

# PICTURE



## Pro-active management of the Impact of Cultural Tourism upon Urban Resources and Economies

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Cultural Tourism Impact Assessment  
procedure**

### Executive summary

Task n° **3.1**

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## 1. Introduction

*Why to care about tourism plans, programmes and projects in our urban areas?*

Majority of Europe's population lives in towns and cities and benefits not only from economic, cultural and social development within cities, but also appreciates the complex ambience of urban areas which refers to the quality of life of its citizens; people who live, work and spend their leisure time within its boundaries. Increased interest in urban tourism since the beginning of the 1980's has brought a sharp upturn in this kind of tourism. It resulted from renewal and rehabilitation projects of historical centres, more diversified cultural actions, public's interest in heritage and urban development and the search for attractions and spending opportunities within cities. The fact that people tend to spend more, but shorter holidays together with the easier and more affordable mobility and transport possibilities helped to build up cultural tourism in Europe.

*As a result of the rapid expansion of the tourism sector, traditional and emerging tourism destinations are facing increasing pressure on their natural, cultural and socio-economic environments. To maintain urban heritage values, sustainable development and attractiveness of the towns and cities to its inhabitants and visitors it is seen necessary to implement tools to assess possible effects of the increasing developments towards tourism in Europe.*

The present document summarises the content of *First Draft of Cultural Tourism Impact Assessment (CTIA)* document. It aims to provide draft procedure and guidelines for the assessment of cultural tourism oriented plans, programmes or projects and its environmental consequences and all potential impacts on the complex organisms of small and medium historic European cities. It further describes proposed steps of Cultural Tourism Impact Assessment with identification of definitions, outcomes, participants and key issues of particular stages of Impact Assessment procedure.

As such, the present document refers to one of the main objectives of the *PICTURE Project*, which aims to provide local governments and decision makers with tools to facilitate the assessment of the impact of tourism in a locality, with particular regard to built heritage issues and relevant quality of life parameters, in order to improve their strategies, plans and policies.

## 2. Voluntary schemes

Many organizations, worldwide, have proposed sets of principles or produced guidelines to manage the complicated relations between tourism sites and destinations and their visitors. It is an important source of information at the introductory phase of *PICTURE* research as it reflects the view, perception and needs of international organisations, local authorities, travel companies, tour operators and public of the tourism industry and of tourism destinations. This study will focus on those related to cities and urban areas under the wider review of most important voluntary initiatives.

Voluntary initiatives play an increased role in regulating tourism activities, targeting tourism suppliers, such as accommodation, restaurant, sport and leisure facilities, tourist attractions, destinations, tour operators, (tourist) transport companies, tourist associations. It should be stressed that these schemes lack any constraining authority.

The following schemes have been analyzed and compared during this task:

- Sustainable Development of Tourism (WTO, 2004).
- The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET)
- Sustainability indicators for tourism
- Local Agenda 21 for tourism
- Biological Diversity and Tourism
- ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter
- Carrying Capacity, Limits of Acceptable Change, Visitor Experience and Resource Protection Process, Tourism Optimization Management Model, Visitor Impact Assessment and Visitor Impact Model
- National Certification systems for Sustainable Tourism
- Integrated Quality Management (IQM) of urban tourist destinations
- Crowd Management
- The Tour Operators Initiative

### 3. Existing legal framework for EA in EU

The Impact Assessment procedures are regulated by two European Directives, usually named 'EIA' and 'SEA'. The Environmental Impact Assessment procedure is regulated by Council Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, as amended by 97/11/EC and 2003/35/EC. The Strategic Environmental Assessment procedure is regulated by Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the effects of certain plans and programs on the environment.

The European EIA/SEA Directives provide a useful framework for *Competent Authorities* to react in an appropriate manner when a new plan, programme or project, which is likely to produce significant effects on the Environment (including urban heritage values) is proposed.

The area of application of the two directives is very broad, the main criteria for requiring an impact assessment being that the proposed project, plan or programme is likely to produce significant effects (positive or negative) on "the environment". The term "environment" is also to be understood in its broadest meaning, including "material assets and the Cultural Heritage". Therefore, an important number of projects, plans and programmes set up in an urban context and likely to impact on the built and non-built heritage could be subject to impact assessment.

Certain plans and programmes, set up within organisms delivering a public service (and regardless its public or private status) should also be subject to impact assessment if they are likely to produce significant environmental effects.

The European EIA and SEA Directives provide first of all a procedure, within which the production of a report on the environmental effects is only one step among others. This procedure can be summarized by the scheme below.

Plan, programme or project (PPP) preparation		Not mandatory
Screening	■	Mandatory under Directive 2001/42/EC and Directive 85/337/EC as amended by 97/11/EC and Directive 2003/35/EC
Preparation of assessment framework (Scoping)		
Environmental Report		
Consultation with Designated Authorities and the Public		
Review of Adequacy of the Environmental Information	■	Mandatory under Directive 2001/42/EC only
Decision-taking		
Announcement of Decision		
Monitoring		

Although some steps are not mandatory in the two Directives, this scheme constitutes an international benchmark. Iterations between the different steps are sometimes necessary, the procedure is not a linear succession of tasks, but as a genuine exploration, in search of the best solution.

## 4. Explanation of Environmental Assessment stages

The first draft of proposed structure of the *Cultural Tourism Impact Assessment (CTIA)* is organized following stages.

### 1. Baseline information

The *Baseline information* consists of existing documents such as Strategic Plan, Action Plans, Sustainable Development Plans; information on current economic, social and environmental conditions in the area; structure and trends within the tourism sector; review of benefits and costs of tourism to local communities. The Competent Authority has to know the strategy of development not only in terms of tourism but in the context of the strategic plans for their governed area/city/region. Such information is a starting point to evaluate the current situation and recognize opportunities, risks and benefits which should be taken into account while preparing a plan, programme or project.

### 2. Plan, programme or project preparation - Notification

Developer (could be private person, company, institution, NGO, municipality etc.) should prepare a draft of the plan, programme, project (with different alternatives), to be presented to the competent authority. Based on the Baseline Information, it should cover general characteristics of the project or plan, description of the site/area, regulations which are applicable, economic considerations, socio-economic conditions, expected changes.

### 3. Screening

This stage is designed as a quick step aimed at determining the need to carry out a *CTIA*, potential problems and impacts identification. It is based on case-by-case examination or on pre-existing criteria. The *Competent Authority* is solely responsible for taking the screening

decision if the Environmental Assessment is required for proposed plan or project, or exempted from Environmental Assessment and justify his decision. It is necessary to develop knowledge about the possible reactions of the public, which could help the competent authority in taking its decision. It is crucial to announce and explain the screening decision to the public, otherwise, there might be the risk of public controversy.

#### **4. Scoping**

All stakeholders, including the public, are invited to participate in the debate which aim is to define a programme for the Environmental Assessment. This debate should be managed by an independent body. The output should include impacts to be assessed, assessment methods to be used, experts in charge of the different assessments, etc. Elaboration of alternative projects, plans or programmes and their assessment form part of the stage. It is essential to identify and highlight significant values of the locality; highlight possible significant effects to be assessed, including cumulative effects from multiple developments activities; outline the possible project alternatives, including the no action alternative; provide a detailed decision matrix to be developed for selection of appropriate methods; select experts to elaborate the CTIA report. Public participation is necessary at this stage and mandatory under EIA/SEA directives and crucial to avoid later negative reactions. It should include consultation/presentations to authorities, environmental experts, local community, NGO's. The scoping stage should open and enlarge as much as possible the debate (in terms of stakeholders, ideas, alternatives, possible effects, etc) and should then structure it for the Cultural Tourism Impact Assessment stage.

#### **5. Cultural Tourism Impact Assessment**

This assessment gathers all information which will form the basis for consultation, negotiation. Reports from experts in charge of the different assessments compose the *CTIA*. It is recommended to elaborate two documents: a *non-technical Summary* (widely understandable version) and a *complete report*. The later should include: general information, current character and context of the locality/town, historical development of place comparison with similar cases, state of the tangible and intangible heritage, economic and ecological data etc. Presentation of the project alternatives and comparison of their various effects should be included in the report. Various techniques of assessment could be applied: Tourist Carrying Capacity, socio-demographic indicators, limits of Acceptable Change, Visitor Experience, Visitor Impact Assessment. In order to create a report understandable to the public, it is recommended to use appropriate visualisation techniques.

#### **6. Consultation**

Experienced Independent body should be managing the consultation of the *CTIA* report with designated authorities and the public. Presentations to authorities, local community, and wide public will result with comments which should all be annexed to the *Impact Assessment report*. Consultation should be enlarged as much as possible and all means of effective communication methods should be used (Internet, local newspapers etc). Results of consultation could lead to require some further Assessments.

#### **7. Review of adequacy of the CTIA**

Done by the Independent control organism the Review of adequacy of the Environmental Information aims at ensuring that the *CTIA* respects the 'Terms of Reference' requirements, and provides all the information needed by the Competent Authority in order to make their decision. Independent control organism will produce the report with comments, to be annexed to the *CTIA* report. This Review should report on both the quality and soundness of the

procedure and the quality of the impact assessments. The results of the independent review may lead to further assessments of other impacts.

### 8. Decision taking

To take its final decision, the Competent Authority is required to take into consideration the *CTIA report*, the result of consultation with designated authorities and the public, and the results of the review of adequacy of *CTIA*. The final decision could be the approval, conditional consent, or refusal of the proposed Plan, Programme or Project submitted by the authority of the developer.

### 9. Decision announcement/ implementation

The competent authority is required to explain its final decision. The announcement must describe the content of the decision and any attached conditions, the main reasons and considerations upon which the decision is based.

### 10. Monitoring

Collecting quantitative and qualitative data on the environmental, social and economic evolution of the monitoring area. It is necessary to *define objectives and scope of monitoring programme*. Area-based monitoring addresses the *cumulative effects* of the various developments and activities taking place in or near a considered area. The monitoring can be described as data collection, evaluation, and action (if necessary) with regular reporting. Monitoring serves as a feedback to decision makers about the effectiveness of their actions. It enables to identify unforeseen adverse impacts and allows to undertake a remediate action when necessary.

The following table summarizes the proposed structure of the Cultural Tourism Impact Assessment with the involvement of various stakeholders. Further research work is needed to test and evaluate the suitability and applicability of CTIA procedure to all the cases when a new plan, programme or project, will be likely to produce significant effects on any of the aspects of the environment of towns and cities.

Proposed scheme of the CTIA procedure	Participants involved			
	developer	compet. authority	experts	public
Baseline Information				
Plan, programme or project (PPP) preparation Notification				
Screening				
Preparation of assessment framework (Scoping)				
Cultural Tourism Impact Assessment				
Consultation with Designated Authorities and the Public				
Review of Adequacy of the CTIA				
Decision-taking				
Decision announcement / Implementation				
Monitoring/ Corrective actions				