



RECIRCLE MED

Interreg
Euro-MED



Co-funded by
the European Union



SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BLUE AND CIRCULAR TOURISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN - RECIRCLE MED

Deliverable D.1.1.1: Blueprint for Blue Action Plans for Circular Tourism

<https://recircledmed.interreg-euro-med.eu/>

Project Partners:



RECIRCLE MED



PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Acronym:	RECIRCLE MED
Project Title:	Supporting the implementation of blue and circular tourism in the Mediterranean
Project Code:	Euro-MED0401366
Project Priority:	Greener MED
Project Mission:	Enhancing sustainable tourism
Specific Objective:	RSO2.6: Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy
Type of Project:	Transfer project (Thematic Project)
Project Duration:	01/04/2025 - 30/06/2027 (27 months)

DELIVERABLE INFORMATION

Deliverable no:	D.1.1.1
Deliverable Title:	Blueprint for Blue Action Plans for Circular Tourism
Deliverable Type:	Feasibility study resulting in blueprint
Work Package:	WP 1: Design
Activity:	Activity 1.1
Work Package Leader:	The Energy and Water Agency (EWA)
Deliverable Responsible:	The Energy and Water Agency (EWA) & Association of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCAME)
Partners Involved:	UTH, CEFAU, NAMBR, OHRID, BAR, LivingProspects
Dissemination Level:	Public



RECIRCLE MED



Document History

Versions	Date	Status	Type of change	Delivered by
Version 1.0	10/06/2025	Initial Document	N/a	EWA
Version 2.0	10/09/2025	Updating draft document	Changes based on partner feedback/discussion	EWA
Version 3.0	26/11/2025	Final version	Changes to the document structure and approach	EWA



RECIRCLE MED



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	6
1. Conceptual integration	8
2. Integration of project tools.....	10
2.1. REBOOT MED – Recovering, Experiencing and Boosting eco-Tourism in the WestMED area	10
REBOOT MED – Blue Economy Action Plans	11
2.2. INCIRCLE - Support INSular and low-density areas in the transition towards a more CIRCULAR tourism Economy	12
INCIRCLE – Circular Tourism Assessment Tool	14
2. SWOT Analysis of REBOOT MED and INCIRCLE Tools.....	16
3. Feasibility assessment	18
Strengths	18
Constraints.....	19
4. Design of the Blueprint	19
5. Developing Blue Action Plans for Circular Tourism	21
6. Requirements	24
Conclusion.....	24
Appendix.....	25
Explanation of the Measure Scoring System	26
Scoring of measures	26
Circular and Blue Tourism Performance Categories	29
1. Reduce – Metrics and Measures.....	31
2. Regenerate – Metrics and Measures.....	43
3. Rethink – Metrics and Measures	56
4. Innovate – Metrics and Measures.....	66
5. Revalue – Metrics and Measures	71
6. Reinvest – Metrics and Measures.....	80
References.....	90



RECIRCLE MED



List of Tables

Table A1 Visual representation of the scoring system at different levels for the Reduce principle and water pillar.....	28
---	----

List of Figures

Figure 1 Flowchart illustrating REBOOT MED's Blue Economy Action Plan.12	
Figure 2 Flowchart illustrating INCIRCLE's Circular Tourism Assessment Tool	15
Figure 3 Visual depiction of total scores allocated per principle for the circular tourism strategies.....	16
Figure 4 Conceptual integration of REBOOT MED and INCIRCLE tools	Σφάλμα! Δεν έχει οριστεί σελιδοδείκτης.
Figure 5 Visual representation of the stages involved in the RECIRCLE MED Blueprint for Blue Action Plans for Circular Tourism.....	23
Figure A1 Visual depiction of Circular and Blue Tourism Performance Levels (Concerned, Pro-Activist, Circular).....	30





Introduction

In the Mediterranean, tourism is closely connected to economic, social, cultural, and territorial life. It goes beyond being a single sector, influencing many policy areas not usually associated with tourism. Moving towards more circular tourism, whilst also focusing on blue economy aspects, is essential to protect natural resources, preserve cultural heritage, and ensure long-term benefits for local communities and economies.

Against this backdrop, the RECIRCLE MED project provides practical guidance and strategic tools to support this transition. This document sets out the requirements of Deliverable 1.1.1., as defined in the Application Form for the RECIRCLE MED project.

Deliverable 1.1.1 “Blueprint for Blue Action Plans for Circular Tourism” is part of Activity 1.1 “Integration of tools”. Its objective is to combine the Action Plans of the REBOOT MED project with the circular tourism assessment tools of the INCIRCLE project, fostering sustainable practices and embedding Circular Economy (CE) principles into Blue Action Plans. This activity establishes a structured approach to integrating these tools into a unified blueprint, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of their combined outcomes.

As part of this deliverable, a preliminary feasibility study will assess the potential impact of merging the INCIRCLE tools and REBOOT MED’s Action Plan approach and identify ways to facilitate broader implementation. This will enable the design of the Blueprint to develop Blue Action plans. This will form the basis for the design of the Blueprint, supporting partners and enabling participating territories to incorporate blue and circular economy principles into actionable plans. In turn, these plans can later be developed into blue and circular tourism packages, reinforcing long-term sustainability across the region.

EWA with the support of ASCAME, both partners that have participated in implementing these tools, will oversee the activity. Project partners will contribute their knowledge and expertise to facilitate the effective integration and creation of the Blueprint.

The Blueprint will then be transferred through Activity 1.2 “Designing the transferring process”,¹ and further developed into action plans. The Associated Organisations² will contribute their expertise to ensure smooth

¹ Activity 1.2 *Designing the transferring process*, involves designing and tailoring modules to transfer and adapt the blueprint from A1.1, for use in new coastal destinations.

² List of Associated Organisations: Pomorie Municipality; Municipality of Zakynthos; Association of Sicilian Municipalities – ANCI Sicilia; Tourism organisation of Municipality of Bar; Hydrobiological Institute; Regional Association of Italian Towns in Lazio – ANCI Lazio; Municipality of Central Corfu and Diapontian Islands; Lebanese Center for Energy Conservation; Mediterranean Renewable Energy Centre;



RECIRCLE MED



integration of the tools. The results will feed into Activity 1.3 “Stakeholder mapping and mobilization” and Activity 2.1 “Development of Blue Action Plans for Circular Tourism”, while contributing to the Results Amplification Strategy.

Deliverable 1.1.1 will result in a Blueprint that provides a clear methodology and guide for the creating Blue Action Plans for circular tourism, by:

1. Integrating of tools and action plans provided by INCIRCLE and REBOOT MED, and
2. Outlining the conditions necessary for replicability and adoption of the Blueprint by the **four receiving destinations** (CEFALU, NAMBR, OHRID and BAR).

All the project partners - UTH, ASCAME, EWA, CEFALU, NAMRB, OHRID, BAR and Living Prospects – will be involved in the formation of this deliverable.





1. Conceptual integration

Tourism development in the Mediterranean has traditionally followed a linear mass-tourism model, concentrating large numbers of visitors in environmentally sensitive coastal areas. This pattern has led to severe environmental degradation, depletion of resources and limited innovation across the tourism value chain (UNEP/MAP, 2020; Plan Bleu, 2017). Although tourism remains a key sector for regional economies - for coastal and insular areas - its long-term sustainability is increasingly at risk due to the overuse of natural resources, high seasonality and climate change impacts. Addressing these challenges requires a strategic shift toward tourism models that are environmentally restorative, socially inclusive and economically resilient.

Two complementary approaches have emerged as a response to these systemic challenges: the circular economy (CE) and the blue economy (BE). The circular economy advocates for systems that reduce waste, extend the use of resources and restore natural capital through regenerative practices (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013; European Commission, 2020). When applied to tourism, CE principles promote sustainable infrastructure, efficient use of resources and innovations that minimize the environmental impact across the entire tourism value chain (Manniche, Larsen, & Broegaard, 2021).

On the other hand, the blue economy focuses on the sustainable use, governance and conservation of ocean and coastal resources to foster economic development while preserving marine ecosystems (World Bank, 2017). In tourism, this translates into sustainable coastal and maritime tourism practices, integration with marine spatial planning and alignment with ecosystem-based management approaches such as the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) under the Barcelona Convention (UNEP/MAP, 2019).

Although both frameworks align with European and Mediterranean sustainability goals, their joint implementation in tourism policies and combined operationalization in tourism practices is still limited. This is often due to sectoral fragmentation, governance limitations and the absence of common tools and methodologies (Mosgaard et al., 2022). Recognizing this gap, the RECIRCLE MED project seeks to bridge the two models by co-creating an integrated blueprint for tourism destinations that combines the circular economy's focus on resource efficiency with the blue economy's commitment to protecting marine and coastal ecosystems.



RECIRCLE MED



To operationalise the integration of these frameworks in coastal tourism, the RECIRCLE MED project suggests and adopts the following joint definition, which serves as the conceptual basis for its methodology:

“Blue and circular tourism is a sustainable tourism³ model that combines the blue economy’s focus on conserving and responsibly managing marine and coastal resources with the circular economy’s principles of resource efficiency, waste reduction and lifecycle thinking.”

In this integrated approach, coastal tourism is conceived as a regenerative socio-ecological system, where tourism-related activities are designed to:

- Protect and restore marine and coastal ecosystems,
- Advance the use of resource-efficient practices across tourism services and infrastructure,
- Promote local value creation, innovation and resilience through inclusive participatory governance,
- Manage tourism flows to align with the ecological carrying capacity of coastal destinations.

This model fosters long-term sustainability by shifting from linear, resource-intensive tourism practices to restorative, place-based development, maintaining a balance between economic development and preservation of environmental or social systems.

This integrated approach highlights the values of ecosystem-based management, lifecycle thinking in services and infrastructure and participatory governance involving public authorities, local communities and private stakeholders. By combining the blue and circular economy models, RECIRCLE MED offers a comprehensive and transitional framework for tourism destinations - particularly those with limited capacity or access to innovation - guiding them toward a more sustainable, socially inclusive and economically resilient tourism development model (European Commission, 2021) with multiple benefits:

- **Conceptual coherence:** It enables policymakers to shift from sectoral strategies and adopt a comprehensive vision of sustainable tourism that encompasses resource efficiency and biodiversity conservation.
- **Operational guidance:** Integrated models support the design of place-based strategies such as the “Blue Action Plans for Circular Tourism,” that foster sustainable blue and circular practices in a structured decision-making process.

³ A concept of tourism that considers all its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts.



RECIRCLE MED



- **Policy alignment:** The joint framework aligns with the European Green Deal, the EU Sustainable Blue Economy Strategy, the Circular Economy Action Plan and the Barcelona Convention's ICZM Protocol, ensuring coherence across governance levels.
- **Replicability and scalability:** The integrated model is particularly useful for low-capacity destinations that lack access to innovative tools or funding but are rich in natural and cultural capital. It supports knowledge transfer, participatory governance and transnational cooperation—all essential in a fragmented and diverse region like the Mediterranean.

2. Integration of project tools

2.1. REBOOT MED – Recovering, Experiencing and Boosting eco-Tourism in the WestMED area

The REBOOT MED project aimed to foster public-private partnerships, co-define Blue Economy Action Plans for the recovery of the tourism sector, and incubate, accelerate, and test new ecotourism and blue economy tourism products and packages in 10 pilot areas across 6 WestMed countries⁴. REBOOT MED was implemented through three pillars that emphasized the following tangible outcomes:

1. **Capacity building and awareness raising** about the competitiveness and sustainability of the coastal and maritime tourism ecosystem through local clusters and collaborative exchanges with the WestMed Initiative.
2. **Promoting an asset-based development approach** that harnessed local resources to foster sustainable growth and a healthier environment. This pillar supported tourism Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), coastal communities, and potential pioneers (such as women, NEETs, and startup entrepreneurs) to act as change agents in reimagining and reconstructing coastal and maritime tourism. REBOOT MED provided tailored go-to-market services and testing activities to support their transformative roles.
3. **Sharing and capitalizing on lessons learned** at both local and WestMed levels to complete the cycle of the project's impact.

⁴ The 6 WestMed project countries are France, Italy, Spain, Tunisia, Morocco and Mauritania.



RECIRCLE MED



The overarching objective of REBOOT MED was to support the implementation of the WestMed common roadmap for developing a sustainable blue economy in the sub-basin. The initiative aimed to foster growth, create jobs, and improve the living environment for Mediterranean populations and tourism ecosystems. REBOOT MED started on September 1st, 2022, and concluded on August 31st, 2024. For more information on the project outputs and results, please visit <https://www.REBOOT-med.eu/en/home/>

REBOOT MED – Blue Economy Action Plans

REBOOT MED's Blue Economy Action Plans for the Recovery of the Tourism Sector (D2.1) are based on a three faceted analysis of a tourism region's varied resources. These include:

- **Marine and terrestrial resources**, which are natural assets found both on land and at sea, such as coasts, fisheries, landscapes, and biodiversity. In REBOOT MED, these resources form the foundation for sustainable tourism packages that respect ecological limits while supporting local economies.
- **Tangible and intangible heritage**, which are cultural assets ranging from monuments, crafts, and gastronomy to traditions, stories, and community practices. REBOOT MED integrates these elements into tourism development, ensuring authenticity and strengthening local identity alongside economic opportunities.
- **Natural resources and ecosystem services** (the benefits provided by nature, including clean water, fertile soils, climate regulation, and biodiversity), which connect economic, social, cultural and environmental factors to support a comprehensive analysis of the territorial context.

Based on this analysis and the feedback received from stakeholder representatives, objectives⁵ for the specific region are defined. These objectives address the region's particular needs.

The process follows a SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) approach and outlines the expected results for the region from the implementation of the Blue Economy Action Plans.

⁵ A broad statement describing an improvement that regional and national local authorities are seeking, Objectives specify the direction for improvement and priority areas, but not the means for achieving it.



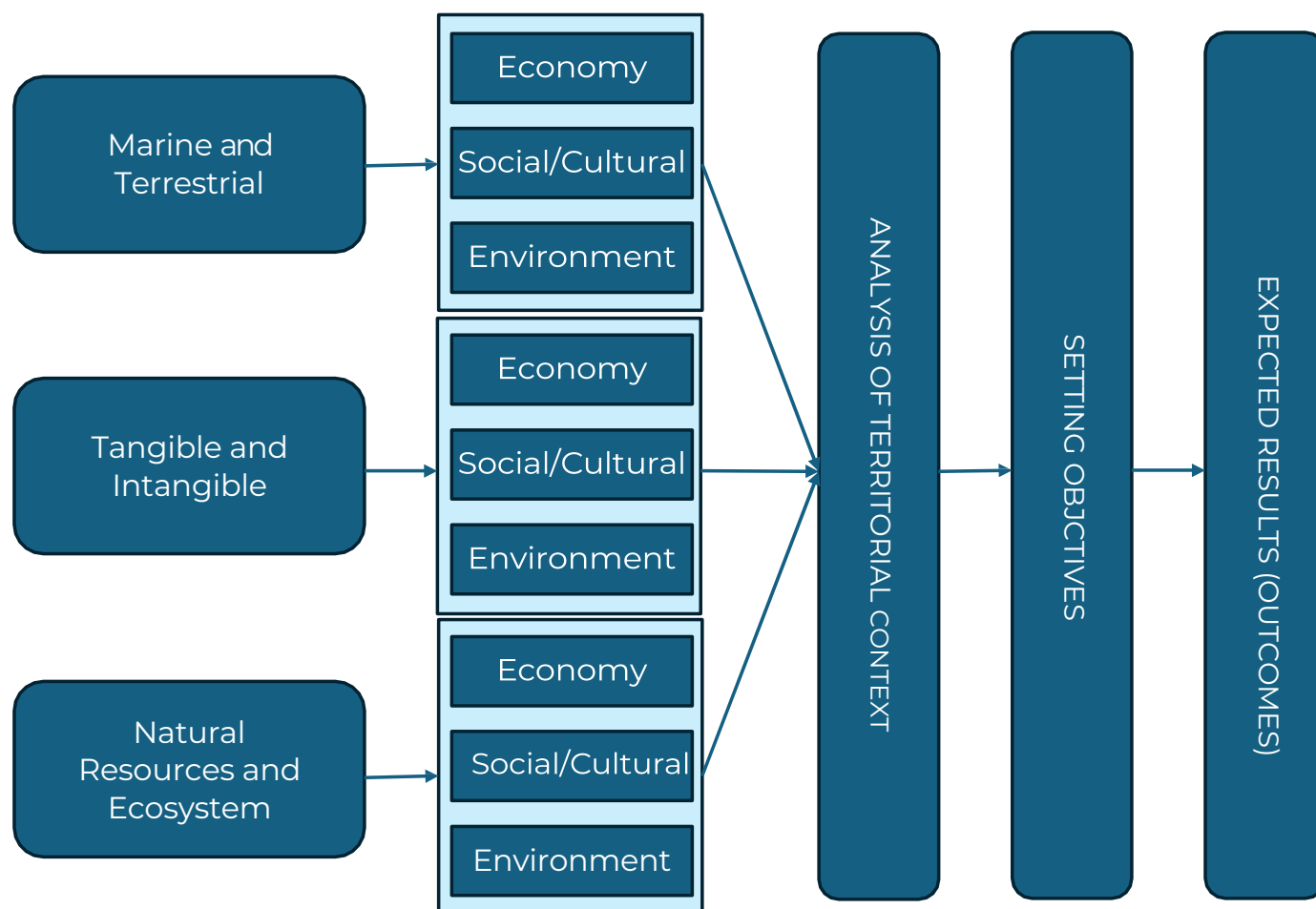


Figure 1 Flowchart illustrating REBOOT MED's Blue Economy Action Plan

2.2. INCIRCLE - Support INSular and low-density areas in the transition towards a more CIRCULAR tourism Economy

The INCIRCLE project set out to help Mediterranean islands and low-density areas make tourism more sustainable by applying circular economy principles. These regions often face limited resources, seasonal visitor peaks, and fragile ecosystems, so the project focused on reducing pressures in four key sectors: water, energy, waste, and mobility.

INCIRCLE is built around a set of **five guiding principles** that bring circular economy thinking into the heart of tourism development, while also connecting strongly with the blue economy. These principles define how resources are managed, how communities are engaged, and how destinations can prepare for a more resilient future.



RECIRCLE MED



The first principle is **Reduce**, which highlights the need to design out waste and minimise the use of scarce resources. In tourism, this means creating policies and practices that limit unnecessary consumption of water, energy, marine and terrestrial resources. By following blue economy principles, destinations shift away from dependence on raw extraction and towards efficient, circular management of both terrestrial and coastal systems.

The second principle is **Regenerate**, which ensures that resources remain in circulation for as long as possible, whether through technical cycles such as reuse and repair or biological cycles such as composting and regeneration of natural systems. This approach also encourages dematerialisation, such as moving from paper-based to digital systems, and the integration of tourism into local economic and ecological activities. By applying the ReSOLVE framework (Regenerate, Share, Optimise, Loop, Virtualise, Exchange), INCIRCLE supports the regeneration of natural and cultural assets, particularly in marine and coastal areas central to the blue economy.

The third principle is **Rethink**, which adopts a holistic view of resource management that considers economic, natural, and social capitals. It emphasises the importance of involving stakeholders from the beginning, so that tourism strategies are co-designed, inclusive, and resilient. From a blue economy perspective, this means recognising the interconnectedness of terrestrial and marine resources and ensuring that tourism development strengthens both ecosystem health and long-term economic value.

The fourth principle is **Innovate**, focusing on the need for creative, forward-looking solutions. Circular and sustainable tourism requires managing current environmental challenges but also anticipating future ones. This aligns with European strategies such as the Green Deal, which call for systemic change and inspire territories to adopt new methods. In the blue economy, innovation can involve sustainable maritime activities, eco-friendly coastal infrastructure, or new tourism products that actively protect and enhance marine and coastal resources.

The fifth principle is **Revalue**, which highlights the importance of maintaining and increasing the value of resources over time. Tourism systems can achieve this by extending the life of products through reuse, repurposing, and remanufacturing, or by upcycling materials to create higher-value outputs. In a blue economy context, revaluing also means safeguarding marine and coastal resources—such as sustainable seafood, restored habitats, or maritime cultural heritage—so they continue to provide long-term ecological, cultural, and economic benefits.

Alongside these principles, INCIRCLE organises its work around **four sectoral pillars**, which address the main areas where tourism most directly impacts



RECIRCLE MED



resources. The first is **water** management, focusing on efficient use and preservation of scarce water resources, a critical issue for islands and low-density territories under seasonal pressure. The second is **energy**, where the project promotes efficiency and renewable sources, such as solar energy, to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. The third pillar is **waste** management, which supports strategies to reduce waste production and strengthen recycling, both essential for maintaining attractive and healthy destinations. The fourth pillar is sustainable **mobility**, which encourages low-carbon transport options like cycling, public transit, and electric vehicles to cut emissions and congestion.

In addition to these four sectoral pillars, INCIRCLE also incorporates a **horizontal**⁶ dimension to ensure the effectiveness and longevity of its approach. Central to this is participatory governance, bringing together local communities, SMEs, and policymakers in the co-design of solutions. The governance framework also supports policy integration and institutional structures as reflected in the adoption of new circular tourism legislation in several territories. Beyond policy, governance extends to the establishment of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, through indicators and toolkits to track progress, as well as capacity building initiatives to strengthen local skills. This governance-driven model not only ensures accountability and alignment across stakeholders but also provides the foundation for replicating strategies in other territories.

INCIRCLE – Circular Tourism Assessment Tool

INCIRCLE's circular tourism assessment⁷ tool focuses on an assessment of the existing tourism policy and strategy⁸ in a region or locality. The assessment is based on the five INCIRCLE principles – Reduce, Regenerate, Rethink, Innovate and Revalue.

The performance of the strategy on each of these five pillars is assessed through five metrics related to the four INCIRCLE pillars of water, energy, waste and mobility, and an additional fifth horizontal metric which addresses an issue specific to the specific principle being addressed. The value of each of the five metrics is assessed based on the performance of five different measure typologies in the existing tourism strategy.

⁶ For the RECIRCLE MED project, the "horizontal" dimension has been renamed to "governance", as this term better reflects the project's scope. While the focus of governance remains like the previous horizontal dimension, its description has been updated to align more closely with the objectives of this project.

⁷ This INCIRCLE project deliverable (D4.1.1) was referred to as the "Strategy Evaluation Framework", and "Strategy Evaluation Toolkit" this terminology can be used interchangeably, with "Circular Tourism Assessment Tool".

⁸ The terms *tourism strategy*, *circular strategy*, or simply *strategy* refer to the current state of circularity and sustainability in the tourism sector within a destination. *Tourism strategy* is used interchangeably with *tourism policy*.





The performance of the tourism policy (Circular Tourism Performance) is assessed through a rating equation linking up the measures, metrics and pillars in a single weighted score.

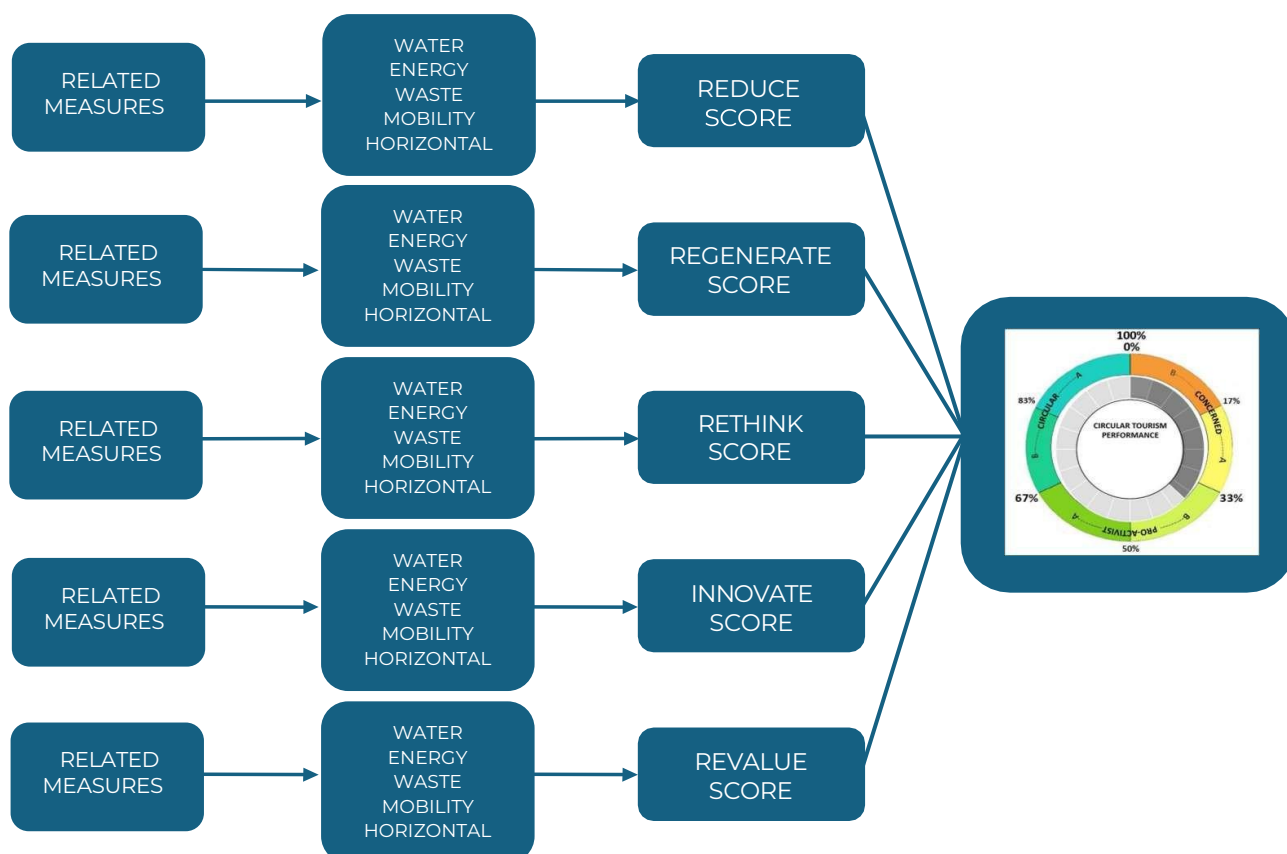


Figure 2 Flowchart illustrating INCIRCLE's Circular Tourism Assessment Tool

The INCIRCLE Circular Tourism Assessment Tool also provides an assessment of the performance of the strategy along the five INCIRCLE principles of Reduce, Regenerate, Rethink, Innovate and Revalue; as well as the five INCIRCLE pillars of Water, Energy, Waste, Mobility and Horizontal Policies.

In as much the assessment tool provides an unbiased insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the Tourism Strategy under review, highlighting key policy areas which need to be addressed for strengthening the circularity elements of the policy.

Comparative assessment between participating territories can also help identify synergies for sharing of experiences and cooperation for the optimisation of the regional tourism policy.





Figure 3 Visual depiction of total scores allocated per principle for the circular tourism strategies

2. SWOT Analysis of REBOOT MED and INCIRCLE Tools

To evaluate the feasibility of combining and building on the tools developed in the previous projects, a SWOT⁹ analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) has been conducted. This analysis examines how the Blue Economy Action Plans of REBOOT MED and the Circular Tourism Assessment tools of INCIRCLE can be integrated within the RECIRCLE MED framework.

Commonalities:

⁹ An analysis based on the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of a sector used to evaluate its position and to develop strategic planning. The SWOT analysis assesses internal and external factors, as well as current and future potential.



RECIRCLE MED



- Both projects are grounded in strong stakeholder participation and consultation, ensuring that proposed measures are relevant and supported by those who will implement them.
- Each project provides an evidence-based framework that can inform local decision-making, offering structured approaches to guide blue, circular and sustainable tourism planning.

Differences:

- INCIRCLE delivers a resource-focused assessment framework based on sectoral pillars (water, energy, waste, mobility), whereas REBOOT MED addresses broader horizontal factors such as marine and terrestrial resources, heritage, and ecosystem services.
- INCIRCLE emphasizes analysing the performance of existing policies, while REBOOT MED goes further by defining objectives, expected results, and pathways for policy reform.

Together, these complementary approaches create a strong foundation for RECIRCLE MED, with the following SWOT analysis highlighting how their integration can generate added value for sustainable, blue and circular tourism in the Mediterranean.

Comparative SWOT Analysis: INCIRCLE and REBOOT MED

	INCIRCLE	REBOOT MED
Strengths	• Strong toolkit for circular tourism, focused on water, energy, waste, and mobility. • Builds on prior MED projects (e.g., BLUEISLANDS, ALTER ECO, MITOMED+), ensuring continuity. • Broad stakeholder engagement with participatory planning.	• Multi-country and cross-sectoral scope, adaptable across Mediterranean territories. • Pilot projects tested in real contexts, demonstrating practical application. • Strong public-private collaboration through joint activities. • Promotes innovation and supports sustainable growth.
Weaknesses	• Requires strong local capacity for data collection and analysis. • Early-stage circular integration can be challenging for territories without prior experience. • Coordination across multiple actors and regions can be complex.	• Uneven institutional capacity across regions may limit uptake. • Limited mechanisms to ensure long-term implementation beyond the project. • Coordination complexity due to multi-country scope.



RECIRCLE MED



Opportunities	• High potential for replication in other Mediterranean regions. • EU support for sustainable tourism and circular economy policies. • Can inform and influence regional and local policymaking. • Creates stakeholder networks that can endure post-project.	• Stimulates eco-tourism innovation and new circular and blue tourism products. • Aligned with WestMed and UfM strategies, providing policy visibility. • Boosts local entrepreneurship, particularly for SMEs. • Scale-up potential via EU funding for proposed measures and broader adoption of the framework.
Threats	• Risk of slow adoption of measures post-project. • Fragmented governance or political/economic instability could hinder uptake.	• Market uptake and acceptance of proposed measures may be uncertain. • Dependence on stakeholder commitment for long-term results.

INCIRCLE provides a resource-focused toolkit based on prior MED projects, while REBOOT MED adds pilot projects, multi-country collaboration, and a focus on innovation and entrepreneurship. Together, they form the foundation of RECIRCLE MED, offering practical, scalable solutions for blue, circular and sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean.

3. Feasibility assessment

Strengths

The integration of tools from the REBOOT MED and INCIRCLE projects into a single framework for RECIRCLE MED is both promising and challenging. A key strength is that both initiatives share a clear vision of sustainability. Each promotes responsible tourism and resource efficiency, which provides a strong conceptual alignment for building a joint tool. Their focus areas are also highly complementary: INCIRCLE brings practical instruments for circular resource management in water, energy, waste, and mobility, while REBOOT MED contributes a broader perspective that includes ecosystems, cultural heritage, and the blue economy. Taken together, they create a comprehensive foundation for advancing sustainable coastal and island tourism.

This effort is further reinforced by the fact that both projects have already developed and tested a wide range of tools, indicators, and frameworks. Rather than starting from scratch, RECIRCLE MED can build on a solid base



RECIRCLE MED



of proven methodologies. Importantly, this combined approach is also consistent with wider European strategies, including the Green Deal, the EU Blue Economy Strategy, and the WestMED Initiative, giving it policy relevance and added legitimacy.

Constraints

At the same time, several constraints must be addressed. Regional capacities vary considerably: not all territories have the same level of data availability, technical expertise, or institutional readiness, which could affect the practical application of the integrated tool. The harmonisation of methodologies also requires careful work to ensure that indicators and guidance from both projects align seamlessly and can be applied consistently across regions. Finally, success will depend on effective coordination across different sectors—such as tourism, environment, and governance—and across different levels of administration. In some contexts, this coordination may be slow or complex, but it is essential for ensuring that the model is not only adopted but also sustained over time.

4. Design of the Blueprint

After reviewing the different aspects of the two projects, together with their associated project deliverables and outputs, a blueprint for developing the Blue Action Plans for Circular Tourism, was created. Based on the feasibility assessment of incorporating the projects' tools, it was decided to integrate the Blue Economy Action Plans for the Recovery of the Tourism Sector (D2.1) from REBOOT MED with the Circular Tourism Assessment Tool (D4.1.1) from the INCIRCLE project. This integration provides a robust guidance framework – the Blueprint – that territories can implement when designing their own Blue Action Plans for Circular Tourism.

The Blueprint for the Blue Action Plans for Circular Tourism builds on the INCIRCLE project's five pillars: water, energy, waste, mobility, and horizontal approach (renamed “governance”), while integrating REBOOT MED's focus on the environment and local heritage. The environment pillar, whilst traditionally focusing on the terrestrial environment, will be expanded to include marine and coastal ecosystems, resulting in a total of **seven pillars**.

These pillars are analysed using INCIRCLE's five principles - Reduce, Regenerate, Rethink, Innovate and Revalue - and are further augmented by an additional *economic dimension*, titled **Reinvest**. This addition aligns the other principles, bringing the total to **six principles**. The *Reinvest* dimension strengthens the framework by emphasising that sustainability must also deliver financial benefits to local communities. It involves supporting SMEs,



RECIRCLE MED



creating green and circular jobs and ensuring that the economic gains of tourism remain within the territory. When combined with blue economy principles, it helps align tourism growth with the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources, fostering a balance where economic development and environmental management reinforce one another. The inclusion of this principle builds on insights from the REBOOT MED project, which highlighted the importance of embedding economic sustainability into tourism frameworks to support local communities and long-term regional development.

Based on these principles, several **blue and circular measures** have been proposed to guide tourism territories toward improved environmental practices and awareness. A comprehensive explanation of these measures can be found in the Appendix, “Circular tourism measures contributing to the Blueprint for Blue Action Plans for Circular Tourism.” Furthermore, based on the number of measures currently implemented within a territory, a circular score can be assigned using a rating system. The higher the “circularity” of the destination, the better its score. Blue and circular scoring categories are divided into three levels:

- *Concerned about the Circular and Blue Economy* (obtains a score of between 0%–33%),
- *Pro-Activist about the Circular and Blue Economy* (score of 33% to 67%) and
- *Blue and Circular destination* (67%–100%).

This scoring and ranking system is further explained in the Appendix.

Territories will be evaluated based on their current sustainable tourism practices, forming the foundation of the territorial analysis stage of the Blueprint. To complete this stage, partners must list and include relevant tourism-related data in the Excel sheet, “Metrics and Measures in the Blueprint for Blue Action Plans for Circular Tourism.” This enables scoring of each territory’s circularity (incorporating blue economy aspects) and provides a standardized way to compare results across partner regions. This integrated approach will allow for a comprehensive assessment of the territorial context, with a particular focus on tourism policy and strategy.





5. Developing Blue Action Plans for Circular Tourism

Building upon the Blueprint and the assessment of territorial circularity, this stage focuses on systematically developing tailored Blue Action Plans through territorial analysis, SWOT evaluation, and stakeholder engagement to guide sustainable tourism practices. To initiate this process, the **SWOT analysis** of the different partner tourism areas will be conducted using the data collected in the previous stage, providing a structured understanding of each territory's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This analysis systematically identifies the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats related to each territory's current tourism practices. Strengths highlight areas where the destination is already performing well, such as existing blue and circular initiatives, strong local engagement, or effective resource management. Weaknesses point to gaps or challenges that need to be addressed, including limited infrastructure, low awareness of blue and circular practices, or inefficient use of resources. Opportunities focus on potential improvements, such as the development of new blue and circular tourism products, partnerships with local SMEs, or leveraging blue economy initiatives. Threats consider external or internal factors that could hinder progress, such as economic pressures, climate change impacts, or regulatory constraints.

Following the SWOT analysis, partners will be invited to **propose new measures** to accelerate the transition of their territories toward sustainable, blue and circular tourism practices. For each tourism area, clear **targets and objectives** will be defined to ensure that proposed measures are practical, adequately resourced, and aligned with local priorities.

Throughout all these stages, **active stakeholder engagement** is crucial, ensuring sustainable, circular and blue economy initiatives are grounded in local realities and supported by those who implement them. **Key stakeholders** include tourism organizations, planning and development departments, waste and water authorities, energy and transport providers, law enforcement, parks and port authorities, hotel and tour associations, NGOs, chambers of commerce, employee unions, and academic institutions. Involvement should focus on those with the capacity to provide data, influence policy, and stay committed. Residents and tourists should also be engaged to ensure strategies reflect community needs and visitor perspectives.

The outcomes of this process will shape the **Blue Action Plans** by:



RECIRCLE MED



- Addressing weaknesses and identifying opportunities to strengthen regional tourism policies, based on the SWOT analysis findings,
- Proposing new and improved measures to support the transition of the tourism destination toward blue and circular tourism systems,
- Establish SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) targets and objectives for key measures, ensuring a robust and realistic Blue Action Plan.

This approach integrates INCIRCLE and REBOOT MED frameworks to provide a broad, actionable, and strategic roadmap for sustainable tourism development.

Figure 7 provides a visual representation of all the stages in the Blueprint. A simple way to remember these stages is to group them into three steps:

1. **Data Collection:** Input data from existing measures, as outlined in the Appendix.
2. **Territorial Analysis:** Analyse the local tourism context, which informs a SWOT analysis of current policies and practices.
3. **Action Planning:** Use the insights from the SWOT and territorial analysis, to propose new measures, set objectives and targets, and guide future actions.

The final output of this process will be a tailored **Blue Action Plan for Circular Tourism** designed to guide each receiving territory in promoting sustainable blue and circular practices within the tourism sector, while supporting the development of blue and circular tourism packages.



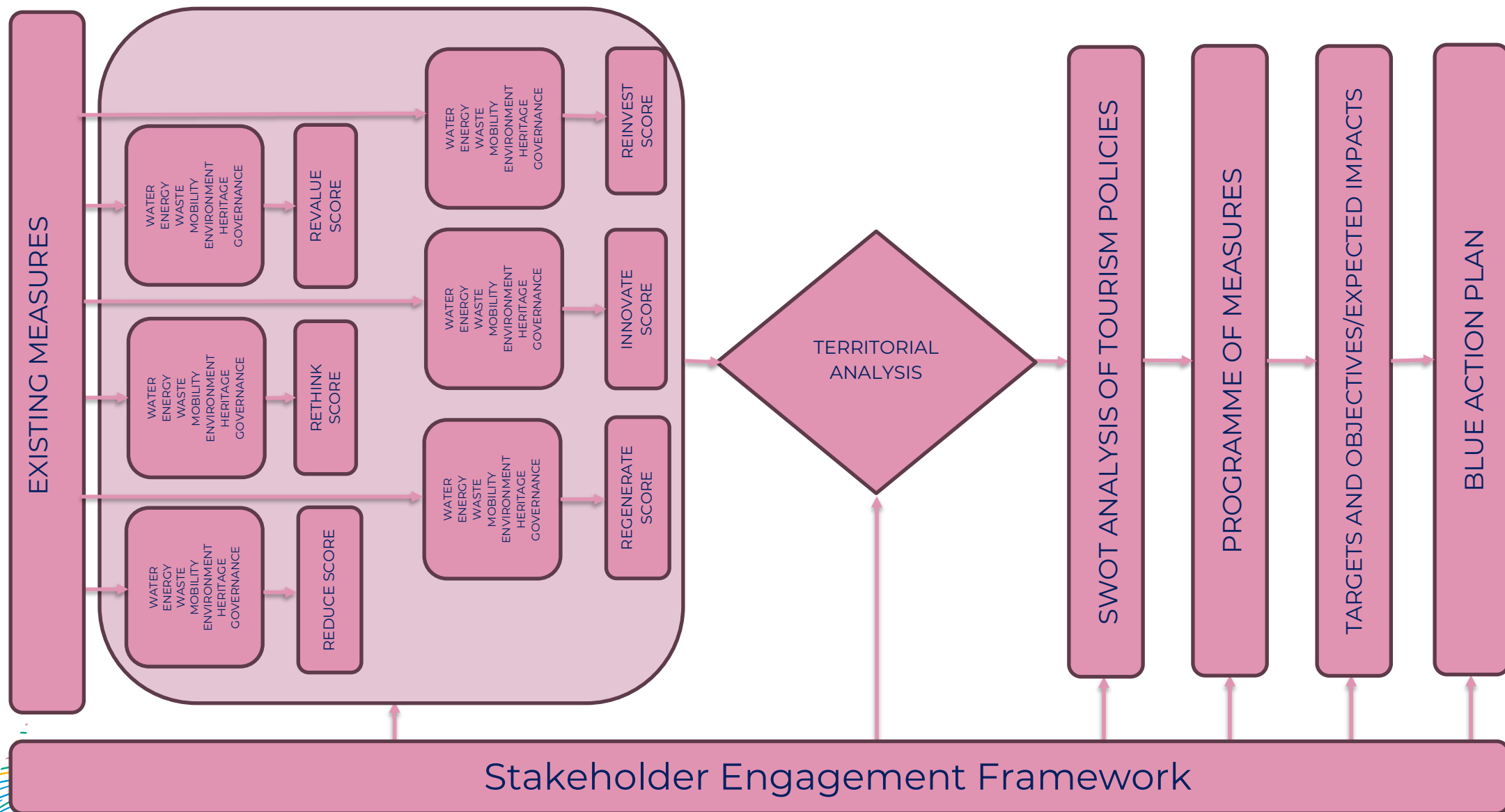


Figure 4 Visual representation of the stages involved in the RECIRCLE MED Blueprint for Blue Action Plans for Circular Tourism.

6. Requirements

1. Commitment at the local level

Local and regional authorities must actively support sustainability and blue and circular economy principles. This is essential to ensure that the RECIRCLE MED Blueprint is included in planning processes and translated into concrete actions.

2. Access to reliable data

The effectiveness of this proposed approach depends on access to current and accurate data, including tourism flows, environmental indicators, and economic trends. Reliable data is essential to the local context, identify priority areas for improvement and measure the impacts of the proposed measures.

3. Strong stakeholder engagement

For RECIRCLE MED to succeed, a wide range of stakeholders, including public institutions, tourism boards, private businesses, NGOs, and community groups, must be actively involved in consultations. Their participation will ensure that the Blue Action Plans are realistic, relevant and will be supported by those who will implement them.

4. Technical expertise and capacity

Technical expertise relating to data analysis, territorial planning, and sustainable tourism will be required to support this process. This will help to ensure that the created tools are used correctly and interpreted in an effective way.

5. Flexibility of tools

The chosen tools and methodologies to be developed must be adaptable, especially since the different territories are different (socially, economically, and environmentally), so the framework must allow for a degree of customisation but also maintain a common structure and approach throughout.

Conclusion

Bringing together circular tourism and blue economy strategies provides a strong foundation for creating sustainable and resilient coastal destinations. This approach balances environmental, cultural, and economic objectives while remaining flexible enough to adapt to the specific needs of each territory. With adequate support, it can positively shape local policy and planning. Going forward, close collaboration among all partners will be essential to ensure the approach remains practical, effective, and delivers tangible, lasting impact, maximizing the outcomes of RECIRCLE MED.





Appendix

Circular tourism measures contributing to the Blueprint for Blue Action Plans for Circular Tourism

This appendix presents the detailed set of circular tourism measures that underpin the Blueprint for the Blue Action Plans for Circular Tourism. While the main document outlines the overall framework, principles, and territorial analysis process, the purpose of this appendix is to provide a technical expansion of the components used to structure and evaluate the measures proposed by the participating tourism territories.

The appendix begins by explaining the measure scoring system used within the Blueprint, clarifying how measures are assessed across the circular and blue tourism performance categories. It then describes the full set of categories derived from the Blueprint's pillars and principles and explains how they guide the evaluation of sustainability, circularity, and blue economy relevance.

Finally, the appendix presents a detailed list of all measures identified, including their classification and scoring, along with illustrative examples. These examples help demonstrate how different types of interventions can support local transitions toward more circular and sustainable tourism models, as defined by the Blueprint.

This material serves as a comprehensive reference for understanding how territorial inputs are transformed into actionable insights within the Blue Action Plans.





Explanation of the Measure Scoring System

For each of the **6 principles** (Reduce, Regenerate, Rethink, Innovate, Revalue and Reinvest), there are 6 metrics, each focusing on a different sectoral pillar; water, energy, waste, mobility, environment, and heritage. In addition, a 7th metric takes a governance approach to the tourism sector, based on the specific principle being addressed. Each of the **7 metrics** encompasses **5 measures**, which support the assessment of the partner's state of sustainability and circularity. This assessment will contribute to the development of the Blue Action Plans.

Through this system, a total of **210 measures** have been defined (detailed in the following section). These were developed by combining the measures introduced under the INCIRCLE project with the core focus areas of the REBOOT MED project.

Moreover, for all the **42 metrics (7 metrics for each of the 6 principles)**, there are **5 measures** used to allocate **ratings**. These measures assess the extent of which current tourism policies or strategies align with the principles of circularity. All the measures can be assigned a maximum **rating of 3**, depending on whether they are represented in the tourism strategy¹⁰.

Therefore:

$$\sum Total\ Score = Score_{Reduce} + Score_{Regenerate} + Score_{Rethink} + Score_{Innovate} + Score_{Revalue} + Score_{Reinvest}$$

$$Score\ Reduce = \frac{\sum_{n=1}^7 R_{Measure}}{7}$$

Where R is rating.

The same calculation can be carried out for each of the subsequent RECIRCLE principles; Regenerate, Rethink, Innovate, Revalue and Reinvest.

* The maximum score for a single principle is **15**.

** The maximum total score for the assessed strategy is **90**.

Scoring of measures

As explained in the first part of this document, the different metrics and measures are given a rating. The rating of these measures is determined through a classification system. This classification varies from 0 to 3 and

¹⁰ The terms *tourism strategy*, *circular strategy*, or simply *strategy* refer to the current state of circularity, blue economy considerations, and sustainability in the tourism sector within a destination. In this context, *tourism strategy* is used interchangeably with *tourism policy*. Relevant measures and information on the circular and blue economy context of the territory can be drawn from a variety of strategy and policy documents, and do not need to come from a single source.



RECIRCLE MED



scoring is allocated according to the amount of measures present. According to these specifications, one can then calculate an overall score for each strategy. The higher its score is, the more focus it has on the circular and blue economy. It must be noted that a minimum threshold will be taken into consideration, for the scoring of strategies. The calculated scores will be presented in a way that allows for a broader range of results to fall under a varying extent of “circular and blue focused” (Concerned; Pro-Activist and Circular) as opposed to categorising the strategy as either circular or not circular.

Scores should be allocated based on whether the measure is present and the level of information available about it. A **score of 0** is assigned when the measure is not present. A **score of 1** is given when the measure is present but no further information is available. A **score of 2** is allocated when one measure typology (from the various possible typologies for that measure) is present and information available. Finally, a **score of 3** is assigned when multiple measure typologies are present and information is readily available.

This appendix provides an in-depth explanation of the metrics and measures that make up the blueprint. These measures serve as examples of what contributes to circular and blue economy tourism and ultimately feed into the creation of the Blue Action Plans.

Table A1 provides a visual example of this scoring system for one of the principles – Reduce.



Table A1 Visual representation of the scoring system at different levels for the Reduce principle and water pillar.

Principle	Pillar	Metric	Measures	Rating
Reduce	Water	What rules, incentives, and awareness tools does the strategy include to guide enterprises to use water more efficiently?	Legislative Instruments	0 = None 1= Measure/s present but no information is available 2 = One measure type present and information is available 3= More than one measure type present and information is available
			Financial incentives	0 = None 1= Measure/s present but no information is available 2 = One measure type present and information is available 3= More than one measure type present and information is available
			Financial disincentives	0 = None 1= Measure/s present but no information is available 2 = One measure type present and information is available 3= More than one measure type present and information is available
			Awareness/ engagement initiatives	0 = None 1= Measure/s present but no information is available 2 = One measure type present and information is available 3= More than one measure type present and information is available
			Voluntary Codes or Voluntary Performance Benchmarks	0 = None 1= Measure/s present but no information is available 2 = One measure type present and information is available 3= More than one measure type present and information is available





Circular and Blue Tourism Performance Categories

To classify the overall sustainability performance of the tourism areas, the scoring of measures is categorised into three categories, each with two grades. The scoring system considers both circular economy (CE) practices (resource efficiency, renewable energy, waste reduction and preservation of local heritage) and blue economy (BE) practices (sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems, maritime mobility, and ocean related innovation. Figure 1 illustrates the three performance categories and their corresponding grades.

1. Concerned about CE and BE (0%–33%)

- **Beginning Concerned (0%–17%):** Just starting to recognise the role of the circular and blue economies in tourism. A few isolated actions may exist (e.g., basic waste separation or beach clean-ups), but CE and BE principles are scarcely integrated. Marine and coastal impacts are not systematically addressed.
- **Highly Concerned (18%–33%):** Early steps toward circular and blue strategies with some structural actions often driven by external entities or pilot projects. Examples may include energy-saving initiatives or participation in small-scale coastal protection activities. Integration of CE/BE principles remains weak.

2. Pro-Activist about CE and BE (34%–67%)

- **Beginning Pro-Activist (34%–50%):** A structured path begins to emerge, supported by a short-term vision. Actions demonstrate awareness of both CE's economic and environmental potential and BE's role in safeguarding marine/coastal ecosystems and livelihood. Stakeholder networks start to form and include engagement with fisheries, ports and/or marine NGOs.
- **Highly Pro-Activist (51%–67%):** A strong combined circular and blue strategy with a medium-to-long-term vision. Many actions are embedded in clear plans (e.g., green port infrastructure, zero-km seafood sourcing, renewable energy projects). Broad collaboration occurs between land-based and marine stakeholders, moderately integrating CE and BE principles.

3. Circular and Blue Leader (68%–100%)

- **Beginning Circular & Blue (68%–83%):** Emerging as a leader in circular and blue economy integration. Strategies are participatory,



RECIRCLE MED



measurable targets are set (e.g., carbon-neutral tourism zones, marine litter reduction goals), and monitoring systems are in place. CE and BE principles are considerably integrated, balancing resource efficiency with coastal and marine protection.

- **Highly Circular & Blue (84%–100%):** A true front-runner, with a long-term vision, that fully embraces circular and blue economy principles. Processes are participatory and inclusive, with clear targets, strong monitoring, and continuous innovation. The territory positions itself as a model for regenerative tourism, achieving resource efficiency while enhancing marine ecosystem services, sustainable fisheries, and low impact maritime mobility.

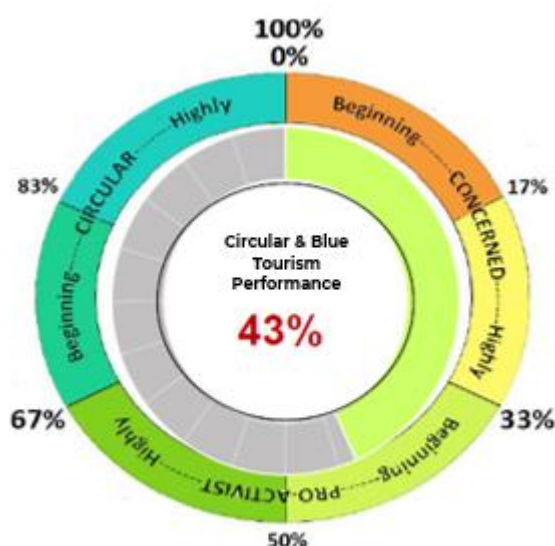


Figure A5 Visual depiction of Circular and Blue Tourism Performance Levels (Concerned, Pro-Activist, Circular).





1. Reduce – Metrics and Measures

Water Metric: What rules, incentives, and awareness tools does the strategy include to guide enterprises to use water more efficiently?

- Measure - Legislative instruments:
 - Referring to any laws, directives, regulations, measures, or rules, specified by government, that are in place within the tourism destination, determining specific standards that must be complied with. In this case, relating to sustainable water management practices. Examples of legislative instruments could include those related to the use of second-class water and rainwater harvesting, enforced plumbing codes of practice, building regulations affecting water use, or water efficient technologies and appliances, as well as climate adaptation and mitigation strategies for coastal and marine areas, marine spatial planning (MSP), and sustainable fisheries management measures.
- Measure - Financial incentives:
 - A positive financial incentive or monetary benefit can be given in the form of grants, subsidies, credits, tax rebates etc, offered accordingly by a competent body. They are used as a driver to encourage a certain behaviour; in this case related to improving water use efficiency within tourism enterprises or supporting blue economy sectors. For example, incentives could be directed towards improving present water-related infrastructure (to reduce leakages), adopting water-efficient technologies, or tax rebates linked to blue economy activities. In addition, monitoring of marine and coastal trade volumes (e.g., ports, shipping tonnage) and data on the GDP and employment contribution of ocean sectors (fisheries, shipping, tourism, offshore energy, biotechnology) may also be considered.
- Measure - Financial disincentives:
 - The aim of a financial disincentive is to discourage a certain unwanted behaviour or action and can be in the form of fines, fees, tickets, tariffs, or taxes and are enforced and monitored by a competent body. Such disincentives can target enterprises to manage and reduce their water use or to invest in new technologies. For example, having a rising water block tariff in



RECIRCLE MED



place can trigger an improvement in water use efficiency, as a means of keeping costs down.

- Measure – Awareness and engagement initiatives:
 - This type of measure is used with the purpose of bringing awareness to water efficiency and water demand. Initiatives can be in the form of generic environmental awareness campaigns that address the general population or can be more focused to the tourism sector as a whole or to tourism operators specifically. The aim of such initiatives is to reach as many relevant stakeholders as possible and offer information and guidance on how to improve water use efficiency, while also enhancing awareness of the blue economy. This includes building public understanding of food security from marine resources and reduction of impact (e.g., per capita fish consumption, available fish stock) and highlighting the importance of gender equality in blue economy jobs.
- Measure - Voluntary codes or voluntary performance benchmarks:
 - These are codes of practice that guide behaviour through codes or setting performance benchmarks within organisations/industry. Such codes would provide guidance on the adoption of water efficient technologies in enterprises and tourism areas. The presence of benchmarks would be used to provide a metric against which the adoption of water efficiency technologies can be gauged, like for example when calculating the water consumption per guest within tourism accommodations. Having voluntary codes and voluntary benchmarks in place, pushes environmental proactivity beyond legal requirements. For example, in the case of hotels, the option to set a benchmark for water consumption (m³) per hotel room (bedspace) per hotel rating.

Energy Metric: What rules, incentives, and awareness tools does the strategy include to guide enterprises to optimise their energy use?

- Measure - Legislative instruments:
 - Refers to any laws, Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP), directives, regulations, measures, or rules specified by government that are in place within the tourism destination, determining specific standards that must be complied with. In this case, these relate to enforced energy efficiency standards within tourism



RECIRCLE MED



enterprises as well as reducing energy use in marine and coastal areas. Examples of legislative instruments could include requirements on the use of renewables, energy performance of buildings, energy-efficient technologies and appliances, shore-side electricity regulations requiring ships in port to switch to clean power, mandatory vessel efficiency standards, or green port certification schemes with energy efficiency criteria.

- Measure – Financial incentives:
 - A financial incentive or monetary benefit can be given in the form of grants, subsidies, credits, tax rebates etc., offered accordingly by a competent body. They are used as a driver to encourage certain behaviours; in this case, related to improving energy efficiency within tourism enterprises as well as supporting marine and coastal activities. For example, incentives could be directed towards installing energy efficient technologies in tourism enterprises, reduced port fees or priority berthing for low-emission or electric vessels, grants/subsidies for hybrid or electric fishing boats, aquaculture farms and coastal tourism operators, or tax credits for renewable installations in coastal communities (e.g., solar, tidal, wind).
- Measure – Financial disincentives:
 - The aim of a financial disincentive is to discourage a certain unwanted behaviour or action and can be in the form of fines, fees, tickets, tariffs, or taxes and are enforced and monitored by a competent body. Such negative incentives can target enterprises to manage and reduce their energy use or to invest in new technologies. For example, having an energy tariff in place can trigger an improvement in energy efficiency, as a means of keeping costs down.
- Measure – Awareness and engagement initiatives:
 - This type of measure is used to bring awareness to the issue at hand: energy efficiency and energy demand. Initiatives can take the form of generic environmental awareness campaigns targeting the general population, campaigns focused on the tourism sector or tourism operators, energy help desks or energy audits. Additionally, initiatives can enhance awareness in marine and coastal sectors, for example through digital tools for real-time monitoring of vessel fuel consumption and aquaculture energy demand. Knowledge platforms sharing case studies of successful



RECIRCLE MED



low-carbon energy use. The aim is to reach as many relevant stakeholders as possible and provide guidance on reducing energy use.

- Measure - Voluntary codes or voluntary performance benchmarks:
 - These are codes of practice that guide behaviour through codes or setting performance benchmarks within organisations/industries. Such codes would provide guidance on the adoption of energy efficient technologies in enterprises and tourism areas. The presence of benchmarks would be used to provide a metric against which the adoption of energy efficiency technologies can be gauged, like for example when calculating the energy consumption per guest within tourism accommodations. Having voluntary codes and voluntary benchmarks in place, pushes environmental proactivity beyond legal requirements.

Waste Metric: What rules, incentives, and awareness tools does the strategy use to guide enterprises to optimise their waste reduction and/or separation practices?

- Measure - Legislative instruments:
 - Referring to any laws, directives, regulations, measures, rules, or sanctions specified by government that are in place within the tourism destination, determining specific standards that must be complied with. This includes enforced waste separation standards within tourism enterprises as well as waste management in coastal and marine areas. Examples include mandatory segregation of organic, recyclable, hazardous, and plastic waste for ports, fish markets, and aquaculture farms; single-use plastics bans in coastal tourism and fisheries supply chains; and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for fishing gear, plastics, and packaging used in coastal/marine industries.
- Measure – Financial incentives:
 - A financial incentive or monetary benefit can be given in the form of grants, subsidies, credits, or tax rebates offered by a competent body. These serve as drivers to encourage certain behaviours, in this case related to improving waste management and separation within tourism enterprises. Incentives may target infrastructural improvements, the adoption of better waste separation practices, or overall waste management performance. Examples include reduced port fees for vessels that demonstrate strong compliance with waste management standards, tax rebates for businesses that



RECIRCLE MED



minimise waste at source (e.g., fish processors applying circular economy models), and deposit–refund systems for fishing gear and beverage packaging. Grants and subsidies for installing waste treatment and recycling facilities in ports or aquaculture sites also represent further opportunities.

- Measure – Financial disincentives:
 - The aim of a financial disincentive is to discourage a certain unwanted behaviour or action and can be in the form of fines, fees, tariffs, or taxes and are enforced and monitored by a competent body. Such disincentives can target enterprises to manage and reduce their waste generation patterns. For example, fining waste producers if they do not separate waste properly.
- Measure – Awareness and engagement initiatives:
 - This type of measure is used to raise awareness of waste separation and management, including in coastal and marine areas. Initiatives can be in the form of environmental awareness campaigns, social media outreach, or training programmes for tourism operators, ship crews, fishers, and port workers on waste segregation and safe disposal. Digital tools such as waste logs, smart bins, or tracking of fishing gear can also be used. Awareness/engagement initiatives may additionally provide information on financial incentives and legislative instruments, ensuring a holistic approach, and can directly address the public, tourism operators and/or different stakeholders (terrestrial/marine/coastal).
- Measure - Voluntary codes or voluntary performance benchmarks:
 - These are codes of practice that guide behaviour through codes or setting performance benchmarks within organisations/industry. Such codes would provide guidance on waste separation in enterprises and tourism areas. The presence of benchmarks would be used to provide a metric against which the improvement of waste separation can be gauged, like for example when calculating the amount of waste separated per accommodation unit, within tourism accommodations. Having voluntary codes and voluntary benchmarks in place, pushes environmental proactivity beyond legal requirements.

Mobility Metric: What rules, incentives, and awareness tools does the strategy include to promote pedestrianisation within the tourism zone and/or support the development of mass transport connectivity solutions in the tourism areas?



RECIRCLE MED



- Measure - Legislative instruments:
 - Referring to any laws, directives, regulations, measures, rules, or sanctions specified by government, that are in place within the tourism destination, determining specific standards that must be complied with. These relate to the use of sustainable transport solutions in touristic and coastal/marine areas. Examples include pedestrian-only zones, zero-emission or low-emission zones, congestion charges, bans on private vehicles in sensitive areas, and mandatory mobility plans for new tourism developments (e.g., hotels, resorts and ports).
- Measure - Financial incentives for transport operators:
 - A financial incentive or monetary benefit can be given in the form of grants, subsidies, credits, tax rebates, free tickets or reserved parking for electric vehicles, offered accordingly by a competent body. They are used as a driver to encourage transport operators to adopt sustainable mobility options instead of more polluting types. Examples include grants for operators committing to electric vehicles, reducing licensing fees for hotels and resorts offering shuttle services, subsidies for electric buses, shuttles, and ferries in tourism zones, or grants for pedestrian infrastructure such as boardwalks, shaded paths, and bicycle lanes.
- Measure – Financial incentives for customers (tourists):
 - Like the incentives offered to transport operators, these incentives target transport users to encourage sustainable mobility solutions over petrol/diesel vehicles. Examples include parking tariffs, emission fees, reserved parking and subsidised fares for sustainable transport options, as well as systems where tourists using sustainable mobility tickets can access discounts at tourism attractions. In coastal areas, incentives could also take the form of discounted transit passes for tourists and workers.
- Measure – Awareness and engagement initiatives for sustainable transport solutions:
 - A crucial barrier to change is a lack of available, reputable information regarding a topic. In the case of sustainable transport solutions, many locals, tourists, and operators may be unaware of



RECIRCLE MED



the benefits (to them and to the environment) of using such alternatives. Awareness and engagement initiatives serve as a means of raising awareness through mainstream media, social marketing campaigns, or community engagement workshops. These can highlight the benefits of options such as pedestrianisation (e.g., improved air quality, support for local businesses) and the use of digital mobility platforms showing real-time availability of ferries, buses, and bike-share systems, particularly in coastal and marine areas.

- Measure - Supports the integration of sustainable mobility services:
 - Sustainable mobility services include bike pooling, sustainable shuttle, and taxi services, carsharing schemes etc. For the integration of sustainable mobility services to be possible, there must be acceptance for mobility users (operators and customers), to encourage its use and ease its transition into. Is support offered through capacity building programmes for transport operators or through support schemes?

Environment Metric: What rules, incentives, and awareness tools does the strategy include to reduce pressures on the natural (terrestrial and marine) and/or urban environment in the tourism areas?

- Measure - Legislative instruments:
 - Binding rules, such as zoning laws, environmental standards, or green building codes, can limit overdevelopment and safeguard local environmental assets. In coastal and marine areas, this may include carrying-capacity limits on visitor numbers in sensitive ecosystems (e.g., reefs, mangroves, beaches), protected area designations (e.g., marine protected areas, heritage sites with tourism restrictions), and noise or light pollution limits in eco-sensitive zones such as turtle nesting beaches. Other examples include restrictions on construction in coastal dunes, limits on concrete use in natural zones, or eco-building standards for energy and water efficiency.
- Measure – Financial incentives:
 - Grants, subsidies, tax rebates, or discounts may encourage businesses to adopt resource-efficient infrastructure or integrate eco-friendly design. In coastal and marine areas, incentives could include discounted concession fees for tourism operators with



RECIRCLE MED



strong sustainability practices, tax rebates or credits for eco-certified hotels, eco-lodges, and sustainable tour operators, or grants and subsidies for nature-based infrastructure such as green roofs, rainwater harvesting, or artificial reefs. Payment for ecosystem services (PES) schemes may also be used to reward communities that conserve mangroves, dunes, and wetlands.

- Measure – Financial disincentives:
 - Financial disincentives act as economic deterrents and include eco-taxes, levies on single-use materials, or fines for damaging natural areas alongside urban areas. These measures aim to reduce resource strain. For example, higher fees may be applied to developments that use non-native landscaping plants (which increase irrigation needs), or penalties may be imposed for wasteful energy use in eco-sensitive areas that reduce environmental pressure. Additional examples include fines for discharging wastewater into the sea, eco-taxes on operators disturbing marine habitats, or levies for anchoring in seagrass beds.
- Measure – Awareness and engagement initiatives:
 - This type of measure aims to raise awareness of environmental pressures arising from the tourism sector, including in marine and coastal areas. Initiatives may include environmental awareness campaigns, social media outreach, or tourist education campaigns promoting practices such as leave-no-trace, responsible snorkelling/diving, and waste-free beaches. Citizen science initiative, such as involving tourists in monitoring reefs, marine life, or beach litter, can also be effective. These initiatives aim to reach as many relevant stakeholders as possible and provide guidance on how to minimise pressure on natural and urban environments. They may also share information on financial incentives and legislative instruments, ensuring a holistic approach to addressing the problem.
- Measure - Voluntary codes or voluntary performance benchmarks:
 - Voluntary measures can establish best-practice guidelines beyond regulation, e.g., setting benchmarks for reduced electricity per guest night, or codes of practice for tour operators to avoid sensitive nesting areas. These drive proactive environmental management while reducing long-term costs.



RECIRCLE MED



Heritage Metric: What rules, incentives, and awareness tools does the strategy include to reduce pressures on the tangible and/or intangible heritage in the tourism areas?

- Measure - Legislative instruments:
 - Heritage protection laws or planning restrictions can reduce physical and cultural pressures in tourism areas, including coastal and marine regions. Examples include bans on altering historic façades, caps on visitor numbers at heritage sites, restrictions on amplified music in culturally sensitive areas, controlled access to fragile coastal heritage sites (e.g., temples, historic ports, shipwrecks), buffer zones to prevent overdevelopment near heritage areas, and restrictions on the commercialisation of sacred or intangible practices.
- Measure – Financial incentives:
 - Subsidies, grants, or tax breaks may support enterprises that adopt practices reducing strain on heritage assets and promoting cultural preservation, including in coastal and marine areas. Examples include funding for digital ticketing systems to avoid overcrowding, grants or subsidies for the restoration of heritage buildings, traditional vessels, and cultural landscapes, or tax credits for businesses that preserve or sustainably integrate cultural heritage in their operations. Support may also extend to restaurants using traditional recipes that ease pressure on cultural authenticity.
- Measure – Financial disincentives:
 - Penalties or fees can deter harmful practices that damage heritage. Examples include fines for graffiti or littering at archaeological sites, or differential pricing (higher fees) for operators whose activities degrade cultural landmarks.
- Measure – Awareness and engagement initiatives:
 - Initiatives can reduce pressure by shaping behaviour and increasing appreciation for heritage, including in coastal areas. Examples include tourist education campaigns on dress codes in sacred spaces, respectful photography guidelines, or campaigns promoting respect for cultural sites, traditions, and practices. Other initiatives could involve training guides to encourage off-peak site visits, or community training programmes in heritage management, storytelling, and cultural entrepreneurship.



RECIRCLE MED



- Measure - Voluntary codes or voluntary performance benchmarks:
 - Heritage-focused voluntary codes guide businesses in minimising pressure beyond legal requirements. For instance, hotels may adopt benchmarks limiting coach tours to peak hours or establish voluntary guidelines for craft shops to avoid mass-produced "heritage-style" items, protecting authentic artisanship.

Governance Metric: How does the strategy promote the reduction of the carbon footprint of Small and Medium Tourism Enterprises (SMEs)?

- Measure - Promotes consideration of the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem Nexus:
 - The water–energy–food–ecosystem (WEFE) is crucial for sustainable development in coastal/marine regions. These four resources are under constant pressure due to population growth, economic expansion, and climate change. They are deeply interlinked, and a change in one (e.g., energy production) can affect food systems, water availability, and ecosystem health. A nexus approach, through integrated management and governance, ensures resource security while safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystem health. Consideration of the WEFE nexus can be promoted through financial incentives, awareness/engagement initiatives, or similar mechanisms. Examples include the percentage of tourism enterprises applying integrated water–energy–food management practices, the share of locally and sustainably sourced food in tourism facilities, and the proportion of renewable energy used in water supply and food production systems.
- Measure - Promotes alternative greener supply resources:
 - Green supply resources and green supply chain management incorporate sustainable environmental practices at any stage of the supply chain, including product/service design, sourcing, manufacturing, operation, and end-of-life management. Promotion of alternative greener resources through awareness/engagement initiatives or financial incentives can reduce the carbon footprint of tourism activities in coastal/marine regions. Examples include limits on high-carbon practices (e.g., banning diesel generators in island resorts where alternatives exist), tax breaks for SMEs achieving eco-certifications or



RECIRCLE MED



measurable carbon reductions, and mandatory carbon reporting for larger SMEs aligned with national climate commitments.

- Measure – Capacity building for circular resource management:
 - Focuses on structured training programmes that equip tourism enterprises with practical skills to reduce inefficiencies in water, energy, waste, mobility, environment, and heritage management. These programmes aim at daily operational improvements and circular practices that can be replicated by staff and managers across facilities. Examples can include ad-hoc workshops or recurring programs covering on water-saving fixtures in hotels, waste separation protocols, staff training modules for energy-efficient operations, and the use of carbon footprint calculators or toolkits designed for tourism SMEs.
- Measure - Integrates considerations to the virtual carbon footprint:
 - Virtual carbon can refer to the carbon dioxide derived from fossil fuels that was emitted through upstream supply chains and is imported into an area in the form of goods and services. It does not consider methane (CH₄) or other agriculture related gases (Chen, et al., 2020). It can also be described as; the total “carbon footprint of resident tourists as a measure of the domestic and imported virtual carbon related to consumption and investments required to provide those services” (Cadarso, Gomez, Lopez, & Tobarra, 2016, p. 529). Applying a virtual carbon tax to goods and services can follow the “origin principle” (taxing goods in the country of production) or the “destination principle” (taxing goods in the country where they are consumed (Atkinson, Hamilton, Ruta, & Van der Mensbrugghe, 2011).
 - In coastal and marine tourism, virtual carbon is often overlooked. Relevant indicators include: the share of tourism enterprises reporting embedded carbon emissions, the proportion of locally versus imported food and materials, average carbon intensity per tourist (kg CO₂), and reductions in high-embedded-emission imports.
- Measure - Promotes innovative tools such as renewable energy certificates:
 - Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) provide assurance that energy is sourced from renewable resources. Since electricity from



RECIRCLE MED



the grid comes from multiple sources, purchasing RECs alongside electricity ensures that the renewable component is attributed to the certificate owner. REC use is beneficial because it does not require the owner to have onsite renewable energy installations. Buyers may participate voluntarily or due to compliance requirements that guarantee a certain share of electricity comes from renewable sources. Promotion of RECs can occur through technical support programmes, awareness campaigns, or financial incentives.

- In coastal and marine tourism regions, RECs are particularly relevant. Indicators could include the percentage of tourism enterprises purchasing RECs or Guarantees of Origin, the volume of renewable electricity (MWh) covered by RECs in tourism areas, and the number of SMEs trained in REC usage and reporting.





2. Regenerate – Metrics and Measures

Water Metric: How does the strategy promote sustainable water supply in the tourism area at the minimum impact on the regional/national water distribution system?

- Measure - Incentives for improved water demand management in tourism enterprises:
 - Incentives can be positive (encouraging adoption of sustainable practices) or restrictive (discouraging unsustainable behaviours). They may be monetary, award-based, or regulatory, aiming to promote the use of non-conventional water resources (NCWR). Examples include financial support for rainwater and stormwater collection systems, seawater desalination with renewable energy, and wastewater reuse.
 - In coastal and marine regions, incentives can also take the form of mandatory water efficiency standards for hotels, resorts, ports, and restaurants (e.g., low-flow fixtures, smart irrigation), water audits for large facilities, and restrictions on freshwater extraction in water-scarce areas. Financial incentives may include tax rebates for SMEs reducing water use against defined baselines or reduced tariffs for enterprises adopting circular systems such as greywater reuse and rainwater harvesting.
- Measure - Incentives for improved water demand management by tourists and visitors to the area:
 - Water demand management (WDM) focuses on conserving resources by addressing demand and improving efficiency at both facility and user levels. Incentives can support research into measuring water losses, promote installation of efficient technologies in guest rooms, or encourage behavioural change among visitors. In marine and coastal regions, this may include limits on water-intensive amenities (e.g., private pools or excessive lawn irrigation) and discounts or rewards for guests participating in water-saving programmes such as linen/towel reuse or reduced laundry.
- Measure - Incentives for the recycling of wastewaters:
 - Wastewater recycling is the process whereby water contaminated through human use in tourism facilities (such as kitchens,



RECIRCLE MED



laundries, or guest activities) is treated and reused for purposes like toilet flushing, irrigation, or landscaping. In marine and coastal regions, where water scarcity and environmental pressures are often acute, incentives for wastewater recycling are particularly important. These may include monetary incentives such as subsidies or tax credits for enterprises reusing a defined percentage of treated wastewater or grants for installing on-site treatment and recycling systems. Regulatory approaches can also play a role, for example by integrating reuse-ready plumbing systems into building codes for new tourism developments. In addition, performance-based awards can encourage entities to adopt wastewater recycling while improving their reputation.

- Measure - Incentives for the reuse of greywaters:
 - Greywater originates from bathroom wash basins, bathtubs, showers, and washing machines, but not from toilets. It does not require full treatment and can be reused for flushing systems and irrigation purposes. In marine and coastal areas, greywater reuse is particularly important to reduce pressure on limited freshwater resources. Incentives can include financial measures (e.g., grants or subsidies for SMEs installing greywater systems, reduced water tariffs proportional to reuse volume) and regulatory measures (e.g., mandatory dual plumbing in new hotels, resorts, and marinas, or limits on potable water use for landscaping and toilet flushing). Non-monetary incentives may also reward good performance in greywater management.
- Measure - Technical support for tourism entities to improve water operations:
 - Tourism organisations can improve water efficiency through technical expertise that provides audits, monitoring, and guidance during renovations or development planning. Staff training on efficient appliance use and customer awareness can further support water savings. In marine and coastal regions, technical support is especially important, with mandatory water audits for medium and large-scale facilities followed by assistance from local authorities. Uptake can be encouraged through cost-sharing schemes, where governments or utilities cover part of consultancy



RECIRCLE MED



expenses, and preferential access to green finance for entities completing certified technical support programmes.

Energy Metric: How does the strategy promote sustainable energy demand in the tourism areas which limit impact on national/regional distribution systems?

- Measure - Promotes the adoption of energy efficient (EE) technologies:
 - The promotion of energy efficient technologies can be supported through incentive schemes that encourage the uptake of solutions such as LEDs, sensors and controls, high-rated appliances, efficient water tanks and boilers, roof insulation, glazing, and draught proofing. Promotion may also occur through schemes targeting different energy efficiency typologies related to building systems and end-use energy. In blue economy regions, this is particularly important and can be advanced through energy efficiency standards for vessels and port operations, as well as mandatory energy audits for hotels, resorts, aquaculture facilities, and marinas. Financial support, including subsidies or grants for SMEs and tax deductions or rebates for upgrades (e.g., efficient pumps, chillers, HVAC systems, or electric boats), can further drive adoption.
- Measure - Promotes the installation of renewable energy technologies:
 - The adoption of renewable energy technologies in the tourism sector can be encouraged through awareness campaigns, technical guidance, and financial incentives. In blue economy regions, stronger measures are needed, such as mandatory integration of renewables (solar, wind, tidal) in new tourism, port, and aquaculture developments, and renewable energy quotas for public coastal infrastructure like ports, lighthouses, and visitor centers. Grants, subsidies, or tax credits for solar panels, small wind turbines, or tidal systems, together with public-private partnerships to co-finance installations in ports, islands, and remote coastal areas, can further drive uptake.
- Measure - Promotes the installation of energy storage facilities:
 - Energy storage facilities help tourism areas, including small establishments, use locally generated renewable energy efficiently.



RECIRCLE MED



Promotion can include financial incentives for system design or installation, technical guidance, and awareness campaigns on benefits. In blue economy regions, enabling regulations for grid connection and permitting, low-interest green or blue loans for SMEs and coastal infrastructure operators, and public-private partnerships to co-finance large-scale storage for ports, islands, and resorts can further support adoption.

- Measure - Promotes the combined use of heat and energy:
 - Combined heat and power (CHP) generates electricity while capturing heat for thermal use, improving energy efficiency. Promotion can include financial incentives, technical guidance, or awareness campaigns targeting the tourism sector. In blue economy regions, CHP integration in new tourism, port, and aquaculture developments should be encouraged, along with energy efficiency standards for heat-intensive facilities (e.g., hotels, desalination plants, fish processing units). Tax deductions, credits, and public-private partnerships for demonstration projects in ports and resorts can further support adoption.
- Measure - Promotes the adoption of Building Management Systems by tourism entities:
 - Building Management Systems (BMS) can be promoted through information campaigns, financial incentives, or awareness programmes, helping facilities monitor energy performance, upgrade infrastructure, and potentially pursue building energy rating certification, which can enhance public image. In blue economy regions, promotion can include mandatory smart metering and monitoring in large hotels, resorts, and ports, energy performance codes requiring BMS in new or renovated coastal tourism infrastructure, tax credits for BMS integration, and low-interest loans or blue finance packages for deployment in island and coastal facilities.

Waste Metric: How does the strategy encourage tourism facilities to limit their impact on national waste management facilities?

- Measure - Promotes waste reduction/minimising yearly tonnage to landfill:



RECIRCLE MED



- Reducing waste and minimising landfill requires understanding waste generation patterns, efficient supply chain management, staff training, and collaboration with food banks. Promotion can include financial incentives for composting or other waste reduction measures, as well as information campaigns targeting the tourism sector. In blue economy regions, mandatory waste separation at source for hotels, resorts, cruise ports, and restaurants, along with reporting of waste generation and diversion rates by large coastal facilities, can strengthen outcomes. Tax credits for investments in waste reduction technologies (e.g., digesters, compactors) and recognition programmes for “zero waste” hotels, marinas, and tourism enterprises can further enhance adoption.
- Measure - Discourages the use of single use products/materials:
 - The use of single-use products (e.g., plastic bags, cutlery, straws, heavily packaged items) can be discouraged through national or regional legislation, educational campaigns targeting tourism entities, and technical support at the facility level. In blue economy regions, additional incentives such as reduced waste management fees for enterprises that cut disposable product use, and recognition or marketing advantages for “plastic-free” hotels, restaurants, and marinas, can further encourage adoption.
- Measure - Promotes conversion of bio-degradable Waste to Energy (WtE):
 - Converting bio-degradable waste to energy through bio-digestion creates biogas that can supply heating and electricity to facilities or be used for transportation. Tourism entities can support this at regional or national levels by participating in pilot projects, public consultations, or WtE committees. Education campaigns and materials can be disseminated to relevant stakeholders, including other tourism entities and tourists. In coastal and marine areas, grants, subsidies, or tax credits for SMEs installing anaerobic digesters, biogas plants, or compost-to-energy systems can further enhance WtE adoption.
- Measure - Promotes the separation of waste for recycling purposes:



RECIRCLE MED



- Educational programmes and training sessions for tourism staff about which wastes can be recycled, such as e-wastes (appliances, cables, ink cartridges, batteries), help promote responsible waste separation. Local authorities can further support this by providing waste separation bins in facilities and popular tourist areas, or by offering financial incentives. In blue economy regions, regulations could require hotels, cruise terminals, and resorts to report recycling rates, while recognition and branding advantages for “recycling champions” in coastal tourism can further encourage adoption.
- Measure - Promotes the sourcing of zero km supplies:
 - Promoting local produce and products helps minimise impacts from imports, reduces packaging needs, supports local farmers and businesses, and promotes local culture through authentic food and products. Financial incentives can support farmers and help establish cooperatives with tourism businesses. Information dissemination can encourage tourism stakeholders to partner with small local businesses and promote locally grown food and authentic products. In coastal areas, sustainability standards requiring resorts, marinas, and cruise operators to use local suppliers, along with government and municipal green procurement policies prioritising local producers, can further strengthen this measure.

Mobility Metric: How does the strategy promote the integration of tourism areas into national mobility initiatives?

- Measure - Promotes incentives for green transport solutions:
 - Financial incentives from governments or vehicle suppliers can encourage transport operators to provide green mobility options, while incentives for users support the transition to cleaner transport. Promotion of incentives can also occur through educational campaigns or marketing. In blue economy regions, this can include low-emission zones in coastal and tourism areas, regulations on charging and refuelling infrastructure for clean vehicles in ports, marinas, and hotels, discounted operating fees for low-emission vessels, or tourist benefits for choosing green transport modes, such as free shuttles with eco-accommodation bookings.



RECIRCLE MED



- Measure - Promotes the development of direct public transport routes:
 - Development of direct public transport routes can help alleviate traffic pressures in popular tourism areas and improve connectivity between localities to disperse human pressures. Promotion can occur through research funding initiatives and technical expertise to strategically develop routes. In coastal and blue economy regions, integrating new routes into coastal masterplans and Blue Economy strategies is essential, alongside blue bonds or green financing for clean transport infrastructure, such as electric buses and ferries.
- Measure - Promotes the diversification of the tourism product:
 - Diversifying the tourism product can help alleviate human pressures on popular areas by redirecting tourism flow to less well-known sites and optimising mobility services for smaller facilities (e.g., local or NGO-run operations). Promotion can occur through social media campaigns or incentivised agreements between local authorities, tourism agencies, tour operators, and NGOs. In blue economy regions, regulatory support for community-based tourism initiatives in fisheries, heritage villages, and protected areas is essential, alongside integration of diversification into Blue Economy masterplans to reduce dependency on mass tourism. Tax incentives for investments in alternative tourism products, such as eco-lodges, heritage trails, and marine adventure offerings, can further support this strategy.
- Measure - Promotes infrastructure to enable green transport operations:
 - Green or sustainable transport includes low-pollution options such as hydrogen, solar-powered, electric, dual-energy, and natural gas vehicles. Key considerations include availability of EV charging ports and alternative fuel sources at stations. Local authorities can fund research initiatives and hire technical experts to set up and monitor infrastructure supporting green transport. Promotion of incentives can also occur through educational campaigns or marketing. In blue economy regions, urban planning and coastal development codes should mandate cycling lanes, pedestrian zones, and EV parking in tourism areas, while low-interest loans or blue finance can support municipalities and tourism operators in upgrading clean mobility infrastructure.



RECIRCLE MED



- Measure - Promotes infrastructure to encourage cycling and walking:
 - Local authorities can fund research and planning initiatives and hire technical experts to set up, monitor, and improve infrastructure encouraging cycling and walking, such as bicycle lanes, pedestrian areas, and hiking routes. Open green spaces should be prioritised over roads, and cycling infrastructure fully integrated with the wider transport network. In blue economy regions, urban and coastal planning regulations should mandate safe, accessible pedestrian and cycling routes in tourism zones, complemented by low-interest loans or blue finance for projects supporting non-motorized mobility.

Environment Metric: How does the strategy promote the local environmental characteristics in the development of the tourism zone?

- Measure - Promotes local products:
 - Highlighting the use of locally sourced goods and services (e.g., natural building materials, eco-certified cleaning products, or regionally produced food and beverages) strengthens the local economy and reduces dependency on imports. Encouraging enterprises to integrate local supply chains lowers carbon footprints and retains revenue within the community. In coastal tourism areas, requirements for local sourcing (e.g., percentage of food or fish sourced locally) and market access policies (farmers' markets, craft fairs) can further support local producers. Financial incentives, tax benefits, or subsidies for tourism operators prioritizing local products can motivate adoption, while information campaigns can help increase awareness and sales.
- Measure - Promotes the use of local vegetation for landscaping:
 - Landscaping with indigenous plants (e.g., drought-resistant shrubs, coastal grasses, or endemic trees) reduces irrigation needs, enhances biodiversity, and restores local habitats. Native vegetation also provides cultural value by reflecting the natural identity of the tourism area. Restrictions on invasive or exotic plants in coastal tourism zones, along with reduced water tariffs for facilities using low-irrigation native species, can further promote this practice.
- Measure – Considers local and urban environmental texture in the tourism area's development:



RECIRCLE MED



- Integrating the character of the local built environment (stone, wood, local geological rock, or traditional paving) into new developments strengthens cultural authenticity while reducing environmental strain from imported materials. For example, using locally sourced stone for public walkways regenerates traditional craft skills and reduces transport-related emissions. Coastal development regulations limiting high-rise or disruptive structures in sensitive marine or urban landscapes, along with tax credits or subsidies for projects incorporating local design and sustainable building practices, can further preserve the area's character.
- Measure - Promotes the integration of the tourism zone with the surrounding environment:
 - Linking the tourism area with nearby natural and cultural landscapes ensures a seamless transition between urban and natural zones. Examples include green corridors connecting towns with forests, waterfront promenades linking coastal heritage with beaches, or trails uniting villages with parks. Planning regulations requiring tourism zones to be physically and ecologically connected with surrounding landscapes, seascapes, and urban areas, as well as buffer zones and ecological corridors linking tourism areas with coastal and marine ecosystems, are particularly important in marine/coastal regions. This fosters regeneration by encouraging conservation of surrounding landscapes.
- Measure – Supports the regeneration of marine and coastal ecosystems:
 - Strategies may include enterprises funding habitat restoration projects, reforestation, wetland revitalisation, mangrove replanting, seagrass protection, or organising beach and/or underwater clean-ups. Funding can be through CSR initiatives, tax breaks, or other financial mechanisms. Tourism becomes an active contributor to environmental renewal, enhancing long-term ecosystem resilience and creating a positive economic image that attracts eco-conscious visitors. Additionally, tourism projects should contribute to restoring marine and coastal ecosystems when impacts occur, and zoning rules should require tourism zones to align with marine protected areas (MPAs) and coastal conservation plans. Public-private partnerships for large-scale marine regeneration (e.g., coral reef credits, carbon sequestration



RECIRCLE MED



via blue carbon ecosystems) can further support environmental renewal.

Heritage Metric: How does the strategy support the regeneration, preservation, and renewal of heritage assets within the tourism area?

- Measure - Promotes interactive heritage experiences:
 - Activities such as traditional dance workshops, craft-making demonstrations, storytelling nights, or re-enactments of historical events allow visitors to experience heritage in an interactive way. These activities generate direct income for practitioners while regenerating intangible cultural traditions. Further activities could include boatbuilding, traditional cooking, and folk performances, particularly in blue economy regions, serving as a unique selling point for the area.
- Measure - Integrates heritage in the built environment:
 - Integrating heritage into everyday spaces (naming streets after historical figures, restoring traditional façades, or using cultural motifs in signage) regenerates cultural identity within the tourism zone. This also strengthens branding and adds authenticity that increases the tourism area's market appeal. New tourism developments should incorporate heritage assets and traditional styles, including the reuse of warehouses, lighthouses, and waterfronts for tourism purposes such as museums, eco-lodges, or cultural centers.
- Measure - Encourages restoration of heritage sites and improves access:
 - Investment in restoring heritage sites (archaeological parks, historic squares, religious monuments, or maritime infrastructure) together with accessibility improvements (safe pathways, ramps, signage, digital guides, and interpretive elements) helps regenerate both the cultural value of the sites and their economic potential. Heritage conservation plans for historic buildings and cultural sites in tourism zones further support long-term preservation. Ensuring accessibility and inclusivity broadens visitor demographics and increases tourism revenues.
- Measure – Promotes community led heritage activities:



RECIRCLE MED



- Encourages active involvement of residents, schools, and local associations in co-developing heritage projects. Examples include community-designed heritage apps, school craft programmes, local storytelling initiatives, festivals, workshops, or maritime tradition events, particularly relevant in blue economy regions. These activities build local ownership, strengthen social cohesion, and ensure heritage preservation aligns with community interests. Revenue-sharing schemes allowing communities to benefit directly from visitor participation can further enhance engagement.
- Measure – Promotes eco-heritage innovation initiatives:
 - Promotes innovative technologies to interpret and preserve heritage. Examples include Augmented Reality tours, interactive museum exhibits, digital storytelling platforms, immersive heritage experiences, apps, eco-museums, or heritage trails, particularly relevant in blue economy regions. Marketing and promotion support for these initiatives encourages wider adoption, while knowledge exchange networks linking coastal and marine heritage destinations help share best practices. These approaches support visitor engagement while safeguarding cultural assets through creative solutions.

Governance Metric: How does the strategy promote the protection/conservation of natural areas?

- Measure - Environmental protection legislation:
 - Environmental protection legislation established by local or national governing bodies addresses the protection and conservation of natural areas, including coastal and marine environments, forests, and biodiversity. The strategy should consider the presence of such legislation during planning, promotion, or development of the tourism sector. National and regional laws protecting coastal, marine, and terrestrial ecosystems from unsustainable tourism development should be considered, as well as the alignment of public-private partnerships for conservation projects with legislative requirements.
- Measure - Promotes integrated policy approaches:
 - An integrated policy approach refers to collaboration between departments and public authorities (horizontal integration) and across different levels of government (vertical integration) to create



RECIRCLE MED



practical and strategic policies. The strategy should promote coordination between sectors and regions, ensuring inclusivity among stakeholders through consultation or outreach programmes. Coordinated spatial and marine planning regulations should be considered to align tourism development with ecological and cultural priorities, and Blue Economy principles should be integrated into national and regional strategies.

- Measure - Addresses the protection of natural recreational areas:
 - Encouragement of environmental stewardship in natural recreational areas can be supported through legislative tools or by involving local agencies and non-governmental organizations in conservation efforts. Research into visitors' movement patterns can identify areas requiring additional protection, while systems for effective enforcement are established. Awareness and engagement initiatives, such as information campaigns, help inform citizens and tourists about ongoing protection measures and promote responsible behaviour, including proper waste disposal and respect for ecosystems. Zoning and land-use regulations protecting beaches, coastal parks, wetlands, and trails from unsustainable development further support the protection of these areas. Monitoring and enforcement protocols for littering, habitat disturbance, and unsanctioned activities reinforce these measures.
- Measure - Promotes alternative natural facilities:
 - Promoting less frequented natural areas can be supported through incentives, such as reduced transport fees, as well as promotional campaigns and materials, encouraging both locals and tourists to visit these sites and dispersing visitor pressure. Promotion of alternative areas enhances the value of sustainable local activities, such as purchasing from local fisheries, and requires collaboration between tourism actors and environmental authorities. Support can also include grants or subsidies for enterprises and municipalities developing alternative facilities (e.g., eco-camping, nature trails, kayak docks), as well as reduced permit fees or tax relief for tourism operators adopting low-impact natural facilities.
- Measure - Promotes Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives by the sector:



RECIRCLE MED

- Corporate Social Responsibility measures in tourism include conserving landscapes, biodiversity, and cultural heritage, ensuring fair use of natural resources, supporting local products and services, and engaging local communities. Publicity of CSR initiatives within the sector can stimulate and encourage other entities to adopt similar practices, through information campaigns, social media promotion, or marketing. Incentives such as funding, performance-based awards, or guidance on CSR best practices for coastal and marine tourism (including energy, water, waste management, heritage, and community engagement) can further enhance sector participation, while providing marketing advantages for destinations or enterprises.





3. Rethink – Metrics and Measures

Water Metric: How does the strategy promote the value of water? (to properly quantify the significance of its use).

- Measure - Based on consultation with stakeholders from water sector:
 - Open communication and consultation between public and private stakeholders allow discussion of water use and its value within the tourism sector, supporting informed decision-making. The strategy may include incentives, such as financial or technical guidance, to establish working groups, advisory committees, or voluntary cooperation programmes between actors, and may also include legislative measures requiring participation. Additionally, consultation can help ensure tourism operators are informed about water use intensity requirements (e.g., litres per guest-night).
- Measure - Based on post-strategy adoption, follow-up consultation with stakeholders from the public and private sector:
 - The strategy allows for post-adoption participation and feedback from public and private stakeholders to discuss priorities such as water use, for example through bi-yearly consultations. It may include incentives, such as financial or technical support, to establish working groups or advisory committees. Mandatory reporting and review cycles (every 2–3 years) ensure stakeholder input is integrated into strategy updates, while access to blue finance instruments can provide additional incentives for initiatives aligned with follow-up priorities.
- Measure - Identifies threats of tourism on other water-using sectors:
 - To identify threats from tourism activities on other water-using sectors (e.g., manufacturing, agriculture, fisheries), research and monitoring must be carried out to assess water-related behaviours and impacts. Financial incentives can support research programmes and cumulative impact studies, particularly in water-stressed or coastal regions, while technical support can assist in conducting risk assessments across sectors. Funding for joint sectoral water management projects (tourism–agriculture–fisheries collaborations) can also mitigate potential conflicts and promote sustainable water use.



RECIRCLE MED



- Measure - Outreach programmes to outline use of water by the tourism sector:
 - Outreach programmes can include educational campaigns or materials addressing water use within tourism organisations and tourist behaviours. Workshops and dialogues involving tourism operators, water utilities, and local communities can support discussion of water demand and conservation strategies. Additionally, interactive tools such as apps, virtual tours, or gamified experiences can help tourists understand the water footprint of their activities. Incentives for technical support or strategic planning workshops can further assist organisations in improving water efficiency.
- Measure - Promotes provision of reclaimed water to other sectors:
 - Reclaimed water can be supplied to other sectors if proper infrastructure is in place, while also promoting its use and benefits. Financial incentives can support the installation or improvement of connecting water infrastructure between sectors. Outreach programmes can help build trust in reclaimed water by demonstrating safety, cost-effectiveness, and environmental benefits. Robust quality control and reporting mechanisms ensure safety and strengthen confidence among users. In cases where tourism facilities have surplus reclaimed water, there is potential to provide it to other sectors.

Energy Metric: How does the strategy promote the rethinking of energy consumption within the tourism sector?

- Measure - Based on consultation with stakeholders from the energy sector:
 - The possibility for open communication and consultation between public and private stakeholders to discuss energy consumption, energy efficiency, and the production of energy from renewable energy sources (RES) within the tourism sector, and to make decisions accordingly. Aligning energy sector planning with tourism development strategies ensures a reliable, clean, and affordable energy supply to tourism hubs such as coastal resorts and islands. Financial or technical incentives can support the establishment of working groups, advisory committees, or voluntary cooperation programmes, while legislative measures may require obligatory participation between sector stakeholders.



RECIRCLE MED



- Measure - Outreach programmes to outline use of energy by the tourism sector:
 - Outreach programmes can occur through educational/awareness campaigns and /or materials addressing energy usage from tourist establishments or by addressing tourists' energy behaviours. Such programmes also encourage engagement from both private and public sectors. Moreover, incentives for technical support/workshops (e.g., energy audits and the presence of help desks) to help organisations have a clear and strategic plan for improving energy efficiency.
- Measure - Identifies threats of tourism on the energy demand of other sectors:
 - To identify the threats from tourism activities on other energy-using sectors (manufacturing, agriculture, etc.), research and monitoring must be carried out to determine the sources and impacts of energy demand from the tourism sector. Financial incentives can support such research and monitoring, while technical support for tourism organisations can help mitigate potential further impacts. Collaboration between the energy sector and tourism boards helps align strategies, while providing visitors with energy-saving guidance during their stay (e.g., responsible use of air conditioning, EV transport options). Aligning tourism with Blue Economy principles of sustainability, resilience, and resource efficiency is also essential.
- Measure - Encourages research into energy consumption characteristics:
 - Research into energy consumption characteristics can be encouraged by incentivising the installation of equipment that monitors energy use within facilities (e.g., Energy Management Systems) or by offering technical support through energy audits. Data on seasonal fluctuations, peak loads, and energy-intensive activities can also be collected to identify high-energy-use sub-sectors, such as cruise tourism, luxury resorts, or conference facilities.
- Measure - Integrates energy resourcing with the surrounding community:



RECIRCLE MED



- For the integration of energy resourcing with surrounding communities, efficient connectivity must be considered. Improved connectivity allows renewable energy generated by tourism facilities to enter the grid and be supplied to other facilities. Financial incentives can support this integration (e.g., through installation of energy storage systems or connection to a smart grid) or provide technical assistance for these installations. Additionally, energy-saving initiatives benefiting the community, such as shared energy-efficient street lighting or public facilities powered by renewable energy, can be implemented, particularly in coastal and marine regions.

Waste Metric: How does the strategy mitigate waste generation within the tourism sector?

- Measure - Based on consultation with stakeholders from the waste management sector:
 - The possibility for open communication and consultation between public and private stakeholders with the waste sector, to discuss waste mitigation within the tourism sector and to make decisions accordingly. The strategy may include financial or technical incentives to set up working groups or advisory committees, voluntary cooperation programmes between different actors, or obligatory participation through legislative measures. Alignment of tourism waste management with municipal and regional waste plans is important to ensure efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts.
- Measure - Outreach programmes to outline waste management of sector:
 - Outreach programmes can occur through educational/awareness campaigns/materials addressing and informing on waste management patterns within tourist establishments or tourists' waste generation trends and how to improve them. Such programmes also encourage engagement from both private and public sectors. Moreover, incentives for technical support/workshops to help organisations have a clear and strategic plan for improving waste management.
- Measure - Integrates waste management with surrounding community:



RECIRCLE MED



- For the integration of waste management with surrounding communities, the tourism sector must support the efforts of waste service providers at a national level, where possible. This can be through passive efforts such as dissemination of information to stakeholders or through active measures such as financially incentivising their integration of waste management with surrounding communities.
- Measure - Identifies threats from tourism-related waste to other sectors:
 - This assesses how waste generated by tourism activities may impact other sectors. It involves targeted research and monitoring to understand waste-producing behaviours and to determine whether existing or planned tourism developments have adequately considered potential waste-related risks. The findings support better prevention and coordination across affected sectors.
- Measure - Encourages research into waste generation characteristics of the sector:
 - Research into waste generation characteristics can be encouraged by incentivising collaboration between tourism establishments and waste management providers that collect facilities' waste. In doing this, information relating to the amounts and types of collected wastes can be relayed back to the waste producers. Offering technical support in the form of waste audits will also further support research efforts.

Mobility Metric: How does the strategy promote the transformation of transport services in tourism destinations?

- Measure - Based on consultation with stakeholders from public transport sector:
 - Does the strategy offer incentives (financial, technical, or otherwise), to set up working groups or advisory committees, voluntary cooperation programmes/schemes between different actors, or does it require obligatory participation between public transport stakeholders through legislative measures?
- Measure - Based on consultation with stakeholders from private transport sector:



RECIRCLE MED



- Does the strategy offer incentives (financial, technical, or otherwise), to set up working groups or advisory committees, voluntary cooperation programmes/schemes between different actors, or does it require obligatory participation between private transport stakeholders through legislative measures?
- Measure - Promotes benchmarks for transport services diversification:
 - A benchmark is a standard that allows comparison of activity results (e.g., performance of the transport sector) against competitors or fixed standards. Benchmarks provide a metric to gauge the diversification of transport services, such as comparing environmental impacts. Having benchmarks in place encourages environmental proactivity beyond legal requirements. For blue economy regions, benchmarks for marine transport, such as electric or hybrid ferries and waste-efficient cruise operations, should also be considered.
- Measure - Identifies threats from tourism-transport to other sectors:
 - To identify threats from tourism-related transport on public transport and other sectors, research, monitoring, and consultation must occur. Potential or actual impacts from tourism developments should be considered. This includes effects such as air pollution affecting agriculture, marine transport affecting fisheries or coral reefs, and road congestion impacting local commerce and emergency services.
- Measure – Integrates transport services with national development policies:
 - Are transport services planned, developed, and managed in alignment with national development policies? Do transport strategies explicitly reference broader policy frameworks and ensure coherence with national priorities such as sustainability, mobility, infrastructure development, and regional integration? This measure also considers opportunities for ongoing coordination and participation in national planning processes to maintain long-term alignment as policies evolve.

Environment Metric: How does the strategy embed green and environmental solutions into the structure and operations of the tourism zone?



RECIRCLE MED



- Measure - Based on consultation with service providers from the environmental sector:
 - Refers to formal engagement with environmental service providers (e.g., renewable energy firms, eco-architecture consultancies, biodiversity experts) to identify and integrate green solutions into the tourism infrastructure. For example, consulting water treatment providers for eco-lagoons in resorts, or partnering with solar companies to power public lighting. This ensures tourism developments adopt market-ready, cost-effective environmental solutions that benefit both enterprises and the local economy.
- Measure – Follow-up consultation with stakeholders from the public and private sector:
 - Refers to ongoing dialogue with stakeholders such as municipal authorities, chambers of commerce, hotels, and tour operators to ensure continuous feedback on green solution adoption. For instance, follow-up consultations may evaluate performance of waste-to-energy projects or gauge SME uptake of eco-certifications. This creates an adaptive system where environmental integration is regularly updated, maximising economic and environmental returns.
- Measure – Promotes opportunities for greening the tourism environment:
 - Refers to initiatives that actively encourage green retrofitting and design across the tourism zone. Examples include green roofs on hotels, eco-landscaping in public squares, climate-resilient shading, and tree-planting corridors connecting attractions. Such interventions improve energy and water efficiency, increase property values, and enhance visitor appeal. These opportunities can be encouraged and supported through financial means, awareness initiatives and information sharing.
- Measure - Encourages research into tools for marine and terrestrial resource management:
 - Refers to promoting academic and applied research into innovative tools tailored to protect marine and terrestrial resources. Examples include digital monitoring systems for water quality in coastal zones, AI-based models to predict beach erosion, or tools for sustainable fisheries management linked to tourism demand.



RECIRCLE MED



Research produces solutions that safeguard vital ecosystems while strengthening innovation-driven economies.

- Measure – Involves community support for the development of environmental tools:
 - This refers to engaging residents, schools, and local associations in co-developing and testing environmental tools. Examples include community-led monitoring apps for air or noise quality, school projects designing recycling stations, or cooperatives creating biodegradable packaging for local markets. Communities can also be educated on the importance of environmental monitoring for sustainable tourism, fisheries, and coastal management. Such engagement builds community ownership, strengthens social capital, and reduces reliance on external solutions, helping ensure that tourism revenues support local innovation.

Heritage Metric: How does the strategy promote the presentation of local heritage in tourism products?

- Measure – Integrates local events into the tourism offering:
 - Refers to the integration of traditional events and festivals into the tourism offering, ensuring they are marketed and accessible to visitors. Examples include seasonal harvest celebrations, open-air concerts featuring local music, or gastronomy fairs. Such events drive visitor spending in accommodation, food, and crafts while valorising living traditions.
- Measure – Promotes local products in the tourism area:
 - Refers to embedding heritage-linked products directly into tourism experiences. Examples include handicraft boutiques in cultural quarters, weaving demonstrations with purchase opportunities, or local food pairing menus in hotels. This creates direct market channels for artisans and producers, keeping economic benefits local.
- Measure – Promotes media and publications about local heritage:
 - Refers to the creation, publication and dissemination of books, guides, films, and digital content that interpret and celebrate local heritage. For instance, publishing folklore stories as visitor booklets, producing documentaries for hotel TV channels, or curating podcasts on regional traditions. These publications enhance



RECIRCLE MED



cultural knowledge while generating revenue for local writers, artists, and media producers.

- Measure – Promotes museums and cultural centres in the tourism area:
 - Refers to the active integration of museums and cultural centres into the tourism product through joint ticketing, promotional campaigns, or partnerships with local businesses. Examples include night museum tours, craft residencies in cultural centres, or interactive exhibitions linking heritage with sustainability. This boosts visitor flows, diversifies revenue streams, and strengthens institutional viability.
- Measure – Supports the market entry for innovative heritage products:
 - Supports the development and commercialisation of innovative heritage products. Examples include modernised traditional crafts, design collaborations, heritage-themed technological products, or artisan startups. This expands market reach and strengthens the economic sustainability of heritage-based enterprises. Support can be provided through funding and technical assistance (including training).

Governance Metric: How does the strategy encourage and support collaboration of the tourism sector with other sectors?

- Measure – Establishes a National Tourism Policy Forum:
 - A National Tourism Policy Forum is a chance for relevant stakeholders to meet and discuss measures and the future of the tourism sector. It promotes collaboration between tourism actors and other sectors. Financial incentives can encourage participation and contribution to such forums whilst performance-based awards will further encourage participation.
- Measure - Promotes research on the impacts of tourism on other sectors:
 - This measure refers to incentives that support research into the pressures that the tourism sector puts on surrounding environments (e.g., carrying out tourism impact assessments). Research can also occur through consultation activities before and after strategy implementation, involving between private stakeholders and the public within the tourism sector (covering



RECIRCLE MED



tourism establishments/facilities and water, energy, waste, mobility, environment and heritage stakeholders). For this measure, public consultation specifically refers to the involvement of local citizens.

- Measure - Promotes outreach activities to other sectors and communities:
 - Incentives to fund the setup of trade fairs or conferences allowing for the promotion of the latest technologies or products with the tourism sector. Such events facilitate communication efforts and collaboration between other sectors and communities with the tourism sector. Reach out activities can occur by incentivising partnerships with community members and local community organisations.
- Measure - Promotes holistic local development plans for touristic areas:
 - Local development plans refer to strategic planning processes that guide sustainable growth and long-term development within the tourism sector. These plans typically integrate land use, infrastructure, community needs, environmental protection, and cultural assets to ensure that tourism benefits are balanced with resilience and inclusivity. They should also identify sensitive areas, such as coastal zones, marine habitats, and cultural sites, to ensure sustainable use. Holistic plans help destinations anticipate future pressures, attract investment, and align tourism with wider regional development goals.
- Measure - Promotes integrated management plans for touristic areas:
 - Integrated management plans focus on the operational management of the tourism area and ensure that all stakeholders, including residents, local businesses, and tourism entities, are involved in decision-making and its process. Engagement may range from simply informing stakeholders of planned actions, to consulting them for feedback, to fully involving them in the creation and implementation of the plans. Effective management is supported by meaningful and continuous participation across these levels of engagement.





4. Innovate – Metrics and Measures

Under this principle, the metrics for the 6 pillars: water, energy, waste, mobility, environment and heritage, are similar in nature, and therefore the 5 measures assigned to each pillar will be the same (taking the associated pillar into account). The scoring methods will also be the same and thus can be applied to each measure accordingly.

Water Metric: How does the strategy promote innovative systems for managing water demand within the tourism destination?

- Measure - Promotes increased data acquisition to better identify water-related challenges:
 - Data acquisition occurs through the collection, conversion, and sharing of information. Incentives can drive research within the sector through the installation of water data collection equipment and data acquisition software, as well as by encouraging information sharing with other research entities, institutions, or sectors. Data collection should include monitoring of coastal water quality, groundwater levels, salinity, and wastewater discharge. Data acquisition can occur at the level of individual tourism entities or at a regional level.
- Measure - Identifies Research and Innovation (R & I) challenges of the tourism sector in relation to water:
 - Refers to any agency, institution, or organisation responsible for identifying R&I water challenges within the tourism sector. The identification of these challenges is encouraged through incentives for researchers or participating organisations. The strategy also promotes R&I in areas such as smart water monitoring systems, circular water use (e.g., greywater recycling), and nature-based solutions (e.g., wetlands for wastewater treatment).
- Measure - Promotes the participation of the tourism sector in R & I programmes focused on water management:
 - Participation of tourism sector stakeholders in water R&I programmes is ensured by promoting the importance of their involvement through marketing and outreach campaigns, and by providing incentives for participation in workshops, pilot projects, and similar initiatives. R&I programme participation is aligned with national Blue Economy strategies and water management policies.



RECIRCLE MED



- Measure - Facilitates the participation of tourism operators in sectoral water conferences:
 - Facilitating participation of tourism operators in sectoral conferences (relating to water demand management) through financial incentives (or awards that can boost public image of companies) or by providing a platform for information dissemination and feedback.
- Measure - Promotes the market entry of innovative water technologies:
 - Facilitates communication between destination stakeholders and producers of new water-related technologies through measures such as feedback sessions and surveys, supporting their adoption. Promotion is further encouraged through information campaigns and marketing efforts. The strategy fosters a stronger ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship within the Blue Economy.

**The above measure descriptions can be repeated for the following pillars – Energy, Waste, Mobility, Environment and Heritage.*

*** Scores should be allocated based on whether measures are in place and the amount of information available about them. A score of 0 is given when no measures are present. A score of 1 is assigned when one measure is present but no further information is available. A score of 2 is given when one measure is present and information is available. Finally, a score of 3 is allocated when more than one measure is present and information is readily available.*

Energy Metric: How does the strategy promote innovative systems for managing energy demand within the tourism destination?

- Measure - Promotes increased data acquisition to better identify energy-related challenges
- Measure - Identifies R & I challenges of the tourism sector in relation to energy use
- Measure - Promotes the participation of the tourism sector in R & I programmes focused on energy efficiency
- Measure - Facilitates the participation of tourism operators in sectoral energy conferences
- Measure - Promotes the market entry of innovative energy technologies



RECIRCLE MED



Waste Metric: How does the strategy promote innovative systems for optimising waste management within the tourism destination?

- Measure - Promotes increased data acquisition to better identify waste management challenges
- Measure - Identifies R & I challenges of the tourism sector in relation to waste
- Measure - Promotes the participation of the tourism sector in R & I programmes on circular waste solutions
- Measure - Facilitates the participation of tourism operators in sectoral waste management conferences
- Measure - Promotes the market entry of innovative waste management technologies

Mobility Metric: How does the strategy promote innovative systems in aiding efficient mobility within the tourism destination?

- Measure - Promotes increased data acquisition to better identify mobility challenges
- Measure - Identifies R & I challenges of the tourism sector in relation to sustainability mobility
- Measure - Promotes the participation of the tourism sector in R & I programmes on green mobility
- Measure - Facilitates the participation of tourism operators in sectoral mobility conferences
- Measure - Promotes the market entry of innovative mobility solutions

Environment Metric: How does the strategy foster innovative systems and technologies for integrating the local environment into the tourism destination?

- Measure - Promotes increased data acquisition to better identify environmental challenges (terrestrial and marine)
- Measure - Identifies R & I challenges of the tourism sector in relation to environmental sustainability
- Measure - Promotes the participation of the tourism sector in R & I programmes focused on environmental protection and marine protection
- Measure - Facilitates the participation of tourism operators in sectoral environmental conferences
- Measure - Promotes the market entry of innovative environmental technologies



RECIRCLE MED



Heritage Metric: How does the strategy promote innovative systems for presenting and/or integrating local heritage in the tourism destination?

- Measure - Promotes increased data acquisition to better identify heritage conservation challenges
- Measure - Identifies R & I challenges of the tourism sector in relation to cultural and natural heritage
- Measure - Promotes the participation of the tourism sector in R & I programmes on heritage valorisation
- Measure - Facilitates the participation of tourism operators in heritage-related conferences
- Measure - Promotes the market entry of innovative heritage preservation technologies

Governance Metric: How does the strategy promote innovative solutions for the environment and/or circular measures/technologies?

- Measure - Establishes an R & I strategy addressing specific tourism challenges:
 - Through consultation with different sectors, a long-term R & I strategy is established to address circular tourism challenges. The strategy is aligned with national Blue Economy frameworks, coastal zone management plans, and Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring coordination across sectors.
- Measure - Allocates funds to research projects in the tourism industry:
 - Provides financial support for research projects within the tourism sector, particularly those focused on innovative environmental and circular solutions. Support may range from the absence of dedicated funding, to one-off or ad-hoc financial initiatives, to the regular and sustained provision of funds that enable ongoing research and innovation.
- Measure – Enables innovation capacity in tourism:
 - Provides support systems that help tourism enterprises test, adopt, and scale innovative circular solutions. This goes beyond training and into enabling experimentation, with financial, technical, or advisory mechanisms. Support could be in the form of grants for piloting smart water monitoring, expert mentoring for renewable-energy integration, subsidies for AI-driven waste-tracking tools.



RECIRCLE MED



- Measure - Establishes centralised technical support service for implementing circular measures and technologies:
 - This measure considers whether technical support services are offered within the sector and how easily they can be accessed. Readily available guidance enables businesses to adopt circular practices more effectively, lowers barriers for smaller operators, and accelerates the sector's transition toward resource-efficient and sustainable operations.
- Measure - Promotes the organisation of conventions on innovative solutions:
 - Actively supports conventions focused on innovative solutions, either by hosting such conventions locally or by incentivising participation and attendance at conventions outside the region. Promoting engagement with these conventions encourages knowledge exchange, fosters the adoption of cutting-edge practices, and strengthens the sector's ability to implement innovative solutions effectively.





5. Revalue – Metrics and Measures

Water Metric: How does the strategy promote the use of non-conventional (alternative) water resources within the tourism destination?

- Measure – Promotes water auditing to identify opportunities for non-conventional water resource use:
 - Water auditing is carried out through site visits and regular monitoring to determine possibilities for using non-conventional water and how this can be implemented. Support from water auditing technical experts is provided as needed, which can be either through external or internal auditing. Moreover, the feasibility of rainwater harvesting, greywater recycling, desalination, and stormwater reuse is explored.
- Measure - Support schemes for “normal” and “deep” retrofitting works:
 - Normal retrofitting refers to quick and targeted upgrades such as low-flow fixtures or efficient irrigation, while deep retrofitting adopts a systems-thinking approach, e.g., secondary water distribution networks, greywater reuse, or integration of rainwater harvesting. Supporting both types of retrofitting maximises resource efficiency and long-term resilience.
- Measure - Establishes a comprehensive Water Management Plan:
 - A comprehensive water management plan is strategically designed to satisfy the needs of people and businesses in the tourism sector, considering short, medium, and long-term considerations of water demand. Nature-based solutions, such as wetlands and coastal buffers, are applied where possible to enhance water retention and purification.
- Measure - Establishes voluntary benchmarks for the use of non-conventional water resources:
 - By establishing benchmarks for NCWR to be used within the tourism destination, the strategy is promoting the use of NCW resources. An example of such a voluntary benchmark could relate to the level (%) of water reclaimed compared to the total amount of water used within a tourism facility.
- Measure - Includes benchmarks in quality labels for the sector:



RECIRCLE MED



- Benchmarking should be present for Quality labels (in relation to water) that are applied to products offered by the tourism sector. The higher the percentage of reclaimed water in such products, the higher the Quality Label grade.

Energy Metric: How does the strategy promote alternative sustainable energy resources?

- Measure - Energy auditing to identify key optimisation actions:
 - Energy auditing should be carried out through site visits, and regular monitoring to determine optimisation actions for energy use within tourism facilities. Is support from energy auditing technical experts, for either internal or external auditing, readily available to such facilities?
- Measure - Support schemes for “normal” and “deep” retrofitting works:
 - Normal retrofitting works are usually fast and easy options, targeting isolated system upgrades. This would include works such as the installation of photovoltaic cells or solar water heaters on roofs. “Deep” retrofitting works include installing integrated glass panes or improving heating and cooling systems to use renewable energies. Deep retrofitting works would be incorporated into a period refurbishment. Does the strategy offer any schemes present that support entities in “deep” retrofitting work, in relation to energy?
- Measure - Establishes a comprehensive Energy Development Plan:

Assess whether a comprehensive energy development plan is in place or under development, and whether it has been strategically designed to meet the energy needs of both residents and businesses within the tourism sector. The plan should consider short, medium, and long-term energy demand, ensuring alignment with current and future requirements of the sector.
- Measure - Establishes voluntary benchmarks for alternative energy solutions:
 - By establishing benchmarks for renewable energy to be used within the tourism destination, the strategy is promoting the use of alternative energy solutions. An example of such a voluntary



RECIRCLE MED



benchmark could relate to the level (%) of renewable energy compared to the total energy demand within the tourism facility.

- Measure - Includes benchmarks in quality labels for the sector:
 - Benchmarking should be present for Quality labels (in relation to energy) that are applied to products offered by the tourism sector. The higher the percentage of renewable energy generated on site and in relation to energy demand, the higher the Quality Label grade.

Waste Metric: How does the strategy promote the sustainable reuse of waste?

- Measure - Waste auditing to identify key optimisation actions:
 - Waste auditing should be conducted through site visits and regular monitoring within tourism facilities to identify opportunities for waste reduction and reuse optimisation. Support should be made available to facilities seeking to improve their waste management practices, including access to technical experts and guidance for both internal and external auditing processes. Ensuring that tourism enterprises have this support helps optimise resource efficiency, reduce environmental impact, and promote sustainable operations across the sector.
- Measure - Establishes a comprehensive Waste Management Plan:
 - Is there a comprehensive waste management plan in place, that has been strategically designed to satisfy the needs of people and businesses in the tourism sector? Does it take the short, medium, and long-term considerations of waste generation into account?
- Measure - Proposes support schemes for waste reuse:
 - The strategy considers the proposition and introduction of support schemes for waste reuse within the tourism sector, such as financial contributions to waste-to-energy (WtE) initiatives or recycling programmes. Pilot initiatives may also be implemented to demonstrate practical applications, including organic waste composting, packaging reuse, and material recovery.
- Measure - Establishes voluntary benchmarks:



RECIRCLE MED



- Voluntary benchmarks provide organisations and the tourism sector with performance standards that guide behaviour and encourage best practices beyond legal requirements. These benchmarks can focus on areas such as waste management, for example, measuring the weight of waste generated per hotel room, and aim to optimize operational efficiency while benefiting both the enterprise and surrounding communities. By setting clear targets, voluntary benchmarks foster environmental proactivity and continuous improvement across the sector.
- Measure - Includes benchmarks in quality labels for the sector:
 - Benchmarks integrated into quality labels allow tourism products and services to be compared against fixed standards or competitors' performance. In the context of waste reuse, higher levels of reuse relative to waste generated can contribute to a higher quality label grade. This approach not only incentivises better waste management practices but also provides external recognition, helping businesses demonstrate their sustainability performance to customers and the wider market.

Mobility Metric: How does the strategy promote the optimisation of available mobility solutions?

- Measure - Establishes a comprehensive Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan:
 - A comprehensive Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan is used to strategically address the mobility needs of both residents and businesses within the tourism sector. The plan should consider short, medium, and long-term requirements for private and commercial traffic, ensuring efficient, safe, and sustainable transportation solutions
- Measure – Innovation incentives for mobility optimisation:
 - Are there any promotional schemes present that encourage the generation of innovative solutions to optimise mobility options within the tourism sectors? Promotional schemes can be in the form of information campaigns to highlight the importance of innovative solutions, or through financial support of competitions/hackathons that foster participation to address mobility issues within the tourism sector.
- Measure – Support for greening operational vehicles:



RECIRCLE MED



- Are there financial support schemes in place for tourism operators that are taking measures to make their operational service vehicles more “green” (more aligned with circular economy requirements)? Examples could include scrappage schemes and electric vehicle schemes targeting non-tourist-facing vehicles used by tourism enterprises, such as maintenance vans, delivery trucks or catering vehicles. These schemes would be specific to vehicles used for enterprise operations and not for transporting tourists.
- Measure – Support for greening tourist vehicles:
 - Are there financial support schemes in place for making vehicles that directly serve tourists “greener” (and more aligned with circular economy requirements)? Examples could include scrappage schemes and electric vehicle schemes targeting vehicles such as tour buses, shuttle vans and rental cars that are used in providing transport services to tourists.
- Measure - Retrofitting schemes for tourism vehicles:
 - Are there retrofitting schemes in place to improve existing vehicles used for tourism services, aligning them with circular economy and sustainability principles? Such schemes aim to reduce the need for purchasing new vehicles by upgrading current fleets to be more energy-efficient, lower-emission, and environmentally friendly. Promoting vehicle retrofitting supports sustainable operations within the tourism sector, reduces resource consumption, and contributes to the sector’s broader environmental and circularity goals.

Environment Metric: How does the strategy promote the value of the local environment or products from the local environment?

- Measure - Establishes a comprehensive plan for the valorisation of local products:
 - Refers to a structured, destination-wide plan for integrating locally sourced products into the tourism supply chain. This includes mapping local producers, creating partnerships between tourism operators and farmers or artisans, and setting targets for local procurement. Local products are incorporated into menus, souvenirs, tours, and visitor experiences, ensuring that spending by tourists remains within the community and maximises local economic benefits.



RECIRCLE MED



- Measure – Offers support schemes to start-ups and/or SMEs producing local products:
 - Refers to financial and technical support for entrepreneurs and small producers that create goods linked to the local environment. Examples include grants for eco-cosmetics made from native plants, micro-loans for organic food producers, or incubator programmes for eco-design products. Feedback from these initiatives is used to adjust schemes, expand successful efforts, and ensure alignment with Blue Economy goals.
- Measure - Includes benchmarks for sustainability in quality labels for the sector:
 - Integrates sustainability criteria into regional or destination quality labels for local products. Certification schemes could, for instance, require low-carbon production, biodiversity-friendly harvesting, or fair-trade sourcing. These benchmarks not only enhance consumer trust but also improve competitiveness of local goods in both tourism and export markets.
- Measure – Promotes a buy-local marketing scheme:
 - Refers to marketing schemes, including campaigns designed to encourage both visitors and residents to purchase locally made products from the tourism area. Examples include organised food trails, destination branding with “made in the region” labels, or marketplaces connecting hotels and restaurants with local suppliers. These campaigns capture higher-value spending, retain more visitor spending locally, and showcase the uniqueness of the destination.
- Measure – Promotes studies and research for the diversification of local environmental and marine/coastal products:
 - Covers research initiatives that explore ways to expand the range of local environmental products integrated into the tourism economy. Examples include research into under-utilised native plants for gastronomy, new eco-materials for crafts, or climate-resilient crops for agritourism. Furthermore, this can include developing eco-certified sea salt products, valorising edible seaweeds in gastronomy, or promoting artisanal fisheries products under destination branding. Structured and ongoing research in these areas can strengthen product diversity, reduce dependency



RECIRCLE MED



on imports, generate new revenue streams and provide an innovative sustainable offering for the destination.

Heritage Metric: How does the strategy enhance the value of local traditions by integrating them into tourism experiences and offerings?

- Measure - Establishes a comprehensive Heritage Tourism Plan:
 - Refers to the presence of a strategic heritage tourism plan, whether it is already implemented or currently in the design and development phase. Such a plan integrates heritage traditions into tourism development, including mapping traditional practices, setting investment priorities, and aligning cultural preservation with tourism offerings. Such a plan ensures heritage is safeguarded while also generating long-term economic benefits for local communities.
- Measure – Promotes the organisation of activities in the tourism zone:
 - Refers to initiatives that bring traditional practices directly into the tourism product through organised events and activities. Examples include traditional cooking workshops, craft demonstrations, or seasonal festivals staged for visitors. These activities strengthen local employment, increase tourist spending, and reinforce cultural continuity.
- Measure – Develops heritage trails and cultural interpretation experiences:
 - Refers to the creation of heritage points, trails, and interpretive experiences that enhance visitor engagement and cultural appreciation. Examples include mapped cultural routes, storytelling stations at heritage sites, community-led craft workshops, or local food experiences integrated into visitor trails. The focus is on diversifying experiences, distributing tourism benefits across communities, and strengthening cultural identity, while also encouraging connections with heritage beyond the immediate tourism area, including collaboration with neighbouring communities, regional traditions, or cross-border initiatives.
- Measure – Provides training courses for tourist guides:
 - Refers to programmes that train guides to communicate local traditions, history, cuisine and intangible heritage, such as folklore,



RECIRCLE MED



performing arts and storytelling. Well-designed programmes also help to strengthen guiding as a career path, improve service quality, and build guides' capacity in sustainability, accessibility, and digital skills. Furthermore, well-trained guides enrich visitor experiences and help ensure traditions create real economic value for communities.

- Measure – Promotes traditional cuisine and practices:
 - Integrates heritage-based culinary and craft traditions into tourism experiences. Examples include traditional cuisine into menus in restaurants, sharing of traditional cooking practices, heritage-themed hotel offerings, and cultural food festivals. Reinforces local identity, supports local producers, and creates unique visitor experiences.

Governance Metric: How does the strategy promote the upcycling of resources throughout different sectors?

- Measure – Framework for resource upcycling:
 - Establishes long-term strategies that embed upcycling into destination management, ensuring continuous action and stakeholder engagement. Focus is on policy frameworks and multi-year efforts rather than one-off initiatives. This includes a five-year destination plan that integrates upcycled materials into public spaces, cross-sector partnerships for repurposing waste (e.g., using glass bottles for local craft production or wood waste in festival infrastructure), and mapping waste streams from tourism activities, such as organic waste, plastics, textiles, and construction debris.
- Measure - Promotes the upcycling of resources:
 - Refers to awareness-building and communication strategies that showcase the value of resource upcycling and highlight examples within the tourism sector. Promotional activities aim to shift mindsets, inspire replication, and normalise upcycling practices. This can include environmental awareness campaigns, exhibitions, social media campaigns, stakeholder showcases, or recognition schemes for pioneering actors. Unlike financial incentives, the focus here is on visibility, inspiration, and education, not direct monetary support.



- Measure – Sector capacity building on upcycling:

RECIRCLE MED



- Builds the knowledge and skills of tourism enterprises and workers specifically to engage in creative upcycling. Focuses on hands-on learning, knowledge sharing and entrepreneurial opportunities that generate added value from waste materials, through training hotel staff on furniture refurbishing with reclaimed wood, workshops for artisans to repurpose plastics into souvenirs.
- Measure - Integrates the tourism sector into regional resource upcycling initiatives:
 - Refers to efforts to integrate the tourism sector with regional upcycling initiatives, either through passive measures (indirect support such as information sharing, guidelines, or awareness campaigns) or active measures (direct engagement through outreach programmes, partnerships, or certification schemes). A balanced approach combining both, maximises impact by informing stakeholders while also incentivising practical participation.
- Measure – Offers financial incentives for entities involved in resource upcycling:
 - Assesses whether financial mechanisms exist to motivate tourism entities to participate in resource upcycling. These incentives can reduce the costs of waste management, encourage enterprises to supply usable resources to upcycling companies, or stimulate participation in circular economy partnerships. The emphasis is on direct financial triggers that shift business behaviour.





6. Reinvest – Metrics and Measures

Water Metric: What financial supports and systemic mechanisms enable enterprises to optimise water use?

- Measure – Facilitates green financing frameworks:
 - Refers to financial tools that support tourism enterprises in adopting resource-efficient technologies. These may include green investment mechanisms such as low-interest “green” loans for water-saving equipment, subsidies for rainwater harvesting, or tax rebates for installing recycling infrastructure. Such opportunities may be offered as part of a comprehensive, ongoing programme or more isolated, one-off initiatives. These financial measures help reduce operating costs for businesses while strengthening local sustainability.
- Measure – Support schemes for water efficiency adoption:
 - Refers to enabling programmes (non-financial or mixed) that help tourism enterprises adopt water-efficient practices without requiring major capital investment. These schemes may include supportive conditions such as co-funded hotel water-saving pilot projects, technical assistance or recognition awards for efficient housekeeping and operational practices.
- Measure – Provides technical and financial advisory services for efficiency transitions:
 - Refers to the provision of specialised expert guidance and hands-on technical assistance that supports tourism enterprises in designing, retrofitting, and upgrading their facilities with integrated water efficient solutions. This includes advisory services on selecting appropriate technologies, optimising system performance, and ensuring long-term operational efficiency. In parallel, financial advisory support helps enterprises identify suitable funding mechanisms, assess investment feasibility, and plan cost-effective transition pathways.
- Measure – Voluntary benchmarks linked to financing eligibility:
 - Refers to non-mandatory benchmarks that funding bodies or financial institutions use to guide eligibility for water demand management/efficiency investments in tourism enterprises. Examples of benchmarks could be setting limits on water usage



RECIRCLE MED



per guest night, having certification for water stewardship programmes, and setting minimum efficiency standards for plumbing in enterprises etc. Businesses meeting these benchmarks could then qualify for green financing opportunities.

- Measure – Supports the promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives to optimise water use:
 - Refers to actions that encourage tourism enterprises to adopt CSR initiatives designed to optimise their water use. Examples include sponsoring research on innovative water-saving methods, partnering with NGOs for water stewardship campaigns, supporting community rainwater harvesting infrastructure, training courses for water-efficient housekeeping in hotels, and publicly reporting on water performance metrics. CSR initiatives should also align with national water management strategies, sustainability certifications, and Blue Economy goals.

Energy Metric: Which financial mechanisms and enabling frameworks does the strategy provide to help enterprises sustain and expand energy efficiency?

- Measure – Facilitates green financing frameworks:
 - Refers to financial tools that reduce the upfront cost of adopting energy-efficient infrastructure. Examples include low interest “green” loans for solar panels, subsidies for building insulation or efficient HVAC systems, and tax rebates for installing smart energy monitoring devices. These measures enable enterprises to make long-term structural upgrades that lower bills, stabilise energy demand, and enhance profitability. Green financing frameworks should also encourage high-impact innovation in Blue Economy sectors.
- Measure – Support schemes for energy efficiency adoption:
 - Focuses on pooled or collective programmes that reduce enterprise costs. Examples include joint subsidy schemes, cooperative pilot projects, shared access to renewable installations, or group purchasing arrangements for efficient technologies.
- Measure – Provides technical and financial advisory services for efficiency transitions:



RECIRCLE MED



- Refers to the provision of expert guidance and technical assistance, ranging from basic intermediary support to more advanced, high-level advisory services, to help tourism enterprises design, retrofit, and expand their facilities using integrated energy efficient solutions. Examples include consultancy for zero-carbon hotel design, guidance on retrofitting insulation and installing efficient appliances, and technical support for integrating renewable energy systems into existing operations.
- Measure - Voluntary benchmarks linked to financing eligibility:
 - Refers to non-mandatory benchmarks set to guide eligibility for energy efficiency financing for tourism enterprises. Examples include setting kWh consumption per guest-night, requiring certification in energy management systems (e.g., ISO 50001), or minimum efficiency standards for appliances and lighting. Enterprises meeting benchmarks may qualify for green financing opportunities (feeding into the previous measure).
- Measure – Supports the promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives to optimise energy use:
 - Refers to actions that encourage tourism enterprises to adopt CSR initiatives designed to improve energy performance. Examples include sponsoring community renewable energy projects, training staff on energy conservation, supporting awareness campaigns on low-carbon tourism, or publishing energy performance reports.

Waste Metric: What financial supports and systemic mechanisms enable enterprises to improve waste management practices?

- Measure – Facilitates green financing frameworks:
 - Refers to financial tools that enable enterprises to upgrade infrastructure for sustainable waste management. Examples include low-interest loans for installing on-site sorting systems, subsidies for food waste composting or digestion units, or tax rebates for reusable product systems (e.g., refill stations). These investments reduce disposal fees, create value from waste streams, and embed circular economy principles in the tourism sector.
- Measure – Support schemes for efficient waste minimisation:



RECIRCLE MED



- Focuses on enabling programmes that encourage enterprises to adopt low-waste practices without major capital investment. Examples include co-funded pilots for plastic reduction schemes, technical assistance for designing zero-waste events, or recognition programmes rewarding businesses that achieve high diversion rates. These schemes lower operational costs, enhance reputation, and showcase the destination as a leader in circular tourism.
- Measure – Provides technical and financial advisory services for waste management transitions:
 - Support services here mean expert guidance and technical assistance for enterprises, ranging from basic intermediary support to more advanced, high-level advisory services, to design or retrofit facilities with integrated waste management solutions. This could include consultancy on circular kitchen designs, composting systems, waste separation logistics, or integration of material recovery facilities in hotels.
- Measure – Voluntary benchmarks linked to financing eligibility:
 - Refers to non-mandatory standards used to guide financing for waste management improvements. Examples include benchmarks for % of waste diverted from landfill, minimum recycling rates, or adoption of certified zero-waste standards. Enterprises meeting benchmarks may qualify for preferential loans or subsidies.
- Measure – Supports the promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives to optimise waste management:
 - Refers to CSR initiatives that promote waste reduction and recycling. Examples include partnerships with local NGOs on litter prevention, programmes donating surplus food to communities, public reporting on waste diversion, or sponsoring community clean-up campaigns. Such initiatives reduce waste management costs while enhancing reputation.

Mobility Metric: What financial supports and systemic mechanisms enable enterprises to optimise green mobility solutions?

- Measure – Facilitates green financing frameworks:



RECIRCLE MED



- Refers to financial tools that support enterprises in adopting cleaner and more efficient mobility options. Examples include low-interest loans for electric shuttle services, subsidies for e-bike fleets, tax rebates for installing charging stations, or grants for fuel-efficient delivery vehicles. These investments reduce dependency on fossil fuels, cut long-term operating costs, and strengthen the competitiveness of sustainable destinations.
- Measure – Support schemes for green mobility adoption:
 - Focuses on enabling programmes that make it easier for tourism enterprises to trial and adopt sustainable transport practices without heavy upfront investment. Examples include co-financing shared mobility pilots, technical assistance for setting up bike rental systems, or recognition schemes for businesses reducing emissions from staff and guest transport. These schemes improve local accessibility, enhance visitor satisfaction, and support the shift towards low-carbon mobility.
- Measure – Provides technical and financial advisory services for integrating green solutions:
 - Refers to technical support services that assist enterprises in adopting green transport systems, such as consultancy for installing electric vehicles (EV) charging stations, guidance for integrating mobility hubs at hotels, or technical help for optimising logistics with low-emission vehicles.
- Measure – Voluntary benchmarks linked to financing eligibility:
 - Refers to non-mandatory performance standards for financing green mobility. Examples include setting CO₂ emission reduction targets per trip, benchmarks for % of electric or hybrid fleets, or certification under green mobility standards. Achieving benchmarks unlocks access to preferential loans or mobility subsidies.
- Measure – Supports the promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives to optimise green mobility solutions:
 - This measure refers to CSR initiatives promoting and optimising sustainable mobility solutions. Examples include enterprises sponsoring community e-bike networks, offsetting guest transport



RECIRCLE MED



emissions, public awareness campaigns on sustainable travel choices, or providing incentives for staff carpooling.

Environment Metric: How does the strategy enhance the economic value of environmental assets within the tourism product?

- Measure – Offers support schemes for integrating environmental actions in the tourism area:
 - Refers to financial or organisational schemes that encourage tourism enterprises to adopt environmentally friendly practices. Examples include grants for biodiversity protection projects, subsidies for eco-certifications, or co-financing for ecosystem restoration initiatives. These schemes lower barriers to action and help transform environmental protection into a driver of competitiveness and value creation.
- Measure – Offers expert support for the development of integrated environmental plans:
 - Refers to the provision of expert advice and technical support to help enterprises or destinations design and implement environmental action plans. Examples include consultancy on ecosystem services valuation, biodiversity-friendly tourism planning, and integrated coastal zone management. The measure also considers whether such expert services are available on an ongoing and accessible basis, rather than being limited or one-off, so that tourism enterprises can consistently receive the guidance needed to develop effective and comprehensive plans. Ensuring the availability of such support strengthens the protection and optimisation of environmental resources, which are key economic assets for the tourism sector.
- Measure – Studies to monetise the environmental value (terrestrial and marine/coastal) within the tourism product:
 - Refers to research and valuation studies that calculate the financial worth of natural assets within the tourism sector. Examples include economic valuation of protected areas, willingness-to-pay studies for eco-tourism experiences, or cost-benefit analyses of conservation versus degradation. These create an economic case for reinvestment into natural assets. Examples of economic valuation of marine and coastal resources and ecosystems can include coral reefs for diving tourism, willingness-to-pay studies for



RECIRCLE MED



beach conservation, or cost-benefit analyses of protecting mangroves against coastal erosion.

- Measure – Incorporates environmental certification and market incentives:
 - Encourages tourism enterprises to obtain environmental certifications (e.g., eco-labels, ISO 14001) and ensures these certifications are meaningfully supported through market-based incentives. Such incentives may include preferential promotion, tax benefits, priority listing on sustainable tourism marketing platforms, or other advantages that increase business visibility and competitiveness. The measure also considers whether both certification pathways and associated market incentives are actively available, reinforcing the economic value of strong environmental performance and motivating enterprises to adopt higher sustainability standards.
- Measure – Supports promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives that integrate environmental value into the tourism product:
 - Refers to voluntary business-led or public-private initiatives that link environmental responsibility directly into tourism services. Unlike financial incentives or technical support schemes, CSR initiatives focus on a business's commitment to sustainability as part of its identity and branding. Examples include eco-labels for environmentally friendly hotels, enterprises designing carbon-neutral holiday packages, or enterprises integrating conservation into guest experiences (e.g., reef restoration tours).

Heritage Metric: How does the strategy enhance the economic value of heritage assets within the tourism product?

- Measure – Offers support schemes for heritage activities in the tourism zone:
 - Refers to financial schemes that enable enterprises or communities to preserve and promote heritage assets. Examples include grants for heritage site restoration, subsidies for cultural events, or co-financing of museum expansions. Such schemes help protect heritage while generating long-term economic returns from cultural tourism.



RECIRCLE MED



- Measure – Offers support services for the development of integrated heritage plans:
 - Refers to technical or advisory support that aid with creating plans that integrate cultural and historical heritage into tourism offerings. Examples include guidance on adaptive reuse of historic buildings, integrating intangible cultural heritage (crafts, gastronomy) into visitor packages, or capacity-building for heritage site managers to align conservation with visitor engagement. The measure also considers whether such expert services are available on an ongoing and accessible basis, rather than being limited or one-off, so that tourism enterprises can consistently receive the guidance needed to develop effective and comprehensive heritage plans.
- Measure – Studies to monetise the heritage value within the tourism product:
 - Refers to research and valuation studies that assess the financial and cultural worth of heritage assets within tourism, such as calculating visitor willingness-to-pay for heritage sites, conducting economic impact assessments of cultural festivals, or performing cost-benefit analyses of heritage conservation. The measure also considers whether these studies are comprehensive, up-to-date, and effectively integrated into the tourism strategy. Similar approaches can be applied to blue-economy assets, such as marine ecosystems, fisheries and coastal cultural practices. These studies help monetise heritage and marine value, creating a strong economic case for reinvestment and ensuring long-term preservation while supporting sustainable tourism development.
- Measure – Implements heritage linkage schemes to maximise economic returns:
 - Refers to structured initiatives that connect heritage tourism across destinations with an emphasis on economic impact. Examples include coordinated regional festivals, joint ticketing schemes for heritage trails, or cross-border marketing campaigns designed to increase visitor spending. The measure also considers whether these initiatives are comprehensive, actively managed, and effectively link multiple destinations, rather than being limited or small-scale pilot efforts, to drive revenue, diversify visitor flows, and create measurable economic benefits for heritage sites and surrounding communities.



RECIRCLE MED



- Measure – Promotes Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives that integrate heritage value into the tourism product:
 - Refers to voluntary business-led or public-private initiatives that embed heritage responsibility directly into tourism services. Unlike financial incentives or technical support schemes, these CSR initiatives highlight a business's commitment to preserving and promoting cultural identity and authenticity as part of its brand. Examples include hotels supporting local craft traditions, tour operators offering authentic cultural experiences in partnership with communities, or enterprises contributing to the restoration and maintenance of heritage sites.

Governance Metric: How does the strategy consider the tourism sector as a whole and its contribution to the country's economy?

- Measure – Collects data to assess the contribution of the tourism sector to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP):
 - Refers to the systematic collection of economic data measuring tourism's direct and indirect contribution to GDP. This may include use of Tourism Satellite Accounts, sectoral NACE code tracking, or regular reporting on tourism employment and revenue. Such data is critical for informed policy and economic planning.
- Measure – Implements an investment plan for the tourism area:
 - Establishes structured frameworks for channelling public or private investment into the tourism sector, supporting long-term competitiveness and sustainable growth. This includes infrastructure upgrades such as sustainable transport and utilities, development funds for SMEs, or co-financing mechanisms for cluster growth. The measure also considers whether the investment frameworks are comprehensive and operational, with clear mechanisms and long-term financing, rather than being limited, short-term, or project based. By doing so, it strengthens the destination's physical and economic foundation for tourism.
- Measure – Conducts studies to optimise the economic return from the tourism sector:
 - Refers to economic research identifying ways how to maximise value from tourism activities, whilst ensuring the long-term sustainability of the destination. Examples include studies on high-



RECIRCLE MED



value visitor segments, carrying capacity assessments, analyses of economic leakages and multipliers, or evaluations of the impact of specific tourism products or events. The measure also considers whether these studies are comprehensive, up-to-date, and effectively integrated into the tourism strategy, rather than limited, outdated or periodic. Such research provides practical information to guide investment, marketing, and management decisions, so destinations can increase revenue, reduce waste, and plan effectively for the future.

- Measure – Implements a structured tourism plan:
 - Refers to coordinated marketing and branding initiatives that raise the destination's visibility at national or international level. Examples include diversification into new visitor markets, digital marketing strategies, cultural branding campaigns, and cross-border promotional partnerships. The measure also considers whether these initiatives are part of a structured, long-term plan rather than ad-hoc activities, ensuring that promotional efforts strengthen demand and secure tourism's sustainable economic contribution.
- Measure – Implements a tourist tax and reinvests the revenue into the tourism sector:
 - Refers to the introduction of levies or visitor fees that generate revenue earmarked for reinvestment in the tourism sector. Examples include bed taxes funding infrastructure, conservation fees supporting protected areas, or cultural levies financing heritage promotion. The measure also considers whether the revenue is fully or partially reinvested to enhance tourism development. By doing so, it ensures that tourism directly contributes to its own sustainability while supporting local economic growth and the long-term resilience of the destination.





References

- Atkinson, G., Hamilton, K., Ruta, G., & Van der Mensbrugghe, D. (2011). Trade in 'virtual carbon': Empirical results and implications for policy. *Global Environmental Change*, 21(2), 563-574. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2010.11.009>
- Cadarso, M., Gomez, N., Lopez, L., & Tobarra, M. (2016). Calculating tourism's carbon footprint: measuring the impact of investments. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 117(Part B), 529-537. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2014.09.019>
- Chen, S., Chen, B., Feng, K., Liu, Z., Fromer, N., Tan, X., . . . Hubacek, K. (2020). Physical and virtual carbon metabolism of global cities. *Nature Communications*, 11(182), 1-11. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-019-13757-3>
- Ellen MacArthur Foundation. (2013). *Towards the circular economy: Economic and business rationale for an accelerated transition*. <https://ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/towards-the-circular-economy-vol-1-an-economic-and-business-rationale-for-an>
- European Commission. (2020). *A new circular economy action plan: For a cleaner and more competitive Europe* (COM(2020) 98 final). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC009>
- European Commission. (2021). *Sustainable blue economy for the EU: Transforming the EU's blue economy for a sustainable future* (COM(2021) 240 final). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0240>
- Manniche, J., Larsen, K. T., & Broegaard, R. B. (2021). The circular economy in tourism: transition perspectives for business and research. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 21(3), 247-264.
- Mosgaard, M. A., Kerndrup, S., & Lehmann, M. (2022). Circular economy transition in tourism. In E. Genovese & A. Pansera (Eds.), *Circular economy supply chains* (pp. 187-205). Emerald Publishing.
- Plan Bleu. (2017). *Sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean: State of play and strategic directions*. Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre. <https://planbleu.org/en/publications/sustainable-tourism-in-the-mediterranean-state-of-play-and-strategic-directions/>
- UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan. (2019). *Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean*. Barcelona Convention.



RECIRCLE MED



<https://www.unep.org/unepmap/who-we-are/contracting-parties/iczm-protocol>

UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan. (2020). *State of the environment and development in the Mediterranean*. <https://planbleu.org/en/soed/>

World Bank. (2017). *The potential of the blue economy: Increasing long-term benefits of the sustainable use of marine resources for small island developing states and coastal least developed countries*. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/26843>

