



SPOT-IT: your smart assistant in the development of cultural tourism objects and infrastructures

For European, national and local policymakers

Author: BIU team

Introduction

This is the first issue in a series of Policy Briefs that present the main findings and practical outcomes of an EU-funded research project SPOT (2020-2022). We inform all groups of stakeholders involved in the development of cultural tourism in Europe about what we have found out during our multi-national study implemented in 15 countries and share with you several policy-related recommendations and other results that might be useful in your professional work.



1. SPOT-IT in questions and answers

What is SPOT-IT?

SPOT-IT is a GIS-based innovative tool for the planners, organizers and developers of cultural tourism objects and infrastructures. The tool was developed mainly by the group of researchers and designers from Bar-Ilan University (Israel) and incorporates inputs from all 15 European and non-European teams that contributed with empirical data from their case studies and tested the tool with their local and regional stakeholders.

Who and why needs SPOT-IT?

SPOT-IT is needed for entrepreneurs, local authorities, local residents, and others who wish to receive extensive and diversified information (visually and geo-references represented) regarding visiting, promoting, and initiating new projects of cultural tourism in a given area.

It is needed since this information is currently not compiled, organized, presented and processed in a manageable manner that allows for decision-making for the development of cultural tourism (CT) sites and infrastructure.

While numerous stakeholders can benefit from it, the best use can be made by: **(1) Potential entrepreneurs/investors; (2) Local and national authorities; (3) Local community.**

What is the new and unique functionality of the tool?

The tool is new for its **conceptualization**, in particular:

- (1) The **suitability analysis** component allows the user to define the desired criteria for initiating, developing, and visiting cultural tourism sites, based on the location's peculiar attributes.
- (2) It's **visitors' prediction algorithm** that allows the user to receive an estimate of the economic performance of new initiatives in cultural tourism.
- (3) It's data layers that are based on **machine learning tools** operated on users generated content in social media.

What are the main components of SPOT-IT?

The logical block scheme of the SPOT-IT tool can be found in Figure 1. The **main analytical components** of the tool are:

- the suitability analysis component
- visitors' prediction algorithm
- three social media-based layers
- public participation platform that allows the local community to actively participate in the process of cultural tourism development
- numerous data layers that represent data on micro-climate, infrastructure, zoning, and potential conflicts.



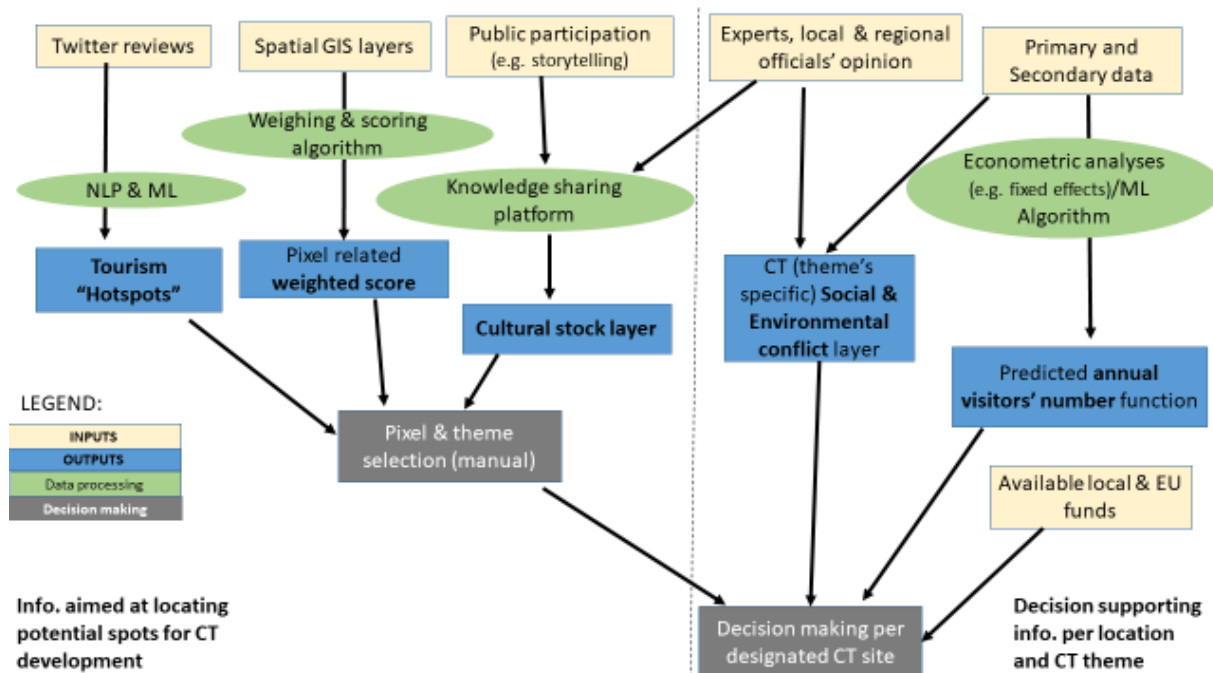


FIGURE 1: LOGICAL BLOCK SCHEME OF THE SPOT-IT TOOL.

2. SPOT-IT technology and further details

The importance of the data to the operation of the innovative tool (IT)

The general idea of the tool is the **creation of an innovative GIS-based website that provides a decision support mechanism for the development of cultural tourism (CT) sites and infrastructure**. SPOT-IT is needed for entrepreneurs, local authorities, local residents, and others who wish to receive extensive and diversified information (visually and geo-references represented) regarding visiting, promoting, and initiating new projects of cultural tourism in a given area. It is needed since this information is currently not compiled, organized, presented and processed in a manageable manner that allows for decision-making for the development of CT sites and infrastructure.

The **multiple data layers, their integration, and spatial representation** stand at the heart of the tool. The more accurate and diversified the data the better-informed decisions can be made. Effective decision-making requires information on various aspects of regional development that have a spatial context.

Based on the literature and expert’s opinions, it was decided which data variables are relevant to the development and strengthening of CT, and how to integrate the desired social, economic and environmental data. This is a challenging process given the heterogeneity of the case studies. Some case studies consist of one municipality while others include several municipalities, also, some case studies are purely rural, while others are hybrid with urban/rural mixture. In some countries, relevant data is not easily obtained. While some of the data exist (and could be accessed) others need to be created especially for the innovative tool. Another obstacle that underlies the creation of the tool is that while social, economic and environmental data exist in all case study regions, they may be collected at different scales and different time frames which require GIS skills for the integration of the data.

The innovative concept of SPOT-IT

The tool is designed to endow power to its user and allows several sources of flexibility including the choice of data layers to be used (Figure 2). The operators of the tool may decide which layers to use and propose and upload additional data layers that suit better to their area.

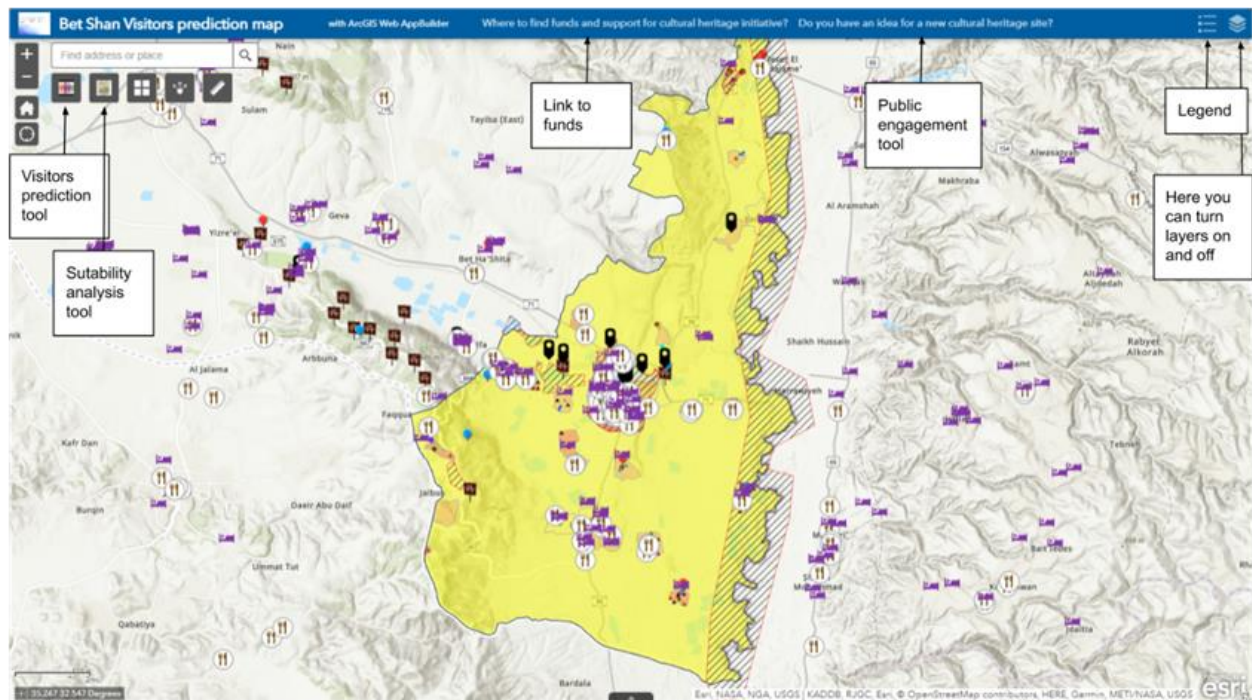


FIGURE 2: AN EXAMPLE OF A CONTRIBUTION OF THE TOOL: ANNUAL VISITORS' PREDICTION.

Its main components are divided into **5 major categories** in line with the imperative data:

- The **suitability analysis component** (see above)
- Its **visitors' prediction algorithm** (see above)
- **Economic sustainability**: core, secondary and specific data
- **Social media-based layers**: core, secondary and specific data
- **Environmental sustainability**: core, secondary and specific data

The innovative tool needs to handle all groups of data sustainability issues, secondary and specific data. Yet, the tool, as well as our interest, cannot spread over an enormous quantity of variables. Therefore, each partner decides on the variables that are important to their case study and assigned them into one of the categories.

Altogether, while numerous stakeholders can benefit from it, the best use can be made by: **(1) Potential entrepreneurs/investors; (2) Local and national authorities; (3) Local communities.**

Project Identity

Project name	Social and innovative Platform on Cultural Tourism and its potential towards deepening Europeanisation (SPOT)
Coordinator	Prof. Milada Šťastná, Ph.D. Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic milada.stastna@mendelu.cz
Consortium	Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development, Dresden, Germany CERS Institute for Regional Studies, Győr, Hungary Wageningen University & Research, Wageningen, Netherlands Tallinn University, Estonia Karl Franzens University of Graz, Austria University of Aberdeen, United Kingdom University of the Aegean, Mitiline, Greece University of Barcelona, Spain University of Verona, Italy University of Wrocław, Poland Univerzity of Ljubljana, Slovenia Constantine the Philosopher University, Nitra, Slovakia
Duration	36 months
Funding Scheme	H2020-SC6-TRANSFORMATIONS-2019
Budget	3 000 000 EUR
Website and social networks	www.SPOTprojectH2020.eu fb: @SPOTprojectH2020 twitter: @H2020Spo
For more information	Contact – Dissemination team: spotprojecth2020@gmail.com

