



Infopack

Participatory and co-creation process in developing sustainable tourism

A methodology developed in the TExTOUR project

This road is for:

STAKEHOLDERS INTERESTED IN STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND IN SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE MANAGEMENT.

Abstract

Stakeholder and community engagement is crucial to achieve sustainable local development and tourism practices. However, communities and stakeholders are often uninterested in taking part in the co-creation process. To help them understand the importance of their involvement in the local development processes, it is important to implement careful and comprehensive planning methodologies, a variety of tools and strategies, and a holistic approach.

A sustainable tourism development project, like TExTOUR, should consider not only stakeholders and interest groups but also the complex system of values and power they represent. As a result, organisers should continuously pay attention to the inclusion and empowerment of participants who may have less power or influence. Therefore, similarly, **having various social groups represented in the process is a desired requirement**, even though it may be a challenge.

Participatory and community building processes take much time. This means careful planning is needed. You should be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of different engagement methods, otherwise stakeholders may not be incorporated into the decision-making process or planned activities may have to be left out. Also consider that it may take longer to engage weaker stakeholders and vulnerable groups than it does for regular stakeholders.

Community involvement has a multitude of advantages: it supports identity building, gives local communities the chance to influence the development of their own territories and helps them capture economic benefits from tourism development, thus supporting local businesses. It forms part of evolving **sustainable heritage management concepts which empower communities** to influence/redefine their heritage, and actively participate in sharing and displaying it. In our experience, this has created a complex role for communities, with both economic opportunities and conflicts. Below we list some of the tools and techniques you should adopt for your sustainable tourism projects.



What to pack:

KNOWLEDGE, TOOLS, AND SKILLS REQUIRED BEFORE IMPLEMENTING THE ACTION

- Supportive administrative and regulatory environment;
- Trust and motivation between the community and the different stakeholders;
- Identification of possible barriers to participation (e.g. physical, technical, knowledge, linguistic, cultural, traditional, geographical, etc.).



Textour's methodology for effective stakeholder engagement

Before starting the stakeholder engagement, **we should ask ourselves what the purpose of the engagement will be** (why it is necessary to involve the people, what is the common goal we want to achieve, etc.). This requires a structured approach which enables us to map stakeholder and community groups, and to identify the best ways to reach them. The approach always includes an assessment for monitoring purposes, setting up a feedback loop.

If we grasp the project's background and context, then we can more effectively set out objectives and build on previous experience instead of duplicating efforts. Things to consider are historical and geographical factors, similar projects in the past, decision-making processes, existing networks and communication channels, etc.



Pic 1. Workshop on the TExTOUR methodology. Credits: Nicola Vuolo

Once we have set our objectives, the stakeholder identification process can begin. **We can divide this into three main stages:**

1. **Identifying all potential stakeholders**, their main incentives and how they can contribute to the project;
2. **Assessing and prioritising the stakeholders** based on their power, influence, relevance and roles in the different phases of the project;
3. **Knowing the stakeholders involved**, their relations to the project, knowledge, appropriate means of communication, willingness to engage, etc.

The actual levels of engagement may vary for each stakeholder based on their level of interest and potential to influence the project. Following the model for stakeholder influence mapping, we can distinguish **four types of involvement levels:**

1. **Inform:** for stakeholders who have little interest in the project and low influence on project outcomes;
2. **Consult:** stakeholders with high interest but low influence can be asked about specific questions, or involve as intermediary bodied to reach out and form alliances with other, more influential stakeholders;
3. **Involve:** e.g. those stakeholders, who are very influential, but have little interest in the project or have limited resources/capacity to be involved but who should still be involved;
4. **Collaborate:** collaboration is the highest level of involvement, and it usually concerns stakeholders with high interest and high influence in the project. These stakeholders can contribute with the most knowledge, data, resources, networks, etc. to the project, so their involvement should be a priority in the engagement process.

There is a wide range of techniques available to engage stakeholders; however, choosing the right method (or mix of methods) can make the difference. Each method has its strengths and weaknesses. To choose the right one for your situation, you should be clear about the purpose of engagement, identify the potential stakeholders and the time schedule. You should also rank stakeholders in order of priority as this will help you choose the appropriate engagement approach.

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Pic 2. Workshop on the TExTOUR methodology. Credits: Nicola Vuolo

Stakeholder engagement methods can be divided into two broad types:

1. **One-way methods:** which take the form of “information” and are usually applied with stakeholders with low influence and low interest;
2. **Two-way methods:** which ensure shared decision-making, responsibility, joint learning and actions. These methods can take the form of consultation (specific questions are asked), involvement (higher involvement in discussions, but not involved in decision-making) and collaboration (full involvement, including in decision-making).



CULTURAL TOURISM CO-DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

icons.pageflow.io/seven-steps-towards-co-developed-cultural-tourism

When choosing a method always consider the expectations and capacities of your stakeholders and select tools that meet their needs. Do not forget that different tools can be combined to achieve a better result.

Stakeholder engagement tools and techniques can be categorised as:

1. **Data/input gathering techniques:** these can be used for starting dialogues and gathering information;
2. **Participatory planning tools:** applicable in the process of co-developing research outputs;
3. **Decision making tools:** facilitate engagement of stakeholders in the decision making process;
4. **Community/team building:** these tools can be applied at different levels, from strengthening the core project management team to building a local community;
5. **Multi-purpose tools:** they can be used for different purposes, throughout the entire research process.



Roadmap:

THE MAIN STEPS TO EMBARK ON

- 1 **FROM MONTH 1 TO THE OVERALL PROCESS**
Establish a community of stakeholders.
- 2 **MONTH 1-2**
Identify local strengths & heritage resources.
- 3 **MONTH 3**
Establish an action plan.
- 4 **MONTH 4**
Define a sustainable business model.
- 5 **DURING THE OVERALL PROCESS**
Follow-up and self-evaluate.
- 6 **MONTH 6**
Define a final action plan.
- 7 **FROM MONTH 7**
Implement activities.



Testimonials

**“In my opinion,
cultural tourism is
where everything
should start.”**

JELENA PUJIC - MUSEUM OF HERZEGOVINA



New fellow travellers

WHO JOINED AND FORMED THE NETWORK

All the relevant stakeholders who you will engage during the process.



Souvenirs

BEST ACHIEVEMENTS RELATIVE TO THE PROJECT'S IMPACTS



POLICY IMPACT

- Stakeholder engagement and management practices should be used as a key to create strong relationships between the different actors of the system, strengthening stakeholders' loyalty.



SOCIAL IMPACT

- Community engagement, learning empowerment and capacity building.



CULTURAL IMPACT

- Strengthening local identity through community engagement.



Contact us if you want to apply this methodology to your sustainable tourism project

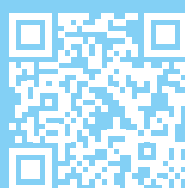
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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No.101004687