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Towards the Human Circular Tourism: Recommendations, Actions, and Multidimensional Indicators for the Tourist Category

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Abstract: As underlined by OECD and United Nations, as cities are growing in size, they will face challenges in becoming climate neutral, reducing their environmental footprint, and meeting the growing needs of their populations. In cities, the main challenges of sustainable development are concentrated. So, there is a need to identify a new development model in order to make cities more sustainable. This necessity concerns all sectors, including the tourism one, which represents the third largest socio-economic activity in Europe. The tourism sector puts pressure on the city, increasing waste generation, noise and air pollution, and congestion in infrastructure and public areas. In addition, it is organized according to the linear economy model. This linearity is particularly visible in cities as people here tend to choose comfort over sustainability. In this framework, new approaches, strategies, and tools are required in order to make the tourism sector more sustainable, thus reducing its negative impacts on cities. In this perspective, the Human Circular Tourism (HCT) model is proposed. The aim of this study is to provide an operational framework consisting of recommendations, actions, and indicators to effectively operationalize the Human Circular Tourism model and to support public authorities (and other tourism stakeholders) in the identification of efficient policies in the tourism sector.

Keywords: sustainable development goals; Human Circular Tourism (HCT); multidimensional indicators

1. Introduction

In a world that is becoming more and more globalized and urbanized, as also high-lighted by the United Nations, "the future of humanity is undoubtedly urban" [1]. In fact, cities are the place where the main challenges of sustainable development are concentrated. The way in which cities are planned and managed has impacts on the quality of life of the citizens who live in them.

Cities provide jobs, public and private services, infrastructure, and educational opportunities. A total of 68% of the world's population will live in urban areas in 2050, and thus cities will play a key role in sustainable development [2,3]. As a series of documents published by the OECD on the topic of city development and the new "World cities report 2022: Envisaging the future of cities" by the UN-Habitat show, as cities are growing in size, they will face challenges in becoming climate neutral, reducing their environmental footprint, and meeting the growing needs of their populations.

One of the major issues that characterizes our century is climate change, an issue that has been irresponsibly undervalued (by institutions, politics, educational institutions, etc.) and for which we absolutely must act on today, before we reach the breaking point. Linked to climate change is also the social challenge; in fact, for example, the poorer social classes are more likely to pay the cost of global warming [4].

Today we have two planes, the plane of the status quo (highly critical) and that of the desirable future. The goal today is to reduce the distance between these two planes as

much as possible by identifying the development strategies that help to face the economic, social, and environmental crisis. In this perspective, the United Nations' Agenda 2030 and the New Urban Agenda express a vision of a desirable future through the identification of 17 Strategic Goals (Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs) to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

So, there is a need to identify a new development model in order to make cities more sustainable. There is a need to change and improve the way we produce wealth by decoupling the production of value from the production of negative impacts, both environmental and social ones. A new economy is therefore needed, for re-establishing the relationship and the balance between natural ecosystems and human activities, a necessity also confirmed by the COVID19 pandemic. The pandemic has represented (and is still representing) an opportunity to reflect on the close relationship/correlation between ecological, economic, and social dimensions and the need to re-think and re-shape development models.

This concerns all sectors, including the tourism one, representing the third largest socio-economic activity in Europe [5]. This sector is based on a linear economy model.

On the one hand, the tourism sector contributes significantly to global GDP, ranking as the third largest export sector of the world economy and providing a large number of job opportunities [6]; on the other hand, it poses a serious threat to the balance of ecosystems and significantly contributes to global warming due to the large amount of emissions related to tourism activities. In addition, it produces other negative impacts on the natural ecosystem including, for example, soil erosion, pollution, discharges into the ocean, habitat loss, increased strain on threatened and endangered species, and greater vulnerability to forest fires [7]. Therefore, this sector puts pressure on the city to be able to boost demand flows and thus business volume. In fact, tourism activities have a significant impact on the urban environment and local people, as they increase waste generation, noise and air pollution, and congestion in infrastructure and public areas.

In addition, the linearity of the tourism sector is particularly visible in cities as people here tend to choose comfort over sustainability [1,8].

So, in light of this, cities are ideal ecosystems for developing new development models for the tourism sector [1,8,9], such as the circular tourism proposed in this study. A transition to a more circular tourism sector would reduce pressure on local infrastructure and the environment while stimulating the local economy.

The tourism sector is characterized by a high degree of complexity as it includes, and (directly and indirectly) involves, many diverse and heterogeneous stakeholders, interests, and values, and it is linked to many other sectors and activities. Furthermore, it is a dynamic sector, as a reflection of the continuous changes that characterize our century.

Considering the impacts that the tourism sector can produce on socio-cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions, it can play a significant role in the urban sustainable development. Local authorities are increasingly becoming more attentive to the needs of their citizens, who demand a better quality of urban life and to be able to live in an urban environment that meets their needs.

So, new policies and strategies are needed to de-couple the development of certain economic sectors (such as tourism) from producing negative social and environmental impacts. In this framework, the research question is to understand how to make the tourism sector more sustainable, that is which strategies and tools are necessary and more efficient to this end. In this perspective, the Human Circular Tourism (HCT) model and, in particular, an operational framework (consisting of Recommendations, Actions, Indicators) are proposed to implement this model.

The paper is organized as follows: after an introduction about the circular economy model (Section 2), the literature review on circular tourism (Section 2.1) and the role of evaluation in assessing its impacts (Section 2.2) were described. In Section 3, the proposal is described, starting from the Tourism for SDGs Platform (T4SDGs Platform), as theoretical and operational references and two UNWTO documents (recommendations included in the

"Call for action for tourism's COVID-19 mitigation and recovery" and the Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism). In Section 4, recommendations and actions to operationalize the HCT and a set of multidimensional indicators for assessing the circularity in the tourist behavior category are provided. Finally, Section 5 highlights the strengths and limitations of the proposed approach and future research perspectives.

2. Circular Economy and Tourism Sector

The tourism sector produces both positive (i.e., economic impacts) and negative impacts, especially in environmental terms, since it is organized according to a linear logic [10]. In recent times, many studies [8,11] and practices [12] have increasingly shown that the linear logic characterizing the tourism sector has to be reversed, adopting the circular economy model in the tourism sector, in order to pursue sustainable development goals [2,13,14].

The circular economy model is suggested as a way to put sustainable development concepts into practice. It is based on the idea that nothing in nature is "waste" and that everything may be turned into a "resource". It relates of the closing of resource flows [13,15]. In essence, a circular economy is one that mimics the circular processes of the natural economy. This is a "regenerative economy".

There are currently 114 definitions of the circular economy in the scientific literature [16]. The circular economy has been identified by the UN as goal 12 of the 2030 Agenda [2] and in paragraphs 71–74 of the New Urban Agenda [3] (the final report of the Habitat III conference) as a general development model that has impact on social and natural contexts while creating new economic wealth. This develops circuits of collaboration between different stakeholders and drives an endless extension of the lifespan of resources and their use values.

Furthermore, the circular economy is the economy in which nature co-evolves with the city and, at the same time, it is the economy that contributes to enhance the sense of being a community, by generating and regenerating relationships (between man and nature and between people) [17], thus contributing to the humanization of the city [18]. The circular economy is able to produce economic wealth and, simultaneously, foster social inclusion and reduce environmental impacts [17].

In recent times, the need to place human needs and wellbeing at the center of new development strategies has become increasingly urgent. The human being should be placed at the center of the circular economy's processes in order to make it more inclusive. We need to rethink the role of the human being into the cycles of the "butterfly diagram" [19], as well as the cycles of biological and technical nutrition, as indicated by Lemille [20]. To preserve and improve human value, the "butterfly diagram" has to incorporate circular human flows. Making decisions with human well-being as a core component of the economic framework might improve access to our economy and create experiences that better meet our requirements [21].

In the European Commission's documents on the human-centered city [22,23], a holistic, participatory, and inclusive perspective is taken as the starting point for addressing global urban challenges through research and innovation actions capable of accelerating the transition to inclusive, resilient, and safe ecosystems. The European Commission identifies six dimensions in which to implement such actions: 'people', 'place', 'prosperity', 'resilience', 'governance', and 'measuring innovative cities'. These dimensions are the expression of a change in mentality that is progressively placing people at the center of development strategies, investigating how to transform his expressed needs into strategic objectives for improving his wellbeing. In order to identify concrete actions to be implemented, it is inevitable to think about 'places', that is, the contexts in which human beings live and in which it is necessary to re-establish a balance both between people and between people and the environment. For this reason, urban areas have particular importance, as they represent the scenario in which the current problems linked to environmental, social, and economic crises are more evident.

As underlined in the previous paragraphs, the tourism sector exerts great pressure on cities, and in environmental but also in social and economic terms. Reducing the pressure of tourism in cities means improving the environment in which people live, and thus its wellbeing and quality of life [24].

At the EU level, in particular in the tourist sector, the potential of the human-centered approach is recognized first of all to increase competitiveness and results in advantages for society as a whole in terms of economic growth and job creation [25] as well as decreased consumption of ecological resources [19]. The interpretation of the human-centered approach in a wider perspective is coherent with a more comprehensive understanding of the circular economy model [26], which embraces not only the aspects related to the industrial symbiosis but also the other issues, such as human health [27] and the rebalancing of the connections between people and ecosystems [28–31].

Despite the growing awareness about the social and cultural implications of the circular economy model implementation, these implications are explored less [16,21,32] than the economic [19] or the ecological impacts [33–37].

Starting from these considerations, this research proposes the Human Circular Tourism (HCT) as a strategy able to make the humanization of the tourism sector more effective in a circular economy perspective [38]. Implementing circular tourism in a human-centered perspective means to put human beings at the center of the processes and to consider this sector as an "inter-active system" [39] in which all dimensions are interconnected. Putting human beings at the core of the processes also implies an intergenerational perspective [10] focused on the needs and requirements both of today's users and of future generations, thereby minimizing gaps and injustices.

To carry on the literature review, the most relevant scientific databases (Web of Science, Scopus, Science Direct) have been investigated. Papers dealing with the topic addressed in this study have been selected on the base of keywords search. In particular, it has been conducted by including the following concepts: circular economy, tourism, circular tourism, human-centered development, and multidimensional evaluation.

2.1. The Concept of the Circular Tourism: The State of the Art

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the UNWTO has been conducting studies and analyses to assess the impacts of COVID-19 on tourism and to predict potential recovery scenarios [5]. According to the UNWTO studies, COVID-19's negative consequences led to a 72% decrease in visitor numbers from 2019 to 2021, despite a 4% increase in global tourism in 2021 compared to 2020 (415 million vs. 400 million). With a 73% decline in international tourists, 2020 is still the worst year ever for tourism [40].

A projected loss of USD 1 trillion in export earnings is resulted from the drop in foreign visitor arrivals, which had a detrimental impact on the USD 1.6 trillion global GDP in 2021 [40].

The main factors identified by experts for an effective recovery of international tourism are the spread of the vaccine, the elimination of numerous travel restrictions, and clearer information on specific travel protocols.

Before the pandemic, just over 10% of the world's GDP was generated by the travel and tourism sector. After a challenging 2020 and 2021 that saw some industry false starts brought on by new COVID-19 versions, and tourism is now practically at a similar level.

Almost tripling from January to July 2022 (+172%) compared to the same period in 2021, international visitor arrivals increased to 57% of pre-pandemic levels in the first seven months of 2022, according to the most recent UNWTO World Tourism Barometer [41].

In a report released by WTTC [38], cities are at the forefront of this phenomena, accounting for over half of all foreign trips as either standalone attractions or entry points to other tourist destinations. Some cities outperformed their previous tourism income, despite three challenging years.

In many documents drawn up for the recovery phase [42,43] and in the latest World Tourism Day Report [24] the focus is not only on restoring economic equilibrium in the

sector, but above all on rethinking a reorganization of the entire value chain with a view to a greater sustainability for people and the planet.

The concept of the circular tourism is proposed to make the tourism sector more sustainable. This concept is still scarcely addressed in the scientific literature. Furthermore, there is still a certain degree of uncertainty about the definition itself, as also confirmed by Vargas-Sánchez [44] in his analysis of scientific databases, as Web of Science and Scopus, on this topic.

Vargas-Sánchez [44] identifies Fan [45] as the first—in chronological order—in dealing with the circular economy model as a realistic choice to move towards a sustainable development in the tourism sector.

The scarcity (in quantitative terms) of scientific research on circular tourism also emerges from the bibliometric analysis about tourism and sustainability conducted by Niñerola et al. [46], highlighting that circular tourism is the most recent keyword to have been included in the scientific publications analyzed (starting from 2016).

Most definitions of circular tourism are mainly related to the environmental field and thus on the eco-friendly approaches. For example, according to Lu and Hu [47], circular tourism, integrating leisure, culture, environmental protection and education, is the tourism that is able to reduce the negative impacts on the environment.

In this new tourism model, all the actors (from tourists, to suppliers, to resident population) adopt an eco-friendly behavior [48], through a sustainable use of resources and a low carbon economy, as stated by Zhao P. [49], creating "a virtuous circle that produces goods and services without wasting the limited resources of the planet that are the raw materials, water and energy" (www.circular-tourism.com, accessed on 15 July 2022).

Other definitions of circular tourism are also connected to corporate social responsibility actions, responsible tourism/travel and, in general, to any measure that helps to save water and energy consumption (particularly from non-renewable sources), lower CO_2 emissions, waste reduction—even the offer of zero km food in restaurants [44].

However, the ambition of the circular tourism is to reach comprehensive positive impacts and not only a zero environmental impact [8].

Starting also from the definitions emerging from the above studies, the definition assumed in this paper is the following: "Circular tourism is the tourism that transforms its processes from linear (take-make-dispose) to circular (take-make-use-remake) ones. [. . .] It limits impacts on the environment, and in which actors of tourism (traveler, host, tour operator, supplier) adopt an eco-friendly and responsible approach" [50]. Circular tourism is referred to as its capacity to trigger and stimulate circular flows, aiming to conciliate the tourism sector and sustainable resource management. However, that is not all. Circular tourism is not only a green tourism, addressed to limit the consumption and waste of non-renewable energy resources. Recovery, reuse, redevelopment, but also valorization and regeneration are key words if we think about circular tourism. We can "use" tourism as a mean to regenerate knowledge produced by each territory (in terms of values, language, significance, skills). The functional reuse is not only referred to as the fixed capital, but also to knowledge and values. In this perspective, circular tourism represents a mean to fix the memory in the era of "instant", of the "hic et nunc". Through functional re-use, we are able to regenerate values, keeping them in time [50].

To move towards a circular tourism is a complex process because tourism involves "different interdependent, complementary and competing sectors" [51]. So, this transition cannot be successful unless there is interaction and collaboration/cooperation among the different actors, both in the tourism sector and in other sectors directly and indirectly involved [8,44].

Responsibility is a key word in the transition to circular tourism. The transition is only possible if the actors involved (i.e., guests and tourism industry staff) become aware of the need for behavioral changes [52]. In general, the transition to the circular economy model necessarily requires a "cultural revolution" [50]: this new model necessarily requires

changes in behavior and lifestyle that depend on the level of awareness of people about the issue.

Furthermore, as Sørensen and Bærenholdt [51] highlight, studies about circular tourism are mainly focused on the implementation of the principles of the circular economy from the side of the supplier [8,53] and not from the side of the demand.

Indeed, the main studies in this circular perspective [8,11,12,54] are focused on the existing examples of circular tourism, focusing much more on the adopted solutions rather than on the needs that they supply. Generally, they are referred to in the hospitality sector, mobility, energy efficiency, water, and waste management.

For example, Dutch Hospitality in Netherlands [55] optimizes the logistics and supply chain through a virtuous distribution network which transforms food waste in "nutrients" for a new food production. In particular, the Green Recycled Organics (GRO) company collects coffee grounds from restaurants and hotels and uses them as growth substrate for oyster mushrooms which, after a period of about six weeks, are sold and distributed to the restaurants. This example of mushrooms is particularly important because it recalls the concept of symbiosis that exists both in the animal and in the plant world. This concept is part of the wide concept of the circular economy and its implementation as the symbiotic principle is interpreted as a collaborative relationship between elements that "help" each other. Symbiosis is therefore collaboration able to produce co-benefits, which are benefits equally distributed among all parts involved in the exchange.

In Hungary, the Ladybird Farm Leisure Hotel [56], awarded with the European Business Awards for the Environment Winner 2016–2017, is an example of virtuous circular tourism. Assuming the principle "waste = money" [57], the hotel allows the visitors to pay part of their entrance fee by recyclable household waste.

Additionally in other European cities, as in Naples (Italy), it is possible "to pay by waste", using recycled plastic bottles to pay for the funicular railway ticket.

Furthermore, the Central Hotel Moena [58] (Italy) promotes sustainable mobility (i.e., shuttle sharing) and slow and responsible tourism. Some of the sustainable actions adopted by the hotel are km0 food, energy saving system, energy from 100% renewable sources, and signs to inform the customer about ecological practices used to reduce the consumption of detergents that pollute the environment.

In addition, the "Widespread Hotel" model (see for example the ones in Matera, Italy) [59] is an example of a circular accommodation system, as it consists of several buildings close together that are able to provide integrated hotel services, proposing an innovative concept of a hospitality network. This kind of organization is in line with the concept of "circular tourism" [50], because it represents a collaborative model capable of both activating development processes and safeguarding existing values in terms of recovery, preservation, and valorization of the territory and its traditions and peculiarities, producing benefits at multidimensional level [17]. It contributes to strengthening the sense of community and to valorize territorial characteristics, while reducing at the same time environmental impacts, reusing existing buildings rather than constructing anything new.

Furthermore, other examples of circular tourism are the platforms for stimulating tourists in immersive and place-based touristic experiences. These platforms, such as VisitNaples [60], represent a "place" where many different stakeholders of the touristic sector are put in a network exchanging information, thus triggering and stimulating circular knowledge flows.

The above examples show how the circular tourism concept covers different aspects of sustainability, from processes to products, from tangible to intangible aspects, from an environmental dimension to social, economic, and cultural ones. They also highlight the importance of closing loops on various levels, taking into consideration the diverse elements of the tourist destination, various groups of stakeholders, integration of the tourism activity into infrastructure, and other services for the environment [61].

Certainly, the solutions adopted in the cases outlined above and in all the other existing virtuous practices in the field of tourism have been developed in response to the major

challenges of this particular historical moment (characterized by climate change, pandemic, excessive consumption of resources, etc.), but the different solutions are determined by the specificity of the places where they are implemented and, above all, by the specific needs expressed by the main actors involved in the tourism chain.

2.2. The Evalation Process in the Implementation of the Circular Tourism

The importance of sustainable tourism indicators for public management has been emphasized by the UNWTO since the early 1990s, as essential instruments for policy-making, planning, and management processes at destinations [62].

The importance of evaluation is emphasized at the European level as a "cross-cutting dimension" [22,23] to develop methods and tools to assess, monitor, and improve the performance of circular and human-centered regeneration strategies from a multidimensional, inter-scalar, and interdisciplinary perspective.

Evaluation in the circular economy perspective implies interpreting phenomena through a systemic perspective and adopting integrated approaches [63] that allow considering multidimensional impacts and capturing the complexity of values involved in the tourism sector. Studies regarding evaluation methods about circular economy projects, in fact, point out that these methods are mostly sectoral referring to one or a few dimensions of circularity [64]. The partial approach frequently sends the wrong messages to decision-makers. In this complexity of values, adopting evaluation tools understandable (also building a common language) to all actors facilitates dialogue [65] and, thus, their involvement in decision-making processes [66]. Furthermore, while it is more immediate to assess the circular economy for products and services (e.g., through the Lyfe Cycle Assessment method), the evaluation process becomes more complex if we move to a regional or global scale [67]. Evaluation methods like multiple-criteria decision-making (MCDM) may be able to fix the frequent conflicts between circularity metrics [68].

In the tourism sector, the issue of assessment becomes fundamental to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of strategic decisions in a short and long-term perspective, to strengthen inter-institutional and intersectoral relations [69–71]. Interpreting the role of evaluation from a human-centered perspective means taking as starting point the needs expressed by people and aiming to improve their well-being, health, and quality of life. Since human needs change over time, consequently, evaluation processes have to be dynamic in order to effectively capture this change. The evaluation also has to be interactive, iterative, and participative [62,72–76]. The direct involvement of people and the dialogue among them facilitate the identification of needs, interest, and values involved in the evaluation process. However, at the same time, this interaction could generate a confusing and unclear mix of issues, if it is not well managed. Thus, it is necessary to discern and select the information and data to be included in the evaluation process in relation to the purpose of the assessment.

Some scholars [77–83] highlight the need to put people's wellbeing at the center of economic development, promoting a 'humanization' of the economy [84]. However, in the scientific literature this issue has been approached much more from a theoretical strategic point of view, rather than investigating operational tools to adopt for its implementation, evaluation, and monitoring.

The OECD's Better Life Index [85] and Eurostat's Quality of Life Index [86] represent attempts to monitor people's quality of life, and thus their wellbeing, by including different factors that contribute to it. As highlighted by some academics [7,87–90] and national and international organizations [33–35,91,92], tourism is a sector that impacts many factors that affect people's wellbeing (environmental impacts in terms of pollution, social impacts in terms of employment opportunities, economic impacts in terms of revenues and support to local economies, etc.). Therefore, the support of a multidimensional and multicriteria evaluation seems to be necessary especially for such a complex and evolving sector.

Some international studies in the tourism sector [14,54,62] have proposed evaluation frameworks, emphasizing the importance of evaluation methods and tools both to support

decision-making processes (programming phase, ex-ante) and also to assess the produced impacts (on-going and ex-post phase).

However, most studies focus on the identification of tourism policies and practices, but still few studies focus on how to assess and monitor the multidimensional impacts (both as expected results—ex ante phase—and as produced impacts—on going and ex post phases). Furthermore, the few studies concerning the assessment of impacts focus on the development of indicators for sustainable tourism that can be used in strategic decisions by institutional bodies of tourism destinations [14,36,37,62,93–95], tourism accommodation [96–98], tour operators [99,100], tourism enterprises [88,101,102]. From above two main limitations emerge: in the analyzed literature, tourists/users are never directly considered in the evaluation framework; secondly, in each document the indicators are developed exclusively for one category of stakeholders, making the evaluation framework sectoral and not inclusive.

The only reference in literature that differs from the above considerations is the MED InCircle project [54], which has developed a Circular Tourism Industry Tool in four different versions for the four main types of tourism industries: accommodations, tour operators and travel agencies, restaurants and food and beverage services, and campsites.

Among the outputs of the MED InCircle project, the Participatory Processes Toolkit [103] and the Circular Tourism Self Assessment [104] are two documents of particular relevance. In the former, the importance of the participatory process is emphasized in order to establish sector priorities and draw policies based on the needs and specificities of each territory according to the principles of the circular economy including, among the stakeholders, representatives of local communities, residents, and possible tourists. The second document emphasizes the importance of evaluation tools as knowledge and awareness-raising tools, as well as an opportunity to establish a dialogue with other practices in the sector to the achievement of circular economy tourism goals.

3. The UNWTO Approach: A Call for Action for Tourism's COVID-19 Mitigation and Recovery

A few years before the pandemic, in 2018, the UNWTO had launched the Tourism for SDGs Platform (T4SDGs Platform) [105] (see the following subsection) in which six categories of tourism stakeholders were identified and, for each of whom, Recommendations were specified in relation to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is described in detail in the following paragraph.

Tourism for SDGs Platform

To highlight the relation between the SDGs and the tourism industry, the World Tourism Organization of the United Nations (UNWTO) launched the Tourism for SDGs Platform (T4SDGs Platform). This platform provides the international tourism community with a place to co-create and engage in order to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development [2].

The portal includes a network diagram that lists the main categories of stakeholders involved in the tourism industry, including tourists, government entities, international organizations, donors, academic institutions and CSOs, and businesses (Figure 1).

Additionally, through this platform, the users can learn and share information regarding initiatives, ongoing or completed research projects, entrepreneurial strategies and actions, as well as personal narrative stories illustrating the role that tourism plays in the achievement of the SDGs. They can also find information on possible collaborations and actions that might be performed to achieve the SDGs.
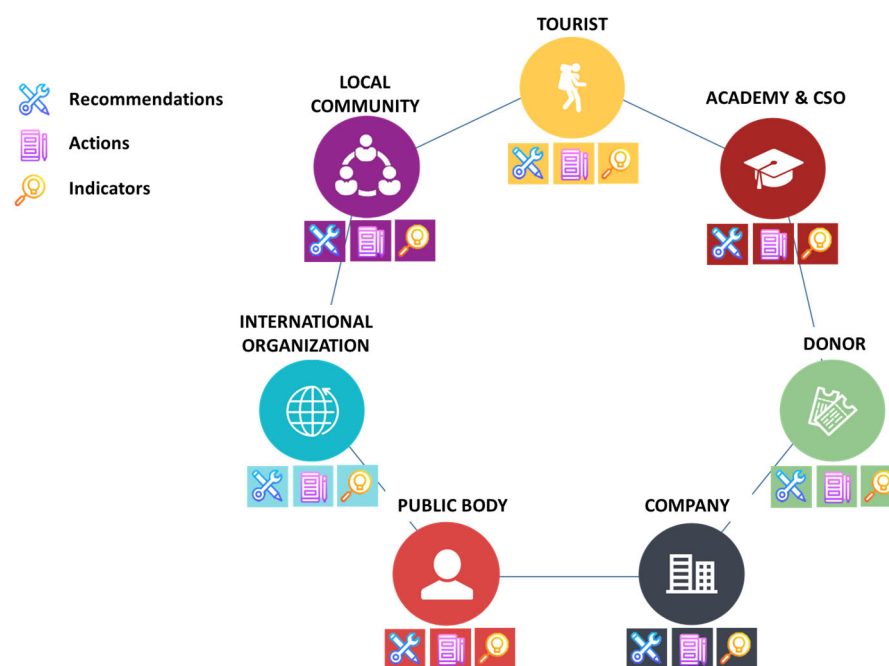
Figure 1. The flourishing diagram of T4SDGs platform. Source: adapted from www.tourism4sdgs.org (accessed on 22 December 2022).

The platform is particularly important as users can access a variety of resources, add their own efforts, discoveries, and projects, encourage conversation and collaboration, and exchange content related to tourism and sustainable development.

Thus, the platform represents a co-creation space in which users 'train' themselves in dialogue and critical confrontation in order to identify a common vision.

Tourism has an important role as an opportunity for cultural exchange and dialogue between individuals and communities belonging to different cultures and civilizations [106,107]. With the advent of technology, means of communication have multiplied and, with them, the way in which the tourism experience is shaped [108] and the way in which stakeholders can become involved in decision-making processes, sharing ideas, and stimulating active and critical participation.

Technological supports, such as the UNWTO platform, play an important role in sharing ideas and knowledge both in enhancing the awareness of individuals about current critical issues and also in building a common vision through an argumentative, dialogic, and critical process. The interaction stimulated by these technological supports can contribute to the comparison between people and thus to the reduction of possible conflicts among different point of views, in terms of different visions, needs, and requirements.

Critical knowledge and civic knowledge are closely interlinked. In this perspective, the role of platforms, such as that of the UNWTO, is to activate circular relationships among people able to stimulate dialogue and collaboration for building a sense of community and civic responsibility [17].

Despite the utility of the UNWTO platform, some critical aspects emerge. The recommendations by UNWTO are presented as suggestions, but no operational tools are provided for implementing them. For example, a multidimensional evaluation framework (including the four dimensions of sustainable development) is not provided and thus the platform is lacking a tool that is able to provide empirical evidence about the concrete contribution of tourism to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, there is a lack of explanations as to why and how a specific action contributes to the achievement of a certain Sustainable Development Goal. This aspect is crucial if the behavior of different actors is to be concretely oriented in a more sustainable and circular perspective. Expressing the recommendations in summary form, without highlighting the possible effects of each of

them with respect to the SDGs, does not improve the awareness of each actor about their role and responsibility in the transition to a more sustainable tourism.

Furthermore, some recommendations turn out to be too general and difficult to "translate" into action, especially for tourists unfamiliar with sustainability issues, as in the case of the recommendation "Leave only a minimum footprint and a good impression behind" referring to UN Goal No. 12 ("Responsible Consumption and Production") or the recommendation "Reduce your environmental impact by being a guardian of natural resources, especially water and forests" referring to UN Goal No. 13 ("Climate action").

The lack of clarity and operationalization of the recommendations risks make them similar to many other documents that have been produced at the international level, finding little place in the daily actions of actors and thus bringing about actual change in this field [65]. It is necessary for the used language and the proposed concepts to be easily understood by all; only in this way can they really be a tool that can reach as many people as possible.

As indicated above, this study provides a set of recommendations and actions for tourists in order to orient their behaviors in a more sustainable perspective. Furthermore, an evaluation framework is proposed to assess the circularity of the tourists' behaviors to operationalize the Human Circular Tourism model.

The starting point is both the recommendations included in the "Call for action for tourism's COVID-19 mitigation and recovery" launched by UNWTO [109] "to help tourism sector not only recover from the unparalleled challenge of COVID-19 but to 'grow back better'" [5] and the Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism [110].

In the first document, the UNWTO proposes a checklist of possible measures not only to concretely sustain the tourism sector, but also to prepare it to restart stronger and more sustainable after the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are 23 recommendations, which are divided into 3 key areas:

- "Managing the Crisis and Mitigating the Impact" in which the recommendations related to the economic and social impacts of COVID-19 are mainly highlighted, specifically those linked to employment and the most vulnerable people.
- "Providing Stimulus and Accelerating Recovery" which includes recommendations that emphasize the importance of providing financial stimulus to boost marketing and consumer confidence and also the need to place tourism at the center of national recovery policies and action plans;
- "Preparing for Tomorrow" in which the recommendations emphasize the role of the tourism sector in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals through the implementation of the circular economy model.

The second document (the Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism), published only a month later than the first one, aims to support the tourism sector in the post-COVID19 recovery phase and in its transition towards a more sustainable sector.

The guidelines represent a follow up of the recommendations for action and are focused on seven priorities for tourism recovery. Each priority is detailed in the specific recommendations.

The main pillars of the guidelines are linked to the mitigation of the economic impacts, to the development of safety protocols and coordinated strategies, and to the promotion of innovation and digitalization processes. The guidelines also highlight the opportunity to foster an innovative and digital transition of global tourism to improve international interoperability and to facilitate the communication among different stakeholders, but also to create new opportunities in the global tourism sector through digital learning and online skills training.

Both the Recommendations and the Guidelines were produced in consultation with the Global Tourism Crisis Committee, established by UNWTO with high-level international representatives of the tourism sector.

To foster the transition to HCT, it is necessary to start with a stronger awareness among the different actors about their roles and responsibilities. This is the reason why this study starts from the flowchart category of "travelers": their awareness and choices are

crucial to the achievement of sustainable and circular tourism. In the face of supply from the perspective of sustainable and circular tourism, the behavior of users/travelers (who represent the demand) is of crucial importance. In this study, the category "travelers" (by UNWTO) is replaced with the term "tourist" in order to also include "tourists from one's own city". The latter increased significantly during the pandemic period due to restrictions in getting around and traveling.

4. The Tourists' Category: How to Operationalize the Human Circular Tourism

The two aforementioned documents, the recommendations and the guidelines by UNWTO, and the T4SDGS Platform represent the starting point for elaborating the proposal. In fact, the recommendations and the guidelines, together with the analysis of the existent scientific literature, reports, and documents in the tourism field, are considered as significant references to operationalize the HCT. Furthermore, the T4SDGs platform has been taken as a reference also for the structuring and organization of the proposed operational framework.

The UNWTO recommendations are here revised and integrated with other recommendations mainly related to Human Circular Tourism. Moreover, as a step forward to the UNWTO recommendations, a set of actions for each recommendation is here identified so that they can have a "translation" in concrete terms.

In addition, to fill the gap of the lack of operational tools, this study proposes an evaluation framework for assessing the HCT. In fact, in order to identify the circularity of tourist's behaviors, a set of multidimensional indicators is then developed by considering the environmental, social, economic, and cultural dimensions (Figure 2). This operational framework can represent a support to public authorities and other tourism stakeholders (as tour operators, private bodies, etc) in the identification of efficient policies in the tourism sector.
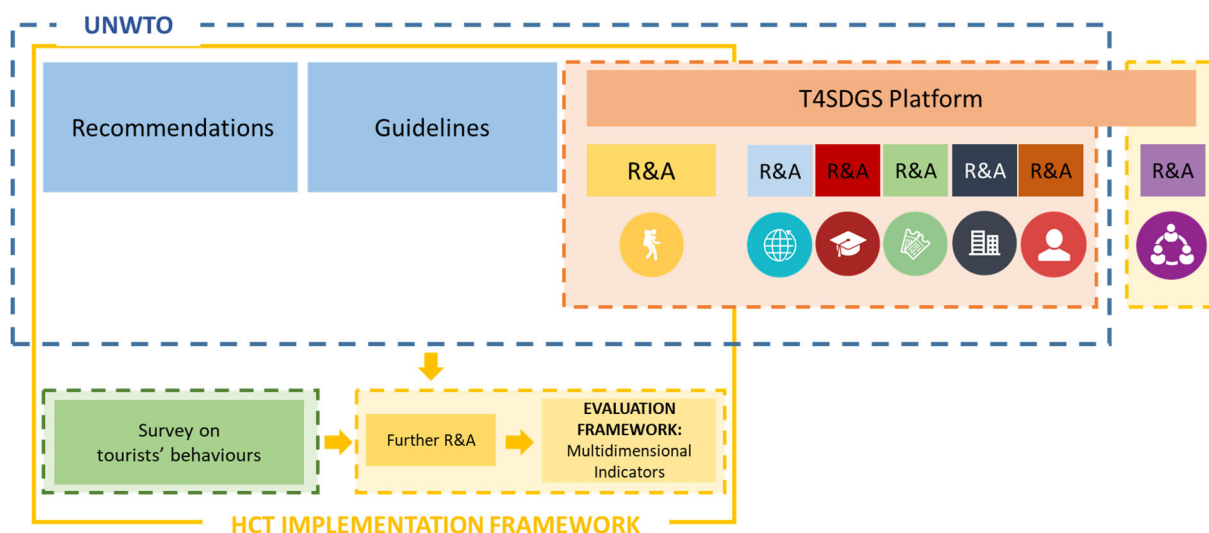

Figure 2. The process for the development of the HCT implementation framework.

4.1. Recommendations and Actions for Implementing Human Circular Tourism

Tourists' behaviors are fundamental in the transition towards the HCT because their choices and actions contribute to the successful (or not) of the circular strategies implementation. To this end, it is necessary to increase the awareness of tourists about the HCT so that they can improve or change their lifestyle and behaviors on the basis of this new model.

In this study, 11 recommendations are proposed. They are divided into three main dimensions: environmental, socio-cultural, and economic dimensions (Figure 3).

These recommendations, which are different from the UNWTO recommendations, regard not only the ecological and economic dimensions, but also the social and cultural dimensions.
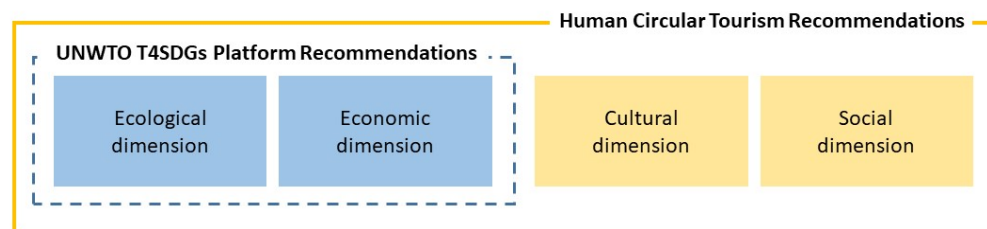

Figure 3. HCT recommendation framework.

The proposed recommendations are actionable and suggest behaviors that the tourists should adopt during the different phases of travel: dreaming, planning, booking, experiencing, and sharing moments [111–113].

For each recommendation, the related actions (Table 1) have been identified. They are in line both with the circular tourism definition assumed in this study and good practices and documents about this topic. They regard different aspects related to the implementation of circularity in the experience of the tourists. The circular actions, as the recommendations they refer to, are categorized into the three aforementioned dimensions (environmental, economic, and socio-cultural ones).

As shown in the above Table 1, the UNWTO recommendations have been integrated or adapted with aspects related to the circular tourism and have been reorganized considering the four dimensions of sustainable development.

The identified recommendations aim to make tourists more responsible and aware of the four dimensions during their travel.

The environmental dimension is divided into four categories: "To be a responsible tourist", "To reduce waste", "To reduce emissions", and "To reduce the consumption of non-renewable resources".

The first category, "To be a responsible tourist", focuses both on the dimension of the tourist's responsibility (which manifests itself above all in the choices to be made before embarking on a trip) and on the attention paid to certain aspects during the tourist experience. The proposed actions concern the choice of facilities that offer carbon-positive activities, the purchase of products from companies that adopt an environmentally friendly behavior, and the attention the tourist pays to information provided by the monitoring sensors in accommodation structures or in transportation means. The survey conducted in our previous research [10] showed that the least frequently adopted behavior is to choose accommodation with environmental certifications and the reason for this trend is explained in a particularly critical aspect of green certifications. Indeed, while the choice of green facilities depends on the responsibility of the tourist, it also depends on the clarity with which facilities communicate the strategies adopted and actions taken to implement effective sustainability [114]. Another critical aspect in choosing a sustainable accommodation is related to insufficient knowledge and familiarity of tourists with the complex technical aspects of the certifications, contributing to making their actual effectiveness and usefulness even less clear.

Booking platforms of tourist facilities (Booking, Ecobnb) often label with a sustainable badge the facilities that have demonstrated certain environmental certifications. However, this is most likely not enough to assess their real contribution to sustainability, e.g., by specifying which services they provide or which products they use, how they act to reduce their direct and indirect emissions, or by making sustainability data available to quantify the benefits of their actions. Communicating and sharing transparent and reliable results enables tourists to make more informed choices. A recent research conducted by Booking.com [115] confirms the criticality declared by tourists in easily finding details on the sustainability of facilities and underlines how improving this aspect is crucial in influencing tourists' choice.

Table 1. Recommendations and actions for the tourist category.

Recommendations		Actions
Environmental Dimension		
1	To be a responsible tourist	**A1.1** Give preference to staying in facilities that are or offer carbon-positive activities (adapted from UNWTO).
		A1.2 Buy from companies that adopt sustainable practices and do not harm the environment (adapted from UNWTO).
		A1.3 Pay attention (and modify behaviors) according to the information provided by the monitoring sensors in accommodation structures or in transportation means.
2	To reduce waste	**A2.1** Make separate waste collection.
		A2.2 Reduce the utilization of not recyclable products.
		A2.3 Stop printing booking confirmations and boarding passes, instead have digital copies of these documents (adapted from UNWTO).
		A2.4 Buy minimally packaged goods (adapted from UNWTO).
		A2.5 Support second-hand and gift economy (i.e., using sharing platform, donating to charity organization).
		A2.6 Bring own bag for shopping (adapted from UNWTO).
		A2.7 Order or fill plates with the amount of food that can actually be eaten (for avoiding leftovers) (adapted from UNWTO).
		A2.8 "Recover" the food that has not been eaten (i.e., asking for a "doggy bag", using apps for avoiding food waste) (adapted from UNWTO).
3	To reduce emissions	**A3.1** Buy km0 products.
		A3.2 Prefer soft mobility.
		A3.3 Prefer clean transport.
		A3.4 Prefer public transport rather than individual transport (adapted from UNWTO).
		A3.5 Use cooling and heating systems in a wise way.
		A3.6 Use sharing transport.
4	To reduce the consumption of non-renewable resources	**A4.1** Prefer activities and services that use renewable resources (rainwater recovery systems, reuse of wastewater, etc.) (adapted from UNWTO).
		A4.2 Use water system in a wise way (i.e., reduce water and energy consumption whenever possible, take shorter showers and air-dry hair whenever possible) (adapted from UNWTO).
Economic Dimension		
5	To support local economies	**A5.1** Buy locally-made handcrafts and products, paying fair prices (adapted from UNWTO).
		A5.2 Prefer the consumption of local food products.
		A5.3 Sustain local enterprise and projects (i.e., through donations, active participation, and promotion of the enterprise activities).
Social Dimension		
6	To contribute to cultural and knowledge exchange and integration (between tourists and local community)	**A6.1** Learn to speak a few words in the local language. This can help you connect with the local community in a more significant way (adapted from UNWTO).
		A6.2 Speak with local people.
		A6.3 Speak with other tourists you meet along the way.
		A6.4 Hire local guides with in-depth knowledge of the area (adapted from UNWTO).
		A6.5 Share initiatives or social projects considered interesting during the tourist experience and learn from them (adapted from UNWTO).
		A6.6 Propose and share (on social networks or on platforms such as the UNWTO one) innovative ideas that can reshape and benefit the tourism sector and make it more sustainable (adapted from UNWTO).
		A6.7 Share feedback about tourist destinations and tourist experience (word of mouth, giving feedback on tourist digital platforms).
7	To enhance own cultural experiences	**A7.1** Take part in local cultural activities (also through cooperative and collaborative behaviors).
		A7.2 Research information and learn about local culture, customs, traditions, and conditions before leaving and during the trip. It is a great way to build understanding of the local lifestyle and excitement for your adventure ahead (adapted from UNWTO).
8	To respect authenticity and integrity of cultural and natural heritage and values of local communities	**A8.1** Adopt respectful behaviors (respect values and traditions of the local community).
		A8.2 Report any inappropriate or discriminatory behaviors that happened during tourist experience or online (adapted from UNWTO).
		A8.3 Adopt respectful behaviors for man-made and environmental resources (i.e., comply with local regulations regarding the enjoyment of environmental and cultural heritage, respect wildlife and their natural habitats) (adapted from UNWTO).
9	To preserve health condition	**A9.1** Use already existing resources on health for guidance (e.g., from the ILO, WHO, etc.) (adapted from UNWTO).
		A9.2 Protecting oneself from diseases (vaccinate yourself, use anti-COVID mask) (adapted from UNWTO).
10	To be an aware tourist	**A10.1** Use services supplied by e-tourism to customize the tourist experience and become an aware tourist.
		A10.2 Improve the knowledge of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (from UNWTO).

Another encouraging detail emerges from the research: it identifies, among the reasons for staying in sustainable accommodation, the reduction of one's own environmental impact, the desire to live a more authentic local experience and the awareness of the contribution of sustainable structures in caring for local communities. Starting from these considerations, a clearer communication of the advantage of choosing facilities labelled with environmental certifications helps tourists to develop a broader interpretation of sustainability, including social, economic, and cultural aspects. In fact, some certifications also include, among the criteria, the respect for health and wellbeing of both consumers and workers (with particular attention for the latter to working conditions and their rights) (i.e., Blue Angel, B Corporation). Furthermore, in relation to the cultural sphere, other criteria are referred to in respect to the local traditions and customs, assuming a respectful attitude towards the community.

Furthermore, some certifications concern not only provided services, but also the products used in tourist facilities (e.g., BIO Hotels). For this reason, one of the actions concerns the purchase of products from companies that are recognized for their commitment in a more sustainable production and consumption system. Moreover, the third action focuses on the support that technologies can offer to reconnect the economy of man and the economy of nature [18], in order to increase awareness (and thus responsibility) for certain actions. Thus, responsibility is linked to the duty to know, to foresee the consequences of the people choices, both as individuals and as groups, due to the interdependence with others [84]. From this perspective, the actions proposed in the environmental dimension is also connected with the social aspects [116]. The same consideration also applies to the "To support local economies" in the economic dimension. For example, the issues of reducing waste, emissions, and the consumption of non-renewable resources, are closely connected to a question of equity and responsibility not only towards others and our planet, but also towards the future generations [117].

Indeed, the mismanagement of resources and waste is a problem that requires the responsibility of everyone. Not only governments and authorities have the duty to define new policies and re-orient the existing ones, but all individuals, in their daily choices and actions, as individuals and as communities, must get out of a dimension of hyper-individualism [84]. They have to leave an indifference status and open up to a vision of sharing and altruism.

Climate change, pandemics, and conflicts have affected the access to food resources and worsened the living conditions of many people, leading to food poverty for a growing number of people. The possibilities for not being 'distracted' citizens are manifold and require a change of mindset, which is a cultural change. Dosing food portions, catching up on what we do not eat, and taking a shower in a reasonable amount of time are just some of the actions in which tourists can easily lower their level of attention especially when they are in carefree situations, such as during a trip.

However, these are "little" actions that, if carried out collectively on a daily basis, allow individuals to do in their own small way something extremely important for the future of everyone and the environment. All projects for change and all directives issued at European and international level risk remain ineffective if they are not based on real sharing by citizens.

On an economic level, the proposed actions are linked to the contribution of tourists to support local economies, for example buying locally-made handcrafts and products, sustaining local projects, etc.

On a social and cultural level, they are linked to the integration and cultural/knowledge exchange among tourists and between tourists and local communities, including also the aspects related to the respect of the authenticity and integrity of local heritage and values. As has emerged from the previous survey [10], the valorization of cultural and natural heritage emerges as the main factor that the interviewers associate with the concept of sustainable tourism. The main factor required to considerably change the mindset is the culture [84]. It is the 'key energy' for the development [18]. The future of the contexts in

which we live is not only determined by urban planning or economic or environmental choices, but it is strongly conditioned by the way of thinking and living of each citizen, by his aspirations, work, and lifestyle, but above all by the priorities guiding his choices.

Culture produces trust, which is the principle on which economic and public/political activities are based [84]: it fights resignation and separation, it builds integration. Culture produces hope and future: there is no future at all if each subject does not project its interest beyond the subjective one.

From the above considerations, it emerges that being a responsible tourist means first being a responsible citizen, able of relating one's own needs to those of the community and the planet. In order to promote human development of the city, citizens have to be "educated" to recognize intangible values, such as intrinsic values [66], which go beyond instrumental values, and which, complementing them, constitute the image and identity of a site (the spirit of the place) [118]. The identity of a place, its 'character', depends on its humanity, on the associated life that takes place there, on the traditions and customs of life: on its intangible, cultural, and spiritual capital [119,120]. For this reason, among the proposed actions, particular importance has been given, in the social dimension, to the relations that the tourist can establish with the tourist destination community, in terms of cultural and knowledge exchange and integration. In this dimension, the recommendation categories are specifically focused on the contribution to the cultural and knowledge exchange and integration (between tourists and a local community), on enhancing the cultural experiences of tourists, on respecting the authenticity and the integrity of cultural and natural heritage and values of local communities, on preserving health conditions, and on becoming an aware tourist.

As well as how dialogue within one's own community stimulates the sense of collectivity, participation, and civic commitment, in the same way the integration between tourist and local community makes the tourist experience more authentic and respectful of the genius loci [118,121]. Indeed, understanding the values of communities other than our own stimulates active involvement in activities supporting local culture and economy [122,123].

The relationship between tourist and local community is neglected in UNWTO Recommendations, despite the fact that this is very important in tourism experiences. To confirm this neglect, it is highlighted that in fact, the local community is not considered among the actors included in the UNWTO flourishing diagram. Instead, this diagram should be integrated with this new category, which has an active role in the circular tourism implementation.

4.2. Multidimensional Indicators for Assessing the Circular Actions

Starting from the recommendations and actions identified in the previous paragraph, a set of multidimensional indicators to assess them has been identified (Table 2). The aim is to evaluate and monitor the circularity of tourists' behaviors, that is, to assess how they can contribute to the implementation of Human Circular Tourism.

The first column on the left in the table shows the Action to which the indicator refers. Each Action may correspond to one or more indicators. In the second column, an identification code and the indicator itself are provided. Finally, the last column shows the unit of measure of each indicator.

Several types of sources of data can be considered for populating the proposed indicators, i.e., tourism research institutes, official statistical sources (such as ISTAT), the national tourism board, tourism councilors, local tourism observatories, associations and federations, provincial authorities. Furthermore, for some data that cannot be found in official sources, field research can be developed (through surveys).

Table 2. Multidimensional indicators for assessing tourists' behaviors.

Reference Action	Indicator	Unit of Measure
Environmental Dimension		
A1.1	**I1** Amount of bookings in eco-friendly facilities.	%/year or N./year
A1.2	**I2** Amount of purchases in companies that adopt sustainable practices and do not harm the environment.	%/year or N./year
A1.3	**I3** Amount of tourists that declares to adapt their behaviors according to the information provided by the monitoring sensors.	%/year or N./year
A2.1	**I4** Percentage of separate collection on the total amount of waste produced in a tourist accommodation.	%/year
A2.2	**I5** Amount of tourists that declares to use recyclable products (glass, water, etc.).	%/year or N./year
A2.3	**I6** Amount of tourists presenting a printed booking confirmation at the reception desk.	%/year or N./year
A2.4	**I7** Amount of tourists that declare to buy minimally packaged goods.	%/year or N./year
A2.5	**I8** Expenditure in second-hand and gift products.	€/year
A2.6	**I9** Amount of tourists that declare to bring their own bag for shopping.	%/year or N./year
A2.7	**I10** Amount of tourists that order plates with the amount of food that they can actually eat.	%/year or N./year
A2.8	**I11.a** Amount of doggy bags required in food facilities.	%/year or N./year
	I11.b Amount of tourists that use apps for avoiding food waste.	%/year or N./year
A3.1	**I12** Amount of tourists buying km0 products.	%/year or N./year
A3.2	**I13** Amount of tourists using soft mobility (bicycle).	%/year or N./year
A3.3	**I14** Amount of tourists using clean transport (electric vehicles).	%/year or N./year
A3.4	**I15** Amount of tourists using public transport.	%/year or N./year
A3.5	**I16** Amount of tourists declaring to pay attention to cooling and heating consumption.	%/year or N./year
A3.6	**I17** Amount of tourists using sharing transport.	%/year or N./year
A4.1	**I18** Amount of tourists choosing activities and services that use renewable resources.	%/year or N./year
A4.2	**I19** Amount of tourists declaring to pay attention to water system.	%/year or N./year
Economic Dimension		
A5.1	**I20** Amount of tourists buying locally-made handcrafts and products paying fair price.	%/year or N./year
A5.2	**I21** Amount of tourists declaring to consume local food products.	%/year or N./year
A5.3	**I22.1** Amount of donations for supporting local tourism activities.	€/year
	I22.2 Amount of tourists involved in activities of local enterprises.	N./year
	I22.3 Willingness To Pay (WTP) for contribution to cultural and natural heritage conservation.	€/tourist/year
Social Dimension		
A6.1	**I23** Amount of tourists declaring that want to learn to speak a few words in the local language (based on interviews).	%/year or N./year
A6.2	**I24** Amount of tourists declaring that are interested in speaking with local people during the tourist experience (based on interviews).	%/year or N./year
A6.3	**I25** Amount of tourists declaring that speak with other tourists they meet along the way (based on interviews).	%/year or N./year
A6.4	**I26** Amount of tourists who have hired local guides (on the total of tourists).	%/year or N./year
A6.5	**I27** Amount of tourists who share initiatives or social projects considered interesting during the travels.	%/year or N./year

Table 2. *Cont.*

Reference Action	Indicator	Unit of Measure
A6.6	**I28** Amount of innovative ideas proposed that can reshape and benefit the tourism sector and make it more sustainable.	%/year or N./year
A6.7	**I29.1** Amount of tourists sharing feedback about tourist destinations and experience.	%/year or N./year
	I29.2 Percentage of tourists satisfied with tourist initiatives.	%/year
A7.1	**I30.1** Amount of tourists participating in local cultural activities.	%/year or N./year
	I30.1 Percentage of tourists who feel well received by the host community.	%/year
	I30.3 Amount of tourists involved in cooperative initiatives (also in activities with the local community).	%/year or N./year
A7.2	**I31** Amount of tourists researching information and learning about local culture, customs, traditions, and conditions before leaving and during the trip.	%/year or N./year
A8.1	**I32** Amount of tourists adopting respectful behaviors (deducted from questionnaires and interviews).	%/year or N./year
A8.2	**I33** Amount of reporting about inappropriate or discriminatory behaviors that happened during tourist experience or online.	%/year or N./year
A8.3	**I34** Amount of tourists adopting respectful behaviors for man-made and environmental resources (deducted from questionnaires and interviews).	%/year or N./year
A9.1	**I35** Amount of download of existing resources on health for guidance.	%/year or N./year
A9.2	**I36** Percentage of tourists adopting health-safety measures.	%/year
A10.1	**I37** Amount of users of services supplied by e-tourism.	%/year or N./year
A10.2	**I38** Amount of tourists knowing about the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.	%/year or N./year

The above set of indicators would represent a first step towards the development of a comprehensive evaluation framework for assessing the circularity level of development strategies in the tourism sector. They cover all the dimensions of sustainability and are mainly referred to the demand, such as the actions refer to the behaviors of the tourists. Certainly, as the next research step, it will be important to understand how these actions also impact supply, as they are strictly interrelated.

Unlike the analyzed scientific literature, the indicator framework proposed here is not sectoral, but simultaneously covers all the three dimensions related to the HTC, namely the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions. As can be seen, compared to linear tourism, in the circular tourism the environmental and socio-cultural dimensions take on a more prominent role.

These proposed indicators can be a useful tool for institutions and, more in general, decision makers, to assess and monitor the level of circularity of tourism from the perspective of tourists. Such indicators can support decision makers in the tourism field, helping institutions to adopt strategies and policies that incentivize tourists' circularity behaviors.

This proposed evaluation framework is about the evaluation of tourists' behaviors, but a future step of the research can be related to the development of the evaluation framework also in reference to the other categories of tourism stakeholders in order to have a comprehensive evaluation framework for Human Circular Tourism. This would also make it possible to put the different categories into relation.

5. Conclusions

This study fits into a complex process aimed at the operationalization of the Human Circular Tourism model. In this perspective, it would represent a first step in the development of an operational framework (consisting of recommendations, actions, indicators). The general framework is differentiated for each category of stakeholder of the tourism sector, but at the same time it has to be able to put them into a system by highlighting their interrelationships. The reason for this differentiation is to clearly define the ways in which each category of stakeholders could/should effectively act and contribute to the achieve-

ment of a more sustainable tourism, both from the supply and demand sides. Obviously, the actions in each category are interrelated. As said in the previous paragraphs, here the attention is, as a first step, focused on the tourist category: the success (or failure) of the implementation of the HCT model greatly depends on the behavior of the tourists and their mindset/culture. Focusing on the study of individual behaviors is key to understanding how the acceptance and participation of different stakeholders in processes and measures that aim at circularity affect their beliefs and awareness, leading to changes in their cultural approach, perceptions, and propensity to implement circular and sustainable practices [64]. To this end, the framework of recommendations and actions have been developed. It can be useful for local authorities, but also other stakeholder as tour operators or private bodies, to orient their strategies in tourism policies.

One limitation of this study is surely that it refers to a single category of stakeholders. Furthermore, the difficulty of identifying data to populate indicators is another limitation: statistical sources are not always up-to-date and fieldwork is complex (in terms of time and resources).

For the above, a future line of research is represented by the development of the same operational framework (Recommendation, Actions, and Indicators) also for the other stakeholders of tourism sector identified in Figure 1. This would allow for a comprehensive framework and also be able to identify and reflect on the possible interrelationships between individual frameworks. Furthermore, this framework can be carried out in order to verify any necessary improvements and additions.

The role of knowledge and awareness is crucial in this perspective. Raising tourists' awareness and guiding their choices and behaviors is important to move towards a more sustainable tourism perspective. Sharing circular tourism practices, identifying success (or failure) factors, is also important to increase knowledge and awareness on the issue.

Systems to (self-)monitor tourists' behavior could contribute to greater tourist awareness and increase their sense of responsibility, incentivizing more sustainable behaviors. For example, apps to calculate one's carbon footprint during a trip can be useful in this perspective.

The introduction of "rewarding" measures (through, for example, apps that reward environmentally sustainable behavior) can also be a strategy to incentivize responsible and sustainable behavior. Through these reward measures, tourists can be incentivized to adopt more sustainable lifestyles, turning their "unsustainable" habits into sustainable ones.

These incentives are useful both on the demand and supply side. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, a future research step could be the further development of this operational framework also for the other categories of tourism-related stakeholders (companies, academia, donors, international organisations, and public bodies) in order to identify the contribution of each category in the achievement of a common goal.

Moreover, at a wider level, as already implemented in some countries, guidelines for the implementation of Human Circular Tourism model should be included in official policies.

The results of this study are intended to be a support for decision-makers in developing guidelines to orient choices and strategies towards a more sustainable tourism.

In order to guide the long-term strategic development of cities, tourism could be more integrated into national and local planning. This would involve identifying the synergistic relationships and intersections between the tourism sector and other sectors, taking into account the sector's deep relations to and dependence on various resource flows and value chains (i.e., construction, finance, and retail).

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