

# **BENCHMARKING OF TOURISM PRODUCTS AND IMPLEMENTATION IN GALICIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** Benchmarking could be defined as the systematic process of identifying, comparing and learning from the best practices or successful experiences of a particular sector in diverse geographical areas by disaggregating and analysing in an orderly manner the set of factors that condition their success. The outcome of this process helps improve key processes of a sector or adapt those practices that after a long search have been proven successful, to other areas. This study has gathered, in an orderly and synthetic manner, diverse successful experiences that guarantee a sustainable model for tourism from a social, environmental and economic point of view. These experiences fall under four types of tourism: cultural or heritage tourism, urban tourism, language learning tourism and rural tourism. In total, over forty success stories were analysed, ten per type, in twelve different European countries: Italy, France, Spain, The Netherlands, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Poland, Germany, Greece, Norway, Austria and Ireland. On the other hand, this benchmarking of tourist products has allowed us to develop applicability models for other geographic realities, but above all, for the tourism reality of Galicia. **Keywords:** benchmarking, sustainable tourism, success stories, Galicia

**RESUMEN:** *Benchmarking* (evaluación comparativa) se puede definir como el proceso sistemático para identificar, comparar y aprender a partir de las mejores prácticas y experiencias exitosas de una industria en particular en varias áreas geográficas al desglosar y analizar un conjunto ordenado de factores que determinan su éxito. El resultado de este proceso ayuda a mejorar

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los procesos clave de una industria o adaptar las prácticas que, después de una larga búsqueda, se han probado con éxito en otras áreas. Este estudio reunió, de una forma ordenada y concisa, varias experiencias exitosas que garantizan un modelo sostenible para el turismo desde el punto de vista social, ambiental y económico. Estas experiencias se distribuyen en cuatro tipos de turismo: el turismo cultural o patrimonial, turismo urbano, el aprendizaje de idiomas y el turismo rural. En total, más de cuarenta casos de éxito fueron analizados, diez por tipo, en doce países europeos: Italia, Francia, España, Holanda, Dinamarca, Reino Unido, Polonia, Alemania, Grecia, Noruega, Austria e Irlanda. Por otra parte, este análisis comparativo de los productos turísticos nos ha permitido desarrollar modelos para su aplicación en otras realidades geográficas pero, sobre todo, para la realidad del turismo en Galicia. **Palabras clave:** evaluación comparativa, turismo sostenible, historias de éxito, Galicia.

**RESUMO:** O termo *benchmarking* pode ser definido como um processo sistemático de identificação, comparação e aprendizagem, a partir das melhores práticas ou experiências de sucesso de um sector particular, em diversas áreas geográficas, através da desagregação e análise sequencial de um conjunto de factores que determinam o seu éxito. Este método de análise comparativa tem como resultado a melhoria dos procesos-chave de um sector ou a adopção das práticas que, após uma investigação apurada, se revelaram ser as mais bem sucedidas em outros sectores. Este estudo reuniu, de uma forma ordenada e concisa, várias experiências de sucesso que garantem um modelo turístico sustentável do ponto de vista social, ambiental e económico. Estas experiências distribuem-se por quatro tipos de turismo: cultural ou patrimonial; urbano, ideomático; turismo em espaço rural. No total, foram analisados mais de quarenta casos de sucesso, dez por tipo de turismo, em doze países europeus: Itália, França, Espanha, Holanda, Dinamarca, Reino Unido, Polónia, Alemanha, Grécia, Noruega, Áustria e Irlanda. Por outro lado, esta análise comparativa de productos turístico permitiu-nos desenvolver modelos para serem aplicados em outras realidades geográficas, mas sobretudo aplicáveis à realidade da Galiza. **Palavras-chave:** avaliação comparativa, turismo sustentável, histórias de sucesso, Galiza.

## INTRODUCTION

In the recent communication from the Commission on tourism, the role of tourism in the European economy is acknowledged (European Commission, 2010). The sector is reported to contribute some 4% to EU GDP, representing the third largest socioeconomic activity after the trade and distribution and construction sectors. In the future this will be one of the economic activities with the largest potential to generate growth and employment in the EU. In this same communication a new tourism policy is adopted “for making European tourism a competitive, modern, sustainable and responsible industry” (European Commission, 2010, p. 14). Besides, the Commission explicitly acknowledged that tourism development “must also respond to concerns relating to social matters, territorial cohesion and the protection of and capitalization on natural and cultural heritage” (European Commission, 2010, p. 6).

In Galicia tourism is also a strategic economic sector, as it contributes some 10.9% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 10.3 of its workforce (Exceltur, 2009). The recent Act of the Galician Parliament no. 14/2008 on Tourism sets forth the indisputable objective of building sustainable tourism in the region, thereby integrating a territorial, environmental, cultural and purely business approach to tourism, in which the highest economic but also social profitability is attained

and in which significant resources due to their environmental, cultural or landscape values are protected. Thus, the main objectives of the new Galician Act on Tourism are completely aligned with those set forth from the Commission (2010; 2007), stating that the future of the sector means developing a model of sustainable tourism including its economic viability, quality employment, a clear push to innovation, the involvement of local communities, preserving cultural wealth and biological diversity, ensuring an efficient use of resources and guaranteeing the necessary cooperation across destinations.

Once the importance of the challenge of sustainability in tourism is acknowledged as a potential engine for innovation and growth, and as some progress has been already made in order to improve its outcomes, more progress is now to be expected. Therefore the European Commission claims that it is necessary to mobilise the agents in the tourism sector so that they produce and share knowledge. The goal of the European Commission is to improve visibility and recognition of the best practices by citizens and society in the EU and to strengthen knowledge and understanding of practices that are related to sustainability and competitiveness so that all these aspects are mutually reinforced. At present, the European Commission as well as the Galician regional government are giving priority to research studies strengthening the degree of awareness and information available and motivating sustainability in tourism. Besides, they try to focus the attention of stakeholders (for example universities, research institutes and public and private observatories) in acquiring knowledge related to the challenges of sustainability for European tourism. This will also improve cooperation and the supply of formal and non formal training in tourism.

Involvement at local and regional level has to be fostered through alliances across destinations of different kind taking part in sustainable tourism management, which pioneers shall start and keep open to the participation of all stakeholders (Cawley & Gillmor, 2008; Ivars, 2003; Vera, 1997). The European Commission (2010; 2007) also supports the strengthening or creation of technological platforms in tourism. One platform can work through which experiences of good or bad practices are exchanged and from which cooperation shall take place between tourism destinations (Kozak, 2004). Fostering the exchange of best practices for the sustainable management can significantly contribute to the competitiveness of tourism destinations. These platforms help adopt a more specific approach reflecting the territorial and economic characteristics of destinations.

In this context, the research project “Benchmarking of tourism products and implementation in Galicia” is a proposal aiming at the generation of knowledge in the tourism sector around a series of sus-

tainable tourism products: cultural or heritage tourism, urban tourism, language learning tourism and rural tourism. The goal of this analysis is to test the future replicability of the experiences in the territorial reality of Galicia and therefore the study gathered, in an orderly and synthetic way, diverse successful experiences from other European countries so that there is a link between knowledge acquisition, dissemination and implementation of sustainable and competitive tourism initiatives. In total, more than forty success experiences were analysed, ten per each type, in twelve European countries: Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom. Over 40 qualitative SWOT analyses, as suggested by Pascual (1999), were performed and they were applied to 40 products in Galicia.

## OBJECTIVES

In order to face the challenges mentioned above, the research project “Benchmarking of tourism products and implementation in Galicia” set the following goals:

a) Main goals:

**MG1:** To analyse in a systematic and integrated way the direct and indirect factors turning some particular tourism initiatives into good practices in different countries.

**MG2:** To study the transferability and implementation level of European good practices in Galicia.

b) Specific objectives:

**SO1:** To analyse the European experience in rural, urban, cultural and language learning tourism.

**SO2:** To study the trends of European markets regarding rural, urban, cultural and language learning tourism.

**SO3:** To analyse management systems and set up a database with the (economic, sociocultural and environmental) sustainability indicators and quality of each of the destinations under study.

**SO4:** To prepare a catalogue of good practices with explanatory records summarising in a fast and visual manner the key factors to success of good practices. This shall allow tourism agents to establish new development strategies to develop competitive and sustainable destinations.

**SO5:** To provide actors in tourism (the regional and local administration, entrepreneurs, tour operators) with a reference tool on good practices in Europe that may help destinations identify methods and strategies they need to implement to improve and increase their market share in the national and international market.

**SO6:** To create quality products such as the publication of good practices or the database aimed only at tourist agents of our region but also at those developing their activities in other Atlantic areas with similar features, such as Asturias, Cantabria, and the Basque Country.

**SO7:** To foster cooperation and coordination of the University of Santiago with institutions such as the Institute of Tourism Studies of Galicia (Galician Government), which focuses on the study and analysis of tourism trends and markets, with the goal of gathering and optimising resources and unifying efforts towards a common goal: to get to know the European tourism market, its trends and the potential transfer of their experiences to Galicia.

## PROJECT PHASES

A benchmarking project was developed for sustainable tourism in the following phases:

### *Preparatory phase - background*

Drafting the report started with a clarification of key concepts. These are operational definitions that help make decisions in the next phases. Therefore, key words such as benchmarking, successful experience, sustainable tourism, were classified. Each type of tourism was assigned an initial definition in its corresponding conceptual framework: urban, cultural, language learning and rural tourism. This piece of research also brings together the outcomes of the reviews of theoretical contributions that analyse benchmarking and the information systems applied. This analysis helps obtain better accuracy and to define the concept of *benchmarking of sustainable tourism* and justify the use of the term regardless of the type of tourism and the different segments.

*Phase I Identification of successful experiences, in which, depending on a series of sustainability indicators, the criteria to decide whether or not an initiative in sustainable tourism was successful or not were identified. Amongst those complying with such indicators, the ones with more potential for transference in Galicia were also identified.*

*Phase II Information gathering and processing. In order to gather information the project has based its implementation on different basic methodologies:*

Field research: “In situ” field work has been undertaken to know the reality of different tourism products. Therefore experiences in France, Norway, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Italy, Holland or Poland were visited.

Personal interviews with the most important stakeholders in successful experiences were performed, especially for language learning tourism with over ten interviews in France, Ireland or the United Kingdom.

*Phase III Information analysis.* After compilation and analysis of the information, individual reports were drafted for each successful experience of each European country classified according to the type of tourism, in an orderly and structured manner.

*Phase IV Adaptation of sustainable initiatives to Galicia.* In this phase we determined the “destination” that could be a recipient of good practices in the Galician territory. This part tried to transfer to Galicia those successful actions or experiences undertaken in Europe in the field of sustainable tourism and that have shown their capacity to be sustainable and that are likely to be transferred to other geographical contexts.

*Phase V Once each experience had been analysed a Qualitative Diagnosis was undertaken for each of them. Therefore SWOT analysis were used, to identify the strong points (Strengths and Opportunities) and weak points (Weaknesses and Threats) and to synthesise the main conclusions of the current situation regarding economic development (Pascual, 1999). This synthesis was undertaken in four groups, two internal, of the territory where the initiative is going to be replicated, in this case Galicia (Weaknesses and Strengths) and two external or resulting from trends foreign to the territory (Threats and Opportunities). Out of the factors or variables on which we can have an impact those with a higher level of efficiency or development are called Weaknesses. On the other hand, those to be strengthened, as they have a positive value at present, those needed to attain the objectives set, and those that may provide competitiveness to the territory if further developed, are called Strengths and therefore we have to maintain them. Amongst the external factors or trends, i.e. those factors out of effective control, the positive or favourable ones are called Opportunities while the negative or unfavourable ones are called Threats. In this way, whatever the strategy developed, it has to be based on strengths thus reinforcing them, and on correcting the weaknesses. Thus, the territory will be in a position to obtain the maximum benefit from favourable trends as well as to reduce the impact of negative ones. In order to synthesise the successful sustainable initiatives over forty SWOT analysis were carried out, one per initiative.*

*Phase VI Development of a technological platform.* Developing a technological platform is a something pertaining to all the different phases but this last one entailed providing the information of each of the experiences analysed. Through a web platform the knowledge generated from this research was transferred and this project became an example of how to activate the “third mission of universi-

*ties". The platform aims at gathering, organising and classifying all documents generated in research and have them available for different stakeholders in a fast and easy way. Practical information regarding the conferences and meetings in which the benchmarking team took part are also available.*

**Phase VII Dissemination of knowledge.** To disseminate knowledge the project attended several international conferences in India, Portugal and Israel, apart from domestic ones in Palma de Mallorca and Madrid.

**Phase VIII Drafting of final report and publication.** All main conclusions and the different initiatives analysed by the team were gathered in the report.

*Phase IX Throughout the whole project life, there has been follow-up, as well as a mid-term assessment and a final one to verify the achievement level of the objectives set.*

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

### *Benchmarking*

There are several types of benchmarking (Kozak, 2004; Boxwell, 1994). This study focuses on functional benchmarking, which could be defined as the systematic process of identifying, comparing and learning from the best practices or successful experiences of a particular sector in diverse geographical areas by disaggregating and analysing in an orderly manner the set of factors that condition their success. The outcome of this process helps improve key processes of a sector or adapt those practices, that after a long search have been proven successful, to other areas.

### *Successful experience*

This is the definition of successful experience developed by the study team: a tourism initiative or project, both public or private, of proven success according to a series of sustainability indicators for which information is gathered in an orderly, systematic and simple way, including photographs or illustrations to document the explanation and whose content or reality can be accessed through the internet. The experience shall be determined from a geographical perspective by being gathered in European countries and with potential application in a third country, Galicia in this case, where through other programmes, plans or preparatory studies its absence or need was identified. Lastly, it shall also be necessarily classified according to its content, belonging to the four types of tourism analysed (cultural, language learning, rural and urban tourism).

### *Sustainable development*

The concept of sustainable tourism derives from a new and universally accepted paradigm, that of sustainable development (Weaver, 2006; Hall & Page, 2002). This concept was firstly stated by the report *Our Common Future*, also known as *Brundtland Report*, as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 43).

### *Sustainable tourism*

Since the 1960s the mainstream tourism model was fundamentally based on mass sun and beach products with little complementary supply (Weaver, 2006; Vera, 1997). In recent years, tourism has started a development strategy from a different perspective. This is an activity that must necessarily be compatible with the natural and social environment in which it develops and it must relate to issues such as quality, integration and conservation as key to competitiveness. In this way, the need to harmonise economic growth with environmental protection gave way to sustainable tourism (Weaver, 2006). After the popularisation of the concept of sustainable development by the end of the 1980s, the concept of sustainable tourism developed, first in opposition to mass tourism and later as a desirable object of all types of existing tourism. Therefore, the concept of sustainable tourism applies the principles of sustainable development to tourism activities.

The *Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism* sets forth nine principles to achieve this type of tourism (European Commission, 2007), and they were also considered in order to analyse the applicability of the experiences to Galicia:

1. Take a holistic and integrated approach with a whole range of activities that affect the economy, society and the environment in a positive way.
2. Plan for the long term taking care of the needs of future generations.
3. Achieve an appropriate development pace, reflecting and respecting the host resources, communities and tourism destinations.
4. Committed participation of all stakeholders in decision making and practical implementation.
5. Use the best and most recent available knowledge for initiatives and actions, shared across Europe.
6. Where there is uncertainty about outcomes, preventive action should be taken to avoid damage to the environment or society.
7. Reflect impacts in costs (user and polluter pays).



8. The carrying capacity of sites and wider areas should be recognised, with readiness and ability to limit, when appropriate, the amount of tourism development and volume of tourist flows.
9. Continuous monitoring.

## CRITERIA TO SELECT A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE

The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) stated the need to have tourism destinations examined according to environmental, economic and socio-cultural criteria according to a series of indicators (Carbone & Yunis, 2005). The lack of an accurate and widely accepted methodology to measure the degree of sustainability of experiences led the WTO to propose a series of sustainability indicators. In a summarised way, *economic indicators* included are the following: creation of local employment (both for men and women), the types of jobs created, the number of business created and their type, the increase in the number of visitors per place, the increase in the average stay or the average expenditure per day of stay. Amongst the *socio-cultural indicators* the relationship between tourists and the local population (level of accommodation of tourism to the dynamics of local life), the preservation of material and non material heritage, the degree of satisfaction of the local community with the activity, the increase in the educational level of the local population are taken into account. Amongst *environmental indicators*, the generation of waste, increase in energy consumption, preservation of the landscape and biological diversity, the preservation level of the protected spaces, the improvement of environmental information, amongst others, are included. In order to analyse the success of a good practice, twenty indicators were agreed amongst those mentioned, although not all of them could be analysed for each experience. The reason was just that the data were not available, an issue that becomes a determining factor when using sustainability indicators.

## RURAL TOURISM AS A FORM OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Due to the existence of many overlapping concepts such as *rural tourism*, *nature tourism* or *farm tourism* the group needed to first clarify these concepts. *Rural tourism* is any type of tourism activity located in the rural environment (Ivars, 2000). *Nature tourism* is mainly developed in rural areas and has as its main motivation the performance of recreational and leisure activities, the interpretation and/or knowledge of nature at different levels and the practice of sports of different physical intensity and risk using the natural environment in a specific way (Antar-Ecotono, 2004). On the other hand, *farm tourism* or *agritourism* is one of the types of rural tourism in which complementary services or activities are provided, with or without accommoda-

tion, with or without maintenance, paying a price, in agricultural, cattle or forestry farms in which the activity is ongoing (Phillip, Hunter & Blackstock, 2010). Farm tourism must therefore necessarily mean that the activity of the farm is maintained while at the same time it can offer its customers a series of services or activities.

**Table 1. Successful experiences in Rural Tourism**

Initiative	Region	Country
1. Aude Cathar Country. France	Languedoc-Rousillon	France
2. Trekking in France		France
3. Regional Natural Park of Grands Causses.	Midi-Pyrénées	France
4. Agritourism in France, an environmental and quality proposal		France
5. Pick-your-own or <i>cuillete a la ferme</i> practices. United Kingdom, France and Italy		United Kingdom, France and Italy
6. Tourism in vegetable gardens in Parc Agrari at Baix Llobregat	Catalonia	Spain
7. Lands ends	Cape North and Point du Raz in Cap Sizum	Norway and France
8. Cheese route of Bregenzerwald	Vorarlberg	Austria
9. Rural pubs around Dublin and the Bistrot at Pays en France		Ireland and France
10. Tourism in palace gardens		Germany and France
11. Fishing tourism in the Norwegian Lapland	Finnmark	Norway

In total eleven successful experiences of sustainable rural tourism of scarce incidence in Galicia were analysed in seven European countries (Austria, France, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom). Tourism in rural areas in Galicia proved to be a key activity in the processes of economic development taking place since the 1990s, but focusing exclusively on accommodation and the recovery of architectural heritage (Lois, Piñeira & Santomil, 2009; Santos, 1999). Sustainable rural tourism must become a factor for economic diversification

and therefore activities such as the ones analysed under nature tourism (e.g., hiking, active tourism, ecotourism) must be fostered, as well as support to agritourism and quality agrofood products in particular. On the other hand, agritourism and its related activities had very little impact in Galicia or were very scarce in comparison with other countries such as France, Germany or Austria in which the supply of agritourism has doubled in recent decades. This reasoning led to three successful experiences in agritourism to be analysed, experiences four, five and six (Table 1, Table 2).

**Table 2. Transfer of sustainable rural tourism initiatives to Galicia – summary chart**

Successful experience analysed	Transfer to Galicia
1. Aude Cathar Country. France	Creation of Territorial Quality Brands in the territories of the 32 Rural Development Groups (RDG), in order to identify (agricultural, crafts related, tourist or heritage) products and services of a particular territory.
2. Trekking in France	Creation of a planning structure in order to foster joint action to promote, plan and expand the network of official and marked paths in Galicia in a safe and efficient manner.
3. Regional Natural Park of Grands Causses.	To favour the concept set forth in the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in protected natural spaces, so that decisions are made with all stakeholders, including those in tourism, to improve governance.
4. Agritourism in France, an environmental and quality proposal	Agritourism and its related activities had little repercussion in Galicia and were scarce, therefore a regional network for agritourism should be structured and supported.
5. Pick-your-own or cuillete a la ferme practices. United Kingdom, France and Italy	Collection of agricultural produce directly by the consumer in farms near the cities in the Atlantic axis where several counties with a Denomination of Origin can be found, such as those of Pimientos de Herbón (green peppers). A link is to be established between tourism and food quality products.
6. Tourism in vegetable gardens in Parc Agrari at Baix Llobregat	This is another type of agritourism, tourism in vegetable gardens, another way of being a tourist while paying attention to the habits of farmers, as well as to the space, the food, the culture and health. Through the creation of guided tours, visitors may get to know different crops produced in the area and, as important as that, enjoy them during the season. In Galicia there are plenty of counties with vegetable production such as that of pepper, turnip greens, potatoes...
7. Lands ends	To design a Management and Conservation Master plan for Cape Fisterra, in a global project to preserve this space through an adequate integration of different uses and activities, specially those in the public area. Several programmes should be established: management plan, natural and cultural heritage conservation plan and a plan for public use.

*(Continued)*

*(cont.)*

Successful experience analysed	Transfer to Galicia
8. Cheese route of Bregenzerwald	Creation of specific tourism products such as cheese with cheese making units in a Denomination of Origin, taking into account cooperation and co-participatory mechanisms with food festivals and restaurants.
9. Rural pubs around Dublin and the Bistrot in Pays en France	Galicia has areas of special concentration of bars and taverns near large cities such as the “ <i>furanchos</i> ” in the Salnés, offering singular experiences of contact with rural area and the chance to enjoy its own wine and food.
10. Tourism in palace gardens	Galicia has numerous and peculiar Pazos (manors) with gardens that are real microcosms with important tourism potential. Museums may be created, theme visits organised, its own food catering services developed, merchandising and specialised shops opened. Adding value to the gardens in Pazos could help create tourism products of singularity and distinctiveness.
11. Fishing tourism in the Norwegian Lapland	Responsible sports fishing from fisher’s vessels.

## URBAN TOURISM

Urban tourism is that being developed specifically in cities, with the goal of getting to know and visiting interesting spots in the city. Sometimes urban tourism and cultural tourism are mistaken, as they are complementary but both models need to be differentiated. Cultural tourism, on the other hand, need not happen in a city, it can happen in any other environment. Regarding urban tourism, we must highlight that it is based on the use of urban polycultures and getting to know those urban areas that, due to their landscape, morphology and/or function, generate more interest in terms of enjoying leisure time. In this way, tourism in cities is not just a product for external consumption but a condition that fosters their habitat and daily activities, uses and equipment. The most important thing is to *live* the city as any other citizen (Castro & Piñeira, 2009). Stakeholders see this kind of tourism not only as a factor to generate economic development, wealth and jobs, but also as a strategic axis towards a policy to renew urban spaces as it implies, amongst other things, the rehabilitation of buildings, the improvement of public spaces, the creation of leisure areas (river or seaside promenades), equipment, improvement in accessibility, mobility and safety, etc.

In recent years Galician cities have taken important steps in terms of urban renewal (Castro, 2010). Santiago de Compostela, the administrative capital of Galicia and World Heritage Site, the ending point of all the pilgrimage routes, followed the path of constructing em-

blematic buildings such as the City of Culture. A Coruña followed the path of enhancing its Art Nouveau buildings and also building new emblematic constructions such as the Domus. Ferrol, the traditional naval and military city in the North, decided to recover the Art Nouveau environment of the neighbourhood of Magdalena. In the Rías Baixas we find two large towns: Vigo and Pontevedra, the latter decided to foster a quiet environment focusing on well-being and one of the most interesting old towns in Spain. Lugo and Ourense are the most important inland towns. Ourense focused on thermal tourism, while Lugo focused on its Roman past and its Roman wall, also a World Heritage Site. There are also other smaller towns involved in such processes. All these are modern and cultural cities for which the urban tourism sustainable initiatives were analysed in different European capitals (Table 3).

**Table 3. Transfer of sustainable urban tourism initiatives to Galicia – summary chart**

Successful experience analysed	Transfer to Galicia
1. Albergo Difusso. Puglia. Italy.	There are many undervalued and underused historical old towns in Galicia, with plenty of derelict buildings (Betanzos, Corcubión, Corcubión, Muros, Noia, Padrón, Pontevedra...) that may be reactivated by incorporating horizontal hotel structures such as the one started by Albergo difussi, with differentiated elements that bring old towns back to life.
2. Open House. London	With the exception of Santiago de Compostela cities were not understood in Galicia as an interesting tourism product. At present, the seven Galician cities are managing to have an important role in tourism promotion in which the functional and artistic features of each of them are highlighted. The idea of an open city could be used here too.
3. Lodz. Recovery of industrial heritage.	Galicia has a rich and varied industrial heritage. Since the 18 <sup>th</sup> century there was an increase in industrial activities with many pottery factories, mines, salting and canning factories developing in the region. However, they have not been acknowledged for tourism so far. Some remarkable examples of this heritage are the whaler factories of Cangas de Morrazo and Bueu, in the province of Pontevedra, Caneliñas in Cee, south of Fisterra in A Coruña and Portiño de Moras in Lugo; the pottery factory of Sargadelos, or Las Reales Fábricas de Ponte Xuvia in Ferrol, wind mills in Catoira, the canning factories of Massó in Cangas and Bueu...
4. Sustainable mobility in the city	Design of Master plans for bikes in Galician cities, to foster the use of bikes, with diagnosis, bike paths networks, parking and training and awareness programmes.

*(Continued)*

*(cont.)*

Successful experience analysed	Transfer to Galicia
5. City and health. Bisceglie	The urban landscape of the Galician waterfront was never of much relevance historically. With time several waterfronts were recovered. However, they could be better used if leisure and sports activities were developed on them, addressing different age groups.
6. Riverside beaches. Berlin	
7. À la carte visits	
8. Urban tourism without borders	Need to develop a tourism accessibility plan for Galicia in order to identify those products or destinations with the conditions to be promoted for all tourists, including those with some kind of disability, reduced mobility or special needs. Accessibility should be acknowledged through a quality label.
9. Psiri, the phoenix of Athens	Any of the middle-sized Galician cities could join the slow movement, especially when we try to combine modernity with our identity, cultural and traditional traits. All of them have the basic requirement of not being above 50,000 inhabitants and they try to be competitive as tourist destinations, each with a different style. The old town of Allariz gathers the most important motto of what a Citta Slow is.
10. Cittaslow or slow cities	

## CULTURAL TOURISM

Cultural tourism relates to visiting sites of historic, artistic, scientific or heritage value. According with Santos (2006), there are two approaches for defining cultural tourism. In a narrow sense, cultural tourism includes movements of people due to cultural reasons, such as study trips, trips to festivals or other cultural events, visiting sites and monuments, visits to study nature, art or folklore, and pilgrimages. In a wider sense, cultural tourism is defined as all movements of people to cover the human need for diversity and to increase the cultural level of the individual triggering new knowledge, experiences and contacts. Cultural tourism provides more than 2.5% of Galicia's Gross Domestic Product, according to a report from the Observatorio da Cultura Galega (2005). This source states that in 2008, 550,091 people not residing in Galicia visited the region attracted mainly by its heritage, ethnographic aspects and landscape, that is 242,995 more than in 2001.

Table 4 shows ten experiences analysed for cultural tourism.

**Table 4. Transfer of sustainable cultural tourism initiatives to Galicia – summary chart**

Successful experience analysed	Transfer to Galicia
1. “Teleguide-Italy. Culture service”. Cultural information through mobile telephones in Italy.	Visitors coming to Galicia attracted by its food and important natural and cultural heritage could move around historic sites and get to know its tourism offer using their mobile phones. Therefore the authorities should set up access points in strategic spots in the city where they could download information. These would be virtual tourist information offices, open 24/7 and adapted to the needs and timings of travellers.
2. “Musical festival Grafenegg”. Development and use of cultural tourism in Austria.	Promotion of classical, pop-rock and world music festivals in the summer months in the Pazo de Liñares, in the municipality of Lalín, which is being renewed to turn it into a cultural centre. This is a county, Deza, of little tourism consolidation but with great and varied cultural potential. Besides, its strategic geographic location is stressed by good communications to cities such as Santiago and Ourense.
3. “Montmorillon. City of Writing”. Discovering the forgotten guilds of France.	The concept of the city of writing means that in a particular picturesque area the largest number of shops and workshops relative to books must be located, as well as crafts shops, until a network of cities of writing is created. Its applicability is possible in Galicia’s smaller towns, where the model can be reinterpreted with a completely different topic, from the creation of musical instruments to fisheries or stage arts.
4. “Tour around the castles of the sea of Puglia”. Adding value to the maritime watch-towers of Italy.	This is a model that could help Galicia attach value to the many architectural legendary resources it has, and which are many times neglected. An action plan for the “Watch-towers” of the Ría of Arousa should be established. There we have the towers of Torre Santo Tomé do Mar or San Sadurniño in Cambados, as well as those in A Lanzada, Calago in Vilanova de Arousa and those of Oeste in Ca-toira.
5. “Città aperte”. A circuit without borders around art in Italy.	One of the most important difficulties for cultural tourism in Galicia is precisely the opening times of monuments and sites of interest. Many of them are closed throughout the day, they only open for events, ceremonies, mass... This limitation interrupts the tours around historic towns, therefore tourists tend to go for cultural visits in the morning and then after lunch they go somewhere else or even to the beach. Therefore, “opening the cities” in Galicia in the summer months should be considered, with new tours around cities and monuments without fears of finding them closed.
6. “Barcelona Movie Walks”. Film routes in Spain.	Galicia is an excellent set for films and in fact has a long history of films being set in its territory.

*(Continued)*

*(cont.)*

Successful experience analysed	Transfer to Galicia
7. "Zuiderzee". An open air museum in Holland.	Doing something similar in Galicia would allow us to go back to legends, guilds and far off destinations that are endangered. The discourse can be varied and the framework any of the deserted villages already existing without having to build a new one, and adapting it to this tourism proposal.
8. Time travel. Historical recreation in Denmark.	The possibility of the tourist undertaking a medium or long stay in a teaching setting (family or camp) and becoming the protagonist of History being recreated makes this a very interesting alternative to be used in the castles of Monterrei (Ourense), Pambre (Lugo) or Sobroso (Pontevedra), as well as in the surroundings of the monastery of Carboeiro (Pontevedra).
9. Myths and legends. A cultural alternative in England.	Galicia has a long and rich tradition of oral heritage that should be gathered in such an original initiative as this British one.
10. In search of the lost heritage. Ancestral travels in England	Making the best use of the archives in Galicia to encourage the historian inside everyone to trace our ancestry through our surnames or create our family history.

## LANGUAGE LEARNING TOURISM

As a consequence of a series of changes, the definition of language tourism developed by the World Tourism Organisation in 1991 must be changed. This definition considered language learning tourism as "a set of activities that people undertake during travelling to different places to those of their natural environment for a consecutive period of time below one year, and logically to experience language immersion in a language that is not that of their natural environment". However, we rather consider language learning tourism as a segment of tourism combining learning a language at destination and practising some kind of motivational activity. Using this definition, as the initial project proposal indicated, several success experiences were analysed combining learning of a foreign language with some kind of leisure activity – such experiences are booming in several European countries (Table 5).

Traditionally, moving to learn a language at destination was considered an educational and cultural activity, as a sub segment of cultural tourism. However, this activity must be considered as an economic activity and mainly tourism activity due to the services it is linked to. At present, the language learning tourism market is adapting to a customer base that demands for their holidays a combination of foreign language learning with other motivational activities, especially those linked to food, folklore, sports and nature tourism. This study gathers



ten case studies of complementarities between the language and different types of tourism, not only cultural tourism. A supply of combined language courses with some other activity comprises the tourism pack (Table 6).

**Table 5. Successful experiences in language tourism**

Initiative	Region	Country
1. Combined courses French and cooking	Languedoc-Rousillon	France
2. Combined courses French and wine	Bourgondy	France
3. Combined courses of English and internships in companies	Dublin	Ireland
4. Combined courses of Spanish and dance	Andalusia	Spain
5. Eastbourne school of English: combined courses of English and rugby	Sussex	Great Britain
6. Cavilam: Combined courses of French and spa therapies	Auvernia	France
7. English Village: total language immersion in the rural environment	Umbria	Italy
8. Les Assemblés Gallèses	Brittany	France
9. Is Aix-En-Provence: Combined course French and trekking	PACA	France
10.MEI. Marketing English		Ireland

**Table 6. Complementarities between language and different tourist activities**

Case study	Language	Activity	Type of tourism
Case study 1	French	French cooking courses	Food tourism
Case study 2	French	Wine tastings	Food tourism
Case study 3	English	Internships in companies	
Case study 4	Spanish	Flamenco	Cultural tourism
Case study 5	English	Rugby	Sports tourism
Case study 6	French	Spa therapy	Thermal tourism

According to the Proceedings of the Conference on Language tourism in Spain *Spanish, as a cultural, tourism and economic value and resource*,<sup>1</sup> the Spanish language market generates around 462.5 million Euros and more than 235,000 foreign students. In the past six years an increase in 56% of students has taken place.

The profile of language tourists is that of a university student, usually women, between 20 and 30 years old, whose most important reasons to travel are to know the country, culture and language (67.3%). Most of them (83%) prefer private centres while only 10% prefer universities to learn or improve the language. The most widely demanded universities are those of Salamanca, Alcalá de Henares and Granada. The most important destinations are Andalusia, Castile-Leon, Region of Madrid, Catalonia and the region of Valencia. Madrid is the third language destination in Spain with around 40,000 students per year, most of them coming from the United States, Germany and France. With the objective of continuing fostering visits from this type of tourists, the city's Tourism Trust has created the Club of the language tourism product. In terms of cities, Salamanca and then Málaga are the most important destinations. The province of Salamanca is the most important traditional destination of this type of tourism, while the province of Málaga is the most important destination in Andalusia, ahead of Seville, Granada and Cadiz. On the other hand, the most important issuing markets are Germany (23.2%), USA (13.4%), France (12.9%), Italy and Great Britain. There are 627 centres offering Spanish for foreigners, out of which 39% of them are located in Andalusia and Madrid. In terms of regions, Andalusia has concentrated its supply in four provinces: Málaga, Seville, Granada and Cadiz, thus making up 94% of the Andalusian supply. In Castile León it is in Salamanca where half the places are in the whole region, while supply in Catalonia is concentrated in Barcelona and in the region of Valencia, in Alicante and Valencia. However, there are hardly any demands for language learning tourism in Galicia. The average stay of language tourism is very high, of four weeks, therefore this is one of the sectors with the longest number of nights. Apart from the average stay and expenditure, this type of tourism is distributed throughout the year, in summer (39%), spring (29%), autumn (20%) and winter (15%). Although most students come in the summer, the level of seasonality is well below that of the tourism sector in general, which concentrates around 47% of all visitors in the summer.

In this context, in some Spanish regions, language learning tourism is a trend that is growing and a clear focus for the future. In contrast,

the Galician supply is starting and still has many shortcomings, as it addresses a university profile and does not cover the needs of potential tourists such as people below 18 years and older than 45 with specific needs such as Spanish for business. The supply in Galicia is provided by the University of Santiago de Compostela, who receives the largest number of students through its International Courses and three private schools belonging to the Galician Association of Spanish language schools, Agaes. Apart from that, there was only a proposal in 2008 through the Sociedade de Imaxe e Promoción Turística de Galicia, Turgalicia, in order to foster language tourism in the region. All this means that the market of language learning tourism in Galicia is little developed in terms of supply and demand of combined courses, but this niche could become a potential product for the future as long as the accommodation, universities and private schools start cooperating amongst them.

In the United Kingdom English as a foreign language brings 500,000 students per year, which means 2% of the total number of tourists, and they have created an industry based on language learning tourism.

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