

# Can indicators for sustainable tourism improve tourism planning in the coastal destinations? – Empirical evidence from Catalonia, Istrian Region and Tuscany Region

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# INTRODUCTION

- Mediterranean attracts the most significant number of tourists, more than any other destination in the world (Apostolopoulos et al., 2014; Escrich, 2019).
- In 2017, Southern/Mediterranean Europe had 267.4 million arrivals, the world's most substantial number, and the next region by the number of arrivals was Western Europe, with 192.7 million (UNWTO, 2018).
- Tourism has a significant and crucial role in the economic development of the Mediterranean countries (Drius et al., 2019), and it has a significant share in the GDP.
- Tourism is one of the most risk-averse industries and dependent upon social, economic and environmental stability.

# INTRODUCTION

- Different studies have emphasised the importance of sustainable tourism - "sustainability paradigm is clearly consistent at the level of discourse, and even in the planning, but does not translate sufficiently into action." (Torres–Delago and Palomeque, 2014)
- Many authors have emphasised the need to develop methods for evaluating the impacts of tourism in order to move towards sustainability (Torres–Delago and Palomeque, 2014; Gahin, et al., 2003; Castellani and Sala, 2010).
- There is a need to measure the effects that sustainable tourism has achieved, and this can best be done through the indicators of sustainability in tourism.

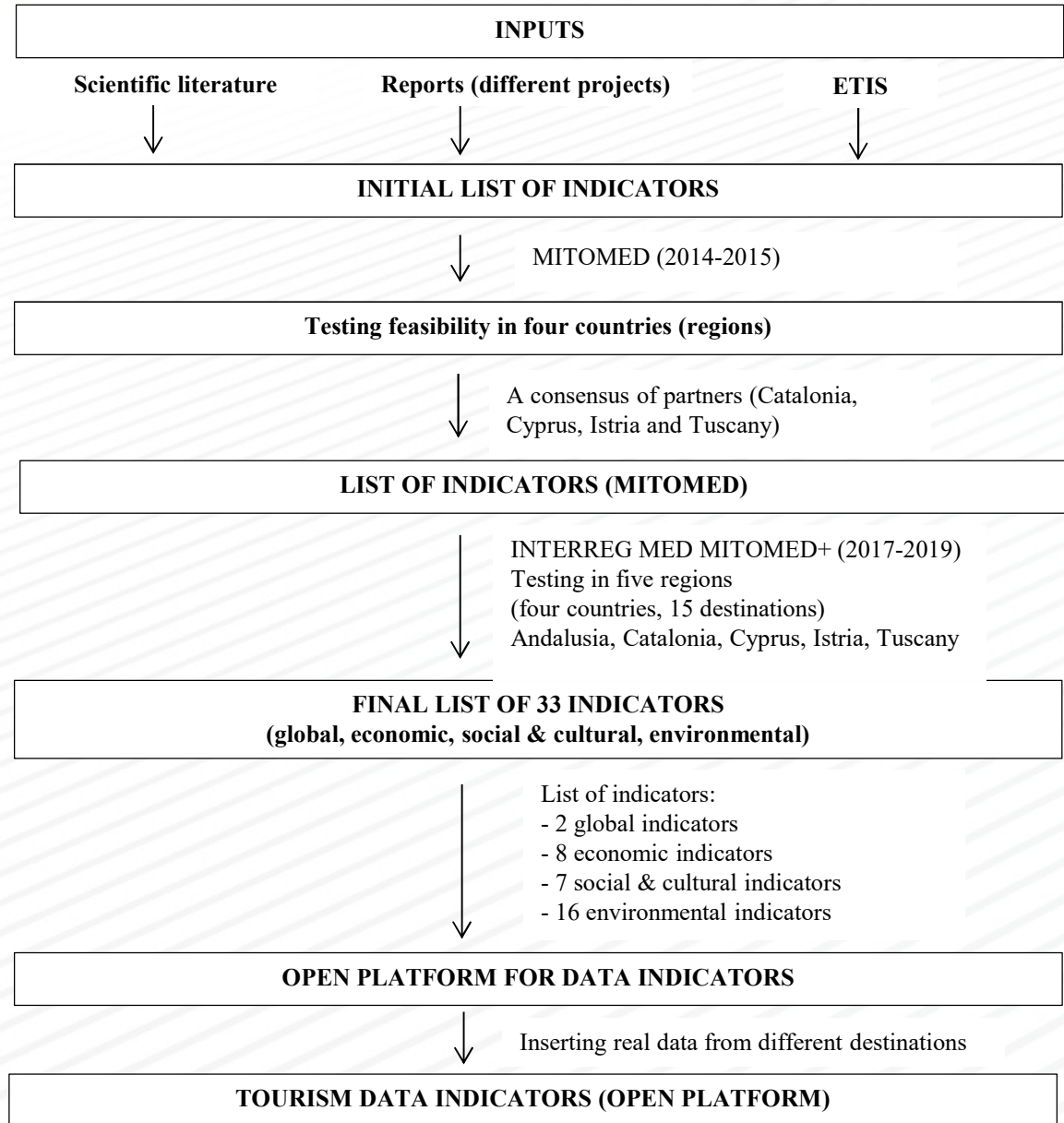
# INTRODUCTION

- The European Union emphasises the importance of sustainable tourism management, focusing on three pillars of sustainability: economic, socio-cultural and environmental – ETIS
- The suggestions from the destinations that voluntarily tested the ETIS were that data collection techniques and procedures needed to be improved (Modica et al., 2018).
- Many different researchers have tried to develop and test different indicators as a useful set of information for stakeholders and decision-makers - **Our goal was to test the usefulness of the MITOMED+ set of indicators at the local and regional levels, aiming at their comparison on a transnational level.**

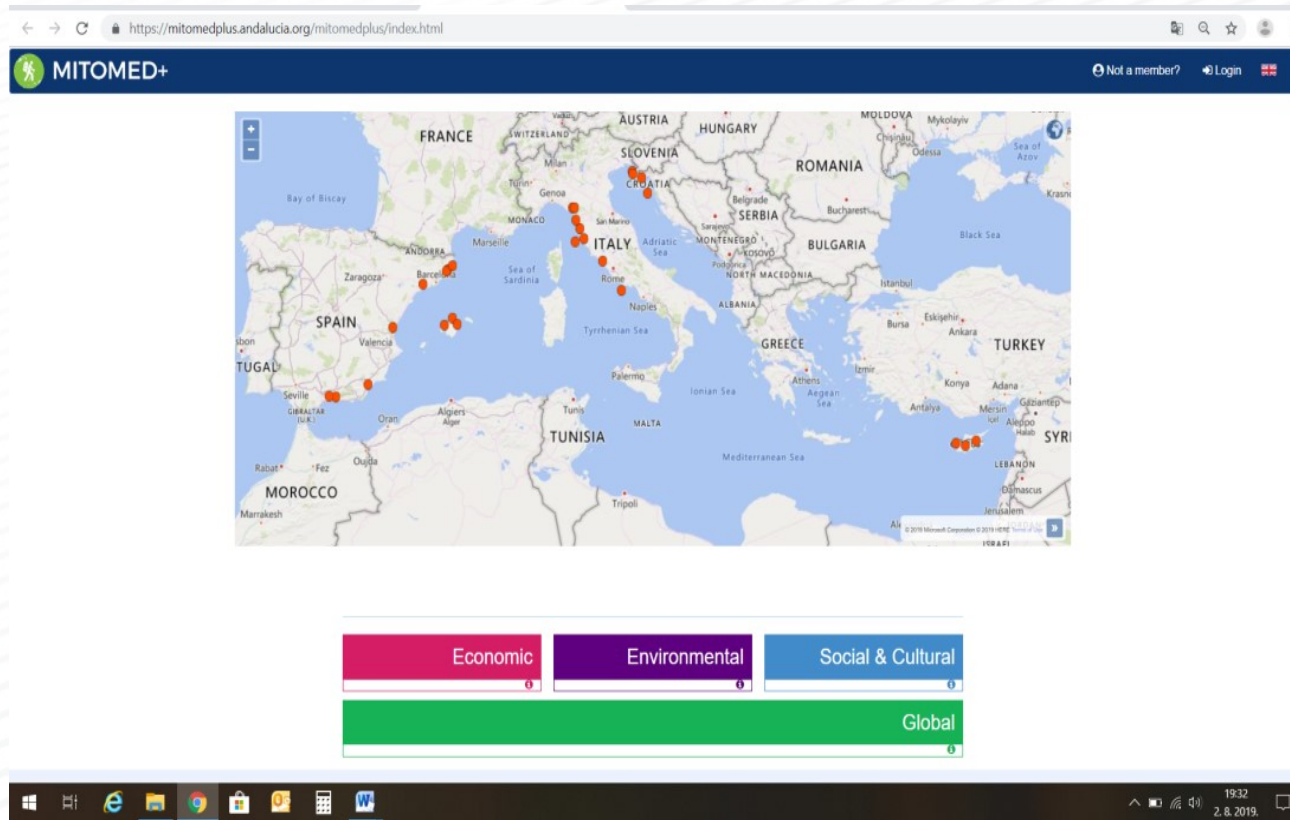
# METHODOLOGY

- **Tourism data indicators system and Online open platform**
  - Indicators calculated in the regions have been collected in different ways: contacting local partners, cities and municipalities, tourist companies, official governmental statistics, tourist offices, local, regional or national statistical bureaux and other stakeholders, or by conducting a visitor's survey.
- Paper presents the analysis of collected indicators in three regions, Catalonia, Istria and Tuscany.
- The paper presents the **interpretations of the specific indicators that can or cannot be compared among different destinations** in these regions.

**The development process of creating a set of indicators and open platform**



## MITOMED+ Open platform for data indicators



Source: Interreg Mediterranean MITOMED+ project,  
<https://mitomedplus.andalucia.org/mitomedplus/index.html>

## General data for the destinations involved in testing phase in Catalonia, Istrian Region and Tuscany Region for 2017

Region	Destination	Total Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Population	Number of beds	Number of tourists	Number of overnight stays	Number of tourists/ residents	Number of beds/ resident
Catalonia	Sant Antoni de Calogne	33.6	10,709	9,369	19,018	669,523	1.78	0.87
	Lloret de Mar	48.7	37,042	33,412	1,233,320	5,624,000	33.3	0.9
	Torredembarra	8.71	15,726	323	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.02
Istria	Poreč	119.0	16,696	28,234	567,062	3,199,276	33.96	1.7
	Novigrad	27.0	4,345	13,451	222,744	1,139,111	51.26	3.1
	Labin	71.85	11,642	10,762	211,477	1,313,654	18.16	0.92
Tuscany	Versilia	438.18	164,723	34,212	638,557	2,593,152	3.88	0.21



# RESULTS

- The indicators are divided into categories: 2 global, 8 economic, 7 social & cultural and 16 environmental indicators.
- Common difficulties emerged in the three countries related to economic aspects, such as the calculation of the relative contribution of tourism to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) destination and tourism employment. This data is available at the regional level, but not at the destination level.
- The GDP data is not available in relation to the tourism sector at local level.

# RESULTS

- Environmental indicators at present lack the collection of data related to water, energy, waste and renewable sources consumption.
- In the Catalonian destinations, data is available, but not in Istria and Tuscany. For instance, in Tuscany, the services are managed by different agencies according to destinations; for this reason, data collection and comparison are difficult.
- Destinations use different approaches in calculating data.
- For instance, in Istria, the data was calculated on the local government unit and in Tuscany, the data was gathered together for several units, based on different legislations.

# DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- The results of gathering the tourism data indicators underline the importance of **involving all tourism stakeholders in the management of the destination** and help them to understand the benefits of using indicators.
- Tourism data indicators system and Online open platform help public and private tourism stakeholders to analyse the current impact of tourism on local economies, environments and societies.
- **The main benefit of this example is that indicators are tested at the transnational level.**

# DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- The results are visible to all; this allows researchers and tourism experts, as well as tourism managers and decision-makers, to study data in the future.
- Other destinations have insights into the possibilities to modify data collection to have useful tourism data indicators that can be compared with other destinations and regions.
- In the end, developing a tool, like the possibility to calculate a set of indicators for local governments, can have a **broader impact in conducting and creating policies that promote sustainable and responsible tourism in the Mediterranean.**

# RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

- Some indicators are available only at a national level and, for some indicators, data is not registered, or there is no available data for indicator calculation.
- The other fundamental limitation for the better understanding of indicators usage as an information guide in tourism destination planning is the fact that indicators were collected only for two years.
- Up to now, there are no possibilities to calculate the trend, which is essential information in sustainable tourism development planning.
- Further data collections and analyses are needed for a full evaluation of the potentialities of our approach and for a thorough comparison of different regions' trends.

# Thank you for your attention!

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