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Handbook on tourist flow management

July 2024

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Introduction

Aims of the handbook

Provide guidance to tourism stakeholders so that they can sustainably manage tourist flows while ensuring high social and environmental performance levels. This will:

- preserve natural and cultural resources;
- enhance the tourist experience;
- safeguard the quality of life of local communities;
- better distribute the resulting economic benefits.

Before tourism can be developed it must be effectively regulated to prevent it from causing any negative impacts and becoming out of control.

Target audience

The entire tourism ecosystem, including tourist information centres, tourism-sector professionals (accommodation providers, travel agencies, tour guides etc.), site managers and local authorities. The handbook examines the management of closed or open natural and urban sites, as well as other sites.

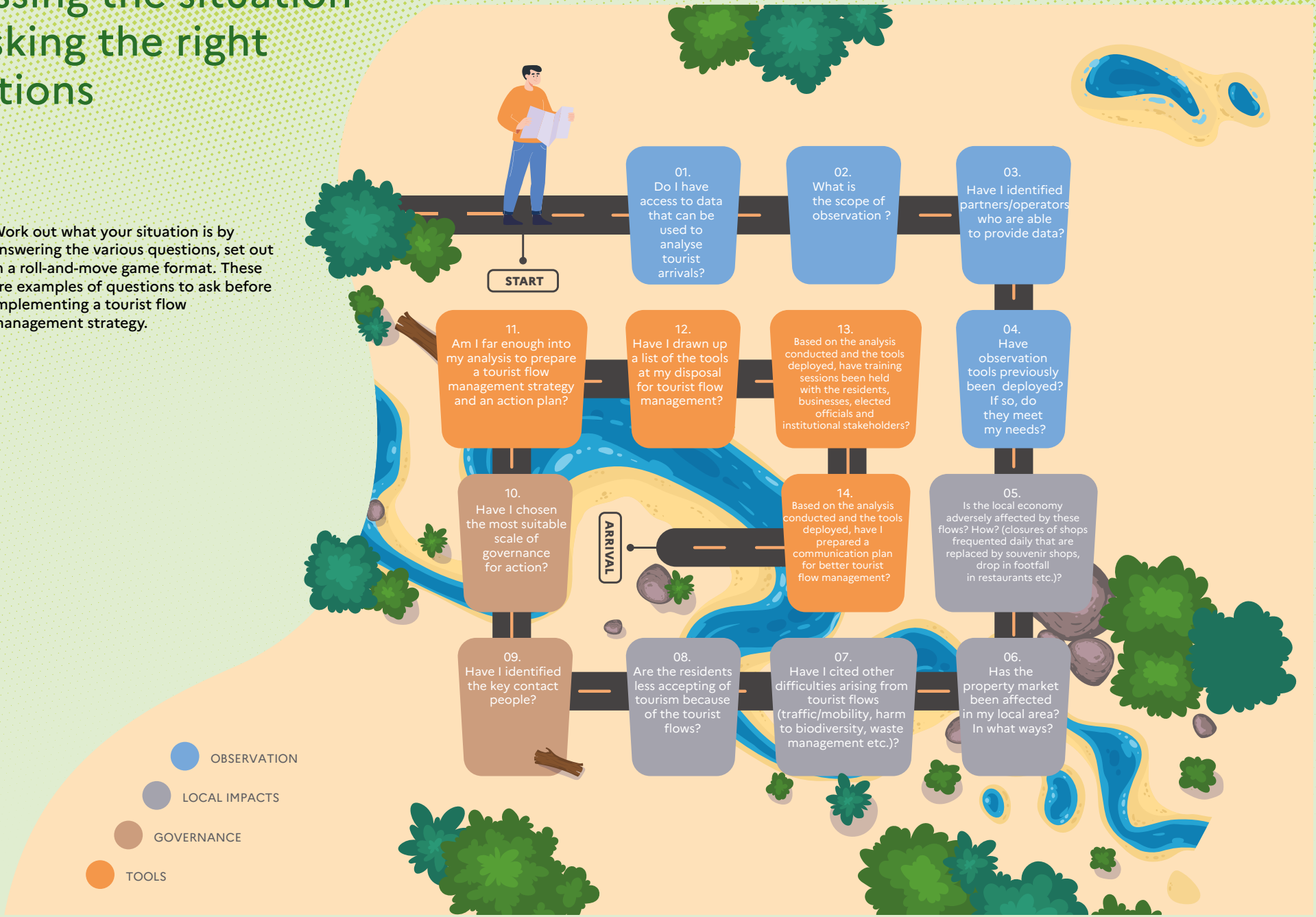
Stakeholders can implement measures corresponding to their level.

Using the handbook

This handbook provides guidelines for tourist flow management primarily in the form of best practices identified in the field, but it does not provide solutions for specific situations. It is to be used as a basis for ideas and does not lay down requirements.

Assessing the situation by asking the right questions

Work out what your situation is by answering the various questions, set out in a roll-and-move game format. These are examples of questions to ask before implementing a tourist flow management strategy.



Selecting the right measures

The following sections detail the measures that should be introduced and examples of best practices for tourist flow management.

1 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Check the environmental sensitivity and the tourist capacity of a given area before creating new routes or redirecting visitors to new areas: an assessment must be conducted on the environmental sensitivity and tourist capacity of potential offset areas so as to avoid an undesirable impact on areas that are not equipped to host an influx of visitors.

Harness the appropriate human resources: Imobilising human resources is vital for ensuring that tourist flows are effectively managed. There needs to be a well-trained and sufficiently large team in place to, for example, observe and analyse flows, draw up an action plan, monitor sites, manage visitors and take action where necessary. The key contact people must also be identified.

Plan ahead: tourist flow management requirements must be anticipated to prevent a situation from worsening, and in particular media coverage of the local area needs to be monitored in order to identify any events that could result in an unexpected influx of visitors, such as filming for TV, documentaries or films, with the suitable preventive measures being taken.

Identify the support and financing schemes provided by various government and private-sector bodies: a variety of sources can be consulted such as EU funds, and aid from the central government, the regions, the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME) and Atout France (France's tourism development agency) to name a few. These resources can be used to build local capacity.

2 OBSERVATION

Before a flow management strategy can be implemented, an observation phase must be carried out. The aims of this phase are to:

1. identify the subject of observation: flows, practices, uses etc.;
2. define the quantitative and qualitative indicators to garner an objective insight into the tourist capacity of the site or its region (e.g. the impact of visitor numbers on biodiversity, economic activity, visitor satisfaction etc.);
3. assess the needs and costs of implementing observation tools and identify the potential technical difficulties in rolling them out;
4. introduce diverse counting measures (e.g. surveys, counters, photographic observation of the landscape etc.);
5. provide training in data analysis (e.g. with the support of consultants).

BRIGHT IDEA

Understand and analyse the perspectives of visitors, residents and professionals and track visitor numbers — The Charente river estuary

Two visitor footfall studies were conducted in 2013 and 2018. These studies gathered quantitative and qualitative data on the five key sites of the Charente river estuary: Île d'Aix, la Pointe de la Fumée, Port-des-Barques/Île Madame, the Pont Transbordeur and l'Arsenal de Rochefort.

At a more local level, on the Île d'Aix, a counter was installed to have a concrete idea of the number of visitors to the island as from 2021. This data was subsequently processed to compare footfall year on year, as well as to compare periods of the year and the busiest days. It was found that overall visitor numbers for 2023 were slightly down on the 2022 figure, but that, on peak days, they had increased, from 6,000 in 2022 to 7,000 in 2023. The counter cost roughly €7,000 and requires an additional several hundred euros per year for upkeep.

In addition, in July and August 2023, a visitor survey was carried out by the Île d'Aix town council and the Rochefort Océan Urban District Community (CARO). The format of the survey was one-on-one interviews conducted at the end of the day by a seasonal worker with visitors at the dock. Approximately 450 surveys were filled out in total. The answers indicate that tourist numbers are perceived to be a nuisance particularly in the village, at the isle's dock and on the coastal paths. Tourists are considered to be more of a nuisance as their numbers increase. However, respondents surveyed during both peak and off-peak days in the summer recommend visiting the island (98% overall).

A survey of tourism professionals was also conducted with assistance from an intern at the Rochefort Océan Tourist Information Centre based on a

questionnaire that was trialled with some twenty respondents. There are plans to organise a meeting in the near future to follow up on the interviews conducted.

Feedback: By observing tourist flows, certain areas for due diligence were flagged up in relation to the quality of services (health and hygiene, visitor information and guidance) and to maintaining the specific qualities of the tourist site (tranquillity, offering a change of scenery, nature).

The data collected was analysed internally; this did not pose any difficulties but was time consuming.

In 2024, the visitor survey will be rounded out with a study on the visitor experience, and work will begin to set out the initial measures to implement with key influencers on peak dates.

BRIGHT IDEA

Tourist number study in the Vallon de l'Aiguebrun hiking area — Luberon regional nature park

Observation: trampling, parking and traffic issues, proliferation of sports activities.

A visitor footfall study has been launched with a view to improving traffic, car parks and reception facilities for the general public in the Vallon de l'Aiguebrun. This study is being carried out in collaboration with the TRACES TPI consultancy firm and has two components:

- a quantitative component entailing the collection of data using eco-counters on walking paths and manual counters in the site's car parks;
- a qualitative component based on surveys conducted from April 2023 to April 2024 with the participation of tourism professionals (42 respondents), residents (160 respondents) and visitors (335 respondents).

Feedback: 80% of the study is financed by the Région Sud Regional Council, and the municipality of Buoux contributes €2,000 for a total budget of €30,582.

Work carried out in collaboration with the consultancy firm has made the task of outlining and implementing the study guidelines much easier.

The primary difficulty lies in securing the human resources required for conducting surveys and field studies: an intern has been provided by the consultancy firm (20 days) as well as a full-time equivalent employee from the Luberon regional nature park (23 days) and the temporary participation of the Regional Park Ranger Service in the summer (particularly for manual counting in car parks). Greater involvement of the Luberon regional nature park team or the addition of an intern would have proven beneficial during the period of the survey. In addition to the survey dates, the time for sharing findings and taking readings from the eco-counters (a manual operation) must also be factored in.

A participatory steering committee must also be set up from the outset with the stakeholders concerned by the site in question (in this case municipalities neighbouring Vallon de l'Aiguebrun, the National Forestry Commission, the département authorities — the sensitive natural areas and the département map of hiking and walking paths departments — the inter-municipal cooperation institution, the inter-municipality tourist information centre, the Région Sud Regional Council, the Département Regional Planning Directorate, the French Office for Biodiversity — OFB). Ongoing monitoring guarantees cooperation between partners and smoother progress for the project.

The results are currently unavailable as the data has not yet been adjusted and therefore cannot be shared. However, it was found that tourist numbers were not "even", and that peaks occurred during specific periods (the extended May public holiday weekends, formed by taking additional leave, the autumn half term/public holiday). Having been granted an exemption from access restriction measures, imposed in the event of wildfire risks, Vallon de l'Aiguebrun sees peaks in visitor numbers in the summer season. Another finding was that there is a limited understanding of the park regulations (swimming is prohibited). The measures to be taken will therefore revolve around the areas for due diligence, namely communication and managing flows (particularly during peak footfall) by introducing services to decongest the Vallon trail.

A benchmarking exercise was also carried out to gain an insight into the measures implemented in other regions faced with similar issues.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Information, Studies and Observation Unit — Regional Tourism and Leisure Activities Committee of Occitania

When looking to observe tourist flows, it is important to find out whether there is processed data available for the specific region, particularly from institutional partners. There is no need to repeat the data collection and processing procedures.

When a stakeholder collects data within their scope using a variety of sources (Flux Vision, various platforms, French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies — INSEE, GPS routes etc.) a narrative must be objectively built using the data to ensure that their analysis is operational and that it can be then shared. This requires:

- recontextualising the figures relative to the scope of the stakeholder's area of observation and to their objectives;
- ensuring that their regional analysis meets specifically determined needs: how can we help businesses adapt their models? How can we support stakeholders in formalising their strategies?;
- cross-referencing the tourist flow data collected with the vulnerability of specific regions (biodiversity, land take, tourist capacity etc.;
- developing a regional analysis tool that is suitable for tourism stakeholders (tourist information centres, département tourism commissions etc).

This data storytelling is only possible with technical expertise.

EXAMPLE OF A USABLE TOOL

Murmuration

Murmuration is a French SME that was founded in March 2019 to incorporate environmental factors into every decision-making cycle, serving all tourism stakeholders (from the public sector and businesses to the general public.

Murmuration uses Earth observation satellites monitoring the entire globe and collates this data with other open data sources such as tourist flows and the tourist offering to provide clear, trustworthy, transparent and accurate information on the state of the environment anywhere on earth that is affected by tourism.

Murmuration provides a range of tools suitable for managing tourist flows:

- dynamic dashboards for environmental, social and economic monitoring that give decision makers and local authorities access to a tourism monitoring centre, examining tourism activity distribution in the region, its environmental impact and the seasonal trends. With this monitoring centre, environmental factors can be incorporated into the tourist flow management procedure in order to more evenly spread tourist numbers over time and across the region;

— dynamic dashboards for monitoring tourism activities and their viability relative to environmental indicators. These dashboards are designed to allow users to view the activities available in the region, and give them a sustainable tourism score over a set period so as to provide better guidance to visitors to the region;

— a tourist capacity limit, assigned to a region: the limit is determined using environmental indicators to provide decision makers with a figure for the maximum number of tourists that can visit a region without harming the environment (in terms of air, water and biodiversity). This limit can be applied in conjunction with other social and economic data.

EXAMPLE OF A USABLE TOOL

Outdoorvision, a platform for observing flows of outdoor recreational sporting activities

Outdoorvision is a service offered, designed and developed by the National Outdoor Sports Resources Unit, Support Taskforce at the Minister for Sport. Outdoorvision is the result of an innovative partnership between Regional Councils, sports federations, central government departments and brands contributing to a non-profit programme.

Outdoorvision collects, anonymises and aggregates GPS routes saved by volunteer sports enthusiasts on their smart watches and mobile apps. Running, cycle, skiing and hiking routes, recorded in the field by these individuals, are gathered and enhanced on a digital platform that then shows what sporting and recreational activities are being practised in local areas.

On this platform, users can view these activities by means of various base maps and features:

— track the flows of those practising an outdoor sport in real time, and compare them by period;

— count how many people practising an outdoor sport pass through a geographic area or follow a certain trail;

— determine the main starting and finishing points and rest stops;

— examine the use of path and off-path routes.

This mapping tool allows local authorities and managers of natural areas to act more effectively in their respective local areas by giving them a better insight into the practice of outdoor sports.
More than 12 million routes have been recorded on the Outdoorvision platform thanks to the contribution of 900,000 people using smart devices and 650 professional users.

→ **Other counting tools are available such as Affluence, Flux Vision Tourisme and Eco Compteur.**

3 GOVERNANCE

Consideration must be given to ensuring the right governance level is applied to flow management in order to develop a coordinated regional strategy.

A round table expanded to include tourism professionals, traders, tourist information centres, sworn officers, municipalities, government-funded intermunicipal cooperation institutions (EPCIs), the National Forestry Commission (ONF), the French Office for Biodiversity (OFB), residents and other players guarantees a shared vision for the future supported by a sophisticated knowledge of the tourism and regional ecosystem.

Where appropriate, reaching out beyond administrative boundaries and inviting neighbouring local authorities to the round table is always a possibility.

A cross-cutting approach, incorporating, inter alia, planning, cultural, housing and tourism aspects, is also vital.

The following questions must therefore be asked: at what level should a working group be managed? What is the appropriate scale for discussions and what form should they take?

Consideration should also be given to human resources and particularly the importance of a project manager with varied expertise capable of leading and coordinating the working group.

BRIGHT IDEA

The tourism rejuvenation agreement for the Greater Paris region

The tourism rejuvenation agreement (contrat de destination) for the Greater Paris region has created a forum for organisations and bodies which did not necessarily work together to discuss jointly defined issues. The agreement has brought together the Île-de-France Regional Tourism Committee, the département tourism committees for Hauts-de-Seine, Seine-Saint-Denis and Val-de-Marne, the Paris Transport Authority (RATP), the Research and Higher Education Institute for Tourism (IREST) among others. Meetings with the partners in the group are held on a monthly basis, and the working group has notably led to the aggregation of guided tours offered in various départements on a single platform, ExploreParis: https://exploreparis.com/en/

This initiative was also an opportunity to translate the website in English in order to raise its profile and list tours that are available in other foreign languages. In general, these tours focus on little-known aspects of the area (African culture in Paris) that are off the beaten track and skirt the city's ring road.

A more recent milestone achieved by the group was its collaboration on the release of a new edition of the Cartoville guide book on the Greater Paris

region: https://www.gallimard.fr/Catalogue/GALLIMARD-LOISIRS/Cartoville/France/Grand-Paris# The aim of this guide is to show that Paris as a tourist destination expands beyond the city limits, and show that the ring road is not the endpoint and is in fact a gateway to discovering interesting cultural facets.

BRIGHT IDEA

Establishment of a working group on knowledge acquisition, analysis of visitor footfall and reception facilities — The Charente river estuary

In the wake of two footfall studies carried out in five key sites of the Charente estuary (*Île d'Aix, la Pointe de la Fumée, Port-des-Barques/Île Madame*, the Pont Transbordeur and l'Arsenal de Rochefort), a working group was set up in December 2022. The group is formed of elected officials and technicians representing the five sites. In this context it has been tasked with creating a specific working group for *Île d'Aix* on knowledge acquisition, analysis, tourist numbers and the visitor reception facilities. This specific working group comprises various regional stakeholders, working together in a complementary fashion: these include the municipalities of Île d'Aix and Fouras, the Rochefort Océan Urban District Community (CARO), the Charente Maritime département, the Charentes Tourism Board, the Gironde Estuary and Pertuis Sea Marine Nature Park, the Rochefort Océan Tourist Information Centre, the coastal protection agency and central government departments. Four specific working groups were formed, for (i) gathering viewpoints, (ii) observation, (iii) biodiversity and (iv) communication. From February 2023 to February 2024, three steering committees and sixteen meetings were held under these working groups. A range of questions were addressed during these meetings, such as: How can peaks in footfall be determined? How can they be measured and evaluated? How can they be managed? How can evaluations and footfall be correlated? How can information on the isle's sensitivity be obtained? What communication strategy should be implemented? What information messages should be conveyed before and during a visit?

Measures were implemented based on the answers collectively given for each of these questions, with others in the pipeline. They include surveys for visitors, tourism professionals and residents, determining and monitoring tourist numbers and peaks therein using indicators, monitoring other similar regions, mapping natural areas, developing a joint communication strategy (talking points, comms calendar etc.).

Feedback: The work of each of the subject-specific groups feeds into other measures in a transparent manner. Since work began, the message shared has been that it is a medium- to long-term endeavour requiring oversight by the CARO, in collaboration with all partners. The first year of the project provided time for adjustment and information sharing: talking in terms of peaks in footfall rather than overtourism, rolling out a tailored communication strategy rather than taking a demarketing approach etc. In this second year of the project, the working group will expand to include tourism professionals (cruise lines, small flat-bottomed ferry operators, traders etc.) and neighbouring regions that are key influencers (*Île d'Oléron, La Rochelle, Île de Ré*).

Defining the role of each stakeholder is key from the very start of the project. Care must be taken to not excessively burden partners, all the while maintaining close ties.

BRIGHT IDEA

Project in the Gorges de Galamus — The Corbières-Fenouillèdes Regional Nature Park

The Gorges de Galamus is a natural area faced with some significant challenges such as landscape preservation, biodiversity conservation, and tourist and commuter mobility.

Bisected by a secondary road, this site is unique in its location, being nestled between two municipalities, two intermunicipal bodies and the two départements of Pyrénées-Orientales and Aude, both in the Occitania region.

For over twenty years, the Gorges de Galamus Operation has helped to manage road traffic during the summer when roads are at their busiest by for example introducing a contraflow system regulated by seasonal workers and more recently installing a tourist information hut.

To gain a deeper insight into the matter, in 2023 a study was launched by the Corbières-Fenouillèdes Regional Nature Park under the Avenir Montagnes Ingénierie investment and technical support scheme. A group of consultancy firms were called upon to perform a tourism assessment of the site involving an analysis of tourist flows (monitoring centre, surveys, eco-counters, road traffic counting devices etc.), establish a benchmark to understand the operation of the site and perform mapping activities. An analysis based on this work was presented in November 2023 that was then used to formulate strategic recommendations.

Feedback: A very large portion of the project was focused on local-level dialogue, with consultation meetings involving non-profit organisations, space management bodies, local authorities, tourism professionals and residents. These consultation workshops provided much food for thought as to the performance of the analysis, established the joint challenges and outlined a collective vision for the "Future of the Gorges de Galamus".

An even more in-depth consultation could take place by for example involving academics.

Focus area: Discussion is currently underway on the level of governance needed to address the challenges faced by the site and to implement the recommendations for its long-term management. Is there need to set up a public interest group? A mixed syndicate? Can it be deemed a Grand Sites operation (certification for protecting the natural landscape and promoting socio-economic development for residents while improving the visitor experience)?

BRIGHT IDEA

Partnerships formed through "clubs" to reach out beyond administrative boundaries — The Charentes Tourism Board

"Collaboration leads to success" is the guiding principle of the Charentes Tourism Board which forms partnerships as soon as possible in order to materialise projects that otherwise would not exist without this co-operative approach and which help transform the tourism sector. These partnerships, known as "clubs", were set up for the first time in 2005 and perfectly reflect this drive to bring private-sector and institutional stakeholders together for more effective joint action. A range of objectives are set, including forming a network of professionals who are unfamiliar with each other, defining a joint, meaningful strategy, pooling financial and human resources, and building the capacity to take innovative collective measures with a stronger impact. There are currently six topic-based clubs corresponding to the priority industries of the Charentes area: Thalasso (thalassotherapy), Thermalisme (thermal spa treatments), Sites Incontournables (must-see sites), Coups de cœur (favourites), Festivals and Villages & Paysages (villages and landscapes). The Villages & Paysages club was established in 2023 and has formed a network of 18 member municipalities, allowed them to share monitoring information and engineering tools, and organised topic-specific workshops. One of this club's goals is to reiterate the importance of villages in the tourism industry by showcasing their authenticity to expand the area visited by tourists in the local area, particularly in inland zones.

For example, the objective for 2024 has been to work on creative tourism, which is known for its interactive qualities since it encourages residents, tourists and other stakeholders to discover local culture by taking part in handicraft and creative activities. The end goal is to compile a digital catalogue of experiences on a collaborative basis that will be used as a source of inspiration by travel agencies, tour operators and international media among others.

4 WORK ON TOURIST ACTIVITIES

Work can be undertaken to enhance tourist attractions and activities with a view to effectively managing tourist flows. This involves conceiving a tourism development strategy that brings together environmental and economic concerns by, for example:

- promoting lesser-known tourist destinations;
- revitalising traditional activities such as handicrafts, artistic professions and agriculture, taking into account the specific characteristics of the local area;
- showcasing businesses that are open to the public.

This work avoids focusing on a tourism policy applicable to a small area, and its goal can be to encourage visitors to stay for several nights.

Lastly, promoting local services throughout the year, and identifying and highlighting tourist activities that are available whatever the season can help to spread tourist flows over time when necessary.

BRIGHT IDEA

Operation ParisLocal — *Paris Je t'aime* Tourist Information Centre

To address the concentration of tourist flows in Paris city centre and along the river Seine, *Paris Je t'aime* – Tourist Information Centre decided to put the spotlight on the local community with Operation ParisLocal. The initiative promotes Paris's craftspeople to show another facet of the French capital to visitors, give them another reason to come to the city and let them discover certain neighbourhoods that are overlooked by tourists.

As an initial step, a website was set up to identify interested professionals and provide details on their location, their line of work and the activities they would organise for the three days of the initiative. Awareness campaigns then helped to promote this initiative and get people interested, with video clips presenting the artists and craftspeople involved. In 2023, 600 stakeholders signed up to the platform.

In the next phase of the initiative, the artists and craftspeople identified were entered into the application "My *Paris Je t'aime*", which is designed to act as a guide for tourists during their stay, allowing them to locate, via GPS, the attractions, businesses, craftspeople and events in their area. By applying filters, users on the app can locate the amenities they want to find more of on their itinerary or that are nearby. This gives them the opportunity to take a detour from direct routes and discover other facets of the city.

The third stage would be to set up an online marketplace that acts as an additional economic opportunity for craftspeople and gives greater visibility to their products. This stage is currently the subject of a feasibility study.

BRIGHT IDEA

The Micro-adventures initiative — Office de tourisme Grand Avignon

The Micro-adventures initiative sets out to make the Grand Avignon Urban District Community a base camp for the rest of the Provence region. The initiative promises visitors the very best of Provence within a 50-km range with no need for a car, and targets locals and more generally young people who prefer to travel without a car and set off on the "unbeaten path".

Some travel ideas are provided by the Grand Avignon Tourist Information Centre, such as:

- « *La route qui mène aux étoiles* », ("Pathway to the Stars"), a bike route which goes through the Luberon massif and the Mont Ventoux area to reach an astronomical observatory;
- « *J'irai dormir chez les grues cendrées* », ("An overnight stay with the common cranes"), a bike route leading to the Camargue wetland for some birdwatching;
- « *D'une rivière à l'autre* », ("From one river to the next"), a canoe excursion along the Sorgue and Ouvèze rivers.

The Grand Avignon Tourist Information Centre decided to solely provide itinerary ideas and tips (it sells no products or services) with the belief that the journey begins with the preparations and that it is key for each person to picture themselves on their adventure by tailoring it to their liking. If novice explorers need some advice on how to plan their outing, Pauline, an expert in micro-adventures at the Tourist Information Centre, can help them prepare during a telephone or video call.

There is also a specific section that provides "adventurers" with information on how to go on a sustainable outing.

5 DEVELOPMENT WORK

Developing tourist spots can guarantee high-quality visitor reception and allow for controlled tourist flows while protecting the cultural, historical or natural site.
However, before beginning such development work, the necessary time should be devoted to a holistic and collaborative analysis of the situation based on in-depth studies before deciding what needs to be developed or even what developments need to be rolled back.

Examples are locating car parks further away from the site, building park-and-ride car parks and special pathways in natural areas (hiking or bike trails) and creating visitor routes.

Development work that is reversible and temporary must be the priority.

BRIGHT IDEA

Construction of a metered car park to manage visitor numbers at the Cirque de Saint-Même basin — *the Cœur de Chartreuse* Inter-Municipal Cooperation Institution

Twenty-five years ago, in an attempt to address conflicts of use, a decision was made to build a metered car park with a capacity of approximately 200 vehicles, operated by means of a tollbooth. The opening days of the car park are determined based on potential footfall. When the car park is at full capacity, the reception team closes off entry to the Cirque de Saint-Même by shutting the secondary road (under a département order issued every year). Information on closures is reported through the Tourist Information Centre and on social media. The reception team is also tasked with providing information about biodiversity and explaining the rationale for the parking charges.

Building this metered car park cost around €45,000, and is open on average for roughly 65 days of the year. This sum includes the staffing and operating costs.

Incentives for low-carbon vehicle use round out the car park project (providing free parking for bikes, a 10-km loop walk), together with activities raising awareness of the fragility of the natural environment and reminders of the rules from the National Forestry Commission rangers on peak days.

Feedback: this car park project was a success in terms of local population satisfaction, even if it has been hard for visitors to accept and to redirect visitors to an alternative car park.
Consideration needs to be given to the appropriate level of governance: in this case, a site committee determines the car park's opening days and prohibits overnight parking, among other measures.

BRIGHT IDEA

Détours Trails in Mornac-sur-Seudre

The Détours Trails initiative is the brainchild of the Royan Atlantique Urban District Community (CARA), and was set up to relieve the pressure on seaside resorts and provide opportunities to discover the inland area and the countryside. The project is spectacularly described as follows: "Places, pieces of heritage, viewpoints and a variety of ambiences are a reflection of the local history and are brimming with unusual stories to tell. Take a stroll along the new, easy-access town trails passing through the heart of neighbourhoods for a few kilometres (2-5 kilometres), suitable for a one-hour family excursion. It's time to take time for yourself…". Along these walking loops you can find information signs about the local flora and fauna, designed in collaboration with a local non-profit organisation.

Three of these trails are located in the village of Mornac-sur-Seudre and begin at the port. These trails offer visitors and residents a unique way to discover the lanes and alleys of this village — recipient of the Les Plus Beaux Villages de France certification — and in particular to visit the oyster farms in the marshes, diverging from the well-trod pedestrian streets to provide an exceptional tourism experience. Currently 10% of visitors follow these trails which extend their stay and prompt them to partake in the activities organised by non-profit organisations and make purchases in the local stores, ultimately spreading out tourist flows.

BRIGHT IDEA

Extension of the Ocres bike trail in the Luberon massif

In 2000, a tourist cycling trail was extended from 15 to 51 kilometres to let bikers discover the Ocres massif while encouraging a slower way of visiting punctuated by encounters with locals along the quiet small roads of the Luberon massif, passing by the former ochre quarries, tourist sites and places of cultural interest away from the major tourist hubs.

In 2022 and 2023, the trail was overhauled and extended by the Pays d'Apt Luberon Inter-Municipal Cooperation Institution. The extended section passes through the east of the Ocres massif, which is less visited by tourists and further away from the major tourist hubs. The trail is now 95 kilometres long, with arrow signs installed in both directions with a shared laneway. It currently passes through ten municipalities, four more than before thanks to the extension, allowing for more exploration and relieving pressure from tourist flows.

Total expenditure required to build this extension was €60,000, with funds provided by the Espace Valléen Luberon-Lure programme and a financial contribution made by the French Regional Planning and Development Fund (FNADT), the Région Sud Regional Council, the Vaucluse Département Council and the Pays d'Apt Luberon Inter-Municipal Cooperation Institution.

6 AWARENESS RAISING / COMMUNICATION / TRAINING

It is vital to raise awareness among, and provide information and training to:

- economic stakeholders, since they are key influencers in stepping up the promotion of the local area and communicating the flow management arrangements to tourists;
- residents and tourists to raise acceptance levels and improve the hospitality service and best practices;
- institutional stakeholders, the media, students and any other flow management stakeholders.

Here are some examples of messages and information to be disseminated before, during and after visits:

- raise awareness about the value and vulnerability of the area being visited;
- the flow management measures implemented and their vital importance;
- the low season and its benefits;
- eco-friendly practices, resource sharing and biodiversity protection;
- accessible non-motorised, pollution-free modes of transport for reaching the destination and travelling in the area, the public transport timetables and facilities, the services available, the ecosystems in place etc.;
- tourist footfall information in real time and forecasts, where possible.

The goal is to provide information on the optimal visitor experience rather than discouraging visits. A unified message needs to be conveyed by all stakeholders.

Various measures can be implemented to raise awareness and provide information and training, such as educational tours, an annual meeting preceding the tourist high season (with the gendarmerie, firefighters, institutional stakeholders etc.), events, newsletters, mobile apps, a visitor charter, information bulletins, training initiatives, support for service providers in quality assurance procedures (labels, seals and marks), signage and municipal newsletters, and mediators. Effective use of nudge marketing and collaborations with one or more key influencers in the field could also be good communication channels.

BRIGHT IDEA

Educational tours and workshops on the local area organised by the Dieulefit-Bourdeaux Tourist Information Centre in Drôme Provençale.

Educational tours are training days organised for tourism professionals based in the Dieulefit-Bourdeaux area that promote and provide information about the region. Occasionally, these sessions are held in neighbouring regions. These lively info days let stakeholders (re)discover tourist sites, accommodation facilities, activities and know-how, and are an opportunity for networking and discussion, with the potential for local partnerships to be formed between the tourism professionals. Educational tours are an effective initiative for informing local economic stakeholders of eco-friendly practices and flow management, giving them a more nuanced understanding of their local area. Educational tours help to activate, build and give impetus to the service provider network, and so it is vital that employees from the Dieulefit-Bourdeaux Tourist Information Centre attend them.

Since 2017, the Tourist Information Centre has organised two educational tours per year in spring and autumn, when the tourist season is calmer. There are between 20 and 25 attendees at each iteration (from accommodation providers, bike rental firms, tree-climbing equipment rental companies, heritage non-profit organisations or those that organise events, artists, online service providers, traders etc.). Various topics are explored: there are day-long sessions for example dedicated to "Nature, organic living, well-being and health", "Nature and know-how" and "Ideas for stays and family activities". During these sessions, participants can visit such places as heritage sites, galleries and organic farms.

The Tourist Information Centre also holds workshops on the local area with the participation of an expert local guide. These "training sessions" are designed to teach seasonal workers and new service providers about the must-see sites in the local area.

BRIGHT IDEA

Harnessing digital technology to manage tourist flows in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region

The Regional Tourism Committee of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region provides digital communication support to stakeholders that have undertaken local initiatives to manage tourist flows (e.g. adaptations, regulatory measures). This work seeks to promote the measures implemented by providing marketing solutions designed to better inform tourist attraction visitors about eco-friendly practices, decongest overcrowded parking facilities, redirect tourist flows to alternative attractions, step up communication about certain points of interest that require advance reservation and encourage last-mile sustainable transport solutions

Fifty percent of the co-financing of the digital communication initiatives undertaken comes from the Regional Tourism Committee, which is backed by the expertise of a digital communication agency.

For instance, an experiment was carried out in 2023 to promote the Arromanches park-and-ride lot in Hyères for visitors to Porquerolles Island. The destination attracts many tourists; as a result, traffic jams can occur on the Giens peninsula and parking facilities can become overcrowded at the jetty for travellers headed to the island. This experiment sought to encourage people wanting to visit Porquerolles Island to park further away in the Arromanches car park, which is free and provides visitors with free transport to the jetty via bus line 67. The main drawback is that this route is less direct than parking at one of the three facilities at the jetty.

Three measures were identified: enhance the promotion of the park-and-ride lot on the websites related to the destination that show up at the top of internet users' search results; attract intended visitors (those wanting to visit the point of interest) to inform them through retargeting; communicate with visitors in real time through live communication methods (e.g. audio streaming, Demand Gen campaigns, the Météo-France meteorological service).

Keys to success: Emphasise the convenience of parking at the Arromanches park-and-ride lot, leverage the communication methods that can be activated to attract both on-site visitors during their stay and the intended visitors who have shown an interest in visiting the island, while involving stakeholders (e.g. tourist information centre, metropolitan area, representative from the ferry operator).

INSPIRATION

Implementing an appropriate communication strategy – Example of the Charente River estuary

A stocktake of the tourism offering and the services available year-round was conducted in order to fine-tune the marketing of the destination and to see if it would be worthwhile to promote the off-season period. The following three seasons were jointly agreed upon by the partners involved: the high season (July, August and holiday weekends in May), the low season (April, May, June, September and October) and the off-season (from November to March). Each season corresponds to a distinct offering and atmosphere on the island (e.g. light, biodiversity).

Work has also been carried out on the images and photo library used to advertise the estuary. It found that many photos show bikes even though there are conflicting uses between pedestrians and cyclists in the high season. With the aim of promoting walking, an advertorial project was put in motion on this theme to dispel the destination's image as a place dominated by white houses, hollyhocks and bike riding".

Simultaneously, workshops are being prepared with the island's key influencers (cruise lines, small flat-bottomed ferry operators, neighbouring tourist information centres and the Rochefort Océan tourist information centre) to discuss the island's image, tourism recommendations that can be given to visitors in season (projected footfall calendar) and promote stays on the island at alternative periods and for longer timeframes.

Lastly, a communication strategy shared with various stakeholders was devised in order to have a coordinated approach to the media: establishing talking points, a communication calendar, a list of the year-round tourism offering and coordination regarding requests, etc.

Feedback: This work is to be conducted over the medium term and a wide range of stakeholders need to be involved. The aim is to build a core group of a few service providers/stakeholders who will then disseminate best practices as ambassadors.

EXAMPLE OF A USABLE TOOL

Le dispositif Biodiv'Sports pour concilier sports de nature & biodiversité

Biodiv'Sports est un dispositif conçu et co-animé par la Ligue pour la protection des oiseaux (LPO) visant à concilier les pratiques de sports de nature et le respect de la biodiversité. Ce dispositif permet d'engager un processus de concertation locale entre acteurs et usagers de sites naturels, chargés de définir de façon collective, des zones de quiétude favorables aux espèces lors de périodes sensibles (reproduction, nidification…). Accompagnées d'informations qui participent à la sensibilisation du public (biologie/écologie de l'espèce, impact de la pratique…), ces zones de quiétude sont ensuite portées à connaissance des pratiquants, directement sur des plateformes numériques déjà existantes et partenaires (ex : Viso Rando, Camp to Camp, Whympr…), afin de permettre aux sportifs, qu'ils soient fédérés ou non, d'adapter leur pratique et de préserver la nature dans laquelle ils évoluent. Ces données peuvent également être diffusées sur les sites de pratiques (signalétique) ou tout autre support consulté par les pratiquants (topoguides…).

7 EXPERIMENTS & INNOVATIONS

To identify, re-examine or adapt the measures rolled out to manage tourist flows or to address this topic further, it could be useful to:

- single out positive and innovative local initiatives and communicate with other regions about replicable best practices;
- keep an eye out for new innovative solutions;
- gather information using Atout France's resource centre, especially its webpage on tourist flow management;
- expérimenter les solutions identifiées.

BRIGHT IDEA

Trialling of a car-free day on the Île d'Aix

For four years in a row, the Île d'Aix has trialled a car-free day, with residents, elected officials and local partners adapting accordingly. Following this trial that began in 2021, an information point was set up in a wooden oyster shed to raise visitors' awareness and provide them with information from mid-June to mid-September. They are particularly encouraged to leave their vehicles on the mainland. The information point is meant to raise visitors' awareness about the isle's environmental fragility and to inform them about walking times and the tide schedule over a longer timeframe than the car-free day. Since 2018, car traffic has fallen by half while pedestrian and bike traffic has increased by the same proportion.

BRIGHT IDEA

Developing new approaches to tourist reception and hospitality: the example of *Les Oiseaux de Passage* — A case study of Marseille's northern districts

Research conducted by the travel cooperative *Les Oiseaux de Passage* underscores the fact that tourists and daytrippers are not the only type of travellers, as there are also business travellers at companies in the free port zone in Marseille's northern districts, people accompanying a loved one hospitalised at Nord Hospital, artists and doctoral students in residency programmes, interns and trainees, students, new arrivals to the city, and so on.

This work highlights the major hospitality needs, going beyond tourists, including in regions with little outside appeal. It also stresses that virtually all accommodation providers cater for various types of travellers and that such guests generate, for many, a significant number of overnight stays, with all accommodation categories concerned (e.g. hotels, youth hostels, holiday villages, camp sites, holiday rental homes, guesthouses). What's more, this applies to urban, semi-urban and rural areas. Many accommodation providers also express their satisfaction at meeting and hosting alternative travellers, usually in the off-season and for longer periods of time (e.g. hotels that have contracts with the département's departments to offer emergency housing solutions, apartment hotels hosting families after a fire in their home, holiday rental homes and guesthouses hosting workers seconded for several weeks).

These non-tourist visitors are hardly taken into consideration in hospitality strategies even though they come year-round, stay in every area of the destination and for longer lengths of time, are environmentally-friendly and contribute more to the local economy, local businesses and the green transition (energy-saving practices, use of local services). They represent an alternative or an addition to a tourism model focused on a reduced share of non-tourist visitors.

Accordingly, expanding the ability to meet these diverse hospitality needs is a relevant avenue for regions and economic operators to greatly reduce the environmental impact of tourism, foster social justice and meet unmet demand. This will provide an opportunity for the tourism sector to contribute to the green transition and the resilience of its economy.

BRIGHT IDEA

Establishing a mobile tourist information point — *Cœur de Savoie* tourist information centre

As part of a reception and information dissemination plan, the *Cœur de Savoie* Inter-Municipal Cooperation Institution carried out an assessment which found that keeping a brick-and-mortar tourist information centre open year-round is not sustainable for the region, as the number of visitors using the centre was sometimes very low (140,000 nights spent in commercial accommodation/budget of €220,000).

In a region spanning 330 km² and including 41 municipalities, visitors and locals were not necessarily aware that there was a tourist information centre or what it did.

Following this assessment, a decision was taken to close such public tourist information centres, train tourism-sector professionals to create a network of regional ambassadors and operate a mobile information point available in July and August, as has been the case since summer 2023.

In parallel, the tourist information centre website was overhauled to make it a go-to resource, with work carried out to create a calendar of the events happening in the region. In addition, a marketplace tool was developed to form a database of topical information.

Feedback: Present in areas around lakes; cycle routes; summer markets.

Advantages: Information provided on 30 to 60 occasions per day; present at large events and at those differing from year to year. The mobile information point can also be used to hold events (e.g. vineyard fondue parties). The time saved by closing the brick-and-mortar tourist information centre has increased collaboration and communication with tourism service providers.

Disadvantages: Visitors cannot access information point services during heat waves.

BRIGHT IDEA

Launching a test project as a pilot region under the engineering arm of the Plan for the Future of Mountains, with the support of the alliance *La Fabrique des Transitions*
— Luberon Regional Nature Reserve

A test project is being undertaken through the launch of a working group on educational outreach and conflicting uses with the aim of defining the types of conflicting uses and trialling and then deploying educational tools at regional level in an attempt to ease tensions related to conflicting uses. The working group is made up of the following four categories of participants to kickstart an effective regional project and facilitate cooperation: elected officials, central government departments, local government employees and tourism professionals.

The ultimate goal is to hold training sessions for working group participants between summer and early September.

To date, an initial meeting has been held to address participants' expectations and needs in terms of resolving conflicting uses. A second meeting was held to continue discussions on the types of conflicting uses participants were experiencing, their causes and consequences, and the actions that could be undertaken or expanded to better manage such conflicting uses.

8 SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND ALERNATIVES TO CAR USE

Developing sustainable transport options is a key measure to meet various milestones such as reducing greenhouse gases and decongesting roads and parking facilities.

This can mean looking into last-mile management, making it possible to reach major tourist attractions using sustainable transport modes and alternatives to car use, offering financial incentives to visitors who arrive by foot or bike, and encouraging accommodation providers to include last-mile management strategies in their services.

Additionally, people need to be informed of the region's alternative (car-free) transport offering so that it can be fully used. For example, it may be worthwhile to develop ties with economic operators that are able to promote sustainable transport options to reach tourist attractions through platforms such as Mollow and Hourrail.

→ The Directorate General for Enterprise (DGE) has launched a review of last-mile management and low-carbon, carless travel options in France. This section will consequently be updated after the review's completion in order to report the findings and promote existing solutions and best practices.

BRIGHT IDEA

Annemasse transport and tourist information centre — Annemasse

Since 2019, the transport and tourist information centre has housed all information on operators able to meet the needs of users to get around and discover cultural and tourist points of interest under one roof. The location offers a full range of services to the public:

- information on/ticket sales for all forms of transport;
- biking services: bike rental, storage and maintenance;
- sustainable transport information point: carsharing, carpooling, etc;
- tourism-related events and information: travel tips, tailored information, ticket sales.

Feedback:

Such an initiative relies on the goodwill of people and organisations and must be part of a clear policy strategy. The potential for logistical issues, particularly concerning building space, should also be taken into consideration.

Beyond the merging of transport and tourism under the same roof, the departments need to address the topic and put forward suggestions in order to create real synergy between tourism and transport. As there are fundamental differences between users seeking out information on transport and tourism, the employees of both structures will need to receive training given their distinctly different lines of work.

With some saying that the name "transport and tourist information centre" is not immediately meaningful, significant work needs to be done to attract visitors and make it a thriving place

Even in cases where these two departments cannot be combined under the same roof, it is in the best interest of the regions to have the departments meet with one another to find synergy.

Même dans l'hypothèse où ces deux services ne pourraient pas être réunis au sein d'un même bâtiment, les territoires ont tout intérêt à faire se rencontrer les services pour trouver des synergies.

BRIGHT IDEA

Designing a walking map co-created with regional stakeholders — l'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue

The town of Isle-sur-la-Sorgue has developed a walking map titled *L'Isle à pied* ("The Isle on Foot") that resembles a metro map. The aim is to promote walking as a form of transport to reach the town's main points of interest, whether for tourists or locals (e.g. day nurseries, schools, community centres). This initiative has been undertaken together with the town's ambassadors. The map is freely available at the town hall, in shops and at the tourist information centre, in addition to being viewable on various websites.

At the same time, a cycle route connects five municipalities to the entire Vélo Loisir Provence network of cycle paths. Work has been carried out to introduce numbered signposts with arrows to encourage cycling.

« *L'Isle à pied* » map: Brochure L'Isle à pied. (islesurlasorguetourisme.com)

BRIGHT IDEA

Visiting Madame Island by horse-drawn carriage

Visitors can travel in horse-drawn carriages from the Port-des-Barques peninsula to visit Madame Island sustainably. This initiative is backed by the town hall, the urban district community and the département. Feedback has been positive: it is an enjoyable educational outreach tool and an alternative to visiting the island by car, while being accessible to the disabled. During the ride, commentary provides visitors with information about local flora and fauna.

9 APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

In some instances, using the local or national regulatory framework can help manage tourist flows.

Doing so involves researching the applicable regulations and summarising them, as well as communicating with other similar tourist destinations.

This measure can be used in specific situations in which protecting tourist attractions is the goal.

BRIGHT IDEA

Implementing visitor quotas on Bréhat Island

In August 2021, a review process was launched following publication of the Climate and Resilience Act which authorises regulating or prohibiting access to protected areas by order (Article L.360-1 of the Environmental Code). The first outcome of this process was to create a joint commission (including elected officials and island residents) called the Hypertourism Commission (Commission Hyperfréquentation). It is tasked with working alongside the population to address this issue. These discussions resulted in the mayor of Bréhat issuing a municipal order in June 2023.

Findings: Bréhat Island has 400 year-round residents. Tourist numbers could reach up to 6,000 daily visitors. A sense of loss of control, environmental protection issues, damaged areas and waste management problems were cited during the review process.

However, a lack of statistics was preventing any action from being taken.

Review process: From end-2021 to end-2022, a data collection phase was initiated using measurement systems, including counters, in order to have factual information on which to base the review. In addition, satisfaction surveys were distributed to the island's visitors and residents.

All of the data gathered reinforced the goal of making use of the possibility offered by implementing Article L.360-1 of the Environmental Code.

A second phase of the review process examined the legal and practical conditions required for the mayor of Bréhat to issue an order limiting the number of visitors:

- an order can only be issued for a protected area: check that the entirety of Bréhat is a protected area;
- an order can be issued to cover only the territory of the municipality: how can this be checked?

Should visitor inspections take place when boats arrive on the island? It would be impractical, however, to tell them upon arrival that the island enforces a visitor quota.

To overcome these limitations, numerous meetings were held and a three-party agreement was signed with the departments of the region and département in order to identify how to combine the areas of responsibility:

- département: in charge of port management;
- region: in charge of ferry transport;
- town hall: in charge of setting the quota of visitors to the municipality.

Simultaneously, an extensive consultation process was launched, including many meetings at various levels:

- plenary meetings with all invited stakeholders (prefectures, département, region, municipality, neighbouring municipalities, tourist information centre, gendarmerie, trader representatives, ferry operators);
- public meetings with island residents;
- targeted meetings with traders and businesses during which the region voiced its support for the municipality of Bréhat to put the measure into a regional context;
- creation of a joint commission made up of elected officials and residents;
- meetings with ferry operators;
- a meeting with new tourist information centres and with destinations to explain to them how the quota rule works and to provide them with sample communication material that they can put on their website to encourage visitors to plan their trip more sustainably.

All of these meetings and the resulting feedback made it possible to set a joint quota of 4,700 people per day that takes account of all the issues at stake, particularly the island's economic health. Significant cooperation is essential to get all the parties involved in such a project on board.

The département issued an order to divide up the 4,700 visitors among the various ferry operators and the mayor of Bréhat issued an order setting the quota.

It should be noted that owners of second or holiday homes, permanent residents, workers and security personnel are not counted in the quota.
It should be noted that owners of second or holiday homes, permanent residents, workers and security personnel are not counted in the quota.

Bréhat's mayor, drawing on feedback from Porquerolles Island, issued a second order prohibiting chartered vessels from docking in the island so as to prevent abuse and circumvention of the quota rule.

After the summer season, a debriefing meeting was held and the feedback was positive. The extension of the quota system for 2024 was announced in November 2023 in order to give all the stakeholders time to prepare for the upcoming season.

Feedback: It is difficult to implement the quota measure. It seems that it would be easier to enforce a quota on an island or in a nature park than in areas that are not very well demarcated.

It is important for mayors to have legal support.

The implementation of a quota changed visitors' consumer behaviour, as they were more likely to reserve their ferry journey in advance, making it easier to anticipate tourist flows.

In addition, the measure prevented the overcrowding of the parking facilities located around the departure port in the Pointe de l'Arcouest (Ploubazlanec).

Ferry operators modified their communication materials to encourage visitors to reserve their tickets in advance in order to guarantee their trip to the island.

The economic impact is difficult to calculate. For the full year, overall visitor numbers were down by 3.5%, while visitor numbers were higher than usual in the low season.

Bréhat's mayor chose not to apply the quota for the 8 May 2024 holiday weekend, but the ferry operators opted to implement it themselves.

Difficulties experienced following the order's issue: A petition for protection of fundamental liberties (référé-liberté) was filed and rejected by a judge. An appeal is pending before the Administrative Court.

Forthcoming steps: Extension in 2024 – a similar order since summer 2023 was unusual, with bad weather conditions and few days on which the quota was reached. This will make it possible to have two reference years.

Note: Visitor quotas are not universally suitable.

For example, other Ponant Islands further out from the mainland do not intend to impose a visitor limit since tourist arrivals are mechanically lower due to fewer ferries running each day.

10 INCORPORATING LOCAL POPULATIONS

Incorporating locals into tourism strategy helps to improve hospitality and tourism's acceptability.
Various measures can be used, including public consultations on any planned tourist flow management measures, organised tours, new residents' meetings, public meetings, workshops, inclusion of locals in special commissions, surveys and polls.

In addition, it is important to inform locals of the benefits of tourism, such as by highlighting the amenities that improve the lives of both tourists and residents (e.g. cycle paths); developing services that are available year-round (public transport, essential shops, etc.); planning an annual cultural events calendar, including events outside the tourist season; and introducing a tourist tax to fund heritage maintenance. Lastly, a review should be undertaken on turning tourist information centres into third places that also serve residents (to be used as coworking spaces or to hold workshops, lectures, tastings and the like) and on developing the use of mobile information points at events.

→ La DGE a lancé des réflexions approfondies sur l'intégration des populations locales dans les stratégies touristiques. Cette rubrique, fera donc l'objet d'une mise à jour à l'issue des travaux engagés afin de restituer les résultats obtenus et mettre en avant les solutions et bonnes pratiques existantes.

BRIGHT IDEA

Creating residents' associations
— Example of Marseille's northern districts

Forming hospitality communities can provide a way to address the needs of visitors while receiving them and showing them around the city and its environs year-round.

In Marseille, the creation of a residents' association (made up of resident volunteers, local businesses, artistic venues, artisanal producers, organisations, creative artists, etc.) made it possible to:

- co-create more than 300 "story walks" taking the form of themed walking tours encouraging visitors to discover the history of the city's neighbourhoods, including through its history of immigration and industrial transformation; local artists, craftspeople and producers; the Chemin des peintres art history trail; and the history of pilgrimage (e.g. heritage tours, pre-recorded tours, image maps, scavenger hunts and walking routes), as well as through reading materials and locally produced souvenirs (e.g. soap, honey, tea, tarot cards and postcards);
- compile a list of available accommodation options and support the creation of new places to stay with residents of Marseille's northern districts (e.g. guesthouses, holiday home rentals, youth hostels, pilgrim guesthouses and artist residencies).

Le développement de l'offre d'hébergements a permis de proposer des séjours combinés aux balades et à la découverte des produits artisanaux permettant un accueil intégré chez l'habitant et dans l'histoire de la ville.

BRIGHT IDEA

Overhauling a tourist information centre

— Example of *Le Comptoir Local Aunis Marais Poitevin*

Findings: A regional assessment report highlighted the region's low tourism occupancy rate while the population has grown by 6.2% in 10 years.

Based on these findings, the objective of the tourist information centre has shifted towards developing local tourism, promoting local attractions and marketing the region as a green and sustainable travel destination. Elected officials are following this new strategy, thus facilitating the overhaul.

The Comptoir Local was under construction from December 2020 to autumn 2023. Several milestones were met:

- the first issue of Brèves du comptoir, a newsletter for locals that covers more than just tourism, was published in December 2020;
- starting in March 2021, a new name and logo was adopted with the addition of "local";
- a magazine featuring inspiring ideas was released in April 2021;
- in November 2021 a new eco-designed website was created that has a slide button allowing visitors to choose their website experience by selecting either «*je suis d'ici*» ("I'm from here") or «j'arrive» ("I'm visiting"). In addition, service providers were included and featured;
- auniscape, a mobile escape game about the region, was made available for visitors year-round in July 2021 (obstacle: did not find an audience;
- in March 2022 a partnership was developed with a beekeeper who hosts an event about bees; the proceeds collected are to be used to purchase a beehive that will increase the number of bees for the beekeeper;
- local residents – and no longer just economic operators – were permitted to attend the event Rendez-vous des loisirs et du terroir (held in April 2022 and in April 2023), with artisan and farmers market stands added in addition to recreational service providers;
- a second version of the logo was created in December 2022;
- a collaborative project was launched to rearrange the premises and improve the year-round shop that sells local products by putting the spotlight on producers.

What has changed in practice: the communication strategy has been tailored to both locals and tourists; the tourist information centres place greater emphasis on local artists, craftspeople and producers; there is a shop selling local products; and public events are offered year-round.

Feedback: The name Comptoir Local has a few downsides: residents and employees have voiced their concerns that people do not know what it is, which led to "tourist information centre" being included in the logo.

It is increasingly targeting locals in order to benefit the local economy and showcasing local artists, craftspeople and producers, among others.

BRIGHT IDEA

Developing and protecting non-profit organisations

— Example of the town of Mornac-sur-Seudre

In the village of Mornac-sur-Seudre, with a population of 857, non-profit organisations play a pivotal role in organising leisure activities in the town, including canoeing and kayaking excursions, and creating a cultural events calendar that features a pottery festival and guided tours of flora and fauna given by the educational organisation *L'Huître Pédagogique*. [Non-profits also raise awareness about current societal issues, sometimes even serving as a replacement for government initiatives, such as "*Jardins partagés*", a community garden programme that provides members with a way to harvest their own vegetables and makes its compost systems available to all residents so that they can recycle their green waste.] In addition to the boost that these non-profits give to tourism, they help pass on skills, attract young workers and animate the village year-round, which has an indirect impact on the running of the primary school, the lifeblood of the village. Non-profits can be an effective means of action that should be supported and further cultivated.

BRIGHT IDEA

Working group meetings for residents on tourism

— Example of the guided tour operator OnlyLyon Tourisme et Congrès

In 2019 the city of Lyon commissioned a study with the firm TCI Research and recommissioned it in 2022 to gauge how residents generally feel about tourism (acceptability or rejection of it, support for developing it). On the whole, residents of Lyon had positive views of tourism, especially when compared with the benchmark for the other European cities studied. The share of residents who expressed a dislike for tourism was stable and very muted (4%), whereas it averaged 10% for other destinations (up four percentage points on 2019). Additionally, 82% of Lyon's residents were proud to see tourists in their city. But 52% of them also want to have the opportunity to be more involved in tourism policy, a percentage which is slightly higher than in 2019 and in line with the averages for other destinations.

In the same vein, a website called tourisme-different.com was created in 2022 and is home to surveys intended to gather the opinions of visitors, professionals and residents about tourism in Lyon. Communication campaigns have been carried out to promote the surveys among residents. Over 600 respondents have submitted surveys, with a rather positive trend observed in their answers, as nearly 50% of respondents said that they viewed the development of tourism as having positive consequences, while 31% responded that they saw it as having just as many positive as negative

consequences. 66% of respondents felt that Lyon had not yet reached its maximum tourist capacity.

The last question of the survey was "To discuss this further, would you like to take part in a collaborative working group for residents on tourism, called Tourisme & Habitants?". Some 187 people responded affirmatively, a more than respectable amount out of 600 respondents, illustrating that there is a real drive to participate.

Feedback from residents has also helped to identify the most relevant sustainable practices to explore and to fuel future projects involving residents.

Based on the survey answers, an initial meeting of residents and professionals was organised so that they could share their vision of tourism and their ideas, and co-create solutions for more sustainable tourism in Lyon. It brought together resident volunteers, professionals motivated by the exercise, academics, residents' associations and tourist information centre employees. The event was attended by 34 residents and 22 tourism-sector professionals. The initial meeting covered three topics along with 12 idea boards. A design thinking firm was brought on board to organise and develop the topics and idea boards. The workshops held were on discovering the city (tailored to both residents and visitors), creating opportunities for interaction and engagement between locals and tourists, and promoting heritage and local stakeholders.

Feedback and future developments: These workshops produced 23 ideas that were classified and described in detail, an analysis of what may already exist and of future users and the stakeholders concerned, an assessment of opportunities, constraints and areas for attention. These ideas were assessed using a five-point scoring system to identify how they rate in terms of issues such as inclusion, impact on the local economy and on the environment, implementation complexity and financial and HR costs.

Residents and professionals had the opportunity to vote for these 23 ideas online through social media, with 800 votes cast to date. The five ideas that received the most votes are currently being conceptualised by the first Tourism Lab. Discussion groups and trial tours attended by residents and visitors are planned between now and late 2024 in order to gather their opinions and reactions, with the goal of finalising the creation of new products that meet the needs of both residents and visitors to the destination. The topics most appreciated by residents revolved around the discovery of local artists, craftspeople and producers, hidden gems and venues for meetings between residents and visitors.

SPOTLIGHT

Legal analysis on preferential rates for residents:

Brainstorming about different ways to make tourism more acceptable to residents, or even about how to get residents to visit local tourist attractions more often, resulted in considering the possibility of offering residents preferential rates for tourist activities and services. However, introducing preferential rates for residents to access activities and services managed as industrial and commercial public services, appears to be legally questionable. In addition, it does not seem to be the most relevant way to achieve the goal being pursued.

Some local authorities show a preference for incentives that implicitly target residents without discriminating against others (i.e. that provide incentives instead of advantages).

This is the case, for example, for admission to tourist attractions for a specific length of time, often annual (whether offered as a pass, subscription or membership), allowing people to visit an attraction as many times as they want until the end of the validity period: anyone can sign up, but the cost is a deterrent for those who are only visiting one time (typically tourist visitors); on the other hand, the cost is worth it for people planning to visit several times during the validity period, which may give residents an incentive to visit the attraction on a regular or semi-regular basis, especially if the attraction offers a variety of activities, tours and other services during the same period.

In a way, this is what the *Pont du Gard* (a Roman aqueduct bridge in southern France) did when it gave visitors the option to convert their parking fee (€9 for a daily ticket) into an annual parking pass (for €9/year), provided that they submit an application by creating an account online: the offer is only appealing for residents, since they are likely to come back to the attraction, if not regularly, at least easily; the offer's appeal for tourist visitors has not been established.

Seasonal-based pricing – along the lines of the high season/low season model used by commercial tourist accommodation operators – or free admission during the off-season for certain categories of visitors (typically children of an age requiring that they be accompanied by at least one adult) appear to meet the twofold goal of distributing tourist flows more evenly over the year and maximising the number of residents visiting tourist attractions, without posing any real risk to ensuring equal access to public services or breaching the principle of equal treatment enshrined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

11 Key points to keep in mind when managing an emergency situation

Which mechanisms should be used as a priority?

- Bring all stakeholders together before the season to agree on a reception strategy, including elected officials, seasonal workers, service providers (in tourism or other sectors), tourism-sector professionals, the police, first responders, nature wardens and heritage preservation stakeholders.
- Draw on all local resources in terms of security, surveillance, fines, collection, reception, educational outreach, etc.
  As part of a collective effort to prepare for the season, this may for example involve jointly identifying temporary parking areas on public or private land for their mutually agreed upon use in order to decongest the main parking facilities.
- Use, on a trial basis, small-scale tourist flow management measures of all types: orders to modify or prohibit entry, shuttle services, car-sharing lots, additional staff (at parking facilities, for instance), etc.
- Ensure a strong presence on the ground to better communicate awareness, interpretation and safety messages, and guide visitors in their experience and use of a given attraction.
- Communicate with and inform visitors using temporary signage and/or real-time information (e.g. Waze, Affluences, Google).
- Anticipate the impacts of significant media coverage of the site by preparing a communications kit for journalists and influencers, among others.

INSIDE STORY

Identifying priority actions for the Etretat Cliffs, a major natural site — Alabaster Coast

Two priority actions were identified at local level:

1. Set up an experimental working group called "Transport – Preparing for the tourist season" that brings together local elected officials, intermunicipal cooperation bodies, tourist information centres, tourism development agencies, gendarmeries, subprefectures, the département and regional directorates concerned by issues like transport and visitor numbers (roads, cycle paths, etc.), in conjunction with the implementation of the region's sustainable transport and itineraries plan. Its purpose is to:

- enable all stakeholders to learn about how transport will be organised locally for the tourist season (off-site parking permitted, traffic patterns, public transport timetables, on-season events that could affect traffic, etc.);
- ensure the monitoring of visitor footfall with local and regional stakeholders by sharing photos and videos to observe changes in behaviour and to engage in discussion on future developments;
- share stakeholders' visitor number data (e.g. tourist footfall, Flux Vision data, counters, parking counts, number of information point users).

2. Implement communication and educational outreach initiatives to make visitors aware of alternative ways to get around for a new experience of the cliffs:

- additional security provided by a gendarmerie mounted unit during the summer season and reinforcement of human resources through a future rural warden unit shared among municipalities;
- documents and press releases reminding visitors about good practices and carless options;
- mobile information point made available in the summer season to raise awareness among visitors and residents at the heart of the region about protecting nature and the environment, and travelling sustainably;
- creation of crisis communication that is standardised at regional level, particularly on social media and covering topics such as nature and environmental conservation and good practices to adopt.

Identifying potential partners

Before going forward with each of the measures set out in this handbook, be sure to contact and/or involve the relevant stakeholders. To guide you, here is a non-exhaustive list of potential partners:

- Local authorities
- Devolved government departments, under the aegis of the prefect: Regional Directorates for the Environment, Planning and Housing (DREALs), Regional Directorates for Food, Agriculture and Forestry (DRAAFs), Département Regional Planning Directorates (DDTs), domestic security forces, etc.
- Government-funded institutions: Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCIs), French Office for Biodiversity (OFB), National Forestry Commission (ONF), etc.
- Public-sector tourism stakeholders: Regional Tourism Committees (CRTs), Département Tourism Agencies (CDTs), Tourist Information Centres (OTs), Atout France
- Academia: research laboratories and universities, including elite universities
- Private-sector stakeholders: relevant trade associations, residents and users (residents' associations, neighbourhood councils, etc.), non-profit organisations
- Mobility management bodies (AOMs)
- Tourists, daytrippers, visitors
- Managers of routes and nature areas (e.g. hiking committees, regional nature parks, national parks, major French sites (Grands Sites de France), Natura 2000 network sites)
- Sports federations
- Stakeholders providing transport solutions to tourists: aviation, rail, maritime and road transport sectors

Glossary

Acceptability

Acceptability does not mean acceptance. Tourism is accepted because it is made acceptable, balanced and sustainable for nature and the environment, the living conditions of residents and the visitor experience. There is an underlying notion of regional consent. Acceptability is not necessarily related to a given number of visitors. It is a factor both in regions that attract many tourists and in regions that are less prepared due to a less entrenched tourist culture, where visitor numbers are lower but have a greater impact on the region and residents' sentiment. The challenge of tackling the issue of acceptability when managing visitor numbers is to anticipate the risks that a strategy of redistributing visitor numbers to areas that are less prepared for or used to receiving such an influx may entail.

Conflicting use

Describes populations with differing interests at tourist attractions that also serve other purposes. For example, Père Lachaise Cemetery.

Educational tour

Technical term used by tourism professionals. It can take the form of the organisation of full-day training events for tourism stakeholders (e.g. tourism professionals, institutional stakeholders, elected officials, residents) to promote and inform them about various tourism infrastructure and destinations.

Overcrowding and tourism peaks

Overcrowding occurs when a site or an attraction exceeds its visitor capacity. It is often a problem limited in time (season) and space (tourist areas) and related to the attraction's management of visitor footfall.

Tourism peaks are when the number of visitors to an attraction reaches a maximum. This occurs on 15 August, for example, at certain attractions.

Overcrowding and quantifiable tourism peaks need to be put into perspective in light of their timeframes and the geographic areas in which they are observed. Visitor numbers observed during a peak cannot be the only point of reference for implementing management and planning solutions.

Overtourism

Overtourism happens when a destination or a tourist attraction is deemed as having an excessive number of visitors, for at least one of three reasons:

- damage has been caused to the environment, biodiversity or the natural and/or historical heritage of the destination or the attraction;
- the local population's quality of life has deteriorated, resulting in a considerable increase in the non-acceptability of tourism for the population;
- the conditions for visitors have a negative impact on the tourist experience.

Contributors and acknowledgements

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