Strategic transitions for social tourism

VISITFLANDERS
Foreword

The origins of social tourism in Flanders lie in the implementation of the Law on paid holidays in the first half of the previous century. Social tourism grew massively in the following years and increased in importance across the entire tourist sector. Where the emphasis previously lay on the social accommodation offer, social tourism evolved and increasingly focussed on the various target groups.

The Tourism for All sector stands in the middle of a changing world and sees the opportunities that await it. In an intense change process, other actors were involved to think about a future for social tourism. The potential that has arisen in that process and that has further increased as a result shows the possibilities of an ambitious future. What this could all imply, can be found in this report. I wish you pleasure in reading it.

Michel Vandendriessche
Chair of the steering committee for the change process social tourism
Tourism relies on living roots. In Flanders, holidays are a basic right for everyone. People believe in the positive effects of holidays and the wish that everyone can experience that. Someone who is feeling good, functions better. Someone who feels appreciated has a positive outlook on society. Bringing high-quality holidays within everybody’s reach is therefore also an investment in the open-mindedness of future generations and an insurance for our society. This attention to equality is part of the DNA of Flanders. This is abundantly illustrated by the captivating history of social tourism in Flanders.

We see the world is changing and so is social tourism. The accommodation on offer improved in terms of quantity and quality; fire safety and accessibility became standard. Established names in social tourism think about target groups and goals. Target groups shift, child poverty and social inequality in Flanders are increasing fast. More and more organisations are discovering the potential of tourism and guide their customers towards day trips or holidays. The consumer is also choosing more consciously and more sustainably. Social entrepreneurship comes to the fore: corporate social responsibility is no longer a peripheral phenomenon. Flanders wishes to distinguish itself from other European regions by means of this social entrepreneurship and wants to fulfil the right to leisure time and tourism.

It’s from this perspective that VISITFLANDERS and the social tourist sector have joined forces to guarantee with an action plan a grand future for social tourism as a valued and major player within the larger regular tourist sector.

Peter De Wilde
Administrator-general VISITFLANDERS
CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 6

HISTORY OF SOCIAL TOURISM 8
1 \ Flemish decree 'Tourism for All' (Toerisme voor Allen) .............................................................. 13
2 \ Accessible Travel Info Point (Infopunt Toegankelijk reizen) ....................................................... 17
3 \ The Holiday Participation Centre (Steunpunt Vakantieparticipatie). ......................................... 18
4 \ Policy Paper 2014-2019 ................................................................................................................ 21

SKETCH OF PARTICIPATIVE TRANSITION PROCESS SOCIAL TOURISM 22
1 \ Focus groups ........................................................................................................................................ 23
2 \ Two-day Conference .......................................................................................................................... 25
3 \ Workshops ......................................................................................................................................... 26
4 \ Results ............................................................................................................................................... 27
5 \ Description of social tourism .......................................................................................................... 28
6 \ Holiday chain ...................................................................................................................................... 33
7 \ Transition lines .................................................................................................................................. 35
8 \ Implementing structures in social tourism ...................................................................................... 36

STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES 2014-2019 39
SD 1: Social tourism is a cross-sectoral policy concerning the different governments - local, regional and international ........................................................................................................ 40
SD 2: Every Flemish person with barriers can go on holiday ......................................................... 41
SD 3: There is a coordinated, actively extended network of partners of the wide holiday chain .......... 42
SD 4: The partners within social tourism are supported in their task, in harmonisation with the network event ........................................................................................................................................ 44
SD 5: All partners involved in the holiday chain can visibly link themselves to the ‘social branding’, from the vision and mission of social tourism ........................................................................ 45

FIRST RESEARCH RESULTS 46
Adult accommodation Tourism for All - Exploration of the future .................................................. 47
Making holidays possible for every Flemish person - A participative study ..................................... 48

DECISION 50

APPENDIX I Overview of goals 52
APPENDIX II Five principles of good stakeholder management 54
APPENDIX III Glossary 55
APPENDIX IV Participants 56
APPENDIX List of sources 57
INTRODUCTION

Tourism is frequently regarded as an experience that contributes to general well-being. This contribution frequently lasts longer than the holiday itself. It starts before the holiday begins with looking forward, longing for and counting down to the day of departure. It continues to give lasting pleasure after the holiday through the many beautiful memories that are often brought to mind, even years later. It has been shown that memories and positive experiences are associated with a positive self-image and they contribute to reinforcing the physical and psychological resilience of people. Through the characteristic ‘resilience’, people can handle stressful situations in a flexible manner. Someone with a resilient personality has the ability to bounce back from difficult and onerous situations.

This also applies to the sector of social tourism. In the past it has gone through many positive experiences and developments. Because of this it has become more resilient and is ready for a fresh, innovative future.

An affordable and diversified holiday offer, free of practical, financial and mental barriers, is a challenge that must not be avoided. The ‘everything or nothing scenario’ that arises from facing the confrontation going on holiday with barriers has to be tackled. The focus lies on sufficient support so that each holiday becomes a successful experience. Moreover, there is an important task in terms of professionalising the sector of social tourism and optimising its image.
Keeping in mind the changes in society and the increasing importance of corporate social responsibility, the social tourism sector did not want to lag behind. Back in November 2013, VISIT-FLANDERS had already initiated and facilitated the start of an innovative process. This process produced supportive information that has helped policymakers in drafting the necessary plans.

Through the new approach - described in more detail below - choices are made to raise the participation rate of Flemish people, to shape the future of social tourism in the long term together and to permanently increase its visibility and share in the tourism sector.
**HISTORY OF SOCIAL TOURISM**

**1906**

The obligatory Sunday’s rest is introduced.

**1920 > 1935**

Companies such as Minerva and Gevaert take the lead. They also give their lower paid clerks and workers paid holidays.

**1936**

The trade unions celebrate. The right to holidays is recognised officially, both in Belgium and in numerous other European countries. All employees get paid holiday days and the chance to escape from the harsh reality of the daily grind. This is where the foundation of social tourism lies.

However the workers are really not keen to go on holiday. The government sets up a ministry for workers’ holidays. There appear to be no buildings to accommodate them. The government sets up the ‘non-profit association Workers’ holidays [vzw Arbeidersvakantie].

**1948**

The right to holidays not only gains ground in Flanders, but also in the rest of the world. After the Second World War a very large number of countries agrees on which human rights have to be protected so that everyone can live in a safer manner. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is reviewed and collated in 30 articles. For the first time, ‘relaxation’ is given a respectable place in it.

For social tourism, Article 24 is the most important:

"Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay."

**ARTICLE 24**
The trade unions notice that they have to help workers to go on holiday. For workers there is no other affordable infrastructure. In the spirit of the time, each political pillar builds its own centres. The government subsidises the construction of holiday houses, where workers can enjoy a week on the coast at an affordable price.

A first holiday experience is generally an organised group holiday in large holiday camps. Both the transportation and the activities are organized for them. Thus social tourism in Belgium leaves the starting blocks.

This is also this period in which the Travel Savings Funds are established, to which a part of the miserable worker’s wage can be paid each month. In the summer that money could be converted into cheap train tickets, hotel vouchers or entrance tickets.

In the post-war years the holiday camps for social tourism at the coast experience their glory days. The period of economic growth is an era of hard work, but the average Belgian has little time and limited resources for holidays. Social holidays were subsidised by the government and more and more holiday houses were created. Because of their success, social organisations not only looked at home country destinations but also at those abroad.
Society was going through continuing changes and progress. A large number of Belgians become more affluent and no longer want to use the socially tinted holiday centres. They don’t want to go on holiday in groups but with their family. As a result of the ever cheaper opportunities for foreign travel, Flanders has become too small. Holidaymakers explore the commercial circuit and find their way from social tourism to ‘regular’ tourism. The democratisation of holiday is a fact.

However, not everyone is on the boat of financial progress and a considerable group is left lagging behind, also in the field of tourism. In 1980, a new subsidy decision for social-tourist investment projects is taken, where the focus shifts to youth hostels and camping sites.

The Flemish Commission - General for tourism is established. It is given the task of promoting and organising tourism and leisure activities.

Among the tasks it is set is focussing a lot of attention on social tourism.

The original objective of social tourism seems to have been overtaken: most workers have learned to go on holiday. The holiday accommodations for social tourism run into difficulty as they lose sources of subsidy. Reducing the price does not help in times of heavy competition from the low-budget offering in the commercial sector. They seek alternative sources of financing and they continue to exist. The camps for social tourism become accessible for everyone and the target group becomes more diverse.

More and more Flemish people can afford to go on holiday more than once a year.

The General Committee for Tourism is given a new name: VISITFLANDERS is established.

The World Tourism Organization signs a treaty on October 1st in which it declares that everyone has the right to travel and get to know other countries.
There are still people in our country who cannot go on holiday. The Holiday Participation Support Centre and the Accessible Travel InfoCentre is set up for them. The Holiday Participation Support Centre (see below) wants to encourage the tourist sector to make efforts for socially vulnerable groups. The Accessible Travel InfoCentre is set up for people with a disability and mainly gives information about the accessibility of the tourist offering.

The policymakers are convinced of the positive effects of holidays in combating poverty and exclusion. A new decree ‘Tourism for All’ (see below) places the focus from now on onto several target groups who are still insufficiently able to go on holiday: people in poverty, persons with a disability, children and young people, elderly people and one-parent families. Holiday accommodations and organisations that make efforts for social tourism will from now on be given direct recognition and support.

The policy incorporates holidays as a part of the battle against poverty and exclusion. The Flemish Action Plan Poverty Reduction [Vlaams Actieplan Armoedebestrijding (VAPA)] collates all efforts that the various policy sectors are taking within the framework of poverty reduction.

VISITFLANDERS further expands the Holiday Participation Support Centre.

Introduction of a monitored A and A+ label in line with the accessibility.

The label A+ means that the holiday accommodation scores positively (+) on the essential components (*). It complies with strict accessibility standards and is accessible in a comfortable and independent manner.

The label A means that we consider the holiday accommodation as basically accessible. For most people with restricted mobility it is utilizable, but extra effort or the aid of a helper may possibly be needed.

Start of transition process. for social tourism
Strategische transities voor het sociaal toerisme
1 / Flemish decree ‘Tourism for All’

The social tourism sector in Flanders gets its own decree ‘Tourism for All’ in 2003, to replace a Royal Decree of 1980. It anticipates the changing social context and provides a new interpretation of social tourism. “Tourism for All” refers to a non-commercial form of tourism and recreation, where other objectives are the focus rather than the organisation of purely economic activities. On the one hand, the decision was made to opt for a target group-specific approach to support the holiday experience of specific target groups. On the other hand, “Tourism for All” implies a new approach towards supporting the organisations and accommodations that are aimed at these target groups.

Through the years the offer of recognised accommodation has expanded to 587 with a total capacity of more than 45,000 beds. The number of overnight stays in these Tourism for All accommodations amounts to more than 4.5 million per year. Within the decree, attention is specifically paid to accommodations with a good (better) accessibility and care. To this end, specific budgets were deployed by VISITF-LANDERS to complete the necessary alterations.

![Recognition of Tourism for All 2014](image)
Social holiday accommodation remains an important element in tourism in Flanders: In 2014, 4.65 million overnight stays were achieved, that is good for 17.5% of all overnight stays in the same year in Flanders.
The way in which recognition and financial support could be regulated was set out by means of several additional decrees. In this - as was noted in their refocusing note - management support centres were set up to develop vision and innovative products and to support the accommodations that fall under their management in terms of training and marketing. They must offer minimum support to four recognised Tourism for All accommodations and in this respect achieve the following points:

- Train the staff of the accommodations
- Coach the management of the accommodations
- Develop new tourist products
- Research the profile of specific target groups
- Conduct market research with particular attention to the target groups mentioned in the ‘Tourism for All’ decree
- Take measures within the context of international tourism
- Stimulate the further holiday experience of the target group mentioned in the ‘Tourism for All’ decree

At present there are 10 recognised management support centres. They have been offering high quality support to the associated Tourism for All accommodations for many years already. The management support centres have been subsidised to that end since 2004 by VISITFLANDERS, with a staff subsidy on the one hand, and an operating subsidy on the other hand. They have built up with their associated accommodations a substantial amount of expertise and have developed new stimuli regarding the reception of people/groups that experience limitations in respect of going on holiday. An important part of the overnight stays that were achieved via the Holiday Participation Support Centre were realised by accommodations that are associated with a management support centre.
SOME EXTRA FIGURES ON TOURISM FOR ALL:

28% of the total number of beds in tourism have a Tourism for All recognition; at the coast this amounts to 66%

10% of the accommodations with a recognition from Tourism for All are aimed at accommodation for adults

FIGURES FOR MANAGEMENT SUPPORT CENTRES:

20% of the accommodations with a recognition from Tourism for All are associated with a management support centre

30% of the total bed capacity

More than 1,000 full-time workers employed

Salary costs: 30,000,000 euro

Turnover: 55,000,000 euro

In addition this decree recognises social-tourist organisations and makes it possible to award subsidies to create organised holidays for target groups. The associations reached 4,458 holidaymakers in 2014, and had a budget of 770,000 euro available for the organisation of these holiday camps.
Since 2001 Tourism Flanders has had an Accessible Travel Infopoint. This grew from a collaboration with several organisations and services by and for people with a disability. The task consisted of adding to the missing information on travelling with a disability and is aimed at two target groups:

### The Accessible Travel Infopoint

As a holidaymaker in Flanders you can contact the Infopoint for matter such as **background information about accessibility**, **possibilities about premiums and guidelines for accessibility modifications**. The Info point thus plays a vital role in increasing awareness in the tourist sector.

**Travellers with a disability** and the elderly can find carefully collected information on the accessibility of various holiday destinations at the Infopoint. They can expect to get reliable info from the information point, tailored to their personal requirements. The Infopoint is however not a travel agency: it provides the necessary information, but leaves the practical realisation to the traveller.

In 2012, the decision was taken to incorporate the Accessibility Infopoint in the operation of VISITFLANDERS.
In 2001, the Flemish government set up the Holiday Participation Support Centre. It wanted to invest in the realisation of the right to holidays for everyone. The Support Centre mainly focussed on the target group of people who live in poverty. The European ‘poverty line’ is regarded here as the standard and people with a RVV status (’claimants of increased insurance allowance; the former OMNIO status) also qualify.

The Holiday Participation Support Centre is a platform within VISITFLANDERS that facilitates the holiday participation network. It works within the legal framework of the ‘Tourism for All’ decree. It responds to the changing social context and provides a partially new interpretation of social tourism. The Holiday Participation Support Centre is further embraced by the Flemish coalition agreement and the accompanying policy note on tourism (2014-2019), the Flemish action plan on combating poverty (VAPA) and horizontal policy plans such as youth, equal opportunities and the elderly.

The Holiday Participation Support Centre is a unique concept in Europe - and by extension in the entire world - that makes holidays possible for everyone. The Holiday Participation Support Centre is not an advisory service, but a partner network that brings together expertise, goodwill and social responsibility to realise the right to holidays for all Flemish people. At the crossroads between supply and demand, personal services are offered to the Flemish and all partners. The service provided is tailored to the person, but is not assistance. Social organisations know the people who want to go on holiday or make a day trip and can assess their situation.
A holidaymaker does not have to tell his or her story or show what his or her income is again for a holiday application. There is trust in the social organisation in terms of counselling and screening of the holidaymakers. The social organisations offer support to the holidaymaker when completing the forms, the preparations for the holiday… People can also sign up directly with the accommodation on offer. The Holiday Participation Support Centre cooperates with more than 1,500 social organisations in Flanders: public centres for social welfare (OCMWs), voluntary organisations and associations that reach a broad range of target groups. These organisations communicate about the accommodation on offer with possible holidaymakers in their client group or members’ lists by means of holiday guides and the Internet site.

Holidays give people a psychological boost so that they are able to cope again. Holidays promote health, reinforce the family links and increase social networks. After a holiday people feel more positive about life and have more self-confidence.

The Holiday Participation Support Centre reached 123,101 holidaymakers for a day trip or holiday in 2014. Besides the more than 1,500 member organisations, 560 tourist partners are also associated.
To reinforce the right to holidays and to be more locally present, much effort was put into the establishment and development of Rap-Op-Stap travel agencies. In these travel agencies for people with a financial threshold, it is very easy to walk in without being left feeling stigmatised. How these agencies are set up is mainly with the aid of several organisations ‘in the field’ and they are frequently run by volunteers. Right from the start of the establishment of these offices, they proved to be a great success for the target group.
A sector is also bound to the prevailing laws that apply in Flanders. Besides the ‘Tourism for All’ decree, each government period also sets out its priorities in a specific policy note. Within the context of social tourism, the policy note from the Minister for Tourism, Ben Weyt, strives to bring tourism within the grasp of each Flemish person.

The minister wants to provide holiday opportunities for each age group, for any means, for each Flemish person, with or without a disability. Besides the pre-existing target group focus, more barriers will be investigated, detected and mapped. The Holiday Participation Support Centre will take on this specific task and formulate solutions for tackling all possible holiday barriers for Flemish people in an integrated manner.

People with specific holiday barriers form an important economic market that offers opportunities for tourist entrepreneurs with regards to a more diversified offer, an extension of the season and increasing income. An important focus here lies on making the tourist chain more family-oriented, in particular for multi-generational travel. Extra attention in this respect goes to a suitable promotional policy for foreign visitors with children. The existing youth hostels will be included in this international promotion, even though they are already being drawn on for their potential for internal school- and group trips.

The network of the Holiday Participation Support Centre will be maximised.

The ‘Tourism for All’ decree will, in the context of an evaluation, be closely examined in order to better match it to the new accommodation decree and to arrive at a more market-corrective policy. This harmonisation will pay much attention to the subsidies, always with priority attention being given to accessibility, health care and child-friendliness.

The existing agreements with the management support centres will be re-focussed, and their expertise deployed to the maximum. The regulations for social-tourist associations and its subsidisation will be highly simplified.
SKETCH OF PARTICIPATIVE TRANSITION PROCESS FOR SOCIAL TOURISM

Through the need for greater profiling and the changing expectations of the government and society, the social tourism sector wished to give its own future an innovative boost. During the Forum Tourism for All, held in November 2013, a participative transition process was initiated. The choice for starting up a project structure around this transition process was obvious, because the changes will take place mainly in the actual sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANISATION</th>
<th>WHO?</th>
<th>FORMULATE PROPOSALS</th>
<th>ADVISING/STEERING</th>
<th>DECISION MAKING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT SPONSOR</td>
<td>FLANDERS TOURISM</td>
<td>PETER DE WILDE</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT MANAGER</td>
<td>FLANDERS TOURISM</td>
<td>JEROEN MARIJSSE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKGROUP*</td>
<td>FLANDERS TOURISM</td>
<td>MARIANNE SCHAPMANS, JEROEN MARIJSSE, JENS DILS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEERING GROUP</td>
<td>FLANDERS TOURISM</td>
<td>MARIANNE SCHAPMANS, KATRIEN MAMPAEY, JAN VAN PRAET, JEROEN MARIJSSE, JENS DILS</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PASAR</td>
<td>MICHEL VANDENDRIESSCHE</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CENTRUM JEUGDTOERISME VZW (CJT)</td>
<td>FREDERIK VERCAMMEN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HOEVE JADOU L</td>
<td>DOMINIQUE GIELEN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HORIZONT VZW</td>
<td>EDDY BEUTEN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOCUS GROUP</td>
<td>SEVERAL WORKGROUPS COME TOGETHER TO OPERATIONALISE THE STRATEGIC GOALS</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEEDBACK GROUP</td>
<td>FORUM TVA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To ensure participation and consultation, the Forum Tourism for All acted as feedback group. The process was conducted by a steering group, which was composed of several actors from the work field and staff members from VISITFLANDERS, who took on many implementing and coordinating tasks.

At the end of the process, the drafted transition plan was presented to the Forum Tourism for All on 26th June 2015. This plan was approved at the Forum. As a result of the manner in which it has come about and the procedures that were followed, this has become a participatively drafted plan that is owned by the entire sector. The Holiday Participation Support Centre (and thus VISITFLANDERS) is one of the actors who stand behind this plan - and its implementation.

1 / Focus groups

In March 2014, as many stakeholders as possible were consulted in focus groups to aggregate the first ideas for the future.

In total 85 participants from various sectors within social tourism considered the central question: ‘What constitutes an initiative for social tourism?’.

The discussions arose through the use of scen-
Examples of statements that raised issues relating to the content of social tourism and resulted in a reasoned analysis and discussion:

- EasyJet and RyanAir make it possible for people to fly at a low cost
- Euro Lines provides buses to London for 3 euro
- A hotel offers gluten-free meals
- A school organises sea classes for those who can pay for them
- All youth movement camps are social tourism
- A private entrepreneur who builds a care hotel on the coast. The rooms are priced at market rates
- A voluntary organisation that organises a collection campaign and uses the money to pay for a weekend in Center Parcs for teenage mums
- A private tour operator who hands over part of its profits to a charity organisation in Ethiopia
- An attraction park that offers special discounts for families with more than three children
- A group accommodation in the Ardennes run by a trade union, with reduced rates for trade union members
- A luxurious holiday resort run by a health insurance company, which attracts the vast majority of its clients from the higher middle class
- A holiday accommodation that provides dedicated social employment with business tourists as its target public
- The zoo that offers tickets at a reduced rate to the Support Centre

The ideas that arise were talked about and discussed in an open and dynamic atmosphere. This gave rise to a shift in and the establishment of a new conceptual framework.

**SOCIAL TOURISM IS A PROCES**

**THAT FACILITATES A TOURIST ACTIVITY THAT:**

- offers added social value
- simultaneously gets rid of more than one barrier to holiday participation
- works on the basis of the needs of the target group/clients from a holistic approach
- reaches the target groups in a result-oriented manner

With this conceptual framework as a basis, strong foundations were laid on which to work further in the coming two-day conference.
2 / Two-day Conference

The outcomes of these focus groups were examined in more depth during a two-day conference at the coast. The participants were mostly those of the first stage focus groups.

In collaboration with a consultant, an intense, packed programme was drawn up in order to finish with a complete version of a conceptual framework. The process had to change track already in the first day. The diverse backgrounds and subtle differences in vision of the various participants were, after all, being extensively discussed and brought to the fore for the first time in the history of social tourism. Instead of regarding this change in the programme as a brake on the process, this momentum was used to come to a better-reasoned and discussed picture of social tourism. In consensus the group agreed upon a supported description of ‘social tourism’ (see below), which forms a strong basis for a sustainable future.

As a starting point for the remainder of the two-day conference, the group defined the ambitions that social tourism wishes to uphold in regard to the future. These eleven formulated ambitions were further developed and closely studied via a few work groups.
1. How can we optimise the image of the sector?
2. How can we develop cooperation with complementary and potential partners?
3. How can we professionalize and continuously share knowledge through the creation of a knowledge platform?
4. How can we ensure that social tourism becomes both outgoing and incoming?
5. What is the role of sustainability and corporate social responsibility?
6. How do we increase public support for the right to holidays for everyone?
7. How do we ensure that the demand side understands the usefulness of holidays?
8. How can we offer sufficient support so that every holiday becomes a success experience?
9. How can we ensure that social tourism becomes both outgoing and incoming?
10. How do we look for points of contact in the flanking policy?
11. Inclusive where possible, exclusive where necessary!

The intense cooperation during the two-day conference resulted, besides the description, in a thorough exploration of good practice examples and the description of new solutions and possibilities.

3 / Workshops

As from November 2014, further work was done on the results from the two-day conference. In order to acquire more detailed information to draw up the strategic transition plan, workshops were organised in the spring of 2015. No fewer than 79 people took part in this process.

Once again VISITFLANDERS brought together various participants in some large cities in Flanders and Brussels. The workshops worked on the central problems: “Your organisation is a link in the holiday chain. How can we connect the various links in the holiday chain in order to achieve the goal of ‘everyone deserves holidays’?”

This problem gave rise to several other questions and answers. These were prepared in advance by groups consisting, on average, of two to three participants. The answers were discussed in a plenary session and were grouped into a few major topics. These themes were then discussed in a second round, supported by the ‘world cafe’ method and larger groups looked for creative existing or possibly new solutions.

All the collected information and ideas were processed substantively and remodelled into the current plan with strategic and operational objectives.
4 / Results

The following results are presented from all work moments:

| Conceptual Framework for Social Tourism | Description of Social Tourism | Holiday Chain | Executive Structures | Transition Lines |

Strategic Transition Plan

November 2013
Kick-off transition process on Forum TVA

2014

April 2014
Two-day transition process memorandums visitFlanders

March 2014
Focus groups transition process

June 2014
Effects of new description mapping out social tourism at the Forum TVA

June 2015
Policy note minister of tourism

2015

March 2015
Ratification strategic and operational objectives BK Forum TVA

September 2014
Presentation of interim results to Cabinet tourism

April 2015
Update transition process to Cabinet tourism

February 2015
Workgroups in Flanders

November 2014
Ratification transition lines by Forum TVA

September 2015
Concept not transition plan at Cabinet tourism

2016

January 2016
Start of implementation transition plan
5 / **Description of social tourism**

During the two-day conference in the spring of 2014, the sector observed a shift in the conceptual framework on the basis of the ideas gathered from the various focus groups. Social tourism is considered as a process that facilitates a tourist activity that:

-- offers added social value
- simultaneously removes more than one barrier to holiday participation
- is based on the needs of the target group/customer from a total approach
- reaches these target groups in a result-oriented manner

**After redefining this conceptual framework, a new description of social tourism came about, which serves as the new ‘vision’ and with which the sector wishes to identify itself in the future:**

Social tourism has the ambition to remove all barriers in the holiday chain that an individual/group is unable to overcome on their own.

For this, cooperation is required between partners who work from a socially responsible vision.

This vision is closely linked with the mission that the sector has set itself:

We believe in the positive effects of holidays and wish no one to be deprived of that. Leisure time and tourism are important for body and mind. Someone who is feeling good, functions better. Someone who feels appreciated, has a positive outlook on society. Everyone deserves holidays!
The description of social tourism is applicable in the various models of social tourism that have been outlined, such as were defined by Minnaert, Maitland & Miller in 2011:

According to the 'participation model', social tourism focuses on specific target groups. These target groups are supported to participate in the offering that is accessible to everyone. The same standard product is offered to all tourists. One example is the offers via the Holiday Participation Support Centre.

In the 'inclusion model' social tourism is focused on promoting the participation of everyone in tourism, including that of persons who for economic or other reasons (financial, health,...) have fewer opportunities to enjoy holidays away from home. Both groups of holidaymakers (both target group and regular holidaymakers) are supported to take holidays away from home. The tourist offer that is made to them is a standard offer. An example of this is the French 'chèques vacances'.

In the ‘adaptation model’ social tourism is regarded as a specific offer to specific target
groups. It can concern adapted accommodation, adapted service provision, adapted formulas,... for target groups who for all kinds of reasons (financial, health,...) have difficulty accessing the regular tourist offering. Social-tourist associations that develop a specific product for specific target groups (patients, people with a disability, families and/or children in poverty, teenage mothers,...) are examples in this sense.

In the 'stimulation model', the stimulation of the tourist sector outside the holiday season is the central issue, because tourism outside the high season continues to contribute to employment and the socio-economic development of the region. Specific products are offered (e.g. arrangements,...), whether or not these are focussed on a specific target group. The IMERSO program in Spain is an example of this model.

**Continuum of holidaymaker(s)**

We can imagine that there are a proportion of people who consciously do not take part in going on holiday. They can be found on the left hand side of the continuum within the non-participation zone. The more people become aware of the possibilities and can train their competencies, the more they shift to the right.

It is on this 'balance zone' that we find the stumbling blocks where resources and support have to be continuously deployed to raise awareness about and encouragement to take holidays. The focus lies on any possible barrier that a holidaymaker experiences and that he himself cannot overcome. In order to proceed to independent participation in holidays we note that there is a GAP which at present is not being filled within the sector. Adequate communication could help holidaymakers to become more independent in the holiday participation process.

By conducting the necessary destination promotion aimed at the target groups, other holidaymakers on the continuum can progress still further. There is at present no specifically appointed partner who takes upon itself this type of promotion.
The participation rate can be increased by committing to enhancing the skills of people, creating solidarity and challenging them to move outside their comfort zone. It is important to find sufficient organisations that will make an effort in each of these sub-aspects. In addition, care must be taken that they learn from each other and that information and support can be linked to each other. Only if the combined action of these actors is guided properly will there be greater certainty that the three factors - which stimulate the increase in the participation rate - will be sufficiently reinforced in an individual for them to independently (learn) to take action and to participate in tourist activities. The model below clarifies this:

\[ P = U V^2 \]

Promotion of participation in tourism by bringing the balance between the challenge, skills and solidarity into balance. People participate if the balance between and in these three factors is present:

- **CONNECTION**: Do I recognise myself in this offer? Is this something for me, for us? I want to but... Not wanting to participate is a choice. Not being able to participate is exclusion. Actions are extended to people with a holiday wish, impeded by barriers, but with the desire.

- **CAPACITY**: Do I have the skills to organise this trip? Is the challenge big enough or too big? Taking the bus for the first time, making little lists, confirming agreements. For the one perfectly normal, for the other a real task. The holiday skills of people need to be supported and developed.

- **CHALLENGE**: Can the offer seduce me, is it specific or not specific enough? People participate if the challenge is in balance. When it is too big, people do not see themselves starting on a trip; too difficult, too tricky. When the challenge is too small, it loses all its attractiveness and it is not worth the effort.
Social entrepreneurship

Not every organisation active in the tourist sector is linked to the Tourism for All decree. Social entrepreneurs are present everywhere and form a reality that reinforces new tendencies and possibilities for social tourism. The growth model shown below (according to Piet Colruyt) reflects where entrepreneurs can situate themselves on this continuum.

Entrepreneurship and non-profit go hand in hand. Results are important in all sectors. In searching for the balance between social objectives and voluntary commitment and attention to efficiency and effectiveness, an organisation positions itself at different places on the continuum for various aspects of its operation. Nevertheless, the quest for social entrepreneurship remains a guiding principle for social tourism.
6 / Holiday chain

In the description of social tourism a lot of attention is paid to the holiday chain. The starting point is no longer the focus on an individual or on a form of accommodation but on the **combined efforts of various actors** that can (help) support the complete holiday process. The holidaymaker is placed centrally in all possible forms of support that are offered. Eva Mouton was asked to encapsulate the holiday chain in a drawing.
The holidaymaker starts by **dreaming** and fantasising about holidays. This is an essential step in order to proceed as an individual to an effective holiday experience. After the dream is converted to more of a reality, the holidaymaker starts **making plans**: how can this holiday experience really come true? After the necessary ideas have been collected and all the details worked out, a **choice is made from what’s on offer**. This choice is more thoroughly developed during an in-depth **preparation phase**.

Then it’s time for the holidaymaker to **leave** for the chosen accommodation and the holiday experience can start at last. On **arrival** in the holiday accommodation, the effective holiday starts: **it’s not only the possibilities for sleeping and eating** that are important. During their stay, the holidaymaker has the opportunity, if he wishes so, to take part in **activities and/or day trips**. These possibilities have already been investigated in the preparatory phase.

The end of the holiday experience arrives when the holidaymaker leaves to go **home**. Once at home, the holidaymaker (together with others) reflects on holiday memories. These again start the process of the holiday chain into action and support the **dreaming of** a next holiday.

From the social tourist perspective, the emphasis lies in this chain on **connecting the different components** of the holiday chain to make holidays possible for every Flemish person. At each step that a holidaymaker can take, there are **various actors** active who provide support and can help to make a holiday experience come true for people who have more difficulty than the average tourist.

Planning, preparation and also accompanying postcare are often supported by social organisations that refer their customers to the holiday participation offer. The holiday experience on site is the teamwork of those offering accommodation and tourist activities. The mobility of a holidaymaker determines how easily someone can get to the site.

This transition plan helps to adequately coordinate all these aspects sufficiently. Social tourism is playing the card of a **broader network that has greater commitment to exchange and mutual cooperation**, thus serving the holidaymaker who experiences barriers that he himself cannot overcome. The existing network of the Holiday Participation Support Centre shall, as a result, be expanded much further and will be able to offer more extensive support to all people concerned.
7 / Transition lines

In terms of long-term perspectives, the sector has the goal of increasing the holiday participation for every Flemish person who experiences barriers. This results in an increase in the economic contribution, in an expansion of the season and in responding to new target groups. In the course of the social tourism participative transition process, there were several topics raised in in-depth discussions in order to respond to this.

The upshot of this was that these ambitions were combined in six large transition lines. They indicate the policy framework within which the participative transition process attempts to bring about its major changes. From this the more operational objectives arise that will lead in the coming policy period to the realisation of the changes.

1. From a simple sector to a multiplayer network
On the basis of the ‘Tourism for All’ decree, social tourism is attributed to a limited number of (social) tourist providers. Corporate social responsibility and social entrepreneurship bring other players into the social-tourist field.

2. From a target-group oriented offer to a progressive universal offer
A progressive universal offer represents an offer for everyone. This however does not mean doing the same for everyone, but adapting the offer to the needs and to those who experience barriers. A target group policy is necessary, but within a target group not everyone has the same needs.

3. From single activities to a mechanism
Cooperation between partners is important in order to remove the various barriers in the holiday chain.

4. From offering accommodation to removing barriers in the entire holiday chain
Where so far the emphasis lay on offering high-quality, price-friendly accommodation we have noticed a distinct shift. Social tourism has the ambition to remove all barriers in the holiday chain.

5. From the development/investment of an offer to promotion and encouragement
On the basis of the Tourism for All decree, there was major investment in recent years in the development of a high quality offering. We wish to capitalise on these efforts by committing to promotion and encouragement.

6. From the current Tourism for All decree to...
If we want to use our policy tools with the correct focus, then an evaluation of the decree Tourism for All is almost unavoidable. In the short term we must refocus the existing agreement with the ‘management support centres’ and highly simplify the legislation and the subsidisation for social-tourist associations.
8 / **Implementing structures in social tourism**

The social tourism sector (earlier named by the ‘Tourism for All’ decree) has a rich and divergent history in Flanders. Because of this extensive history, there is already a great deal of expertise among the current social-tourist entrepreneurs. Until now, this expertise was mainly shared among their own organisations without deploying a general cross-border attitude. By means of the existing legislation management support centres were subsidised for their support work, but this was for only one part of the sector. In addition the social-tourist associations receive subsidies to organise holidays, which are exclusively accessible for children and adults with a financial barrier.

In recent years, the idea has grown that there was a need for more exchange of information and consultation as well as the need to learn more from each other in order to professionalize more. The support to the social-tourist sector, which was until now facilitated by the Holiday Participation Support Centre of VISITFLANDERS on the one hand and a partial cover through the management support centres on the other side, has to be enlarged to offer broad support for the whole sector. In that sector there are also possibilities for a further extension of its social-tourist concept to the current regular tourist sector. Within the predominating concept of ‘corporate social responsibility’, a preference for a sustainable and social account from each entrepreneur comes more to the forefront.

In order to involve new actors more in the whole of social tourism, it seems appropriate to put more efforts into the social dimension, which could occupy more space within the tourism sector. Through the development of a social-tourist brand (social branding) and the deployment in terms
of broad and complete support by actors within the partner network of social-tourist entrepreneurs, this sector can expand more broadly and acquire a larger social relevance.

To successfully complete the implementation of the transition plan for social tourism, the responsibilities must be divided across various actors within social tourism. Besides the Holiday Participation Support Centre, the sector accepts its responsibility to work on, execute and ensure a part of this process.

By executing some substantive changes from the ‘Tourism for All’ decree, and the amalgamation of the adult accommodations with the future new Tourist Accommodation decree, the social-tourist sector will also be supported at the level of the legislation in its legitimacy, security and in its market position.

The Holiday Participation Support Centre is the central ‘body’ where various tasks to be executed in respect of the transition plan shall be taken on, coordinated and/or facilitated. This means an enlargement of the existing task of the Support Centre. It continues to exist in its current structure within VISITFLANDERS and facilitates, even more than previously, the social-tourist entrepreneurs and the social organisations/holidaymakers. It remains faithful to its assigned roles and focusses on several areas. At least its current resources will continue to be deployed in order to guarantee this expanded operation.
In addition the role of VISITFLANDERS Flanders consists of providing supporting instruments within the context of social tourism:

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT:
- Subsidies for threshold-lowering measures for recognised youth accommodations/hostels in the Tourism for All decree
- Subsidies for threshold-lowering measures for accommodation forms that meet the criteria from the (new) Tourist Accommodation Decree
- Allocation of accessibility label by a label committee specially established for that purpose

SECTOR SUPPORT:
- Subsidies for social-tourist associations (support to allow persons in poverty to participate in holidays)
- Impulse measures for the development of new holiday offer for holidaymakers who experience barriers

Given the success booked with the support to people in poverty, VISITFLANDERS continues to make efforts in this field and it foresees a continuation of the subsidies for social-tourist associations. Moreover VISITFLANDERS wishes to continue to focus on other barriers by deploying specific impulse measures. That will be made possible after a refocusing of the resources for the management support centres.
During an intensively participative process with the strong involvement of the social-tourist entrepreneurs work was conducted, in the course of 2014 and 2015 on a first major plan for the social-tourist sector. This plan drives the future for social tourism in a certain direction with satisfactory clarity about the path to be taken. At several places in Flanders workshops were started up, in which a total of 79 people took part. Much input was collected by a wide diversity of organisations, which testifies to the high level of participation. After their efforts, all information was collected and reworked to form a strategic transition plan for social tourism with five strategic objectives and numerous operational objectives for the coming policy period of the Flemish government.
All operational objectives are always tested against the mission, the vision and the general transition lines. Further operationalisation will be rolled out during the policy period.

It has become a strategic plan for the ‘renewed’ social-tourist sector, with a strong emphasis on offering support and preservation of an own identity.

As from October 2015 work has started on an initial implementation of the operational objectives in terms of actions. Which of the various actors should be involved in order to conduct the actions successfully has to be determined. The ownership of each action will be allocated as well. Once again this shall take place in a participative follow-up process.

**SD 1: SOCIAL TOURISM IS A CROSS-SECTORAL POLICY CONCERNING THE VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS LOCAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL**

As a result of the changes that were facing social tourism in recent years, the feeling arose that the future was beginning to look uncertain. With the changes that are imminent within the structures of the management support centres and the subsidy regulations for the social-tourist associations, certain concerns surface. It remains important that the government gives a clear supportive signal to the social-tourist sector and society to keep a balanced, hospitable Flanders in the spotlight. Officially the card of social tourism should thus be played at various government levels, so that social tourism is kept visible on all these levels.

**OD 1.1: THE RENEWED DESCRIPTION OF ‘SOCIAL TOURISM’ WILL BE ACTIVELY TRANSLATED AND PROPAGATED NATIONAL- AND INTERNATIONALLY**

Keeping and renewing the existing identity forms a big challenge for social tourism. To that end it is important to redefine the roles of the various partners and to challenge the Flemish government to consolidate this renewal within the legislative framework.

**OD 1.2: VISITFLANDERS HAS ESTABLISHED A PERMANENT CONSULTATION BODY**

VISITFLANDERS set up a permanent consultation body with various representatives of the actors for social tourism. Via this body recommendations are mutually made to reinforce the actors of social tourism in the execution of their task. A similar consultation such as the Forum Tourism for All is an excellent example of this. Giving this Forum Tourism for All a new task and composition can serve as a good basis for attaining this objective.

**OD 1.3: THERE IS STRUCTURAL CONSULTATION BETWEEN SEVERAL POLICY MAKERS WITH REGARD TO HOLIDAY (WELFARE, EDUCATION, PUBLIC TRANSPORT, CULTURE,...)**

To guarantee the right to holidays for everyone, there is a greater need to keep attention on the topic in several policy domains or to introduce it where necessary. The importance of harmonisa-
tion between several policy sectors and an increase in their mutual cooperation, grows continuously. To allow its identity to be acknowledged, social tourism will commit to joining in with various structural consultations or initiating it where necessary.

**OD 1.4: THE MUTUAL COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SOCIAL-TOURIST HOLIDAY PROVIDERS, HOLIDAYMAKERS AND FLANDERS RELIES ON FIVE PRINCIPLES OF GOOD STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT**

Sustainable relationships arise through good mutual communication, which is sufficiently transparent. With the right agreements between the various partners in the broad network, trust grows and better collaboration as a result. Social tourism assumes a combination of all these success factors.

---

**SD 2 : EVERY FLEMISH PERSON WITH BARRIERS CAN GO ON HOLIDAY**

Following the specific concentration in recent years on people in financial difficulties, the ‘renewed’ social tourism wishes to pay attention to all possible barriers that prevent people from going on holiday. The experiences that were gained up to now in respect of financial barriers are a major source of inspiration for the development of efficient solutions for dealing with other barriers in the broad holiday chain. Of course, the financial barrier also remains a formidable challenge for the ‘renewed’ social tourism.

**OD 2.1: THE BARRIER SOLUTIONS ON WHICH THE FOCUS WILL BE PLACED IN THE COMING POLICY PERIOD HAVE BEEN DEFINED**

To know whether all Flemish people can go on holiday, the various barriers that prevent people from doing so must be mapped out. Only once this is clear can the right partners become involved in order to help to get rid of these barriers. The collaborations that arise from this involvement, form the basis for a specific solution tailored for the holidaymaker.

**OD 2.2: THE TARGET GROUP THAT EXPERIENCES BARRIERS IS SUPPORTED IN THE HOLIDAY CHAIN**

Via all kinds of channels and instruments social tourism attempts to offer extensive support to the holidaymakers. The appropriate attention is given not only to the holiday experience on the spot, but also to the preparation and the ‘aftercare’ within the complete holiday chain.

**OD 2.3: PARTNERS FROM THE BROAD HOLIDAY CHAIN TAKE ON THE COMMITMENT TO HELP GET RID OF BARRIERS**

To give the renewed social tourism the best chances of success, it is important to clearly define the commitment that is expected of the entrepreneurs. Besides existing partners in the social holiday net-
work, there needs to be sufficient focus on how new partners can be persuaded to engage in the social-tourist narrative. The development of adequate instruments and facilities forms the basis of this intense partner operation.

**OD 2.4: THERE ARE REGIONAL NETWORK ALTERNATIVES FOR (PUBLIC) TRANSPORT**

It is not sufficient to map out the local network alternatives for transport. Alternative investigations should be initiated with sectors, which up to the present have been taken into consideration too little and which wish to tap into new target groups. Moreover, it continues to be relevant to maintain contacts via the usual channels and to conduct negotiations with the various public transport companies that are active in Flanders.

**SD 3 : THERE IS A COORDINATED, ACTIVE, EXTENDED NETWORK OF PARTNERS IN THE BROAD HOLIDAY CHAIN**

A further extension of the existing network is a formidable challenge. Not only do the existing partners have to be confirmed in their efforts, but the network will also have to go in search of new and sometimes even other types of partners depending on the additional barriers to be tackled. It is not a case of ‘you ask, we deliver’, but a constructive network in which as many partners again continue to be stimulated to help pull on the same - but broader - rope. The focus must be placed on exchanging information and an intense structural collaboration to constantly prove the considerable added value of the network.

**OD 3.1: THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITHIN THE BROAD NETWORK ‘SOCIAL TOURISM’ IS ORGANISED STRUCTURALLY AND PARTICIPATIVELY**

Within the partner network attention is given to sufficient exchange of information including the optimal harmonisation of supply and demand. Besides making use of the necessary instruments to make this information exchange possible, there has to be sufficient investment in meeting opportunities in order to strengthen the mutual collaboration. How and whether use can be made for this of existing volunteer networks has yet to be resolved.

**OD 3.2: THERE IS A STRUCTURAL COOPERATION WITH LOCAL TOURIST SERVICES AND SOCIAL SERVICES TO BRING ALL INFORMATION FROM THE EXTENDED NETWORK TO THE HOLIDAYMAKER/HIS NETWORK**

The aid and collaboration of the local services signifies a major boost in the active network. They are the best placed to collate local information and to think locally about the development of facilities and local collaborative bonds. Also depending on local regulations, they are the ideal organisations for persuading local governments to raise their social commitments.
OD 3.3: THE RAP-OP-STAP NETWORK EXPANDS AND CONSISTS OF REGIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGERS WHO INFORM EVERYONE ABOUT ALL POSSIBLE BARRIERS AND WHO ACT AS A TRAVEL AGENCY FOR THE TARGET GROUP WITH A FINANCIAL BARRIER

Because of the sizeable amount of expertise that currently has been acquired in respect of the financial barrier, the Rap-Op-Stamp agencies are well-placed to receive holidaymakers with all kinds of barriers and to provide wide-ranging holiday information. Only people with a financial barrier can book directly via these offices.

OD 3.4: THERE IS AN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN RELATING TO ‘SOCIAL TOURISM’ AND ALL BARRIERS TO SPECIFIC TARGET GROUPS IN SOCIETY IN ORDER TO BREAK THROUGH EXISTING PRECONCEPTIONS

Within social tourism awareness campaigns will be organised about the different target groups who experience barriers. These target groups will be involved in the drawing up the contents of the campaign. The campaigns determine in advance the groups to be reached and are always based upon improving the provision of services to the social tourist target groups.

OD 3.5: TEST PROJECTS FOR INNOVATION AND RENEWAL WILL BE CREATED

Because of the transition that social tourism is undergoing, there is not only extensive innovation for the sector, but various opportunities arise for the sector to innovate in all possible aspects of collaboration and network activities. Because of this, the new sector for social tourism remains stimulating and motivating as a driving force for the right to holiday for everyone.
**SD 4: THE PARTNERS WITHIN SOCIAL TOURISM ARE SUPPORTED IN THEIR TASK, THIS IN HARMONY WITH THE NETWORK ACTIVITIES**

Good support for the social-tourist entrepreneur and his staff is characterised by the basic principle that the entrepreneur in the first place can continue to concentrate on his core tourist business. Existing needs will be centrally mapped out with respect to social tourist entrepreneurship and the correct customised solutions offered to the network partners in a coordinated manner. This highly centralised management strengthens the entrepreneur in his endeavour to achieve his social-tourist goals and makes the wider partner network more robust.

**OD 4.1: THERE ARE NEED-DRIVEN TRAINING COURSES FOR THE NETWORK**

To be able to support tourist entrepreneurs in their ‘social-tourist entrepreneurship’, they are offered various possibilities for training and on-going training. To create all of these and to customise them more, a distinction is made in the diversity of network partners: not every type of training is useful for every type of partner. Besides a sort of ‘permanent range’ of support, there will be a response to existing needs.

**OD 4.2: THE STAFF OF A SOCIAL-TOURIST BUSINESS WILL BE SUPPORTED IN GIVING ASSISTANCE TO THE HOLIDAYMAKER ON SITE**

Although this is an objective that could also fall into the previous category, it was kept separately to emphasise the importance of supporting the staff. The staff are of crucial importance to the success of a social-tourist business. Supporting them in their dealing with the client with barriers is an important step in raising the success chances of a ‘social tourism business’.

**OD 4.3: THE HOLIDAYMAKER IS ACTIVELY SUPPORTED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERESTS AND COMPETENCES IN THE FIELD OF HOLIDAYS**

The social-tourist entrepreneur identifies various possible cultural leisure activities and is trained to match these to the holidaymaker with barriers. By discovering new leisure activities, a holidaymaker is also stimulated to participate in this part of society in daily life.
SD 5 : STARTING FROM THE VISION AND MISSION OF SOCIAL TOURISM ALL PARTNERS, INVOLVED IN THE HOLIDAY CHAIN, CAN VISIBLY LINK THEMSELVES TO THE ‘SOCIAL BRANDING’,

For many years the nature and identity of social tourism has been developing in various ways to become what we know now. It is not only through the changing legislative framework, but also through the various social responsibility strands throughout society that a well-balanced ‘social branding’ of social tourism can secure a strong basis and a bright future. Existing and new partners are proud of the strong brand and act as ambassadors for the renewed and extended sector.

OD 5.1: THERE ARE SEVERAL SORTS OF LABELS/LOGOS (GRADATIONS OF ‘SOCIAL TOURISM’) THROUGH WHICH AN ORGANISATION CAN ASSOCIATE ITSELF WITH THE NETWORK OF SOCIAL-TOURIST PARTNERS

In addition to a brief investigation into what contents the labels/logos should have within the description of ‘social tourism’, the focus will be on the layered structure that a branding may or can have. Which advantages and disadvantages are associated with the labels/logo, and which expectations are held by the issuing authority on the other hand? Just like the transition process, a participating realisation is very important in this matter in order to preserve the DNA of social tourism and to raise the social consensus around it. The labels/logos must be sufficiently ambitious to maximise a greater development of the sector.

OD 5.2: THERE IS A STRUCTURE IN WHICH THE RULES FOR ACCESS TO AND APPRAISAL OF THE ‘SOCIAL BRANDING’ ARE MADE KNOWN

Both for the development and for maintenance of these labels/logos it is important to establish a structure that takes on the responsibility for this and that defines which organisations can integrate the common DNA of social tourism. Conditions of accession and regulations in the context of appraisal relating to retention of the label/logo will be coordinated from this position.
INITIAL STUDY RESULTS

In the wake of the rollout of the transition plan for social tourism, a number of studies were initiated by VISITFLANDERS, which will contribute to the direction to be chosen for social tourism. On the one hand, there is a study into the adult accommodations in the Tourism for All decree and the option of being incorporated in the Tourist Accommodation decree. On the other hand, a barrier study was conducted to reveal on which barriers VISITFLANDERS and the social-tourist sector should focus in the coming years. The recommendations are briefly given below. The full studies can be requested from the Holiday Participation Support Centre.
Adult accommodations Tourism for All - Exploration of the future

RECOMMENDATIONS:
TOWARDS BASIC CRITERIA FOR ALL ACCOMMODATIONS

The study reveals that a lot of subsidies have already been brought into line within the Tourism for All decree and the Tourist Accommodation Decree, or have been abolished. There are no actual differences between both decrees relating to basic criteria and standards (relating to hygiene, fire safety,...). The participants in the study - and by extension the social tourism sector - are the requesting party for more transparent and simpler legislation where the same rules and opportunities then apply to all providers of accommodation. In that sense, a basic license with basic criteria for all accommodations seems the better option.

STIMULATING DIVERSITY IN THE OFFER

Tourism for All accommodations continue to give priority to the removal of barriers in the holiday chain and to focussing on specific target groups. Other accommodation providers also use numerous principles (including accessibility and care) in their business operation under the umbrella of ‘corporate social responsibility’. Moreover, we see that accommodations invest in various ways and with varying intensity in quality and comfort for the client depending on the intended target group.

It continues to be important that accommodations retain the freedom of choice to focus on respectively accessibility, comfort and/or quality by means of specific support and incentives. In this way a diversified range continues to exist for everyone, including for people with specific barriers.

SOCIAL TOURISM ON THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL AGENDA

The sector is ready for the creation of a new and inspiring narrative for the future of social tourism in Flanders. There is a high degree of willingness among all stakeholders to think about how that future might look. Cooperation and exchange (between all actors within and outside Tourism for All) is central to this. The question of how social tourism can continue to remain high on the political and social agenda is crucial in this process.
Making holidays possible for every Flemish person - A participative study

RECOMMENDATIONS:
THE CONCEPT ‘EVERYONE DESERVES HOLIDAYS’ WILL BE FURTHER DEVELOPED AND TESTED FOR FEASIBILITY

No measures are necessary in terms of specific sub-target groups because each tourist is different. Tourism Flanders does not choose ‘priority barriers’, but goes in search of solutions. One solution to customised service can be offered by an innovative pilot project, the online platform ‘Holiday Connect’.

The proposed platform is a service that realises the holiday wish of people who experience (non-financial) barriers to going on holiday. The service facilitates matchmaking between a specific request from the holidaymaker and the accommodation on offer by means of a vast network of volunteers, hotel managers and service providers. Customised work is a requirement. For the social-tourist sector a big opportunity is available to distinguish itself in terms of service and quality. By devising and offering personal service tailored to tourists with a holiday barrier, they can re-position themselves in the market.

TOURISM FLANDERS INSPIRES ITS NETWORK WITH STUDY RESULTS

Recommendations and research results will be systematically presented to the social-tourist sector - and by extension to the entire network.
GENERAL RAISING OF AWARENESS

There is a need for general raising of awareness (holidaymakers, tourist sector, occasional visitors,…). The ‘worlds’ of the specific target groups and their holiday barriers are still unknown. Raising awareness can be done for example by organising training and education and making hands-on information available to the service providers from the complete holiday chain.

POOLING SOLUTIONS AND CO-CREATION

The Holiday Participation Support Centre collects and pools solutions for the different barriers in order to be able to provide tools. A look is also taken at which tools could be interesting to other services. The Holiday Participation Support Centre therefore harmonises with other services offered by VISITFLANDERS and examines which tools are multi-deployable. A check is also conducted to see whether a link can be made with the social tourism change process (for example impulse subsidies - refocusing subsidies to management support centres).

In the near future the Holiday Participation Support Centre will be approaching organisations that could think with it about this challenge. Solutions could then be formulated through concrete collaborations.
Strategische transities voor het sociaal toerisme

EN_10-10-2016.indd   50
10/10/2016 11:51:04
CONCLUSION

The players in social tourism have already made substantial achievements in the development of a thriving future through intense mutual cooperation in recent years. They developed a well-supported description of social tourism that fulfils the function of a mission and a vision. Besides defining and recognising ‘the holiday chain’, six transition lines were defined. These were in turn translated into various strategic and operational objectives. Through further mutual cooperation between the players in social tourism, these objectives will be translated into actions that will be executed jointly. The existing structure for supporting and managing all of this will also be expanded in the coming time within the Holiday Participation Support Centre. All these elements combine all of this into a broad transition plan for the social-tourist players.

Not only does this ambitious plan put social tourism on the map, it also keeps a finger on the pulse to keep it on that map. The structures that have been set form a good basis on which to allow the entire innovated and innovating social tourism to develop into a thriving example of social entrepreneurship. The supporting government is ready, along with the enthusiasm and the knowledge of the tourism entrepreneurs, to spread social tourism across the existing networks and in this way to allow even more people to enjoy the right to holidays.

With the proposed ambitions all players in social tourism will be working together towards a better future for people and society.
## ANNEX

### SOCIAL TOURISM IS A CROSS-SECTORAL POLICY CONCERNING THE VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS: LOCAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SD 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OD 1.1</td>
<td>The renewed description of ‘social tourism' will be actively translated and propagated nationally and internationally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD 1.2</td>
<td>VISITFLANDERS has established a permanent consultative body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD 1.3</td>
<td>There is structural consultation between several political sectors in respect of holidays (welfare, education, public transport, culture,...)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD 1.4</td>
<td>The mutual communication between social-tourist holiday providers, holiday-makers and VISITFLANDERS is based on the five principles of good stakeholder management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EVERY FLEMISH PERSON WITH BARRIERS CAN GO ON HOLIDAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SD 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OD 2.1</td>
<td>The barrier solutions on which the focus will be placed in the coming policy period have been defined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD 2.2</td>
<td>The target group that experiences barriers is supported in the holiday chain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD 2.3</td>
<td>Partners from the broad holiday chain take on the commitment to help get rid of barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD 2.4</td>
<td>There are regional network alternatives for (public) transport</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### THERE IS A COORDINATED, ACTIVE, EXTENDED NETWORK OF PARTNERS IN THE BROAD HOLIDAY CHAIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SD 3</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OD 3.1</td>
<td>The exchange of information within the broad ‘social tourism’ network is organised structurally and participatively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD 3.2</td>
<td>There is structural cooperation with local tourist services and social services to bring all the information from the extended network to the holidaymaker/his network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD 3.3</td>
<td>The Rap-Op-Stap network expands and consists of regional account managers who inform everyone about all possible barriers and who act as travel agency for the target group with financial barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD 3.4</td>
<td>There is an awareness campaign on ‘social tourism’ and all barriers aimed at specific target groups in society in order to break down existing preconceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD 3.5</td>
<td>Test projects for innovation and renewal will be created</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**SD 4**

**THE SOCIAL TOURISM PARTNERS ARE SUPPORTED IN THEIR TASK, THIS IN HARMONY WITH NETWORK ACTIVITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OD 4.1</th>
<th>There are need-driven training courses for the network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OD 4.2</td>
<td>The staff of a social-tourist business are supported in providing assistance to the holidaymaker on site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD 4.3</td>
<td>The holidaymaker is actively supported in the development of interests and competences in the field of holidays</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SD 5**

**STARTING FROM THE VISION AND MISSION OF SOCIAL TOURISM ALL PARTNERS INVOLVED IN THE HOLIDAY Chain CAN VISIBLY LINK THEMSELVES TO THE ‘SOCIAL BRANDING’,**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OD 5.1</th>
<th>There are several sorts of labels/logos (gradations of ‘social tourism’) with which an organisation can associate itself to the network of social-tourist partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OD 5.2</td>
<td>There is a structure in which the rules for access to and evaluation of the ‘social branding’ are made known</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Five principles of good stakeholder management

Each partner in the network is one of the players within the dynamic tourism sector.

Besides VISITFLANDERS there are many other players active in the tourism sector. VISITFLANDERS is equivalent to other players.

The tourism sector is broader than the action radius of VISITFLANDERS. The tourism sector is created by all players concerned. VISITFLANDERS is an active and important player. The tourism sector is dynamic, which means that it can vary both in terms of content and scope.

Each partner in the network starts from its aims and tasks and seeks partners to realize them.

The own objectives and tasks of each partner are directive for the actions and engagements in collaborations that contribute to the realisation of the tasks of the network.

The network makes its task and ambitions clear both internally and externally. Everyone who has an interest in the processes is a stakeholder. Successful collaboration occurs when all partners can bring their interests together.

Every participant in the network is focused on high-quality relationships.

Each colleague enters into relationships from their own core mission and their own specific task with several (potential) partners.

The network takes active steps to expand the knowledge and understanding for its stakeholders.

The network communicates transparently and involves stakeholders from the beginning of each process (if the why is clear, the who follows).

All partners in the network work with a fully transparent agenda. Ambitions and objectives are made clear right from the start to all stakeholders.

The initiation of each process includes identifying all stakeholders and the way in which they will be involved during the process. After clearly explaining ‘why’ a process is necessary, it also becomes clear which partners all be involved in the realisation of it.

The network opts for results where things are set in motion in practice.

Results are defined in terms of changes in practice.
ANNEX III

Glossary

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)
...is a process where organisations voluntarily strive to make improvements at the business and social level by, systematically, incorporating economic, environmental and social considerations in an integrated and coherent manner in the entire company operation. Consultation and dialogue with the relevant stakeholders or interested parties of the company are part of this process.

Corporate Social Responsibility is an entrepreneurial attitude based on customised work. It is entrepreneurship with more rules in part because the world has changed around us. The world is open, communication is super-fast and the various means of transport mean everyone can potentially go everywhere. The quality principle reminds us that we continuously have to improve the business management, together with the stakeholders.

With that quality comes being accountable for social responsibility. Or with an other word: transparency.

A company not only strives actively for the existence and the profitability of the company, but also tries to exercise as positive an influence as possible on the whole of society. To do this, the company looks at its economic, social and environmental interests and its ideas - more than what is strictly legally prescribed. It also listens to the outside world. Corporate social responsibility creates value.

Do you get benefits from it directly as an entrepreneur or is it only profitable in the long term? When does corporate social responsibility 'pay'?

The relation between costs and benefits for corporate social responsibility is difficult to state exactly. Some entrepreneurs think that it can cost more than it produces, for others it has to be financially rewarding. Whether you do it on the basis of strong personal involvement or because 'we have to', corporate social responsibility helps to limit some risks and to strengthen the connection with the environment. In the short or long term it always pays, in terms of the goodwill and involvement of stakeholders and/or in money/profitability. Corporate social responsibility is based on a win-win situation for everyone, based on collaboration.

SOCIAL MARKETING
...also called the social marketing concept. Just like commercial marketing, the purpose is to have goods and/or services (in this goods and services have to be regarded in the broad sense of the word, both material and immaterial. It therefore also concerns ideas, concepts, persons, companies,...) brought to market (marketing) and to convince persons/institutions of its usefulness.

The aim of social marketing however exceeds the simple principle of profit maximisation,
as observed in commercial organisations. It is not that social marketing disregards the profit principle. It is open to the profit principle, but then without repudiating the human and ecological aspect.

We can state that the final goal of social marketing is generating social profit. Social marketing aims to be profitable for the society in its whole, ranging from the individual and the family, to companies and governments.

POVERTY

‘Poverty is a network of social exclusions that extends across several areas of the individual and collective existence. It separates the poor from the commonly accepted patterns of living in the society. They cannot bridge this gap on their own. This gap can only be bridged when the society makes an appeal to the psychological capital of persons in poverty and their surroundings. To that end, society makes the formation of economic, social and cultural capital accessible to them’ (Vrancken, et al, 2007).

CARE HOLIDAY/HOLIDAY WITH CARE

A general, unequivocal definition for the term ‘care holiday’ or ‘holiday with care’ cannot simply be provided. The term is frequently used as a ‘catch-all term’ that covers a multiplicity of meanings: for one person it relates to the accessibility of the holiday accommodation, for someone else it means travelling with assistance, for others it concerns the provision of specific parameters, for still others it is about a combination of the previous elements.

A ‘holiday with care’ can be defined as an ‘accessible holiday with care support’. A ‘holiday with care’ assumes therefore that two basic conditions are met:

1. An accessible holiday infrastructure. This relates to the transport to/from and on site at the holiday destination, the holiday accommodation and to the holiday experience.

2. Care support in the form of the presence of medical care, assistance and appliances. The degree to which these different forms of care support are necessary, as well as the intensity of the care in order to go on holiday, differs from person to person.

PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY
...can appeal for support to the Flemish Agency for Persons with a Disability [Vlaams Agentschap voor Personen met een Handicap] (VAPH). It is not always clear what is understood by the term disability. For this reason the VAPH always uses the following definition:

“Every long-term and significant participation problem of a person that is attributable to the combined action of functional impairments of a mental, mental health, physical or sensory nature, restrictions when executing activities, and personal and external factors.”

MANAGEMENT SUPPORT CENTRES

Private legal entities who conduct the support of the management of minimum four recognised accommodations with a Tourism for All recognition, can be recognised for this as a management support centre for Tourism for All. If the support centre concludes an agreement with VISITFLANDERS with concrete measurable objectives, financial support can be granted for the fulfilment of its tasks.

Support centres supervise the dynamic and proper management of minimum four recognised ‘Tourism for All’ accommodations. They are responsible for the necessary development of a vision, product development and support in the domain of training and marketing at the accommodations that are associated with them.

SOCIAL-TOURIST ORGANISATIONS

For certain groups in our society, going on holiday is still not self-evident. Social-tourist organisations therefore organise holidays, specifically for children and families living in poverty. These organisations can be recognised by VISITFLANDERS and receive financial support for their operation.
ANNEX IV

Participants

The participative transition process was made possible through the collaboration of the Forum Tourism for All and by its delegated steering group that kept a close eye on the process and gave guidance.

STEERING GROUP:

CHAIR: Michel Vandendriessche (Pasar vzw)
Dominique Gielen (Hoeve Jadoul)
Eddy Beuten (Horizont vzw)
Frederik Vercammen (Centrum voor Jeugdtoerisme)
Jan Van Praet (VISITFLANDERS - Destination Development)
Jeroen Marijsse (VISITFLANDERS - Holiday Participation)
Katrien Mampaey (VISITFLANDERS - Inclusive Tourism)
Marianne Schapmans (VISITFLANDERS - Holiday Participation)

Jens Dils (VISITFLANDERS - Holiday Participation)
Most members of the Forum Tourism for All and the steering group participated in the various parts of the process. The following participants helped to introduce refreshing ideas during the focus groups and/or the two-day conference and/or the workshops:

Andre Janssens (Den Draai vzw)
Ann Vandenbussche (Vlaamse overheid - Afde-ling Jeugd)
Anne Coetsier (Social Economic Regional Council Ghent Eeklo)
Annie Daems (Al-arm vzw)
Arabella Weyts (Pirlewiet vzw)
Barbara Poppe (Fonds Vrijetijds participatie)
Bart Hollevoet (OCMW Brugge - vrijetijds- participatie)
Bert Mellebeek (De Hoge Rijen)
Britt Jennes (KU Leuven)
Bruno Paternoster (VISITFLANDERS)
Canet Karem (VISITFLANDERS - Holiday Participation Support Centre)
Cani Nas (ACOM vzw en Wijkpartenariaat - De Schakel vzw)
Carine Geboers (VISITFLANDERS - Holiday Participation Support Centre)
Caroline Godts (Sociale Innovatielab)
Celine Exter (Uit De Marge vzw)
Christien Vanlerberghe (Vlaamse Jeugdverblijven Vlaanderen)
Christoph Cooreman (Flemish government - Youths Department)
Christophe Vandenberghe (Duinse Polders Blankenberge)
Christophe Vandenberghe (Duinse Polders Blankenberge)
Danielle Huse (Villa Rozenrood)
Danny Van Assche (Horeca Vlaanderen)
Dirk Van de Velde (CVBA Govaka/Pasar vzw)
Dirk Vermeir (Pasar vzw)
Dominique Nédée (Corsendonk Hotels)
Eric Schaerlaecken (Jeugdverblijf Don Bosco)
Erwin Eeraerts (Youth hostel Oud Klooster Dikkele vzw)
Evi Struyf (Kinderwoude vzw)
Evy Van Bocxlaer (Kompas vzw - ROS Gent)
Frank Cottem (youth hostel De Fiertel)
Frank Mercier (Pasar vzw)
Geert Van der Aelst (De Dielis bvba)
Geneviève Delefortrie (VISITFLANDERS - Holiday Participation Support Centre)
Gilbert Claes (Home Fabiola)
Gudrun Willems (VISITFLANDERS - Holiday Participation Support Centre)
Guy Uyttebroeck (Destelheide)
Hannelore Herreman (Uit De Marge vzw)
Hendrik Vandermarliere (The Outsider)
Hilde Vande Ginste (Uze Plekke)
Hilde Watteeuw (Welzijnsschakel Integraal Brugge)
Ilse Versaen (Plantentuin Meise)
Ine Vanderstock (Via Via Tourism Academy)
Jan Korthoudt (Flemish government - International Flanders Unit)
Jenny Poncin (Tourism Province Antwerp)
Jeroen (A Place to Live vzw)
Jo De Bock (Vayamundo vzw)
Johnny Cypers (De Brug Hasselt)
Jos Vercruysse (Flemish government - International Flanders Unit)
Julie Rutgeerts (VISITFLANDERS)
Julie Van den Bergh (Sporta vzw)
Karel De Rudder (CultuurNet Vlaanderen)
Kathleen De Meyere (B&B Altijd Genieten)
Katrien Van den Bulcke (Kazou vzw)
Koen Moyaert (plans for start up vow with respect to social tourism)
Koenraad Pevenage (Vayamundo vzw)
Kris Devischer (Demos)
Lars Desmet (Banaka vzw)
Liesbet De Wit (Tourism Province Antwerp)
Lieven Vandepitte (Hoogveld vzw)
Lindsay Van Mirlo (STA-AN vzw)
Maarten Doise (LEJO vzw)
Marc Messiens (Home Sint Franciscus vzw)
Marianne Gorissen (BaNaka vzw)
Marina Claes (Openluchtklassen vzw)
Martine Van Limbergen (Speel-o-theek Pipo)
Matt Vandemaële (Peace Village Mesen)
Mia Lammens (VISITFLANDERS)
Mireille Vercauteren (Provincial Council East Flanders)
Monika (Vriendschap Zonder Grenzen vzw)
Morwenna Buyssse (Oranje vzw)
Nasca De Backer (Kindervreugd vzw)
Patrick Blondé (De Repoo vzw)
Paul Janssen (Center Parcs)
Peter Meulendijks (Kindervreugd vzw)
Piet Ternont (Scouts en Gidsen Vlaanderen vzw – Hopper Jeugdverblijven Moerkesheide)
Pieter Wieërs (Vriendschap Zonder Grenzen vzw)
Razia Alibhai (Agentschap Integratie&Inburgering Brussel)
René Sauvillier (AI-arm vzw)
Rik Vandevenne (Woutershof)
Rob Devlieghere (Domaine de Massembre)
Robin Ronsyn (De Kleppe)
Roeland Schaeken (Horizont vzw)
Rudi Kennes (Flemish Agency Persons with a Disability)
Sabrina De Boeck (Vrienden Van de Basiliek vzw)
Siska Deknudt (De Kleppe)
Sofie Devriendt (Provincial Sports Centre De Boere-kreek)
Sofie Goeminne (Middelpunt)
Stefaan Gheysen (Westtoer)
Stefaan Praet (Tourism Brugge)
Stefan Vandebroek (BaNaka vzw)
Steven Desmedt (youth hostel De Peerdevisser)
Tamara Desmet (Middelpunt)
Tim Vanderlinden (A Place to Live vzw)
Tim Verwilghen (VISITFLANDERS - Holiday Participation Support Centre)
Tine Boiy (Bielebale vzw)
Toon De Rijck (Netwerk Tegen Armoede vzw)
Veerle Timmermans (Rap op Stap Hasselt)
Ward Poppe (KSA Heem Monsalvaet/Ter Helme)
Yannick Van Keer (Use-it)
Yves Gils (youth hostel Oud Klooster Dikkele vzw)

AND WITH SUPPORT FROM:

Bert Smits (Levuur)
Jeroen Bryon (Tourism cabinet)
Lynn Minnaert (University of New York)
Thierry Lagrange (ALTO architectural firm)
ANNEX V

Source list


~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~