

Santiago de Compostela, one of the four pilot cities of the Bodah project

Sustainable tourism management is the main objective of the BODAH (Big and Open Data for Atlantic Heritage) project, led by Turismo de Santiago de Compostela and involving six other partners from Spain, France, Ireland, Portugal and the United Kingdom. The Project develops and rolls out technologies to measure and better understand the behaviour of both visitors and inhabitants of the Atlantic Area's heritage cities.

Santiago de Compostela, a World Heritage city, is one of the four pilot Atlantic destinations of the BODAH project in which a wide range of data will be collected, analysed and modelled to better understand and manage tourism flows. The other pilot destinations are San Sebastian, the French Basque Country and Cork in Southern Ireland.

Santiago de Compostela was declared a World Heritage Site by Unesco in 1985. This designation was based on the attractiveness of the city, its magnificent middle age buildings and streetscapes, coupled with its important historical and spiritual significance, as the focal point of Europe's most famous pilgrimage routes along the way of Saint James

Within the historic centre of Santiago, the Cathedral, its four squares and the surrounding streets attract the greatest concentration of visitors and sightseers to the city.

To assist with the management of sustainable visitor numbers in Santiago, BODAH has developed a system of data indicators that contribute to maximising overall tourism sustainability. Data is produced which monitors popular visitor sites, tourist numbers, traffic levels, visitor perceptions and also socio-economic benefits of tourism to the city. The data platform is based on a total of 30 different datasets which combine to measure impacts in real time and permitting city authorities to respond with initiatives to maintain sustainability.

The system developed within the BODAH Project makes it possible, to know how many visitors are within the city historic core, how long they remain, any environmental impacts being generated and also how tourism is perceived by the visitors and locals alike.

The information is essential to managing tourism at anytime and especially in terms of supporting public health measures during the COVID 19 Pandemic. The system will continue to support sustainability when tourism normality returns, with large numbers of people visiting Santiago.

The BODAH project, in which Fomento de San Sebastián, Fundación Santa María la Real del Patrimonio Histórico, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Munster Technological University, Glasgow Caledonian University and Bangor University are participating alongside Turismo de Santiago, is being developed within the Interreg Atlantic Area Programme, with a total budget of €1,573,373 75% of which is cofinanced by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).