

**FAST-LAIN**  
**(Further Action on Sustainable Tourism**  
**–Learning Area Innovation Networks)**

ACTION N°: /CIP/10/B/N04500 Grant programme 2010 “Knowledge Networks for the Competitiveness and Sustainability of European Tourism”

**FAST-LAIN Project –**  
**Tourism Research & Information Subject Index**  
**and**  
**Knowledge Transfer Framework**

draft Final Nov 2012

**European Research Area Thematic Subject Index Framework – Work flow**



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### **FAST-LAIN Project Deliverable– Tourism Research & Information Subject Index and Knowledge Transfer Framework 2012**

**Please note that this paper is accompanied by an Excel workbook that details the Topic Framework and subject index, entitled [Tourism Topic Information Framework - Research Thematic Subject Index.xls](#)**

## BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The FAST-LAIN project aims to design a coherent knowledge management research framework that will improve tourism stakeholder knowledge networking. It has achieved this by setting up a consortium of research experts from partner organizations, working with regional, national and international tourism stakeholders, to define and map existing research activities related to sustainable tourism development, to build a European-wide policy-relevant thematic knowledge management and collaboration framework.

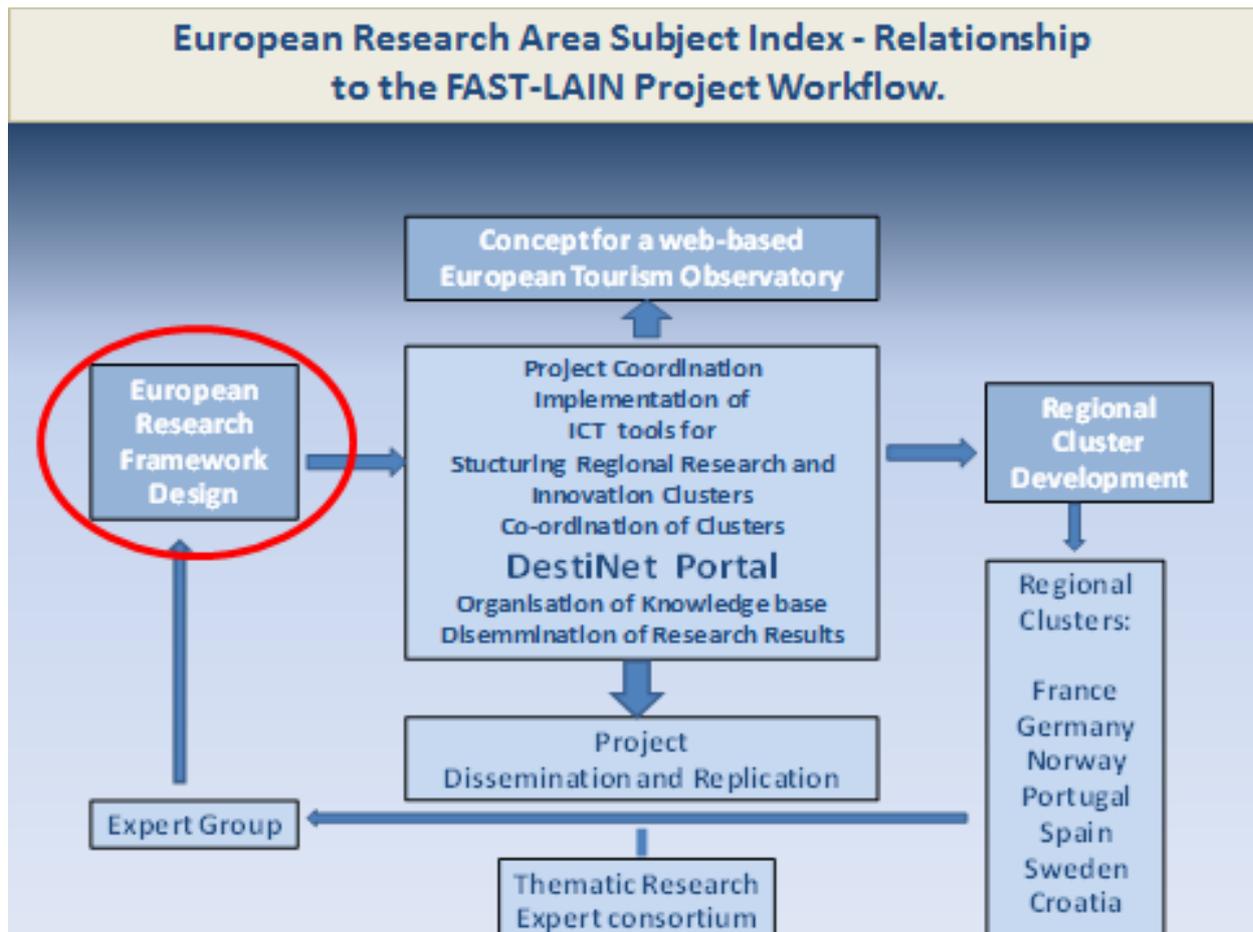


Figure 1 The FAST-LAIN Project and the development of the thematic research framework

Specific deliverables to develop the thematic research framework include:

- the elaboration of a European map of universities, research institutions and regions addressing sustainable tourism;
- Definition of a policy-relevant research framework for sustainable tourism development;
- Application of the research framework to a knowledge management and training system, which includes a set of key publications and a best practice transfer mechanism.

This work has resulted in the current form of the DestiNet Sustainable & Responsible Tourism Portal, which has embedded the tourism thematic subject matter framework to relate tourism specific issues to the wider European research and knowledge transfer process. The framework includes a list of European and global

research bodies, a topic index, a selection of key publications, and a knowledge transfer mechanism. This can all be found in the DestiNet Sustainable & Responsible Tourism Portal, where the key subject heading define the portal content breakdown and then a keyword search offers more detailed sub-topic information classification.

## TOURISM SECTOR INFORMATION NEEDS AND THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

*,The European Research Area is composed of all research and development activities, programmes and policies in Europe which involve a transnational perspective. Together, they enable researchers, research institutions and businesses to increasingly circulate, compete and co-operate across borders. The aim is to give them access to a Europe-wide open space for knowledge and technologies in which transnational synergies and complementarities are fully exploited. ERA consists of activities, programmes and policies which are designed and operated at all levels: regional, national and European’<sup>1</sup>*

The screenshot shows the EIT website's 'About Us' page. The header includes the EIT logo and navigation links like 'Search', 'Like', 'Follow', and 'Newsletter'. The main navigation bar lists 'Innovation Communities', 'Events', 'Education', 'Entrepreneurship', 'Newsroom & Media', 'About Us', and 'Key Documents'. The left sidebar contains a menu with categories like 'Background', 'Facts and Figures', 'Governing Board', 'Strategy', 'Key Documents', 'Careers', 'Budget & Finance', 'Procurement', and 'Location and contacts'. The main content area is titled 'About Us' and 'Mission'. The mission statement reads: 'The EIT is a body of the European Union established in March 2008. Our mission is to increase European sustainable growth and competitiveness by reinforcing the innovation capacity of the EU.' A diagram illustrates the interconnectedness of 'Higher Education', 'Business', and 'Research & Technology'. The text further explains that this translates into developing a new generation of innovators and entrepreneurs through integrated structures like Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). It lists three transitions: from idea to product, from lab to market, and from student to entrepreneur.

**Figure 2 The ERAs mission – a multi-stakeholder approach focusing research on solutions to challenges facing European business and regions.**

The ERA has the goal of Improving knowledge transfer between universities, public research organisations and industry, which is seen as essential for ensuring that publicly-funded research results contribute to economic output from (new) businesses, and can effectively support innovation and the development of new services and products, in response to challenges facing European stakeholders.. Likewise, knowledge transfer has an increasing importance for research and especially in all ‘fields of trans-disciplinary and cross-border research.

<sup>1</sup> ERA web page accessed 27/08/2012

Tourism is no exception to this, but it can be seen from the European research priorities and subject index that tourism has not been specifically or effectively dealt with to date as a subject in its own right. However, from the ERA research fields below, there are several areas of information useful for tourism development and innovation. The aim is to define tourism subject matter so that it can be linked horizontally to any of the cross-cutting issues below.

## ERA SUBJECT INDEX

Some ERA initiatives focus on specific areas of research, including: joint programming, the joint technology initiatives(JTIS), the strategic energy technology plan (SET plan) and the 3 public-private partnerships for green cars, energy-efficient buildings and factories of the future, which were launched in 2009 as part of the european recovery plan.<sup>2</sup>

### **ERA Thematic Areas**

Aeronautics  
Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry  
Endocrine Disrupters  
Energy Research  
Environmental Research  
Health  
Industrial Technologies  
Marie Curie Actions  
Marine and Maritime Research  
Regional aspects of FP7  
Research Infrastructures  
Science in Society  
Small businesses (SME Techweb)  
Social Sciences and Humanities  
Sustainable Development  
Transport  
External sites  
ARTEMIS Joint Undertaking (Embedded Computing Systems)  
Clean Sky JTI (Aeronautics and Air Transport)  
ENIAC Joint Undertaking  
Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking  
Fusion for Energy  
Information Society Technologies (IST)  
Innovative Medicines Initiative (Joint Undertaking)  
Nanotechnology  
NETWATCH  
Security Research  
Space

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<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/areas/priorities/thematic\\_priorities\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/areas/priorities/thematic_priorities_en.htm)

## THE ELABORATION OF A EUROPEAN MAP OF UNIVERSITIES, RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS AND REGIONS ADDRESSING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM;

To define the thematic research framework for tourism, the FASTLAIN project created a live map of existing tourism related research institutions, and developed a topic information framework to categorize their research interests. This tool can be found in the DestiNet portal. Type in the work research into the keyword list and you will see the current state of the process of logging on the European Tourism Research community

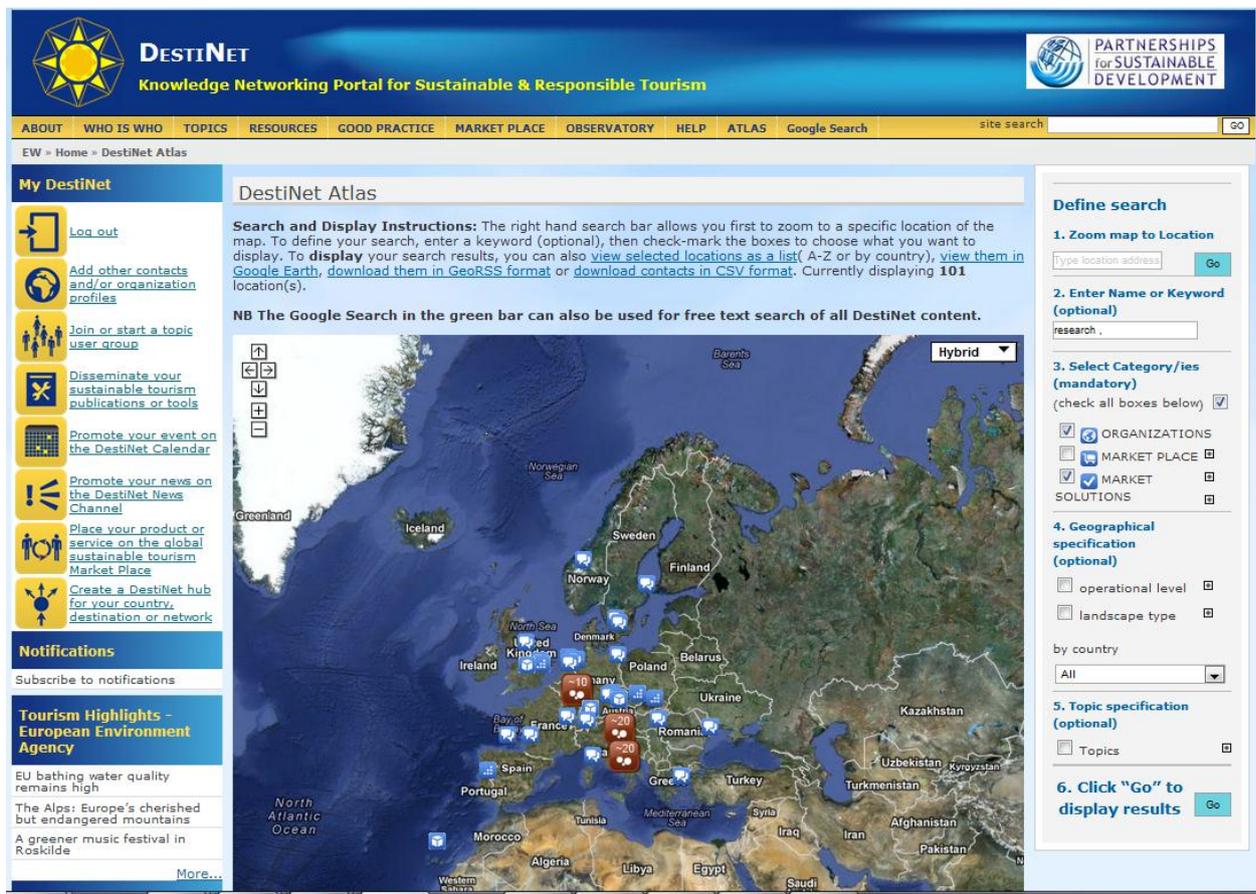


Figure 3 The DestiNet Atlas of European tourism research and information providers

The list can be broken down by stakeholder category, including businesses, administrative bodies, academics and NGOs.

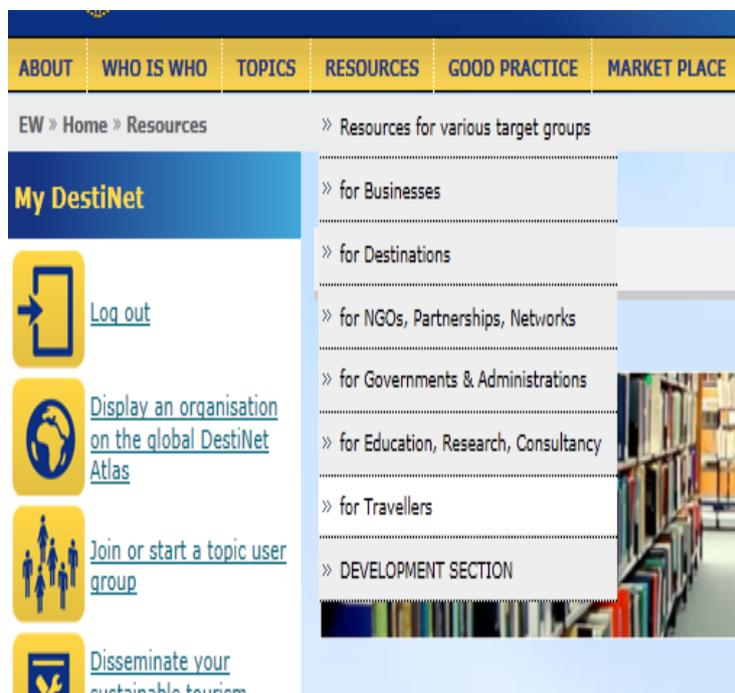
It can also be linked to the key topics of interest to the organisations.

## Research and Information sources on the eight topic areas (DestiNet Atlas, August 2012)

Topic	Organisations
Natural and Cultural Heritage	46
Sustainable Transport and Travel	15
Destination Management and Good Governance	158
Quality Assessment, Certification and Marketing	7
Climate Change -Energy and Resource Efficiency	28
Sustainable Supply Chain Management	14
Knowledge Networking, Training & Education	226
Sustainable Consumption and Production & Tourism	23

In the *Who is who* section on DestiNet <http://destinet.eu/who-who> this listing is hyperlinked to the related governmental, non-governmental and research organisations on the DestiNet Atlas, filtered by the keyword “research”. Readers can further filter the 300+ research and information sources on the [Atlas](#) by their operational level (from local to global), countries and further keywords.

The body of publications and other tools relevant to European tourism stakeholders has been collated in the Portals Resources section.



**Figure 4 The Resource section of the portal listing key publications relevant to tourism research to marketplace actions**

These publications can be categorized by their relation to the key topics and also by stakeholder relevance. Go to the [DestiNet Resources site](#) to see the current tools and publications list compiled in the FAST-LAIN project.

**See helpful resources on following topics:**

- [Awareness raising](#)
- [Marketing](#)
- [Certification](#)
- [Natural and cultural heritage](#)
- [Destination management](#)
- [Supply chain](#)
- [Sustainable consumption and production](#)
- [Biodiversity](#)
- [Energy](#)
- [Innovation](#)
- [Green Economy](#)
- [Conservation](#)
- [Sustainable Transport](#)
- [Resources Efficiency](#)
- [Climate Change](#)
- [Knowledge network](#)
- [Water consumption](#)

## DEVELOPMENT OF A POLICY RELEVANT RESEARCH & INFORMATION TOPIC FRAMEWORK

In order to build a tourism topic framework related to the subject matter of the European Research Area, the factors that shape tourism development have been defined and labeled under a set of topic headings consistent with global principles of how to face the challenges of making tourism more competitive and sustainable, in line with the Commission's own 2007 and 2010 Communications and the FP7 thematic framework. It has been built into the DestiNet Portal on-line structure to define the topics addressed by the sustainable tourism observatory system and Knowledge and Innovation Communities toolkit that is also embedded in the portal.

As a list of topics dealing with the key challenges and opportunities facing European tourism stakeholders, it will provide the tourism stakeholders with a comprehensive subject framework that can be linked to both principles and monitoring systems (see observatory paper).

The Tourism Topic Framework has the following breakdown:

1. Sustainable Consumption and Production & Tourism (overarching theme)
2. Climate Change- Energy & Resource Efficiency
3. Natural and Cultural Heritage
4. Sustainable Transport & Travel
5. Quality Assessment, Certification & Marketing
6. Destination Management & Good Governance
7. Knowledge Networking, Training & Education
8. Sustainable Supply Chain Management

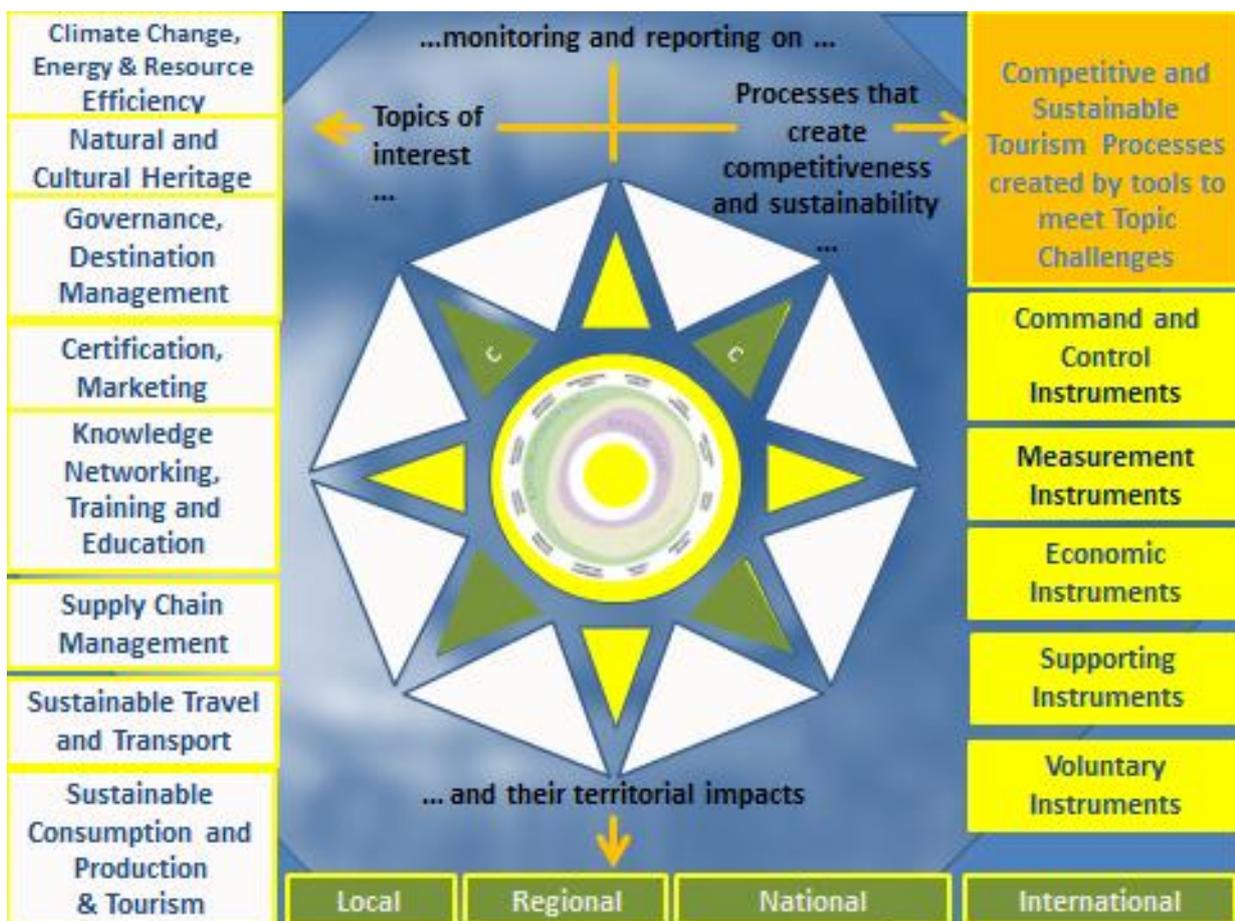
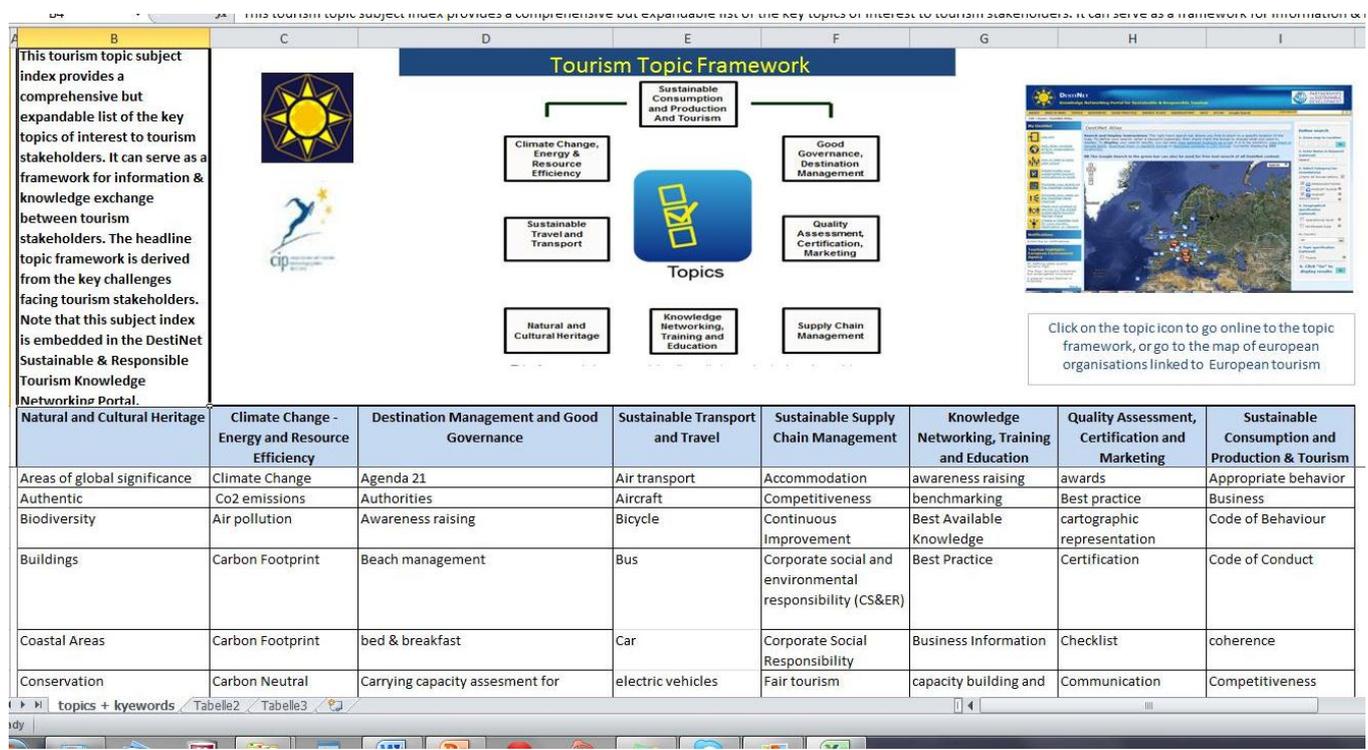


Figure 5 The topic framework showing its multi-level applications and orientation to solutions to tourism sector challenges

These topics cover a wide range of interrelated processes that involve stakeholder actions and their impacts. Each subject area has an index of sub-topics, which can be seen in full in the Excel worksheet that accompanies this paper. This framework shapes the DestiNet Sustainable & Responsible Tourism Portal, where the key subject headings define the portal content breakdown, and then a keyword search offers more detailed sub-topic information classification. Stakeholders at each administrative level would be informed of the above topics, how they impacted at their level, how to respond to them, and how to monitor that response.



**Figure 6 The Tourism Topic Information Framework – available in an excel work book and embedded in the DestiNet Portal Keyword system**

## APPLICATION OF THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK TO A KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING SYSTEM

The subject matter index is being used to classify information stored in the DestiNet portal, which in turn provides both a knowledge networking and observatory management system to apply the subject index for knowledge transfer and application. The diagram below shows how the application of the framework can be used in the observatory process to make regional to European and cross-sector information more coherent.

## European Research Area Thematic Subject Index Framework – Work flow



**Figure 7 How the Commission can use the framework as a unifying subject matter protocol for knowledge transfer**

To achieve this, it should be recognized that information collection and use already exists at multiple levels, and these currently diverse and ad hoc systems should be engaged and developed into a European wide workflow. The subject framework would then operate as a European-level subject-matter protocol linking national and regional information agencies, and also global collaborators, all of whom could access a data, information or knowledge partnership programme that promoted the framework.

The observatory concept paper shows the required multi-stakeholder management structure co-operating up to the European level and reflecting different stakeholder interests, overseeing a decentralized information distribution process that better suits the knowledge needs of tourism practitioners across a range of tourism related issues at different administrative levels.

A training system for managing information flows to update and expand the knowledge based has been developed as part of the Portal support material. Alongside a basic induction tutorial to the portal, there is a comprehensive Tourism Knowledge & Innovation Community Handbook that guides users through the work steps to set up the knowledge networking processes they need.

## SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

The FAST-LAIN project has established a tourism thematic subject matter framework that can be used to relate tourism specific issues to the wider European research and knowledge transfer process . The framework includes a list of European and global research bodies, a topic index, a selection of key publications, and a knowledge transfer mechanism. This can all be found in the DestiNet Sustainable & Responsible Tourism Portal, where the

key subject heading define the portal content breakdown and then a keyword search offers more detailed sub-topic information classification.

The tourism topic framework takes account the factors that shape tourism development, consistent with global principles of how to face the challenges of making tourism more competitive and sustainable, and in line with the Commission's own 2007 and 2010 Communications as well the FP7 thematic framework.

It has used to define the concept of the European virtual tourism observatory system, and has been applied to the Knowledge and Innovation Communities toolkit that is also embedded in the portal.

A training system for managing information flows to update and expand the knowledge based has been developed, containing a basic induction tutorial to the portal and a comprehensive Tourism Knowledge & Innovation Community Handbook to guide users through the knowledge management and development process.

Please see the related documents on the concept for a European Virtual Observatory and the Tourism Knowledge & Innovation Community Handbook for further information, and go to the DestiNet portal to see the knowledge transfer mechanism as a working online tool.

## Participating Experts and Supporters in the FAST-LAIN Project

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