



Tourism profiling and training methodology report

A summary

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The report is divided into four chapters to better cover all relevant aspects of the creation of innovative city tours – Tourists, Creators, Local Businesses, and it concludes with a list of tourism experts in Europe as a helpful reference.

The first chapter 'Tourists' addresses the importance of **authenticity** for the creation of tourism and cultural practices. The idea of creating something 'authentic' for visitors and travelers stems from three characteristics:

- Authentic experiences veer away from predetermined, cliché itineraries.
- Authentic experiences push both local and foreign audiences out of their comfort zones.
- Authentic experiences are created with the help of local entrepreneurs/creatives.

However, in the creation of these experiences, all involved parties should be cautious not to fall into the trap of **mass tourism**. Mass tourism is defined as an extreme concentration of visitors in one place which can lead to its oversaturation, and, therefore, degradation and loss of attractiveness.

The antidote to this oversaturation of popular tourism/cultural activities has come in the form of embracing **alternative tourism**. Alternative forms of discovering a city are small-scale tourism and cultural initiatives developed by local people and based on

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local nature and culture. Not only do they have something new to offer visitors, alternative forms also diversify the tourism and cultural portfolio of the community and create noticeable economic benefits as these activities can take place all year round.

Alternative tourism is best exemplified in **peripheral and experience-based practices**.

- Peripheral tourism and cultural practices can be defined as visits to an area that is not a major destination and/or taking part in creative practices which do not traditionally appear in programs as spaces of cultural consumption or visitor attraction.
- Experience-based tourism and cultural practices can be defined as visitors being immersed in a narrative staged beforehand by the local community. Therefore, these practices use intangible assets (such as traditions, oral history, language) and require a degree of participation of target groups and the local community.

A type of Experience-based practices is **Creative tourism**, which aims to show participants what it's like to be a citizen of a place by focusing on active skill development, creating new cultural narratives and using digital tools.

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The aforementioned alternative practices can be equated to **sustainable tourism**, too. Economic, ecological and socio-economic (inclusion/accessibility) components of sustainable tourism are present in these practices in several ways:

- Alternative practices make ecological and economic considerations a priority when they:
 - preserve the social, natural and historical assets of a destination
 - create experiences that do not require the expensive maintenance of ageing structures
 - take place in areas which are not oversaturated with visitors
- Alternative practices make inclusion and accessibility a priority when they:
 - actively involve the local community and listen to their concerns
 - enable people with access requirements (mobility, vision, hearing and cognition) to participate independently in the experience

The second chapter – Creators – tackles the question of local community participation. The city tours created by alternative tourism and cultural practices represent **'bottom-up' approaches** to decision-making. This means that local people are given the opportunity to make decisions about their neighbourhood's resources. Therefore, initiatives are created that are consistent with local values.

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There are several steps that should be taken to mobilise and motivate the local community to participate in the creation of a city tour:

- Start a dialogue to better understand the local community's concerns, interests, and perceptions regarding the impacts of a potential or proposed initiative.
- Identify and communicate sustainable, economic and inclusive opportunities for the local community that may come as a result of the potential or proposed initiative.
- Facilitate the involvement of the local community by empowering them to tell their stories and by providing adequate training to acquire needed skills, capital and tools for the creation of city tours.

The third chapter – Local businesses – shifts the perspective from the local community to the entrepreneurs and creatives who aspire to develop innovative city tours. According to research and experts in the creative and tourism industries, the use of **modern technology and greater interactivity of activities** is crucial to stay ahead of the curve and meet environmental and visitor needs.

The benefits of using technology in the creation of city tours are numerous:

- Technology offers greater personalisation of experience as it allows participants to tailor activities to their desired level of interactivity and immersion.

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- Technology reduces entry barriers for artistic innovation, so that all interested creators can try their hand at developing something innovative.
- Technology promotes sustainable solutions as it can be used to safeguard cultural heritage and redirect visitors to less crowded areas by improving the connectivity of peripheral destinations.

Two such examples of utilising technology for city tours come in the form of **'smart city' tourism and playable cities**.

- Smart tourism enhances the visitor experience by means of smart technologies which allows the visitor to contextualise the experience to their needs and focus on sustainability. An example of smart technology that can enhance the visitor experience is the application of Augmented Reality (AR) which allows participants to see the real world and perceive an additional virtual world on the same field of view.
- Playable cities use 'playfulness' as a strategy to reinvent and reinvigorate largely unused areas of cities or the periphery. 'Playfulness' is achieved by using technology to create scenarios and activities with visitors and the local community.

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