SPOT Consultation for RURITAGE Webinar

Webinar "Rural tourism and marketing"

April 12th 2020

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Abstract

UNIVR team has represented SPOT project during the RURITAGE webinar. Before the webinar, it has been launched an internal consultation on issues addressed to SPOT project by the Organisers. This document will display an insight on Consortium understandings and evidences on issues of inclusiveness, biodiversity and equal involvement of local communities. The results of internal consultation is offered to Partners knowledge and without any pretention of analysis.

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1. SPOT Consortium and forms of inclusiveness

RURITAGE Network has addressed to all the participants to the first webinar entitled "Rural tourism and marketing" four crucial questions:

✓ How to develop socially inclusive tourism?

✓ How do you involve local people equally? What kind of strategies that we can follow.

✓ How to establish touristic concepts and keep the biodiversity?

✓ How do you involve women? What are your approaches / strategies in strengthening women's role / their participation? Impacts (if any already).

In these early 2020s, a Horizon2020 project about cultural tourism ought to consider environmental and social justice principles of sustainable development, pointing at economic, social, ecological and cultural ethics. In the writers' own beliefs, this special industry that is tourism has the responsibility and the privilege to reflect on the principles of equity that are part of a process never taken for granted (Jamal & Higham, 2021).

Trying to clarify to ourselves (as sociologists of culture) this issue, varieties of SPOT case studies made us to conceive an inclusive approach to tourism as part of the great container of responsible tourism, social tourism, peace through tourism, pro poor tourism (probably less than the other ones), accessible tourism (literature starts to be consolidated: cf. Scheyvens & Biddulph 2018). The step forward would be to try (and sometimes normatively to want) to boost the largest participation of marginalised groups or categories in tourism activities and experiences: from the planning phases until the fruition experiences.

Writers would refer to this inclusive approach in SPOT summarising with a statement: the most actors are actively involved, the best the benefits could be shared and the best strategies of contrasting obstacles will be elaborated. Namely, actors involved are researchers, policymakers, tourism stakeholders, and the same tourists who are (and have to be) aware that a larger access, production and consumption of forms of respectful tourism is a key for building such an equity. Respect is ideally due to the communities, to the natural contexts and to all their human and non-human inhabitants. This could become an effective intergender, intergenerational, interspecies, intercultural (Haughton 1999) and, where it is applicable, also an interreligious equity.
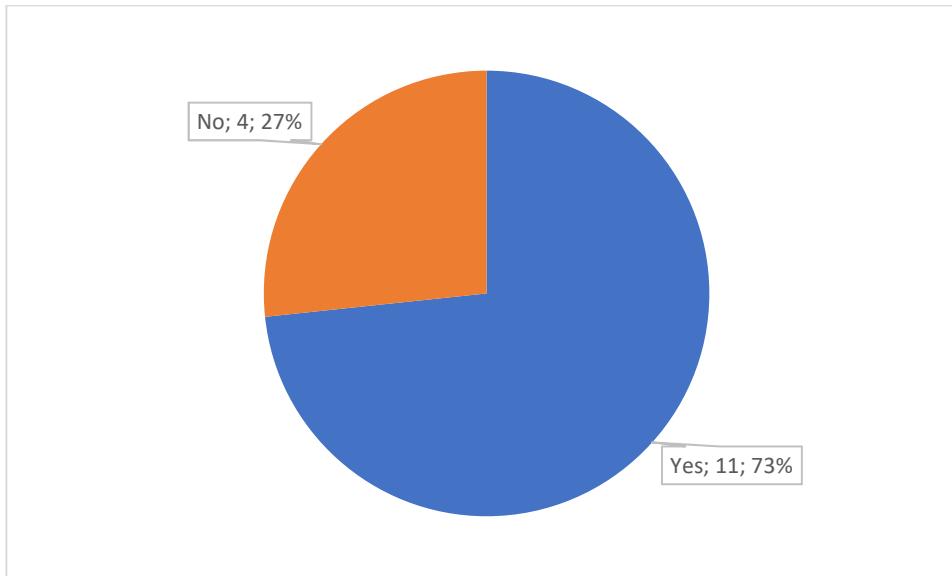
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2. SPOT Consultation for RURITAGE

2.1. Results of the questionnaire

First of all, we would thank all the Partners to have filled in the questionnaire. Here we share the results of the online Consultation for RURITAGE, hoping it would be useful in any way.

*Q2. Is your case study concerned with rural tourism? *

But at least 10 of SPOT case studies present both urban and rural tourism (like we can read in our Project Proposal).

Q3. In SPOT, are you developing a socially inclusive approach to cultural tourism?

- ✓ Yes, we have already worked on it
- ✓ Yes, we would like in the future
- ✓ No, it does not fit to our case study

Developing Inclusive Approach to CT in SPOT

Q4. *If you are developing an inclusive approach, how/what are you doing in few words?*

Word cloud representation

Answers collected

Involving local communities and stakeholders

Setting up a community-based cultural tours and activities, Strengthening associations and governmental institutions

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Increasing participative processes and more inclusive governance, working to create a new model of tourism for the current moment and the post-pandemic future that is more sustainable in a comprehensive sense (i.e. one that takes into account the needs of local residents and includes them in tourism's activities and economic benefits).

Interviews with different populations: decision makers in the authorities, entrepreneurs, tourists, local population. Also, analysis of plans and recommendations for cooperation between municipal authorities and rural localities. The purpose of the surgery is to promote collaborations and strengthen the entire area

We participate in the creation of products available to all groups of the population (including the handicapped).

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In our ***** rural region the relationship between visitors and residents plays a crucial role. Many residents see tourism as an economic potential (income, jobs). Also, the influence of tourism on nature/landscape has importance, as there are several smaller areas like camp grounds with a tendency to over-tourism. Another field of inclusion is intergenerational because older visitors have often permanent homes, whereas younger look for active and event tourism. Religious tourism does not play a role. About visitors from other countries we have less information, as they were a minority in the Corona year 2020 when we conducted our survey.

Still not working on it.

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Mapping all the case study area stakeholders, considering the actual Covid-19 situation and cooperating with their needs

social inclusive means that local residents, entrepreneurs and officials are involved in developments from society and policy. We look how they are involved for old subjects about cultural tourism and new subjects.

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We are doing so, by engaging all parts of the local communities (including local residents, tourists, professionals/entrepreneurs, local authorities, NGOs, Universities and other institutions/organizations) in all parts of our research, and especially (so far) for purposes of WP1

Q5. Respect to SPOT project, how to involve local people equally? In your opinion, are there preferable and more suitable strategies? *

Word cloud representation

Answers collected

Using local authorities as mediators to reach people.

Stakeholder meetings and groups

This will be done by organising various types of meetings and roundtables well prepared in advance, both face-to-face and virtual (face-to-face preferably), by trying to involve different groups in terms of age, gender, professional background, by trying to address the variety of problems they are dealing with.

Yes, it would be helpful to have greater interaction with residents (although COVID does not currently permit this) in addition to the contact we will have with the other main stakeholders of the tourism sector (and other related sectors).

Round table - promote a joint discussion of all the poor. Analysis of characteristics of each factor to understand his skills and abilities

SPOT project involved local people equally.

Our invitations to participate in the round table meetings are directed to different social groups (stakeholders)

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This topic is under-represented in local strategies. But there are some hints: A broader approach is intended to include partners in peripheral areas in the concepts. Also the cooperation between accommodation providers and cultural services providers is less developed and shall be strengthened. They have a Tourism development Agency, but with too less influence on local actors.

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The easiest way is to provide access to the common platform to the wide public where anybody can find the suitable information (SPOT will set up such Web research center)

We do not discriminate local people according to their social position. The best strategy is to go to field and gather opinions directly from people in the street.

Finding the best channels to make local residents aware of the project and enhance their participation

offer them possibilities to participate in existing networks and build new ones with them: digital and physical

using digital solutions to include their opinions, long-term multi-stakeholder cooperation including nontraditional institutions representing local communities

Dissemination of all information pertaining to SPOT to the local societies--best, perhaps, through social media and news releases. Engagement of local authorities in this task, as well as professional chambers, tourism organizations/ offices etc. Mostly, however, our own participation and participant observation in everyday life matters and cultural-tourism-related practices, as much as possible, so that SPOT becomes broadly known

Q6. Are you especially involving women in SPOT actions and activities?

- ✓ Yes, in research teams
- ✓ Yes, in stakeholder groups' composition
- ✓ Yes, both the previous answers
- ✓ Yes, because our case study especially points to women's participation (as stakeholders, as tourists)
- ✓ No. It is not a concern in our SPOT case study
- ✓ No. Maybe, we will have to further consider it in the future
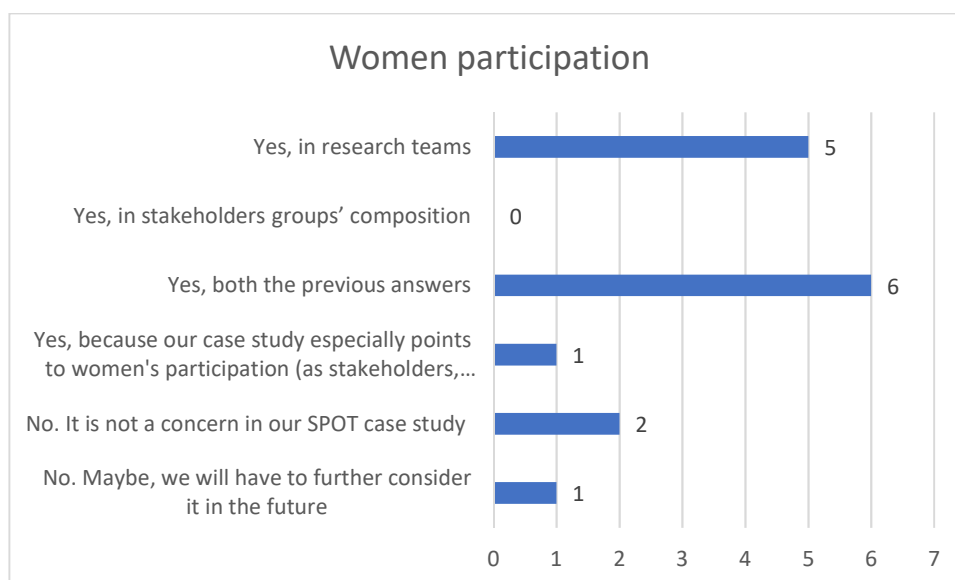
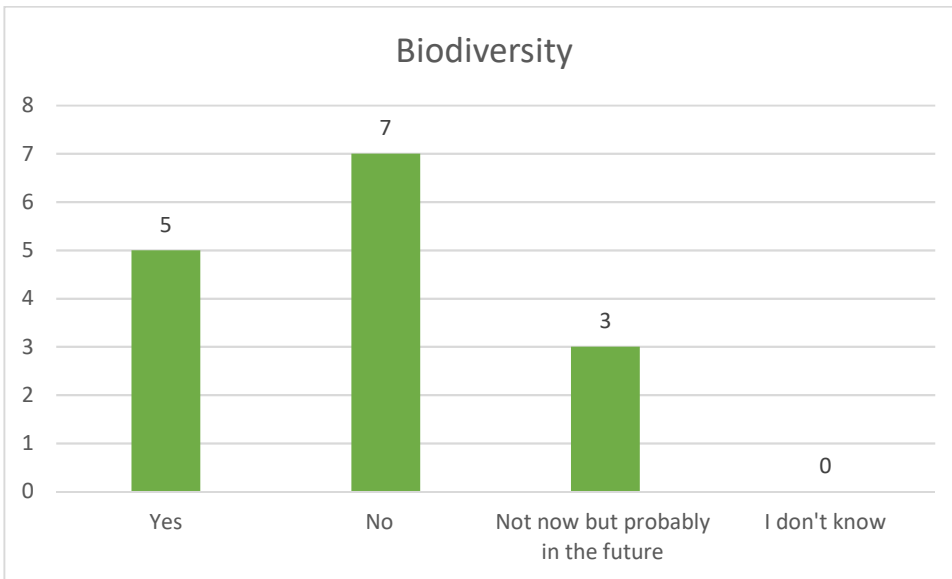## Q7. Is biodiversity a matter in your case study?

- ✓ Yes
- ✓ No

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✓ Not now but probably in the future

✓ I don't know

Biodiversity

Q8. *Tourism and biodiversity could clash in some contexts. Considering your case study, how to improve tourism, keeping biodiversity?*

Word cloud representation

Answers collected

I see overtourism as one of the main hazards to biodiversity and (un)fortunately, our case study is not suffering from it (yet). In other cases, raising people's awareness about the local biodiversity would aid preserving it.

Manage visitor flows

To inform the preparation of local plans for tourism that take full account of biodiversity; To guide the implementation of plans and all aspects of management; To provide a source of information for potential developers and for dialogue with them in advance of any project proposal; To gain revenue for a particular activity, such as conservation; Linking Communities, Tourism and Conservation: A Tourism Assessment Process

The local and regional goverments are currently creating new a new plan of use for the large Collserola park located in the nothern part of Barcelona (not technically in our case study area, but still important as it spans 8.000 hectares and is the "green lung" of the city). This plan aims to preserve the land and its biodiversity while also allowing tourists and residents to use the land responsibly and to enjoy its benefits. It will likely be even more important as time goes on and both tourists and residents seek nature-based tourism alongside cultural tourism in the busy city.

Providing information to promote engagement

We have experience in monitoring the number of visitors to natural areas extending to the city of Nitra. It will be essential to pay attention to sustainable tourism. There are places in the natural environment of the city where we suddenly notice a high concentration of tourists with their negative impact (eg. trampling, waste production).

We did not consider this issue because it is not a matter in our case study.

Only relevant to a lesser degree in our case-study. Tourism is underdeveloped and mainly focused on hiking and bike tourism, which initially only have a low impact on biodiversity itself.

There are some clash points at the lake Schwielochsee and in the Spreewald Biosphere Reserve where many visitors concentrate. This is related to Biodiversity, water quality.

To make tourism more sustainable by using new technology and digitalisation (bringing knowledge about local species) and keep all the rules how to properly behave in the nature.

Supporting green roof initiatives and urban beehives keeping, more open green areas and public spaces in the cities; supporting local producers

We would boost the green side of the tourism in our case study that could become also a more educated tourism to matters of ecology and biodiversity

Tourism can contribute to biodiversity: money earned with tourism is invested for nature and landscape

managing visitor flow, leveraging technology to teach about biodiversity

There are proper tourism management techniques/ methods to regulate tourism flows and concentrations, in order to contain tourism's negative impacts on the environment and biodiversity. Obviously, such measures and relevant planning are highly connected both with top-down and with bottom-up actions and responsibilities. This is a larger issue and an inter-sectoral one, of course, it does not only refer to tourism per se and strictly biodiversity. Also, the opposite may occur: tourism, for instance, has benefitted the landscape in our case study, through exposure, through awareness-raising and consequent actions for landscape preservation, management, promotion and broader valuation.

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3. Some conclusive thoughts

In SPOT project, there has been about one year of pandemic on fifteen months of time project. The fieldwork for data collection took the Coronavirus as an opportunity to consider, in the first wave of survey, the period of pandemic and, in a second wave of survey - hopefully - the pandemic overcoming and the tourism recovery.

It could be observed that despite the dramatic change of frame, the project is pursuing its main objectives. Coronavirus crisis has touched differently the 15 case studies and also in recent times, partners have observed different attitudes and fears face to the tourism shrinking or recovery. If some impacts could be announced here, tourism stakeholders need more and more our knowledge based platform to restart and to re-imagine cultural tourism in their own countries and worldwide.

4. References

Haughton, G. (1999) 'Environmental Justice and the Sustainable City', *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 18(3), pp. 233–243. doi: 10.1177/0739456X9901800305.

Jamal T. & Higham James (2021) 'Justice and ethics: towards a new platform for tourism and sustainability', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(2-3), pp. 143-157, doi: 10.1080/09669582.2020.1835933

Scheyvens R. & Biddulph R. (2018) 'Inclusive tourism development', *Tourism Geographies*, 20(4), pp. 589-609, doi: 10.1080/14616688.2017.1381985

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