



Understanding Seniors' Needs – Lessons Learned from Health Tourism Development

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Background

- Demographic trends, increased role of seniors
- Healthy ageing, tourism in EU policies
- Tourism trends, increased role of health tourism



About the Project

- European consortium (7 partners from 4 countries)
- EU COSME programme (676737/COSME)
- From August 2015 to November 2016

Developing new health tourism product attractive for seniors during the off-season period.



Main objectives

- Encourage a better **cooperation** and increased agreements among different actors of the health tourism value chain and seniors associations/organisations with elaborating a new, international balneology tourism product network focused on off-season, and custom tailored to seniors specific needs;
- To make more benefit for tourism **SMEs** by increasing the number of tourism flows during the low and medium seasons and professionalization of tourism service providers;
- Communication and promotion of tourism as a strategy for active and **healthy ageing**;
- Facilitate accessibility in tourism offers, along with intermodal transfer and transnational connectivity;
- Foster the construction of innovative **health insurance** policies in order to make the product sustainable and self-developing in the future.

Destinations in Focus

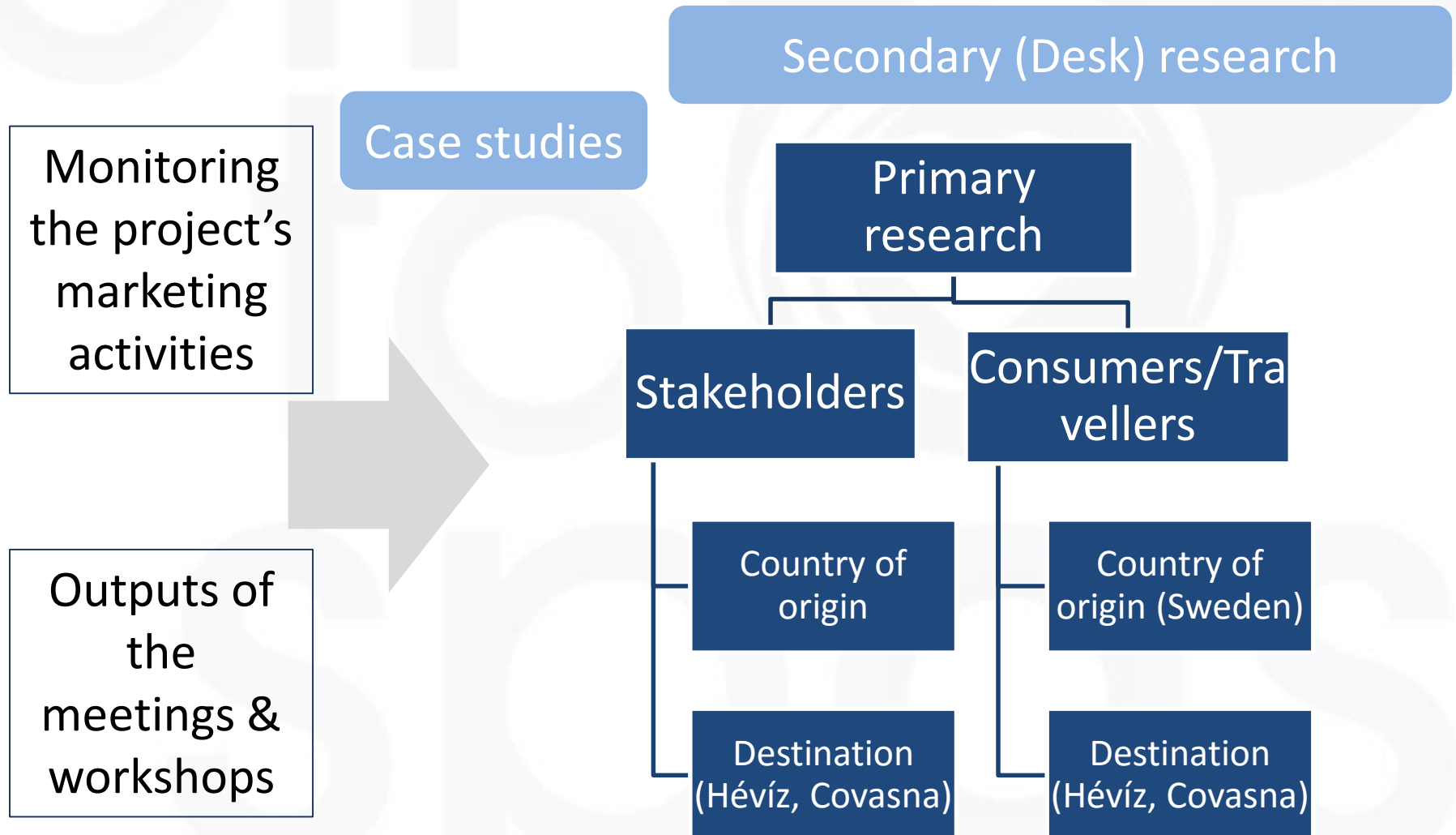
Hévíz (Hungary)

- Mature health tourism destination with long traditions.
- Over 1 million guest nights yearly.
- Small city with good infrastructure.
- 6 km from Lake Balaton.
- **,Hévíz Traditional Cure'**
- Wide range of tourism experiences/services.

Covasna (Romania)

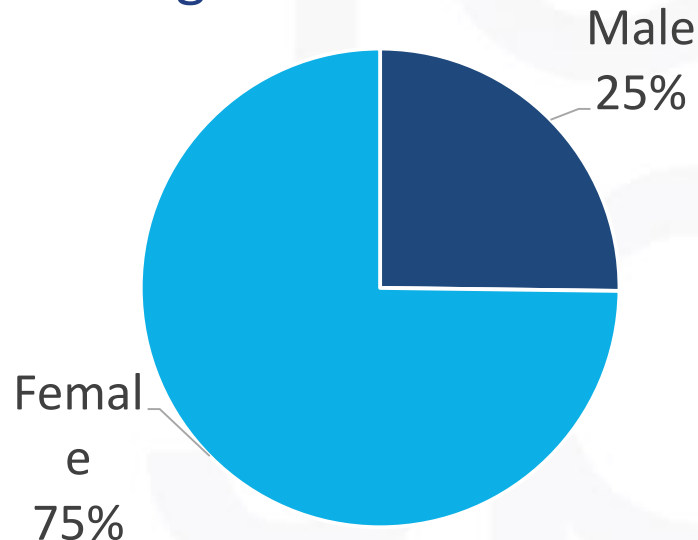
- Undiscovered destination.
- No 1. region to be visited in 2016 (Lonely Planet).
- Natural treasures.
- Countryside, mountains with small settlements.
- **,Covasna Method'**
- Active tourism experiences.
- Gastronomy, cultural heritage.

Supported by a Comprehensive Research



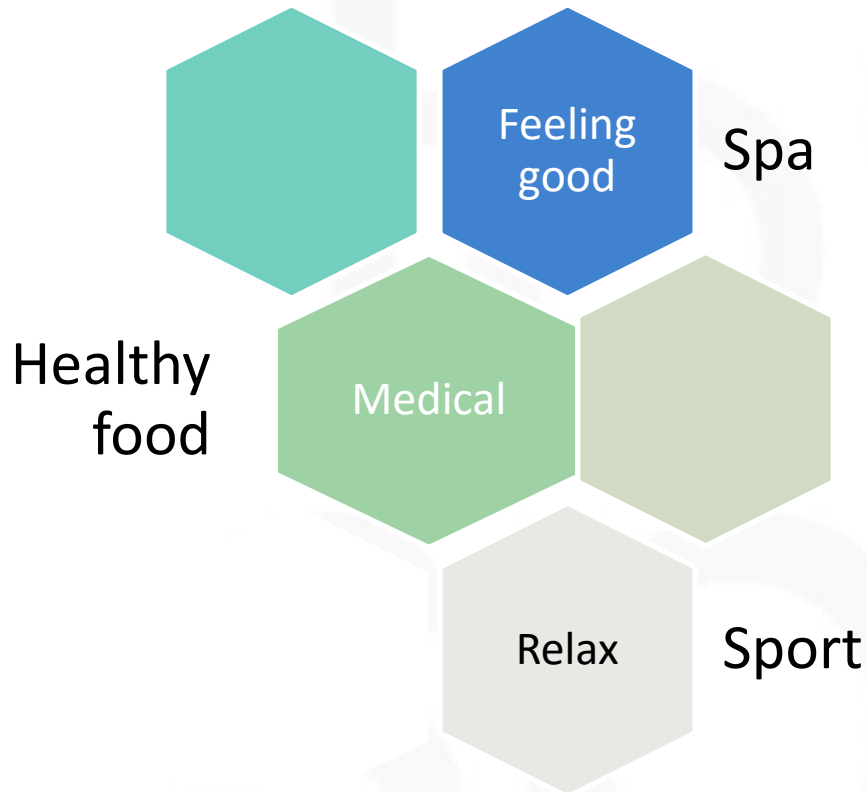
Methodology – Consumer Research

- **170 potential** traveller
- Seniors, mainly **Swedish**
- 54% **retired**
- 13% with children **living abroad**, 32% with friends/relatives living abroad



Age group	Share
50-55 years	22.1%
56-60 years	16.9%
61-65 years	17.6%
65-70 years	18.4%
70+ years	25.0%

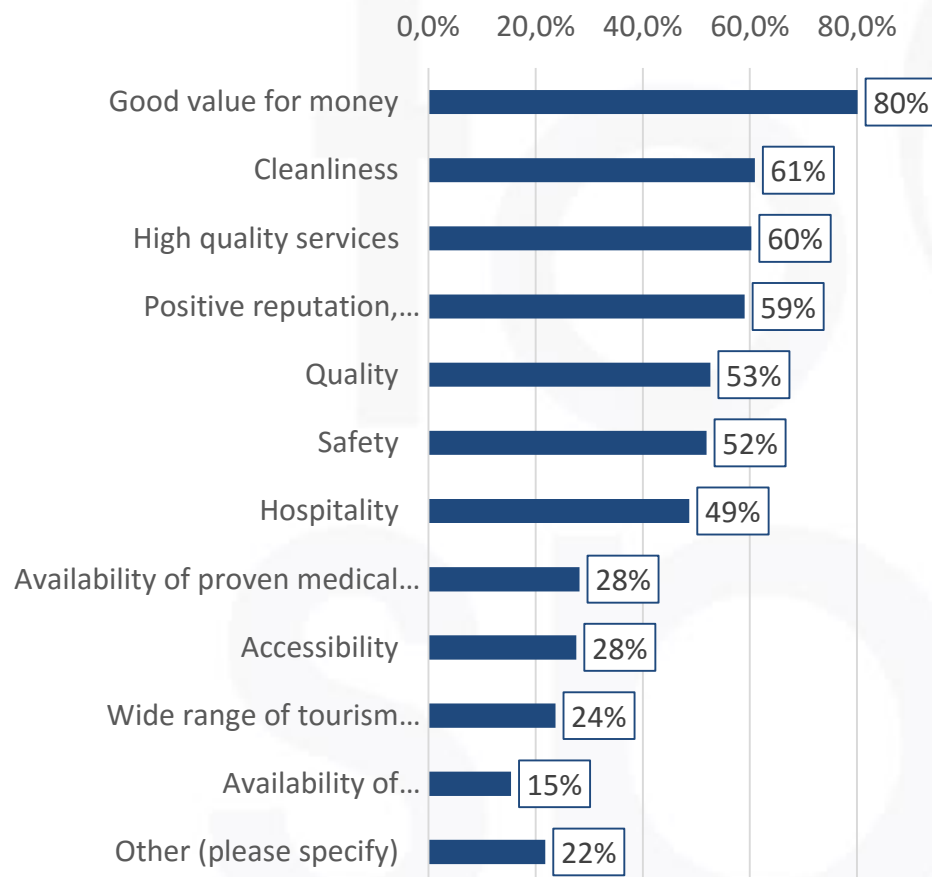
Attitudes towards health tourism



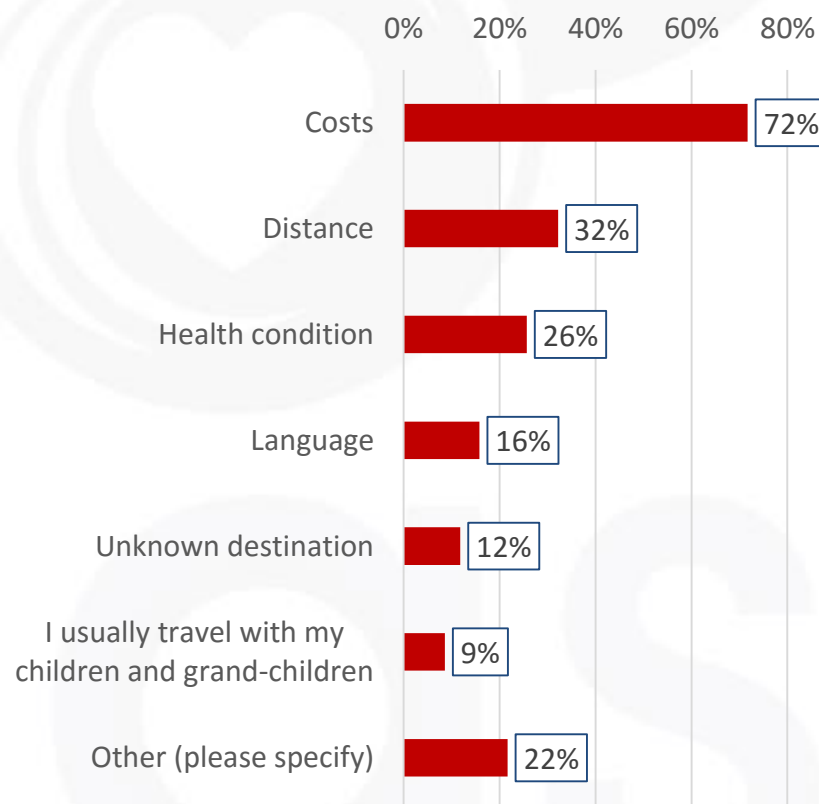
- Open-minded, affluent travellers with **good health conditions**
- **Taking care about health** (nutrition, physical and mental exercise)
- 9 out of 10 have **hobbies**

Drivers & limitations – health tourism

Drivers



Limitations

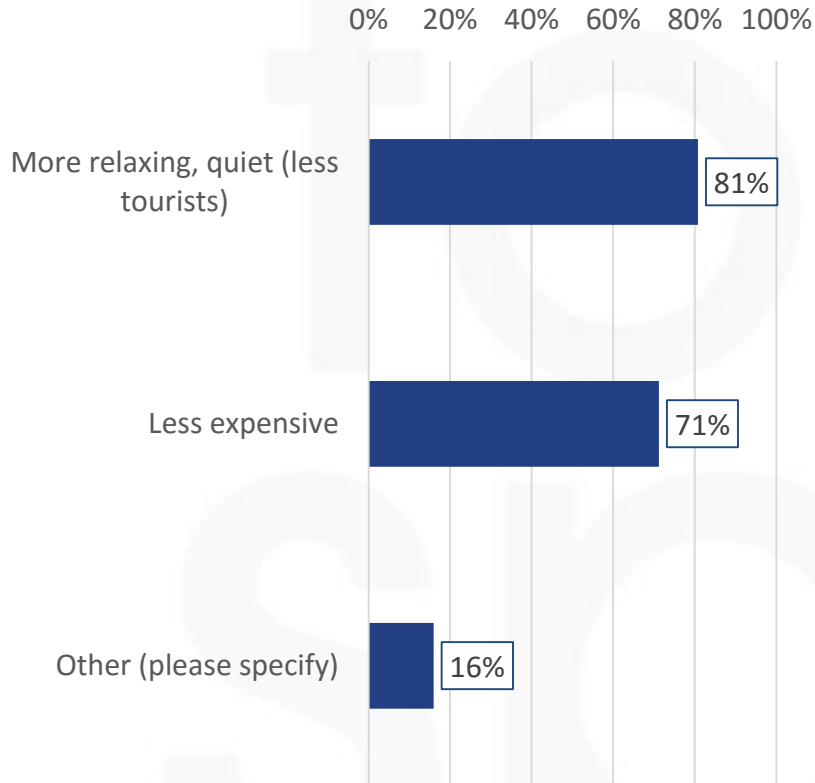


Source: Off to Spas consumer survey (n=170)

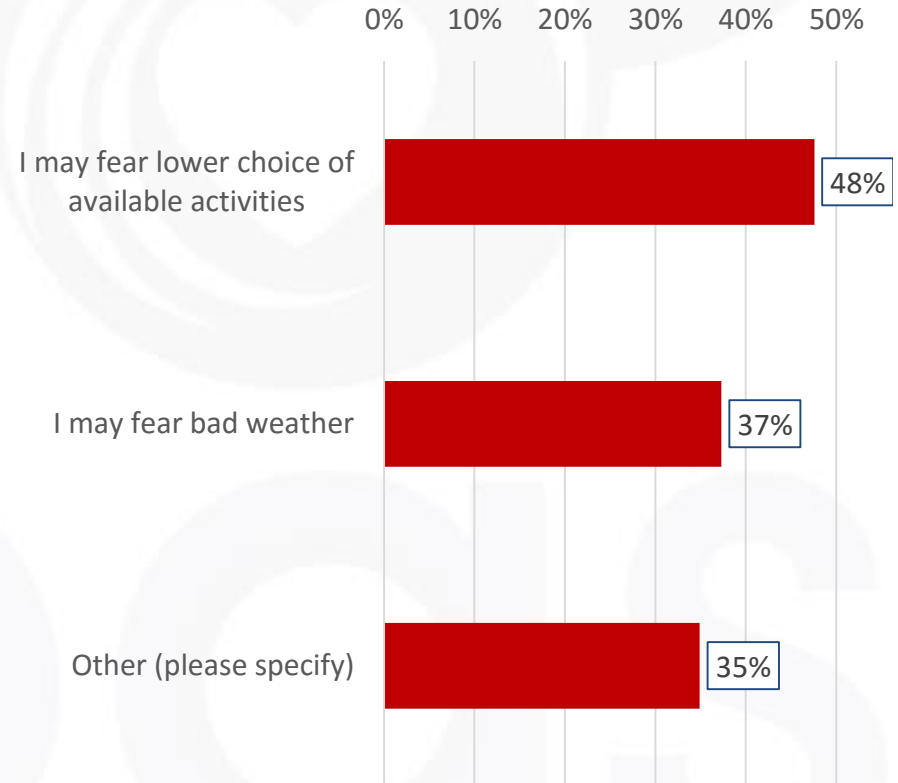


Drivers & limitations – off-season health tourism

Drivers



Limitations



Source: Off to Spas consumer survey (n=170)

,Ideal' health tourism package 1 week with spouse/partner & friends

Dietetic food, medical assistance

Wine & gastronomy, fitness, **high** quality accommodation, **medium** quality accommodation, active tourism, medical treatment

Wellness treatment, cultural attractions



What kind of medical treatments?

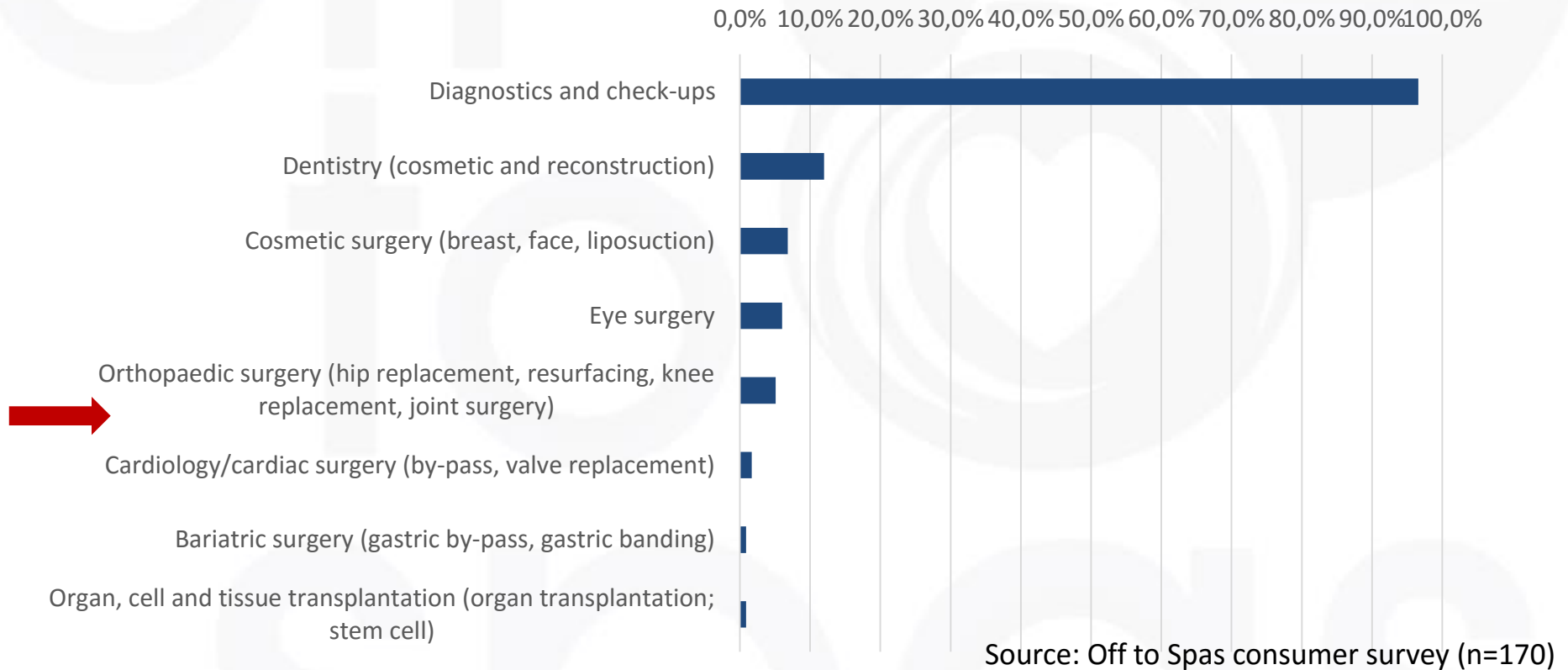
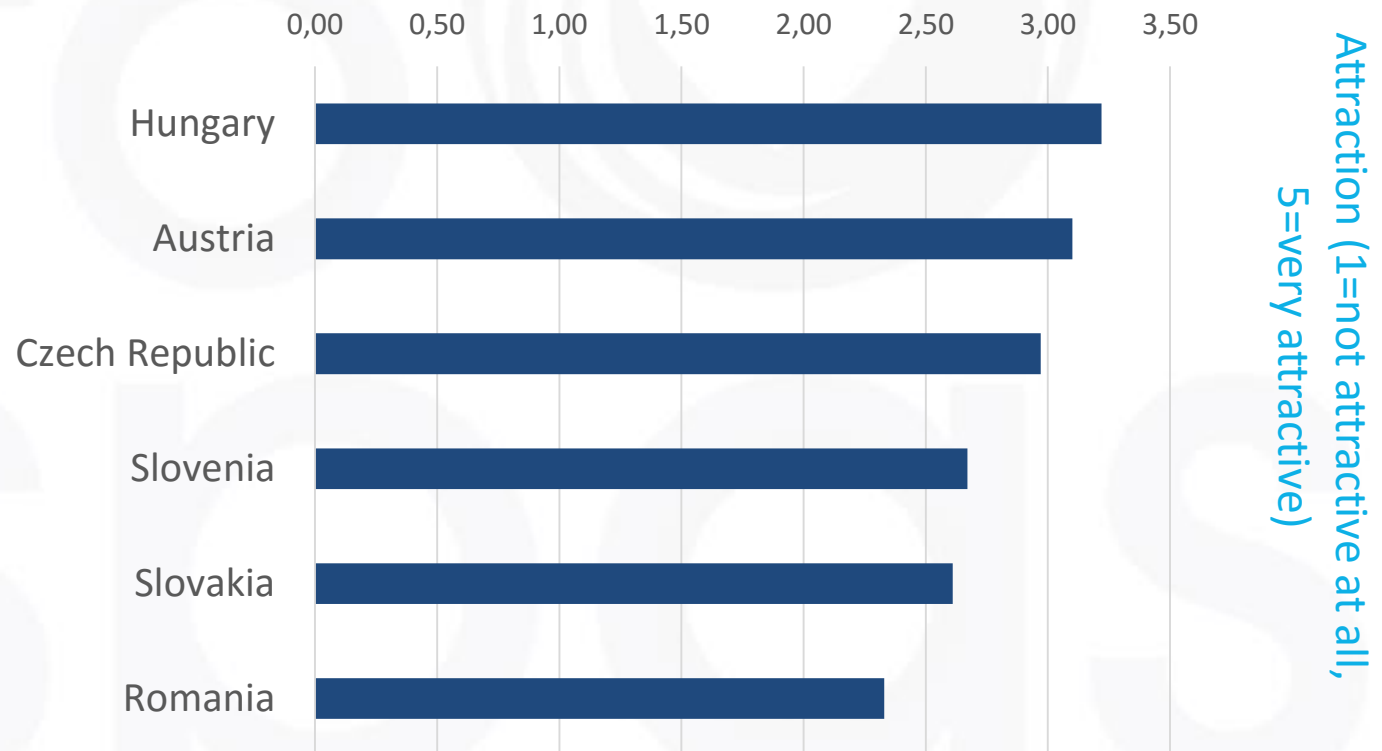


Image and awareness of Central and Eastern European destinations

- Reputation of traditional health tourism destinations (Estonia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Mediterranean)



Source: Off to Spas consumer survey (n=170)

USP of the involved destinations

Hévíz

- Thermal spa/bath, price, culture, food, *don't know*, medical treatment

Covasna

- *Don't know*, nature, price, culture, new experience

Limited potential of health insurance

- They consider themselves rather ,travellers’.
- Good health condition, **active lifestyle**.
- Seeking new experiences, exploring new destinations.
- **Perception problems** about health tourism abroad, and cures/methods.
- **Cultural background**.

Source: Off to Spas consumer survey (n=170)



How to reach travellers?

Information sources	%
Internet	91.8%
Friends/family recommendation	60.3%
Past experience	56.2%
TV programme	42.5%
Newspaper/Magazine articles	37.7%
Travel agency	27.4%
Travel information received by e-mail	24.0%
Guide books	21.9%
Social media	18.5%
Newspaper/Magazine advertisements	15.8%
Travel information received by mail	15.8%
Maps	10.3%
Medical referral	8.2%
Health Insurance Company	8.2%
Radio programme	6.2%

Source: Off to Spas consumer survey (n=170)

B2B study tours

Feedbacks

- 3 study tours
 - 2 Hévíz (November 2015, February 2016)
 - 1 Covasna (November 2015)
 - 3 days programme
 - Health tourism
 - Other leisure services
 - Seniors, representatives of seniors' associations
 - Sweden, Germany, Austria
- Importance of **distances**
 - **Wellness** and **leisure** could be the main driver
 - Need for **explanation** of health tourism services/treatments
 - **Lack of perceptions** as health tourism destinations
 - **Language** problems

Conclusions

A vertical line with four circles at the end of each segment, connecting four text boxes. The circles are empty and the line is blue.

Need for understanding visitors needs, cultural differences (acceptance of treatments).

Perception problems, lack of awareness and image as health tourism destination.

Significant role of ,experience', improved health condition is a ,side effect'.

Need for more cooperation between health and tourism.

Project is going on...

- Final conference:
 - 18-20 November 2016
 - Hévíz/Hungary
 - International health tourism conference
 - Together with the annual meeting of the Hungarian Balneological Association





Thank you for your attention!



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