

Montagne de Reims

PARC NATUREL RÉGIONAL

Inclusive tourism

Montagne de Reims regional nature Park (France)

Emmanuelle Déon, Sustainable Tourism project manager

How can nature areas and Destination Management Organizations take action for a more inclusive tourism towards disadvantaged groups ?

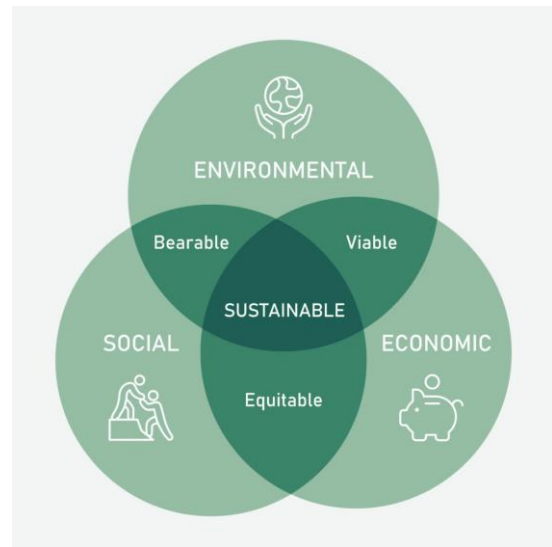


Origin of the project

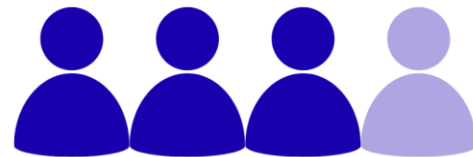
The **‘social’ pillar of sustainable tourism often seems less present** in strategies developed by Protected Areas or DMOs

When it comes to inclusivity / accessibility, we often think of people with disabilities

A large share of people still do not have access to tourism

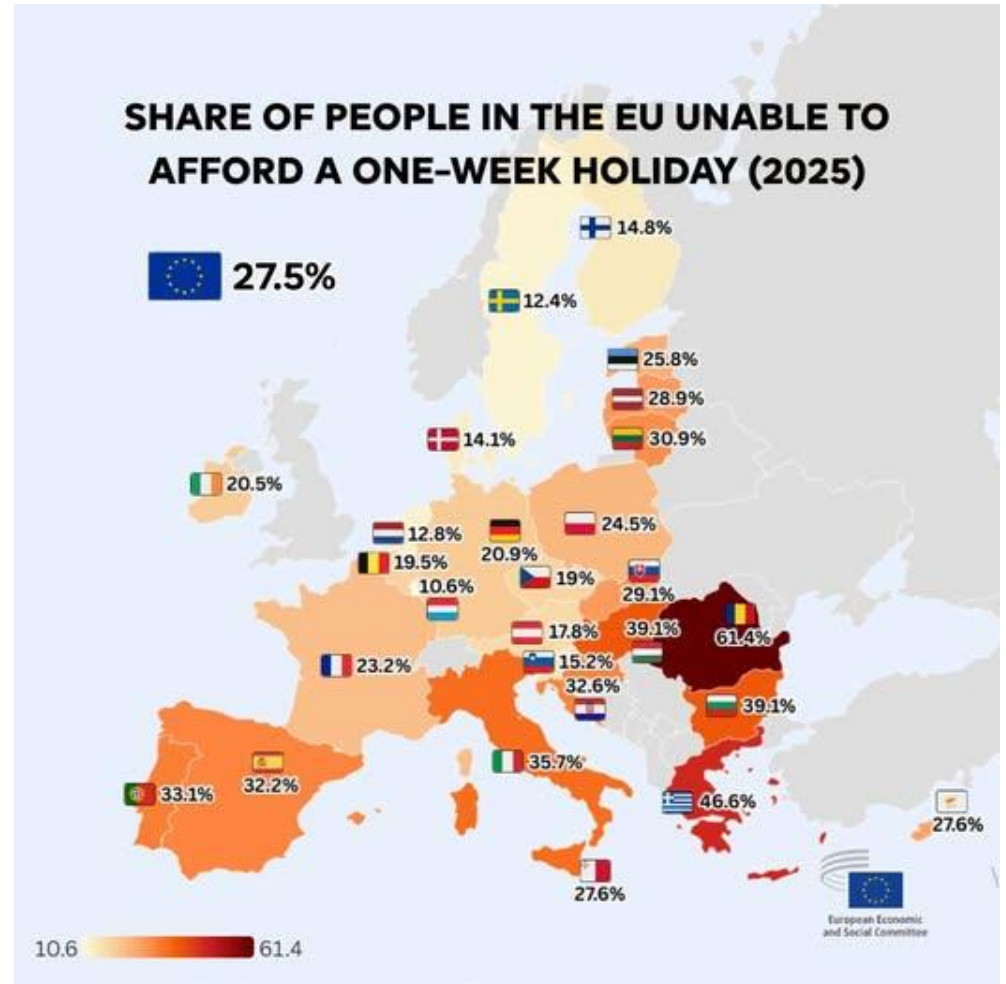


Source : The environmental, economic and social components of sustainability (Alamy Image)



Inability to afford paying for one week annual holiday away from home (2025)

Source: Inability to afford paying for one week annual holiday away from home, 2025, [Eurostat](#) (shared by [EESC - European Economic and Social Committee](#))



Access to holidays for all in a challenging environmental context : what consistency ?

- **Personal benefits (source of well-being for people, good for one's mental health,...)**
- **A driving force for social integration**

Quote from a social worker who has supported projects for families going on their first vacation:

"Interacting with people who are preparing their first vacation is a wonderful tool to work on the notion of citizenship. As social workers, it allows us to talk about health, insurances, family relationships, rights, use of social aids... [And] while focusing on this positive and enlightening project that creates dialogue, people can dream of something which is both nice AND possible !".

- **A part of the solution when it comes to raising people's awareness of the current environmental and climate challenges.**

"In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught". (Baba Dioum)



Focusing on under-served groups and access to nature in general

- The difficulty of using the right words
- Identifying the different barriers
- The concept of intersectionality
- Local tourism and access to nature in general

In a report commissioned by Shropshire Hills National Landscape (UK) and produced by the local consultant Curious Birds / Kate Garner, people known for - or believed to - having barriers for leisure or activities in nature are listed as :

“• *People who are elderly*

• *People who are young*

• *People living with poor mental or physical health*

• *People living with complex disabilities*

• *People living with neurodiversity*

• *People from minority ethnic backgrounds*

• *People living on low incomes*

• *People without access to a car or easy access to public transport*

• *People who are socially isolated*

• *People experiencing barriers because of their religion*

• *People experiencing barriers because of their sexuality*

• *People experiencing barriers because of their gender*

• *People experiencing barriers because of their body shape”*

Shropshire Hills National Landscape (UK)



Shropshire Hills National Landscape :

- **Runs a shuttle bus service** during summer to connect a train station to different tourism and leisure spots of Shropshire Hills
- **Coordinates a « Young Rangers » program** for people aged 12-16, with activities themed on nature restoration. Sometimes, this is the only opportunity they have to spend time outdoors.
- **Develops new outreach and engagement work with underseved communities** thanks to their « Engagement Ranger ».
- **Commissioned a report** on « Recommendations into improving engagement with under-served groups in the Shropshire Hills National Landscapes ».
- **Explores what their local stakeholders are doing** in this field (training plans and working groups for better inclusivity, charities involvement, use of public policies on mental health issues...)



© Picture : Shropshire Hills NL



Tourism Flanders (Belgium) :

- **Runs a « Everyone Deserves a Holiday » program** (Iedereen Verdient Vakantie)
- **Coordinates a network of 142 « Rap op Stap » offices** across Flanders. Their role is to help people with limited budget to organize their holidays or leisure activities.



Tourism Province of Antwerp (Belgium) :

- Has a person in charge of « Threshold-free tourism project » in their team.
- **Organized a solidarity campaign** in 2022 during the national annual campaign « De Warmste Week » (collecting donations for a good cause).



Vacances Ouvertes (VO) : collaboration with social workers and DMOs (France)

- VO is a non-profit organization committed to **providing access to holidays for all**
- They see holidays as a tool **for personal development, strengthening social links** between individuals
- Target audience : first-time vacationers, young people (16-25), isolated adults, single parents needing a « parental break »...



Examples of collaborations between VO and nature areas and/or DMOs

- Gironde Tourisme (DMO) has developed a project that connects social workers with the tourism industry in order to create “first-time holidays” programs.
- On a larger scale, the Lens-Lievin metropolitan area launched a project in 2024 called “10 000 Holiday departures,” which has continued every year since then.



« 10,000 people heading out on vacation
Stop dreaming about going on vacation : just do it ! »



...and more examples in the report !

**Report: Creating more inclusive tourism
in Protected Areas**

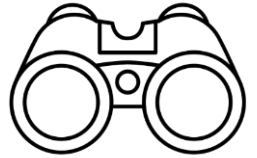


<https://www.europarc.org/news/2025/01/report-creating-more-inclusive-tourism-in-protected-areas/>

A few tips to building an inclusive tourism strategy (1/3)

1. Understand the needs :

- Financial challenges need to be addressed, but financial support alone won't guarantee inclusivity
- Understand the different obstacles and work on both tangible and intangible barriers



2. Build awareness & confidence among DMOs and Protected Areas :

- Work with local experts to understand communities instead of assuming knowledge.
- Intersectionality: address different inequalities or social factors.
- Team-wide inclusivity inside our organizations (DMOs, Protected areas) : encourage confidence to discuss inclusivity ; seek for more diversity in teams ; ensure inclusivity is embraced by every member of the team, integrated into each project through tools, training, and a shift in mindset ; and **accept the idea that we might make mistakes sometimes.**



A few tips to building an inclusive tourism strategy (2/3)

3. Collaborate in partnerships :

- Work with diverse players : break down silos between social services, tourism, and other sectors. Work in collaborative project modes.
- Incorporate multiple sectors: link tourism initiatives to broader goals such as health, well-being, social inclusion, education, and environmental sustainability.
- Engage local youth or communities in volunteering roles, and create creative connections: design projects that link urban areas with natural spaces, possibly through art and culture, to bridge gaps and enhance inclusion.



4. Develop an inclusive tourism design in all development projects :

- Clear and simple information: provide easy-to-understand, well-illustrated information (avoid technical jargon).
- Efficient signage: ensure signage is frequent, clear, and not overly reliant on written language.
- Sensory engagement: develop interpretive materials that stimulate the five senses, accommodating various access needs.
- Public amenities: ensure accessible toilets, benches along paths, and so on.



A few tips to building an inclusive tourism strategy (3/3)

5. Develop required infrastructure and transports :

- Affordable accommodation: provide lower-cost accommodation options (e.g., campsites) to facilitate inclusive tourism.
- Transport accessibility: ensure public transport connections are convenient for underserved groups. **Keep in mind that public transport can also represent a challenge for people who are not used to them.**



6. Offer personalized support :

- One-on-one support: work closely with individuals or families to overcome concerns related to tourism experiences.
- Dedicated people in teams : more organizations should consider having staff specifically dedicated to working on inclusive tourism.
- Co-production with local communities: ensure that services are not merely "provided" but co-produced with the people involved and concerned.

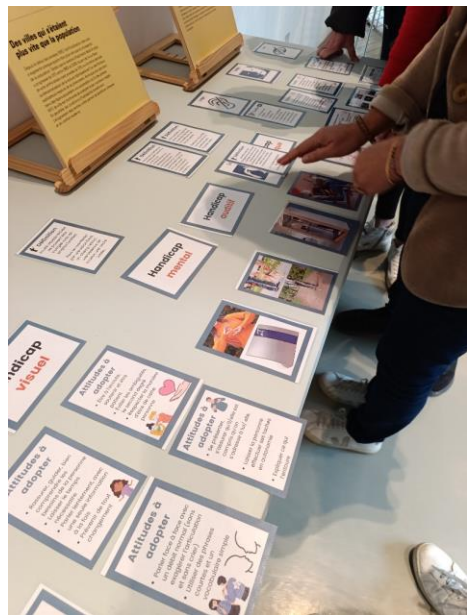


Inclusive access to nature in Montagne de Reims regional nature Park



PARC NATUREL RÉGIONAL DE LA MONTAGNE DE REIMS

Capacity building event for tourism stakeholders



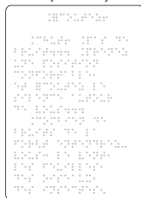
An inclusive trail in Rilly-la-Montagne forest

- Panels : special attention paid to colors, contrasts, font type and size, etc ; content « easy-to-read-and-understand »
- Audio content
- Sensory elements (3D models of species, sensory stations...)



An inclusive trail in Rilly-la-Montagne forest

(braille)



(braille)



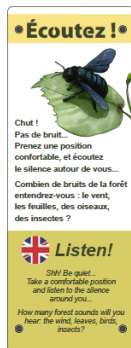
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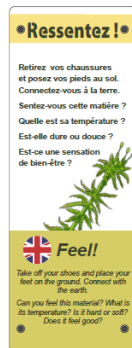
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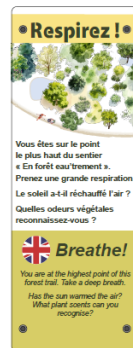
Plaquette face avant
(impression)



Plaquette face avant
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Plaquette face avant
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Plaquette face avant
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Borne
Mât chataignier
Section 120 x 120 mm
Raboté, chanfreiné
Biseauté à 45° sur la partie supérieure
Hauteur totale 1500 mm



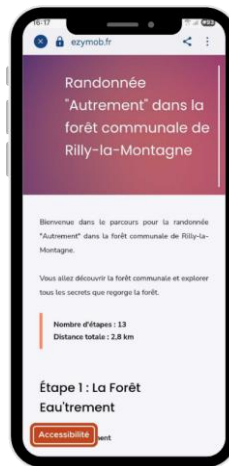
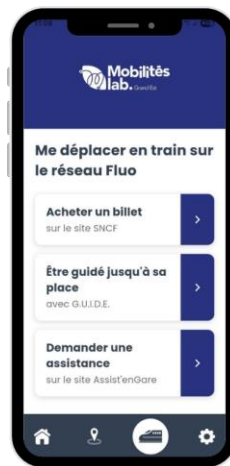
Inclusive tourism and mobilities



Autonomous mobility for an inclusive destination

Mobile app currently under development for blind or low vision people :

- to facilitate access to the train (guidance to the station, the platform, the train door, and the seat)
- to facilitate access to the trail from the train station, navigation along the trail, and exploration of the trail's features



Montagne de Reims

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Thank you !

e.deon@parc-montagnedereims.fr

Une autre vie s'invente ici

