PRODUCT CREATION MANUAL

EU SKY ROUTE STAR TOURISM

CONTENTS

GOAL OF THE MANUAL

This manual intends to be a guide that is easy to apply in order to implement the development of products linked to star tourism. Specifically, it intends to aid the development of memorable star tourism experiences, as a part of the EUSKY ROUTE project.

The manual is structured around developing the different phases making up the creation of the product:
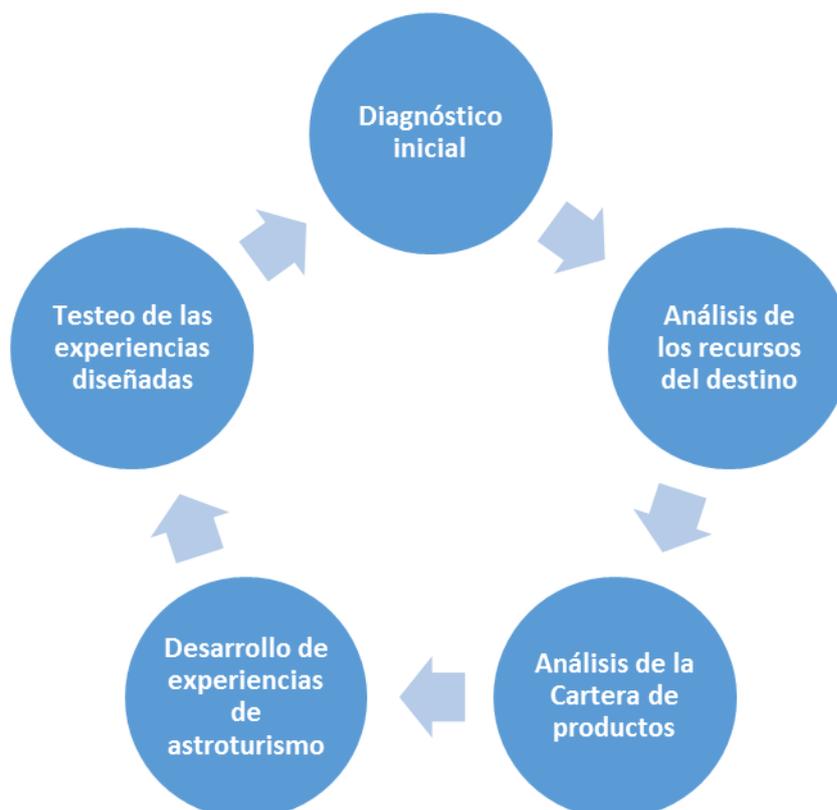
PHASE 1. Initial diagnosis

Perform an initial assessment of an area or destination in order to be able to perform a preliminary diagnostic assessment of the experience offered from the perspective of the potential tourist.

This phase requires:

- Being able to dialogue with public and private agents from the region with a prior assessment plan for the destination and proposal for how to dynamise it.
- Having a methodology that is easy to apply and may be reapplied to different areas at the destination.
- Analysing the positioning of the destination and what its generic tourist value proposal is: central sales argument, able to attract a tourist to the area and its attractions, and which must have a greater evocative power than other "competing areas" at the destination. It is not about listing resources and attractions, but about defining what can attract a tourist to that destination.
- Determining the current destination segments by type: country of origin, age, reasons and interests, activities, behaviour, etc.
- If it does not already exist, a general SWOT analysis of the destination must be drawn up.

Depending on this preliminary analysis, the destination's general model of attraction is defined, taking into consideration the current situation, which may be:

A. Model with a predominant attraction currently able to generally attract different audiences.

Action:

Begin work with that predominant attraction, linking star tourism as a complement to it.

B. Joint model for different complementary attractions currently able to generally attract.

Action:

Begin work with a route for the group of attractions. Link star tourism to the network of existing packages, depending on possible complementary effects.

C. Model with attraction or attractions currently able to attract a specific, particular segment.

Action:

Begin work with the segment or segments being looked after and the possibility of integrating other specific segments and the generic tourist. Working with the star tourist niche as a complement.

D. Model for potentially suggestive attractions and resources, which are not currently able to attract.

Action:

Begin work establishing the preliminary route and storytelling for the same. Development of star tourism with a differentiated focus.

E. Model for resources without enough appeal.

Action:

Begin work creating an appeal able to attract–building it, borrowing it, inventing it…

PHASE 2. Analysis of resources at the destination, with special emphasis on those related to star tourism. This inventory must include existing companies.

An inventory constitutes the orderly and structured record of all of the tourist elements that, due to their natural, cultural and human qualities may appeal to the visitor and, therefore, represent a valuable instrument for planning, as they are a basis for assessment and establishing priorities in tourist development for any territory.

Previously, it is worth establishing the differences between what is considered a resource and a tourist product:

A tourist resource is any element, material or immaterial, linked to the nature and culture of a socially organised territory, which is able to temporarily attract — either by itself or through its transformation— people from other places, so it must always respond to tourist motivational charts. They make up the "raw material" with which the tourist activity works, thus their identification and assessment is an essential task in the diagnosis phase of any strategic planning. For a tourist resource to become "usable raw material", it must be fully integrated into the tourist product, which arises from the resources themselves, the complementary offer and accommodation, besides general services, professional training and infrastructures, amongst other noteworthy aspects.

Separately, the group of assets and services that are the object of commercial trade within the system of tourist activities, with the aim of responding to the tourist's needs and wants, may be understood to be a tourist product. We can define it as the group of leisure activities that must be designed, organised and developed by public or semi-public organisations (municipalities, foundations, independent or state administrations, tourist boards, tourist offices, business

associations, amongst others) and private companies (companies, cooperatives, self-employed people, etc.) aimed at providing a service, entertaining, amusing and making the client loyal, satisfying the needs of the consumer at a tourist destination.

To summarise, the tourist resource is the base on which tourist activity is developed; it is a potential appeal that motivates tourists to visit a place and which, added to services and infrastructures, become a tourist product such as hotels, restaurants, theme parks, museums, routes and itineraries, historic, artistic and religious monuments to visit, natural monuments, fairs, exhibitions, championships, seminars, conferences, festivals, amongst others.

Tourist destinations with numerous resources must invest their efforts into creating the necessary means to structure products and guarantee a tourist experience for the visitor, with the aim of making him or her loyal and transmit his or her satisfaction to other individuals.

This inventory has been developed following two fundamental criteria:

- Constituting a true reflection of the reality of the destination's tourist resources, indicating the technical information and the situation it is passing through.
- Being clear, open and dynamic, allowing its periodic updating with regard to variations that may arise within the resources, and also the incorporation of new attractions.

The fundamental goal pursued with the elaboration of this inventory of tourist resources is that of discovering, in a real and systematic way, the tourist heritage belonging to a destination, using an assessment that is both qualitative (determines the characteristics of the resource) and quantitative (numeric assessment of the resources), to give the planner the information to allow him or

her to strengthen actions to improve its quality and its incorporation to the design of structured products. Therefore, it is to do with systematising the information referring to natural, cultural, historic and artistic resources and monuments at the destination, to the tourist facilities and the basic infrastructure available, which constitute the elements of the tourist offering.

The resources can be grouped into six large categories: Natural resources; ethnographic, artistic and historic resources and monuments; cultural resources; tourist leisure resources; facilities and infrastructures directly linked to star tourism.

- **Natural resources:** any that present a natural element, whether on land or sea, and modified or not by man, as an attraction. Resources may be "natural" insofar as they reflect zero-almost zero human impact or intervention and "scenic" with regard to their morphology, origin, composition or way in which they are presented reflect unique or complementary attractions for the understanding-assessment of the territory. Natural disasters, mountains, cliffs, nature spots, viewing points and coastline formations are included in this group.

- **Historic, ethnographic and artistic resources and monuments;** any elements built by man that are interesting due to their nature or due to the use that has been made of them and that reflect the human effort to ensure their survival, habitat, material culture or historical conditions in historic time. The main types would be architecture, museum spaces, archaeological ruins, ethnographic heritage, town planning, works of art, historical monuments, amongst others.

- **Cultural resources:** elements made by man for man, in other words: those activities where he is the participant and the creator at the same time. We have included craftsmanship, gastronomy, folklore and artistic activities,

national holidays, fairs and markets and scheduled events, whether cultural, sporting or artistic.

▪ **Tourist leisure resources:** activities that focus on leisure, such as tourist routes and hiking, sports centres and centres associated to the natural or urban environment, which are compatible with the sustainable conservation of the environment where the activity takes place. Any that recreate or put on a show about the evolution of the natural environment or systems of recreation aimed at facilitating the comprehension of human history and its interaction with the natural and urban environments will also be taken into account.

▪ **Facilities and infrastructures:** this section includes any facilities and infrastructure that has a direct effect on the tourist industry, such as accommodation, establishments dedicated to catering and other hotel and restaurant services, tourist businesses, travel agencies, public transport, car parks and health and safety centres.

▪ **Star tourism:** including all those resources like observatories, planetariums, etc.

Filing method

Performing the inventory involves two phases of work:

Phase I: identifying, ordering and classifying tourist resources. This process refers to compiling information (oral sources, bibliography, etc.), and ordering and classifying data.

The methodology used is based on a system of files that contain the data for each resource. There are differences between the files depending on category and nature.

- Definition of the categories, nature, types, subtypes and elements of information to be included for each resource.

- Compiling information, where data issued by the public administration, bibliography, newspapers, magazines, the internet and technical reports, amongst others, are considered.

- Fieldwork involving, on the one hand, the identification and verification of the existence of each resource, highlighting its general characteristics, its history, reference details, accessibility, facilities and infrastructure, elements of qualitative value, ongoing projects, activities relating to the resource, elements for improvement and observations, amongst others and, on the other hand, interviews were also planned with representatives of the different sectors at the destination, who know their resources (business owners, employees, politicians, technicians, experts, etc.).

- The information is recorded by completing the files. Special attention must be given to the star tourism resources.

- It is recommended that the data compiled from the inventory of tourist resources at the destination be processed on a computer database with GIS support.

- Drawing up a report on the results, which constitutes a diagnosis, summary-style, of the general characteristics of the tourist resources at the destination.

Phase II: assessment and hierarchisation of the tourist resources, which involves the process of weighting, in order to determine their degree of importance.

It is recommended that they be permanently reviewed and updated, as substantial changes arise in the characteristics of the resources, or new attractions may be added to the inventory. This work must be performed by a specialised technical team that knows the characteristics of the destination.

Table 1. Example of content on inventory files. General file.

- **Name of resource:** the name that identifies the tourist resource is indicated.

- **Category, nature, type and sub-type:** it is drawn up depending on the classification established. The nature of the resource is determined depending on whether it be of a material (tangible) or immaterial (intangible) nature.

- **Photograph of the resource:** identifying image of the resource.

- **Description and historical reference:** noteworthy data that describes the characteristics of the resource is added as applicable. In the case of resources of a cultural type, there will also be references to their historic significance and their touristic appeal, the date they were built, the style of the building and the building material used. In the case of natural resources, the following variables will be taken into account: situation, height, depth, surface, climate, temperature, existing fauna and flora, state of conservation and maintenance, depending the type of resource. In the case of activities relating to folklore and scheduled events, the time and place of the event is specified, along with the type of event, the causes that make it interesting to the audience and the global quality of the resource as a tourist attraction. Separately, when we are referring to technical, scientific or contemporary artistic activities, the most notable aspects regarding the type of operation (mining, agriculture and fishing, etc.), the details of tourist interest and the chances of visiting the resource must be highlighted.

- **Location, address, telephone and fax, website URL, opening**

times and others: indicates the location of the resource and its basic contact details.

▪ **State of conservation:** the state of conservation of the resource is established. In this case, we follow the parameters used by specialists in the conservation of historic heritage, determining conservation on three levels: good, regular or bad, depending on whether it is habitually used or not and conserves the original state of the elements, above 75% (good), 50% (regular) or under 50% (bad).

▪ **Protection category:** it specifies the degree of protection for the resource, whether it be of an international, national, regional or local nature. In the case of catalogued heritage, we will be governed by independent regulations on the area of heritage, which specifies that the protection of the assets may be integral, partial or environmental.

▪ **Current use:** it describes the usual use given to the resource. To the contrary, if there resource is not in use or it is abandoned at the time the file is drawn up, it must be specified, dating the record in any case.

▪ **Basic bibliography for the resource:** the basic reference bibliography for the resource is specified. In certain cases, it becomes necessary to also have the opinion of specialists on the resource to obtain qualitative-type information, fundamental for understanding and measuring the potential and possibilities for improvement of the resource in their just measure.

▪ **Accessibility:** depending on whether the resource is reached on foot or by road (tarmac or not), or whether there is parking (free or not) and opening times. It indicates the possibilities for accessing the resource and varies depending on whether the situation is good, regular or bad, depending on ease of access, including by bus, parking and opening times.

- **Level of affluence:** degree to which it is frequented by tourists and visitors, depending on the resource's capacity, which may be very high, high, medium, low or zero. The tourist resources most frequented at the destination are taken as a reference.

- **Management and ownership of the resource:** it says who the organisation is that owns and manages the resource, whether private, public or both.

- **Information and signage:** it refers both to information services (leaflets, tourist guides) and guided tours, and to signage that helps locate the resource.

- **Support for enhancing its value:** it specifies whether the resource receives aids, whether financial, material or human, to improve its value. This aid may come from the private, public or both sectors.

- **Tourist value:** it may be current or potential, depending on its current effect on the destination's tourist sector.

- **Tourist use:** whether permanent or specific (festivities or events).

- **Facilities and services:** public or private services and facilities that complement the value of the resource (whether at the facilities or close-by) such as restaurants, cafeterias, shops, toilets, etc. Where there is no score, it must be taken that there is no offer of this type. On certain occasions, there will be a negative score if it is considered a service that is necessary for the correct working of the resource.

- **Ongoing projects:** list of any actions that are currently underway or that have been performed recently with the intention of modifying and improving the resource.

- **Current activities relating to the resource:** this is in reference to the services and activities performed at the resource, in other words, an activity that complements this (such as guided tours, events, exhibitions, etc.)

- **Relationship to other resources:** any resources that by their nature, history, type or simple proximity are related to the resource in question are listed.

- **Elements for assessment:** aspects relating to the resource are valued qualitatively (from 1 to 5), taking into account their importance in direct relation to the group of attractions at the destination, such as:

  o Global appeal of the resource, with the maximum score for those that are really a significant attraction.

  o Its uniqueness, as a differentiating destination element.

  o Quality of its surroundings, in aspects such as beauty, cleanliness, maintenance, etc.

  o Its degree of relevance-use indicates to what measure the resource is relevant for the touristic development of the destination, given its uniqueness and appeal, getting a lower score when the resource, in spite of having potential, barely has any effect on the tourist sector.

  o The priority of adding value, giving a positive score for the degree of implication of the private or public sector in putting the resource into use.

  o It is a reason for school and other groups to visit (the use of the resource by these groups is analysed).

  o It is a reason for local tourists to visit.

  o It is a reason for national and international tourists to visit.

- **The resource's potential:** se relaciona, brevemente, las actuaciones y mejoras que puedan potenciar la imagen general del recurso.

- **Elements for improvement:** it is a qualitative approach to the real needs posed by each resource for value to be appropriately added to it. These needs or requirements may be examined from different perspectives:

o   Access and communications at the resource.

o   Support facilities and infrastructures.

o   Attached services (shops, information, etc.).

o   Added value of surroundings (maintenance, green areas, cleanliness).

o   Specialist and technical advice for improvement of the resource.

o   Other services (such as informational panels, materials, human resources, etc.).

▪   **Observations and comments:** any information that has not been considered in other sections of the file is added, along with interpretations that are considered opportune and necessary for improved understanding of the resource.

PHASE 3. Analysis of the portfolio of current products

Given the market dynamics, the current situation of the products and in what measure they are suitable for the destination segments and markets must be analysed. The destinations must increase their product portfolio and incorporate star tourism analysing client needs and market conditions. In this regard, the Ansoff's four-quadrant growth strategy model (1987) is of great use.

Figure 1. Ansoff Matrix.

		MARKET		
PRODUCT	**New**		**New**	**Existing**
			Diversification	**Product development**
	Existing		**Market Development**	**Penetration**

Source: Adapted by Ansoff.

The different quadrants are described below:

1. Penetration: Modifying and promoting the existing product intensively on the current market.

2. Product development: Introducing a new product to the current market.

3. Market development: Repositioning and focusing the current product on new markets

4. Diversification: Launching a new product on a new market.

PHASE 4. Development of star tourism experiences

With the aim of introducing experiential elements and novelties into the product, the agents involved at the destination should have asked themselves the following questions for the main phases of the activity: Meeting point and first point of contact with the group of tourists; Transfer to the stargazing location; Preparation and presentation before the stargazing; Dynamic of the stargazing; Ending the stargazing and saying goodbye; Return transport; Subsequent contact with the tourists.

For the product designed, they must ask themselves the following questions, in an attempt to suggest improvements to the current process. This exercise is useful for generating a greater number of collective ideas and it also helps the company to identify the possible gap between what it perceives and what is actually perceived by the activity user.

Questions for diagnosis and improvement:

1.   What can be done so that, in these stages prior to the start of the activity, the tourist can learn more about star tourism and the possibilities offered by the destination in this regard?
2.   How can this stage prior to the start of the activity be more fun?
3.   How can the theming of this stage prior to the activity be improved?
4.   How can we personalise it: making it personal, adapted to the tastes of each person, unique, connected to their motivations?
5.   How can we improve the pleasant sensory perception (sensory shock): sound, smell, touch, taste, sight and introduce new aspects in this regard?

PHASE 5. Testing the experiences designed

Once the product has been designed, there must be a pilot to test the experience. Here are some basic questions that may make up the customer survey. In any case, this survey may be adapted to each specific experience.

Indicate from 1 to 10 their perception of the experience, with 1 being total disagreement and 10 total agreement:

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	It was great fun										
2	It was something new for me										
3	I've been in touch with local culture										
4	It contributed to showing Europe's historic astronomical heritage										
5	It has shown the cooperation between European countries as regards astronomy and enticed me to visit other European star tourism destinations										
6	I've learnt a lot										
7	The viewing point is perfect										
8	The guide is very good										
9	Sky conditions were suitable										
10	The material used was suitable										
11	The theming of the activity was suitable										
12	It made a big impact on me										
13	I was very interested in doing this activity										

Age:

Sex:

Nationality:

Duration of the trip:

Finally, and as a continuation of the dynamic of generating products, support and the work of dissemination must not be forgotten, which involve the following, amongst others:

- Training

- Generation or support of dynamising events

- Internal promotion (information offices, social networks, destination website, etc.)

- Mediator between public and private agents

Lastly, and even if it is outside the scope of this manual, there must be an appropriate marketing plan for the new product, integrating it once more with the rest of the marketing actions for the destination.