source: European Best Destinations



2 DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

2.1 Definition

Destination management is designed to guide sustainable growth and help ensure the viability of the tourism industry, enabling it to become resilient to external shocks and changes in a dynamic and competitive market. It is an ongoing process in which tourism, industry, government and community leaders plan for the future and manage a destination. It is also a holistic process that ensures tourism adds value to the economy, social fabric and ecology of our communities. Tourism can be an economic driver, generating jobs and contributing vibrant lifestyle benefits to our communities. But equally tourism can leave a heavy environmental footprint, if unplanned. Thus it needs to be managed to ensure that it leaves a positive legacy for current and future generations. The INNOVIMENTOR tourism result needs to be considered in the broader context of the BALKAN-MEDITERRANEAN Cooperation Area. To be effective, planning, development and marketing activity must be based on research and the needs of the consumer. The Destination Management Process will integrate both demand (the visitor or consumer needs) and supply (the product or experience). A such integrates four key delivery areas :

- Research & Analysis
- Consultative Planning
- Experience & Product Development
- Marketing & Promotions

Adopting a holistic destination management approach the COLLABORANDO Tourism Business Network will ensure that industry objectives are planned and managed to meet the needs and aspirations of the involved communities and the particular context unique to each destination. Importantly, one of the key outcomes of a holistic destination management, the case

here would be the Project Area, is a strong resilient tourism industry with dynamic and adaptive product and experience offerings that adapt to the needs of the visitors and the involved community as the destination evolves and matures. The use of primary and secondary data collection to inform both planning and implementation will contribute to a well-managed destination (Project Area) with constantly updated offers. Through good destination management the COLLABORANDO Tourism Business Network will foster a viable and diversified tourism offer which will open up new opportunities across the economy for growth investment, job creation, cultural and lifestyle outcomes and potential income sources to manage and maintain cultural and natural heritage assets of the destination. It is common knowledge that tourism, if well managed, can leverage other sectors of the economy to open up new markets for the products and services on offer. There is no single template or one size fits all approach to Destination Management. Destinations vary in size, type, structure and aspiration for their tourism future. However, there are some common processes and fundamental concepts that need to be considered:

- **Defining the destination** as part of the destination management process by drawing notional boundaries and points of access.
- **Understanding the market** (customers /visitors) and **offers**(key product or experiences)
- Adapting or creating a strong community **vision** for the future of the destination
- Develop a **destination management structure** with a clear communication process that links all relevant stakeholders and



seeks their engagement in the delivery of the vision.

In summary, Destination Management is:

- an **ongoing process** that engages **delivery partners** in a strong **collaborative network to deliver on a clear vision for the future**;
- occurs when all stakeholders take a collaborative and holistic approach to developing and marketing the

tourism offers, consider the best **process**, the **place** to which it relates, the **people** involved and the **product** on offer - all determined by the needs and expectations of those who will visit

- is based on a framework that *integrates five key delivery areas: research and analysis, bottom up planning, product development, marketing and evaluation.*

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2.2 Destination Management Practice

There is no one-size-fits-all solution or template for destination management. However, the basic processes are the same. However the relationship below is an important principle:

**Place – Target Market –Key Actors-
Product**

The Place

Visitors determine in their mind what they perceive the destination to be, even prior to their arrival. The destination can be defined by a geographical attribute such as the island of Corfu and Chios in Greece or the rural parts of the Rhodopi Mountains in Bulgaria. It could be the product indication such as a label determining a wine region, or by regional or state boundaries. Not every community that receives visitors can be regarded as a destination in the destination management context. A region may be the core attraction or the center of a destination; a community may be part of a broader destination; or it may be part of the journey to get to a destination.

The Target Market

To gain an understanding of the target market the following questions shall be asked:

- Who is currently visiting the destination?
- Where are they coming from? How are they getting to the destination?

- Which is the travel pattern? Are they coming as singles, couples without children, couples with children?
- How long are they staying?
- What are they looking for in an experience?

Key Actors

It is not a simple task to identify tourism partners in each geolocation or Pilot Project Area, Activity 3.1 and 6.2 shall help set up the Stakeholder Map: their mission is to engage and communicate more broadly including also stakeholders not directly/traditionally involved in tourism and consider external partners not currently engaged in tourism, but who directly or indirectly impact upon the tourism product and experience in each Pilot Project Area. The relevance of a person or an agency may not always be obvious within the destination management context. They might be responsible for the planning or delivery of components of the destination management process. There may be stakeholders who work for a local council or an archaeological authority and who are responsible for the planning or the issue of permits and authorizations.

To gain an understanding of the stakeholder landscape the following questions shall be asked:

- Who is the community of interest?
- Who are the key destination management delivery partners/stakeholders; and do they understand their role in the destination



management? (land use planning and development assessment; natural resource management; economic development planning and activity ; recreation facilities and services; community services; the arts, events and cultural heritage agencies; the environment and sustainability; relate to support or impede our destination management goals?

- who are the key staff in a business; have they got the right skills and experience for their destination management role?
- how to find common ground or a shared interest as a basis for a productive and mutually beneficial relationship with this key contact?

Bottom up approach

Planning is about working together to share knowledge and ideas about creating the COLLABORANDO Creative Tourism Area as a result of the completion of the BMP/2619/Project INNOVIMENTOR, defining what they can offer, and agreeing on what their values are. These values should be expressed in the tourism vision and brand of the COLLABORANDO Tourism Business Network. Vision and values have already been established by the Partnership during the Project planning process, however the implementation has its own dynamics and the in situ community, cultural, environment or economic development interests can be also taken into account.

The Product (Experience is the Product)

The 'tourism product' is what customers buys, the 'tourism experience' is what they live and remember. The tourism product includes – accommodation, attractions and tours that tourists purchase, participate in or consume. The *tourism experience* – the emotional feeling or personal achievement a tourist derives from the purchase, participation or consumption of the tourism product(s). Thus the question for the e COLLABORANDO Tourism Business Network shall be: What is it that the destination is offering and can it deliver on the expectations of the visitor?

To gain an understanding of the experience landscape the following questions shall be asked:

- What experience does the destination offer?
- What is promised in the marketing campaign?
- Which is the region to be called destination? (80 geolocations in GR/BG/CY/AL/FYROM)
- What do visitors expect to see and do in the region; what are the core attractions or the reasons visitors come to the destination?
- How do visitors get to the destination?
- Which is the travel pattern: do visitors travel in family groups, special interest groups, couples or singles?
- Which is the accommodation pattern? Where do they stay?
- Which is the consumption pattern? What do visitors eat and drink? What do they spend their money on?
- Which is the mobility pattern? How do they move around?
- Which is the satisfaction pattern? What do visitors do and experience? Does the destination deliver on expectations? Are visitors satisfied with the destination?

It is of crucial importance to understand what the destination is offering, its tourism product or experience, particularly from the visitor's perspective. An experience doesn't have to be a product. It might be the excellent customer service and quality presentation of your destination. Understanding the Project Area offers is critical as it is at the core of the iCLOUD MUSEUM brand and brand values.

The Process

An important parameter is to determine *the best processes* in order to achieve best results. It's important to consider these other factors first because given the different approaches, roles, stakeholders, delivery partners, and circumstances in each Pilot Project Area (destination), there is no a single approach, but one with multiple parameters. There are processes and fundamental concepts to consider at



every step. The best process to employ is one that will help each Partner Area to focus on the product and experience and compare it to the visitor expectations and community aspirations or vision. Each Partner will thereby identify any gaps in service delivery and consider mechanisms for measuring quality and visitor satisfaction. Access to and the availability of the local product and experience offering need to be considered in the mix as well.

The process should be evolved in the broader context, considering the relative size, scope and scale of tourism in each Project Area, each destination within the Project Area region is very different. Not all communities see tourism as the answer to their dreams. Some regions will be satisfied to deliver a modest tourism experience. Other destinations will embrace tourism as the major economic driver for themselves and strive to deliver on the promise - and

achieve beyond expectation, esp. on an experience-based product: an experience doesn't have to be a product. It might be the excellent customer service and quality presentation of the destination. Through the iCLOUD MUSEUM and the i/eBook. Understanding what you are offering is critical as it is at the core of your brand and brand values.

To gain an understanding of the destination management approach the following questions shall be asked:

- What is the level of maturity of the destination and where is it in terms of its destination lifecycle?
- What is the overall impact of tourism on the local economy and how does it work with, leverage or support other sectors?
- What are the size, scale and scope of tourism in relation to the destination management model a Project Area community may need?

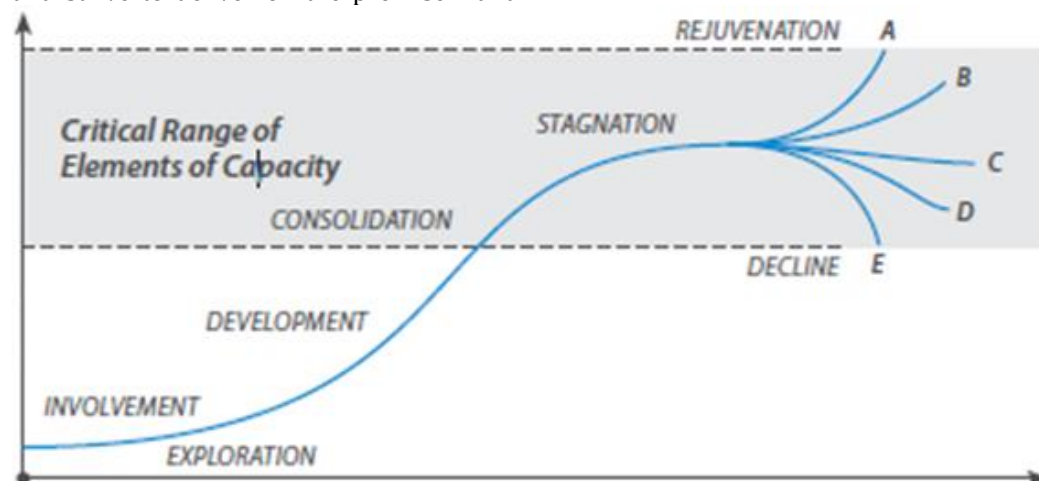


Fig. 03: Adapted from Miller and Galucci, 2004.

Destination management involves a constant and ongoing process of planning, implementation, review and assessment to ensure that the vision is optimised and objectives achieved. For this reason best practice approaches to destination management have been designed to foster collaborative approaches with key delivery partners. An Integrative Destination Management Framework is based on four interlinked areas of effort:

- **Inform – Research, Analysis & Evaluation**
- **Plan – Bottom Up Planning**
- **Develop – Destination Development**
- **Communicate – Marketing**

Research and analysis and a bottom up planning process shall **<in-form>** all parts of the best practice destination management process. They inform and show how the traditional delivery areas of destination development and marketing can yield



tangible results that develop products and experiences in a destination; and communicate the results to visitors. To drive a collaborative approach, it is important to establish a clear language commonly understood by all stakeholders. Contemporary tourism planning needs to engage a broad cross section of destination stakeholders. These include community groups, industry associations, all levels of government and the media. The product development alias the destination experience is about creating and maintaining visitor experiences, saleable products and services that meet visitor needs and expectations, reflect the destination brand and facilitate the elements of a journey within a destination. Development may not be restricted to hard infrastructure such as transport, accommodation and attractions. A destination might require investment in soft infrastructure such as cultural communication, - the case of the iCLOUD MUSEUM,- to make experiences more accessible to and interesting for the visitor. It might also need to consider existing products and experiences; identify gaps in the tourism product and experience offering; and discover opportunities to attract investment to develop new or to enhance existing product or experiences. Marketing and Promotion are about growing visitor and community awareness and demand for the destination in line with the destination brand. It involves clearly and effectively communicating what's on offer, the unique proposition both before visitors arrive and once they are in the destination. Marketing and promotion are also about providing a sales opportunity for the destination, especially utilizing the COLLABORANDO online booking app (Activity 6.4) , that could be incorporated into the i/eBook (Activity 5.4). Marketing should not ignore with internal stakeholders and community, to whom the main message shall be properly communicated. This ensures that the Project Area remains in focus also in the post-Project operation phase; that achieved results during destination management process remain a priority after the final delivery date of the Project; and that the managers of the COLLABORANDO Tourism

Business Network the can keep abreast of their progress.

The key is to communicate how tourism can deliver on the community's own vision for the future.

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Destination Development

Destination development is about creating and maintaining visitor experiences, saleable products and services that meet visitors' needs and expectations and facilitate their travel and stay within a destination. Traditionally this focus has been on assets and products. Increasingly visitors are looking to enjoy unique and fulfilling experiences that bring a destination to life and make it memorable. The most authentic visitor experiences may be developed outside the regular tourism offering. These will provide opportunities for visitors to experience the landscape, people, way of life, culture and food enjoyed by the local community. Make sure to invest in soft infrastructure rather than just hard infrastructure such as transport, accommodation and transport.



Fig. 04: Gouda Destination, Amsterdam
Source: European Best Destinations

INFORMATION MATRIX		
	QUESTIONS	SOURCES
PLACE	What is the place? Define the place as per Local Pilot Project	Visitors tend to create destination boundaries around experience clusters. Cross-regional and -sectoral collaboration will maximize the opportunity of attracting new audiences
	• What information already exists about the place you have defined as your destination?	• Government Tourism Organisations,
	• Is it a destination or part of a journey to, or from a destination?	• related National and Regional Authorities;
	• What physical attributes (natural and man-made) add to or detract from the attraction of the destination?	• Ministries of Culture and Education;
	• What historical (natural and social) information is available about the destination?	• Park Management and Environmental Authorities;
	• What plans, research or information are relevant to the destination?	• Business Clusters and Organizations;
	• Investigate Authority Management Plans and Reports of relevance (local, regional national)	• International Cooperation (UNESCO, ICOMOS, COE, WWF etc.)
	• Is there a community plan or strategic plan that sets out a vision for the community?	• Private Sector
	• Is there an Economic Development Plan (ED) / Regional Operation Programme (ROP)?	
	• What other industry sectors feature in the ED/ROP plan?	
	• How does tourism relate to or leverage these sectors?	
	• If the environment is a key aspect, is there any natural resource management, catchment management or sustainability information that may be relevant?	
	• What land use planning regulations are in place that may impact tourism?	

Table 1: Info Matrix

M4: DESTINATION BRANDING



	QUESTIONS	SOURCES
AUDIENCE AND STAKEHOLDERS	<p>Who can contribute to the Stakeholder Map?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider stakeholders with place links to the place (cultural groups or economic interest groups; authorities) Does the community have a vision? Do does Pilot Project Area pursuit a destination brand and brand strategy? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dominant Activities/interests/features; dominant landscape/urban environment; dominant natural environment and man-made assets may lead to communities of interest; Visions can be integrated into community or Local or Regional Operation Programmes (ROPs) or economic development strategies
	<p>Who is the Existing Audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the current visitor demographic and psychographics; Where are visitors coming from? Why are they coming? Is this information current and consistent? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor data can be obtained from the national/regional authorities/EUROSTAT tourism operators and the local visitor information centres can to provide information
	<p>What staff and skill base is available to collate the information?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider skilled works needed to help bring together the required information Do they have the time and capability (skill) to collect the information? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a skills audit to assess the capability of the teams involved in the process and to identify gaps. Trace potential organisations that can assist in this area (universities, academies, research centers may be able to provide information or resources via internships or research projects)
	<p>Who are the key partners?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who to collaborate with to bring together the information needed process? Define the type and level of involvement; Define other individuals or stakeholders to assist (who are they and what do they require or receive by their involvement in process)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying key partners throughout the process; List the prominent sources or information or resource agencies you have identified thus far as a starting point.

Table 02: Info Matrix

M4: DESTINATION BRANDING



	QUESTIONS	SOURCE
PRODUCT	<p>How does the iCLOUD MUSEUM Area as a whole present as a total product or experience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the iCLOUD MUSEUM offers? • What is its unique selling proposition? • Is this in line with the values and vision of the involved communities? • Is this in line with the set brand values? • What are the individual products and experiences on offer? • Do these match the needs/wants of the target market? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product audits • Information can be collated via council data lists, business directories, organisations' membership information, and local industry actors; • An online review of information promoting the iCLOUD MUSEUM Area is a great way of identifying what experiences are being promoted and offered to visitors.

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Table 3: Info Matrix

M4: DESTINATION BRANDING



PROCESS MATRIX

		QUESTION	SOURCE
PROCESS PLACE		What processes will you need to put in place to facilitate consultative destination planning? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a community vision and how does tourism contribute to this? Leverage it? Add value to it? Is there a brand statement and identified values? How do you plan to integrate the vision and brand into your destination planning process? What stage of the destination lifecycle is your destination? What is the size and scale of tourism in relation to its economic, social or environmental impact? What level of planning is required to enable a suitable management approach to be established in your destination? What planning is in place already that you can incorporate into a DM Plan? Are there gaps in planning and if so who should complete this work, how will it be resourced and when does it need to be completed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate baseline data to produce situation analysis to document current scenarios as a first step in planning.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the scope for growth in the current size and scale is tourism? How does this relate to the vision? How does this relate to your brand values and statement? What social, economic and environmental impact is this likely to have? What physical planning issues need to be considered? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate land use planning and natural resource management requirements

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Table 4: Process Matrix

PLANNING MATRIX

	QUESTIONS	SOURCES
SKILLED WORKERS	<p>Who needs to be engaged in the destination planning process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will be engaged the communities of interest, stakeholders and key delivery partners in the planning of the Project Area planning? 	<p>Draw input from the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Information Matrix local people community leaders influencers.
	<p>Is the current visitor profile achieving sufficient return on investment to support the current size and scale of tourism?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the visitor profile need to or is it likely to change in the future? What will be the catalyst for changing the visitor profile (e.g. is demand or supply the driver?) What type and level of investment are required to initiate and maintain the change? Who will resource it and is it sustainable? How will the COLLABORANDO Tourism Business Network communicate with visitors and community? What information and messages needs to be shared? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access visitor profile data Access strategy documents Conduct an Experience Audit to inform the background for the planning reasons Conduct Consultations in the Project Area (WP4) Involve industry and economic development actors;
	<p>What staff and skill base do you have available to assist with planning processes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there is a skill/capability gap, how will you fill this and how will you resource it? 	Skills and capability assessment/audit.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who are the Key Delivery Partners and what is their role? 	Refer to Information Matrix

M4: DESTINATION BRANDING



PRODUCT	<p>What product is currently on offer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the Project Area offers adequate to service current and future markets? • How will the COLLABORANDO Tourism Business Network maintain the product and experience offering to ensure visitor satisfaction? • How will the COLLABORANDO Tourism Business Network change the product and experience offering to ensure visitor satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product experience Audits (Activity 3.1/Output 1: Joint Survey Study to investigate entrepreneurial needs and skill needs of human Capital in the Project Area • Visitor satisfaction research (Activity 3.5/Output 1: Satisfaction Survey on the supply side offers in the project area)
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Table 05: Planning Matrix



DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT MATRIX

PROCESS	<p>What information can you use to assess the current stage of destination development?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure data sourcing to in-form an assessments; • Ensure sufficient supply of product on offer of the right standard to meet current visitor needs; • Where are the product and experience gaps? • Is customer service up to standard? • What are the key tourism opportunities for future development? • What size and scale parameters need to be considered? • What are the intended growth targets/parameters? • What other organisations/initiatives are involved in product or business development? • Is growth represented by increases in visitor nights, expenditure, yield or a mixture of the above? • How will this be achieved? • How will this be measured? • Does this level of development fit within the community vision & brand values? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product and experience audits; • SWOT and/or PESTEL Analysis • Tourism Opportunity Plans or Strategies (WP3: Tourism Accessibility Plan; WP4: Tourism Experience Diversity Matrix; Thesaurus of Experience Opportunities); • Visitor satisfaction data/reports (WP3: Satisfaction Survey on the supply side offers in the Project Area) • Economic development plans (WP3: Tourism Accessibility Plan); • Community vision and Brand strategy. (WP2 Communication, Dissemination and Visibility Plan).
PLACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What physical assets, sectors or activities have potential to link to tourism? • What are the physical planning, environmental or heritage considerations? 	<p>Review Tourism Opportunity Plans or strategic development plans Investigate land use planning and natural resource management requirements</p>

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M4: DESTINATION BRANDING



SKILLED WORKERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who needs to be engaged in the destination development process? How will s/he be engaged? Can the community/s of interest contribute to product and experience offering? Who is responsible for Project Area Destination Development? (What organisation and individuals?) Is there acknowledgement of this role and the relationship with tourism and other delivery partners? Do they have the skills, resources and networks to achieve this? Who are the Destination Development Key Partners? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to Information Matrix Skills and capability assessment/audit Refer to the COLLABORANDO Tourism Business Network
INDUSTRY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the industry viable? Is the industry providing the level of customer service that meets visitor expectations? Is the current visitor/market profile achieving sufficient return on investment to support the current size and scale of tourism? Does this need to change in the future to meet growth targets? What will be the catalyst for changing the visitor profile (e.g. demand or supply driven) What strategies/initiatives are needed to achieve change? What type and level of resourcing/investment is required to initiate and maintain the change? Who will resource it and is it sustainable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly review the visitor profile; Regularly review satisfaction data; Regularly review strategy documents such as Experience Audits to inform action as you progress; Involve industry and economic development stakeholders
PRODUCT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What product is currently on offer and is it meeting visitor needs and expectation? What initiatives will you put in place to maintain the product and experience offering to ensure it meets current and future visitor needs and expectations? Does the existing product and experience offering need to be refreshed? Is the level of customer service meeting expectation? Is sufficient interpretation occurring? Is it in line with the brand statement and values? How will this be resourced? Is your product development activity in line with the vision and brand? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product and experience audits; Visitor satisfaction research.

Table 06: Destination Development Matrix



COMMUNICATION MATRIX

	QUESTIONS	SOURCES
PROCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a marketing and communication plan to guide the work in the Project Area? Is there a brand strategy? How does this relate to the vision of the involved communities? How does this relate to other regional or state brands (both tourism and other related products such as food and wine)? Which process can ensure your brand message is communicated and delivered upon in the visitor experience? Which processes are in place to assess this? How to coordinate and fund the post project implementation? What resources are required and who will contribute? Is there a strategy or system to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of your marketing and communication? Which are critical success factors: (Saturation in key markets; Response to call to action; Conversion to sales; Total sales outcome; Yield; Return on investment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The INNOVIMENTOR Communication, Dissemination and Visibility Plan The Internal Communication Protocol The setup of the CREATIVE TOURISM BUSINESS NETWORK (WP6) The Booking App The numbers of downloads of the i/eBook
PLACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the branding and marketing plan reflect the physical and industry offers of the Project Area? Is it linking to or leveraging other industries or sectors? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to the Marketing Plan (Activity 3.6) Refer to Information, planning and product matrixes; Create stories and images that integrate physical aspects of your destination Refer to the narrative structures of the i/eBook Refer to the AR App

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Table 07: Communication Matrix

M4: DESTINATION BRANDING



HUMAN RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your Branding and Marketing Plan reflect the values and vision of the community and industry? • Is the industry engaged and active in destination marketing? • Is the industry delivering on the brand message? • Who is responsible for the Project Area Marketing? • What organisation and individuals participate the works? • Is their role acknowledged? • Do they have the skills, resources and networks to achieve this? • Who are the Key Partners? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to Information, planning and product matrixes; • Create stories and images that integrate the characters of your destination and the sorts of visitors or you are trying to attract • Visitor satisfaction data. Mystery shop programs • Skills and capability assessment/audit • Refer to Information and Planning Matrix/ People.
PRODUCT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the product currently on offer reflected accurately in the marketing and branding? • Is the service offering meeting current visitor/expectation? • Is the marketed product in line with the communication methods and media used by the key target markets? • Is investment required to improve the use of technology to enable effective communication with potential and engaged visitors? • Is industry skilled in using technology to communicate with visitors before, during and after their visit? • Are sufficient data collected from the use of technology? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product & experience audits • Visitor satisfaction research • No of downloads at the Appstore/Google Play (i/eBook) • AH applications downloaded

2.3 The Components

The Destination Management Components (DMC) include the vast array of documents and processes that can be produced or employed to produce a destination management plan and guide the process of implementation. Not every destination will need all of these and some may already have much of this information in other plans or information resources. The DMC Table can be used as a reference framework to assist the Project Area SMEs find the information they need for an appropriate destination management process in the context of the iCLOUD Museum.

Destination management requires collaboration around a shared vision. Tourism may be just one contributor to achieving that vision. Destination management is an ongoing process. Right from the outset the key concepts needs to be considered, which are the:

- place that makes up the destination ;

- human resources that need to be involved or considered ;
- products/services/offers on sale/available
- process to be undertaken

Which components a region integrates into its destination management process will largely depend on:

- the level of maturity or development
- the desired intensity of tourism activity
- the skills, knowledge and experience of the key people charged with developing and delivering destination management
- the resourcing of the destination



Fig.06: Porto, Portugal with Clerigos Tower
 Source: European Best Destinations

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT COMPONENTS	KEY DELIVERY AREAS	KEY DELIVERY PARTNERS	DESCRIPTION
VISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Development • Marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community • LTO/RTO/NTO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets the vision for the future of tourism; • tourism vision should link / contribute to a broader community or regional vision.
DEFINING THE DESTINA TION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTO/RTO/NTO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines the destination's notional experience boundaries according to visitor profile and product offering.
PESTEL ANALYSIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTO/RTO/NTO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is designed to provide destination managers with an analytical tool to identify different macro-environmental factors that may affect business strategies and how they may influence tourism performance now and in the future of Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal (PESTEL) factors.
SWOT ANALYSIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTO/RTO/NTO; • Community • Industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the destination (and organisational environment) via an assessment of its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT).

M4: DESTINATION BRANDING



LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTO/RTO/NTO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure planning and development controls on all categories of appropriate land is consistent with the community and tourism vision and enable the development of appropriate product and experience development (e.g. restaurants to play live music); • Consider in addition to tourism and business zones, the types of activities and potential tourism experiences to encourage in non-traditional tourism areas such as agricultural and conservation land; • Often tourism-related activities in these zones are prohibited, non-defined or attract onerous conditions (this will limit the product diversification and experience development options such as adventure, food and nature based tourism etc.)
TRANSPORT AND ACCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • Planning • Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State infrastructure planners/managers; • Industry • LTO/RTO/NTO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List/catalogue of transport services and facilities
INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • Planning • Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State infrastructure planners/managers; • Industry; • LTO/RTO/NTO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify infrastructure assets and needs including the number, variety and standard of hard and soft infrastructure; • Conduct comparative analysis of audit information compared to market research and visitor profile information.

Table 08 : Destination Management Components

M4: DESTINATION BRANDING



DESTINATION MANAGEMENT COMPONENTS	KEY DELIVERY AREAS	KEY DELIVERY PARTNERS	DESCRIPTION
CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT AREA TOURISM POTENTIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Planning Development 	LTO/RTO/NTO; Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of offering or potential offering with development; Consider other sectors that may provide opportunities to create or enhance the offering or market e.g. specific sectors such as food, wine and agriculture; Promote environment, heritage, arts and cultural sector, community festivals and events
TOURISM PRODUCT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Planning Development 	LTO/RTO/NTO; Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop audits on available product/services Main as inventories available product and service categories; Review the quality/ standard of the Project Area offers in line with rating or price category Include specific sectors (food, wine and agritourism; fish tourism' MICE; community festivals and events; business special interest; educational tourism, etc.)
EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Development Marketing 	LTO/RTO/NTO; Industry Relevant sectors or community orgs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articulate opportunities for the development of experiences based on visitor profile, trends and the Project Area assets or strengths.
RESOURCE AND SKILLS AUDIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Planning Development 	LTO/RTO/NTO; Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List and assess the experience/skill level and quality of both industry and the tourism organization; Include an skills audit and analysis
CRISIS AND RISK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Development 	Related Ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply public risk management a to every aspect of the destination management process.; Apply business risk management in terms of taking decisions that could adversely impact upon market and trade; Apply crisis management from an industry and visitor perspective
Branding	Research > Planning > Development > Marketing	LTO/RTO/NTO; Industry Relevant sectors or community orgs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates the values and essence of what the Project Area offers and expresses; Articulate how to protect and build brand resilience



Destination Management Components	Key Delivery Areas	Key Delivery Partners	Description
Market Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • Planning • Development • Marketing 	Universities, RTO/LTO, Industry	Tourism data and trend information used to inform decision-making.
Visitor Profile (preference and behaviours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • Planning • Development • Marketing 	Universities, RTO/LTO, Industry	Research that provides insights into what current and potential visitors want to experience and the how/when they make decisions to transact.
Competitor Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • Planning • Development • Marketing 	Universities, RTO/LTO, Industry	Review of competitor destinations and other discretionary spend competitors.
Marketing plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • Planning • Development • Marketing 	Universities, RTO/LTO, Industry	A plan that outlines communication initiatives that raise the destination's profile and its products/experiences and convert interest into sales to improve yield and turnover.
Distribution plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • Planning • Development • Marketing 	Universities, RTO/LTO, Industry	A plan that details how products will be distributed to the market via traditional and digital methods.
Benchmarking, Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • Planning • Development • Marketing 	Universities, RTO/LTO, Industry	Sets baseline data to enable measurement of change or impact of activity through regular and consistent data collection and analysis.

Table 09: Destination Management Components

2.4 Good Practices

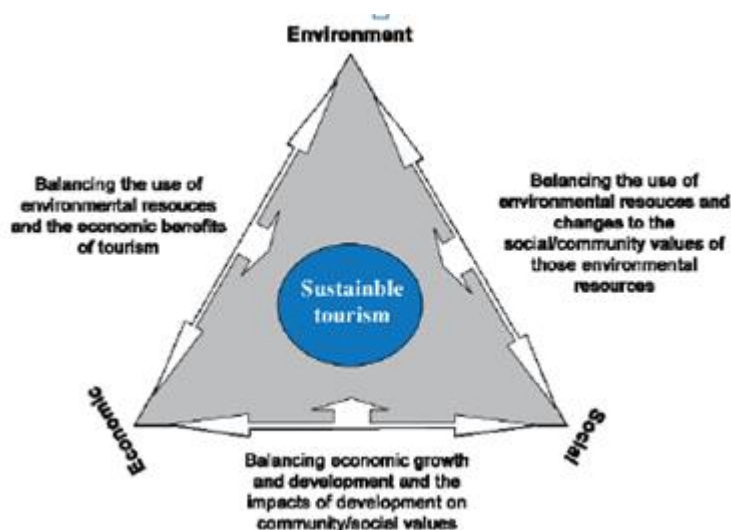


Fig 07: Adopted from Mullis and Figart Global Tourism Achieving Sustainable Goals, 2011

2.4.1 Good Practice Tank 1: Strategic Vision

Destinations aiming to excellence strive to establish long-term strategic planning processes to guide the sustainable management, development and marketing of tourism. Thus they seek the support of local community champions or visionary leaders that have the technical, communication and facilitation skills, are well respected by the community, and that can effectively tap into local networks to lead the strategic planning process. They engage experienced human resources if tourism planning expertise is lacking at a destination level and seek the support of governments (local/regional/national), industry and business groups and community stakeholder organizations. They establish effective consultation processes to engage and consult with interested governments, business, community and Indigenous stakeholders across local, regional, state and national levels. They engage the community in all stages of the planning process to ensure community ownership of the Destination Management Plan. They establish and communicate a shared vision for tourism amongst all stakeholders, while undertaking and utilizing research to inform

decision-making. They undertake an assessment of the current and future market situation, e.g. audits of existing tourist facilities, identification of tourists' preferences and behaviors. They identify competitors and consider the broader issues such as changing environmental conditions and resources, airline capacity, visitor markets, sustainability, prediction of future trend. They define realistic time frames for the implementation of the Destination Management Plan with a short term (1–3 years), medium-term (3–5 years) and longer-term (5–10 years) vision. They identify priority actions and identify implementation strategies (e.g. local government employment of a Tourism Officer, formation of a Reference Group). They integrate with local and state governments plans and policies, e.g. natural resource management, town and land use, social and cultural, economic development, infrastructure and risk management plans. They establish a regular review framework (e.g. annually) to identify areas where strategies and actions need to change due to changing conditions and they facilitate learning amongst stakeholders about sustainable tourism.



2.4.2 Good Practice Tank 2: Stakeholder Involvement

Destinations striving for excellence establish an effective destination management structure to lead and facilitate stakeholder cooperation for the sustainable development, management and marketing of tourism. In this vein they encourage and support local leaders with extensive tourism or professional expertise who foster and drive collaborative approaches to tourism management through sound decision-making, analytical capabilities and engagement with stakeholders and the local communities. They identify clear roles and responsibilities for stakeholder organization involvement (e.g. Local Tourism Organizations (LTO); Regional Tourism Organizations (RTO); National Tourism Organizations (NTO), local governments, local and intraregional, national or foreign business groups, other local government agencies, and significant community groups. They establish an overarching board structure comprising

representatives from local governments, businesses and community stakeholders and tourism professionals. They provide a structure for communication and information exchange about tourism amongst stakeholders and establish specialist committees (e.g. marketing, events, policy). They shall develop strategic and operational plans to guide the development, management and marketing of tourism and utilize experts, where needed, to ensure professional advice on tourism (e.g. strategic planning, issues). They ensure support by full-time and part-time staff (e.g. marketing, event management administration, finance and commercial services). They foster on-going collaboration between business, local governments and community across local, regional and national levels, while working collaboratively with surrounding regions and their LTO/RTO and local governments.

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2.4.3 Good Practice Tank 3: Government Support

Destinations looking for excellence must ensure a strong level of support from government authorities and local/regional tourism organizations that can provide with strong leadership and strategic tourism expertise to support local/regional destination development, management and marketing and facilitate strategic destination planning processes including financial support. They shall plan and lobby

for investment in public and private infrastructure for tourism hand in hand with the development and implementation of strategic marketing plans and tactical marketing campaigns. And last, but not least they facilitate cooperative networks across public private and public sectors involving relevant government departments and agencies, local governments, tourism and business operations and local communities.

2.4.4 Good Practice Tank 5: Governing Bodies

Destinations looking for excellence shall ensure a good level of support from their local governments so that they work cooperatively with local and regional tourism organizations to support sustainable tourism development and enhance the planning and marketing initiatives. The setup of Tourism Council is recommended and the appointment of a tourism manager to guide and inform the

Council's involvement in tourism, so that the implementation of the tourism strategy is ensured. The Council shall provide for financial support for the operation of a Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and the development of other infrastructure and support facilities. Also it has a mission develop policies to support sustainable tourism development.



2.4.5 Good Practice Tank 4: Transparency

Destinations looking for excellence must be supported by effective regional tourism organizations and/or local tourism organizations that lead and coordinate tourism and business involvement that have effective visionary leaders and a clear vision with identified values that underpin the role of the organization in tourism. These support organizations must have effective board structures with expert members in business and tourism, and shall establish clear roles and responsibilities for their board members with longevity of people in executive positions and plans for

succession. They shall exhibit transparency and accountability in their decision-making and develop effective partnerships with local/regional/national tourism organizations, local and regional governments, business groups and communities. They shall foster a good level of cooperation amongst local and regional tourism and business operators, coordinate and train local operators (e.g. service quality excellence, cooperative marketing initiatives) and integrate the achieved results with other initiatives and networks in their broader region.

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2.4.6 Good Practice Tank 8: Funding

Destinations establish methods to improve funding for tourism. They should consider and introduce tourism and business levy scheme, they can apply for national and EU grants; they can collect membership fees for

the local and regional tourism associations and establish commercial booking services as part of visitor information center operations.

2.4.7 Good Practice Tank 7: Researching and Reporting

Undertaking research to support decision-making for tourism requires budgeting for research and understanding the need for research to inform decision making and develop a research program to establish effective systems at the destination level. It is also important to gather information about visitation and visitor needs and satisfaction levels and utilize research undertaken at regional or national level in

order to avoid the duplication of works. In the same vein there is a need to establish performance indicators to measure economic, environmental and sociocultural impacts of tourism and undertake continuous and consistent data collection. Reporting and communication mechanisms shall ensure that findings are regularly communicated to interested stakeholders.

2.4.8 Good Practice Tank 9: Heritage Significance

It is a priority for sustainable development to educate and communicate the significance and local values of tourism to visitors, the community, governments and businesses. It is recommended to develop a Cultural Communication Program to educate visitors about the environment, community values, and provide guideline for appropriate visitor behavior, safety and

security issues. Within this vein it is necessary to educate the community and local business about the significance of heritage resources to ensure their sustainability. Of equal importance is to educate local government employees and stakeholders about sustainable tourism and the significance of local heritage.



2.4.9 Good Practice Tank 6: Recreation and Leisure

Collaboration is required with government bodies of protected areas, park management bodies and NATURS 2000 reserves in order to obtain advice in strategic planning processes for tourism and acquire assistance in establishing planning and management systems to preserve natural, heritage and cultural assets and effective visitor management systems and develop

infrastructure and facilities development that enhance and better manage the natural environment and contribute to the visitor experience. It is also a sine qua non condition to plan and develop accessible spaces for recreation and leisure; and provide the VIC with quality interpretive services to enhance the visitor experience.

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2.4.10 Good Practice Tank 10: Service Quality

To foster service excellence is required to recognize the importance that all businesses, directly and indirectly involved in tourism, are educated and trained as to the need to provide quality customer service. It is recommended to develop or adopt a Service Excellence Program to ensure the delivery of exceptional and consistent services for all business and tourism operations. Thus it is needed to

identify and implement appropriate service quality training programs for business owners and their staff, to monitor visitor satisfaction with service quality as part of destination visitor surveys and benchmark visitor satisfaction against other leading regional tourism products. To achieve this goal local businesses have to be encouraged to become members of relevant industry associations and establish or adopt service quality accreditation schemes.

2.4.11 Good Practice Tank 11: Crisis Management

A crisis management plan is an indispensable parameter within the Destination Management Plan. Thus it is needed to develop a crisis and risk management strategy for tourism to ensure an immediate response to crisis situations and work cooperatively with relevant agencies and stakeholders to develop crisis

and risk management strategies for tourism (e.g. police, fire, ambulance, park authorities; municipalities, volunteer organizations etc.). An emergency management plan for key infrastructure in the urban, rural and coastal environment has to be available including key visitor sites, cultural and natural heritage attractions. The strategy outcomes shall be communicated to key outcomes of strategy to the community, businesses, visitors, and interested stakeholders to ensure that residents and visitors are informed of risk and emergency management arrangements. Crisis and risk management plans for tourism shall be incorporated into the local government risk management. Local businesses shall be encouraged to develop and implement tactical marketing campaigns to respond immediately to crisis situations.



Fig. 08: Colmar, France
Source: European Best Destinations

2.4.12 Good Practice Tank 12: Sales

Tourism is a selling a unique proposition for each destination. Thus to create innovative advertising, sales and promotion strategies to support the destination brand and image lies at the core of the tourism activity. Successful destinations promote the unique attributes of the destination and link to the diversity of visitor attractions and experiences and develop creative promotional and advertising images that are used consistently across all media and social media.

It is important to develop tactical campaigns to even out seasonality or raise awareness of destination product and experience, leverage public relations and media

exposure that is linked to tactical campaigns or events and exploit the opportunities for public relation events (e.g. an opening of new infrastructure development, or creating competitions to attract attention). In this vein the support of leading tourism operators that act as ambassadors to showcase the destination shall be encourage through fam – and study tours at local level, so that gains are leveraged from the exposure of destination on movies and television programs. Additional activities include the development of e-marketing strategies, the participation at relevant tradeshows; the development of promotional strategies for international visitor markets with realistic messages and delivery on the marketing promise.

2.4.13 Good Practice Tank 13: Tourism Value Info

Quality visitor information and interpretation services need shall be accessed at Visitor Information Centres (VIC) that are well managed and resourced at human and financial level. VICs shall provide consistent and quality visitor information (e.g. web site, visitor guide, signage), options for quality central accommodation and tour booking services; interactive interpretation experiences to give an opportunity for visitors to be

involved. At territorial level the provision of good directional and interpretative signage and the opportunities for visitors to experience local product and experiences (e.g. food and wine trails, touring maps) is fueling the positive word of mouth. To ensure the results it is necessary to provide training for VIC staff and tourism operators to ensure consistent communication of visitor information.

2.4.14 Good Practice Tank 14: Event Strategy

Events build very lucrative sub-sector in tourism and the development of festivals and events that support the place image can make a “destination” out of a place. Thus it is needed to develop an Events Strategy to better coordinate, manage and promote a destination’s festivals and events, or/and to develop festivals and events that align with the destination brand and image and appeal to local community and visitor markets. In the case of the iCLOUD MUSEUM Area, both options are feasible and should be sought

after. However in regards to the second option, the INNOVIMENTOR Creative Tourism Network (Activity 6.2 /Output 3), which will inherit an operate the Project Legacy, including the i/eBook, the Creative Tourism Corridor (Activity 5.3/Output 1), the Booking App (Activity 6.4) and the Augmented Reality App (Activity 5.3/Output 2) establish a research program to assess the economic, environmental and social impacts of festivals and events and the visitor profile and satisfaction data.



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Fig. 09: Santorini, Greece
Source: Europeans Best Destinations



3 DESTINATION MARKETING

3.1 Definitions

Destination Marketing

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The purpose of Destination Marketing is to:

- Grow visitor awareness and demand for the destination and its products;
- Clearly and effectively communicate with visitors to better understand their needs and wants;
- Communicate the destination's unique offering and value proposition both before visitors arrive and once they are in the destination
- Develop and communicate the destination's vision and values via a clear brand statement that is then reflected in how you market and promote your destination and communicate what is on offer.

Marketing should include communication with internal stakeholders and the community to ensure that tourism remains in focus. Marketing spans traditional, electronic and social media to attract and inform visitors and key stakeholders. It may include events and other interactive public relation activities as part of an awareness raising and engagement strategy. Importantly, customer service delivered by industry may positively or negatively

impact upon a destination's brand and reputation. To market tourism from a destination perspective is a two-way street, with approaches that focus on external and internal audiences. In both cases the Marketing Plan (Activity 6.3/Output 1) needs to ensure that the targeted audiences are engaged and have the ability to interact with the local community and to provide for feedback. External communication targets enhanced visitation, whereas internal communication is about ensuring stakeholders and communities are engaged and aware of the tourism goals set.

The daily life connects to large variety of goods and services are available. Items range from toothpaste and soap to gourmet food, luxury products, bank services and aesthetic surgery. How do all these goods and services reach the clients? Obviously the businesses offering the goods and services have to ensure that these are sold. For this to happen businesses must ensure that consumers/users are aware of their products and place them at points convenient to the consumers. This involves a number of activities such as product planning, pricing, promotion, use of middlemen (wholesalers, retailer etc.) for sale, warehousing, transportation etc. All these activities taken together are termed as Marketing.



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Fig. 10: Ogilvy Campaign
Available at:

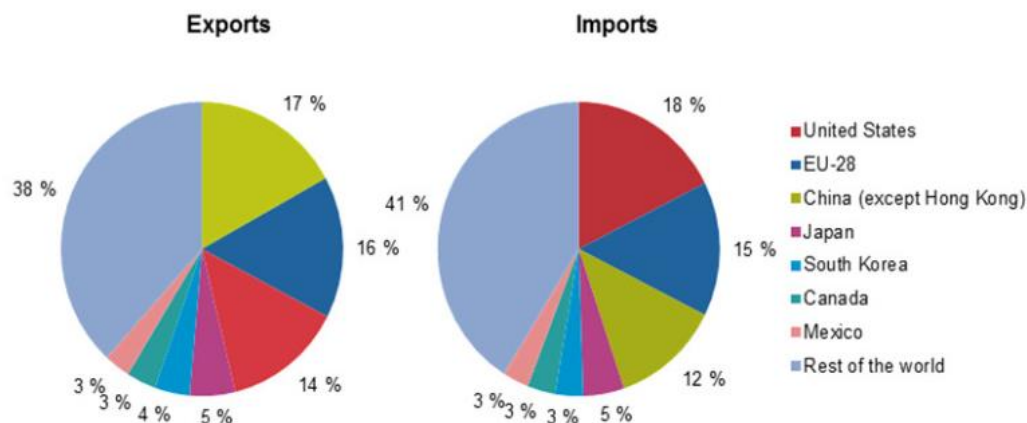
<http://ethicalmarketingnews.com>

Products and services are not necessarily produced at the places where they are consumed or used, especially in the globalized economy: now days even in peripheral places, now-a-days one can find products manufactured in China and other countries. This implies that the manufacturers must be making efforts to ensure that their products are in demand and reach the ultimate consumers all over the globe. A competitive market offers several options in terms of quality, shape, design, colour, type of service, price etc., and consumers buy what suits them most, meaning that producers assess the needs of consumers, their tastes and preferences and plan the products accordingly, ensuring at the same time that the uptake markets are

aware about the product/service and its features. All these activities are part of the marketing function of any business/organisation. Marketing refers to the process of ascertaining consumers' needs and supplying various goods/services to them in order to satisfy their needs. Thus, marketing is the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producers to consumers/users. In other words marketing is an organizational function and set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the business/organisation and its stakeholders.



Import and export shares for main trading countries, 2016



ec.europa.eu/eurostat

Fig. 12: Main Trading Countries 2016
Source: [EUROSTAT](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat)

PRODUCT APPROACH	
Focus on	Product
Means	Selling
Ends	Profits through maximization of sales

Table 10 The Product Approach

3.2 The Approach

According to the traditional approach, marketing means selling goods and services that have been produced. Activities are concerned with persuasive communication and sale of goods/services. This concept boosts the promotion and sale of goods and services and little attention is paid to consumer satisfaction. This approach has several implications:

- The main focus of this approach is on product, i.e., there is a product and it has to be sold. So, we consumers must be have to persuaded to buy the product

- All efforts are concentrated on selling the product. Means adopted include personal selling and sales promotion to boost the sales
- The ultimate goal of all marketing activity is to earn profit through maximization of sales.

The satisfaction approach is not built merely around selling, but considers the consumers' wishes and needs as the guiding spirit and focuses on the delivery of such goods/ services that can satisfy those needs most



effectively. Thus, marketing starts with identifying consumer needs, then plans the production of goods/services accordingly to provide with the maximum satisfaction. In this vein products and services are planned according to the needs of the customers rather than according to the availability of materials and machinery and thus all activities (manufacturing, research and development, quality control, distribution, selling etc.) are directed to ensure satisfaction. Implications include:

- The focus is on customer-oriented: the marketing activity starts with an needs assessment and plans the production of items that satisfy these needs most effectively, incl. pricing, packaging, distribution and sales promotion
- All marketing activities, e.g. product planning, pricing, packaging, distribution and sales promotion are combined into one

as coordinated marketing efforts. This is called integrating marketing and implies

- developing a product that can satisfy the needs of the consumers;
- taking promotional measures so that consumers come to know about the products, its features, quality, availability etc.;
- pricing the product keeping in mind the target consumers' purchasing power and willingness to pay;
- packaging and grading the product to make it more attractive and undertaking sales promotion measures to motivate consumers to buy the product; and
- taking various other measures (e.g., after sales service) to satisfy the consumers' needs.

- The main aim of all effort is to earn profit through maximization of customer satisfaction. This implies that, if the customers are satisfied, they will continue to buy and many new customers will be added. This will lead to increased sales and so also the profits.

3.3 Marketing vs Selling

The terms 'marketing' and 'selling' are related but not synonymous. In marketing, the focus is on the consumer's needs and their satisfaction, while focuses on products. In fact it is a small part of the marketing process wherein emphasis is initially on promotion of goods and services and eventually on increase in sales volume. Marketing has long term perspective of winning over consumer loyalty to the product by providing maximum satisfaction. Selling has short-term prospective of only increasing the sales volume. In marketing,

the consumer is the king whose needs must be satisfied. In selling, the product is supreme and the entire focus is on sale. Marketing starts before production and continues even after the exchange of goods/services has taken place. The provision of after sale service is an important component of the marketing process. Selling starts after the production and ends as soon as the exchange of goods/services has taken place.

MARKETING	SELLING
Marketing includes selling and other activities like various promotional measures, marketing research, after sales service, etc.	Selling is confined to persuasion of consumers to buy firm's goods and services.
It starts with research on consumer needs, wants, preference, likes, dislike etc., and continues even after the sales have taken place.	Selling starts after the production process is over and ends with the handing over the money to the seller by the buyer.
Focus is on earning profit through maximization of customers' satisfaction.	Focus is on earning profit through sales maximization
Customer's need is the central point around whom all marketing activities revolve.	Fragmented approach to achieve short- term gain.
It is an integrated approach to achieve long term goals like creating, maintaining and retaining the customers.	All activities revolve around the product that has been produced.
Stresses on needs of buyer.	Stresses on needs of the seller.

Table 11: Marketing vs Selling

- In the context of Marketing, **the market refers** to a group of buyers for a particular product or service. Types of Markets include:
- **Marketeer:** the term refers to the person who organizes the various marketing activities such as market research, product planning, pricing, distribution etc;
- **Seller:** the term refers to a person or organization who is directly involved in the process of exchange of goods and services for money. This includes the wholesaler, retailer, etc.
- **Buyer:** A buyer is one who is directly involved in the process of purchase of

goods and services. He/she is one who selects the goods, makes payment and takes the delivery;

- **Consumer:** One who actually uses the product or service;
- **Customer:** A customer usually refers to the person who takes the buying decision. A customer can also be the consumer. Similarly, the buyer may be different from the customer or one can be the customer as well as the buyer'
- **Virtual Market:** The advancements of ICT, allow buyers and sellers interact with each other by using Internet for their transactions

AREA	GOODS	TRANSACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Market • Regional Market • Cross Border • National Market • International Market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit Market • Furniture Market • Stock Market • Tourism Market • Pharmaceutical Market and so on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholesale Market • Retail Market

Table 12: Market Types



3.4 Subject matter

Destinations are characterized by complex sets of relations between community members, business interests and governments. In this vein there are no identical destinations, as the general and specific conditions, such as destination size and scale, geography, climate, local economic conditions, social and cultural values, political orientations, tourist perceptions and movements combine to produce different issues and outcomes. Destinations can therefore exist at multiple scales from local to international. They can be defined as geographical locations; clusters of attractions, services, activities and infrastructure; political and administrative units; or social, cultural, economic or spatial constructs, or any combination of these perspectives. Destinations are also characterized by different combinations of natural, built and human resources, having different capacities to innovate, compete and differentiate. It is therefore important to realize the complexity of a given destinations, how they are imagined and perceived, and how they are defined by different stakeholders and markets. Successful destinations are also founded on effective and sustainable planning and management, whereby sustainable destination management, development and marketing practices are regarded as being inter-related and equally valued. In the past it was given much weight to marketing activities, without balancing marketing with development and management concerns. More recently, with increasing realization of the vulnerability of many destinations to environmental issues, -once gone, gone forever-, market downturns and increased international competition, there has been a strengthening commitment to a balanced approach to destination planning and management. Destination planning and management should therefore be underpinned by sustainable tourism development, good governance and marketing.

Destination marketing has traditionally been aligned to growth orientated strategies

that have mainly focused on image creation, advertising and sales promotion aimed at achieving growth in domestic and international visitation. Recent research, however, shows that destination marketing should adopt a sustainable approach where marketing is integrated with sustainable destination management and development objectives to ensure the needs of both visitors and residents are met in regional communities⁸.

The approach adopted by INNOVIMENTOR is that marketing has a triple mission:

- to conserve the resources of a Project Area assets across 80 geolocations in GR/BG/CY/AL/NMK;
- to provide a high quality visitor experience;
- to deliver on the promise

Rather than the traditional view that marketing simply involves selling and promoting products or places, destination marketing should be both conceived and realized as a **strategic tourism management tool** that should provide a balance between stakeholder's objectives for the development of tourism in the region as well as ensure the sustainability of the destination's resources. As such, destination marketing need not necessarily be in opposition to other principles of sustainable tourism development, if used as a management tool to ensure that responsible tourism is developed within regions, to take account of tourism capacity and visitor management issues. In this vein the Project Area Marketing Plan (Activity 6.3/Output 1) shall build a mechanism to facilitate regional development objectives aligned that the strategic objectives of the BALKAN-MEDITERRANEAN Cooperation Area. As such, good marketing can help mitigate the protection-use conflict and provide for a balance between stakeholder interests and the sustainability of the Project Area resources.



In the real economy, digital, social or transactional, marketing is important to the business, consumers and society as it helps:

- businesses to keep pace with the changing tastes, fashions, preferences of the customers. It works out primarily because ascertaining consumer desires is a regular phenomenon and improvement in existing products and introduction of new products is perpetual; thus, marketing contributes to providing better products and services to the consumers and improve their standard of living;
- making products available at all places and throughout the year: coffee and tea from all over the world lands on super market shelves, while seasonal fruits are

available round the year due to proper warehousing or proper packaging, with marketing creating time and place utilities;

- in the economic development as various functions and sub-functions of marketing like advertising, personal selling, packaging, transportation, etc. generate employment for a large number of people, and accelerate growth of businesses and places;
- businesses in increasing its sales volume, generating revenue and ensuring long run-success;
- businesses in meeting competition most effectively.

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3.5 Objectives and Functions

The basic objectives of marketing include:

Customer Satisfaction

All marketing activities are directed towards customer satisfaction. Marketing starts with ascertaining consumer needs and produce goods that satisfy those needs most effectively. Not only that the pricing and distribution functions of marketing are also planned accordingly.

Increased Demand

Through advertising and other sales promotional efforts, marketing aims at creating additional demand for their products. Satisfied customers also help in creating new customers. For example, if you buy a 'gel pen' and feel satisfied, next time also you will buy the same pen and obviously when you tell others about it they will also feel like giving it a try.

Ensure Quality

This is a basic objective of marketing. The business houses try to update and upgrade their knowledge and technology to continuously provide better products. If they do not do so, they will be phased out through competition.

Organization

Another objective of marketing is to build a good public image and create goodwill for the organisation. This helps in maintaining loyalty to the product and accepting new products of the same company.

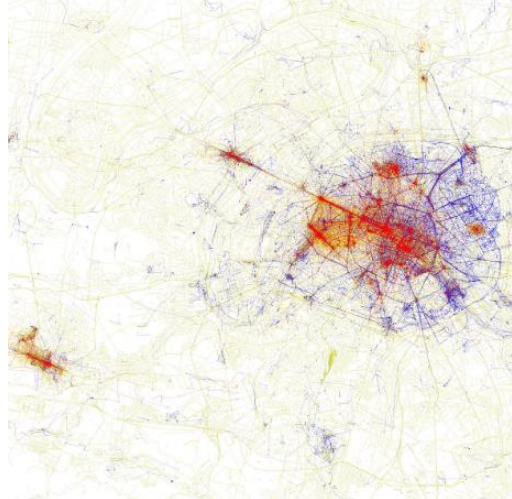
Profitability

The ultimate objective of all marketing efforts is to generate profitable sales volumes for the business. Taking care of customer needs and wants by providing the required goods and services at prices they can afford, and at places and timing that are convenient to them ultimately lead to increased sales and profits. To ensure the process 12 steps are followed



3.5.1 Research

Research involves collection and analysis of facts and data relevant to various aspects of the product-service-customer relationship. It is a process of collecting and analyzing information regarding customer needs and buying habits, the nature of competition in the market, prevailing prices, distribution network, effectiveness of advertising media, etc. Marketing research gathers records and analyses facts in order to arrive to rational conclusions and properly inform the decisions



and actions to follow towards the most suitable marketing strategy.

Fig. 13: City of the Lights

Tourism in Paris is a major income source. In 2018, 17.95 million tourists visited the city and her region. The top reason to come are sightseeing and shopping. The city is the largest Airbnb market in the world.

Source: Wikimedia Commons



Fig. 14: Paris Marketing Campaign
Source: Author



Fig. 15: Paris Marketing Campaign
Source: Author



Fig. 16: Paris Marketing Campaign
Source: Author

3.5.2 Product Planning and Development

Marketing starts much before the actual production: information is gathered regarding what are the needs of the consumers and then decide upon what to produce. Marketeers always start with planning

and designing a product for the consumers, applying the identical process when modifying and improving an already existing product and can help also raise environmental awareness.



Fig. 17: Making the Case for Soap Recycling

6.3 Billion Metric Tons is of waste 30.000 heavier than the Empire State Building and is and only a small part of it is being recycled.



Fig.18: Making the Case for the Environment

Source: INSIDER

[Suggested Video](#)

Suggested Articles

[My Plastic-Free Life](#)

[The Eco Soap Bank Case](#)

3.5.3 Buying and Assembling

Buying and assembling activities refer to buying and collection of required goods for resale. This function is primarily relevant to those businesses engaged in trading activities. In

the context of manufacturing organizations, buying and assembling involves buying raw materials and components required for production of finished goods.

3.5.4 Packaging

Packaging involves putting the goods in attractive packets according to the convenience of consumers. Important considerations to be kept in view in this connection are the size of the package and the type of packaging material used. Goods may be

packaged in bottles (plastic or glass), boxes (made of tin, glass, paper, plastic), cans or bags. The size of the package generally varies from a few grams to a few kilograms piece to a number of pieces of a product, or in any other suitable quantity in terms of weight, count,



length etc. Packaging is also used as a promotional tool as suitable and attractive packages influences the demand of the products. It may be noted that packaging is different from packing, which refers to putting goods in suitable containers for transportation

purposes. Still there is a lot to be done for environmental friendly packaging at global level.

[Suggested Article](#)

3.5.5 Standardisation and Grading

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Standardization refers to development of standards for production of goods with respect to shape, design, color and other characteristics. If products are standardized, customers are able to identify a product and its characteristics very well. So goods can be sold by sample or description. Standardization helps in promoting the sale of

the product by increasing consumers' confidence in the product quality. Grading involves separating products into different classes on the basis of certain predetermined standards relating to size and quality and is extensively applied in case of agricultural, forest and mineral products.

3.5.6 Branding

Branding means to create the product identity and let its distinctive features come to prominence. In other words branding makes a product different from others so that it is

known by that name or symbol or mark. Among the many industries the automobile and fashion industry have produced some of the most successful brands.



Fig. 19: Automobile Brands
<https://www.adorecars.com/cars>



Fig. 20: Fashion Brands

3.5.7 Pricing

Pricing involves decisions regarding the fixation of product prices, as resulting from the product costs, the capacity of customers to pay, and the prices of the competitive

products. Pricing is crucial step that influences the sales-profits relationships and thus it has to be given utmost attention.

3.5.8 Promotion

The objective of the product promotion is to motivate the customers to buy the product. Thus promotion includes a range of activities such as advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and publicity.

Promotion involves also communication with the existing and potential customers raising their of the product, its distinctive features, price, availability, enhancements of a given product etc.

3.5.9 Distribution

Distribution aims to ensure that consumers get the goods and services at the place and time most convenient to them and in the desired quantity. The term refers to activities undertaken for the sales and the physical transfer thereof. Sales involve use of middlemen such as wholesalers and retailers

whose services are used for making the products available at convenient points and helping in their sale to the pool of customers. The physical transfer involves warehousing and transportation of goods from production places to the sales points.



3.5.10 Selling

Selling aims to raise the customer interest in the product and apply persuasive communications to transform interest and motivation into the purchase decision. Selling is an important function of marketing whereby the ownership of goods and services is transferred from the seller to the buyer for a consideration known as

price. To initiate and complete the process of selling, the seller has to inform the prospective buyer about the availability of goods or services the nature and uses of products, their prices and the needs of the customers that may be effectively satisfied by the product.

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3.5.11 Storage

Storage refers to holding and preserving goods (not services) from the time of production till the time of their sale. Storage involves making suitable arrangements for preserving the goods till they are bought by the consumers and delivered to them. Warehousing is synonymous to storage but is normally used for large-scale storage facility for goods and commodities (the classical case is the supermarket

warehouse). Warehousing operations are essential for storing raw materials and finished goods to be used at a later stage by the company for production or resale, however as it is often connected to a high cost, the main aim to sell as much as possible and store as least as possible, thus reductions and seasonal sales at different times of the year serve to reduce the warehousing costs.

3.5.12 Transportation

Transportation refers to the physical movement of goods (and not services) from one place to another. In marketing, transport as an activity refers to physical movement of raw materials as well as finished goods from the place of production to place of consumption. Goods are transported through various means like

railways, roadways, waterways and airways. For heavy and bulky goods, the railways and waterways are the best. For other goods, it depends upon the demand, cost involved, urgency, nature of the goods etc. to decide about a suitable means of transportation.

3.6 Digital Marketing

Digital or e-Marketing is the mix of modern communication technology and traditional principles that marketers usually apply. Digital marketing takes place in the Internet, whereas the realm of e-marketing, the terms of online marketing and internet marketing are usually interchangeable. E-marketing focuses on marketing a product, a company, or a destination online, in our case it shall be the iCLOUD MUSEUM, the Project Area as destination. Depending on the product, applied is direct or indirect, both aiming to connect to new customers,

retain present customers, and build a brand identity. Both direct and indirect marketing styles have advantages for any business model. Ultimately, a diverse approach to marketing, combined with common sense testing, will reap rewards. Start with small campaigns, using both styles, and then test, refine and scale to measure the ROI. Direct marketing involves paid platforms, such as television, direct mail, print advertising and digital advertising. Indirect advertising happens more organically through blog posts, social media,



news announcements, business newsletters, and any campaign that does not have the direct intent to sell. Direct campaigns are ideal for new customer acquisition, whereas indirect marketing keeps those customers engaged with your brand. In the case of the iCLOUD MUSEUM or the Project Area as destination, these methods are not the only option, as the landscape is dominated by the 4th Industrial Revolution, where UGC shapes and drives the destination identity and fame.

In general e-marketing, with online tools and resources, can be used via direct emails, blogs, SMS or text messaging, web pages, videos, banners, pictures, advertisements (like pay per click, display or social media advertising), search engine optimization, social media, affiliate marketing etc. There are many tools for e-marketing, the most appropriate depend on goals, product types, business capacity, target market, and other criteria related to the decision making processes of the COLLABORANDO Tourism Business Network, which inherits the Project Legacy (Activity 6.2).

E-marketing is important for the COLLABORANDO Tourism Business Network because when it is executed properly, the return on investment (ROI) can be greater than more traditional marketing strategies. The COLLABORANDO Tourism Business Network stakeholders shall decide in the post project operation phase, whether they make a business-driven cluster with a physical presence or work completely online. In this case e-Marketing is something they have to work with and put to their advantage. This would mean that they can reach an unlimited number of potential visitors and clients around the world, given also the fact that the i/eBook will be offered as a free download directly at the App store and Google Play.

e-Marketing includes of the main principles of traditional marketing but with a couple of differentiating characteristics. One main benefit of e-marketing is that its impacts are quantifiable. This enables the COLLABORANDO Tourism Business Network to work more efficiently and

effectively, thus creating higher ROIs and profits. Moreover, an e-marketing strategy that has been implemented well can reach a cost effective consumer acquisition as compared to traditional marketing. Benefits include:

- **Increased Outreach:** Due to the features of the digital world, the target customers can be anywhere in the world. Different from typical marketing methodologies, the internet's advantage is that your prospects and your customers can be included in the marketing mix of your business at any time of the day, at any place in the world
- **New Horizons:** E-marketing has marketing routes that simply are not there in traditional marketing. It is not just advertising via broadcast email and search engines. New opportunities in viral marketing, social networking, and other approaches solely found on the internet offers access to customer groups that were previously unreachable.
- **Cost Effectiveness:** Using online technologies the Creative Tourism Network can initiate a large reduction in the post-project marketing budget. When the Creative Tourism Network precisely targets the core customers (experience seekers), e-Marketing can help with a cost effective approach to raise the customer base, increase brand awareness, and keep the final product in touch with the existing and prospective consumers.
- **Accountability:** When executed properly, e-marketing gives complete accountability for its results. Activities that are online are completely trackable since tools can precisely show your company's ROI, indicating that there is value in each cent you spend on e-marketing.



3.6.1 Optimization

It is common knowledge that the top source of new site visitors are search engines. Actually, Google already has eighty-eight-percent (88%) of the market. It is thus suggested to prioritize ranking of the final product in Google. This can be accomplished this through three main steps:

- **Optimization of search results:** The title of the web page is used by Google as the suggested title of its search results. In addition, the Creative Tourism Network, including its stakeholders shall be presented in an informative and succinct manner. Domain names are also a significant portion of the search results of Google. Hence, an easy-to-read and descriptive domain name shall be selected for the commercial website. Also subpages should also be easy to read. Meta descriptions are defined as page summaries usually made use of by Google on their results page. Thus it is suggested to write meta descriptions

that are unique for every page using 160 characters or less;

- **Make Google understand selected pictures:** Short but descriptive file names for pictures are required. The attribute, "alt" describes the picture. This aids Google in understanding what the picture is about. Short captions below every picture are also required. Significant information through text instead of pictures shall also be included;
- **Updating content:** The website is the storefront in the virtual world. Unlike the physical store windows that can stay unmodified for a certain period of time, sometimes even 6 months or more depending on the business type, the website needs to show activity. Thus it shall stay updated and be kept fresh through active blogs, sales announcements, special offers, and new products.

3.6.2 Research Behavior

Research on phrases and keywords the target market uses to locate products and services a business is selling, is either made in the digital era. The Wordtracker, a company founded in 1997 (<https://www.wordtracker.com/>) is exemplary for this operation: to note words or phrases that are used a lot. These phrases that create high keyword effectiveness index or KEI will often offer the most optimal return. Google has also a keyword planner tool of Google, which comes with an account for free ad words. The Google tool will provide with an estimated monthly search for any search term you provide. The tool also provides you with other keyword lists

that Google thinks are connected to the search term and their monthly traffic.



Fig. 21: Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany
Source: European Best Destinations'

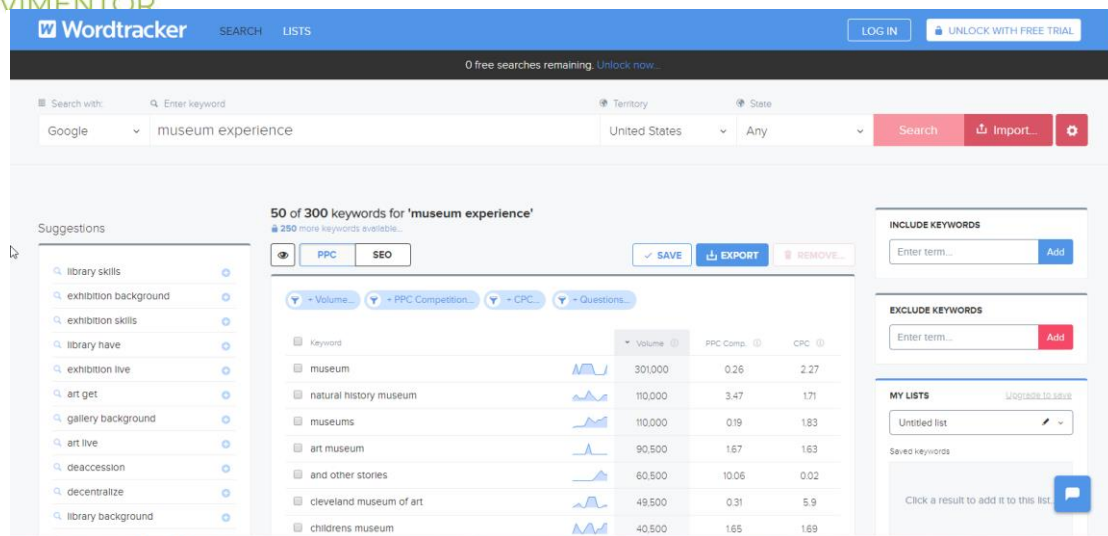


Fig. 22: Testing the Wordtracker

Suggested Video:

[HOW TO USE WORD TRACKER](#)

3.6.3 High Ranking

In the search box of Google type in the phrase you need optimization for and then type a space and afterwards, like: www.companyurl.com. The first web page to be found find listed coming from the

indicated site is the easiest to optimize for using that phrase. Afterwards, optimize the web page can be optimized as per tips given in the section on optimizing for Google.

3.6.4 Page Elements

To optimize a web site, all key phrases should be incorporated into the text in a natural manner, for at least 3 to 4 times. It is significant to incorporate it into the tag, title. The tag should not be greater than 9 or

10 words. Hence, it is difficult to create optimization for one web page for greater than 3 to 4 phrases. Make use of every phrase at least once in the heading or subheading within the tags, H1, H2, or H3.

3.6.5 Link-Building Strategy

Any site will rank higher if it has more hyperlinks coming from websites that rank high, are of good quality and relevant. To achieve this result, one should access text hyperlinks that have important keywords. A practical way is to try to contribute to discussion groups and forums, with a text hyperlink in the signature and check for

reciprocal hyperlinks from websites that complement the one is being optimized. Some other ways to build links are:

- **Guest Posts:** This is a good way to get a link from an authoritative page or domain. Having guest posts is also a pure approach to building links, since it



seems you are giving something in return for a link. This means that the own content can be hosted on a good domain; that the domain has its syndication, attracting links; and you can create a link using good anchor text;

- **Employee Links:** Based on the focus and size of the business to be optimized, its employees might have personal sites, blogs, or other sources of links where the link building efforts can be placed. Having links coming from the inside is a great way to get links coming from sources that are of quality.

- **Testimonials:** Companies usually work with contractors or freelancers. This public can be reached out to them to offer testimonials in exchange for a link. Moreover, by using consultants' or specialists' services, one can do the same with contractors. Lastly, if there are customers who are happy with the product or service offered and they do not mind linking to their site, this could be a good opportunity for any business.

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3.6.6 Learn from Competitors

Keeping track of the competitors is a crucial step in the marketing process. If they have had a banner advertisement for a couple of weeks but get rid of it eventually, it could mean that it did not work out, meaning that it is not worthy to replicate the approach. To figure out where they usually get links by typing www.theirurl.com in Google. Here are a couple of tools to help to learn from your competitors:

- **Google Alerts** – This could help you find out the backlinks of your competitors;
- **Marketing Grader** – It shows the overall score of all of your competitors according to blogging success, social media activity, lead generation, and SEO (Search Engine Optimization). One can find out if the competitors' scores change and whether the own score would change;

- **Infinigraph** – Infinigraph follows the trends in social media circles for particular industries. This tool checks what brands and contents are trending for the target market of each company, business or destination. Not only is this helpful for a competitive analysis, but also for the own company;
- **Monitor Backlinks** – This tool, one can monitor the backlinks of your competitors and get them sent to the own email. It also contains a description of the highest and lowest domains;
- **SEMRush** – This tool is specializing in the competitors' data. One can receive information immediately on their rank and organic keywords, traffic, and ad keywords

3.6.7 Marketplaces

Every marketplace has its own system, limitations, and processes. Although Amazon and eBay for example, are popular, the margins they offer you are low. One can make use of them to release an inventory of end of life and overstock items. They can be also used to gain new customers and bring them to your main website. Amazon draws in almost 85 million unique visitors every month. Sellers usually report an

estimated fifty-percent (50%) rise in their sales upon joining [Amazon Marketplace](#). However one should bear in mind marketplace fees (deducted as a percentage per sale), marketplace infrastructure (restrictions on the own branding), and inventory (challenge to coordinate stocks). In the end, consider the marketplaces that a company joins.

3.6.8 Merchandise for Revenues

Using the offer of “3 for 2,” “also bought” tool, and related product hyperlinks to raise the value of every sale is a proven value method. Email your regular customers using

exclusive offers so that they would come back. Incorporate significant tips and information, so that people who unsubscribe would be kept at a minimum.

3.6.9 Measure and Adopt

[Google Analytics](#) is a powerful free tool. It can be used to measure results and indicates what should be scaled up, what works and what should be gotten rid of. To maximize the use of Google Analytics on should:

- **Set goals:** within Google Analytics: one can put in that conversion the important objective, for example—Google Analytics has a lot of templates to track conversions well;
- **Incorporate:** [Google Webmaster Tools](#) into the website. This would provide with index issues, impression data, links connected to your site, manual spam actions, organic search keyword impression, click data, and the like;
- **Group the target publics:** Different kinds of target publics visit the websites, thus it is significant to

differentiate them, for instance according to gender, age, location, language, technology used, user behavior, and traffic sources;

- **Access behavior flows:** to check and map user behavior. Google Analytics allows to narrow down for particular variables;
- **Follow the status of your email campaigns:** to track email campaigns on Google Analytics;
- **Use custom campaign URLs:** Google provides a tool that allows to create the own unique URL for your particular marketing campaigns. You may include parameters such as your medium, source, content, term, and campaign name. As soon as you have a customized link, you may use it in its complete form or shorten it by using a link shortening tool such as [bit.ly](#).

3.7 e-Marketing Tips

Below are five essential steps particularly working or for small businesses, or start ups like the case of the Creative Tourism

Network, the organization that inherits the project Legacy upon completion of the Project.

3.7.1 Convenient Subscriptions

Ease of subscription applies for both website and emails. To create a signup page on the website, blog, Facebook, as well as other social media sites, where is known that customers or targeted prospects actively circulate. Even though companies

aim to acquitting complete customer profiles, too many required fields heavily discourage the sign up process, thus too long subscription forms will turn off customers of the product or service.



3.7.2 Permissions

Permission have a legal dimension and also reflect a democratic process. Thus permissions cannot be taken for granted. Several studies demonstrate that from the audience joining an email lists, about a 77% unsubscribes due to excessive, uninteresting and irrelevant information reception. Working on making the own permission-based list by asking target customers to sign up for your subscriptions is a democratic process: placing a subscription option on the for site, emails, invoices, trade shows, advertisements, and the like, allows the customer pool to properly decide on a desirable commitment. Although timely sending of emails to

customers per month is safe, you can do more (like weekly) or less (like quarterly). A typical complaint from customers is that permission-based emails are sent too often. To define the proper strategy a business should ask readers which frequency they would like. Know that you should have a strict privacy policy for your host list. Several studies demonstrates that an approximate 74% of surveyed customers would be suspicious of businesses sharing their contact information with others. It is thus recommended do not to rent or sell the house list to others, and that there exists a clear and understandable privacy policy on the website and emails.

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3.7.3 Content

Create a good and working content formula is essential for business and customers. Some components of good e-newsletters, emails, or blogs, for example, incorporate tips, expertise, success stories, case studies, Q&As, industry news, industry trends, industry statistics, did-you-knows, how-to articles, contributed expert articles, and short surveys. Any newsletter can include special or exclusive offers. As many email account holders have their own cluttered inboxes, it is good to make newsletters interesting yet short. To get to know what is best to send or convey to customers, a short and quick survey from the company's database can be conducted asking for

feedback. Knowing the customer pool well, allows for the personalization of the website. If a company will email customers, the readers' first names and related personal information that is significant to the reader shall be used first. This is a way to increase response rate. As many people are afraid of viruses and spam, they will avoid opening emails with attachments. They are also afraid of having their web browser or laptop crash, since opening large files sometimes does this. Thus it is better for attachments to share and post them on a web page and turn them into a trackable hyperlink.

3.7.4 Preferences

It is absolutely crucial now the preferences of the customers and readers. Provide them with content in the popular formats, whether it may be in text, AOL-friendly, or HTML versions. It is important to have a multi-format deployment because it

satisfies all the preferences of customers. Placing in enticing title lines on the website or enticing subject lines for emails, attracts to read further or open emails. Try not to sound like e a spam email by putting in words such as "urgent" or "free."



3.7.5 Measuring

Customers can be flexible and adaptable when it comes to email or website loyalty. So make sure you continuously measure and refine your communications. Focus on click-throughs, opt-outs, bounce rates, open rates, etc. and respond as needed. If no one

clicks on a particular topic, you may have to take that topic out and look for a new and more interesting one. Focus on the open rates and requests for unsubscribing Page | 51 because it is a significant metric to look at.

3.8 Regional Destination Marketing

Regional destinations, such as the case of the INNOVIMENTOR Project Area with 80 geolocations in GR/BG/CY/AL/NMK, should pursue a cooperative approach to marketing. As a post project operation the Creative Tourism Network should establish an effective and consistent destination brand and image that is used to position and promote the iCLOUD Museum Area to

attract appropriate visitor markets and guide the development of appropriate tourism product. It is thus necessary to have identified the target appropriate markets and keep track of their changes and transformations. Below are three quintessential principles to achieve the envisaged results:

3.8.1 Cooperative Approach

Regional destinations, such as the case of the INNOVIMENTOR Project Area with 80 geolocations in GR/BG/CY/AL/NMK, should establish a dedicated and experienced marketing committee as part of the overarching destination management structure to guide and inform decision-making for destination marketing and:

- develop a strategic tourism marketing plan to guide marketing efforts;
- employ experienced marketing staff to coordinate destination marketing efforts;
- seek a strong level of support from key actors to foster and lead cooperative marketing efforts across state/territory, regional and local levels;

- have a well-established LTO/RTO to lead and fosters participation and cooperative marketing initiatives amongst local operators and businesses (e.g. trade shows, tactical marketing campaigns);
- encourage the support of leading commercial tourism, heritage and business operators to
- contribute and invest in destination marketing initiatives;
- seek the support of local government for marketing activities;
- partner with neighboring regions to develop stronger campaigns;
- source adequate funding to ensure all levels of industry can participate in marketing campaigns.

3.8.2 Inclusive Collaboration

Regional destinations, such as the case of the INNOVIMENTOR Project Area with 80 geolocations in GR/BG/CY/AL/NMK, should

- consult and collaborate with government, business and community stakeholders to consider to establish a



- strong and consistent destination brand and image;
- identify and focus on the competitive strengths of the destination;
- undertake consumer research to inform decisions about how to best position the destination and recognize that the destination cannot appeal to all visitor markets;
- ensure the brand and image reflects the strategic vision for the destination;
- promote iconic features and attractions of the destination and their linkage to the Project Area;
- develop a 'Brand Policy' to protect the destination brand and to align further product and infrastructure development;
- communicate the brand and image to industry operators and ask them to consider the destination brand when developing product and their own marketing (e.g. develop brand toolkits);
- ensure consistent delivery of the brand through associated advertising, sales and promotional strategies;
- link well with the regional and state brand and image;
- use realistic images and messages to support the brand and image; and regularly review and refresh the brand

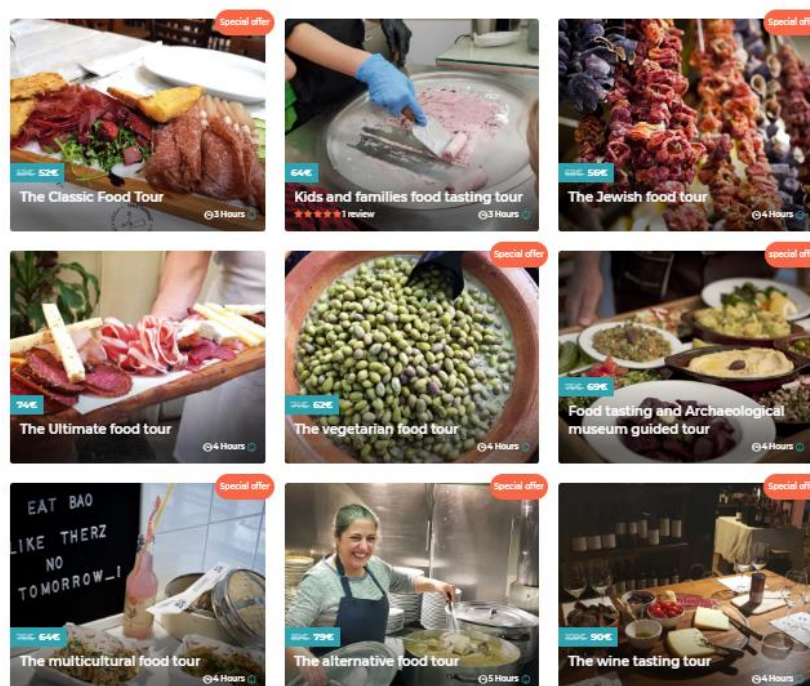
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3.8.3 Target Market Research

Regional destinations, such as the case of the INNOVIMENTOR Project Area with 80 geolocations in GR/BG/CY/AL/NMK, should

- understand the history and future direction of the consumer marketplace and the position of their destination in that marketplace;
- undertake research to identify and understand the unique reasons why visitors are attracted to the destination;
- identify appropriate target markets that 'fit' with the attractions and experiences available at the destination and community values;
- develop effective marketing strategies to target these visitor markets;
- ensure product development and visitor experiences suit these markets;
- do not rely on one or limited visitor markets; and consider the appeal of product to both domestic and international visitor markets.

Fig. 23: the Athens Food Tours On Foot
Source: European Best Destinations





4 DESTINATION BRANDING

4.1 Definition

A cluster of activities, sets of experiences and transactions that are created in the minds and through the activities of tourists, residents, operators and policy-makers.

The idea of branding a destination is a relatively new one and the academic investigation of such a process is still in its infancy (Gnoth, 1998). Although the words 'brand', 'branding' and 'destination image' have already appeared in many academic studies and industry conferences, no apparent effort has been made to distinguish between destination image and destination branding. The purpose of this

short commentary is to stimulate thinking on destination branding and to outline its relationship with destination image. As the choice of destinations available to consumers increases, an effective destination 'positioning' strategy becomes necessary. A key component of this positioning process is the creation and management of a distinctive and appealing destination image. And thus, a considerable amount of time and money is spent establishing a positive image in order to influence consumer decision-making. Effective destination marketing should follow a three-stage process in order to develop a favorable destination image.

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4.2 Subject Matter

A sustainable tourism destination is reached when environmental, community and economic values are balanced and resolved through collaboration and compromise to achieve a level and style of tourism that:

- protects and enhances the natural and built features upon which the tourism industry is based;
- is consistent with community values and aspirations both now and over the long term, and contributes to community development and well-being;
- is appropriately developed and marketed so that it is distinctive, competitive and synergetic, and with the flexibility to respond to market changes now and in the future;
- increases the contribution of tourism to the economy of regional destinations and promotes long-term industry viability;
- increases destination appeal, delivers on brand promise, increases repeat visitation and enhances the reputation of the destination resulting in increased yield from tourism.

The most frequently cited definition for destination image is: *'the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination'* (Crompton, 1979). This involves an individual's mental picture of a place based on their knowledge and other global impressions. The image, a person has of a tourist destination is a function of various points of reference. Its root may go back to our early school years when we studied the geography or history of a country and it is being re-in-formed as the new input is being drawn or existing knowledge re-confirmed., e.g. *Venice is drowning with tourists, Egypt is stricken by terrorism, Paris is a must.* Information obtained from friends, relatives or media sources also contributes to our final picture. In addition, of course, our image of a destination is shaped through any of our own tourist experiences.

Image is an evaluative (e.g. 'good/bad', 'true/false') and multi-dimensional construct. Therefore the attributes of image can be grouped according to various components, although destination image is regarded as an attitudinal construct: destination image is more cognitive and



involves subjective knowledge of a destination (e.g. expensive, exotic, urban, cold, cultural, natural developed, underdeveloped, secure and so on) and therefore its evaluation may vary from one person to another. A tourist's attitude towards a destination also includes an element of strong emotional attachment (e.g. exciting, fun, origin seeking, cosmopolitan, recreational, cultural, shopping and so on).

The process of destination branding begins, in reality, when the evaluation of destination image includes a strong emotional attachment. These two concepts share some common ground but destination branding represents the emotional component of the destination image. A tourist destination may have a name, but not necessarily a brand name (e.g. New York, Paris). Only branded destinations would establish an instant emotional link with their customers. Therefore branding is the second stage of building a favorable destination image.

In the ever more competitive tourism marketplace, destinations are increasingly adopting branding techniques to craft an identity which emphasizes the uniqueness of their product. Those marketing travel destinations, just like those marketing other consumer products, have had to turn to branding to distinguish their 'product' and to convey a positive message that will motivate the consumer. Successful destination branding involves establishing a mutual relationship between destinations and tourists by satisfying tourists' emotional ('relaxing', 'pretty') and basic needs (e.g. eating). In particular, branding of a destination helps to establish a link between destination image and consumer self-image. One of the important determinants of branding is the brand personality – this emphasizes the human side of the brand image. In practical terms, brand personality uses human personality traits to describe a destination image (e.g. family oriented, friendly, exciting, interesting, original). A destination that

forms a clear identity in tourists' minds can be easily branded. By the same token, brand personality brings the destination image alive. This same idea has been shown to be successful in marketing goods. For example, Coca-Cola is portrayed as traditional, while Pepsi is young. Marlboro cigarettes have a rugged image, while Virginia Slims have an attractive, modern and liberated image. It can easily be applied to destinations such as Paris and Venice can be portrayed as romantic, while at the same time, depending on the personal attitude they can be cultural, urban, unique and sophisticated.

Although consumers seem to have little difficulty in assigning human personality traits to particular brands, the theoretical 'proof' underpinning brand personality is quite limited. Research has not yet found out how and why consumers endow inanimate products with qualities of human personality; however brands display three essential personality features:

behavior, interaction with the environment and stability. For example, a brand symbol is animated in order to symbolize behaviour, e.g. the Michelin man to symbolize strength and durability. Brands can also be updated to keep up with changing times and customer tastes, e.g. Kentucky Fried Chicken decided to shorten its name to KFC to lessen its association with fried and unhealthy food, while it associates with the initials JFK airport (?), evoking deliberately (?) a cosmopolitan impression; other brands display remarkable stability of core traits over the years, representative examples are the luxury brands of the fashion industry. The result of successful marketing means that a brand differentiates itself from the competing brands, just like a human should invest in differentiating the Project Area from the competitors. In this vein the Creative Tourism Network should use communication techniques and product development tactics to 'build' a personality for the Project Area.

4.3 Brand Awareness

The term suggests to make sure that the consumers know that the product or service exists, and it is available for sale. It is very important in promoting products. In commodity-related product markets, brand awareness decides the amount of sales that a product will make. Therefore, highly recognized brands thrive competitively in the market. Creating brand awareness is just the next step after creating a strong brand, which is very important these days for businesses or destinations to stay on top of the market. Hence, brand awareness measures how famous a brand is within its target audience. A strong brand is an essential element of your business behind its slogans and logotype. Strong branding and brand awareness strategies are crucial to developing a long term standing in the market. Here are some reasons why brand awareness is important for a business:

- **Brand Equity:** Equity is a brand's value beyond its physical assets such as equipment and buildings. Brand awareness is a key factor in developing brand equity. The more customers know about the brand, the more they will associate with it, the higher the reputation will be and the greater the overall brand value will rise;
- **Social Impact:** Businesses develop social impact through creating awareness about their brand in the market. This social impact helps people to spread positive word of mouth about the brand and perceive the brand's importance in their lives. In this way, the brand begins symbolizing their lifestyle choices, taste, or habits;
- **Customer loyalty:** In order for a business to sustain, it is important to retarget the converted consumers and enable them to come back and make purchases rather than targeting new clients, which can be very costly. Brand awareness plays a key role in enabling repeat sales or sustaining old clients through developing their loyalty towards your brand. For example, if a business follows up on a client through satisfaction surveys, promotions and newsletters after the sale has been made, it will increase a customer's loyalty towards the brand and result in increased future sales;
- **Capturing lost positions:** A consumer might drop the idea of purchasing a brand or might prefer the products and services of the competitors for any reason whatsoever. Through retargeting, businesses can reconnect with these kinds of lost leads and encourage them to make a purchase. The existing brand familiarity of the retargeted group can be leveraged along with an incentive such as discount, offers to make sales.
- **Saves marketing costs:** Brand awareness comprises of aided recall and unaided recall research. Aided recall research approaches the customers and asks them about their associations, awareness, and thoughts relating a particular brand whereas unaided recall research seeks to know the perceptions of the consumers regarding different brands of a particular product.



4.4 Branding the iCloud MUSEUM

The path to revealing a community-based brand, as it is the case of the Project Area conceived as an integrative destination, usually involves a multitude of stakeholders and may depart somewhat from that generally followed for branding corporate products and services. One reason for the variation is the composite nature of communities which are a compilation of many independent and competing businesses, products, and experiences that may be owned and managed by many different organizations with no single management team or brand custodian. For the Creative Tourism Network, starting to operate upon Project completion, the challenge remains to orchestrate cohesive brand messages and experiences through the commitment of many local players, including neighborhoods, attractions, hotels, tours, real estate agents, and restaurants that may also be competitors to each other.

Unlike a single consumer product, a destination like the Project Area is not a discrete, independent entity, but a complex set of parameters and cannot be reformulated or terminated if it is not popular or is under-performing. Nor can it introduce different products under different names. A problem for such a brand to be developed is that some important leaders frequently do not have strong marketing credentials, nor do they have a customer-focused perspective, yet they sometimes exert considerable influence over the process: and these days, every citizen weighs in with their opinion as well. Thus marketing research demonstrates that if a destination brand is to be developed as a coherent entity, participants in the process must be aware of the potentially destructive role of politics. While a corporate brand may need to be approved by a marketing

team or board, the destination brand may have to be endorsed by the Regional Authorities, including a series of municipalities, and other organizations in which political players are active or inactive. The destination brand has to be an exception, overcoming enmity, and above politics and the support of political leaders is vital and must be nurtured. It is important to gain their endorsement and understanding of the branding assignment. The future of destinations in Europe lies in the hand of the regional authorities, which often dispose of limited marketing budgets compared to the marketing resources of companies. Exacerbating the situation is the pressure from destination stakeholders and the challenge of developing a simple positioning message that will resonate with customers yet capture the diverse nature of destination attributes.

Community-based brands often have to withstand a level of political and public debate that consumer brands rarely have to undergo. A destination brand has to be able to stand the test of time, public debate, political scrutiny, media questions, and the analysis of marketing partners. The best way to insulate the brand from this scrutiny is to generate community buy-in and involvement from the start, through an open consultative process.

Brand planning for places usually requires an approach that is more conciliatory and inclusive than that found in the branding of most consumer products. For instance, being very specific with the positioning may unintentionally alienate many groups and cause controversy. Conversely, the trick is to not dilute the positioning to the point where the place loses its strongest competitive edge, and ends up being seen as meaningless or irrelevant.



4.5 User Generated Contents (UGC)

The term 'Web 2.0' refers to the second generation of web-based services that have gained massive popularity by letting people collaborate and share information online in previously unavailable ways. With Web 2.0 any individual can post their own content, opinions, videos, audio or imagery to the web for other users to see and respond to. Since Web 2.0 has begun to change the way consumers engage with information on the Internet, the term 'User-Generated Content' (UGC) is used to highlight the role that individual consumers have in submitting, reviewing and responding to online content. A constantly growing number of websites are incorporating features which enable the user to contribute their own content enabling people to communicate about special interest topics or products or services through the Internet. Such content is commonly referred to as 'user-generated content'. In relation to travel and tourism, some examples of user-generated content include:

- people sharing opinions about travel destinations, attractions and accommodation properties through blogs (weblogs) or other discussion forums
- travelers submitting photos or videos to the Internet to share their travel experiences with other online users
- consumers posting reviews of accommodation properties to sites such as tripadvisor.com
- people using social networking sites such as MySpace.com, facebook.com or

YouTube.com to share travel information.

The use of online sources of information in the travel planning process is now well entrenched. In the last decade over 200 million travel related searches are carried out each month on the Internet and some 95% of Internet users rely on information from the web as part of their travel information search process. But there has been limited research on the information search process and decision making behavior related to online vacation planning. The travel industry has had a varied response to the emergence of UGC. While travelers appear to be embracing the concept, travel industry members are still unsure of how to respond. However, given the critical role that the Internet now plays in the information search stage of the itinerary planning process, interest in integrating user content into travel sites is growing. In a comprehensive study of online travel planning, researchers reported that consumers seek information related to key sub-decisions: travel partners, the destination, expenditure required, activities, travel dates, attractions to visit, transportation providers, length of trip, rest stops and food stops. Given that UGC sites are effectively one type of Internet source that travelers can be influenced by, it is likely that the types of impacts these sites have on the consumer are similar in scope to the effect of more traditional travel sites. Ultimately UGC sites have the potential to influence the viewers' decisions in any of these areas.

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WEB TYPE	DEFINITION
Blogs (Weblogs)	Web pages that contain newsgroup-type entries, involving text, images and links to other 'blogs' in a chronological order with the newest posting listed first
Wikis	Websites that allow the user to easily add, remove, edit and/or change its content to suit their individual preferences
Podcasts	The blogging of audio content (i.e. MP3 format) which is accessed on a user-demand basis
Social Networks	Spaces such as MySpace and YouTube, that allow a group of friends, peers or like minded individuals to communicate, chat and share information on topics of interest



Table 13: Adapted from Kolbitsch & Maurer (2006) & Reactive (2007)

Marketers now have much less control over what messages reach consumers about their products. Already a decade ago, Cox et al. (2009) refer to the US-based report by iProspect and Jupiter Research which evidenced that approximately one-third of consumers were influenced by social content sites when making purchase decisions. While these sites may not necessarily make consumers decide to purchase, they can have an impact on a company's reputation. The degree of integrity, expertise and honesty related to the content that is posted online has an important impact on the level of influence of UGC on the consumer. Based on the various studies done to date, UGC can provide the following benefits to businesses:

- increase the likelihood of consumers having a good opinion of a business
- improving the search engine ranking of websites that contain UGC
- enhancing cross selling opportunities for different products/services

- providing the ability to convert consumers from 'observers' to 'purchasers' due to the
- trustworthiness of consumer reviews
- increasing consumer loyalty to websites that contain UGC to the ongoing development of
- content and dialogue on key issues
- providing relevant and up to date consumer feedback on products and services.

There is a diverse range of sites emerging that contain user-generated content related to travel and tourism. These range from generic social networking sites such as MySpace.com which contain travel sections through to individual blogs that have been created by avid travelers to showcase destination reviews globally. Below are known sites categorized either as commercial (providing consumer the ability to make up to 5 star ratings), commercial (with no ratings available) or non-commercial.

COMMERCIAL SITED- 5 STAR RATINGS
• Trip Advisor (www.tripadvisor.com) Comm – 5 star
• Epic Trip (www.epictrip.com) Comm – 5 star
• IgoUgo (www.igougo.com) Comm – 5 star
• Lonely Planet's Bluelist (www.lonelyplanet.com/bluelist) Comm – 5 star
• Orbitz (www.orbitzinsider.com) Comm – 5 star
• Mapsack (www.mapsack.com) Comm – 5 star
• Virtual Tourist (www.virtualtourist.com) Comm – 5 star
• Trip Up (www.tripup.com) Comm – 5 star
• Traveldestination (www.traveldestination.com) Comm – 5 star
• Expedia (www.expedia.com/destinations) Comm – 5 star
• Yahoo Travel (travel.yahoo.com) Comm – 5 star
• TravBuddy (www.travbuddy.com) Comm – 5 star
• STA Travel Blogs (www.statraveljournals.com) Comm – 5 star

Table 14: UGC Sites Ratings



COMMERCIAL SITES – NO RATINGS	
Flickr Travel (www.flickr.com/travel)	Comm – No rating
Gusto (www.gusto.com)	Comm – No rating
Travelistic (www.travelistic.com)	Comm – No rating
The Lobby (www.thelobby.com)	Comm – No rating
Kayak (www.kayak.com)	Comm – No rating
Visit Victoria (www.visitvictoria.com)	Comm – No rating
Lonely Planet TV (www.lonelyplanet.tv)	Comm – No rating
Schmap (www.schmap.com)	Comm – No rating
Trip Hub (www.triphub.com)	Comm – No rating
Del.icio.us (www.del.icio.us.com)	Comm – No rating
NON-COMMERCIAL SITES	
This Place I Know (www.thisplaceiknow.com)	Non-commercial
Wikitravel (www.wikitravel.com)	Non-commercial
Travel Blog (www.travelblog.com)	Non-commercial
Travel Rants (www.travelrants.com)	Non-commercial
Trips Log (www.tripslog.com)	Non-commercial
YouTube Travel (www.youtube.com/travel)	Non-commercial
V Carious (www.vcarious.com)	Non-commercial
World 66 (www.world66.com)	Non-commercial

Table 15: UGC Sites Ratings

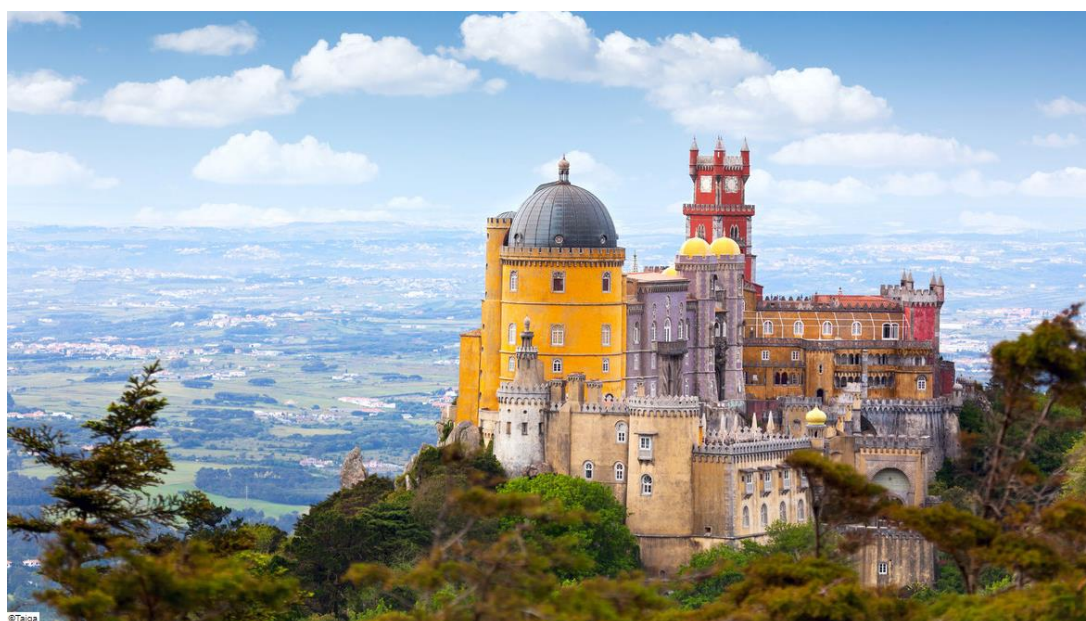


Fig. 24 : Pena Palace, Portugal
Source: European Best Destinations

The main way people found out about travel UGC sites was through Google (76%), 'by accident' while looking for travel information online (45%) or by referral from family or friends (33%). Currently most UGC online related to travel tends to revolve around hotel and accommodation booking sites such as tripadvisor.com, booking.com, though an increasing amount is appearing about destinations. Other providers (travel agencies, hotel chains, airlines and travel critics) are beginning to embrace UGC. The major UGC players in the online travel market are targeting travelers who are no longer interested in (or trusting of) more traditional travel information sources such as travel guides. Some providers are now incorporating UGC into their own web strategies to better engage with travelers and potential guests. Two major types of UGC comments being made: those through a general 'blog' (which were more common overall) and those made via reviews of particular travel products (which were more common in commercial 5 star websites). Most of the comments involved expressing an opinion and updating others on events or activities. Most of the review comments fell into the categories of 'updating others' and expressing opinions' as with general UGC blog comments. Overall, the commercial 5 star websites exerted more control over how UGC content could be entered, usually by a review

Almost half the participants in the research had visited some form of site containing UGC and around one-third had used UGC sites to help search for information about travel destinations and accommodation options. The results of the survey suggest that travelers are accessing a wide-ranging selection of sites that contain UGC as part of their trip planning process. UGC sites are mainly used when a destination has been chosen and the traveler is searching for accommodation options or trying to narrow down the choice of destinations. While the most prominent sites appear to be the popular travel sites such as Trip Advisor and Lonely Planet, the number of UGC sites being used by travelers is large. Existing UGC users appear to rely on these types of sites predominantly to search for information about travel destinations and

accommodation options, so it's not surprising that other popular sites used by participants in this research included WotIf.com and LastMinute.com. Of particular interest is the relatively lower reliance on social networking sites such as MySpace, YouTube and Flickr. While some 45% of study participants had used these sites, many did not consider them particularly useful compared to specialist travel sites.

While UGC sites are being reviewed and considered by a large proportion of travellers during their trip planning process, they are not necessarily considered as the most trustworthy or useful source of travel information. A comparison of the relative levels of trust held between various sources of information shows that non-UGC sites, such as state tourism websites or airline sites, are considered more trustworthy than UGC, followed by specialist travel sites (many of which do contain UGC) such as Trip Advisor and Lonely Planet. Most of the sites considered more useful were commercial 5 star websites where the UGC comments tended to be a review rather than part of a general blog.

The popular social networking sites such as MySpace, YouTube and Flickr are considered less trustworthy in terms of the information provided by people on these sites about travel destinations and products. It appears that the 'social' nature of these sites is recognized by most users and the information on them is not given as much consideration as other sources when making final travel decisions. Similarly, comments made by people on pure blogs which aren't specialist travel sites, are not trusted by most people. These sites are more commonly used by travellers to communicate and share stories amongst a network of known friends and peers, rather than being considered as credible sources of travel information by the average consumer. While information provided by state tourism websites is clearly considered the most important and reliable source of online travel information, participants in this study felt it was useful when travel operators responded to UGC posted online.



Similarly, most people felt that existing state tourism websites could be enhanced by incorporating functions to allow real travellers to contribute UGC to them.

More than 80% of respondents also reported that they preferred consumer reviews over a hotel provider's description of themselves. Interestingly, however, almost 60% of respondents indicated that they considered it favorable when a travel supplier responded to comments made on TripAdvisor.com. Sites containing UGC are perceived as being useful by people who use them. More than half of the study's participants suggested that they would factor in the influence of UGC when making their final decision about where to visit during a trip. Less than a third of travellers, however, would actually change their existing travel plans because of the influence of something they read via UGC. It appears that information obtained via UGC is generally used by travellers after they have already chosen what destination they will visit, and when they are in the process of searching for accommodation. While some users are considering UGC at the stage when they are trying to choose a final destination out of their short-listed options, most are using UGC to assist with accommodation selection.

- UGC is becoming a powerful 'conversion' tool as it reassures travellers about their travel choices;
- 15% of respondents always use UGC sites when travelling, while 64% occasionally use them.
- Some 30% of respondents state UGC sites are 'very influential' when booking online travel, a further 50% say they have 'certain influence' and 20% do not find them useful at all;
- UGC sites are generally being used once the travel search process has been narrowed down.
- In an online survey of more than 800 travellers by Nielsen/Net Ratings, more than half the respondents indicated that user-generated reviews provided on sites such as TripAdvisor.com were the most reliable source of travel information.

- According to IgoUgo the integration of user-generated content into travel websites has been found to increase booking conversions by 10%.
- TripAdvisor is the most popular UGC sites for travellers.

Overall, the degree of influence that UGC sites appear to be having on prospective travellers appears to vary depending on how much credibility and trust they place in the content which is posted by individuals to these sites. One of the most contentious issues surrounding the impact of UGC sites on consumer behaviour is the extent to which consumers actually trust the information about products and services that is posted on these sites. Given that is not always easy to identify and assess the profile of the person who has posted information on blogs and other social networking sites, the reader cannot easily gauge the credibility of the information provided. In the early days of Internet chat rooms and recommendation sites, marketers responded to this by advocating that firms could contribute successfully to these sites by disguising themselves as real consumers. However, more recent thinking suggests that faking the identity of user-generated content is an unwise strategy due to the loss of trust and credibility that results. One of the important issues is 'who' should be responsible for driving user-generated content sites. At one end of the spectrum, businesses can establish their own blogs or other UGC sites and encourage consumers to contribute to them. At the other end, the establishment of UGC sites can be left to independent third parties who are entirely removed from the products, services and businesses that are discussed.

An experimental survey of 490 online consumers found that the use of online recommendations greatly influenced the consumer's product choice, but there was no difference in the level of trustworthiness given to recommendation sites that were hosted on non-commercial third party sites compared to commercially driven sites. This suggests that it is the degree of integrity, expertise and honesty related to the content posted online that will determine whether or not UGC influences the consumer, rather



than who actually initiates and operates the site (Senecal & Nantel 2004). With the emergence of UGC, marketers will need to adopt a substantially different approach to their online marketing strategies, resisting the temptation to try and control the consumer dialogue, and instead facilitating ways that travellers can share their stories with others. Essentially if brands, destinations or any other type of business try to control what consumers are saying, it is likely to have a negative effect on the consumer's response.

Just as there has been little research into the impact of Web 2.0 sites on traveller decision-making, so is there minimal research on the technical and functional design effectiveness of these sites. While the study did not specifically analyse the design features of the 30 selected sites, it is useful for tourism marketers to be aware of the importance of website usability if they intend to develop their online marketing strategies and include UGC.

With their high degree of user interactivity, UGC sites potentially bring a new design dimension to online user behaviour and website use. Arguably, the website design features of such sites, with their focus on user-generated content, should be highly usable. Usable websites are easy to learn, allow tasks to easily be remembered, are intuitive and promote efficient use of the web space. There are noted benefits from making websites as usable as possible, coming from the improved visitor experience.

However a European Union *Study on online consumer reviews on the hotel sector* in 2014 notes that despite the fact that 90% of travelers globally referred to online reviews when planning their trip, many reviews are misleading the customers with fake news.

Online consumer review sites and platforms are tools that are widely used by consumers and are becoming embedded in both consumer behaviour and business models. A 2013 European Consumer Centres' Network web survey showed that 82% of respondents read consumer reviews before shopping. Tools for increasing consumer awareness and raising their trust in the market should not, however, mislead consumers with fake reviews, which, according to different estimates, represent between 1% and 16% of all 'consumer' reviews. Directive 2005/29/EC, the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive, concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market defines misleading or aggressive commercial practices and prohibits, in particular, the practice of falsely representing oneself as a consumer. Misleading or fake reviews undermine consumers' confidence in the integrity of online reviews and lead to consumer detriment. A fake review can be defined as a positive, neutral or negative review that is not an actual consumer's honest and impartial opinion or that does not reflect a consumer's genuine experience of a product, service or business. Some European consumer organisations say review sites would benefit from being regulated, or to some extent standardised. The problem of fake online reviews not only concerns individual consumers; it can lead to an erosion of consumer confidence in the online market, which can reduce competition. To deal with this issue, some guidelines have already been adopted by consumer enforcement bodies, regulators and other stakeholders, in the EU and internationally. Enforcement actions have also been taken. Fake online reviews should be taken seriously, as more and more consumers buy online, and the practice is becoming increasingly sophisticated.



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Fig. 25: Rijks Museum, Amsterdam
Fig. 26: Prague, Czech Republic
Fig. 27: Aix en Provence, France
Source: European Best Destinations





4.6 Implications for Tourism Marketing

Already a decade ago scholars demonstrate suggest that tourism operators and destination marketing organizations cannot ignore the rising popularity of sites containing UGC or the role that they may play in the travel planning behavior of consumers (Cox, Burgess and Selitto, 2007). Moreover, these sites can provide information that influences booking plans and can cause travelers to alter their travel plans. Cox, Burgess and Selitto found that there are two major types of UGC—those made through general ‘blogs’ and those made via reviews of particular travel products. The most common UGC features are the ability to book flights, accommodation and rental cars. The majority of consumer reviews were for accommodation, though some reviews were also for attractions or destinations as a whole. Although these sites are rising in popularity, they are not yet considered to be as credible or trustworthy as existing sources of travel information (such as state tourism websites) but are an additional source of information. Travelers prefer websites that allow them to enter ratings (up to 5 stars) for individual travel experiences. These are typically well known, have more features and usually only allow UGC reviews rather than general blog comments. Many consider that existing travel sites, including state tourism websites, should incorporate UGC features. However, any attempt to integrate UGC features into existing websites should be done with the concerns of travelers in mind. Contributors should be asked to provide some profile information to enable readers to make informed decisions about how relevant postings are to their own situations. All travel operators and tourism organizations involved in marketing destinations and products need to be aware of what is being said about them on the prominent UGC sites. However, they must not attempt to manipulate content or embellish postings by masquerading as real travelers. Many users are astute enough to see through these tactics and form negative opinions about organizations that tamper with UGC.



Fig. 28: Assos, Cephalonia
Source: European Best Destinations



5 DESTINATION BRANDING QUIZZ

Forward looking destinations and regions are adopting destination branding strategies to provide themselves with the focus and distinctive edge to attract more visitors, income, and talent. Here is a quick quiz to see how the brand building of your destination may compare with some of the leaders.

1. Target Markets: Is your brand based on thorough insights into the perceptions and motivations of target audiences?

2. Positioning I: Do you have a positioning statement and brand promise that you use as a beacon to guide all of your marketing and tourism development resources?

3. Positioning II: Is your brand based on well researched positioning that is meaningful to customers and cannot be easily matched by competitors?

4. Emotional Benefits: Do your marketing messages convey strong emotional benefits?

5. Brand Experiences: Have you defined the core experiences that are essential to the delivery of your brand promise?

6. Brand Identity: Do you have a distinctive logo, color pallet and graphic style, as well as key words and phrases that reflect brand are correctly and consistently used in all communications?

7. Alignment: Are all marketing actions by staff and partners aligned with your brand strategy?

8. Architecture: Does your brand take into account the needs and objectives of partner organizations engaged in economic development, trade, recruitment, film locations, education, etc.?

9. Adoption Plan: Do you have a plan to encourage support and adoption of your brand strategy by key stakeholders and partners?

10. Brand Manual: Have you documented your brand strategy include benefits, brand essence, associations, personality, visual and verbal identity, experiences, brand symbols and guidelines encourage on-brand behavior in order to deliver your Destination Promise? ____

Rate using the following rating guidelines:

1 = No 3 = Somewhat 5 = Yes

TOTAL SCORE ____



SCORING SCALE
44-50 Brand Guru
Your destination is well on its way to winning visitor's hearts and minds wherever you choose to promote it. You have a well-crafted strategy and have probably gained the support of key stakeholders and partners. Your competitors increasingly find it almost impossible to compete with you. The challenge is to stay ahead of them.
35-43 Brand Star
You're doing a good job. You may have established a strong market position, but may not have developed the other components needed for true branding success. You are vulnerable to those destinations that are Branding Gurus. Beware, they are out to win over your best customers.
25-35 Sales Star
Your destination is possibly caught as one of a group of undifferentiated competitors in which you have to rely on your sales skills, enthusiasm and great service to attract business. You have not yet crafted a compelling value proposition and the brand personality that will clearly differentiate you from competitors. A Destination Branding Blueprint will provide the insight and directions to elevate you above the Brand Stars.
< 25 "The Plain Brown Wrapper"
Your destination seems to be the tourism version of a generic brand. Your programs do not currently embrace the brand building strategies, discipline or techniques that may turbo-charge your marketing by presenting compelling propositions to your best customers and engaging the support of your key stakeholders. It is never too late to start a branding strategy and it does not require a huge budget.

Table 16: Destination Branding Quizz: Scoring Scale



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