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# AGORA

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## Work Package 2

### Activity A2

**Identification of Challenges and Barriers that stand in the way of developing Regenerative Tourism experiences.**

**Interviews with individuals and/ or representatives of organizations / local authorities / communities / agents that promote community regenerative tourism experiences.**

### Reporting Template

Developed by p-consulting.gr.

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## Interviews with individuals and/ or representatives of organizations / local authorities communities / agents – Reporting Template

### Guidelines for conducting Interviews with project stakeholders / individuals and/ or representatives of organizations / local authorities / communities / agents that promote community regenerative tourism experiences to support the creation of the Sustainability Guide

Here are comprehensive guidelines for conducting interviews with stakeholders in the context of creating a sustainability guide for addressing challenges and barriers for promoting collaboration between community agents and other stakeholders that support and implement regenerative tourism experiences involving local communities:

- **Identification of relevant stakeholders – Interviewee’s profile:** The key participants of this series of interviews for the support of regenerative tourism experiences, are **individuals and/or representatives of organizations / local authorities / communities / agents that promote community regenerative tourism experiences**. You should ensure representation of perspectives and expertise.
- **Interview Objectives:** The objectives of the interviews, are gathering insights on challenges and barriers, understanding stakeholders' perspectives on sustainability practices and implementation of regenerative tourism experiences, and identifying potential solutions. This will help focus the interview and ensure relevant information is gathered.
- **Development of Interview Questions:** We have prepared a set of open-ended questions that encourage participants to share their knowledge, experiences, and suggestions. There is a **generalized set of questions**, and **a set of questions tailored to the specific challenges and barriers** identified in the context of regenerative tourism experiences involving participants/interviewees. However, **partners** conducting the interviews, **should bear in mind the local context, which might lead them in identification of additional challenges that have not been listed herein**. In this case, **they can add questions, if they consider them to be relevant for the purpose of finding out more about specific situations**.
- **Conduction of the interviews:** You are proposed to schedule interviews with participants and ensure a comfortable and conducive environment for open discussion. Use active listening techniques, probe for deeper insights, and encourage them to share their experiences, ideas, and suggestions.
- **Establishing Rapport:** Begin each interview by introducing yourself, explaining the purpose of the interview, and emphasizing the importance of the participant’s perspective. Establish a friendly and open atmosphere to encourage honest and meaningful responses.
- **Document the answers:** You are suggested to take detailed notes during the interviews. Transcribe or record interviews (optionally with the use of a consent note when anonymity is not an issue) to ensure accuracy. Also, if feasible, ask for photos or/and a short bio of your participants. Otherwise, ensure participants' confidentiality and anonymity, if desired. Assure them that their responses will be aggregated and anonymized to protect sensitive information.
- **Follow-up and clarification (optional):** If needed, follow up with stakeholders to seek clarification or gather additional information after the initial interviews. This can help ensure a more accurate understanding of the challenges and barriers.



- **Follow-up and Gratitude:** Send a follow-up email or letter expressing gratitude for the stakeholders' participation. Offer to share the project's findings and demonstrate how their input contributed to shaping the sustainability guide.

### **Generalized interview questions**

1. *The most common definition of regenerative tourism is “leaving things or a place in a better state than visitors found them or it” and most recently it has been stressed that “it is not just about visitors having a positive impact but also for hosts to play an essential role in the process”. What do you think regenerative tourism experiences are all about?*

**Answer:** When a person comes to a place and makes a connection with the place and the people there in a way that does not have a negative impact on the community, and enables the person to connect with themselves, with other people and with nature, to make a connection where this relationship at the same time helps the person to improve themselves, and also enables the local people to improve themselves through this kind of tourism. Nature is improved through this tourism. And it is also about how tourism can bring about positive change.

2. *How do you see the future of regenerative tourism?*

**Answer:** It is something that is still in its beginnings and will not become mainstream in another 2, 5 or 10 years, because in order to make a big change you have to change the system. Not just in terms of advertising/communication or changing what you offer, the system that develops tourism also has to be changed. We had an opportunity during the pandemic, when everything stopped, but now Venice is full again, the cruise ships are still sailing. At the local level, things are moving slowly. To have a positive future that can be implemented at the macro level, you need a paradigm shift in the public sector, in laws and development strategies.

3. *How do you perceive the importance of sustainability and regeneration in addressing long-term environmental, social, and economic impact?*

**Answer:** I think this is key. The problem with the concept of sustainability is that it has been understood as a word that you stick on a product and that is it. The point is that all 3 lines of action (environmental, social and economic) are taken into account and the outcome responds to each of these lines of action. We need to take a holistic view, look at the whole system and understand how changes in one part of the system affect the others.

4. *What role do local associations, authorities, and infrastructures play in supporting regenerative tourism experiences?*

**Answer:** It is crucial that they have the power to decide on the laws, and in order to support this sustainable, regenerative development, they must give people the freedom to develop their activities in this way. The laws do not allow certain things like recycling or the reuse of waste. Laws need to be created for this regenerative or responsible tourism, but also an environment or platforms where the private and public sectors can easily communicate and collaborate, where society can propose and explain what tourism means to them and what it could look like in their community. Without cooperation between all sectors, this change cannot be achieved. Without giving the community an important role, no progress can be made.

5. *What improvements or collaborations and co-design initiatives, would you suggest in supporting regenerative tourism experiences?*



**Answer:** A space where the community itself can explain how it can sustain it (tourism) and in what quantities, what it can offer... But first you have to understand the place they are in and what it represents to them, how best to explain to the public what is on offer. So they can see how the community is connected to nature and understand the history of the place. It is important that the public sector is responsive to this.

6. *What are the main challenges you have encountered in developing and implementing regenerative tourism experiences through collaborations with peers, local authorities, community agents and/or associations and other relevant stakeholders in your area, if any?*

**Answer:** When people want to devote themselves to tourism, they think in the short term. If they develop a project now, they think that in two months they will have visitors or immediate profits. They take little time because they want quick results. It takes time to develop a form of tourism that is sustainable or responsible and that they can make money with. It is important to explain to you that with responsible development, you will not make enough profit in the beginning, but in the long run you will make a regular income.

7. *Would you have suggestions and solutions to share for successfully addressing such challenges?*

**Answer:** Negotiation. You have to explain how this is going to help. The problem with this is that they are talking about funds or financial support, so they do what they can without putting money into community projects and without taking public opinion into account.

8. *Can you share any specific environmental impacts that you have identified and the measures you have taken to mitigate them?*

**Answer:** An important activity that is indispensable is to create something that was not there before. In many places we have seen reforestation as a very important tourism initiative. We are giving power to parts of society that they did not have before, empowerment, education to people who did not have it, like women who are only in the family or in the household, and we need to give them an important role in tourism, make them key players and also empower young people.

9. *In your experience, what are the key barriers to involving the local population to participate in regenerative tourism initiatives?*

**Answer:** The problem is that there are not too many opportunities or occasions to put this education into practice. On both sides, people are often too busy with their own personal problems and have neither the time nor the inclination to think about what they think are other people's problems.

10. *What strategies or initiatives have you found effective in educating visitors about sustainable practices and ensuring their active participation in maintaining the area's cleanliness and good practices?*

**Answer:** First we do not tell them it's sustainable because it's a word that does not explain itself, you have to explain it in a way that people understand. There is a story that you explain to them: what tourism represents there, the culture of the place, the nature. Through the story they can understand that tourism is sustainable. The visitor is not there to be lectured, they are on holidays. You have to keep this story informal, like a conversation between people who know each other and explain what they are doing.

*Specific interview questions for individuals and/or representatives of organizations / local authorities / communities / agents that promote community regenerative tourism experiences*

- *What sustainability challenges or barriers do you currently face in your role/industry/community?*

**Answer:** Yes, one challenge is that sustainability is the most vacuous word there is, so it cancels out everything social behind it. Another challenge is that in the community many are thinking about how to improve by making numbers, and that does not work like in other sectors. This is about something qualitative. It is about quality and not quantity.

- *Can you provide examples of successful sustainable initiatives or practices you have implemented or observed?*

**Answer:** Spend time with the community, understand the core of where you are. People like to have things explained to them in a simple way while you are walking through a community or taking a tour, when you stop at a natural place that is important to them.

- *What are the key motivators or incentives for your organization/community to embrace sustainable practices?*

**Answer:** It is a personal motivation. That they really believe and that they can do something to improve their local environment or their community on a macro level. Some people only do it because the laws force them to, even if they do not believe in it.

- *What obstacles or resistance have you encountered when trying to implement sustainability measures when implementing an event/activity/training?*

**Answer:** Some sustainability measures may be more inconvenient than traditional practices. This can make it harder for people to change their habits, even if it is for the better, which can make it harder to implement new sustainability measures.

- *Are there any specific regulations or policies that hinder or facilitate efforts towards your end?*

**Answer:** At the public level, there are funds like this project that you are doing. They give you tools to develop projects like this and manage waste, but not much more.

- *How do you measure or assess the impact of sustainability initiatives? What metrics or indications do you find most valuable?*

**Answer:** To measure impact well, it is good to use indicators, but also to understand what kind of indicators to use for each case. The easiest way is to see that new projects are being created thanks to these efforts. These people have an honest job and everything is registered. That is crucial. Seeing that there are people working in a professional way is an indicator.

- *Are there any innovative or emerging technologies that you believe could significantly enhance sustainability efforts?*

**Answer:** If there is, I do not know about them.

- *In your opinion, what role should collaboration between different stakeholders play in advancing sustainability goals when implementing activities/events/trainings?*

**Answer:** This is the most important thing. Cooperation is essential, because without it nothing we do is possible.

- *In your opinion what could be preventing collaboration efforts and initiatives?*

**Answer:** One problem is that they often only see their own personal outcome, they want something positive for themselves and do not understand that the best outcome is achieved through cooperation. They want to do it their own way and do not accept suggestions, ideas or ways of working from others. When we talk about paradigm shifts, we have to make a mental shift that is happening in many cultures.

- *Do you have any ideas about how to co-design experiences and who might be the parties involved?*

**Answer:** We need to create a space where all sections of society can meet. A safe space where you feel free to declare something. Not thinking will have negative effects, but improving and learning and building something better, creating these spaces.

- *How do you engage and educate your employees/community members about sustainability and regeneration? What strategies have been successful?*

**Answer:** The members are people who already know why they are involved in the sector. Each of them has a personal reason, an experience or a contact they have had with nature or tourism in general. And so they have decided to become an active part of it.

- *Are there any financial or resource constraints that prevent you from implementing more regenerative practices/experiences? How do you overcome them?*

**Answer:** Some products are expensive, there are no means and solutions sometimes cost more, but even that does not mean it is more expensive, it means that responsible production has its normal costs and that has to be assumed.

- *What kind of support or assistance would be most beneficial in addressing sustainability challenges and barriers?*

**Answer:** A public sector that listens more, responds faster, is more cooperative, has the ability to implement solutions more quickly, bureaucracy sometimes creates bottlenecks.

**Possible additional interview questions, bearing in mind identification of additional challenges, for individuals and/ or representatives of organizations / local authorities / communities / agents that promote community regenerative tourism experiences**

- .....?

**Answer:**

- .....?

**Answer:**

**Summary of the main points reported by interviewees.**

*(Please summarise here the main deducted results/points/suggestions of the answers given by your interviewee)*

- *Concept of Regenerative tourism experiences*

When someone visits a destination and makes a meaningful connection with the place and its people without harming the local community, it allows them to connect with themselves, others and nature. This kinNature is improved through this tourism. And it is also about how tourism can bring about positive change. This kind of connection promotes personal growth while strengthening the local community, contributing to positive change and benefiting nature.

- *The future of regenerative tourism*

This concept is still in its early stages and will not catch on in the next 2, 5 or even 10 years. To achieve significant change, systemic change is needed, not only in terms of marketing and offers, but also in terms of the functioning of the tourism system itself. A positive future at the macro level requires a paradigm shift in the public sector, in the legal framework and in development strategies.

- *Environmental impacts*

An essential aspect of our efforts is the creation of something new that did not exist before. Reforestation initiatives, for example, have proved crucial in many places in the field of tourism. In addition, part of our mission is to empower sections of society that have been marginalised in the past. This includes providing education and opportunities to individuals, such as women, who have traditionally been confined to domestic tasks, and empowering them to make an important contribution to the tourism sector. Similarly, we want to actively engage and encourage young people and recognise them as important participants in our initiatives.

- *Strategies or initiatives effective in educating visitors about sustainable practices and ensuring active participation in maintaining cleanliness in the area*

It is important not to rely solely on the concept of "sustainable" as it can be vague and abstract. Instead, we need to communicate the concept effectively through stories. We paint a story that makes clear what tourism means in this particular context, the rich local culture and the importance of preserving the natural environment. This narrative allows visitors to grasp the idea of sustainability, without feeling like they are being lectured to. Most importantly, we keep this approach to storytelling informal, much like





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a friendly conversation where we explain our initiatives and why they are important. This way we can create a compelling and relatable experience for tourists.

