



Healing Alps:

Tourism based on natural health resources as strategic innovation for the development of Alpine regions

ASP815

ALPINE HEALTH TOURISM INNOVATION MODEL

WP2

Output O.T2.2

PP 4 SRC Bistra Ptuj

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1. Summary

Although the pandemic gave a significant blow to the tourism sector, tourism is still one of the most important and fastest-growing economic sectors at an international level. This activity has been positioned as one of the main pillars in the development of many regions and countries, as when it is done properly, it promotes growth, creates jobs, attracts investment, and boosts exports¹.

Tourism is also a major engine for job creation and a driving force for economic growth and development in the Alpine programme area. Yet alpine tourism is currently experiencing challenges such as climate change and is often only focused on specific regions. Global trends such as a thirst for nature-based experiences and increased health consciousness hold considerable opportunities for developing innovative nature-based health tourism value chains. The HEALPS2 project will provide policymakers, regional developers, Alpine regions and SMEs access to innovative knowledge and implementation tools to fulfil this potential.

Innovation is considered essential to the growth and long-term sustainability of health tourism companies and destinations, with continuous innovation taking place to improve competitiveness, but especially the tourists experience and safety with new product offerings. In project HEALPS2 the consortium considers the health privilege of the Alpine region. The project developed specific innovative tools, practices and pilot projects that reflect the lacks and needs of the particular Alpine area and add toward the attractiveness of health opportunities of the Alpine region. The important factor of developed tools, practices and pilot project is their transferability of it into other regions, which is clearly explained in the document.

The overall objective of HEALPS 2 is to develop and improve framework conditions and tools for better utilisation of Alpine-specific natural health resources for the development of innovative tourism products and service chains. It connects academia, different business sectors such as the health sector, tourism and local service providers, as well as innovation and transfer agencies to jointly implement new business models that improve value creation across sectors in Alpine destinations. This transnational and transversal approach is built on unique Alpine natural health resources and strengthens the Alpine territorial innovation capacity.

¹ Puertas Medina, Martín Martín, Guaita Martínez, Serdeira Azevedo, 2022

2. Definition of health tourism

Healthcare is a robust industry, which is tightly related to other sectors such as travel and tourism, wellness and information, communication and technology. The merging of health care and travel sectors has seen it become a prominent movement in the past decade or so. It has created a phenomenal enhancement in human mobility worldwide. In fact, the concept of healthcare travel has its history dating back to the ancient times when people travelled places, searching far and wide, for the best healthcare services.

In the modern era, healthcare traveling has evolved to include well-being enhancement and leisure, as patients require time to recuperate and recover. The evolution has obligated destination marketers to relook into the purpose of healthcare travellers when visiting a destination. The combination of health care, travel, tourism and wellness concepts eventually created the concept of health tourism. The term, "health tourism" or "medical tourism" has been used since the 17th century. In fact, health tourism, medical tourism and wellness tourism are commonly used interchangeably, and perhaps it is essential to note that each of the terminologies is, in fact, different. Health tourist, thus, in this context, is defined as tourist who travel elsewhere to seek and receive health, medical and/or wellness services for different reasons.²

Health tourism is a subsector of general tourism that comprises medical, wellness, and spa tourism. Medical tourism involves people travelling expressly to access medical treatment. People travel for wellness tourism to maintain or enhance their personal health and well-being. Spa tourism focuses on healing, relaxation or beautifying of the body that is preventative and/or curative in nature. The three forms of health tourism (medical, wellness, and spa) reside on two parallel meanings: 'illness-health-wellness' and 'curative-preventative-promotive'. Medical tourism is associated with curing illness; wellness tourism promotes personal well-being and spa tourism is positioned in between, aiming to prevent illness and wanting to sustain health. Wellness and spa tourism are also associated with certain types of facilities offered at 'wellness centres' and spa destinations, while medical tourism focuses on (non-tourism) medical facilities.

Health tourism could therefore be defined as those forms of tourism which are centrally focused on physical health, but which also improve mental and spiritual well-being and increase the capacity of individuals to satisfy their own needs and function better in their environment and society³.

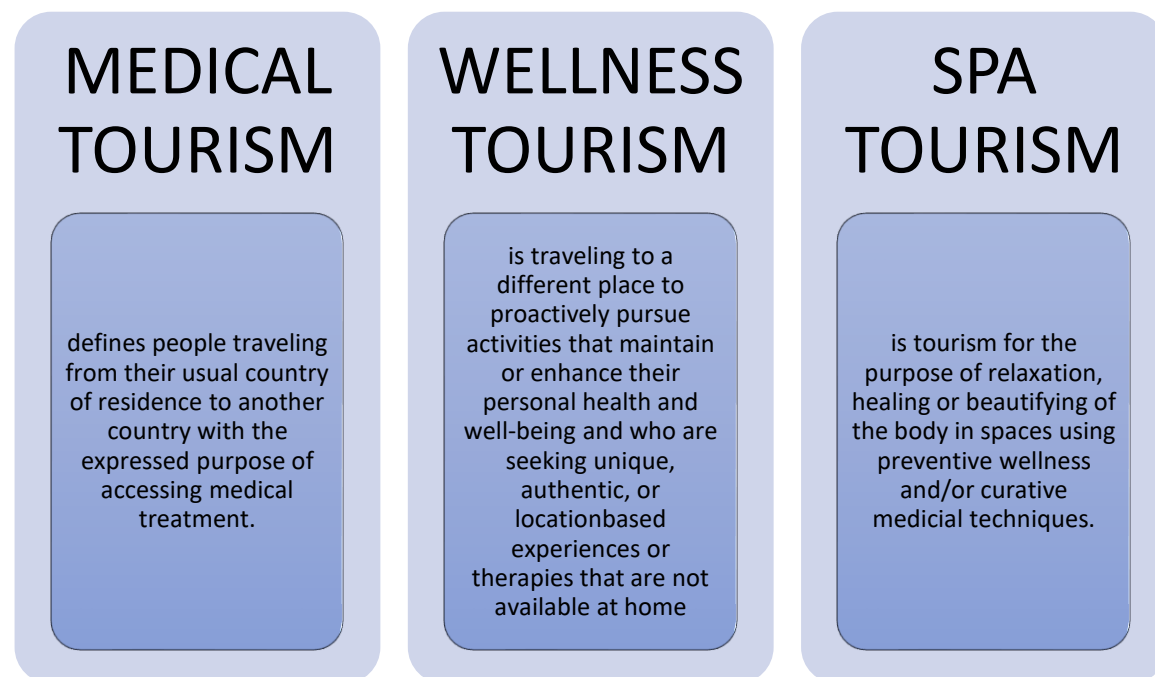
In the scope of a definition of health tourism described above, a new category called "Nature-Based and Health-Promoting Tourism" should be added and described as well. Basically, the recommendations always refer to the development of nature-based and health-promoting tourism that is evidence-based. In this context, evidence-based health tourism' is defined as a temporary movement of a person to a place, where he or she finds a particular intervention for a specific health condition in a holiday setting that will have beneficial effects and promote health and wellbeing based on the best available current scientific research⁴.

² Brian Kee Mun Wong, Sarah Alia Sa'aid Hazley

³ M. Smith & Puczkó, 2015, p. 206

⁴ Pichler et al. 2017

Picture 1: Types of health tourism



Source: Christina Ratcliff: Research for TRAN Committee - Health tourism in the EU: a general investigation, European Parliament, 2017

While Global Wellness Institute include spa tourism under wellness tourism (GWI, 2017), the European Parliament study on health tourism considers spa tourism as a separate type of health tourism combining medical and non-medical elements, and thus situated between medical tourism and wellness tourism at the other end. Illness is related to medical tourism; an example being citizens with a medical condition who seek treatment. Wellness tourism can be perceived as promoting services to healthy citizens who want to enjoy a healthy holiday. Prevention may be linked to spa tourism that appeals, for example, to people with chronic disease or medical conditions. Thus, while in the case of medical tourism, suffering and illness are part of the experience, wellness tourism entails enjoyment, health and rejuvenation — with spa tourism involving both medical and non-medical services.

3. Health tourism in the EU

Worldwide, the wellness economy, that includes wellness tourism and spa tourism, saw high strong pre-pandemic time grew rates for every sector between 2017 and 2019, where each market hit a record valuation. In those years, the wellness economy grew 6.6% annually, a significantly higher rate than global economic growth (4%). In the pandemic year of 2020, the wellness economy contracted by 11%, nearly four times more than the declines in global GDP (-2.8%). However, the 2021 report on The Global Wellness Economy (Global Wellness Institute), predicts the high growth of wellness tourism (21%) and spa tourism (17%) in the period of 2020 – 2025⁵.

In the EU, health tourism lacks reliable figures and credible data sources, with definitional issues contributing to a wide range in the figures available. Nevertheless, it could be estimated that the total volume of health tourism in the EU reached at 56.0 million domestic arrivals and 5.1 million international arrivals (from all over the world), totalling 61.1 million health-tourism arrivals in the EU for 2014. This is health tourism with the main objective of wellness, spa and health.

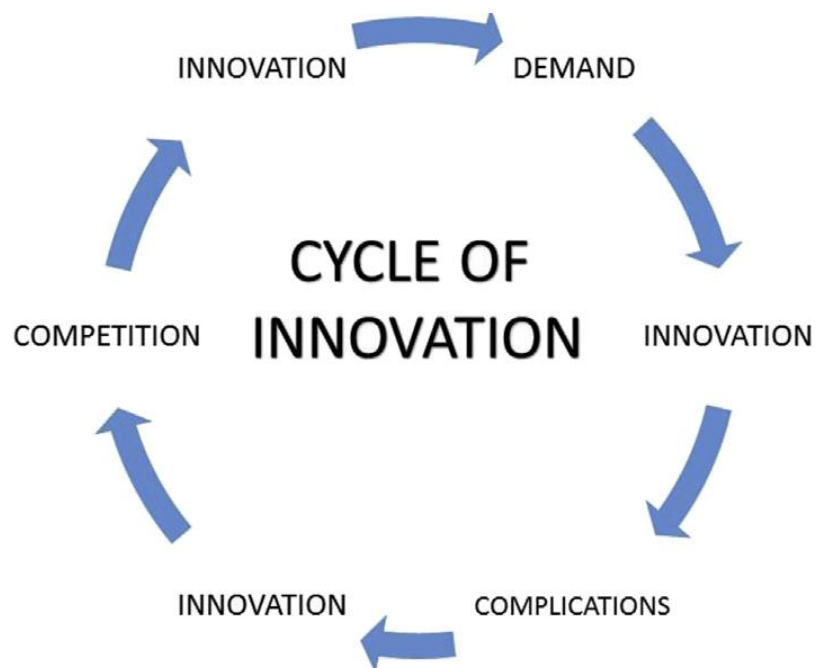
⁵ Global Wellness Institute

The health tourism share of all EU arrivals is 4.3% (international plus domestic). Germany, France and Sweden are key players in EU28 health tourism, with 56% of all health tourism arrivals and 58% of all departures. With two-thirds to three-quarters of the total market, wellness tourism dominates EU health tourism. Health-tourism revenues total €46.9 billion in the EU, which represents 4.6% of all tourism revenues and 0.33% of the EU28 GDP. More than three quarters of the EU health-tourism revenues are contributed by just five countries: Germany, France, Poland, Italy and Sweden⁶.

4. The pursue of innovation in health tourism

Although the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, tourism is still one of the most important and fastest-growing economic sectors at an international level. The lack of tourists had huge consequences on the overall tourism economy, including health tourism enterprises. Nevertheless, the relationship of these enterprises with the healthcare system provided some opportunities to continue operations, with the need of further promoting innovation in this industry [1]. Health policies and tourism market trends are addressing the health tourism industry as one of the main pillars in the development of many regions and countries, as it promotes growth, creates jobs, attracts investment, and boosts exports [2].

Innovation is considered essential to the growth and long-term sustainability of tourism companies and destinations, with continuous innovation taking place to improve competitiveness, but especially the tourists experience and safety with new product offerings. Industry stakeholders are under pressure to continuously deliver new offerings and providing more, faster, and bigger experiences to remain competitive. Yet, some stakeholders are still reluctant towards innovating their value offers, often due to the financial burden or the fear of possibly losing some authenticity in the healing treatments or activities, by radically changing the participant experience in a negative way [3].



Tourism experiences must be “meaningful” to produce wanted innovation potential. The notion of ‘meaningful tourism experiences’ herewith incorporates the values of the three generations of experience economy (i.e., staged experiences, co-creative experiences, transformative experiences) in fostering: (a) pleasurable and enjoyable experiences designed for many tourists; (b) personalized and extended interactions with the tourists and other tourist stakeholders; and (c) life-changing transformation for a few individuals [4]. In this sense, innovation initiatives in health tourism destinations should integrate the engagement of all relevant stakeholders and addressed to implement holistic offerings that produce meaningful experiences of health, wellness and tourism.

⁶ Ratcliff et al

5. Description of the HEALPS2 project

5.1. Overview

Tourism is a major engine for job creation and a driving force for economic growth and development in the Alpine programme area. Yet alpine tourism is currently experiencing challenges such as climate change and is often only focussed on specific regions. Global trends such as a thirst for nature-based experiences and increased health consciousness hold considerable opportunities for developing innovative nature-based health tourism value chains. To fulfil this potential, the project will provide policymakers, regional developers, Alpine regions and SMEs access to innovation knowledge and to implementation tools.

The target groups to which the Innovation Model is addressed are primarily tourism planners and developers, but in an intermediate way it should also be used by target groups such as: local, regional and national public authorities, sectoral agencies, interest groups including NGOs, higher education and research institutes, SMEs, business support organisation, European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG) and European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC).

The HEALPS2 project is built on the ARPAF project HEALPS and the aim is to improve framework conditions for utilising Alpine natural health resources by developing health tourism products and service chains. Lessons learnt from existing innovative, but fragmented cases will be elevated to a transnational level. Supported by the combination of the latest research results with digital solutions, the nature-based health tourism approach will be tested in pilot regions and the experiences then translated into relevant tools for Alpine regional development. By engaging quadruple helix stakeholders, cross fertilisation between tourism, health and other relevant sectors and co-learning is stimulated at transnational level. This shared knowledge at various scales facilitates framework conditions for value generation based on location-bound Alpine assets. HEALPS2 will allow transnational & transversal knowledge transfer from academia to regions and SMEs. Thus, the project contributes to the positioning of the Alpine Space as globally attractive health promoting place.

The main added value of HEALPS2 is the bundling & translation of R&D as well as existing knowledge into adaptable strategies and hands-on tools for Alpine regions to facilitate innovation and transnational cooperation in health tourism and related sectors. The project translates HEALPS' outputs and experiences already made into tailor-made processes & tools and strategies. Methodologies for the identification of need-based transnational cooperation developed in the project strengthen alpine cooperation and help overcome regional short-comings.

5.2. Project relevance

Tourism is a key sector for Alpine economic development and job creation yet is experiencing significant challenges incl. a traditionally weak innovation capacity due to its spatial fragmentation, lack of access to knowledge & little transversal cooperation. Growing markets for health tourism coupled with location-bound natural alpine health resources hold considerable innovation opportunities for unique nature-based health tourism services & transnational cooperation. By including stakeholders from various sectors (not just tourism & health) a nature-based health tourism approach can act as innovation driver in Alpine regions. It can provide new impulses for extending seasons as well as for tourism development in peripheral destinations. To fulfil this potential, the scope of resources must be analysed, framework conditions for innovation must be improved and stakeholders from different sectors & levels must be involved leading to an Alpine health tourism innovation strategy.

Nature-based health tourism can add value and unlock new possibilities for Alpine cooperation. To maximise this potential, the project follows a collaborative approach to the development of strategies and hands-on tools. In the ARPAF project HEALPS, health benefits of Alpine resources were analysed & best practices were identified. These outputs are the basis for the development of an innovative application to assess regional situations regarding nature-based health tourism. Regional health tourism policies were evaluated, specific needs & strategic success factors were identified for implementing a collaborative approach in innovation modelling for Alpine health tourism. Carried out in regional & transnational quadruple helix stakeholder groups this modelling leads to alpine-wide adaptable strategies and techniques including a unique ICT-simulation tool. Policy recommendations prepare the base for more innovation-driven tourism projects across the Alpine Space in the future.

5.3. Project objective

The overall objective of HEALPS 2 is to develop and improve framework conditions and tools for a better utilisation of Alpine-specific natural health resources for the development of innovative tourism products and service chains. It connects academia, different business sectors such as the health sector, tourism and local service providers, as well as innovation and transfer agencies to jointly implement new business models that improve value creation across sectors in Alpine destinations. This transnational and transversal approach is built on unique Alpine natural health resources and strengthens the Alpine territorial innovation capacity.

The project will result in improved conditions for the development of innovative health tourism value chains incl. cross-sectoral & transnational links. Alpine regions -spec. sectoral agencies & public authorities- will have access to hands-on techniques to integrate unique Alpine assets & their sustainable valorisation in tourism strategies. Alpine networks (e.g. AidA) will be empowered to offer efficient support to regions/communities regarding health tourism development. Policy makers at different levels will benefit from specific starting points to initiate innovation-driven health tourism projects. HEALPS2 will thus contribute to increasing the level of maturity of framework conditions at various scales: local, regional & transnational.

6. Presentation of the innovative digital tools developed in the project

6.1. Health Tourism Assessment and Benchmarking Tool (HTAB tool)

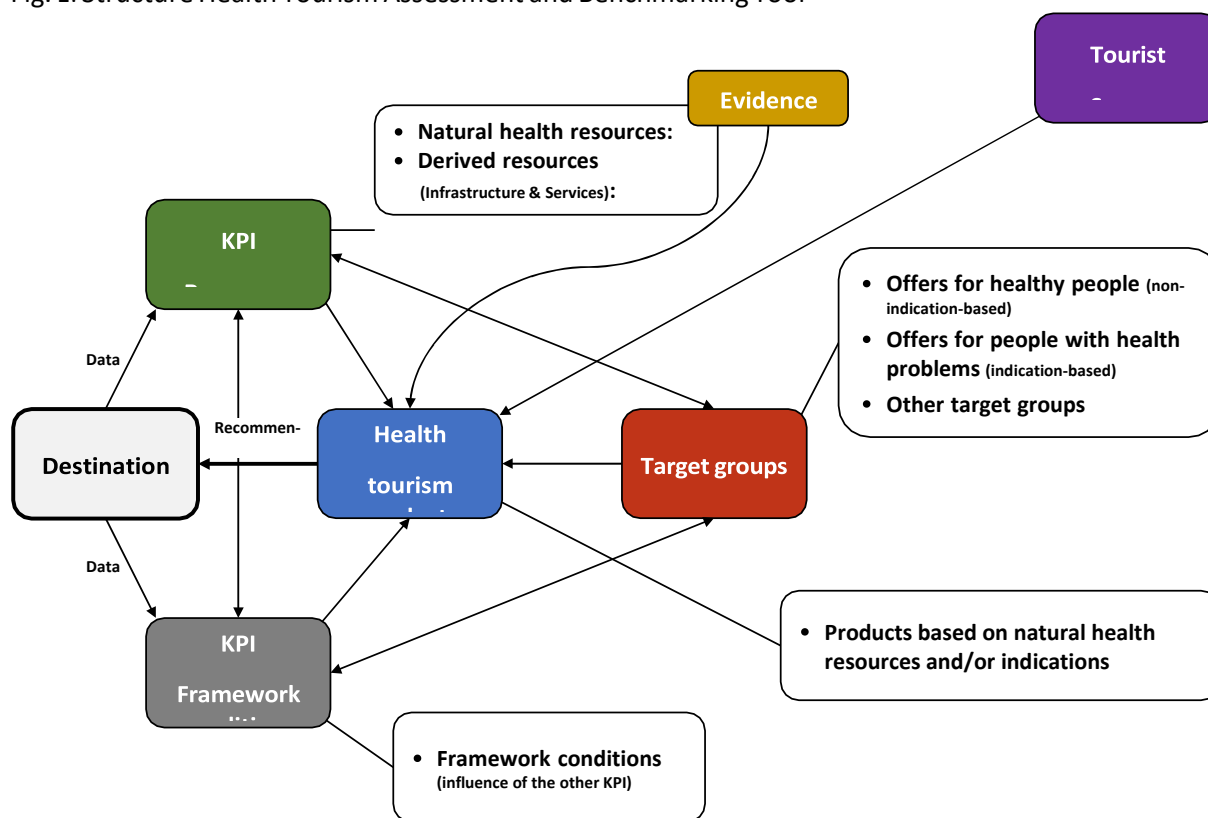
6.1.1 Overview

The aim of the tool (HTAB) is to provide recommendations for the development of health tourism products in alpine destinations or regions. Users of the tool are persons responsible for tourism in the destinations (e.g. DMO, tourism managers, politics).

As input for the tool, success factors in Alpine health tourism are defined (KPI). This is done on the one hand by a literature analysis as well as knowledge from previous research/projects and on the other hand by the exchange with practice partners from tourism (regional workshops to complement, test and finalise the KPIs). In addition, data from our own tourist survey will be used.

As output, recommendations are given in text form for predefined target groups, which are also derived from the literature as well as from previous research work and regional workshops. These recommendations are based on the input of the destinations and thus on the general conditions of the destination as well as on the expectations of the tourists (tourist survey). In addition, the current level of evidence of the health resource on which each recommendation is based is given. The following figure shows the explained model structure in a graphical overview.

Fig. 1: Structure Health Tourism Assessment and Benchmarking Tool



Source: own illustration 2020

According to the current status, the model is based on the following success factors of Alpine health tourism (KPI), which are classified here (KPI details, see Chapter 2):

- | | | |
|--|--|-----------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural health resources: • Derived resources (Infrastructure & Services): | <p>18 Factors</p> <p>23 Factors</p> | } KPI |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism in general: • Health Tourism: • Networks and cooperations: • Regional features: | <p>10 Factors</p> <p>4 Factors</p> <p>8 Factors</p> <p>8 Factors</p> | } KPI Framework |

In principle, the model works as follows: For each of the target groups, a separate optimum is defined for the KPIs. These target group optimums are then compared in the model with the real data from the destination. In this way, the existing framework conditions in the respective destination are analysed with regard to the needs of the defined target groups. Finally, the target groups are identified for which the destination offers the best conditions under the general conditions represented by the KPIs. The destinations then receive a recommendation in text form for these target groups, which are best suited to the destination. This recommendation includes the essential contents (resources and general conditions) for product development. In addition, the KPIs from the tourist survey are included in both the analysis and the recommendations.

In workpackage T1 the HTAB tool is created in an Excel file that contains all the relations and definitions explained above.

6.1.2. Key Performance Indicators, Destinations

As described above, the success factors on the destination side are the core of the model. The KPIs are collected in the finished model via a dedicated online platform. This digital questionnaire is then directly linked to the model and carries out an analysis in real time, so that the result is available to the destinations after a short time. In principle, the target groups of the model are all destinations in the Alpine region that wish to become involved in health tourism. Concrete actors are therefore all decision-makers and other stakeholders in these destinations.

Below is a list of the pre-selected Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for the Health Tourism Assessment and Benchmarking Tool. The structure of the list is based on the previously introduced structure of the tool (see Fig. 1).

Natural health resources (18 Factors):

- Alpine healing waters / thermal water
- Alpine water – blue space (e.g. rivers, lakes, glaciers)
- Kneipp
- Waterfalls
- Forest
- High altitude (2500+)
- Moderate altitude (1000-2500m)
- Protected areas
- Alpine farming
- Radon treatment
- Honey
- Alpine milk & dairy products
- Plants / Phytotherapy
- Healing cave/tunnel (Heilstollen)
- Moor
- Air quality
- Light pollution
- Noise pollution



KPI

Derived resources (Infrastructure & Services) (23 Factors):

- Health Manager (own employee with tasks in project management, marketing and public relations)
- Health check before & after
- Courses in sport and exercise
- Gymnastics / Balance training
- Courses/services for relaxation
- Massages
- Physiotherapy
- Nutritional advice
- Meditation
- Yoga
- Guided hiking
- Mountain hiking
- Climbing / Outdoor bouldering
- Walking
- Winter - snow-based activities,
- Winter - Not snow-based activities
- Cosmetics / Beauty Offers
- Spa treatments
- Certified hotels for health tourism, Evidence based design
- Barrier-free
- Car-free destination
- E-Bike Availability
- Bicycle availability (e.g. bicycle rental)

Tourism in general (10 Factors):

- Destination name
- Inhabitants/Population
- Population density
- Arrivals
- Overnight stays
- Duration of stay
- Tourism intensity
- Internationality
- Guest structure, age
- Guest structure, gender

Health Tourism (4 Factors):

- Use of natural health resources
- Products with natural health resources
- Minimum duration of stay Effectiveness
- Seasonality of the product

KPI

Framework

Networks and cooperations (8 Factors):

- Cooperation in the tourism sector
- Cross-sectoral cooperation
- Cooperation in the health sector
- Cooperation with authorities and politics
- Network participation, regional
- Network participation, national
- Network participation, international
- Project experience in tourism

Regional features (8 Factors):

- Touristic image
- Image health tourism
- Tradition of health tourism
- Unique selling proposition (USP)
- Attractions, regional characteristics (events)
- Authenticity
- Regionality (food)
- Accessibility

6.1.3. Key Performance Indicators, Tourists

In order not only to cover the framework conditions of the supply side, the tool is extended by the perspective of the tourists themselves with the help of an online survey for the perspective of the tourists. According to the current status, the tourist survey covers the following aspects:

Categories of the tourist survey

- (Language)
- Well-known health tourism destinations
- Health and holidays
- Perception of Alpine resources as a health benefit
- Health holiday experience
- Best season for a health holiday
- Factors health holidays
- Medical factors Health holidays
- Importance, aspects and services
- Willingness to pay, aspects and services
- Sources of information/trust
- Diseases or health restrictions, treatment and prevention
- Interest nature-based health holiday
- Reasons for no interest in health holiday
- Information on the local environmental conditions

A purple rounded rectangular button with the text "Tourist Survey" in white, centered within the button.

- Climate change
- Self-assessment (social media and organic food)
- Country of origin, Postcode
- Household, Children
- Education
- Gender
- Age

6.2 Tactical Health Management Toolset (Scenario Tool)

6.2.1. Overview

The Output O.T2.1 Tactical Health Management Toolset (THMT) is a digital tool to assess and simulate the valorisation of alpine resources in the framework of health tourism. It supports the development of innovative alpine health tourism products and service chains and detects synergy potential. Since this is a digital tool, this report only explains the actual output in an accompanying manner. The tool can be used via the website linked in this report.

The THMT is to be understood as a part of an overall development process of a nature-based health tourism in the Alpine Space. This process is described in detail in the Output O.T3.1 Training Toolkit on Innovation Model and Tactical Toolset and is therefore not explained in more detail here. In this context, it is particularly important to note that the tool should not be seen or used in isolation from this process and the associated process steps.

Basically, the THMT is based on the activities and the resulting deliverables of WP T1. The overarching activities here are:

- Activity A.T1.1 Development of the Health Tourism Assessment and Benchmarking Tool (HTAB),
- Activity A.T1.2 Regional assessment of Health Tourism strategy development and implementation,
- Activity A.T1.3 Identification of strategic success factors and synergy potential.

In addition, selected activities from WP T2 form a further basis for the development of the tool, this is:

- Activity A.T1.3 Identification of strategic success factors and synergy potential.

The following chapters explain the structure and use of the tool. And at this point it should also be noted that the tool is called Scenario Tool in the external presentation.

6.2.2 Structure of the Scenario Tool

The THMT is made of several components that build on each other and together form an automatically running support tool for the development of innovative alpine health tourism products and service chains.

As a user of the Tool, first you have to go to the HEALPS2 website, click on the link to the tool questionnaire and fill in the questionnaire on KPIs in your region. Afterwards you will receive a result document by e-mail. In this document you will find recommendations on possible development paths in nature-based and health-promoting tourism for your destination. These recommendations are based on a comparison of the destination data provided (questionnaire) and the scientific findings on this form of tourism and its medical evidence used in the tool. The tool is based on medical indications (e.g., cardiovascular, respiratory or mental illnesses) and derives suitable target groups for the respective destination. Matching the most suitable target group, the results document provides information on the understanding, meaning and use of the success factors used in the tool (natural resources, services, etc.) with regard to the development of nature-based and health-promoting offers.

In summary, from the user's point of view, the Scenario Tool basically consists of three contact points. These are:

- I. **HEALPS2 website** https://healing-alps.eu/scenario_tool/
- II. **Scenario Tool questionnaire**
https://www.alpinehealth.eu/survey/index.php?r=survey/index&sid=58919_&lang=en
- III. **PDF output** (recommendation texts)

I. HEALPS2 Website – Explanation of the use of the Scenario Tool

Ad 1: The project website (www.healing-alps.eu) contains all information about the HEALPS2 project. One subpage is dedicated exclusively to the tool. Here the use of the tool is explained and the questionnaire, which has to be filled out for the use of the tool, is linked. Below are some pictures from the Scenario Tool page on the HEALPS2 website.

STEPS

How it works



Step 1

Fill in an online survey on health tourism

In order to provide you with an optimal analysis and added value, specific questions are asked about your destination. These include, for example: existing Alpine natural health resources, number of overnight stays, existing infrastructure and offers such as physiotherapy or guided hikes. Please also provide relevant key factors such as cross-sector collaboration and accessibility.

Step 2

Our algorithm will process the answers.

The tool uses a database with the knowledge of medical studies on the effect of natural Alps health resources and it's touristic usage in terms of prevention, therapy and rehabilitation. Our algorithm processes and compares these different information streams with your answers in the survey. The tool then identifies and evaluates the unique selling points for your destination.



Step 3

Receive a report with your results and recommendations.

After an evaluation phase of around two days, we will send you a report via e-mail. In the report you will find the outcomes and recommendations for your Alpine health tourism destination. The report gives you advice for the use of local natural health resources and the improvement of health services in relation to suitable indication-based target groups. You will also receive a visual representation of the results.



Step 4

Develop your own tailored nature-based health offers.

With the tailored information on your destination, you can better exploit the potential of your resources in the form of innovative and target-group-specific offers in the future. To do this, you can either start your own development process or take the next steps with the help of the community. At the end of the report, you will find further information on the various development paths, specific contacts and possible funding opportunities.



II. HEALPS2 KPI questionnaire for the Scenario Tool

Ad 2: The questionnaire for the use of the tool is based on the developed KPI and is available to the users in all project languages (German, French, Italian and Slovenian) as well as in English. By means of the online questionnaire, the destination data is collected for analysis in the ontology. Completing the questionnaire is therefore a fundamental requirement for the use of the tool. Below are some screenshots from the KPI online questionnaire.

*Do you have the following natural health resources in your destination?

Check all that apply

Alpine healing waters (e.g. thermal waters)
 High altitude (more than 2.500m)
 Honey

Alpine waters - blue space (e.g. rivers, lakes, glaciers)
 Moderate altitude (more than 1.000m up to 2.500m)
 Alpine milk & dairy products

Kneipp
 Protected areas
 Plants / Phytotherapy

Waterfalls
 Alpine farming
 Healing cave / tunnel (Höllstollen)

Forest
 Radon treatment
 Moor

Note: Please select all resources that can basically be found at your destination.

You have indicated that the following natural health resources are present in your destination. Now please indicate whether this resource is currently used for tourism in your destination and whether there is a specific tourist product for this natural health resource.

	Yes, used for tourism.	Yes, there are tourism products.	No answer
Protected areas	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alpine farming	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Note:

Touristic use = the resource is usable or accessible for tourists in any form

Touristic product = tourists can buy or book a specific product in which the resource is integrated

Previous Next

Please indicate if your destination is a member of a tourism network that meets at least once a year. Please differentiate between regional, national and international networks.

Check all that apply

Regional tourism network member

National tourism network member

International tourism network member

Note: A tourism network is here understood to be the regular (at least once a year) professional / content-related exchange between at least two partners beyond a normal business relationship.

Is or was your destination involved in research projects on tourism?

Yes
 No
 No answer

Note: In this context, a research project is understood to be the targeted study of a specific topic with the involvement of scientific partners (e.g. universities, research institutes).

Previous Next

III. Scenario Tool Output – The PDF

Ad 3: Based on the destination data (KPI), the analysis is performed using the optima stored in the ontology (definition of optimal conditions and evidence of natural resources). From this automatically running analysis, a PDF file is also automatically created, which summarizes the result of the analysis in the form of text, graphics and additional information. The user of the tool receives this PDF by email (enter the email address in the questionnaire).

Structure and contents of the results document: The results document is divided into nine substantive paragraphs, the core contents of which are listed here in key words after the indent.

1. **Introduction and background** - explanation of how the tool works, definition of nature-based and health-promoting tourism, instructions on how to deal with the results
2. **Medical evidence as a quality feature** - explanation of medical evidence, quality levels of evidence, use of evidence in tourism
3. **Recommendations for the development of nature-based and health-promoting tourism with medical evidence in your region/destination** - graphical representation results (winning target group(s), comparison optimum vs. reality based on the categories/factors used in the questionnaire)
4. **Evidence, natural resources and services as core elements** - state of the evidence (incl. literature references), listing of suitable natural resources & services as well as important booking factors; each appropriate to the recommended target group
5. **Image & attractions** - hints on importance and use of destination image & existing attractions (incl. USP) for the development of nature-based and health-promoting offers for the recommended target group, authenticity as an example of a success factor
6. **Key figures on the importance of tourism for the region/destination** - information on the understanding and use of tourism key figures (on the supply side, e.g., tourism intensity, length of stay, source markets) for the development of nature-based and health-promoting offers, information on key figures on the demand side (e.g. socio-demographics); in each case suitable for the recommended target group
7. **Cooperations & networks** - hints on the importance and use of cooperations and networks, regionality as an example of a success factor
8. **Further special features of the alpine region for your destination development** - information on the use of alpine special features (air, noise and light pollution) with regard to their use in nature-based and health-promoting tourism
9. **Outlook and further information for the development of your own tailor-made nature-based health offer** - from knowledge to implementation, ideas for product development, use of the community, contacts, funding opportunities

Following are some excerpts from the results document, where points 1 and 2 (partially shown here) as well as points 8 and 9 represent basic and therefore valid information. Points 3 to 7 are then individually adapted to the data of the participating destination and place the KPIs in the context of nature-based health tourism. Here are also the specific recommendations to the destination based on the above-mentioned target groups.

General notes on the recommendations of the tool for the end user (1. Introduction and background):

“Dear representative of the region/destination "name of the destination", thank you for your interest in our project HEALPS2 as well as for using our Scenario Tool. This information and recommendations are intended to help you identifying potential development paths in the field of nature-based and health-promoting tourism for your region/destination.

[...]

For the interpretation of the recommendations made here, this means that before initiating such a development process in the direction of nature-based and health-promoting tourism, an additional potential and feasibility study as well as a detailed consultation with the local tourism stakeholders should be carried out in any case. In this context, it should also be pointed out that the development paths recommended here are medium- to long-term developments.

[...]

Basically, the recommendations always refer to the development of nature-based and health-promoting tourism that is evidence-based. In this context, evidence-based health tourism' is defined as a temporary movement of a person to a place, where he or she finds a particular intervention for a specific health condition in a holiday setting that will have beneficial effects and promote health and wellbeing based on the best available current scientific research.”

Information about medical evidence (2. Medical evidence as a quality feature): “As a green island amid fine dust, the Alpine region has many natural and regional healing resources that offer health benefits to residents and visitors. These include, for example: Alpine healing waters, thermal waters, Alpine streams for Kneipp healing, waterfalls, high altitude (above 2500m), nature reserves and biodiversity, Alpine agriculture, Radon purification galleries, marshes, Alpine air quality, mountain forests, Alpine plants, white exercise (snow-based activities) and green exercise (nature-based activities). This is a strong USP of the Alpine region and distinguishes it from other natural areas, as the Alpine region has many natural healing resources.

Health is man's most precious asset. Therefore, health must also be treated and protected with special care in tourism. Therefore, the health tourism product must have a high degree of veracity or integrity and must be proven to ...

- increase health-related quality of life and makes us more performant, for example = prevention*
- or to even cure diseases = therapy*
- or to get us back on our feet quickly after an illness = rehabilitation.*

Proven means that the product must have a medically proven effect on health. This requires either the use of existing medical knowledge or the creation of new knowledge = evidence.

[...]”

7. Presentation of innovative practices developed in the project area – Alpine region

This Chapter collects and describes the innovation practices developed by HEALPS2 consortium, aimed at enhancing attractiveness of health tourism opportunities in Alpine regions. They reflect the requirements and needs of the specific areas, but they were formulated to be easily transferable into other regions and health tourism destinations, with a proper adaptation to local conditions in terms of existing infrastructure, level of engagement of local and regional stakeholders, needs and factors of tourists.



The innovation practices identified in the project can be subdivided into three types i.e. **(1) innovation techniques**, **(2) innovation supporting tools**, and **(3) innovative product offerings** (see Fig. 1). The three types, and in general the innovation practices presented, can be purposefully integrated, according to the aims in terms of innovativeness and competitiveness of each health tourism destination.

Innovation techniques for Alpine health tourism	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Participatory processes for habitat management ❖ Integration of health tourism into an existing tourism strategy ❖ Design of a health tourism program with focus on nature-based wellbeing activities ❖ Outdoor innovation training for a sustainable future of Alpine health tourism ❖ Product development process for evidence-based products in Alpine health tourism (ProDevEHT) ❖ Creating medical evidence for natural resources for nature-based health tourism (CreMENHT) 	
Innovation supporting tools	Innovative product offerings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The Business Model Canvas <input type="checkbox"/> Miro board for online idea development <input type="checkbox"/> Template for Idea concretization <input type="checkbox"/> Digital presentation of health factors <input type="checkbox"/> Foster interest and involvement of local stakeholders through a series of webinars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The “Full Health Thermal Spa Resort” concept ✓ Men-dedicated weekend package ✓ Selfness in old castle parks

Fig. 1. Types of innovation practices identified in HEALPS2 project to foster competitiveness of health tourism industry

The **three types** of practices are described in the following sections:

1. Innovation techniques for Alpine health tourism

1.1 Participatory processes in health tourism destinations: Cooperation between destinations and municipalities in Habitat management

This technique is developed starting from the awareness that health tourism destinations are living spaces, where the relationship between guests and locals should be redefined. Decision-making processes of the actors directly involved in the tourism sector (hoteliers, tourism professionals, providers of tourism products such as hiking guides, producers of regional products, farmers, foresters, etc.) do not often include municipalities in the destination, which bring in the viewpoint of the population. As multipliers for the existing offers, the locals can contribute to ensuring that health tourism products are accepted and properly supported.

To this aim, it is necessary that they also benefit from the existing offers and are involved in the development of tourism strategies with their policy representatives. Other important factors are transparency, to be ensured with effective communication means, and the presentation of results in a timely manner. Thus, the participatory process for Habitat management foresees to identify possible user groups, providers, local/regional stakeholders, and other interest groups or people, as follows:

- Possible user groups: Agriculture, handcraft, trade, clinics, nature conservation and alpine association.
- Possible providers: Mountain railway companies, hiking guides, trail owners, partner businesses, tourism information centres, product partners of other destinations.
- Possible stakeholders: Municipalities (at administrative and political level), provincial governments, civilian population (interested locals).

These groups can work effectively by discussing possible developments and joint actions in working groups and exchanging information several times in joint events. To this end, it is important ensuring that all possible stakeholders are invited to participate in the working groups. Moreover, the cooperation with municipalities requires to consider the laws, ordinances, and guidelines that bound their operations, thus proper municipal committees should be elected, and share decision-making with the mayor.

1.2 Integration of health tourism into an existing tourism strategy

The regions that aim to develop health tourism offers should firstly consider and include the existing tourism strategy, without disregarding it. The integration extends also to the existing natural resources, their current use and the tourism offers.

This innovation technique was applied in the Bregenzerwald region (Austria), where local tourism stakeholders were invited in a meeting to discuss all existing offers (without specifying the provider). These were properly clustered, and gaps in the potential health tourism offer were also defined. The latter included the availability of specific natural resources and facilities suitable for health tourism aims. For example, it emerged that the resources “forest” and “water” could be easily exploited for healing treatments, with many Kneipp facilities located in the forest or near to a forest no longer used. In the next period, the team of Bregenzerwald Tourism is planning to develop and implement

measures for the valorisation of all Kneipp facilities, with their integration into existing offers and packages, without developing a completely new offer.

Also in this technique, the involvement of different stakeholders allows to create a complete picture of the existing resources, services and infrastructure. Participative efforts are also required into the development of product offerings, and their integrating into existing services, also to guarantee their acceptance in the existing strategies.

1.3 Design of a health tourism program with focus on nature-based wellbeing activities

This innovation technique addresses regions where there is still no functional destination management, and a strategic approach for exploiting existing natural resources is missing. Specifically, it entails the creation of health and tourism programs focused on spending time in nature to enhance wellbeing, and on outdoor activities such as biking and hiking. The development of these programs includes a series of steps that are based on the existence of few initiatives, or even the lack of a strategic approach. Indeed, the steps to implement such an innovation technique are:

- Analysis and evaluation of the quality and integration possibilities of the existing offer.
- Modelling of potential program content with suitability analysis.
- Preparation of basic material with a description of the program (content, logistics, integration).
- Examination of technical, logistical and organizational capacities in the region for the implementation of the program.
- Coordination between stakeholders and partners involved in the program.
- Preparation of information materials and communication content.
- Development of sustainable program management and marketing plan.

This innovation technique was applied in the region of Pomurje (Slovenia), where a functional destination management organization is missing. During the first step of analysis, it emerged that the most important stakeholders to be involved in the program were the SMEs, such as incoming agencies, tourism and accommodation organizations, tour guides. These were involved in all the subsequent steps, together with public (visitors), sectoral agencies and local / regional authorities, and some prototypes of developed programs were evaluated for a possible integration into existing offers of the destination.

1.4 Outdoor innovation training for a sustainable future of Alpine health tourism

This innovation technique foresees a two-day outdoor innovation workshop for health tourism stakeholders based in the Alpine region. The workshop was designed with the aim of training participants in entrepreneurial patterns and fostering idea generation and networking between different actors of the health tourism sector while spending time in nature. The idea is that experimenting with methods and exercises outdoors can be a catalyst for creativity, development of new ideas and innovative concepts for the development of the same region where the outdoor training takes place.

The training follows the principle of effectuation, based on entrepreneurial research that focuses on learning entrepreneurial thinking and acting through practical principles and an action-guiding process, thus overcoming the classic management approach of analysis-planning-goal setting-executing. It addresses the dynamic environments where a new logic for entrepreneurial behavior is needed, by stimulating emergent responses that business actors are not able to plan.

This innovation technique was developed in the National Park Schwarzwald. Here participants practiced the “ethics of reticence”, with nature left to itself without human beings “planning” in which way nature should have developed. By letting nature developing on its own, participants could observe how new unforeseen things can happen which human beings would have been unable to plan. With the principle of effectuation, the actors from different European regions promoting health tourism were able to reflect on the opportunity of a sustainable future for the overall health tourism industry. They firstly exchanged their experiences about the changes characterizing the health tourism, i.e. the increasing awareness and consciousness for the own health, lifestyle and new (mental) diseases (e.g. burn out); the demographic changes driving new needs of tourists travelling for wellbeing; the changes in service providers, with new networks, platforms and cooperation opportunities (e.g. hospitals cooperate with tourism boards); the new frame conditions, with changes in health care system, less support by health insurance, and more private/ self-paid patients. Afterwards, they conceptualized new ideas for new offers as well as cooperation opportunities for potential joint future projects.

The workshop revealed to be particularly helpful to identify means to promote health tourism in the regions with the use of digital technologies, considering that during the first steps of a (digital) disruptive innovation the planning and analysis tools are not always adequate to take the next entrepreneurial steps.

The main features and outcomes of the innovation technique can be summarized as follows:

- Exchange of experiences between actors from the health tourism sector, by thinking and learning in nature and with heterogenous groups of actors.
- Developing a common understanding of sustainable health tourism and of joint criteria for sustainable health tourism, with the emergence and integration of different perspectives.
- Development of new ideas and offers for the health tourism sector that will be potentially implemented afterwards in cross-border consortia, and especially driving the adoption of digital technologies.
- Design and test of a new innovation workshop format that exclusively takes place in an outdoor environment where participants are (almost) continuously moving (e.g., hiking), with an enhancing effect on participant’s creativity.

1.5 Product development process for evidence-based products in Alpine health tourism (ProDevEHT)

This innovation technique entails the basic path from the existence of a natural resource to the creation and use of medical evidence for the touristic valorisation of the resource. So far, most health tourism offers lack a real link between tourism and medicine, with many offers in nature-based health tourism that are not evidence-based. To develop a high quality and effective health tourism based on natural resources, the step to create evidence is indispensable. In addition, both a regional and an operational analysis of the framework conditions as well as the implementation potentials are necessary. In the proposed path, there is the possibility of integrating cross sectoral services and offers into the tourism offer, especially in medical or health-oriented services, and establishing topics such as good nutrition and good sleep with local partners as a direct part of the tourism value chain. At the same time, this increases the potential of a broad regional anchoring and thus also acceptance of this type of tourism in the region.

The innovation technique consists of four structured steps that support interested stakeholders in creating medical evidence, and subsequently using it for touristic valorisation. The four steps are identified as: 1) Assessment of Health tourism Potential and Customer Needs, 2) Medical Scientific Research, 3) Product Development and Implementation, 4) Evaluation. As shown in Fig. 2, they should be realized in sequence with a continuous improvement approach, with the Evaluation phase providing inputs for the subsequent cycle.

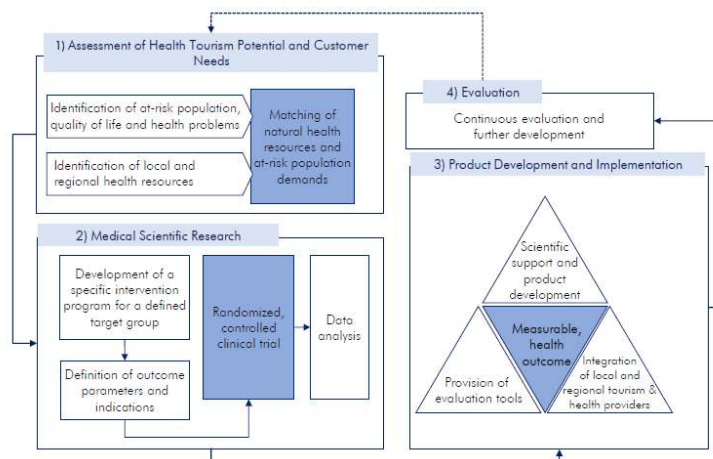


Fig. 2. Structural approach for the creation of medical evidence for natural resources

The phases for the creation of medical evidence of alpine healing resources requires the involvement and close cooperation of different stakeholders. Indeed, the overall process should leverage the knowledge from: the analysis of existing case studies and consideration of potential market expectations; the definition of challenges in product development; the definition of requirements for education and training in health tourism; and the exploitation of adequate supporting technologies.

The innovation technique can be regarded as a medium- to long-term implementation, and adequate resources should also be planned for the search for and availability of suitable external partners (e.g. service providers or research institutes) that perform the clinical studies needed for creation of the medical evidence. Possible solutions are in any case cooperation of several partners as well as a (co-) financing via subsidies, e.g. in the form of practice-oriented research projects as the HEALPS2 project, where this innovation technique was firstly tested. However, if the process is completed and appropriate products are offered on the market at the end, the chance of creating a high-quality and regionally anchored product is very high. This type of tourism development can therefore also contribute to the overall sustainable development of a region.

1.6 Creating medical evidence for natural resources for nature-based health tourism (CreMENHT)

The innovation technique presented here shows the basic path from the existence of a natural resource to the creation of medical evidence for the use within a nature-based and health-promoting tourism. Thus, this innovation technique deepens a subset of the higher-level innovation technique of the overall process for developing evidence-based health tourism products (Product development processes in for evidence-based products in alpine health tourism).

To valorise natural resources for health tourism, it is necessary to verify the effectiveness of the resource according to medical standards. Only in this way can a high-quality and at the same time credible health product be developed and offered.

To utilize natural resources for tourism, the interaction between tourism and medicine is always necessary (see Fig. 1). This relationship can be explained as follows:

- Health Tourism: Location change and leisure setting as consecutive elements to distinguish health tourism from the use of local healthcare infrastructure and from medical tourism.
- Indications: Indication as the basis or rationale to use a certain health tourism product
- Evidence: Evidence-based medicine means that decision making on diagnosis and treatment is based on the best available current research, the physician's clinical expertise and the needs and preferences of the patient. Health related interventions based on best available scientific research and integrate the clientele's interests, values and needs.

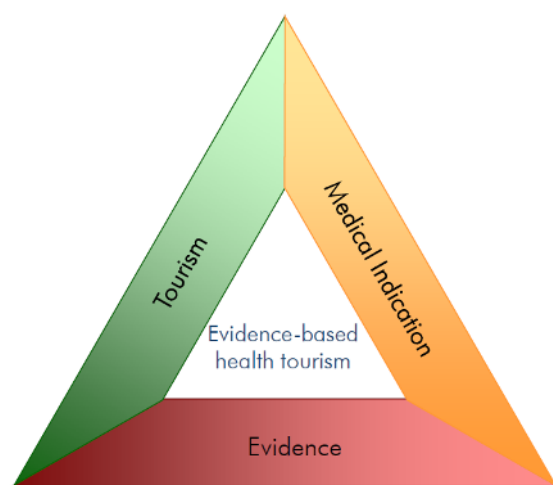


Figure 3: Relationship between tourism and medical evidence

The innovation technique presented here shows stakeholders step-by-step how to create medical evidence for natural resources. A clinical study is always open-ended. In this respect, the preparations up to the decision for a clinical study are very important, since high costs are always associated with a clinical trial. The individual steps to create the evidence are (see Fig. 2):

1. Identify and evaluate existing natural resources for potential use in nature-based and health-promoting tourism
2. Decision for a clinical study
3. Definition of the objective of the study, formulation of the hypotheses to be investigated
4. Analyse of existing case studies and consideration of potential market expectations
5. Definition of potential subjects, inclusion and exclusion criteria
6. Definition of the study procedure, determination of the measurement methods according to the defined objectives
7. Submitting an ethics committee application to conduct the study
8. Contracting of a trial insurance for the study
9. Implementation of the study on site
10. Evaluation of the study

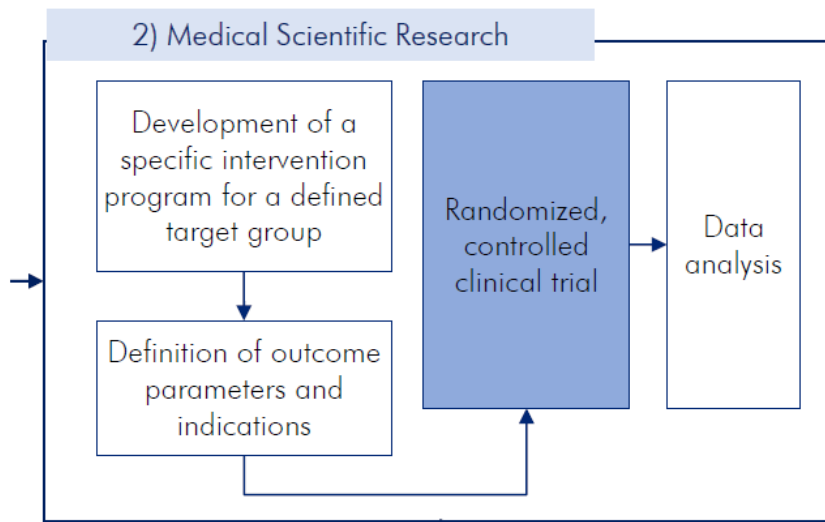


Figure 4: Medical scientific research on natural resources

The exact design of the clinical study is always individual and depends on the natural potentials as well as the objective to be defined and on the budget.

In principle, the innovation technique is already applicable. Thus, there are already studies that have demonstrated the effectiveness of natural resources.

2. Innovation supporting tools for Alpine health tourism

2.1 The Business Model Canvas to devise an effective business model for new local wellness and health tourism products

The Business Model Canvas is a visual framework adopted for the description, assessment, design, or improvement of business models. It can provide a valid support the development of new value offers – or extending the current offers – by including innovative wellness and health tourism products for the Alpine areas and position them as relevant destination for wellness tourists.

The analysis takes into consideration nine blocks, grouped into the following four areas:

- infrastructure: including key partners, key activities, key resources
- offering: including value proposition
- customers: including customer relations, channels, customer segments
- finances: including cost structure, revenue streams.

The template (Fig. 3) is filled in with concise qualitative information, aimed to facilitate brainstorming while not considering a quantitative assessment.



Fig. 5. The Business Model Canvas template [5]

Usually, the business model canvas can be regarded as a preliminary step to the drafting of a business plan. It allows to schematically outline, in a way that is easy to understand even for non-experts, how businesses or other economic entities, create, deliver, and capture value. This tool can, thus, support the collective design of innovative business models of health tourism within a participatory approach. The template can be printed out on a large surface so that groups of people can jointly start sketching and discussing business model elements with post-it notes or board markers. Thus, it represents a hands-on tool that fosters understanding, discussion, creativity, and analysis.

This technique was developed in a one-day workshop in pilot area region Ossola. This area is rich in resources which can effectively support the creation of a tourism offer focusing on wellness and health. At the same time, it has been observed that this offer is currently very limited. The main aim of this innovation technique was to involve the actors who could play a crucial role in the creation of new wellness and health tourism products in the thematic area, and in a preliminary assessment of the viability of these initiatives. The target groups included local tourism businesses and professionals (and, in some specific case, NGOs), together with local public administrations and institutions, which could support the development of the new products through their activities, projects and funding.

This technique can be very effective in comparing the different business models which can support the development of a specific new tourism product (e.g., visitors could be offered a program of guided hiking thanks to the financial support of the local government or hoteliers, or individual participants could be charged for each hike). The adoption of a participatory approach should consider the selection of stakeholders to be involved in the discussion: the group should not be too big, so that each participant can effectively contribute, but at the same time not too small, to include different relevant point of views. Participants don't need to have specific economic skills but should have knowledge of the wellness and health tourism market and provide different perspectives. If this is not the case within the group of local stakeholders (as it happens when such an offer is still not developed in the area), such competences should be guaranteed through the engagement of external experts.

2.2 Miro board for online idea development on health tourism products

The online collaborative whiteboard platform Miro (<https://miro.com/>) represents a valuable tool to foster innovation and development of health tourism product ideas based on the natural resources found in the Alpine regions. The Miro Board is initially designed to contain different categories of themes to be discussed. Stakeholders are provided with an example for each category and then asked to fill out the template with ideas on possible nature-based health tourism products containing local

natural resources, by writing them on digital post-its before allocating the ideas to one of the five categories. In the following steps, other stakeholders can further develop existing ideas by adding to the post-its, and also to bundle ideas. The main factor for developing the technique is that there are different stakeholders in every region which would be interested in developing and offering nature-based health tourism products but there is a lack of time and resources to come up with ideas on their own. Moreover, not all are aware of the local resources in the region and their level of evidence.

This innovation technique was employed in a workshop dedicated to the development of new nature-based health tourism products for the Val Müstair in Switzerland. The workshop consisted of three parts:

- Part 1: Generation of ideas for tourism products based on natural health resources
- Part 2: Concretization of the idea
- Part 3: Presentation of the results in the plenum.

In Part 1, all participants are asked to place their ideas for nature-based health tourism in the region based on local resources. With this aim, the Miro Board consists of a template containing the five broad categories of food, water, agriculture, sports, and open categories. In the following step, participants were asked to vote on the best ideas generated, and to prioritize and select 3 ideas for the next round. Specifically, these were: Trail running, healing power of water & power sports, Detox-week (Fig. 4).

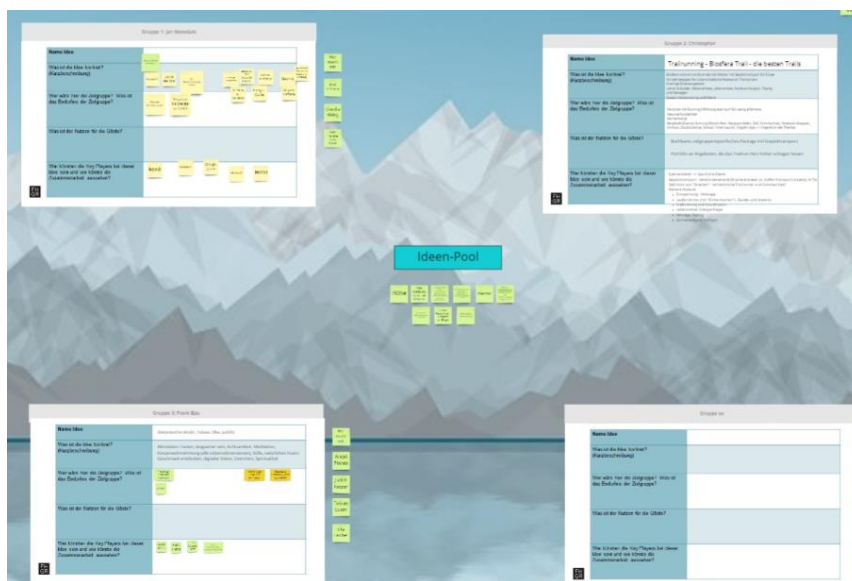


Fig. 6. Print screen of Miro board with 3 developed ideas

In the second part, the three ideas with the most votes received were presented again. After that, the participants were allowed to assign themselves to the idea they wanted to work on further. For this task they had to answer the following questions: What is the idea concretely? Who would be the target group here? What is the need? What is the benefit of the idea for guests? Who could be the key players in this idea and how could the cooperation look like? A moderator from the project group made notes on a new Miro board.

In the last Part 3 one person per group had to present the idea shortly to the others. The workshop ended by asking the participants to join one of three action groups to further develop and implement

the idea. In a following step, the ideas were defined in more detail. In effect only one of the three ideas was developed into a product, while further brainstorming resulted in a separate idea, which had not been generated during the online workshop.

Miro is a tool that is easy to understand and adopt and does not require many resources. Once the Miro Board is created, it can be easily copied and applied. Moreover, it represents a valuable technique to be used in context where the physical interaction is not possible, as it was during Covid-19 pandemic when on-site workshops could not be held.

2.3 Template for Idea concretization within Alpine health tourism

This tool supports all the tools proposed in previous sections and adopted in workshops. The results and the ideas emerged in these workshops should be further developed and concretized through a situation analysis. For example, an additional Part 4 of the workshop with Miro Board (Section 3.2) should take place after the workshop, (in asynchronous, or even individually). It should be dedicated to concretizing ideas by the researchers and interested parties and share it with the service provider. This concretization should include (desk) research to find out what offers are already available, who the competitors are in this area, what similar or identical offers already exist on the market and what the guests' needs are. A template with guiding questions to concretize the idea is thus designed as key innovation technique of HEALPS2 project, as follows.

Positioning / market potential (density of supply / demand trends)

- Are there intact natural and cultural landscapes?
- Are there special qualities or experience potentials?
- What are the authentic / unique strengths of the region (experience potentials)?
- Which offers already exist, which do not?
- Is there already a thematic positioning locally or regionally?
- Gaps in the offer? What is missing?
- Comparable or exemplary offers in the region or abroad?
- Current trends and market developments at the domestic and international level?
- What is the local/regional tourism destination like? Which target groups are already being targeted?

Target group / needs

- Lifestyle and information habits of the target group to be addressed?
- Who should be addressed?
- What are the characteristics of this target group?

Offer description (draft) / service modules

- What should the offer look like and what should it contain?
- Who (service provider of the region) should play a part in the offer?

All these questions can help to grasp the idea in more detail, and to concretely develop it in a task force with the service provider. To concretize the idea, a collaboration platform can be used to work on the concept simultaneously, but this can also be done in a Word template and sent by email to other partners (research partners, service providers) for commenting the concept.

2.4 Digital presentation of health factors

The use of digital tools represents a valuable innovation for customers who are looking for health tourism products and want to see how the product is working on them. Specifically, digitalization could enable visitors to visualize the health effects of locations such as many Alpine regions and make them “feel” their unique value. Specific tools can project an image or data of individuals health components before and after the use of certain health products.

Reach natural resources – thermal water, quality vineyards, quality local food, hiking and biking opportunities, forests - are proven, by medical studies, to have positive health effects on individuals (resveratrol in wine, anti-depression, slow-ageing, anti-stress, increase of vitamin D, etc).

For hundreds of years some areas recognized also as an important natural energetic area, with good effect on human health. Locations have been chosen as places for building shrines, temples, and churches. Energy points have been proven to have positive effects on health, such as better sleep, increased energy, health improvement, etc.

Combining all these natural sources and digital presentation in health product tourism offer can provide health improvement of society.

3. Innovative product offerings for Alpine health tourism industry

3.1 The “Full Health Thermal Spa Resort” concept

This innovative product was designed starting from the challenge of imagining the thermal spa resorts of tomorrow. Thermal spa resorts have two core activities: thermal medical care and leisure tourism. Some resort actors also established a new activity, coherent and specific, around Preventative Health, aimed at creating destinations that offer equipment, services and accommodation in a favorable thermal and touristic environment, with specifically designed preventative health products meeting customer expectations. This concept of “Full Health Thermal Resort” can enhance destination competitiveness as it has differentiating factor the focus on preventative health in a genuine life and holiday destination (town or village). To this end, the resort governance should prioritize the collaboration between all resort stakeholders, fostered to fully share the project’s ambition and collectively aim at creating, developing, and achieving the Full Health Thermal Resort.

The innovative technique was developed in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region (France) as part of the smart specialization S3 strategy initiated by the European Commission in 2014. The concept was formalized in a shared document, followed by the creation in 2015 of a “Full Health Thermal Resort” Blueprint elaboration methodological guide. Thus, the innovative technique is being implemented in the pilot resorts of Châtel-Guyon and La Bourboule, and is included in the 2016-2021 Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Regional Thermal Plan, with other regional thermal spa resorts implementing the process to define their destination’s specific strategy. Other European thermal resorts can adapt the “Full Health Thermal Spa Resort” concept to its own specific features and offer preventative healthcare products adapted to its clients’ expectations.

3.2 Men-dedicated weekend package

This innovative product was designed starting from the idea that several touristic products are mainly dedicated to women, with a lot of offers to choose from. Conversely, male tourists usually receive eventful products. The product ideated in the Spodnje Podravje region (Slovenia) develops a three-day weekend package reserved for men, including slow home-made food, slow wine tasting, spa relaxation. The concept integrates the principles of Mithraism, an ancient religion reserved only for men, and the slow tourism concept.

The innovation technique collocates in a tourist product niche, with a lack of stress-relief products for men in the region. The new health tourism product can also align with other touristic offers – wine tasting, home-made food, spas, experiences in nature (walking, hiking, cycling, water sports) – and provide a value-adding offering to regions aiming to reach new market segments.

3.3 Selfness in old castle parks

Different research demonstrates that finding the inner peace is an important factor toward healthy life. Selfness has become very popular in concept of slow tourism, and many people are now embracing it. Selfness can be performed in many ways – walks, yoga, reading etc. – in peaceful outdoor places – forest, parks, mountains.

This innovative product is based on the importance of selfness, and the low availability of natural areas in urban contexts. It proposes the use of historical parks, and specifically old castle parks, to be used for individual treatments. These parks are bigger than normal urban parks, they are beautifully structured; and often have some very rare flora and fauna in them. They also offer some insights into history of the place, and all these factors combined make them a suitable place for some individual seances and therapies.

This health tourism product could be developed into two different ways: 1) with some instruction throughout the park (for example boards or instructions on the app) for solely alone experience, or 2) with a guide for individual treatments or for small groups treatments.

8. Presentation of the pilot activities developed in the project

Upon presented innovation practices partners developed pilot activities that include one of developed innovation practice.

The pilot action Touristic product development for evidence-based products in St. Veit im Pongau tests the real implementation of the product development process described in the Innovation practice "Product development processes for evidence-based products in alpine health tourism". For this purpose, the individual steps of the process are absolved in the form of workshops with representatives from the community.

The challenge of using the numerous resources in a meaningful and sustainable way, if possible, in combination with each other was addressed. One potential field of development in this context is the topic of health. On one hand, this should be used for further development of tourism and, on the other hand, to strengthen the identity of the locals. For this, the municipality needs external knowledge about evidence and its integration into suitable offers.

Four steps of the pilot activity are performed in the form of individual workshops. Accordingly, the four steps and thus workshops are:

1. Assessment of Health Tourism Potential and Customer Needs
2. Medical Scientific Research (Optional, depending on objectives and available resources)
3. Product Development and Implementation
4. Evaluation

In this way, the challenges presented can be worked through step by step and in a participatory process of all relevant stakeholders, allowing to define and implement possible solutions or fields of development.

The following resources are needed to implement the pilot action:

Municipality's side:

- Selection and implementation of local stakeholders
- Organization of the workshops in coordination with the external partner and the local stakeholders
- Provision of infrastructure for the workshops (rooms, technology, possibly catering)
- Financial resources for the involvement of external partners
- Financial resources for the implementation of an own clinical study to generate medical evidence
- Financial resources for the actual realization of the theoretically developed offers

External:

- Medical expertise on evidence from natural resources
- Expertise and human resources to conduct a clinical trial with natural resources
- Expertise in the field of tourism product development

Alpine region has plains that offer more nature connected offer. Innovation practice outdoor innovation training for a sustainable future of Alpine health tourism can provide activities that contains a series of immersive health based sensory and mindfulness activities that engage with these elements in different ways and use them to promote physical healing and mental well-being. As well as healing and deepening the relationship to their bodies, participants will also deepen their relationship to the surrounding environment and engage with it in a way that is generally absent from day-to-day life.

The first day of three-day experience is inspired by the Earth element, with activities that invite stability and presence. Second day combines Fire and Water to cleanse and nourish the body, allowing for a fresh start on third day, where Air and Ether invite clarity and strength, allowing one to recharge, dream, and imagine.

Pilot activity provides major improvement in nature-based tourism offer providing services based on nature, like barefoot trail walk, foraging workshop and walk, sleeping in grounded beds (conducting pads, or copper wires connecting people in beds to the ground), making and drinking infused tea using foraged leaves or herbs from the previous day Black Water thermal bathing, roasting food for lunch on an open fire, this can be the food foraged from the previous day, dry sauna bathing in a sauna with Far Infrared light, night-time campfire, breathwork workshop, lying in a beehive room to breathe the air and listen to the buzzing, guided sound bath session, star bathing, ...

Development of new nature- and evidence-based health tourism experiences in the Val Müstair that will provide links between tourism and medical providers is implementing innovation practice Online idea development workshop with Miro Board.

The aim of the action is to develop diverse tourism offer with powerful identity, differentiation, and quality, to exploit the potential and to incorporate the health centre in providing relevant health services to tourists in order to support the general provision of medical services to the population of the Val Müstair.

To determine and evaluate the potential of the Val Müstair region for nature- and evidence-based health tourism, an investigation of the current situation of the region is carried out. The existing tourism and medical services and infrastructures as well as the current tourism marketing of the Val Müstair are analysed.

To determine the potential for the development of nature- and evidence-based health tourism, a market analysis with the key competitors is undertaken. In addition to an analysis of case studies on the prevailing competitive situation within the canton of Graubünden and the neighbouring South Tyrol, a systematic analysis of existing data on the nature and evidence-based health tourism market also forms part of an extended investigation of the current situation.

After the elaboration of the evidence of existing natural health resources as well as the regional potential of the Val Müstair for nature- and evidence-based health tourism, specific tourism experiences are developed. This includes idea development, elaboration of selected ideas, pre-test, evaluation, development of marketing strategy & measures.

As this is a collaborative development of tourism experiences, the main resource necessary is time of all the stakeholders involved. In addition, knowledge of the evidence for the impact of natural resources on human health and well-being is necessary.

In urban area of city Ptuj partners implemented the innovation practice digital presentation of health factors. The objective of the pilot action is to enrich the tourism offer of the city Ptuj, testing a new health tourism product which builds upon the local natural resources.

The pilot action is based on research of natural resources in Ptuj and its nearby surroundings. We discovered that Ptuj has thermal water, powerful river, beautiful forests, old castle parks, vineyards with quality wines, local food producers, hiking possibilities and rich history. All these natural and cultural qualities of Ptuj have been proven to have good effect on human health including history – Ptuj has three Mithra's shrines and they are one of the lasts in world. Only London and Ptuj are proud owners of ancient Mithra's shrines. Mithra's shrines are known to have been built on spots or places that have strong energetic points. And energetic points are also proven to have good effects on human health.

Pilot action is focusing on health improvement of the participants. Participants will have a thorough conversation with expert in medicine. There all medical issues will be discussed, and digital presentations of health factors will be provided. Upon the conclusions of the expert, the program for next days will be prepared. The program will consider the medical needs of individuals or small groups. At the end of the program the digital presentation of health factors will again be presented, and the participants will be able to see which good effects on their health they received during the program.

The main expected result of the pilot action will be to test whether combination of different urban health resources is health effective as studies show. Studies show positive health effects of individual resource like spa, slow food, wine tasting, forest selfness, energetic points, hiking, biking,... With pilot action we want to provide a combined health tourist product created by the health needs of individual.

Upon medical studies and past experiences of using all described health resources, we believe that pilot action can provide even more effective health results based on natural resources.

Humans are visual beings; therefore, a software was developed, that is showing health characteristics before and after the experience of the product.

Health tourism product will be developed as 3-to-5-day experience, depends on the health needs of individuals or group. Product is appropriate for small scale groups (3 - 5) or individuals. If the group is participating in the experience, it is important that health issues are similar.

Health tourism product will offer experiences according to health issues the individual or the group have. Possible experiences are spa treatment, wine tasting, slow local food, energetic points, hiking, forest wellness. Experiences will be individually implemented in the product according to the needs of the participants.

The product will offer expertise from different experts. First contact (1st day of the product) will be with expert from medicine, who will discuss the medical condition with every participant. He/she will also provide the visual insight of the health condition through developed software program. Upon the medical analyse the most appropriate product will be designed. After medical overview the experts

from chosen fields will work with participants (2nd, 3rd – 4th day). On last day the medical review will be taken, showing the visualization of health factors on developed program.

The Pilot Action will be implemented in the city of Ptuj and its surroundings. Thermal spa ate located on right side of Drava river, energetic points are also located on right side of river Drava where Mithra's shrines are located, city of Ptuj and surrounding have many small forests also old castle parks with reach biodiversity, wine tastings are possible in many wine-cellars in the city (Osterbergers wine cellar, Ptuj wine cellar, wine tasting in old castle tunnels,...) and at wine producers in surroundings, slow food tasting can be experienced at many local touristic farms in surroundings, hiking's are possible in Ptuj' s surrounding.

The pilot action is seizing the opportunity to offer the product to tourist that combines all relevant offers in the city and relate to positive health effects.

Health based tourism is poorly developed in Ptuj region, despite the many health related offers. The pilot action is therefore attracting different target groups, who will experience diverse local offer of natural and cultural backgrounds. And all will relate to positive effects on health.

The objective of the pilot action "An adventure in wellness" – Organization of adventure-therapy weekends in Ossola is to enrich the tourism offer of the Ossola region, testing a new wellness tourism product which builds upon the local natural resources and skills. According to the Adventure Therapy methodology, participants will be invited to take part in different outdoor activities (climbing, orienteering, trekking on different types of terrain and at night...) designed to challenge them and stimulate insights which could prove valuable in their everyday life. The experience will be organized as two weekends event jointly led by local psychologists and mountain guides. Each weekend will be addressed to a small group of 6-8 participants. During each weekend, the mountain guide will adapt a predefined tentative schedule according to the weather conditions and the fitness level of participants, guiding them in carrying out safely all proposed activities. Under the guidance of the psychologist, on the other hand, participants will reflect on their experiences, the emotions they will fell and the lessons to be learned from it, both in a one-to-one and in a group setting. During all activities, the two professionals will work closely together, while still respecting their individual roles. Overnight accommodations will be arranged in an alpine hut.

The Pilot Action will be implemented within two of the most scenic spots in the Protected Areas of Ossola, with the two weekends taking places respectively at the Alpe Devero and the Alpe Veglia. Both areas are deemed perfect to host the initiative as they are rich in different natural landscapes, are surrounded by several mountain paths of varying difficulty and support additional outdoor activities, such as, for example, climbing.

The pilot action focus on seizing a relevant opportunity arising from the interplay of following factors:

- As previously mentioned, thanks to its rich natural heritage and fascinating mountain landscapes, the Ossola region lends itself very well to the organization of health and wellness outdoor activities. The accommodation facilities operating in the area can effectively meet the needs of such visitors.
- tourists, and especially urban residents, are showing a growing interest in experiencing the natural environment for physical and psychological well-being. This trend, which has further

and significantly increased in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, is especially relevant since it could attract qualified visitors in the less crowded days and seasons.

- the professional skills needed in order to develop such an innovative tourism product are available in the area.
- tourism initiatives related to psychological well-being have been, until recently, almost non-existent in Ossola and very limited in the Alpine context, thus providing ample opportunities for growth to regions and businesses which will be willing to invest in the field.

Pilot Action Scenario Tool – Beta tasting tests the expectations on and the usability of the Scenario Tool. The test is conducted with volunteer participants who can sign up as beta users via email through the project website (https://healingalps.eu/scenario_tool/). Apart from the contact data in the form of the e-mail address, no further data is collected from the users within the scope of beta testing. The Pilot Action takes place in a digital way and refers to the during the registration process not collected region data of the voluntary beta users. Therefore, no exact information about the regions of the beta users can be given at this point.

Beta testing intends to test and optimize the expectations for and usability of the Scenario Tool. Optimization of the Scenario in terms of user-friendliness (here especially in terms of filling out the questionnaire on which the tool is based) as well as the expectations of potential users in terms of the concrete outcome of the tool.

The following resources are needed to implement the Pilot Action described:

Beta User:

- Valid email address and time for the registration
- Time to read the description of the beta testing process
- Time to go through the beta testing process

Integration of the natural health resource “forest” into the tourism strategy and development of some offers based on this resource is another pilot activity developed within the HEALPS 2 project. During the collection and evaluation of the region's data at the beginning of the project, it became apparent that the resource "forest" is strongly represented in the Bregenzerwald and has a special character. These are so-called “planter” forests, which are unique in the Alpine region. This fact was little or not at all known to the actors in tourism. In a workshop with regional stakeholders, this resource was presented by experts from the "forest" sector. Subsequently, it was worked out what kind of offers could be possible based on this resource. An essential factor was to first collect all existing tourism offers that can be assigned to the health sector with all stakeholders.

It was determined that the resource "forest" should be linked with another one, namely "water". In the region there are very many neglected, partly disused Kneipp facilities at the edge of the forest and in the forest itself. And finally, all stakeholders agreed that the health tourism offers should be on the level of prevention. This was also because the resource "forest" (as described in the deliverable D.C.4.1_Borchure Alpine Natural Health Resources) is still too little researched in terms of medical evidence in the Alpine Space. The next step is to survey all existing Kneipp facilities in the region and check what is needed for their maintenance and repair. Linked with preventive offers such as forest walks, themed hikes through the forest, breathing exercises, forest bathing, etc., it will then be worked out how to communicate these new offers to the locals and guests.

A broad range of stakeholders covering many sectors in the region is necessary. In addition to the tourist destinations, there is also a need for participation at the municipal level, stakeholders from the medical sector, but also Kneipp associations, herbalists, hiking guides, forest experts, farmers, beekeepers, locals, who know their region well. It is also important to involve as many people and organisations as possible who have already worked on the development of the existing tourism strategy. It was essential to define the level at which services should be developed: an increase in health-related quality of life to make us more capable = prevention; or the means to cure diseases = therapy; or the ability to get us back on our feet quickly after illness = rehabilitation.

The methodology applied in this pilot action is the following:

- Workshops with regional and local stakeholders, facilitated by external persons.
- Knowledge transfer about the region to stakeholders, in particular about the resource "forest", by experts.
- Training courses are also planned for various providers (hoteliers, providers of "holidays on the farm", herb educators, hiking guides, etc).

The expected results are:

- Existing but no longer used and maintained Kneipp facilities, fitness trails and other paths in the forest will be renovated and used again.
- Various tourism offers (already existing and to be newly developed) will be linked with each other: Forest & Water, "Get out for a while", etc.
- The "planter" forests are much more strongly and increasingly integrated into tourism communication.

Above all, manpower is needed. The repair of existing facilities is largely carried out by the municipalities on whose territory they are located (personnel of the building yard, etc.). Often it does not take much. Afterwards, the facilities are looked after, for example, by the local Kneipp associations, local heritage societies, local tourist information centres, etc. An expert is commissioned with the integration into the existing tourism strategy and embedding in the existing communication (website, etc.). These costs are not yet known but will be borne by Destination Bregenzerwald Tourismus GmbH.

Implementation of the Full Health Thermal Spa Resort concept (Station Thermale de Pleine Santé) is the last pilot action developed within this project. The role of the Fédération Thermale Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes is to federate the thermal spas and the identification of the resorts likely to implement the concept of "Station Thermale de Pleine Santé". Selection of a first list of stations ready and adapted to the concept for 2022 contains 7 thermal spas resorts: Aix-les-Bains, Bourbon l'Archambault, Brides-les-Bains, Divonne-les-Bains, La Bourboule, Vals-les-Bains and Vichy.

The objective is to strengthen the offer and the economy of the thermal spas with adding 4 resorts to the list in 2022, additional 4 in 2023 and another last 4 resorts in 2024. Altogether 12 additional resorts from 2022 until 2024. With this pilot action the region wants to achieve a differentiating, serious, medically recognised product, adapted to the resorts and the clientele. The objective is to diversify the offer of the resorts and to develop the attractiveness of the thermal spas in the region.

The ambition or expected results of this pilot are to consolidate the thermal activity and to become the region of reference in the field of health prevention and thermal wellness.

The main problem the pilot action addresses is the difficulty to find the staff and the financial resources to go forward with important tasks like:

- interviews with individual actors of thermal cities: mayor, thermal operators, tourist offices, etc.
- pre-evaluation of the compatibility of the Full Health Thermal Spa Resort concept from 2022
- organisation of meetings in pre-selected resorts and visits thermal baths/resorts
- confirmation of the commitment of the pilot resorts in 2022
- meeting of resorts committed in 2022
- press presentation of the concept & destinations 2022
- checking the appetite of the clientele for the prevention and the suitability of the product
- behavioural study towards health and experience of use in spas.

The pilot's objective is to produce a product that will care for the patient before, during and after the stay, to develop thermal treatments, activities, educational workshops and to provide one-week course or a complement to the cure. With pilot we want to reinforce the Region's ambition: "To be the 1st thermal region committed to Preventive Health and Well-being Thermal".

For the pilot to be successful, the marketing of the pilot is very important task. Marketing would require activities like press purchases, digital campaigns, hosting of influencers, presence of regional regional Thermalies, creation of a charter, photo reportage, creation of videos...

The pilot will contribute to the strategy of the region "The vision - The bets - The challenges for 2022 – 2027":

1. To allow the Thermal Establishments to quickly recover the level of frequentation in 2019 (development of customer loyalty and winning over new spa-goers);
2. To accompany the actors of the resorts in the setting up of the Thermal Health Resort;
3. Promote the preventive health offers of the resorts (conquest of a new market);
4. Training thermal doctors or encouraging their installation;
5. To open up new avenues of development (climatotherapy / environment, diversification of the offer and rejuvenation of the resorts' clientele...)

9. Transferability of the innovative digital tools, practices and pilots to other regions

9.1 Transferability of the innovative digital tools

Both digital tools, the **Health Tourism Assessment and Benchmarking Tool (HTAB)** and the **Tactical Health Management Toolset (Scenario Tool)** are designed to help with the development of health tourism in alpine destinations or regions. The aim of the HTAB tool is to provide recommendations to the people responsible for tourism in alpine regions, how to develop health tourism products and the Scenario tool assesses and simulates the valorisation of alpine resources, supports the development of innovative alpine health tourism products and service chains and detects synergy potential.

These two digital tools are unique in terms of designated destination (alpine region) and in terms of tourism segment (health tourism). Without any alteration of their structures and frameworks their transferability to non-alpine destinations or non-health related tourism activities is very much limited or even impossible.

Nevertheless, with the adaptation of the structure and with new fitted input and analysis, with different KPIs, destinations and target groups, the concept of these two digital tools could be reused and transferable to other (non-alpine) regions and to various types of tourism or even other segments of business or industry.

9.2 Transferability of innovative practices

Due to the variety of innovative practices presented in this document, the level of transferability of each practice varies as well. To check and display the transferability of these practices clearly and understandably, we have developed several criteria that were challenged and evaluated against every practice. We have laid-out and cross-checked all the criteria and the practices in the table below (see the Transferability table from 9.2.1 below) and marked each practice from a low, medium or high level of intensity for each criterion.

A low-level means that a certain criterion does not limit the transferability of the practice, and high-level means that certain criterion is very important for the transferability of the practice to other regions. In other words, practices with more low-level criteria are more transferrable and practices with most high-level criteria are less transferable to other regions.

The transferability criteria are the following:

- **Nature based criterion** is where health tourism is based on the natural attractions of an area and where the main motivation of the tourists is the observation, appreciation and the healing characteristics of the nature.

- **Health tourism infrastructure** is the collection of the various components, like spas, accommodation facilities, institutions, wellness centres, wellness services, focused on healing, relaxation or beautifying of the body that is preventive and/or curative in nature. Low level of this criterium means that there is no specific tourism infrastructure needed for the transferability of the innovative practice to other region. High level of this criterium means that specific tourism infrastructure is essential for implementation of the practices in the other regions.
- **Specificity of target groups** determines the broadness variety of different types of target groups needed for the implementation of the practice. Practices with low level of specify of target groups are broadly open to different types of practitioners or do not define specific type of users while high level of this criterion means that innovative practices are focused on specific type of users, like SMEs, municipalities or age/gender-based users.
- **Stakeholder involvement** means the level of the involvement and participation of the different stakeholders in the process of co-designing, co-creating and implementing the innovative practice in the region.
- **Policy instrument/strategy development** is sometimes required in the development or implementation of the innovative practices. Some innovative practices described in this document require development of new strategic documents and policy instruments, some require adaptation of strategies, and some do not mention any adaption of the documents.
- **Discovery proses** of transparent and democratic consultation with broad range of stakeholders with the purpose to create new policies, strategies, innovative projects and decisions in the region/city or other administrative environment. Discovery process requires several workshops, meetings and other forms of consultation with key stakeholders. Innovative practices with high level of discovery process require more intensive cooperation, organization and communication for exchanging ideas between variety of stakeholders, whereas low level of discovery process means no or very simplified process of stakeholder consultation. Discovery process could be understood also as discovery of new ideas by being inspired by the nature and the technique,
- **Time to implementation** means the time interval between initiation and completion of the innovative practice in the region, influenced by complexity of the business modes, long discovery process, investments in new tourist infrastructure and other factors
- **Maturity of the practice** means the level of the development and completion of the innovative practice. Low level of the maturity of the innovative practice means that the practices are still on the level of the idea or in the initial stages of the development. High level maturity means that practices are explicitly defined, managed, measured, controlled and effective.
- **Medical evidence based** in the case of presented innovative practices is very limiting criteria and applies the scientific method which bring benefits of the health to the practices where the technique or the tourist product is based on a clead medical evidence, that is an end user knows

9.2.2 Reasons for transferability of innovative practices

- **Participatory processes in health tourism destinations: Cooperation between destinations and municipalities in Habitat management**

+ reasons: Habitat management is a innovative practice that targets mostly local decision makers on municipal level but requires also high involvement of other stakeholders in local environment, like civil population, user groups and health tourism providers. This innovative practice is easily transferable to other regions that have established good practices for stakeholder communication and co-decision processes. The adaptation to local conditions, like infrastructure, municipal administration, existing participatory structures is necessary in order to transfer the Habitat management practice to other regions.

– reasons: When cooperating with municipalities it is important to bear in mind that the processes in the municipal administration and at the political level are often bound by laws, ordinances, and guidelines. The mayor should not decide alone but discuss it in municipal committees. Such an approach sometimes requires a lot of time.

- **Integration of health tourism into an existing tourism strategy**

+ reasons: This innovation practice is not focused on a specific target group, and the stakeholder involvement is not very high, which makes it easily transferable to other regions.

– reasons: However, this innovative practice it requires certain level of natural predispositions in terms of natural landscape, like forests and water recourses and most importantly, the adaptation or thorough revision of local/regional tourist strategies in order to integrate health tourism aspects.

- **Design of a health tourism program with focus on nature-based wellbeing activities**

+ reasons: The business model developed in this innovative practice follows certain steps to identify the crucial stakeholders and create local value chains for nature-based health tourism. This innovative practice is focused mostly on SMEs. Therefore, this business model can be easily adopted to other regions, even if they didn't yet develop destination management organisation.

– reasons: Since the innovative practice requires high participation of local stakeholder, it requires good organisation and co-decision process on decision making level.

- **Outdoor innovation training for a sustainable future of Alpine health tourism**

+ reasons: The innovative practice is well developed and in a mature phase and does not require specific tourist infrastructure or strategy or policy changes on a local level and targets wide range of stakeholders. Therefore, it would be easily accessible to other regions.

– reasons: However, this practice requires active participation of the stakeholders at the workshops in order to achieve the right results, that is new out of the box thinking and new disruptive ideas.

- **Creating medical evidence for natural resources for nature-based health tourism (CreMENHT)**

+ reasons: CreMENTH innovative practice is not focused on a specific tourist infrastructure and does not require regional policy or strategy changes. It is however based on providing clear medical evidence of the healing power of nature which means a strong involvement of research and medical profession to conduct clinical trials. Therefore, the innovative practice is transferable to other alpine regions with big natural potential and where tourist providers have good support of medical professionals.

– reasons: The main barrier for the implementation can be seen in the associated costs. Depending on the scope of the clinical study required for creation of the evidence, the costs can be between a five- and six-figure sum. Moreover, this innovative practice cannot be carried out by stakeholders alone, but always requires professional medical support. Possible solutions are in any case cooperation of several partners as well as a (co-) financing via subsidies

- **Product development process for evidence-based products in Alpine health tourism (ProDevEHT)**

+ reasons: This innovative practice does not require specific tourist infrastructure and does need long time to implement.

– reasons: Like the previous innovative practice, the ProDevEHT innovative practice is very medically based and needs very specific experts that can create the medical evidence from the natural resource, perform clinical studies needed for creation of the medical evidence and is therefore transferable to the regions with untouched nature and strong cooperation between medical and tourism sector.

- **The Business Model Canvas to devise an effective business model for new local wellness and health tourism products**

+ reasons: The Business model canvas is a business model that through strong discovery process and involvement of stakeholders results in comparing different business models and identification of new tourism products. Being a business model, this innovative practice does not require specific infrastructure, nature-based environment and is not targeting specific users, therefore is easily transferable to other regions all-over the EU and broader.

– reasons: The implementation of the innovative practice requires very active participation of the stakeholders to achieve concrete results. The tourism products must be well defined beforehand.

- **Foster interest and involvement of local stakeholders through a series of webinars**

+ reasons: This innovative practice is easily transferable to other regions since it offers a know-how on connecting local business and stakeholders via series of online webinars.

– reasons: In order to achieve good results, this practice requires active participation of motivated stakeholders.

- **Miro board for online idea development on health tourism products**

+ reasons: Being an online idea development workshop, this innovative practice does not require specific infrastructure (besides online tool) and changes in a regional policies or strategies.

– reasons: It does however encourage a strong involvement of specific stakeholders, active in different categories of the workshop (food, water, agriculture, sports, etc) that through discovery process generate new ideas for nature-based tourist products. This innovative practice is therefore transferable to other regions that can involve different stakeholders in active participation.

- **Template for Idea concretization within Alpine health tourism**

+ reasons: This innovative practice is based on market analysis that consists of desk research, identification of competitors and workshops. This practice is simple to understand and does not require many recourses, therefore it is easily transferable to other regions and can be adopted also to other sectors.

– reasons: This innovative practice does not have strong reasons that would limit its transferability.

- **Digital presentation of health factors**

+ reasons This innovative does not have any specific local characteristics and is therefore easy transferable to other regions.

– reasons: The costs of investments to the digital equipment, required for the implementation of the health factors, could be significant.

- **The “Full Health Thermal Spa Resort” concept**

+ reasons: This concept is targeting specific stakeholders that are co-creating local strategies.

– reasons: This practice can be implemented in regions with thermal water recourses, with strong spa industry and where this industry is priority of local smart specialisation strategies. The concept requires strong political support to change regional strategies, established spa tourism infrastructure and strong involvement of stakeholders in a decision-making process.

- **Men-dedicated weekend package**

+ reasons: Although being focused on the concept of Mithraism, an ancient religion reserved for men, this innovative practice includes offers for well-being for men, that could be easily transferred to other regions.

– reasons: If the key marketing element of this innovative practice is Mithraism, than this product is limited to the regions and areas with similar men-specific historical or religious characteristics.

- **Selfness in old castle parks**

+ reasons: This innovative practice does not target specific users and does not require high stakeholder involvement in a co-decision process, therefore is easily transferable to other regions.

– reasons: The only limitation to transferability of this innovative practice is specific natural conditions and existence of castle parks.

9.3 Transferability of the pilot activities developed in the project

Pilot activities are developed to present nature and evidence-based tourism offer by involving developed innovation practices. In coordination of transferability ability of innovation practices pilot activities can show high and low transferable potential.

Overall view provides us with understanding that all described pilot activities can be transferable to other regions. Some adjustments according to region indicators should be made.

10. Conclusions

Building on the ARPAF project HEALPS, the aim of the Alpine Space project HEALPS2 is to improve framework conditions for utilising Alpine natural health resources by developing health tourism products and service chains.

Tourism is a major engine for job creation and a driving force for economic growth and development in the Alpine programme area. Yet alpine tourism is currently experiencing challenges such as climate change and is often only focussed on specific regions. Global trends such as a thirst for nature-based experiences and increased health consciousness hold considerable opportunities for developing innovative nature-based health tourism value chains.

To fulfil this potential, the project will provide policymakers, regional developers, Alpine regions and SMEs access to innovation knowledge and to implementation tools.

Lessons learnt from existing innovative cases will be elevated to a transnational level. Supported by the combination of the latest research results with digital solutions, the nature-based health tourism approach will be tested in pilot regions and the experiences then translated into relevant tools for Alpine regional development.

Please note that all information and communication materials could be downloaded via HEALPS 2 webpage: www.healing-alps.eu.

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