Project acronym: **DEMo4PPL**
Project full title: **Digital Education Modules 4 Participatory Planning**

OPT-T9: PARTICIPATORY PLANNING IN TOURISM AND DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

1. Short description

Participatory planning in tourism and destination management refers to the approach to actively involve all stakeholders – including regulatory bodies, local communities, businesses, and tourists – in the decision-making process about managing the destinations. Participatory planning in tourism incorporates diverse perspectives and local knowledge to address the unique needs and aspirations of communities, mitigate potential negative impacts, and enhance the overall visitor experience. This approach holds significant multidisciplinary value, bridging the gap between business-oriented tourism training, which often focuses on destination marketing and planning-oriented programs that view tourism primarily as a sectoral policy. By integrating both business and policy perspectives, this Module offers a more comprehensive approach to tourism and destination management from the macroeconomic perspective. It enriches existing curricula by addressing sustainability challenges and emphasizing the careful planning of the carrying capacity of host communities, fostering a balance between development and preservation.

The Module aims to (i) discuss policies, regulations, and planning frameworks that guide tourism development, including how to navigate and influence these arrangements; (ii) analyse the social, economic, and environmental dynamics of destinations, including how these factors influence tourism planning; (iii) familiarize students and learners with the principles and methodologies of participatory planning because of stakeholder engagement in tourism development and (iv) explain the liaison between participatory planning and sustainable destination management in tourism. The content focuses on the natural and human elements of tourism destinations, the multifaceted impacts of development, the role of policies and

stakeholder interventions, participatory planning processes, and the importance of sustainable, ethical, and digital approaches in tourism and destination management.

2. Keywords

Destination Management; Tourism; Stakeholder Engagement; Planning; Public Participation; Sustainability

3. Content
3.1. Natural and anthropogenic components of tourism destinations

Tourism destinations are understood as physical or geographical areas, whether or not they have administrative or analytical boundaries, selected by the tourists to visit, that represent clusters of interconnected products, services, activities, and experiences along the tourism value chain (UNTWO, 2010). The most important feature of the destinations is the interrelation of its components in the process of provision of tourism experiences and tourism products. Tourism destinations, once seen mainly through their geography and the interactions between tourists, service providers, and locals, are now understood as complex systems that adapt to changing economic, political, and social trends, with the territories playing a key role in their growth, stakeholder relationships, and development over time (Jovicic, 2016). In this context, a destination can be understood as a network of interconnected stakeholders, both directly and indirectly involved in tourism, whose actions play a critical role in the effective functioning of the destination system and influence the way tourism operates within a specific location (Jovicic, 2016). These stakeholders - private sector (business), public sector (government and sectoral organisations), civil sector (including education), local communities, and customers (tourists) (Slivar, 2018) are the main agents that define and interact in the planning processes in tourism. **Table 1** provides a detailed breakdown of the primary roles, responsibilities, and interests of each stakeholder group in the context of **tourism planning and** highlights how their actions and interactions contribute to the sustainable development and effective management of tourism destinations:

Table 1: Interested parties in the planning processes of tourism (source: Modified from (Slivar, 2018))

	Stakeholder	Role and interest
Public Sector		
	Tourism suppliers	Aim to achieve optimum economic gains within the boundaries set by regulations
	Agents/intermediaries	Represent the collective interests of business
	Business support and professional associations	Coordinate sectoral development activities
Private Sector		

	National public authorities (government)	Define the general direction and influence processes through policies, plans, and financial support
	Regional and local authorities	Develop the lower-level plans, define infrastructure development and localization of the sectoral development
	Tourism organizations	Primarily engaged in destination management and marketing
Civic Sector		
	Special-interest NGOs (volunteers, environmentalists, etc.)	Defend the general public interest in managing tourism landscapes
	Education	Build the necessary knowledge, skills, and competence for sustainable management
Local Communities and Customers		
	Local communities	Make sure that tourism profits do not affect the social and environmental viability
	Tourists	Influence the development of the sector with their decisions

This multi-stakeholder approach to tourism planning emphasizes the importance of collaboration and coordination among all actors involved. By recognizing and addressing the diverse interests and needs of stakeholders, destinations can achieve a balanced and sustainable tourism system that benefits both visitors and host communities.

In more practical terms a **tourism destination** is an area that is distinctly recognized and marketed as a place to visit due to unique characteristics, attractions, amenities, and a combination of those. Destinations are more than just physical locations; they represent an experience offered to tourists through a harmonious blend of natural, cultural, and manmade features that make the area appealing and memorable. They can vary largely in scale, ranging from small settlements and villages to large cities, regions, or even entire countries. Sometimes, a destination may refer to a specific site, such as a natural wonder, cultural heritage site, resort, or theme park, each offering a focused experience based on its unique attributes. In all cases, the ultimate purpose is to offer experiences and this is done based on the combination of unique elements – both natural and manmade – that can deliver this experience together. Through the diverse range of stakeholders (See Table 1) destinations can connect to form broader networks. Beyond its physical attributes, a destination also possesses an intangible essence, shaped by its image and identity, which plays a significant role in determining its appeal and competitiveness in the tourism market (UNTWO, n.d.).

When the spatial aspect of tourism destinations is taken out, the concept of **tourism landscape** emerges. A tourism landscape refers to a geographic area that has been shaped, utilized, and perceived primarily about tourism activities (Terkenli, 2021). It encompasses the physical, cultural, social, and aesthetic elements directly or indirectly influenced by tourism. The concept integrates both natural and man-made (anthropogenic) features of the environment, reflecting the interactions between tourism development, local communities, and ecosystems. Thus tourism destinations

are focus on the provision of tourism services and experiences, whereas landscapes highlight the physical and visual environment. Accordingly, the natural and anthropogenic components of tourism landscapes are the key elements that define the uniqueness, attractiveness, and sustainability of these destinations. These components can be broadly understood as follows but not limited to (Krastev & Umnikova, 2019):

Natural components:

- Geographical features - mountains, hills, plains, coastal strips
- Climate - temperatures, seasonality, rainfall, sunny days
- Flora and fauna - rare plants, protected animal species, biodiversity
- Natural sights - bays, waterfalls, caves, rivers, lakes, geysers
- Nature reserves and parks - protected areas of ecological importance
Anthropogenic (man-made) components:

- Cultural and historical sites - archaeological finds, museums, fortresses, temples
- Infrastructure - transport connectivity (airports, roads), accessibility services, hotels, restaurants
- Services and facilities - tourist information centres, guiding services and guides, sports facilities
- Events and activities - festivals, cultural events, sports events
- Contemporary architecture and art - sculptures, bridges, landmarks with modern aesthetics

Successful tourism destinations are often built on the harmonious interaction among stakeholders, natural resources, human creations and activities. This includes in particular the sustainable use of natural resources and the creation of facilities that highlight and protect these resources. In that, the planning of the physical environment has become increasingly crucial in today's context, driven by growing awareness of the alarming reality that space is a finite resource for tourism (and not only), the use of which should be prudent and considerate to promote sustainable and environmentally friendly development (Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2019).

From the planning perspective, the holistic consideration of the natural and anthropogenic components of tourism destinations and landscapes is essential from the following perspectives:

- Balance and sustainability

In managing tourism destinations both the natural and anthropogenic components need to be considered together and in a balanced way to achieve sustainability. Natural components attract tourists, while anthropogenic resources enhance the overall experience. However, it is the natural components that also limit the amount of visitors that an area can handle to continue functioning as a destination over time. Overuse or mismanagement of natural resources can lead to environmental

degradation while neglecting anthropogenic resources can result in the deterioration of cultural heritage and infrastructure.

- Preservation and conservation

Tourism planning should aim to preserve and conserve natural resources by promoting eco-friendly practices and minimizing environmental impacts. Similarly, it should work towards the conservation and restoration of anthropogenic resources to maintain their cultural and historical significance.

- Community involvement

Engaging the local communities in the planning process is crucial. Residents often have valuable insights into both natural and anthropogenic resources and can contribute to sustainable tourism practices that benefit the environment and local culture at the same time.

- Policy and regulation

Effective policies and regulations, including zoning laws, environmental regulations, and cultural preservation guidelines, are necessary to guide the sustainable use and management of both types of resources.

Generally, the purpose of tourism planning and destination management is to maximize economic benefits while preserving the resources on which growth is based and while mitigating the negative environmental and social impacts on the destination areas and communities (Rahmafitria, Pearce, Oktadiana, & Putro, 2020). The success of tourism development is more dependent on natural destination components than on developments within the sector itself (Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2019). Accordingly, tourism development should not be considered as subject to narrow sectoral planning but as an element of integrated spatial planning with priority given to the development of areas with the potential to combine natural and man-made components and with the potential to form clusters (Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2019).

3.2. Economic, political, social, environmental and cultural impacts of the development/ redevelopment upon the landscape

The tourism sector is undergoing constant transformation driven by various factors, prompting the exploration of alternative approaches such as new tourism types, innovative spatial organization, and diversified tourism products and destinations (Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2019; Krastev & Umnikova, 2019). The development or redevelopment of tourism landscapes significantly impacts their economic, political, social, environmental, and cultural dimensions. This development necessitates a re-evaluation of urban processes, especially given the ongoing intensification of natural and human-made resource use and the surpassing of tourist destinations' capacity to accommodate visitors. It is recognized in research, business,

and policy-making that it is necessary to streamline the development of tourism infrastructure to counteract the challenges of seasonality, the concentration of tourism infrastructure, and the homogenization of tourism offerings and to prevent the transformation of tourism landscapes into densely urbanized areas.

The most important concept in this regard is the concept of the **caring capacity for tourism,** defined by the World Tourism Organization and referring to the "maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic and socio-cultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of the visitors' satisfaction" (PAP/RAC, 1997). Carrying capacity has been used as a research and planning tool to determine the appropriate thresholds for development that support the sustainable utilization of tourism resources (PAP/RAC, 1997; Rahmafitria, Pearce, Oktadiana, & Putro, 2020) and as a counterpart to newly emerging notions such as over tourism, the resilience of the destinations, overcrowding and so on. What is also implied in the definition as well as in many reports of the WTO on the same theme is that the carrying capacity is very much dependant on the local context and specificities of a place associated with a destination – therefore the difficulty to offer a standardised solutions and the need for the communities at the destinations to plan for themselves. Based on the caring capacity concept many planning tools for tourism development in view of sustainability were and are being developed (Rahmafitria, Pearce, Oktadiana, & Putro, 2020). Still, the underlying philosophy behind the caring capacity concept is rooted in the need for framing the purely economic elements of growth with the long-term interests of host communities (with their resources and landscapes) and tourists (with their needs and desires for experiences) in an equitable way.

Carrying capacity is a key element of tourism planning because it drives a balance between growth and sustainability at tourism destinations so that tourism growth does not exceed a destination's ability to manage the different impacts of visitor inflows. In other words, the carrying capacity defines the growth thresholds of tourism and the turning point after which the development focus needs to be shifted away from profit and income generation to ensuring resource resilience and preservation, including quality of life of both host communities and visitors. It is associated with rising prioritization of special-interest over mass tourism practices, quality over quantity of tourism services and products, promoting small-scale over large-scale enterprises, educating over satisfying tourists as all cost, and so on. While identifying the optimal environmental, infrastructural, and social limits of a destination, policy-makers and planners can introduce measures to maintain a high-quality visitor experience and long-term endurance of tourism as an economic activity with a specific territory at the same time.

The caring capacity concept has several main dimensions for consideration (see Figure 1), the most common being (Kennell, 2014; Rahmafitria, Pearce, Oktadiana, & Putro, 2020):

- Economic

This dimension refers to the level at which tourism does not negatively impact the local economy, including the cost of living and local employment. It implies that tourism destinations should be developed in such a way so as not to cause economic dependency only on tourism or tacitly suppress other sectors (e.g. agriculture, food production, cultural industries) that may have equally viable or better development perspectives for the host communities.

- Social

This dimension is about the extent to which tourism can occur without the visitors causing strain on the ways and quality of life of the local communities. One of the most common threats in this regard refer to the commercialization and commodification of local culture that in the end may lead to the loss of identity (e.g. when rituals are adapted for showcase before large audiences)

- Physical

Here the focus is on the landscape and infrastructure's ability to support a certain number of visitors, such as accommodation, transportation, and other facilities. One of the most common conflicts arises when the desire to expand tourism infrastructure leads to damage and degradation of natural landscapes. For example, the demolition of natural sand dunes during beach area enlargement, or the construction of additional beds at winter resorts that exceeds the available space on ski slopes.

- Environmental

The ability of the natural environment to withstand human activity without suffering significant degradation and pollution. The physical and environmental dimension are very much related.

- Political

The reference here to the maximum utilization of tourist resources that can occur without leading to political instability, such as conflicts over land rights, control of tourism revenues, and civic movements for the protection of valuable heritage against the adverse effects of over-tourism. This dimension is closely linked to the economic and social ones.

- Perceptual Capacity:

The number of visitors a destination can handle before the visitor experience is diminished.

In the planning processes usually, a combination of the caring-capacity dimensions are used given the time frame, resources, planning level, and desired improvements in the planning area that are sought. Modern planning tools can further allow more adequate measuring and outlining of possible scenarios for the different stakeholders.

Figure 1: Caring capacity of tourism destinations (source: own elaboration based on (Kennell, 2014; Rahmafitria, Pearce, Oktadiana, & Putro, 2020))
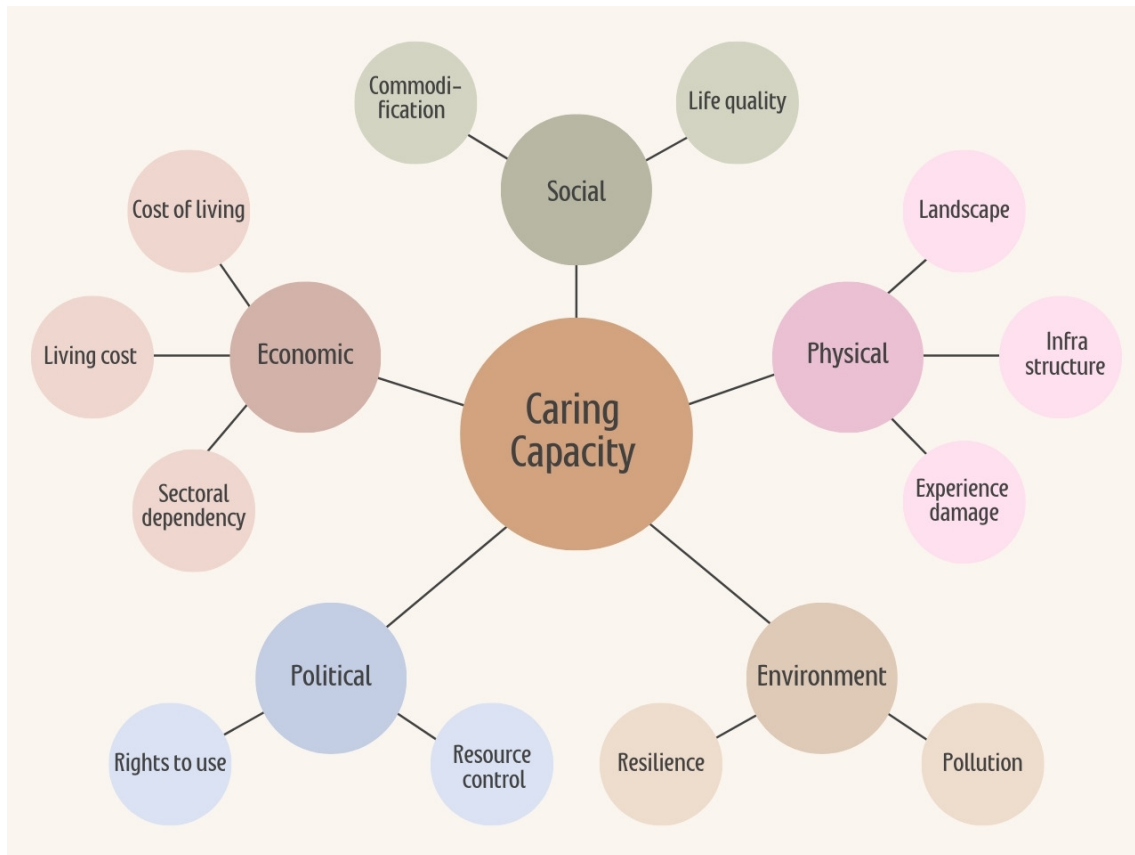
3.3. Local, regional, national and international government policies about tourism planning and destination management

Generally, tourism is subject to sectoral policy-making and in the majority of the EU countries tourism landscapes and destinations fall in the general regional and spatial planning policies (OECD, 2012; Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2019). However, this perspective has been changing given approaches for smart specialization, integrated territorial investments adopted and community-led local development in the EU (INTERREG). Still it is important to consider the specifics of the territorial dimension of tourism as the tourism landscapes transcend administrative borders (e.g. we have natural and archaeological sites that fall on the territories of different regions and countries) and therefore the different components of tourism destinations may be regulated by different polies, strategies and legislations that need to be considered together in the process of planning. This holistic view is also important when referring to the caring capacity of the landscapes and destinations.

The planning processes are in the realm of the public sector as stakeholders in tourism. Local governments focus on community-specific needs, balancing economic benefits with preserving cultural heritage and natural resources. Regional governments often aim to promote inter-municipal cooperation, infrastructure

development, and the equitable distribution of tourism benefits within the administrative areas under their realm. At the national level, governments establish overarching frameworks and regulations. Internationally, organizations like the EU and UN shape development trends such as the drive towards sustainability, resilience, cross-border cooperation, equitable sharing of tourism resources, and so on.

The process for **participatory planning** in tourism implies that all relevant stakeholders – including local communities, government agencies, businesses, civic organisations, and tourists – are actively involved in the decision-making process. This approach ensures that the diverse perspectives, needs, and aspirations of these stakeholders are considered and the development of the destinations occurs in a balanced and equitable way. Participatory planning is associated with community engagement in the planning processes (DEMO4PPL Report on Participatory Planning Approaches and Practice at EU level). Still, it must be considered that the different types of stakeholders have different power and weight in the process.

In that, participatory planning has several advantages:

- It ensures that stakeholders' needs, interests and proposals are reflected in the final plans, entailing a higher degree of public acceptance and satisfaction with the planning projects, which is fundamental for their successful implementation.
- Stakeholder involvement helps to identify local problems and needs that may be overlooked by spatial planners due to their complexity or specific nature.
- When diverse stakeholders (particularly citizens) have the opportunity to observe, comment, and contribute to the planning process, this reduces the risk of corruption and inefficiency, increases trust in institutions, and helps to build a more responsible and engaged community.
- It supports innovation and creative approaches to problem-solving. The diversity of opinions and perspectives can lead to the more sustainable exploitation of tourism landscapes.

3.4. Stakeholder intervention levels in tourism planning and destination management

The intervention level in tourism planning and destination management refers to the specific stages of governance at which stakeholders may interfere in shaping and influencing the planning process. These intervention levels typically align with the various policy-making tiers– local, regional, national, or international. At each level of intervention, stakeholders may engage during distinct phases of the planning cycle, including the initial, intermediate, and final stages.

- Local level

This level of participation is closest to the community and individual businesses. It includes involvement in the planning and development of specific neighbourhoods, streets, parks, and other public spaces within a city or municipality. Citizens engage through public hearings, workshops, surveys, and various forms of direct democracy, such as referendums on particular projects. At this level, participation is direct and has an immediate impact on the quality of life for the local population. Decisions are made by municipal councils and administrations, which possess planning autonomy.

- Regional level

At the regional level, stakeholder participation encompasses the planning and development of larger areas, potentially including multiple localities or entire regions. This involvement includes the creation of regional development plans and infrastructure projects that benefit tourism destinations, such as roads, bridges, and transport links, as well as environmental and natural resource protection initiatives. Participation typically occurs through public consultations, discussions of strategic documents, and involvement in thematic working groups. Decisions at this level are made by regional authorities, who are often closer to central governance than to local authorities, resulting in a significant distance between individual stakeholders and decision-makers.

- National level

At the national level, stakeholder involvement typically occurs through intermediaries such as business branch organizations or established civic groups. This process is based on the preliminary identification and formulation of group interests that need to be addressed and defended in the planning processes. Participation can take place through national public consultations, involvement in the discussion of draft laws, and providing feedback and suggestions via official channels, including public e-participation portals and petitions.

- International level

This level of participation pertains to planning the joint use of shared tourism landscapes and resources. The interests of individual stakeholders are represented through interest-based associations and by incorporating these interests into the positions of national governments.

Internationally sustainability has been recognized as a mainstream development priority (UN Sustainable development goals, EU Green Deal). This priority is translated to the national and international general and sectoral policies, and accordingly

downwards. When it comes to tourism, however, it needs to be noted that there is no uniform policy-making at international level, including in the EU, which means that tourism that tourism is subject to territorial and sectoral planning differently in different countries in regions. Some relevant policies in this regards are the transport regulation policies and legislation, water management resources and policies, natural resource management policies and legalisations, heritage protection policies and regulations and so on. These policies and guidelines emphasize the importance of bottom-up planning approaches. Actively engaging local stakeholders in tourism development is central to addressing regional priorities and representing diverse interests, aligning with how the UN and EU define social sustainability. Tourism is a national and regional competence field amongst the Member States of the EU and regions therefore have full authority to follow national or regional tourism policies (Wanner, Seier, & Pröbstl-Haider, 2020). These policies and guidelines emphasize the importance of bottom-up planning approaches. Actively engaging local stakeholders in tourism development is central to addressing regional priorities and representing diverse interests, aligning with how the UN and EU define social sustainability (Wanner, Seier, & Pröbstl-Haider, 2020).

3.5. Processes for participatory planning in tourism destination management

Participation processes in planning are mainly distinguished based on the initiative for their launch: (i) the formal processes are the ones defined in the national legislation and introduced by the decision-making bodies while searching for the credibility of their plans and policies; (ii) the informal processes are the ones initiated by the civil society structures to offer organic solutions to important community issues. Both approaches complement each other by providing additional platforms and opportunities for community engagement and interaction between citizens and authorities. Informal processes are often characterised by greater flexibility, accessibility, and creativity in participatory approaches.

3.5.1. Formal participatory planning processes

- Public hearings

Many spatial plans and projects require public hearings to enable citizens and stakeholders to express their views, suggestions and concerns.

- Public consultations

Prior to the adoption of important strategic documents, regulations or plans, public consultations are held to allow citizens to read the proposed documents and give their input.

- **Strategic Planning Committees**

Established by authorities, these committees include representatives from various sectors such as tourism, transportation, and environmental management to collaboratively draft destination management plans.

- Workshops and Focus Groups:

Organized by planning authorities to engage stakeholders in discussions on specific issues, such as developing eco-tourism strategies or managing overcrowding at popular attractions.

- **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)** :

Mandated processes that involve formal participation from stakeholders to evaluate and approve tourism projects while considering their social, economic, and environmental impact.

- Digital participation

With the development of information and communication technologies, online platforms for citizen participation are increasingly used, allowing citizens to participate in spatial planning processes remotely.

3.5.2. Informal formal participatory planning processes

- Participation through social media and online platforms

Social media and various online platforms offer opportunities for broad citizen participation in the discussion of spatial planning issues. They allow citizens to share opinions, exchange information and organise around particular issues or initiatives.

- Working groups and brainstorming

Working groups and brainstorming sessions are forms of informal participation that bring together citizens, experts, NGO representatives and other stakeholders in an informal setting to discuss and develop ideas and solutions to specific issues related to the development of space.

- Community projects

Community (grassroots) projects involve the direct participation of citizens in the planning, development and implementation of projects to improve the local environment, such as the improvement of public spaces, the creation of community gardens or initiatives to improve the built environment. These projects help to strengthen community ties and increase civic engagement.

- Educational initiatives

Educational initiatives aim to increase citizens' awareness and understanding of spatial planning, processes and the importance of citizen participation. They may include lectures, seminars, workshops and other forms of training organised by civil society organisations, educational institutions or other stakeholders.

Figure 2: Processes for participatory planning in tourism destination management (source: own elaboration)
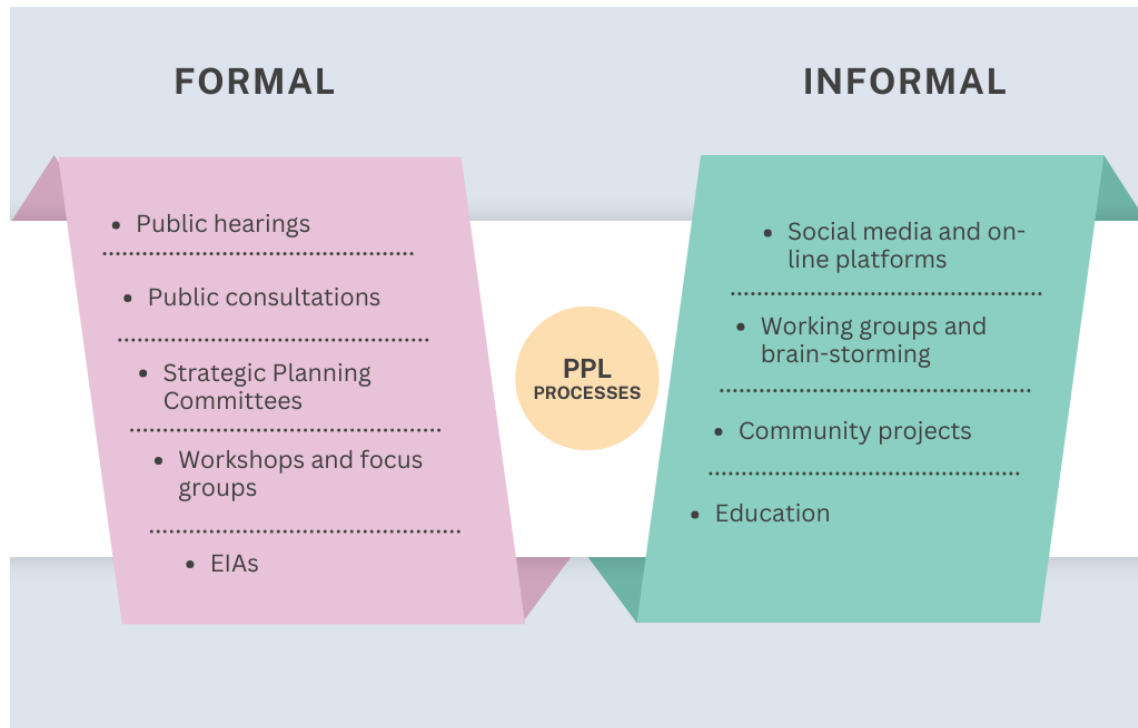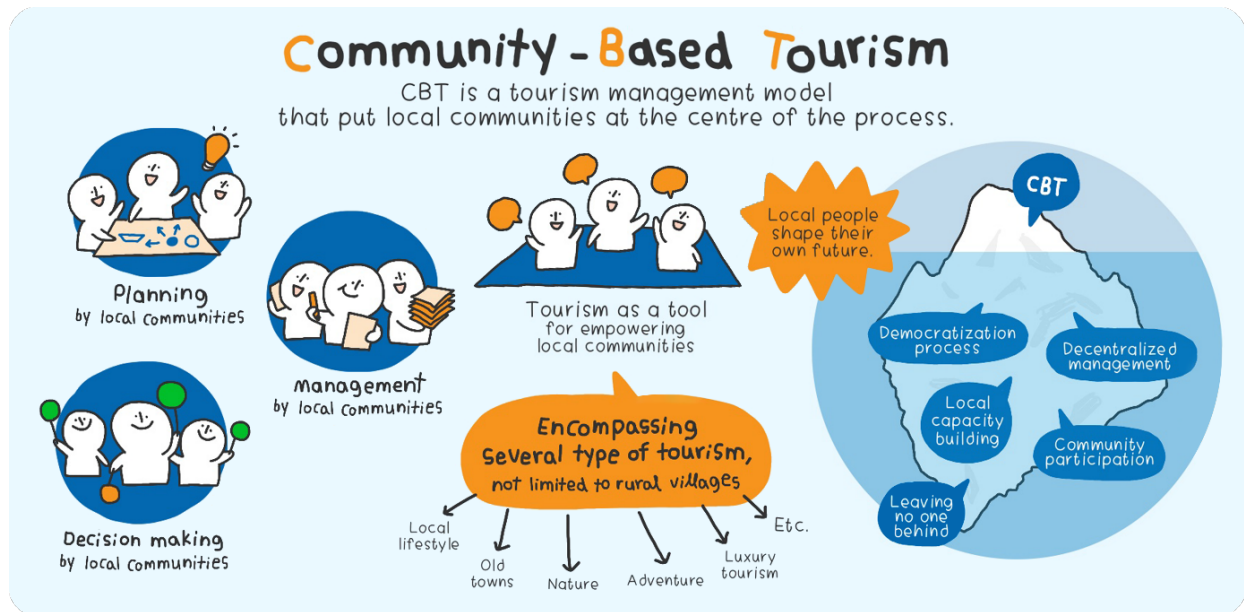

3.6. Community-based tourism, sustainable tourism practices, heritage

Community participation in tourism is considered as a way towards sustainable and equitable development. The processes of participatory planning in tourism are best integrated the philosophy of community-based tourism that brings together the notions of collective decision-making, planning, management and delivery of tourism products within an area (see Figure 3). **Community-based tourism** generally refers to the community participation in the tourism planning process so as to ensure sustainable development of the destinations while preserving the tourism landscapes and resiliently raising the caring capacity (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

In discussing community-based tourism, it is essential to emphasize the shift from a passive acceptance of local communities in tourism to an active, self-determined approach. Rather than merely "accepting their role," communities should define their own role, alongside that of the tourism industry (Pinel, 2003). To achieve this, they need to create opportunities to step back from the pressures of tourism marketing and product development. This allows stakeholders to reflect on their tourism experiences and local values, setting a clear direction for future development in collaboration with key partners (Pinel, 2003).

Figure 3: Processes of Community-based Tourism (source: (Rungchavalnont, 2022))

However, it needs to be kept in mind that, community-based tourism is considered as an ideal case and an alternative development pathway for tourism sector versus mass tourism as it is understood differently and in different environments also for planning purposes (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). One of the distinctive features of community-based tourism is the focus on preserving ethnic-territorial identity and valuing and transmitting cultural heritage in all its forms (Santos & Anzaldua-Soule, 2024).

Participatory planning in tourism serves as a foundation for integrating community-based tourism, sustainable tourism practices, heritage conservation, and the carrying capacity of destinations. Through participatory planning, local communities are actively involved in decision-making processes, aligning tourism development with their needs and values, a core principle of community-based tourism. This ensures that tourism initiatives empower communities, foster cultural exchange, and distribute economic benefits equitably. By including diverse stakeholders, participatory planning promotes sustainable tourism practices that balance economic growth with environmental stewardship. It enables the identification and mitigation of ecological impacts, supports the adoption of eco-friendly practices, and ensures that tourism activities align with the long-term well-being of the environment and local populations.

Against this background, detailed spatial management regimes should be established to integrate the management of funds to optimize the use of public resources, accumulate the effects of combined investment initiatives, implement targeted policies to attract strategic investors, foster public-private partnerships at all levels, promote environmentally sustainable development, and preserve the places' spiritual uniqueness as a crucial characteristic. (Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2019)

In terms of planning, the potential guiding elements for community-based tourism can be summarized as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Potential Guiding Elements for Community-based Tourism (source: (Pinel, 2003))

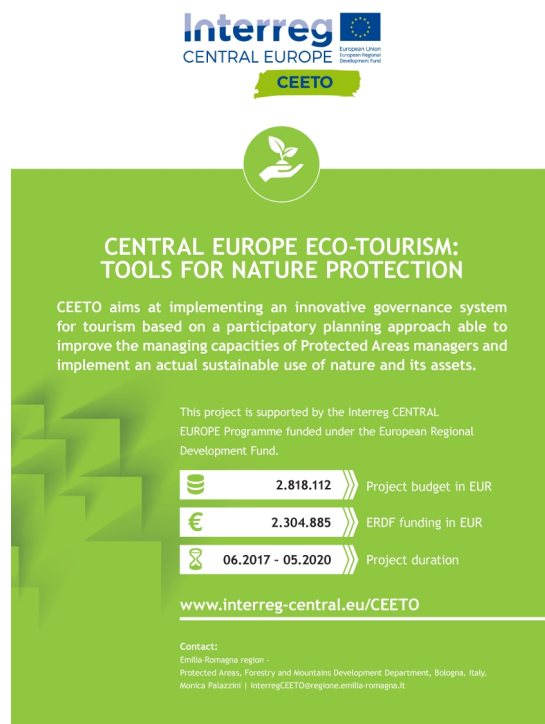| Participation Practise	Element
Inclusive Cooperation	1. Using tourism planning to "pull together" local residents 2. Including broad stakeholder input 3. Clarifying co-operative stakeholder roles sooner rather than later 4. Preparing children/youth with values and skills for tourism for tourism and community stewardship 5. Creating a more unified local voice for external relations and communication
Understanding and Shaping Implications and Expectations	6. Better understanding the implication, potential, demands, and expectations of tourism 7. Working toward a consistent tourism season by satisfying those who come 8. Ensuring safety of tourism and locals 9. Communicating clear community messages to tourists 10. Encouraging friendly and respectful attitudes between residents and tourists 11. Setting local land and marine stewardship examples by residents 12. Working to reduce socio-cultural stereo-types 13. Shaping appropriate tourist expectations to match local realities 14. Respecting residents and privacy while also influencing tourism activities and behaviours
Local Maintenance and Enhancement	15. Maintain the ability to keep living and working in the area 16. Managing gradual growth that matches local capacity 17. Showing pride in the area and cultural backgrounds 18. Protecting the wilderness and waters as primary resources for all local economies 19. Protecting the mystique, freedom, and other features attractive to locals and tourists alike, and 20. Treating all local resources as a complete system

4. Classroom discussion topics

1. How does the level of intervention in tourism planning–local, regional, national, and international–affect the influence and engagement of different stakeholders in the planning process? What are the benefits and challenges of stakeholder participation at each level, and how does this impact the governance of tourism destinations?

2. Should formal and informal participatory planning processes in tourism be treated as complementary approaches, or do they offer fundamentally different benefits that should be utilized separately? Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each approach in terms of community engagement, flexibility, and effectiveness in shaping tourism development plans.

3. How does integrating community-based tourism with participatory planning enhance the sustainability and resilience of tourism destinations, particularly in preserving cultural heritage and managing environmental impacts?

4. Assignment

Using the CEETO Project as a case study on the value of sustainable approaches to tourism and destination management, incorporating ethical and digital aspects

CENTRAL EUROPE Eco-Tourism: Tools for Nature Protection (CEETO), supported by INTERREG Central (source: (Interreg Central, https://programme2014-20.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/CEETO.html))

CEETO is designed to make tourism a driver for nature protection and local socio-economic well-being by promoting sustainable tourism models in Protected Areas (PAs) and Natura 2000 sites across several European countries. These areas represent valuable natural assets but are increasingly threatened by unsustainable tourism, which creates environmental pressures and conflicts with local communities over natural resources and infrastructure use. The project addresses the issue of lack of sustainable tourism planning tools in many PAs and aims to create an innovative

governance system that integrates environmental, social, and economic aspects to ensure tourism supports nature conservation while benefiting local communities.

Based on a detailed overview of the CEETO website and resources the students are to:

(i)   Discuss

    o   the key challenges it aims to address in Protected Areas and Natura 2000 sites
    o   the tools and models developed and tested through CEETO
    o   if the project outputs contribute to balancing tourism growth with nature protection

(ii)   Write a critical reflection on (~1000 words)

    o   roles and interests of main stakeholders in promoting sustainable tourism
    o   the benefits and potential limitations of using CEETO's approach in other destinations

(iii)   Deliver a presentation (~10 minutes) on

    o   how this case study can influence tourism planning practices in students' own countries.

5. Summary of Learning

Q1: What is the difference between a tourism destination and a tourism landscape?

A: Tourism destinations refer to the whole set of resources that provide tourist products at a place, including marketing – e.g. these are places that are designed for tourism. Tourism landscapes are the natural and man-made settings in which tourism takes place in general.

Q2: What is the caring capacity for tourism?

A: The caring capacity for tourism refers to the maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic, and socio-cultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of the visitors' satisfaction.

Q3: What is the main difference between the formal and informal participatory planning methods"

A: The formal methods are initiated by the government (decision-makers), while the informal ones are initiated by the communities.

Q4: What is community-based tourism?

A: Community-based tourism is when tourism planning occurs with community participation so as to ensure sustainable development of the destinations while preserving the tourism landscapes and resiliently raising the caring capacity

Q5: Which are the main dimensions of the caring capacity of tourism destinations?

A: These are the economic, social, physical, environmental, political and perceptive dimensions.

Quiz

Q1: Which stakeholders are involved in the effective functioning and planning of the tourism destination system?

    a) Only private sector businesses
    b) Government and educational institutions
    c) Private sector, public sector, civil sector, local communities, and customers
    d) Tourists and local communities

A: c

Q2: Which of the following is a natural component of tourism destinations?

    a) Hotels and restaurants
    b) Museums and archaeological finds
    c) Tourist information centres
    d) Geographical features like mountains and coastal strips

A: d

Q3: What is crucial for achieving sustainability in tourism destinations?

    a) Focusing solely on natural components
    b) Considering both natural and anthropogenic components together in a balanced way
    c) Developing extensive man-made infrastructure
    d) Maximizing the number of tourists without limits

A: b

Q4: (True or False): The primary goal of tourism planning and destination management is to maximize economic benefits while ensuring the preservation of resources and mitigating negative environmental and social impacts on destination areas and communities.

A: True

Q5: What is the main impact of the development or redevelopment of tourism landscapes?

    a) It only affects the economic dimension
    b) It impacts economic, political, social, environmental, and cultural dimensions
    c) It has no significant impact
    d) It only affects the political dimension

A: b

Q6: What does the economic dimension of caring capacity refer to?

    a) The extent to which tourism can occur without negatively impacting the local economy, including cost of living and local employment
    b) The ability of the natural environment to withstand human activity
    c) The level of political stability in a tourist destination
    d) The quality of visitor experiences

A: a

Q7: What is a common threat mentioned under the social dimension of caring capacity?

    a) Economic dependency on tourism
    b) Commercialization and commodification of local culture leading to loss of identity
    c) Environmental degradation
    d) Conflicts over land rights

A: a

Q8: (True or False): The concept of carrying capacity is crucial for tourism planning as it helps determine the appropriate thresholds for sustainable development of tourism resources.

A: True

Q9: At which level of intervention is stakeholder participation in planning closest to the community and individual businesses?

    a) Regional level
    b) Local level
    c) National level
    d) International level

A: b

Q10: What kind of activities are typically involved at the regional level of stakeholder participation in planning?

a) Public hearings and referendums
b) Development of regional development plans and infrastructure projects
c) Participation through e-participation portals and petitions
d) Planning the joint use of shared tourism landscapes

A: b

Q11: Match the participatory planning process with the initiator using arrows:

Process	Initiator
a) Community projects	
b) **Environmental Impact Assessments**	
c) Workshops and Focus Groups	B. Government
d) Working groups and brainstorming	C. Civil society
e) Public hearing	
f) Education	

A: a-B; b-A; c-A; d-B; e-A; f-B

Q12: (True or False): Informal participatory planning processes are always mandated by national legislation and require formal approval from decision-making bodies.

A: False

Q13: (True or False): Participatory planning in tourism excludes local communities from decision-making processes and focuses solely on economic growth, disregarding sustainable practices and environmental stewardship.

A: False

Q14: Which is the philosophy that best integrates participatory planning in tourism?

a) Mass tourism
b) Community-based tourism
c) Eco-tourism
d) Special-interest tourism

A: b

Q15: Match the following terms with the correct definitions:

Term	Definition
a) **Community-Based Tourism**	A. Involves local communities in decision-making to align tourism development with their needs and values, fostering cultural exchange and equitable economic benefits.
b) **Participatory Planning**	B. A tourism philosophy that emphasizes community involvement to ensure sustainable development, cultural preservation, and environmental resilience.
c) **Sustainable Tourism Practices**	C. Frameworks established to manage funds, attract investments, and promote environmentally sustainable development while preserving cultural uniqueness.
d) **Spatial Management Regimes**	D. Promotes balancing economic growth with environmental conservation by adopting eco-friendly practices and mitigating ecological impacts.

A: a-B; b-A; c-D; d-C

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7. Glossary

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA): a process used to evaluate the potential environmental effects of a proposed project or development before it is carried out. It aims to ensure that decision-makers consider the environmental impacts when deciding whether to proceed with a planning project.

EU Green Deal: a package of policies and strategies, adopted by the European Commission with the aim to make the European Union (EU) climate-neutral by 2050.

Stakeholder: an individual, group, or organization that has an interest in or is affected by the outcomes of an activity.

UN Sustainable Development Goals: also known as SDGs are a global framework of 17 interconnected goals aimed at ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring peace and prosperity for all by 2030.

WTO: World Tourism Organization, often referred to as the UNWTO, is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for the promotion of sustainable and accessible tourism globally. It is headquartered in Madrid, Spain.