

Ecotourism claims to bring benefits to both conservation and local communities in protected areas. [DestiMED PLUS](#) and [MEET Network](#)'s goal is to develop ecotourism multi-day products with evidenced sustainability around the Mediterranean. **How do we know this is actually happening?**

The [MEET Standard](#) has been developed to ensure that, and includes a series of indicators to assess the enabling conditions for ecotourism to be developed in a protected area and destination, and the sustainability and quality of the product being developed. Below follows a summary of the rigorous assessments carried out in in the project. More information will be available in the project website.

ENABLING CONDITIONS

TOURISM MANAGEMENT IN THE PROTECTED AREA

This assessment aims to understand if the protected area has appropriate tourism management mechanisms, to ensure a low-impact and conservation-friendly design of the ecotourism offer, based on a simplification of the [IUCN Green List Global Standard](#) for Protected Areas.

CATEGORY	ASSESSMENT					
1. Legal and regulatory conditions	Legal designation	PA Management plan	Visitor-related park regulations	Visitor mgmt. plan	Active visitor management	Visitor monitoring
2. Ecotourism package and visitor use	Compliance with park rules	Package content	Conservation compliance of package design	Visitor impact		
3. Added values	LEC conservation activity					
						Ideal Compliance Non-compliant situation

GOVERNANCE OF THE LOCAL ECOTOURISM CLUSTER

This assessment aims to measure if the protected area and the different tourism stakeholders in the cluster and destination operate under the main principles for good governance. It has been developed drawing on the [IUCN Best Practice Guidelines for the Governance of Protected Areas](#).

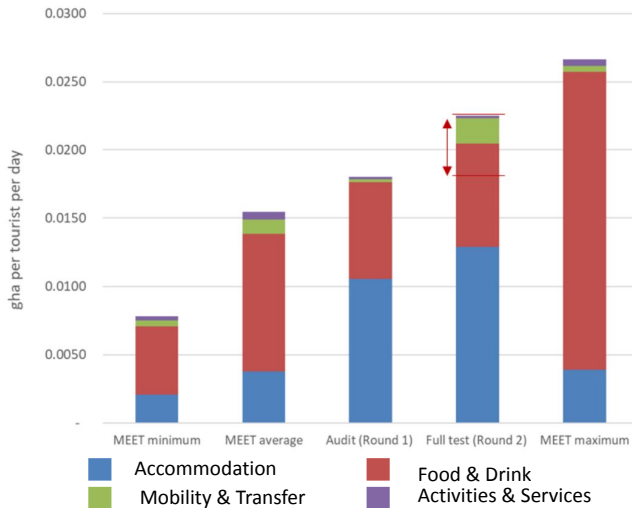
CATEGORY	ASSESSMENT					
1. Legitimacy and Voice	Representation of stakeholders	Diversity	Standards			
2. Direction	Strategy and action plan	General alignment				
3. Performance	Implementation, monitoring & learning	Participatory product development	Cooperation	Policy and lobbying		
4. Accountability	Communication and information	Feedback	Control			
5. Fairness & Rights	Respect	Fairness	Legal alignment			

PRODUCT SUSTAINABILITY

ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT OF THE PRODUCT SERVICES

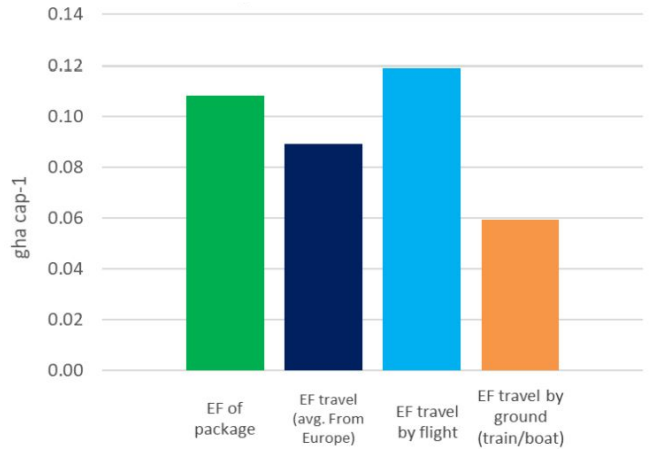
The [ecological footprint \(EF\) assesses](#) the human appropriation of the biosphere's capacity to provide renewable natural resources and key ecological services. To accurately measure the ecological footprint of a ecotourism package, the project is using a new [methodology](#) and the [EF Calculator](#), that collects data and calculates the footprint of the different package components: accommodation, food, mobility & activities. Carbon and Water footprints have been also measured for some products and will be soon available as well.

Ecological Footprint of the package (gha per tourist per day)



The total ecological footprint of this package increased by 25% from the baseline done (round 1) to the final assessment (round 2), with a higher footprint than the MEET average. The reason for the increase lies in the choice of accommodation (+22%) and the mobility & transfers category (+740%). The suggestion is to reschedule the activities avoiding extra movement by car and opt to use higher fuel efficiency vehicles and/or public transportation.

Ecological Footprint of travel to the destination from Europe (gha per tourist)



This graphic shows the average EF of travelling to Divjakë-Karavasta National Park from an average European city, and the difference between air and ground travel. The EF of travelling to the destination is lower than the EF of the actual package (0.82 times the per capita EF of the package). To this destination, the average EF of travelling by ground (train/boat) is 50% lower than the average EF of travelling by flight from Europe.

SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PRODUCT SUPPLIERS

The socio-economic assessment aims to measure the social impact of the different suppliers and facilities on 15 social topics covering 4 stakeholder groups (workers, local communities, value chain and visitors). The methodology is based on a simplified version of the [Product Social Impact Assessment](#).

Stakeholder group	Social Topic
Workers	Working Conditions
	Gender equality
	Health & Safety
	Freedom of Association & Collective Bargaining
	Training
Local community	Local capacity building
	Local employment
	Residents' perception of tourism impacts
	Tourism
Value chain	Integration of sustainability on supply chain
	Supplier Relationships
Tourists	Transparency
	Quality of the service
	Health & Safety
	Feedback Mechanism

2	Ideal performance
1	Intermediate positive performance
0	Compliance
-1	Intermediate negative performance
-2	Non-acceptable performance

The total social impact of the final assessment for Divjakë-Karavasta ecotourism package shows an value of -0.79 but with lack of data, which means a situation between compliance and an intermediate negative performance.

The non-compliant categories that resulted from this assessment help the destination to identify areas where the local ecotourism cluster can work towards **improving their performance**. Sustainability is a long journey, but the first step is to identify the needs. Actions for improvement are planned to be implemented and new results will be available soon.