

Haute Ecole
« ICHEC – ECAM – ISFSC »



Enseignement supérieur de type long de niveau universitaire

How can a wellness retreat be designed to meet the expectations of a global, yet primarily European, clientele, while respecting the specific cultural and social context of this market?



REVAMP RETREATS

Mémoire présenté par :

Jeanne BOURGUIGNON

Pour l'obtention du diplôme de :

Master en gestion de l'entreprise

Année académique 2024-2025

Promoteur :

Laurent LAHAYE

Boulevard Brand Whitlock 6 - 1150 Bruxelles

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List of acronyms

Gen Z	Generation Z
WHO	World Health Organization
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
ATTA	Adventure Travel Trade Association
ETC	European Travel Commission
GWI	Global Wellness Institute
GNH	Growth National Happiness
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
SIC	Societal Impact Canvas
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation

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Preamble

As I write this, I am 26 years old, finishing my studies, and my head is full of dreams. I have a lot of ambitions, ready to create my future and explore the opportunities that are open to me. I am driven by the desire to work in fields that I am truly passionate about. Unlike previous generations, mine seems unafraid to take risks to pursue a life we have always envisioned.

My generation, Generation Z (“Gen Z”), is redefining what it means to “work”. They are shifting the focus from traditional career success to personal values, objectives, life balance, and good impact (Hancock, 2023). This generation brings a unique approach: they are dreamers, and they want more than just life stability and great benefits. They are looking for a real purpose and meaning in their work (Hancock, 2023).

Moreover, despite the alignment of their professional and personal life, they also want flexibility, and for that, a must for this generation is to have the freedom to manage when and where they work (Agbede, 2024). This explains why working remotely, or at least in hybrid, is more popular nowadays. Indeed, according to data gathered by Agbede (2024) from various reports, mainly based on U.S. respondents, 80% of women and 76% of men prefer to work partially or fully from home (Agbede, 2024). This allows them to have personal interests and maintain a better work-life balance. This flexibility goes beyond just some comfort. It is giving so much more. It is also about creating a work structure that supports their mental health and well-being, something that Gen Z takes very seriously (Deloitte, 2024; Trends, 2024).

Additionally, Gen Z has uplifted the entrepreneurial spirit. They have broken the codes of traditional career paths and placed work in alignment with passions and values at the heart of their priorities. Many of them are thinking of creating their own business, if they haven’t already, that reflects who they are, their vision of the world and the impact they would like to make (Haaland, 2024; SWNS, 2024). A study by SWNS (2024), the South West News Service, in the New York Post reveals that almost 36% of Gen Z consider themselves to be entrepreneurs, which serves as proof that this spirit is deeply implanted in this generation and that it is important to pursue a work that feels meaningful.

In comparison, this figure is still slightly below Millennials, 39% of whom identify as entrepreneurs (SWNS, 2024). However, it is well above Generation X with 29% and Baby Boomers with 25% (Haaland, 2024; SWNS, 2024). For Gen Z, entrepreneurship is a true lifestyle choice driven by a desire for autonomy, creativity and balance between personal and professional life. Instead of the rigid 9-to-5 structures that defined the careers of their elders, they are looking for a kind of liberty that allows them to find meaning in what they do (Modi, 2023). According to a ZenBusiness report, 75% of Gen Z want to start their own business. This percentage reflects a collective desire to bring their ideas to life with creativity and a clear goal: to find meaning in their work (Browley, 2025).

In short, Gen Z is reshaping what success truly means. Where Baby Boomers and Generation X placed importance on stability and progressive growth, Gen Z prioritizes creativity, adaptability and, above all, meaning and purpose. They see entrepreneurship as more than just a way to generate profit (Modi, 2023). This generational breakthrough shows the importance of choosing a career path that resonates with their deepest values. That's exactly what motivates many members of Gen Z (Modi, 2023). And that is also what motivates me.

Because of my generation's influence and my own dreamer's spirit, last year, I left my small and beloved country to embrace island life and embark on an amazing internship, working in tourism in Bali. I specifically chose to focus on the wellness industry. I interned with Revamp Retreats, an American company founded by Kori Zornes. Kori's inspiration to start this company came from a personal transformation during a retreat that changed her life. That experience made her quit her corporate job. She then started Revamp Retreats and later moved to Bali to pursue a mission of sharing health, wellness and travel, which ultimately became the mission of this company. Now working side by side with Christian Tripodi, her partner, they have facilitated numerous retreats, working with amazing teachers, healers and leaders in the wellness community, to transform lives through meaningful retreat experiences (About Revamp Retreats, 2024).

During my internship I took on various tasks but my biggest role, which felt like the perfect fit for me, was being a retreat leader. I was responsible for overseeing details during the planning phase of each retreat and handling all logistics, operations and communications onsite, and Kori and Christian trained me to become the best leader I could be over the course of four months. They taught me valuable life lessons as well as some hacks in logistics, organization, customer experience and team coordination. I was also able to immerse myself in the culture of Bali, which enriched me both personally and professionally. Working closely with them gave me insights into what it truly takes to lead a successful retreat, from the logistics to the deep emotional connections with participants. It provided me with hands-on experience and allowed me to develop my own style as the retreat leader I am today.

I have had the opportunity to lead a 6-day retreat in Bali twice, each time hosting more than 15 women coming from different countries to live the retreat experience. Following this internship, I started working for them as an intern, leading more retreats in Europe: one in the UK in August 2024, one in Spain in September 2024, one in France in March 2025, another one in Spain in April 2025 and finally 3 in Costa Rica during throughout the entire month of May 2025. Those experiences convinced me that I was made for this job, to lead retreats in beautiful places all around the world.

At this point, one thing is for certain: my near future is going to be in this sector. I feel so much more confident and fulfilled now. I have transitioned into a role that allows me to bring together everything I am passionate about. My time in Bali, surrounded by such natural beauty and vibrant culture, played a big role in helping me grow as a leader and understand what makes a retreat successful. However, although Bali is a place that supported personal growth and reflection, leading the retreats in Europe is what made me realize how important location is, as are many other logistical aspects like the teachers, the activities, the schedule, etc. Therefore, this thesis will look at these key elements, using some examples from Bali as well as from Europe to create a clear guide to plan a successful retreat.

Looking back, I am incredibly grateful for the journey that brought me here and the opportunities that came along. But as I said, I am a dreamer! I am excited to keep growing and learning in this work to achieve concrete ambitions. I have the desire to build something of my own, and this thesis represents the first step toward that goal: to develop a strategic plan to create my own retreat business, combining my unique vision with the lessons I have learned while leading retreats with Revamp Retreats. My internship and work with them gave me a strong foundation for understanding the core elements of retreat management. However, turning this vision into a reality requires a strategic approach, which is the focus of this thesis.

Introduction

In a world where the pace of life is constantly accelerating, where professional and personal expectations are increasing, and where the balance between body and mind is often challenged, wellbeing is becoming a necessity for many people (Raguin, 2024). This search for fulfillment and reconnection with oneself reflects profound needs: to refocus, to slow down and to give meaning to a life often shaped too much by stress and the pressures of modern society. In response to all these needs, wellness tourism is emerging as a booming industry, offering spaces to nourish body, mind and soul (Raguin, 2024).

This phenomenon is not a surprise. It is part of a global context in which the challenges of mental health and individual wellbeing are coupled with a broader societal reflection on quality of life and balanced lifestyles. Wellness retreats, in particular, play a unique role in this changing dynamic. These retreats not only offer a break from the fast pace of life, but also a transformative experience, often shaped by a reconnection with nature, the discovery of new practices such as yoga, meditation or mindful trainings, and the chance to experience that with a community that shares the same aspirations and societal goals (Raguin, 2024). Although this sector is already a great success in certain parts of the world, such as Bali, where wellness retreats are an integral part of the tourism offering, this thesis will mainly focus on the European market.

The aim is to explore, analyze and question how a wellness retreat can meet the specific expectations of a worldwide but mainly European, consumer base, while respecting the cultural and social particularities of this market. This reflection will serve to identify client needs and guide the study through a central research question: **How can a wellness retreat be designed to meet the expectations of a global, yet primarily European, clientele, while respecting the specific cultural and social context of this market?** This question serves as the road map for this research, directing both the theoretical analysis of the wellness tourism sector and the practical development of a business concept tailored to the European market.

Throughout the process, this study focuses on evaluating the **desirability** (market demand and client expectations), the **feasibility** (logistical and organizational aspects), the **viability** (economic sustainability) and the **durability** (strategic relevance and long-term social value) of the project, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of what it takes to successfully launch and sustain a wellness retreat in this context. This thesis aims to contribute to this reflection by focusing on a strategic feasibility study of a wellness retreat in Europe, based on the Revamp Retreats case study. This project is set within a framework that blends theory and practice in order to offer a comprehensive analysis and provide concrete insights to help design and develop a retreat that aligns with market expectations. The motivation behind this research is based on my own professional experience, but also on the evolution of consumer expectations. Consumers are no longer just looking for a relaxing break but rather for experiences that transform, inspire and bring sustainable value to their overall wellbeing (Yeung et al., 2018b).

This paper is divided into three main parts each with several chapters, which will provide a step-by-step framework to respond to the questions raised. The first part explores the theoretical foundations and current dynamics of wellness tourism and wellness retreats, with a focus on the European context. In addition, an introduction of Revamp Retreats, the company selected as the case study for this thesis, will be provided. The second part presents the methodology used to collect and analyze data, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. This part forms a central element of the thesis, adopting a triple

research approach: exploratory, applied and abductive, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the wellness retreat market. The final part translates the research results into a strategic and operational roadmap, using tools such as the Societal Impact Canvas to guide the creation of a successful and sustainable retreat business. The Societal Impact Canvas will serve as the framework for structuring this research and connecting different sources of data collected. Each of its 15 components is analyzed through a combination of scientific research, online data, insights from my personal experience with Revamp Retreats and their online certification program and empirical data gathered through surveys and interviews. This structured approach provides a detailed and practical analysis, leading to a concrete and coherent business plan.

By combining extensive theoretical analysis, rigorous methodology and practical application, this thesis provides a structured and operational framework for the creation of a viable and competitive wellness retreat business. It provides a foundation that addresses market trends, strategic planning and practical execution and offers valuable recommendations to enter this fast-growing sector.

Wishing you a pleasant and rewarding read.

Part 1: Contextualization

The first part of this thesis is fundamental to understanding the main topic of the work. It lays the groundwork of the study with a clear and structured academic framework. It introduces different topics and highlights key issues and trends. This first part is structured into three main chapters. The first chapter explores the fundamental concepts of wellness, tracing its development from a global vision to its traditional roots and continuing evolution, including a deepening in yoga practices and others. This chapter also covers the modern perception of wellness, with a particular focus on wellness tourism and its rise in our contemporary society. The second chapter is devoted to wellness retreats, offering an extensive analysis of this specific model, its growth and its role in the tourism and wellness industry. Finally, the third chapter offers a short explanation of Revamp Retreats, the company chosen as the case study, in order to better understand its operation, offerings and retreats.

Before diving into the core of this thesis, it is essential to clarify the methodological approach and the explanation of the chosen focus areas. This work relies significantly on studies and data collected during different retreats led by myself in different countries and locations while working with Revamp. However, the ultimate goal of this project is to assess the feasibility of adapting this concept to the European market. This focus is further supported by the fact that the primary audience for the quantitative data from the main general survey conducted as part of this study was predominantly European, with a significant proportion of respondents being Belgian. More research will continue to be carried out globally, concerning other parts of the world thanks to different interviews conducted with yoga teachers and retreat leaders of many nationalities. This comparative approach allows for an exploration of how the successful elements of Revamp can be adapted and implemented in a context focused on the European market.

This literature review serves to provide deeper context and knowledge on the subject. These chapters are essential to justify the rationale of the study and what it takes to realize part 3 of this thesis, the creation of the project. Finally, it helps to formulate the basis of the research problem by situating the study in a clear and credible context with a coherent and structured approach.

Chapter 1: The path of wellness

In this chapter, we're going to focus on wellness, where it comes from, what it represents over time, etc. Following different readings, it quickly became clear that a singular definition of wellness was not sufficient to keep a scientific rigor and understanding of the subject. There are many variations and nuances in wellness practices due to different cultures and periods. To make this research clear, it is important to acknowledge these differences and understand where wellness is coming from, its roots, its evolution and its challenges. Moreover, to fit the scope of this study, this chapter will also broadly cover the different types of tourism to finally focus on the definition of wellness tourism, its rise in our modern society and in Europe, and the different forms and practices it can take.

1. A global perspective on wellness

For a long time now, wellness has been a worldwide movement, influenced by historical traditions and by major cultural beliefs. Wellness practices, like many cultural, religious or other practices, differ from country to country due to cultural, spiritual and environmental factors (Global Wellness Institute, s.d. ; Smith, 2021). For example, Eastern philosophies such as yoga, which is the focus of many retreats and the practice of Buddhist meditation emphasize self-empowerment, spiritual fulfillment and self-

awareness. Western wellness traditions, on the other hand, often focus more on physical health, with sport and nutrition, as well as relaxation, calm and tranquility (Smith, 2021). All these characteristics can also be found in spas and thermal cures, which have been at the center of Western medicine for decades (Smith, 2021).

Only a few examples of wellness practices are mentioned in this thesis. The focus will be on yoga and a little bit on meditation and breathwork as these ancestral practices are among the most commonly integrated into retreats. However, it is important to bear in mind that many other practices, whether well-known or less familiar, have their roots in specific countries, cultures, beliefs and communities. Examining the origins of well-being highlights the diversity of the wellness tourism of today and emphasizes that wellness has, in reality, a variety of cultural and historical shapes. This perspective helps understand in a better way how wellness practices have transcended borders and become integral to different lifestyles globally.

1.1 Traditional roots of wellness

Wellness has its origins in various beliefs, ancient healing practices, religious rituals and cultural traditions. It is defined as "a multidimensional state of being describing the existence of positive health in an individual as exemplified by quality of life and a sense of well-being" (Corbin & Pangrazi, 2001, p.1). This multidimensional concept encompasses physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual well-being, reflecting a holistic approach to health and life balance (Corbin & Pangrazi, 2001).

The number of dimensions included in commonly used definitions of wellness often ranges between 5 to 7, with the most frequently described being physical, social, intellectual, emotional (mental) and spiritual. Other proposed dimensions, such as vocational and environmental, are recognized more as influences on personal wellness rather than direct components (Corbin & Pangrazi, 2001). Research continues to explore the relationships among these dimensions, emphasizing the complex nature of wellness.

Wellness is a term widely used by the general public and health professionals, but it is often misapplied. Many fitness programs are now labeled as "wellness" programs, leading to confusion and interchangeability between fitness and wellness. Establishing a uniform definition is critical for ensuring credibility and standard usage of the term by professionals. Additionally, such clarity can help the public better understand what wellness truly entails and what it does not (Corbin & Pangrazi, 2001).

As for wellness tourism, it can be traced back to ancient practices, such as thermal and mineral spring baths for healing and rejuvenation. These practices are still an integral part of wellness tourism nowadays, particularly in Europe (Yeung et al., 2018b). Although, since then, these ancient healing practices have become more accessible and more oriented towards a moment of wellness and relaxation (Yeung et al., 2018b). Traditional wellness practices often reflect local traditions, lifestyles and natural resources. Herbal remedies, purification rituals and the many spiritual practices rooted in Hinduism illustrate how wellness is integrated into the daily lives of locals (Meikassandra et al., 2020). Similarly, many traditional European wellness traditions, such as Finnish saunas or Austrian herbal therapies, emphasize the importance of the connection between nature and human well-being (Drobnik & Stebel, 2020 ; Walker, 2025).

When referencing Hinduism, yoga, meditation and purification, it is reasonable to think about the origin of these traditions: India. India is the motherland of yoga and meditation, both of which are deeply

rooted in its cultural and spiritual heritage. These practices are thousands of years old, their origins stemming from the philosophical and religious traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism (Basavaraddi, 2015). Yoga was not considered physical exercise at first, but more of a meditative practice designed to reach self-realization and spiritual awakening. Meditation is just as important in Indian spiritual practices, in which it has been used as a foundation for mental clarity and inner peace (Basavaraddi, 2015).

Over time, yoga and meditation have grown from their religious origins to become more of a universal tool for well-being, offering physical, mental and spiritual benefits, a transformation that has been strongly influenced by modern practitioners who have emphasized its therapeutic and holistic dimensions (Basavaraddi, 2015). Current wellness practices, which are now taught worldwide but come from this Indian heritage, are in fact traditions that guide modern retreats, integrating spirituality with physical and mental well-being in a way that connects with diverse communities around the world (Global Wellness Institute, 2018; Smith, 2021).

Religious rituals are more specific to each religion, and while this research paper does not focus on religion or religious practices, beliefs such as meditation or chanting, for example, are common elements integrated in retreats. Meditation, which is part of many religious traditions such as Buddhism and Hinduism, is not only about spiritual well-being; it is also about psychological well-being. It promotes a sense of purpose and inner harmony (Smith, 2021). Similarly, Chanting, often used in rituals across different religions, is associated with spiritual practices and fosters a sense of community and emotional release. According to Smith (2021), meditation and other religious practices can bring spiritual healing and psychological rejuvenation, creating a holistic basis for well-being.

In short, the overall understanding of wellness has evolved and will continue to evolve based on various concepts such as harmony and holistic health. As we have seen, whether we are talking about thermal traditions in Europe, purification in Bali, meditation and yoga in India or other traditions elsewhere in the world, these approaches balance the physical, emotional and spiritual health of every human being who practices them (Smith, 2021). These examples of traditional roots of wellness show that the historic traditions of certain countries are now part of the main tourism experiences shared worldwide.

1.2. The evolution of health ideals

The concept of wellness has evolved over decades to reflect a focus not only on the absence of disease, but also on the promotion of positive health. As the World Health Organization (WHO) (2025) defined it in 1946 during an international health conference in New York, “health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. Indeed, health goes beyond the absence of disease, it includes a positive aspect that covers wellness and quality of life (Schramme, 2023). This evolution led to the popularization of the term “wellness” as a holistic state of being (Corbin & Pangrazi, 2001). Authors such as Halbert Dunn in his study published in 1959 and Donald B. Ardell in 1985 also insisted on the fact that wellness was more than just a way of life, describing it as a state that results from healthy behaviors rather than the behaviors themselves (Allen, 2017; Nag, 2020).

Wellness is also described as “what you are, not what you do”, indicating that it results from a combination of dimensions, including physical, emotional and spiritual factors (Corbin & Pangrazi, 2001). It is an integral part of health and it is described as the positive dimension of health, rather than as a separate concept. In this context, wellness is the property of the individual, and is characterized by

factors such as quality of life, happiness and satisfaction (Corbin & Pangrazi, 2001). This highlights the increasing importance of promoting wellness through personal and public health initiatives.

Since wellness, medicine and healthcare have been mentioned several times in the preceding paragraphs, it is worth taking a closer look at how perceptions of those concepts have evolved over the centuries. This will provide valuable context to be able to understand contemporary approaches to wellness and their historical foundation. A closer look at the evolution of health is important to have insights into the cultural and societal factors that influence society today.

Historically, health was often associated with religious or mystical practices. Healing rituals and the use of natural cures were deeply rooted in cultural and spiritual traditions. These early approaches to illness and healing, though rudimentary, reflected humanity's primitive need to find meaning in disease within a larger context of human experience. Ancient civilizations, such as those of India and China, developed holistic systems such as Ayurveda and traditional Chinese medicine, which focus on the balance between the body, the mind and the soul (Smith & Kelly, 2006). Likewise, the Greeks and Romans associated health with physical activity and spiritual well-being, with practices such as bathing rituals and mindful reflection forming an integral part of their health paradigms (Smith & Kelly, 2006). Over time, and with the evolution of science, medicine has begun to evolve into a more structured discipline. The integration of biology into medical science allowed for a more global view of medical conditions, focusing on the health of the populations (Méthot, 2016). Nowadays, health is most often associated with practices based on clear evidence that relies on research, technology and data. Innovations in medicine transformed perceptions of health by promoting precision in today's sciences (Smith, 2021).

Despite the predominance of more “scientific medicine” today, traditional healing practices such as herbal medicine, meditation and spiritual healing continue to coexist with modern practices. This integration reflects a bigger understanding of health, combining the cultural importance of traditional practices with the scientific precision of modern medicine (Meikassandra et al., 2020).

In more recent decades, the perception of health has also evolved, from curative treatment to more preventive and holistic approaches. Wellness now emphasizes a proactive outlook, encouraging individuals to take control of their own health through lifestyle changes such as regular exercise, healthy eating, mindfulness into their daily routines to promote long-term well-being and developing an awareness of their mental health (Nasiche, 2024; Yeung et al., 2018).

Speaking about mental health, since the middle of the 20th century, wellness has emerged as a multifaceted concept that goes beyond physical health. Halbert Dunn's study, “High-Level Wellness” for man and society, published in 1959, outlined wellness as a proactive and preventive approach to health. His work highlighted life purpose, social connections and environmental harmony as crucial elements of wellness (Dunn, 1959; Nag, 2020). Indeed, Dunn describes the concept of health as a positive vision that goes beyond the simple absence of disease (World Health Organization, 2025.; Dunn, 1959; Nag, 2020).

Dunn's health grid, shown below, helps us to rethink health in a more holistic way, integrating social, environmental and personal dimensions. It is based on two main axes: the health axis, which runs from death to optimal wellness, and the environmental axis, which encompasses physical, biological and socio-economic factors. This grid allows us to identify four quadrants that combine states of health and environmental conditions: poor health in an unfavorable environment, protected poor health in a favorable environment, emergent high level of wellness in an unfavorable environment, and high level

of wellness in a favorable environment. This model shows that health is not a binary state (disease or absence of disease), but a continuous process influenced by interactions between the person and their environment (Dunn, 1959). Good health requires a balance between all factors: social, environmental, physical, mental and even spiritual (Dunn, 1959). This concept comes very close to the mentality Revamp integrates through their retreats. It is also a state of mind that people who prioritize wellness are trying to adopt these days.

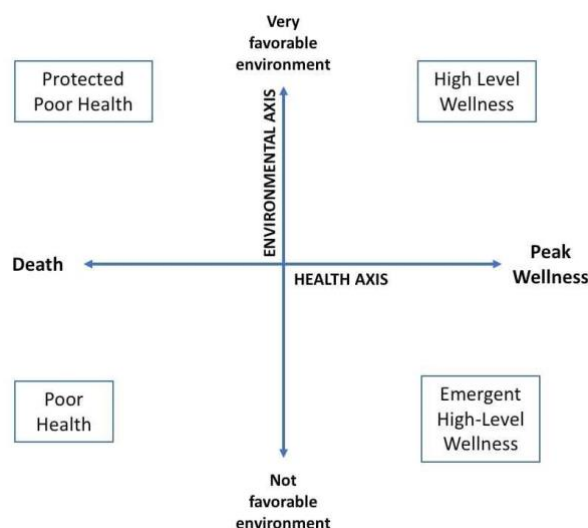


Figure 1: Dunn's Health Grid Modeling.

Source: Dunn, H. L. (1959). High-Level Wellness for Man and Society. American Journal of Public Health and the Nations Health, 49(6), 786–792. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.49.6.786>; p.46

From another perspective, Geadah (2012), a university psychologist, historian and professor, talks about a new approach to modern health care, which emphasizes the importance of holistic care that involves not only physical health but also emotional and social well-being. This shift is evident in the growing interest in wellness tourism, which responds to the modern ideology of health as a global, multidimensional goal (Geadah, 2012). It is true that travelers are increasingly seeking out destinations offering extensive wellness experiences, from yoga retreats and meditation programs to spa treatments and holistic therapies (Nasiche, 2024). This tendency is aligned with the larger cultural spotlight on wellness and the pursuit of personal development through travel (Nasiche, 2024). Destinations like Bali, for example, illustrate this evolution by combining traditional healing practices with modern wellness philosophies, offering programs that blend physical, mental and spiritual wellness (Meikassandra et al., 2020).

As a result, mental health, which was historically neglected and criticized, is now widely recognized as an essential element of overall health. This is why practices such as meditation and yoga, among others, are increasingly demanded by the general public. Those practices have been recognized for their positive effects on mental health, thanks to the benefits they produce for psychological and emotional well-being. As pointed out in the paper of Farias et al. (2020), those activities, in particular those similar to mindfulness meditation, are known to be able to reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress. They serve as a bridge between the spiritual, psychological and physical health aspects of life and are the foundation of modern wellness practices. They are a great option for people who are looking for a holistic approach to personal fulfillment and healing (Farias et al., 2020). The rise of wellness tourism also reflects this expansion. Travelers are seeking to experience new destinations that improve personal development and self-transformation (Yeung et al., 2018; Nasiche, 2024).

In conclusion, the evolution of health, medicine and self-care reflects the constant efforts of individuals to improve their quality of life. From its spiritual and mystical beginnings to today's holistic and preventative approaches, the journey of health perceptions highlights the importance of adapting to the changing needs and values of society.

1.3 Modern challenges to wellness

In today's hyper-connected world, our fast-paced lifestyle introduces a series of new challenges to our physical and mental well-being. The chronic stress of our society, the pressures of professional life, digital fatigue and the lack of time for ourselves are some of the most common factors affecting our society. However, while they are the cause of many problems, such as burnout and depression, they also drive many people to seek activities focused on personal wellness, thus increasing the demand for wellness alternatives. Digital detox retreats, for example, have gained popularity (Smith, 2021). They were created to force participants to disconnect from technology and focus on themselves and their mindfulness so they can be in the present moment and enjoy a calm and healthy environment. These retreats are among the many examples of solutions to the problems of our modern society and its constant connectivity (Smith, 2021).

Mental health has also become a major focus of our society's concern for wellness. Anxiety, depression and trauma are receiving increased attention. In fact, more and more organizations are offering programs that promote psychological and spiritual healing and transformation (Smith, 2021). By reducing the stigma attached to some of our society's illnesses and focusing on proactive and preventive care, as explained before (cf. above point 1.2), which focuses on the preventive side of health, these wellness programs encourage people to be more open about mental health, a common topic of discussion that concerns us all (Yeung et al., 2018b). These modern trends explain the predominant evolution of wellness tourism as holistic healing.

2. The wellness travel revolution: shifting societal focus on wellness tourism

Before exploring wellness tourism in detail, it is useful to place this notion in a broader context of the evolution of tourism in general and some of its various forms. This contextualization will enable a better understanding of the rise of wellness tourism as a response to societal changes and new traveler expectations.

Each form of tourism responds to specific motivations and expectations which reflect a constant evolution in the industry. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism can be divided into three main categories: domestic tourism, inbound tourism and outbound tourism (*8 Types of Tourism That You Need to Know*, 2023; UNWTO, 2025). Domestic tourism, which consists of travel within the country of residence, is often the most accessible, with no administrative constraints such as visas. Inbound tourism contributes directly to local economies through the arrival of foreign visitors, while outbound tourism reflects the habits of major source markets where international tourism spending is increasing rapidly (*8 Types of Tourism That You Need to Know*, 2023; UNWTO, 2025).

Tourism can also be divided into specific categories that respond to a variety of motivations. Among these, cultural tourism plays a key role in valuing cultural heritage, monuments and traditions. When well managed, it promotes both the preservation of sites and the economic development of local communities, as indicated by UNESCO's World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme

(UNESCO, n.d.), and attracts a clientele looking for intellectual enrichment and discovery (Smith and Richards, 2013; Richards, 2018).

Adventure tourism is a fast-growing category, estimated at \$282 billion in 2022 (Gittelman, 2024). It includes outdoor and physical activities like hiking, climbing and water sports, which combine personal challenges and immersion in nature (Buckley, 2010). According to a report by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA), this dynamic segment, which also often incorporates sustainability and responsible tourism, is a key driver of tourism industry growth (UNWTO, 2014). The report also notes that more travelers seek meaningful experiences that foster a connection with nature, local cultures and communities. Such tourism can generate significant benefits for local economies, especially when it is led by small businesses and guided by environmental and cultural respect (UNWTO, 2014).

Another important category is ecotourism, defined by the UNWTO as a form of responsible tourism that reduces harm to the environment and supports local communities. It attracts travelers who care about nature and ethical travel. Ecotourism usually takes place in natural areas and focuses on enjoying and learning about nature and local cultures. It often involves small groups and is run by local businesses. It also helps protect the environment by creating jobs, bringing income to local people and raising awareness about the importance of preserving nature and culture (UN Tourism, n.d.).

Urban tourism is also a very popular category of travel that attracts many kinds of people. It focuses on exploring cities and enjoying what they have to offer, such as museums, restaurants, nightlife, shopping and cultural sites. Europe is especially strong in this area, with many cities ranked among the world's most visited (*8 types of tourism that you need to know*, 2023).

Then there is leisure tourism, which refers to travel during free time for relaxation, fun or discovery. It includes many sub-categories like adventure tourism, ecotourism, cultural tourism, urban and rural tourism and even food tourism. Some travelers focus on visiting local attractions, while others prefer to relax in a resort or enjoy spa treatments. For many, tasting local food is a key part of the experience, making gastronomy an important part of leisure tourism (*8 types of tourism that you need to know*, 2023).

Business tourism refers to travel done for professional purposes. This can include attending meetings or conferences, or visiting another office of the same company. In recent years, a growing trend has emerged called "bleisure" travel, where business travelers extend their trips to enjoy some leisure time at their destination (*8 types of tourism that you need to know*, 2023; Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001).

Finally, wellness tourism is, as Mueller and Kaufmann (2001) define it, "the sum of all the relationships and phenomena resulting from a journey and residence by people whose main motive is to preserve or promote their health"(p.3). This definition highlights the role it plays in responding to modern societal needs for holistic well-being (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001; Darmawijaya et al., 2019). Unlike medical tourism, which focuses on curative care, wellness tourism offers a holistic approach combining physical, mental and spiritual dimensions. It is characterized by "a state of health featuring the harmony of body, mind, and spirit, with self-responsibility, physical fitness or beauty care, healthy nutrition or diet, relaxation or meditation, mental activity and environmental sensitivity" (Liao et al., 2023, p.2). "Medical wellness tourism" is a related concept that adds a preventive health dimension. It includes programs such as stress management, sleep optimization or early-stage disease detection without falling under traditional medical treatment (Wellness Tourism Association, 2025). This subsegment responds to a growing demand for comprehensive wellness solutions that combine well-being with health monitoring.

Overall, both wellness tourism and its more preventive medical wellness subcategory reflect a rising global trend, with the wellness tourism sector expected to reach \$1 trillion by 2024 and experience an annual growth rate of 16.6% between 2022 and 2027 (McGroarty, 2023).

The distinction between wellness and medical tourism is made even clearer in the figure below, which places wellness tourism within the broader category of health tourism, while also highlighting its unique focus. Unlike medical tourism, which is often linked to illness or recovery, wellness tourism is part of illness prevention tourism. It focuses on well-being through dedicated wellness services, rather than treating specific medical conditions. This visual framework helps clarify how wellness tourism is both connected to and separate from other forms of health-related tourism (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001).

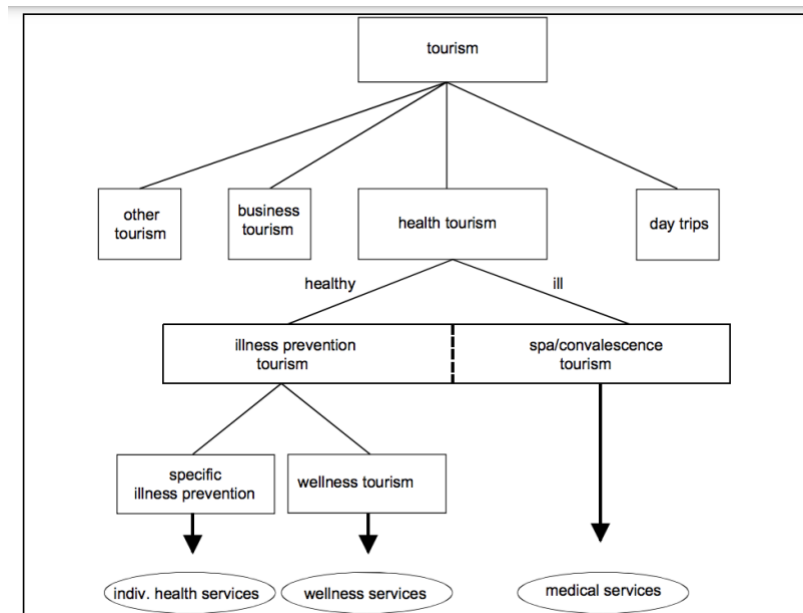


Figure 2: Typology of health & wellness tourism.

Source: from Kasper, as cited in Mueller, H., & Kaufmann, E. L. (2001). Wellness tourism: Market analysis of a special health tourism segment and implications for the hotel industry. Journal of Vacation Marketing, 7(1), 5–17. P.8

All these types of tourism reflect the changing expectations of travelers in a post-pandemic world. In 2024, international travel reached 98% of what it was in 2019, reflecting a strong rebound after the pandemic fueled by interest in more authentic and customized travel (UNWTO, 2024). Wellness tourism stands out in this context, combining holistic well-being with tourist exploration. It attracts a clientele concerned with physical and mental health, through experiences such as meditation, spa treatments and wellness-focused retreats. Indeed, wellness tourism responds to the demand for experiences that increase mental, physical and emotional well-being. It is aligned with the desire for meaningful and sustainable travel, with experiences such as yoga, meditation, spa treatments and activities in nature (Liao et al., 2023; Darmawijaya et al., 2019).

The diversity of wellness tourism experiences, motivations and services can be illustrated through the Global Wellness Institute’s model, which highlights what wellness travelers seek, do and visit during their journeys.

As shown in the graph below, wellness tourism touches on multiple dimensions of well-being, including physical health, mental clarity, emotional balance, spiritual connection and environmental consciousness.



Figure 3: Overview of the holistic values, activities and destinations associated with wellness travelers.

Source: Yeung, O., Johnston, K., Callende, T., Ross, K., Takemoto, R., & Ko, S. (2021, December). 2021 Wellness Tourism, Spas, Thermal/Mineral Springs | The Global Wellness Economy: Looking Beyond COVID. Global Wellness Institute. <http://globalwellnessinstitute.org/wellness-tourism-spas-mineral-thermal-springs-the-global-wellness-economy-looking-beyond-covid-2021/>

Wellness tourism is a distinct and fast-growing segment, something we will see more clearly later, yet it shares a common objective with other forms of tourism: the need to meet the specific expectations of an increasingly demanding and diverse clientele. Where cultural tourism focuses on intellectual enrichment and ecotourism on environmental sustainability, wellness tourism focuses on the overall improvement of physical, mental and emotional health. This unique positioning responds to profound societal trends, such as the growing emphasis on wellness and stress management in a world of modern challenges (Yeung et al., 2021).

Also defined by the Wellness Tourism Association (WTA) (2025), wellness tourism is “a specific division of the global tourism industry that is defined by the common goal of marketing natural assets and/or activities primarily focused on serving the wellness-minded consumer and those who want to be.” More than a simple escape from the pressures of everyday life, wellness tourism offers a holistic approach that responds to a desire for meaningful and sustainable needs (Wellness Tourism Association, 2025). Additionally, wellness tourism has been described as "an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful existence" (Darmawijaya et al., 2019, p.206). This perspective highlights its proactive nature in promoting holistic health and wellness, distinguishing it from other tourism categories.

By setting wellness tourism in the broader context of different forms of tourism, it becomes clear that this segment is a reflection of the changing priorities of modern societies. It is part of a global transition towards more meaningful and enriching experiences. Wellness tourism is characterized by the blending of health, well-being and personal fulfillment into the tourism experience. It represents an evolution from traditional “relaxed” tourism to a more immersive and transformative approach. This responds to the needs of a global population that is becoming more focused on wellness (Liao et al., 2023). In this way, it is helping to redefine the contours of the global tourism industry.

2.1. The evolution of international tourism in Europe

As this research aims to explore the potential of adapting an existing wellness tourism concept to the European market, it is essential to understand the tourism context in which the retreats would take place. Looking at how tourism is evolving in Europe, both in terms of international arrivals and domestic travel, helps identify key trends, traveler expectations, and structural challenges. This chapter offers a large picture of the main dynamics shaping tourism in Europe today, in order to see the potential of wellness experiences within this context. The insights presented in this chapter are mainly based on data and reports published by the European Travel Commission (ETC), complemented by other studies on tourism trends in Europe. The ETC is a key reference for understanding tourism flows, traveler motivations and strategic developments across the continent, making it a valuable and reliable source for this analysis.

In recent years, the European tourism industry has undergone significant transformations, influenced by various factors, challenges and emerging trends such as the evolution of global traveler preferences, economic factors and other uncertainties of an unstable world. Europe is a very popular destination, and long-haul travelers pay even more attention to safety, cost accessibility and cultural immersion in their choice of destination (ETC, 2024a). According to the European Travel Commission (2025), 63% of travelers from countries such as Australia, Brazil, Canada, Japan, South Korea and the USA are planning a long-haul trip in 2025 (ETC, 2025).

However, only 44% of them plan to visit Europe, compared to 49% in 2024, which does mark a slight drop in the desire to travel to a European destination (ETC, 2025). Moreover, the cost of travel remains a major obstacle, given that according to the European Travel Commission (2025), 46% of respondents mention that prices are too high to travel to Europe, and that budget restrictions are therefore one of the main obstacles to a holiday in Europe (ETC, 2025). While almost 38% of respondents are prepared to spend more than €200 per day, a growing proportion of tourists prefer an average budget of €100 to €200 per day (ETC, 2024a). These budget differences show the need for varied tourism offerings that appeal to both higher-end travelers and more economical tourists. Despite economic uncertainties and inflation, European tourism is showing a strong recovery due to post-pandemic demand, better flight connections, and the return of major international events (ETC, 2024c).

Safety is another key factor for international travelers when choosing a European destination. According to the European Travel Commission (2024a), political stability is particularly important for travelers. In addition, quality tourism infrastructure, including reliable transport networks and well-developed accommodation, is an essential element for 38% of travelers.

In addition to being concern about safety and infrastructure, many travelers today express a strong desire for cultural immersion and authentic experiences that allow them to engage deeply with their destination (ETC, 2024b). A large proportion of today's tourists seek to discover local culture, history, gastronomy, and urban life in meaningful ways. They value opportunities to interact with local populations and to learn about traditions and lifestyles that differ from their own (ETC, 2024b).

Geographically, Mediterranean destinations in southern Europe are recording exceptional growth (ETC, 2024c). 51% of respondents to a recent survey said they were looking for less touristy destinations, while 18% were interested in remote areas with minimal infrastructure (ETC, 2024d). This shift is particularly noticeable among younger travelers, who favor new and unexplored regions over traditional hotspots (ETC, 2024d).

Europe's tourism industry is evolving in a challenging environment, marked by economic challenges and changes in traveler expectations. The future of the sector will depend on tourism players' ability to adapt to new traveler demands, promote sustainable experiences and keep European destinations competitive in terms of safety, infrastructure and financial accessibility.

These geographic and behavioral trends are supported by the latest data on tourist arrivals. As shown in the figure below, European countries are expected to receive 767 million tourist arrivals in 2024, with intra-European travelers accounting for 598 million (78%) of this total which is a clear indication of the continent's reliance on regional mobility. Non-European arrivals, while smaller in proportion (170 million, or 22%), are projected to grow steadily, reaching 226 million by 2029. Both segments reflect the continued attractiveness of Europe as a destination, but also the evolving nature of travel motivations across origin markets.

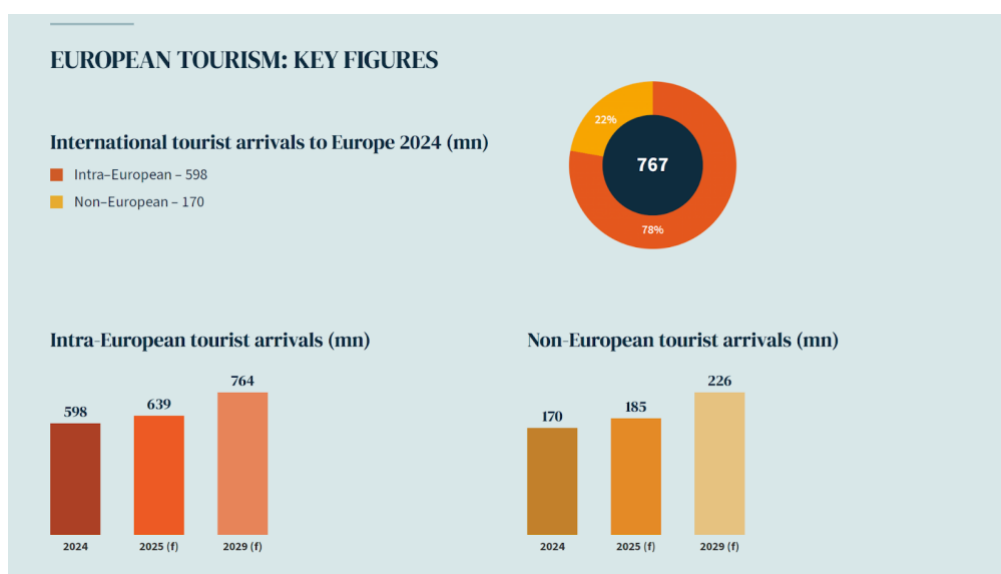


Figure 4: European tourism: key figures.

Source: ETC. (2025, February 3). *Cost concerns weigh on 2025 international travel plans to Europe in key markets.* ETC Corporate. <https://etc-corporate.org/news/cost-concerns-weigh-on-2025-international-travel-plans-to-europe-in-key-markets-1225/>

Given that the vast majority of international tourism in Europe comes from within the continent itself, it is crucial to take a closer look at intra-European travel intentions and how they are being reshaped by social, economic and cultural dynamics. Understanding how Europeans are choosing to travel, their values, their constraints and emerging priorities is essential for tailoring tourism offerings like wellness retreats to a regional audience that represents the backbone of European tourism.

2.2 Travel intentions and new consumer priorities in Europe

Intra-European tourism is undergoing significant transformation. Travelers across the continent are rethinking how and why they travel and placing increasing importance on sustainability, personal well-being, flexibility, and authenticity. This section explores the evolving mindset of European travelers, revealing the new consumer priorities that are redefining the future of travel within Europe.

According to the European Travel Commission (2023), about 68% of Europeans planned to travel between October 2023 and March 2024 (the period on which this report focused). Travel intention was

slightly higher among people over 35 (71%) compared to younger travelers aged 18-34 (61%). The figure below shows the breakdown of travel intentions by age category, illustrating this difference.

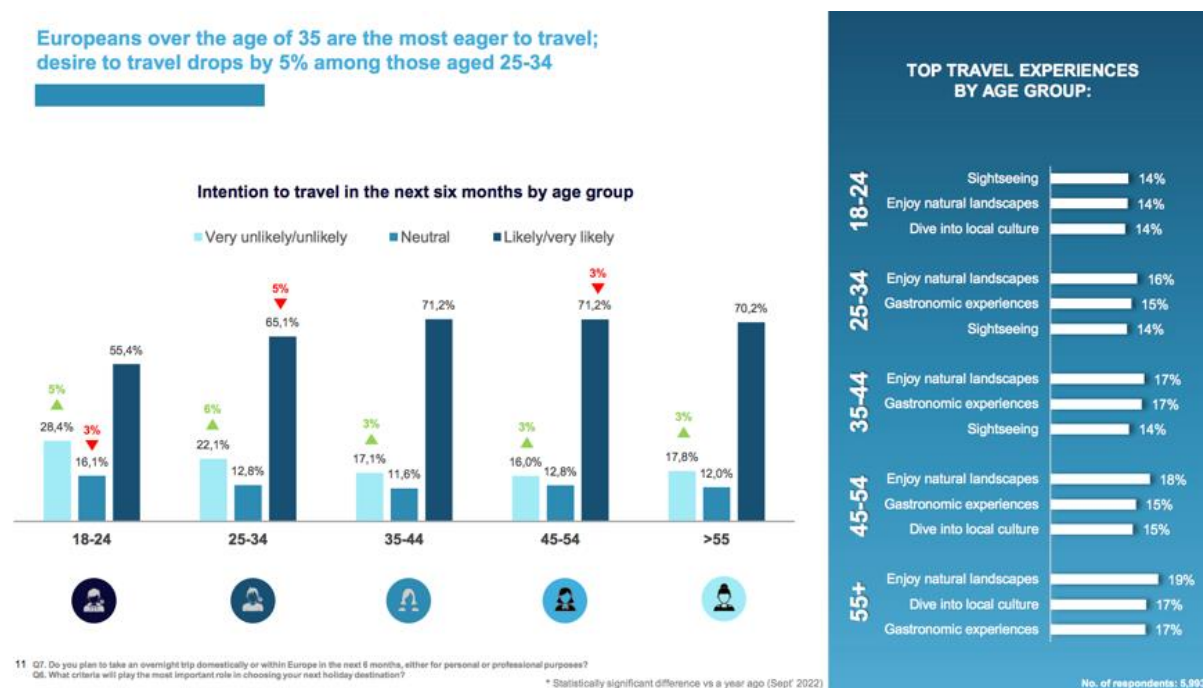


Figure 5: Key figures on European tourism, by age group.

Source: ETC. (2023, October 26). Monitoring Sentiment for Intra-European Travel Autumn& Winter 2023/2024. ETC Corporate. <https://etc-corporate.org/reports/monitoring-sentiment-for-domestic-and-intra-european-travel-wave-17/>

Even though there was a small decline in travel intentions in 2023, some European countries still had very high travel rates. As shown in Figure 6 below, the top five countries where people were most likely to travel soon were Spain (75.4%), Italy (74.7%), UK (73.3%), Poland (72.6%) and Belgium (65.4%) (ETC, 2023).



Figure 6: Intention to travel & top destinations from the European tourism.

Source: ETC. (2023, October 26). Monitoring Sentiment for Intra-European Travel Autumn& Winter 2023/2024. ETC Corporate. <https://etc-corporate.org/reports/monitoring-sentiment-for-domestic-and-intra-european-travel-wave-17/>

Most Europeans preferred traveling to neighboring countries (32%), followed by other European countries that are a bit further away (28%), showing a clear preference for more accessible destinations. This trend is illustrated in Figure 6, which presents both travel intentions and destination preferences. The shift also corresponds to changes in transport modes. While 50% of travelers still preferred flying, more people are opting for trains or buses. In 2023, these transports were representing 17% of trips which was a rise of 5% compared to 2022 (ETC, 2023). This could suggest a growing interest in more eco-friendly travel options, which naturally leads to choosing destinations that are closer and more accessible.

Beyond transportation and sustainability concerns, leisure and relaxation remain the top reasons for travel, representing 69% of travel intentions (ETC, 2023).

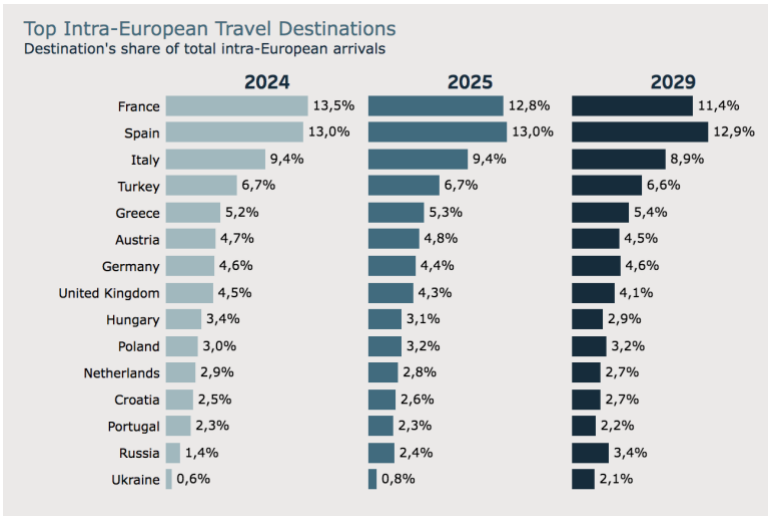


Figure 7: Top intra-European Travel Destinations.

Source: ETC. (2025, February 3). Cost concerns weigh on 2025 international travel plans to Europe in key markets. ETC Corporate. <https://etc-corporate.org/news/cost-concerns-weigh-on-2025-international-travel-plans-to-europe-in-key-markets-1225/>

Figure 7 presents the most popular intra-European travel destinations, highlighting Southern Europe’s dominance. In Figure 8, France, Italy and Spain also lead the way, with Spain remaining one of the most popular destinations in Europe, ranking third overall with 6.8% of Europeans planning to visit just behind France (7.4%) and Italy (7.0%) (ETC, 2023).

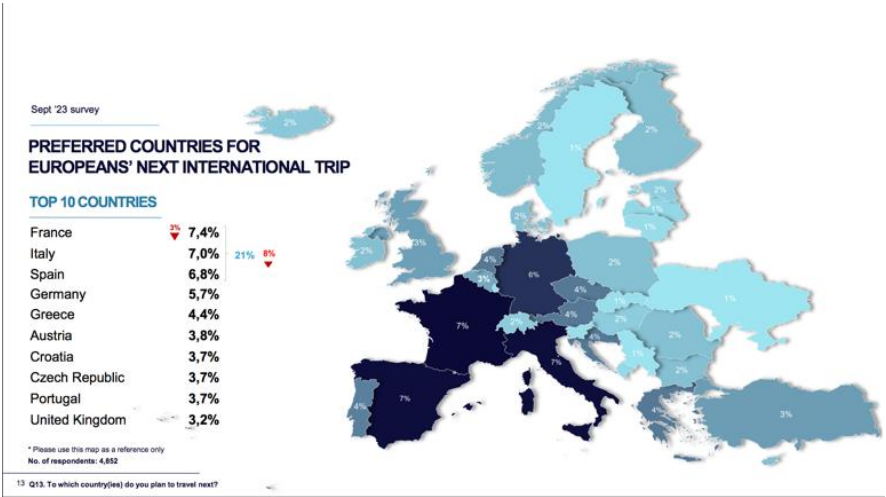


Figure 8: Preferred countries for Europeans' next international trip.

Source: ETC. (2023, October 26). Monitoring Sentiment for Intra-European Travel Autumn& Winter 2023/2024. ETC Corporate. <https://etc-corporate.org/reports/monitoring-sentiment-for-domestic-and-intra-european-travel-wave-17/>

When choosing a destination, European travelers considered several key factors like good weather (19%), attractive promotional offers (17%) or a friendly and welcoming local population (12%) (ETC, 2023). However, recent data reveals shifting travel behaviors. Tourists are looking for less crowded and more affordable destinations (ETC, 2023). As Figure 9 shows, budget behavior is changing, with the percentage of travelers planning to spend less than €1,000 dropping by 9% compared to last year. Meanwhile, those who are willing to spend over €1,500 rose by 7%. This shift is likely due to rising travel costs and a change in mindset. People are now prioritizing quality experiences over cheap getaways. In terms of trip length, as we can see also on Figure 9, the study found that shorter stays (4-6 nights) were the most common (ETC, 2023). This is in line with insights from Lars, a yoga teacher and retreat facilitator interviewed, who observed that rising costs have led many retreat providers to shorten their programs by a day or two in order to keep prices stable without reducing profitability (cf. Appendix 10).

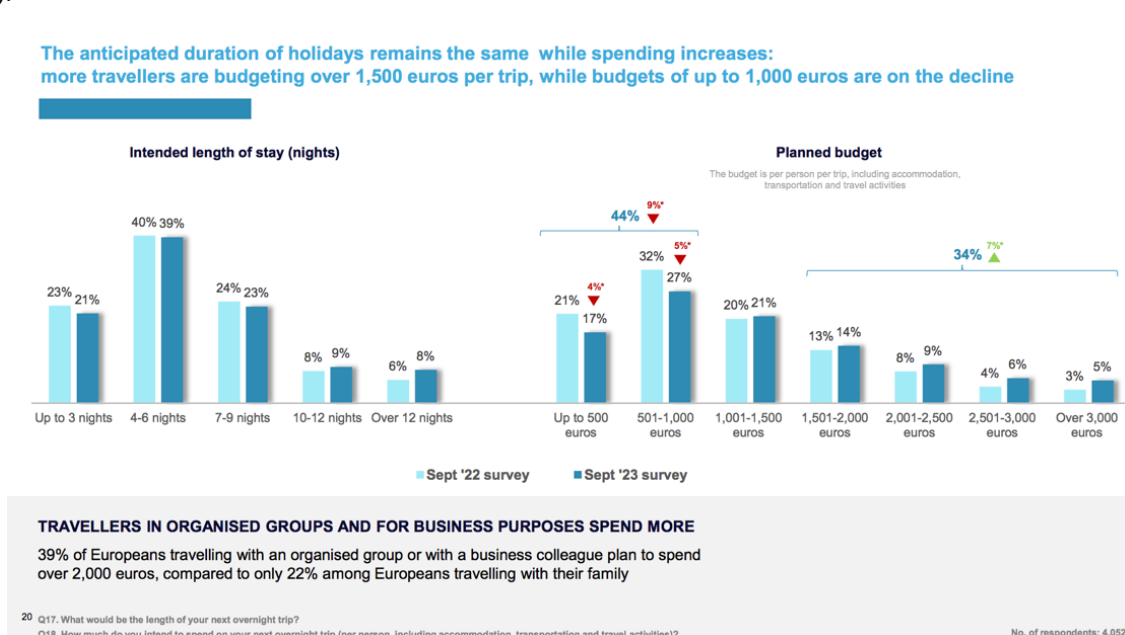


Figure 9: Intended length of stay & Planned budget.

Source: ETC. (2023, October 26). Monitoring Sentiment for Intra-European Travel Autumn& Winter 2023/2024. ETC Corporate. <https://etc-corporate.org/reports/monitoring-sentiment-for-domestic-and-intra-european-travel-wave-17/>

These results highlight the main trends in European tourism. The growing importance of security, climate, budgetary concerns and the flexibility of bookings is evident, as is the growing preference for sustainable travel alternatives, particularly in the choice of transportation. The evolution of these trends means that the wellness tourism industry needs to adapt its offerings and communications to meet the expectations of different generations of travelers.

2.3 The rise of wellness tourism in modern society

As mentioned before, interest in wellness in modern society is growing significantly. It is a response to the desires of a society that is rapidly evolving to meet the challenges of the world that surrounds us today. While we live in an age of personal care, it is sometimes hard to deal with the stresses and strains of a fast-paced society and the increase of diseases linked to our lifestyles, such as obesity, diabetes and hypertension. Such health concerns have encouraged people to take care of themselves, eat well and prioritize self-care and mental health. This evolution has led to the start of a booming wellness industry,

which embraces practices that have been created to improve lifestyles through fitness and exercise, mindful eating, relaxation therapies, meditation and psychotherapy. (Smith, 2021).

Younger generations, particularly Millennials and Generation Z are leading this evolution. Whether through ecotourism or personalized health programs, these generations are seeking experiences that match their values and ambitions (Smith, 2021). They prefer human experiences to material goods and are actively searching for wellness retreats. This shift in their priorities, as observed in their professional careers, has created a massive demand for transformative experiences that combine travel and self-care. The figures speak for themselves. For over a decade, wellness tourism has emerged as one of the fastest-growing sectors in the global wellness economy. In 2012, the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) valued the market at \$439 billion, with 524.4 million trips representing 5.8% of all global tourism travel (McGroarty, 2024).

2.3.1 The rise of wellness tourism worldwide

This point will explore the global expansion of wellness tourism, focusing on its economic growth, regional dynamics, and the evolving motivations of travelers. Most of the data and graphs presented here come from the Global Wellness Institute (GWI), a leading nonprofit recognized for its extensive research on the global wellness economy. Their reports are detailed and freely available, making them a great reference for this topic. GWI was chosen as a main source in this chapter because it offers consistent and up-to-date data across regions and sectors. Their work tracks economic trends and provides insight into the social and cultural shifts that drive demand for wellness travel experiences (*Global Wellness Institute*, n.d.).

While the GWI offers detailed and useful data on wellness tourism, it's important to remember that their goal is to promote the wellness industry. Because of that, their numbers and future projections often show strong and positive growth. These forecasts should be read carefully. Tourism is a very unpredictable sector. It can be heavily affected by global events like health crises (such as the Covid-19 pandemic), security issues, or political instability. So, the future trends suggested by the GWI should be seen as possible scenarios, not guaranteed outcomes.

The following figures illustrate the significant growth of wellness tourism between 2012 and 2022, both in terms of its share of total tourism trips and overall spending. These charts, based on GWI data, show the impressive growth of wellness tourism over the past decades as well as future projections. By 2019, before the pandemic, wellness tourism had reached \$720 billion in spending, with an average annual growth of 7.3% between 2012 and 2019, 25% higher than the growth of general tourism at the same time (McGroarty, 2024). This rapid expansion can be seen clearly in Figure 10, which compares the growth rates of wellness tourism and overall tourism over time. Although the Covid 19 pandemic caused a drop in tourist spending, wellness tourism showed quite a recovery during the Pandemic Recovery period.

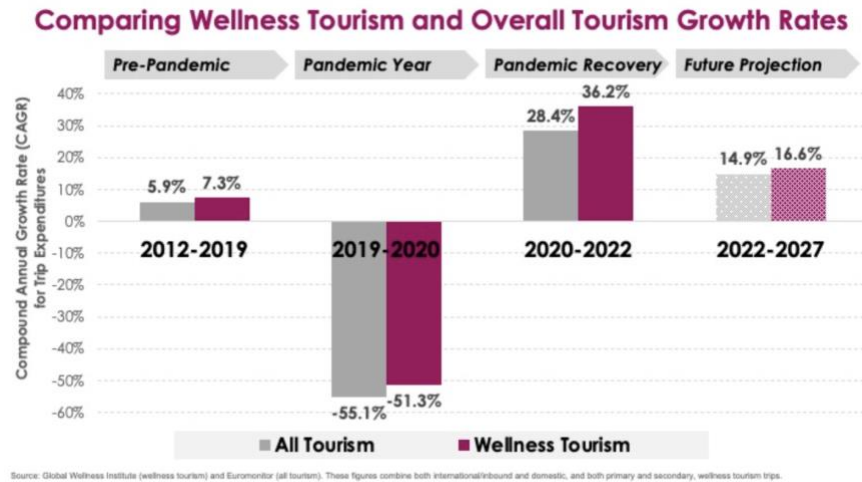


Figure 10: Comparing wellness tourism and overall tourism growth rates.

Source: McGroarty, B. (2024, March 25). *A Decade of Wellness Tourism: First-Ever Compilation of 10+ Years of Market Data.* Global Wellness Institute. <https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/global-wellness-institute-blog/2024/03/25/a-decade-of-wellness-tourism-first-ever-compile-of-10-years-of-market-data/>

As illustrated, wellness tourism experienced a sharp drop in 2020 like the rest of the industry but recovered quickly with a 30.2% growth rate between 2020 and 2022. In 2022, it already represented 7.8% of global tourist trips and is projected to reach 8.3% by 2027 (McGroarty, 2024). This progression is visible in Figure 11, which shows the increasing share of wellness tourism within the overall tourism landscape.

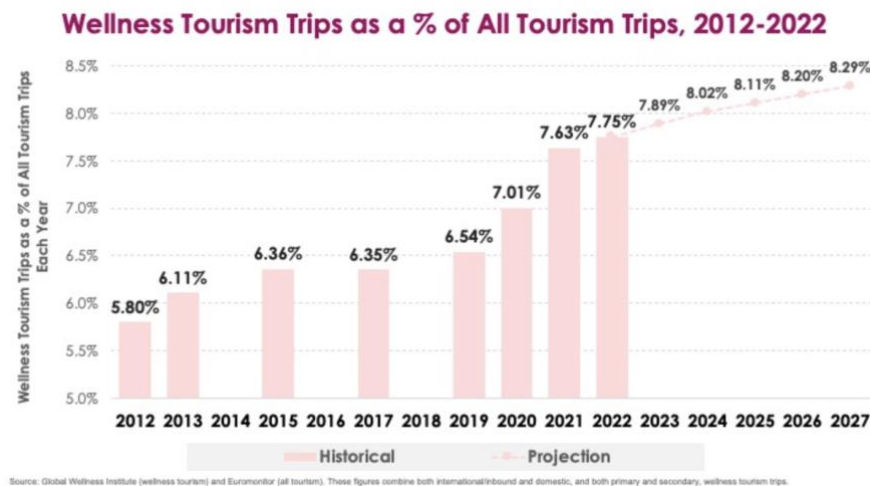


Figure 11: Wellness tourism trips as a % of all tourism trips, 2012-2022.

Source: McGroarty, B. (2024, March 25). *A Decade of Wellness Tourism: First-Ever Compilation of 10+ Years of Market Data.* Global Wellness Institute. <https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/global-wellness-institute-blog/2024/03/25/a-decade-of-wellness-tourism-first-ever-compile-of-10-years-of-market-data/>

This is proof that health and wellness travel is a growing global trend. Destinations like Bali exemplify this movement, offering a lot of meditation, yoga and wellness retreats, and sometimes even holistic detox retreats that allow participants to reconnect with their inner selves. These retreats, which are now everywhere in the world, attract health-conscious travelers and people in search of spiritual awakening (Nasiche, 2024; Meikassandra et al., 2020).

After outlining the global growth of wellness tourism, it is important to reposition the scope of this study. As a reminder, this study specifically focuses on Revamp and the European market, as it aims to explore the development of a similar wellness offering within a European context. The example of Bali is frequently referenced due to its alignment with the concept of wellness retreats organized by Revamp, as well as its role as a global hub for wellness tourism.

Due to the influence of destinations like Bali, the Asia-Pacific region has established its position as a leader in wellness tourism. Thanks to its growing middle class, expanding economy, breathtaking landscapes and, above all, its rich cultural heritage of wellness practices, this area of the world has seen quite an impressive growth in wellness tourism, with 6.5% annual growth between 2015 and 2017, which was twice as fast as the tourism sector as a whole. This growth is yet another proof of the societal trend of integrating wellness into all aspects of life, including leisure and travel (Yeung et al., 2018b); Nasiche, 2024; Meikassandra et al., 2020).

That said, Europe remains the largest market for wellness tourism in terms of the number of trips. In 2017, the continent recorded nearly 292 million wellness tourism trips, ahead of Asia-Pacific (257.6 million) and North America (204.1 million), with total expenditures reaching \$210.8 billion (Yeung et al., 2018a). As shown in Figure 12, this confirms Europe's leading role in this fast-growing segment, supported by its historical spa culture, modern wellness infrastructure, and strong domestic travel market. These numbers highlight the continent's maturity in the field, as well as the increasing demand for preventive health and holistic well-being experiences among European consumers.

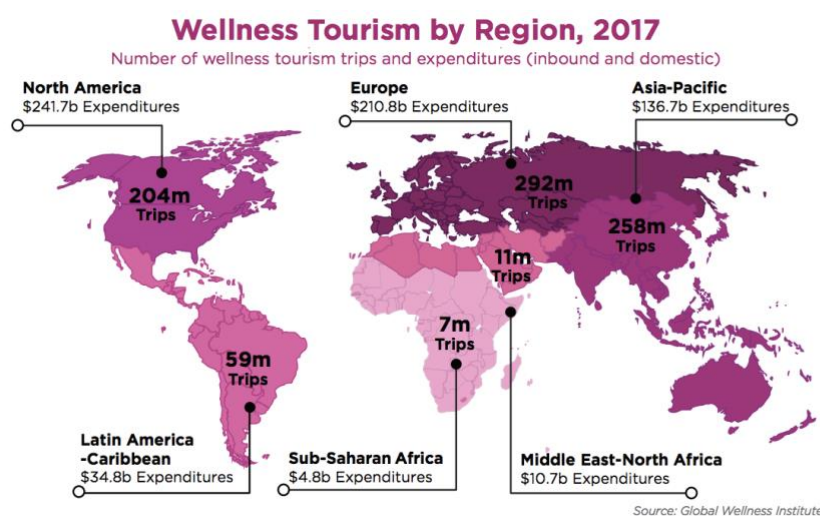


Figure 12: Wellness tourism by region, 2027.

Source: Yeung, O., Johnston, K., & Callender, T. (2018, October). 2018 Global Wellness Economy Monitor. Global Wellness Institute. <https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/industry-research/2018-global-wellness-economy-monitor/>

These numbers highlight the continent's maturity in the field and the growing demand for preventive health and holistic well-being. According to Smith (2021), societal and cultural changes have heavily influenced the way people take a closer interest in wellness. In more individualistic cultures, such as Australia, the US and the UK, self-care is associated with independence, autonomy and personal development. Conversely, collectivist societies, such as many Asian countries, place greater value on collective well-being, the importance of group cohesion, harmony and family bonds (Smith, 2021). These cultural dynamics play an important role in the growing demand for wellness tourism experiences and products.

For example, there has been a significant shift toward the so-called “secondary wellness travelers”, who represent 89% of global wellness trips in 2017. These types of travelers are incorporating wellness activities and elements into their trip even if it is not the primary goal of their vacation (Yeung et al., 2018a). This reflects the desire to integrate wellness into travel, illustrating a societal shift that wellness is no longer optional for many but rather an expectation when choosing a travel experience.

Another key driver is the rise of a global awareness of mental health issues and illnesses that are linked to our lifestyle. Because of this growing awareness, wellness is now seen as an essential part of our lives. Some travelers now choose to take part in yoga or other types of retreats, while others make a priority to have more regular spa treatments or choose to consult health professionals for personalized attention to their physical and emotional needs (Smith, 2021; Nasiche, 2024).

When looking at spending behaviors, we observe another important trend: the shift from international to domestic wellness tourism. According to a study by the Global Wellness Institute in 2018, domestic wellness travel leads the market with 82% of wellness travel worldwide (Yeung et al., 2018b). This evolution is clearly illustrated in Figure 13, which shows the comparative growth of international vs. domestic wellness travel spending premiums from 2012 to 2022. We can recall a decline of international travel from 65% to 41%, compared to domestic travel that is still on the rise from 150% to 175%. This shift is most likely the result of the increase of secondary travelers for wellness tourism, and the development of domestic tourism during the Covid pandemic (McGroarty, 2024).

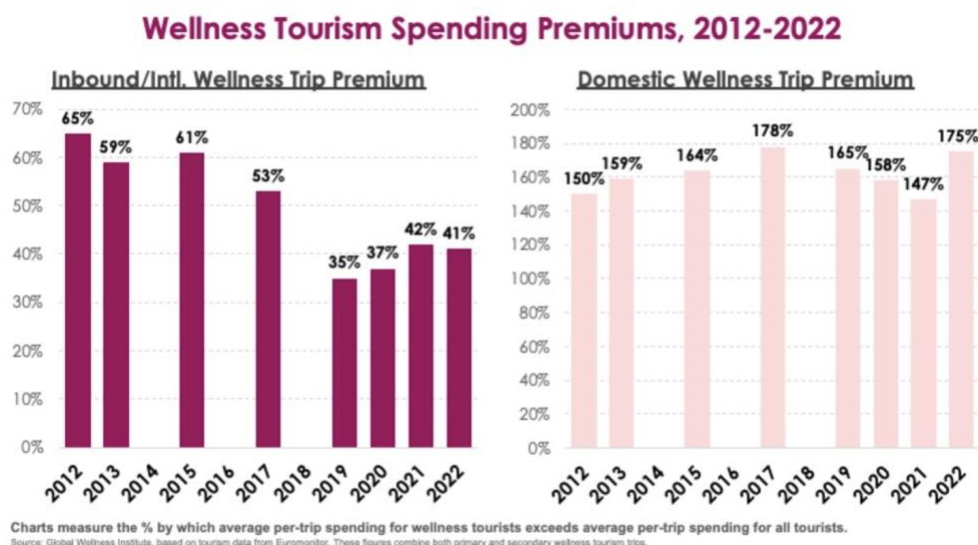


Figure 13: Wellness tourism spending premiums, 2012-2022.

Source: McGroarty, B. (2024, March 25). A Decade of Wellness Tourism: First-Ever Compilation of 10+ Years of Market Data. Global Wellness Institute. <https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/global-wellness-institute-blog/2024/03/25/a-decade-of-wellness-tourism-first-ever-compile-of-10-years-of-market-data/>

2.3.2 The rise of wellness tourism in Europe

After looking at the global rise of wellness tourism, this point will focus on the European perspective. As seen earlier, even though Europe is not always the most dynamic in this field, it still plays a key role thanks to its strong spa culture, growing interest in sustainability and changing lifestyle habits. Based on recent data from the European Travel Commission (2023), we can see that many European travelers are now looking for nature, relaxation, and personal care during their trips. Even if these are not always

labeled as “wellness,” they reflect a growing demand for wellness-related experiences. This creates new opportunities to develop offers like retreats that are adapted to European expectations and travel habits.

Indeed, while wellness tourism is not explicitly mentioned in this report from the European Travel Commission (2023), the growing interest in nature-based activities and cultural experiences suggests a shift toward relaxation and self-care experiences. Looking at the data on the graph of preferred types of leisure right below, wellness and relaxation account for 8.3%, but Europeans favor city breaks (19.3%), cultural & heritage trips (16.7%) and nature getaways (13.5%). Even though wellness-focused trips are not on the list of the preferred experiences, active experiences, SPA & Wellness-specific stays and spiritual experiences, which account for 8.3%, 4.7% and 2.3% of preferences respectively, are experiences that are part of the wellness tourism since they attract travelers looking for relaxation and rejuvenation (ETC, 2023).

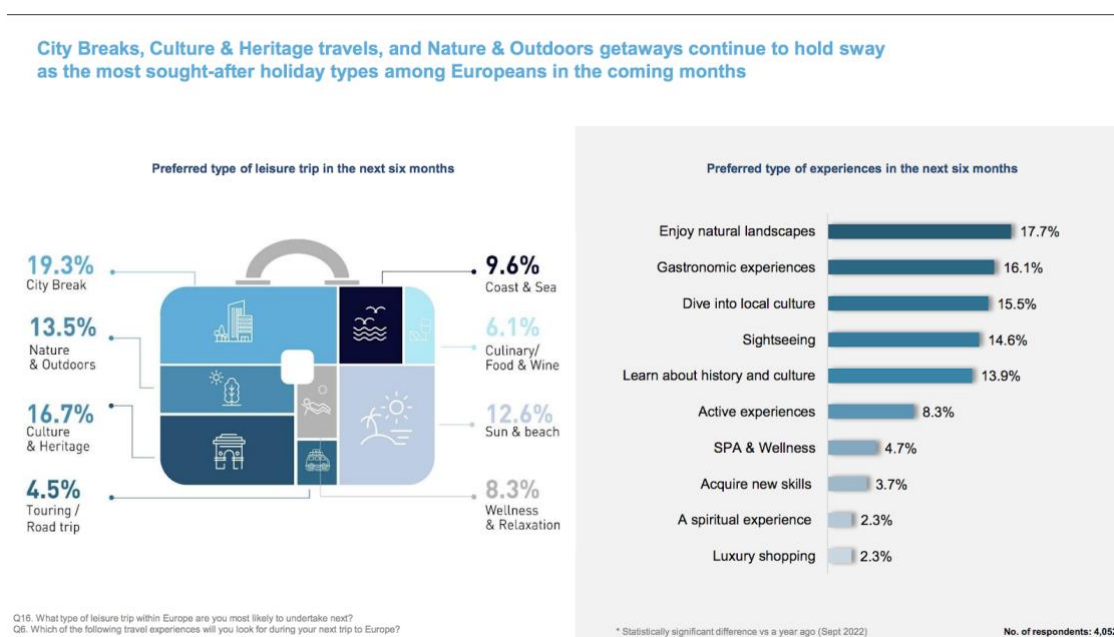


Figure 14: Preferred type of leisure trips & experiences.

Source: ETC. (2023, October 26). *Monitoring Sentiment for Intra-European Travel Autumn& Winter 2023/2024*. ETC Corporate. <https://etc-corporate.org/reports/monitoring-sentiment-for-domestic-and-intra-european-travel-wave-17/>.

For wellness tourism businesses, this trend indicates a huge opportunity to develop yoga retreats, wellness-focused stays or programs that combine nature, meditation and holistic treatments. Moreover, the strong demand for nature experiences is a key indicator that immersive retreats in natural settings made to reconnect with the inner self and the natural environment around it will continue to grow (ETC, 2023).

In accordance with analysis of this data, retreat concepts set in a location surrounded by nature with yoga practices adapted to all ages and with a length of 4-6 days are most appealing to this audience. Although inflation is influencing consumer decisions, well-being, relaxation and personal development remain priorities for many Europeans (ETC, 2023). Yoga and wellness retreats have everything to gain by promoting added value like healing experiences, reconnection with nature, sustainable well-being and a holistic approach to health. By adapting their offer to these new expectations, they can attract a public ready to invest in transformative travel.

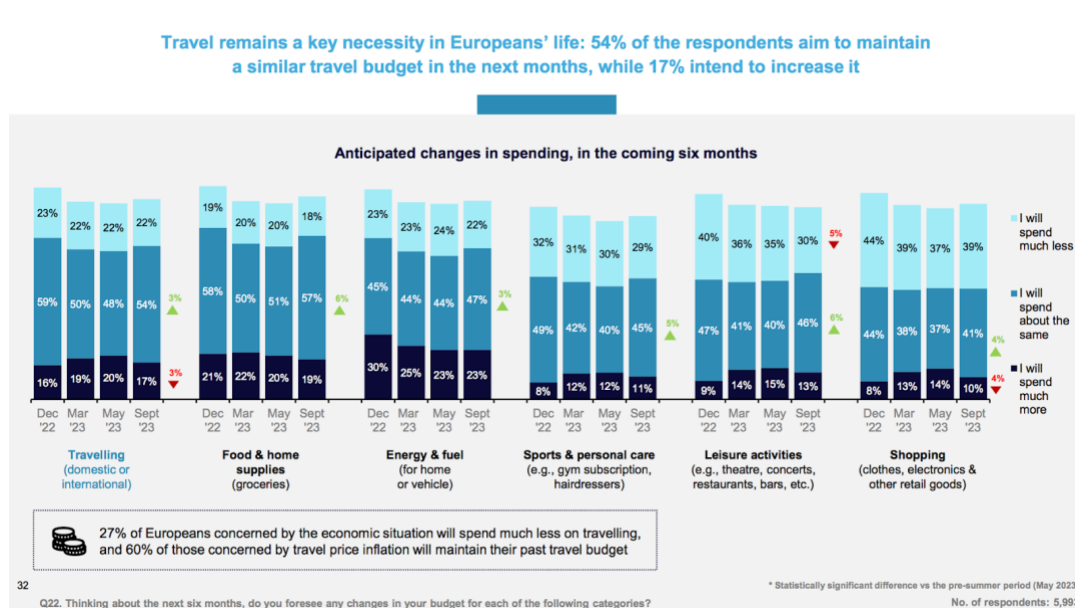


Figure 15: Anticipated changes in spending, in the coming six months.

Source: ETC. (2023, October 26). *Monitoring Sentiment for Intra-European Travel Autumn& Winter 2023/2024.* ETC Corporate. <https://etc-corporate.org/reports/monitoring-sentiment-for-domestic-and-intra-european-travel-wave-17/>

The data in Figure 15 shows that despite economic challenges and inflation, travel remains a priority for many Europeans that prefer to maintain their travel budget or even for some, to make it even bigger. In fact, 60% of travelers that are worried about rising costs still said they will not cut their travel budget. This shows that travel experiences are deeply valued (ETC, 2023). Certain spending trends in the table above are particularly favorable for wellness tourism and yoga retreats. For instance, 49% of Europeans plan to maintain their spending on sports & personal care, and 32% even plan to increase it. This shows that health and wellness are becoming bigger priorities for Europeans. This is in phase with the rise of wellness tourism where travelers are combining mental and physical health (ETC, 2023). Another category of expenses is leisure activities where almost 40% of respondents are reducing their spending on traditional leisure activities, which could mean a shift toward more immersive, transformational experiences. Finally, 23% of respondents plan to cut down on fuel & energy costs, highlighting a growing interest in eco-friendly travel as mentioned above (ETC, 2023).

A yoga retreat close to a train station with many possibilities of soft mobility like walking or bicycling with an orientation towards sustainability thanks to organic local food menus and a tendency to reduce any kind of technology could please a public sensitive to environmental issues.

2.4. Forms and practices of wellness tourism

Wellness tourism has become a dynamic, wide-ranging sector, with a multitude of forms and a diverse choice of activities and practices designed to help travelers improve their physical, mental and spiritual well-being. This type of tourism has experienced a great uptake in recent years due to growing awareness of health and lifestyle issues, such as stress, burnout and mental health problems in general. This is why this tourism industry needs to be diversified in its form of wellness, and to have different approaches and offerings to match the growing societal emphasis on health, mindfulness and self-care.

The foundation of wellness tourism is preventive wellness, which focuses on lifestyle practices that improve health and well-being even before any big problems arise. Activities such as yoga, meditation, fitness and mindfulness training are common examples of preventive wellness. These practices are

aimed at reducing stress, improving mental clarity and encouraging emotional resilience, often through immersive experiences in peaceful environments (Yeung et al., 2018b). Holistic approaches, which combine nutrition, physical activity and mental health therapies, are also widely adopted in wellness tourism (Smith & Richards, 2013).

The popularity of wellness vacations has climbed rapidly, since travelers are increasingly looking for experiences that combine both relaxation and real health benefits (ETC, 2023). Packaged programs, such as yoga retreats, fitness vacations and spa stays respond to travelers' physical and emotional needs. These vacations often incorporate spa treatments, meditation sessions and eco-friendly accommodations, outlining a commitment to sustainable and holistic travel environments (*Le tourisme du bien-être*, 2022). According to Voigt et al. (2011), these vacations offer psychological benefits such as stress reduction and better self-awareness. With a focus on both leisure and well-being, these packages attract modern travelers that are in search of more meaningful and transformative journeys (Voigt et al., 2011).

When we think about it, we can clearly picture wellness centers as part of the vast variety of forms that wellness tourism represents. Wellness centers play an important role in our modern way of traveling. These types of facilities have evolved over time, from luxurious spas and hotels to more accessible venues in a more accessible environment. A wellness center can include a variety of activities and programs such as fitness centers, yoga studios, personalized wellness treatments, mediation, spiritual workshops and local excursions, to name only a few examples (Meikassandra et al., 2020).

Spa resorts and beauty centers are some of the most recognizable forms of wellness tourism. These establishments target travelers who are looking for relaxation, rejuvenation and beauty treatments. Luxury spas in luxury resorts or wellness centers mainly offer all-inclusive programs with services such as massages, facials, access to a gym, a dedicated spa area and much more. The popularity of these places is principally explained by the benefits and sensations they provide to the body and mind (The Future of Wellness, 2024).

Some destination spas have programs that are highly personalized, with the possibility to arrange whatever activities guests prefer to enjoy. These programs can include a personal lifestyle or fitness coach, a specific food menu or even therapeutic treatments, all of which can be adapted to each customer's specific needs (Grand View Research, 2023). This development reflects society's growing preference for preventive health and holistic treatment. As Mueller and Lanz Kaufmann (2001) pointed out, those wellness centers are no longer the exclusive privilege of luxury hotels. Indeed, it has spread to more urban environments. As a result, wellness practices have become an integral part of everyday life for a larger number of people. This “opening up” of wellness offers demonstrates an important cultural shift in people's attitudes towards their own health and wellbeing (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001).

Indeed, wellness is no longer just a luxury; it is also about adventure and discovery. This type of tourism, which we could call “adventure-based wellness tourism”, combines a multitude of activities with mental and spiritual rejuvenation. Activities such as hiking, kayaking, cycling, yoga, Pilates etc. are an integral part of this form of tourism, which also emphasizes some form of sustainable practices and often crosses over with ecotourism since most travelers who are concerned with their health are also concerned with reducing their ecological impact (Global Wellness Institute, 2018; Yeung et al., 2018a). These studies have shown that being in nature or with a group of people while doing physical activities also helps to reduce stress, anxiety and depression, while improving your overall mood and physical condition. This

fits perfectly with the modern tendency for people to develop a more active lifestyle and seek meaningful interactions (Biddle et al., 2019).

Another form of tourism is cultural and spiritual experiences. It incorporates traditions and spiritual elements that offer transformative experiences. These experiences can include visits to sacred sites, meditation practices, local community activities, visits to historical monuments and so on. This allows travelers to explore their spiritual dimensions or immerse themselves in the local culture (Yeung et al., 2018a ; Global Wellness Institute, 2018).

These different forms of wellness practices can be experienced in many formats, from an hour-long session, or an entire afternoon break, to a full day, a weekend getaway, a week-long retreat or even extended stays of two weeks or more. A short wellness getaway is just as valuable to your well-being as a week-long retreat. Kühnel and Sonnentag (2011) assert that planned breaks, involving for example a yoga class, an afternoon at the spa, a wellness weekend break or any other enjoyable time, help people balance their work and personal lives and therefore favor their overall wellbeing (Kühnel & Sonnentag, 2011). These moments are designed to fit into the crazy and busy lifestyles most people have while offering a break from the hustle and bustle of everyday life (Grand View Research, 2023). Such experiences are often focused on mindfulness and offer a well-structured pause to help people calm down and experience mental clarity, emotional stability, physical activities or simply a moment to be (Smith, 2021).

Behind each of these forms of wellness tourism lie different target audiences, with specific expectations, motivations and needs. Women remain the dominant participants in this sector, representing around 60% of wellness retreat attendees often aged between 25 and 45 with medium to high incomes and a strong interest in personal development and holistic wellbeing (WHITBY, 2023; CompareRetreats, 2018; CBI, 2022). However, the sector is diversifying. Some travelers are primarily looking for relaxation and stress relief through spa treatments or wellness weekends. Others, especially younger or more active profiles, are drawn to adventure-based wellness trips combining nature, fitness and mindfulness. Meanwhile, spiritual and cultural wellness tourism tends to attract individuals seeking transformative experiences or deeper meaning. Each wellness offering therefore appeals to a different profile and must be designed accordingly, based on their decision-making criteria: destination, program intensity, duration, group vs. individual format, and of course, price. (CompareRetreats, 2018; CBI, 2022; McGroarty, 2023). These audience characteristics and expectations will be analyzed further in the next chapters, reflecting the responses gathered through interviews and survey data.

In conclusion, the forms and practices of wellness tourism range from traditional spa therapies to various retreat possibilities, from a simple yoga class to a spiritual cultural immersion experience, and the list goes on. As explained above, society is becoming increasingly aware of the importance of good health and wellbeing, and this awareness is likely to keep growing in the future.

That said, even though interest in wellness is clearly on the rise, it doesn't mean that this growth is guaranteed. Economic pressure or accessibility issues could slow it down. Not everyone will be able to afford premium retreats or wellness stays, especially during uncertain times. So even if the potential is strong, the development of wellness tourism will depend on the industry's ability to stay inclusive and affordable, and to meet the evolving needs of increasingly segmented audiences. If the industry is able to remain adaptable to those conditions, then these diverse offerings, including retreats, could keep growing and make wellness tourism an even bigger and more meaningful part of the global tourism economy.

3. A broader vision of wellness: conclusion

As seen in this chapter, wellness is not one fixed idea. It is a concept that has developed over time, shaped by different cultures, beliefs, and lifestyles. It includes many aspects of life: physical health, mental well-being, emotional balance and spiritual growth. From ancient practices like yoga and meditation in India (Basavaraddi, 2015), to purification rituals in Bali and spa traditions in Europe (Smith, 2021), wellness has been part of human culture for centuries and has now become an even more important part of modern life.

The concept of health has also evolved. As the World Health Organization (WHO) explains, health is not only the absence of disease but a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being (World Health Organization, 2025). Authors like Dunn (1959) and Corbin & Pangrazi (2001) describe wellness as a way of being. In today's fast-paced and digital world, challenges like stress, anxiety and burnout are more present than ever, leading people to turn to alternatives such as retreats, mindfulness and calming practices (Smith, 2021; Yeung et al., 2018a). This growing need has supported the rise of wellness tourism, offering people a way to disconnect and reconnect through activities that support both body and mind (Smith & Puczko, 2008).

But wellness tourism goes beyond the individual. The energy and values of the destination also matter. The Global Wellness Institute gives the example of destinations like Costa Rica, where the famous and widespread phrase "Pura Vida" reflects an entire way of life that excludes stress, negativity and overthinking, and gives space to a relaxed, simple and present mindset (Yeung et al., 2018). On the other side of the world, Bhutan offers another powerful example. The country promotes well-being through its national philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH), placing community welfare, environmental preservation and cultural identity at the heart of both its governance and tourism strategy. With most of its territory covered by forest and one of the happiest populations in Asia, Bhutan reflects a unique approach that combines personal health with collective harmony, deeply rooted in Buddhist tradition (Gibbens, 2018; Yeung et al., 2018).. And in Europe, as seen through this chapter, wellness tourism continues to grow. While some travelers face budget limits, interest in wellness, nature and authentic experiences remains strong (ETC, 2023; ETC, 2024a). Each format of this tourism attracts different types of travelers with their own needs and expectations (CBI, 2022; Compare Retreats, 2018). This diversity is a strength, but it also requires the industry to stay flexible, accessible and inclusive to meet the expectations of increasingly segmented audiences (Global Wellness Institute, 2018 ; Smith & Puczko, 2008). These examples show that wellness is not a one-size-fits-all experience; it must adapt to different environments and reflect local values (Smith & Puczko, 2008).

This chapter showed that wellness is more than a trend. It is a deep, long-term movement based on the human need for balance and connection. Wellness tourism is one of the ways people are now choosing to take care of themselves, by traveling with intention, purpose and awareness. From ancient traditions to modern practices, from individual healing to collective well-being, wellness is becoming part of how people live, travel and take care of both themselves and the world around them.

Now that the global context of wellness and wellness tourism has been explained, the next chapter will focus more closely on one specific and growing part of this trend: wellness retreats. This chapter will explore what a wellness retreat is, how it works, and why it has become such an attractive option for many travelers looking for transformation, rest and reconnection.

Chapter 2: Introduction to wellness retreats

Before discussing the specifics of wellness retreats and their role within wellness tourism, it is essential to understand what the term “wellness retreat” signifies. Although the word “retreat” can refer to a wide variety of experiences, wellness retreats, often considered a specific sub-category, are distinctive in their main objective, which is to provide an environment for physical, mental and emotional rejuvenation (Wellness Tourism Association, 2025.; Dimon, 2018; Yeung et al., 2018a). This section will clarify the notion of a “wellness retreat” to establish a clear framework for the analysis that follows. Naturally, some different forms of wellness retreats and variations will be explored in the following pages.

1. What is a wellness retreat?

If the term retreat can refer to a wide variety of experiences, wellness retreat can be described in a few different ways as well. A wellness retreat can be defined as a multi-day, guided experience designed to support physical, mental and emotional well-being through structured activities such as yoga, meditation, nature walks and healthy eating. Typically hosted by facilitators in a dedicated space, it offers a calm and supportive environment where wellness is the primary focus. Unlike larger wellness resorts, retreats are often smaller in scale and more intimate, offering a more personal and immersive experience for travelers seeking rest, balance, and personal growth (Dimon, 2020; Dimon, 2018; Wellness Tourism Association, 2025)

These definitions show the essence of what a wellness retreat is. To be even more precise, a retreat means to withdraw from everyday life to focus on yourself. This withdrawal can take various forms and is motivated by individual needs and goals (Dimon, 2020; Dimon, 2018). As The Good Index (2021) describes, retreats provide the time and space to “step back from day-to-day life and focus on yourself,” whether that involves relaxation, personal development or other specific objectives.

The main difference between retreats and traditional vacations is their value and lasting effects. A research study by Epel et al. (2016) showed that retreats can have beneficial long-term effects, such as improved energy and mental clarity. Compared to the short-term impact of traditional vacations, which usually push vacationers to manage their schedules and plan activities accordingly only to find themselves exhausted at the end of their stay, retreats allow participants to rest and recharge their batteries. They are deliberately planned to offer a structured experience and supportive environment so that participants don't have to worry about their daily schedules (Keeken, 2019; Epel et al., 2016). This emerging trend to go on retreats is due to travelers' eagerness to participate in a program that already includes everything. These are designed to offer a restorative, guided time-out that helps to improve mental clarity and emotional balance. These retreats often include mindfulness practices, yoga sessions and immersive nature activities, such as forest bathing, which help participants recharge and restore their energy (Kühnel & Sonnentag, 2011). According to Kühnel & Sonnentag (2011), a retreat that is planned around recharging and prioritizing self-care experiences is designed to improve mental health and overall wellbeing. These experiences often offer more than personal benefits; they are made to create a strong sense of community and collective wellbeing. They are designed for travelers looking not only for physical health, but also for deeper meaning, real purpose and true connection in their lives (The Future of Wellness, n.d.; The Future of Wellness Tourism, n.d.; Kühnel & Sonnentag, 2011).

One of the characteristics of retreats is their inclusive aspect. They are addressed to a wide range of individuals, regardless of their fitness level, age or personal ambitions. Retreat participants are as diverse

as the retreats themselves, ranging from the very active to those seeking to recover from personal illness or daily life stress. However, all of them come with a common purpose that unites the group (The Good Index, 2021). In fact; most retreats are predominantly group experiences. They emphasize the community aspect of wellness tourism and attract travelers looking for shared transformative journeys. However, some retreats are also designed for internalizing and finding peace within yourself. Then there is another angle of focus, with more solo adventure programs and personal time for solo activities like meditation, journaling and conscious thinking exercises (The Good Index, 2021; Kabat, 2003). These activities are designed for people who desire more personalized and introspective experiences. They offer opportunities for much greater self-reflection. Kabat (2003) has observed that these practices reduce stress levels and improve concentration, making them valuable elements of wellness retreats.

A wellness retreat can incorporate any number of different activities (Vogt, 2025). Many wellness retreats now incorporate creative activities designed to encourage artistic expression and emotional release. These can take the form of art, music, dance or theater workshops. Those practices are becoming more common as part of a holistic approach to well-being. For example, as this thesis is based on an action research study of my personal experiences as a retreat leader on different retreats, activities like sacred theater, dance to release emotions through music, painting, writing and other activities were built in to help with creating, feeling and being in the present moment without planning anything in advance (personal action research management). These experiences demonstrate that these practices help individuals to work with their emotions and feelings, to reduce stress and to reach a state of emotional harmony. Research by Stuckey and Nobel (2010) confirms that the practice of artistic expression contributes significantly to emotional healing and overall well-being.

Another key aspect of retreats is their duration, which can also vary considerably, from a half-day or entire day to an immersive experience lasting several days, a week or more. For example, a weekend retreat may offer a condensed program of workshops, treatments and group activities, while longer retreats allow participants to more deeply explore lifestyle changes and achieve meaningful results while enjoying time off to unwind and relax (The Good Index, 2021).

Finally, retreats are often more affordable and flexible than we might think. There is a retreat to suit every interest and budget. Retreats can be planned anywhere and organized in countless ways and on countless different topics. This accessibility and diversity has contributed to the growing popularity of retreats (Vogt, 2025).

To summarize, wellness retreats represent an intentional, holistic approach to pausing, prioritizing health, relaxation and personal development. They can be organized for a wide spectrum of purposes like proximity to nature, professional programs like team building, personal purpose, spiritual reflection, etc. Wellness retreats offer a transformative experience that ordinary vacations do not always offer. Their role in wellness tourism is essential, as they act as a bridge between personal well-being and the growing demand for experiences that promote holistic health.

2. Types of wellness retreats

Despite their common goal to improve participants' well-being, wellness retreats can vary considerably in terms of concept, duration, location and philosophy. Depending on participants' preferences, they can include specific practices such as yoga, meditation, fitness, detoxification and therapeutic treatments. Of course, each type of retreat responds to the needs of and attracts a specific audience. However, in the context of this thesis it is only necessary to identify and analyze the main categories of retreats from the global wellness retreat tourism landscape.

This section highlights the main formats and categories that are most frequently requested by potential clients, according to the surveys conducted for this thesis research, as well as those already conducted by Revamp. A clear understanding of these different types of wellness retreat is essential to get an idea of the sector's scope and adaptability.

According to Smith & Kelly (2006), wellness retreats are part of a broader movement known as holistic tourism, characterized by immersive, introspective and transformative journeys. Yoga, meditation, detox and nature retreats are examples of this trend. Each such retreat offers specific physical, emotional or spiritual benefits that resonate with modern travelers seeking meaning, balance and escape.

The following classification presents the main forms of retreats relevant to this study, which will later support the design of a European-based retreat adapted to local expectations. A more precise analysis of Revamp's offerings will follow in Chapter 3.

2.1 Yoga retreats

Yoga retreats are a core pillar of Revamp's programs. yoga was created to help people feel more connected: to their body, their mind, their emotions and even something greater than themselves. The word "yoga" actually means "union" (Yogascope, 2024d). Today, especially in Western countries, many people practice yoga for its physical benefits: to improve flexibility, gain strength or reduce stress. But even in its modern form, yoga still includes other important elements like breathing exercises, meditation, holistic workshops and other rituals aimed to reconnect to the inner-self, reduce stress from the everyday life and reach a harmony between the mind and the body (Smith et Puczkó, 2014; Yogascope 2024d).

Vogt (2025) highlights that the variety of yoga retreat options, from rustic eco-lodges to luxurious resorts, contributes to their popularity. Their accessibility to all levels, from beginners to advanced practitioners, enhances their popularity and constant growth. According to Allied Market Research (2024) and Yeung et al. (2018), yoga retreats are one of the most important parts of the retreat market.

The most practiced yoga styles, according to The Yogascope blog (2020; 2023a), are:

- **Hatha Yoga:** Known as the "yoga of effort," Hatha is one of the most traditional and foundational styles. It emphasizes alignment, static postures held over several breaths and conscious breath control (pranayama), making it ideal for beginners or those wanting to return to the essentials.
- **Ashtanga Yoga:** A rigorous and codified practice that consists of six progressive series of postures, each requiring mastery of the previous before advancing. This is a very structured and physical practice that asks for discipline and challenge.

- **Vinyasa Yoga:** A dynamic and creative flow practice derived from Ashtanga. Vinyasa synchronizes breath with movement in sequences that often feel like a flow or a dance.
- **Kundalini Yoga:** Often called the yoga of energy, Kundalini combines repeated movements, breathwork, mantras and meditation to awaken spiritual energy.
- **Yin Yoga:** A slow, introspective style that blends principles of Hatha yoga and Traditional Chinese Medicine. Postures are held for several long minutes, targeting connective tissues and promoting flexibility. It is deeply meditative and ideal for those looking to slow down, heal and balance an active lifestyle.
- **Yoga Nidra:** A deep and relaxing practice that involves guided meditation. As it is a practice with no movement and is done laying down, it is very restorative. It allows practitioners to enter a state between awake and asleep. This helps with mental clarity, stress relief and emotional insight.

These practices are not chosen randomly (Yogascope, 2020; 2023a). They represent the most popular styles worldwide and are central to the majority of experiences offered by Revamp and other yoga retreat organizers. Participants choose yoga retreats for different reasons: to deepen their practice, to experience a more holistic lifestyle or simply to recharge physically and emotionally (Yogascope, 2020; 2023a). The combination of movement, stillness and introspection helps reduce cortisol (the stress hormone) levels, promotes flexibility and strength, improves decision-making and supports emotional regulation through energetic alignment (Yogascope, 2024c).

2.2 Spiritual retreats

According to Smith & Kelly (2006), spiritual tourism allows participants to cultivate inner transformation through practices like rituals, silence and energy work. Spiritual retreats include practices like rituals, ceremonies and other traditions rooted in Eastern religions such as Buddhism or Hinduism (Smith & Kelly, 2006). Additionally, breathwork, which is a transformative breathing practice inspired by specific ancient techniques, is often integrated into spiritual retreats. This method, as described by The Yogascope (2024b), can lead to emotional release, spiritual awakening and deep introspection. Participants may experience strong physical and emotional sensations, such as tingling, crying or euphoria, which are seen as part of the healing process (Yogascope, 2020). These retreats particularly appeal to women or people seeking emotional and energetic balance. Their rising popularity is linked to a growing desire for meaningful experiences and disconnection from urban stress (Yogascope, 2024a). Revamp offers several such programs in culturally rich locations like Bali, where traditional Hindu rituals support immersive experiences.

2.3 Nature retreats (adventure)

Retreats that focus more on nature offer immersive experiences in wonderful natural environments such as forests, mountains or beaches. According to Kaplan & Kaplan (1989), being immersed in nature reduces cognitive fatigue, helps the mind and body to recharge and increases mental clarity. These retreats often combine yoga with physical activities like hiking, surfing, or horseback riding. In Europe, nature-based retreats are flourishing, especially in certain places. It attracts an audience looking to reconnect with nature and achieve physical balance (Yeung et al., 2018b). Nature retreats also align with the growing trend of eco-conscious tourism (Global Wellness Institute, 2018; Wellness Tourism Association, 2025).

2.4 Meditation retreats

Meditation retreats focus on the improvement of mindfulness and mental health. These programs offer guided meditation sessions, breathing exercises and introspection through moments of long silent periods. Breathwork also plays a significant role in many meditation retreats. As noted by The Yogascope (2020a, 2024b), this controlled breathing technique activates the nervous system, releases emotional blockages and helps with consciousness. It supports the meditative process with deeper introspection and an energetic balance, which helps to silence the mind for a better practice. Kabat (2003) points out that meditation significantly reduces anxiety and stress levels while increasing concentration, resilience and general well-being. These kinds of retreats, which are often integrated into hybrid programs like those offered by Revamp, include cultural and local elements, such as spiritual ceremonies or nature linked activities that strengthen the transformative effect (Smith et Puczko, 2014). According to The Yogascope (2024c), such retreats support deep introspection and are particularly beneficial in today's overstimulated world.

2.5 Detox retreats

Detox retreats aim to eliminate physical and emotional toxins accumulated through stress, diet or lifestyle. Often held in natural settings, they include healthy plant-based meals or fasting diet, gentle movement sessions like yoga or other physical activities like hiking and moments of stillness and relaxation (Schade, 2023). These retreats are increasingly popular among people seeking physical reset and sustainable energy boosts in a space free from distractions, surrounded by supportive peers and guided by wellness experts (Schade, 2023). At Shanti-Som, for example, each detox program includes nutritional consultations, yoga and meditation sessions, colonic therapies and spa treatments. The emphasis is on holistic restoration rather than restriction (*Everything You Need to Know About a Detox Retreat and Its Benefits*, 2022).

2.6 Corporate wellness retreats

Corporate wellness retreats are off-site programs designed to reduce stress, promote healthy habits and improve team dynamics. They typically include yoga, fitness, mindfulness and stress management workshops. These retreats help enhance physical and mental well-being, boost morale, increase productivity and strengthen team cohesion. To be effective, corporate retreats should align with team needs, include expert facilitation and provide a balance of relaxation and personal development activities (Hawthorne, n.d.). As highlighted by Hawthorne (n.d.), corporate wellness retreats have emerged as a vital tool for improving overall employee well-being and organizational performance. These retreats provide opportunities to improve physical health through yoga, hiking and fitness sessions, enhanced mental well-being via meditation and mindfulness and increased engagement and morale through team bonding activities. Benefits also include higher productivity post-retreat, as employees often return feeling refreshed and more focused. Corporate retreats are becoming strategic investments in employee health, satisfaction, and workplace efficiency (Hawthorne, n.d.).

2.7 Other types of retreats

There are many other kinds of retreats such as reading retreats, creative writing retreats, surf & yoga retreats, Pilates & yoga retreats, horse riding retreats or even equine therapy retreats. Those combine personal passions and overall wellness, attracting specific niches of travelers. While it is not the core

focus of Revamp, the existence of these formats opens the door to diversify offerings and respond to emerging lifestyle trends in the future. Combining yoga with other disciplines can amplify its benefits. Pilates, for instance, shares similarities with yoga in terms of breathing and muscle strengthening. Merging both practices helps balance physical exertion and relaxation, while also improving posture and body awareness (Yogascope, 2023b). They complement one another in a way that serves as a powerful tool to optimize both physical and mental well-being.

The wellness retreat industry is vast and continuously evolving. By focusing on the categories above, which reflect both market trends and some of Revamp’s operational experience, this study ensures a relevant foundation for designing a retreat model adapted to the European context.

Table 1: Summary of the different types of retreats and the practices associated

Retreat type	Main focus	Practices	Strategic fit
Yoga	Physical & mental balance	Hatha, Vinyasa, Kundalini, Yin,...	Main offering
Spiritual	Emotional & energetic healing	Rituals, sound healing, breathwork, chakra	Specific culture/country based
Nature (adventure)	Ecological & nature immersion	Hiking, surfing, forest bathing	EU main expansion
Detox	Physical reset	Plant-based diet, massages	Urban audience
Meditation	Introspection & resilience	Silent retreats, breathwork	Deeper formats
Corporate	Team building, community & productivity	Group workshops, coaching	Company focus
Others (niche)	Specific formats	Surf, writing, Pilates, reading, horseriding	Personal potential

3. The growth of the wellness retreat sector

The wellness retreat sector has experienced rapid expansion over the past decade, reflecting a societal shift toward holistic health, self-development and preventive well-being. More than just a trend, this evolution reveals a fundamental change in consumer priorities: individuals increasingly seek restorative, meaningful experiences that integrate physical, mental and spiritual dimensions (cf. appendix 12).

This section examines the rise of the wellness retreat sector from three points. First, it provides an overview of global wellness tourism trends and changing consumer demand. Second, it explores the rise of wellness retreats in Europe. Third, it offers a comparative analysis between the European wellness retreat market and other key global wellness destinations.

3.1 Global development and changing demand

Wellness tourism has become one of the fastest-growing travel segments globally. According to Johnston et al. (2024), the global wellness economy reached \$6.3 trillion in 2023 and is projected to grow by 7.3% annually, outpacing global GDP (Gross Domestic Product). Wellness tourism alone is valued at \$300.6 billion, with over 207.5 million wellness trips recorded in 2023 in the United States (Johnston et al., 2024). This surge is largely fueled by increasing awareness of physical and mental health, a demand for preventive care, and a deeper consumer focus on holistic well-being (Allied Market Research, 2024).

Travelers are increasingly opting for experiences that integrate wellness, nature and reconnection with self. The rise of wellness retreats reflects this shift. A key emerging consumer segment includes women between the ages of 25 and 45, with medium to high incomes, already engaged in healthy lifestyles and seeking deeper emotional and psychological well-being (WHITBY, 2023; Compare Retreats, 2018; CBI, 2022). As mentioned by Steffi (cf. Appendix 11) in our interview, and confirmed by other teachers during my retreats, the mental health market will continue to grow. Steffi (cf. appendix 11) mentioned her worries about the yoga market reaching a saturation point, but for her, the development of retreats will continue to grow as society continues to evolve.

The professionalization of the industry has also grown over time. As Chatzimpalidou (2025) notes, wellness professionals and therapists are becoming increasingly essential to meet rising demand. She mentioned for example that mental wellness “has grown at an impressive 11.6% annual rate since 2019, underscoring the increasing demand for support in managing stress, anxiety, and emotional resilience” (Chatzimpalidou, 2025). Wellness tourism is expected to continue growing fast, with a yearly growth rate of 10.2% until 2028 which would be faster than many other wellness-related sectors. This evolution of consumer expectations has created opportunities for wellness practitioners to diversify their services but also for retreats to grow and diversify their offerings, including more mindfulness workshops, personalized coaching and holistic healing programs (Chatzimpalidou, 2025).

3.2. The rise of wellness retreats in Europe

Europe currently accounts for approximately \$1.7 trillion of the global wellness economy, which is an important number, covering over 90% of the total world wellness economy when combined with North America (\$2.2 trillion) and Asia-Pacific (\$1.9 trillion) (Johnston et al., 2024).

One important factor in Europe’s success is its historical legacy in spa and thermal tourism. Countries such as Germany, Hungary and Austria have long traditions of health-focused travel, including balneotherapy and mineral spring treatments, which have now evolved into modern wellness retreats (Smith & Puczkó, 2008).

A second factor is post-pandemic awareness. The health crisis of COVID-19 led European travelers, especially from Western and Northern Europe, to place more attention on their physical and mental well-being. Retreats are increasingly perceived as an effective means of rebalancing and disconnecting from stressful lifestyles (McGroarty, 2023; Johnston et al., 2024).

A third factor is increased willingness to invest in well-being. European consumers generally spend more on wellness holidays, favoring tailor-made experiences and luxury packages over standard tourist offerings (CBI, 2023; (Yeung et al., 2018). This behavior supports the emergence of premium retreats across the continent.

Spain, France, Portugal and Italy have emerged as leading destinations driven by their Mediterranean lifestyle, warm climate and both historical and modern infrastructure (ETC, 2023). Portugal is celebrated for its mountainous retreats and coastal experiences, while France specializes in thalassotherapy and other yoga & spa packages in different regions (Yeung et al., 2018b). Despite these advances, parts of Europe remain underutilized. Less saturated regions such as Slovenia, Croatia and rural areas of other countries offer untapped potential for immersive, nature-based retreats (Yeung et al., 2018b). With the right positioning and integration of local wellness traditions, these destinations could expand Europe's retreat offering while preserving their authenticity and sustainability.

3.3. Comparative analysis: Europe vs. other wellness destinations

As the wellness retreat sector expands, global destinations such as Bali, Costa Rica and Colombia have established distinctive retreat models. This section compares these destinations with the European context, offering strategic insights into how Europe can position itself as a retreat destination competitively and authentically.

Bali has been recognized as a reference point for spiritual and wellness retreats, offering travelers a unique combination of affordability, authenticity and deep cultural immersion. According to the study of Meikassandra et al. (2020), Ubud, a Balinese town rich in traditions, spiritual rituals and natural beauty, stands at the heart of Bali's wellness scene. Surrounded by jungle and rooted in Balinese Hinduism, Ubud offers a wide range of retreats combining yoga, meditation, herbal medicine and holistic practices focused on harmonizing body, mind and spirit. Bali's tropical climate, welcoming community, and blend of traditional healing and spiritual connection create a truly extraordinary and accessible experience, where authenticity meets a touch of luxury (Meikassandra et al., 2020).

Costa Rica positions itself at the intersection of nature, wellness and sustainability. Its appeal lies in its biodiversity, eco-conscious infrastructure, and wellness adventure offerings such as surf-and-yoga camps or hiking-detox retreats. The "pura vida" lifestyle and established wellness tourism branding make it a favorite, particularly among North American travelers (Yeung et al., 2018b).

Colombia has recently emerged as a strong contender for wellness retreats. Its value proposition includes cultural richness, affordability and ancestral healing traditions like cacao and temazcal ceremonies. Colombia's unique combination of mountain and beach environments adds to its immersive experience. Its evolution as a retreat destination illustrates the rising importance of cultural authenticity and connection to nature (Weimer, 2024)

In contrast, **Europe** builds its model around diversity, heritage and premium positioning. While it may not offer tropical climates or indigenous rituals, Europe excels in curated, high-quality experiences rooted in regional identity. From Nordic spa culture and Mediterranean nutrition to the historical spa towns of Central Europe, the continent leverages its wellness traditions with modern infrastructure and security. European retreats often prioritize personalized programs, gourmet wellness cuisine and access to scenic yet accessible locations (Yeung et al., 2018b).

Instead of replicating tropical or spiritual models, Europe has the unique opportunity to develop its own identity: integrating local healing traditions like herbal medicine and thermal therapies, multi-location formats like mountain and sea and seasonal variations of those things. This positioning is also bolstered by the rising demand for therapists and professionals specialized in mental wellness, spa experiences, and holistic coaching, especially in luxury settings (Chatzimpalidou, 2025).

Europe's strength lies in offering safe, authentic and personalized wellness experiences that match the needs of modern, health-conscious travelers. Its opportunity is to blend yoga and modern wellness practices with local traditions, regional foods, natural therapies and a slower pace of life. Instead of copying tropical retreat models, Europe can succeed by leveraging its own cultural and natural richness.

Strategic contrasts and key takeaways

Table 2: Summary of the destinations and their characteristics

	Europe	Bali	Costa Rica	Colombia
Culture	Historical heritage, therapeutic traditions (spa, herbal, thermal)	Spiritual and ritualistic heritage	"Pura vida" lifestyle and wellness values	Ancestral healing and indigenous rituals
Nature	Varied (mountains, coasts, forests,..)	Tropical landscapes, beaches	Rainforest, jungle, beaches	Mountains, jungle, beaches
Positioning	Premium Unique Safe	Affordable Immersive	Eco-luxury Adventure	Emerging Affordable
Main audience	Mid-high income Europeans Global travelers	Digital nomads Global wellness & spiritual travelers	North American wellness tourists	Young wellness explorers Budget conscious travelers
Opportunity	Blend modern wellness with local traditions Develop multi-location formats	Maintain low-cost immersive model	Expand sustainable wellness infrastructure	Offer authentic, affordable programs

These examples demonstrate how wellness tourism and wellness retreats can draw from local traditions and cultural heritage to create meaningful, immersive experiences, while also highlighting the diversity of practices around the world. These reflections will serve as a foundation for the development of the project in part 3 of this thesis, where the feasibility, challenges and design of a retreat project in Europe will be explored more deeply.

Chapter 3: Revamp Retreats

In this growing world of wellness tourism, some ventures stand out, not by chance, but through a carefully crafted blend of vision, strategy and human connection. Behind every impactful wellness experience lies a story, a mission and a strategy, and wellness experiences offered by Revamp Retreats are no exception. Discovering who they are shows how purpose and vision can shape a retreat experience. This chapter introduces Revamp Retreats, the company selected as the case study for this thesis.

Revamp Retreats was chosen following a professional journey that includes an internship completed in 2024, and an ongoing collaboration in organizing and leading several retreats since then. The knowledge acquired through these experiences feeds into this paper using an action-research methodology, where practice and continuous reflection strengthen the research process. The development of this methodological framework is detailed in Chapter 2: Methodology.

1. Who are they?

Before getting deeper into Revamp Retreats' strategies and offerings in Part 3 of this work (cf. below p.), it's essential to understand the company's origins and identity. This section will explore the company's history and the motivations of its founders, while highlighting the principles that guide their mission.

Revamp Retreats is a company focused on wellness retreats, combining innovation and commitment in a fast-growing sector. It was founded in 2017 by Kori Zornes, a passionate traveler and entrepreneur from Las Vegas who decided to quit her corporate job to embrace a new life. She now runs the company with her partner, Christian Tripodi, and together they have developed a distinctive business model. Their focus is to create premium wellness retreats that not only inspire personal growth but also promote ethical tourism. They offer a mix of travel, entrepreneurship and personal development, with the objective of positioning themselves as a key player within the wellness tourism industry (About Revamp Retreats, 2024). However, given the dynamic nature of the wellness tourism sector, Revamp Retreats operates within an increasingly competitive market where personalization and niche positioning are essential to stand out.

According to what Tripodi said during one interview organized in November 2024, Revamp Retreats differentiates itself by focusing on customer care, so that participants feel valued and supported from the very first interaction (cf. appendix 3). This approach is described as fostering a sense of community that goes beyond traditional customer service. Tripodi also mentions the company's focus on personal transformation, integrating aspects of adventure and wellness with opportunities for introspection and self-discovery. The aim, as he stated, is to offer the customers a new perspective and a deeper sense of freedom in their lives (cf. appendix 3).

The company focuses on organizing high-end wellness retreats in destinations chosen for their natural beauty and soothing atmospheres. Each retreat is built around a well-balanced program that integrates yoga, personal development, group connection and time for rest and reflection. The model is built on three main pillars: expert teaching, thoughtful planning and carefully selected locations. Rather than competing on price, Revamp Retreats has positioned itself within the premium market, aiming to deliver high-value experiences that guests perceive as worth the investment. Their emphasis on quality over quantity reflects a conscious decision to prioritize depth over scale. According to the company, success is not measured only by numbers, but by the impact a single retreat can have on someone's life (About Revamp Retreats, 2024; cf. appendix 3).

During the interview, Tripodi mentioned clearly their mission to “change lives through travel, connection, and high-level mentorship.” (cf. appendix 3). From this mission stems a larger vision: to grow their impact significantly over the coming years. They aim to increase the number of retreats hosted each year and to scale their influence through the creation of their Retreat Leaders Academy, an online course that trains new facilitators, equipping them with the tools and mindset needed to design

and lead their own impactful retreats, and will then contribute to expand also the impact of wellness retreats through their own initiatives (cf. appendix 3).

2. Key elements of Revamp Retreats' offerings

2.1 Revamp's position on the market

As the wellness tourism sector continues to grow, Revamp Retreats operates within a competitive and evolving landscape. The company differentiates itself in a competitive market through specific features in its offerings. These include customized wellness programs, global destinations chosen for their soothing atmospheres, access to world-renowned teachers and environments of luxury and comfort (cf. appendix 3). According to Tripodi (cf. appendix 3), Revamp Retreats intentionally positions itself in the “premium” segment of the wellness retreat market, situated between basic and luxury. Revamp avoids competing on price and instead focuses on delivering high-level services, thoughtfully selected venues and curated experiences that reflect the value of the investment. As Tripodi explains: “We have, in my opinion, high-level service, resources, amenities, and accommodation. [...] We’re not cheap, and we don’t compete in the space where most retreat companies compete, which is price and affordability” (cf. Appendix 3).

The brand’s core elements, the teaching the planning and the venue (also known as the three pillars), are, in Tripodi’s words, “expertly curated,” which creates a high-value guest experience prioritizing comfort, authenticity, and connection (cf. Appendix 3). Their retreats are structured around personalized wellness journeys, combining yoga, meditation, workshops, cultural activities and time for rest and reflection. Each retreat is designed to align with the values and expectations of their target audience. This model defines Revamp’s identity and activities in an evolving and competitive retreat landscape.

2.2 A holistic and adaptive program design

The company organizes a limited number of retreats each year to maintain a certain level of personalization and consistency in the quality of service provided.

One of the key features that defines Revamp Retreats is their comprehensive and balanced approach to wellness, built around a thoughtful combination of practices and experiences. Each retreat offers a carefully designed mix of yoga, meditation, personal development workshops, cultural immersion and moments of rest or integration, forming a program that supports both physical and emotional revitalization (*About Revamp Retreats*, 2024).

In short, Revamp’s holistic and adaptive program design allows each retreat to feel intentionally structured yet personally meaningful, supporting participants in ways that align with their unique goals. This approach contributes significantly to the overall satisfaction and transformation that many guests associate with the Revamp experience.

This chapter gave an overall introduction of Revamp Retreats, who they are, how they work and how they position themselves in the wellness tourism world. More concrete details about their strategies, how they operate and how their model could fit the European market will be explored in Part 3 of this thesis.

3. Revamp Retreats Leaders Academy:

Another important part of Revamp Retreats' long-term strategy is the development of the Retreat Leaders Academy. This online platform is designed to teach people how to create and lead their own retreats, using Revamp's proven methods. The academy offers a step-by-step program covering key areas, including defining the retreat's purpose, setting prices, selecting a location, managing legal and logistical aspects, developing a booking system, marketing the retreat and leading it effectively on-site.

The academy allows Revamp to expand its impact by helping others bring high-quality wellness retreats to life. As Tripodi explained in our interview, if they organize 10 retreats of 15 people for example, they will reach 150 people. But if they teach 10 people how to manage and lead 10 retreats, that's just exponentially more. That's why, in addition to their in-person retreats, Revamp has extended its reach through the Retreat Leaders Academy (cf. Appendix 3 + Retreat Leaders Academy course online). This initiative turns their knowledge into a powerful tool for growth, reaching new communities across the world.

By building a global community of retreat leaders who share their values, Revamp strengthens its influence in the wellness sector. Through their active leadership, Zornes and Tripodi also position themselves as industry mentors and thought leaders, helping shape the future of wellness tourism. This strategic move supports their expansion goals while staying true to their mission: creating ethical, personalized and transformational wellness experiences (cf. Appendix 3+ Retreat Leaders Academy course online).

Part 2: Methodology

As a reminder, the methodology adopted for this thesis is conceived to provide a comprehensive answer to a fundamental research question: **“How can a wellness retreat be designed to meet the expectations of a global, yet primarily European, clientele, while respecting the specific cultural and social context of this market?”**

Chapter 1 : Research design

1. A triple research approach

This research is based on a triple approach: exploratory, applied and abductive. This combined methodology helps to understand the dynamics of this growing sector, while identifying possible market challenges and opportunities.

1.1 Exploratory research

Exploratory research is defined by Bhat (2018), as a type of study used to investigate a primary research problem. This dimension aims to identify behaviors, trends and opportunities in the wellness retreat market. This phase consists of two distinct parts.

The first is based on data gathered directly from the public, focus groups and field observations, which may provide useful information for exploring the subject (Bhat, 2018). In this case, this data was collected from observations during the retreats or directly from Revamp Retreats and their clients.

The second part of the exploratory research is the literature review which includes all of the scientific publications from online sources (Bhat, 2018). This literature review helps contextualize the subject by exploring the roots of wellness and health and common challenges of wellness tourism and wellness retreats.

The diagram in Figure 16 below provides a visual summary of the two complementary parts of exploratory research, called the primary and secondary research methods.



Figure 16: Key components of exploratory research.

Source: Bhat, A. (2018, November 6). Recherche exploratoire: Définition, types et méthodologies. QuestionPro.
<https://www.questionpro.com/blog/fr/exploration-recherche/>

The following paragraphs provide a detailed explanation of how each part of this exploratory research was implemented in the context of this thesis.

1.2. Primary research: Field experience and immersion

This first category includes all data directly linked to professional immersion, practical experience and active participation within the context of wellness retreats.

One particularly valuable yet subjective source of insights is the Retreat Leaders Academy an online program offered by Revamp Retreats. This resource played a key role in shaping the understanding of retreat organization and leadership within the scope of this thesis.

While the program is highly informative and offers clear, actionable guidance, it is based on the specific model and personal experiences of Revamp's founders. As such, it should be taken as a practical, experience-based guide rather than a scientifically rigorous methodology.

Another similarly subjective, yet impactful, resource is the training and real-world experience gained while working as a retreat leader. During the 4 months of internship and subsequent employment by Revamp, several wellness retreats were planned, organized and implemented. Each of them reflected a variety of approaches and met a unique set of participant expectations depending on the theme, target audience and local context.

The work with Revamp provided a unique opportunity to observe the operational and strategic framework of a company specializing in wellness retreats, offering a direct understanding of how retreats are conceptualized, planned and executed. This work experience serves as a case study for analyzing key operational challenges, strategic decisions, and the dynamics of the wellness retreat industry, which are directly relevant to the main objectives of this thesis.

The primary activities undertaken during this internship included retreat planning, logistics management and strategic expansion efforts. These activities necessitated essential practices for ensuring smooth operations, including audience targeting, the selection of retreat centers and effective stakeholder coordination. My experiences as a retreat leader offered valuable insights into both the logistical and experiential aspects of organizing retreats. These leadership experiences were not only formative but also served as the foundation for a rich and immersive approach to this research: action research.

Beyond operational processes, the management of human resources during retreats revealed important success factors related to leadership and collaboration. In particular, the importance of balancing directive leadership, necessary for clear decision-making and operational efficiency, with a supportive approach, which is essential for fostering autonomy, trust and team cohesion, stood out as a key success factor. This adaptability in leadership style proved essential for managing teams composed of diverse stakeholders, including local providers, guest instructors and service staff. This balance is also reflected in the governance models outlined in Part 3 through the RACI framework.

These observations highlight the central role of relationship management and collaborative leadership in the successful organization of wellness retreats (cf. appendix 3). These insights will be further analyzed in the feasibility study developed later in the thesis, where the importance of operational and human resource management models will be discussed in the context of creating sustainable wellness retreats.

The coordination of key stakeholders, such as accommodation providers, instructors and local facilitators emerged as a central pillar of retreat success. Through reflection and observation, I identified not only what worked well, but also areas for improvement and the interconnected effects of these dynamics on the overall retreat experience.

A strong emphasis on collaboration and mutual respect was consistently observed as a cornerstone of Revamp Retreats' operational model. Fostering positive working relationships contributed significantly to smoother retreat operations, greater guest satisfaction and the achievement of long-term objectives. These human-centered management strategies, based on trust, communication and shared responsibility, align with broader best practices in sustainable retreat management (cf. Appendix 3).

This case study offers insights that are directly linked to the feasibility study developed in this thesis. It shows what is needed in practice to create and manage wellness retreats, such as being efficient with operations, having a clear strategy and creating meaningful experiences for guests. The methods and practices observed during the different retreats contributed to a clearer understanding of what makes a retreat successful, as well as the challenges that can come up when building a sustainable and impactful retreat business.

This combination of practical engagement and reflective analysis highlights the value of action research, a collaborative and iterative method of inquiry that involves repeated cycles of planning, action, observation and reflection (Zuber-Skerritt & Perry, 2002). It is especially relevant in contexts like this one, where the researcher is also a practitioner and where the aim is to produce practical knowledge that improves both theoretical insight and real-world outcomes.

While this approach is not strictly objective, it adds a valuable and unique insider's perspective. As Zuber-Skerritt & Perry (2002) argue, action research allows practitioners to co-create knowledge in a way that bridges theory and practice. By engaging directly in the experience, I was able to identify hidden challenges, observe spontaneous behaviors and evaluate the retreat experience from both the organizer's and the participant's viewpoint.

This approach sees the retreats not just as experiences, but as ongoing learning cycles where action and reflection go hand in hand, as illustrated in the following figure. Action research is a practical way of doing research, where the objective is to work through cycles of planning, take action, observe results and reflect on them. It's especially useful when the researcher is actively involved in the situation, and it helps improve practice while also building useful knowledge (Zuber-Skerritt & Fletcher, 2002). In my case, leading the retreats gave me the chance to observe, adjust and learn as things unfolded, while also helping the organization grow and shaping the retreat concept developed in this thesis.

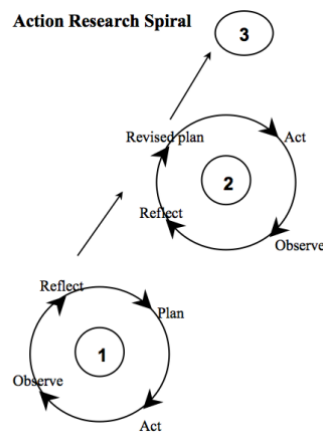


Figure 17: The spiral of action research cycles.

Source: Zuber-Skerritt, O. & Perry, C.(2002). Action research within organisations and university thesis writing. The Learning Organization: An International Journal 1. 9 (4): 171–179. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09696>

In this kind of action-research-based thesis, the researcher, who is also a practitioner, leads an independent study that is both academic and focused on change and action. Following this model, I went through the spiral of action research cycles during the different retreats I led, revising for the next retreat and for this project (Zuber-Skerritt & Fletcher, 2002). This method helped gather meaningful insights, not just during the retreats, but also while preparing for them and while reflecting on guests’ feedback.

These experiences and observations were not recorded as they were mostly personal conversations or general post-retreat debriefs with guests and teachers. However, the reflections were integrated progressively into the design of this project. These insights are based on personal and specific experiences rather than on scientific and objective research. They also serve as a “living laboratory” for testing strategic hypotheses and refining the project proposed in Part 3.

1.3.Secondary research: Documentary review

The second part of this exploratory approach is based on over 100 resources, all referenced in the bibliography. This research relies on many documentary sources to provide a global, accurate and up-to-date perspective on the wellness retreat market. Since there is unfortunately no extensive academic literature specifically focused on the European wellness retreat segment, the sources of the documents are all very distinct, although many do come from internationally recognized institutions known for the quality and reliability of their insights.

The Global Wellness Institute (GWI), for example, is a source used and cited many times, thanks to their precise data from different sources. GWI is considered the leading global research and educational resource for the global wellness economy, known for its rigorous, freely accessible research on wellness tourism. The GWI’s work is widely used by governments, academics, journalists and businesses, and many other sources used in this thesis reference their work (*Global Wellness Institute*, n.d.-a).

Another essential reference is the European Travel Commission (ETC). The ETC is a non-profit organization representing 36 national tourism organizations across Europe. Co-funded by the European Union, their collaborative approach with institutions, academia, and private partners enhances the credibility and utility of their research, especially when it comes to consumer behavior and wellness travel in Europe. This study also integrates data and frameworks from UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization), a specialized UN agency responsible for the promotion of responsible,

sustainable, and universally accessible tourism. Additionally, some information was drawn from the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) knowledge base.

To complement these institutional sources, this research also incorporated sector-specific content from specialized companies such as Le Yogascope, a retreat platform and blog offering curated wellness and yoga experiences. While not a scientific source, they provided rich practical insights, especially via detailed articles on guest expectations, yoga styles, retreat models and other specific information. Their content proved to be a valuable supplement, offering a practitioner's perspective close to the one adopted by Revamp Retreats. This company was also contacted twice by email and once via Instagram but ultimately declined to interview, which would have been very useful as they are competitors of Revamp.

Lastly, academic authors such as Melanie Kay Smith, Laszlo Puczko and others have been referenced multiple times, and for different academic work due to their consistent and pioneering work in wellness tourism and wellbeing strategies.

In sum, most of the sources used in this study were selected for their scientific validity, international recognition and practical relevance to the retreat and wellness tourism sectors, offering a solid foundation to explore both the strategic and societal feasibility of this business model. Some of the sources, though very relevant and useful, came from less academic frameworks like blogs, magazines or journals and were integrated for their experiential relevance rather than their academic rigor.

1.4. Applied research

The applied research aspect, on the other hand, is focused on more concrete results. The data collected is used to develop a complete and comprehensive business model. This integrates strategic and operational recommendations that reflect the real needs of the market and of potential customers. The aim is to use real facts and qualitative and quantitative data analysis to define a valid solution. This practical approach ensures that the conclusion of this thesis is not theoretical, but applicable (Liza, 2022).

To achieve this, the research integrates feedback from various sources, including two online surveys and a series of semi-structured interviews with teachers and retreat facilitators. The surveys, developed via Google Forms, were designed to explore different dimensions of the retreat experience, from participant expectations to budget preferences, ideal locations and activity formats. These surveys contain over 70 questions across multiple sections, offering detailed insight into consumer behavior and preferences. Similarly, the interviews conducted with teachers, professionals and former guests provided deeper qualitative insights, addressing topics such as logistical challenges, teacher-participant dynamics and key success factors of previous retreats as well as general aspects of wellness. Together, these sources form the empirical backbone of this thesis.

The complete methodology regarding the interviews and the structure of the questionnaires, including distribution channels, response rates, participant profiles and detailed objectives will be further elaborated in the next chapters (cf. Chapter 2: Data collection and analysis). This robust empirical base ensures that the strategic conclusions and recommendations developed in this thesis are also grounded in evidence-based insights and are directly applicable to the development of a successful wellness retreat business.

1.5. Abductive research

Finally, the abductive approach provides a connection between all, which means going back and forth between theory and practice to build a deeper understanding. It does not just start from theory (as is the case with deductive research) or only from data (like inductive research) but combines both. It helps refine ideas along the way, using real-world feedback to adjust initial assumptions and formulate a realistic conclusion (The Decision Lab, 2025). It is especially useful in a context like this thesis, where personal experience, evolving trends, and practical insights are central to the final project.

The aim of this research is to guide both the theoretical exploration of wellness tourism and the practical development of a strategic retreat concept to explore how a wellness retreat can be designed to meet the expectations of a global, yet primarily European, audience, while also respecting the cultural and social specificities of this market.

The abductive process began with some initial hypotheses based on early readings about wellness tourism, consumer behavior, travel intention and wellness retreat business. These ideas were then confronted with the data collected from field experience, surveys, interviews and retreat observations. Every new piece of information helped rethink or improve the initial assumptions.

To help structure and organize this process, the Societal Impact Canvas (SIC) is used as a strategic planning tool designed to help build business models that are not only efficient and viable, but also aligned with positive societal impact. It includes 15 blocks, each used to organize findings and create a structured, consistent business model (Gerlach, 2015). On top of that, this tool also helps maintain a sense of coherence throughout the project by linking theoretical insights to practical applications to create a realistic business model in Part 3. It supports the analysis not only of what is desirable (based on market demand and guest expectations) but also of what is feasible (in terms of organization) and viable (in terms of long-term sustainability). The SIC also allows for the inclusion of societal impacts in the establishment of a business model.

The content of this SIC was developed using various tools and approaches presented during the master's option *Nouveaux Business Modèles Durables*, taught by B. Hudlot, P. Drouillon and P. Verhasselt at ICHEC. Two presentations made by Balemba & al provided complementary tools and valuable insights. Together, these resources formed a methodological foundation that supported the structuring of the analysis.

By combining this abductive reasoning with the Societal Impact Canvas, the research stays grounded in both theory and practice. It allows for the creation of a retreat model that is thoughtful, adaptable and well-suited to the European context, while also being realistic, sustainable and aligned with the evolving expectations of wellness travelers today.

4. A three-level analysis: micro, meso, macro

To structure this study, three complementary levels have been identified: the micro level, focusing on individual market and the direct competitors within the industry; the meso level, focusing on relationships between players such as the direct stakeholders and the competitive environment; and the macro level, which examines the larger external environment and global factors that have an impact on the development of the concept, including societal, economic and legal components. Each level is analyzed using specific methodological tools chosen for their relevance to this business retreat context (Giboin, 2016).

2.1. Micro-level analysis

Micro-level analysis focuses on the behaviors, preferences and expectations of potential participants, as well as the company's in-house processes, here referred to as Revamp Retreats. It aims to answer fundamental questions: Who are the target customers? What are their specific needs? What are their motivating factors and potential obstacles?

To carry out this analysis, different complementary tools are used. The SWOT analysis, which is a common strategic tool to analyze strategic action plans, identifies the company's internal strengths (Giboin, 2023). In addition, the two surveys conducted identified the demographic data of Revamp's customers as well as potential new target groups. They provided a better understanding of travel consumption behaviors, interests, and motivations for participating in a retreat, like relaxation and personal transformation. This valuable information will guide us through their potential obstacles: price, location, access etc.

Finally, the feedback from teachers complete this analysis by providing expertise on the retreats market. The testimonials, collected through interviews and surveys, offer an essential qualitative perspective on areas to improve and practices to maintain.

2.2 Meso-level analysis

The meso-level explores the interactions between key stakeholders, such as teachers, local suppliers and marketing partners. It also covers the competitive dynamics of the wellness retreat sector. Porter's Five Forces model is then a great central tool for this analysis. This analysis provides an overview of competitiveness and profitability of the project and helps the development of an effective strategy (Van Laethem et al., 2023).

2.3. Macro-level analysis

The macro-level analysis sets results in a global context, taking into account political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, ecological and legal influences. Here, it is the PESTEL tool that is used to structure this approach.

This method indicates what outside environmental factors can impact this retreat project. The PESTEL tool enables us to regroup different factors. The political dimensions include an examination of tourism regulations and different policies. Economic dimensions explore the impact of economic cycles on customers' purchasing power. Socio-cultural trends, such as the growing interest in wellness, offer strategic opportunities, while technological innovations can enhance the customer experience and simplify logistics. The ecological aspect emphasizes sustainable practices, such as the use of local and organic products, while legal analysis ensures conformity with regulatory standards (Van Laethem et al., 2016).

Chapter 2: Data collection: a mixed-methods approach

To meet the research objectives, the methodology is based on a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data. These data were collected via two online surveys (Google forms), a series of semi-structured interviews and participant observation during Revamp's wellness retreats. Each tool was designed to address specific research objectives and to enrich the understanding of both the strategic and operational dimensions of wellness retreats.

1. Qualitative data

One of the pillars of this methodology is based on qualitative data, collected via semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted with various key interlocutors in the wellness retreat sector, with the aim of obtaining a detailed and nuanced view of both operational and strategic aspects. The 11 interviews were carried out between November 2024 and March 2025. Most interviews were conducted via WhatsApp calls for greater flexibility, while one was carried out face-to-face. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Their full transcriptions can be found in the appendices 3 to 11.

The interviews had several objectives like understanding operational challenges and success factors in retreat organization, capturing insights from different professional perspectives, identifying evolving participant expectations and market dynamics and comparing feedback of people coming from different places in the world (USA, Europe, Asia, Latin America). Respondents were selected based on their direct experience with organizing or participating in wellness retreats, or their expertise in related sectors (wellness, yoga business development etc.). The contact was initiated mainly through existing professional or personal networks and targeted outreach via email and social media (Instagram). This ensured diversity of backgrounds (geographical, professional, experiential) to broaden the perspectives collected.

First interviews were conducted with Christian Tripodi, the co-founder of Revamp Retreats, last November. Although an initial, unrecorded interview had taken place, it provided fundamental insights into the strategic planning and growth mechanisms of retreat businesses. Later, recorded discussions explored topics such as marketing strategies, logistics management and business expansion in an international context. These exchanges offered valuable insights about successful retreats and common challenges in this sector (cf. appendix 3).

In addition, between mid November and early December 2024, 5 teachers who had participated in previous retreats with Revamp in 2024 were interviewed, as was Lorena Fasui, a young professional in this sector. These interviews all followed a precise and consistent structure, designed to stay aligned with the research objectives and allow systematic comparison of responses. The guide used to structure these interviews can be found in the appendix 1. These interviews aimed to provide qualitative information on key themes such as logistical challenges, participant management and elements contributing to an enriching experience. Teachers also shared their observations on participants' expectations and gave their personal advice on the topic of retreats as if they were guests (cf. appendices 4 to 9).

In addition, conversations with participants on retreats were also considered. Although these were not official interviews, they provided valuable personal feedback and helped to better understand the key factors behind customer satisfaction. The data collected was particularly useful to evaluate where improvements could be made on the current project.

Finally, interviews with two professionals from this sector, Steffi and Lars, who each have organized wellness retreats before, gave another perspective for this qualitative analysis since it allowed us to better understand the crucial factors of customer satisfaction and retreat organization and gave an outside look compared to the Revamp Retreats team and teachers. Testimonials collected through these interviews play a key role, not only in exploring general perceptions of retreats, but also as a basis to target and sharpen the project (cf. appendices 10 and 11).

1.1 Interview Sample and Distribution

The following table provides an overview of the various interviews that were conducted:

Table 3: Information about the interviews

Name	Role	Organization	Country	Duration	Main Theme
Christian Tripodi	Co-founder	Revamp Retreats	USA based in Bali	2 calls of over 60min	Business development, retreat organization, wellness tourism
Moun D'Simone	Life coach and teacher	Independent	USA	+/- 45min	Retreats organization, management, guest feedback
Allie McLaughlin	Fitness and yoga teacher	Independent	USA	+/- 45min	Retreats organization, management, guest feedback
Noelle Croner	Fitness and yoga teacher	Independent	USA	+/- 45min	Retreats organization, management, guest feedback
Livia Marati	Life coach, and yoga teacher	Independent	Guam	+/- 45min	Retreats organization, management, guest feedback
Rachel Pringle	Life coach and teacher	Independent	Spain	+/- 45min	Retreats organization, management, guest feedback
Lorena Fasui	Fitness coach and retreat organizer	Freelance	Bali & Romania	+/- 60 min	Retreats organization, management, wellness tourism
Lars Bjoern Mathiesen	Yoga teacher and retreat organizer	Employee at Yoga Room Brussels	Canada based in Belgium	over 60min	Yoga, wellness, client expectations

Steffi	Yoga teacher in studio and on retreat	Freelance teacher for studio in Lisboa and for Ancestral Retreats	Germany based in Portugal	over 60min	Wellness tourism evolution and yoga retreats
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1.2 Contact Attempts and Non-Responses

In addition to the successful interviews, several other industry professionals and organizations were contacted but did not ultimately participate:

Table 4: Information about contact attempts and non-responses

Name	Role	Method of Contact	Response	Comment
Slow Down Retreats	Small & new organization of retreats	Personal contact	Declined	Said the scope did not match their positioning
WildlyWell Retreats	Organization of Retreat (very similar to Revamp, closet competitor, same market same locations)	2 Emails + Instagram message	Declined	Polite refusal via email and Instagram from the owner assistant
Coherence Retreats	Organization of Retreat (very similar to Revamp)	2 Emails + Instagram message	No response	No reply after different contact attempts
Le Yogascope	Organization of Retreat (bigger but similar offer than Revamp)	2 Emails + Instagram message	Declined	Polite refusal citing internal priorities
Katja Werner	Yoga teacher, content travel creator and photograph	Personal contact through a friend, multiple emails and Instagram exchanges	Initial agreement but no follow-up despite the many attempts	Despite a good contact (+ high relevance due to her many wellness retreats attempts and a previous thesis of hers on the subject); never finalized

Marta	Yoga teacher at Yoga Room and organizer of her retreats	Informal exchanges only after classes	Scheduling difficulties	Valuable conversations but no formal recorded interview possible
Gabriella	Yoga teacher in Costa Rica on retreats	Instagram exchanges	Supposed to meet in Costa Rica	Hybrid retreat, traveled a lot and could not manage to see each other

Despite multiple follow-up attempts (two to three times per contact by email and Instagram messaging), certain interviews could not be scheduled due to time constraints, operational priorities of the contacted organizations or simple non-responses most likely due to the size of their operations. Despite these declinations, the interview sample remains relevant. This variety ensures a rich qualitative base for analyzing operational practices, guest expectations and retreat market trends. However, it is acknowledged that the limited number of interviews and the concentration on the Revamp network introduces a partial view that must be considered when interpreting the findings.

2. Quantitative data

As explained before, the methodology also relies on quantitative data collected through two online surveys developed via Google Forms. These surveys were designed to explore participants' preferences and potential customers' expectations, measure the effectiveness of the retreat project and guide strategic decisions by analyzing several key indicators. They were structured differently so they could meet additional objectives.

2.1 Survey of Former Participants

The first survey was addressed to former participants of past Revamp retreats. Its main goal was to gather in-depth feedback on their experiences, with a focus on satisfaction, perceived strengths and areas for improvement. The questionnaire consisted of eight sections, covering geographic and demographic data to establish respondent profiles, analyzing holiday consumption behaviors, and exploring participants' wellness-related habits as well as their personal experience of Revamp retreats.. Starting with this group allowed for a better understanding of what matters most to existing clients, offering a solid foundation from which to develop the second survey. In this sense, the feedback served as a valuable reference point to fine-tune the questions posed to a broader audience.

Both this survey and the second one were shared primarily through personal networks on Instagram and Facebook, as well as through wellness WhatsApp groups and then through direct WhatsApp messages to contacts within the travel and wellness industries. The first survey was conducted between August 2024 and March 2025 and resulted in 24 responses from former participants of the four retreats held in 2024 and the first one of 2025 in France.

Respondents to this survey, who were former guests, were generally more actively involved in wellness practices, which aligns with their prior engagement with the retreat experience (cf. appendix 12). Their insights helped confirm the importance of certain retreat elements and revealed areas requiring refinement, such as logistical planning or schedule flexibility. Appendix XX provides the structure of the questionnaire and the access to the answers.

Additionally, informal post-retreat satisfaction feedback carried out with former guests further enriched the analysis by identifying specific strengths and areas for improvement.

2.2 Survey of the General Public

The second survey targeted a more general public, including individuals both familiar and unfamiliar with the concept of wellness retreats. Rather than simply validating a predefined set of assumptions, this survey aimed to explore broader trends: levels of interest in wellness experiences, behavioral patterns and general expectations. The questionnaire was structured into nine sections, some of which mirrored the structure of the first survey to allow for direct comparisons—particularly in terms of demographic information and holiday consumption behaviors. Other sections explored the appeal of wellness retreats among respondents less familiar with the concept, identifying the retreat characteristics considered most important by this segment. This second phase was crucial to expand the scope of analysis and capture the motivations, preferences and potential barriers influencing a wider pool of potential clients including those not yet reached by previous retreats.

As said above, the survey was shared through different networks. In total, 76 responses were collected from the general audience throughout December 2024 (cf. appendix 13).

The profile of respondents closely reflects the typical target audience of previous Revamp wellness retreats: 80% of respondents were women, predominantly aged between 25 and 40 years old, with Belgium being strongly represented (61 respondents) due to the fact that many respondents had access to this survey through me. However, the USA was also represented with 10 respondents, leaving the last 5 to different European countries. In this survey, most people play a sport as their hobby but only a few people actively engage in wellness activities such as yoga, Pilates or meditation.

This combined quantitative approach, integrating both targeted feedback from past guests and broader market insights from a general audience, offers a well-rounded understanding of current expectations and opportunities. It also provides a strong foundation for shaping future retreat offerings in line with real customer needs.

3. Study limitations

Despite its solid foundation, this methodology has certain limitations and it is important to recognize them since they may influence the results and interpretation of the findings. These limitations are categorized according to the different types of data collected: qualitative studies, quantitative studies and observational data.

3.1 Qualitative research limitations

The qualitative phase of this study, based on semi-structured interviews with key actors in the wellness retreat sector (teachers, organizers, participants and external professionals), provided rich and in-depth data. However, an early, unrecorded interview with Tripodi restricted the ability to fully utilize his inputs as well as many other inputs not recorded during retreats. Additionally, a significant proportion of the teachers interviewed had collaborated recently with Revamp Retreats. While their expertise was invaluable, their experiences may reflect specific organizational practices rather than a fully diversified view of the retreat industry. Broader engagement with teachers from different companies might have uncovered additional perspectives. Moreover, although a diverse range of profiles was targeted, including yoga teachers and retreat organizers, the total number of interviews remains relatively small. The qualitative insights gathered, while rich, cannot be claimed to represent the full complexity of the global wellness retreat sector. However, it seems like even though the number of interviews was not huge, information on many topics was validated by the interviews.

3.2 Quantitative research limitations

Quantitative data were collected through two online surveys designed via Google Forms. Despite their usefulness, they were mainly distributed through personal and professional networks, as well as a wellness-related group on WhatsApp. As a result, the sample is not perfectly random and shows an over-representation of Belgian respondents (with a strong cluster around the 24–25 years age range, that represents my peers and surroundings). Unfortunately, the general audience survey only collected 76 responses, while the former participants' survey only gathered 24 responses. Although sufficient for identifying major trends and preferences, the sample size remains relatively small for statistical generalization. Also, even though not verified, respondents were individuals who chose to complete the survey voluntarily, either to help me or possibly reflecting a greater interest or enthusiasm for wellness

retreats than the general population. This might lead to slightly more optimistic assessments of retreat interest and willingness to spend.

Finally, despite careful preparation and pre-testing, some questions may have been interpreted differently by respondents, introducing variability in the answers. Efforts to ensure clarity and completeness were implemented, but online surveys always carry a possibility for unfortunate misinterpretation.

3.3 Observational data limitations

Participant observation during the retreats provided invaluable first-hand insights into the operational, logistical and emotional aspects of the experience. However, as an active participant and the retreat leader, my own interpretations and perspectives inevitably influenced the way I perceived and recall observations. Although I always tried to remain neutral and analytical, complete objectivity is difficult to achieve in action research. Plus, observations were based on a limited number of retreats. While these retreats offer rich and diverse contexts, they cannot fully reflect the diversity of the wellness retreat market across Europe or worldwide.

Nevertheless, these observations were cross-checked with participant feedback and teacher interviews to strengthen the reliability of the conclusions.

Finally, two transversal constraints apply to the whole research process. The first one being the resource and time constraints. The scope of the study had to fit within a master's thesis timeline and resources, while combining my job working on retreat for Revamp. This has limited the possibilities for broader data collection and extensive observation. Furthermore, there is a limitation due to contextual changes. For instance, I could observe that the wellness and tourism sectors are dynamic and susceptible to rapid changes, notably in response to economic, social or environmental factors but as I conducted my research starting in 2024, by January 2025, new reports were published. The trends and participant preferences identified in this study are quite valid at the time of writing but it should be regularly updated if the business is to remain competitive and aligned with market developments.

4. Conclusion

By combining theoretical analysis, empirical data and practical experience, this methodology establishes a structured framework to understand the wellness retreat market and design an effective business model. The triple-level approach, micro (individual participant needs and experiences), meso (key stakeholder interactions and competitive forces) and macro (global market trends and socio-economic factors), provides a comprehensive foundation for developing a sustainable retreat project. The combination of mixed-methods research, iterative refinement through observation, and careful data analysis ensures that the conclusions drawn are both reliable and applicable.

Ultimately, this rigorous methodological approach supports the creation of a wellness retreat business that not only addresses market opportunities but also contributes meaningfully to the well-being of its participants, with a strong focus on authenticity, sustainability and societal impact. The findings from this research will serve as the foundation for the project's operational strategy, helping to define key elements.

Part 3: Development of the project

This third part of the thesis explores the development and strategic feasibility of a wellness retreat project, based on the case study of Revamp Retreats and the work done this past year working and co-leading retreats with them. The objective of this section is to build a purpose-driven wellness retreat model adapted to the European market, drawing on theoretical insights, practical experience and field data to shape a concept that is both meaningful and feasible. This work is guided by the following research question: How can a wellness retreat be designed to meet the expectations of a global, yet primarily European, clientele, while respecting the cultural and social context of this specific wellness market? After reviewing the academic literature and explaining the methodology, this section represents a shift from theoretical exploration to concrete application.

As explained in the methodology, this part integrates a variety of sources: market data, customer feedback, interviews with facilitators, retreat observations and survey results. It also uses the Societal Impact Canvas (SIC) as a guiding structure, the structural “backbone” of the analysis. The SIC breaks down the retreat model into 15 interconnected dimensions, from purpose and audience to societal impact and partnerships.

Chapter 1: The journey to this concept

This chapter explores how the work with Revamp Retreats offered a concrete framework to observe and test different retreat formats and operational choices. Throughout the year, my involvement with the company provided a unique opportunity to examine how retreats are conceptualized, structured and delivered.

The initial objective was not to create a new retreat company from scratch, but to explore how Revamp’s approach could be adapted and reimaged for a European audience accounting for cultural expectations, logistics and market realities. This shift from observation to project design emerged progressively, through hands-on experience and regular reflection. Fieldwork, theoretical insights and personal positioning all played a role in shaping the structure and scope of the final model.

1. The retreats I have worked on and led over the past year

To build a wellness retreat model that is both relevant and feasible, it was essential to draw insights directly from the field. This section focuses on categorizing and analyzing different types of the retreats I have led in diverse locations and with different formats under Revamp (cf. appendix 2). The goal is to get actionable insights that can enrich both the retreat design and the methodology of this thesis. Rather than relying on theoretical frameworks, this chapter brings in the practical perspective: What did the retreats actually look like? What types of audiences did they attract? What worked well and what did not?

The aim here is not only to describe these retreats, but to analyze them as real-world case studies. Each retreat offers valuable information about structure, audience needs, operational challenges and pricing. By categorizing and comparing them, this section identifies the elements that are transferable, the ones that need adaptation and the ones that reveal clear strategic opportunities for a European context.

In other words, this chapter turns experience into evidence and forms a crucial foundation for the design decisions that follow. By applying action research principles, I was able to integrate field-based learning directly into my academic work. Practical experience became a source of rich and meaningful data for both immediate learning through this thesis and long-term strategic thinking for future projects in the wellness retreat sector.

1.1 Categories and characteristics of the retreats

Wellness retreats are designed to meet specific objectives, whether it is to promote general well-being, improve physical fitness, enable spiritual development, focus on emotional growth or even just take a personal reset. By categorizing these retreats, we can better understand their unique features, audience profiles and operational dynamics. This analysis also serves to identify elements that can be adapted for the creation of a wellness retreat in Europe.

Each category is described systematically to highlight their individual concepts, their target audience, their operational structures, their key advantages, challenges and limitations they might face and their cost implications.

Table 5: overview of retreat categories, formats and operational considerations

Retreats	Type	Benefits	Audience	Advantages	Challenges	Costs
"Power & Pause in Paradise" Bali - May 2024	Reconnection and fitness	Disconnect from daily stress Reconnect with well-being	Women seeking physical rejuvenation and relaxation	Physical activity & relaxation Community	Logistical complexities Clients' luxury tastes	High costs: • Luxury venues • 2 experienced instructors
"Rise & Align" Bali - July 2024	Self-discovery and emotional balance	Introspection and self-growth Emotional balance and manifestation	Women seeking personal growth and clarity	Lasting emotional impact and transformation Community	Introspection and group dynamics	Moderate costs: • Strong word-of-mouth promotion due to the teacher: easy to sell all the spots fast
"Modern Dreamer" UK - August 2024	Inner healing and transformation	Emotional healing Deep personal transformations	Women exploring personal growth and healing of trauma	Highly transformative and emotionally impactful	Intensive preparation and follow up	High costs: • Specialized facilitators • Pre-and post-retreat follow up • Very private venue

"Wild Mystery" Barcelona - September 2024	Creativity and sensitivity	Awakening creativity and embracing yourself Empower participants	Women seeking self-expression and empowerment	Unique focus Engaging activities Memorable experiences	Require careful positioning with those themes	High costs: • Very well-known facilitator • Private and beautiful venue
"Commune" France - March 2025	Daily movement and connections	Rejuvenation to nurture mind, body and spirit	Women seeking to reconnect with themselves and others	Community Daily movement Nature	Lack of activities on the properties and surrounding Inclement weather	High costs: • Celebrity teacher (easy to sell)
"Barre & Bliss" Barcelona - April 2025	Fitness and discovery	Igniting energy Fueling the soul Finding the flow	Women seeking to spice up their routine and discover the surrounding	Physical activity Community Discovery	Clients' luxury tastes Inclement weather	High costs: • Private and beautiful venue • 2 experienced instructors • Excursions
"Freedom & Fluidity" Costa Rica - May 2025	Reset and daily movements	Balance Inspiration Fresh perspective	Guests seeking to escape burnout and invite more freedom into their life	Yoga Meditation Breathwork Adventure Creativity Rest	Schedule very busy 2 retreats at the time on site	High/moderate costs: • Luxury eco-resort • 2 very good and known teachers

“Align + soul Pura Vida” Costa Rica - May 2025	Fitness and serenity	Reconnect with yourself Balance of strength and peace	Guests seeking to reset, recharge and realign	Physical activity Relaxation Community	Small group 2 retreats at the time on site	High/moderate costs: • Luxury eco-resort
“Sol & Flow” Costa Rica - May 2025	Fitness, connection and new perspectives	Feeling the energy and radiance of the sun and practice within	Guests seeking to escape their daily routine and connect with their body and others	Daily yoga and workshops Travel and adventure Community	Younger instructor - first retreat Bigger group	High/moderate costs: • Luxury eco-resort • Surf class • Easy to sell due to mainly friends and family guests

As demonstrated in this table and in the chapter that focuses on the type of retreats (cf. above p.), wellness retreats can be grouped into different categories according to their main objective. Some of these retreats are designed to offer a complete reset through daily mindful practices and slow intentional movement. Others aim to fuel the soul, light up energy and create a sense of flow and inspiration. Across all categories, what ties them together is their purpose: to guide participants towards balance, inner clarity and transformation, whether that is through restful introspection or energizing activities, individual reflection or meaningful social connection. Each retreat responds differently to the needs of its guests, offering either calm and quiet for those in search of stillness or dynamic group settings that foster inspiration and shared growth.

One important category is the fitness retreats. They often link to reconnection, which includes daily movements too. Those focus on balancing physical activity and relaxation to help participants disconnect from daily stress and reconnect with their physical and mental well-being. These programs often include a variety of movements a few times a day such as yoga, Pilates, barre or even other strength or sculpt training. For example, the “Power & Pause in Paradise” retreat, held in Bali in May 2024, combined dynamic yoga styles like Power Yoga and Vinyasa Flow with fitness sessions like Barre and Pilates, as well as restorative practices like Yin Yoga. The target audience for this program was designed for women, particularly mid-career professionals and/or mothers, who were looking for physical rejuvenation and relaxation (cf. appendix 2.2). These retreats particularly appeal to guests who are already health-conscious and are looking to maintain or reset their wellness routines in an inspiring setting.

Retreats can also focus more on self-discovery and setting goals for personal aspirations. Often, in those retreats, guests find a balance between introspection and personal development, releasing emotions and feelings in the process, and community time sharing the experience with others and discovering the local culture. Small daily sessions of movement or breath are often added to the schedule as well. The “Rise & Align” retreat, held in Bali in July 2024, illustrated this approach by offering journaling, meditation, sound healing and workshops on emotional balance and manifestation. Unique activities, such as workshops on medicinal plants or a visit to a water temple, added cultural elements, while the intimacy of the group fostered strong bonds between guests. Another retreat that fits right in this scope is “Freedom and Fluidity”, which happened in May 2025 in Costa Rica. These retreats attract people in search of clarity, purpose inspiration and transformation in a supportive and peaceful environment.

Inner healing and transformation retreats form an additional category, focusing on deep emotional healing and personal development. For example, the “Modern Dreamer” retreat, held in the UK in August 2024, offered participants a safe space to engage in deep exercises and inner child work. These highly specialized retreats enable deep personal transformation and have a huge emotional impact, with small groups and pre-and post-retreat integration support to ensure lasting results. However, they often require intensive preparation and involve higher costs due to private venues and specialized facilitators. They are typically hosted in peaceful, secluded settings in connection with nature to restore and led by trained life coaches or therapists.

The final category focuses on creativity and sensitivity, allowing participants to explore self-expression through different beliefs, dance, theatre, spirituality and other creative activities. The “Wild Mystery” retreat, which was held in Barcelona in September 2024, stands out for its emphasis on awakening creativity and embracing sensuality and spirituality. Activities designed to foster a playful yet meaningful connection with oneself were amplified by the retreat's setting in the Catalan wilderness, creating a memorable and unique immersive experience. These retreats are aimed at women seeking

empowerment and creative exploration but require meticulous market positioning to align with their themes.

Beyond the main retreat categories, emerging hybrid formats blend elements such as physical activity, group dynamics and cultural immersion to foster both personal growth and community-building. Some focus on rejuvenation, encouraging participants to pause, reflect and restore their energy through grounding practices like gentle yoga, breathwork or mindful walks. Additionally, retreats are increasingly tailored to specific audiences with distinct emotional needs and expectations. Regardless of the format, whether hosted in a secluded countryside villa or a beachfront resort, the key to success lies in creating a coherent, aligned and emotionally safe environment that supports the retreat's purpose and resonates with its participants.

In conclusion, Revamp's wellness retreats share the common goal of supporting the holistic well-being of their participants. Categorizing these retreats makes it easier to understand their distinct features, operational models and target audiences. In fact, their audience is particularly well-defined, with almost 100% of participants being women and often navigating moments of personal or professional transition such as a change in their career, motherhood, identity shifts or significant life changes. These guests tend to be health-conscious, emotionally aware and motivated by a desire to disconnect from daily pressures in order to reconnect with themselves, their bodies and a deeper sense of purpose.

1.2 Key learnings from the field

While the categories above outline the structure and positioning of different types of retreat, this section highlights the patterns and key success factors that emerged across them.

One of the key lessons from the retreats I led and studied is that structure really matters. A well-balanced retreat should include a mix of physical movement, mindfulness practices and moments of connection. This was clearly observed during the action research done with Revamp during retreats, through guest feedback and interviews with teachers.

Participants consistently emphasized how important it was to have movement sessions, experienced facilitators, well-paced programming and space for meaningful group connection. For example, during the "Modern Dreamer" retreat in the UK (August 2024), emotionally intense workshops like inner child healing or somatic sessions were central to the experience (cf. appendix 2.3). However, participants needed movement practices such as yoga to help release what they had processed emotionally and reconnect with themselves and their bodies. Without this physical release, the workshops could easily become too heavy and overwhelming. This connection between physical and emotional work was echoed by several participants, who highlighted the importance of alternating intense introspection with embodied practices (cf. appendix 4-11, 12, 13).

In addition to movement and mindfulness, guests also appreciated cultural and sensory elements that made the retreat feel special. This includes things like cacao ceremonies and sound healing in Bali, visits to local markets in France, turtle release and surfing in Costa Rica and city explorations in Barcelona. These moments did not just add variety, they made the retreat feel rooted in a real place and gave participants a more meaningful connection to their surroundings. Cultural immersion and new experiences were often cited in the feedback as essential for making the experience not only transformative but also enjoyable and memorable (cf. appendix 12).

A third pattern was the vital role of community. Many guests shared how meaningful the group energy was and how great it was to bond with others, to feel supported and to have space for honest conversations. For some, the friendships formed during the retreat were the most valuable part of the experience. The sense of emotional safety, created through shared rituals and group discussions, played a fundamental role in how participants perceived their personal transformation. Offering post-retreat follow-up, such as online calls or regular messages in WhatsApp groups, helps guests stay connected, continue the work started on retreat and stay engaged with future retreat opportunities. It keeps the sense of community alive, even after returning home. This kind of ongoing connection was described by many as one of the most appreciated and unexpected parts of the retreat experience (cf. appendix 12).

However, not everything works perfectly and there were a few things that could be improved in each of the retreats. Some logistical issues, such as transportation, miscommunication with the venue or delays in meal services, created unnecessary stress. A few participants also reported needing more rest or space in the schedule or on the contrary wanting more activities. These observations highlight the importance of the rhythm and operational clarity, two aspects that can be adjusted and improved in the design of future retreats (cf. appendix 12).

In short, the most consistent elements across successful retreats are highlighted in the following table as the key learnings point observed across multiple retreats:

Table 6: Key learnings from the field

Key Learnings	Examples
A structured program is essential	A well-balanced mix of movement, mindfulness and connection creates a sense of flow and safety.
The facilitator shapes the experience	The emotional and physical depth of the retreat depends heavily on the quality of facilitation.
Cultural & sensory elements enrich the journey	Ceremonies, local traditions or nature-based experiences add depth and memorability.
Group bonding and post-retreat follow-up are crucial	Participants deeply value emotional safety, community and continued support after the retreat.
Logistical challenges need attention	Issues like unclear communication or packed schedules can create stress and reduce impact.

These insights give a strong foundation not only to understand what works in existing retreats, but also to design something more adapted to the European market. They show how important it is to create experiences that are easy to access, connected to nature, built around good local food and emotionally meaningful, while still keeping the deep, transformative feeling people are looking for. Taking all of this into account helps define a retreat that feels more realistic, aligned with what people actually need and relevant to today's European context. The next part looks more closely at these European expectations and how they can help shape a retreat offer that feels both meaningful and adapted to local values.

1.3 Implications for a European context

The combination of field insights and survey responses from European participants (mainly Belgian) reveals several recurring preferences and expectations. These patterns help define how the retreat model can be adapted to better reflect the cultural values, logistical needs and lifestyle habits of a primarily European audience.

All these insights help shape how a retreat could be designed specifically for a European context. While the core structure is a combination of movement, mindfulness, cultural experiences and connection, some adjustments are needed to better match Europe preferences and realities (see Chapter on European Market).

First, the question of accessibility stands out. Unlike international guests who may be more open to long-haul flights to exotic destinations, many European respondents expressed a clear preference for retreats reachable by train or short flights. Environmental concerns were raised several times: some participants mentioned they actively avoid flying and would rather join a retreat closer to home. For them, traveling long distances for just a few days feels “ecologically wrong” as some mentioned that wellness also includes making responsible choices about travel. Instead, they seek more of a peaceful break from daily life where simplicity remains essential. Whether they mentioned Portugal, Spain, Italy, France or Greece, participants overwhelmingly chose places surrounded by nature and near the sea, in the mountains or in the countryside over urban or highly luxurious destinations. What mattered most for them is access to sunlight, high-quality seasonal food and a peaceful, comfortable atmosphere, a break that offers peace and a break from daily life (cf. appendix 13).

Survey responses also revealed the core expectations for a retreat: space to relax, disconnect, eat well and learn something new. Most participants want to leave feeling rested, aligned and reconnected. They also expect experienced teachers and good organization to ensure a more impactful experience. Most European respondents are looking for a balance between relaxation and personal growth. Unlike in Bali, where spiritual and traditional ceremonies are popular, Europeans tend to prefer activities like movement practices, nutrition workshops, life coaching or modern mindfulness tools that are more aligned with their daily lives (cf. Appendix 13).

Finally, intimacy plays a central role. European guests valued small group sizes and informal social interactions rather than large programmed events. What stood out as more impactful for European guests were shared meals, spontaneous conversations and unstructured time spent together, moments that felt authentic and emotionally resonant (cf. appendix 13).

Taken together, these responses indicate that for a European retreat format the emotional and transformative potential of Revamp’s model can be kept but still adapt to meet the expectations of a European audience. The table below summarizes the main points of differentiation and key adaptation areas for a European retreat audience:

Table 7: Design Implications for the European Context

Area of adaptation	Preference
Travel & Accessibility	Preference for locations reachable by train or short flights; strong ecological awareness; many avoid flying.

Cultural Framing of Practices	Preference for grounding tools (e.g. journaling, breathwork, coaching) over spiritual or traditional ceremonies.
Environment & Setting	Strong emphasis on calm, nature, high-quality local food and comfortable but unpretentious venues.
Emotional Tone & Pacing	Desire for emotional depth with gentle pacing and space to integrate, not intense catharsis.
Group Size & Intimacy	Small groups, informal conversation and intimate dynamics are key to building trust and transformation.

All of this leads to the next chapter, where these cultural and operational insights are translated into a more structured framework using the Societal Impact Canvas (SIC). This tool helps shape a retreat model that is not only viable and attractive, but also socially and environmentally aligned with its market. Each of the 15 dimensions of the SIC ensures that every part of the project speaks to both guest expectations and wider cultural and ecological responsibilities.

Chapter 2: Strategic analysis using the Societal Impact Canvas (SIC)

This chapter marks a transition from field observations to structured strategic thinking. This research aims to explore how a wellness retreat can be designed to meet the expectations of a global, yet primarily European audience, while aligning with the region's specific cultural and social context.

To guide this exploration, this chapter uses the Societal Impact Canvas (SIC), the core strategic tool of this study. The version of the SIC used here is mainly based on the model developed by Falize, Hudlot, Cochaux & Drouillon (2018) and introduced during the Master's option "Durability" at ICHEC. Rather than replicate Revamp Retreats' model blindly, the goal here is to understand the underlying principles that make their approach successful. The SIC will serve to highlight these key elements and assess how they could be adapted to the European context. Through this lens, we will explore questions such as: What values guide Revamp's retreats? How is the guest experience designed? And how do they collaborate with teachers, venues and partners to create a meaningful and consistent offering?

The Societal Impact Canvas is built around four key pillars. Desirability (client expectations) focuses on whether the project addresses a real and meaningful need for users or society. Feasibility (logistical and operational aspects) assesses the ability to turn the idea into a practical and implementable solution, considering available resources, skills and partnerships. Viability (economic sustainability) ensures that the retreat can be financially sustainable over time by looking at costs, income and long-term economic resilience. Finally, Durability (long-term environmental and societal impact) emphasizes the retreat's responsibility toward the environment and society, aiming to create a positive and lasting impact for future generations.

The SIC offers a structured framework to align a retreat concept with both its internal values and its external impact, across fifteen interconnected dimensions. To help visualize the analysis, the figure below presents the adapted version of the SIC used throughout this chapter. Each section corresponds to a strategic dimension explored in the following pages.

- Yellow = durability = Strategic purpose & social value

- Green = desirability = Market fit and value proposition
- Orange = feasibility = Stakeholders, governance and infrastructure
- Blue = viability = Financial viability and sustainability

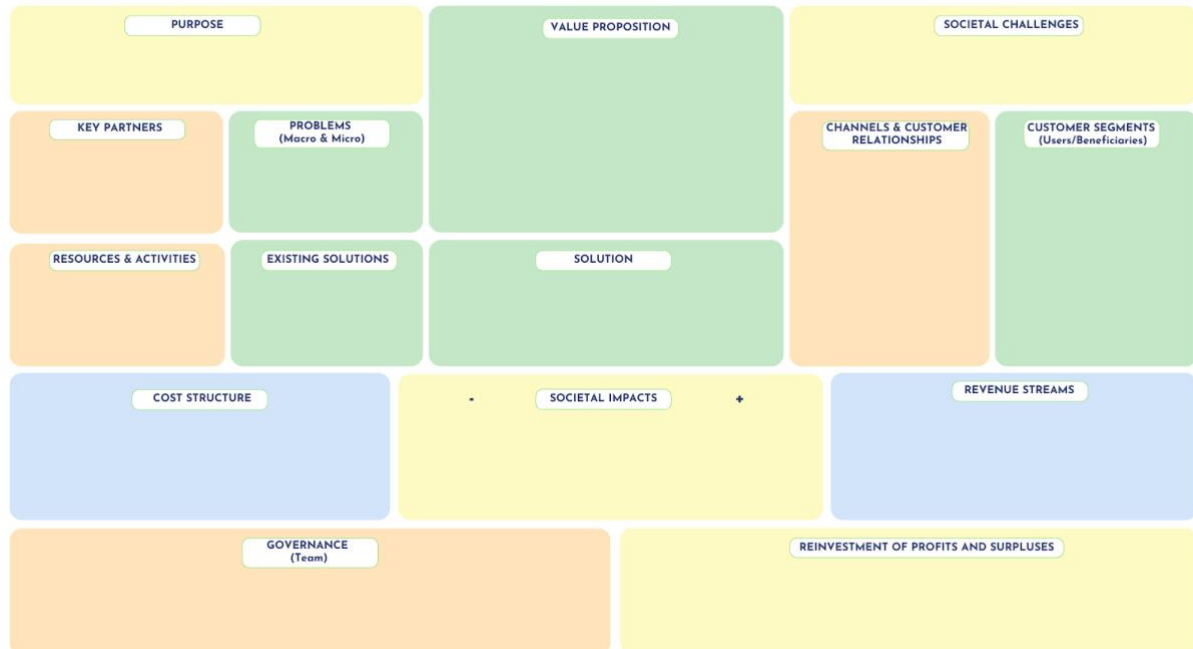


Figure 18 : Societal Impact Canvas. Source: Translated from Falize, Hudlot, Cochaux & Drouillon. (2018). Societal Impact Canvas [PDF].

Each block of the canvas will be explored one by one. For each of them, the analysis follows a two-step structure: first by examining how Revamp currently addresses that specific aspect of their model, then by identifying what should be preserved, adapted or reimagined to better align with the expectations, values and practical realities of the European market. This method allows for a grounded and clear comparison between what already works and what could evolve, helping shape a retreat concept that is relevant to the European market, financially viable and strategically grounded, resonant with client expectations while remaining culturally and logistically and economically coherent.

1. Durability

This first section lays the groundwork for understanding the deeper motivations behind the retreat model. It explores the project's core purpose, the societal needs and the long-term change. By analyzing Revamp Retreats' mission, social relevance and ambition for impact, this section clarifies how the retreat positions itself as a response to broader cultural and human challenges. It considers how profit is reinvested or redirected to serve that mission. All together, these elements offer a view of the retreat's design while examining how the foundational "why" connects to the change this model intends to create.

1.1 Purpose

The concept of purpose within the Societal Impact Canvas (SIC) refers to the fundamental reason for a project and its mission, vision and values. It captures both the long-term ambition and the principles that guide daily decisions. In the context of wellness retreats, purpose goes beyond commercial viability; it defines what the retreat stands for, what change it aims to create in society and why participants would choose to engage with it on a deeper level. These retreats offer a thoughtful alternative to fast-paced,

consumer-centric travel, allowing participants to recharge, reflect and focus on their well-being in a structured yet calm setting. For a project like a retreat, which is based on a mix of emotional transformation with logistical precision, understanding this foundational layer is essential to evaluate a coherent strategy and the impact.

Revamp Retreats' mission is simple but powerful: "to change lives through travel, connection and high-level mentorship", as Christian Tripodi explained (cf. appendix 3). This really reflects what they stand for, the idea that when people are given space, guidance and meaningful experiences, real transformation can happen. Their goal is not just to run retreats but to offer something that feels authentic and deeply supportive (About Revamp Retreats, 2024).

Looking ahead, they have a clear vision for where they want to go. Right now, they are already reaching over 2,000 people every year, but by 2026, they want to grow that number to 10,000. To get there, they have put in place a structured plan using Objectives and Key Results (OKRs). Some of their main targets include running at least 10 retreats per year (with 15 to 25 guests in each) and coaching 100 new retreat leaders through their Academy (cf. appendix 3). But for them this is not just about growth; it is about creating a ripple effect in the wellness world by empowering new leaders and building communities grounded in emotional intelligence, authenticity and care (About Revamp Retreats, 2024).

This intention is echoed by guests and facilitators alike. Surveys and interviews show that many participants come to Revamp Retreats to reconnect with themselves, recover from burnout or find emotional clarity (cf. appendix 12, 13). In a survey: "I needed rest, renewal and adventure to realign myself." Another said: "I needed to find alignment between my mind and my heart." These lived experiences reinforce the retreat's mission and illustrate its deep societal relevance (cf. appendix 12).

This project's foundation also draws from personal experience. After facilitating several Revamp Retreats, I observed the transformative potential of well-designed and emotionally supportive environments. These lived experiences inspired the decision to adapt the model to the European context with a clear personal "why" rooted in the need for safe, nurturing and culturally relevant spaces. This alignment between personal motivation, professional experience and societal need offers a strong foundation for a coherent and impactful retreat model.

To translate this into a design strategy, we can turn to the Japanese philosophy of Ikigai, the intersection of what you love, what the world needs, what you are good at and what you can be paid for (Balemba, E. & al., 2024; Tortu & Gautier, 2021). Guests are not simply looking for relaxation; they are looking for meaning, clarity and connection. This concept not only resonates with Revamp, it also forms the methodological core of this project. The retreat design synthesizes personal passion for well-being and connection, societal demand for emotional safety and growth and business realities such as sustainability and scale. In this way, personal purpose and societal ambition are fully aligned. It connects the retreat's values to broader societal demands such as mental health support, stress reduction and meaningful human connection. Every design choice, from the programming to the teachers and the natural environment, reflects this intention.

As one facilitator described, these retreats are like "vacations for the mind, body and soul" (cf. appendix 12), offering a kind of reset button for participants to explore personal growth and regain balance and clarity. The goal is not just to follow trends in wellness but to offer healing spaces where participants feel seen, supported and empowered.

In adapting this purpose to the European market, the challenge is not to change its essence, but to localize its expression. As analyzed from many responses through both surveys (cf. Appendices 12 and 13), the desire for emotional clarity, connection and rest exists across cultures but how it is accessed and articulated varies. European wellness, for example, often leans into nature-based simplicity, cultural immersion and environmental awareness. That means forging stronger ties to local communities, collaborating with European facilitators, incorporating regional traditions and choosing venues accessible by train or low-impact travel. These choices are not just practical, they deepen the project's alignment with cultural values and environmental priorities, they are key to building long-term relevance.

At its core, the purpose of this adapted retreat model is to remain true to Revamp philosophy, the personal “why” and the societal needs of the European market. This is what the Societal Impact Canvas aims to evaluate: an alignment between individual intention, societal relevance and economic viability. Every element, from the structure of the program to the energy of the group is designed with this balance in mind. Through this lens, purpose becomes both visionary and actionable. As Tripodi said in an interview, “We are a curious and inspired team on a mission to change lives through travel, connection and high-level mentoring.” (Cf. appendix 3) This intention is echoed by other facilitators, such as Moun who emphasized the need to offer “settings conducive to magic” (cf. Appendix 4). These qualitative insights enrich the strategic purpose with lived emotion and authenticity.

1.2 Societal challenges

This project was created as a direct response to a mix of personal and societal pressures, particularly around disconnection, mental health and emotional burnout. These challenges do not appear in isolation. They are connected and come from bigger structural problems that shape how people live, work and travel such as the pace of modern work, the dominance of mass tourism models and the precariousness of many jobs. They show up in daily life for many people, especially among Millennials and Gen Z, generations marked by chronic stress, constant productivity, a fast rhythm of life, digital overload and a deep sense of disconnection. In reaction to those challenges, there is a rising demand for experiences that offer more than just rest. People are seeking meaningful ways to pause, realign and reconnect with themselves and others.

These challenges are not only explained in official reporting, like those shared in the first part of this thesis. It is something participants talk about openly when they join retreats and that could also be found repeatedly in the survey responses from past participants (cf. appendix 12). As one explained: “I needed to find alignment between my mind and my heart” . In the same idea, another participant said: “I wanted to reconnect with my body and emotions. I was completely burnt out” . One participant described joining a retreat with the hope to “learn how to regulate my emotions and leave recharged” . Another spoke about wanting “clarity, rest, and adventure”, while others simply wanted to “switch off the phone and focus on well-being” or “reconnect with nature and find inner peace” . These are not casual wishes. They reflect deeper social, economic and environmental pressures that influence how people live, work and travel.

Some of these pressures come directly from the way tourism and the wider economy are structured. Mass tourism, for example, often favors standardized experiences that prioritizes profit over cultural or environmental preservation. Jobs in these models are often seasonal, low-paid and lacking recognition. At the same time, access to meaningful, restorative travel experiences is far from equal. Certain populations are excluded for financial, geographical or physical reasons.

The first table synthesizes key societal challenges and how they show up in daily life.

Table 8: Explanation of the societal challenges

Societal challenges	Descriptions of the challenges
Mental health and stress management	Rising levels of anxiety, emotional fatigue, and difficulty managing stress affect a growing number of individuals, especially among younger generations.
Work-life imbalance and burnout	The pressure for constant productivity and blurred boundaries between work and personal life have led to chronic burnout and a loss of personal time and space.
Digital overload and isolation	Continuous screen exposure reduces attention span and deepens emotional disconnection, while paradoxically increasing feelings of isolation
Disconnection from nature	Urban lifestyles and modern routines limit people's contact with the natural world, weakening an important source of calm, health, and inspiration.
Climate awareness and eco-conscious travel	The environmental impact of tourism, including high carbon emissions from long-distance travel and overconsumption of resources, contributes to climate change and environmental degradation.

The societal challenges described above are symptoms of larger systemic dynamics, which are clearly reflected in some of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Linking these observed needs to global objectives helps frame wellness retreats as part of a broader societal response, not simply as personal well-being experiences. The following figure represents the 17 SDGs:



Figure 19: 17 SDGs. Source: United Nations. (n.d.). Communications materials. Retrieved Augustus 8, 2025 from [Communications materials - United Nations Sustainable Development](#)

In the context of the European adaptation, these challenges remain highly relevant but may be expressed differently depending on cultural norms and local lifestyles. The underlying needs like disconnection,

rest, clarity, emotional balance etc. remain the same, but the way they are met (through nature, group activities or quiet reflection) must fit local cultures.

Recognizing this shared pressure is a key step toward shaping a retreat model that feels desirable, respectful and impactful in diverse European contexts. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that not all challenges are equally visible in global frameworks like the United Nations SDGs. Some, like reducing social isolation, creating safe spaces for expression, or encouraging regular contact with nature, are harder to measure but still matter deeply. Finally, the following table maps each challenge to specific SDGs, showing where they align with global priorities and indirectly, where they sit outside those priorities but still matter for real-world change.

Table 9: SDGs and related societal challenges

SDGs titles	Societal challenges
SDG 3 - Good health & well-being	Stress, anxiety, emotional fatigue, mental overload and lack of physical activity.
SDG 4 - Quality education	Absence of emotional education and need for lifelong learning and self-awareness tools.
SDG 5 - Gender equality	Lack of safe spaces for women's expression, emotional safety and empowerment.
SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth	Work-life imbalance, burnout, disconnection from purpose and need for better working conditions.
SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production	Overconsumption, unsustainable travel and lifestyle habits.
SDG 13 - Climate action	Long-distance travel emissions and need for sustainable tourism alternatives.

Framing challenges in this way, problem first then SDG link, helps reveal both the human-level struggles and the systemic patterns behind them. It also shows where current tourism models can exacerbate these problems. For example in mass or “all-inclusive” tourism, where efficiency is prioritized over local benefit, seasonal workers are underpaid and even so-called “eco” offers can be more about marketing than genuine responsibility. In the European context, these issues take different forms from overwork in large cities to rural isolation or lack of access to green space but the underlying need for more human, responsible and connected experiences remains constant.

In the European context, these issues look different in different places. In some areas, it is overwork in fast-paced cities and in others it is rural isolation or lack of access to nature. What does not change is the growing demand for experiences that feel more human, more responsible and more connected, both to people and to the planet.

1.3 Societal impact

If the challenges in the previous section are the starting point, then societal impact is about the difference a retreat model like this one can make in that landscape. It is not only about whether participants feel good when they leave but also about whether the experience creates positive ripples in their lives, their communities and the environment.

The impact shows up in different ways. On a personal level, retreats give people the chance to step away from the constant noise of daily life. Many guests arrive exhausted, stressed or feeling stuck, and leave with more energy, emotional balance and mental clarity (cf. appendix 12). The mix of guided practices (like yoga, meditation and emotional sharing) with time in nature helps people reconnect with their bodies and counter the effects of a sedentary lifestyle. One guest shared that it helped her disconnect and return more aligned with herself (cf. appendix 12). For some, this is not just a holiday, it is a turning point. Being in nature, whether in the mountains, by the sea or in a forest, gives people space to breathe and reconnect with something bigger.

At the community level, the retreats foster a sense of belonging that often extends beyond the event. Guests talk about forming “chosen families,” sharing meals made from local produce, and keeping connections alive months later (cf. appendix 12). Local facilitators, chefs and artisans are integrated into the experience, their work recognized and valued and their economic opportunities expanded. This helps create value locally while preserving cultural identity and know-how.

For the environment, the retreats aim to make sustainability part of the everyday experience such as local sourcing, seasonal food, reducing waste and choosing train-accessible venues whenever possible. These choices do not solve climate change but they create awareness and show that lower-impact travel can still be enriching and inspiring, showing guests that comfort and responsibility can go hand in hand.

Like the challenges, the impacts can be split between those that align clearly with SDGs such as better health (SDG 3), informal learning and personal development (SDG 4) and those that fall outside but remain significant, like reducing social isolation by creating links and a sense of community and restoring connection to nature as a form of mental health support. The following table outlines how the retreat responds to the issues identified earlier and thus creates an impact.

Table 10: Retreat contribution to the SDG

SDGs titles	Retreats' impacts
SDG 3 - Good health & well-being	Supports mental, physical and emotional health through safe spaces for rest, transformation and guided practices.
SDG 4 - Quality education	Offers informal learning on emotional intelligence, self-awareness and mindfulness through workshops and personal development tools.
SDG 5 - Gender Equality	Provides safe, empowering spaces. Often women-focused retreats, empowerment workshops, sisterhood dynamics and body-awareness practices.
SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth	Collaborates with local facilitators, chefs and any other partners to promote inclusivity and support local economies.

SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production	Promotes local, seasonal food, low-waste habits and conscious lifestyle choices.
SDG 13 - Climate action	Prioritizes train-accessible venues over air travel, local sourcing, vegetarian or vegan meals etc.

While retreats bring many benefits, it is important to recognize that no model is without its limitations. Long-distance travel, when it happens, has a clear environmental cost. Even when retreat venues are adapted to be easily accessible by train, the impact is obviously limited if participants continue to fly. This highlights the need for both infrastructure choices and behavioral shifts in travel habits. Besides, there is also the risk of not meeting some social or environmental goals due to budget, logistical challenges or lack of local partners.

Pricing, even with tiered structures, can still feel out of reach for some people, which means certain groups remain excluded from the experience. Employment generated for local collaborators, while valuable, can still be seasonal and less stable than ideal. The reach of the model may also remain limited to people already somewhat aware of wellness and sustainability, meaning the audiences most in need might not always be the ones who benefit.

These risks are not ignored. They are being addressed step-by-step. For example, by prioritizing train-accessible venues in Europe, testing more inclusive communication strategies and exploring pricing models that balance accessibility with financial sustainability. As the model evolves and expands in the European context, there is also an opportunity to strengthen how impact is measured, not only with immediate post-retreat surveys but also with follow-ups months later, story-based evaluations and SDG-aligned metrics. This would make impact claims more transparent and would help understand what changes actually last in people's lives.

In short, Revamp Retreats delivers an impact that is both personal and socially relevant, but its long-term credibility will depend on how well it can keep improving in these areas. For many, responding to emotional burnout, disconnection and eco-anxiety with thoughtful, well-designed experiences is no longer a luxury; it is becoming a necessity. The goal now is to keep that sense of integrity while refining our approach, so that the project can continue to grow as a purpose-driven actor in the future of wellness and responsible tourism.

1.4 Allocation of profits and surpluses

In line with the values of the Societal Impact Canvas, this section explores how the profits and surpluses generated by the retreat are used not just to sustain the business but to serve the bigger mission behind it. In the current Revamp Retreats model, reinvestment already serves to ensure quality, deliver premium experiences and uphold a strong ethical positioning, as explained by Christian Tripodi (cf. appendix 3). However, in the European adaptation of the model, reinvestment becomes a strategic tool to go beyond the foundational standards, addressing key contextual needs such as inclusivity, environmental footprint and regional anchoring. The idea is simple: money is not the end goal but a tool to keep improving the experience, reduce the project's footprint and support everyone involved from guests and facilitators to local communities and ecosystems.

Unlike more traditional models of tourism that prioritize short-term profit, this project adopts a long-term, purpose-led reinvestment strategy. The goal is not just to maintain high-end experiences, but to reinvest deliberately to make these retreats more accessible, grounded and future oriented.

Some of the surplus will be used, as is already the case in Revamp's current model, to refine the guest experience, improving things like onboarding, communication before arrival, content design and group facilitation (cf. appendix 3). These elements may seem small, but they make a big difference in how safe, supported and connected participants feel. In the European model, these areas remain critical, but additional reinvestment is aimed at enhancing interpersonal care and psychological safety, particularly in shorter or regionally adapted formats where deeper support might be needed in a more condensed timeframe. The idea is to reduce barriers to engagement from the very first touchpoint, especially for first-time participants or those outside of the typical premium audience (personal action-research management).

Beyond the guest experience, surplus is also used to strengthen the retreat's ecological and ethical commitments. Environmental consciousness is already embedded in Revamp's ethos, but the European adaptation reinforces this through surplus reinvestment in eco-certified suppliers, low-impact venues and promoting train-accessible retreat destinations. This responds directly to SDG 13 (Climate Action) and aligns with both regulatory pressures and participant expectations in Europe. Beyond maintaining green standards, reinvestment here supports innovation toward even more sustainable formats, such as low-travel local editions or zero-waste event frameworks.

While collaborating with local partners is already central to the European version of the retreat, part of the reinvestment strategy aims to formalize and scale this relationship-building process. This might involve allocating surplus to develop long-term partnerships with regional chefs, therapists, artists or eco-farms and not just hiring them but co-creating content, co-hosting events or involving them in pilot programs. This approach supports SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and reinforces authenticity.

Another big priority is making the retreat model more accessible. While the Revamp model has historically focused on high-end experiences, targeting a premium audience, there is a real desire to open up the retreat format to a wider range of people. In adapting this to Europe, reinvestment becomes key to broadening access, not by lowering standards but by diversifying formats. For instance, some surplus could support the development of weekend getaways or 3-4 day mini-retreats in nearby, nature-rich areas. These options would be more affordable, would require less time off work and would be regionally accessible. They are both cost and time commitments and it could be appealing to younger participants or those with limited resources.

In parallel, surplus can fund inclusion initiatives. The idea would be to create scholarship spots for students, people at low revenue or underrepresented groups. These actions directly support SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and offer concrete ways to make well-being more democratic, without diluting the retreat's essence. Basically, to offer a lower-cost entry point, especially attractive to younger audiences or those with tighter budgets.

In parallel, one of the key innovations in the European model is the explicit allocation of surplus funds to evaluating project outcomes and measuring their long-term societal and environmental impact. While Revamp already collects some qualitative feedback (feedback, facilitator notes, testimonials etc.), the European strategy proposes a more structured approach, including post-retreat surveys, impact

dashboards linked to SDG goals and story-based methods to track transformation over time. This reinvestment into measurement and adaptive learning serves both to improve guest experience and to communicate the retreat's societal value more clearly which is a competitive advantage in the European ethical market.

Finally, part of the surplus will support ongoing research and experimentation, a priority in the European roadmap. This includes piloting retreats in emerging wellness regions like southern Italy or rural France, testing new content formats and exploring hybrid or modular experiences. While geographic diversification is already envisioned, reinvestment ensures that each pilot is supported with the necessary resources to be ethically tested, locally anchored and evaluatively tracked. This reinforces the project's capacity to evolve in line with market shifts and user needs.

Of course, it is not always easy to balance this vision with financial reality. Some markets come with higher costs and economic uncertainty can affect pricing or participation. But while many of the actions described echoed with existing Revamp values, the European project's long-term commitment is clear: to treat surplus not just as profit but as a way to create shared value. Rather than just preserving premium standards, reinvestment here becomes a vector for systemic innovation, ensuring that the wellness experience serves broader goals (social, ecological and cultural). Every euro reinvested is not only a means to sustain quality, but a lever to make that quality more meaningful, more equitable and more embedded in the European context.

2. Desirability

This section focuses on assessing the relevance and competitive positioning of the retreat model within the broader wellness tourism landscape. It begins by identifying the key issues, both societal and individual, that the retreat aims to address, before mapping out existing alternatives in the market and articulating how this particular offer stands out. By examining the proposed solution, its value proposition and its core customer segments, this part evaluates the strategic alignment between what is being offered and what the target audience genuinely needs and expects. It ultimately sheds light on the retreat's potential to resonate with the European market in a meaningful, distinctive and sustainable way.

2.1 Problems

The wellness retreat sector faces challenges on macro and micro levels, which require a layered and strategic approach. This section goes through both levels in detail to better understand how the retreat model can be adapted effectively for the European market. At the macro level, a PESTEL framework helps outline the broader environmental, political and socio-economic trends shaping the landscape of wellness retreats. At the micro level, insights from direct participant feedback and action research highlight concrete issues related to accessibility, inclusivity and perceived value.

While Revamp Retreats already operates internationally, this project targets a more defined European segment. The aim is to understand how external pressures and internal limitations shape this sector and how this retreat model can be realistically and sustainably integrated within it.

2.1.1 Macro level: PESTEL analysis

A PESTEL analysis (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal) is a strategic tool used to assess the external environment that affects or influences any business or sector (ICHEC, 2023). In this case, it provides an essential overview of the external factors shaping wellness tourism in the European context.

Political dynamics directly influence how and where people travel. Visa policies, bilateral tourism agreements, and tourism recovery packages all play a role in shaping access. Political stability also impacts how potential guests perceive safety. Indeed, as seen in the contextualization (cf. above p.), safety is an important factor for international travelers when choosing a destination in Europe. According to the European Travel Commission (2024a), political stability is a key concern, and 38% of travelers also value good tourism infrastructure, including reliable transportation and accommodation. The European Union supports tourism development through different programs and rural wellness initiatives, creating a favorable environment for tourism providers.

Economically, inflation and significant disparities in regional purchasing power shape how participants weigh value against price. Despite inflation, European travelers still see travel as a priority, with 60% of those concerned about rising prices saying they will not reduce their travel budget (ETC, 2023). This resilience suggests a continued demand for travel experiences. However, understanding actual spending capacity remains crucial. While 38% of travelers are willing to spend over €200 per day, many others aim for €100–€200/day (ETC, 2024a). In our general survey, respondents indicated that high costs often deter participation, with many targeting mid-range budgets (€1,000–€2,000 per retreat) rather than luxury packages (€3,000–€5,000). One participant noted: “Retreats are generally very expensive” (cf. appendix 13). This underlines the opportunity for a quality offer at an intermediate price point.

Social factors are perhaps the most pivotal. As seen and widely explained in the beginning of this thesis, there is a growing emphasis on self-care, mental health and emotional resilience. Many people find themselves trapped in fast-paced, hyperconnected routines that leave little room for rest or reflection. Even holidays can become stressful due to the need to plan and make constant decisions, leaving travelers just as tired as before they left. This makes the possibility of stepping into a space where logistics are handled and one can be fully taken care of increasingly appealing. After the COVID-19 pandemic, demand for practices like yoga, mindfulness and wellness retreats has grown significantly. However, awareness of retreats as a concept remains low in some populations, with almost half of survey respondents stating they knew nothing or almost nothing about them. Others perceive them as elitist, reserved for younger or more advanced practitioners. They feel like they “wouldn’t fit in” due to age, physical ability or lack of experience. In certain cultural contexts, the stigma toward therapeutic activities makes retreats harder to approach without hesitation.

Technology has changed how people access wellness. Virtual coaching, online apps and digital wellness platforms have made wellness more accessible without needing to travel (Wellness Tourism 2024). While this creates competition for in-person retreats, it also shows how much interest there is in wellness in general and can serve as a gateway for participants to eventually seek immersive offline experiences.

Environmental considerations are particularly critical in the European context, where sustainability is now a core expectation. A study by Nikolic et al. (2021) confirms that European travelers are becoming more aware of the environmental implications of tourism and are actively searching for eco-friendly travel options, such as destinations accessible by train and accommodations with sustainable

certifications. The study highlights that travelers prefer initiatives such as low-carbon programs and the reduction of long-distance flights to reduce environmental impact (Nikolic et al., 2021). However, this ideal often clashes with reality as high train costs in Europe sometimes push toward flights, despite the desire for low-carbon travel options. This tension between environmental ideals and practical realities is a recurring challenge.

Finally, the **legal** framework is equally essential. Operating wellness retreats in Europe requires full respect for legal and safety regulations. Organizers must follow rules about participant safety, health standards and emergency procedures (Brossman, 2016). The book written by Brossman (2016) emphasizes the importance of having solid risk management strategies in place, including arranging complete travel insurance for participants, insulating the company from various liabilities and developing clear policies to deal with emergencies or unplanned incidents. Data protection is also essential, especially under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which controls how personal data is collected and stored (European Commission, n.d.). Legal compliance is key not only for safety but also for building trust with participants and avoiding legal risks, and a thoughtful approach to Legal compliance that integrates the brand's voice and priorities can be a value add for everyone involved.

Overall, this PESTEL analysis shows that Europe offers a strong foundation for the growth of wellness tourism. Political stability, social awareness of well-being, interest in sustainability and the recovery of travel demand all point in the same direction: towards market potential. At the same time, economic pressures, low awareness, exclusivity perceptions and competition from digital alternatives highlight the need for wellness retreats to be accessible, inclusive and operationally excellent.

2.1.2 Micro level: operational challenges from field data

At the micro level, challenges are not theoretical; they are grounded in real participant feedback and logistical insight. This data, gathered through real action research, survey responses and interviews, reveals the problems people face in meeting their needs. The points below group these into clear themes, making it easier to see where thoughtful changes could have the most impact on the guest experience.

Awareness: Survey responses revealed limited awareness among participants about retreats, with some stating they knew "almost nothing" about them. One respondent even admitted: "I knew almost nothing about retreats before attending" (cf. appendix 13). While this is a macro-level market awareness issue, at the operational level it requires better pre-retreat communication materials, accessible explanations of what a retreat entails and clear differentiation from traditional holidays. This lack of familiarity can discourage potential guests from even considering a retreat.

Perceived elitism and inclusivity concerns: Retreats are sometimes viewed as exclusive, aimed at younger audiences or those already advanced in yoga or wellness practices. This perception can deter beginners. Feedback revealed concerns about "not being good enough" (physically or in yoga skills), "being too old" or not fitting in with a presumptively younger or more advanced group. Operationally, this means designing inclusive programming, offering different difficulty levels and clearly communicating that retreats welcome all ages and abilities.

Pricing and value perception: As previously noted, cost remains a consistent concern. While some travelers are prepared to invest in wellness experiences, many target a mid-range budget (€1,000–€2,000) rather than high-end options (€3,000–€5,000). The up-front investment required can lead to

hesitation or exclusion of potential participants. Participants from the general survey emphasized the need for retreats that feel more financially accessible.

Accessibility: Location plays a decisive role in participation. Guests often prefer destinations within one hour of a major airport or train station, with straightforward transport. High train fares in Europe make flights more common, which can create environmental concerns among participants.

Communication: Small but impactful logistical issues can cause avoidable stress before the retreat even begins. Indeed, this stress can often come from small things: unclear packing lists, insufficient information about transport or meals or delays in email responses. These were all flagged in participant feedback and must be addressed through better systems.

Variety: Participant feedback has pointed to uncertainties around accommodation standards, meal variety (especially protein availability), and the range of activities offered. Limited clarity or choice in these areas can reduce perceived value. Teacher interviews have also flagged concerns regarding consistency in meal quality and accommodation, which directly affect the participant experience.

Holiday alternative comparison: Some potential guests question why they should choose a retreat over a traditional holiday package. This comparison introduces an additional decision barrier, especially when the difference in experience is not clearly understood.

These micro-level insights are guidance for a meaningful design. Despite high overall satisfaction rates, these elements underline the need for excellent communication, expanded activity options, inclusive design and accessible, eco-friendly and affordable experiences. By addressing these operational challenges, the wellness retreat project can meet participant needs more effectively and attract a broader, more engaged audience.

2.1.3 Conclusion

This multi-level analysis underscores both the complexity and the potential of developing a retreat offer adapted to the European context. From macro trends around sustainability, mental health and economic accessibility to the micro-level needs voiced by past participants, the challenges are real and clear. Far from being overwhelming, they offer direction. They invite a retreat model that is more than responsive; they invite one that is proactively designed to align values, context and operational precision. The European audience, while sharing core needs with Revamp's current clients, brings its own cultural codes and practical constraints that must be acknowledged.

These insights are not just diagnostic, they serve as the foundation for shaping a model that is both strategically positioned and socially resonant. With that, the next section turns to the current landscape of wellness retreat offerings in Europe, identifying how this project differentiates itself within an increasingly competitive field.

2.2 Existing Solutions

The wellness and mental health tourism sector in Europe has been experiencing sustained growth, driven by the convergence of societal trends such as the rising prioritization of mental health, the adoption of holistic lifestyles and the growing appetite for experiences that promote personal transformation. Public policies supporting sustainable travel and rural tourism, alongside improved mobility within the Schengen zone, create favorable conditions for expansion. However, within the yoga and wellness

retreat segment specifically, the market is showing clear signs of saturation. As Steffie noted during an interview, “Yoga has grown so much that it feels like it has reached its peak. There are more yoga teachers than students at this point (cf. Appendix 11). This observation reflects an oversupply dynamic in which the sheer number of offers is outpacing demand, making differentiation critical.

Revamp has built a competitive position in this environment through a deliberately curated approach to premium wellness travel. Its core offering integrates personalized wellness programs, carefully chosen destinations, collaboration with high-level teachers and an emphasis on comfort, authenticity and human connection. This combination has allowed Revamp to create a strong brand identity centered around emotional depth and immersive guest experiences, as pointed by Christian Tripodi (cf. appendix 3).

From a strategic perspective, the model’s current position is summarized in the SWOT analysis presented in Figure 20. These factors set the stage for understanding how Revamp currently operates and where adaptation may be necessary for the European market.

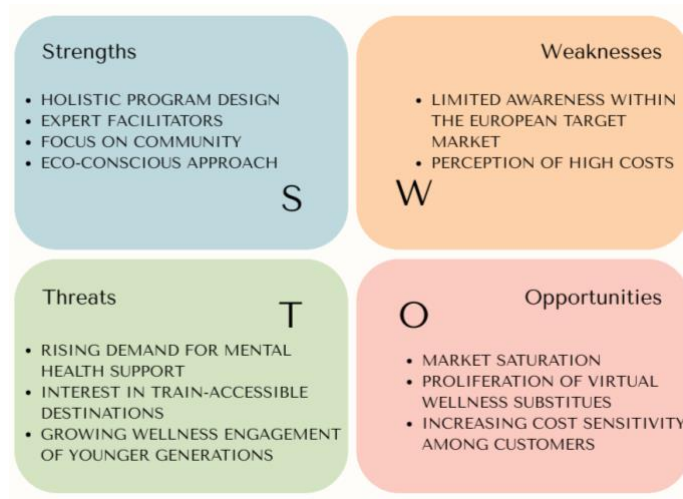


Figure 20: SWOT

2.2.1. Revamp’s position on the market

According to Tripodi (cf. appendix 3), Revamp intentionally positions itself in the “premium” segment of the wellness retreat market situated between basic and luxury. Revamp avoids competing on price and instead focuses on delivering high-level services, thoughtfully selected venues and curated experiences that reflect the value of the investment. As Tripodi explains: “We have, in my opinion, high-level service, resources, amenities, and accommodation. [...] We aren’t cheap, and we don’t compete in the space where most retreat companies compete, which is price and affordability” (cf. Appendix 3). The three pillars of Revamp’s offer (expert teachers, thoughtful planning and unique properties that often handle on-site food and activity provision) are, in his words, “expertly curated.” (cf. appendix 3). This approach creates a guest experience that participants frequently describe as “unforgettable,” “nourishing,” “life-changing” or “well above expectations”. Survey feedback underscores the value participants place on the combination of structured guidance, attentive care and flexible pacing, suggesting that this balance is a significant driver of perceived value (cf. Appendix 12).

2.2.2 Price and value

Revamp's pricing falls at the higher end of the market. Retreats typically range from \$3000 to \$5,000 USD (approximately €2,750 to €4,550, converted for consistency) depending on location and accommodation (*About Revamp Retreats*, 2024). In comparison, in the survey conducted with the 76 persons who had for most of them never attended a retreat revealed that most were comfortable spending between €1,000 and €1,500, with 36 respondents preferring options under €1,000 (cf. appendix 13). Despite this, guests who have joined a retreat before are aware of the higher costs involved, and those who have experienced a Revamp retreat often describe the cost as "fair" or "excellent" value for money, citing food quality, emotional impact, quality of guidance and distinctive locations as key factors in their evaluation (cf. appendix 12). This highlights Revamp's niche: it targets a demographic that is both able and willing to invest in transformative, premium experiences.

To better understand Revamp's positioning, Bowman's Strategy Clock is a useful tool because it shows how brands compete based on price and perceived value as illustrated in the figure below (Bowman & Faulkner, 1996 from Arshad & Yazdanifard, 2017). Revamp sits clearly in Zone 5: Focused Differentiation, a space where higher prices are justified by delivering exceptional value that is emotional, experiential and hard to copy.

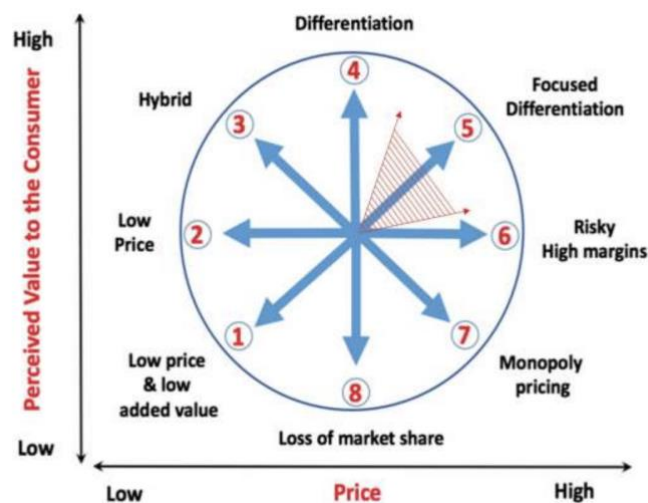


Figure 21: Bowman's Strategy Clock.

Source: Bowman & Faulkner, from Arshad, A., & Yazdanifard, R. (2017). *Investigative Synopsis of Sony Inc.'s Strategic Management Issues / Failures and How to Overcome Them*. 4(9).

For Revamp, this means working with premium venues, partnering with expert teachers and facilitators and creating experiences that are not only beautiful and well-organized but also deeply human and emotionally curated. Every detail, from the flow of the program to the atmosphere of the venue, is chosen to create a sense of transformation and care that guests feel is worth the investment (cf. appendix 3).

The challenge, however, is that in the European market, the value is defined a bit differently. Participant feedback shows that while emotional depth and high-quality service are important, European guests are often more price-sensitive and more focused on practical and ethical dimensions such as sustainability, local authenticity and ease of travel. Many see value not only in the personal benefits they get but also in knowing their experience is environmentally responsible, culturally relevant and accessible without expensive long-haul flights (cf. appendix 12).

This means Revamp's focused differentiation needs to evolve. Instead of relying only on premium quality and emotional richness, the strategy should also highlight eco-responsible choices, transparent pricing and logistics that make participation easier and less costly. The goal is to keep the premium feel

while making it clear that the higher price reflects not just luxury but also a commitment to sustainability, accessibility and cultural connection. This kind of adaptation allows the brand to keep its core identity while aligning more closely with what the European audience values most, a point that will be explored further in the next section.

2.2.3. Competitor comparison

To contextualize Revamp’s position, a comparative analysis was conducted with Wildly Well Retreats, a direct competitor operating in the same premium segment. Both brands target similar audiences, offer comparable lengths and formats, and even use overlapping venues.

Table 11: Comparison Revamp Retreats vs. Wildly Well Retreats

	Revamp Retreats	Wildly Well Retreats
Dates	May 17–22, 2025	May 31–June 5, 2025
Location	Nosara, Costa Rica	Nosara, Costa Rica
Duration	5 nights / 6 days	5 nights / 6 days
Focus	Yoga, surf, yin/nidra	Yoga, sound healing, reiki, etc.
Audience	Mixed	Women only
Price	\$2,790–\$3,950 USD	\$3,489–\$4,400 USD
Activities	Surf, yoga, rest	Yoga, breathwork, hikes
Food	3 meals/day	3 meals/day
Transfer	Included	Not included

While Wildly Well’s prices are slightly higher, the offerings are quite similar. Both brands curate content-rich retreats, leverage emotional and spiritual language and prioritize high-touch service. However, Revamp participant survey feedback revealed a desire for greater activity diversity, including nature adventures and movement practices that go beyond traditional yoga (cf. appendix 12). This comparative case shows that Revamp is not alone in its niche. However, when these differences are considered alongside insights from personal action research, they point to potential opportunities for differentiation through content innovation, geographic accessibility and ecological practices.

2.2.4. Competitive landscape in the wellness retreat sector

The bigger competitive environment for wellness retreats includes boutique providers, wellness resorts, hotel packages, etc. As Tripodi emphasized, the retreat industry “englobes multiple verticals,” with offerings ranging from luxury spa escapes to community-driven retreats (cf. appendix 3).

Revamp’s advantage lies in the balance it strikes between premium quality and a sense of intimate community. Its focus on expert facilitation, group cohesion, emotional safety and curated detail gives it an edge in fostering repeat engagement and word-of-mouth trust. Unlike providers that prioritize only

aesthetics or activities, Revamp invests in emotional experience design, a differentiator echoed in Tripodi's comment: "Our approach is rooted in creating a sense of being special and retained from the very first interaction" (cf. Appendix 3).

From the perspective of Porter's Five Forces, three factors are particularly relevant: industry rivalry, the treat of new entrants and the threat of substitutes.

Within the European wellness retreat sector, industry rivalry is high, driven by both market saturation and the relative similarity of many offers. While the overall wellness and mental health market continues to grow, the yoga retreat segment in specific has reached a point where supply often exceeds demand. As one yoga teacher interviewed observed, the market now seems to have more instructors than students, suggesting that the boom in yoga may have reached a saturation point (cf. appendix 9). Many providers operate in the same destinations, often at similar price points and within the same market tier, whether premium, mid-range or budget, offering overlapping activities such as yoga, meditation and breathwork. The comparison between Revamp and Wildly Well Retreats illustrates this overlap, with almost identical formats, venues and pricing structures. This level of homogeneity makes it difficult for new offers to stand out unless they present a clear and credible point of differentiation. In such an environment, authenticity becomes a decisive competitive lever. Revamp's focus on holistic transformation over trend-chasing, its integration of emotional safety and its commitment to ecological responsibility provide meaningful ways to distinguish itself, maintaining relevance and loyalty in a crowded field where many players appear interchangeable.

The threat of new entrants in the wellness retreat sector is high, largely due to the low barriers to entry. For individual facilitators or small collectives, launching a retreat requires far less investment than establishing a permanent wellness venue, with minimal equipment needs and no requirement for advanced technical expertise. The growing availability of accessible and affordable yoga teacher training has further expanded the number of people wanting to organize retreats. As Lorena (cf. appendix 9), a leader and facilitator in Romania, explained, it is relatively straightforward to benchmark prices, promote an offer online and adapt the program based on participant interest gathered through pre-sign-up forms. These conditions make it just as easy to organize a one-off retreat as it is to host a few small retreats each year without committing to a full-time operation. However, while starting is easy, sustaining quality over the long term is far more challenging. Fixed costs, such as paying venues in advance before participant fees are collected, can create financial pressure, particularly if attendance is uncertain. More importantly, maintaining consistent quality, ensuring a coherent guest journey and building a strong reputation require significant operational discipline and relationship-building. As a result, while new retreats can appear in the market very often, only those that combine operational structure, trusted partnerships and a well-defined brand identity are likely to achieve long-term viability. This challenge is amplified by the high level of similarity between existing offers, meaning that even well-organized new entrants must work harder to present a clear and credible point of differentiation in an already crowded space.

Finally, the threat of substitutes is high, with a wide range of alternative options competing for the same wellness-focused audience. Indirect substitutes come from the broader travel and leisure market like wellness centers, nature holidays, thalassotherapy packages or classic hotel stays, which can offer relaxation and physical rejuvenation but rarely deliver the same depth of emotional connection, community and structured personal growth as a retreat. In parallel, there are more directly comparable alternatives targeting "time for self-care" or mind-body practices, such as personal development coaching, individual therapy or day-long wellness workshops. The most rapidly growing substitutes,

however, are digital: online courses, virtual retreats, meditation apps and streaming yoga platforms, many of which are free or low-cost, allowing users to practice independently from home. These formats provide flexibility, affordability and convenience but they cannot replicate the collective energy, embodied practice and environmental immersion of an in-person retreat. In particular, the combination of group bonding, somatic experience and disconnection from daily routines that remains a unique value proposition that digital or fragmented alternatives cannot fully match. The strategic response is therefore to keep the in-person retreat at the center of the offer while using digital tools before and after the event to maintain continuity and engagement without diluting the transformative impact of physical presence.

Table 12: Core characteristics depending on the type of competitors

Type of competitor	Examples	Core characteristics
Direct competitors	Wildly Well Retreats, other premium yoga/wellness retreat brands	Similar pricing and locations, overlapping demographics (affluent, wellness-oriented, mostly women), premium positioning, content-rich but similar activity mix (yoga, meditation, surf, sound healing)
Indirect competitors	Wellness resorts, boutique hotels, spa hotels, thalasso centres, nature holidays	Offer relaxation and wellness services such as yoga or spa treatments but not the same sense of community, emotional support or personal growth that retreats offer. Standard service and less immersive.
Alternative solutions	Virtual retreats, online platforms, personal coaches, therapy	Lower-cost, flexible, accessible from home but focus on individual practice. Missing the group dynamic and environmental immersion of in-person retreats.

The boundaries between these categories are small and an indirect competitor today could easily reposition into the retreat market tomorrow, particularly as demand for wellness experiences continues to grow. With so many trained yoga teachers ready to lead retreats, it is easier for non-retreat businesses to step in, using this talent pool to make their offers appeal to the same audience as wellness retreats. This fluidity reinforces the importance of maintaining a continuous market watch to track evolving formats and emerging players particularly in Europe, where the sector remains less mature than in established wellness hubs like Bali or Costa Rica.

Yet, despite the saturation of these global destinations, feedback from European participants points to a clear gap: the lack of high-quality retreats that are accessible, eco-conscious and culturally relevant. Many express frustrations at having to choose between expensive long-haul travel to premium destinations or local options that may not offer the same level of diversity or uniqueness they are looking for. Survey insights consistently highlight a preference for train-accessible venues, lower-carbon logistics and formats rooted in European cultural and environmental contexts. This gap represents a significant strategic opportunity to design a retreat model that integrates proximity, sustainability and exceptional programming while preserving the emotional depth, personalized service and transformative potential that define Revamp's brand. Such an adaptation would position Revamp not only to stand out in a saturated market but also to align fully with the evolving values and practical needs of the European wellness traveler.

In summary, although Revamp offers a high-quality, emotionally curated product, it currently operates in a competitive space defined by saturation and replication. The opportunity now lies in adaptation: creating an innovative European model that fills existing market gaps by combining accessibility, eco-responsibility and holistic excellence. This transition will be the focus of the following section.

2.3 Solution

The analysis in the previous section identified clear gaps in the European wellness retreat market, particularly the lack of accessible, sustainable and culturally relevant offers, as well as strong opportunities to create a model that meets these needs while standing out in a saturated market. The solution here directly addresses those gaps, on the societal challenges and macro–micro problems identified earlier. The aim is to design a wellness retreat model that stays close to Revamp’s emotional and ethical foundations while adapting to the specific expectations of the European market. It is not about starting from scratch or simply copying what works already; it is a nuanced recalibration that blends high-quality, transformative experiences with accessibility, sustainability and cultural relevance.

The retreat is conceived as a flexible framework rather than a fixed format. This means it can be adapted to different destinations, venue types and facilitator profiles while maintaining a consistent brand ethos. The program responds to recurring participant needs revealed in surveys and interviews: emotional safety, authentic connection, environmental sensitivity and financial accessibility. It also incorporates one of the strongest pieces of feedback: the desire for more variety beyond a single focus. While yoga remains a central pillar, it is complemented by breathwork, mindfulness workshops, creative expression like painting, cooking, etc., gentle movement practices and cultural immersion or nature-based activities. Guests might spend the morning in deep practice, the afternoon exploring local heritage or hiking in nature and the evening sharing meaningful conversations in a communal space. From a design perspective, the retreat will prioritize a mix of structured sessions and free time. Workshops on emotional regulation, nutrition or creative arts will be integrated with moments for rest, reflection and unplanned exploration. This directly responds to the micro-level problem of participant burnout and the societal challenge of chronic stress, aligning with SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being by creating space for rest, emotional recovery and mental resilience.

This balance between structured sessions and free time has often been described as a key factor of satisfaction by participants. Many respondents expressed a desire for programs that offer "a chance to pause," "room to breathe," and "spaces for quiet integration" (cf. appendix 13). Some participants describe the ideal retreat as one that “gives time to just be,” while still offering opportunities for depth, healing and group energy. This approach directly addresses the micro-level problem of participant burnout and the broader societal challenge of chronic stress, aligning with SDG 3 by creating space for rest, emotional and mental resilience. Beyond the structure of the program, the retreat will also respond to the rising societal need for mental health support by creating intentional spaces for emotional safety, human connection and personal growth. Digital disconnection is intentionally built in. This supports deeper presence, strengthens group connection and reflects repeated guest requests for “no phone, just a book and peace” (cf. appendix 13). Limited digital tools will be used before and after the retreat for onboarding and follow-up, maintaining connection without reducing immersion. This also responds to the micro problem of social isolation and constant digital overload. Technology will therefore be used positively and intentionally, for example, through pre-retreat WhatsApp groups or post-retreat email follow-up, to strengthen community bonds and ensure integration of the retreat’s impact over time. A certain level of technological engagement will also be necessary to maintain operational excellence such as coordinating logistics, managing bookings and ensuring smooth communication with participants.

Location choice is a strategic pillar. Instead of relying on long-haul destinations, the model focuses on train-accessible venues within Europe, ideally combining natural beauty with logistical practicality. Proximity to major transport hubs reduces ecological impact and travel fatigue, while natural landscapes, temperate climates and cultural familiarity support emotional regeneration. Whether in a coastal village, a forested retreat center or a countryside estate, the setting will embody accessibility, beauty and simplicity, aligning with survey responses that highlighted preferences such as “by the ocean,” “in the woods,” or “in inspiring natural environments.” This directly contributes to addressing the macro problem of high-carbon travel and supports SDG 13: Climate Action by minimizing emissions through regional, train-accessible locations.

Europe also offers favorable conditions for retreat development, thanks to the ease of travel within the region, strong public safety standards and institutional support for rural regeneration, sustainable tourism and wellness initiatives. These frameworks make it easier to operate while ensuring accessibility and environmental alignment. They also help build trust with participants, who value both safety and logistical simplicity, reinforcing the retreat’s commitment to accessible, sustainable and emotionally secure experiences.

The retreat will follow a six-day, five-night format, long enough to enable transformation, yet short enough to remain accessible in terms of both time and cost. Pricing is carefully calibrated to balance value and accessibility, staying in a good range: high enough to enable great quality but not so expensive that it excludes part of the target audience. Financial modelling (cf. [below](#) p.) shows that at moderate group sizes and mid-tier pricing, the model is viable but with a narrow margin of safety. Increasing the average price by even 5% or securing just a few more participants can improve profitability, while small reductions in fixed or semi-fixed costs can achieve similar gains without diminishing the quality or value of the retreat experience. This financial awareness is integrated into operations. Seasonal planning is also integrated into the operational strategy as the off-peak period will be used to achieve higher margins through lower costs, while peak periods may focus on maximizing attendance without sacrificing quality. Local sourcing and partnerships reduce expenses, strengthen sustainability credentials and deepen the cultural connection of the experience, all of it aligning with SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production by promoting locally sourced, low-impact supply chains.

Sustainability is not a mere marketing add-on but a structural element of the offer. Meals will be plant-based, seasonal and regionally sourced, with attention to variety and nutrition. Transport options will prioritize low-carbon choices and materials used on-site will be natural or recycled wherever possible. Partnerships with local facilitators, artisans and producers will not only minimize environmental impact but also anchor the retreat in the surrounding community. These commitments can carry a cost premium for organizers, a factor accounted for in financial modelling and one that may be reflected in pricing to ensure viability. This reinforces the project’s commitment to SDG 13. While most past Revamp guests, mostly from the US, did not explicitly demand eco-measures, the European marketplaces stronger emphasis on these values (cf. appendix 12).

Finally, the retreat stands apart from a standard holiday by removing the stress of planning. Everything is included (accommodation, meals, activities and local logistics) so guests can fully relax and focus on themselves. This “all taken care of” element was repeatedly cited in surveys as a main reason for choosing a retreat over a conventional trip (cf. appendix 12).

What makes this model unique is not just what is offered, but how it is delivered. Transformation comes from the combination of content, facilitation and environment but also from the care, intentionality, and

integrity with which the experience is held. Safe, emotionally supportive spaces will be co-created by trusted facilitators, with clear logistics, transparent communication and strong leadership to ensure a coherent journey from first contact to post-retreat integration. As Moun explained, the magic happens when people feel safe to show up as they are, without thinking. This ethos runs through every element of the design (cf. appendix 4).

As a conclusion of this point, it's worth stepping back to look at where our retreat model stands strategically. The SWOT diagram below distills the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats shaping its potential:



Figure 22: SWOT

In short, this solution takes the societal challenges and macro–micro problems we identified earlier and turns them into a concrete solution. It is a retreat model that can be adapted while keeping its core identity and without losing quality or authenticity. It builds on the strengths of the Revamp approach but is revised for the European context. The goal is to create an offer that feels meaningful, works in practice and earns its place in the European wellness market while staying true to its purpose. This strategic foundation is what allows to create complete value propositions, the focus of the next chapter.

2.4 Value proposition

For this retreat model to work in real life, it needs to bring clear value not just to the people who join, but also to the other key people who make it possible. Indeed, before detailing the specific value proposition for our target clients, it is important to recognize that a retreat business model cannot function without delivering clear and relevant value to all its key stakeholders. As seen in other part of this SIC, these main groups are essential: the participants, who live the experience; the facilitators, who bring the transformation and hold the experience; and the local partners, who give the retreat its place and its services through logistics, venue management and complementary services. Each of them plays an important role and if one is missing or if their needs are not met, the model simply cannot work. For this reason, 3 separate value propositions were defined, using the same clear structure learned at ICHEC in the Durability option, ensuring clarity and coherence, while reflecting the specific role, expectations and motivations of each group. This way, each one shows exactly what we offer, why it matters and how it is different from other options out there (Balemba, E. & al., 2024).

2.4.1 Clients value proposition

Our project, the European Wellness Retreat Model, is designed for mainly European travelers seeking depth, authenticity and a more intentional way to spend their time away. It allows them to go beyond simple rest by combining embodied and meditative practices, creative exploration, cultural immersion and time in nature. It achieves this by working with experienced and value-aligned teachers, selecting welcoming and serene venues, taking care of all logistics to remove stress and creating a warm, inclusive group atmosphere. This model balances high-quality experiences with affordability, ecological responsibility and cultural relevance. With the impact of delivering a safe, structure and transformative journey that responds to emotional, physical and ecological needs, it offers a coherent, all-inclusive format where participants feel supported from booking to departure.

2.4.2 Facilitators value proposition

Our project, the European Wellness Retreat Model, is designed for experienced and values-aligned facilitators such as yoga, meditation and creative arts teachers who want to share their expertise with an engaged audience in meaningful settings. It allows them to focus fully on teaching and guiding participants without the burden of venue search, logistics, marketing or participant management. It achieves this by handling all operational aspects, providing serene and well-equipped venues, curating aligned participant groups and offering fair and transparent compensation. Unlike ad-hoc retreat collaborations or self-organized events where facilitators must manage logistics and marketing themselves, our model ensures a professionally managed environment that enhances both teaching impact and facilitator wellbeing. With the impact of allowing them to deliver their best work in a stress-free, supportive context while expanding their professional reach in the European market, it offers structured partnerships, coordinated retreat planning and consistent communication.

2.4.3 Local Partners value proposition

Our project, the European Wellness Retreat Model, is designed for local venue owners, chefs, artisans and service providers who value sustainable tourism and wish to host or collaborate in wellness experiences. It allows them to attract an audience aligned with their values, extend their season beyond typical tourism peaks and generate stable, respectful business relationships. It achieves this by selecting partners who share our ecological and cultural values, integrating their services into our program design and showcasing their offerings as part of an authentic local experience. Unlike short-term tourist bookings that may prioritize cost over quality or sustainability, our model fosters long-term collaboration, fair remuneration and mutual brand enhancement. Local partners will enjoy the impact of strengthening the local economy, supporting cultural preservation and creating shared value between hosts and retreat participants.

2.4.4 Conclusion

By setting out the value we bring to participants, facilitators and local partners, we make sure everyone's needs are clear and respected from the start. This creates trust, makes the retreat run smoothly and gives it more impact for everyone involved. When each group benefits, the whole model is stronger, more reliable and more appealing. This not only strengthens our strategic positioning but also ensures that our offer is attractive, relevant and sustainable for everyone involved. That is what will help this retreat stand out and last in the European wellness market.

2.5 Customer segments (users/beneficiaries)

Understanding who this retreat is for is key to designing something relevant, meaningful and financially sustainable. This section compares two overlapping yet distinct customer segments: the international clientele of Revamp and the European audience targeted by this new model. By examining their demographic and psychographic profiles, as well as motivations, spending behavior and preferred experiences, we can better define not just who we serve but how to build a business model that fits them, as opposed to a duplication of what already exists.

2.5.1 Revamp's niche market

Revamp has positioned itself in the premium segment of the global wellness retreat market. The brand mainly attracts women, who constitute 96% of participants according to the survey data distributed to former participants of Revamp retreats, mostly aged between 25 and 45 (Google Form, 2024/2025 – Annexe xx). Those women come from diverse professional backgrounds often working in high-pressure or care-driven environments. This specific demographic is consistently identified through both internal feedback (surveys) and the external wellness sector research done in the Part 1 of this thesis (cf. above p.). These women tend to be health-conscious, educated and professionally active, often juggling demanding careers while seeking space for self-care, emotional clarity and reconnection. As Tripodi explains, these women “care deeply about their health, mental well-being and finding balance in their busy lives” (cf. appendix 3).

Tripodi also mentioned that the average annual income of their target audience is between \$80,000 and \$160,000 USD (cf. appendix 3). The data collected from 24 past retreat guests confirmed that the average reported annual net incomes was close to \$200,000 USD and some ranging up to seven figures (cf. appendix 12). Their financial security allows them to spend 15-20% of their annual income on holidays, including wellness retreats, viewing these as essential for mental health and emotional wellbeing (cf. appendix 12). These participants tend to expect high-end accommodation, professional facilitation and seamless logistics. They are not just buying yoga or coaching, they are investing in an emotionally rich, curated space that fosters growth and connection. Phrases like “unforgettable,” “life-changing,” and “safe and nourishing” were commonly used to describe past experiences (cf. appendix 12). As Tripodi emphasized, the goal of Revamp is not only to deliver high-end yoga or coaching, but to “offer safe spaces where people feel cared for, seen, and supported” (cf. Appendix 3).

Revamp’s international audience includes clients mainly from the U.S. but also a few from Canada, the UAE and occasionally Europe. This diversity brings a small range of cultural expectations but what connects them is the desire for meaningful transformation and premium experience (cf. Appendix 12).

2.5.2 Target segments for the European market

While the values may overlap, the European audience requires a different approach. This project does not aim to replicate Revamp’s model, but to create a new one, designed for a more local, values-driven and budget-conscious public. The survey data from over 70 respondents revealed a clientele equally interested in wellness and reconnection but with different expectations in terms of price, accessibility and sustainability (cf. appendix 13).

Demographically, this group is predominantly female, with 80% of survey respondents identifying as women. The largest age group, as represented in the following graph, is between 25 and 34 years old, representing 58% of respondents, followed by the under-25 age group with 20%.

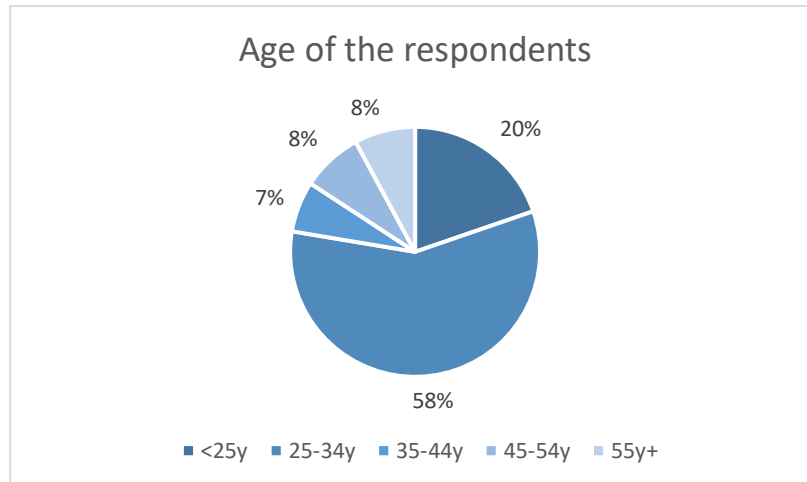


Figure 23: Age distribution (in %)

They come from diverse professional backgrounds including many students, entrepreneurs, educators, consultants, healthcare professionals etc. Geographically, 72% of respondents are based in Belgium, predominantly in Brussels (cf. Appendix 13).

Among those who agreed to disclose their annual salary, approximately 45% fall within the range of 25,000€ to 34,999€. The remaining percentage can largely be explained by the high proportion of students in the sample. Consequently, the share of income allocated to holidays also varies according to professional status, although the overall average remains around 15%.

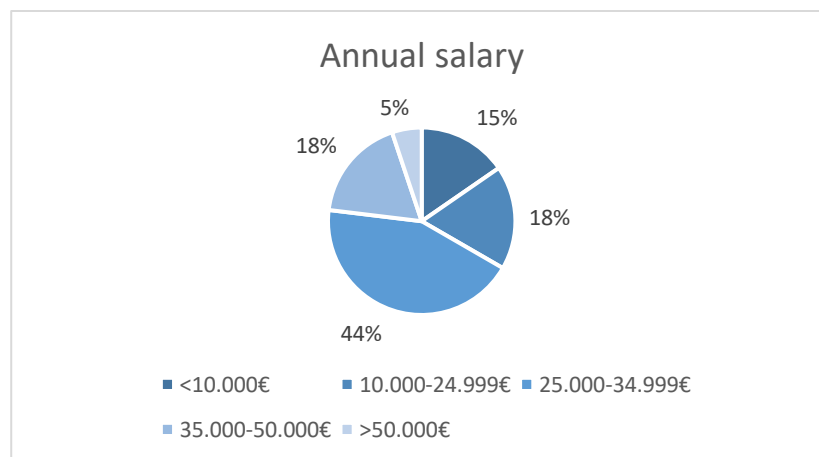


Figure 24: Salary range breakdown (in %)

Psychographically, respondents shared a desire for digital disconnection, emotional reset, time in nature, personal reflection and creative expression. Participants expressed interest in structured programs combining a mix of yoga, hiking, creative workshops (such as painting, journaling or cooking), mindfulness activities and eating healthy food. Several also mentioned Pilates and other sports, spa treatments or even nutrition workshops, showing that health-related retreats are not limited to emotional support but include physical and dietary components too (cf. Appendix 13).

Many also mentioned wanting to travel within Europe, especially to train-accessible destinations. Countries like Spain, Portugal, Greece and Italy were mentioned as examples that are attractive for their nature, climate and cultural offerings. Some also mentioned not needing to go far and 65% confirmed being interested in a retreat in their own country. One participant even noted: “There’s no need to go far

to disconnect. Belgium has beautiful places. What I need is guidance, calm, and community” (cf. appendix 13). Many mentioned the affordability to not have to pay for transportation if they stay in their country: “It would be convenient to spare the travel expenses and it would be better for the planet not having to go too far” (cf. Appendix 13).

What really stands out is the focus on authenticity over luxury. Many expressed a preference for simple, meaningful experiences over high-end “Instagrammable” ones. Comfort is still important, but it must feel real, not staged. This also ties to concerns about eco-responsibility and slow travel. Local food, train-accessible locations and venues with low environmental impact were frequently mentioned (cf. Appendix 13).

Indeed, the Europeans from this survey place greater emphasis on affordability and ecological responsibility. Several respondents cited “price” and “distance” as barriers to participation in international retreats. The ideal price range for a six-day retreat fell between €800 and €1,500, although a smaller part was willing to pay up to €2,500 or more for more premium, luxury experiences. Compared to the Revamp model, this reflects a completely different budget range, and calls for a more flexible, tiered pricing model, as opposed to a “one-size-fits-all” premium formula (cf. Appendix 13).

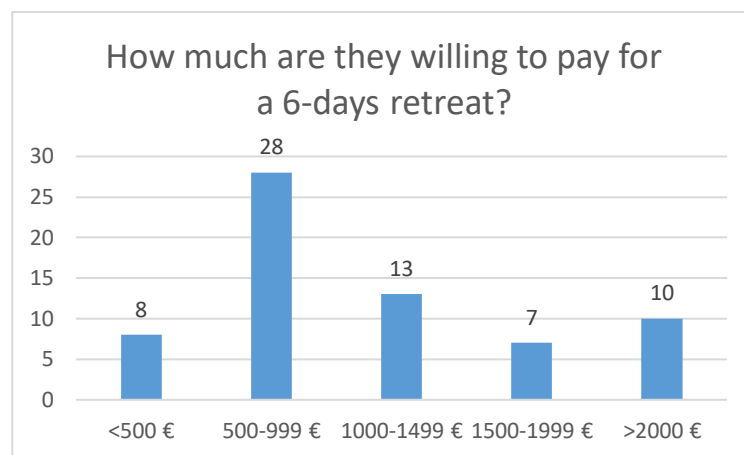


Figure 25: Distribution of willingness to pay for a 6-days retreat across price categories

Although women aged 25–45 remain the core target, other groups may emerge. Male respondents, who made up 20% of the survey sample, also showed some interest in mixed-gender retreats, appreciating the balance and diversity that they bring. In addition, some people may seek similar experiences with different pacing or focus areas. These are valuable secondary segments for future diversification, including potential B2B formats or workplace retreats mentioned by some respondents (cf. appendix 13).

2.5.3 Conclusion

In summary, this retreat model is designed for two distinct yet overlapping audiences. The first is Revamp’s established premium clientele, mainly international, with high purchasing power, strong emotional awareness and a proven appetite for transformational experiences. While this group could be interested in a European version of the retreat, they are not the main focus.

The second and primary audience is the emerging European wellness traveler. Like the first group, they are motivated by an appetite for transformational experiences that foster emotional safety, personal growth and meaningful connection. However, they place stronger emphasis on accessibility, ecological

responsibility and cultural authenticity. Their budgets are generally lower, their travel preferences lean towards train-accessible destinations and their definition of “value” is more connected to ethics and authenticity than to luxury for its own sake.

Both groups converge on core needs: emotional safety, holistic well-being, human connection and a balance of structure and freedom. By designing a business model that is rooted in the European market’s realities, rather than simply replicating the existing Revamp approach, the project aims to offer a product that is both aspirational and attainable, emotionally rich and logistically coherent. This dual strategy ensures commercial viability while reinforcing the retreat’s social and environmental relevance in the European wellness tourism market.

3. Feasibility

This section analyzes the internal and external structures that enable the retreat model to function, from key collaborators to delivery mechanisms and internal decision-making processes. It explores how Revamp builds relationships with guests, partners and facilitators, and how these connections contribute to the overall guest experience. Special attention is given to the team members, resource management and core activities, as well as to the infrastructure that supports program execution. By mapping out the operational backbone and key stakeholder dynamics, this part highlights the foundational ecosystem behind a premium retreat offering and how it must evolve to ensure sustainable accessibility, strategic partnerships and an efficient go-to-market strategy within a European context.

3.1 Channels and customer relations

In the wellness retreat sector, the way the value proposition is communicated and delivered is just as critical as the value proposition itself. From the initial point of discovery to the final follow-up after the retreat, each stage of the participant’s journey is designed to foster emotional safety, trust and belonging. This section examines the channels and relationship-building strategies used by Revamp, while exploring how they may need to be adapted within the European market. It draws from interviews, participant surveys and professional field observations, aligning with the Societal Impact Canvas’s focus on human-centered delivery mechanisms and meaningful relational systems.

3.1.1 Communicating the experience: discovery and connection

For Revamp, communication is not just about marketing; it is a means of creating a sense of emotional safety and resonance from the very first contact. How people hear about the retreats says a lot about what they value the most, not just offers and destinations but people and experience.

According to a survey conducted among past participants (cf. appendix 12), the top discovery channel was teachers, mentioned by 66.7% of respondents. This shows how essential facilitators are, not only for the retreat experience itself, but also as trusted stewards of the brand who introduce people to Revamp. Several participants even named specific teachers as their main motivation for attending, reinforcing the idea that the person delivering the experience is often more important than the format itself.

Social media, especially Instagram, was the second most common entry point (58%), followed by word of mouth (50%). On Instagram, Revamp does not sell a product, it tells a story. Through personal testimonials and photos and video content that reflect emotional presence, the goal is to help people see themselves in the experience. As Tripodi puts it: “We don’t push sales. We tell stories and let people

find themselves in them” (cf. appendix 3). Concerning the word-of-mouth, this is perhaps the most telling indicator of relationship-based success since the emotional quality of the retreat is so strong that it becomes shareable. Many participants book not because of a promotion but because someone they trust told them it was life changing.

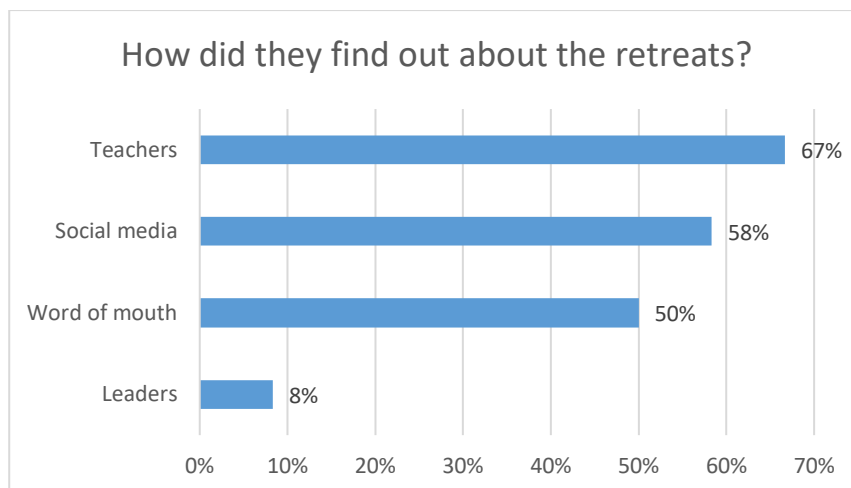


Figure 26: How participants find out about the retreats?

The website also plays a key role. It presents not just logistics but values through facilitator bios, past participant testimonials and a strong, coherent visual identity. Meanwhile, the newsletter provides a softer point of contact with early-bird offers, facilitator spotlights and behind-the-scenes updates that maintain a gentle but consistent presence.

From discovery, marketing performance is tracked through metrics like open rates, clicks, repeat bookings and conversion rates. But the focus of this project will remain on building a relationship, not just a transaction. To ensure relevance and emotional alignment, a feedback-informed approach will guide ongoing improvements. For example, if a notable number of guests express confusion about travel logistics and this is validated as a recurring priority issue, automated welcome packs and clearer FAQs may be introduced. If email engagement drops, the tone or structure of newsletters may be adjusted. This iterative, guest-centered process allows the communication strategy to stay dynamic and responsive while preserving its emotional integrity.

Word of mouth may take longer to develop in a new market like Europe, that is why teachers, as relational anchors, will continue to be key partners in expanding visibility organically. Facilitators often promote the retreats within their own networks, effectively turning teachers into micro-ambassadors for the brand. Tripodi describes this approach as non-intrusive: “We don’t push sales. We tell stories and let people find themselves in them” (cf. Appendix 3).

3.1.2 Relationships with participants

At Revamp, the customer relationship is not something that happens during the retreat, it starts well before. Once someone books a retreat, they receive a series of personal emails, practical documents and often a call to answer questions and ease any doubts. This early contact creates a sense of care and attention. Participants know they will be held, not just hosted (cf. appendix 3).

During the retreat, everything is designed to feel both intentional and human. Group size is deliberately limited, often between 12 and 18 participants to ensure intimacy and real connection. Opening rituals

help set the tone and facilitators remain deeply attentive to group dynamics throughout the experience. The rhythm includes structured workshops as well as unstructured time, space for people to reflect, rest or just be. As one participant shared: “The free time forced me to be present and let go” (cf. appendix 12). Throughout the experience, facilitators are attuned to group dynamics, adjusting pacing and structure to meet emotional needs.

After the retreat, the relationship does not end. Participants are invited into post-retreat WhatsApp groups, integration calls and sometimes alumni meetups or online rituals. The intention is not solely to “retain” clients but also to honor the process that was started and to offer space for it to continue. Retention is nonetheless an important outcome, as nurturing these long-term connections supports both the community and the sustainability of the business. These initiatives maintain the emotional thread, transforming a one-time experience into a long-term relationship. Many participants describe meeting “women who felt like family” and report a sense of community that extends well beyond the retreat itself (cf. appendix 12).

Loyalty here is created not through tactics, but through resonance. Participants are not just customers, they are a co-journeyer whose trust and investment are reciprocated through care, presence and continuity. To maintain this connection, the team offers light-touch initiatives between retreats, including post-retreat content such as rituals, playlists or journaling prompts, invitations to online workshops or free integration calls, alumni gatherings both virtual and in-person and early-bird offers for returning guests. None of these are framed as “funnels”; they are simply invitations to continue the journey, if and when it feels right.

This authenticity aligns with the SIC principle of non-extractive marketing, which aims to build genuine trust and resonance rather than relying on pressure-based tactics or conversion-driven messaging. Building trust and resonance can, in turn, support a healthy marketing funnel, ensuring that relationships not only feel authentic but also sustain the business over time. Rather than pushing people to come back, the goal is to remain present in their lives so that, if they choose to return, the door is open.

3.1.3 Conclusion

What distinguishes Revamp and what will define its growth in Europe is not simply the content of its offerings. It is the care and coherence with which those offerings are delivered. From Instagram posts to follow-up calls, every interaction is designed to hold space.

Notably, both the general audience survey and the one conducted with former participants included the same question: “How did you find out about these retreats?” The results were consistent: teachers, social media and word of mouth were the top three channels in both groups. This suggests that in the European market, we can rely on these same foundations, particularly the influence of facilitators and the storytelling power of social media. Word of mouth, however, may take longer to grow organically in contexts where the brand is still emerging. That makes teachers especially valuable as relational entry points into new local networks.

The core challenge will be preserving intimacy while expanding reach. This will require balancing automation with personal touch, local adaptation with brand coherence and efficiency with emotional presence. By grounding the model in trust-based communication and genuine human connection, the retreat experience remains not just a product to be consumed but a relationship to be entered and remembered.

The next 2 sections will explore how this relationship-based model is supported operationally through key partnerships and governance structures.

3.2 Key partners

The success of a retreat depends on many people. While the experience is held together by the internal team, it really comes to life through a whole ecosystem of partners, people who cook the food, host the space, guide the sessions, help with logistics and bring their own energy and expertise to the retreat. These partners are not just here to “provide a service”; they co-create the atmosphere, the flow and the emotional quality of the retreat. Without them, the retreat would not feel whole.

In the case of Revamp, this relationship-based model has always been central to its brand. Whether it is teachers, chefs, venue hosts or coordinators, the company works with people who share similar values and a sense of purpose. As observed during field experience and confirmed in interviews, Revamp avoids traditional hierarchical structures in favor of more collaboration and mutual respect. As Tripodi explains: “We don’t work for each other, we work with each other. Our retreats are built on trust, shared vision, and high standards” (cf. appendix 3). The way these relationships are structured and how decisions are made together will be explored more deeply in the following section on governance.

To bring this model to our European concept in a way that is both adapted and sustainable, we need to take a closer look at who the key partners are and what kind of relationships are built with them. The objective here is to understand each partner’s role, how important they are according to the guest experience and how easily (or not) they could be replaced if needed. For example, finding a good yoga teacher or transformational coach is much harder than changing a transport provider and the emotional impact is totally different. So it makes sense to invest more in the relationship with the teacher.

For this section we use a visual map, an ecosystem circle, to help see where each partner stands in the bigger picture. Each of them has been carefully positioned on an ecosystem map according to its degree of engagement, co-creation potential and emotional or operational centrality. This map below has five levels. At the center, in yellow, are the strategic partners: the core co-creators whose roles are essential and hard to replace. In the next circle, in light green, are the involved partners, these are people we bring in regularly who add real depth to the retreat. Further out, in dark green, are the supporting partners who help give the retreat visibility but are not involved in the delivery itself. Then, in turquoise, we find the interested actors, people or groups who are aware of the project and might get involved later. Finally, in the outermost circle, in dark blue, are the users.

The figure below illustrates the map of the different partners identified within the framework of this project. The different categories and the explanation of each partner's placement are detailed in the following paragraphs.

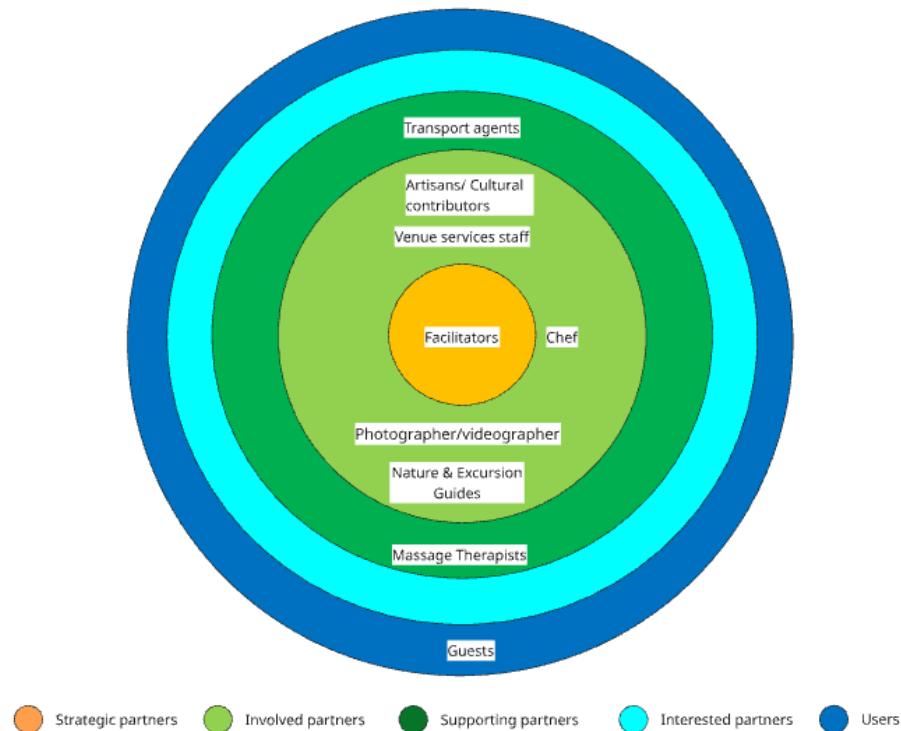


Figure 27: ecosystem of the key partners.

Adapted from : Drouillon, P., Hudlot, B., Verhasselt, P. (2022a). Partenariat et écosystèmes [Powerpoint].

In order to align this ecosystem map with guest priorities, survey data was also collected. Participants were asked what elements of the retreat were most important to them. The results clearly showed that the quality of teaching and the teacher was the top priority, for 92% of the respondents. This was followed by location (71%), accommodation (67%), food (59%), and community (44%). Price, small group size and accessibility were also mentioned, though less frequently (cf. Appendix 12).

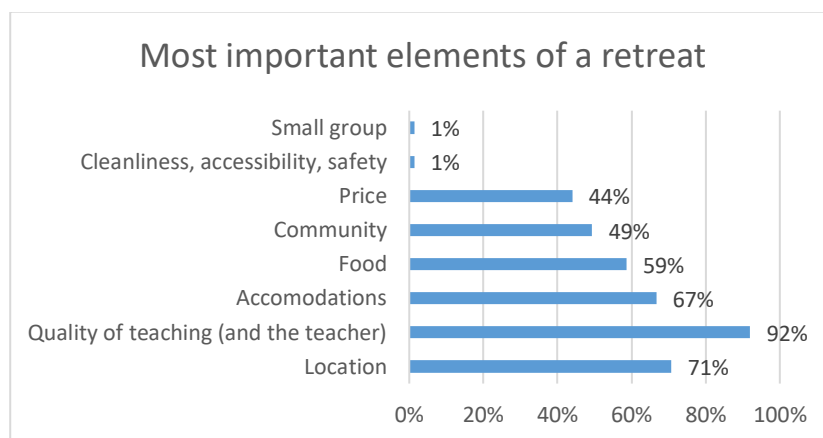


Figure 28: The most important elements of a retreat (in %).

These results highlight the central role of the facilitator in the retreat experience. They are the people at the core of this ecosystem. They are the teachers (yoga, Pilates, etc.), life coaches, psychologists, therapists or other kind of movement leaders who guide the group and hold the emotional space. In every survey and interview, this is what guests highlight as the most important part of the experience. In fact, many people said they signed up because of a specific facilitator. That is why this role is considered completely central: it has a huge impact, and it is very hard to replace.

Then comes the venue, which entails more than just the physical space. Of course, the building, nature, comfort and sustainability features matter, but these are better seen as resources. Thanks to my participation at several retreats, I can say that what really makes a venue a “partner” is the people who run it. Hosts, housekeepers and coordinators on site are the team that makes sure the retreat feels safe, clean, organized and calm. At Can Vital for example, a venue in Catalonia where 2 retreats were led over the course of this research, this human presence is already strong with a beautiful team working on site, helping at any time and communicating through a very responsive WhatsApp channel for any need. The team is experienced with wellness groups and knows how to adapt to our rhythm (like silence hours, free time by the pool or meal timing in the house). They are there but not over present.

As seen above, food is also a big part of the experience for guests. Not just for health but because it brings people together. Having a great chef working for the retreat is a very important partnership. If the facilitators make sure to nourish participants’ minds, the chef is responsible for nourishing their bodies. This chef is in charge of the menu, which needs to accommodate every guest, accounting for food preferences, allergies etc. As this person will be there on-site constantly, they are an “involved partner”. They support the retreat from behind the scenes, but their role is still essential. This setup also strengthens our connection to the local economy and food systems, which is part of our sustainability goals, explains Tripodi (cf. Appendix 3).

Another key involved partner is the photographer/videographer. While the photographer is not directly shaping the retreat’s program, they play an important role in capturing its atmosphere, energy and special moments. High-quality images and videos help participants relive the experience long after it ends, and they also become valuable tools for sharing the retreat’s spirit with future guests, supporting the business side of the retreat by providing authentic visual content for marketing purposes.

Another partner group is the creative and cultural contributors. These are people who lead small workshops during the retreat like a pottery session, a traditional dance class, a sound healing session or even something more specific to the culture. For example, during one of the retreats in Bali, guests learned to make their own medicinal drinks with a local and watched traditional Balinese dancing. In Costa Rica participants practiced surfing with locals and in France went wine tasting in a local vineyard. These workshops usually happen once or twice during the retreat but they add a lot in terms of creativity, embodiment and cultural depth. These contributors are considered “involved partners”: they are not part of the whole retreat, but they shape its cultural tone, precise Tripodi (cf. Appendix 3).

The same goes for nature guides and excursion hosts. Participants often say they want to reconnect with nature, and activities like hiking in Montserrat mountain, discovering a Balinese temple and rice paddy or turtle watching at sunrise during nesting season in Costa Rica offer another value to the retreat and a necessary balance to the internal work. Local guides play an important role in these moments. Some may also share knowledge about the landscape or local ecology, which makes the experience even more meaningful. While they are not full-time collaborators, it is important to build long-term relationships with those who really get the idea of the retreat.

Around this operational core, there are also some external supporting partners such as wellness therapists for massages, bike providers, taxi drivers, etc. They do not take part in the retreat itself but they help for small tasks. They are a bit further out in the ecosystem map as they are constantly different but they still play a real role in helping the retreat thrive.

Finally, there are the guests, the participants of the retreat. They are not “partners” in the same sense but their role is huge. They give feedback, spread the word, recommend the retreat to friends and can come back to another retreat. So while they’re on the outside part of the ecosystem map, they are still essential to the system’s health.

This partner map, supported by guest survey data, offers a practical and human way to organize these relationships and helps see where to focus the most, and what to keep at the heart of the retreat. Strategic partners like facilitators or coordinators add richness and depth. Supporting and interested partners can grow over time. And participants bring the whole thing to life. The next chapter will look at how the internal governance, the way of organizing and working as a team, supports this partnership model.

3.3 Governance (team)

The governance model behind this retreat project is inspired by clarity, collaboration and emotional intelligence. It reflects the same values that define the guest experience (care, co-creation and shared responsibility) and adapts them into the way the team works behind the scenes. This chapter explains how decisions are made internally within the retreat team and how external stakeholders (facilitators, chefs, venue staff, local partners etc.) are involved in shaping the experience.

Inside the retreat organization, things are intentionally kept simple. There is no strict hierarchy or corporate structure. Instead, responsibilities are shared based on trust, skill and experience. Even though Revamp is not a cooperative, the logic of collaboration, autonomy and mutual respect is very present in the way teams are built.

As Tripodi said: “The idea is not to have one person running everything from the top. We work with people we trust, people who bring their own leadership and care to the project. Everyone brings their expertise and we all listen” (cf. appendix 3).

From my experience, during retreats, each person in the team has a clear role, but no one is “above” the others. Decisions are made mostly collectively before the retreat and on site. Coordination happens in real time through open communication and a shared understanding of what matters most.

The core team typically in the idea of this project consists of three people: a retreat director, a logistics coordinator and a retreat leader. The retreat director creates the entire retreat, leads the planning, secures partnerships and manages the budget. This person holds the bigger vision and makes sure all choices stay aligned with the retreat’s values, validating all final decisions.

Another part of the internal team is the operations and logistics coordinator. This person’s responsibilities range from guest communication and registration to transport organization, scheduling, materials management and liaising with third-party suppliers or venue teams. They also oversee pre-retreat communication including emails, information lists and WhatsApp group facilitation as well as post-retreat follow-up through feedback forms and emails. Guests often say it feels like “everything just worked,” and that is because someone was making sure of it. As one participant put it: “Everything was perfectly organized; I had nothing to think about” (cf. appendix 13). Several teachers, including Moun (cf. appendix 4), have emphasized that a professional logistics team is essential to ensuring a secure and serene experience for both staff and participants.

Finally, the retreat leader who, in parallel with the coordinator, helps oversee the final details before the retreat and handles everything on-site, from logistics to the organization, activities or guest relations

with constant on-site support. Everything goes through the retreat leader during the retreat, and they serve as the main stream of communication between everyone.

Everyone brings something essential to the table, and even if the responsibilities are divided, team check-ins help make shared decisions when needed, especially during the retreat itself. These roles are chosen not just based on skills but also on emotional maturity and the ability to co-create safe, high-quality experiences. However, not everyone involved in the retreat is part of the internal core team. Some are external collaborators, yet their impact on the retreat is just as strong.

For example, facilitators (teachers, life coaches, etc.) are a special case. Technically, they are not employed by the retreat company and do not belong to the formal business structure. But in practice they are at the heart of the experience. The entire program is often designed around them, their tone sets the rhythm of the week, their expertise shapes the emotional arc of the retreat and in many cases, they are the reason why guests choose to come. As one survey respondent explained when referring to teacher Kristin McGee, “The attraction was the retreat with Kristin McGee. That led me to initially sign up.” For this reason, they are considered “internal” to the retreat itself, even if they are external to the business. In terms of governance, they are co-deciding with the retreat director during the planning phase, for example, when designing the weekly flow, choosing themes or planning content. During the retreat, they become co-decision makers with the retreat leader: adjusting sessions based on group energy, shifting timing or handling group dynamics. Their presence is not just functional; it is foundational.

There are also the “support partners” who contribute to the retreat through their skills or services, without being part of the core team. Their involvement varies, with some present all week and deeply involved, while others play a smaller or one-off role. For clarity, they can be grouped in two main categories.

First there are the regularly involved partners. This includes chefs and other kitchen teams, and the venue owner and the staff who are on-site throughout the retreat. For some retreats we can also consider a videographer/photographer part of this.

Chefs are usually consulted during the strategy phase, helping build menus, planning around nutrition or sustainability goals and co-deciding on unplanned issues that could come up during the retreat itself like adapting the menu or schedule of the meals to the flow of the day or to group needs. Venue staff, especially when involved in guest care or space coordination, are consulted before the retreat and may also take a little more part in operational decisions on-site, but always with validation from the retreat leader (for example, timing room cleans or adapting schedules).

The other group are the occasionally involved partners. This group includes local guides, surf instructors or any other person involved in an external activity. They are usually consulted in advance to book an activity or a day excursion. Their involvement is lighter during the retreat itself but their input still shapes the guest experience, especially in terms of cultural immersion or relaxation. As for transport providers, they are notified ahead of time about pick-up and drop-off schedules from airports or train stations, allowing for seamless coordination without their direct involvement in planning. The same applies to massage therapists, who come on site only to perform pre-scheduled treatments at designated times agreed upon before the retreat.

Even if their involvement varies, these partners all help shape the quality and coherence of the retreat. Their input, timing and presence can change the rhythm of the day and ultimately, how guests feel and remember their experience.

To give a better visualization, we use a model based on four levels of involvement, inspired by the governance framework taught in the Option Durabilité of Master 1 at ICHEC. It also aligns with the well-known RACI model (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) used in many corporate settings, while keeping terminology and nuances that feel right for our context.

The governance model is separated into two columns: the planning phase (what happens before the retreat) and the operational phase (what happens during the retreat). Some roles are more involved in one phase than the other. This structure avoids confusion and supports smoother collaboration. It also gives each person a clear sense of when and how their input is expected or needed.

To support this, we define four levels of involvement. The first is "informed," which means someone is simply kept in the loop, without being asked for input. Then comes "consulted," where their opinion is requested, but the final decision stays with the core team. The third is "concerted," which means the person is actively involved in shaping the decision and their feedback is taken seriously. In the RACI framework it would be "responsible". Finally, in some cases, there is "co-decision," where the person has an equal say and the decision is truly made together and the role the Retreat Leader plays is akin to "accountable" in the RACI structure. This way of working helps build fairer and more balanced collaborations while staying clear about who decides what and when.

Table 13: Level of involvement according to phase. Adapted from: Drouillon, P., Hudlot, B. Verhasselt, P. (2022b). Business Ecosystémiques. Module 3 - Une gouvernance et des modes de travail nouveaux [PDF].

Level of involvement	Strategic Phase	Operational Phase
Informed		Transport agents Massage Therapists
Consulted	Logistics coordinator Nature & Excursion Guides Photographer/videographer Venue service staff	Logistics coordinator Nature & Excursion Guides Photographer/videographer Artisans/cultural contributors
Concerted	Retreat leader Cooking chef Artisans/cultural contributors	Venue service staff
Co-decide	Facilitators	Facilitators Retreat leader Chef

The general idea is to match the level of involvement with the importance and irreplaceability of each partner. For example, facilitators are both emotionally and strategically central and they are hard to replace. That is why they are often placed at the co-decide level during both operations and strategy level when planning ahead. This logic also aligns with the ecosystem map in section 3.2. (cf. above p.).

Those at the center of the circle tend to co-decide or concert. More replaceable or supportive partners may be simply informed or consulted.

Governance in this project is not about control; it is about creating the right conditions for trust, quality and transformation. Everyone has a voice and roles are clear, as are lines of decision making. Strategic partners co-build the experience, while other partners are supported and involved in ways that match their role and contribution. Whether it is about designing the retreat or adapting it in real time, the goal is always the same: to hold the space together.

3.4 Key resources and activities

To deliver a high-quality and emotionally resonant wellness retreat in the European market, several categories of resources are essential. These resources operate mostly behind the scenes, yet they form the invisible architecture that sustains not only the guest experience but also the long-term viability of the project. They can be grouped into four domains: human, material, intellectual and financial (Balemba & al., 2024)

3.4.1 Human resources

Human presence is at the heart of the retreat model. Facilitators like yoga teachers, coaches, therapists etc. are the cornerstone of the guest experience. They do not just deliver sessions, they create the emotional conditions for transformation. Their charisma, presence and care were consistently cited in surveys as decisive reasons for booking. As participants shared: “Because Kristin McGee was leading it!”, “Love Rachel’s vibe”, “I knew Kristin through Peloton and loved her classes”, “I was familiar with the instructor and love her classes”, and “To be in Rachel’s energy” (cf. appendix 12). Alongside them, operational staff such as on-site coordinators, chefs, photographers and venue hosts ensure smooth logistics and a warm atmosphere. Some of these roles may be internalized through a small core team managing planning and communication, while others will be local and project-based, depending on the venue and program. Building trusted relationships with high-quality professionals across locations is therefore key to maintaining consistency without centralizing everything.

3.4.2 Material resources

Even though retreats are temporary, they require solid logistical infrastructure. This includes yoga equipment like mats and blocks, sound systems for music during practices and personal items such as welcome kits or yoga materials. Venues often provide some of these but sometimes certain items need to be transported, rented or stored between retreats. The material also includes digital below structure: booking systems, email communication tools or messaging platforms like WhatsApp are essential for both guest experience and internal coordination. These tools must be reliable, easy to use and aligned with the overall brand tone (personal action research management).

3.4.3 Intellectual resources

What sets a retreat apart is not only the people or the place but also the design of the experience itself. Intellectual resources include the retreat structure like the flow of each day, the balance between content and rest and the psychological pacing of the week. They also cover the development of original content like meditation scripts, journaling prompts, playlists, workshop concepts or visual storytelling elements. These assets create coherence, guide the participant journey and ensure emotional depth. In addition,

the collection and integration of guest feedback after each edition plays a major role in continuously refining the offer which allows the experience to stay dynamic, culturally sensitive and guest-centered (personal action research management).

3.4.4 Financial resources

While detailed figures will be presented in a dedicated chapter (cf. below p.), it is important to acknowledge here that financial resources are a crucial pillar of the project. Each retreat involves upfront investments like venue deposits, facilitator fees, marketing campaigns and equipment rental if needed. It also includes ongoing costs related to operations, staff, guest care and digital tools. A sustainable model must ensure that these expenses are covered by revenue while still allowing space for reinvestment and experimentation. Exploring external funding, through early-stage grants, partnerships or sponsorships, could also support development, especially during the launch phase in new markets.

3.4.5 Conclusion

To provide a clearer view, the table below gives a simple overview of the different types of resources with examples and whether they need to be planned ahead, managed by the core team or delegated to local partners, depending on the context of each retreat.

Table 14: Summary of resource types

Category	Internal	External
Human resources	Retreat director, Retreat leader, logistic coordinator= core team	Facilitators, chefs, therapists, ... = local team
Material resources	Digital tools, welcome kits, ...	Some on-site equipment (e.g.: sound system) or rental (e.g.: yoga mats)
Intellectual resources	Program design, playlists, workshop content, brand asset	Playlists, workshop content
Financial resources	Venue deposits, facilitator fees, marketing spend, operational costs, equipment costs...	

Delivering a retreat that feels truly meaningful and transformative takes a lot more than just a beautiful venue or talented facilitators. What really makes the difference is how all four types of resources come together and how easily they can be adapted when needed. That's what supports the emotional depth, consistency and long-term success of the project.

As this model is brought into the European market, using Revamp as a starting point, the real challenge will be finding the right balance to keep certain things in-house to stay true to the brand, while also building strong local partnerships that offer flexibility and cultural fit.

Some things, like storytelling or guest communication, can be handled by the core team. Others, like venue staff, chefs or local guides, need to be sourced on the ground. This mix creates both consistency and local sensitivity. In the end, it's the combination of good logistics and emotional care that makes it

all work. One supports the flow, the other supports the transformation. And investing in both is what makes this project not just workable but truly meaningful.

3.5 General conclusion

In the end, this is not just about being efficient or ticking all the boxes, it is about making sure everything fits together in a way that feels right. From the people involved to the tools we use, each part plays a role in holding the kind of space we want to create. A space where guests can really let go, feel safe and reconnect with themselves. This isn't just our vision, it's what the guests are actively seeking and when we deliver on that promise, it naturally drives loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and long-term business success.

As we move this model into the European context, the challenge is not just logistical, it is about keeping the soul of the project intact while adapting to new realities. That means being clear on what needs to stay in-house to keep the identity strong and where we can lean on local partners to bring flexibility and cultural depth.

It's not always about doing more, it is about doing what truly supports the kind of experience we want people to have. One that's not just smooth and beautiful on the outside but that also makes people feel something real. Like Tripodi said: "When you bring expert teachers, expert planning and top-level venues together, the guests benefit from a much higher quality experience" (cf. appendix 3). That is what we are aiming for in this project, something thoughtful, grounded and meaningful from the inside out.

4. Viability

This final section examines the financial foundation of the retreat, considering not only profitability but also long-term sustainability and alignment with the project's values. The objective is to design a financial model that functions effectively in practice particularly within the European context while ensuring that care, quality and creativity are preserved over time. This requires a comprehensive understanding of all costs, a robust tiered pricing strategy and mechanisms to ensure the retreat can be delivered consistently across seasons.

To address these objectives, the financial analysis is built on two key inputs: insights from Revamp (cf. appendix 14.1) and a European-based strategy that accounts for accessibility, travel habits and local culture. The resulting model is designed to be both flexible and dynamic, enabling updates whenever key variables such as participant numbers, pricing, room types or food costs change, thus maintaining its relevance and predictability over time (cf. appendix 14.2).

The financial model is structured around three components: the cost structure, the source of revenue and the sensitivity analysis (cf. appendix 14.2, 14.3, 14.4 & 14.5). The cost structure details total fixed, semi-fixed and variable costs for delivering one retreat. The source of revenue analysis examines the composition and structure of income for a single retreat, focusing on three pricing tiers (standard, mid and VIP) defined according to realistic market expectations for service level, room privacy and included extras and culminating in the calculation of the total expected revenue. The sensitivity analysis is supported by a break-even assessment, mapping the impact of different group sizes and pricing levels on profitability and identifying the point at which the retreat becomes financially viable.

However, beyond simply balancing costs against revenues, this section addresses a broader question: can a retreat be financially sustainable while remaining true to its mission? The model aims to ensure fair compensation for the team and partners, maintain accessibility and deliver an experience that fosters rest, purpose and community without compromising on quality or care.

Ultimately, the goal is not to create a “high-profit” business but to establish a financial framework that is realistic to implement, adaptable to growth and empowering for both the team and participants. In this way, the retreat can grow steadily and sustainably, preserving its values while building the trust and stability required for long-term success.

4.1 Cost structure

Running a retreat requires much more than choosing a beautiful venue and offering a meaningful program. Behind the experience, there’s a clear financial structure that must be both solid and adaptable. In this case, the cost model was developed specifically for a European context, drawing on real operational data, insights from similar projects like Revamp and a detailed simulation model built to test different scenarios.

The aim here is not simply to list costs but to understand how each one behaves depending on the size of the group, the retreat format and the choices made around quality. Every cost is categorized into one of three groups: fixed, semi-fixed and variable (cf. appendix 14.3). This helps define what is essential and immovable, what can evolve based on participant numbers and what scales directly with each booking, allowing for both scalability and precision in planning.

To inform the financial modeling of this European retreat, we used real-world data from the Summer 2024 Revamp Retreat at Can Vital (Barcelona), a sustainable venue aligned with European participants’ preferences (see Appendix 14.1).

4.1.1 Fixed costs

Fixed costs represent the backbone of retreat financials, the expenses that exist no matter how many guests join. These are the foundational commitments made before any participants are even confirmed.

The most significant cost component is the venue. In the base case, the model assumes a six-night stay in a sustainable retreat space that provides comfort, privacy and immersion in nature. Drawing on benchmarks from locations such as Can Vital in Catalonia, venue rental costs are estimated to range from €9,000 for smaller or off-season spaces to €18,000 for high-season bookings or exclusive use of the entire property. For the baseline scenario, the working average is set at €13,500, reflecting a realistic midpoint within this range. This estimate includes accommodations for both guests and the core team.

The second fixed cost is the retreat leader, whose responsibilities include hosting the retreat, acting as the primary on-site contact, overseeing daily coordination, and ensuring participant care. The model allocates €1,500 per retreat for this role, representing modest yet fair compensation for the breadth of duties involved.

Third, travel costs for the core team are treated as fixed expenses, covering round-trip transportation for both the retreat leader and the teacher. While these costs may vary slightly by destination, the model assumes €500 per person. Given the focus on European locations and the selection of Europe-based

teachers, travel costs are expected to remain predictable. Destinations are chosen for their accessibility via train or short-haul flights, supporting both affordability and environmental responsibility.

In addition, the model accounts for the services of a professional photographer or content creator. This individual documents the retreat, produces visual content for marketing purposes, and helps support the retreat's long-term visibility. A flat fee of €500 is allocated for this role.

Finally, an insurance and administration fee of €500 is included for the entire retreat. This covers essential insurance requirements and administrative processes, ensuring compliance, risk management and operational security. All together, the total fixed costs in the base case for one retreat amount to €17,000.

4.1.2 Semi-fixed costs

Some expenses in the retreat's budget are semi-fixed, meaning they include a base amount that remains constant up to a certain number of participants but increases as attendance grows. These costs are influenced by group size, yet retain a fixed component that must be budgeted for regardless of final numbers.

First, teacher compensation is set at €3,000 for the first 10 participants, with an additional €350 granted for each participant beyond this threshold. This payment structure reflects the increased workload associated with larger groups and incentivizes the teacher to actively contribute to both pre-sales efforts and on-site delivery.

Second, chef compensation covers a private chef and an assistant responsible for preparing three daily meals plus snacks, using organic, seasonal and locally sourced ingredients. Drawing on Revamp's data with a Spanish chef experienced in wellness retreats, the model assumes a base rate of €3,600 for a minimum of 10 guests. For each participant above this threshold, an additional €60 is added. Helena's familiarity with the structure, pacing and dietary expectations of holistic retreats in Europe makes this rate a reliable benchmark for catering costs in the current model.

In the base scenario of 15 participants, total semi-fixed costs consist of €6,600 in fixed base expenses and €2,050 in variable charges for the five participants above the initial threshold of 10 participants.

4.1.3 Variable costs

Variable costs are directly dependent on the number of participants. They cover all per-person expenses essential to delivering the retreat experience and are a key factor in calculating the financial break-even point.

First, the largest variable cost is the logistics coordination and operations fee. This covers the organizer's work in pre-retreat planning, partner coordination, marketing, communications and post-event follow-up. Although much of this work occurs outside the retreat timeframe, it is priced per participant at €300 in the model.

Other guest-dependent costs include:

- Welcome gifts: each guest receives a curated welcome gift bag (notebooks, water bottle, essential oils etc.), budgeted at €40 per person, depending on branding choices and supplier selection.
- Transportation: arrival and departure transfers are arranged to ensure a smooth guest experience. The model allocates €65 per participant, based on rates used by Revamp in Spain with a trusted local transport provider. This cost may vary slightly depending on location but remains a reliable average.
- Excursions & cultural activities: group experiences such as guided hikes, wine tastings and local visits are included in the retreat itinerary. These are estimated at €45 per guest. The goal is to provide one to two experiences that balance immersion with restoration.
- Massage treatment: massage treatments for VIP participants are included as part of the core offering. The model allocates €80 per treatment, reflecting market rates for certified therapists in Southern Europe.

In the base scenario of 15 guests, variable costs average approximately €450 per participant (€530 per participant for VIP guests), resulting in a total of €6,910 in guest-dependent expenses.

4.1.4 Conclusion

The cost structure integrates fixed, semi-fixed and variable expenses into a coherent and adaptable financial framework. In the base scenario of 15 participants, it comprises €17,000 in fixed costs, €8,650 in semi-fixed costs and €6,910 in variable costs, for an estimated total of €32,560 per retreat. Given the high fixed costs in this model, having 15 participants in the base scenario allows these expenses to be distributed more broadly across the group, improving overall cost efficiency. Overall, the cost structure balances financial responsibility with the retreat's ethical and transformative objectives, ensuring stability and sustainability without compromising the participant experience.

4.2 Sources of revenue

If the cost structure reveals what it takes to run a retreat, the revenue structure shows what it takes to sustain one, over time, across seasons and with evolving guest expectations. In this section, the focus shifts to how income is generated, how pricing can reflect both access and quality, and what levers exist to increase financial resilience without compromising the values at the core of the experience. This part of the model presents realistic revenue expectations, with participant fees as the primary source, informed by survey findings and benchmarks from Revamp's retreat in Barcelona, and adapted to the European market (cf. appendix 14.4) .

4.2.1 Identified price points and value perception

To forecast accurate revenue, it is essential to understand both what participants are willing to pay and how they perceive the value of the retreat. Survey data (cf. appendix 12) was collected to assess participants' price expectations and the value they associate with a retreat experience. The results indicate that most respondents are willing to invest between €800 and €1,500 for a six-day retreat, while higher-income participants are prepared to spend up to €2,500 for premium experiences. These insights support the development of a tiered pricing model, structured by room type and add-ons and designed to cater to a broad client base while reflecting European market practices, where achieving an appropriate balance between price and perceived value is essential.

Participants viewed this investment not as a luxury but as a form of transformational self-care. One participant wrote: “It’s more than a vacation, it’s a reset. That makes it worth the cost” (cf. appendix 12). A clear and transparent pricing structure, inclusive of meals, lodging and activities, enhances perceived value and satisfaction. The inclusion of meals, activities, accommodations and pre-/post-retreat support justifies this pricing, particularly when transparency is prioritized.

A major theme in participant feedback regarding perceived value was the need for accessible, local and low-impact options. About 32% expressed interest in retreats within their home country or in locations accessible by train. Hosting retreats in Southern Europe (Spain, Portugal) helps balance warm, inspiring locations with eco-conscious accessibility. This supports both environmental goals and cost optimization, as air travel and long-distance logistics are minimized. However, as the survey sample is not representative of the wider European population, the findings should be interpreted with caution.

4.2.2 Derived pricing model

The primary source of revenue comes from participant fees, structured into three tiers based on room type and access to additional services. This tiered model allows for pricing flexibility while maintaining the integrity of the core experience, as all participants share the same sessions, meals and group activities. The VIP tier offers enhanced comfort such as massage treatments, without introducing exclusivity or fragmenting the group dynamic.

Table 15: Base scenario

Tier	Description	Base Price per Participant
Standard	Shared room, access to all core programming	€1,550
Mid	Private room, more privacy and small extras	€2,150
VIP	Premium room, curated wellness gifts	€2,700

Therefore, in this model, the values for the base scenario presented in Table 15 are informed by survey findings on price points and perceived value and are further refined using benchmarks from Revamp’s retreat at Can Vital (cf. appendix 14), where standard packages began at approximately \$3,650 for shared rooms and increased to \$4,500 for premium packages, inclusive of all meals, activities and extras. These combined insights ensure that the pricing structure reflects market expectations while remaining aligned with the retreat’s value proposition.

Table 16: Pricing model with a margin

Tier	Description	Base Price per Participant (+20%)
Standard	Shared room, access to all core programming	€1,860
Mid	Private room, more privacy and small extras	€2,580
VIP	Premium room, curated wellness gifts	€3,240

In addition to the base-tier prices shown in Table 15, a 20% increase is applied to each tier, as shown in Table 16. This uplift functions as a buffer that ensures the pricing structure not only covers the costs identified earlier but also provides additional capacity for operational resilience, future investment and effective risk management.

4.2.3 Distribution and revenue forecasts

Based on the pricing model outlined above, the base scenario assumes an estimated distribution of participants across the pricing tiers, projecting the proportion likely to choose each tier for a total of 15 participants:

- 50% Standard Tier (approx. 8 people)
- 35% Mid Tier (approx. 5 people)
- 15% VIP Tier (approx. 2 people)

Table 17: Revenue distribution across pricing tiers

Pricing Tier	Number of Participants	Price per Participant	Revenue
Tier Standard	8	€1,860	€14,880
Tier Mid	5	€2,580	€12,900
Tier VIP	2	€3,240	€6,480
Total	15	€2,284	€34,260

This mix results in an average revenue of €2,284 per participant and a total retreat income of €34,260 in the base scenario (cf. appendix 14.4). Table 17 above illustrates how revenue is distributed across the different pricing tiers, highlighting the balance between broad accessibility and the additional value generated through premium options.

4.2.4 Other considerations: Loyalty and strategic upselling

Although not currently included in the financial model, loyalty initiatives and strategic upselling are recognized as important levers for ensuring the long-term sustainability of this retreat model. At this early stage, the focus is on establishing a solid operational and financial foundation. However, wellness retreats are inherently relationship-driven, creating opportunities for repeat engagement, referrals, and optional enhancements. Over time, the introduction of such measures could strengthen guest loyalty, diversify revenue streams and enhance resilience against market fluctuations. Potential initiatives include early-bird offers to secure bookings and improve predictable cash flow, loyalty discounts to encourage repeat attendance and referral rewards such as credit or small gifts for guests who introduce new participants. While these factors are not yet modelled, integrating them in future iterations will help to secure financial stability and foster the continued growth of the retreat community.

4.2.5 Conclusion

The revenue model is built primarily on participant fees, informed by survey findings and refined using market benchmarks such as Revamp's retreat at Can Vital. A tiered pricing structure balances accessibility with opportunities for enhanced comfort and personalization, ensuring all participants share the same core program while choosing their experience based on comfort and connection, not status.

This approach reflects more than financial logic, it embodies a human philosophy. The language and pricing are intentionally positioned around self-care and intentional rest, avoiding exclusivity while resonating with European guests who value transparency, authenticity and value-for-money. Environmental considerations are also embedded in destination choices, favoring train-accessible venues in Southern Europe to reduce carbon impact while remaining practical.

In the base scenario of 15 participants, the model generates an average revenue of €2,284 per person and €34,260 in total, with a 20% buffer applied to support operational resilience, reinvestment and risk management. While loyalty initiatives and upselling are not yet included, they are recognized as essential for long-term sustainability. Ultimately, the true engine behind revenue is trust, built through transparent pricing, high-quality facilitation and consistent care, ensuring slow, steady growth while remaining grounded in the retreat's values of care, creativity and human connection.

4.3 General financial viability conclusion and interpretations

Building on the cost structure and revenue sources, this section evaluates the financial performance of a single retreat under the previously defined assumptions. The analysis incorporates fixed, semi-fixed and variable costs, along with the tiered pricing structure, to assess profitability and determine the break-even point. Results are presented for the base case before being extended through sensitivity analyses to explore performance under varying conditions (cf. appendix 14.5).

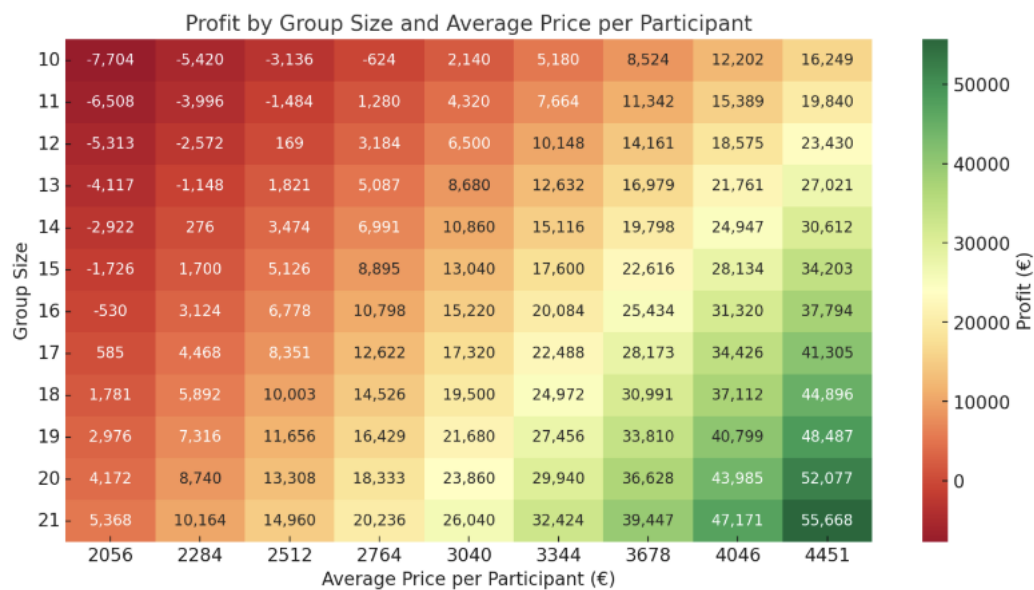
4.3.1 Base Scenario Results

Based on the parameters outlined above, the base case scenario assumes 15 participants at a weighted average price of €2,284 per person (cf. [above p. : 4.2 Sources of revenue](#)), reflecting a pricing mix of 50% standard tier, 35% mid-tier, and 15% VIP tier, and yielding projected total revenues of €34,260. Under the current cost structure, this configuration yields a modest surplus of approximately €1,700 per retreat, equivalent to a 5% profit margin.

4.3.2 Sensitivity Analysis

As explained in the previous section, the base case scenario delivers a 5% profit margin (€1,700 profit margin), leaving little room to absorb changes in attendance, pricing or costs. This narrow margin creates a financially fragile situation where even a minor deviation (e.g., one fewer participant) can turn a profitable retreat into a loss-making one. Therefore, the sensitivity analysis evaluates the risk associated with different group size and price combinations, highlighting the most effective strategies for enhancing profitability and ensuring the retreat's long-term viability.

Table 18: Profit by groupe size and average price per participant



As shown in Table 18, the modelling covers a range of group sizes from 10 to 21 participants and average prices per participant from €2,056 to €4,451. The base scenario of 15 participants at €2,284 serves as the reference point for assessing the financial impact of adjustments to these variables (cf. appendix 14.5).

The first key insight concerns the minimum viable attendance. At the current average price, profitability turns negative if the retreat hosts fewer than 14 participants under the assumed pricing mix (50% standard tier, 35% mid-tier, 15% VIP tier). For example, with 12 participants the model projects a significant loss of €2,572, with the shortfall increasing sharply at lower occupancies. The proximity of the break-even point to the planned group size highlights the critical importance of securing sufficient attendance to safeguard financial performance.

The second insight relates to the effect of pricing. For a group of 15 participants, a 10% increase in the average price would almost triple the profit margin. Even a 5% increase would be enough to reach a margin of 10% of total revenue (approximately €3,400).

A third observation concerns the impact of occupancy. Increasing participant numbers by just two above the base case is also sufficient to achieve a 10% revenue margin. Each additional participant beyond the initial threshold of 10 contributes a consistent and predictable improvement in profit, making occupancy growth a straightforward way to strengthen margins where market conditions allow.

While not explicitly highlighted in the above sensitivity table, cost optimization represents a critical lever for profitability. Reducing fixed and semi-fixed costs by 10% achieves the same financial outcome

as a 5% price increase or two extra participants. This pathway is particularly valuable if market conditions limit the potential for price or attendance growth.

Finally, this analysis also highlights the benefit of combining improvements. When both occupancy and price are increased simultaneously, the gains are multiplicative rather than additive. Moderate adjustments to both can quickly elevate profitability well above 10% revenue margin.

4.3.3 Constraints and Considerations

It is important to interpret this financial model for a single retreat with caution, as several factors could influence its accuracy and applicability in practice. These include :

1. Supplier capacity: Availability of venues, chefs and teachers may limit the maximum number of participants, while some costs may be locked in through contractual agreements, reducing flexibility in pricing or cost management.
2. Participant experience: Expanding group size beyond 16–18 attendees could risk diminishing the quality of the experience, potentially undermining the retreat’s premium positioning.
3. External risks: Airfare volatility and local cost inflation could significantly affect profitability if not proactively managed.
4. Seasonality: Demand and costs vary substantially across the year. Shoulder seasons may allow for premium pricing and lower venue or travel costs, whereas peak periods may increase attendance potential but also drive up accommodation and transportation expenses.

4.3.4 Conclusion

The base case analysis indicates that the retreat is financially viable but operates with a very narrow margin of safety, leaving it vulnerable to fluctuations in demand or costs. Sensitivity analysis confirms that profitability is most responsive to adjustments in average price and participant numbers, with even modest changes to these variables yielding substantial improvements in financial outcomes. Achieving sustainable profitability will require a deliberate and balanced approach that combines targeted pricing strategies, disciplined cost control, and effective capacity management.

5. Conclusion of the SIC

This chapter marks the shift from observing the field to translating those insights into a coherent strategic framework. As introduced at the start, the Societal Impact Canvas has served here as both a lens and a structure, enabling the adaptation of Revamp Retreats’ core principles to the European cultural and social context. The resulting diagram synthesizes the analysis into the four pillars of desirability, feasibility, viability and durability, illustrating how purpose, partnerships, resources and impacts interconnect. In doing so, it reaffirms the chapter’s objective: to move beyond simply describing a successful model toward understanding the mechanisms that make it work and to shape a concept capable of delivering authentic, sustainable and socially relevant wellness retreats in Europe.

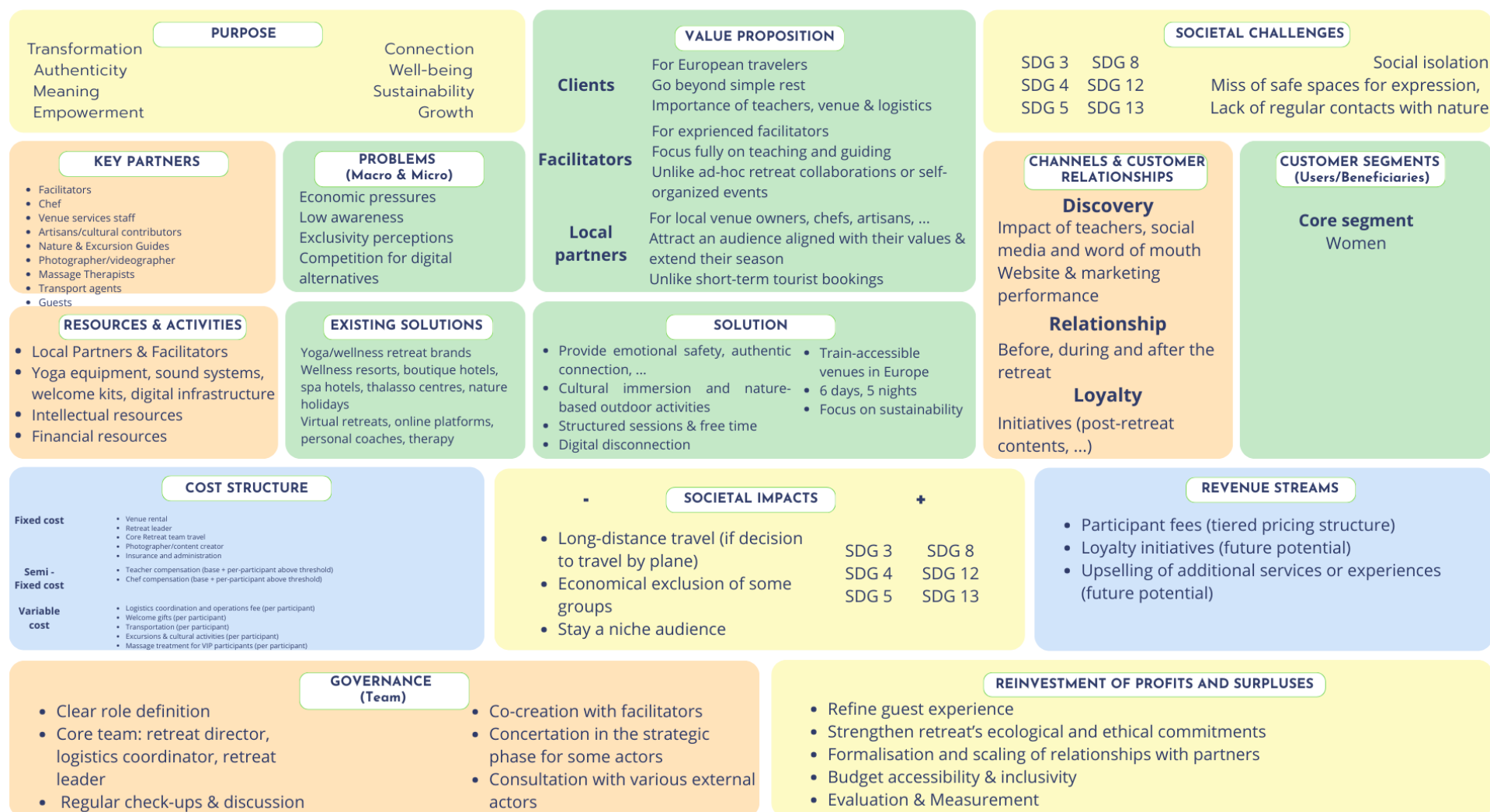


Figure 29 : Personnel production of the SIC

Conclusion

This thesis began with a simple yet ambitious question: **How can a wellness retreat be designed to meet the expectations of a global, yet primarily European clientele, while respecting the specific cultural and social context of this market?** The aim was not only to develop a viable business concept but also to explore how such a venture could meet deeper human needs while remaining sustainable over time. Wellness tourism, as shown in the research, is not just an industry trend; it responds to wider societal changes and the pressures and uncertainties of modern life.

Europe provides fertile ground for such a project. While it lacks the tropical landscapes of Bali or the indigenous traditions of other regions, it offers something equally valuable: cultural diversity, a rich wellness heritage and a strong reputation for quality, safety and authenticity. The challenge and the opportunity is to create experiences that appeal to global audiences while staying rooted in local traditions and values.

The research combined exploratory, applied and abductive approaches, drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data, as well as a detailed case study of Revamp Retreats. The Societal Impact Canvas served as a guiding framework, ensuring that market desirability, operational feasibility, financial viability and societal durability were all considered together. This structure linked theory with practice, turning insights from surveys, interviews, and industry analysis into actionable recommendations.

Findings confirm strong and growing demand for high-quality, eco-responsible wellness retreats in Europe. Travellers increasingly seek immersive experiences that promote personal growth, mental clarity, and physical well-being. Older participants value a mix of cultural discovery and relaxation, while younger generations prioritise sustainability and authenticity. Medium-length stays of four to six nights appear ideal, long enough for meaningful engagement yet manageable in terms of cost and time.

From an operational point of view, the concept is feasible but requires discipline. Group sizes should remain below 16 and 18 participants to preserve quality and personal attention. Venue suitability, reliable suppliers and skilled facilitators are critical but resource-intensive. Financially, the model is profitable in the base case but with a narrow margin, making it sensitive to changes in pricing or occupancy. This underlines the importance of cost control, targeted marketing and efficient operations. Long-term durability is supported by alignment with enduring trends in preventive health, environmental responsibility and authentic travel.

A central insight is that profitability and social impact can reinforce each other. Financial stability allows a retreat to meet expectations, reinvest in operations, expand its reach and deepen its positive impact on participants and local communities. The Societal Impact Canvas helps keep these priorities aligned.

In addition, authenticity, personalisation and a strong connection to place are the retreat's main differentiators. Europe's diversity offers rich possibilities, from Nordic sauna culture and forest bathing to Mediterranean nutrition and Central European spa traditions. Partnerships with local suppliers, tourism boards and other operators can create a "rising tide" effect, raising standards and benefiting the wider tourism sector.

Finally, targeted marketing is equally important. Digital tools make it possible to reach specific audiences with precision but require regular review and adjustment. Quantitative metrics such as click-through and conversion rates show performance, while guest feedback such as reported lifestyle changes provides insight into the retreat's deeper impact. Both are essential for refining the offer and building long-term loyalty.

Like any research, this work has limitations. Treating Europe as a single market risks overlooking regional differences in culture, infrastructure and consumer preferences. Applying the framework to individual countries could yield more targeted strategies. In addition, the financial model cannot fully account for unexpected events such as geopolitical crises, sudden regulation changes, or health emergencies. The marketing and operational strategies will also need to be tested in real-world conditions.

Looking ahead, adaptability will be crucial. The meaning of "well-being" changes over time, shaped by social trends, environmental concerns and technological advances. The model could be adapted to other segments, such as corporate wellness retreats, urban wellness weekends or adventure travel with mindfulness components. It could also influence related sectors, such as sustainable transport, by creating demand for greener travel options.

In the end, this work is more than a business plan it is a reflection on how commercial ventures can create spaces for pause, reconnection, and transformation. A well-designed retreat can redefine well-being as a sustainable way of life while opening new pathways for positive business impact.

This thesis marks both a conclusion and a starting point. The next steps are clear: launch a pilot retreat, build strong partnerships, and implement a continuous improvement process guided by data and participant feedback. Done well, this project can grow without losing its integrity and can amplify its positive influence. By creating retreats that are both financially viable and socially transformative, we take part in building lasting, authentic happiness one guest, one experience, one moment at a time

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