

Article

New Approach to Identifying Barriers and Potentials in Peripheral and Less-Known Areas Using a Multi-Criteria Analytical Matrix

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Abstract: The purpose of the article is to present the author's methodology for identifying and assessing potentials and barriers occurring in various locations related to cultural tourism. The research aimed to develop a methodology to identify barriers and potentials for tourism development in peripheral and less-known locations. The potentials and barriers identified in a given location are important determinants of the development of cultural tourism and therefore economic development in the mentioned area. The identification of development potentials and barriers refers to the existing features of a given area or place and factors that activate or limit the possibilities of its using cultural resources. The study was based on the analysis of eight case studies of destinations with interesting cultural values. The entire series of analyses addressed various aspects of these destinations. Areas of different sizes and scales were considered, including areas in transboundary regions, rural areas, historic city centres, and archaeological or industrial sites. The work presents the author's methodology for integrating the various elements that define the features and factors of cultural tourism and establishes a framework for a strategy for its sustainable development. To achieve this, a tool in the form of a comprehensive matrix was developed to assess the situation of each pilot site. Based on this tool, the pilot sites identified key features or factors as a barrier or potential and furthermore defined their territorial scope and their impact on their chosen dominant types of tourism. Barriers and potentials were identified based on a set of 47 previously developed features and factors. During the research, 38 most important potentials and 15 barriers were identified. The tool presented in the paper is comprehensive and universal, so it can be applied to any destination.

Keywords: cultural tourism; sustainable tourism; potentials; barriers; analytical matrix



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1. Introduction

Cultural tourism is an unusually widespread range of activities and types of cultural experiences [1]. It is one of the fastest-developing industries in global tourism markets, which makes it particularly important in the development of regions [2]. Culture and tourism are now concepts that permeate and complement each other and, in fact, are driving increased inflows of tourists and, through that, investors. A change in the perception of these two apparently separate aspects of life occurred at the end of the 20th century. The combination of culture and tourism has gradually changed the role of cultural assets in attracting tourists and additionally allowed destinations to distinguish themselves from each other. Over time, the role of culture in tourism became more obvious. From the 1980s in particular, “cultural tourism” began to be seen as a major source of economic development for many areas. It is particularly important for less developed areas where there are few alternative sources of income. One of the main messages of this article is to

draw attention to locations and places unknown to a wider audience. They are situated off the main tourist routes, rarely mentioned in guidebooks, but are an important identity element of a given place or region. In many European countries, activities are carried out aimed at identifying such places; these are both scientific interdisciplinary studies and formal or informal initiatives related to local cultural heritage resources, both tangible and intangible. The selection of pilot sites indicated for the research study on cultural tourism was based on these local or regional analyses and programs indicated by scientific and research institutions and entities responsible for shaping development in smaller towns and other peripheral sites.

Based on some estimates by Europa Nostra [3], “more than 50% of tourist activity in Europe is driven by cultural heritage, and cultural tourism is expected to grow the most in the tourism sector”. Thus, culture is used to promote tourist destinations by promoting the region’s brand. However, this raises certain risks because, while on the one hand, it affects the preservation of identity, at the same time it increases pressure on the environment and can affect the quality of life of residents. These changes will be particularly noticeable in places previously not often visited by tourists. In this context, an important aspect and framework for the development of cultural tourism is its sustainability. Tourism is an opportunity for economic development for peripheral regions; it creates new jobs, allows for the creation of new infrastructure projects (e.g., roads, facilities, and public spaces), and by strengthening the sense of local identity, it contributes to social activation. However, it can constitute an additional environmental burden related to the increased and more intensive use of natural resources, e.g., water. Already three decades ago, priorities for the sustainable development of cultural tourism were identified by Agenda 21 for the travel and tourism industry [4]. They identify the basis for the study of tourism-related issues and the quality of life of the destination’s residents and emphasize the need to maintain environmental quality. For the sustainable development of destinations, the World Tourism Organization has recommended criteria for indicators [5]. The guidelines are a general framework for groups of indicators suitable for cultural tourism. They address three dimensions (domains) of sustainability: social, economic, and environmental. Furthermore, indicators related to the measurement of cultural aspects cannot be overlooked, so they have been additionally identified as an independent group in this research [6]. Taking into account these four main domains, groups of key common European factors and features have been created that characterize different types of cultural tourism, represented by different regions and places in Europe and beyond. Each of these places has different values, potentials, and challenges that need to be addressed to contribute to their development through sustainable cultural tourism [7–9].

In addition, different types of tourism have different barriers related to management and sustainable development [10–15], politics [10–12,16], marketing [10,15,17], culture, environment [13,18], infrastructure, business [10,11,19,20], human resources [14,15,20–23], and many others. They have a significant impact on the development of the region and the development of a sustainable approach to tourism that meets the needs of both tourists and host regions while protecting them and supporting their future development opportunities. Identifying potentials is an equally important element that the tourism industry can use for sustainable development. In many regions, tourism potential is based on geographical features [19], cultural heritage [19], and historical sites [17]. Research shows that a barrier identified for one region can have potential for another region. An example is the Penza Region, one of whose potentials is business. [20]. Sociological potentials and the association of social groups with regional cultural heritage also have an impact on sustainable tourism development [24–27].

The presented research aimed to develop a methodology to identify barriers and potentials for tourism development in peripheral and less-known locations. The analyses were carried out as part of the European Union’s Horizon 2020 project entitled “Social Innovation and TEchnologies for sustainable growth through participative cultural TOURism” (TEXTOUR). They constitute an original proposal for defining barriers and potentials by

establishing sets of features and factors (F&F) and comparing them with the previously defined cultural resources of the analysed destinations.

The research conducted by the authors is a contribution to the strategic development of tourism in lesser-known areas. Awareness of barriers, potentials, and dominant types of tourism directs pilot sites and allows for achieving sustainable development of cultural tourism. Therefore, the presented research and its results support the decision-making process and may be supportive for many areas developing tourism in the future.

2. Materials and Methods

The research was based on the analysis of selected examples of locations that, although located in peripheral or less-known places, have interesting cultural values. The entire series of analyses was addressed to various aspects of these destinations.

2.1. Pilot Sites

Eight case studies were considered, which vary in size and scale and include areas in transboundary regions, rural areas, historic city centres, and archaeological or industrial sites. The case study areas and their countries are listed in Figure 1.

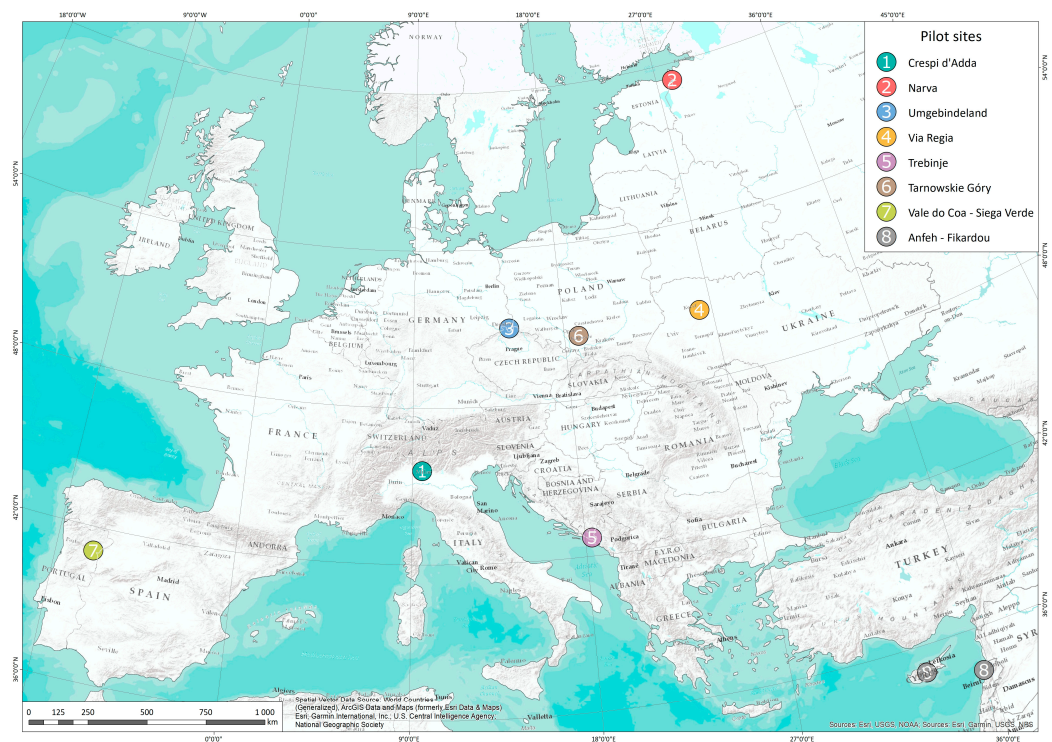


Figure 1. The case study areas.

Among eight pilot sites, three of them are cases covering a larger area of a cross-border nature (Pilots 3, 4, and 7). Each of the pilot sites presents a different type of cultural heritage, creating a rich collection of European transboundary areas with common history. The next four pilot sites are point locations—towns or their districts with a specific type of cultural heritage that is relevant to the area in question (Pilots 1, 2, 5, and 6). Pilots 1, 2, and 6 are related to the post-industrial heritage of Europe, and Pilot 5 presents the richness of the area located at the crossroads of cultures, which is inscribed in the landscape of the Balkans. The last pilot (Pilot 8) is a combined case—it consists of two small localities (point locations), one located in Cyprus and the other one in Lebanon. Both sites (Anfeh and Fikardou) are placed on the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage and present a harmonious relationship between the built and the natural environment, creating an attractive cultural landscape.

Pilot 1: UNESCO site of Crespi d’Adda—Lombardy Region (Italy)

Crespi d’Adda is part of the municipality of Capriate San Gervasio, in the province of Bergamo, in Lombardy, at the extreme southern point of the “Isola Bergamasca”, nestled between the Adda and Brembo rivers and the foothills of the Alps in Italy. Pilot 1 represents a cultural landscape based on historic synergy between factories and houses. It is the most complete and best-preserved example of this type of heritage in Southern Europe, which was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1995.

Pilot 2: Narva: using post-industrial heritage in enhancing cultural tourism (Estonia)

Narva is the third largest city in Estonia, located in Ida-Viru County, in the north-eastern part of the country, at the Russian border and on the Narva River. The pilot area focuses on the Narva Kreenholm complex and the city of Narva, using post-industrial heritage created by the remarkable textile industry complex from the mid-19th century. Political and technological changes and the decline of old industries have created a large amount of empty spaces in the Kreenholm district (around 30 ha), which are high-value cultural heritage.

Pilot 3: Transnational cultural landscape of Umgebindeland (Poland, Germany, Czech Republic)

The “Umgebindeland” is a transboundary region between Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic and is part of the EUROREGION “Neiße-Nisa-Nysa” which includes: the Neißeland, the UNESCO European City of Görlitz/Zgorzelec, the Nature Park Zittau Mountains, Northern Bohemia, and the Polish part of Bogatynia. The “Umgebindeland” is characterized by the presence of the historic half-timbered houses, which are located in many places of this region. The transboundary cultural landscape, developed in the late Middle Ages and also characterized by modern industrialization, constitutes a connecting element between places and offers strong potential for cultural tourism and the development of structurally weak border regions.

Pilot 4: European Cultural Route of Via Regia, a symbol for European unification (Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, Germany, France, Spain)

This pilot is a fragment of Via Regia running through the western part of Ukraine. Via regia is the oldest and longest road link between east and west of Europe, connecting eight countries from Russia and Ukraine in the east to the Atlantic coast of Spain in the west. Within the frame of the TExTOUR project, less-known cultural heritage sites in the Rivne region were identified and promoted, which is located in the north-west of Ukraine and covers the eastern parts of the Volyn Polissia, the Volyn Highlands and the small Polissia, and the western edge of the Central (Zhytomyr) Polissia.

Pilot 5: Embracing the potential of the Balkan diversity through Trebinje environs (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia)

Trebinje is a border town in Bosnia and Herzegovina, not more than 35 km from Dubrovnik (Croatia) and 80 km from Kotor (Montenegro), both of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. It is a former trading town with a well-preserved old town surrounded by fortified walls. Cultural tourism in the city is promoted on the basis of arts and architecture, diversity of historical and cultural heritage (inter alia: urban fabric that originates from different historical and cultural periods, archaeological sites), culinary heritage, literature, beliefs, and traditions.

Pilot 6: Historic silver and lead post-mining facilities in Tarnowskie Góry—Upper Silesia Region (Poland)

Pilot 6 is “Tarnowskie Góry Lead-Silver-Zinc Mine and its Underground Water Management System”—the historical heritage of the mining industry, which has been included on the UNESCO list since 2017. The historic silver and lead mine is one of the oldest preserved mining facilities in Poland and one of the oldest silver and lead mines in Europe. This pilot site consists of three areas of the Upper Silesia Region: the city of Tarnowskie

Góry, the city of Bytom, and the Zbrosławice Commune. The area is situated in Silesia Voivodeship, in southern Poland, and belongs to the Metropolis of the Upper Silesia, on the northern outskirts of the agglomeration. Cultural tourism in Tarnowskie Góry and in Upper Silesia is promoted on the basis of post-industrial heritage, diversity of historical and cultural landscapes (heaps, post-mining water bodies, mine towers, etc.), architecture, as well as regional traditions referring to mining customs (uniforms, rituals, dialect).

Pilot 7: Transboundary UNESCO site of Vale do Côa—Siega Verde (Portugal-Spain)

Pilot 7 is “Prehistoric Rock Art Sites in the Côa Valley and Siega Verde”, which has been included on the UNESCO list in 1998 (Côa Valley) and in 2010 (Siega Verde). The Côa Valley Archaeological Park is located in the northernmost part of Guarda district, in the Alto Douro region (Portugal) and Siega Verde in the western end of the province of Salamanca, near the border between the autonomous community of Castile and León and Portugal (Spain). These transboundary objects—Côa Valley and Siega Verde—form a unique site of the prehistoric era, rich in material evidence of the Upper Palaeolithic period. Integrity of this area is defined by engraved rock surfaces as well as by typical patterns of prehistoric paintings inside caves.

Pilot 8: Anfeh protected area (Lebanon) and the mountain village of Fikardou (Cyprus)

This TExTOUR pilot consists of two locations separated from each other by the Mediterranean Sea. Both sites, small villages Anfeh and Fikardou, are placed on the tentative list of the UNESCO World Heritage and present a harmonious relationship between the built and the natural environment, creating an attractive cultural landscape. The village of Anfeh is located in the Koura District in the north of Lebanon, on the coast, 70 km north of Beirut. Anfeh is characterized by the natural and cultural tourism attractions, which include agricultural land (olive trees), coastal activities (traditional fishing and remnants of salt production), archaeological remains, and sacral monuments. The village of Fikardou is a quasi-abandoned place on the southeastern slopes of the Troodos Mountains in Cyprus, about 32 km southwest of Nicosia. It is a traditional mountain settlement that has preserved its 18th and 19th century physiognomy and architecture, as well as its natural environment.

2.2. Main Concept

The TExTOUR project’s data collection process was thorough and multifaceted, incorporating both bottom-up and top-down methodologies. It involved gathering statistical data from local and regional sources and applying SSH triangulation methodology, which included online surveys, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. This approach allows for a comprehensive collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The data gathered was essential for analysing knowledge gaps and forming the foundation for developing strategies and tools aimed at enhancing sustainable cultural tourism.

The typical profile for entering and checking the data is formed by individuals involved in cultural tourism management, such as policymakers, project coordinators, data analysts, and professionals with a strong background in understanding cultural tourism dynamics and also familiar with the use of digital tools. Additionally, they were adept at interpreting both qualitative and quantitative data to support strategic decision making and policy formulation within the cultural tourism sector. The validity of the data was ensured by a combination of expert reviews upon pilot-specific assessments by stakeholders involved in the project, who collectively make certain the data’s accuracy, reliability, and relevance to the project’s goals.

To achieve the main objective, proprietary methodology was developed to integrate various elements that define features and factors (F&F) of cultural tourism and establish a framework of strategies for its development in partner regions and locations. As a result, a comprehensive matrix representing the situation of each pilot site was developed. The research was divided into several stages presented in Figure 2, and the participation of the pilot sites was planned as the main source of information on the most important barriers and potentials, their scope, and impact on types of tourism.

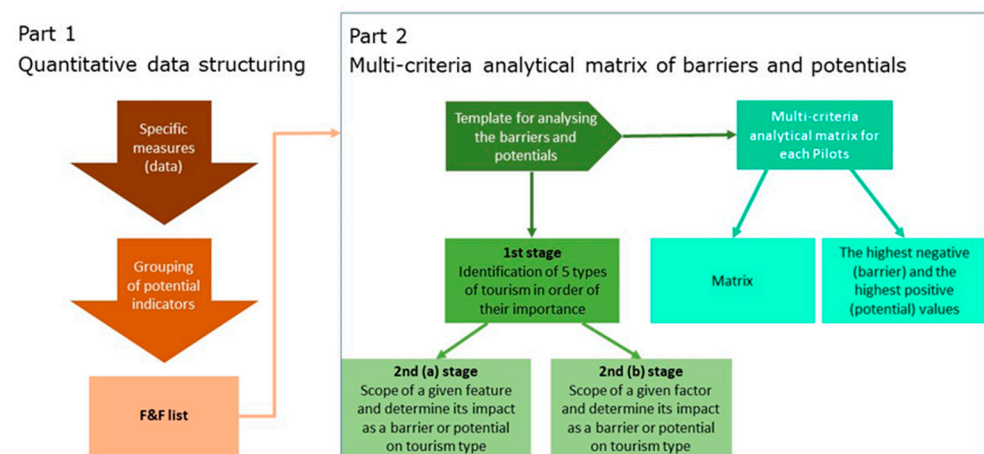


Figure 2. Work stages.

The first part of the work focused on structuring quantitative data provided by the pilot sites to generate an F&F list (Figure 2). In the second part, an active template allowed the identification of the most important F&F that enhance potential, as well as those that are barriers to the development of cultural tourism. The template was developed to allow representatives of the pilot centres to identify them (Figure 2). In stage 1 of the active template, each pilot site prioritised the types of tourism represented by the site. For this purpose, an active list was used, which made it possible to determine five types of tourism in order from the most to the least important. In stage 2, the pilot sites indicated the features—stage 2a and factors—stage 2b that constitute barriers and potentials with their impact on a relevant type of tourism and defined the territorial scope of each feature and factor. The analytical matrix allows defining and prioritising the selected types of tourism. In addition, it allows identifying the scope and impact of barriers and potentials for each type of cultural tourism in terms of F&F. To this purpose, values were assigned to individual assessments, which were then used to rank the barriers and potentials for each pilot. Due to the methodical character of this research, a detailed description of the procedure for creating the analytical matrix was presented in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 as part of the overview of the research results obtained.

3. Results

3.1. Quantitative Data Structuring

The collected data from pilot sites (specific measures) based on well-known statistical databases used several sources, e.g., public official statistics and websites. These results comprise three sets of quantitative data, i.e., regular, additional, and complementary. These datasets provide a description of statistical data (metrics) on phenomena, events, facilities, economic activity, and living conditions of individuals or social groups as perceived in the context of cultural tourism. These data, according to the above classification, were obtained from pilot sites as a result of the searches.

Grouping potential indicators from the obtained specific measures required combining quantitative indicators into four domains: economic, social, cultural, and environmental. In the next step, the data were analysed to remove or combine duplicate data and organise them. This allowed data to be further grouped into smaller clusters describing predefined F&F that could represent barriers and potentials for the development of cultural tourism (Table 1). A list of 47 items (F&F) was created (Table 2). The prepared list did not yet suggest whether a given F&F was a potential or a barrier. Only the pilots in the set activities were to determine this. Provided, with detailed instructions for completion, the template allowed participatory work with peripheral areas that were able to assess their potentials and barriers in the context of cultural tourism development in their locations (Appendix A).

Table 1. Extract from the list of data clusters of selected measures and their F&F.

Data/Measure	F&F
Waste generated by tourism	State of environment
Water consumption per capita/per year	
Waste segregation/sorting opportunities	
The average amount of annual precipitation	
Heating and cooling degree days	
Amount of waste generated	Type of tourist admission
Number of tourist attractions included in the visit pass	
Number of visitors in organised tours	
Prize of visit pass	
Number of kindergarten pupils (visitors)	
Number of primary school pupils (visitors)	Communication and promotion of site
Tourists by age category	
Number of school excursions (visitors)	
Number of copies of publications prepared for tourists: maps and pocket guides and tourist necessities	
Number of followers in social media (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/LinkedIn, etc.) [total]	
Number of publications in the press and on the Internet about tourist attractions and events taking place in the pilot/site	
Number of tourism portals/www	

Table 2. List of F&F.

Features	Factors
• State of environment • Type of tourist admission • Communication and promotion of site • State of local business development • State and variety of culture offers of site • Tourism facilities • Electromobility on site • Public–private partnership on site • Cultural heritage richness, uniqueness/variety of site • Local awareness of cultural tourism • Tourism organisation system on site • Type and intensity of tourist traffic • Logistic on site • Scientific research addressed to the site • Accessibility of site (including disabilities) • Climate adaptation on site • Development (investment) of the pilot site • Tourist satisfaction • Site management • Size of site • NGOs involvement • Employment structure on site • Financial status of site • Border position	• Waste and water management • Financial support and incentives • Economic growth and development • Dynamic of local tourist services • Facilities of qualified tourism • Demography • Safety and health • Cultural sector dynamic • Environmental policy • Dynamic of employment • Tourism management • Tourism enterprise(s) performance • Tourism supply chain • Landscape and biodiversity management • Cultural heritage education • Variety of accommodation offers • Local authorities cooperation on cultural tourism • Communication and promotion of cultural tourism • Variety of culture offers • Gastronomy • Public transport system • Policy and administrative regulations • Environmental threats

The domain-specific measures were assigned to F&F, but in some cases the measures addressed more than one domain, mainly due to the overlapping of socio-economic and cultural-social issues.

3.2. Explanation of the Pilot Study

This paper presents a new approach to identifying barriers and potentials in the development of cultural tourism. It is a tool that takes into account four aspects of sustainability in the process of developing sustainable cultural tourism strategies in the TExTOUR project for eight case study areas in Europe and beyond.

The eight pilots of different scopes were carefully selected to address all relevant or determinant aspects of CT development that the TExTOUR project aims to address holistically. The pilot links considered in the project are multicultural dimension, minority cultures, transboundary dimension, international, less attractive, not yet fully explored and exploited areas, over-exploited areas, urban, rural, remote, peripheral or deindustrialized areas in transition, sense of belonging, Europeanisation, and industrial, natural, or cultural heritage.

The methodology developed to identify barriers and potentials involved the active participation of representatives from the pilot areas, as experts with knowledge and awareness of the pilot area. The work of the pilots also boiled down to identifying the types of tourism with their ranking. This approach provided reliable input for building a tourism development strategy as the main objective of the TExTOUR project.

3.3. Development of the Multi-Criteria Analytical Matrix of Barriers and Potentials

An analytical matrix was created based on the results of the completed template. This analytical matrix allows defining and prioritising the selected types of tourism. In addition, it allows identifying the scope and impact of barriers and potentials for each type of cultural tourism in terms of F&F. It assigned values to individual assessments, which were then used to rank the barriers and potentials for each pilot.

The list of the most important types of tourism was the first stage in further analysis carried out. Pilot sites in the template were given the opportunity to indicate the dominant types of tourism. Therefore, five tourism types that best characterise the site were selected in each pilot (based on pre-selection), and then an appropriate rank was assigned to them: highest, high, medium, low, and lowest (Figure 3B, Table 3). This part of the participatory work allowed for defining the basic destinations of tourism in these peripheral areas. Through the selected tourism directions (also in the context of their development in the area), the pilots were able to identify a potential or barrier from F&F's list of 47 and determine their impact and scope. In addition, they could add a feature or factor not included in the list and determine its character according to the same criteria.

Numerical values were used in the analytical matrix to perform prioritization analyses of F&F and tourism types. The highest value was assigned the highest rank, i.e., 1. Subsequent levels have a value that is 0.2 lower than the rank that preceded them, so when calculating the final value, the score for less important tourism types is reduced. Also, the mark “-” (none) was introduced, which means that a given type of tourism was not selected (Figure 3B).

The next criterion used for the analysis in the template by pilot sites is the territorial scope F&F (as a barrier or potential) in the context of further development of cultural tourism in each of the analysed pilot sites. The local scope of the impact F&F was considered very important, as a certain feature or factor is directly related to the pilot. In the case of less attractive and less-known areas, the local scope is also very important, as bottom-up and local initiatives implemented by the pilot partners can have a crucial impact on the development of cultural tourism in a given location. The second important level is the combination of a local and supra-local scope (from regional through national to international). Figure 3B shows the values assigned to the three types of the impact scope of particular F&F in the analytical matrix. The highest value, i.e., 3, was assigned to the

local scope as a given feature or factor related directly to the pilot. The value 2 was assigned to the scope that included both the pilot and the area beyond. The smallest value (1) was assigned to the supra-local scope.

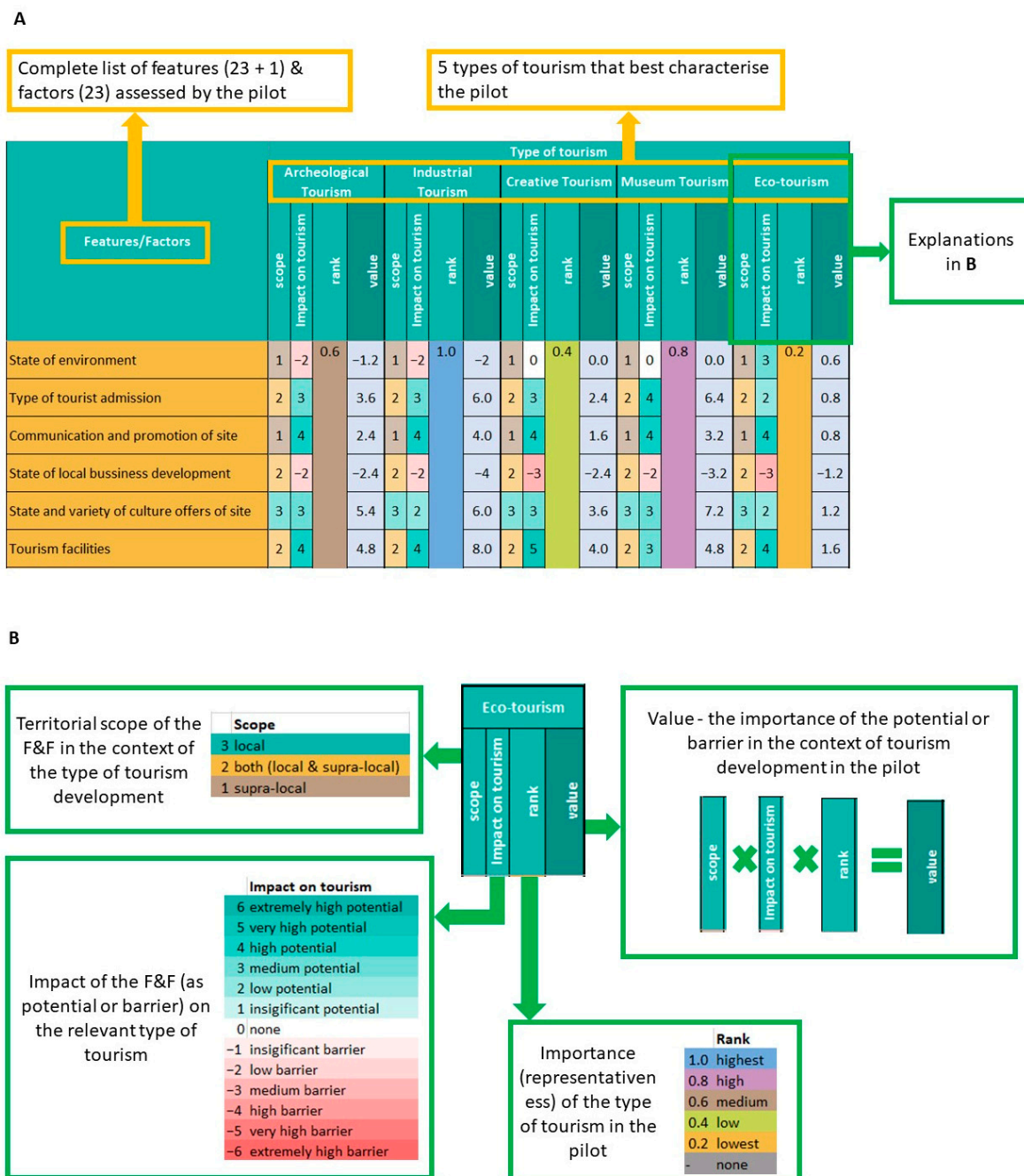


Figure 3. Extract from the analytical matrix with an explanation of its elements (A,B).

The last criterion of the template contains thirteen levels of impact on tourism (Figure 3B). The first six levels relate to the impact of F&F as potentials on the type of tourism. They are ranked from the highest value to the lowest: extremely high potential, very high potential, high potential, medium potential, low potential, and negligible potential. The next 6 levels relate to the impact of F&F as barriers on the type of tourism. These were (from the lowest to the highest value): insignificant barrier, low barrier, medium barrier, high barrier, very high barrier, extremely high barrier. The ranking also included the level “none”, which meant that there was no assessment of the impact of this F&F on the type of tourism. The

next stage of the analysis was to assign numerical values to each impact level of the feature or factor on the type of tourism in the analytical matrix (Figure 3B). The highest level was assigned a value of 6 and the lowest level—a value of 1. No influence “–” (none) was defined as a numerical value of 0. Moreover, depending on whether the feature/factor was a potential or a barrier, the sign +/– was assigned, respectively.

Table 3. Types of tourism—rank level in particular pilots.

Type of Tourism	Pilot 1	Pilot 2	Pilot 3	Pilot 4	Pilot 5	Pilot 6	Pilot 7	Pilot 8A	Pilot 8B	Summary
Museum Tourism	2	1	5	1	1	3	2		2	8
Eco-Tourism	5			2	5	2	3	4	5	7
Culinary Tourism		5		3	4	5	4	1		6
Archaeological Tourism	3	4		5			1	5		5
Industrial Tourism	1	2	4			1				4
Creative Tourism	4		3		3	4				4
Traditional festival Tourism		3					5		4	3
Village Tourism			1					2	1	3
Pilgrim Tourism					2				3	2
Hiking Tourism (Sports T.)			2					3		2
Dissonant Tourism				4						1

Based on the pilot site assessments of the influence of particular F&F, their impact on a given type of tourism and the ranking of selected tourism types, numerical values were generated in accordance with the above description, and they were summarised in the following columns of the matrix: scope, impact on tourism, and rank (Figure 3A). Column “Value” in the multi-criteria analytical matrix is the result. The value given in this column is the product of the 3 previous columns. The results of the analysis were used to rank features/factors and their impact on a given type of tourism.

3.4. Barriers and Potentials in Cultural Tourism in Each Pilot Site

The result of the research was to identify barriers and potentials and determine their importance in relation to diverse tourism offers in peripheral and less-known locations.

Based on the evaluation of the pilot sites in terms of the impact of each feature and factor, a value was calculated for the selected type of tourism. The value allows visualisation and presentation of capabilities and threats and illustrates the specific context of the pilot. All this was possible due to the use of the multi-criteria analytical matrix and the proprietary approach.

In order to extract the greatest barriers and potentials of each pilot from the matrix, the last 3 elements (the highest negative values) and the first 3 (the highest positive values) were selected from the set of values. They indicate the greatest barriers and potentials that characterise the pilot site (Table 4). The scores for each pilot varied, but barriers and potentials were recognisable in almost every case, both in the group of F&F. A special case on this list was the Via Regia pilot site (Rivne in Ukraine), which was mainly characterised by potentials. It should be noted, however, that the survey was conducted before the start of the war in Ukraine, before 2022.

Table 4. Summary of barriers and potentials number for each pilot site.

		Pilot 1	Pilot 2	Pilot 3	Pilot 4	Pilot 5	Pilot 6	Pilot 7	Pilot 8a	Pilot 8b	The Sum of Potentials Divided into F&F	The Sum of Barriers Divided into F&F
Features	State of the environment									P	1	
	Type of tourist admission											
	Communication and promotion								P		1	
	State of local business development											
	State and variety of cultural offers			P						P	2	
	Tourist facilities		P			P		P			3	
	Electromobility											
	Public–private partnership	P								P	2	
	Cultural heritage richness, uniqueness/diversity	P	P	P		P			P	P	6	
	Local awareness of cultural tourism			P		B		B			1	2
	Tourism organisation system											
	Type and intensity of tourist traffic											
	Logistics	B							B			2
	Scientific research addressed to the site											
	Accessibility (including the disabled)	B	B		P	B			B	B	1	5
	Climate adaptation								P		1	
	Development (investment)			P		B			P		2	1
	Tourist satisfaction					P			P		2	
	Site management				P		P				2	
	Area of the site	P					B		P		2	1
	NGOs involvement	P									1	
	Employment structure			B	P						1	1
	Financial status	B				B		B				3
	Border position					P					1	

Table 4. Cont.

		Pilot 1	Pilot 2	Pilot 3	Pilot 4	Pilot 5	Pilot 6	Pilot 7	Pilot 8a	Pilot 8b	The Sum of Potentials Divided into F&F	The Sum of Barriers Divided into F&F
Factors	Waste and water management											
	Financial support and incentives		B			B	P				1	2
	Economic growth and development		B			B	P				1	2
	Dynamics of local tourist services											
	Facilities for qualified tourism			P							1	
	Demography			B				B		B		3
	Safety and health									B		1
	Cultural sector dynamics					P				P	2	
	Environmental policy				B		B					2
	Employment dynamics			B		B						2
	Tourism management	P					P				2	
	Tourism enterprise performance											
	Tourism supply chain											
	Landscape and biodiversity management					P		P			2	
	Cultural heritage education					P		P			2	
	Variety of accommodation offers					P					1	
	Local authority cooperation in the field of cultural tourism					P	P			P	3	
	Communication and promotion of cultural tourism		P								1	
	Variety of cultural offers					P					1	
	Gastronomy											
	Public transport system	B		B								2
	Policy and administrative regulations									P	1	
	Environmental threats				B		B		B			3
	The sum of potentials in the pilot site	5	3	5	3	10	5	3	6	7		
	The sum of barriers in the pilot site	4	3	4	2	7	3	3	3	3		

Since in many cases individual F&F within a particular pilot were assessed at similar levels (repetition of numerical values), more than 3 areas usually emerged in the analysis, which were selected as the greatest potentials or barriers (Table 3). The number of barriers and potentials estimated for particular pilots varies. A total of 38 potentials and 15 barriers were identified for the analysed pilots from the list of F&F (Table 3, Appendix A). The greatest potential can be observed for cultural heritage richness, uniqueness/diversity of the site (identified in six pilots), and also tourist facilities and local authority cooperation in the field of cultural tourism (identified in three pilots). In contrast, the highest number of barriers was identified in the accessibility of the site, including the disabled (identified in five pilots), and also in the financial status of the site, demography, and environmental threats (identified in three pilots).

4. Discussion

A rapidly growing branch of tourism in recent years, cultural tourism plays an important role in the global economy, accounting for around 37% of the total tourism sector with an annual growth rate of around 15% [28]. It should be noted that tourism in Europe is more than 50% based on cultural heritage [3]. Many areas are trying to capitalise on and strengthen their tourism potential. This study focused on eight peripheral and less-known pilot areas initially assessed as having significant cultural, social, and environmental potential. In order to support these areas in their development and facilitate the management of their cultural tourism, a simple tool was developed to quickly identify the potentials that need to be strengthened and to indicate the barriers that need to be eliminated. The prepared multi-criteria analytical matrix supports the analysis process, which allows for precise actions aimed at the sustainable development of cultural tourism areas. It also forms the basis for management plans and development strategies for peripheral and less-known areas.

Given the current state of scientific knowledge, it is assumed that many solutions are available to support decision making for cultural tourism [29]. However, they often require specialised IT facilities such as servers and qualified IT staff. An example is the solutions proposed by international research projects. One of these is the SPOT project, which aims to develop a new approach to understanding cultural tourism and promoting the development of disadvantaged areas. The project developed SPOT-IT, which is an innovative web-based GIS tool to support planning, development, and decision making in different areas of cultural tourism [30]. Another example is the IMPACTOUR project, which prepared an IT tool to analyse data on and track the impact of activities on decisions [31]. The TExTOUR project prepared an electronic platform to support decision-makers and practitioners in evaluating cultural tourism strategies and services [32].

The analytical matrix proposed in this study is a useful tool that provides reliable data in a short time. It does not require specialised skills or equipment. Multi-criteria analyses have so far been used to tourism sustainability planning, rank and identification of tourism destinations, and evaluating tourism destinations [33–35]. The approach presented is the first of its kind aimed at identifying barriers and potentials for the development of cultural tourism.

The study of lesser-known pilot areas located in different locations and characterized by diverse cultural resources also shows how important it is in planning a cultural tourism development strategy to be aware of the barriers that need to be overcome and the potentials that need to be strengthened. Pilot areas, seemingly different and unrelated, may have many common elements. Research has shown that an identified barrier for one pilot area could be a potential for another [13,20], which is a significant argument for using a multi-criteria matrix in the process of assessing development potentials and barriers.

Taking into account the above, the collected information can become: (1) contribute to regional and supra-regional tourism development strategies; (2) become a reference point for the development of tourist areas, including lesser-known ones; (3) support decision making both in terms of the development of tourism itself as well as the given

area; (4) strengthen the role of participation in the management of cultural tourism; and (5) support sustainable tourism in the regions.

5. Conclusions

This article presents a novel methodology for identifying barriers and potentials to tourism development in peripheral and lesser-known locations. Knowledge of barriers and potentials is a key element in enabling the development of sustainable tourism that meets the needs of both tourists and host regions while protecting and supporting their future development opportunities.

The first phase of work in the pilot areas identified types of cultural tourism related to the richness and diversity of cultural heritage. This process was carried out in collaboration with representatives of the pilot areas. The dominant types of cultural tourism were found to be museum tourism, ecotourism, and culinary tourism.

The process of identifying barriers and potentials was designed to get the best possible information from the pilot areas on barriers and potentials as F&F affecting the development of a particular type of cultural tourism. This task was carried out in a participatory way with the participation of representatives of the pilot areas. The identification of barriers for each pilot project was carried out in relation to the dominant types of tourism identified in each case. The task consisted of two parts. The first part of the work consisted of organising the quantitative data, resulting in an F&F list. This list covered the four pillars of sustainability: social, economic, environmental, and cultural. In the second part of the work, an original multi-criteria assessment matrix was developed to prioritise features and factors (F&F). This allowed us to identify barriers and potentials for each pilot location. Barriers and potentials were identified based on a set of 47 previously developed F&Fs. The study identified 38 key potentials and 15 barriers from the F&F list. The prevalence of potentials over barriers is a good predictor of cultural tourism development, as it is easier and more beneficial to develop cultural tourism based on existing potentials than to eliminate or reduce existing barriers. The matrix developed is universal and can be successfully applied to areas aiming to develop sustainable cultural tourism at the initial stage of developing management plans.

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Appendix A

Table A1. Summary of the highest potentials and barriers for Pilots with main types of tourism.

Pilot Number	Pilot Name	Country	Main Types of Tourism	Features/Factors
1	Crespi d’Adda	Italy	Industrial tourism Museum tourism Archaeological tourism Creative tourism Eco-tourism	Potentials
				Public–private partenrship on site
				Cultural heritage richness, uniqueness/variety of site
				Size of site
				NGOs involvement
				Tourism management
				Barriers
				Logistic on site
				Accessibility of site (including disabilities)
				Financial status of site
2	Narva	Estonia	Museum tourism Industrial tourism Traditional festival tourism Archaeological tourism Culinary tourism	Public transport system
				Potentials
				Tourism facilities
				Cultural heritage richness, uniqueness/variety of site
				Communication and promotion of culture tourism
				Barriers
				Accessibility of site (including disabilities)
3	Umgebindeland	Germany, Poland, Czech Republic	Village tourism Hiking tourism (sports T.) Traditional festival tourism Archaeological tourism Culinary tourism	Financial support and incentives
				Economic growth and development
				Potentials
				State and variety of culture offers of site
				Cultural heritage richness, uniqueness/variety of site
				Local awareness of cultural tourism
				Development (investment) of the pilot site
				Facilites of qualified tourism
				Barriers
				Employment structure on site
				Demography
				Dynamic of employment
				Public transport system

Table A1. Cont.

Pilot Number	Pilot Name	Country	Main Types of Tourism	Features/Factors
4	Via Regia	Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, Germany, France, Spain	Museum tourism Eco-tourism Culinary tourism Dark tourism Archaeological tourism	Potentials
				Accessibility of site (including disabilities)
				Site management
				Employment structure on site
				Barriers
				Environmental policy
				Environmental threats
5	Trebinje	Bosnia- Herzegovina	Museum tourism Pilgrim tourism Creative tourism Culinary tourism Eco-tourism	Potentials
				Tourism facilities
				Cultural heritage richness, uniqueness/variety of site
				Tourist satisfaction
				Border position
				Cultural sector dynamic
				Landscape and biodiversity management
				Cultural heritage education
				Variety of accommodation offers
				Local authorities cooperation on cultural tourism
				Variety of culture offers
				Barriers
				Local awareness of cultural tourism
				Accessibility of site (including disabilities)
				Development (investment) of the pilot site
6	Tarnowskie Góry	Poland	Industrial tourism Eco-tourism Museum tourism Creative tourism Culinary tourism	Potentials
				Site management
				Financial support and incentives
				Economic growth and development
				Tourism management
				Local authorities cooperation on cultural tourism
				Barriers
				Size of site
				Environmental policy
				Environmental threats

Table A1. Cont.

Pilot Number	Pilot Name	Country	Main Types of Tourism	Features/Factors
7	Vale do Coa—Siega Verde	Portugal-Spain	Archaeological tourism Museum tourism Eco-tourism Culinary tourism Traditional festival tourism	Potentials
				Tourism facilities
				Landscape and biodiversity management
				Cultural heritage education
				Barriers
				Local awareness of cultural tourism
				Financial status of site
8a	Anfeh	Lebanon	Culinary tourism Village tourism Hiking tourism (sports T.) Eco-tourism Archaeological tourism	Demography
				Potentials
				Communication and promotion of site
				Cultural heritage richness, uniqueness/variety of site
				Climate adaptation on site
				Development (investment) of the pilot site
				Tourist satisfaction
				Size of site
				Barriers
				Logistic on site
8b	Fikardou	Cyprus	Village tourism Museum tourism Pilgrim tourism Traditional festival tourism Eco-tourism	Accessibility of site (including disabilities)
				Environmental threats
				Potentials
				State of environment
				State and variety of culture offers of site
				Public-private partenrship on site
				Cultural heritage richness, uniqueness/variety of site
				Cultural sector dynamic
				Local authorities cooperation on cultural tourism
				Policy and administrative regulations
				Barriers
				Accessibility of site (including disabilities)
				Demography
				Safety and health

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