



Netherlands

Guide to measuring resident benefits

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1 Introduction

By 2030, every Dutch citizen will benefit from tourism. This is the ambition of Perspective 2030, the national vision for a sustainable development of the Netherlands as a destination. But what do we mean by resident benefit? And how do we measure whether residents actually experience this benefit?

Increasing demand for (measuring) the impact of tourism

Tourism contributes to various societal challenges, but it also has negative impacts. Therefore, tourist destinations are increasingly seeking ways to maintain a balance. To achieve this, it is essential to be able to measure the impact, with attention to economic, social, and ecological effects. Naturally, we consider the costs and benefits, calculating the objectively measurable impact. But just as important is how residents experience the impact of tourism. This publication focuses on the aspect of tourism that adds value for a destination's residents: resident benefits.

Research “Measuring resident benefits”

In recent years, NBTC has collaborated closely with industry peers, knowledge institutions, and policymakers to better define and measure resident benefits. This resulted in a practical working model that has previously been published, along with best practices and tips. In collaboration with the “Agenda Bewuste Bestemmingen” (Conscious

Destinations) research agenda of the Centre of Expertise Leisure, Tourism & Hospitality (CELTH), extensive research was conducted last year on methods for mapping the perceived impact of tourism. It was conducted in three phases: a literature review, interviews with experts, and a practical experiment with four measurement methods in the municipality of Schouwen-Duiveland.

The combination of these three phases yielded a wide range of insights: on the concept of resident benefits, on possible measuring methods, and on selecting the proper techniques. This publication brings these insights together.

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How to use this publication?

This publication helps policymakers and implementing parties choose the right research method to measure resident benefits from tourism.

1. Introduction

We explain how each measurement method works, identify the advantages and disadvantages, and show which method best suits different knowledge needs. We also share practical examples to illustrate how others apply these methods and what their experiences are. Are you already familiar with resident benefits in tourism? Then you can skip to [Chapter 4](#) for an overview of measurement methods.

Are you new to this topic? Then, [Chapters 2](#) and [Chapter 3](#) offer a helpful introduction and background information.

We hope this publication provides practical insight and helps you choose the measurement method that best suits your destination. ●

[Click here to view the colophon and contact details.](#)



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What are resident benefits?

In this chapter, we will discuss what we mean by resident benefits. The definition, dimensions, and framework developed by the national Koplopersgroep Bewonersprofijt* form the basis, supplemented with new insights from the literature**. We will use the dimensions and framework to evaluate the measurement methods in Chapter 4.

* Hoe bezoek bijdraagt aan bewonersprofijt (Dutch only), NBTC, 2024
** A full report of the literature review can be found [here](#).

2.1 Definition of resident benefit

The presence of visitors and their activities have an impact on a destination. Resident benefit refers to the portion of these impacts that positively affects residents.

By ‘visitors’, we mean everyone who visits a location for recreation. This can include overnight visitors, day trippers, international guests, and residents. This publication focuses on tourism, in line with the ambition of Perspective 2030. At the same time, the boundaries between recreation and tourism are blurring, resulting in a growing overlap between different types of visits. We see a similar development more broadly in the hospitality sector, also within policymaking.

Benefit is not the same as support, but it can contribute to it. Research shows that when residents have positive experiences with tourism, they are often more likely to support it. Benefit is also not the same as involvement, but involvement can contribute to greater benefit. For instance, when residents participate in policy decisions, it can result in a form of tourism that adds value

to the community. In addition, it can increase awareness of the positive effects of tourism.

2.2 Impact dimensions of resident benefit

Resident benefit can arise from the three types of tourism impacts: economic, sociocultural, and environmental. Only some of these impacts are positive for residents. These impacts collectively constitute a resident benefit.

Economic impacts

This concerns the positive impacts that visitors have on residents' livelihood opportunities. Consider, for example, employment or increased property values. Some residents benefit directly as entrepreneurs or employees in the tourism and recreation sector, in the form of turnover, profit, or wages.

Land and real estate can increase in value, and the quality of tourism products can improve. The contribution of tourism to the entrepreneurial climate and innovation capacity also falls under this dimension.

2. What are resident benefits?

Sociocultural impacts

This concerns the positive impacts visitors have on the sociocultural aspects of residents’ lives. Consider social or cultural activities that focus on tourism and bring residents together, as well as encounters between visitors and residents that enrich the community. Non-local visitors can also give residents a sense of pride in their living environment.

Impacts on the living environment

This concerns the positive impacts visitors have on the quality of the local living environment. These include maintaining and improving local amenities (waste management, health, safety, utilities), infrastructure, investments in and preservation of nature and cultural heritage, enhanced quality of public spaces (appearance, atmosphere), and a certain degree of vibrancy.

The three impact dimensions are not necessarily equally important. Research in Zeeland

(HZ Coastal Tourism Knowledge Centre, 2024), for example, shows that residents are primarily aware of the positive economic effects and value them the most.

2.3 Experiential dimensions of resident benefit

Actual versus perceived

Some tourism impacts can be identified in practice (for example, the number of jobs in tourism or a price increase due to tourism), but labelling these impacts as resident benefits almost always requires a subjective assessment. For example, some may believe that the region is becoming too dependent on tourism, so the large number of jobs is not necessarily seen as a positive development. Furthermore, tourism-induced inflation can have a very negative impact on some residents, while others actually benefit from it. In line with this, this study focuses on

measuring perception: how residents themselves view the impact of tourism.

Conscious versus unconscious

Resident benefit encompasses all impacts of tourism that are positive for residents. This includes both impacts residents are aware of and those they are unaware of. Consider, for example, a supermarket in a small town that exists thanks to tourism. Residents may be unaware that this supermarket exists, thanks to tourism. In that case, there are opportunities to highlight the positive effects better.

Therefore, there may be impacts that (according to specific criteria and/or in the eyes of experts/stakeholders) have a positive effect on residents, but are not valued as such by them. This is the case if residents are unaware of these impacts, but also if, from their own perspective and value judgment, they do not view these impacts as positive. The opposite is also possible: residents

may assume positive effects that do not actually exist.

The national ambition is that every citizen benefits from tourism. This means not only that residents should benefit from tourism but also that they are aware of its positive impact and value it accordingly.

Individual versus collective

Resident benefits arise at two levels: the resident level (individual) and the community level (collective). Tourist spending, for example, can lead to growth in the local economy (collective) and simultaneously to higher incomes for specific residents (individual). Research in Zeeland (HZ Coastal Tourism Knowledge Centre, 2024) showed that residents generally value tourism for the community more highly than for themselves. This means that benefits at the community level are not necessarily experienced as benefits for each individual.

2. What are resident benefits?

The national ambition that every citizen benefits from tourism goes beyond simply creating collective benefits. We strive for individual benefits, where the added value of tourism is consciously experienced and appreciated by residents.

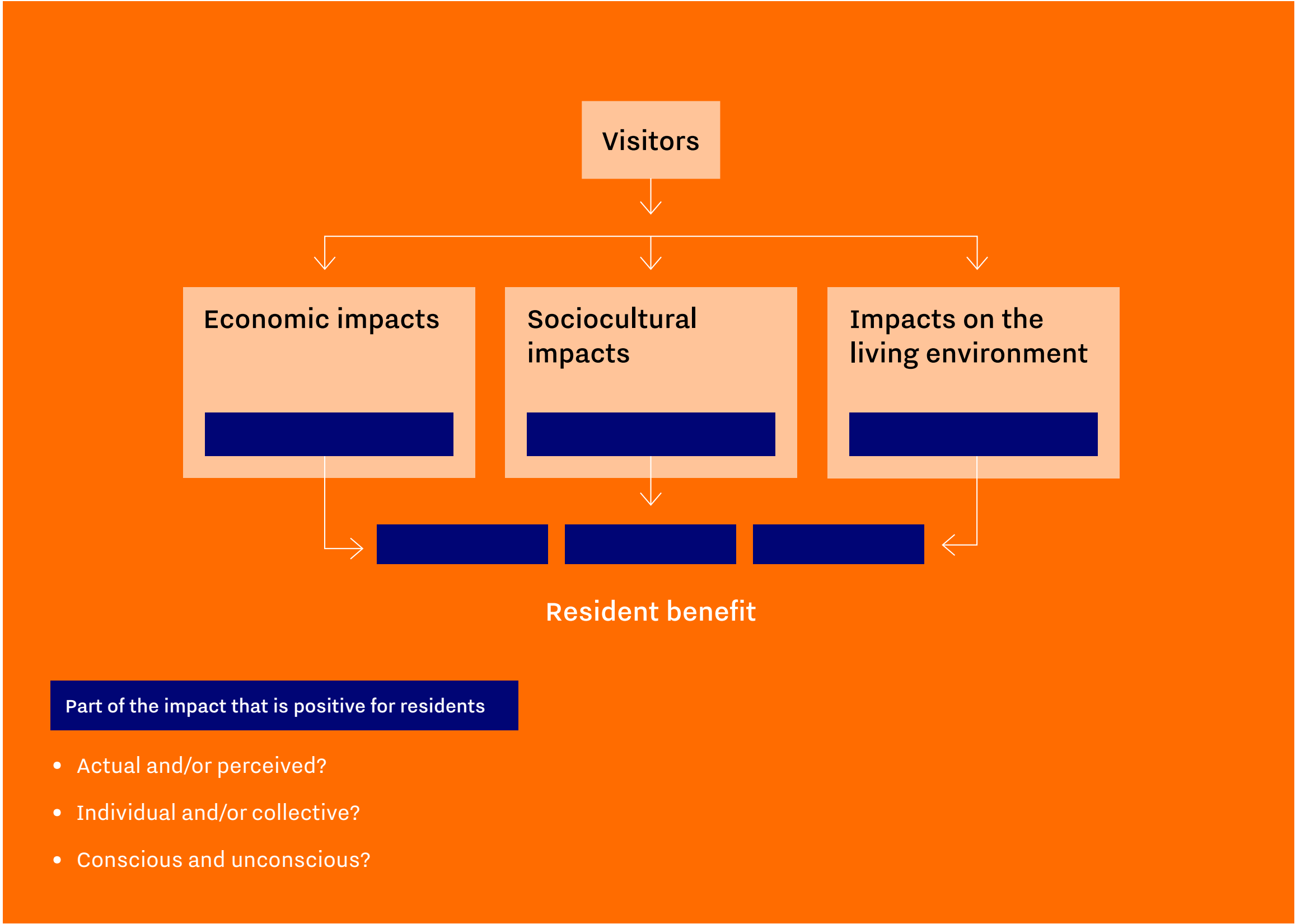
Figure 1 presents the above schematically. The orange blocks in the middle represent the “impact dimensions”, and the three dots on the left represent the “experience dimensions”.

2.4 Relationship with measurement methods

In Chapter 4, we evaluate measurement methods for their suitability for measuring resident benefit. As described above, the emphasis is on methods that measure perception, not on the actual measurement of impact. Many of the methods offer the opportunity to examine both individual and collective impacts. Consider a survey where you can use statements about the extent to which a resident benefits and the extent to which they recognise that the entire community benefits. The methods can also be used to measure perceptions of impacts from

the economic, sociocultural, and living environment domains. Unconscious impact is difficult to measure, but can be indirectly visualised by calculating the difference between actual and perceived impact (where possible) and/or by applying a measurement method that raises awareness. ●

Figure 1 Theoretical framework for resident benefit as developed by the Koplopersgroep Bewonersprofijt (Resident Benefit Frontrunners Group) and specified during this research





3

Motivations for measuring resident benefits

3.1 Why measuring resident benefits is important for policymakers

As stated earlier, tourism and recreation offer not only economic benefits, but also ecological and social opportunities. The role of residents as stakeholders is becoming increasingly important in tourism policy. Mapping the positive effects of tourism for residents – or resident benefit – is valuable in this regard. It provides a basis for constructive discussion and helps policymakers gain a deeper understanding of how tourism contributes to the quality of life.

3.2 A better understanding of resident benefit

Understanding how resident benefits work and how they are experienced better enables policymakers to take measures that help reduce or counter negative sentiments and resistance. The specific set of concepts and tools thus developed contributes to the design of sustainable tourism policy in the broadest sense.

3.3 Emphasising positive impact

In dialogue with residents about tourism, negative aspects often prevail. By explicitly demonstrating how projects contribute to the living environment – for example, through improvements in infrastructure, culture, social cohesion, or vibrancy – the discussion becomes more balanced. This strengthens support among residents and prevents unnecessary tensions.

3.4 Community wellbeing

The wellbeing of the community is increasingly being considered in recreational tourism policies. This encompasses more than just economic impact. Positive effects such as cultural preservation, increased social connection, and revitalised living environments also contribute to greater wellbeing.

3.5 Building a destination together

Actively involving residents in tourism and recreation projects encourages commitment, ownership, and pride. For a significant improvement in resident benefits, it is also important to involve residents in shaping the development progress. The integration of services, retail, and hospitality into the overall offering, including the design of public spaces, must align with residents’ wishes, needs, and lifestyles. In other words, value creation must be achieved for both visitors and residents. This multifaceted value creation generally enriches the business case for these types of locations. ●

FEATURED EXAMPLE

How Drenthe is working on valuable visits

Tourism and recreation are of great value to visitors, businesses, and residents of Drenthe, and the province as a tourist destination. This belief underlies Perspective on Destination Drenthe 2030. In line with this vision, the opinions of residents are considered in new projects and plans. A key prerequisite in this vision is that the local community benefits from tourism developments. There is no standard approach to projects. The (research) approach always depends on the local situation.

The story of the Colonies of Benevolence

Johannes van den Bosch founded the Society of Benevolence in 1818 to offer low-income families a future in the Colonies of Benevolence. The majority of these colonies are located in Drenthe. UNESCO granted the Drenthe Colonies and a Flemish colony World Heritage status in July 2021. To better convey this unique story, a future perspective was developed.

For this purpose, I&O Research conducted a broad survey among residents in 2021. A random sample was drawn from the population of each municipality. These residents all received the

same questionnaire. Furthermore, the survey was based on previous resident surveys in the Netherlands and Flanders on residents' support for tourism. While the survey was labour-intensive, the approach yielded representative results that could be compared across different colonies. Residents overwhelmingly expressed pride in the history of the colonies and supported tourism. Residents also offered suggestions for further development of the narrative.

The story of Vincent van Gogh

Vincent van Gogh spent three months in Drenthe in 1883. During his stay, he underwent significant development as a person and an artist. Although he laid the foundation for his later masterpieces there, this period in Drenthe is not well-known. The Van Gogh House in Nieuw-Amsterdam/Veenoord plays a key role in conveying the story of this period. In collaboration with the municipality of Emmen, the large-scale renovation of the Van Gogh House was used as an opportunity to involve the village.

Since the story of Van Gogh's Drenthe period didn't resonate widely among residents,



How Drenthe is working on valuable visits

it was anticipated that there would be limited willingness to participate in research or engage in activities. Therefore, a different approach was chosen. First, through conversations with stakeholders, we explored the current state of the village, what residents were proud of, and what they wanted to change. We examined the connections between residents' wishes for their town and the ideas for the Van Gogh activities. Next, broader sentiment was gauged through a short poll on the Local Interest Facebook page. Many village residents are active on this Facebook page. Later, a short survey was distributed via the same Facebook page. While these polls are not representative, the research was accessible and still provided a good indication of the sentiment in the village. Moreover, it generated engagement.

The survey revealed that the proposed Van Gogh mural on the old grain silo and the creation of a flower meadow near the old grain silo, in particular, generated considerable enthusiasm, as they enhanced the village entrance. Many volunteers were involved in these activities.

New plans and approach

In 2024, the Province of Drenthe presented a new Recreation and Tourism Agenda. Simultaneously, Marketing Drenthe developed a new multi-year plan. For these plans, research was conducted on residents' attitudes toward tourism and their own recreational opportunities. The study was conducted through the Drenthe Panel, which reaches over 6,000 residents. This panel, owned by the Provincial Council, provides a representative picture. The results showed that Drenthe residents are generally satisfied with their recreational opportunities and have a positive attitude toward tourism.

In Drenthe, the most valuable approach is sought for each project, depending on the local context. The focus is not only on securing support for development, but also on explicitly addressing the needs of residents. Research can be an intervention in itself, thus ensuring increased engagement. In this way, Drenthe works on developments that are valuable to both visitors and residents. ●

4

Methods for measuring resident benefit

4.1 Overview of the various methods

This chapter forms the core of this publication. To gain insight into the benefits of tourism among residents, various measurement methods can be used, either in combination or independently.

In this chapter, we compare these methods. Our interviews show that there is no single method that is most suitable for measuring resident benefit; it always requires a customised approach and often a combination of multiple processes, complementing each other, to obtain a comprehensive picture.

We discussed possible methods for measuring (tourism) impacts with over 30 practical experts and researchers from the Netherlands and abroad. These included both obvious and commonly used options (questionnaire research, focus groups, and interviews) and innovative methods, such as sensory research. We then examined all these potential methods to determine their practical applicability for a Dutch destination and their ability to measure resident benefit. This resulted in a shortlist of eight promising methods.

Shortlist for measuring resident benefits

The following methods can be used effectively to measure resident benefit, either individually or in combination.

- **Questionnaire research (survey):** a structured method for systematically collecting opinions, experiences, and perceptions. This method often has a quantitative approach.
- **Focus group:** a qualitative research method in which a structured discussion is conducted with several participants, usually at least four, to explore a specific topic or issue in depth.
- **Interview:** a qualitative research method that helps gather in-depth information by directly talking to individuals.
- **Photo elicitation:** a research method that uses photographs to stimulate conversations and insights.
- **Participatory mapping:** a way to visually map how participants view and experience a place.
- **Arts-based research (ASR):** a research approach that uses artistic processes to explore, represent, and interpret human experiences.
- **Online dialogue:** a focus group using a digital platform. Depending on the platform

4.1 Overview of the various methods

chosen, participants can enhance each other's posts with comments, likes, images, GIFs, and videos.

- **Social media monitoring and social listening:** this involves collecting, structuring, and analysing online and public posts (on social media platforms, forums, blogs, etc.). Social listening consists in understanding what people say and, more importantly, why they say it, as well as identifying the underlying trends or themes.

Method comparison

The choice of a method depends, among other things, on the type of insights you want to obtain (qualitative/quantitative) and the goal you want to achieve. The destination's context, budget, and monitoring and/or benchmarking options also play a role. The key differences between the methods, based on these and other criteria, are outlined in [the methods overview](#).

In the following sections, we will delve deeper into each method, discussing its content, its capabilities, and how it scores on the criteria. We will also describe practical examples (where applicable) and provide some useful tips for implementing the method.



Methods overview

↓ Click on the method title to go directly to the section.

Selection criteria							
Data type	Quantitative With the possibility of qualitative additions through open-ended questions.	Qualitative Emphasis on personal experiences and opinions. Nonverbal cues can be important.	Qualitative Depending on the design, the emphasis can be on personal experiences and opinions or on group interactions. Nonverbal cues and dynamics can be important.			Qualitative Emphasis on personal experiences/opinions. Impossible to pick up nonverbal cues. Different dynamics compared to physical methods.	Qualitative and quantitative
Representative insights into how residents view tourism	● ● ● ● ●	● ●	● ●	●	●	●	●
Level of detail of results	● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ●
Complexity	● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ● ●
Understandable results	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●
Speed/Availability	● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ●
Costs of implementing the method	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●
Respondent effort	● ● ● ●	● ● ●	● ●	●	● ●	●	● ● ● ● ●
Dependence on other parties to conduct research	● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ●	● ● ● ●
Privacy	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ●

Methods overview

↓ Click on the method title to go directly to the section.

Selection criteria								
Possibility of real-time monitoring	● ● ● ● ●	● ●	●	●	● ●	●	● ●	● ● ● ● ●
Possibility of benchmarking	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ●	●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●
Possibility of measuring the various impacts	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●
Measures the conscious impact	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●
Measures the unconscious impact	● ●	● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ●
Measures the collective benefit	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	●
Measures the individual benefit	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●

Methods overview

Legend

Data type Type of data collected, such as quantitative or qualitative data, and its suitability for answering the research question.	Complexity Lower/higher complexity requires fewer/more analytical skills and interpretation to achieve clear insights.	Costs of implementing the method Expenses required for implementing the method (including participant recruitment, materials or software, hiring expertise, etc.)	Privacy Does the method safeguard the privacy of respondents (personal data and opinions)?	Ability to measure different impacts The extent to which the method allows for measuring various types of impact, such as economic, sociocultural effects, and the impact on the living environment – as described in the <i>Residents’ Benefit Model</i> (Chapter 2).	Measures unconscious impact The extent to which the method is suitable for ‘measuring’ elements of residents’ benefit that residents are not initially aware of, but which they may recognise as such after becoming conscious of them – see Chapter 2.
Representative insights into residents’ perceptions of tourism Does the method yield generalisable results based on the correspondence between respondent characteristics and the entire study population?	Understandable results Does the research lead to outcomes that are relatively easy/difficult to explain to non-experts?	Respondent effort Does the research require preparation and effort by respondents?	Possibility of real-time monitoring Is it possible to carry out real-time monitoring to track the development of residents’ benefit over time?	Measures conscious impact The extent to which the method measures residents’ benefit that people are explicitly aware of – see Chapter 2.	Measures collective benefit The extent to which the method measures the collective residents’ benefit of tourism –see Chapter 2.
Level of detail of results How in-depth and specific are the data obtained, with a higher level of detail providing more insight into complex patterns and nuances?	Speed/availability Time required to go from a question about resident benefits to a ready-to-use answer?	Dependence on other parties to conduct research Are other parties required to carry out the research (for example, external consultants/researchers, the use of specific software, etc.)?	Possibility of benchmarking Is it possible to compare results over time and between destinations?	Measures individual benefit The extent to which the method measures the residents’ benefit of tourism at the <i>individual</i> level – see Chapter 2.	
..... High representativeness	 Easy to explain	 Low effort	 Privacy safeguarded	 Highly suitable for measuring these impacts	 Highly suitable for measuring this
..... High level of detail	 Quickly from question to answer	 Little dependence on others	 Extensive benchmarking possibilities	 Highly suitable for measuring this	 Highly suitable for measuring this



4.2 Questionnaire research

Questionnaire research is a structured method for systematically collecting opinions, experiences, and perceptions. It offers the opportunity to obtain representative and replicable insights.

Questionnaire research is a research method in which data is collected by having participants – often a sample from the entire population being studied – answer a set of predefined questions. The goal is to obtain information about their opinions, behaviours, attitudes, knowledge, or other characteristics in a structured manner.

Relevance to measuring resident benefits

Questionnaire research, applied to resident benefits, can provide insight into how residents view tourism and its impacts. The method is therefore aimed at uncovering perceptions. This can include both the perception of the effects for the individual resident and the effects at the local community level (neighbourhood/district, municipality, region, etc.).

Initially, this will focus on the impacts of tourism that residents are already aware of. While not impossible, a questionnaire is less suitable for investigating effects that are not known to residents. Methods that involve engaging in conversations with residents offer more possibilities for this.

A questionnaire can be tailored to specific target groups, themes, and local circumstances.

In addition to quantitative insights (closed-ended or multiple-choice questions), this method also allows for obtaining qualitative insights (open-ended questions). This method enables the comparison of large groups of people, allowing conclusions to be drawn about the entire population.

What sub-methods/options are available?

There are many different forms of questionnaire research. Below, we list a few examples, categorised by time frame, channel, respondent recruitment method, and question type.

Time frame

- **Cross-sectional:** A one-time measurement of a group of respondents at a specific point in time. Suitable for capturing a snapshot. (For example: what do residents think about tourism at time X?)

4.2 Questionnaire research

- **Longitudinal:** Repeated measurements over a longer period with the same respondents or groups. Suitable for monitoring trends, changes, or effects. (For example: a change in perception of the impact of tourism due to an increase in tourism in region Y.)
- **Flash survey:** A shortened questionnaire. For example, to insert the probe in the interim during longitudinal research.

Channel

- **Online:** Distributed via email, websites, apps, and QR-codes. This leads to rapid dissemination and often automatic data processing. Disadvantages include limited access for people without internet skills, as well as limited control over who participates.
- **Telephone:** Respondents are called, and questions are answered verbally. Advantages include personal contact and the opportunity for clarification. Disadvantage: Telephone research is time-consuming.

- **Paper:** Mailed questionnaires that respondents physically complete and return. This method is suitable for target groups without internet access, but may be less effective with younger target groups. Paper-based research leads to slower data processing and higher costs.
- **Face-to-face:** Direct interviews, for example, on the street or in shopping malls. This can lead to a high response rate and offers opportunities for observation. However, face-to-face research is labour-intensive and geographically limited.
- **Combinations:** For example, an invitation to participate is sent by letter, which includes a link to an online questionnaire.

Target group or recruitment method

- **Panel:** A fixed group of respondents is contacted at successive points in time. This ensures data consistency and makes longitudinal research easier to conduct. However, there is a risk of research fatigue.

When using an existing panel, it is also questionable whether the members correspond to the target group for the study.

- **Open access:** Anyone can participate (for example, via a public link). This allows for broad participation. However, there is less control over representativeness.
- **Targeted sampling:** Focused on specific individuals or groups within the population (residents with a specific socio-demographic profile). This approach can yield more relevant data, but it is more time-consuming to organise.
- **Random sampling:** For example, from a municipality's Personal Records Database (BRP). A random sample is an essential prerequisite for applying statistics later and for making statements that are valid for the entire population. It is, however, a relatively expensive option, as residents then must be contacted by letter (high postage costs).

Type of questions

- **Open-ended questionnaires:** Questions with free-form answers. This can result in rich data. However, the analysis is labour-intensive.
- **Closed-ended questionnaires:** Easy to analyse, but less nuanced in the answers.
- **Hybrid questionnaires:** A combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions.

Pros and cons

Questionnaire research is a valuable method for measuring resident benefits. It offers a structured and consistent way to collect data. By using standardised questions, researchers can obtain reliable information on relevant aspects of tourism. For example, how do residents perceive the number and behaviour of visitors? What added value do they attribute to the visit in terms of economic, social, cultural,

4.2 Questionnaire research

and environmental impacts? How do they weigh the various impacts of visitors? Moreover, questionnaire research is ideally suited for obtaining insights that are representative of the entire community. With large-scale samples, socio-demographic differences can be analysed, as well as trends in perceptions over time. This makes it possible to identify patterns and correlations relevant to policymaking.

A key advantage of questionnaire research is its efficiency. Large amounts of data can be collected relatively quickly, especially when using online tools. The results are easy to analyse. Standardisation also allows for comparisons between regions or over time. This facilitates benchmarking.

However, questionnaire research also has limitations. A significant challenge is its lack of depth. While questionnaires are effective at measuring quantitative insights, they fall short

in understanding residents' emotional reactions, complex nuances, or behavioural adjustments. This can lead to superficial answers, particularly when residents are asked to reflect on how their opinions have developed over time or how they perceive the impact of visitors. Because the methodology doesn't allow for probing, unclear answers cannot be further clarified, leading to interpretation problems.

The closed nature of many questions in a questionnaire can prevent respondents from fully expressing their views. Open-ended questions can partially address this problem. Other methods, such as focus groups, are more suitable for eliciting spontaneous insights and group dynamics. Another point of concern with questionnaire research is that the validity of the results depends heavily on the quality of the questionnaire. Unclear or poorly worded questions can severely limit the value of the collected data.

While questionnaires are suitable for broad samples, their representativeness is not guaranteed. Success depends on the response rate, adjustments for non-response, and sample selection. Furthermore, questionnaire research is less effective for discovering new insights or unexpected themes. Qualitative methods such as focus groups do offer this exploratory flexibility.

In conclusion, questionnaire research offers an efficient and structured way to measure broad trends, quantitative perceptions, and socio-demographic differences. However, its lack of depth and flexibility makes this method less suitable for fully understanding nuances and emotional responses. For a complete and nuanced picture of resident benefit, it is recommended to combine questionnaire research with a qualitative method such as focus groups or interviews.

Criteria

Questionnaire research

Criterion	Score	
Type of data gathering		Quantitative, with the possibility of qualitative additions through open-ended questions.
Validity*		High validity can be achieved in questionnaire research, provided the questions are clearly and unambiguously formulated and based on validated questions or scales. However, if the answers are ambiguous, there is no opportunity to ask further questions, which can lead to interpretation problems.
Reliability		Highly reliable, because the use of a fixed set of questions and statements ensures consistent measurements that are easily repeatable.
Representativeness**		Excellent for research where representativeness is essential. However, the degree of representativeness depends on the sample size, the respondent selection method, any corrections for under- and overrepresentation, and how non-response is handled.
Level of detail of results		Results can be analysed down to the residential area or neighbourhood level, but this entails higher costs. The depth of data per respondent is usually limited. There is also little room to delve deeper into specific topics or considerations. This depends partly on the length of the questionnaire.
Complexity		Questionnaires can be easily programmed using survey software. However, designing a good questionnaire and correctly analysing the results requires expertise. In the Netherlands, various regions use questionnaires based on the internationally adopted RETS-model (although the emphasis there is more on support for tourism than on resident benefits). However, many other questionnaires are also used, both in the Netherlands and internationally. This limits uniformity.

Criterion	Score	
Understandable results		The results can be presented in various ways (such as text, graphs, or infographics). This makes them accessible to non-experts. However, simple presentations can lead to overly simplistic or incorrect interpretations.
Speed/availability		This depends on the scope and complexity of the study. Developing a new questionnaire is time-consuming, and longitudinal research can take years. Survey software can often generate basic results quickly, but more complex analyses require more time.
Costs		Compared to other methods, the cost per respondent is relatively low. However, the total costs can be high due to the often large sample size. Costs also depend on the access channel (telephone, mail, online, etc.) and the geographical level of detail (national, regional, local).
Time effort respondents		Questionnaires generally require less time from respondents than other methods, depending on the length of the questionnaire.
Dependence on other parties to conduct research		A research agency is often required to develop the questionnaire, access respondents, and conduct the data analysis.
Privacy		Questionnaires can be completed completely anonymously, ensuring respondent privacy is well-protected.
Possibility of real-time measuring		Some survey tools allow live monitoring of questionnaire completion, providing real-time insights.
Possibility of benchmarking		Questionnaire research is easily replicated in other regions or time periods, provided the questions remain consistent. This facilitates effective comparisons.

* Validity of a measurement method refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument actually measures what it intends to measure.
** Representativeness refers to the extent to which a sample or dataset accurately reflects the total population you intend to study.

Practical tips

1. Carefully consider the target group and how you recruit respondents. The recruitment method influences the representativeness of the study (see also [Chapter 5](#)).

2. A good balance between completion time (not too long) and content (sufficient insights) is essential. Therefore, critically examine the added value of each question: what do you really want to know, and what will you do with that information?

3. Provide the questionnaire with a clear and concise introduction, outlining the purpose of the study, what will be done with the results, the topics covered, and how long it will take to complete.
4. Ask basic questions (e.g., about gender, age, postal code, and whether they work in the tourism and recreation sector) at the beginning of the questionnaire. This prevents answers from being omitted if respondents drop out mid-question. Conversely, there is a risk that respondents will drop out if they must complete several “boring” questions first. A balance must be found between these two.

5. Using statements in a questionnaire is possible, but they must be provocative and formulated in various directions to achieve a nuanced picture.

6. Ensure the questionnaire has a logical structure and includes short, explanatory texts at the beginning of each section so respondents know what to expect.
7. Test the questionnaire with participants who are a good representation of your target group to ensure all questions are understandable.

8. Consider using the questionnaire as a basis for further discussions with residents. Include permission in the questionnaire to contact them for any in-depth discussions.

9. Consider repeating the survey periodically to monitor sentiment.
- See [Chapter 5](#) for more general tips for resident benefit research.

Case studies

Research has been conducted in various regions on the positive and negative effects of tourism as perceived by residents, usually as part of a larger study on public support for tourism. In the Netherlands, questionnaires based on the *Resident Empowerment through Tourism Scale (RETS-model)* are used in various regions. Several other models are also used abroad, such as the *Tourism Approval Rating in Ireland* and the *Tourismus Akzeptanz Score* in Germany.

- Resident survey on support for tourism (including positive effects) in Zeeland
 - [Survey for the municipality of Schouwen-Duiveland](#) based on a revised questionnaire (2024)
 - [Provincial survey based on the RETS-model](#) (2022)
- Resident survey on support for tourism (including positive effects) in Flanders
 - [Image for the art cities](#) partly based on the RETS-model (2023)

- Resident survey on support for tourism (including positive effects) in the Hanseatic Cities
 - Based on the RETS-model (2020)
- Resident survey on support for tourism (including positive effects) in South Limburg
 - Image for the municipality of Gulpen-Wittem based on the RETS-model (2019)
- Resident survey on support for tourism (including positive effects) in Germany
 - Based on the Tourismus Akzeptanz Score (2024)
- Resident survey on support for tourism (including positive effects) in Ireland
 - Based on the Tourism Approval Rating (2023)
- Resident survey with a broader focus in Friesland
 - Based on panel research, with some components from the RETS-model (2020)

Sample questions for a questionnaire survey

Below are sample questions for a questionnaire survey with potential benefits of tourism, divided across the three impact dimensions.

Economic

- I believe the tourism sector offers residents attractive jobs (e.g., interaction with guests, flexible working hours).
- I believe tourism is good for the local economy.
- Tourism in my [neighbourhood, municipality, region, etc.] helps me pay my bills.

Sociocultural

- Tourism makes me feel proud to be a resident of my [neighbourhood, municipality, region, etc.].
- Tourism makes me feel more connected to other residents.
- Tourism offers me opportunities to learn more about other cultures.

- Tourism allows me to have pleasant interactions with visitors.
- I believe tourism contributes to a more vibrant social and cultural life (e.g., a wider range of cultural activities, more local events and markets).

Living Environment

- In my opinion, tourism increases the focus on preserving the natural environment.
- In my opinion, tourism improves the appearance of my [neighbourhood, municipality, region, etc.].
- In my opinion, tourism increases the focus on preserving our cultural identity and historic buildings.
- Tourism provides more recreational opportunities for me as a resident (e.g., cycling and walking paths and day attractions).
- Tourism improves the quality of life for me as a resident.

- Tourism increases the number of shops and restaurants, which I also benefit from as a resident.
- Tourism increases the number of (public) transportation options, which I can also use as a resident.
- Tourism promotes the organisation of more events that are also attractive to me as a resident.
- Tourism has increased my access to healthcare services, such as general practitioners and pharmacies.
- Tourism has made my living environment more vibrant. ●

Source: Schouwen-Duiveland resident survey questionnaire, HZ Coastal Tourism Knowledge Centre, 2024

FEATURED EXAMPLE

Questionnaire survey Zeeland

* Boley, B. B., McGehee, N. G., Perdue, R. R., & Long, P. (2014). Empowerment and resident attitudes toward tourism: Strengthening the theoretical foundation through a Weberian lens. *Annals of Tourism research*, 49, 33-50.

Zeeland has long been a province par excellence for tourism. In 2023, 21.7 million overnight stays were recorded, and nearly €3.4 billion was spent on the leisure sector. The tourism sector is of significant economic importance in Zeeland, making a substantial contribution to maintaining local amenities. Nevertheless, public opinion about tourism is not always positive. Some residents believe that there are too many visitors, especially during the summer months, and that this causes a nuisance. Commissioned by the Province of Zeeland and Zeeland municipalities, the HZ Knowledge Centre for Coastal Tourism has therefore been conducting a large-scale questionnaire survey regularly since 2019 to gain insight into the extent to which residents support tourism and how they experience its positive and negative effects. The primary reason for selecting a questionnaire survey is the desire to obtain the most objective and representative picture possible of the average resident's opinion.

Approach

Until 2022, the research questionnaire was based entirely on the Resident Empowerment through Tourism Scale (RETS-model)*. This model provides

insight into the various aspects that determine residents' opinions about tourism and allows for the exploration of their interrelationships. The model comprises seven “concepts”, each measured by six to ten corresponding statements.

Although the RETS-model provides a strong theoretical foundation for the questionnaire, its application also entails certain limitations. The questionnaire proved to be too long, too complex, and repetitive. Moreover, important topics are missing, and the statements can lead to a picture that is not nuanced enough. Therefore, the decision was made to abandon this model and develop a new questionnaire. The result of this process is a questionnaire with a straightforward and more logical structure, which better reflects current knowledge questions and provides a much more nuanced picture.

The new questionnaire consists of three main sections:

1. **Opinion on the extent of tourism:** Questions about residents' perceptions of

the number of visitors, the growth in recent years, the impact of tourism on crowd levels, the distribution of visitors throughout the year, and the locations and times when it becomes too crowded.

2. **Opinion on the advantages and disadvantages of tourism:** A total of 36 statements about 18 potential advantages and 18 potential disadvantages of tourism in the areas of economy, culture & society, and living environment, followed by a request to indicate which of these they consider most important (top 5).

3. **Opinion on tourism as a whole:** Questions about how residents collectively and personally weigh the advantages and disadvantages of tourism, the impact on their quality of life, their views on nuisance, the extent of their support for tourism, and whether this support has changed over the past five years.

The idea is that by completing the questionnaire, residents are encouraged to consider all the

Questionnaire
survey Zeeland

possible effects of tourism, both positive and negative, and that they will then reach a well-considered final assessment based on this.

Recruiting respondents

A key goal of the questionnaire survey was to provide the most representative possible picture of the opinions of all residents, both per village and for the municipality as a whole. The required number of respondents for each village was determined using a standard formula based on the number of residents. The city of Schouwen-Duiveland then drew a random sample from the population database (BRP) at the instruction of HZ Knowledge Centre for Coastal Tourism and sent the selected residents an invitation letter with a link to the questionnaire and a personal login code. A reminder was sent after two weeks, if necessary. To maximise participation, the municipality made several gift vouchers available for raffle among participants.

Weighting

To ensure representative results for the municipality as a whole, weighting was applied for age and residential area. The results at the residential area level are indicative.

Results

The updated questionnaire was first deployed in Schouwen-Duiveland in the spring of 2024. Over 2,000 of the 8,000 invited residents completed the questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of 26%. For the substantive results, please refer to the research report, which can be downloaded here.

Learnings

The questionnaire survey is generally considered the most thorough study in Zeeland on residents' perceptions of tourism. It meets the need for a representative picture of residents' opinions. Local politicians attach great value to this. For municipal councils, the survey serves as a crucial tool for debates on tourism and recreation developments, informing decision-making processes.

Some important observations are:

- The questionnaire should not be too long, it should have a logical structure, and the questions should be as comprehensible as possible.
- Choosing the topics to be surveyed and translating this into a good questionnaire requires sufficient time, attention, and diverse perspectives.
- Due to GDPR legislation, the cooperation of municipalities is required for drawing a sample from the BRP.
- Sending invitations by letter leads to high postage costs, but there is currently no reasonable alternative.
- A disadvantage of questionnaire research is that it does not allow for probing. The study provides a general overview. However, this allows for interviews with residents to explore topics in more detail. It is therefore recommended to use this type of research as a basis for in-depth focus groups per residential area. ●



4.3 Focus group

A focus group is a qualitative research method in which a specific topic or issue is explored in depth through a structured discussion with multiple participants (usually at least four). This approach emphasises a clearly defined theme and aims to understand how individuals within a group setting discuss with each other, respond to each other's opinions, and collectively make meaning of them. In other words, how participants form a “social construction”. The session is led by a moderator or facilitator, who guides the discussion without exerting excessive control. This ensures that participants can express their opinions freely while maintaining relevance to the research objectives.

This method is particularly well-suited for discovering the reasons behind participants' attitudes. Central to this is the creation of an environment in which individuals can question and challenge each other and refine their perspectives. Such interactions often result in a diversity of viewpoints and allow participants to expand or adapt their opinions in response to the group dynamics. Compared to a survey or interview, this leads to a richer and more nuanced understanding of the subject.

Relevance to measuring resident benefits

Focus groups are a powerful tool for exploring how residents perceive the benefits of tourism. This includes not only personal benefits but also the impact on the community as a whole. In a focus group, residents can engage in conversation, share ideas, and discover what unites or divides them.

These conversations often reveal needs and concerns that might not be apparent in individual interviews or questionnaires. For instance, someone might point out a neighbourhood improvement that another person hadn't thought of but finds essential, such as reserving parking spaces for residents during peak season. These exchanges clarify which opinions are most common and why some viewpoints are more influential than others. Focus groups thus provide insight into how residents experience the benefits of tourism and which issues are relevant within the community.

In short, the method offers insights into both individual and collective, conscious and unconscious perceptions, and the underlying values. This makes a focus group particularly well-suited for understanding the nuances of resident benefits.

What sub-methods/options are available?

Traditional (in-person) focus groups

Traditional focus groups take place in a physical location where participants discuss the topic under the guidance of a moderator. This method is particularly suitable for rich, face-to-face interactions where nonverbal cues such as body language and tone of voice can provide more depth to the data. However, organising an in-person focus group requires careful logistical planning, including arranging a suitable venue and coordinating participant travel.

Online focus groups

Online focus groups are conducted via videoconference or text-based platforms, allowing participants to participate remotely. This is particularly suitable for geographically dispersed groups, sensitive topics requiring greater anonymity, and reducing logistical

barriers such as travel time. While this method is convenient, the lack of specific nonverbal cues can be a drawback. The success of online focus groups depends heavily on reliable technology and clear guidelines to ensure participant engagement (see also online dialogue research methods).

Creative/activity-based focus groups

Creative focus groups involve activities such as brainstorming, role-playing, or creating visual representations, such as drawings or mind maps, which relate to the topic being studied. This method encourages creativity and engagement. The success of this approach depends on experienced moderators, who must strike a balance between conducting activities and facilitating meaningful discussions (see also research methods photo-elicitation, participatory mapping, and arts-based research).

Expert focus groups

Expert focus groups bring together participants with expertise in the subject matter to discuss specialised topics. This method is effective for in-depth research on complex issues.

Extended focus groups

Extended focus groups are held over multiple sessions rather than in a single meeting. This is useful for longitudinal research or situations where building trust with participants is crucial. However, organising extended focus groups requires a greater time investment from both participants and researchers. Maintaining consistency in participation can also be challenging.

Pros and cons

Regarding measuring resident benefits, focus groups are particularly well-suited for exploring subjective and nuanced topics. These may

include how residents experience the number and behaviour of visitors, their reflections on positive and negative impacts, and the value they assign to various forms of benefits. Residents can also share emotional reactions in a focus group, such as positive emotions related to tourism. However, the latter is not often considered a primary theme. Focus groups offer valuable insights into behavioural changes and historical influences on perceptions. On the other hand, some criteria, such as socio-demographic factors and broader generalisability, are better assessed with (supplemental) methods like surveys.

While focus groups are a powerful tool for understanding collective perspectives, they also have limitations. For example, the researcher has limited control over the data generated. Furthermore, analysing the amount of qualitative data produced can be challenging. Furthermore, coordinating participant schedules

4.3 Focus group

and ensuring their attendance requires significant effort. Recording and transcribing the sessions is essential to accurately capture the richness of the discussion and the interaction between participants.

Despite these challenges, focus groups remain a valuable method for exploring complex issues, discovering diverse perspectives, and gaining insight into how individuals collectively construct meaning. ●

Another disadvantage is that group dynamics can lead some participants to give socially desirable answers rather than their genuine opinions, especially on sensitive topics. Moreover, not all participants can articulate complex nuances clearly; for example, distinguishing between different types of tourists or weighing positive and negative effects. Furthermore, some participants are not fully aware of how their opinions have been formed over time. This can result in superficial answers that lack in-depth reflection. Finally, due to the limited number of participants, focus groups offer only a small number of residents the opportunity to share their opinions. The resulting picture may therefore be less representative of the community as a whole.

Criteria

Focus group

Criterion	Score	
Type of data gathering		Qualitative. Emphasis on group interactions surrounding personal experiences and opinions. Nonverbal cues and dynamics are also valuable.
Validity*		Focus groups collect rich, contextual data and allow participants to share their experiences and perspectives in their own words. The group interaction contributes to a deeper understanding of the research problem.
Reliability		The subjective nature of focus groups means that reliability can vary. Group dynamics and moderation style can influence the results, making replicability difficult. Strict moderation protocols can increase reliability.
Representativeness**		Focus groups are not intended for statistical representativeness and are less effective for quantifying the prevalence of opinions. They are more effective for obtaining qualitative insights. Careful selection of participants or a stratified sample can help cover a wide range of perspectives.
Level of detail of results		The method provides an opportunity to generate in-depth insights that highlight themes, patterns, and nuances in perceptions and experiences. While the technique yields many stories and experiences, it remains anecdotal. Provided the right questions are asked, focus groups offer a good combination of facts, general insights, and details.
Complexity		Focus groups require good organisation and moderation, as well as extensive analysis of group discussions, dynamics, and interactions. Analysing the results requires thematic analysis skills.

Criterion	Score	
Understandable results		The results are understandable and narrative-based, making them accessible to both researchers and stakeholders. Nevertheless, good analytical skills are also required for this type of research.
Speed/availability		This depends on the size and complexity of the study. Designing, organising, conducting, and analysing focus groups takes time. However, a simple focus group can be completed relatively quickly because its design often takes less time than, for example, a comprehensive questionnaire.
Costs		Costs can be high due to the required facilities, recording equipment, participant incentives, and analysis, but generally, they can be kept low.
Time effort respondents		Participants typically need to commit 1-2 hours, which is reasonable. A location that is difficult to access can increase the barrier to entry.
Dependence on other parties to conduct research		There is no direct dependency on external/third parties. However, a skilled focus group moderator is essential for a successful focus group.
Privacy		Privacy is an important consideration, as participants share their personal opinions in a group setting. Strict confidentiality guidelines must be adhered to.
Possibility of real-time measuring		Real-time monitoring is not possible.
Possibility of benchmarking		Benchmarking is limited due to the qualitative nature of the data. However, identifying broader trends or comparisons between groups and destinations is possible.

* Validity of a measurement method refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument actually measures what it intends to measure.

** Representativeness refers to the extent to which a sample or dataset accurately reflects the total population you intend to study.

Practical tips

1. The moderator must **strike a balance** between allowing a natural flow of conversation and intervening to steer it. Minimal intervention is preferred, but timely intervention may be necessary when discussions stall, stray too far off topic, or fail to address crucial insights. Moderators also encourage reluctant participants to contribute and remind the group to communicate in a structured manner.
 2. **Composite vs. natural groups.** Some researchers prefer participants who don't know each other to avoid predetermined interaction dynamics. A potential disadvantage of composite groups is that participants may feel less comfortable, which can lead to less open or superficial discussions. This can lead to the loss of valuable insights. Others choose natural groups, such as friends or colleagues, to foster authentic talks. Both approaches have pros and cons.
 3. The number of focus groups required depends on the research context. Data saturation – the point at which additional sessions yield little new information – often determines when to stop.
 4. **Group size typically ranges** from six to ten participants. Smaller groups of three to five are recommended when participants are likely to be deeply emotionally involved or have strong opinions on the topic. This is especially true when exploring personal experiences or controversial issues. Larger groups can be used when participant engagement is expected to be minimal or when a wide range of short suggestions is being collected. However, larger groups can pose challenges in stimulating active discussions and can complicate analysis.
 5. Limit the session to a **duration of 60–90 minutes** to maintain participant attention.
 6. Use a high-quality recorder (and video, if necessary) to document the session.
 7. Have an assistant take notes on notable moments in the group dynamics or nonverbal cues.
 8. Analyse comments in the context of the discussion, including group dynamics.
 9. Prepare for unexpected situations, such as no-shows.
- See [Chapter 5](#) for more general tips on resident benefit research.

FEATURED EXAMPLE

Focus groups to involve residents in tourism in Utrecht

Many destinations, including the city of Utrecht, are looking for effective ways to engage residents in tourism. What is the best way to engage with them? Where do you start as a destination? Utrecht Marketing, in collaboration with Utrecht University, the Municipality of Utrecht, and CELTH, conducted an exploratory study to develop a practical method for resident participation. The goal: to positively influence residents' attitudes toward tourism. The project team considered involvement and support essential for achieving benefits.

Approach

- 1 Questionnaire research among the residents' panel of the research agency Labyrinth to gain insight into attitudes toward tourism. The questionnaire was based on the RETS-model. The goal was to select focus groups based on an even distribution of residents with predominantly positive, neutral, and negative sentiments toward tourism.
- 2 Focus groups to engage residents and to implement an immediate intervention during

these conversations. The results of the questionnaire research also determined the topics of discussion. These were: 1) overcrowding and dispersal, 2) a business owner's perspective, 3) overnight stay policy with a focus on Airbnb and protecting the housing stock, and 4) overnight stay policy with a focus on hotels. Information on a specific topic was given during four evening sessions, each with a different group of residents. Afterwards, it was assessed to what extent providing this information (awareness) had a positive effect on sentiment. The resident participation ladder of the municipality of Utrecht was used as a tool during the focus groups.

Results and evaluation

- **Exploratory research stimulates the learning curve**
The project provided stakeholders with valuable insights into resident participation in the tourism sector. The exploratory nature of the research enabled extensive knowledge acquisition on how, as a DMO or municipality, you can take initial steps and foster interaction with residents.

- **Combining quantitative and qualitative research works well**
The RETS-model, a quantitative research approach, is a good starting point. It indicates resident sentiment, but that is not a goal in itself. What made this research special was the combination of quantitative measurement with an in-depth qualitative approach in the form of focus groups and the testing of various interventions through dialogue.
- **Local focus is essential**
Through engagement with residents at the residential and neighbourhood levels, listening to their concerns, and asking questions, a deeper understanding of local-level issues and their nuances emerges. Moreover, some concerns can be addressed immediately during these discussions. In this way, research alone can contribute to a more positive sentiment.
- **Selected interventions are partly effective**
The selected interventions proved partially effective. Visualising them using a resident participation ladder, in particular, worked well to facilitate discussion of the various roles

Focus groups to involve residents in tourism in Utrecht

of the municipality, DMO, and residents. The focus group gratefully received feedback on the RETS results from the quantitative research and made developing and prioritising themes more relevant and easier. The personal explanations from experts on various topics provided a deeper understanding and clarification of the tourism phenomenon. There is considerable interest in what happens behind the scenes at a municipality or DMO, and in the underlying figures. This creates a solid foundation for dialogue.

- **Some issues require a different approach**
There are also issues that the project team would have liked to have handled differently in retrospect. The choice of the entrepreneur for “Entrepreneur’s Perspective” is essential, including proper guidance and briefing. Focusing on a local hotel is more effective than a local cultural institution because of its direct connection to tourism. Tourism as a phenomenon is so vast and complex that it requires more precise delineation in advance. For example, it could also work by having participants complete a brief homework

assignment beforehand about their understanding of tourism.

- **Research experience is valuable for other destinations**
The most important value of the research, also for other destinations in the Netherlands, is the realisation that you have conversations about tourism with residents, not about them. This primarily requires a change in mindset, with an absolute focus on creating connections with residents and (local) businesses.

Want to know more?

The research report contains many more tips on organising participation through focus groups and can be read [here](#). ●



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4.4 Interview

An interview is a qualitative research method used to collect in-depth information through direct conversation with individuals. It is characterised as a two-way dialogue in which the interviewer asks questions and the interviewee provides answers.

Interviews can be conducted using a fixed set of questions (structured) or as an open conversation (unstructured). They are usually personal in nature and often take place face-to-face, although they can also be conducted by telephone or video call.

The personal interaction allows for the collection of detailed and nuanced responses. Interviews are particularly suitable for exploring complex topics, revealing contextual details, subtleties, and insights that often remain unnoticed in group discussions or surveys.

In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer uses a list of open-ended questions as a guide. This allows for the flexibility to allow the conversation to flow organically and to probe further on relevant topics. The goal is to create a safe and confidential environment in which the respondent can speak freely.

Relevance to measuring resident benefit

Interviews are particularly valuable for measuring resident benefit because this method allows for personal experiences, emotional reactions, or specific knowledge. An interview allows for a closer look at the perceptions of an individual, a specific resident. Interviews allow for in-depth analysis and the exploration of all perspectives critical to the interviewee. Unconsciously experienced benefit can also emerge in this way. This does require active guidance from the interviewer. Generalising the results is more difficult;

the interview primarily offers more profound richer insights when combined with other methods.

What sub-methods/options are available?

Semi-structured interviews

A flexible interview format in which the researcher uses a list of main questions, but allows for spontaneous follow-up questions and exploration of new topics. This method offers a balance between structured information and open-ended insights, making it widely applicable in qualitative research.

Unstructured interviews

A free-form conversation format without a fixed questionnaire, where the participant determines the direction of the conversation. This method is suitable for exploratory research and allows for unexpected and in-depth insights.

Narrative interviews

This method focuses on collecting personal stories about specific experiences or events. It helps researchers understand how people make meaning of experiences and how they structure them.

Key-informant interviews

Interviews with individuals with in-depth knowledge of a specific topic. This method is often used when specific expertise is needed, such as in policy development or urban issues.

Elicitation interviews

A method that uses visual or other stimuli, such as photos or objects, to help participants reflect and delve deeper into a theme. This promotes nuanced and rich conversations, especially with abstract or complex topics. See also photo-elicitation and participatory mapping.

Street interviews

Street interviews are short, informal interviews conducted in public spaces. Although street interviews are often random, they can also be targeted, for example, by approaching people – or selecting them through initial questions –

based on specific characteristics such as age, gender, occupation, interests, or location. A key aspect of street interviews is the context, which plays a crucial role in obtaining meaningful data. The context itself can also be part of the conversation, for example, by asking the interviewee about their experiences with the environment or how the current situation affects them.

Pros and cons

Interviews are particularly well-suited for exploring subjective, complex, and nuanced topics, such as resident benefits. Interviews enable residents to share their experiences with visitor presence and behaviour, including the positive and negative impacts they have, and the reasons behind these experiences. Unsolicited or unexpected experiences and emotions can also emerge during the interview, which are particularly valuable in better understanding the benefits to residents. However, it is essential to document these properly.

Interviews are beneficial for exploring individual perspectives, allowing for the perception of

specific residents. The method takes into account differences between residents. This immediately presents a disadvantage when processing and generalising the data; the volume of qualitative data – with relevant nuances – that is produced can be challenging to analyse in terms of time and effort. There are also organisational challenges, such as planning, organising, and conducting interviews, as well as communicating carefully with each respondent.

Individual interviews are less suitable for gaining insight into the dynamics and interactions within a group. Any emotions or tensions between residents (or groups) are also less easily revealed. Group interviews or focus groups are more suitable for this.

The selection of respondents is crucial; the picture painted by a single participant can be illustrative, but is not necessarily representative of the entire community.

The interviewer can also have a decisive influence by consciously or unconsciously influencing the course of the conversation and the interpretation of the results. This can be overcome by conducting the interview and data

analysis with two people. This makes the organisation more complex, but it can lead to better quality, as two people can hear more than one perspective and complement each other in their questions.

Despite their limitations, interviews – often used as a supplement or in combination with other methods – offer clear advantages in better understanding the benefits to residents.

An interview is a qualitative research method used to gather in-depth information by speaking directly with individuals. It is characterised as a two-way conversation, with the interviewer asking questions and the interviewee providing answers. This can be done either through a fixed questionnaire (structured) or in the form of an open conversation (unstructured). Interviews are typically personal. They often take place face-to-face, but can also be conducted by phone or video call. The personal interaction allows for detailed and in-depth answers. Interviews are particularly well-suited for exploring complex topics and uncovering nuances, contextual details, and insights that often remain unnoticed in group discussions or surveys.

Criteria

Interview

Criterion		Score
Type of data gathering		Qualitative. Emphasis on personal experiences and opinions. Nonverbal cues can be important.
Validity*		An interview allows a resident to share their experiences and perspectives in their own words.
Reliability		Reliability can vary. A (semi-)structured questionnaire can increase reliability.
Representativeness**		Interviews are not intended for statistical representativeness and are less effective for quantification, but rather for gaining qualitative insights. Careful selection of participants can help cover a wide range of perspectives.
Level of detail of results		The method provides in-depth insights that highlight themes, patterns, and nuances in perceptions and experiences. The method yields many stories and experiences, but remains anecdotal. It offers a good combination of facts, general insights, and details when the right questions are asked.
Complexity		Conducting interviews can be relatively simple, but it requires attention to well-thought-out interview instructions and adequate interviewing skills. Conducting them becomes more complex as a more unstructured approach is chosen. This involves preparation and strong interview skills, with attention to structure, dynamics, and interaction.
Understandable results		The results are comprehensible and narrative-based, making them accessible to both researchers and stakeholders. Nevertheless, good analytical skills are also required for this type of research.

Criterion		Score
Speed/availability		This depends on the size and complexity of the study. Designing, organising, conducting, and analysing interviews takes time (including turnaround time), but simple interviews can be implemented relatively quickly and ad hoc.
Costs		Costs can be high due to the required facilities, recording equipment, participant incentives, and analysis, but these costs can generally be kept low.
Time effort respondents		10-30 minutes per participant (scalable). This can be a barrier. It also depends on whether the interviews are scheduled or spontaneous.
Dependence on other parties to conduct research		There is no direct dependency on external/third parties. For public locations, consent, or at least coordination, is required.
Privacy		Privacy is a key consideration. Strict confidentiality guidelines must be adhered to. Prior consent from respondents is required. The physical setting (secure location) is also essential.
Possibility of real-time measuring		Real-time monitoring is only possible if interviews are conducted in a structured manner.
Possibility of benchmarking		Benchmarking is limited due to the qualitative nature of the data. Identifying broader trends or comparisons between respondents is possible, but may not be representative.

* Validity of a measurement method refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument actually measures what it intends to measure.

** Representativeness refers to the extent to which a sample or dataset accurately reflects the total population you intend to study.

Practical tips

1.

Create an interview guide. This includes the questions and themes, as well as the underlying goal of the research: what insight do we want to gain? This helps the interviewer stay on track and ask good follow-up questions. It also serves as a guide to ensure consistency without compromising flexibility in probing.
2.

Prepare the questions well. Practice a few times to see how the interview will flow.
3.

Think carefully about the location of the interview. A public space isn't always suitable due to noise and the risk of being overheard. Put yourself in the shoes of the people you want to interview; they should feel comfortable sharing their answers.
4.

The interviewer is not only the questioner but also the listener and should adjust or elaborate where necessary (see [Chapter 5](#), Facilitator).
5.

Recording an interview can be done in various ways. Recording in at least two different ways is recommended, for example, by dictaphone and telephone.

See [Chapter 5](#) for more general tips on resident benefit research.

FEATURED EXAMPLE

Haags BuurtBakkie

De Buurtbakkie-bus is parked on select days in a neighbourhood of The Hague, offering residents the opportunity to discuss wellbeing in their neighbourhood over a cup of coffee. It's a visible, accessible way to reach residents and conduct interviews. This format is also suitable for discussing specific topics, such as the effects of tourism and the future of the neighbourhood. The conversations can be completely open, more structured, or a combination of both ([Source](#)).

Another creative format is the “kitchen table conversation”, where policymakers, neighbourhood representatives, or other stakeholders visit residents at home. (Video calling is an online alternative; being able to see each other is essential.) The “kitchen table conversation” can range from an informal, open conversation to a more structured interview, including reporting. It's a way to gain in-depth insights from specific residents.

These kinds of “kitchen table conversations” are held around the energy transition.

Energieparticipatie.nl shared the following tips: “Make it clear in advance of the meeting what they are allowed to discuss and what you plan to do with the input you gather. It's impossible to speak with every household in an area. Ensure you can explain why you're addressing a specific group of people within a particular area in a personal capacity. And how others can contact you if they have questions.” ([Source](#)). ●



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4.5 Photo elicitation

Photo elicitation is a qualitative research method that uses photos to facilitate conversations and gain insights. The images help people reflect on specific topics or experiences. Participants are often asked to bring (self-taken) photos that reflect a particular meaning or emotion related to the research theme. This research method can be applied in the form of a one-on-one interview or a focus group.

The photos serve as conversation starters offering an accessible and informal way to discuss complex or personal topics. This not only promotes deeper conversations but also richer and more nuanced data. The method is often applied in social sciences, urban development, and tourism research, and helps researchers gain insights that would otherwise be difficult to uncover.

Relevance to measuring resident benefits

Photo elicitation is effective for eliciting personal stories and stimulating in-depth discussions. Photos, such as images of tourism and its impact on residents' daily lives, help explore topics such as residents' perceptions of visitor numbers, visitor behaviour, the economic and social added value of a visit, and the balance between positive and negative effects. Depending on the initial assignment, the photos can also lead to discussions about different types of visitors. Past experiences can be effectively depicted by having people bring along old photos. Discussions can also be held about their own behavioural changes. Socio-demographic factors can be considered in this research by requesting them beforehand. Unconscious resident benefits can also be highlighted in the discussions, but compared to more creative research methods, photo elicitation is less effective in this regard.

Pros and cons

A key advantage of photo elicitation is that it allows participants to visualise their perspectives and experiences. This leads to greater engagement in the conversations. It does, however, require specific skills and personality traits from the researcher. They must be able to create the conditions for a positive discussion, while also resisting the temptation to control the conversation.

In-depth personal stories, perspectives, and experiences can be gathered, which can be of great value for policymaking and communication. Moreover, visual stimuli can help stimulate memory and retrieve detailed recollections, leading to more accurate and rich answers. Photo-elicitation research is generally well-received by policymakers because it produces rich, well-illustrated results with relatable practical examples.

The method also has drawbacks: preparation and implementation are relatively time-consuming for both researchers and participants.

Furthermore, the nature of the method can induce biases among participants, for example, based on age or personal preferences. Analysing the data can be challenging, especially when transcribing diverse voices, and the coding process can be influenced by the personal assumptions and values of the researcher(s). The technique is most effective at the local or regional level and less so at higher scales. It works best when focusing on specific neighbourhoods or communities, where participants share similar contexts.

What sub-methods/possibilities are available?

As a research method, photo elicitation has various sub-methods and possibilities for

application, depending on the context and purpose of the research. A key choice is who provides the images: the interviewer or the participant. If the research is to address specific themes or topics, it is common for the interviewer to select the images. When participants provide images, it is assumed that they are emotionally meaningful.

Regarding the images used, this involves more than just traditional photos. Videos, paintings, cartoons, graffiti, or advertisements can also be used, depending on the research. Photos and videos offer the opportunity to share detailed and dynamic visualisations of situations, making it easier for participants to reflect on their personal experiences. Paintings and cartoons provide a more abstract approach, which can help to understand specific emotions or cultural contexts. Graffiti and advertisements can provide valuable insights into how public space is claimed and communicated, as well

as the influence of marketing and media images on the perceptions of residents or visitors. ●

Criteria

Photo elicitation

Criterion	Score	
Type of data gathering		Qualitative. Emphasis on personal experiences and opinions. Non-verbal cues and dynamics can be important.
Validity*	● ● ●	The method measures what it intends to measure, primarily through the in-depth qualitative insights it provides. The neutral approach contributes to validity.
Reliability	● ● ●	The method accurately captures residents’ perceptions, with visual aids further enriching the qualitative depth.
Representativeness**	●	The input from both participant and moderator is highly personal and context-dependent. As a result, results may vary per group or session. Reliability may be compromised if the researcher draws incorrect conclusions.
Level of detail of results	● ● ● ● ●	The method provides access to in-depth and detailed insights that highlight themes, patterns, and nuances in perceptions and experiences. The technique yields many stories and experiences, but remains anecdotal. If the right questions are asked, photo-elicitation offers a good combination of facts, general insights, and details.
Complexity	● ●	Focus groups or interviews using photo elicitation require complex organisation and moderation, as well as extensive analysis of the discussions, dynamics, and interactions. Photo elicitation also requires some knowledge of this method.
Understandable results	● ● ● ●	A thorough interpretation and analysis of the conversations, in relation to the photos discussed, is essential. The advantage is that the results are narrative, making them easier to convey. The photos can even be used to illustrate the results.

Criterion	Score	
Speed/availability	● ● ●	Depending on the size and complexity of the research, designing, organising, conducting, and analysing the group discussions is time-consuming. Moreover, this method requires a relatively large amount of preparation time, including from the participants.
Costs	● ● ●	Costs are related to the necessary facilities, recording equipment, participant incentives, and analysis, but these costs can generally be kept low.
Time effort respondents	●	Participants are typically required to commit 1-2 hours. This is reasonable, but can be more challenging for groups that are more reluctant to engage in resident research. The time investment is greater if participants are asked to make preparations.
Dependence on other parties to conduct research	● ● ●	There is no direct dependency on external/third parties. However, a skilled moderator is essential for a successful photo elicitation session.
Privacy	● ● ●	Privacy is an important consideration, as participants share their opinions in a group setting. Strict confidentiality guidelines must be adhered to.
Possibility of real-time measuring	●	Real-time monitoring is not possible.
Possibility of benchmarking	● ● ●	Benchmarking is limited due to the qualitative nature of the data. Identifying broader trends or comparisons between respondents is possible, but may not be representative.

* Validity of a measurement method refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument actually measures what it intends to measure.
** Representativeness refers to the extent to which a sample or dataset accurately reflects the total population you intend to study.

Practical tips

1.

Provide clear instructions beforehand: Give participants specific guidelines for choosing or taking their photos, for example, by asking for images that reflect both positive and negative aspects of a theme.
2.

Create a relaxed setting: Provide an informal and safe environment in which participants feel free to speak openly and share personal stories.
3.

Know which participants to invite: Aim for the broadest possible representation to include as many perspectives as possible. For a richer discussion, consider bringing together people with different lifestyles.
4.

Use the photos as a tool and make connections: Start the conversation with the images and ask participants to explain why they chose a particular image and what it means to them.
5.

Look for broader themes: Use the photos to identify and discuss broader themes or patterns in the discussion, so that insights go beyond individual perspectives.
6.

Reflect together: Conclude with a short joint reflection on the topics discussed to summarise the key points and wrap up the discussion.

FEATURED EXAMPLE

Experimental photo elicitation workshop

As part of the “Measuring Resident Benefits” project, a photo elicitation workshop was organised in Schouwen-Duiveland on October 22, 2024. Using photos they brought along, seven residents shared their experiences with tourism. One photo reflected the benefits of tourism in their local environment, while another highlighted the challenges. Under the guidance of the research team, the images served as

a conversation starter, revealing surprising insights into how tourism impacts residents’ daily lives, both positively and negatively. The workshop was held in an informal setting at the Schouwen-Duiveland Visitor Centre. This encouraged participants to share their experiences in an open atmosphere. This proved to be a practical approach: participants complimented each other on their photos and

explanations, and supplemented each other’s perspectives. The images added an extra dimension to the conversation. The session was led by Karoline Wiegerink, Hotelschool The Hague, lecturer in City Hospitality. ●



4.6 Participatory mapping

Participatory mapping combines the creation of geographical maps (cartography) with participatory qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups. In this method, residents are active participants: they create, edit, and use maps to visualise their own spatial knowledge, experiences, perspectives, and priorities.

In doing so, they share their local knowledge of specific places along with the associated perspectives and priorities. This provides a valuable complement to existing formal knowledge.

An example of this method is mapping tourist areas or amenities that residents themselves consider essential. These perceptions can be represented in various ways, such as with legends, symbols, colours, lines, arrows, diagrams, or simple drawings. The conversations that take place during the creation or use of the maps are also part of the findings. The map is simultaneously a tool (it stimulates conversation) and an output (the mapped perception).

Participatory mapping, therefore, goes beyond simply gathering geographical information; the method combines spatial data with the participants' personal experiences with locations, spatial layouts, local interactions, or other points of interest (POI). This creates "deeper" insights into the challenges and opportunities of a place.

Participatory mapping offers valuable insights into the dynamics of an area. It clarifies not only

where, but mainly why a particular dynamic manifests itself in space.

Relevance to measuring resident benefit

Participatory mapping is relevant for the theme of resident benefit due to the interaction between a specific location's roles as a tourist destination and a living environment. The visual approach often reveals different information than a regular conversation. This involves tacit knowledge: insights that people possess but are unaware of. The method is therefore not intended for determining actual impact, but is undoubtedly suitable for uncovering both conscious and unconscious perceived resident benefit.

This tacit local knowledge is essential for policymakers and can be overlooked by other research methods.

Depending on the research question, participatory mapping can be used to investigate both individual and collective resident benefits (see also sub-methods). However, for representativeness reasons, a broader sample size and design are required for measuring at the community level.

What sub-methods/possibilities are available?

Mental mapping

Mental mapping focuses on the individual meaning people give to a place and how they organise that place in their minds. It’s not about accuracy or finding consensus, but about personal meaning. For example, where does a resident think the most money is made, and how do they believe the community benefits from this? Or: which place holds nostalgic value for the participant, and how does tourism influence

it? This method primarily examines the individual level of perceived impact.

Sketch mapping

This method focuses on the physical space. Participants are asked to draw a map with geographical features such as roads, forests, houses, and other elements that represent the area. This method is often semi-precise and is usually performed collectively, creating a shared image of the spatial environment. This method is particularly suitable for research into perceived impact at the collective level.

Talking maps

Talking maps go a step further by examining a place from three layers: the past, the present, and the future. This method helps to understand not only the current significance of an area, but also how it has changed over time and its potential for the future. Combining these three dimensions provides in-depth insight into both

the history of an area and the expectations residents have for it.

Scale mapping

Scale mapping often involves mapping an area at different scales, for example, by adding details ranging from the perspective of a neighbourhood or district to that of a city and/or a larger region. The emphasis is on how residents interpret a place and which aspects they consider relevant at a specific scale.

Conflict mapping

Conflict mapping focuses on visualising tensions, conflicts, and competing interests surrounding a place. These can include disagreements between tourists and residents about the use of specific amenities, but also broader issues such as environmental conservation versus economic development. Participants are invited to map conflicts by marking locations, relationships or sources where tensions arise.

Pros and cons

This method is usually not used on its own, but in combination with other qualitative research methods. This doesn’t necessarily have to be a disadvantage; in fact, a combination of techniques can strengthen and substantiate findings. The spatial aspect, inherent to this method, may initially seem limiting (see also [Chapter 5, Tips](#)). Although the initial focus is on spatial aspects, in-depth questions can provide insight into what these mean for residents, thus creating a more complete picture.

A challenge of the method is that the symbols and drawings on a map are figurative and can contain complex meanings that are difficult to capture in words. This sometimes makes reporting difficult, especially for less experienced researchers, and can affect reliability and objectivity.

4.6 Participatory mapping

These caveats underscore the importance of the researcher. The moderator plays a crucial role: not only by asking thorough questions and listening, but also by creating a safe, pleasant, and inclusive environment in which all participants feel heard and feel comfortable drawing freely. It is precisely this combination of methodological rigour and research skills that ensures participatory mapping yields valuable insights.

Participatory mapping combines the creation of geographical maps (cartography) with participatory qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups. Residents are active participants in this method: they create, edit, and use maps to map their own spatial knowledge, experiences, perspectives, and priorities. In this way, they share their local knowledge of specific places, along with associated perspectives and priorities. This is a valuable addition to existing formal knowledge.



Criteria

Participatory mapping

Criterion	Score	
Type of data gathering		Qualitative. Emphasis on personal experiences and opinions. Non-verbal cues and dynamics can be important.
Validity*	● ● ●	This method reflects the experiences and reality of residents. The result is not an objective reality, but a perceived reality. The researcher's interpretation is precise.
Reliability	● ● ●	The input from both participant and facilitator is highly personal and context-dependent (for example, the time and/or location of the research can be influential). As a result, the results may vary per group or session.
Representativeness**	●	Participatory mapping is often conducted with a relatively small sample size. This makes generalisation very difficult. Furthermore, representativeness depends on who participates; excluding specific segments or groups of the population can lead to a biased picture.
Level of detail of results	● ● ● ● ● ●	This method enables probing for details and meaning, thereby allowing for a high level of depth.
Complexity	● ●	Designing effective prompts that fit the context and interpreting the results requires expertise. The optimal number of subjects to be addressed simultaneously in a single session requires experience. Furthermore, the method's success depends on a good moderator.
Understandable results	● ● ●	The maps created can serve as illustrations, but it's essential to realise that the overall interpretation cannot be derived from a single map.
Speed/availability	● ● ●	This depends on the size and complexity of the study. As a standalone method, it can be easily organised, providing a quick overview of local perspectives. Participants do not need to have any special skills. Because participatory mapping is often part of a larger study, the time investment is relatively high. Gathering participants can also take some time.
Costs	● ● ●	The most significant cost is the time investment. Costs depend on the format. A suitable location (space, table and chairs, etc.) is relatively easy to arrange. Creating/completing cards manually is cheaper than digitally.

Criterion	Score	
Time effort respondents	● ●	This depends on the type and number of questions. Participants typically spend about 1.5 to 2 hours working on the card. Nevertheless, it is generally perceived as a pleasant method.
Dependence on other parties to conduct research	● ● ●	The effectiveness of the method depends entirely on the moderator. A competent facilitator is therefore essential (see pros and cons). Furthermore, qualitative research expertise is required for analysing the findings.
Privacy	● ● ●	The cards can be created anonymously, but the use of personal symbols/ drawings can be so personal that participants can be identified. If this method is used in a group setting, clear rules of conduct and privacy are required.
Possibility of real-time measuring	● ●	Depending on the frequency and structure of the method's use, it is possible to observe how residents' benefits develop over time. However, these insights remain limited.
Possibility of benchmarking	● ●	The purpose of this method is to understand perspectives, not to fact-check them. Comparing this with other regions or time periods quickly defeats its purpose. The image is so personal (see reliability) that different methods are better suited for benchmarking.

* Validity of a measurement method refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument actually measures what it intends to measure.
** Representativeness refers to the extent to which a sample or dataset accurately reflects the total population you intend to study.

Practical tips

1. Well-considered questioning is essential. For example, a map adds little to the question ‘How many visitors are there?’, but a question like ‘What area attracts many visitors and what area attracts fewer?’ can, in combination with a map, yield very valuable insights. The formulation of the questions must also be specific. A broad assignment like ‘Draw the residents’ benefits on this map’ is often too abstract for participants, as are direct questions about social, economic, or ecological added value. Therefore, it is essential to refine abstract questions and explicitly link them to spatial aspects, for example: ‘What place are you proud of as a resident?’ or ‘Which area should be protected?’
2. Be critical of the location. The setting of the research matters and can have a (significant) influence on the answers.
3. It is recommended to provide maps without specific details (not tourist maps), so that participants can add additional information and interpretations themselves. This provides scope for their own insights, local knowledge, and personal perspectives.
4. Important in this method is attention to local interpretations, such as locally used names or characteristics attributed to a place specifically by residents. These maps can be prepared in advance based on previous conversations with residents, so that they connect with their perceptions and experiences. This ensures that the final map becomes an authentic and nuanced representation of how the local community perceives the place.

FEATURED EXAMPLE

Participatory mapping experiment



As part of the ‘Measuring Resident Benefits’ project, an experimental study was conducted on Schouwen-Duiveland. During the “Residents’ Day for Tourism” on Saturday, September 28th, tourism entrepreneurs invited their neighbours, residents of Schouwen-Duiveland, to visit and experience their businesses. The study took place at 7Huizen aan Zee, on one of the properties with small-scale holiday accommodations (lodges, glamping).

The experiment was conducted with four respondents in pairs. In addition, a supplementary conversation spontaneously arose with four visitors during the residents’ day.

Two printed geographical maps of Schouwen-Duiveland were available, both A3-sized and in colour. One version was abstract, while the other was more detailed, including specific locations and area designations.

Jan Huizing (Hotelschool The Hague) and Evelien Visser-Jonker (NBTC) facilitated this participatory mapping experiment.

Experiment
participatory
mapping

Participants could indicate which map provided a good starting point for the conversation: the abstract or the particular version. All participants preferred the particular version, which was recognisable and clear to them. This map was also used in the spontaneous conversation.

Using the geographical map, participants circled areas they valued. They added symbols and colours and placed stickers to indicate their opinion, perception, or emotion about the impact of tourism. A first set of questions focused on the

areas valued by residents: which areas they value, what they value about them, and how tourism affects them. A second set of questions focused on the living environment: where participants live, recreate, and work, how this relates to tourism, and how it affects them individually. In the third and final set, the researchers asked where residents experience the impact of tourism on a collective level. An interview question allowed participants to describe that impact. While allowing room for negative experiences, the researchers also probed for positive impacts.

Finally, respondents were asked an open-ended question about their experience with the research method using the maps. The map proved to be effective as a visual aid, not only during the interview but also in the lead-up to it: to connect and initiate conversation. The maps created a playful and accessible setting. ●



4.7 Arts-based research

Arts-based research is a research approach that uses artistic and creative processes to explore, represent, and interpret human experiences. Artistic forms of expression, such as visual art, theatre, literature, poetry, dance, or music, are used to address complex issues holistically and fully engage participants.

Arts-based research distinguishes itself as a transformative approach. By using creative expressions, participants reach a deeper, less rational level of their consciousness. This can lead to profound, empathetic, and sometimes even unexpectedly provocative insights. Arts-based research is therefore suitable for seeking a different perspective.

Relevance to measuring resident benefits

Some of the positive effects of tourism are difficult to capture in words. Consider, for example, pride, freedom, spontaneity, and connection. Through artistic expressions, participants can visualise their personal experiences and perceptions, making such sentiments easier to express.

Moreover, this method is an intervention in itself, with the potential to influence participants' perspectives. By engaging creatively, participants can become more aware of the impact of tourism on daily life, potentially changing their personal meaning. The conversations that develop during the creative session can also contribute to this. Although the effects vary from person to person, this process can contribute to a broader awareness of, and a change in attitude toward, the benefits of tourism.

This research method primarily measures resident benefits at the individual level. Applied in a group setting, the insights can be extended to a more shared level. In addition, the tangible and often attractive results (photos, paintings, stories) can be used to communicate about resident benefits to residents, policymakers, and other professionals. This increases support for this type of research.

Pros and cons

Feelings are often abstract, but in an arts-based research method, they are specifically evoked and expressed during the creation of the artwork and in the subsequent conversation. Because participants are given complete freedom in their creative process, they decide their own focus. This freedom is important, but it makes directing them difficult.

4.7 Arts-based research

Creativity is crucial in arts-based research. It allows researchers to remain curious and look beyond superficial data. Since there is no inherent good or bad in creative expressions, this approach also embodies an inclusive research method.

The method is not suitable for measuring the actual effects of tourism on all residents. Arts-based research is particularly effective for exploring subconscious perceptions at the individual level in more depth.

What sub-methods/options are available?

The choice of a specific sub-method depends on the target group, the research objective, and the context. Methods also differ significantly in terms of criteria, such as cost and the speed with which results can be obtained.

Visual methods

These methods use visual art or visual media to explore experiences and perspectives.

Examples include:

- **Participatory photography**, in which participants take photos to share their experiences.
- **Painting or drawing**, in which participants explore their emotions, ideas, or experiences by creating artwork.
- Combining images, words, and colours (collages) to express complex experiences or feelings.
- **Mapping**, in which physical, social, or emotional spaces, such as places where tourism is positively experienced, are visually mapped. (See also [participatory mapping](#).)
- The collaborative creation of spaces or objects that evoke a collective image of the impact of tourism.

Performative methods

These methods use action and expression to gain insights.

- Theatre or **role-playing**, such as improvisation or forum theatre.
- Expressing feelings or experiences through physical movement (**dance or movement**).
- **Telling** personal stories, often combined with rhythm or poetry, to powerfully convey emotions and experiences.

Literary methods

These methods use text and language to explore experiences, such as writing poems or short stories, or telling anecdotes to express complex feelings or memories symbolically.

Multimedia and digital Methods

Art and research can be combined with technological tools. Consider creating short videos, animations, or interactive media.

Criteria

Arts-based research

Criterion	Score	
Type of data gathering		Qualitative. Emphasis on personal experiences and opinions. Non-verbal cues and dynamics can be important.
Validity*	● ● ●	The validity of arts-based research, such as drawing, depends on how targeted the assignment is for the participants and how well the visual work reflects the intended research questions and goals.
Reliability	● ● ●	Because arts-based research yields less tangible knowledge, it can be challenging to establish objectivity, reliability, and validity.
Representativeness**	●	Arts-based research is not aimed at statistical representativeness. The method is (often) conducted with a small, specific group of participants. Drawings can reflect the participant’s personal perspective but may not always provide a broad or representative picture of a larger population.
Level of detail of results	● ● ● ● ●	Drawings and other artistic expressions can contain symbols and metaphors that go beyond language. This can lead to new, potentially profound insights into the emotions and perceptions of residents.
Complexity	● ●	As a research method, creating drawings or other artistic expressions is relatively complex, both for participants and researchers. Interpreting the artwork requires subjective analysis and targeted questioning. The process itself can also be complex, depending on the level of involvement and the skills of the participants.
Understandable results	● ● ●	Interpreting art can be methodologically challenging because images often contain multiple layers of meaning, which are highly subjective. Symbols and abstractions may not be immediately understandable to the researcher, increasing the risk of misinterpretation. This can affect the validity of the results. Conversely, the art created can also help convey more abstract ideas, such as emotions, in the report.

Criterion	Score	
Speed/availability	● ● ●	Depending on the scope and complexity of the research. Compared to other, more traditional research methods, results from arts-based research can be obtained relatively quickly, especially if participants are directly involved and don’t need much time to create their work. However, processing and analysing the results can be very time-consuming.
Costs	● ● ●	The cost of an arts-based research method can be relatively low, depending on the materials required.
Time effort respondents	●	It can sometimes take more time than initially anticipated, especially if the goal is to create detailed, thoughtful, and personal artworks that should yield more profound insights. This can lead to longer sessions during which participants carefully reflect on their drawings and the process of self-expression.
Dependence on other parties to conduct research	●	Arts-based research requires researchers to possess specific skills such as flexibility, intuition, and conceptual acumen. Researchers must be able to empathise with the subject symbolically, metaphorically, and thematically, and approach their work with moral sensitivity and responsibility.
Privacy	● ● ●	Arts-based research can raise privacy concerns, especially if the drawings reveal personal or sensitive themes. It is essential to establish clear guidelines regarding the confidentiality of the material and the consent of participants. Measures should be taken to ensure anonymity when necessary.
Possibility of real-time measuring	●	Not possible.
Possibility of benchmarking	●	Not possible.

* Validity of a measurement method refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument actually measures what it intends to measure.
** Representativeness refers to the extent to which a sample or dataset accurately reflects the total population you intend to study.

Practical tips

1. Ensure the open-ended question you ask participants is well-defined. The question should strike a balance between being broad enough to allow for creative freedom and specific enough to generate relevant and valuable answers.
2. Before and after drawing, it's valuable to allow participants to reflect on the assignment and their work. This provides deeper insights into the meaning of their creation and helps with the interpretation of the drawings.
3. It's advisable to give participants sufficient time for their creative work, either on location or in an environment where they can use their own materials, such as at home. It's helpful to give participants a reflection assignment right from the start; otherwise, valuable information can be lost.
4. The quality of the materials is crucial; providing good materials (canvas, different types of paint, etc.) encourages participants to do their best and increases the enjoyment of the creative process.
5. An exhibition can serve as a valuable reward (recognition and visibility) for participation.
6. It is essential to make it clear that the focus is not on perfection or beauty, but on the creative experience and expression.
7. Small groups are recommended, as this creates a more personal and supportive environment. This promotes engagement and the quality of the experience.
8. Depending on the complexity of the topic, it may be helpful to offer multiple sessions, allowing participants to explore or reflect on different aspects of the subject.
9. The analysis of the drawings requires a careful and respectful approach. It is essential to interpret the meaning behind the artworks without over-interpreting or over-generalising.

FEATURED EXAMPLE

Arts-based research experiment

As part of the “Measuring Resident Benefits” project, an experimental study was conducted on January 9, 2025, at the offices of the Schouwen-Duiveland Island Marketing Foundation. Two participants, aged 50-55 and residents of Schouwen-Duiveland, participated in the art-based research method. One participant grew up on the island, while the other had moved there nine years ago. Both participants indicated that they were drawn to drawing and painting.

The arts-based method aimed to gain insight into the participants' personal experiences and feelings about living on Schouwen-Duiveland, specifically regarding local tourism development.

Participants were instructed to create a drawing in A3 or A4 format, without worrying about artistic quality. The focus was on expressing emotions and thoughts, not technical skill. The experiment lasted 2.5 hours, with a 30-minute break halfway through. The open-ended question, ‘Draw what it's like to grow up and live on Schouwen-Duiveland while tourism is developing’, was used to encourage participants to reflect on the influence of tourism on their daily lives and to visualise their

feelings and thoughts about living and growing up on Schouwen-Duiveland. Participants were encouraged to use symbols, metaphors, and abstract shapes that represented their personal experiences and emotions related to the island and tourism. They could choose from various materials, including pencils, coloured pencils,

pastels, acrylic paint, and brushes. The use of photos for inspiration, which respondents requested on-site, was also permitted.

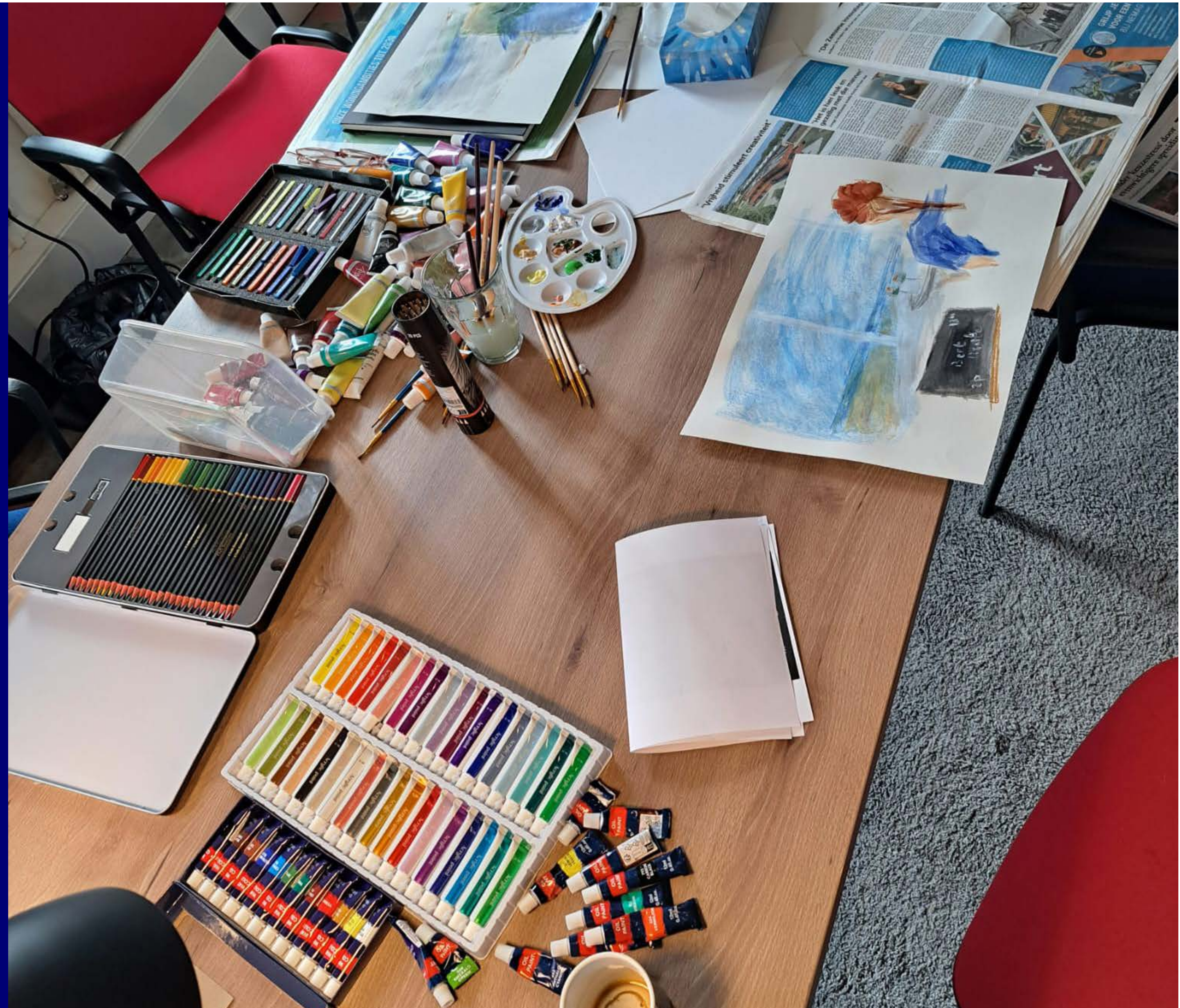
The research data were collected in the form of visual representations (the drawings) and verbal explanations from the participants.



Arts-based research experiment

While explaining their artwork, they were encouraged to reflect on the emotions they wanted to express through their drawing and how its elements connected to their personal experiences and thoughts about tourism on the island. This ensuing collaborative interpretation provided valuable insights into the meanings the participants attached to the visual elements in their work. ●

Ellen de Groot & Elisa van den Heuvel, Breda University of Applied Sciences, led the session.



4.8 Online dialogue

An online dialogue is a type of focus group that utilises a digital platform. Participants don't meet in person, but engage in written discussions online. Unlike a physical focus group, an online dialogue doesn't take place live. The moderator poses one or more questions at one or more points. Participants can then answer these questions independently and respond to comments from other participants.

Relevance to measuring resident benefit

Just like a regular focus group, an online dialogue offers the opportunity to ask about all the positive effects residents experience from tourism (economic, social, and environmental), and about the impact at both the collective and individual levels. By identifying a few facts about the impact of tourism and then asking to what extent people are aware of these effects and/or to what extent they believe tourism brings these effects, a picture can be obtained of the conscious versus unconscious benefits. An additional advantage is that this approach can also immediately raise awareness.

Pros and cons

By identifying a few facts about the impact of tourism and then asking to what extent Participants don't have to be physically present at a set time and place. Anonymity is also an option. On the other hand, the contact is less personal. This makes it more challenging to create a safe environment and to ask follow-up questions. Furthermore, in an online setting, more attention must be paid to rules of conduct, and the information obtained will be less in-depth due to the written nature of the online dialogue.

Criteria

Online dialogue

Criterion	Score	
Type of data gathering		Qualitative data collection. Emphasis on personal experiences and opinions. It is not possible to pick up non-verbal cues.
Validity*		Focus groups collect rich, contextual data and allow participants to share their experiences and perspectives in their own words. The group interaction contributes to a deeper understanding of the research problem. Compared to in-person focus groups, online dialogues are likely to yield less in-depth understanding.
Reliability		Due to the subjective nature of online focus groups, reliability can vary. Group dynamics and moderation style can influence the results, making replicability difficult. Strict moderation protocols can increase reliability. Compared to a physical focus group, an online focus group makes it more difficult to verify who is behind the keyboard and whether the person providing the answers is who they claim to be.
Representativeness**		Online focus groups are not intended for statistical representativeness and are less effective for quantifying research results, but rather for gaining qualitative insights. Maximising the variety of participants can cover as many perspectives as possible.
Level of detail of results		Compared to a regular focus group, an online focus group is expected to yield less in-depth information due to the written rather than verbal interaction.
Complexity		(Online) Focus groups require complex organisation and moderation, as well as extensive analysis of group discussions, dynamics, and interactions. Because of the written communication, an online dialogue is, in this respect, even more complex than a physical dialogue.
Understandable results		The results are pretty explicit. They are in black and white, and the judgments (e.g., thumbs up) may be less nuanced, but they are unambiguous. Nevertheless, the entire process must be analysed correctly.

Criterion	Score	
Speed/availability		This depends on the size and complexity of the research. Designing, organising, conducting, and analysing an online dialogue takes time. Finding participants, in particular, can be time-consuming. This makes this method less suitable for very rapid results.
Costs		Due to the limited number of participants, the costs of a focus group are generally relatively low. However, participant incentives may be necessary. Unlike in-person focus groups, online focus groups do not require a room rental. However, there may be costs associated with using a suitable platform.
Time effort respondents		Participants typically need to dedicate 1-2 hours, a reasonable time commitment, but one that can be challenging for hard-to-reach groups. An online focus group is much more time-consuming than, for example, completing a questionnaire.
Dependence on other parties to conduct research		There is no direct dependency on external/third parties. However, a skilled moderator is essential for a successful online focus group.
Privacy		Privacy is an important consideration, as participants share their opinions in a group setting. Strict confidentiality guidelines must be adhered to. Compared to in-person dialogue, an online dialogue offers the possibility of anonymous participation. However, this depends on the chosen platform. If social media channels are used, this should be given extra attention.
Possibility of real-time measuring		Real-time monitoring is not possible.
Possibility of benchmarking		Benchmarking is limited due to the qualitative nature of the data. However, identifying broader trends or comparisons between groups is possible.

* Validity of a measurement method refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument actually measures what it intends to measure.

** Representativeness refers to the extent to which a sample or dataset accurately reflects the total population you intend to study.

Practical tips

1. When choosing a (social media) platform, carefully consider the target group. The experiment used Facebook, but young people, for example, don't use it much. Governments can use Nextdoor, a platform where neighbours can meet, for free. Another platform, which requires payment, is Adhocracy+.
2. Ensure there are enough participants to make the dialogue engaging.
3. The voluntary nature of participation is a weakness. A system where participants receive points for each answer or interaction can increase commitment.
4. Consider carefully the duration of the dialogue and the timing of questions. A week is very short, but it does keep things moving. On the other hand, too many questions at once can also detract from the depth of the conversation.
5. Use different types of questions to make the dialogue more interesting (e.g., a combination of open-ended questions, statements, multiple-choice questions, etc.).
6. Good moderation is essential to initiate and maintain the conversation. Only if a topic touches people's hearts will they be inclined to keep the conversation going of their own accord.
7. Participants can be kept engaged by sending them a notification when a new message is posted.
8. Participants may ask knowledge-based questions during the dialogue (for example: How many tourists do we actually have?). Respond to this by offering relevant information and thereby immediately raising awareness.

FEATURED EXAMPLE

Online dialogue

As part of the “Measuring Resident Benefits” project, an online dialogue experiment was conducted using a closed Facebook group. Participants were recruited from within the community and among university students. As an incentive, each participant received a €25 Bol.com gift voucher. Ultimately, three people participated in the online dialogue (a fourth participant was contacted, but subsequently remained silent). From January 27 to 31, 2025, participants were asked one or more questions about tourism on Schouwen-Duiveland each day.

Day 1

Introduction

Day 2

Benefits of tourism (economic/social/environmental)

Day 3

Disadvantages of tourism (economic/social/environmental)

Day 4

Weighing the pros and cons, ideas for actions to increase the benefits and reduce the disadvantages, and opinions on who should take the lead

Day 5

Evaluation

Participants were encouraged to respond to each other as much as possible, and they occasionally asked for more specific information. This provided a good understanding of how participants viewed various aspects of tourism. Occasionally, they also sparked new ideas among themselves. It didn’t prove easy to truly engage in conversation, partly because participants responded to the questions at different times.

Online dialogue

The main reason participants participated in the experiment was that they considered tourism important and were interested in how other residents viewed it. During the evaluation, they indicated that they found this exchange of views the most valuable aspect of the experiment. A larger number of participants would have made the experiment even more interesting.

Furthermore, participants indicated that they would prefer to have face-to-face discussions on this topic, as this facilitates better dialogue.

Interestingly, during the online dialogue, two strangers spontaneously submitted a membership request. Because they were not part of the study, their request could not be accepted. But it does show that there is an interest in participating in such a dialogue. ●

The experiment was conducted by Daniek Nijland and Keisa Meyjes of HZ Knowledge Centre for Coastal Tourism and by Ellen de Groot and Elisa van den Heuvel of Breda University of Applied Sciences.



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4.9 Social media monitoring & listening

Social media monitoring is the collection, structuring, and analysis of online and public messages (about a destination). It typically focuses on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Messages from news sites, forums, and public blogs are also often included in the analysis. The messages are typically scraped (automatically retrieved from the web). Social listening focuses on understanding what people say and, more importantly, why they say it, as well as identifying the underlying trends or themes.

Algorithms are used to process and analyse the messages. For example, specific messages can be collected about a destination and/or specifically about tourism-related topics. The algorithms can also determine the message's sentiment: positive, neutral, or negative. Social listening focuses more on recurring themes in the messages and understanding the sentiment.

Relevance to measuring resident benefits

An increasing number of tourist destinations are measuring and monitoring social media posts for reputation management, crisis management, and/or strategic decision-making. Social media is a source of much discussion about tourist destinations, both positively and negatively. By taking note of this, destinations can respond to these sentiments. Social media is, therefore, a valuable tool for measuring resident benefits,

especially when it comes to detecting emerging or new benefits and engagement. Social media analysis can also capture benefits expressed not by citizens themselves, but by other sources, such as SMEs, government officials, politicians, and the media. Social media analysis requires no direct effort from residents and offers a quick, simple, and inexpensive way to access a large number of geographically dispersed residents. It primarily provides macro insights and also offers good opportunities for comparison.

What sub-methods/options are available?

Scraping social media data yourself is rarely permitted (see GDPR news item). This creates a dependency on external parties, who are allowed to do so under strict conditions. Data can be accessed via these official API connections. Well-known providers include

Hootsuite, Mabrian, MMGY TCI Research, and Radarly (formerly Meltwater). The results are usually made available via a dashboard. Through the TRAVELSAT Resident Sentiment Index, MMGY TCI Research offers social media listening combined with a resident survey.

Pros and cons

To successfully implement social listening, it’s essential to have a large number of online posts that share rich descriptive information and are made public. Algorithms currently struggle to distinguish effectively between residents and visitors. Moreover, information about the background characteristics of platform members is not always (or only to a limited extent) available. This method is primarily suitable for measuring general sentiment about a destination, but less so for assessing residents’ (positive) sentiment alone. However, this method

can provide insight into specific aspects of resident benefit that are not uncovered by other methods (such as a survey). A significant disadvantage of this method is its dependence on the topics residents write about themselves. This means there is no control over the topics covered, challenging to gather residents’ opinions specifically.

Therefore, this method is often combined with a survey, for example, to utilise the advantages of both methods fully. Furthermore, this method is particularly well-suited for reaching specific target groups that actively use social media. However, it is not a substitute for a representative survey.

Criteria

Social media monitoring & listening

Criterion	Score	
Type of data gathering	Qualitative and quantitative.	
Validity*		Validity depends on how well the tools used are aligned with the objectives and how accurately the data is collected and interpreted. Often, the intended outcome is measured in terms of online sentiment. In the context of resident benefit, it therefore does NOT solely measure resident sentiment. This requires a deeper, but extremely labour-intensive, analysis. It is often difficult to determine the precise algorithm behind the figures.
Reliability		This can be reliable, but it depends on the quality of the tools, the quality of the collected data, and how the data is interpreted.
Representativeness**		This method doesn't yield representative insights. However, it is suitable for measuring online sentiment. Furthermore, neutral voices are underrepresented in this type of research, as those active on social media often hold the most explicit opinions.
Level of detail of results		The level of detail in the data varies, depending entirely on the content residents post on social media about a topic. In some areas, the data is very abstract (e.g., when displaying sentiment using an index). However, it is possible to examine specific messages, allowing for more insight into the automatically analysed message.
Complexity		Designing a good algorithm is complex and requires specialised knowledge. If you purchase the data from a provider, they often offer easily accessible and user-friendly dashboards.
Understandable results		The results can be presented in various ways (such as text or graphs), making them accessible to everyone, regardless of knowledge level. Interpreting the messages sometimes requires some knowledge of the local context.

Criterion	Score	
Speed/availability		Through providers, the data is quickly available because they use standard algorithms that can easily be adapted to new destinations.
Costs		Costs per provider can be quite high. This includes the investment costs for creating and setting up the dashboard. Often, there are also license fees and costs for each user with access to the data.
Time effort respondents		No (additional) effort required from residents.
Dependence on other parties to conduct research		A specialised agency for social media monitoring is necessary.
Privacy		Provided the agency properly configures this. This should always be checked thoroughly.
Possibility of real-time measuring		Depending on the provider, the results are generally visible very quickly.
Possibility of benchmarking		Providers often offer the option of benchmarking sentiment with other destinations.

* Validity of a measurement method refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument actually measures what it intends to measure.

** Representativeness refers to the extent to which a sample or dataset accurately reflects the total population you intend to study.

FEATURED EXAMPLE

Social monitoring
in Bordeaux

Bordeaux is one of the many cities participating in the “Resident Sentiment Index” study by MMGY/TCI Research. TCI Research provides a standard questionnaire to measure residents’ sentiment, monitor it over time, and benchmark it against other cities. TCI also offers the option of monitoring social media posts. Besides the overall perception of Bordeaux residents regarding tourism, the study provides insight into the advantages and disadvantages residents experience from tourism. Such research reports are often not public, but the DMO Agora Tourisme Bordeaux shared some of the results on [its website](#). ●



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5

General recommendations

Recommendations specific to resident benefits

- Distinguish between the different types of benefits that tourism can bring. Economic benefits often predominate. The social and environmental benefits sometimes require more explanation and attention.
- Distinguish between the benefits that residents personally experience and the benefits that they believe tourism brings to the community as a whole. Experience shows that this is an essential distinction for residents.
- Encourage participants to share their own opinions as much as possible and not to repeat what they have read in the newspaper or what they hear around them.
- Also, pay close attention to any potential disadvantages of tourism that residents experience. Experience shows that disadvantages are more prominent because they bother them. By providing opportunities to air their disadvantages, respondents feel heard, which in turn makes them more open to considering the advantages of tourism.
- In practice, the impact of tourism manifests itself very locally. If you want to research

resident benefits, or more generally, on how residents experience the effects of tourism, keep this in mind. A study at the municipality level, for example, will not provide insight into the differences between more and less touristy communities within that municipality. In general, we recommend choosing the most minor possible scale (such as a community) and then using the combined results to obtain a comprehensive picture (for example, for the entire municipality) if necessary.

Recommendations for recruiting respondents

- To ensure representativeness, in addition to choosing a research method, recruiting respondents is also a key component of the research design. Therefore, consider the following:
 - **How many** respondents are needed? This depends partly on the research objective: is it a representative picture of all residents, or are a few opinions sufficient? [This calculation tool](#) can be used to calculate the desired number of respondents for

quantitative research. In qualitative research, you don't determine the number of respondents in advance by calculating the number of participants. still, you stop taking new participants as soon as you notice that you are no longer gaining new insights.

- Besides the number of respondents, their **characteristics** are also important. To make representative statements about a municipality or area, it is essential to work with the most accurate representation of all residents.
- Although a larger number of groups increases diversity, it also increases the complexity of the data analysis. Therefore, researchers often use **stratified sampling**. In this method, the residents under study are divided into groups, or strata. This is done, for example, based on socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, or socioeconomic status. A random sample is then taken within the strata.
- To **invite respondents**, municipalities can draw a sample from the Personal Records Database (BRP), randomly selecting residents and then inviting them by letter. Another option is to use a panel from a research agency (for a fee). Some

municipalities and provinces have their own resident panel (see example in the box).

- Be careful when recruiting through social media channels, as the group you reach isn't a representative reflection of all residents.
- In any case, **choose communication channels** that connect with the target group. Create an attractive invitation and consider offering a **reward for participation** to increase response.
- **Participation among young people** in resident surveys often lags and is therefore an important consideration, especially if the research objective is specifically related to this target group. However, there are strict rules regarding consent and ethics for young people under 18.

Recommendations for facilitating qualitative research

- **Be aware of your own position and frame of reference.** As an interviewer or facilitator, you can unintentionally influence the way your questions are formulated.
- **Create a relaxed setting:** Provide an informal

5. General recommendations

and safe environment where participants feel free to speak openly and share personal stories.

- **Encourage interaction:** Encourage participants to respond (to each other) and to complement each other's perspectives, thus fostering a richer group discussion.
- **Moderate flexibility:** Prepare a few key questions, but remain flexible and respond to the responses and themes that emerge spontaneously.
- **Document carefully:** Make sure you take notes or record the session (remember to obtain consent) so you can analyse the nuances and insights later.
- **Reflect together:** Conclude with a brief joint reflection on the topics discussed to clarify important points and ensure your interpretation is correct. Reflection can be done both on the spot and afterwards.

Recommendations for your research in general

- Make sure you're clear about what exactly you want to investigate; the research question must be specific, feasible, and relevant. Adapt your approach and choice of method accordingly. This is important for validity, in other words, whether a measurement instrument actually measures what it intends to measure.
- The **reliability** of your research is closely linked to consistency and transparency. Your research must be reproducible. Where possible, provide clear instructions, standardisation, and protocols. It is also advisable to retain raw data.
- **Informed consent** is now required. Clearly inform participants about the purpose, method, and their rights, and ask for explicit permission.
- Consider **privacy**. Anonymise data and ensure it is stored securely.
- **Document carefully:** Note context, observations, and details, even with quantitative data. This also improves reliability.
- Conduct interviews with at least two people: one to lead the interview and one to take notes. This helps with accurate reporting and prevents interpretation errors. The two people can also support and reinforce each other during the conversation.
- Be mindful of your language with residents and avoid jargon. Often, the simplest possible questions are the clearest and most inclusive.
- You can **conduct the research yourself or hire an agency**. Several agencies in the Netherlands now have extensive experience conducting research among residents, including in a tourism context.
- When conducting **online research**, ensure that participation is possible not only via a PC or laptop, but also via a tablet or mobile phone.
- **Game elements** can make participating in the research a fun experience. An example of integrated game elements in a questionnaire survey can be found here: swipocratie.nl.
- **Comparing and combining** different types of data (quantitative and qualitative) provides a more complete picture and offers the best results. Combining various research methods, such as surveys and in-depth interviews, can yield valuable insights and paint a richer, more balanced, and nuanced picture. Moreover, it enhances validity by confirming findings.
- **Preparation** is half the battle:
 - Set a realistic timeline. Research often takes longer than anticipated.
 - Pre-testing can identify potential problems early on.
 - Always create a script or manual.
 - Prepare for unexpected situations, such as no-shows by participants or fellow researchers.

5. General recommendations

- Think carefully about how you will record the conversations. Using two methods (e.g., a professional dictaphone and your own phone) is recommended, so there's always a backup.
- **Analysis:**
 - Be transparent; document your analysis process and decisions thoroughly so they can be reproduced.
 - Creating transcripts is a lot of work, but it's definitely worth it. It enables you to locate specific parts without needing to listen to the entire recording. Working with verbatim transcripts also contributes to thoroughness and accuracy, and thus to a more in-depth analysis. Furthermore, you need the transcript for coding and structuring your data. Software programs are available to support transcription.
 - Coding, structuring, and further analysing your data can be done either manually (for example, with labels or colour codes) or using software programs.
- **Reflect** on your own role as a researcher to minimise bias. And continually evaluate what went well and what you would do differently. ●

FEATURED EXAMPLE

Citizens’ Panel of the Friesland Planning Agency

The Province of Friesland prioritises broad prosperity in the province’s development. Leisure and tourism are among its key themes. To provide administrators and policymakers with the right insights, assessment, and management information, the Friesland Planning Agency uses a citizens’ panel to survey residents’ perspectives on tourism every two years.

Approach

For the so-called tourism monitor, the Friesland Planning Agency utilises the general citizens’ panel. This panel consists of approximately eight thousand provincial residents, who together represent the community. Every two years, they receive a standard questionnaire. This allows for comparison of the results with those of previous editions.

Results and reflection

A panel is a proven tool for preventing under- and overrepresentation of voices. Using a permanent panel (with rotating members) makes it relatively easy to obtain a representative picture of perceptions of tourism. However, even with this method, it is difficult to reach

young people and the elderly and get them to participate in the panel. A media campaign targeting young people will be launched in 2025 to encourage them to participate in the panel.

Meer weten?

Contact Sibilia Hoekstra, researcher at Planbureau Fryslân, SHoekstra@planbureau Fryslan.nl

Read about the citizen panel (general) [here](#) .
Read the article about the 2023 research results [here](#).

The results will also be used for the [Hospitality Monitor](#). ●



6

Research methodology

The project that forms the basis for this publication focused on developing methods for measuring resident benefit. The main objective was to compare and evaluate different measurement approaches for resident benefit.

The project addressed a clear gap in both research and practice: measuring subjective resident benefits. Specifically, it explored how residents themselves view tourism and the (positive) benefits it brings. While traditional studies often focus on the negative impacts of tourism, this project focused on its positive value.

The project consisted of two phases. Through literature research and expert consultations (Phase 1), existing insights into the methods were systematically mapped and enriched. In Phase 2, various measurement methods were then applied and evaluated in a Dutch practical setting.

6.1 Literature review

What is a resident benefit, and what are its components?

Through a literature review, we focused on developing a theoretical framework for resident benefit. To further establish this theoretical framework, we built on the work of the Koplopersgroep Bewonersprofijt (Resident Benefit Frontrunners Group). In this process,

more than 30 academic articles, book chapters, and studies were analysed to understand how resident benefit is defined and which indicators are used to measure the effects or benefits of tourism at a destination. We also examined the measurement methods used for this purpose. This step emphasised the usefulness and necessity of both this project and the concept of resident benefit itself. It resulted in an initial overview of the methods and a list of relevant concepts and terminology. The findings and results of this phase can be found in the Interim Result Phase 1 A.

6.2 Expert consultations

How is resident benefit currently measured? Which criteria play an (implicit) role in the choice of a specific method? How do the methods score on the criteria?

In this part of the study, we examined how resident benefits have been measured to date. Key questions were: Why was a method chosen, how did it work (including the indicators used), what were the results, what resources were

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needed, and how did stakeholders assess the application? The success and failure factors of the methods were also identified. Furthermore, the selection criteria that determine the choice of a specific method were examined. These included factors such as costs, objectives, level of detail, reliability, and the type of outcomes. Each method’s score on the selection criteria was determined.

In the first and second quarters of 2024, 36 Dutch and international experts were interviewed. The following questions were the starting point:

1
What do you understand by resident benefit in relation to tourism and recreation?

2
How important is this theme for your region? And what concrete steps are being taken in your area to increase the (positive) impacts of tourism and recreation on residents?

3
What are the reasons/motives for measuring the perceived impacts of tourism and recreation among residents?

4
Which existing sources for gaining insight into the impacts experienced by residents are you familiar with?

5
Suppose there is a desire to measure the impacts experienced by residents. Which methods are you familiar with? What are the key considerations in choosing a method for calculating the effects experienced by residents?

6
Do you use a method or methods yourself? And why?

7
View the methods overview. Are there any critical indicators/criteria missing in your opinion? Are there any indicators/criteria that you consider irrelevant for choosing between methods?

8
How would you assess the method(s) you used based on the indicators/criteria?

9
Do you have any suggestions for others we could

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speak with about measuring resident benefit?
 If relevant, please add them to the expert list.

Between April and July 2024, the research team conducted 38 expert interviews:

- 18 with academic researchers
- 16 with practitioners focusing on measuring and visualising resident benefit
- 4 with individuals/sources of inspiration regarding alternative research and specific methods.

Thanks to the following interviewees:

Name	Type of expert	Organisation	inter-viewer
Adiyukh Berbekova	WO	University of Hawaii	MB
Manuel Alector Ribeiro	WO	Universty of Surrey	JK
Anneke van Mispelaar	PE	Bureau BUITEN	EV
Bart Neuts en Jan van der Borg	WO	KU Leuven	JK
Bernadett Papp	WO	NHL Stenden Hogeschool	JK
Bynum Boley	WO	University of Georgia	SW
Calvin Curry (RVO) en Maeva Laruelle (Meltwater)	IB	Meltwater / Radarly	EV
Daniëlla Brust-Blumink en Maya Janssen	PE	amsterdam&partners	KW
Elisabeth Retaux	IB	Pas-de-Calais Tourisme	SW
Eva Erdmenger	WO	Wageningen University & Research	JK
Gitte Mikkelsen	PE	Wonderful Copenhagen	SW
Hans de Jong	PE	Markteffect	SW
Iris Kerst	WO	Inholland/ ENSUT	KW
James Hanrahan	WO	Atlantic Technical University	SW
Joost de Vries	PE	Utrecht Marketing	KW
Jorge Ridderstaat	WO	University of Central Florida	MB
Julie Rechnagel	IB	Tonder Kommune	SW
Kathleen Andereck	WO	Arizona State University	MB
Kyle Maurice Woosnam	WO	Warnell School of Forestry & Natural Resources	JK
M. Joseph Sirgy	WO	Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University	MB
Marc Stickdorn	WO	More Than Metrics	KW
Matty Vincke en Maxim Van Meenen	PE	Westtoer	SW
Miriam Mascarós	PE	Visit Valencia	MB

Name	Type of expert	Organisation	inter-viewer
Muzaffer Uysal	WO	Isenberg School of Management, University of Massachusetts	MB
Olivier Henry-Biabaud	PE	MMGY/TCI	EV
Ondrej Mitas	WO	BUas	MB
Patrick Long	WO	Center for Sustainable Tourism	SW
Pim Nouwens	PE	VisitVeluwe	KW
Richard Perdue	WO	Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University	SW
Robin Nunkoo	WO	University of Mauritius	SW
Ruurt van der Wel	PE	Stichting Eiland Marketing Schouwen-Duiveland	SW
Sabrina Seeler	WO	Deutsches Institut für Tourismusforschung	JK
Sibilla Hoekstra	PE	Planbureau Fryslân	KW
Signe Jungersted	PE	DMOcracy (GroupNAO)	TdG
Tinco Lycklama	PE	Bureau voor Ruimte & Vrije Tijd	EV
Vanessa Mack	PE	Fáilte Ireland	SW
Viktor Johansson	PE	Visit Skane AB	SW
Wendy Weijdema	PE	MarktingOost	KW
Yvette Westerbaan	IB	Feeddex	KW
Yvonne Cornax	PE	Marketing Drenthe	EV

List of interviewers	Type of expert
Maïke van Breda (MB)	Scientific researcher (WO)
Thijs de Groot (TdG)	Practical expert (PE)
Jeroen Klijs (JK)	Sources of inspiration (IB)
Evelien Visser-Jonker (EV)	
Karoline Wiegerink (KW)	
Simon Witt (SW)	

6.3 Empirical review

As an empirical test, we applied four measurement methods ourselves in the municipality of Schouwen-Duiveland in the second phase. We opted for a small-scale and flexible application, allowing for gradual adjustments and even failure. The goal was not to achieve a complete, scientifically sound application, but to gain new insights into the methods and compare them. Each method was applied with room for adjustments and experience. We based the selection of methods on three criteria: methods that offered potential for measuring resident benefit, methods with limited application experience (both in the Netherlands and internationally), and methods that allowed for meaningful comparisons.

The choice of Schouwen-Duiveland was strategic, as the local DMO (Development Organisation) carries out a mandate to promote resident well-being, and tourism is a dominant influence in this. The results of the field tests for Schouwen-Duiveland supported the determination of the most suitable method for measuring resident benefit, as is the case for other areas and stakeholders such as municipalities and DMOs. The tests also yielded substantive insights into the benefits for residents on the island itself.

The empirical tests were integrated into the elaborations of the respective research methods. The experimental approach is highlighted as a practical example.

Experiments conducted

- 1 Participatory mapping**
September 28, 2024, on Schouwen-Duiveland during the “Tourism Residents’ Day”.
Jan Huizing (Hotelschool The Hague) and Evelien Visser-Jonker (NBTC)
- 2 Photo elicitation**
October 22, 2024, Island Marketing Foundation Schouwen-Duiveland
Karoline Wiegerink
(Hotelschool The Hague, Professor of City Hospitality)
- 3 Art-based research**
January 9, 2025, Stichting Eiland Marketing Schouwen-Duiveland
Ellen de Groot & Elisa van den Heuvel
(Breda University of Applied Sciences)
- 4 Online dialogue**
Daniek Nijland (HZ University of Applied Sciences) ●



Contact and colophon

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