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EUROPEAN UNION
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Inspire Policy Making with Territorial Evidence

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# // TOURISM - Carrying capacity methodology for tourism

## Lessons for Sustainable Tourism in Malta

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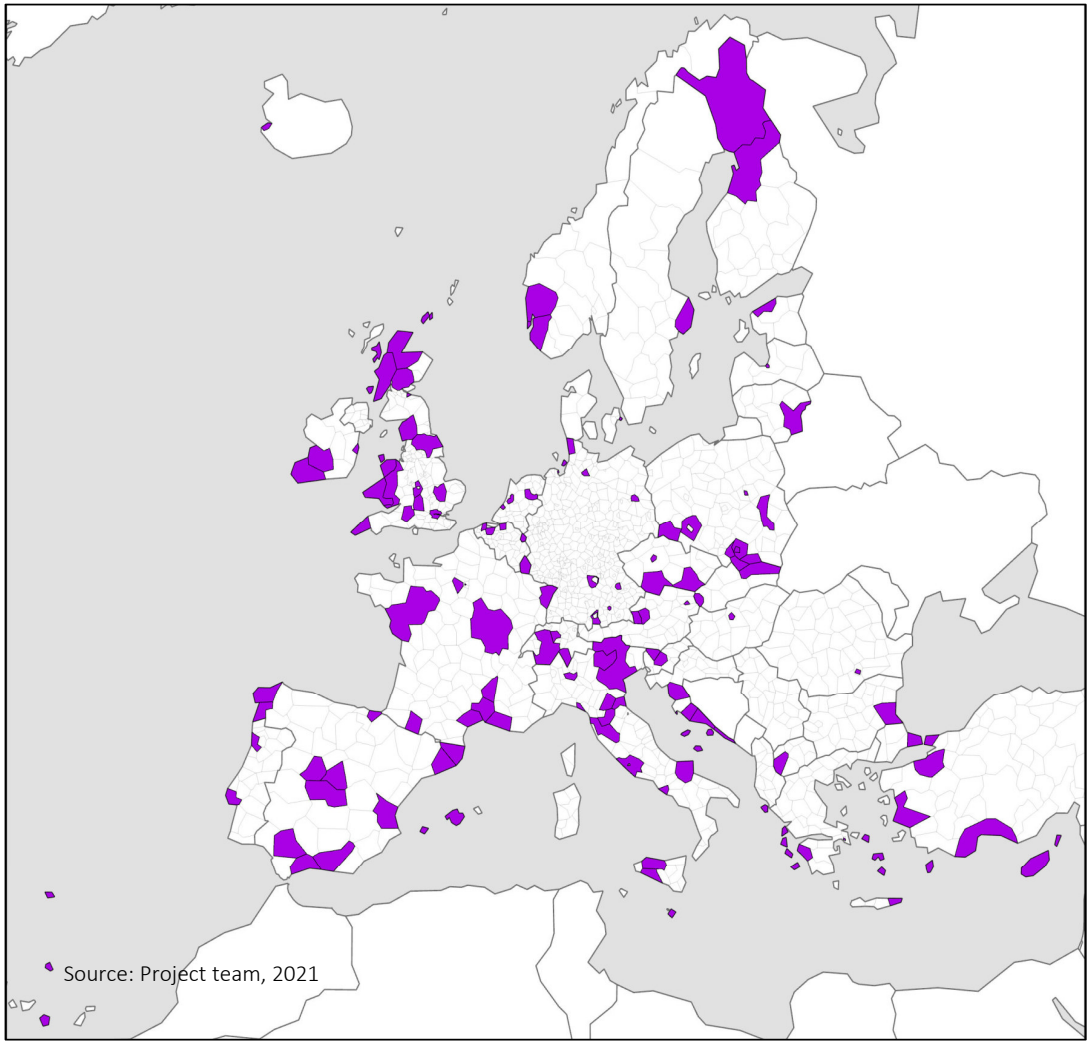
# Setting the frame or “Why should I bother in times like this?”

- All tourism destinations are at a cross road → path dependency as economic sector vs. facing the inconvenient truths (Covid19, climate change)
- Shedding some light on how tourism interacts with the region and society will gain importance → decisions are to be taken on the regional/ local level
- Steering tourism and regional development needs „evidence“ → tourism is an economic sector BUT is embedded in a territorial framework
- Sensitive points in the system „tourism and society/ environment“ need to be identified

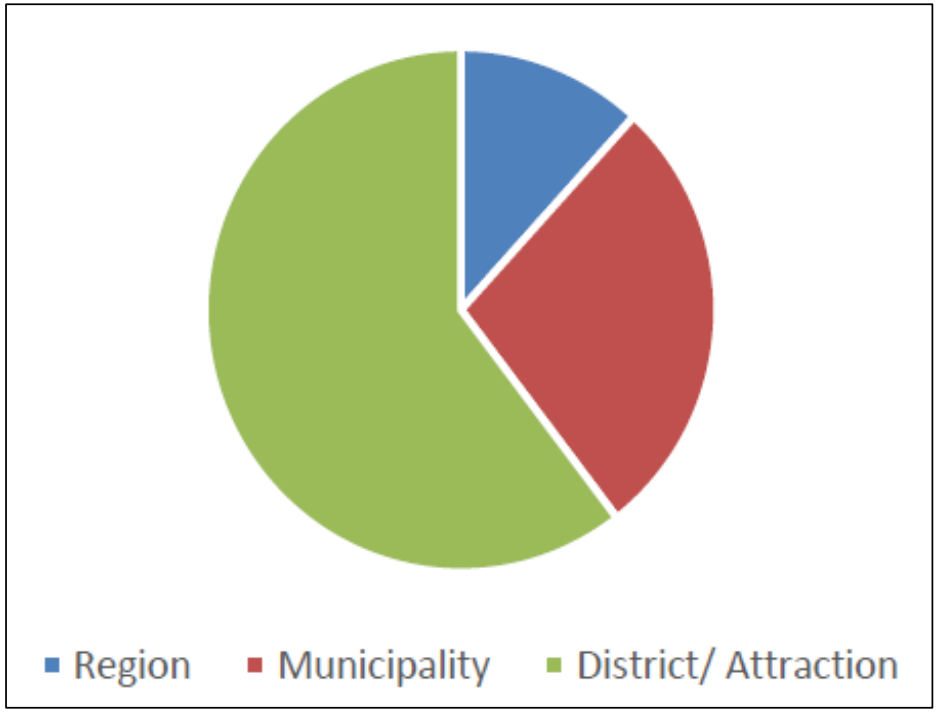
Our method helped there!

# Inventory of overtourism/ unsustainable tourism hot spots

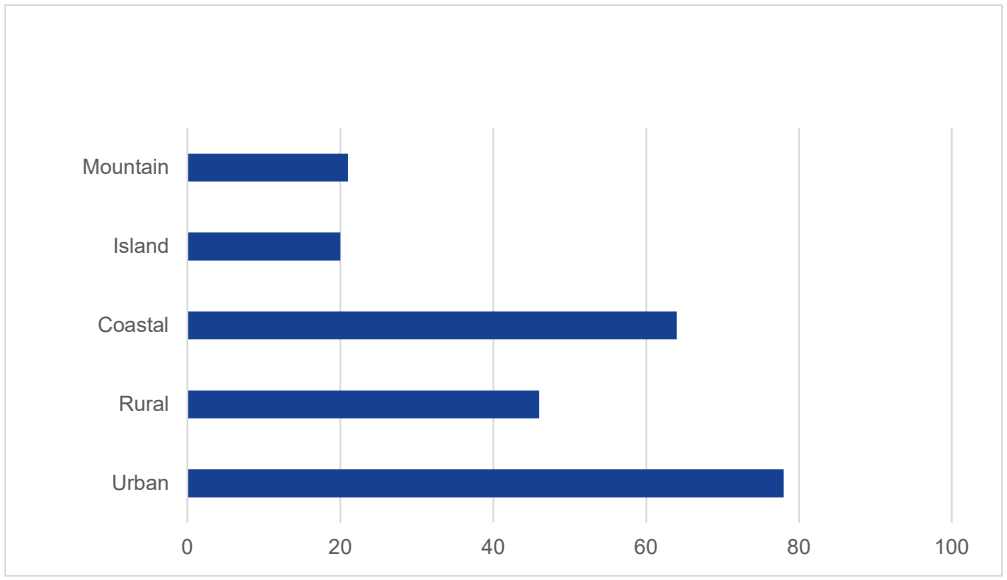


Source: Project team, 2021

Spatial level where overtourism occurs



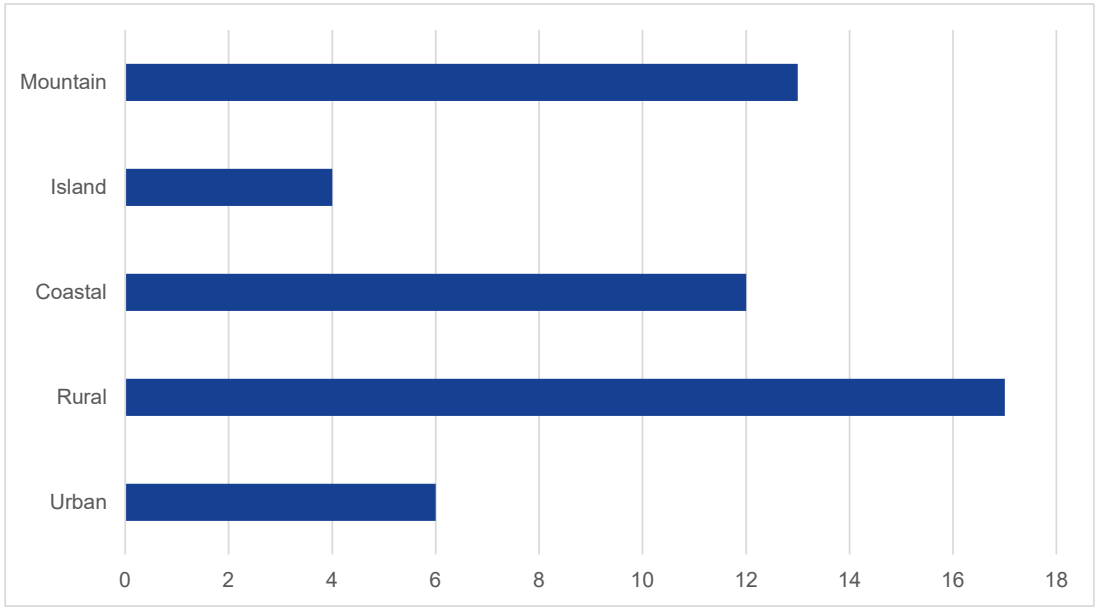
# Inventory of overtourism/ unsustainable tourism per type of destination




Affected destination types before Covid

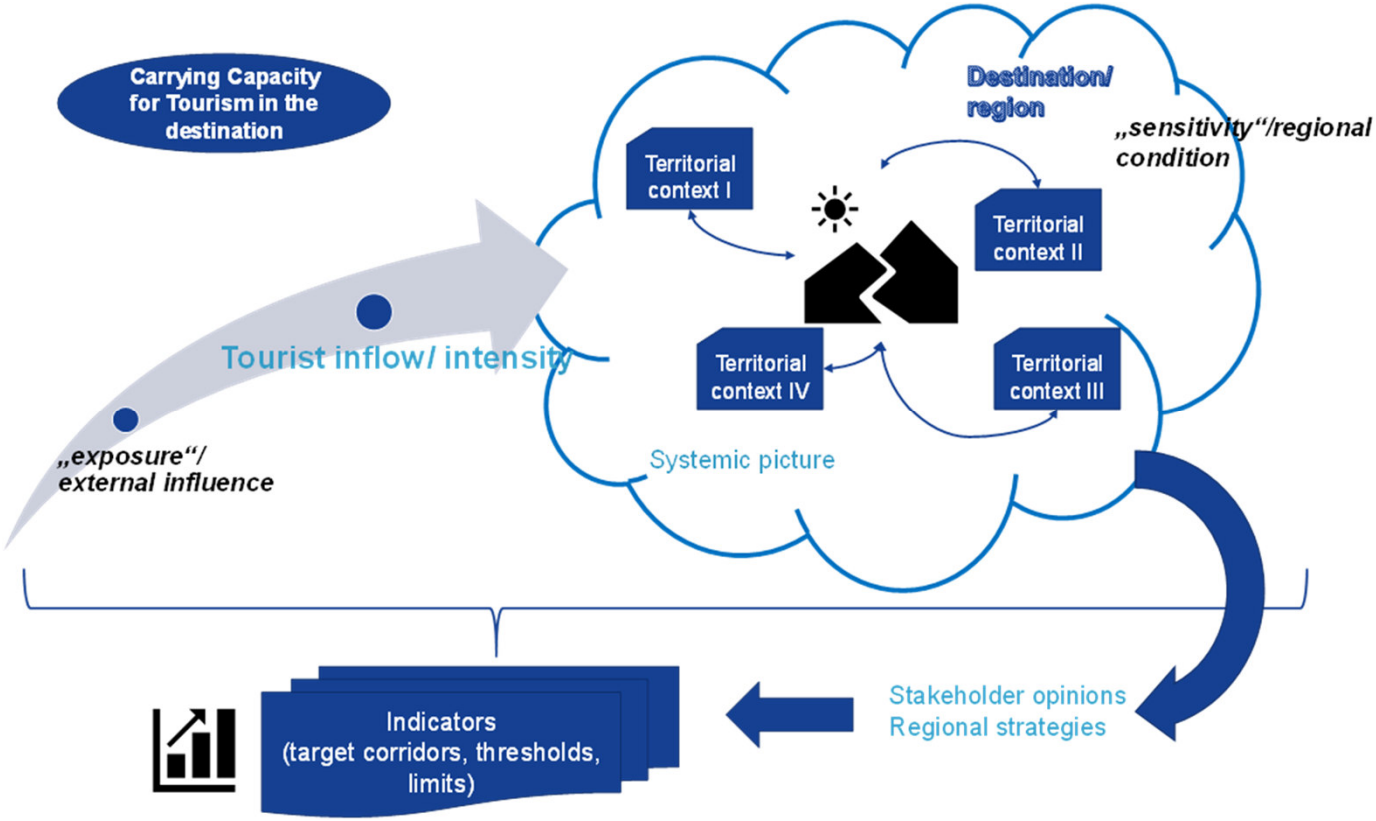
Source: Project team, 2021

Affected destination types during Covid

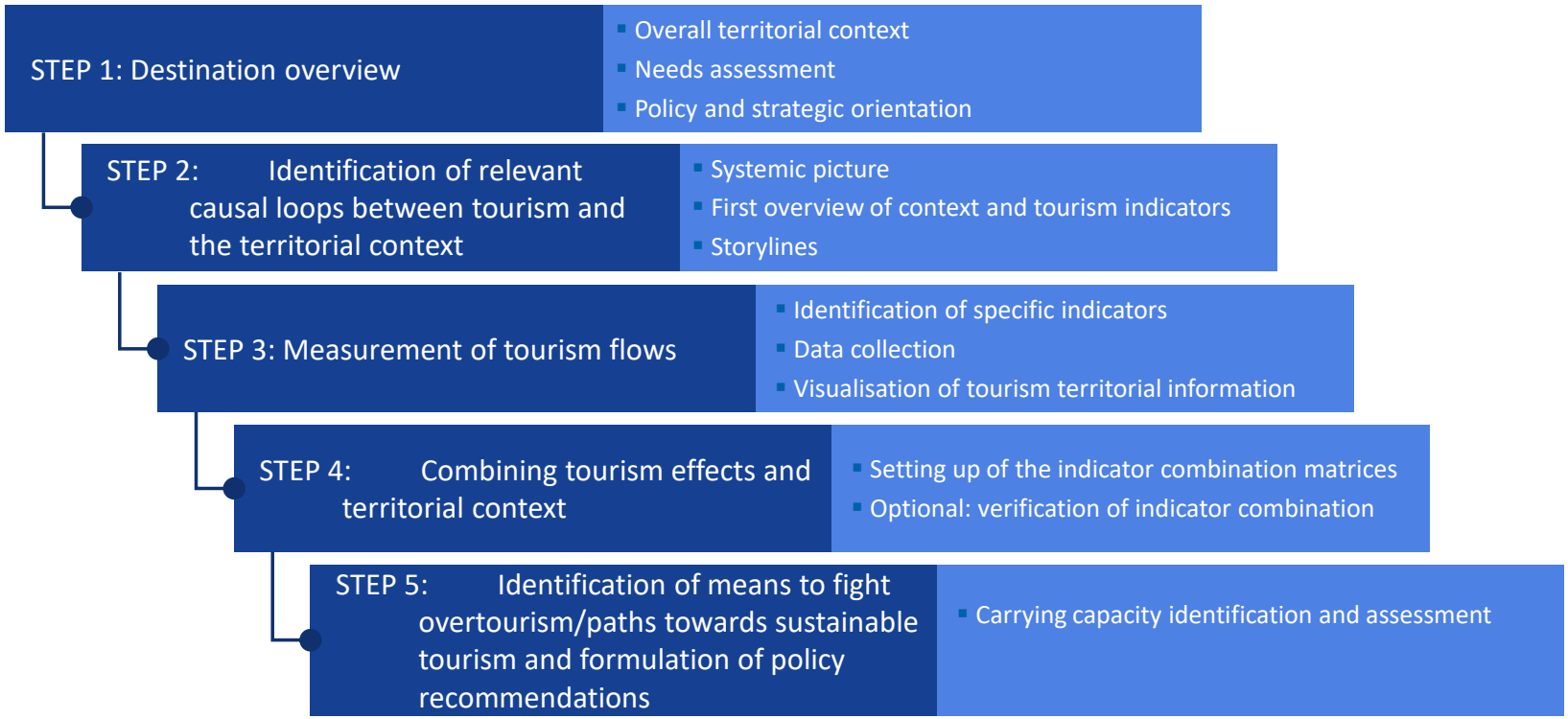


# ESPON Tourism – The method

# Background to the carrying capacity methodology



# Introduction to the methodology



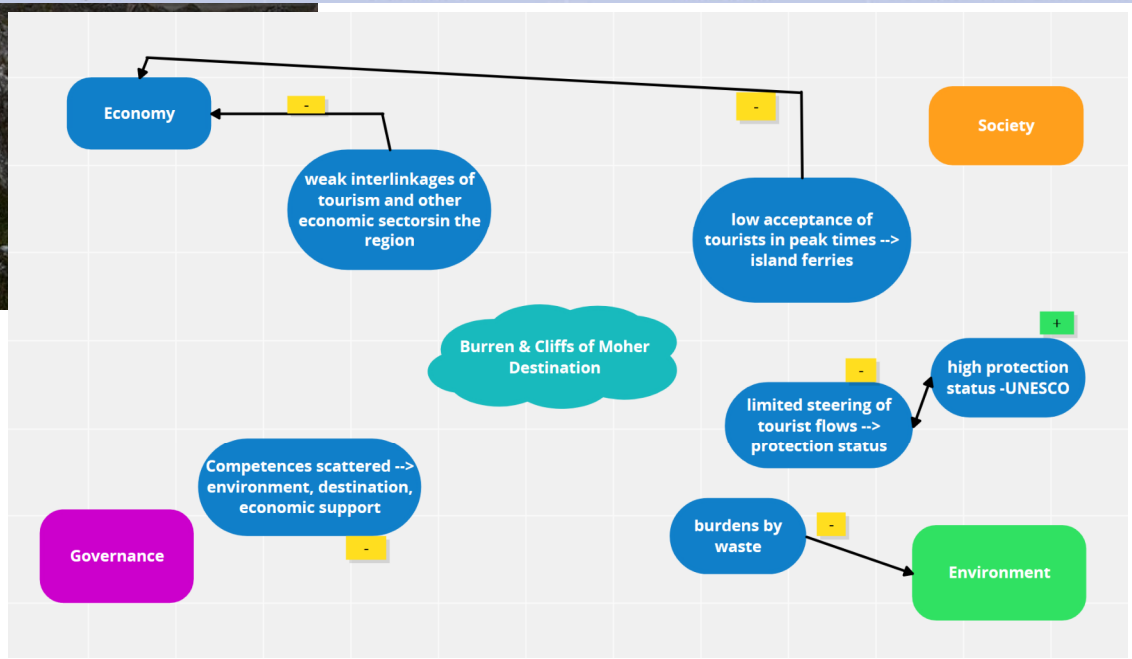
# Steps 1 and 2 – our workshop today

**Step 1: Destination overview**

| 1.1 Overall context | 1.2 Needs assessment | 1.3. Policy and strategic orientation | 1.4 Interviews |
|---|---|---|---|

**Step 2: Identification of causal loops between tourism and territorial context**

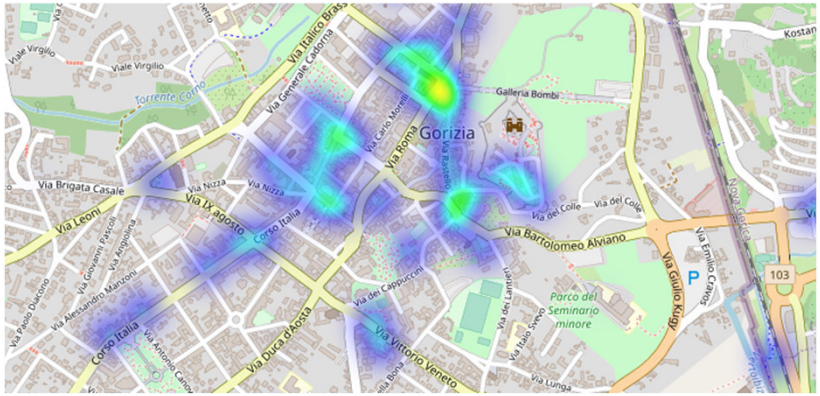
| 2.1 Development of a systemic picture | 2.2 Identification of context indicators | 2.3 Identification of tourism indicators | 2.4 Systemic picture workshop |
|---|---|---|---|

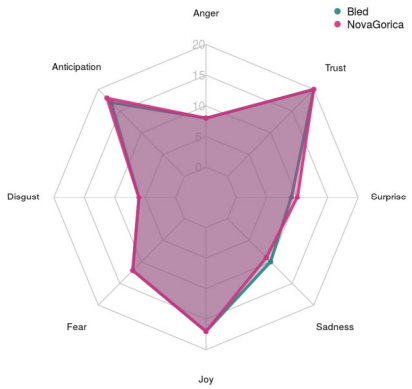


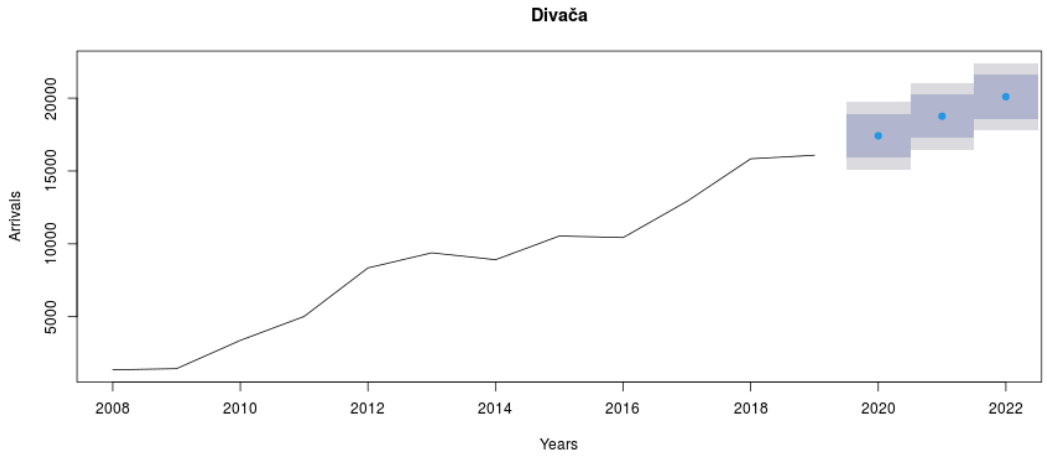
# Tourism Flows

| Step 3: Measurement of tourism flows | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3.1 Data collection | 3.2 Tourist flow estimation | 3.3 Tourist flow prediction |

- Based on the indicators identified by the destination stakeholders (Step 2)
- Challenges: data availability and accessibility
- Solution: data collection of publicly available statistical data and purchase of big data
- Big data in the dashboard: Instagram data (e.g., sentiment, frequency, etc.) and POIs (points of interest) based on Open Street Map data



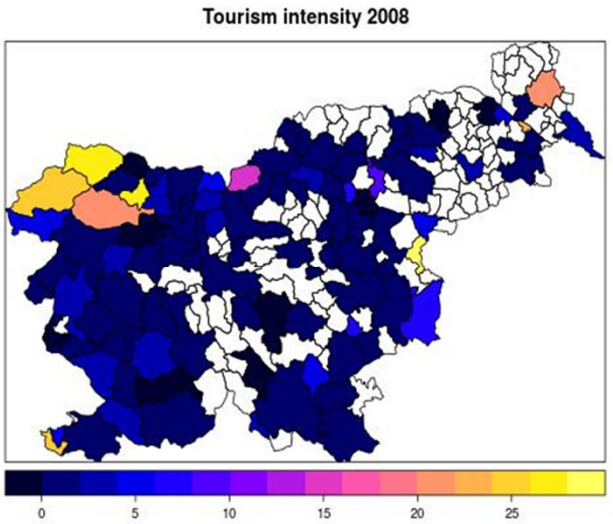



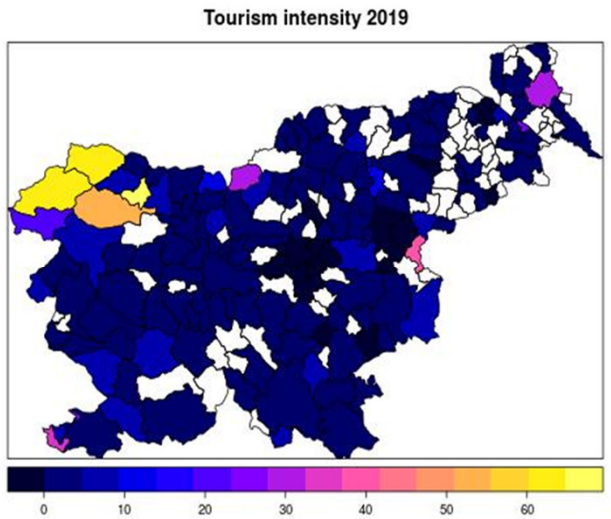



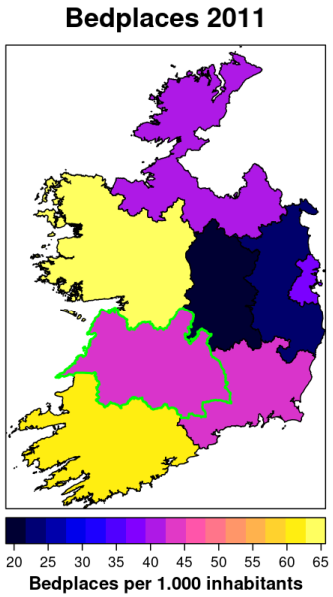
## Sub-Step 3.2 – Tourist flow estimation:

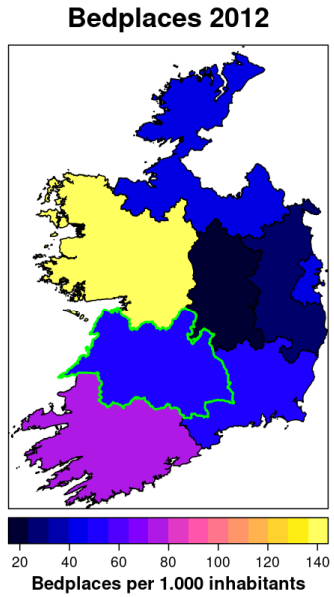
The tourist flow estimation can be based on a variety of available indicators in the database:

- Based on  statistical data: arrivals, arrivals change, length of stay, seasonality tourism intensity.
- Based on big data: can be used to identify hotspots → e.g.  Heatmaps

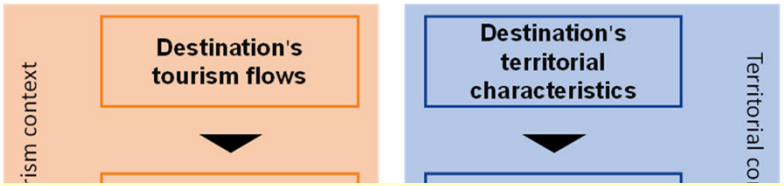


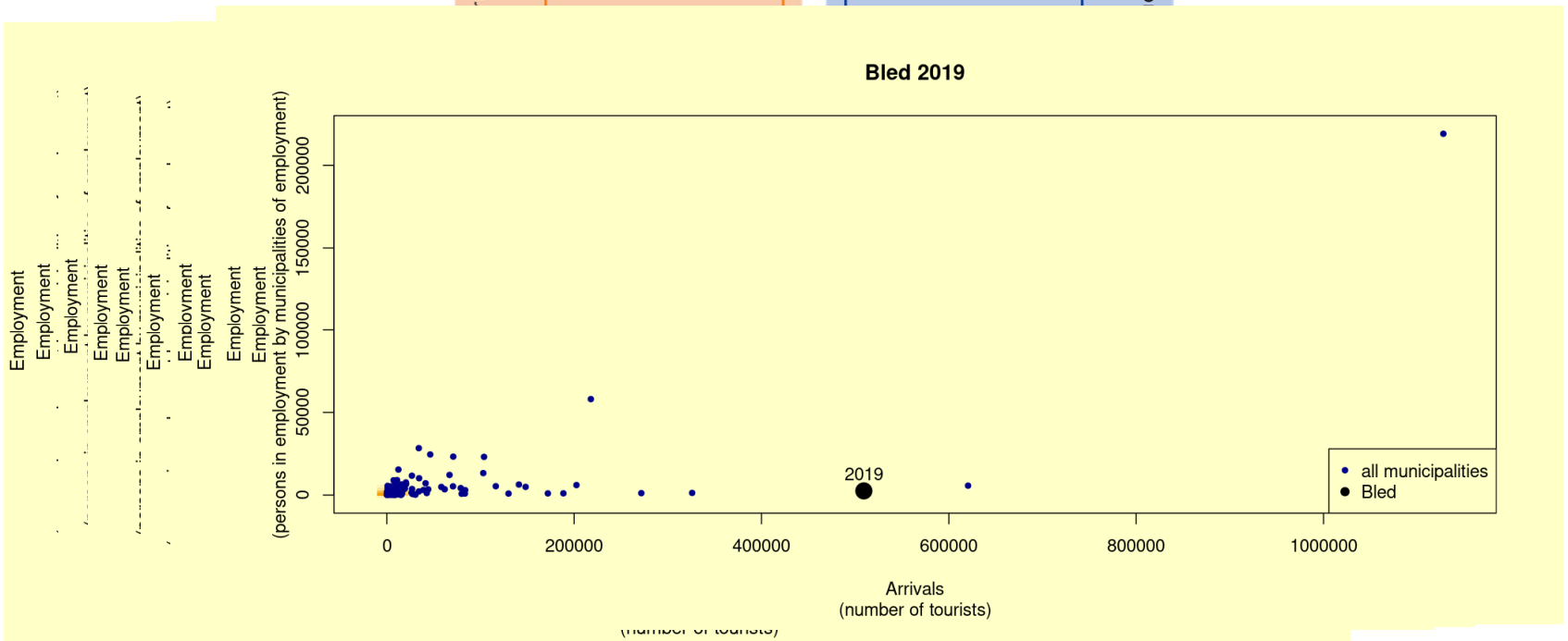



# The concept of carrying capacity – or how to find a way towards sustainable tourism…



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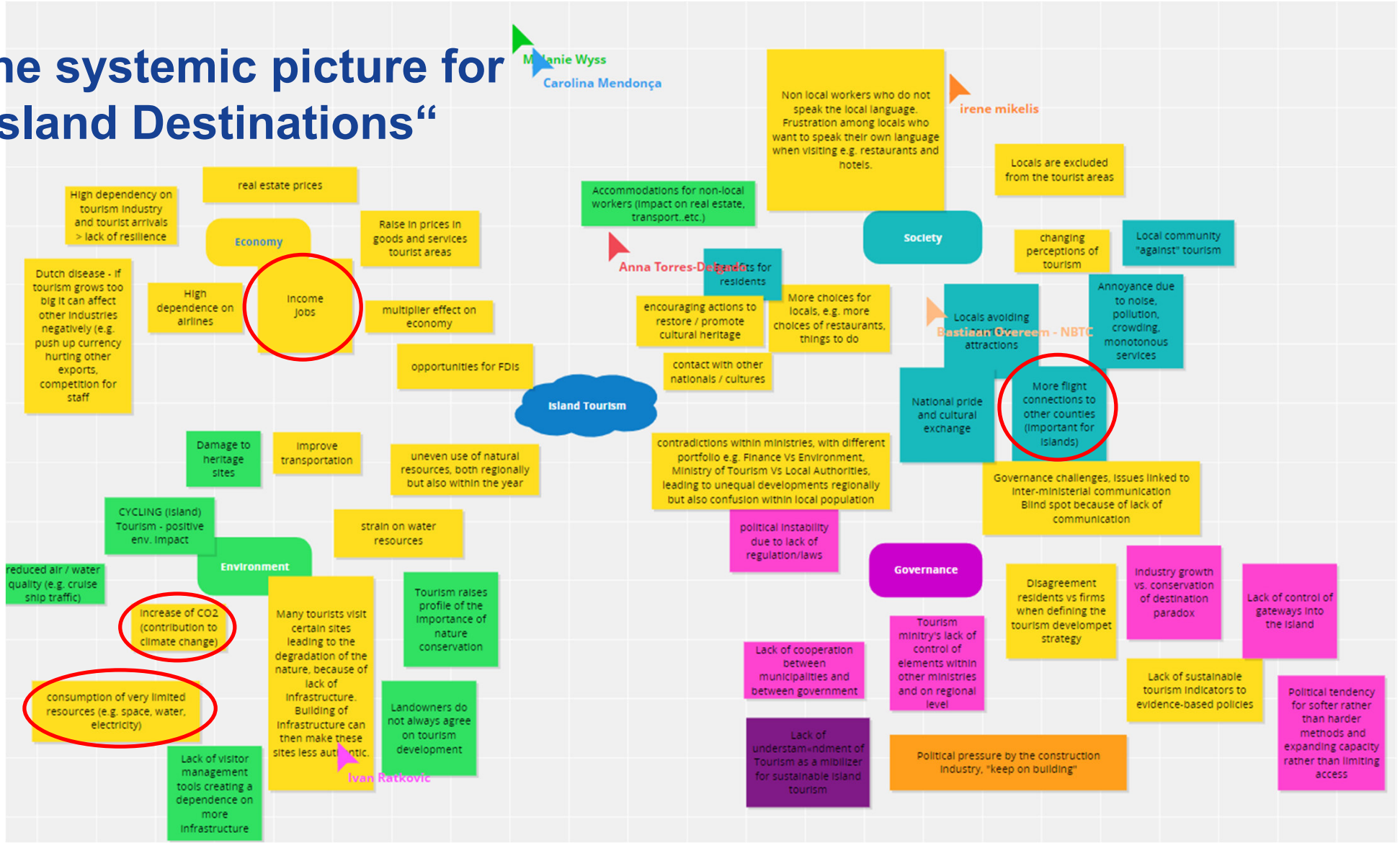
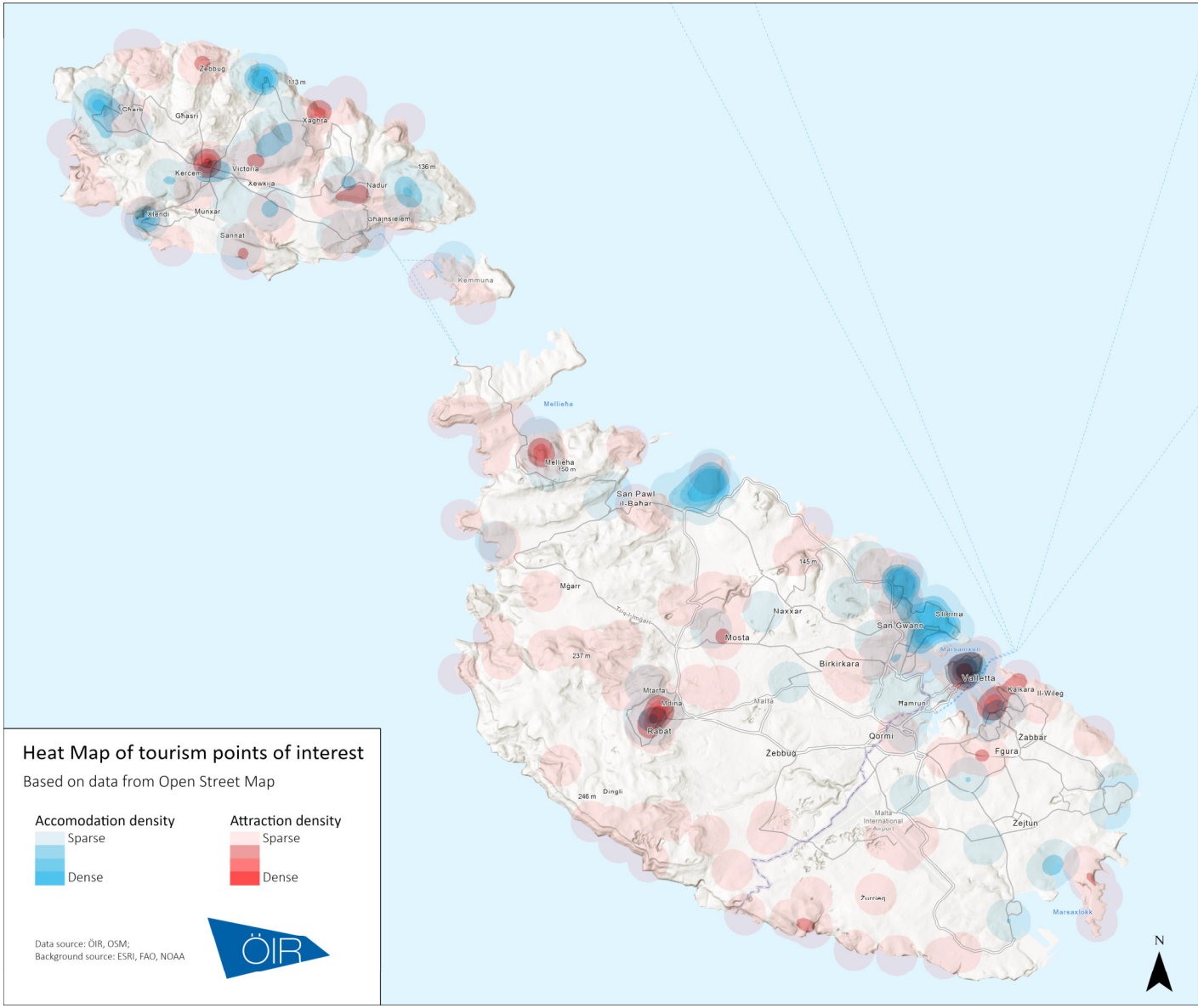
# Some findings for Malta

# The systemic picture for „Island Destinations“

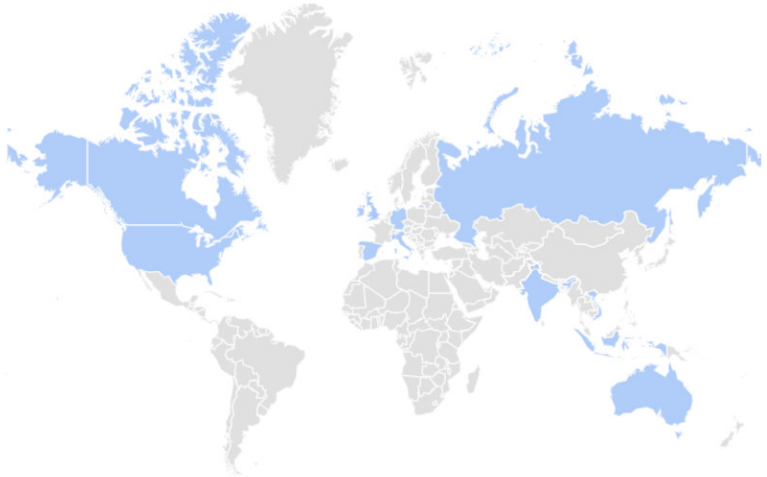


# Tourism Intensity & Flows

Open Street Data heat map of Malta



# Tourism Intensity/ Seasonality – „Holidays Malta“ – Google Trends

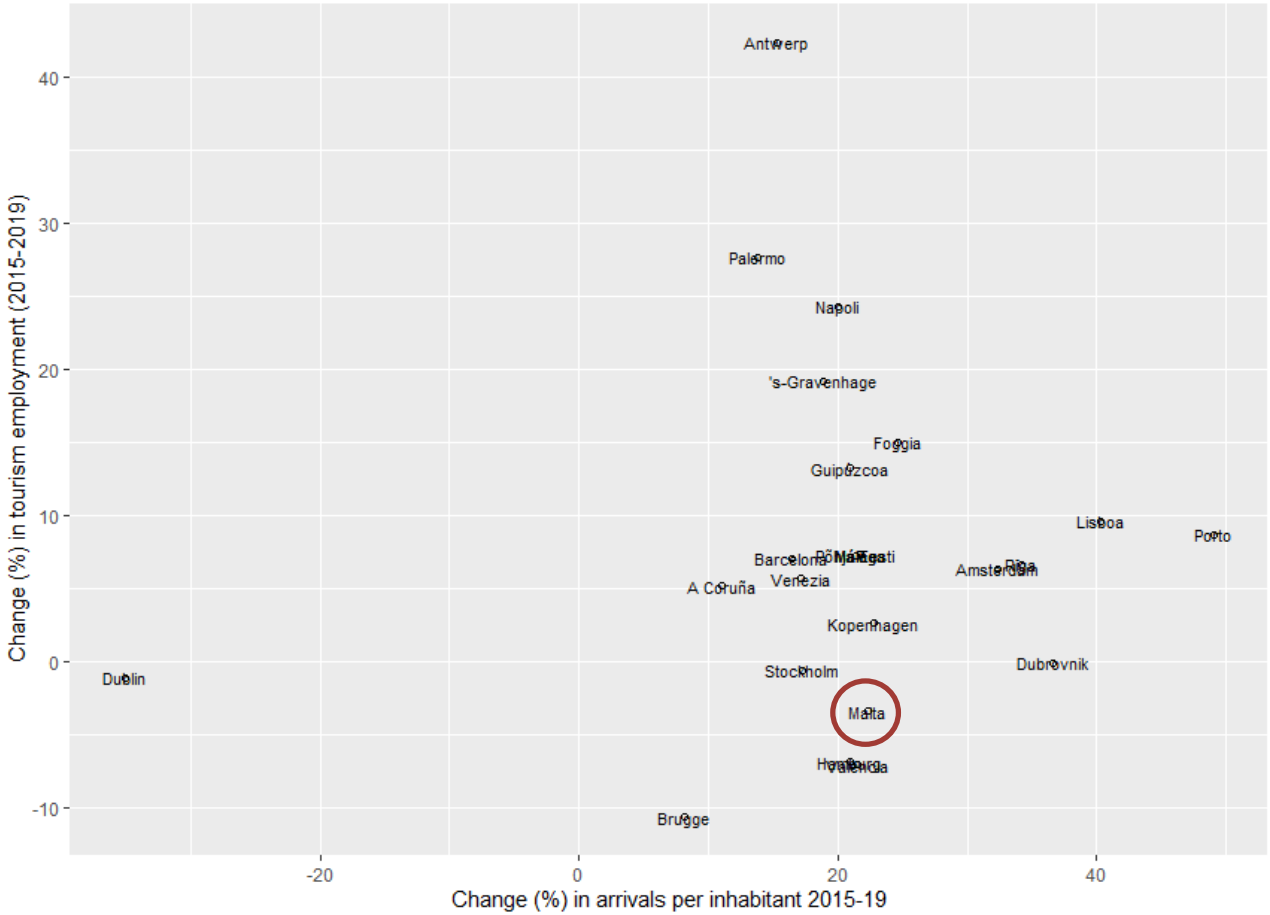


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Malta | 100 |
| 2 | Vereinigtes Königreich | 4 |
| 3 | Irland | 3 |
| 4 | St. Helena | 2 |
| 5 | Vietnam | <1 |

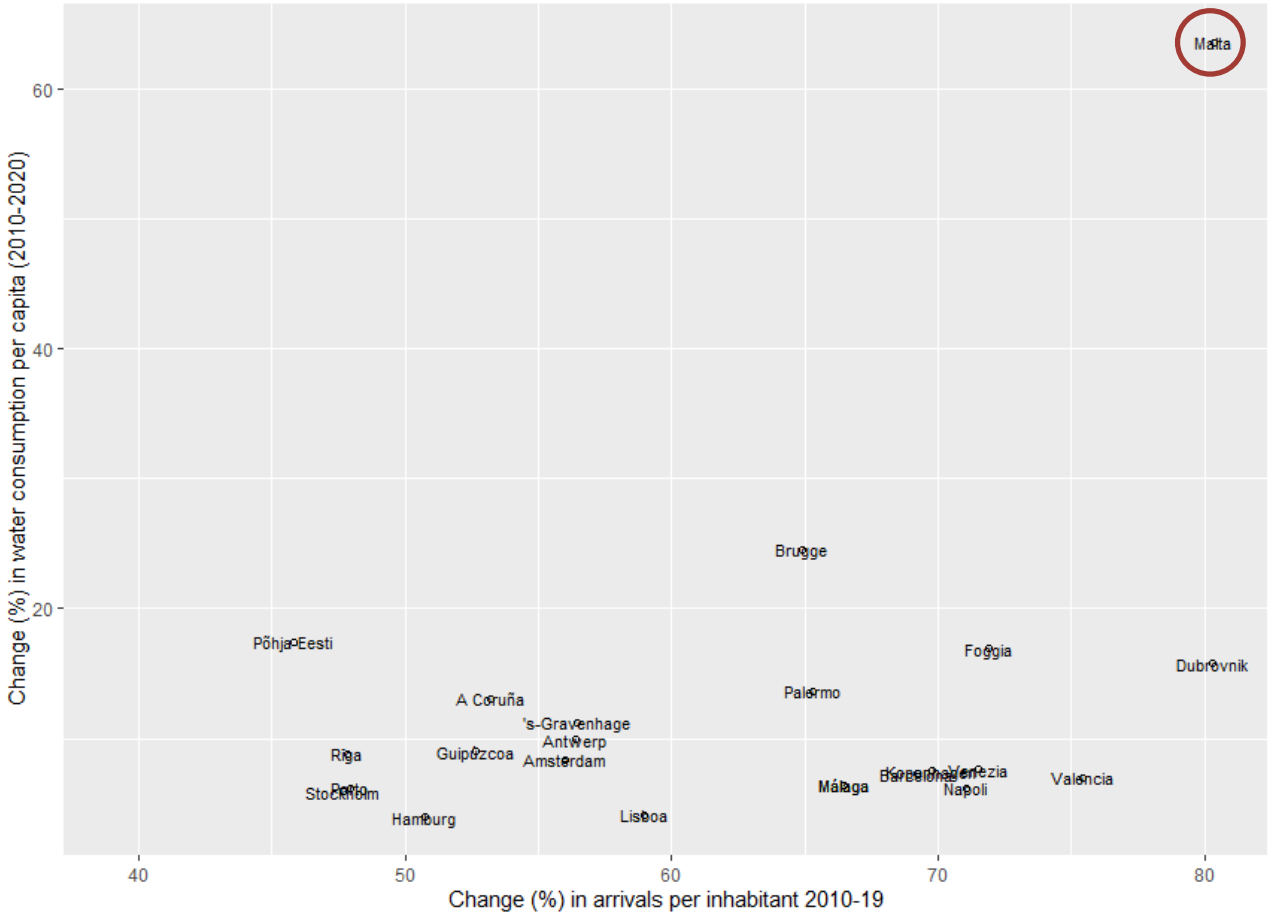
☐ Regionen mit geringem Suchvolumen einschließen

‹ 1–5 von 14 Regionen werden angezeigt ›

# Carrying Capacity - Examples



# Carrying Capacity - Examples



# Conclusions

- Some first „quick and dirty“ evidence snippets corroborate Malta's sustainable tourism strategy
- However in order to better target solutions → more regional perspective is needed
- Whole ESPON Tourism process may lead to better results → proper regional needs assessment, better targeted evidence & regional solution package

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# Thank You!

For further questions please contact:

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