Experience design and nature conservation via VIsitor MOnitoring and MAnagement in protected areas

MEET Network

MEET standard and its approach to measuring sustainability and quality to ecotourism itineraries

Daniela Casimiro
19 of june 2023

Agenda

1. Brief introduction to the Mediterranean: PAs and Tourism
2. Brief introduction to the MEET network
3. MEET Model: Approach for Ecotourism development, management and promotion in PAs
4. MEET Standard - measuring sustainability and quality to ecotourism itineraries

1. Brief introduction to the Mediterranean: PAs and Tourism

Tourism in the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean Basin, is one of 34 **biodiversity hotspots** identified around the globe, and one of Earth's most **biologically rich** yet **threatened** areas. In addition to its biological and geographic wonders, the region is a treasure trove of **human history and culture** and is home to some of the world's **earliest civilizations**.

*The Mediterranean is the 2nd **largest global biodiversity hotspot in the world**. 500 million people with diverse cultures call it home. It is also the **world's leading mass tourism destination** - contributing to the degradation of ecosystems.*

Tourism in the Mediterranean
Threats & Pressures

- Tourist activities **impact fragile habitats** and the artificilization of coastal areas - **50% of Med coast is urbanized**

- **Disturbance** of local fauna and natural life

- **Pressures on resources** across the MED

  - Tourists use 3-4 times more water than residents

  - Produce twice as much solid waste

  - Contributes to more than 50% of its marine litter

  - Increase of the cost of living for local communities (accommodation, etc)

- Tourism highly concentrated (both spatially and seasonally – summer)

- COVID19 increased pressure on natural areas for leisure, overcrowding
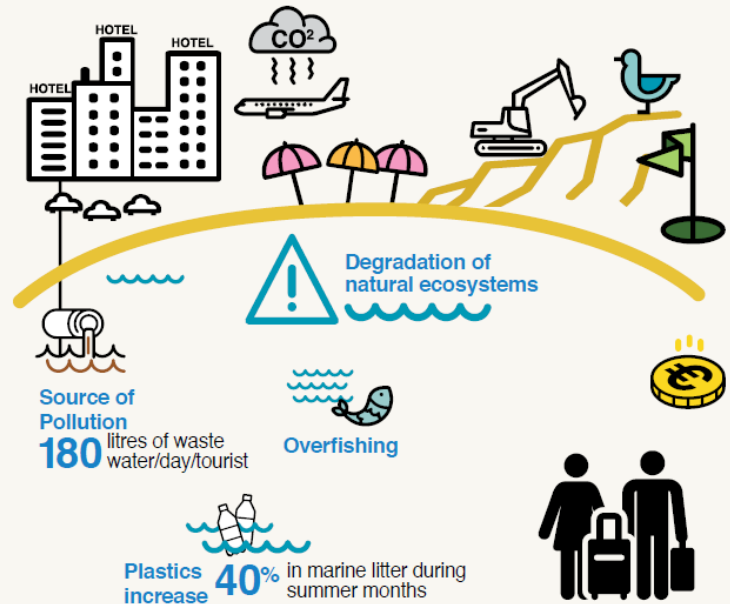

TOURISM AS A THREAT
linear economic model and short-term thinking

50% of Mediterranean shores are **urbanised** - sun, sea and sand tourism infrastructure being one of main drivers

Pressure on natural and local resources water, energy and food
Tourist consumes between **300** and **850** litres of water per day well above residents

Unsustainable tourism practices **disturb local residents** and **fragile habitats,** specially in high season

Source of Pollution **180** litres of waste water/day/tourist

Degradation of natural ecosystems

Overfishing

Plastics increase **40%** in marine litter during summer months

TOURISM AS AN OPPORTUNITY
finding sustainable models

Tourism represents **92%** of the economic value of sea-related activities in the Mediterranean

Benefits derived from ecosystems services coming from tourism and value derived from nature is estimated at **€17** billion a year

Tourism in the Mediterranean
Opportunities

❖ Tourism (used to) represent **92% of the economic value** of sea-related Mediterranean activities

❖ Strong **policy interest** in creating a more sustainable, deseasonalized and resilient tourism sector

❖ Increasing **interest and demand** towards nature destination and sustainable tourism at international, level but also at national and local levels

Mediterranean Protected Areas

The Challenges they are Facing

- Lack of resources, capacity and incentives at PA level

- Competition

- Difficulty meeting quality and sustainability expectations

- Difficulty reaching target markets

- Lack of consistent guidelines and tools for monitoring quality and sustainability

Why it is relevant?

30 by 30 and the Global Deal for Nature

The Newest Challenge for Europe's Parks: A Surge of New Nature Lovers

Lockdown-weary city dwellers across the continent are visiting parks and other protected areas for the first time, overwhelming staff and generating pleas for more support.

Protected Areas of the world
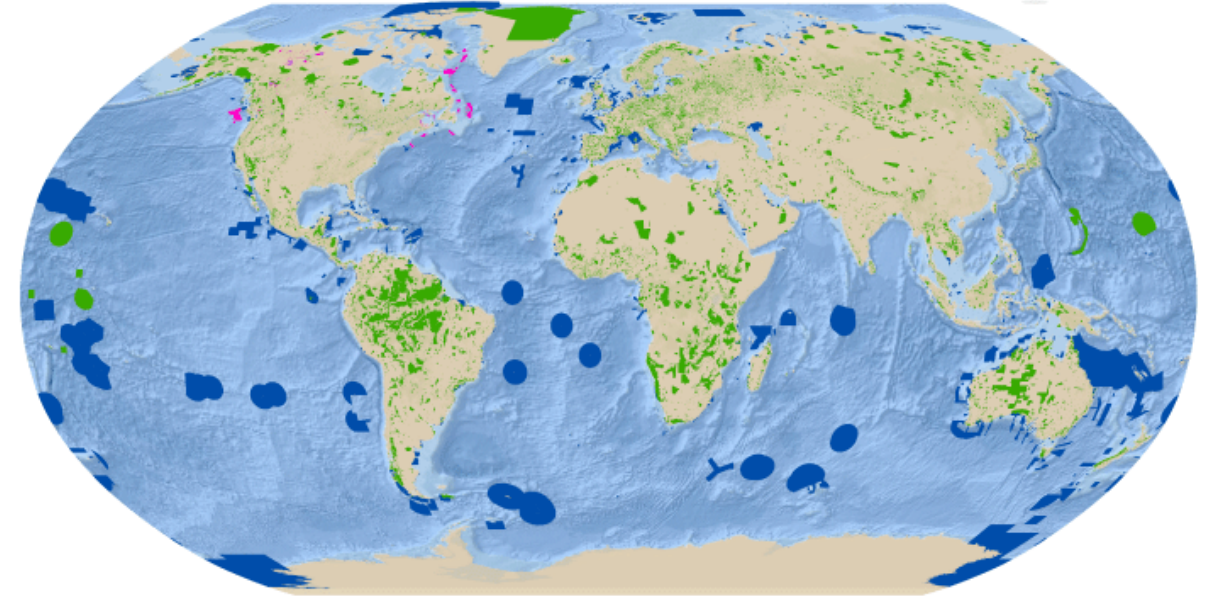
30% of the world's terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, to be in effective protection and management by 2030
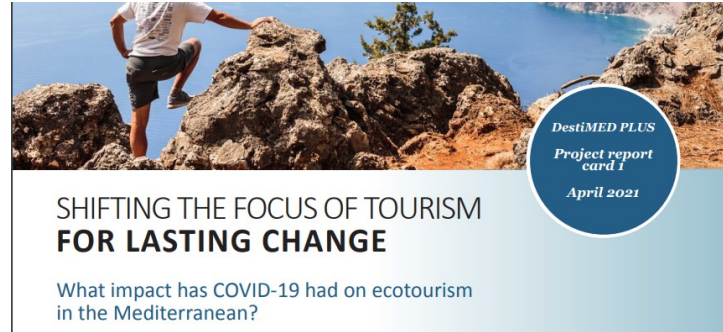
https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/10/travel/european-parks-pandemic.html

Current Trends

PROTECTED AREAS

The New York Times

The Newest Challenge for Europe's Parks: A Surge of New Nature Lovers

Lockdown-weary city dwellers across the continent are visiting parks and other protected areas for the first time, overwhelming staff and generating pleas for more support.

- Sustainable tourism development tools

- Working with the private tourism sector

- Biodiversity protection VS negative tourism impacts

TRAVEL INDUSTRY

DestiMED PLUS
Project report card 1
April 2021

SHIFTING THE FOCUS OF TOURISM **FOR LASTING CHANGE**

What impact has COVID-19 had on ecotourism in the Mediterranean?

- Reducing tourism impacts

- Increasing sustainable tourism practices

- Building resilient destinations by implementing sustainable practices

TRAVELLERS

Spain Looks to a New Kind of Tourism After COVID-19

- More conscious travel choices

- Access to nature and local culture
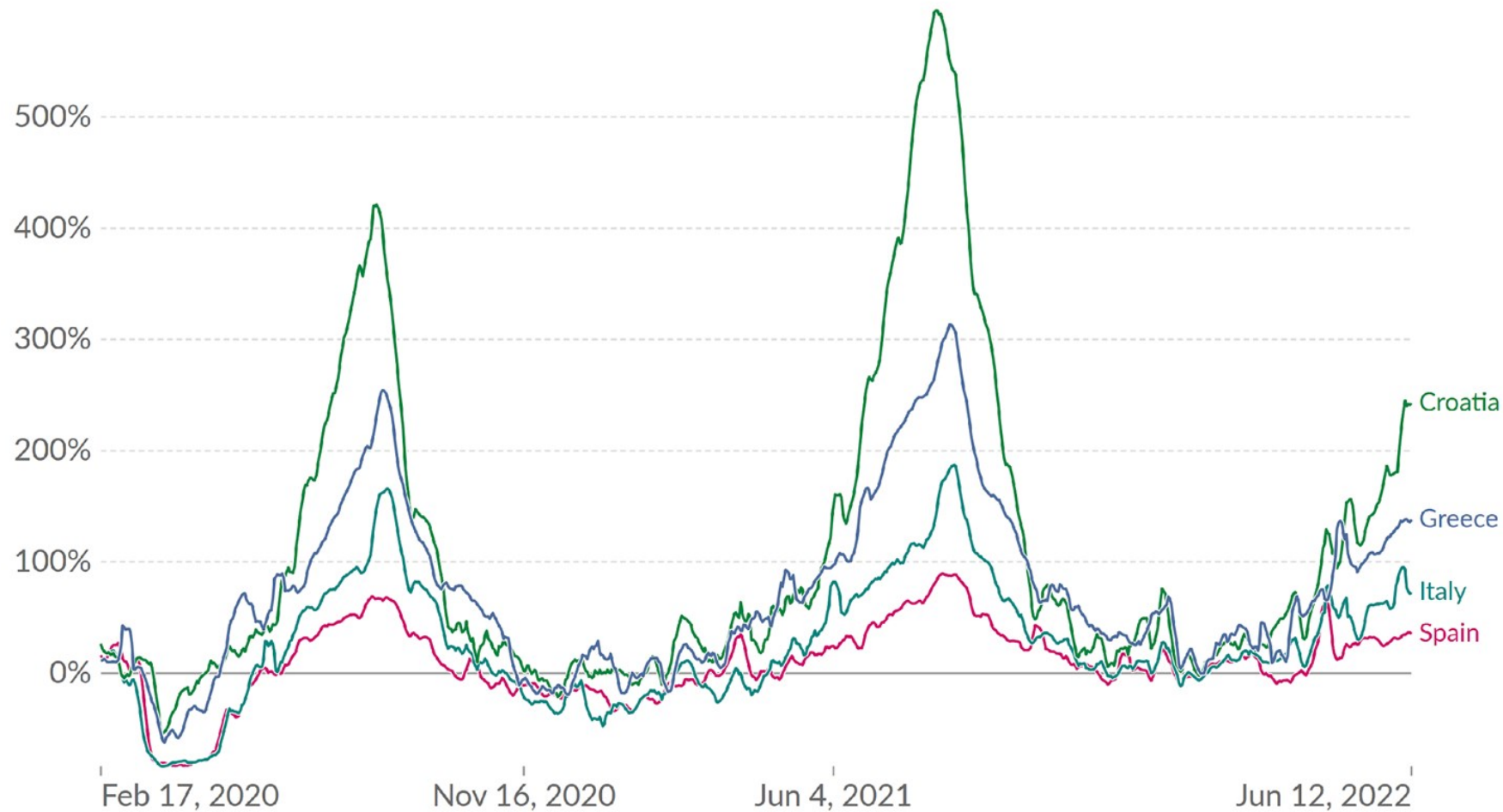
- Quality experiences in lesser-known destinations

Parks and outdoor spaces: How did the number of visitors change relative to before the pandemic?

Parks and outdoor spaces includes places like local parks, national parks, public beaches, marinas, dog parks, plazas, and public gardens.

Our World in Data

Increasing demand for spending time in nature **+** lack of strategic tourism development planning **+** focus on volume rather than value **+** pronounced seasonality **→ Current reality and near future of ecotourism development**

Source: Google COVID-19 Community Mobility Trends – Last updated 17 June 2022
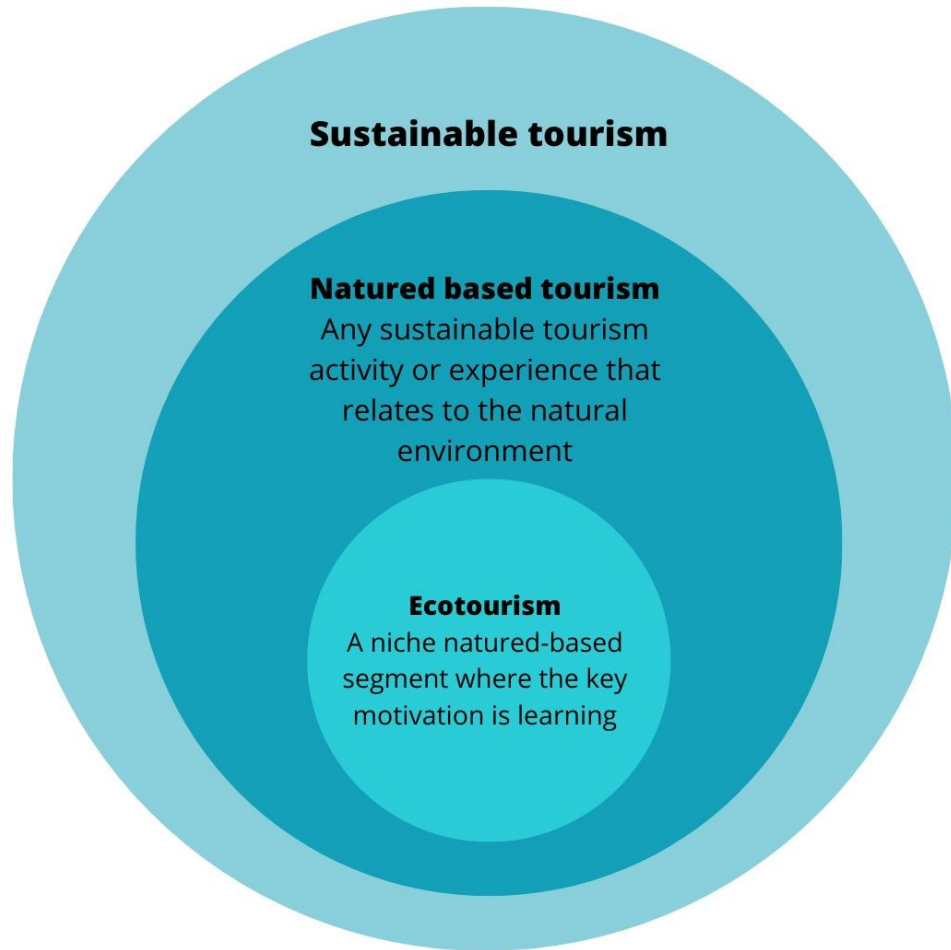Note: It's not recommended to compare levels across countries; local differences in categories could be misleading.

OurWorldInData.org/coronavirus • CC BY

Ecotourism and protected areas in the Mediterranean

The development of ecotourism

Sustainable tourism

Natured based tourism
Any sustainable tourism activity or experience that relates to the natural environment

Ecotourism
A niche natured-based segment where the key motivation is learning

Source: Zewdie and Kindu 2011

✓ **ECOTOURISM:** Environmentally responsible visiting of relatively unspoilt **natural areas**, in order to enjoy and appreciate **nature** (and any accompanying **cultural** features - both past and present), that **promotes conservation**, has **low negative visitor impact**, and provides for beneficially active **socio-economic involvement of local populations**

2. Brief introduction to the MEET network

MEET Network

MEET is a **network of Mediterranean protected areas** and some **key organizations**, working together to conserve the region's natural and cultural mosaic, while promoting a new model of ecotourism to the market through the development of **high-quality ecotourism products** and **innovative tools** to **manage their impacts.**

WHAT & WHEN – MEET Timeline
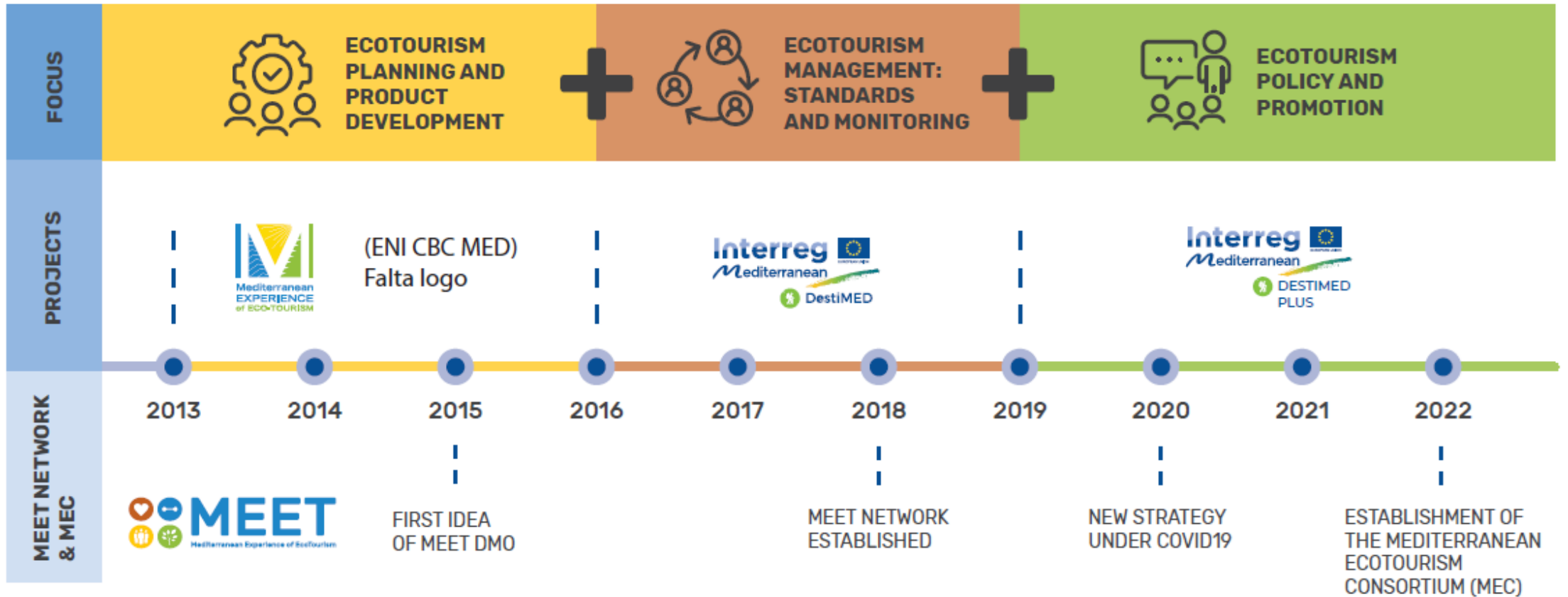
WHO – MEET Functioning

MEET Constituency: MEET is an association registered in Spain composed of park and organisational members, currently with 13 park members / applicants and additional candidates.

MEET Governance: General assembly of members & board composed as 2022 by IUCN Med, GFN, TF and Shouf (President: Alessandro Galli).

MEET Management: IUCN Med acts as Secretariat of the MEET Network and is in charge of its operations, with the support of a commercial advisor and interns/volunteers.

Putting Parks in the Driving Seat

Where we work:

Legend:
- **DestiMED PLUS** Pilot Action Protected Areas
- **MEET Network** Protected Area Members
- **Interreg-Med DestiMED & ENI CBC MED** Participant Protected Areas

Map labels: FRANCE, SPAIN, ITALY, CROATIA, ALBANIA, GREECE, TUNISIA, MALTA, LEBANON, JORDAN
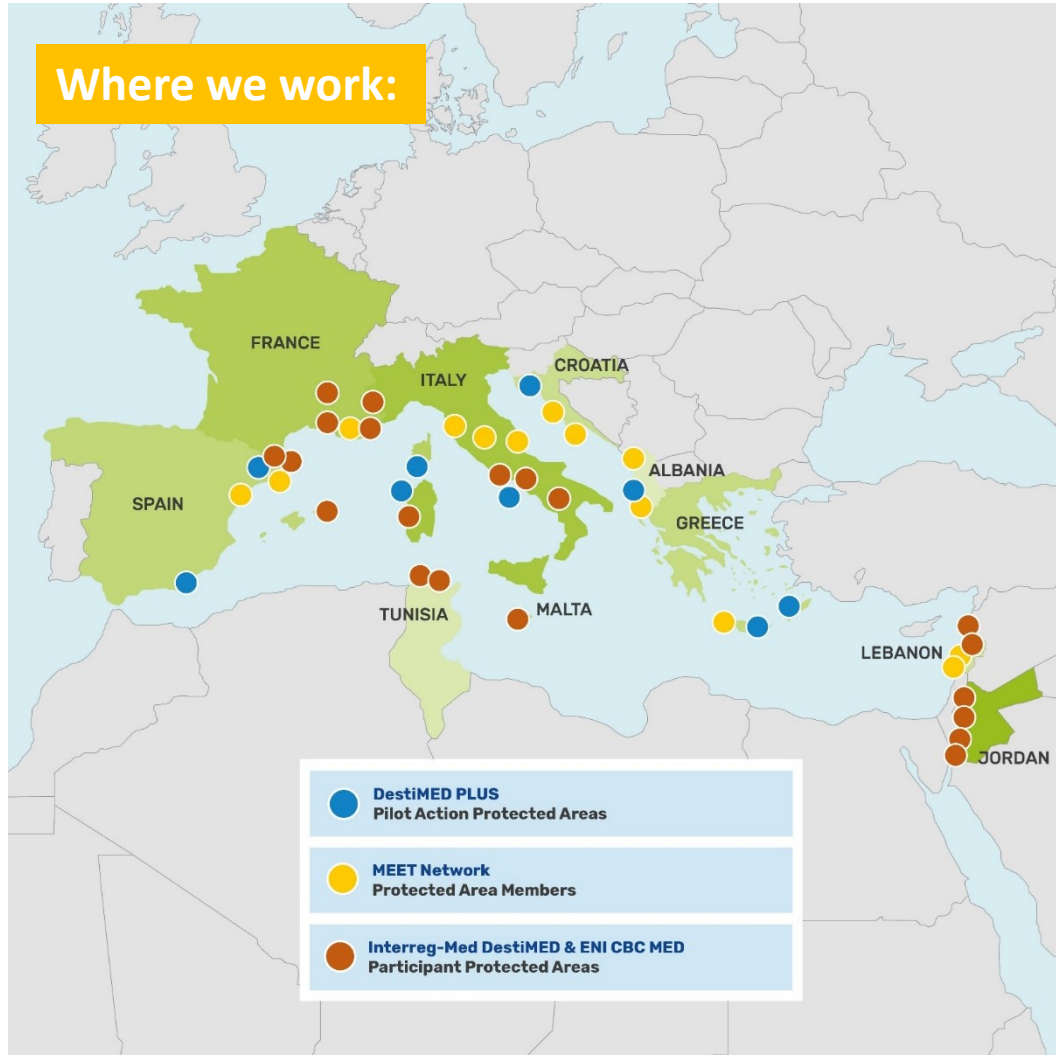
Bringing together tourism and conservation

CONSERVATION & PUBLIC SECTOR
- Parks and Protected Areas
- Policy Makers and PA Management bodies
- Conservation & sustainability organisations

TOURISM & PRIVATE SECTOR
- Local tour operators
- Local service providers
- International tour operators
- DMOs and Tourism boards

MEET products

Based **in** and **around** protected areas

Work with **local communities** and local service providers

Benefit **conservation**

Reduce Ecological footprint

Cooperative tourism (parks and private sector)

Travel experiences

Our values

COMPASSION	**CONNECTION**
COMMUNITY	**CONSERVATION**

Components of an ecotourism product

© Lastovo Islands Nature Park
Food & Drink

© Natalie Beckett
Transport & Mobility

© Circeo National Park
Activities & Services

© Green Traveller
Accommodation

Travel experiences - Destination

3. MEET Model: Approach, management and promotion in PAs

The MEET Model

LOCAL ECOTOURISM CLUSTER

- Protected Area
- Local Tour Operator
- Government
- SMEs
- DMO
- Civil Society

ECOTOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

- Activities and Services
- Accommodation
- Food & Drink
- Transport
- Tour Operations

PROVIDING MARKET ACCESS

- Communication
- Matchmaking
- Coaching
- Brokering
- Promotion
- Insights

MEASURING SUSTAINABILITY & QUALITY

- Ecological Footprint
- Water
- Social
- Economic
- Conservation
- Governance
- Quality

✓ The **park and their communities** are at the driving seat of ecotourism development

✓ Promotes **cooperative tourism development** between public and private sector (local & international)

✓ Clear **conservation and community benefits** aligned with park goals

✓ **Evidenced sustainability** with impact measuring & monitoring

Our differentiators

Park-Led (eco)tourism

MEET Product Promise:

✓ Park-Led and Conservation Centered

✓ Community Engagement and Benefit

✓ Localized Supply Chains

✓ Measured Environmental Impact

✓ Immersive Nature-Based and Cultural Travel Experiences

Trusted & Measured Sustainability
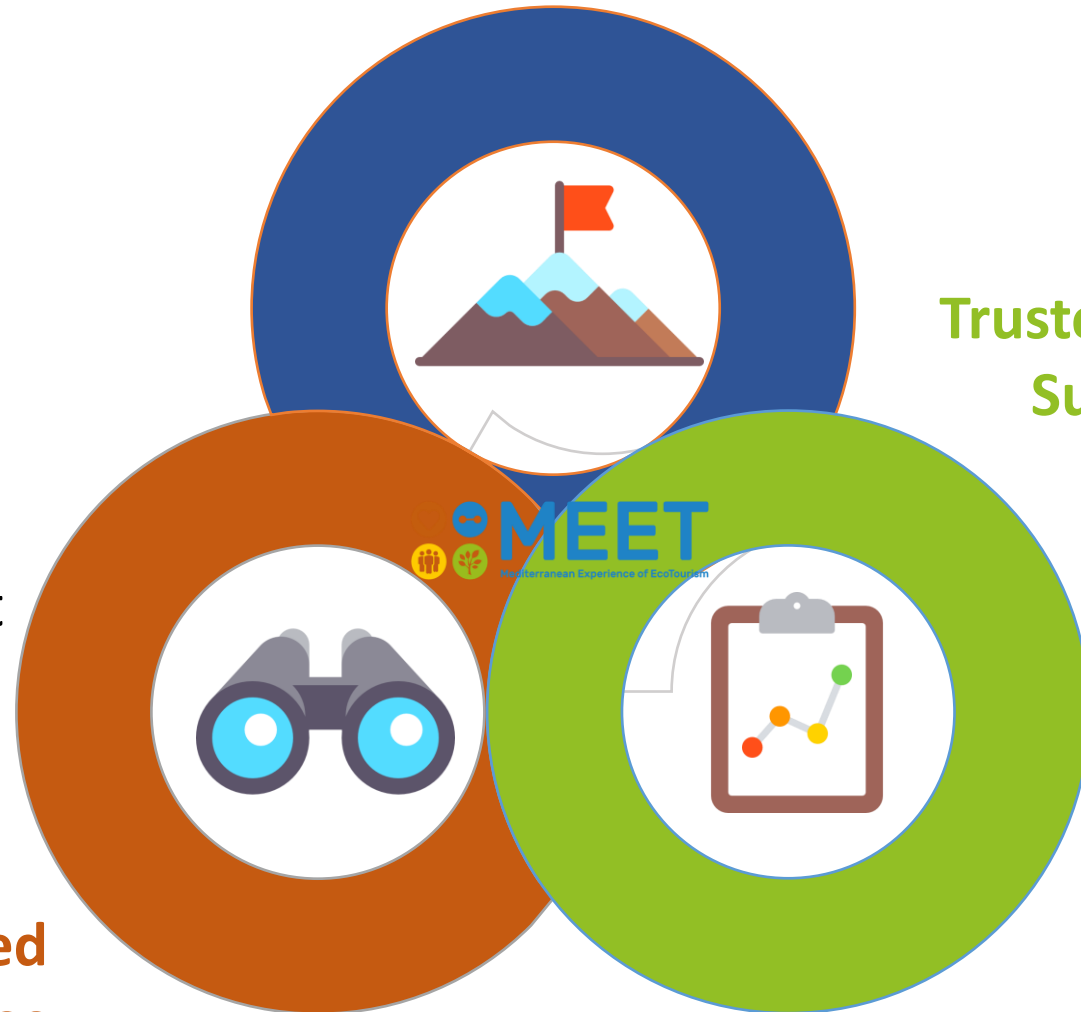
Locally-Crafted Travel Experiences

MEET
Mediterranean Experience of EcoTourism

Local Ecotourism Clusters (LECs)
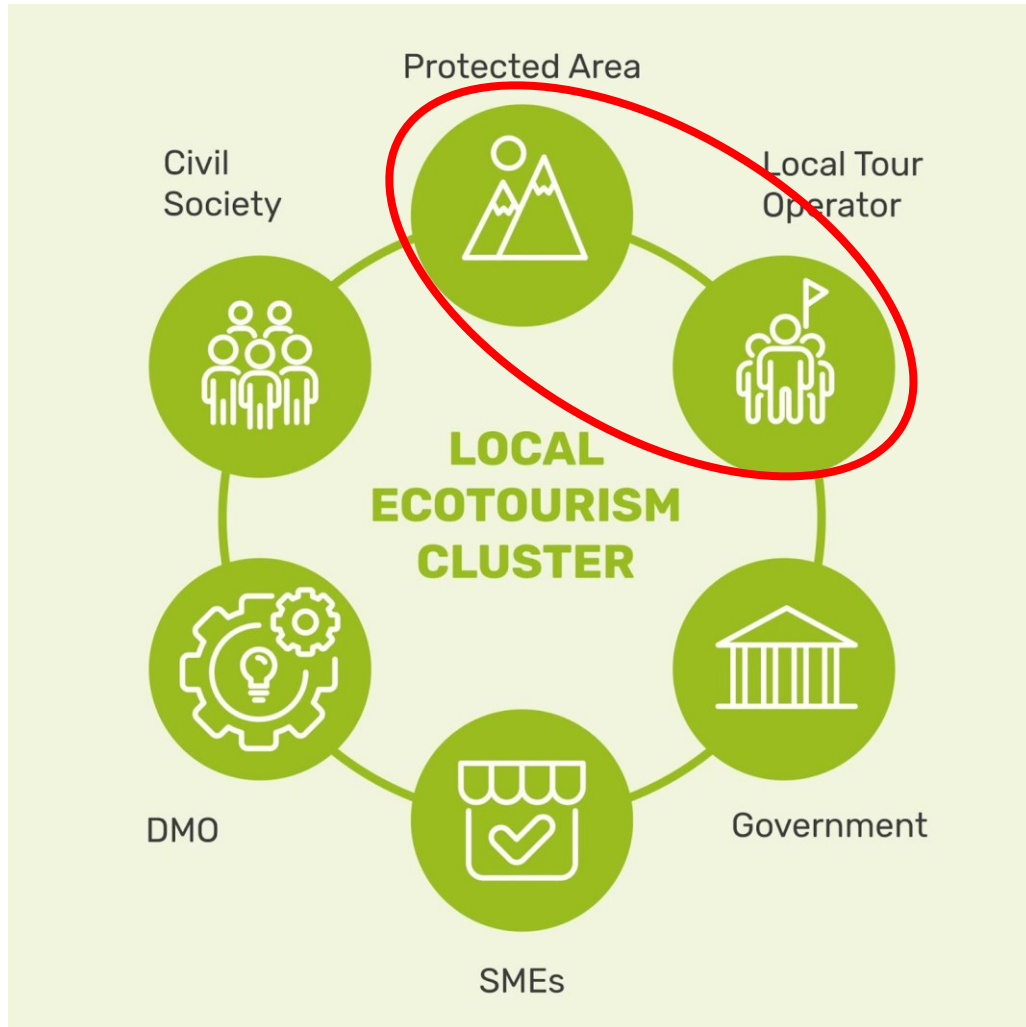
Public-private working groups initiated or supported by the protected area and composed of multi-sector stakeholders

Collaborate to **develop, plan, manage and promote ecotourism products** according to a common vision

An efficiently working and successful LEC is **a key element of the success** of the whole ecotourism development effort in a destination

LECs - Functioning

**THE LEC ENCOURAGES ENGAGEMENT WITH
THE WIDER TOURISM ECONOMY**
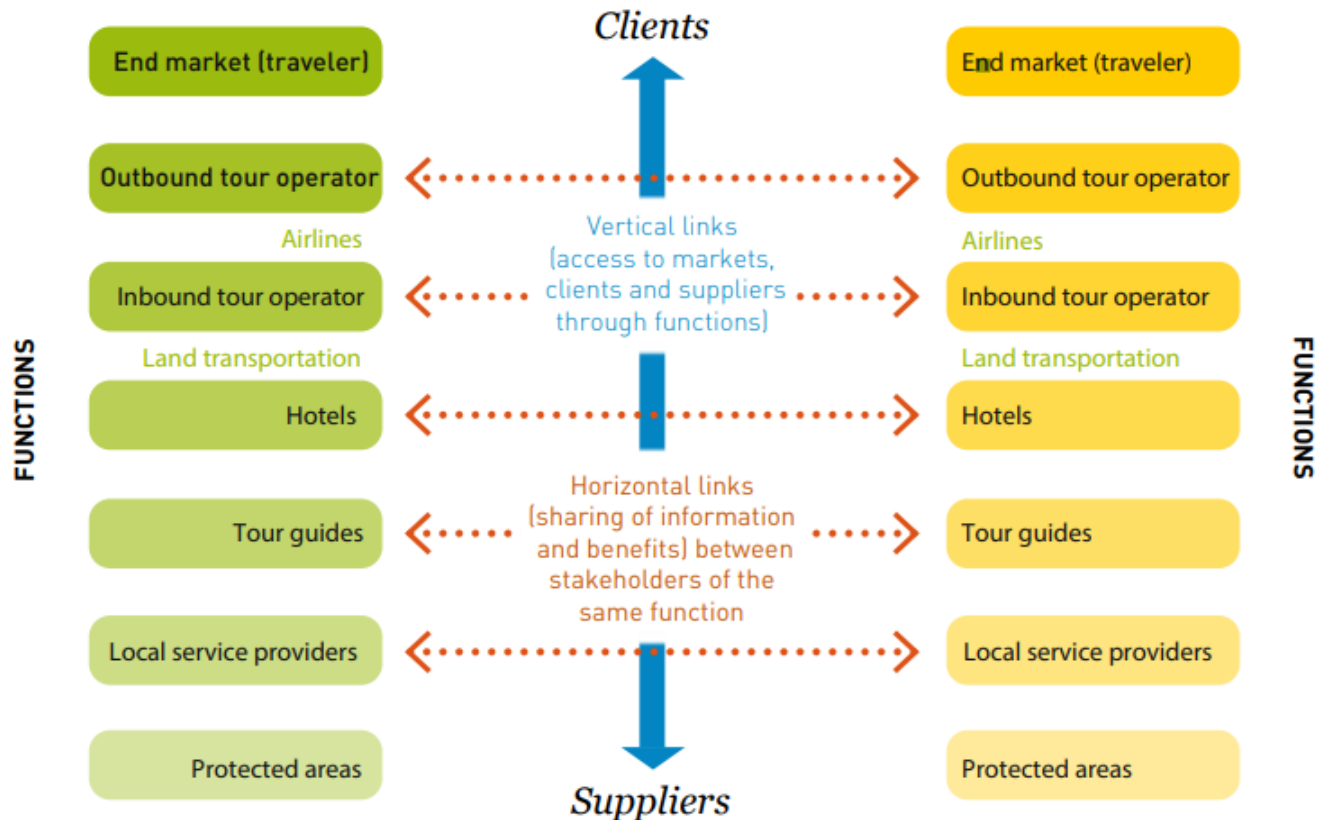
- ✓ Facilitate the identification and pursuit of **common goals and objectives**

- ✓ Facilitate **agreements** between protected area managing bodies, tourism businesses and local stakeholders

- ✓ Provide the basis for a **governance framework**

- ✓ Serve as a **cooperative environment** to encourage synergies, capacity building...

- ✓ Encourage **innovation**

- ✓ Offer **economies of scale** and their knock-on effects

LECs - Composition

Protected area / park authority

- Ensure conservation is respected, promoted and an integral part of the ecotourism product

Local Inbound Tour Operator

Locally owned small and medium enterprises

- Required for ecotourism product implementation
- Help to foster a sense of ownership of the destination
- Entry point for economic gains
- Keep tourism revenue within the destination

Conservation sector

Tourism sector

Local community sector

Local community organisations or representatives

- Act as facilitators and ensure that the strengths, needs and concerns of the local community are comprehended

Local Destination Management Organisation representatives

- Help align policy, regulation and marketing efforts with ecotourism product development, conservation and sustainable Development

Local government representatives

- Help remove barriers regarding infrastructure needs

4. MEET Standard - measuring sustainability and quality to ecotourism itineraries

MEET Standard

MEASURING SUSTAINABILITY & QUALITY

- Quality
- Ecological Footprint
- Water
- Social
- Economic
- Conservation
- Governance

What is it NOT? A certificate for protected areas / destinations / businesses / products.

Integrated approach to guide Protected Areas destinations - A set of **criteria** and **indicators** to manage the **quality** and **sustainability** of MEET brand products.

Guides the ecotourism product development process, ensuring **products are sustainable** and **commercially viable**.

Data is collected on each of these indicators using questionnaires and other tools.

Assessment of this data results in recommendations that informs destination managers on how to improve performance of the destination and ecotourism products.

Enables continuous monitoring for product improvement

MEET Standard
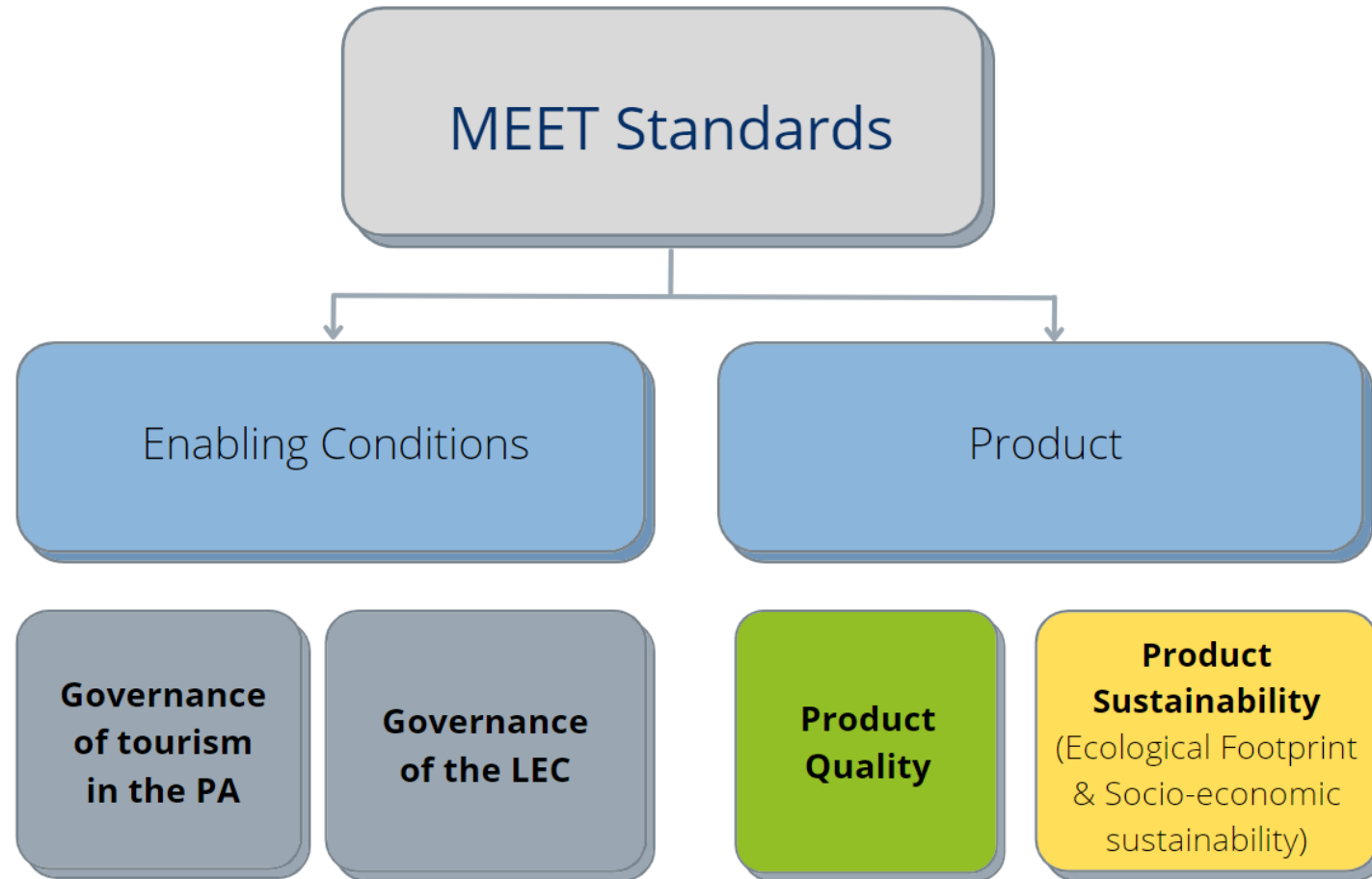
How is the MEET Standard used?
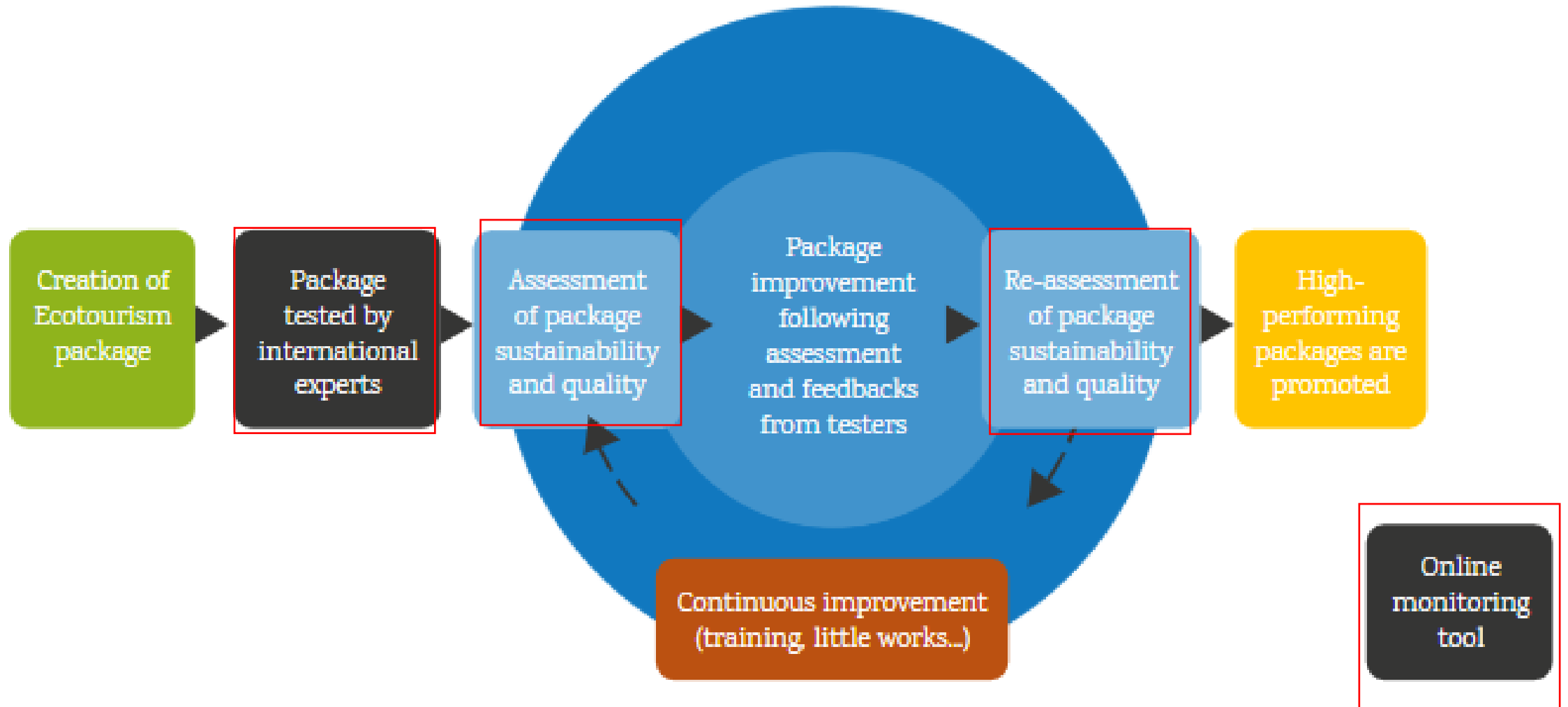
Monitoring Platform

MEET Ecotourism Indicator Monitoring Platform

Ecotourism is often presented and perceived as a "green" or environmentally friendly alternative to traditional tourism. How do we know if that is accurate? Can we actually measure it? How?

The MEET Indicator Monitoring Platform allows ecotourism destinations in and around protected areas to self-assess the sustainability and quality multi-day tourism products in Protected Areas against the comprehensive criteria of the MEET Standard.

This platform provides local ecotourism stakeholders with a system to automatically measure and monitor the performance of an itinerary (ecological footprint, social impact, quality) and the enabling conditions in the destination (governance and conservation management), enhancing their ability to make decisions based on evidence.

MEET STANDARD   MEET MANUAL

Ecological Footprint Calculator of Ecotourism Itineraries

Do you want to know the environmental footprint left behind by your visitors or customers?

The calculator measures and analyses the ecological footprint of your itinerary considering the four main components of an ecotourism package: accommodation, food & beverages, transfers, activities.

CHECK IT OUT!

Social Impact Assesment of Ecotourism Suppliers

Do you want to know the impact on social well being of tourism service providers in your product or destination?

This self-assessment measures the social impact of the different suppliers and facilities on 15 social topics covering 4 stakeholder groups (workers, local communities, value chain and visitors).

CHECK IT OUT!

Enabling Conditions in the Destination: Governance & Conservation

Do you want to know if your destination is operating under good governance principles and respecting nature conservation?

This tool assesses the enabling environment to check with certain conditions that must be met to ensure that tourism benefits conservation as well as local communities and to make sure that no negative impacts on conservation occur.

CHECK IT OUT!

Product Quality Assessment of an Ecotourism Itinerary

Do you want to know if your itinerary is ready to provide a memorable, safe and market-appealing ecotourism experience?

This questionnaire allows you to understand if the itinerary you are developing respond to the expectation of customers, buyers and local stakeholders, and complies with the the products commercialised by the MEET Network, covering issues such as tour leading, guiding and interpretation, supplier selection or itinerary design.

CHECK IT OUT!

Tools and Monitoring

STANDARD MONITORING TOOLS:

➢ Social Impact Assessment of Ecotourism Suppliers

➢ Enabling Conditions Assessment of the Destination: Governance and Conservation

➢ Product Quality Assessment of an Ecotourism Itinerary

➢ Ecological Footprint Calculator

MONITORING PLATFORM
Representing all 4 components of the MEET Standard

Ecological Footprint

Social Impact Assessment

MEET STANDARD

Product Quality

Governance

https://monitoring.meetnetwork.org/
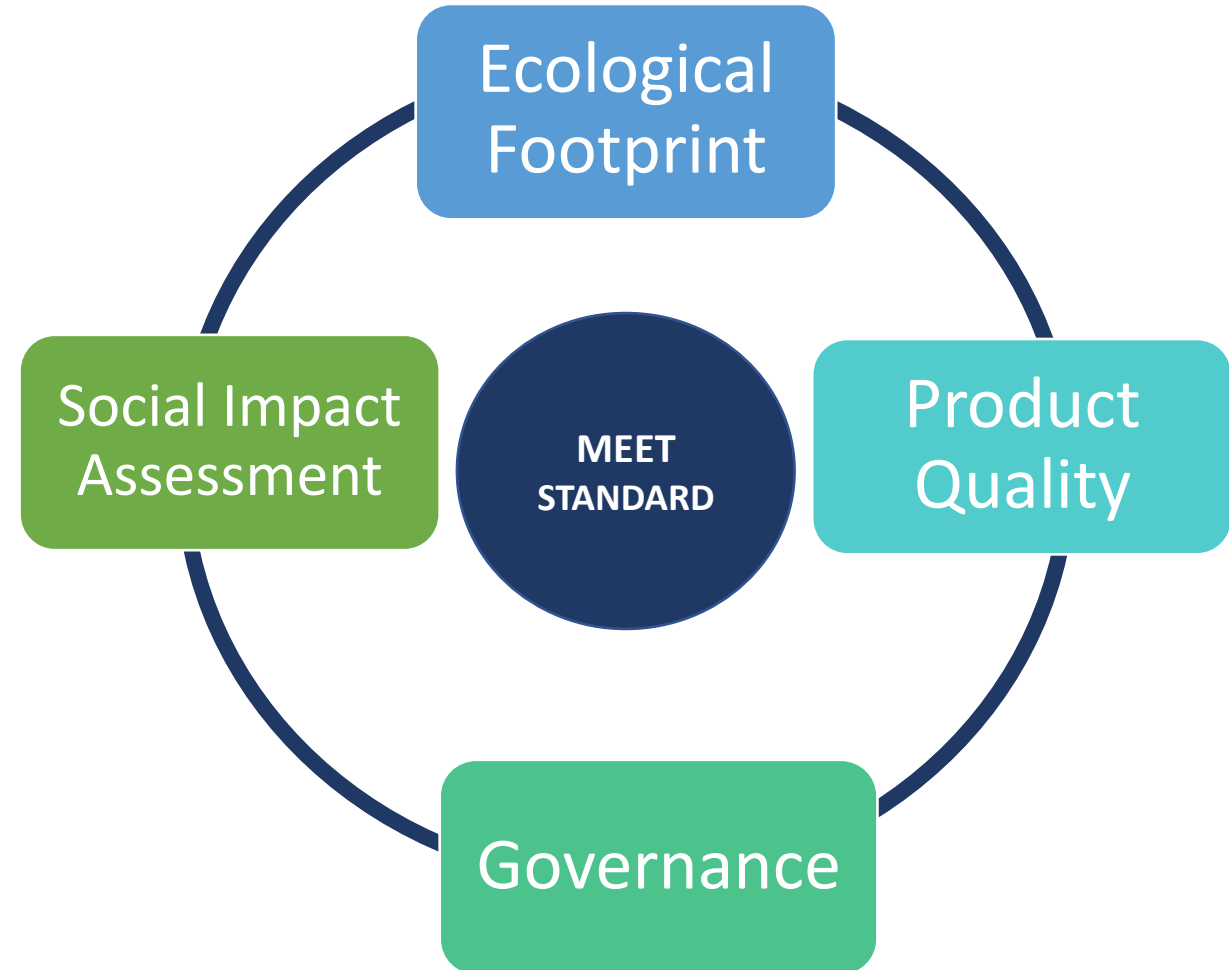
MEET Standard - Methodology

IDENTIFICATION OF INDICATORS

Simple and easy to collect, but meaningful

Limited number of indicators

Focusing on the **existence of important elements**

Broad **applicability**

Awareness-raising function

Alignment with **existing standards**: IUCN Green List, IUCN Best Practice Guideline: Governance of Protected Areas

Ideal performance	
2	

Compliance	
0	

No data or non-compliant situation	
-2	

Enabling Conditions Assessment of the Destination: Governance and Conservation

Governance is *"the interactions among structures, processes and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are taken and how citizens or other stakeholders have their say".*

- ✓ Who decides what the **objectives** are
- ✓ How those **decisions** are taken
- ✓ Who holds **power, authority and responsibility**
- ✓ Who is (or should be) held **accountable**

Enabling Conditions Assessment of the Destination:
Governance and Conservation

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS TOOLS

o Indicators were developed on the basis of the **IUCN Green List standard for Protected Area Management** and **IUCN's Natural Resources Governance Framework**.

o **Data is collected** through a **questionnaire** and is then assessed to produce **recommendations** for the LEC to implement.

Enabling Conditions Assessment of the Destination:
Governance and Conservation - Indicators

Legitimacy and voice	1.1.	Identification of stakeholders and rightsholders
	1.2.	Representation
	1.3.	Diversity
	1.4.	Standards
Direction	2.1.	Strategy and action plan
Performance	3.1.	Participatory product development
	3.2.	Service provider and tour operator selection
	3.3.	Tour operation identification
	3.4.	LEC Action Plan
	3.5.	Degree of activity of LEC
	3.6.	Public awareness
Accountability	4.1.	Internal information
	4.2.	Public information
	4.3.	Feedback mechanism
	4.4.	Reaction to feedback
Fairness and rights	5.1.	Formal complaints

A LEC must reflect all **voices** and have clear **rules**

A LEC follows a **common vision** of ecotourism

A LEC implements its tasks in an **ongoing learning** process and in a **participatory** way

A LEC ensures **transparency** and informs about its activities

A LEC **respects** all stakeholders and rightsholders

MEET Standard - Legitimacy & Voice and Direction

1.1. Identification of stakeholders and rightsholders

- Stakeholder map, including an indication of key stakeholders and rightsholders

1.2. Representation

- Broad representation (at least 8 members): inbound tour operator, protected area, local administration, local community, local CSOs, tourism-related service providers (accommodation, transportation, food&drinks)

1.3. Diversity

- Reflect local social diversity (age, gender balance, ethnic groups…)

1.4. Standards

- Agreed rules and standards: decision-making, composition, service provider selection procedures, roles, responsibilities, meeting, membership, long-term arrangements, tasks…

2.1. Strategy and action plan

- Consistent and agreed strategic vision for (eco)tourism development, in line with the values of the protected area, and linked to an action plan

MEET Standard - Performance

3.1. Participatory product development

- Ongoing discussion to develop ecotourism products, including multiple knowledge sources

3.2. Service provider and tour operator selection

- Clear and transparent service providers and tour operator selection

3.3. Tour operator identification

- Selection of a tour operator willing and able to meet the criteria for package development and monitoring procedures

3.4. LEC Action Plan

- Follow an action plan to define activities, improve the products, trigger new cooperations and promote ecotourism

3.5. Degree of activity of LEC

- Active, locally acknowledged, permanent working group. Periodic meetings are essential (at least two/year)

3.6. Public awareness

- Public authorities and decision-makers are aware of the vision of the LEC on sustainable tourism

MEET Standard - Accountability and Fairness & Rights

4.1. Internal information

- Information about meetings and activities is made accessible and available to LEC members, stakeholders and rightsholders

4.2. Public information

- Key documents, LEC discussion outcomes and activities are publicly accessible

4.3. Feedback mechanism

- Easily accessible mechanism to receive and react to feedback from civil society and stakeholders

4.4. Reaction to feedback

- Relevant external feedback and recommendations are taken into account by the LEC

5.1. Formal complaints

- Formal complaints about the work of the LEC (decision-making, land-use conflicts/rights, communication, activities...) reported by local communities, stakeholders and rightsholders should be documented and addressed appropriately

VISUALISATION OF THE RESULTS

Enabling Conditions in the Destination: Governance & Conservation

This tool assesses the enabling environment to check with certain conditions that must be met to ensure that tourism benefits conservation as well as local communities and to make sure that no negative impacts on conservation occur.

Non-acceptable perfomance		Ideal performance

Performance

Degree of participation of the LEC in the development of the ecotourism offer supported by the park (including MEET itineraries) — **0**

The LEC has specified the procedure to select service providers to be included in the tourism offer supported by the park — **-2**

The LEC has formally identified one or several Inbound Tour Operators (ITO) that can, and is willing to, develop and operate the ecotourism offer supported by the park (including MEET itineraries) and the required monitoring procedures.

NO DATA
The LEC has formally identified one or several Inbound Tour Operators (ITO) that can, and is willing to, develop and operate the ecotourism offer supported by the park (including MEET itineraries) and the required monitoring procedures.

The LEC has an action plan specifying its envisaged activities (meetings, activities, events…) — **2**

Ecological Footprint Calculator of Ecotourism Itineraries

The calculator measures and analyses the ecological footprint of the itinerary considering the four main components of an ecotourism package: **accommodation, food & beverages, transfers, activities.**

Allows us to **quantify tourism pressures** on natural resources and ecological services

This tool allows tour operators, destinations and customers to understand the EF of the **whole ecotourism package**, expressed in gha (global hectares), the **EF per tourist per day**, and the **weight of the different components** of the package.

Ecological Footprint: the rationale

The goods and services that are at the base of human societies and economies are all supported by functioning and healthy ecosystems

By using resources from the planet, and throwing wastes back into it, all of us contribute to placing an impact on our Earth.

This impact is our Footprint and can be measured!

MEET Ecological Footprint Calculator of Ecotourism Itineraries

Features:

- Save progresses and results
- Download results in PDF format
- Explore solution to reduce the EF
- Eventually connect with, and receive support from, the MEET network

Ecological Footprint Calculator of Ecotourism Itineraries

DEFINITION: the amount of **natural capital** necessary **to "support" an ecotourism package** and each single tourist participating in it.

RESULTS are provided for 4 keys offers: **Accommodation**, **Food & Drinks**, **Mobility & Transfers** and **Activities & Services** to help determine drivers of human pressure

Ecosystems types are shown within each category to indicate where human pressure is placed.

UNIT: global hectares (gha) - hectare-equivalent units of land

ACCOMMODATION

MEALS

TRANSPORT

ACTIVITIES

Forest Products
Carbon Footprint
Cropland
Pasture
Built-up Land
Fisheries
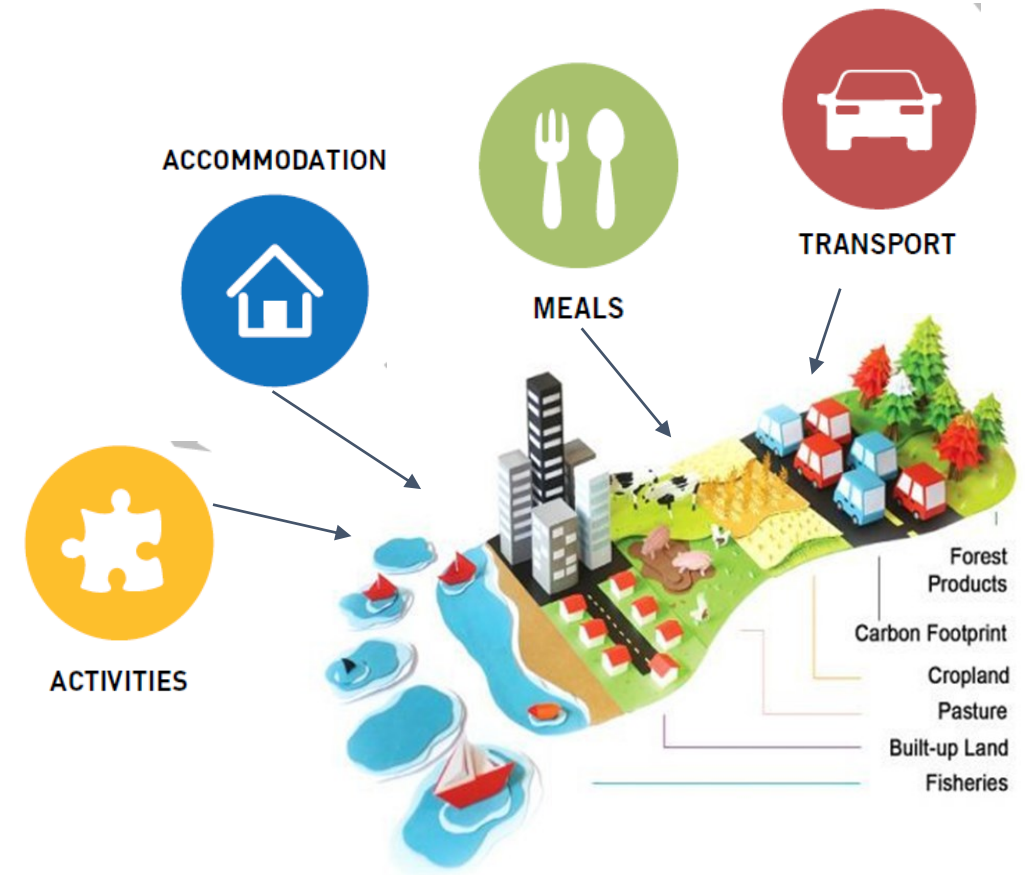
Ecological Footprint Calculator of Ecotourism Itineraries

Accommodation

- General information and characteristic (i.e. type of accommodation, opening season etc)
- Number of **workers**
- Total number of **bed-nights**
- Building **surface**
- **Energy consumptions**, including:
  - Electricity
  - Heating system
  - Water heating
- Consumption/production of **alternative source of energy** (solar, PVs, LPG, geothermic, etc)
- **Good and services** provided (i.e. laundry, replacement of linen, etc)

Food & Drinks

- **Origin** of ingredients:
  - On-farm
  - Local (up to 60km)
  - National
  - International
- **Mode of production** of ingredients:
  - Organic
  - Non-organic
- **Quantity** of ingredients (expressed for the entire group)
- **Cooking time** and type of **stove**
- Number of **workers**

Mobility & Transfers

- **Duration** of the route
- **Distance** covered
- Type of transportation (**motor vehicle** or different)
  - Fuel type
  - Fuel efficiency
- Number of **workers**

Activities & Services

- **Duration** of the activity
- **Distance** covered
- **Means of transportation** used
- For any **motor vehicle** used:
  - Fuel type
  - Fuel efficiency
- Number of **workers**

Ecological footprint in 13 Protected Areas

Protected Area	Duration of the package	Number of tourist	Testing period - Round 1	Testing period - Round 2
Albania North Shkodra Region Parks (Albania)	6 days/5 nights	7	Spring 2018	Spring 2019
Albania South Vlora Region Parks (Albania)	7 days/6 nights	7	Spring 2018	Spring 2019
Kornati Islands National park (Croatia)	6 days/5 nights	8	Fall 2017	Fall 2018
Lastovo Islands Nature Park (Croatia)	6 days/5 nights	8	Fall 2017	Spring 2018
Calanques National Park (France)	6 days/5 nights	6	Spring 2018	Fall 2018
Camargue Regional Nature Park (France)	6 days/5 nights	5	Spring 2018	Fall 2018
Samaria National Park (Greece)	6 days/5 nights	6	Fall 2017	Spring 2018
Colline Metallifere Tuscan Mining UNESCO Geopark (Italy)	4 days/3 nights	10	Fall 2017	Spring 2018
Torre del Cerrano Marine Protected Area (Italy)	4 days/3 nights	7	Fall 2017	Spring 2018
Circeo National Park (Italy)	4 days/3 nights	7	Spring 2018	Spring 2019
Riviera di Ulysses Regional Park (Italy)	5 days/4 nights	6	Spring 2018	Spring 2019
Natural Park of Ebro Delta (Spain)	4 days/3 nights	6	Fall 2017	Spring 2018
Menorca Biosphere Reserve (Spain)	6 days/5 nights	7	Fall 2017	Fall 2018

Source: Mancini, M.S., Barioni, D., et al. (2022). Ecological Footprint and tourism: Development and sustainability monitoring of ecotourism packages in Mediterranean Protected Areas, Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism, Volume 38, 100513, ISSN 2213-0780, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jort.2022.100513

Ecological Footprint Calculator of Ecotourism Itineraries

QUESTION: Excluding international travel, what do you think had the highest ecological footprint in the measured ecotourism packages?

1. **Transfers and local transport**

2. **Food and Beverages**

3. **Accomodation**

4. **Activities and other services**

Ecological footprint in 13 Protected Areas

Daily Ecological Footprint results **per tourist** of the 13 packages in Round 1 and calculated average. Results are broken down by the 4 main categories of activities and services offered in the package.

Food & Drinks represented the major Footprint driver in all 13 packages in Round 1, contributing on average to **63%** of the total package Footprint

Daily EF of DestiMED packages per tourist by category - Round 1
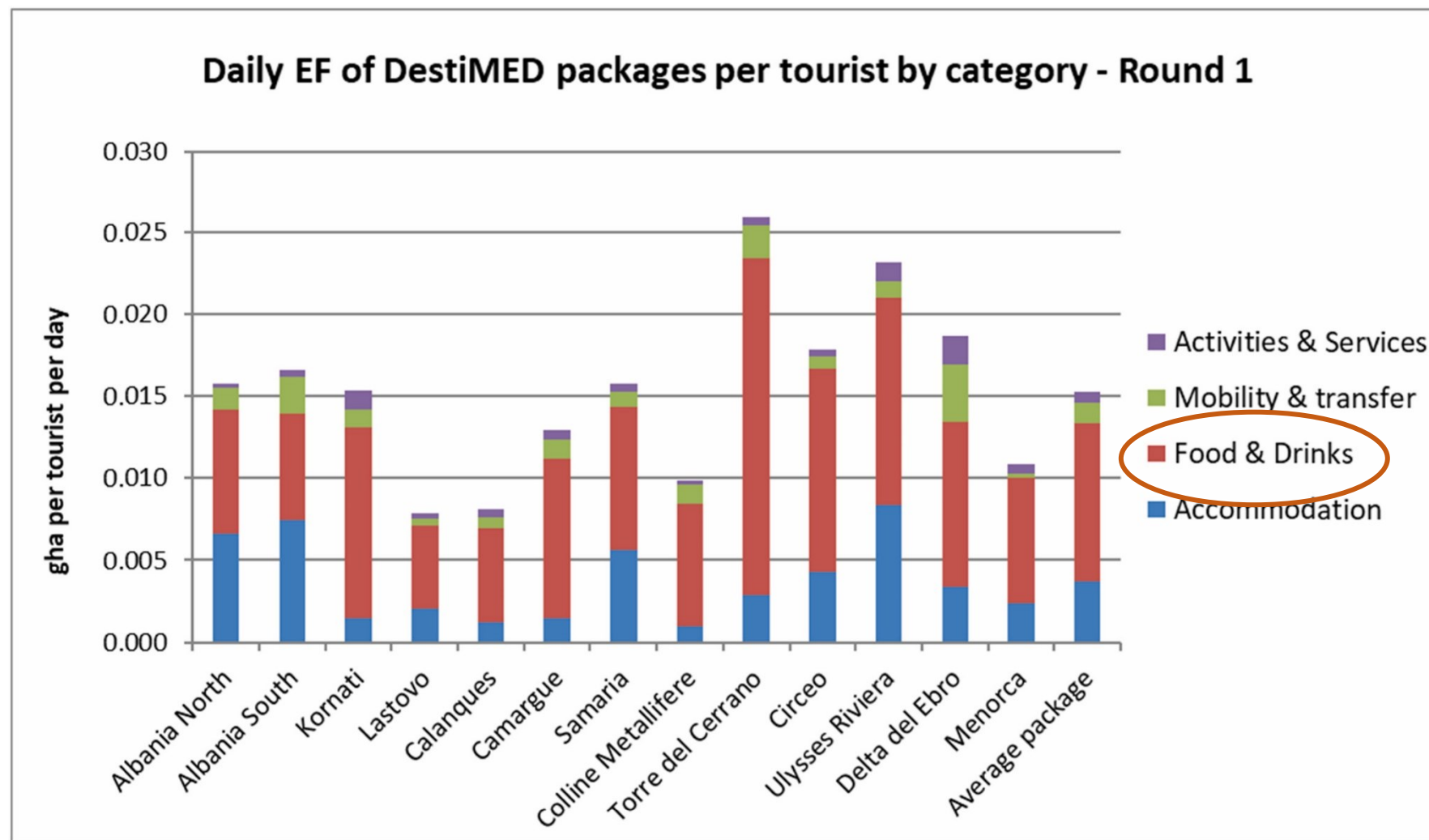
Ecological footprint in 13 Protected Areas

6 packages managed to **decrease** their Footprint value

7 ecotourism packages **increased** their Footprint.

Food & Drinks was the sole service to increase (+12% on average) its Footprint value in Round 2.

EF results comparing Round 1 vs. Round 2
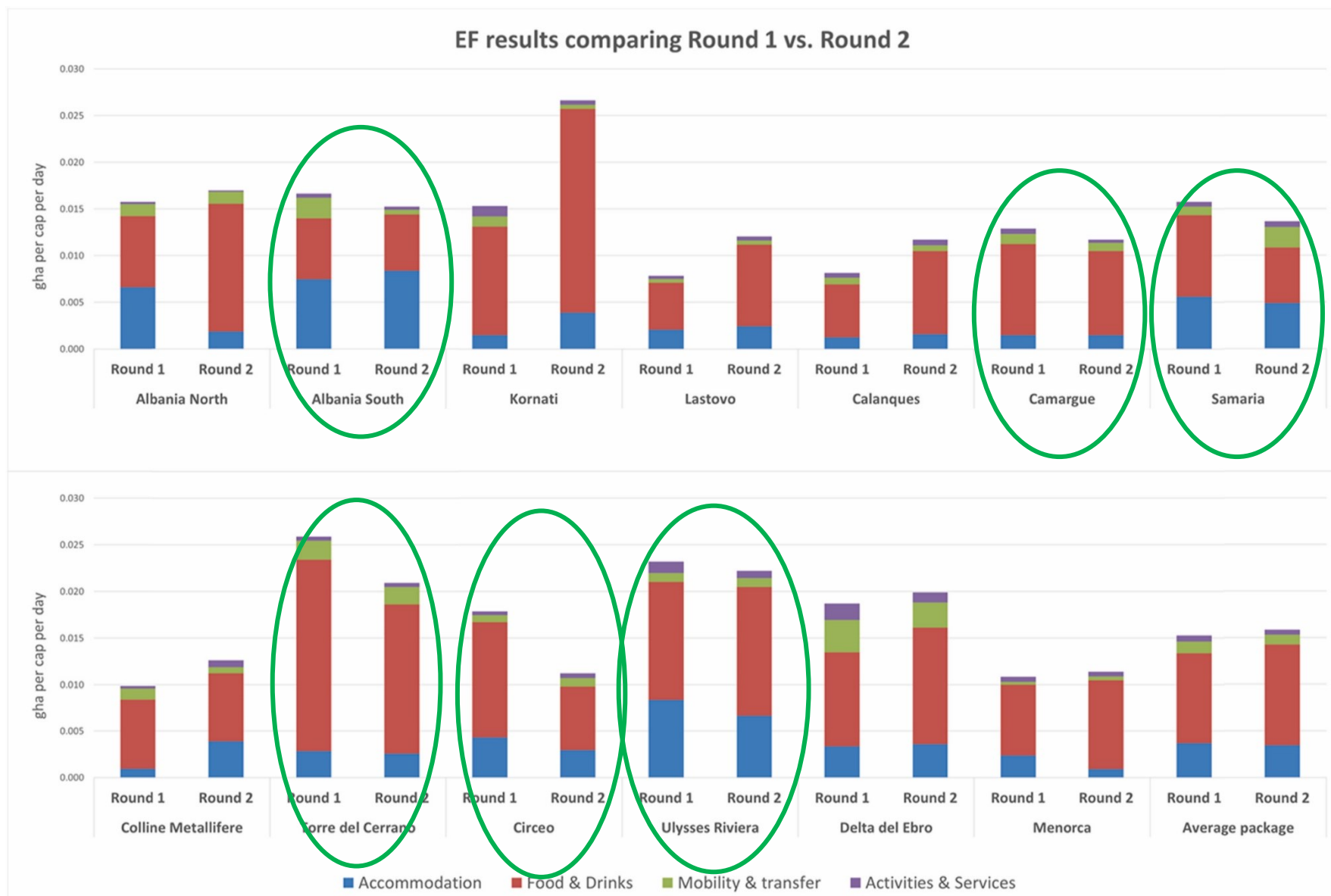
Ecological footprint in 13 Protected Areas
Results

❖ Footprint results breakdown by consumption categories provides a **complementary information,** indicating which **daily tourist activity drives anthropogenic pressures** on the various ecosystems.

❖ The Food & Drink category represented the largest driver across all 13 packages and the highest values were found in those packages **serving big amounts of food in general**, with a **high share of fish and meat products.**

❖ Only 6 packages managed to reduce their Footprint (following the recommendations and implementing other changes according to the MEET standard).

❖ The **increase** in the value for their Footprint from round 1 to round 2 was mainly for the lack of data available during round 1.
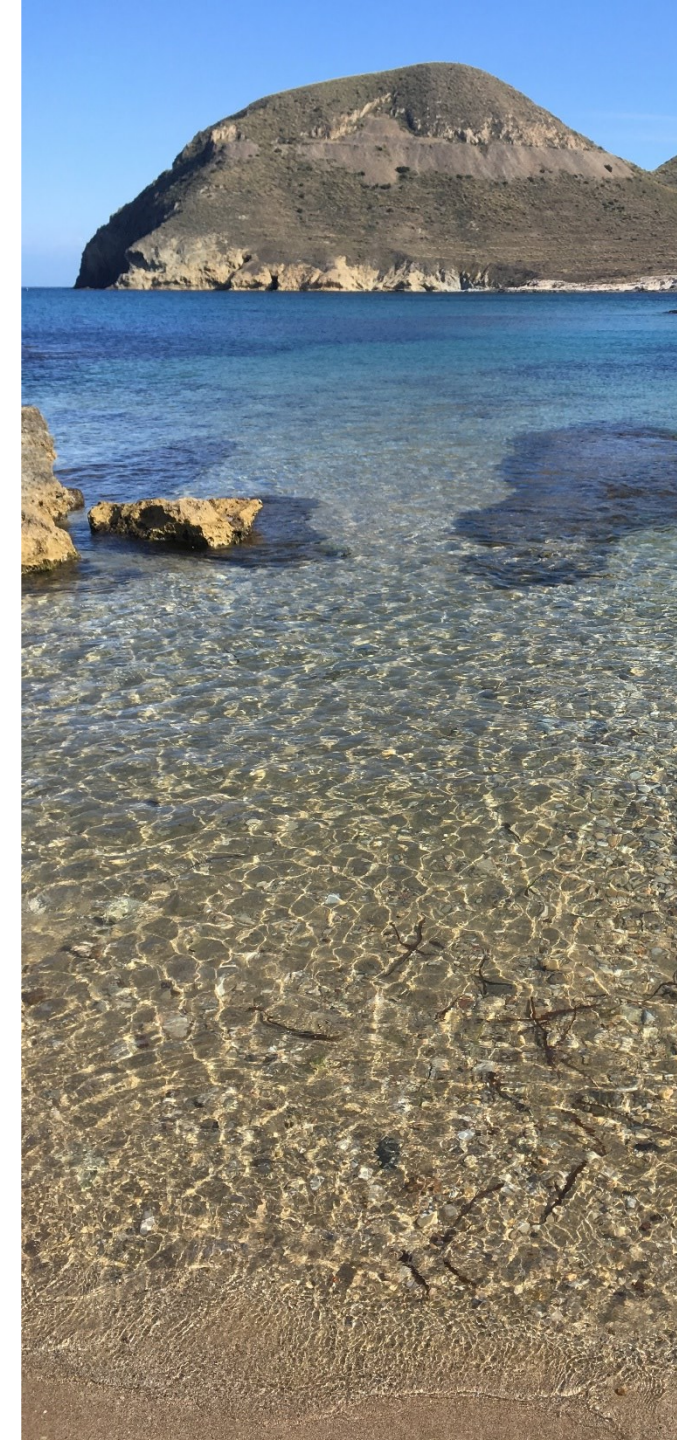
Monitoring Sustainability: Ecotourism package

Standards performance:
"+1 – intermediate positive performance"

	R2 vs. R1	R2 vs. M. Avg.
🍷	- 7%	- 37%
🏠	-	-35%
🚌	+ 574%	-36%
🏊	- 53%	- 28%
🏞	-3%	-36%

Chart legend:
- Accommodation
- Food & Drinks
- Mobility & transfer
- Activities & Services

Chart categories: MEET minimum, Full test (Round 2), Audit (Round 1), MEET average, MEET maximum

Y-axis: gha per tourist per day
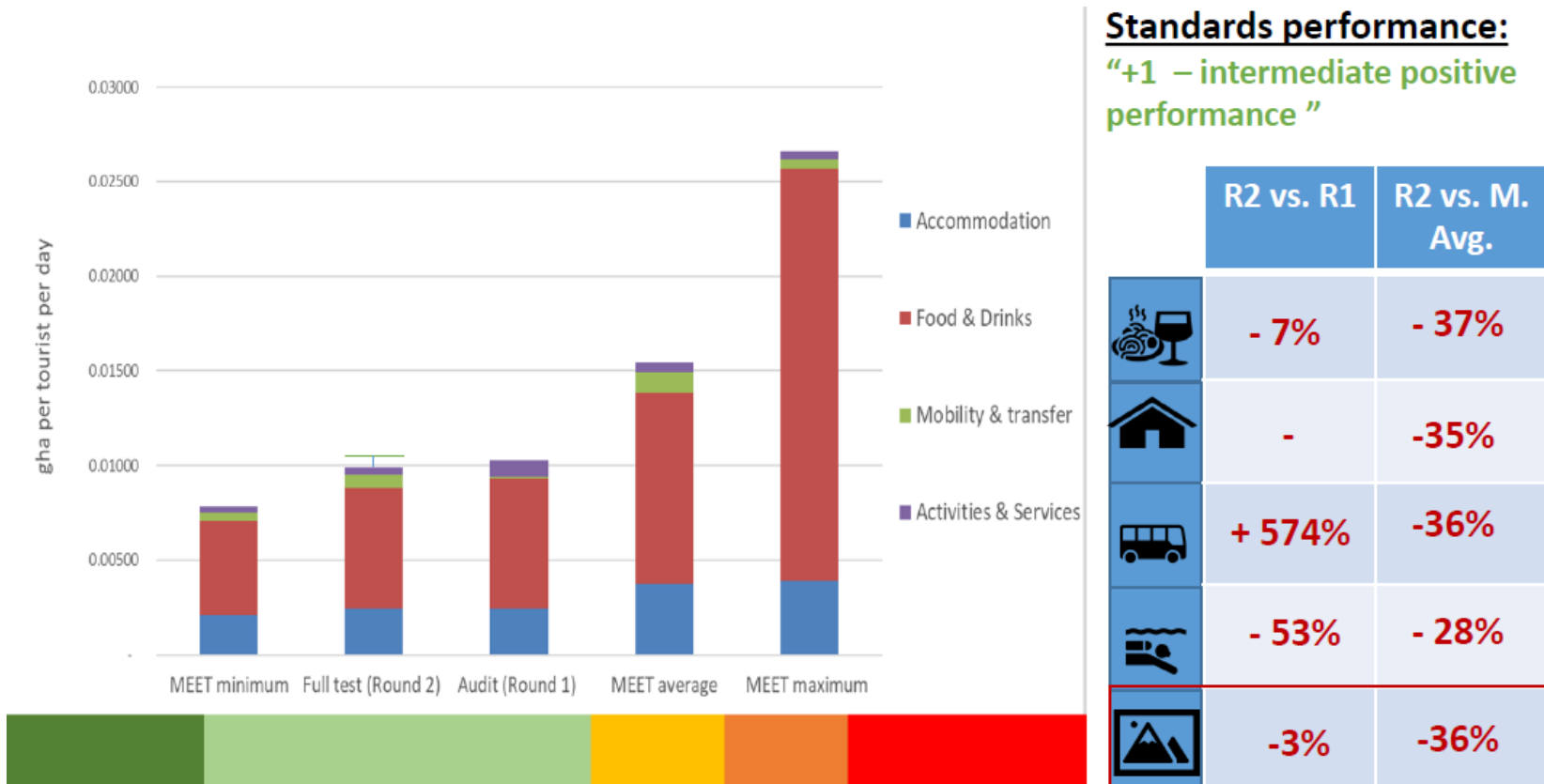
Cres -Lošinj Marine Protected Area
Jadranska Hrvatska– Croatia

Monitoring Sustainability: eco vs. regular tourists

Cres -Lošinj Marine Protected Area
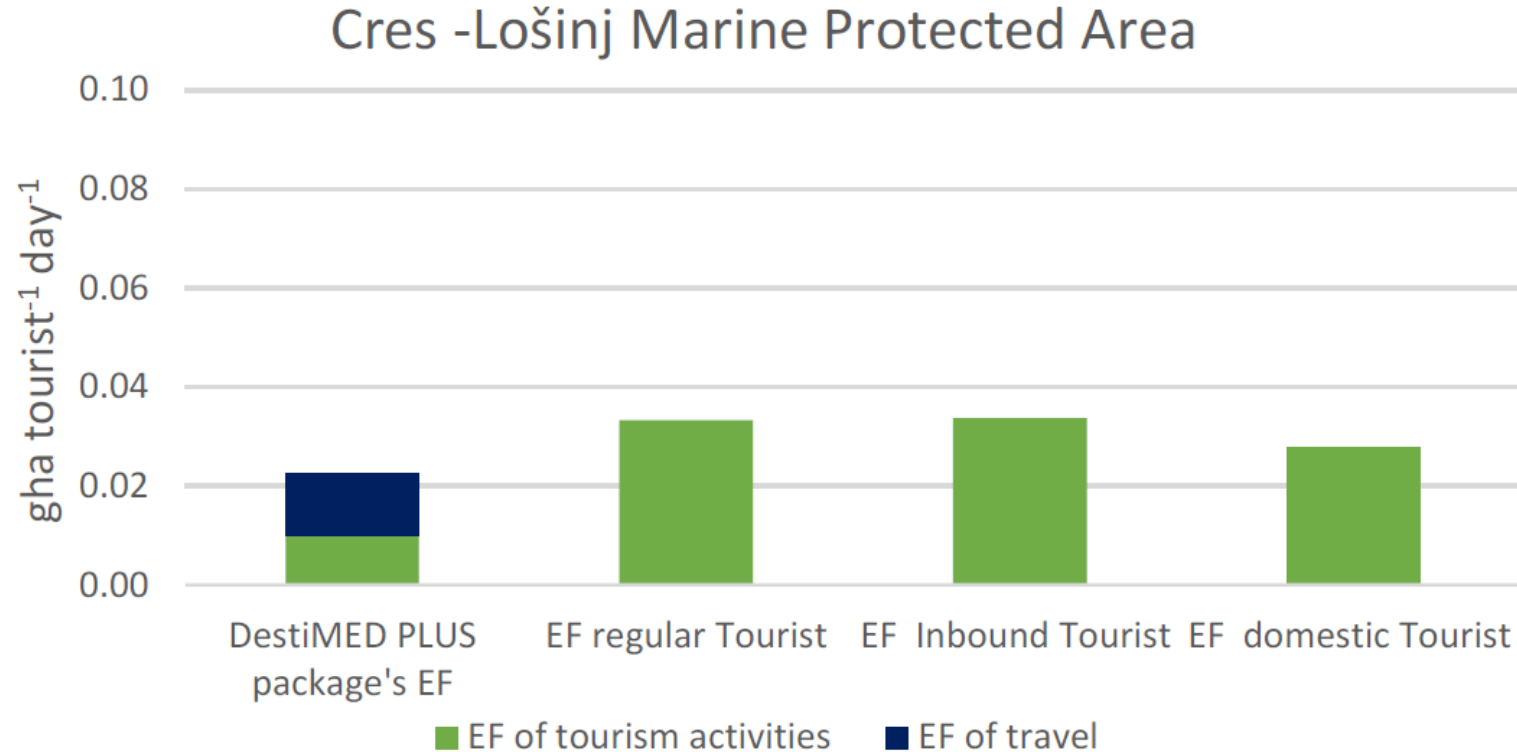
Comparison between the Ecological Footprint of the DestiMED PLUS pilots packages and the Ecological Footprint of a regular tourist (both domestic and inbound) in each of the 6 DestiMED PLUS destinations (all values expressed in gha per capita per day).

Monitoring Sustainability: travel to destination

Cres -Lošinj Marine Protected Area
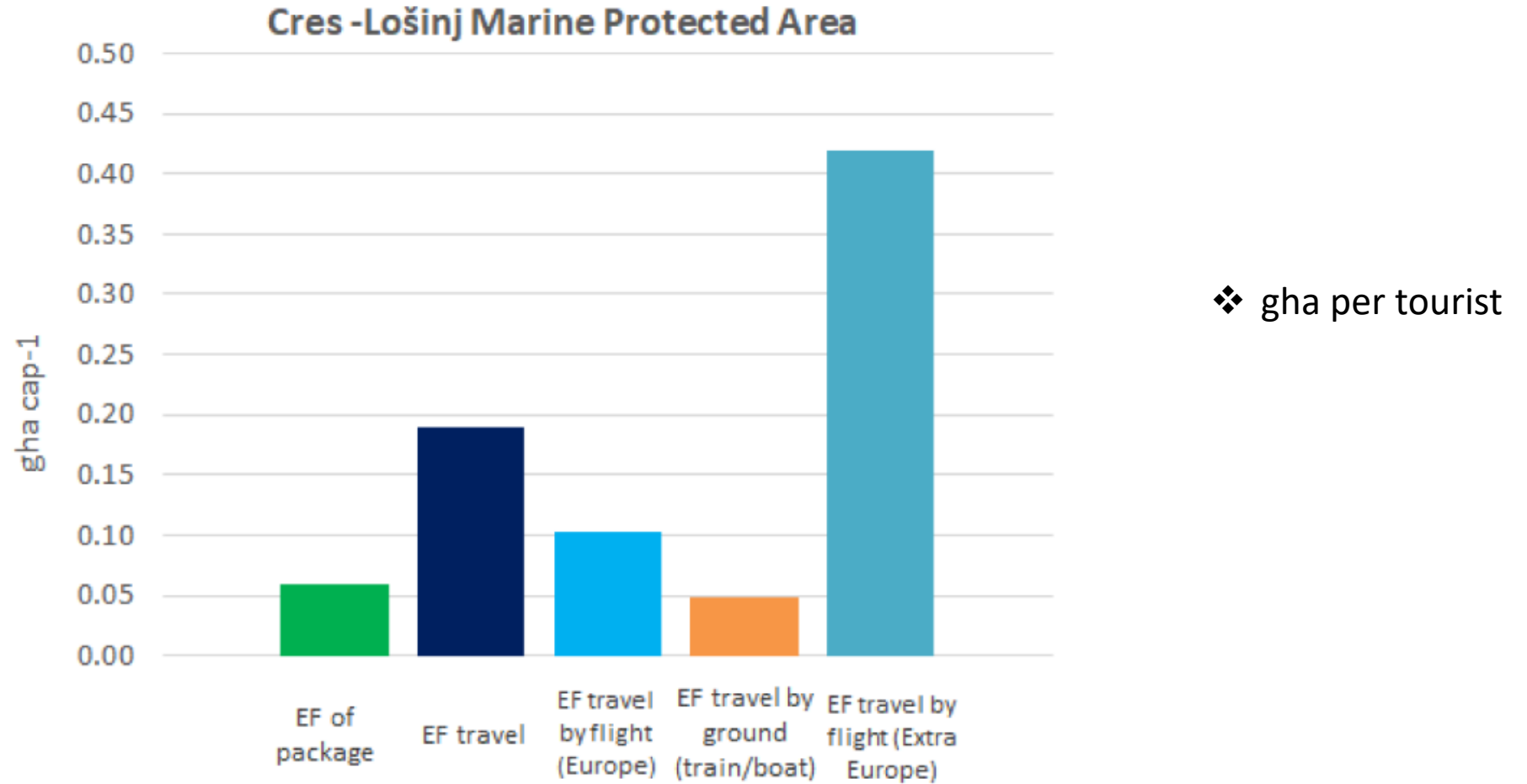
❖ gha per tourist

VISUALISATION OF THE RESULTS

The Total Ecotourism Footprint of your package is... ⓘ

537.994 gha

By Landtype ⓘ
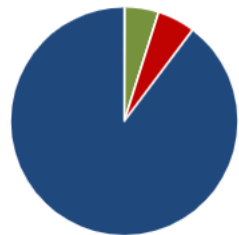
- Cropland - 0.06%
- Grazing - 0.01%
- Forest - 4.81%
- Fishing - 0.02%
- Built-up - 5.38%
- Carbon - 89.73%

The Ecological Footprint per tourist is ⓘ

0.01 gha/day

By Activity ⓘ

15%	71%	9%	4%
Accommodation	Food & Drinks	Mobility	Activity
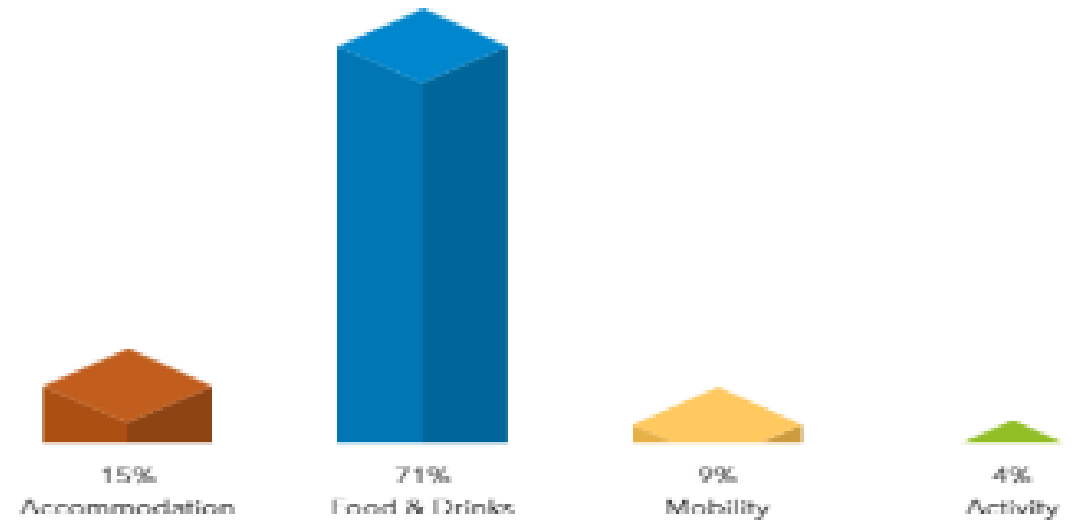
Benefits of the Ecological Footprint for Ecotourism Stakeholders

You cannot manage what you do not measure!!

PROTECTED AREAS MANAGERS
Understanding the biocapacity of the local area and the pressure tourism activities place upon it

LOCAL SUPPLIERS
- Enter as pioneers in a new market
- Reduce and optimise their impacts and costs
- Increase market resilience

THE TOURISM SECTOR
Attract green tourists

Social Impact Assessment of Ecotourism Suppliers

❖ The socio-economic assessment aims to measure the social impact of the different ecotourism service providers, suppliers and facilities present in a destination or included in an ecotourism itinerary.

❖ The assessment covers **15 social topics** and **4 stakeholder** groups (workers, local communities, value chain and visitors).

Social Impact Assessment of Ecotourism Suppliers

❖ Indicators were developed on the basis of the **Social Value Initiative**, Methodology Product Social Impact Assessment and the **EU, European Tourism Indicators System**.
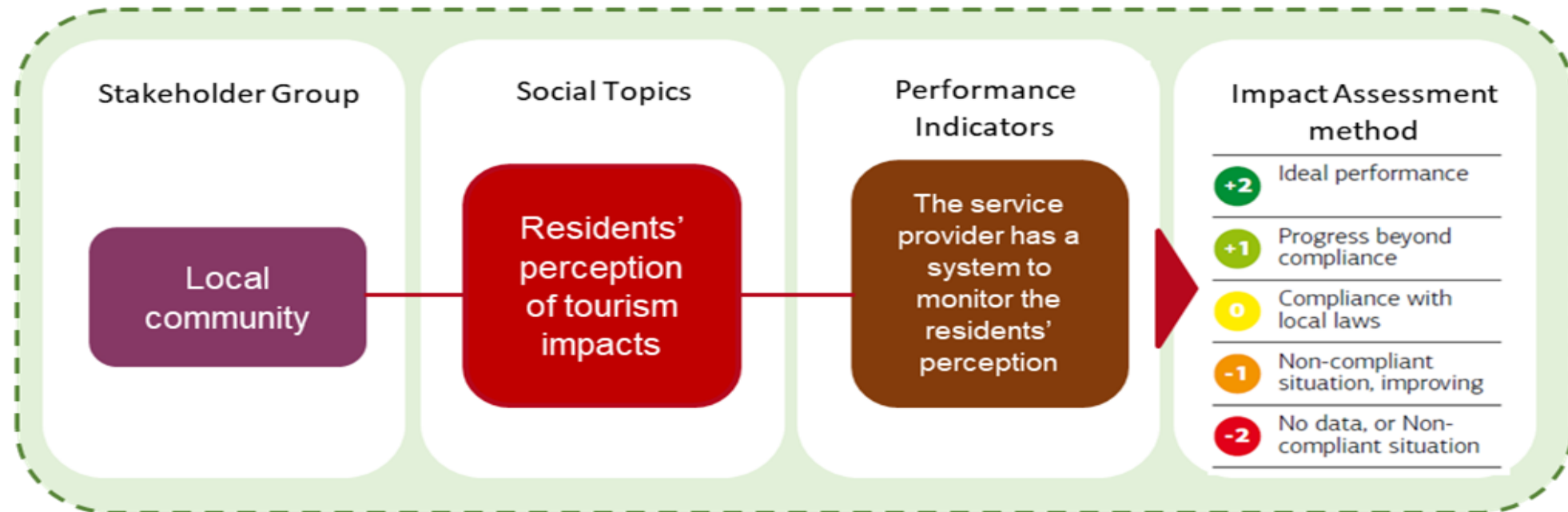
VISUALISATION OF THE RESULTS

By stakeholder group

Workers	Local Community	Value Chain	Customer / tourist
(0.5)	(0.2)	(0)	(0.33)

+2	Ideal performance; a positive output achieved and reported
+1	Progress beyond compliance is made and monitored
0	Compliance with local laws and/or aligned with international standards
-1	Non-compliant situation, but actions to improve have been taken
-2	No data, or Non-compliant situation; no action taken

VISUALISATION OF THE RESULTS

By service provider category
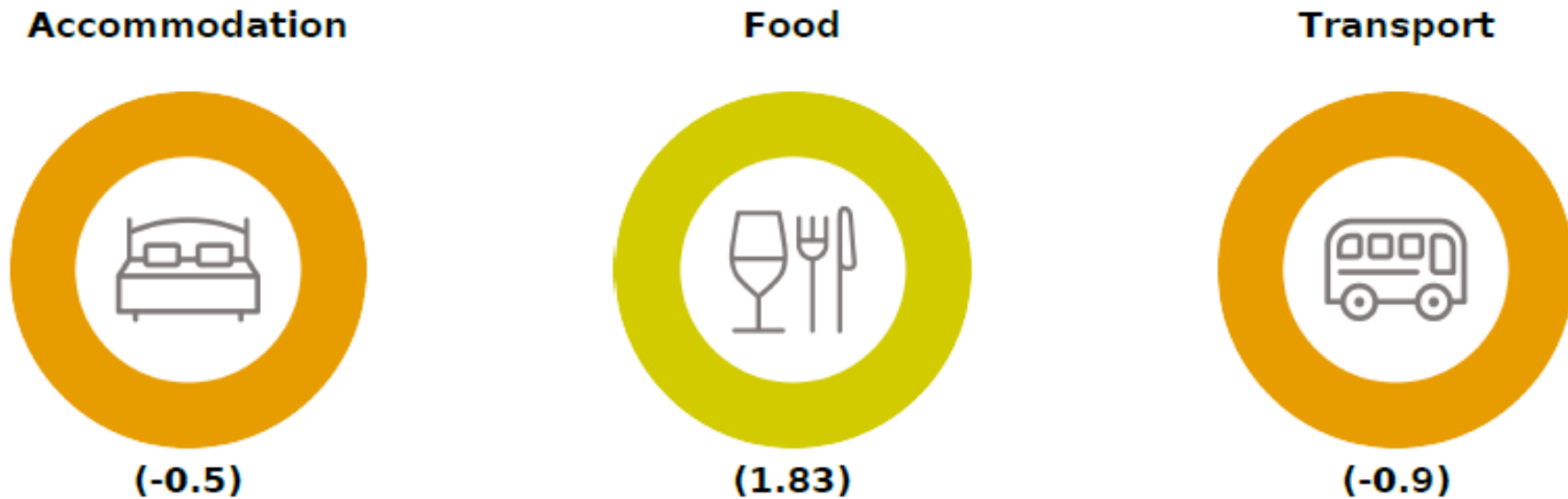
Accommodation	Food	Transport
(-0.5)	(1.83)	(-0.9)

+2	Ideal performance; a positive output achieved and reported
+1	Progress beyond compliance is made and monitored
0	Compliance with local laws and/or aligned with international standards
-1	Non-compliant situation, but actions to improve have been taken
-2	No data, or Non-compliant situation; no action taken

Social Impact Assessment of Ecotourism Suppliers for Ecotourism Stakeholders

- Report the social benefits of the ecotourism products and services

- Good aid for structuring story-telling

- Highlights endemic issues in the region

- Identification of areas of concern which were not originally in the radar

Product Quality Assessment of an Ecotourism Itinerary

• The operator and stakeholders developing ecotourism itineraries in, and around protected areas must ensure the selection of **appropriate providers**, **develop engaging storytelling** that values the destination appropriately delivered by tour leaders and guides, that **interacts meaningfully with its communities, and values the protected areas and culture** of the destination.

• For this purpose, MEET has defined a set of criteria that must be met by the products (multi-day ecotourism itineraries) that encompass basic conditions that should be met regarding the design of the product and itinerary, safety, supplier selection, among others.

Product Quality Assessment of an Ecotourism Itinerary

2.1 PRODUCT QUALITY

- 2.1.1 Sound design of the ecotourism product
- 2.1.2 MEET market alignment
- 2.1.3 Product components characteristics
- 2.1.4 Product safety characteristics
- 2.1.5 Product operations characteristics
- 2.1.6 Product supplier's characteristic

2.1.1 - Product concept; Itinerary design and Leading, Guiding & Interpretation

2.1.2 – Target market; Pricing; Seasonality and Storytelling.

2.1.3 – Accomodation; Meals; Transport and Activities

2.1.4 – Health; Safety and Security

2.1.5 – Tour operator; Tour leader and Guides

2.1.6 – Local ownership; Labour; Human rights; wildlife and Animal welfare

VISUALISATION OF THE RESULTS

Product Quality Assessment of an Ecotourism Itinerary
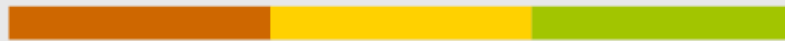
Non-acceptable perfomance				Ideal performance

Sound design of the ecotourism product

PRODUCT CONCEPT
The product/package/itinerary is aligned with the tourism development objectives and plans of the Protected Area or Destination
2

PRODUCT CONCEPT
The product/package/itinerary is focused valuing the natural and cultural resources in and around the Protected Area(s)
2

PRODUCT CONCEPT
The activities related to or within the Protected Area are developed with the LEC and approved by the PA management body.
2

PRODUCT CONCEPT
The number of travelers per group and tours per week is defined and within a maximum capacity of travelers defined by the LEC/PA
2

+2 Ideal performance; a positive output achieved and reported

+1 Progress beyond compliance is made and monitored

0 Compliance with local laws and/or aligned with international standards

-1 Non-compliant situation, but actions to improve have been taken

-2 No data, or Non-compliant situation; no action taken

Product Quality Assessment of an Ecotourism Itinerary
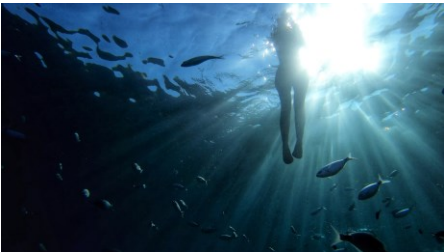
- Report the benefits of the ecotourism itinerary

- Ensures that the product being developed is high-quality and market-oriented, attractive and responding to the needs of customers.

- Confirms that the ecotourism product is aligned with the MEET brand and product line, commercially viable as well as the conservation values of the PA and sustainability is well embedded in the experience

Examples of Recommendations provided by the tools

Governance and Conservation:

- Engage further public bodies in the local ecotourism cluster.

Examples of Sustainability factsheets of Destinations

Examples of Sustainability factsheets of Destinations

ENABLING CONDITIONS

TOURISM MANAGEMENT IN THE PROTECTED AREA

This assessment aims to understand if the protected area has appropriate tourism management mechanisms, to ensure a low-impact and conservation-friendly design of the ecotourism offer, based on a simplification of the IUCN Green List Global Standard for Protected Areas.

CATEGORY	ASSESSMENT					
1. Legal and regulatory conditions	Legal designation	PA Management plan	Visitor-related park regulations	Visitor mgmt. plan	Active visitor management	Visitor monitoring
2. Ecotourism package and visitor use	Compliance with park rules	Package content		Conservation compliance of package design		Visitor impact
3. Added values	LEC conservation activity					

Ideal 🟢
Compliance 🟡
Non-compliant situation 🟠

Examples of Sustainability factsheets of Destinations

GOVERNANCE OF THE LOCAL ECOTOURISM CLUSTER

This assessment aims to measure if the protected area and the different tourism stakeholders in the cluster and destination operate under the main principles for good governance. It has been developed drawing on the IUCN Best Practice Guidelines for the Governance of Protected Areas.

CATEGORY	ASSESSMENT		
1. Legitimacy and Voice	🟢 Representation of stakeholders	🟢 Diversity	🟡 Standards
2. Direction	🟡 Strategy and action plan	🟢 General alignment	
3. Performance	🟢 Implementation, monitoring & learning	🟡 Participatory product development	🟡 Cooperation 🟡 Policy and lobbying
4. Accountability	🟢 Communication and information	🟢 Feedback	🟢 Control
5. Fairness & Rights	🟢 Respect	🟢 Fairness	🟢 Legal alignment

Examples of Sustainability factsheets of Destinations

SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PRODUCT SUPPLIERS

The socio-economic assessment aims to measure the social impact of the different suppliers and facilities on 15 social topics covering 4 stakeholder groups (workers, local communities, value chain and visitors). The methodology is based on a simplified version of the Product Social Impact Assessment.

2	Ideal performance
1	Intermediate positive performance
0	Compliance
-1	Intermediate negative performance
-2	Non-acceptable performance

Workers (0.47)
- Working conditions
- Gender Equality
- Health & Safety
- Freedom of Association
- Training

Value Chain (0.28)
- Sustainability of the supply chain
- Supplier Relationship

Local Community (0.82)
- Local Capacity Building
- Local Employment
- Community Well-being
- Local tourism

Customer/Tourist (0.18)
- Transparency
- Quality of the service
- Health & Safety
- Feedback mechanism

Marketing & commercial efforts of MEET

IN DEVELOPMENT WITH DESTIMED PLUS PROJECT
Nature and Culture Itineraries Designed by Mediterranean Parks

Nature and Culture Itineraries Designed by Mediterranean Parks

ALBANIA: DIVJAKË-KARAVASTA NATIONAL PARK
Pelican's Letters (8 days)

Imagine being in between two rivers, in a fortress of nature and life where you are welcomed every day by the Pelican.
Divjaka - Karavasta Park is a journey between the discoveries of Albania's third treasure.

- Visit the Pelican Island and monitor the heron colony
- Discover the hospitality of the inhabitants, fishermen and artisans of the area
- Learn about bats habitat and hike to the watchtowers to see the landscape of the park and the reservoir of Kryekuq

- Explore the area through walking trails or by horse that traverse the experience of visiting from the tall pines to the centuries-old churches
- Visit the Church of St. Thanas by bicycle and see one of the most beautiful sunsets in Karavasta.

GREECE: NORTH KARPATHOS AND SARIA ISLANDS
Feel Like a Local in an Amazing Destination Combining Culture with Pure Nature (6 days)

Karpathos island is a destination characterized by its pure nature and unique culture. Its isolated location and low population density have played key roles in the conservation of nature, customs and relevant cultural activities.

- Learn about the centuries-old history of the island
- Discover its traditional tastes, music, dance, dressing and food and cook like a local

- Admire its amazing pure nature sites through hiking experiences
- Observe the protected -and other- species that live in the protected area, like the unique species Karpathos frog Salamander and Mediterranean monk seal.

SPAIN: TERRES DE L'EBRE BIOSPHERE RESERVE
Spanish Culture, Cuisine and Wildlife in the Ebro Delta (5 days)

Experience the wildlife and seasonal colours of the largest wetland in Catalonia. Sail, birdwatch and cycle across the Ebro Delta's unmistakable horizontal landscape and explore Encanyissada and Tancada lagoons.

- Visit the salt world of Mon Natura and travel from the Trabucador Isthmus to the Trinidad Salt Pans of the Alfacs Peninsula
- Learn about the sustainable production of mussels and oysters in Alfacs Bay

- Enjoy a guided walking tour through the old Ebro Lands capital in Tortosa City
- Wine tasting at the Gandesa Cathedral Wine Cellar.

SPAIN: SIERRA NEVADA NATIONAL PARK
Caves, Cowboys, and Mediterranean Mountains (5 days)

Hike ancient staircases and climb alpine peaks in Sierra Nevada, the southernmost mountain range of Spain. Discover Andalusian landscapes and develop a deep connection to the past and the people who depend on the Mediterranean's highest mountains.

- Cross the mountain range from North to South to discover a new landscape in each corner
- Share a day at 2,000 meters above sea level with Torcuato, a passionate cattle breeder, who is trying to save the oldest breed of cows in Europe known as the Pajuna

- Discover the Alpujarras, an isolated area in the south of the Sierra Nevada, featuring white villages perched in the slopes, and architecture that preserves their Berber origins
- Stay in a cave and experience silence, peace and tranquility.

The Med as a Leading Ecotourism Destination

Key learnings

❖ The conservation of the Mediterranean basin and its PAs is strongly affected by tourism.

❖ Governance models for tourism development in PAs and in regional policy are needed.

❖ Better tourism and conservation outcomes when there is collaboration among sectors.

❖ MEET offers different methodologies and tools for Protected Areas to manage tourism in PAs

Key learnings

❖ MEET products have comparative advantages of mass tourism destinations for travel to the destination (seasonality).

❖ For some of the tools, it might be difficult to collect DATA, especially socio-economic, as service providers are not willing to share them

❖ The MEET Monitoring tools allows ecotourism destinations in and around protected areas to self-assess the sustainability and quality multi-day tourism products in Protected Areas against the comprehensive criteria of the MEET Standard

Thank you and Get in Touch!

Contact

- **Website:** www.meetnetwork.org

- **Email:** secretariat@meetnetwork.org

Social Media

@meetnetwork.org   @meet_network

@MedEcotourism   MEET Network

Key Resources

- **MEET Catalogue:** https://www.meetnetwork.org/ecotourism-experiences

- **MEET Manual:** https://www.meetnetwork.org/methodological-manual

- **MEET Members:** https://www.meetnetwork.org/mediterranean-parks

- **MEET Training Modules:** https://www.meetnetwork.org/online-learning

- **MEET Ecological Footprint Calculator:** https://www.meetnetwork.org/ecological-footprint-calculator