



# BLUTOURSYSTEM

Operative Methodology (OM)  
towards BluTourSystem innovation

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## Document references

deliverable: D 3.3.1 Operative Methodology (OM) towards BluTourSystem innovation

## Credits

edited by: UNIVERSITY OF VENICE CA FOSCARI

elaborated by: researchers

checked and reviews by: QPM

approved by: Steering Committee

## Scope:

The scope of this document named del\_3.3.1\_Operative Methodology is to introduce the operative methodology issued after a preliminary desk test of scenarios as depicted in 3.1.2 “In depth interpretation of DSS result and enhanced identification of CB scenarios”

The methodology is designed to provide stakeholders, decision makers, and practitioners with:

- A procedure to understand how to use the knowledge framework composed by Tourmedassets, ShapeTourism and the smart cross border data system of BluTourSystem;
- A roadmap to develop new product capable to enhance the CB Adriatic destination focusing on creative tourism, new form of hospitality and relational tourism, eco-innovation, blue economy sustainable exploitation for a new tourism perspective.

## Targets

project partners, policy makers, trainers, SME's and tourism stakeholder

For public dissemination: **Yes**

## A knowledge-based framework to develop sustainable tourism in the Adriatic Cross Border Destination

The operational methodology for the transfer of knowledge of the phenomenon of tourism through data (SCBDS) has been designed as an engine that uses input:

- data;
- ideas;
- gaps and needs;

and as an output produces innovation, training processes and new products and services.

This motor, which represents OM, is made up of various gears. Each gear represents a necessary step to address, calibrate and adapt the knowledge expressed by the data to something that is operational. What goes from gear to gear is the added value useful to destinations to implement innovative plans and actions towards creative tourism and eco innovation. These almost obligatory steps described in the next pages are:

1. Destination overview and analysis;
2. Key Actors to involve;
3. Capacity building procedures;
4. Creation of new actions;
5. Monitoring of the results.



Figure 1 - The framework of the Operative Methodology - authors' elaboration

## how to use data and indicators in tourism planning

The use of the indicators produced through the data collected in the SCBDS (described in del\_3.1.1) allows the destination to know the dynamics of the phenomenon of tourism through official and unofficial information. The mix of this knowledge produces a new value that must be integrated in all phases of destination management, combining standard models with a data related model that can be defined as a data-driven model.

In this context there are several ways to take advantage of the added value created by the data, but they can be enclosed in these tasks:

- benchmarking of performance indicators across all European regions at nuts2 level;
- creation of product averages (e.g. seaside tourism, mountain tourism, etc.) and subsequent comparison;
- creation of area averages (e.g. Mediterranean area territories, northern or central Europe, European islands) and subsequent comparison;

- specific intra-national insights;
- development of levels of use of tourism sub-systems at national, regional and municipal level.

## how to exploit knowledge in developing new business ecosystem for creative tourism and eco innovation

In the following pages we will show the process of value creation using data and information from SCBDS dividing the steps in few gears necessary to apply teaching method using a data-driven approach.

### Destination overview

The first aspect that is involved in the process of developing new business ecosystems by exploiting the information and intrinsic knowledge of the data is related to the characteristics of the destination. In such a process, several elements make up the general picture of this first gear:

- the assets of the destination;
- the performance levels of the destination;
- destination-specific gaps and needs;
- the level in the life phase of the destination (TALC):
- destination products, services and experiences.

These elements are analysed through different activities developed during this project and can be implemented whenever the operational methodology (OM) has to be applied and are functional to address, calibrate and use the data with the ultimate goal of mitigating the general gaps and needs of the destination. For this purpose, it is necessary to understand:

### **1 - THE ASSETS OF THE DESTINATION**

They are all those physical and territorial characteristics of the destination, related to the internal context (e.g. human capital, attractiveness, accessibility), and to the external context (e.g. political situation, main foreign markets, levels of internationalization) that create the basic situation of the destination.

## 2 - THE PERFORMANCE LEVELS OF THE DESTINATION

For this aspect, please refer to del\_3.1.1 which illustrates the summary indicators and the sub indicators created by the Tourmedasset and Shapetourism projects that are re-calibrated thanks to the SCBDS. They are:

- Competitiveness index;
- Attractivity index;
- Sustainability index;
- Web reputation indexes.

## 3 - SPECIFIC GAPS AND NEEDS

In accordance with the activities and the deliverables 3.2.1, 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 it is necessary to understand the gaps and needs of the destination (but also of the actors in the destination - see further) in terms of lack of knowledge and ability. Those gaps and needs are investigated through a participatory analysis (del 3.2) with questionnaires and interviews to the key tourism stakeholders regarding:

- the need of new data (official and unofficial data) to monitor the destination and which data are useful (data sources) to develop business ecosystems (e.g. about attractions, accessibility, smart solutions, amenities, ancillary services; available packages and activities in the destination)
- gaps and needs about digital competences;
- gaps and needs about communication quality
- gaps and needs about foreign languages;
- gaps and needs about internal organization structure and procedures;
- gaps and needs about personalization of the services;
- gaps and needs about creation of relationships;
- gaps and needs about eco-tourism knowledge and stakeholder involvement;
- gaps and needs about creative tourism knowledge and stakeholder involvement;
- gaps and needs about innovation in general.

#### 4 - THE LIFE CYCLE PHASE OF A DESTINATION

These are all the qualitative and quantitative characteristics that make it possible to calculate the level of ripeness of a tourist destination and to include it in one of the phases of the life cycle illustrated by Butler (1980). This analysis is necessary in order to orientate the information coming from the data according to the status of the destination. At each level, in fact, correspond characteristics and peculiarities of demand (e.g. increase in tourists, prevalence of daily visitors, mass tourism and "hit and run" tourists) and tourism supply (e.g. sector of accommodation in expansion, high rate of *airbnbification* of the city, touristification of some districts), but also the quality of products and services, the level of economic benefits related to tourism, negative externalities, social and environmental impacts. Butler identified 7 stages which make up the destination life cycle, namely: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation and either decline or rejuvenation. The approach by Butler is based upon the assumption that 'tourism changes tourism', which is visible throughout the stages of the life cycle model (McKercher, 2005). Over time, according to Butler, natural and cultural attractions become commodified, new, often foreign actors emerge, investments in built environment and nature and scale of tourism change which might affect local communities and the tourism product quality. In the final stages of the cycle, the carrying capacity of a destination is reached or even exceeded which in urban areas is mainly a psychological and social concept rather than an ecological one (McKercher, 2008).

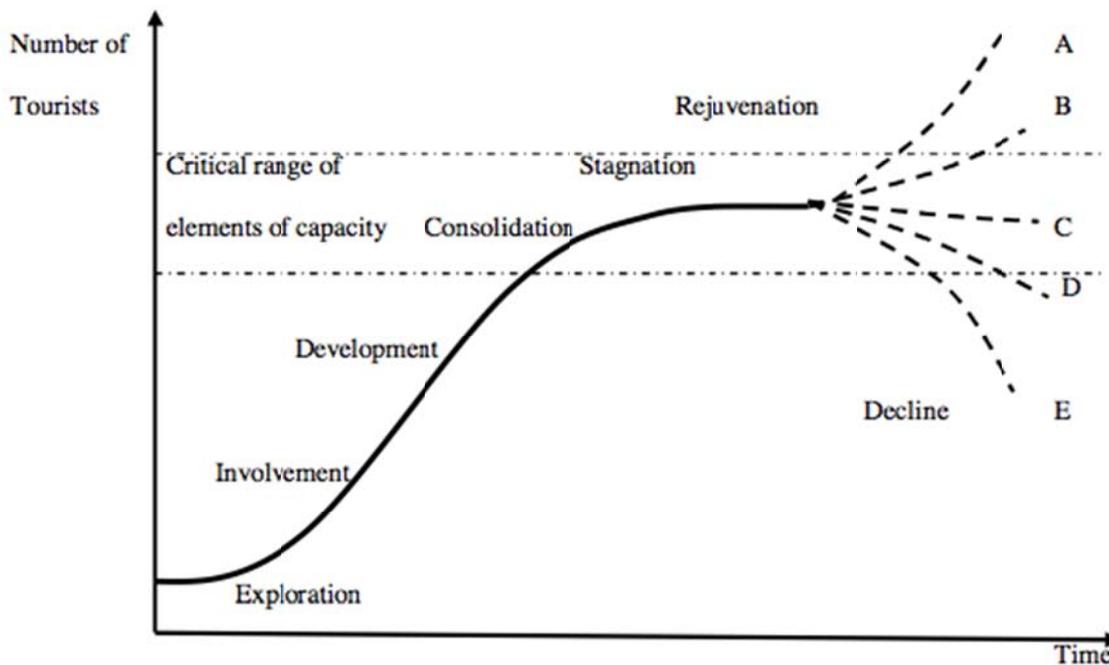


Figure 2 Tourism Area Life Cycle - Butler 1980

Here, according to Butler's model (1980) some characteristics of the different stages:

The Exploration Stage:

- Small numbers of tourists
- Based on primary tourist attractions. These may be natural or cultural.
- No secondary tourism attractions.
- Tourism has no economic or social significance to local residents.

The Involvement Stage:

- Local residents become involved in tourism
- Emergence of secondary tourism facilities such as guest houses.
- A tourism season may develop.
- Pressure develops for governments to improve transport for tourists.

The Development Stage:

- High numbers of tourists that may exceed the local population during peak periods.
- Heavy advertising will create a well-defined tourist market.
- Local involvement and control of tourism declines rapidly.

- External organisations will provide secondary tourism attractions.
- Natural and cultural attractions will be developed and marketed.
- Local people experience physical changes to the area that they may not approve of.

#### The Consolidation Stage:

- Tourism growth slows but the numbers of tourists exceeds the local population.
- The area's economy is tied to tourism
- Marketing and advertising will be wide-reaching.
- Major franchises and tourism chains will be represented.
- Resort areas will have a well-defined recreational business district.
- Tourism arouses opposition and discontent from some local people.

#### The Stagnation Stage:

- Visitor numbers have reached their peak.
- Carrying capacity has been reached or exceeded.
- Tourism causes environmental, social and economic problems.
- The resort becomes divorced from its geographic environment.
- Artificial tourism attractions now supersede the original primary attractions.
- Area has well-established image but will no longer be fashionable.

After reaching stagnation, Butler saw that rejuvenation or decline as possible alternatives. The last stage of his model offers different scenarios between complete rejuvenation and total decline.

As described by Kruczek et al. 2017 the application of this criteria is useful for monitoring the impacts of tourism activities on the environment and for the sustainable developing of the destination. Here we can see an example of application of the TALC able to drive tourism development with a perspective of eco-tourism and eco innovation.

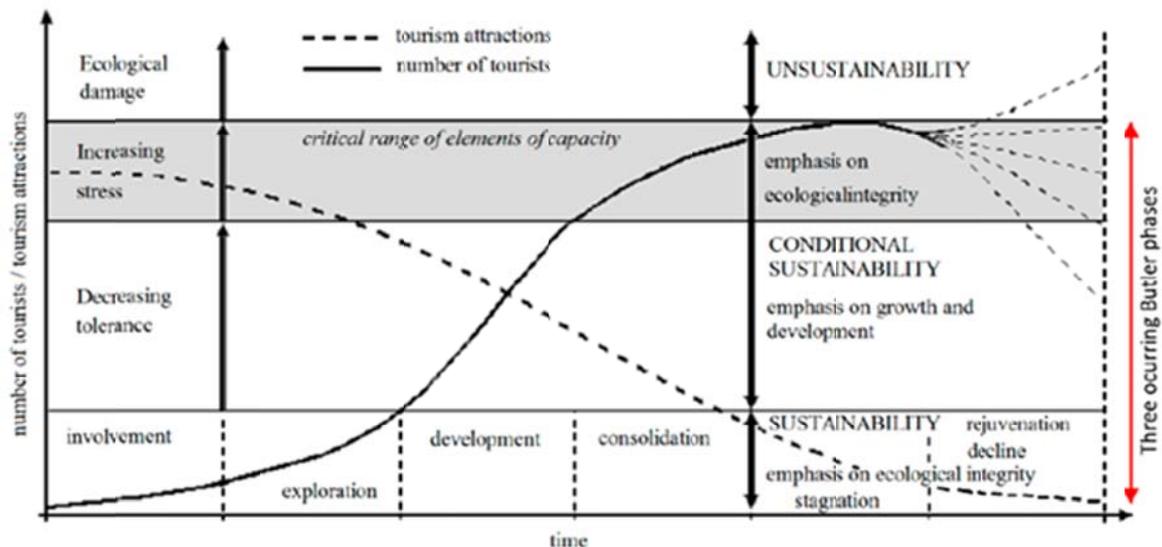


Figure 3 Sustainable development and TALC - Kruczek et al. 2017

Another example on the TALC more related to creative tourism and the involvement of local stakeholders (in this case the citizens) that will collaborate in a process of co-creation of the tourism experience/product/service is to weight and measure the negative impact on local community. In fact, according to one of the definition of creative tourism - 'Tourism that offers visitors a creative pursuit (including arts, crafts and cookery workshops), with the opportunity to stay in high quality accommodation, and to connect **with local people** in a distinctive destination.'

- if the level of the negative impact perception is high, more difficult will be the inclusion and the participation of local community in the creation of new tourism products/services/experience.

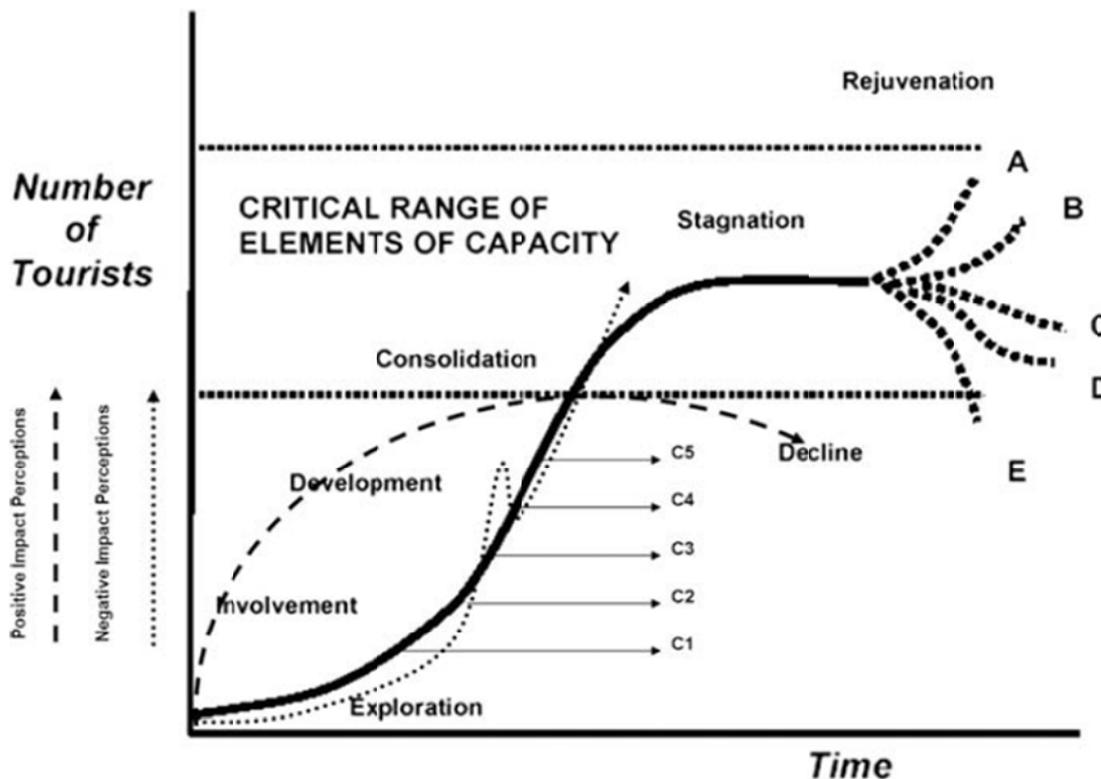


Figure 4 - Theoretical relationship between the tourism area life cycle and local perceptions of tourism impacts and proposed positions of Belizean communities C1–C5 in the cycle (adapted Butler, 1980), source: Diedrich and Garcí'a-Buades (2009)

## 5 - DESTINATION PRODUCTS, SERVICES AND EXPERIENCES

According with del\_3.1.3 and to Buhalis (2000), in order to make the best use of the intrinsic value of data to structure new products and services for creative tourism and eco-innovation with the aim of putting everything into a system in a business ecosystem, it is necessary to develop a mapping of tourism products and services and of the type of tourism connected to the destination (possible experiences). It is suggested to develop a matrix where all the tourist products and themes of the territory are positioned on the vertical axis, while all the destinations, dmo and case study areas are positioned on the horizontal axis. In this way it is possible:

- Map the products, services and experiences of the first level and those most present;
- Identify secondary tourism products;

- Discover which territories or destinations can best meet the requirements of eco innovation and creative tourism;
- Orient the training according to the peculiarities of the destination.

	dest_1	dest_2	dest_3	dest_4	dest_5
cultural tourism	strong presence	medium presence	strong presence	low presence	medium presence
sea side	medium presence	low presence	low presence	strong presence	strong presence
mountain	low presence	strong presence	low presence	low presence	low presence
sport	medium presence	strong presence	low presence	strong presence	low presence
food and wine	low presence	medium presence	medium presence	low presence	strong presence

strong presence	strong presence
medium presence	medium presence
low presence	low presence

Table 1 - example of product X destination matrix

## Actors to involve

BLUTOURSYSTEM aims at boosting the policies evolution for creating innovative systems and new mechanisms to advance the Blue Eco Potential of the cross-border area in a sustainable and competitive way.

By addressing creative and eco-innovation, as a process able to create original processes, systems, services designed to satisfy human needs and to provide a better quality of life with a whole-life-cycle horizon, the project develops scenarios reaching a frame of a more sustainable tourism economy and enhanced human capital.

The tourism system is made up of many different subjects, such as customers, locals, tourism intermediaries, complementary products' producers and sellers and public authorities. In tourism destinations, stakeholders collaborate with the purpose of creating new values, generated by the means of new and/or innovated products/services, processes, marketing/management activities and organizations.

Considering that tourism products are defined and co-created by the demand and the supply, BLUTOURSYSTEM launches a cross-border coordination platform (WP5 output), where knowledge, based on data and on co-created contents, becomes the real ground for a creative innovation in the blue tourism sector: experts and researchers offer data analysis to stakeholders.

The BLUTOURSYSTEM tool SCBDS aims at fostering the balance between divergent public and private interests by gearing tourism development toward a data-driven approach, raising awareness and increasing the knowledge about the competitors and the challenges of the global competition. The data contained in the BLUTOURSYSTEM tool SCBDS helps to improve the tourism knowledge framework, providing analysis and operational tools that support policy-makers and private operators in their decision-making process and lead the tourism growth toward a tourism based on eco-innovation and creativity.

BLUTOURSYSTEM tool SCBDS establishes a cross-border Living Lab (WP4) to enhance the capacity-building of the tourism actors and help the destination growth and business progress. The main topic now is the identification and the selection of the target of the BLUTOURSYSTEM tool SCBDS: who is this tool for?

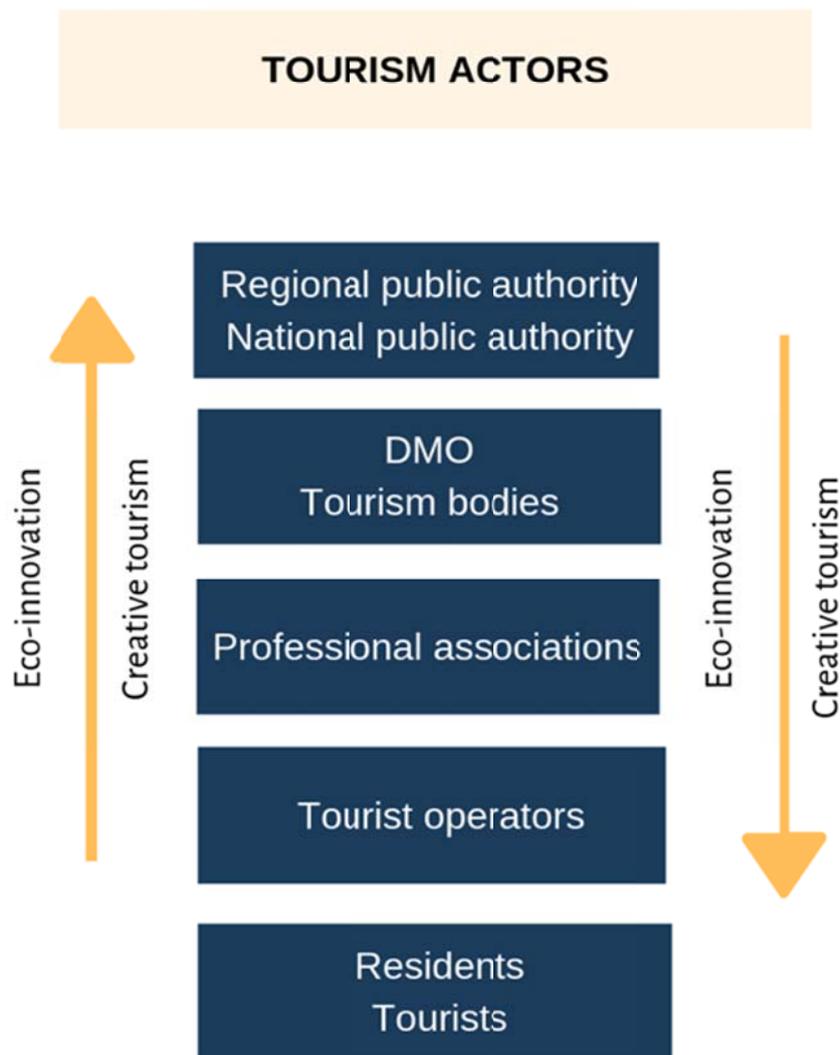


Figure 5. The actors of the tourism system

The choice of the stakeholders is given by the outputs that want to be obtained for the destination and the result of the gap and needs analysis. So, the identification of all the relevant stakeholders is of crucial importance to get the key player involved in the capacity-building process, established by BLUTOURSYSTEM tool SCBDS.

BLUTOURSYSTEM tool SCBDS is mainly targeted to policy-makers, decision makers and managers of the tourism sector who are in charge/power of processing data and information, determining goals and developing policy, strategies and actions for the tourism ecosystem.

The actors of the tourism sector to get involved in the capacity building are:

WHO	WHY
National authorities (Tourism Ministries)	They play an important role in tourism development: they plan tourism activities at national levels. Planning at national levels require appropriate policies being designed and implemented.
Regional authorities (Tourism Departments)	They are relevant key players and decision makers. The Regions support local tourism and SMEs with investments and funding programs and manage the impacts of tourism on the territory.
Universities and Research Institutes	They can play a key role in helping public authorities and firms define innovative strategies through the assessment of the knowledge assets, the enhancement of the skills and competencies of the stakeholders, knowledge and innovation transfer.
DMOs/Tourism Bodies:	DMOs play a key role in the long-term development of a destination, by formulating an effective tourism strategy based on destination marketing and destination management. They build the tourism supply and promote the destination in the tourism market.

Professional associations	<p>They promote and advance the professionalism of individuals in tourism in all sectors, at all levels and worldwide. They bring together various tourism sectors to discuss, debate and share ideas and experiences, to network and to develop best practice.</p> <p>Support training and academic development at all stages of their progress through industry collaboration.</p>
Tourist operators (HORECA operators, site and museum managers, tour guides, etc)	<p>They represent the tourism business system and the engine of the tourism economy. Tourist operators have a direct relationship with the final user and the tourism market. They can give a bottom-up drive in the development of new strategies and action for tourism development.</p>

## Capacity building procedure

Capacity Building process is a key element of a long-term development of tourism destinations: it is an effective, visible and highly valued way for enhancing tourism potentialities in a specific site. It enables local and regional public and private stakeholders to acknowledge the skills to build new and innovative sustainable tourism policies reflecting local features and which address local needs. Furthermore, it enhances the readiness of the actors to build on local strengths to valorize the potentialities of a tourism destination, engaging at the same time in a pro-active way the local community in this process.

It is also pivotal to underline that it also makes feasible for local and regional decision-makers a proper assessment of which most effective mechanism could be developed in order to ensure vertical and horizontal co-operation among all the relevant stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in the tourism sector.

Last but not least, the capacity building fosters the skills of building innovative blue-economy entrepreneurial tourism capacities, including social entrepreneurship, taking into account the direct impact of tourism on local environment-both natural and human – on one hand and the capacity to assure long term local attractiveness and permanence over time of the tourism as development asset at local level.

A key issue is the sustainability of the tourism destinations, just considering only what is the impact of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions of the tourist's travelling.

For the effectiveness of the capacity building training there will be a two-steps cascade training of the same trainers that in turn will have to carry out appropriate and effective education and training schemes in order to achieve tangible results of competitiveness and productivity improvements in the tourism industry.

In a more holistic approach, this would also raise the awareness of local decision-makers to integrate tourism economy into wider regional development strategy, in a framework of a strong public sector management and a multi-actor system of governance which will facilitate the establishment of a comprehensive policy framework with strong and consolidated mutual consultation process.

In the context of the Blutoursystem project the capacity building process plays a key role in the project's activities, an entire WP is devoted to the capacity building process with the implementation, testing and assessment of the QHelix mechanism that is the ground of the WP5 Blutoursystem platform, based on the two pillars of the Advice Blue Points and the CB Living Labs.

We may focus our attention on the Living Labs, which may be defined as a systemic innovation approach. In fact, in most cases living-labs deal with user-centered, open innovation ecosystem, often operating in a territorial or regional context, integrating concurrent research and innovation processes within a citizen-public-private-partnership (C3P), also featured as Public-Private-People partnerships (PPPP), for user-driven open innovation, involving quadruple helix stakeholders (companies, researchers, public organizations and users).

A Living Lab involves four main activities:

- 1) Co-Creation: co-design by users and producers;
- 2) Exploration: discovering emerging usages, behaviours and market opportunities;
- 3) Experimentation: implementing live scenarios within communities of users;

- 4) Evaluation: assessment of concepts, products and services according to socio-ergonomic, socio-cognitive and socio-economic criteria

Besides the organization of the living labs, also seminars are organized with an user centered experiences workshops. The goal is to enable and encourage also the approach of a new responsible and ethical tourism, which empowers the capacity building of policy makers and relevant tourist public and private stakeholders and actors in ensuring inclusivity in governance of tourism destinations, valuing and mapping the state-of-art of the blue economy, taking into account also the changing risk patterns and natural disasters along the coastlines from increasing mass tourism pressures and climate changes. It is pivotal that within the capacity building process, the relevant public and private actors that are directly or indirectly involved in the tourism sector have the awareness and are properly trained also for the planning and implementation of resilience and mitigation measures in the holistic vision of strengthening an effective blue-economy of the tourism destinations.

### Innovation in eco and creative tourism - new actions and plans

According to the overall objective of the project, the BLUTOURSYSTEM tool SCBDS contributes at improving the frame conditions for investments in Blue Tourism and at stimulating competitiveness, eco-innovation, diversification and creative enhancement of cross-border tourism offer.

The development of the capacity building through Living Labs and trainings, grounded on the tool SCBDS, leads the stakeholders to be part of a cross-border tourism innovation process. The processing capability for the data provided by the tool SCBDS, increases the key actors' knowledge on how to effect sustainable change, remedy the lack of inter-sectoral coordination and fill the gaps and needs of tourism destinations with innovative, creative and tailored-made approaches.

The capacity building process aims at helping the stakeholders to implement a Destination Management Plan, defining the priorities and the strategies to develop a competitive cross-border

tourism, based on eco-innovation and creative tourism products. This framework leads the decision-makers and the policy-makers to the identification of strategic objectives and actions through the creation of an action plan. The action plan includes the implementation of different tailor-made actions, depending on the gaps and needs encountered in the analysis supported by the tool SCBDS.

The actions include:

- Creation of partnerships to foster the cooperation and exchange of best practice among the actors
- Creation and testing of innovative typologies of Destination Governance and Management
- Implementation of marketing action, targeted to specific groups
- Development new creative tourism products and experiences to meet the new demand needs.
- Development of new policies to support eco-innovation and sustainable development of tourism, by reducing the impacts of production systems on the environment, enhancing nature's resilience to environmental pressures, boosting an efficient and responsible use of natural resources, fostering new processes, technologies and services that make business greener.



Figure 6. The steps of the process of actions identification

## Monitoring the results

Following the capacity building process and the definition and implementation of the various actions to be undertaken, both strategic and operational, it is necessary to provide a monitoring section. Monitoring, if already present within the operating methodology, makes it possible to verify the effectiveness of the actions in terms of mitigating the gaps and needs of the destination and stakeholders.

In this operational methodology, monitoring models are suggested that use qualitative and quantitative methods in the initial start-up phase of the transfer of knowledge of the data, in itinere (study of destination and involvement of actors) and in the final phase of the actions.

Monitoring in the early stages of the process illustrated in the OM, developed through focus groups and meetings between participants, makes it possible to highlight the needs of operators and the sector, identifying operational routes with respect to the proposed activities and an adequate mapping to be used as a starting point for the two theoretical insights developed through the scholarships.

During the training activities of the capacity building phase, the monitoring of the learning and of the usefulness/family of the contents treated can be carried out through the distribution of questionnaires designed to evaluate the learning of the individual, the level of network built and the knowledge reached by the group. In addition to the questionnaires, meetings dedicated to group comparisons can be useful to gather information on possible process improvements.

The monitoring of the results in the final phase of the OM aims to detect the degree of effectiveness of the implemented training courses and of the other stages of the methodology, as well as the outcome of the actions developed. A way to monitor the actions and the activities implemented using indicators is describe in the figure 10 of the deliverable 3.1.3 named “Strategic vision for driving innovation in CB sustainable tourism- report”, whose scheme is shown below



Figure 7 Tourism business eco-system innovation potential indicators. source del\_3.1.3

## Recommendations for the Advice Blu Point

The Advice Blue Points (ABPs) will be the “pillars” of the transfer of knowledge carried out with the training activities of the capacity building phase because they will be a multilateral arena of confrontation and cross-fertilization of the achievements of the same courses.

It is paramount to assess the effectiveness of the transfer of knowledge from the trainers (higher education capacities) to the “real-world” business practice, analyzing in the medium-long term perspective also real case studies and scenario that have benefitted from the enhanced capacity building of the policy-makers and stakeholders that have attended the courses.

Furthermore, the ADBs will be the “crossroad” of exchange of knowledge, scientific research expertise, enlarging Adriatic inclusive approaches to the European and Mediterranean basin area, promoting new partnerships and liaisons between High Education institutions and research institutes, policy practitioners and enterprises.

It is pivotal that the managers and the staff of the ABPs raise awareness among the attendees of the capacity building courses as well as to the relevant public and private stakeholders directly or indirectly involved on the tourism economy of the significant opportunity to exploit the potentialities of networking and of knowledge exchange of the same ABPs, in the wider context of the follow up of the project BLUTOURSYSTEM with its Platform and the CB Living Labs.

## References