

Appendixes

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IDE Master Graduation

Project team, Procedural checks and personal Project brief

This document contains the agreements made between student and supervisory team about the student's IDE Master Graduation Project. This document can also include the involvement of an external organisation, however, it does not cover any legal employment relationship that the student and the client (might) agree upon. Next to that, this document facilitates the required procedural checks. In this document:

- The student defines the team, what he/she is going to do/deliver and how that will come about.
- SSC E&SA (Shared Service Center, Education & Student Affairs) reports on the student's registration and study progress.
- IDE's Board of Examiners confirms if the student is allowed to start the Graduation Project.

! USE ADOBE ACROBAT READER TO OPEN, EDIT AND SAVE THIS DOCUMENT

Download again and reopen in case you tried other software, such as Preview (Mac) or a webbrowser.

STUDENT DATA & MASTER PROGRAMME

Save this form according to the format "IDE Master Graduation Project Brief_familyname_firstname_studentnumber_dd-mm-yyyy". Complete all blue parts of the form and include the approved Project Brief in your Graduation Report as Appendix 1 !



family name Łucarz
 initials W.W. given name Wiktoria
 student number 5368812
 street & no. _____
 zipcode & city _____
 country _____
 phone _____
 email _____

Your master programme (only select the options that apply to you):

IDE master(s): IPD Dfl SPD

2nd non-IDE master: _____

individual programme: _____ (give date of approval)

honours programme: Honours Programme Master

specialisation / annotation: Medisign

Tech. in Sustainable Design

Entrepreneurship

SUPERVISORY TEAM **

Fill in the required data for the supervisory team members. Please check the instructions on the right !

** chair Giulia Calabretta dept. / section: DOS / MCR

** mentor Fernando Secomandi dept. / section: DOS / MOD

2nd mentor Reinoud van Santen

organisation: Withlocals B.V.

city: Eindhoven country: the Netherlands

comments
(optional)

⋮

Chair should request the IDE Board of Examiners for approval of a non-IDE mentor, including a motivation letter and c.v.



Second mentor only applies in case the assignment is hosted by an external organisation.



Ensure a heterogeneous team. In case you wish to include two team members from the same section, please explain why.

Procedural Checks - IDE Master Graduation

APPROVAL PROJECT BRIEF

To be filled in by the chair of the supervisory team.

chair Giulia Calabretta date 06 - 06 - 2023

signature

CHECK STUDY PROGRESS

To be filled in by the SSC E&SA (Shared Service Center, Education & Student Affairs), after approval of the project brief by the Chair. The study progress will be checked for a 2nd time just before the green light meeting.

Master electives no. of EC accumulated in total: 45 EC

Of which, taking the conditional requirements into account, can be part of the exam programme 30 EC

List of electives obtained before the third semester without approval of the BoE

YES all 1st year master courses passed

NO missing 1st year master courses are:

name Robin den Braber date 07 - 08 - 2023

signature

FORMAL APPROVAL GRADUATION PROJECT

To be filled in by the Board of Examiners of IDE TU Delft. Please check the supervisory team and study the parts of the brief marked **. Next, please assess, (dis)approve and sign this Project Brief, by using the criteria below.

- Does the project fit within the (MSc)-programme of the student (taking into account, if described, the activities done next to the obligatory MSc specific courses)?
- Is the level of the project challenging enough for a MSc IDE graduating student?
- Is the project expected to be doable within 100 working days/20 weeks ?
- Does the composition of the supervisory team comply with the regulations and fit the assignment ?

Content: APPROVED NOT APPROVED

Procedure: APPROVED NOT APPROVED

comments

name Joni Schuurman date 20 - 05 - 2023

signature

New service concept alleviating over-tourism

project title

Please state the title of your graduation project (above) and the start date and end date (below). Keep the title compact and simple. Do not use abbreviations. The remainder of this document allows you to define and clarify your graduation project.

start date 05 - 06 - 202314 - 12 - 2023

end date

INTRODUCTION **

Please describe, the context of your project, and address the main stakeholders (interests) within this context in a concise yet complete manner. Who are involved, what do they value and how do they currently operate within the given context? What are the main opportunities and limitations you are currently aware of (cultural- and social norms, resources (time, money,...), technology, ...).

Tourism and its impacts

In the aftermath of the industrial revolution, advances in transportation, and changing societal attitudes throughout the last century, in Western societies, spending leisure time away from home grew from a luxury to a standard, creating a massive, billion dollars worth industry. To this day, Tourism and Leisure account for about 10% of the global economy (UNTWO, 2018), creates over 300 million jobs world-wide (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2022), and allows over a billion tourists every year to wind down and explore (UNTWO, 2015).

Despite those benefits, the industry has been a significant contributor in environment and social tissue deterioration, with major greenhouse gasses emissions (8-11% of all global GHG emissions, natural landscapes exploitation, perpetuation of economical inequality, and a significant negative impact on many popular destinations' liveability being only a few of them (Lenzen et al., 2019; World Tourism Organization, 2014; Mowforth et al., 2009; Epler Wood et al., 2019; Peeters et al., 2018).

The necessity to transform the industry has been increasingly advocated in the last years from regional (Gemeente Amsterdam, n.a) to international levels (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2022), and few new commercial parties, including Withlocals, a collaborator in this graduation project, has begun to take first steps to instigate the change.

Withlocals mission and ambition

Withlocals.com is a dutch-originated social enterprise within the travel tech industry, operating worldwide. Devoted to reducing the unequal distribution of tourism economic benefits [1] and congestion driven by standard mass-tourism operators in 2013 Withlocals.com set up an online tour booking platform focused on local residents as guides. By engaging the locals, as well as local business owners, ca. 70% of Withlocals tour price is kept within local economies (Withlocals, 2023). Simultaneously, the focus on private tours and less-known parts of the visited destinations contribute to lowering tourists-induced congestion within it.

Having successfully scaled their business model and secured its profitability Withlocals is seeking to further their social mission and offering (Withlocals, 2023). The aim of this graduation project is therefore to explore one of potential opportunity spaces to achieve it - the potential role of attracting tourists to less-known destinations in carbing over-tourism.

[1] As UNWTO (2014) cites "in most mass tourism package tours, about 80% of travelers' expenditures go to the airlines, hotels, and other international companies (who often have their headquarters in the travelers' home countries), and not to local businesses or workers". Links between congestion and mass-tourism operators have been evidenced among others by WTO (2004) and Riganti and Nijkamp (2007).

space available for images / figures on next page

Personal Project Brief - IDE Master Graduation

introduction (continued): space for images



image / figure 1: Graffiti in Barcelona. © Claudio Milano



image / figure 2: Bridge in Venice. © Shutterstock

PROBLEM DEFINITION **

Limit and define the scope and solution space of your project to one that is manageable within one Master Graduation Project of 30 EC (= 20 full time weeks or 100 working days) and clearly indicate what issue(s) should be addressed in this project.

One of the major, increasingly debated issues related to the tourism industry has been the excessive presence of tourists in certain destinations, at certain times, negatively affecting the visited sites (Peeters et al., 2018; Epler Wood et al., 2019; Volo, 2020). This concentration of touristic traffic known as ‘overtourism’ brings about decreased livability to the residents (e.g. overcrowding, inflation, visual pollution) as well as negatively affects the environment (e.g. visual, noise, air and land pollution), as described in European Parliament report on Overtourism (2018). In many places, Venice, Barcelona, Mallorca, or coasts of Thailand being only a few examples, the scale of the issue has triggered drastic measures such as residents protests and temporal closing of the beach in recent years (Coldwell, 2018; Morilla, 2022; Hutton, 2018).

Interestingly, recent customer research suggests that tourists themselves might be increasingly interested in changing their behaviors. According to a recent market study by Booking.com (2019) “over half of global travelers want to play a part in reducing over-tourism, while 51% would swap their original destination for a lesser known but similar alternative if they knew it’d leave less of an environmental impact”. Additionally, as suggested by the UN’s report on Rural development (2021) greater dispersion of tourism across unknown sites could contribute to alleviating the poverty and depopulation in some areas, providing a fair distribution of financial benefits.

This provides an interesting potential innovation direction for Withlocals to explore and ideate upon, which is something the following thesis is aimed to address. Given the complex nature of the problem (Peeters et al., 2018), a more thorough understanding of the challenge at hand from multiple perspectives has to be gained first, to ensure arriving at a solution that can be both socially beneficial and economically viable. Although multiple stakeholders’ perspectives are planned to be explored, to ensure the project manageability within the Master Thesis time-frame, the primary focus will be given to the tourists’ and Withlocals role in the overall challenge.

ASSIGNMENT **

State in 2 or 3 sentences what you are going to research, design, create and / or generate, that will solve (part of) the issue(s) pointed out in “problem definition”. Then illustrate this assignment by indicating what kind of solution you expect and / or aim to deliver, for instance: a product, a product-service combination, a strategy illustrated through product or product-service combination ideas, In case of a Specialisation and/or Annotation, make sure the assignment reflects this/these.

The research will investigate the problem of over-tourism from multiple stakeholders’ perspective, focusing especially on drivers of tourists’ behaviors, as well as barriers and levers to change it. The final design to be delivered is expected to be a service concept supporting over-tourism alleviation. Within that, an attention to both social and market value, as well as fit within overall Withlocals strategy will be given.

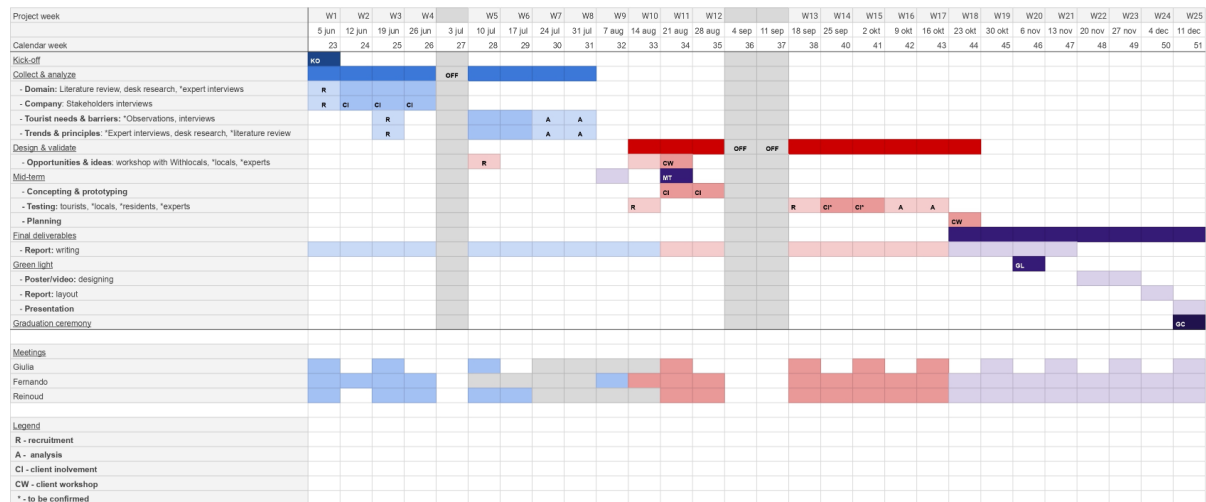
PLANNING AND APPROACH **

Include a Gantt Chart (replace the example below - more examples can be found in Manual 2) that shows the different phases of your project, deliverables you have in mind, meetings, and how you plan to spend your time. Please note that all activities should fit within the given net time of 30 EC = 20 full time weeks or 100 working days, and your planning should include a kick-off meeting, mid-term meeting, green light meeting and graduation ceremony. Illustrate your Gantt Chart by, for instance, explaining your approach, and please indicate periods of part-time activities and/or periods of not spending time on your graduation project, if any, for instance because of holidays or parallel activities.

start date 5 - 6 - 2023

14 - 12 - 2023

end date



The project is planned to be executed part-time, in 4 days per week format. Additionally, a total of 3 weeks of holidays are planned within the project.

Design process

An approach popularized in academia under the term ‘design thinking’, encompassing broad exploration of the problem space through research, reframing the problem, ideating solutions, prototyping and validating the proposals will give rails to the project (Brown, 2009; Luchs, et al., 2015; Stickdorn and Schneider, 2012). The suitability and beneficialness of applying the process to early stage strategy creation has been argued by many (Carlopio, 2009; McKinsey, 2018).

Additionally, important to the project will also be placing a social issue as a starting and central point, next to the market value creation. Given Withlocals’ purpose-related ambitions and author’s personal convictions, such approach becomes indispensable. Due to that, certain theories and tools underpinning Social Implication Design (Tromp, Hekkert, 2014) and Sustainable Value Proposition Design (Baldassarre et al., 2017) - methods dealing with integrating social benefit into the design process - may be used for guidance. Attention to potential consequences of the concept will also be given throughout the project.

Design practices

Throughout the project, practices, principles and mindsets characteristic to design, i.e. integrative thinking, people-centricity, thinking-by-doing, envisioning, knowledge-brokerage, structuring, collaboration, inspiring, will also be used (Schön, 1983, Dunne & Martin, 2006; Calabretta & Gemser, 2015; Calabretta et al. 2016).

MOTIVATION AND PERSONAL AMBITIONS

Explain why you set up this project, what competences you want to prove and learn. For example: acquired competences from your MSc programme, the elective semester, extra-curricular activities (etc.) and point out the competences you have yet developed. Optionally, describe which personal learning ambitions you explicitly want to address in this project, on top of the learning objectives of the Graduation Project, such as: in depth knowledge a on specific subject, broadening your competences or experimenting with a specific tool and/or methodology, Stick to no more than five ambitions.

Given a personal everlasting lust to wander, and about equally long, peculiar enchantment with an idea of intersecting good-doing with profit-making, I am humbled to be involved in the following project marrying the two. Positive it will be a great stage for strategic research and design skills I acquired throughout my Master program, I am also thrilled to use the project as an opportunity to deepen my understanding of the Tourism & Leisure industry and its challenges within sustainability transition, gain an insight into platform business reality, build fluency in balancing the social and economical value through design, and finally, expand my creative facilitation skills.

FINAL COMMENTS

In case your project brief needs final comments, please add any information you think is relevant.

Bibliography attached in the separate file due to length limitations of this section.

2 - Over-tourism implications

vs. Sustainable Tourism Areas

| | |
|---|--|
| 1. Community wellbeing | |
| Problem(s) | Aim(s) |
| 1a. Impaired access to amenities, resources, infrastructure [2], 1b. Congestion of infrastructure (routes) and its facilities [2], 1c. Noise pollution [2], 1d. Conflicts, hostility and misunderstandings in tourists-residents interactions [2], | To maintain and strengthen the quality of life in local communities, including social structures and access to resources, amenities and life support systems, avoiding any form of social degradation or exploitation. |
| 2. Local prosperity | |
| Problems | Aim |
| 2a. 'Economic leakage' - referring to limited retention of tourist spending in the local economy [3], 2b. Inflation of prices of certain goods and services, especially tourist-driven gentrification [1], 2c. Economic reliance on tourism and diminishing of other sectors/types of employment [1]. | To maximise the contribution of tourism to the economic prosperity of the host destination, including the proportion of visitor spending that is retained locally. |
| 3. Biological diversity | |
| Problems | Aim |
| 3a. Water, air and land pollution and waste[2], 3b. Biodiversity damage due to volume and behaviour of visitors [3]. | To support the conservation of natural areas, habitats and wildlife, and minimise damage to them. |
| 4. Cultural richness | |
| Problems | Aim |
| 4a. Change of the character of the area to tourist-oriented [2], 4b. Diminishing of other sectors/types of employment [2], | To respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of host communities. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 4c. Loss of traditions and values [2]. | |
| 5. Local control | |
| Problems | Aim |
| 5a. Lack of engagement of residents in the decision making [2],[3]. | To engage and empower local communities in planning and decision making about the management and future development of tourism in their area, in consultation with other stakeholders. |
| 6. Physical integrity | |
| Problems | Aim |
| 6a. Visual degradation (e.g. hotels, cruises, touristic stalls etc.) [2],[3] 6b. Damage to natural, historical and architectural sites [2]. | To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes, both urban and rural, and avoid the physical and visual degradation of the environment. |
| 7. Resource efficiency | |
| Problems | Aim |
| 7a. Carbon footprint related to overall spectrum of tourism activities (S raphin et al., 2020) 7b. Intensive use of non-renewable resources (e.g. water) [3] | To minimise the use of scarce and non-renewable resources in the development and operation of tourism facilities and services. |
| 8. Environmental purity | |
| Problems | Aim |
| 8a. Water, air and land pollution and waste [2] | To minimise the pollution of air, water and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors. |
| 9. Employment quality | |
| Problems | Aim |
| 9a. Low pay, job security (due to seasonality and sector vulnerability), as well as limited career advancement opportunities [4] | To strengthen the number and quality of local jobs created and supported by tourism, including the level of pay, conditions of service and availability to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 10. Economic viability | |
| Problems | Aim |
| 10a. Degradation of image of the destination [2] | To ensure the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations and enterprises, so that they are able to continue to prosper and deliver benefits in the long term. |
| 11. Visitor fulfillment | |
| Problems | Aim |
| 11a. Decrease in the visitors' experience quality [2],[4]. 11b. Decrease in the destination attractiveness and popularity [2],[3]. | To provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways. |
| 12. Social equity | |
| Problems | Aim |
| 12a. Impaired non-tourism related investments [2]. | To seek a widespread and fair distribution of economic and social benefits from tourism throughout the recipient community, including improving opportunities, income and services available to the poor. |

Source: author, based on: [1] United Nations Environment Programme & World Tourism Organization, 2005 & WTO's (2005), [2] Peeters et al., 2018 [3] Dodds & Butler (2019), [4] Goodwin (2019), [5] Barwicka & Slowhop Sp. z o.o. (2022)

3 - Behavioural factors

| Opportunity | Motivation | Ability |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Complexity of information | Personal relevance | Awareness and memory |
| Amount of information | Benefits and rewards | Knowledge |
| External barriers and drivers | Fears and risks | Willpower |
| Exposure time | Values and beliefs | Mood and physical state |
| Distractors | Inconsistency with attitude | Self-efficacy |
| Control over information | Goals and commitments | Experience and familiarity |
| Structural factors | Social norms | Habit and routines |
| | | Resources |
| | | Physical and mental effort |

Source: author, based on Lieren (2017); Verplanken (2018);

4 - Empirical research

Participants demographics overview

| No. | Nationality | Destination(s) | Age group | Composition |
|-----|-------------|----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 1. | USA | Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Seoul | 24-34 | Partner |
| 2. | S. Africa | Croatia, Italy, Albania, Germany | 45-54 | Partner |
| 3. | USA | The Netherlands, the UK | 24-34 | Partner |
| 4. | India | South Korea | 24-34 | Solo |
| 5. | USA | Portugal | 55-70 | Partner |
| 6. | Mexico | Italy | 45-54 | Partner |
| 7. | Sweden | Italy | 45-54 | Partner |
| 8. | USA | Italy | 35-44 | Kids |
| 9. | USA | Greece, Spain | 55-70 | Partner |
| 10. | Italy | Germany | 55-70 | Partner |
| 11. | UK | Spain, Portugal | 55-70 | Partner |
| 12. | USA | Vietnam | 24-34 | Solo |

Source: author

5 - Empirical research

Screening questionnaire

1. Which countries / cities are you planning to go to for your trip exactly?

{Long answer text}

2. How are you planning to get there?

{Multiple-choice options: Plane, Car, Train or bus, Boat, Other...}

3. What are you thinking of doing there?

{Multiple-choice options: Explore the city, Immerse in the culture, Dive into wilderness, Chill and relax, Grasp the cuisine, Hide in the countryside, Visit the must-sees, Jump into nightlife, Get Active, Other...}

4. Anyone is joining?

{Multiple-choice options: No, only me, Partner, Family, Friend(s), Other...}

5. What is your name?

{Short answer text}

6. Where are you currently based?

{Multiple-choice options: Europe, North America, South America, Africa, Australia, Asia, Other...}

7. What year were you born in?

{Short answer text}

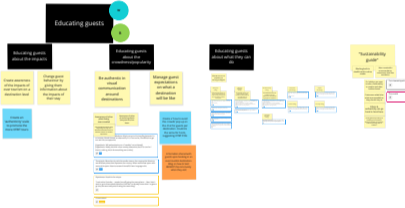
8. What is your e-mail address?

{Short answer text}

9. Anything you want to add?

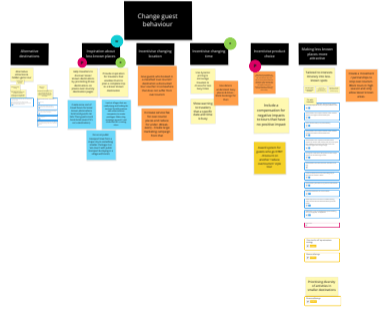
{Long answer text}

Opportunities & responsibilities



"Sustainability guide"

Develop strategy to see more user benefit regions impact



7 - Client sessions

Client team representatives involvement through project phases

| No. | Role(s) | Research | Design | | |
|-----|--------------------------|----------|------------|-------------|------------|
| | | | Directions | Development | Validation |
| 1. | Tech Lead | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 2. | Sustainability Manager | Y | Y | N | N |
| 3. | Chief Executive Officer | Y | N | Y | Y |
| 4. | Community Manager | Y | N | N | Y |
| 5. | Developer | Y | N | N | Y |
| 6. | Chief Growth Officer | Y | N | N | N |
| 7. | UX/UI Designer | Y | N | N | N |
| 8. | UX/UI Design | Y | N | N | N |
| 9. | Sales Manager | Y | N | N | N |
| 10. | Chief Technology Officer | Y | N | N | N |
| 11. | Developer | Y | N | N | N |
| 12. | Founder | Y | N | N | N |

Y - Yes, stakeholder participated in 1 or more sessions throughout the phase

N - No, stakeholder did not participated in the sessions

Source: author

8 - Elements of value

Explore the Elements of ValueSM

Click on any element to learn more



PROVIDES HOPE

Definition: Providing something to be optimistic about

Example: GNC stores sell a wide range of weight loss, nutritional supplements and other products designed to improve consumers' health and fitness.

?

What elements are most important to consumers in different industries?

Click on each industry below to view the top five elements influencing loyalty for each.

- Apparel retail
- Discount retail
- Grocery
- Food and beverage
- Smartphones
- TV service providers
- Consumer banking
- Brokerage
- Auto insurance
- Credit cards

Reset

Social impact



Life changing



Emotional



Functional



© COPYRIGHT 2018 BAIN & COMPANY INC.



Learn More:
The Elements of Value

BAIN & COMPANY 

Source: Bain & Company Inc. (2018)

I would like to start by saying thank you for the effort put into the research and the work you did.

Before diving into the concepts, I want to spend a moment praising the methodology and the clear explanation of the process you went through to reach these conclusions and outcomes. The correlations between the 4 corners [Overtourism, Customers, OFBT, and Withlocals] is very clear and you can tell that you spent time with the various stakeholders to fully understand these correlations.

Moving on to the concepts:

Concept 1: Withlocals-Ed

I think I like this concept very much from a theoretical perspective. This is possibly the hardest to implement because it requires very long tail work.

Key Facts about the destinations are a very attractive feature. People love data and statistics. If we can find ways to link the facts to CTAs and choices, it could be powerful.

I think to make this work would require a significant investment in PR and content marketing to generate traffic to these pages over time. This is a good long-term strategy, on a destination level. There can be plenty of work done with the destinations themselves to help promote this concept.

Concept 2: Withlocals Stories:

I think it was clear in our meeting that this was everyone's favourite. As Eric mentioned during the meeting, it also ties in very nicely to the Passion approach Withlocals was going down a few years ago.

Regional search is something we have already seen traction with and I think that expanding this approach while creating appeal and allure to alternative options has great potential.

The map is a nice touch.

This could also tie in with AI Itinerary building tools and be a path to multi-day itineraries. Can be tested in destinations like Iceland, Chiang Mai, Vietnam, Morocco where guests are looking for multi-day trips and destinations as well as help building multi-city itineraries for guests to mainstream destinations.

The focus on personalization is very aligned with the Withlocals brand and offering a diversity of options to guests is good. I would be careful with the number of options on offer as offering too many options may lead to guests feeling overwhelmed.

It also offers an innovative approach that would differentiate Withlocals from competitors by offering a unique way to explore destinations. Of all our competitors, only Airbnb has similar appeal in off-the-grid destinations.

This would also be good to couple with Social Media and PR around promoting these off-the-beaten-path destinations.

Concept 3:

This is perhaps the most complex and I see it as only moderately aligned with Withlocals' emphasis on transparency and authenticity, but the risk is that it requires robust data handling to ensure reliability and trustworthiness.

From an implementation perspective, I would be weary of portraying a destination/tour as unsustainable and would avoid the rating being on a scale. I would rather show the elements it fulfills and assume that everything on the platform meets a minimum sustainability standard.

With this, I fear that anything that is only meeting the minimum sustainability standards and not shooting high will be perceived as undesirable.

Overall:

From a supply perspective, we would need to think how we would onboard supply in these remote locations, or if we would use existing supply (hosts) to manage these broader destinations

All ideas 1 and 2 offer a very good brand fit. They align well with Withlocals' focus on personal and engaging experiences, though they requires careful implementation to ensure they enhance rather than complicate the user experience. They are very close to the Withlocals brand which emphasizes unique, localized travel experiences, aligning with the company's goal to offer authentic and diverse experiences.

1. Withlocals Destination-ed

Strengths:

- Promotes lesser-known areas, reducing overcrowding in popular destinations.
- Provides operational knowledge and decision-making support.
- Enhances transparency and discovery, highlighting the distinctiveness of each region.

Weaknesses:

- May face challenges in changing travelers' preferences for popular destinations (as we discussed in our meeting)
- Requires significant marketing efforts to build credibility and attract interest.

Opportunities:

- Can partner with local tourism boards and travel influencers to increase reach, although it's not easy to scale this.
- Potential to create unique and personalized travel experiences that attract niche markets.

Threats:

- Competition from established travel platforms offering similar services in these destinations.
- Economic downturns or travel restrictions affecting tourism demand. Global coverage helps to mitigate this risk.

2. Withlocals Stories

Strengths:

- Encourages discovery through personal interests, making locations secondary.
- Offers a broad and diverse range of experiences and themes.
- Reduces uncertainty and attracts attention by focusing on specific themes.

Weaknesses:

- Requires a robust content creation and curation strategy to maintain engagement.
- May face difficulties in maintaining consistent quality across diverse experiences.

Opportunities:

- Can collaborate with local experts and storytellers to enhance content authenticity.

The Withlocals community of hosts can be a valuable asset here.

- Opportunity to tap into cultural and thematic tourism trends.

Threats:

- Variability in customer satisfaction if experiences do not meet expectations. For example, customers don't want to have the feeling they are going to a "rip-off Keukenhof" for instance. The alternative needs to match their expectations.
- Potential oversaturation of thematic tours, diluting the unique selling proposition.

3. Withlocals Location Scores

Strengths:

- Provides transparent information about each location's benefits and drawbacks.
- Helps fill knowledge gaps and builds confidence in less-known destinations.
- Enhances brand perception by promoting transparency and sustainability values.

Weaknesses:

- Accurate and reliable data collection for location scoring can be resource-intensive.
- May struggle to present negative aspects without deterring potential visitors.

Opportunities:

- Can use location scores to guide continuous improvement and quality assurance.
- Opportunity to leverage user-generated content and reviews to enhance scoring accuracy.

Threats:

- Negative scores could harm relationships with local hosts and communities.
- Competitors may develop similar scoring systems, reducing differentiation.

Withlocals Destination-ed

Strengths:

- **Rich Storytelling:** Highlighting the unique stories and attributes of less-known destinations can engage users and inspire visits.
- **Operational Support:** Providing detailed information can help users make informed decisions, reducing the perceived risk of visiting less-known areas.
- **Transparency:** Clear information about destinations helps build trust and manage expectations, potentially leading to more informed and happier guests .

Implementation Considerations:

- **Content Creation:** Developing rich, engaging content for each destination requires significant resources, including research, writing, and media production.
- **User Experience:** The platform should ensure that the additional information does not overwhelm users. A balance between comprehensive details and user-friendly design is crucial.

Potential Risks:

- **Scalability:** Scaling this approach to cover a large number of destinations could be challenging.

Withlocals Stories

Strengths:

- **Personalization:** Focusing on themes allows users to find experiences that align with their interests, potentially increasing engagement and satisfaction.
- **Diverse Offerings:** Offering multiple variants for each theme can cater to different preferences and needs, making the platform more attractive to a wider audience.

Implementation Considerations:

- **Guide Training:** Local guides need to be well-versed in the themes and capable of delivering high-quality, thematic tours.
- **Marketing:** Effective marketing strategies are required to promote these theme-based tours and attract the right audience.

Potential Risks:

- **Complexity in Management:** Managing and maintaining a diverse range of thematic tours can be logistically complex.

- **Consistency in Quality:** Ensuring consistent quality across different themes and locations might be challenging.

Withlocals Location Score

Strengths:

- **Transparency:** Clear, honest information can build trust and help customers make better decisions.
- **Informed Choices:** Highlighting both positive and negative aspects allows users to choose locations that best meet their expectations and preferences.

Implementation Considerations:

- **Data Collection:** Collecting accurate and up-to-date information for each location requires a robust data collection process.
- **Presentation:** The scores should be presented in a user-friendly manner, possibly with visual aids like maps and charts to enhance understanding.

Potential Risks:

- **Negative Perceptions:** Highlighting drawbacks might deter some customers, although it could also attract those who appreciate honesty.

Feedback on Concepts

Concept 1 - Withlocals Destination-ed

I appreciate the Withlocals Destination-ed concept for enhancing country landing pages. This approach can significantly add value to users early in their trip planning, especially if experiences are curated to entice users to explore specific regions. This aligns well with the growing trend of experiential travel.

Positive Aspects

1. **Specialties of the Region:** Defining important keywords or topics for each region is a great strategy for marketing and organic search. Categorizing these specialties in a way that matches common traveler interests is a smart move.
2. **Visual Appeal:** The design focuses heavily on visuals, presenting the regions in an attractive manner that can engage users effectively. It's giving each region its distinct character.

Risks and Opportunities

1. **Portfolio Diversity:** The strategy of highlighting specialties works well only if there is a diverse portfolio of experiences. To make this scalable, we should create blueprints for defining these specialties and identifying gaps in the portfolio. New experiences also pose a risk as they require content, willing hosts, and initial reviews. Also, the curation and quality can provide extra work and can have an impact on the success of this concept.
2. **Host Offer Strategy:** This approach could lead to a strategy for recruiting hosts and developing new tours that fill identified gaps. Conducting market research to identify needed keywords for online marketing can guide this process. By focusing on less busy spots, we can expand our geographic coverage and enhance our search and online marketing efforts with longtail keywords.

Suggestions for Concept Design Improvement

1. **Mobile-First Design:** Considering that almost 70% of landing page traffic comes from mobile devices, redesigning with a mobile-first approach is crucial. Once optimized for mobile, we can then enhance the desktop design. While desktop

remains important, mobile optimization should be the priority to cover most of the users.

2. **Brand Recognition:** The current design lacks strong brand recognition. Ensure the Withlocals logo is paired with the company name for better recall. Incorporate our main brand colors consistently across sections to reinforce brand identity. The sections with each a unique color is a good addition, but it should be in balance with the main brand colors
3. **Context and Information:** The design should provide more context for new users who arrive from search results. It should answer key questions like who we are, what problems we solve for them, how we differ from competitors, and our trustworthiness. This can be achieved through a well-structured hero/header section that introduces our brand and offerings.
4. **Navigation:** Now you need to scroll from top to bottom and you do not have any overview of the content of the page. The hero/header could also include some quick links to each section or a map with all the chosen regions as a summary. In this way, you are serving users who already have a general idea of where they will be going. They can quickly navigate to the content and offers that are relevant to them.
5. **Content Structure:** A structured content approach benefits both users and search engines. Include headings, sections with titles, and relevant text to improve SEO and user experience. Content should always add value to the user, not just fill space, but at least be sufficient for SEO crawlers.
6. **Social Proof:** Introduce testimonials or reviews to build trust and validate the quality of our tours. Curating reviews can also help promote less “popular” tours and help push tours that reduce over-tourism.
7. **Local Expertise:** Our locals should be more prominent. Consider connecting locals to these specialties, and showcasing their expertise in the form of specialties. This could also introduce opportunities for personalization and direct user interaction with the locals for planning assistance.
8. **Planning Assistance:** Focus the copy on helping users plan their trips. Highlight experiences suitable for different times of day (morning, afternoon, evening, full day) to assist in itinerary planning.

Future Iterations

Consider connecting experiences to specific times of the day or week, or even to different seasons. You could encourage users to escape the highlights during peak hours/days and choose an alternative. As for the seasons, the Keukenhof is only open for a portion of the

year, so an alternative could fill the gap when it's closed. This could be part of future iterations or a separate page focused on detailed trip planning.

Concept 2 - Withlocals stories

The Withlocals Stories is a great concept that could either be combined with the first concept or implemented independently. To make the first concept work effectively, this approach might be necessary. This feels like a logical first step before concept 1. Themed tours focus on users who are further along in their trip planning, leveraging popular keywords to attract users to less touristy, more authentic alternatives. This concept could start with a small scope on a few topics to prove value and see if alternatives will be booked.

Positive Aspects

1. **Leveraging Popular Keywords:** This concept effectively uses popular search terms (e.g., Van Gogh Museum, Keukenhof) to divert users to unique, lesser-known experiences, enhancing our longtail search and ad strategy.
2. **Targeting Booking-Ready Users:** Since this approach caters to users closer to booking, it can yield quicker impacts and results. Starting with this concept can provide valuable insights and learnings for refining the first concept.
3. **Portfolio Improvement:** By enhancing the portfolio with themed tours, we can offer more diverse and interesting options to our users.

Opportunities and Risks

1. **Risk of Over-Tourism:** Introducing themed tours might lead to over-tourism in new areas. Educating hosts on managing the impact and designing tours to minimize negative effects can help mitigate this risk.
2. **Localized Expertise:** Engaging a few locals in designing these tours can ensure they are authentic and beneficial, adding a unique touch to the user experience. Partner with local businesses, farms, and restaurants in the tour creation process that could offer authentic experiences and are open to tourists.
3. **Paid Ad Costs:** A significant risk is paying for users who visit the landing page but are only interested in checking off a highlight without engaging further. This can drive up costs in paid ads if the main tour is not available. It is crucial to attract a

mixed group interested in the overall theme, not just the attraction, to ensure ad spend is effective and that the new tours gain momentum.

Implementation Suggestions

1. **Landing Page Focus:** Design landing pages to highlight high-level differences between tours, such as duration, price, and newly introduced labels. This helps users compare tours before diving into specific product details.
2. **Product Page Optimization:** On the product page, users should find detailed information about the tours. While providing comparison controls is important, ensure that the main comparison happens on the landing page to reduce decision stress.
3. **Control and Friction Management:** Introducing more controls on the product page can create friction and stress. Break down the selection process into manageable steps and test variations to find the best approach for conversion rates.
4. **Alternatives for Fully Booked Attractions:** Offer alternatives for popular, fully booked attractions but still show these tours as sold out. This works well for ticketed attractions like the Van Gogh Museum or Sagrada Familia, targeting users interested in the theme rather than just ticking off must-visit items.
5. **Leverage testimonials:** Make use of positive reviews from tourists who have chosen the alternatives to give social proof that these options are a good or better alternative.

Future Iterations

To enhance the concept of the themed tour, we can map the tours to various user preferences and provide customization options. Users could start with a theme, such as a Van Gogh tour, and then personalize it based on their choices for time, group size, accessibility, and transportation. For example, a user might choose a Van Gogh bike tour that takes about 3 hours in Amsterdam. We can then take the pricing of a regular bike tour and add this information to the request, offering a clear price indication for both the host and guest.

This approach ensures the tours are tailored to individual needs, making them more appealing and user-friendly. We could make these specialties from the first concept to the hosts so we know which locals are experts on a topic. Combinations that are regularly booked can be turned into tours. This could even be a strategy to start in a scalable way in more destinations at the same time.

10 - Example of other ideas

Explored throughout the project

The image shows four sequential screenshots of a mobile survey form titled "Tell us about your experience". Each screen has a "Save & exit" button at the top. The first screen is "Step 1 out of 2" and asks for an overall rating (5 stars) and a text review. The subsequent three screens are "Step 2 out of 2" and ask for ratings and feedback on "Communication", "Knowledge", and "Place(s)". The "Place(s)" section includes radio buttons for "Crowded", "Touristy", and "Other", and a "Send" button. The final screenshot also includes a "Next" button.

Responsibility score: 4-5 out of 6

| Animal protection | Child protection | Local guide | Local business | Quiet destination | Social cause |
|--|--|---|---|--|---|
| ISSUE Interfering into natural habitat of animals can have negative effect on their development, thus, is only allowed in selected cases after careful welfare audit and with supervision. | ISSUE In many countries child labour in tourism context is still a reality. Arranged school/orphanage visits may disturb children education, with often objectifying undertones. | ISSUE Engaging foreign guides inhibits local economy and denudes residents of ownership of the narrative about their own culture, and of share more authentic side of their home to visitors. | ISSUE Involving international chains inhibits local economy, often denuding the guests of an opportunity to familiarize themselves with local culture and traditions. | ISSUE The numbers of visitors in most popular places has been exceeding its capacity in the last years. This can lower residents' quality of life and in extreme cases, destroy the ecosystem. | ISSUE From air pollution to gender and race inequality, there is a range of local and global issues that we as humans still have to tackle. |
| OUR POLICY There is zero tolerance for animal entertainment in all Withlocals experiences, given the extremely harmful character of those experiences for the animals. | OUR POLICY There is zero tolerance for child labour at Withlocals. Intrusion and objectification of children is also strictly prohibited in all Withlocals experiences. | OUR POLICY Only residents of the regions that have lived there for a minimum of 2 years comprise the Withlocals team of guides. | OUR POLICY There is a zero tolerance at Withlocals for chain businesses. We also encourage booking tours that include visits to local businesses as much as possible, to boost local economy. | OUR POLICY Withlocals has a zero tolerance for tours in places where tourism puts local ecosystem at threat. We also encourage booking of tours in quieter destinations. | OUR POLICY Selected tours at Withlocals focus on specific societal issue, trying to make a dent through awareness and funds-raising. |
| Learn more | Learn more | Learn more | Learn more | Learn more | Learn more |

The image shows two screenshots of a web page. The left screenshot is titled "Recommendations" and is for the "West Netherlands". It includes a "How to use it?" section and a "Recommend" section with a list of recommendations. The right screenshot is titled "Local cafes & ateliers" and is for "The Hague". It includes a list of cafes and a photo of two women working at a table.

source: author