

12 TRAINING ACADEMY ON CULTURAL ROUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COOPERATION AND CULTURAL ROUTES

TORRES VEDRAS, PORTUGAL, 11-13 JUNE 2025

Workshop 6: Sustainability & Climate Action in Cultural Routes

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Road Map



1. Introduction

- Brief overview of the topic (Resilience & Green Tourism).

2. Initial activity

- Selection of climate change and sustainability (specific) challenges for cultural tourism routes (Mentimeter)

3. Co-creation stage

- Creation of working groups (5-6 participants)
- Select 5-6 main challenges (from above)
- Develop an action plan, focused on:
 - Measures/strategies on sustainability and climate-resiliency to apply in cultural tourism routes
 - Methods (indicators or other) for measuring sustainability and climate-resiliency

4. Wrap-up by moderators

- Summary of the action plans of the various groups
- Elaboration of summary
- Discussion with participants

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Green Tourism



can be understood in two different but intersecting ways...

...as tourism activities undertaken in natural settings, in which the sensory and existential experience of nature is a central aspect of the tourism experience

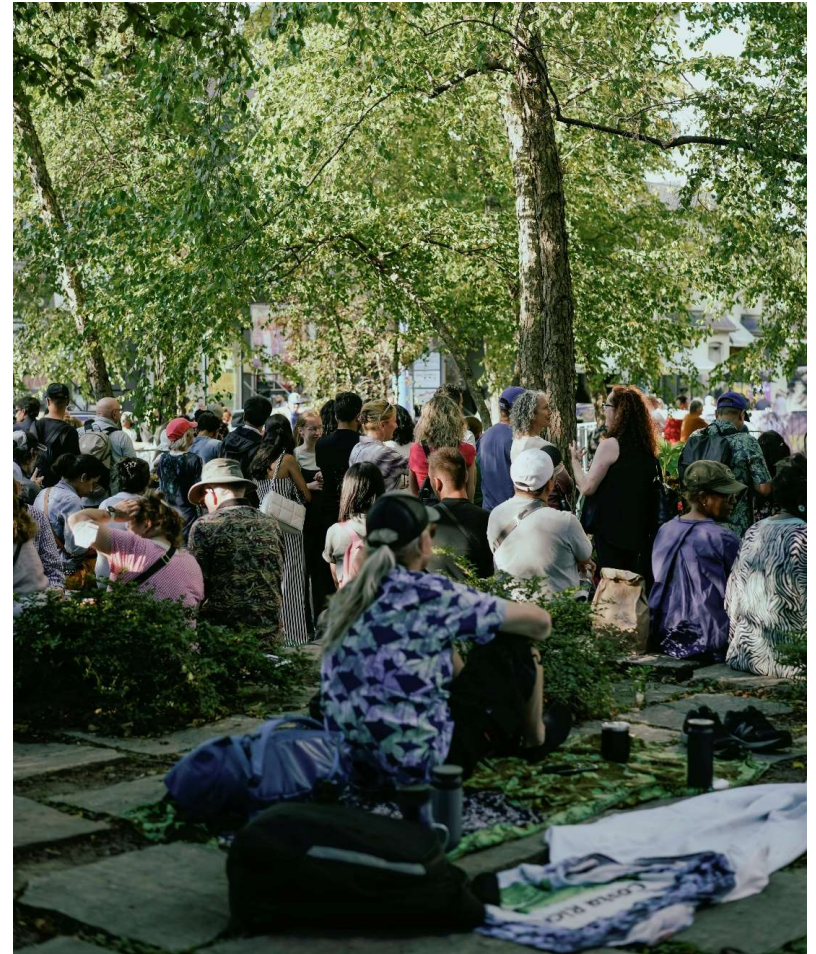
- synonym of *nature tourism*, *rural tourism*, and – at times – *ecotourism*

...as tourism activities which strive to minimize environmental impacts and contribute to the sustainability of the places and regions

- synonym of *sustainable tourism*, and – at times - *ecotourism*

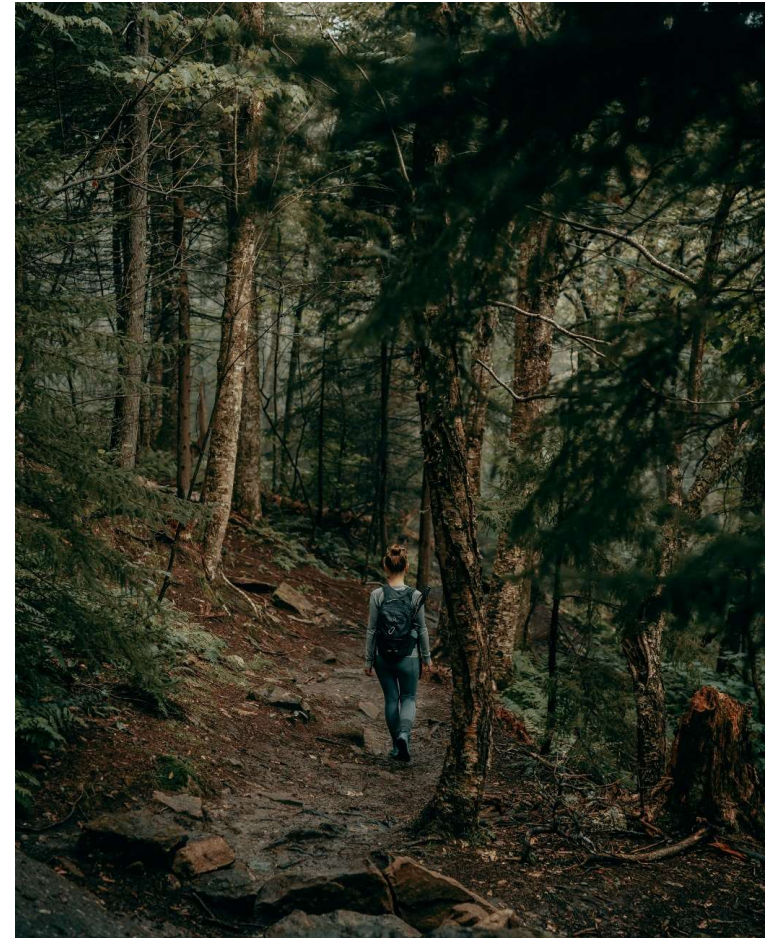
Green Tourism: Strategies?

- There are no 'one-size-fits-all' solutions for tourism: local context matters (population and community, natural resources, tourism infrastructures, governance model)
- Are we trying to provide a solution by creating a problem?



Green Tourism: Some basic principles

- Carrying capacity matters (both in environmental and human terms)
- International mass tourism is not the only kind of tourism there is
- Balancing quality and inclusion
- Local governance, stakeholder inclusion and community-based forms of tourism
- Education, science, culture and conservation are integral parts of the green tourism experience



Green Tourism: Mind the gap(s)

- Is this 'green tourism' or 'green gentrification'?
- Is this 'green tourism' or 'greenwashing'?

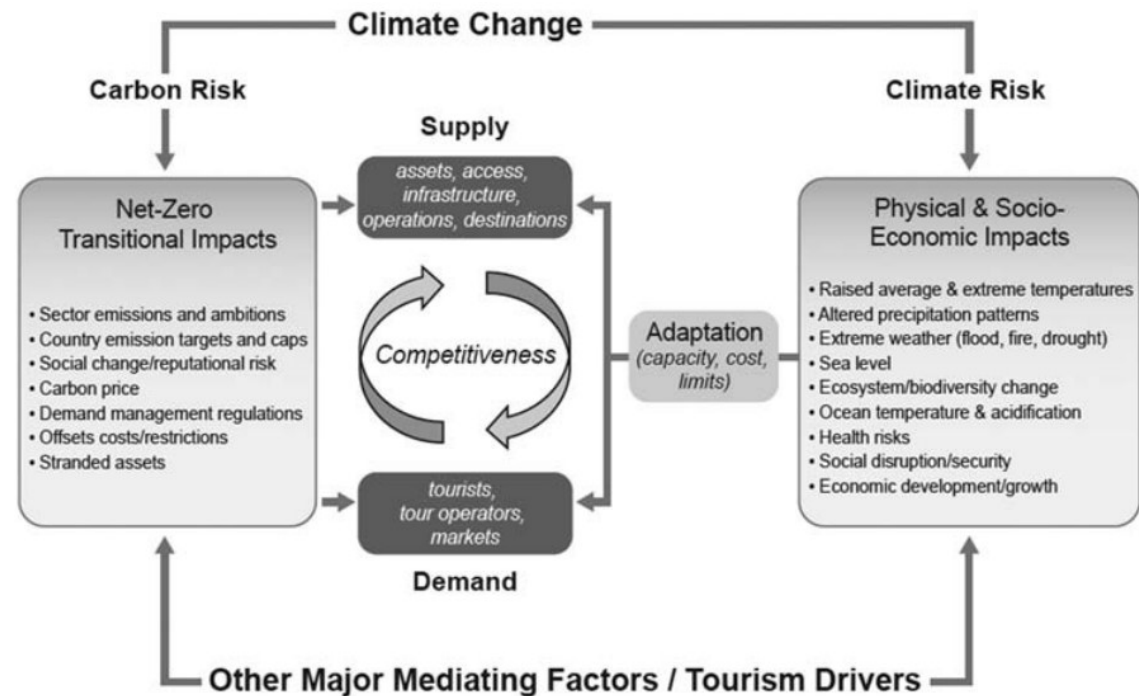


Recommended reading: *The Practice of Sustainable Tourism. Resolving the Paradox* by Christof Pforr, David Weaver, Michael Hughes

Resilience

“Climate impacts will undoubtedly worsen. There is a clear moral and economic imperative to protect the lives and livelihoods of those on the front lines of the climate crisis”. (UN Secretary-General António Guterres, 2021)

- **Vulnerability of tourism activity to climate change**
 - Destinations: environment and local communities
 - Tourists



Scott & Gossling, 2022

Climate change & Tourism

- ***Resilience <> Resistance***
 - Bounce back
 - Bounce forward
 - Ecological perspective
- **Sustainability...**
 - Of the routes
 - Of the tourism activity
 - Of the environment

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Road Map



The importance of governance.

Mains functions adaptable for cultural routes

Tourism governance functions	Indicators of the function	Relationship with tourism resilience
Risk assessment and mitigation	Hazard identification Vulnerability assessment Risk reduction measures	Informed decision-making on disaster risk reduction Prioritization of resources for risk reduction Minimization of disaster impacts on the tourism sector
Collaborative planning and policy development	Multi-stakeholder engagement Integration of DRR principles	Holistic approach to tourism governance Harmonization of tourism and disaster management policies
Community empowerment and capacity building	Local participation in decision-making Training and skills development	Enhanced local ownership and commitment to tourism development Improved skills and knowledge in the tourism sector
Adaptive and context-specific governance	Community-based tourism initiatives Continuous monitoring and evaluation Adaptation of management strategies	Diversification of livelihoods and increased resilience Identification of emerging risks and vulnerabilities Responsive and flexible approach to tourism governance

Source: Zhang et al. (2024)

Climate change & Tourism

- Enter MENTI.COM
- CODE: 3768 3580

Name climate change and sustainability (**specific**) challenges for cultural tourism routes

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Climate change & Tourism



- **Summary**



Summary: *Threats & Responses in Sustainable Green Tourism*

Main Threats:

- **Extreme weather / Heat islands**
- **Lack of public awareness**
- **Inadequate or inefficient transportation**
- **Loss of traditional knowledge**
- **Urban instability**
- **Construction unsuited to environment**

Responses:

Education & Promotion

Youth programs, radio, TV campaigns, public incentives

Cultural & Local Knowledge

Use of vernacular architecture

Sharing traditional construction methods

Climate Adaptation

Time-optimized travel during cooler periods

Adaptive shelters, favoring natural terrain

Transportation Solutions

Public transport links

Car-sharing networks

Urban Greening

Green islands

Information on regenerative practices

Main Threats:

Extreme Weather / Heat Islands

Rising temperatures and heatwaves are increasingly common due to climate change, particularly in urbanized areas with limited vegetation. These "heat islands" make outdoor tourism less comfortable and more dangerous, especially for vulnerable groups.

Lack of Public Awareness

Many people remain unaware of the importance of sustainability in tourism. This leads to low participation in eco-friendly practices, underuse of cultural heritage routes, and limited pressure on authorities to support green initiatives.

Inadequate or Inefficient Transportation

Poor access to cultural and natural sites, especially by public transport, creates over-reliance on private cars. This increases emissions and reduces accessibility for non-drivers, harming both sustainability and inclusiveness.

Loss of Traditional Knowledge

Generations of sustainable building, farming, and living practices risk being lost. This disconnect from local wisdom weakens the cultural depth of tourism and reduces environmentally friendly options that have stood the test of time.

Urban Instability

Rapid and unplanned urban transformations can disrupt local communities, degrade natural landscapes, and create socio-economic tensions. This instability poses challenges to maintaining and managing sustainable tourism routes.

Construction Unsited to Environment

Modern infrastructure often ignores local conditions, leading to buildings that overheat, consume too much energy, or harm the landscape. Incompatible construction practices damage both the environment and cultural identity.

Countering Extreme Weather / Heat Islands

Climate Adaptation

Tourism schedules can be adjusted to avoid extreme heat, promoting off-peak travel. Simple adaptive measures—like shaded walkways and cooling shelters—can help mitigate climate risks for travelers.

Time-Optimized Travel During Cooler Periods

Encouraging visits during more temperate seasons helps reduce health risks, relieve pressure on local infrastructure, and extend the tourism season for local economies.

Adaptive Shelters, Favoring Natural Terrain

Using local terrain to guide construction—like natural shade, slopes, or airflow—helps reduce artificial cooling needs. Adaptive shelters blend into the environment and protect both visitors and biodiversity.

Use of Vernacular Architecture

Local building methods use materials and techniques suited to the environment. These structures are more resilient, climate-appropriate, and culturally meaningful, reducing energy use and reinforcing place-based tourism.

Countering Lack of Public Awareness

Education & Promotion

Raising awareness is essential. Initiatives like school programs, TV campaigns, and local radio can spread knowledge about sustainable tourism practices and motivate responsible travel behavior across generations.

Youth Programs, Radio, TV Campaigns, Public Incentives

Engaging the public through media and incentives can build a stronger base of support for sustainable practices. Educational outreach and rewards for green behavior can drive real change in travel habits and local policy.

Cultural & Local Knowledge

Valuing and integrating traditional knowledge—especially vernacular architecture and farming—helps preserve identity and provides naturally sustainable solutions for modern challenges.

Countering Inadequate or Inefficient Transportation

Transportation Solutions

Improving and promoting low-emission options—like buses between sites or bike routes—can drastically cut carbon impact and improve access for all visitors, not just car owners.

Public Transport Links

Efficient and affordable connections between cultural and natural sites make tourism more inclusive and reduce environmental damage from private vehicles.

Car-Sharing Networks

Community car-sharing reduces the number of vehicles on the road, supports responsible tourism, and gives travelers flexible access without high environmental costs.

Countering Loss of Traditional Knowledge

Sharing Traditional Construction Methods

By reviving and teaching traditional methods, communities can build sustainably, support local economies, and pass on valuable cultural knowledge to new generations and visitors.

Information on Regenerative Practices

Visitors and locals alike benefit from learning about regenerative agriculture, energy use, and construction. Sharing this knowledge builds community resilience and deepens engagement with sustainability.

Countering Urban Instability

Urban Greening

Planting trees, creating green zones, and integrating nature into urban areas reduce the heat island effect, improve air quality, and enhance the visitor experience in cities and cultural hubs.

Green Islands

Pockets of greenery within cities provide shade, comfort, and environmental benefits. They're also educational tools that showcase sustainable urban planning.

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