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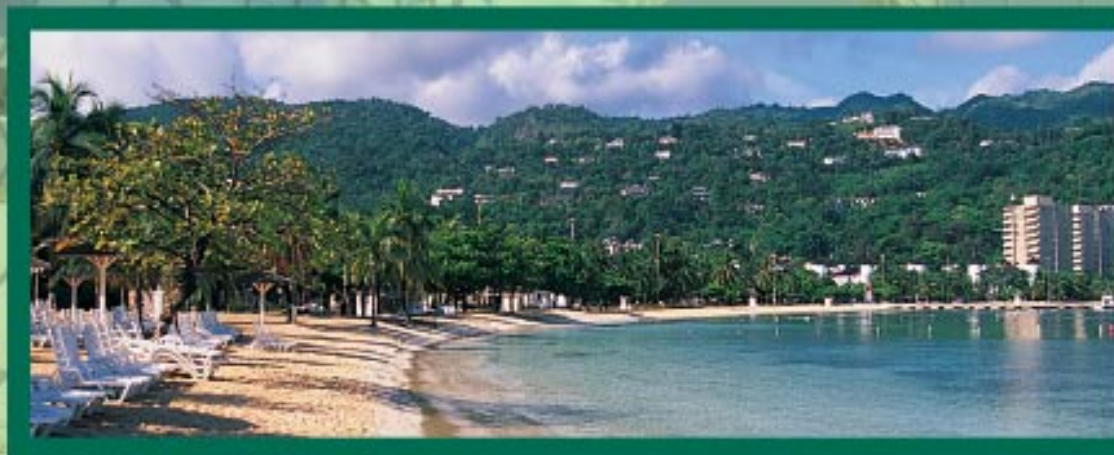


TOUR OPERATORS INITIATIVE
FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY INTO BUSINESS

*A Management Guide for
Responsible Tour Operations*

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME



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INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY INTO BUSINESS

A Management Guide for Responsible Tour Operations



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FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT



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FOREWORD

We have all become accustomed to terms like sustainable development and corporate social responsibility (CSR). These terms are purposefully general and somewhat vague, as they reflect a complex and multi-layered vision, rather than the detailed practices that lay behind them.

Accepting CSR means acknowledging that companies have a responsibility not only to their owners and shareholders, but also to society in general. In the past, tour operators have sometimes neglected their environmental and social responsibilities, arguing that they are simply intermediaries between customers and service providers, and that destination impacts are the responsibility of sub-contracted suppliers or the local authorities. While these stakeholders clearly share the responsibility, most tour operators now understand that it is precisely because they are intermediaries – working closely with both tourists and tourism service suppliers – that they can have an important impact on how destination resources are managed, by influencing the choices of consumers, the practices of suppliers, and the development patterns of destinations.

This corporate responsibility to promote sustainable tourism extends into all areas of business for a tour operator, from the way it manages and equips its main offices, to the types of holidays sold and its selection of suppliers. Sustainability should also be a big part of a company's marketing strategies and relations with its customers, as well as its partnerships and presence in destinations. These responsibilities are now being acknowledged by pioneering tour operators, and welcomed by their markets, shareholders, staff and other stakeholders.

The Tour Operators' Initiative has accepted the challenge to provide material (in the form of direct input and case studies on good practices) for the development of a manual on how to implement sustainable development in a tour operator's business. Because the subject is extremely broad and, in certain instances, there is no firm agreement on how sustainability is defined, this was no easy task. However we wanted to share our experiences both as individual companies and as a group since the launch of the Tour Operators' Initiative in 2000, as we believe that one of the key responsibilities of the TOI is to 'share our knowledge' with other tour operators in order to create a real and tangible response from the tour operator's sector.

The information we have collected, enriched by the Leeds Metropolitan University, does not aim to be a universal reference, but simply a source of inspiration for how sustainable development or a commitment to social responsibility can be implemented into everyday business practices. Some of the actions in this document may not be relevant to all tour operators, while others may be in conflict with certain views or cultural beliefs. However, as long as they generate discussion and provide inspiration, we will have achieved our goal.

The document begins with an introduction that reviews the economic, environmental and social impacts of tourism, as well as the main business reasons for addressing those impacts. Sections 1 through 5 then present ways in which tour operators can integrate the principles of CSR and sustainable development into all areas of their business, including internal management, product development and management, supply chain management, relations with customers and co-operation with destinations.

We hope that this manual will enrich your understanding and commitment to sustainable tourism development. And let's remember that we are all in the same business and we all benefit from sustainable management of the resources that make tourism possible!

TOM SELANNIEMI

Chairman of the Tour Operators' Initiative
Director of Research and Development at Aurinkomatkat-Suntours



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A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie, wearing glasses and a name tag, is speaking to a group of people. He is holding a pen and a small white object. The group consists of people of various ages and ethnicities, some wearing hats. The background shows a large, classical-style stone column. A semi-transparent purple box with a gear icon is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Sustainable Tourism is the Way Forward

The idea of sustainability – and its three pillars of economic, environmental and social action – is now a part of decision-making in many fields (see Box 1). For tourism, as for other industries, the implementation of sustainable development relies on companies accepting their social and environmental responsibilities towards society, and making changes to their business practices to improve their sustainability performance. This commitment is encapsulated in the principle of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which guides sustainability actions for business. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development defines CSR as a commitment by businesses ‘to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community, and society at large to improve their quality of life.’

Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. According to the World Tourism Organization, sustainable tourism leads to ‘management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled, while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.’ The goal of sustainable tourism is to develop and manage tourism-related activities and services in a way that conserves the character of the place being visited, benefits local communities and preserves the resources and attractions that make tourism destinations desirable places to visit – and to live. Sustainable tourism means growth that does not damage the environmental, social and economic structures of the destinations visited, but rather serves to improve the quality of life and the environment of the visited communities.

For tour operators, CSR means adopting sustainable business practices that positively impact both the country where the tour operator is based, as well as the destinations visited, in terms of their economic effects, the environmental and cultural resources exploited, and their policies towards the host communities (see Box 2). Implementing sustainability practices may require a fundamental shift in corporate thinking and organizational culture, as well as the adoption of a more holistic approach towards success, as companies aim for the ‘triple bottom line’: running a profitable business while also preserving the environment, looking after the workforce and giving something back to the communities.

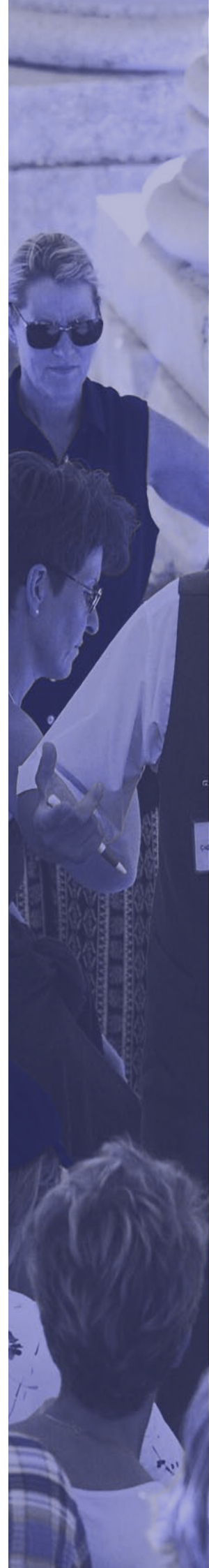
Often, the first step in the transition to sustainable practices is convincing directors and shareholders of the benefits of acting sustainably. While many companies implement good environmental and social practices at least in part because they feel it is ‘the right thing to do’, it is also useful to understand that addressing the negative impacts of tourism development can have significant business advantages for a company, in terms of cost savings, market share, reputation and preservation of their main business assets – the places and cultures their clients are willing to pay to visit. This section reviews the economic, environmental and social impacts of tourism and briefly discusses the business benefits of sustainable practices.

BOX 1: Milestones in sustainable development

The most widely used definition of sustainability comes from the 1987 report of the Brundtland Commission, *Our Common Future*, which described sustainable development as that which ‘meets the needs of current generations without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’.

In 1992, governments from around the world met in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Earth Summit. At the Conference, participants agreed on a number of documents that have since provided the framework for the implementation of sustainability actions around the world. These included the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Rio Declaration, the Forest Principles, and Agenda 21, which was to serve as the blueprint for sustainability in the 21st century. Tourism, however, was not addressed, neither as a cause of negative impacts nor as a potential agent for positive change.

Ten years later, in 2002, heads of state gathered at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, to assess the progress made in implementing Agenda 21 and look to the future. The participants drafted a detailed Plan of Implementation with quantitative targets for poverty alleviation, access to clean water, energy provision, disease reduction, biodiversity protection and other goals. The focus had moved from strictly environmental to a broader perspective that included the social and economic realities of development challenges. This time, tourism was prominently addressed as a means of contributing to sustainable development.



BOX 2: Corporate Social Responsibility in Practice

For a tour operator, following the principles of CSR means that:

- Responsible **vision and values** are reflected in the company's underlying principles;
- **Business ethics** reflect these values by influencing operations;
- **Governance** is transparent and demonstrates how the Board of Directors considers its societal responsibilities and how the company engages stakeholders;
- Business processes are **accountable** through measuring, reporting and verifying impacts;
- **Host communities** will benefit from **economic development** through favourable business practices and, when appropriate, the donation of resources such as goods, money and staff time;
- **Human and labour rights** will be respected in direct employment (within the company) and indirect employment (through suppliers);
- **Environmental standards** will be maintained in both internal management and destination operations with increased efficiency and minimal pollution and damage, for example through energy efficiency, waste reduction and promotion of good land-use practices; and
- A responsible **marketplace** is encouraged through responsible marketing and consumer education.

THE IMPACTS OF TOURISM

The positive economic impacts of tourism are often cited as the main benefits to tourist destinations, while negative environmental and social impacts are considered the costs. In reality, economic, environmental and social impacts can be both positive and negative, and the challenge of sustainable tourism development is ensuring that the benefits in all areas greatly outweigh the costs.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The development of tourism in a country or region is often seen as a tremendous economic opportunity to reduce poverty by generating income and employment. However, if tourism is not developed and managed responsibly, taking into account local needs and concerns, the actual economic benefits may be substantially less than expected.

The key manner in which local populations fail to benefit from tourism is through revenue 'leakages' – when the goods and services used in tourism are produced and purchased outside the country or region.

In addition, government expenditure on tourism infrastructure, such as sanitation, roads, airports or health facilities, may mean that less funds are available for basic services for the local population. Other potential costs include the expense of addressing air and water pollution generated by tourist activities, losses to the economy caused by illness related to pollution, and an increased cost of living for local people, as tourist demand drives up prices for basic goods.

Tour operators can contribute to the increased economic sustainability of tourism in a destination by designing their holiday products to maximise local, regional and national economic benefits. In general, positive economic impacts fall into three categories: direct, indirect and induced.

Direct benefits include expenditure by tourists at the destination for food, souvenirs, excursions, tips, etc. They also include money paid by tour operators to local suppliers, including hotels and local transport companies. However, if the hotel is foreign-owned, those direct benefits will be reduced, as some of the money will leave the country through via leakage. Direct local economic benefits can be maximised by designing holidays to include local suppliers.

Indirect benefits include income and employment generated by goods and services provided to the tourists. For example, food purchased by the hotels can provide jobs and revenues for local farmers or factories. Maximising the use of local products can increase these indirect impacts, meaning that a destination needs fewer tourists to generate the same economic benefit.

Finally, induced benefits come from the increased spending power of employees and their families that results from more tourism jobs. These benefits are likely to be higher in a large place with a diverse economy; on a small island where tourism is the main industry, employees might have little opportunity to spend their wages on locally produced goods. Economic benefits can sometimes be induced in a place a long way from the tourism destination or holiday: for instance, cruise ship workers often send their wages back to their home countries.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Tourism can have wide-ranging and sometimes irreversible negative impacts on the environment. In some of the most extreme cases, long-term environmental degradation has destroyed the very features that once attracted tourists to a place, leading tour operators and their clients to abandon the older destination in favour of new, undamaged ones.

Environmental impacts from tourism result from the design and construction of tourism facilities, such as airports, hotels, roads and attractions; from the day-to-day operation of those facilities; and from tourist behaviour (see Table 1).

It is in this first phase, design and construction, that there is the greatest potential for damage and long-term impacts, as well as the most significant opportunity to ensure sustainable tourism development. At this stage, government authorities determine the scale and type of tourism that will take place in a destination, through the drafting of tourism master plans and the subsequent provision of planning permission for development. Unless properly planned, the siting and construction of tourism facilities can lead to landscape degradation and biodiversity loss through the conversion of natural habitats and damage to coastal areas, forests, coral reefs and other ecosystems.

In addition, the design of a facility will help determine its long-term operational impact, from the levels of water and energy required to run the facility to how much waste will be produced and how it will be treated. Following principles of appropriate design can help to reduce these long-term impacts. This is equally as true for small businesses as it is for large resorts. More than 95 percent of the world's tourism businesses are small companies, and their cumulative impacts are much greater than those of large firms. While these small enterprises may find it difficult to invest in eco-friendly solutions, finding ways to conserve water and energy and reduce waste generation can not only benefit the environment but also result in economic savings from the use of fewer resources.

In addition to the direct local impacts on a destination, tourism also has global impacts through the carbon dioxide emissions of aeroplanes and other forms of transportation that contribute to human-induced climate change. It is estimated that tourism contributes about 5.3 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, 90 percent of which is due to transport.

Although tourism can lead to environmental costs, it can also be a source of benefits for the environment. For example, revenues from tourism may contribute to the funding of protected natural areas and increase their economic importance to a country or region. Tourism can support the preservation of forests and coral reefs by justifying their use for recreation instead of more resource-consuming economic activities like logging or fishing. Tour operators can influence government policy towards these natural resources, as well as tourist behaviour when visiting natural sites. Increased tourist interest in an area can also benefit the environment by raising the awareness of local people about environmental issues and helping them understand the economic value of conserving natural resources.

SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS

The negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism development on host communities are not always immediately apparent. At first, the presence of tourists with very different cultural characteristics or traditions and a higher level of spending power than local people may lead to conflicts and discomfort. Inappropriate displays of wealth, taking photographs of people without asking permission, and wearing revealing clothing, particularly in religious sites, are all examples of behaviour which local people might find offensive (even though they may remain outwardly polite).

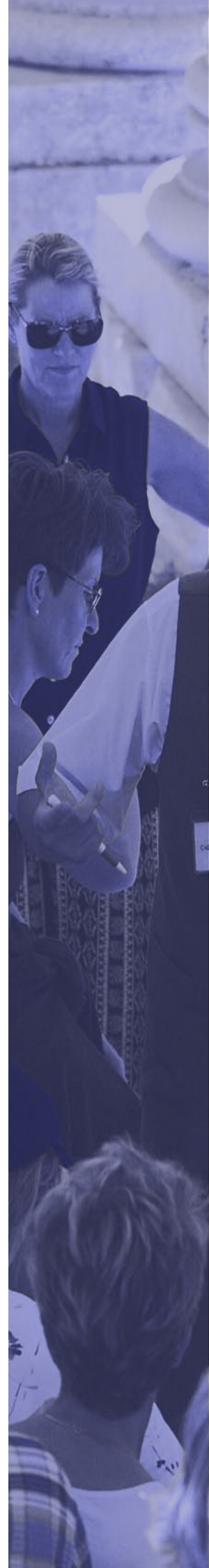




Table 1. Major environmental impacts of tourism

Pressures on natural resources	Pollution and waste	Physical degradation	Social and cultural pressures relating to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity
<p><i>Land and landscape</i> Sand mining, beach and sand dune erosion, soil erosion, urbanization, and road and airport building, resulting in land degradation, loss of wildlife habitats, landscape deterioration</p> <p><i>Energy</i> High energy use by tourism facilities and transportation</p> <p><i>Freshwater</i> Overuse of often scarce water resources by hotels, swimming pools and golf courses</p> <p><i>Biological resources</i> Increased pressure on endangered species due to trade and hunting, increased demand for seafood, fuelwood</p>	<p><i>Land</i> Solid waste and litter disposed often in illegal dump sites</p> <p><i>Freshwater</i> Pollution by untreated sewage</p> <p><i>Marine waters and coastal areas</i> Sediment run-off, pollution from land based hotels and marinas, waste and litter associated with marine sports and cruises</p> <p><i>Air</i> At local level, air pollution from transporting tourists; global impacts, especially from CO2 emissions, relating to energy use in transportation, air conditioning and heating of tourist facilities</p> <p><i>Noise</i> From ground as well as air transportation</p>	<p><i>Ecologically fragile areas</i> (e.g. rainforests, wetlands, mangroves, coral reefs, sea grass beds) If not properly managed, nature tourism threatens the world's most ecologically fragile areas, including parks and natural World Heritage sites.</p> <p><i>Land conversion</i> Disruption of wildlife habitats, clearance of vegetation for tourism development</p> <p><i>Marine resources</i> Recreational impacts (scuba diving, snorkelling, sport fishing), damage to coral reefs and subsequent impacts on coastal protection and fisheries</p>	<p><i>Social and cultural impacts</i> Disturbance of local way of life and social structures, changes in traditional practices that contribute to conservation (including conservation of biodiversity)</p> <p><i>Adverse impacts on livelihoods</i> Lack of benefit sharing with those who bear both human and environmental costs</p> <p><i>Resource use conflicts</i> Competition between tourism and local populations for limited water, sanitation and energy resources, competition with traditional land uses (especially in heavily used areas such as coastal zones)</p>

Over time, tourism can begin to alter local value systems and behaviour, leading to a loss of indigenous identity, the erosion of traditional community structures and changes in family relationships, traditional lifestyles, ceremonies and values. It can also lead to the commercialisation of cultures for tourism purposes, conflicts over resource use (e.g. land, water, food), increased crime, and employment exploitation (for instance child labour and prostitution).

Of course, not all cultural change in any given area will be due to tourism; societal change is influenced by all types of economic development and by other factors such as television and improved communications. Furthermore, different segments of the host community may be more vulnerable to social impacts, while others will welcome change. It is also important to remember that not all cultural change is negative. For instance, women's position in society may be revalued by their ability to earn money in running small tourism-related enterprises. Tourism can increase understanding between different cultures, foster local pride in cultural traditions, help avoid mass relocation from rural to urban areas by creating local jobs, and promote social development through income redistribution and poverty alleviation.

Tour operators can help encourage positive cultural changes and prevent negative impacts by supporting local enterprises and encouraging appropriate behaviour by tourists. Disseminating information on appropriate behaviour to clients and reducing the opportunities for them to display inappropriate behaviour may help to reduce the chances of conflict and cultural disruption.

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Although sustainability practices may generate some immediate business advantages in the form of cost savings and improved relations with staff and local communities, many of their benefits, both to individual companies and to society, are more long-term. In addition, not all the benefits are tangible, and some cannot be easily measured, which may make up-front investments in sustainability more difficult to justify. The key business benefits for a tour operator of acting sustainably include:


- **Revenue growth.** Being seen to be sustainable can help increase income by securing the loyalty of current customers and attracting new ones, resulting in increased market share.
- **Cost savings.** Sustainability actions can help lower operating costs and improve overall productivity and efficiency by reducing resource use, decreasing waste output and avoiding non-compliance fines.
- **Access to capital.** As environmental and social criteria are becoming a standard part of lending risk assessments, sustainable tour operators are more likely to be able to attract capital from banks and investors.
- **Human capital.** Staff are more likely to feel proud of working for employers that take their responsibilities to society seriously. Tour operators known for their sustainability policies have an increased capacity to attract and retain skilled and talented employees and contract labour, thus increasing their ability to innovate and compete.
- **Brand value and reputation.** A reputation for being sustainable adds value to a tour operator's brands and strengthens its market position, making it less vulnerable to short-term market and economic changes.
- **Preservation of destinations.** Acting sustainably helps make tourist destinations more pleasant places to visit and live in. Ensuring the long-term quality of the destination also helps guarantee business viability.
- **Improved service.** Sustainable management makes holiday facilities safer and healthier for employees and visitors, whilst supporting the local community and enhancing their economic well-being increases staff morale, resulting in improved service and thus higher customer satisfaction.
- **Risk management and license to operate.** Tour operators can reduce their legal liability by managing compliance and pre-empting relevant legislation. For instance, the likelihood of losses from damage to their reputation can be reduced by demonstrating a proactive stance towards destination sustainability and product quality, which can be used as defence in any litigation.
- **Pre-empting government regulations.** Governments are increasingly under pressure from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), unions and the general public to regulate the business sector. This pressure increases if bad practices are uncovered. Tour operators that develop their own codes of conduct and produce independently verified performance reports are in a strong position to influence any proposed legislation.

RESPONDING TO CUSTOMER DEMAND

In recent years, public awareness of environmental issues and the consequences of unsustainable exploitation of natural resources has increased dramatically, leading to a global shift in attitudes about the environment and resource use. In terms of tourism, this awareness is expressed in a growing demand for more environmentally and culturally sensitive holiday experiences. Many tourists now expect sustainability considerations to be built into their holidays, which means that tour operators must operate sustainably to remain competitive. While tourists still want competitively priced holidays, they do not want to be singled out for contributing to societal problems such as poverty and environmental degradation.

There are various surveys that measure consumer demand for environmental and social responsibility and describe how this is reflected in their choice of holidays (see Box 3). These studies and other trend analyses show that tourists are increasingly seeking a more knowledge-orientated encounter with the places they visit, expressed in a desire to experience the genuine local flavour of destinations and to learn from and understand other cultures and traditions. While this trend does increase the market for ecotourism and other special interest operators, high-volume tour operators are also finding that introducing more authentic, less commercialized experiences to their holidays is adding to tourist satisfaction. As a result, smaller accommodation establishments, local food producers and excursion providers who explain local cultural traditions and natural attractions are all benefiting from the increased interest in sustainable forms of tourism.





BOX 3: Willingness to pay for sustainable holidays

Many British holiday makers would be willing to pay more for their holidays abroad if the extra money ensured good wages and working conditions for staff in resorts and hotels, as well as the preservation of the host environment. In a 2000 survey of 2,000 adults in the UK, conducted on behalf of Tearfund, nearly half of those questioned said they would be more willing to travel with a company that had a written ethical code. More than half also said that they would pay an average of an extra five percent (or £25 on a £500 holiday) to guarantee ethical standards such as fair wages and the reversal of environmental damage caused by tourism.

According to a different survey, conducted by MORI on behalf of the Association of British Travel Agencies (ABTA), 85 percent of holiday-makers believe that it is important not to damage the environment. Of those surveyed in the 2000 study, 36 percent 'deliberately' saved water by showering instead of taking baths, 18 percent switched off air conditioning to save energy and 17 percent decided not to have their hotel towels washed on a daily basis. When asked how much more they would be willing to pay for environmental, social and charity guarantees, 31 percent said that they would be willing to pay 2 percent extra (£10) on a holiday worth less than £500 and 33 percent said they would pay 5 percent more (£25) on a holiday worth more than £500.

German tourists are particularly demanding for environmental quality in their destinations, according to the annual Reiseanalyse survey. In the 2002 survey, 65 percent of respondents valued clean beaches and water, while 42 percent said they wanted to be able to find environmentally friendly accommodation.

TAKING ACTION: FROM PRINCIPLES TO PRACTICE

Once a company has decided to integrate sustainability principles into its business practices, understanding what to change and how to do so can be a challenge. To make this task easier, this manual divides tour operator business activities into five action areas, which are discussed in Sections 1 through 5:

- **Internal management.** At the most basic level, sustainability practices can be applied to the operations and activities that take place within a company's headquarters and at its country offices. Changes might include using sustainably produced paper for brochures, minimizing energy use and waste production, and ensuring acceptable staff working conditions.
- **Product development and management.** A tour operator's choice of services, routes and activities for its products determines the sustainability of the holidays it offers. The challenge here is to design holiday packages that have lower environmental and social burdens while still yielding acceptable economic returns.
- **Supply chain management.** Most elements of a holiday package are delivered by suppliers who are sub-contracted by the tour operator. Thus, the selection and contracting of service providers is an important opportunity to influence the sustainability of products. Actions here might include setting sustainability standards in consultation with suppliers, assessing them on their performance and supporting improvements, and providing incentives for meeting the standards.
- **Customer relations.** Tour operators can help raise consumer awareness of sustainability issues by providing information on appropriate behaviour, such as purchasing local products, respecting local cultural norms, and avoiding environmental impacts such as littering or wildlife disturbance.
- **Co-operation with destinations.** Tour operators, either individually or through joint industry forums, can influence the sustainability of destinations by supporting sustainable decision-making by destination authorities and other local actors and by engaging in philanthropic activities.

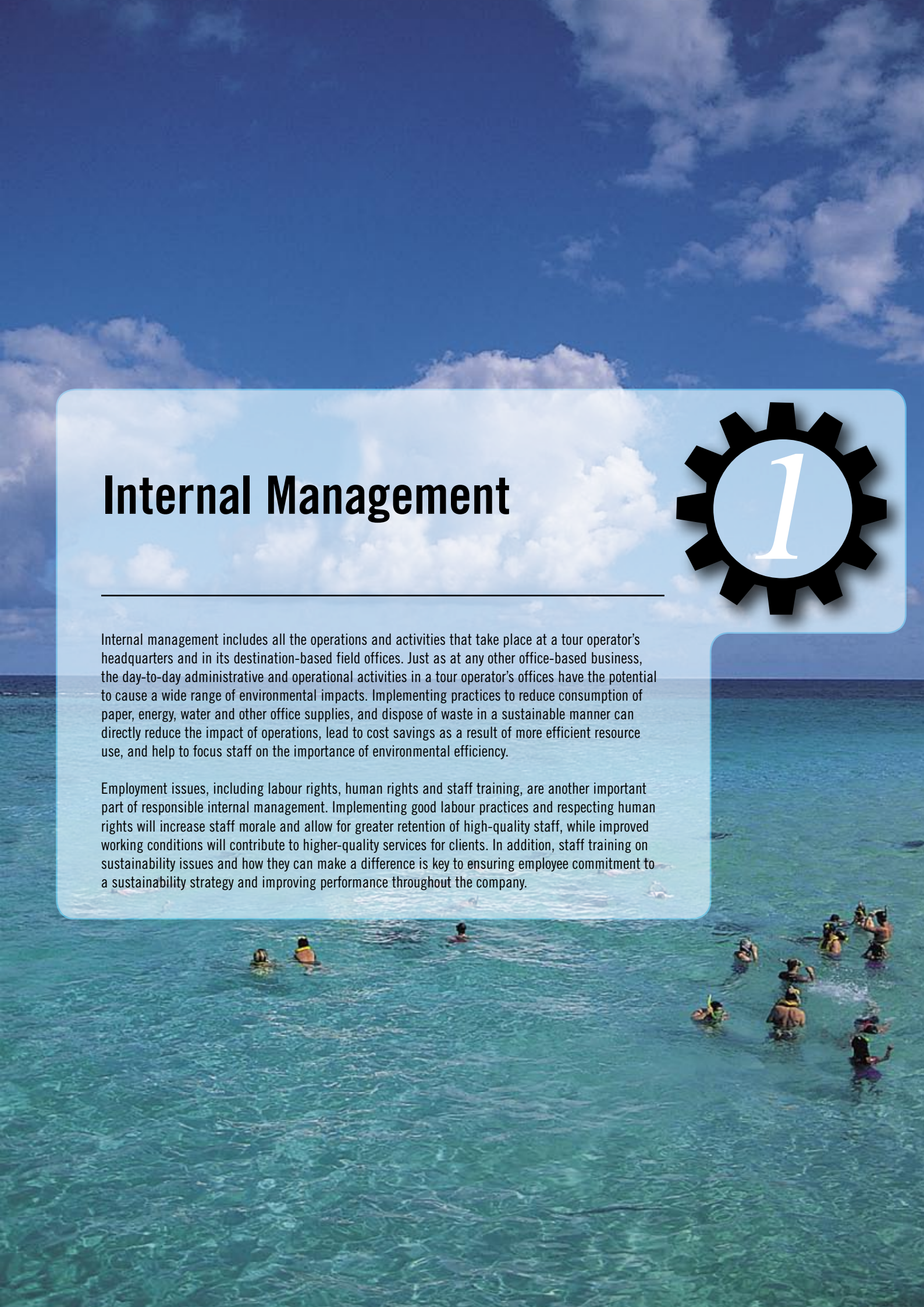


Internal Management



Internal management includes all the operations and activities that take place at a tour operator's headquarters and in its destination-based field offices. Just as at any other office-based business, the day-to-day administrative and operational activities in a tour operator's offices have the potential to cause a wide range of environmental impacts. Implementing practices to reduce consumption of paper, energy, water and other office supplies, and dispose of waste in a sustainable manner can directly reduce the impact of operations, lead to cost savings as a result of more efficient resource use, and help to focus staff on the importance of environmental efficiency.

Employment issues, including labour rights, human rights and staff training, are another important part of responsible internal management. Implementing good labour practices and respecting human rights will increase staff morale and allow for greater retention of high-quality staff, while improved working conditions will contribute to higher-quality services for clients. In addition, staff training on sustainability issues and how they can make a difference is key to ensuring employee commitment to a sustainability strategy and improving performance throughout the company.



1.1 IMPROVE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF OFFICE OPERATIONS

The basic mechanics of running an office – from purchase, use and disposal of materials and equipment to energy and water consumption to staff travel, both for business and to and from work – can cause a wide range of environmental impacts. A sustainable internal management strategy for office operations should first aim to reduce operational costs by using fewer resources, made from more sustainable sources. Savings can then be used to invest in other sustainability actions that might have a longer repayment period. Table 2 lists management actions that can be used to minimise the overall impact of office operations.

Since it is unrealistic to tackle all aspects of office operations at once, it is advisable to start in areas where the biggest savings – both environmental and economic – can be made, and where the up-front investment is not too onerous. Examples of relatively low-cost actions that can yield high sustainability results include:

- **Installing energy-efficient light bulbs.** Lighting accounts for about 25 percent of office energy bills, so replacing conventional light bulbs can drastically cut costs. Although energy-efficient bulbs are more expensive, they last much longer than conventional ones and use less energy per watt.
- **Efficiently regulate heating and air conditioning.** Heating and air conditioning can account for about 60 percent of office energy bills, so increasing their efficiency by fitting thermostatic radiator valves, using timed thermostats and teaching people how to use them will also cut costs.
 - **Reduce unnecessary packaging.** Packaging can be as much as 45 percent of the cost of cleaning materials and other supplies, so buying in bulk not only reduces waste, but also lowers supply bills.
 - **Changing electricity suppliers to one which produces energy from renewable sources.** Buying electricity from a supplier of renewable energy could lead to tax exemptions (for example, in the UK, consumers of energy from non-renewable resources now have to pay a Climate Change Levy).
 - **Promoting the use of public transport and more sustainable forms of travel.** Encouraging employees to use public transport for travel to and from work, and supporting the use of more sustainable methods for business travel, such as trains instead of planes or private cars whenever possible, can result in a significant reduction in travel-related energy consumption and pollution production per employee.



Sustainably managing office energy and water consumption and waste disposal might require collaboration from several companies in a shared building, particularly in rented office space.

1.2 MINIMISE THE IMPACT OF PAPER USE

Tour operators use large amount of paper products, for everything from internal printing to travel brochures. A strategy for minimising the impact of paper use involves changing standard business practices in four ways:

- **Rethink** the type of paper used, choose more sustainable paper, and promote recycled and recyclable materials;
- **Reduce** the amount of paper used, through more effective logistics and alternative communication and marketing channels;
- **Reuse** paper wherever possible; and
- **Recycle** paper that cannot be used again, promote recycling by travel agencies and suppliers and establish a return policy for brochures and other materials.

The place to start in implementing a sustainable paper policy is to measure the amount of paper currently used, both within the office and as promotional materials. This assessment can be organised according to the type and environmental quality of the paper used (most paper is certified to an environmental standard), including paper of unknown origin (which may come from forests that are not managed sustainably); paper certified as coming from sustainably managed forests; and paper certified as having a high content of post-consumer recycled materials. The focus of future purchasing decisions should be on paper in the latter two categories, whilst the use of paper of unknown origin should be phased out. Chlorine-bleached paper should also be avoided.

Marketing and distribution systems can also be reviewed to make sure that fewer brochures are wasted each season. For example, unused brochures can be collected from travel agents at the end of the season and recycled. Alternatively, travel agents can be asked to recycle the brochures themselves. The number of travel agents involved in this process can be noted, with the aim of achieving a year-on-year increase. Customers can also be encouraged to recycle any unwanted promotional materials.



Table 2: Actions for improving the sustainability of office operations*

Area of operation	Sustainability actions
Energy consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Install energy-saving light bulbs. ■ Maximise the use of daylight. ■ Install presence-detectors in toilets or other areas that will automatically switch lights on and off. ■ Buy appliances with a good energy efficiency rating. ■ Use thermostats and time switches to regulate heating and air conditioning. ■ Insulate buildings. ■ Switch electricity supplier to one that uses renewable energy sources.
Water use and wastewater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduce water consumption with a good maintenance programme. ■ Install low-flow aerators and half-flush toilet cisterns. ■ Install low-water or waterless urinals. ■ Switch to biodegradable detergents.
Telecommunications and IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recycle or donate old IT equipment. ■ Refill printer cartridges or donate them to a charity that can reuse them.
Paper (internal use and brochures), office equipment, furniture, and other supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ask suppliers (especially paper suppliers and printers) how their products are made and managed. ■ Avoid disposable and single-use materials where possible, for instance use rechargeable batteries. ■ Buy paper that has a high post-consumer recycled content (rather than chlorine bleached). ■ Use e-mail and electronic records instead of paper. ■ Reuse paper and promote double-sided printing. ■ Recycle materials such as aluminium, glass, paper, cardboard and plastic. ■ Buy furniture made from sustainable timber.
Cleaning services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If managed in-house, ensure that supplies are bought in bulk, and use environmentally friendly products and recycled containers wherever possible. ■ Minimise the use of cleaning products, such as bleaches, chlorine and detergents, that will end up in the wastewater. ■ If contracting out the service, encourage the contractors to use environmentally friendly products.
Catering services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduce packaging. ■ Buy local, bio and Fair Trade products.
Gardening/ landscaping services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduce chemical use. ■ Avoid wasteful landscaping practices and use plants appropriate to the local climate to reduce watering needs.
Couriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Favour the use of lower-impact vehicles.
Staff travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support sustainable forms of transport for staff to travel to and from work, or encourage them to use biodiesel (if appropriate). ■ Support sustainable forms of travel for business trips. ■ Offset carbon emissions from staff travel, particularly flights to destinations.

** Not all of these actions can be taken in all countries, as they may depend on the availability of certain technologies or products or appropriate national infrastructure (such as for recycling systems, waste management or renewable energy use).*

Effective management and regular updating of customer databases can help ensure closer targeting of active customers for mailings and other promotions, so that material is not wasted on people who are not likely to book a holiday. In addition, use of the Internet for promoting and selling holidays can help reduce the amount of paper needed.

EXAMPLE: Minimising paper use

TUI Nederland, the market leader in the Dutch travel industry and part of World of TUI (TUI AG), ran a unique travel store and meeting centre, Station Centraal, where paper waste was reduced and customer satisfaction improved by inspiring people to buy holidays through multi-media information channels. Administration of the holidays was electronic rather than paper-based.

Source: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)

1.3 FOLLOW RESPONSIBLE LABOUR PRACTICES AND RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS

Responsible labour practices are important to a company's long-term business health as well as its overall competitiveness in the industry. Tourism is very much a people-centred service industry, with many opportunities for human contact with customers, from the first encounter that a client has with a travel agent or salesperson promoting a tour, to the holiday itself, where guides and local representatives help ensure that the trip runs smoothly. If a tour operator's employees are treated fairly and have good working conditions, they are more likely to be satisfied and committed to doing a good job and providing efficient, high-quality service to customers.

BOX 4: International Labour Standards

The following responsible labour practices and working conditions are based on the International Labour Organization's Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work:

Employment

- Places of work should be in decent condition.
- Staff should have job security and job satisfaction.
- Preference should be given to recruiting local residents for destination posts, including management positions (where educational levels allow).
- Employees can be given benefits beyond the basic provisions of national and international legislation, such as contributions to health care, maternity, disability, education and pensions.

Labour/management relations

- Trade unions should be allowed to represent their members and have collective bargaining agreements.
- Staff should be encouraged to participate in decision-making.

Health and safety

- The risk of occupational accidents and diseases should be minimised.
- The physical and mental well-being of staff at headquarters and destinations should be addressed.

Training and education

- Training that ensures the continued employability of staff should be provided at all levels of responsibility.
- Lifelong learning and the development of transferable skills should be encouraged.

Diversity and opportunity

- The company should have an equal opportunities policy.
- Cultural customs, traditions and practices of staff throughout the organization should be accommodated within working practices.
- A varied composition of both operational and management staff should be planned for.

Most countries have well-defined legislation to support responsible labour practices, including the right to decent working conditions, and tour operators should comply with that legislation. However, in some countries, this legislation may not be at the level of internationally agreed standards. If this is the case, the company should go beyond national requirements to meet international standards, including the International Labour Organization's conventions and declarations (see Box 4). Companies can also take into account voluntary industry and union agreements.

Complying with international standards is especially important in light of recent changes in the global travel and tourism industry. Liberalisation and deregulation (leading to cheaper fares), increased competitiveness (leading to cheaper holidays), increased horizontal and vertical integration between travel firms, the growth of subcontracting and the introduction of new technologies all mean that employment conditions for workers in the industry are becoming more flexible – and more precarious. While these changes have brought increased pressures to remain competitive in an evolving industry, ensuring fair and equitable treatment of staff will increase the sustainability and the long-term business health of the company by enhancing staff morale, increasing productivity and improving the quality, and thus the demand for, a company's products.

Another essential element in a company's relationship with its employees is respect for their human rights. Human rights apply also to the whole sphere of influence of a tour operator and any stakeholders who may be affected by the company's actions, including the core operations of contracted staff, business partners and suppliers, and host communities in the destinations. In addition, trans-national corporations that have some economic leverage can get involved in advocacy and policy dialogues on human rights in the countries where they work.

Given the fact that human rights are such a deep-rooted consideration for a sustainable tour operator, management systems should be designed and implemented to identify and address all aspects of human rights relevant to tour operations, including the supply chain. Specific points to address include:

- Avoiding discrimination for racial, gender, religious or other reasons;
- Identifying areas where positive discrimination can be justified, for example increasing the number of women at management level if the company is below the national average on this;
- Seeking a genuine dialogue with freely chosen representatives to better understand staff needs and perceptions and allow fair negotiations;
- Ensuring that contractors or sub-contractors are not using forced or compulsory labour, for instance work performed under the threat of penalties or work which is not undertaken voluntarily;
- Ensuring that children are not employed or forced to work in any capacity that deprives them of their childhood and dignity, or sexually exploited in any way (see Box 5); and
- Ensuring that employees are free to leave their positions within the terms of a fair contract.



The International Labour Organisation's website provides answers to basic questions about international labour standards, as well as links to other related sources. www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/norm/index.htm

BOX 5: The ECPAT Code of Conduct Against the Sexual Exploitation of Children

The United Nations defines child sex tourism as 'tourism organised with the primary purpose of facilitating the effecting of a commercial sexual relationship with a child', and certain destinations have become centres for this illegal trade. The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism, a project funded by UNICEF and supported by the World Tourism Organization, encourages suppliers of tourism services to adopt the six-point code. Companies that adopt the Code make the following commitments:

- To establish an ethical policy regarding commercial sexual exploitation of children.
- To train the personnel in the country of origin and travel destinations.
- To introduce a clause in contracts with suppliers stating a common repudiation of commercial sexual exploitation of children.
- To provide information to travellers by means of catalogues, brochures, in-flight films, ticket-slips, home-pages, etc.
- To provide information to local 'key persons' at the destinations.
- To report annually.

Source: <http://www.thecode.org/>

EXAMPLE: Fighting sexual exploitation of children

TUI Nordic, one of the leading tour operators in Europe and part of World of TUI (TUI AG), actively supports ECPAT's work and participated in drawing up the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism. Since 1999, the company has been committed to the Code, which is included in its responsible tourism development policy. TUI Nordic trains staff on the issue, includes a specific clause against child sex tourism in hotel contracts, and informs customers about the issue through materials and awareness-raising activities, such as welcome meetings, hotel books, in-flight video, and information leaflets.

Source: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)

1.4 TRAIN STAFF ON SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

Improving a company's overall sustainability performance will require the understanding, commitment and active participation of staff, at all levels of the organisation. To help ensure this staff buy-in, training on sustainability can be provided to help employees understand the issues and learn how they can contribute to the sustainability strategy within their day-to-day responsibilities.



Review current staff training methods, and consider how to incorporate sustainable tourism training, either on its own, or as part of health and safety or quality training.

There is a wide range of methods that can be used for employee training. For individual training, some of the least expensive options include structured reading, open learning and on-the-job training, while coaching, mentoring and information-based technology training will be more expensive. For group training, options include lectures, group discussions, audio-visual presentations, case studies and role-playing exercises, all of which are relatively straightforward and easy to implement. More complicated and costly – but often more fun and effective – group training methods include simulation games and outdoor training exercises.

One of the best-known ways to train a significant number of staff is through training workshops. Workshops, while effective, are also one of the most expensive options, so they have to be well-planned and executed and be engaging and appealing to participants. The companion document to this manual, **Integrating Sustainability into Business: An implementation guide for responsible tourism coordinators**, includes a section on how to design and execute an effective sustainability training workshop.

Once a training programme has been put into place, communication with staff through company-wide newsletters, the Intranet, attachments to payroll information, staff induction procedures and other methods can reinforce their knowledge of sustainability and help maintain a high level of staff commitment to the strategy.

EXAMPLES: Staff training

Dynamic Tours, a Moroccan tour operator, has developed a 'Mountain and Desert Guide's Charter' for its guides, to build awareness on sustainability as well as reinforce service quality aspects of the guiding job. Each guide gets two weeks of training per year, and more than 100 guides have been trained to date.

Vasco Travel, which offers travel services and tours in Turkey for customers from Austria, Germany, Slovakia and Hungary, has conducted motivational training on sustainable tourism for its guides since 1985. The training emphasizes the role of tour guides as inter-cultural mediators, helping the guides to understand tourist behaviour, improve communication skills and work creatively.

Aurinkomatkat, a Finnish outbound tour operator, trains its head office staff, destination managers and other employees in sustainable tourism through lectures, roundtable discussions, an intranet site and a company newsletter. Customers and stakeholders are given information about the staff training. The programme has led to improved supplier relations and client satisfaction.

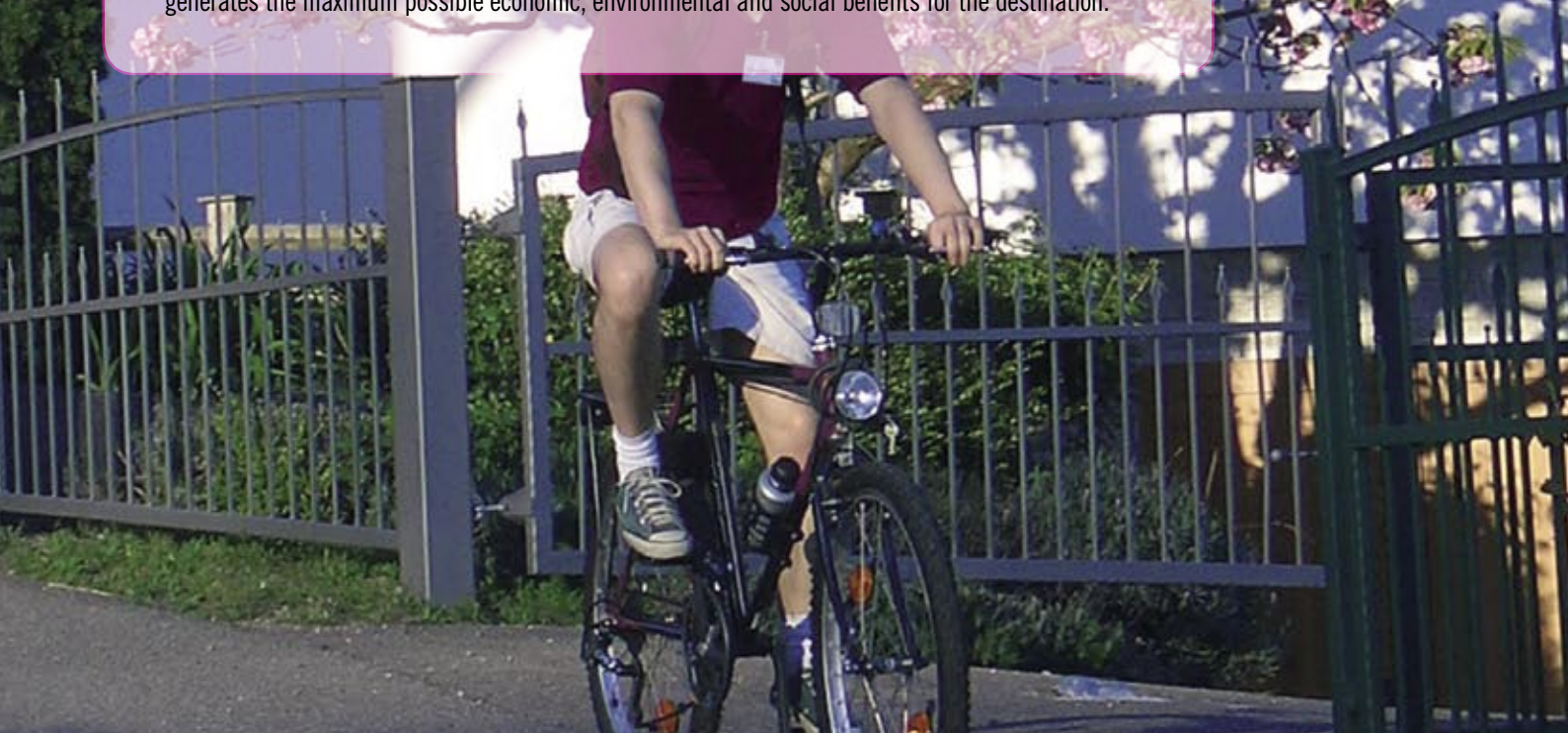
Source: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)

Product Development and Management



Tour operators can have a significant impact on the sustainability of tourist destinations through the design of their holiday products and brands. Incorporating sustainability issues into criteria for choosing destinations can provide incentives for countries and regions to improve their sustainability performance, while the services, routes and activities selected by the product manager for each package contribute to the sustainability of the tour operator's offer.

Sustainable product development and management involves making choices about destinations based on existing environmental management strategies, infrastructure and policies, as well as the track record of the country or destination on social and human rights issues. Designing sustainable holiday packages to these destinations means understanding and addressing the potential impacts of the various tour components and finding ways to ensure that the holiday generates the maximum possible economic, environmental and social benefits for the destination.



2.1 SELECT SUSTAINABLE DESTINATIONS

Tourist destinations are traditionally selected based on their tourism potential, which involves natural and cultural attractions, the average price of tourism-related services (including the exchange rates), health and safety, and security. In addition to these more traditional criteria, a responsible tourism development strategy will also consider sustainability issues, including the destination's environmental, social and economic development records, and the potential positive and negative impacts that tourism might have on the destination.

It is important for responsible tour operators to choose destinations that have good environmental management systems in place and avoid areas where tourism is causing unacceptable levels of environmental damage. Selecting destinations that have defined their 'carrying capacity' and work within this capacity, for example by limiting the construction of new hotels, can make it more likely that the area will remain attractive and sustainable for tourism in the long run.

A company should also favour destinations with good-quality local labour, or where training programmes are in place to increase the number of local people employed in tourism, whilst avoiding destinations where unacceptable labour conditions or working practices, such as forced labour or child labour, are common or where there are human rights abuses. In addition, choosing destinations that support financially sustainable practices and have an open and accountable tax system will help maximise the local economic benefits

BOX 6: Issues to include in a destination sustainability assessment

Environmental Issues


- Fresh water availability, infrastructure and consumption
- Energy availability, infrastructure and consumption
- Transport infrastructure
- Wastewater treatment systems
- Hazardous and solid waste disposal systems
- Air and water quality
- Land-use and biodiversity conservation strategies
- Marine and terrestrial protected areas systems
- RAMSAR-listed wetlands and World Heritage Sites
- Local environmental management structures
- Compliance (or non-compliance) with relevant international declarations, conventions, and treaties
- National, sub-national, regional and local environmental regulations
- Activities to conserve and/or restore the habitats of endangered species, and to prevent, reduce or control factors endangering these species
- Measures to limit the risks and impacts of alien species that are traded or unintentionally transported
- Ecosystems that have been positively or negatively affected by tourism and other activities

Social and Human Rights Issues

- Compliance with International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions on child and forced labour
- Freedom of association
- Non-discrimination
- Programmes to combat sexual exploitation of children
- Programmes to combat and mitigate the social impacts of HIV/AIDS
- Citizen participation in planning process
- Allocation of revenues generated from tourism to local communities, and levels of equity in the distribution of this income
- National, sub-national, regional and local regulations associated with social issues
- Compliance with international declarations, conventions and treaties on human rights
- Incorporation of human rights issues in decision-making and policies
- Policies and general situation on indigenous rights and land rights
- Structures/procedures for dialogue and engagement with indigenous people about ongoing or planned projects

Adapted from the Tour Operators' Initiative Sustainability Reporting Indicators Indicator PMD3 and Guidance note





of tourism, while stopping (or threatening to stop) tours to destinations with high levels of corruption and financial mismanagement might provide incentives for eliminating that corruption.

To assess the sustainability of a potential destination, a company should use indicators and criteria that reflect company policies as well as key sustainability issues relevant to tourism (see Box 6). Information can be collected in a variety of ways, from simple surveys to expert input, depending on the scale of the operations at a destination and the likely severity of tourism impacts. It is often more useful to collect data over a relatively long period of time in one place, to allow for long-term comparisons within the same destination, than to compare data between destinations.

Tour operators can collect information on destinations in several ways, including:

1. **Tour operator staff.** Destination representatives or other staff members can be trained to collect regular data on destinations and individual components of the holiday product as an extension of their current tasks. In addition, a larger company may have a dedicated staff member who spends some time in each destination. A more expensive option is to use consultants.
2. **Stakeholder contribution.** Some form of consultation can be undertaken with all those affected by tourism activities in the destinations, as well as those who feel they are missing out on potential benefits. This can normally be done through a forum involving representatives from the local authorities and other public sector stakeholders, and community representatives.
3. **Dialogue with competitors.** Assessing the impacts of tourism is an important area where tour operators can benefit from collaboration with colleagues and competitors, for instance through meetings at destination level and consultation with public authorities and local communities. The identification of common challenges is the first step towards finding common solutions.
4. **Customer feedback.** Most tour operators solicit feedback from customers via a post-holiday questionnaire, which can be adapted to include questions on sustainability issues such as pollution of beaches and water, badly maintained infrastructure, poor relationships between tourists and local communities, excessive poverty, or tourism-related damage to natural habitats. If the local authorities are aware that tourists have negative perceptions of the destination, they may be encouraged to address the underlying issues.

For some specific destinations or impacts, a company might seek technical specialist input, such as eco-audits, environmental impact assessments or lifecycle assessments. In some instances, information on ecological or socio-cultural change may already be available in third party reports (see Box 7).

BOX 7: Third party reports

Many tour operators will not have the resources to conduct in-depth impact assessments at the destination level, and will normally rely on data gathered by others. Reports on tourism and its impacts in specific destinations may already have been produced by policy-making bodies responsible for the environment, the economy or tourism, as well as donors and development banks, NGOs, industry associations and universities. Third party reports on sustainability issues are more likely to be available if there is a protected area nearby, if tourism development is subject to a master planning process (rather than spontaneous development), and if the destination is under high tourism pressure. Three of the most commonly available types of report are:

- **Economic Impact Assessment:** There may be government-funded assessments of the economic contribution of tourism to the destination. For example, tourism Satellite Accounting allows destinations to gather data on the direct and indirect impacts of tourism expenditure.
- **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):** An EIA helps determine the likely risk of impact from tourism – or any other activity – on a specific destination, ecosystem or even a single protected species. EIAs can be conducted to compare the consequences of several different development scenarios and may include the cost of restoring the environmental quality of the resources damaged by development.
- **Social Impact Assessment (SIA):** Although socio-cultural impacts are usually understood in a qualitative way, impacts can be quantified through a Social Impact Assessment (SIA), which measures residents' perceptions of tourism by asking a representative sample of residents to agree or disagree with a series of statements about the impact of tourism at the destination. These surveys are generally supplemented by qualitative assessments.

EXAMPLE: Eco-audits of destinations

My Travel Northern Europe has conducted eco-audits of tourist destinations that assess the performance of the destination, increase the knowledge of clients, provide local authorities with independent information, and open up a dialogue. The audit questionnaire includes 30 environmental questions that reflect the tour operator's environmental policy. Each area manager is asked to complete a questionnaire with the relevant person in the local authority.

Source: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)

EXAMPLE: Environmental monitoring of destinations

TUI AG, which is the parent company of some 400 tour operators, hotel companies, airlines, travel agencies and other tourism-related businesses, is Europe's travel market leader. The company annually monitors the state of the environment in its destinations, as part of its quality assurance scheme. Staff from TUI Service and incoming agencies question local authorities, environmental groups, etc., and report back to TUI AG Environmental Management on several different environmental criteria, including:

- Bathing water and beach quality;
- Water supply and water-saving measures;
- Wastewater disposal and utilisation;
- Waste disposal and avoidance;
- Energy supply and energy-saving measures;
- Traffic, air, noise and climate change;
- Landscape and building development and open space planning; and
- Nature, species and animal protection.

This systematic monitoring raises the awareness of local inhabitants and decision makers on environmental and nature protection issues. The TUI Service or agency managers in each holiday region are responsible for up-to-date reporting. Environmental reports are supplemented by numerous appendices reflecting TUI environmental criteria for destinations. These appendices include reports by public and private sector organisations, local press releases, environmental education brochures produced in the regions covering nature and environmental protection, samples of guest information material provided by TUI hotels, as well as photographs and maps.

Environmental reports from TUI destinations worldwide are analysed by TUI AG Environmental Management and made available to TUI AG Corporate Centre departments with strategic functions as well as the environmental co-ordinators in the affiliated companies. These environmental reports are used as the basis for consumer information on 'Nature and environment' in all brochures produced by TUI Deutschland, TUI Suisse, TUI Austria and TUI Polska.

Source: www.tui-environment.com

2.2 DESIGN SUSTAINABLE HOLIDAY PACKAGES

The design and management of sustainable holiday packages involves assessing the various components of a tour, from accommodation to transport services to excursions, in order to determine their potential environmental, social and economic impacts – both positive and negative.

Careful planning and selection of the parts of a holiday package can help reduce per capita water and energy consumption and waste production, and contribute to the conservation of biodiversity in areas that attract tourists. Responsible design of tour packages can also reduce the chance of negative socio-cultural impacts as



EXAMPLES: Developing responsible holidays

Exodus, a UK-based adventure tour operator, has a Responsible Tourism policy that includes:

- Hiring more local guides to provide better experiences and support to local communities;
- Purchasing local products and services, where appropriate, for all trips;
- Working with local operators to implement the policy; and
- Limiting group size based on local situations.

Discovery Initiatives, a UK-based outbound nature tour operator, offers holidays designed to meet a set of strategic sustainability objectives. The company offers holidays and tours that support wildlife and conservation in locations where its clients can become actively or financially involved in conservation, and also runs trips for opinion leaders and experts who can influence decision-makers with regard to conservation. Each holiday is designed to be sustainable by supporting conservation efforts, making financial contributions to wildlife and development agencies, raising awareness about conservation and ensuring that the benefits remain in the host communities.

Source: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)

a result of inappropriate behaviour by tourists or unhealthy interactions with local communities. Finally, choosing local suppliers and locally owned services can also help ensure that a significant portion of the revenues from a tour stay in the destination and benefit local people, rather than being lost to leakages.

ASSESS THE IMPACTS OF THE TOUR COMPONENTS

For each destination, the tour operator should first assess the impacts of the different elements of each holiday package, to understand how to design tours to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive benefits to the environment, local communities and the destination economy.

Product characteristics to consider in a holiday assessment include:

- The **type of accommodation** (hotel, guesthouse, all inclusive, etc.), taking into account characteristics such as the grade and size of the establishment, its facilities, and whether it is locally owned, employs local staff and serves local produce.
- The **method of transport** (plane, train, bus, private car, etc.) both to the destination and at the destination. Depending on the location and the services available, it may be possible to make choices according to the level of pollution caused by different types of transport.
- The **type of excursions and activities** at the destination, including attractions visited and souvenir shop stops. Again, according to the type of holiday and the options available, choices can be made on the size of group, the timing of visits (for instance to avoid cultural events at which tourists are not welcome), and the type of information provided.
- The **inclusion or selection of food and beverage**, since these can form key economic benefits for the destination. For instance, if all meals are included in the package price, customers will have little opportunity to frequent local restaurants. Choices can also be made on the type of food served, with an emphasis given to local produce.

INCREASE THE BENEFITS OF A TOUR

Responsible tourism development means not only reducing the potential negative impacts of tourism, but also finding ways to maximise the tourism benefits to the local environment, population and economy. For example, sustainable design might mean choosing to include a certain type of product or service because it reflects something unique and authentic about the destination visited, or deciding not to visit a certain attraction or hotel because it is overly commercialised and does not reflect the traditional values of the country. The principles of sustainable development should be integrated throughout the design and management of holiday packages.

INCREASING ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Environmental sustainability entails avoiding or mitigating negative impacts while at the same time maximising the positive contribution of a tour to environmental conservation. Some examples of responsible environmental actions include:

- Changing the route of trekking holidays to avoid areas that are under excessive tourist pressure;
- Including conservation work as part of holidays, to allow clients to help protect and restore native ecosystems and species in degraded areas;
- Supporting and visiting protected areas in a responsible manner (see Box 8);
- Avoiding popular destinations where environmental damage is known to have occurred;
- Choosing rail or road transport over air transport for short journeys, both from the country of origin and within the destination country;
- Promoting the use of low-impact forms of transport at destinations;
- Avoiding excursions with a high level of environmental impact;
- Avoiding parts of destinations at certain seasons or for a specific period (e.g. at animal breeding seasons, or to allow damaged mountain trails or coral reefs to recover);
- Limiting group size to small numbers in environmentally fragile areas;
- Supporting destination planning that allows natural water cycles to continue; and
- Supporting efforts to reduce impacts on plants and wildlife (e.g. paving of trails to prevent erosion, provision of mooring buoys for dive-boats).

BOX 8: Including protected areas in holiday packages

Tour operators can contribute to the sustainable development of tourism in protected areas as well as the long-term conservation and health of those sites by:

- Including protected areas in itineraries and giving customers information about the natural and cultural features of visited sites and their roles in the conservation of local ecosystems;
- Limiting the size of groups, or dividing large groups into smaller ones when visiting protected areas;
- Informing protected areas managers of visits ahead of time and discussing ways to reduce visitor impacts;
- Integrating sustainability principles into the selection criteria and service agreements of their suppliers, and choosing locally owned and operated suppliers;
- Making financial contributions to conservation and development projects in and around the protected areas;
- Providing customers with opportunities to proactively support protected areas; and
- Providing customers with guidelines on how to avoid negative impacts while visiting sensitive areas, for example by maintaining appropriate distances from wildlife, staying on trails to avoid trampling plants or causing erosion, and keeping water and energy use down to avoid related impacts on the environment.

EXAMPLE: Offsetting carbon emissions

Tourism activities, particularly air transport, can cause significant levels of greenhouse gas emissions, notably carbon dioxide (CO₂). A company can seek to offset these emissions, and even become 'carbon neutral', by funding the planting of trees or energy-efficient schemes to compensate for some or all of the carbon released through their operations or tours. These schemes can be funded either through voluntary contributions from customers or by including contributions in the price of holidays.

British Airways Holidays has partnered with Climate Care to partly offset the carbon dioxide emissions generated by their holidays through financial contributions that will be included in their holiday price. The company calculated that by investing 80 pence in reforestation or emissions reductions, it could offset the CO₂ emissions from one customer hour of travel. As a first step, British Airways Holidays has contributed £10,000 to Climate Care, thus offsetting the equivalent of 12,000 person hours of flying. Future plans include involving clients in offsetting their impacts, improving fuel efficiency, reducing the running time of auxiliary power units and promoting emissions trading.

Source: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)



EXAMPLE: Energy conservation

Studiosus, a German tour operator that specialises in educational holidays, aims to decrease energy use for transportation by three percent per passenger on its tours. The company's measures to achieve this goal include increasing the use of trains and buses for their European holidays, using more non-stop flights and promoting local transport at its destinations. In addition, Studiosus has a 'Stop the Engine' campaign for bus companies to encourage tour buses to turn off their engines while waiting for passengers, rather than leaving them to idle. The company uses trains more than the industry average, has increased awareness amongst industry partners, and has received positive feedback from clients.

Source: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)

INCREASING ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Economic sustainability means ensuring that the maximum amount of revenues from holiday packages remain in the local communities and are not lost to leakages. Some examples of responsible economic actions include:

- Using locally owned accommodation whenever possible;
- Encouraging clients to visit shops and restaurants in nearby towns and villages;
- Including less well-known places in excursions and tours to spread the benefits of tourism and reduce congestion at sensitive sites, or giving customers information on these areas so they can make their own decisions; and
- Maximising the use of local food and produce by arranging for hotel menus to consist of local dishes, and encouraging customers to visit local restaurants.

INCREASING SOCIO-CULTURAL BENEFITS

Careful planning is also essential to maximize the benefits to the society and culture of the countries visited, and minimize the negative impacts. Some examples of responsible social actions are:

- Favouring service providers that employ good quality local labour, train their staff on sustainability issues, and offer reasonable workloads and fair working conditions;
- Restricting visits to sacred or culturally sensitive sites;
- Finding opportunities for tourists to learn about local people and customs and interact with them in an appropriate manner; and
- Planning time for clients to be briefed about local customs by tour representatives.

EXAMPLES: Supporting local communities

Travel Walji's, Pakistan's largest inbound tour operator, organizes tours in the Karakorum region of Pakistan. The company supports local entrepreneurs in Karimbad by creating employment in accommodation, transport, guiding and handicraft production, providing interest-free loans to build hotels, and training guides. Through increased demand for cultural shows, Travel Walji's has also helped to revive local traditional music and dances.

With the support of the British Government, the **Travel Foundation** is working with several of the UK's leading tour operators (First Choice, Thomas Cook, MyTravel and Thomson/TUI UK) and Cypriot partners to develop a 'Discover The Real Cyprus' excursion, to provide benefits to rural Cypriot villagers. More than a million British people visit Cyprus each year, accounting for more than half of the island's tourists. The SAVE Excursion (which stands for Support Abandoned Villages and their Environments) takes tourists on a small minibus tour to rural Cyprus villages and helps them understand and support traditional Cypriot lifestyles.

Sources: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003); The Travel Foundation at http://www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk/downloads/fastfact_cyprus.rtf





Supply Chain Management



The main business role of a tour operator is to act as an intermediary between the end consumer and the providers of tourism services by purchasing tourism-related services to form a holiday package, which is then marketed either directly to customers or through travel agents. Supply chain management includes all actions related to the selection and contracting of service providers, or suppliers. This is a critical area for the overall sustainability of the company because, although a tour operator has no direct control over its suppliers' operations or performance in relation to environmental, social and economic sustainability, a company can only be as sustainable as the sum of its suppliers and the products it offers.

Improving the sustainability of a tour operator's supply chain involves measuring the current performance of service providers to establish priorities for action, developing a policy and standards for how to reduce impacts, and setting targets and actions for achieving sustainable supply chain goals. A tour operator can support its suppliers in their efforts to be more sustainable by raising their awareness on sustainability issues, providing feedback on performance so they can learn where and how to make improvements, and offering technical support for sustainability actions. Tour operators can help ensure that suppliers comply with sustainability standards by creating incentives for good performance and using contractual procedures to enforce requirements.

3.1 DEVELOP A SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN POLICY AND ACTION PLAN

CONDUCT A BASELINE ASSESSMENT OF SUPPLIER PERFORMANCE

The first step in creating a specific policy for supply chain management is to assess the suppliers' current performance on sustainability issues, in order to determine priority targets and actions. This assessment also allows the establishment of a baseline scenario, against which to measure future improvements. The review should address all of the company's main contracted products, services and suppliers (see Table 3).

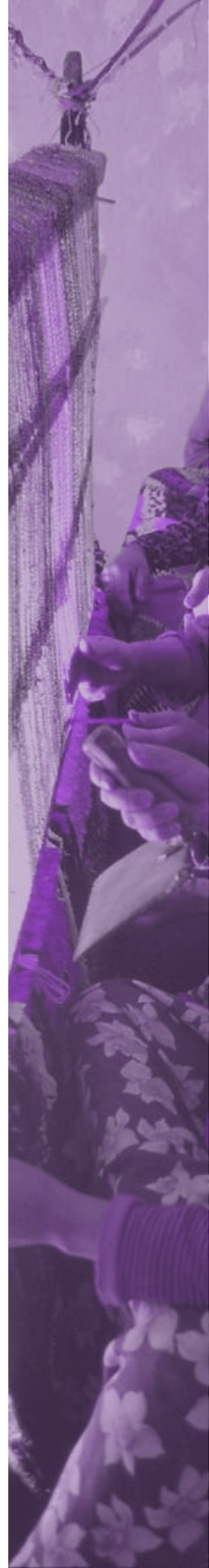
The areas or performance indicators to be assessed will vary depending on the type of supplier, the resources available for the task and the number of suppliers. For example, for accommodation suppliers, a baseline assessment should cover at least the following issues:

- Electricity consumption per guest-night;
- Source of electricity supply;
- Energy efficiency measures, for instance insulation, light-bulbs;
- Water consumption per guest-night;
- Water saving measures;
- Management of wastewater;
- Management of solid waste;
- Use of chemical cleaning products;
- Food sourcing policies;
- Information given to customers regarding sustainability measures;
- Biodiversity conservation measures on the grounds of the hotel/resort;
- Conservation measures in areas used by hotel guests;
- Labour and employment policies; and
- Relations with the local community.

For other groups of suppliers or products (such as land-based excursions, marine excursions, transport providers, etc.) a different set of sustainability indicators will be required. All information collected can

Table 3: Tour Operators' Main Contracted Products and Suppliers

Tourism Products and Services	Suppliers
Accommodation	Hotels, bed & breakfasts, self-catering, (serviced) apartments, campsites, cruise ships, caravan parks
Transport to and from destinations	Public transport (e.g. trains), coaches, taxis, airports, scheduled air carriers, air charters, scheduled sea passages, chartered sea passages, cruises
Catering and food and beverage	Restaurants and bars, grocery stores, farmers, fishermen, local commerce/markets, bakers, butchers, food wholesalers
Ground transport	Car rentals, boat rentals, fuel providers, gas stations, coach rentals
Ground services	Agents, handlers or inbound operators in the destination
Cultural and social events	Excursion and tour providers, sports and recreation facilities, shops and factories
Environmental, cultural and heritage resources of destinations	Public authorities, protected site managers, private concessionaires and owners, excursion and tour providers



be stored in an easy-to-use database, to allow comparison of the most significant impacts for different suppliers of the same type (for example, water consumption per overnight stay for hotels in the Caribbean).

Once the initial baseline has been created, updated information can be collected regularly, so that performance can be monitored and assessed against earlier data. Larger companies may have one or more full-time staff members to oversee the collection and assessment of information, or they may contract local independent organisations to carry out the inspection procedures. Smaller companies may have to rely on self-declarations by suppliers, backed up by occasional visits from company staff.



If relying on suppliers to assess themselves on sustainability audits, and only a sample of the companies or the indicators can be verified, it is useful to agree and communicate what actions will be taken if a supplier is discovered to be reporting false information.

DEVELOP A SUPPLY CHAIN POLICY AND STANDARDS

Based on the information collected in the baseline assessment, a company can then develop a sustainability policy and standards for suppliers. A team of people drawn from many areas of the company, including product development, product management, purchasing, quality control, and health and safety, should be involved in the development of this new policy and standards. This breadth of expertise on this team will enable it to understand and advise on what can be expected in terms of sustainability from suppliers.

A company's standards should reflect the key issues that form the basis of its overall sustainability policy. These standards will provide criteria both for selecting new suppliers and for offering additional promotional opportunities and incentives to existing ones. Standards may be performance-based (i.e. based on specific levels of performance), process-based (i.e. based on the use of specific procedures and practices), or a combination of the two. Standards should be set sufficiently high to represent a real contribution to sustainability by suppliers, but also at a level that is realistically achievable. They should also be flexible enough to accommodate different local socio-economic and environmental conditions and the diverse size and technical capacity levels of suppliers.

It is useful to involve not only staff but also suppliers in defining sustainability performance standards. This allows both staff and suppliers to feel a sense of ownership and participation, making them more likely to be committed to the programme. In addition, suppliers can provide insights into local issues and conditions that may affect the potential to improve their sustainability performance.

EXAMPLES: Sustainable supply chain policies and standards

Premier Tours, a US-based tour operator specialising in safari tours to Southern and East Africa, uses service suppliers and ground handlers for its safaris who are committed to sustainable practices and who apply a responsible approach to tourism, conservation and local community involvement. Such an approach ensures a sustainable environment, employment and other benefits for local communities, and a high-quality holiday for clients. Premier Tours monitors its suppliers' performance.

Atlas Voyages, a Morocco-based inbound tour operator, has developed a suppliers' hygiene and control campaign. A baseline audit and diagnosis followed by talks with suppliers helped set policies, procedures and standards. Follow-up visits are used to check compliance.

Aurinkomatkat, a Finnish outbound tour operator, has developed an environmental performance checklist, in consultation with its suppliers. The checklist was slowly introduced over several years, until it became an integral part of the company's supplier contracts in 2003. To make this process work successfully, Aurinkomatkat monitors performance and provides support in weaker areas, with criteria set to make the standards accessible even to small suppliers.

Source: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)

When larger tour operators own and run accommodation or other facilities, they will have direct control over the implementation of any sustainability measures. The standards required of these facilities should be at least equal to – and preferably exceed – the standards expected of contracted suppliers.

In all cases, it is important to clearly communicate information about the new policy and standards to suppliers, and to indicate how they may affect contractual arrangements.

SET TARGETS AND DEFINE AN ACTION PLAN

Based on its sustainable supply chain policy and standards, a company can next set targets to achieve its sustainability goals. Targets will reflect both improvement by individual suppliers and the overall number or percentage of suppliers that meet the given standards in each year. Ideally, this number will increase annually. Priorities can be set for which suppliers are to be involved in the first stages of the programme, based on economic and managerial considerations. It may be more practical to begin with just a few destinations and/or selected suppliers, rather than trying to introduce the policy everywhere at once.

The most obvious and severe impacts should generally be managed first, although sometimes priority will be given to the easiest to manage. Priorities for action will usually be based on:

- The type, severity and source of impact;
- Sustainability standards already available for each impact (including eco-labels, a tour operators' own guidelines, international agreements, etc.);
- The supplier's ability to reduce the impact; and
- The tour operator's ability to influence the supplier.

A sustainable supply chain action plan should include plans for how to support suppliers in meeting the standards (see Section 3.3 below), a timetable for implementation of the overall plan and for each individual action, specific responsibilities for each department, and the resources (such as training or technical information) needed to implement the plan. Departmental action plans should be incorporated into regular company procedures for reviewing progress and staff appraisal.



Most tour operators with a strong sustainability policy started by working with accommodations that they own, or with which they have a long-standing and successful relationship. Their first steps have been to assess water, waste and energy consumption (as data on these is usually available), and to help the facilities reduce their usage and operating costs. Once this initial phase is well-accepted, it will be easier to introduce other aspects of sustainability.

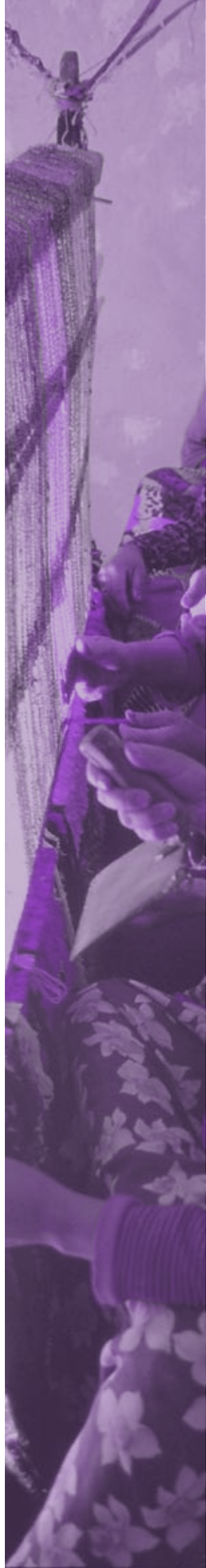



The sustainable supply chain action plan can include three stages – short-term, mid-term and long-term – to allow for a realistic time frame for suppliers to meet the standards. It is important to remember that not all suppliers will be in a position to achieve the targets at the same pace.

3.2 SUPPORT SUPPLIERS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

Tour operators are well placed to support their suppliers in reaching the sustainability standards set by the company. In business terms, it is often easier to continue working with established partners and help increase their sustainability than to find new ones, while in ethical terms, a company can make a greater contribution to sustainability by helping to change the unsustainable practices of an existing partner. Support to suppliers involves raising their awareness on sustainability issues, giving feedback on their performance, and providing technical support for the implementation of sustainability actions.

It is important to demonstrate to suppliers why sustainability performance is important by raising their awareness on relevant sustainability issues and the impacts of tourism. Messages should be kept simple and





relevant, and used to direct suppliers towards further sources of information and expertise. The tour operator can encourage feedback from suppliers on the usefulness of any materials provided and monitor their responses to awareness-raising actions.

To encourage compliance with sustainability measures, a tour operator should give suppliers feedback on their performance, based on its sustainability audits and reviews. This feedback can be accompanied by a comparison with other suppliers in the same sector, and by recommendations on how to improve performance. Before providing any information, suppliers should have a clear understanding of how the information collected from each company will be used and disclosed to others.

The level and type of technical support provided to each supplier should be based on existing performance. Support can take the form of printed material, workshops, bilateral meetings or dialogues, briefing materials and feedback forms for staff, training sessions, checklists and questionnaires, and telephone and on-line information and support services.

In addition, tour operators can offer suppliers links to networks of local, national and international advisers on sustainability and business issues, who can provide on-line and on-site assistance to suppliers. These resources might include local experts on environmental and socio-economic issues, possibly in collaboration with local trade associations and NGOs. Tour operators may also arrange access to technical materials already developed by trade associations, NGOs and international organizations (see Box 9). Where available, existing eco-label schemes can provide advice on how to achieve standards.

EXAMPLE: Support for suppliers

LTU Touristik, a German tour operator that specialises in package holidays to all continents, has distributed 15,000 environmental management manuals to its suppliers. The manual was the result of long-term development process that involved suppliers and destinations. It has been translated into German, English, French, Italian, Spanish and Greek. LTU Touristik requires feedback from hoteliers on the manual's usefulness and the hotels' performance.

Source: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)

BOX 9: Tour Operators' Initiative support guides

The Tour Operators' Initiative, in partnership with the Center for Environmental Leadership in Business (CELB), has created a series of guides to help support tourism product and service providers in improving their sustainability and to assist tour operators in integrating environmental and social issues into their contracting processes. Among the titles in this series are:

A Practical Guide to Good Practice: Managing Environmental and Social Issues in the Accommodations Sector.

This guide provides information on energy consumption, water use, wastewater and solid waste management, chemical use, purchasing, contributions to biodiversity and nature conservation, contributions to community development, social issues in the workplace, and environmental management systems related to the accommodations sector. The guide has been translated into Spanish, French, Arabic, Turkish, Italian and Portuguese.

A Practical Guide to Good Practice: Managing Environmental Impacts in the Marine Recreation Sector.

This guide provides information about the impacts of marine recreation activities on the environment, the rationale for good practice and suggestions on how to reduce the impacts of marine recreation. Topics covered include anchoring; boat operation; boat maintenance; boat sewage and garbage disposal; snorkelling, diving and snuba; seafood consumption and souvenir purchasing; recreational fishing and marine wildlife viewing. A self-assessment checklist is included with the guide to promote the practice of evaluating environmental performance among marine recreation providers. The guide is available in English and Spanish.

The guides are available at <http://www.toinitiative.org>

3.3 PROMOTE COMPLIANCE WITH SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS

In addition to supporting suppliers in their efforts to improve performance, tour operators can also implement more formal ways of encouraging their suppliers to meet sustainability standards, including incentives and contractual requirements.

Suppliers may be more likely to make the effort to improve their environmental, social and economic sustainability performance if they know that their actions will be recognised and rewarded by tour operators.



Suppliers will need to be convinced of the advantages of taking sustainability measures, which might include preferred supplier schemes in the form of higher rates, longer-term contracts, committed guarantees or joint marketing agreements, more brochure space, joint promotional activities or favoured status in system sales searches.

In addition, companies can tap into the competitive spirit of their suppliers and motivate them to take action by publicising examples of other suppliers who have benefited from incentive schemes. Incentives for good performance might include:

- Preferential contracting for suppliers that meet the standards;
- Earlier contract renewal;
- The awarding of sustainability logos, either from an existing eco-label scheme or from a scheme generated by the tour operator;
- Promotional opportunities in catalogues and on websites, including information about sustainability logos and what they mean;
- Publicity about the achievements of high-performing suppliers;
- Presentation of awards and certificates to the best performers; and
- Promotion in destination-based events to showcase good practice.

Incentives should be used at first to encourage suppliers to meet minimum standards. Once these minimum standards have been accepted, it will be possible to include them in supplier contracts, taking geographical and socio-economic conditions into account. The impending inclusion of sustainability standards in contracts should be communicated to suppliers well in advance, and staff should be trained to encourage and monitor sustainability through their relations with suppliers.

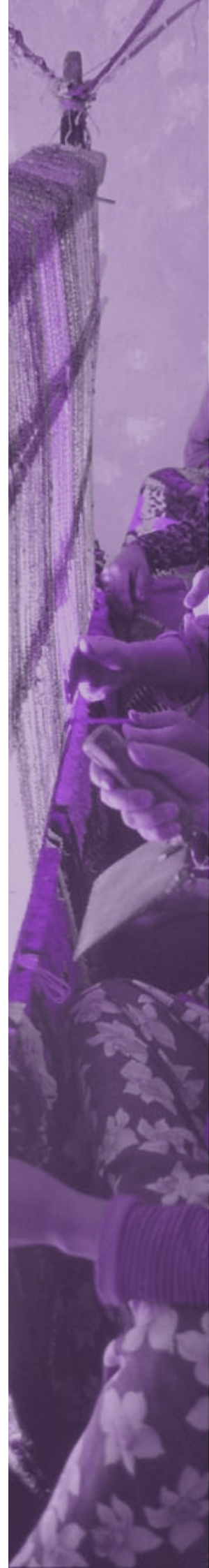
EXAMPLES: Incentives for improved sustainability performance


My Travel Northern Europe has developed a '50 Steps Towards a Good Environment' programme to encourage its in-house and partner hotels to voluntarily adopt environmental actions. Hotels that are labelled as environmentally friendly through the programme are highlighted for good performance in the My Travel NE brochures. Benefits to these hotels have included earlier bookings, meaning better profits for the hotels and a reduced risk of losing environmentally conscious customers.

TUI Nordic, one of the leading tour operators in Europe and part of World of TUI (TUI AG), has established a classification programme called Blue Village Hotels, to recognize the environmental sustainability practices of some of its partner hotels. The company requires Blue Village Hotels to have implemented the hotel section of the WWF Code of Conduct for the Travel and Tourism Industry and the Code of Conduct against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism. The hotels must also have an Environmental Management System in place and inform their customers about UNESCO's World Heritage Ten Rules for Responsible Travelling. TUI Nordic experiences a high demand for the Blue Village Hotels. Clients report a high level of satisfaction with the inclusion of responsible tourism developments, and have a positive image of the hotels and loyalty to the Blue Village brand, leading to early reservations.

Aurinkomatkat-Suntours, a Finnish outbound tour operator, provides incentives to contract partners to improve their environmental performance by providing a sustainability classification system alongside the traditional quality classification in its brochures and marketing materials. Hotels can receive up to three stars for environmental performance, based on information provided by the contract partners and annual checks by destination staff.

Source: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)





Contractual clauses that require meeting the set standards, and the legal implications of these clauses should be considered for each destination, as they are likely to vary from country to country. Procedures can be established to deal with suppliers that do not meet the standards or that submit false information.

EXAMPLE: Contract clauses on sustainability

My Travel Northern Europe has included four contractual environmental clauses as part of its suppliers' Service Agreements. While some hotels decide to meet just the base level requirements stated in the Service Agreement, others opt for achieving higher performance levels in order to earn an environmental label in the company's marketing materials.

Source: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)

EXAMPLE: Environmental standards for hotels

TUI AG, the parent company of some 400 tour operators, hotel companies, airlines, travel agencies and other tourism-related businesses, requires high environmental quality standards of its hotel brands. All TUI hotel companies are committed to introducing certified environmental management systems in their hotels and resorts.

TUI contractual partners have been surveyed with the help of a TUI environment checklist since 1992, to identify the measures they implement to support environmentally-compatible hotel management. Filling out the annual checklist to provide TUI with information on the measures and activities implemented by the hoteliers to protect the environment at their hotels is a contractual obligation. The environmental checklists help control the implementation of sustainability measures by individual hoteliers and hotel chains as well as the whole hotel sector in holiday regions or countries. Hotels with outstanding environmental measures are highlighted in the TUI brochures produced by TUI Deutschland, TUI Suisse and TUI Austria with the designation 'Environmentally-compatible hotel management'.

Source: www.tui-environment.com





TURISMO & AMBIENTE



PROGRAMMA SETTIMANALE DELL'INTERPRETE AMBIENTALE

MARTEDI
ore 11.15 PASSEGGIATA IN CANOA
ore 17.30 ESPLOTTAMO LA FORESTA DEL VILLAGGIO
ore 21.45 PROGETTO TURISMO A AMBIENTE
VENERDI
ore 11.15 PASSEGGIATA IN CANOA
ore 17.00 MINI-CLUB: GIOCANDO CON LA NATURA!
GIOVEDI
ore 9.30 PASSEGGIATA ECOLOGICA IN SPIAGGIA
ore 11.00 SNORVELING CON IL DIVING
ore 17.15 IL MISTERIOSO MONDO DELLE MANGROVIE
VENERDI
ore 11.00 PASSEGGIATA ECOLOGICA IN SPIAGGIA
ore 17.00 IL DIVING
ore 18.00 FORESTA DEL VILLAGGIO
SABATO
ESCURSIONE ALLE ISOLE CONTOY- MUJERES
DOMENICA
ore 10.00 VOLONTARIATO ECOLOGICO IN SPIAGGIA
ore 17.00 MINI-CLUB: SCOPRENDO LA NATURA!
ore 18.00 MONITORAGGIO DEI NIDI DI TARTARUGA

INOLTRE, MERCOLEDI E VENERDI, PASSEGGIATA NOTTURNA PER VEDERE LE TARTARUGHE MENTRE NIDIFICANO (E' OBBLIGATORIO ISCRIVERSI DURANTE IL PERIODO)

Customer Relations



Tourists are often unaware of the impacts they may be causing during their holidays. This may be particularly the case since tourists are, by definition, seeking an escape from the concerns and responsibilities of their everyday lives. Tourists also may not see the impact they are causing, because most of the negative impacts of tourism are the result of the accumulation of many small impacts over time. Visitors who remember only the unspoiled destinations they visited years earlier may never stop to think that their actions may have contributed to the process of change in an area.

Tour operators are ideally positioned to support and influence responsible actions by their customers. They can begin promoting appropriate behaviour in pre-departure information, through a fair portrayal of the destination and the local cultures, and continue raising awareness on sustainability issues throughout the tour and excursions and in any post-holiday information. Sustainability messages should encourage consumers to behave in a more responsible way, while at the same time making them feel good about their actions. A tour operator can reinforce its messages by inviting feedback on sustainability issues and channelling this feedback to suppliers, destination representatives and local policy-makers. Finally, in addition to expecting appropriate behaviour from customers, tour operators have a responsibility to protect their clients' privacy, health and safety; this is an important component of ensuring the overall sustainability of customer relations.

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4.1 COMMUNICATE SUSTAINABILITY MESSAGES TO CUSTOMERS

To maximise the effectiveness of communication to customers, a tour operator can prepare a communication campaign, with a name, an image and a slogan. To develop a campaign, the company must first identify the main impacts that its clients have on the environment and local cultures, set objectives and goals for tourist behaviour and actions, and determine what customers can realistically be expected to do. Campaigns can be generic, intended to develop overall awareness about sustainability, or specifically targeted at changing behaviour in a particular destination or on one particular aspect of the holiday.

The company should also clearly identify its target audience, including their current level of awareness and any motivators or barriers to the desired behaviour. Changing deliberate behaviour is more difficult than getting people to do something without realising it. For example, if the aim is to get tourists to buy more local food, raising awareness of the fact that this helps the local economy might be less attractive and effective than promoting local food for reasons of freshness. The latter message alone does not help educate clients about sustainability, but the end result is the same, so the two messages can be used together.

Based on the goals and audience for the campaign, the tour operator can then determine:

- What is the message? Is there more than one message (which might mean more than one campaign). The message has to be developed in a format that can be applied to several communication tools.
- What communication channels or methods can be used? A cost-benefit analysis will have to be carried out for each one.
- The stakeholders who will need to be involved to develop the message and get it across to tourists, along with methods of cooperation designed to maximise the impact of the communication campaign at an acceptable cost.

RAISE CLIENTS' AWARENESS OF SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

The challenge in communicating about sustainability to customers is to transform an abstract issue into tangible experiences, actions and messages that will mean something to tourists. The best messages are brief, positive and action-driven, and avoid making tourists feel guilty (see Box 10). This communication can be supported by appealing, positive language and images that emphasize the personal enjoyment gained from doing something out of the ordinary, to make the client feel special and form a unique memory to take home. These positive experiences might include buying a souvenir that the customer has watched being made, gaining 'behind the scenes' insight into how local people live, or helping endangered animals thrive in their natural habitat.

Any communication about responsible tourism that is aimed at customers will likely involve three basic themes (see Box 11):

- How tourists can contribute to actions that suppliers are already taking, such as reducing energy and water consumption or waste production at an accommodation, or using socially preferable products, such as crafts made by local cooperatives.
- How actions by individual tourists can contribute to destination-wide issues, such as quality of life, conservation of scarce resources, poverty reduction and local economic development.
- General tips on responsible behaviour for tourists, such as dress codes, appropriate attitudes to local people, how to trade and negotiate, purchase of authentic products (except for those made from endangered species), or advice on preventing littering.

Promoting a message that has been developed by someone influential, such as a celebrity, will often carry more weight with consumers. If suitable messages are not available, an alternative could be to develop messages with destination-based partners who understand the impacts of tourism on the area and can give better insights into what can be achieved.



BOX 10: A sample communication strategy about souvenir purchasing

A strategy aimed at raising awareness among consumers about the potential impacts of their souvenir purchasing decisions should include information about both potential problems and benefits, as well as concrete actions that tourists can take:

Main impact on...	Can cause... (problems/benefits)	Suggested messages for tourists
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural resources and biodiversity; Local economies and cultures. 	<p>The removal of coral, live shells and other life forms from coral reefs to make tourist souvenirs causes the degradation of the coral reef ecosystems and the loss of biodiversity in the marine environment.</p> <p>Tourist demand for crafts can support local handicrafts and skills in the local economy. However, at the same time, demand for cheap 'art' may undermine traditional production.</p>	<p>Don't buy souvenirs such as shells, corals or other crafts made from endangered species.</p> <p>Buy locally made crafts and support local skills.</p> <p>Buy at fair prices – making it a good deal for both the buyer and the local seller.</p> <p>Don't bargain below a reasonable price that fairly reflects the labour and value of the materials.</p>

BOX 11: Topics for raising awareness amongst consumers

Messages about suppliers' performance

- Initiatives to reduce water and energy use and waste production.
- Use of environmentally preferable products, such as non-bleached cotton linen, natural fibre carpets, water-based paints and organic foods.
- Use of socially preferable products such as crafts from minority co-operatives and local farmers' food.
- Initiatives to reduce the use of chemical purifying agents in swimming pools.
- Use of biofuels and renewable energy technologies.
- Suppliers and operators implementing environmental management and social responsibility programmes.

Messages about sustainability issues at destinations

- Contributions to the conservation of scarce resources.
- Services and operators that contribute a fixed percentage of revenues towards environmental and social programmes.
- Potential for economic diversification that supports local traditions and uniqueness.
- Environmental and social information on the destination, to encourage sustainable tourist behaviour.
- Reduction in the depletion of non-renewable resources at the destination.
- Best practice guidelines and commercial incentives to improve performance.

Messages about responsible holiday making

- Appropriate behaviour towards local populations, especially women and children.
- Appropriate practices when trading and negotiating prices.
- Purchase of authentic products.
- Dress codes, especially in urban areas and places of religious significance.
- Advice on how to reduce waste generation and use less water and energy at the destination.
- Assurance that individual behaviour can make a difference.
- Advice on good practice standards and companies meeting such standards for the most heavily impacting holiday activities.

EXAMPLE: Communication to clients

TUI Deutschland, part of World of TUI (TUI AG), includes comprehensive environmental information on TUI destinations in the 'Nature and environment' section of its brochures and at www.tui.de. The information in the brochures includes a disclosure of environmental problems such as shortcomings in waste management or beach cleaning, as well as exemplary environmental initiatives managed by local authorities and regions. The percentage of protected areas is also given. In 2003, TUI Deutschland updated its 'Urlaub und Umweltverträglichkeit' (Holidays and environmental compatibility) brochure page and had it audited for content by an independent expert during ISO 14001 certification.

TUI produced an eight-page leaflet for clients explaining the causes and consequences of forest fires in the Mediterranean and neighbouring regions, and the actions TUI has taken to help affected areas. To prevent forest fires the leaflet asks tourists to:

- Please refrain from smoking in forests, brush and dry grass landscapes;
- Please don't discard cigarette ends or burning matches;
- Please do not start any open fires;
- Please don't leave any glass or bottles on the ground;
- Ensure that cigarette lighters are disposed of in rubbish containers and not in the wild (residual gas!);
- Please do not park cars with catalytic converters, e.g. hire cars, on surfaces with vegetation cover, especially dry grass; and
- Please report any outbreaks of forest fires immediately by phoning the 112 Euro emergency number or informing your TUI or Thomson Service rep.

TUI Nederland, part of World of TUI (TUI AG), has developed a project on environmentally aware tourism to provide sustainability information to travellers going to Bonaire and Curaçao, in the Caribbean. The sustainability message is reinforced at several stages of the holiday, with tips for environmentally sound practices on the voucher booklet, the in-flight video, during the welcome meeting on arrival and any excursions offered, and via a TUI Nederland resource book available at hotels in the destination. Furthermore, TUI actively promotes excursions that have met sustainability criteria.

TUI AG's Environmental Management Department has developed a comprehensive website (www.tui-umwelt.com) with information on sustainability issues for tourists as well as local authorities, tourism officers, nature conservation organizations, experts in tourism and the environment, travel agents and hoteliers. Information on the site is targeted to the needs of each group. This interactive website opens up dialogue with relevant stakeholders and as a result responds to the growing call for greater transparency.

Sources: www.tui.de; <http://www.tui-umwelt.com>; Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)

DEVELOP OR ADOPT A RESPONSIBLE TOURISM CODE OF CONDUCT

More action-oriented recommendations can be captured in a code of conduct for responsible tourism behaviour. While some larger tour operators may choose to develop their own responsible tourism code of conduct, others may opt for using or adapting a code developed by another organisation (see Boxes 12 and 13). Whether original or adapted, the code of conduct can be disseminated to customers in their pre-departure information pack, to reinforce the sustainability policy presented in a company's brochure.

If a company does decide to develop its own code, it should begin by identifying and listing the most important and frequent impacts caused by tourists. For each impact, one action that tourists could take that would significantly reduce the impact – but without significantly altering their enjoyment of the holiday – could be suggested. These suggestions can be listed in order of priority, or organised according to the type of impacts. Before broad dissemination, the statements on impacts and the suggestions for action can be tested on a focus group of loyal customers to determine whether they think they are fair and achievable.



BOX 12: Examples of responsible tourism codes and sources of advice

Global Code of Ethics for Tourism – Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism (this code is specifically orientated to socio-cultural and economic aspects and does not deal with environmental concerns)
<http://www.ecen.org/tourngo.shtml>

Credo of the Peaceful Traveller – International Institute for Peace through Tourism
<http://www.ipt.org/credo.html>

Tips for responsible travellers – responsibletravel.com
<http://www.responsibletravel.com/Copy/Copy100061.htm>

Travellers Code – Friends of Conservation
<http://www.foc-uk.com/downloads/travellerscode.pdf>

Tourism: Don't Forget Your Ethics – Tearfund
<http://resources.tearfund.org/product.asp?cat=148&prod=7108>

The Worlds Travellers Code - Tourism Concern
<http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk/info-for-tourists/travellers-code.html>

BOX 13: A Traveler's Code

Partners in Responsible Tourism has developed a set of guidelines for individual travellers, *The Traveler's Code for Traveling Responsibly*, that promotes responsible behaviour in three areas:

Cultural Understanding

1. Travel with an open mind: cultivate the habit of listening and observing; discover the enrichment that comes from experiencing another way of life.
2. Reflect daily on your experiences and keep a journal.
3. Prepare: learn the geography, culture, history, beliefs, some local language; know how to be a good guest in the country or culture.

Social Impacts

1. Support the local economy by using locally owned restaurants and hotels, and buying local products made by locals from renewable resources.
2. Interact with local residents in a culturally appropriate manner.
3. Make no promises that you cannot keep (sending photos, helping with school).
4. Don't make extravagant displays of wealth; don't encourage children to beg.
5. Get permission before photographing people, homes & other sites of local importance.

Environmental Impacts

1. Travel in small, low impact groups.
2. Stay on trails.
3. Pack it in, pack it out; assure proper disposal of human waste.
4. Don't buy products made from endangered animals or plants.
5. Become aware of and contribute to projects benefiting local environments and communities. (A social benefit as well!).

Available at: <http://www.pirt.org/travelcode.html>

COMMUNICATE SUSTAINABILITY MESSAGES THROUGHOUT THE HOLIDAY CYCLE

Because knowledge does not necessarily mean awareness, and awareness does not necessarily translate into positive behaviour, an awareness-raising strategy aimed at consumers should be sustained and long-term. Changing attitudes and behaviour takes time and is a complex process. It is unlikely that the first messages will convince individuals who are uninterested in sustainability of the need to rethink their actions.

Communication to tourists about sustainability issues and responsible behaviour can be integrated into all information a company produces about its holidays and imparts to its clients. Information can be included in advertisements, brochures, websites, pre-departure information, in-flight magazines and videos, destination briefings, welcome meetings, information packs and activity guides, and post-holiday questionnaires.

Media and publishing

There are many avenues for reaching the public outside of a company's own products and publications. Newspapers, magazines, books and television are all influential channels for imparting information to tourists, and careful targeted public relations efforts can be used to induce consumer demand for sustainable tourism products and to associate particular tour operators with sustainability.

For example, speciality magazines on topics such as bird-watching, fishing, photography, walking and gastronomy are a good way to reach a specific specialty market, as are press releases on topical events. In addition, it may well be worth cultivating the authors of travel books to ensure that information about sustainability at particular destinations gets wider coverage. Radio, TV and newspapers are always looking for experts on particular topics, and it may be possible for company specialists on particular destinations or issues to be included in media lists of experts. As evidence of the company's commitment to sustainability, a brochure illustrating responsible tourism actions is a useful tool for tourists as well as journalists; this could be an adaptation of any corporate sustainability report produced as part of the company's sustainability management system.

These actions are likely to be coordinated by the responsible tourism manager and implemented by the company's public relations and marketing departments.

Travel agents and tour operator sales staff

Communicating sustainability messages at the point of sale is challenging, and for many tourism products it is also inappropriate, as it will not necessarily have a positive influence on consumer choice. Nevertheless, staff in retail outlets such as travel agencies and front-line office staff at direct-sell tour operators can be trained in company policy, sustainable tourism travellers' tips, and resources for more information when requested. The company intranet, retail website and regular training sessions can be used to communicate this information. Clearly, the market to be targeted will affect how the messages are promoted, as some market segments are more likely to be interested in sustainability issues than others. Similarly, some retail outlets are more suitable than others for conveying sustainability messages, for instance travel shops with associated cafés, with books and brochures to browse. It may also be possible to optimize resources for getting messages across through media and publications by getting involved with a national tour operators' association.

Pre-departure documentation

Pre-departure information could include details about the destination in terms of attractions, crafts and local lifestyles, and encourage customers to find out more about the area. Documents such as the booking confirmation, holiday guides and itineraries can be used to reiterate (in an appropriate manner) the sustainability message.

Tour operators can help their customers ensure that their impacts are as minimal as possible by giving suggestions on what to pack and how to behave, with the emphasis on sustainability. For example, on



EXAMPLES: Communicating through travel agents and sales staff

The Italian Association of Tour Operators (ASTOI) has developed a communication campaign to promote responsible travel. The campaign includes ads in newspapers and metro stations. In addition, associated tour operators printed the campaign leaflet in their catalogues. The entire campaign was relatively low cost since both creative costs and publishing received special rates as a social useful project.

Aurinkomatkat, a Finnish outbound tour operator, allows sales agents access to files on environmental performance of their hotels to assist customers in holiday choices. Hotel environmental information also appears in brochures and websites next to hotel quality information.

Sources: Italian Association of Tour Operators (ASTOI) www.astoi.org;
Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)

a trekking holiday in a national park, packing checklists will include biodegradable shampoo and soap, refillable bottles and rechargeable batteries, with an explanation of why these things are important.

In-flight information

In-flight information is particularly important for late bookings where clients have not had time to appreciate the characteristics of their destination. In-flight magazines can include articles on environmental, cultural and social aspects of the destination, and generic responsible tourism tips can be reiterated. In-flight videos are another way of showing destination-specific points; as with the magazine articles, these can describe environmental, social and cultural aspects of the destination. They can be produced in partnership with destination organizations or NGOs that have relevant insights and expertise.

EXAMPLES: In-flight videos

First Choice (UK & Ireland), an outbound tour operator that offers package holidays and flight bookings, introduced an in-flight video on sustainability on all its flights with Air 2000 to the Gambia. The video features advice for tourists about sensitive tourism issues and encourages greater awareness of the needs and wishes of the people of the Gambia. The video was produced jointly by Tourism Concern and Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO).

TUI Nederland, the market leader in Dutch Travel and part of World of TUI (TUI AG), partnered with KLM to show a video about sustainable excursions and activities in Curaçao and Bonaire, promoted in the framework of a broader sustainability project at the destination.

Source: *Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution*, UNEP / TOI (2003)

At the destination

Providing information to customers once they arrive at a destination is one of the most effective ways to influence tourist behaviour. The transfer to the accommodation and the welcome meeting can be used to communicate basic sustainability points in a gentle way, and evening slideshows on the local environment and culture can help to maintain interest. Children's activities with an environmental theme can be used to communicate messages in an enjoyable way. It may be possible to work with local universities or NGOs to develop the necessary materials.

A cost-efficient way of reinforcing responsible behaviour at the destination is through printed materials. The types of materials will depend on the kind of holiday, and may include leaflets on short walks along the coast, educational handbooks prepared by specialist operators, notice-boards, resort magazines, lobby area displays, or postcards on environmental conservation projects.

EXAMPLES: Providing information at the destination

TUI UK, part of World of TUI (TUI AG), includes 'Travellers' Tips' on sustainable tourism in hotel information books and in Britannia's in-flight Skyscene magazine. The company also distributes a 'Save Endangered Species' leaflet to its holidaymakers in selected destinations.

Ventaglio, an Italian outbound and domestic tour operator, has an environmental interpreter programme at key resorts to raise client environmental awareness, support the dissemination and integration of sustainability in its operations, and foster cooperation between resorts and surrounding communities.

Hapag-Lloyd Kreuzfahrten, a German cruise operator, gives each passenger a 132-page handbook with sustainability information and a copy of Recommendation XVIII-1 (adopted at the Antarctic Treaty Meeting in Kyoto in 1994) during its Antarctic expeditions. The company also provides on-board lectures by biologists, geologists, glaciologists, marine biologists, historians and others.

Accor, a French hotel company, has developed a leaflet on coral reef sustainability for clients going to the Red Sea. The company has distributed 24,000 copies of the leaflet as part of a comprehensive programme of awareness raising, staff training and impact monitoring.

Source: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)

After the holiday – customer feedback

Once clients have returned home, a tour operator can ask for feedback to determine what role sustainability aspects played in people's enjoyment of their holiday. It can be very useful to ascertain whether customers are aware of the company's sustainability actions, and whether they recognise and appreciate the results and support continuous improvement. The standard mechanisms of assessing customer satisfaction can be used, including questionnaires, interviews with loyal customers, and unsolicited feedback on service and destination quality. For instance, customers can be asked whether they felt they were adequately informed about local issues by finding out which materials they particularly noticed, or they could be asked whether they found requests for energy- or water-saving measures at the hotel easy to comply with, or merely irritating.

REINFORCING THE MESSAGE BETWEEN HOLIDAYS

Tour operators can capitalise on their support for sustainability projects and programmes in destinations by providing progress reports to customers, through 'Welcome home' mailings, promotional reminders, printed or e-mailed newsletters, or company-produced holiday magazines. Such materials can reinforce customer loyalty and make it more likely that a client will travel again with the same company or take a long-term interest in the area.

More sophisticated information technology systems can be used to personalise messages to clients to focus on their most recently visited destinations. For instance, if customers were involved in tree-planting programmes (either through donations or on a conservation-oriented working holiday) they will welcome news of how the trees are growing. From the development of a pedestrian zone along a beachfront to the re-establishment of mangroves, these changes can be used to remind tourists of why their last holidays were special, and make them want to book again with the same company and go back to the same destination.

4.2 ADVERTISE HOLIDAYS RESPONSIBLY

In order to reinforce the sustainable tourism message imparted through public relations and training of sales staff, a company should ensure that its holidays are advertised in a responsible manner. This means respecting the cultural and environmental integrity of destinations and resisting the commercial pressures that can encourage tour operators to 'over-sell' tourist destinations as idyllic paradises. Marketing images are responsible for tourists' expectations, and incorrect images can lead to inappropriate behaviour and, ultimately, to unhappy



customers. It is essential that brochures and other communication materials present an accurate image of the destination to help tourists choose the most appropriate destination for their needs and interests.

Most countries have consumer regulations governing advertising and marketing standards. The unrealistic claims made about the quality of holiday resorts are a common cause of customer complaints, so it is essential that claims on the quality, sustainability and atmosphere of the destination are correct and verifiable. Another crucial component of a responsible advertising campaign is ensuring that promotional materials are in line with the characteristics of the destination, and that claims of sustainability, either self-made or the result of gaining sustainability labels and awards, reflect the reality of the products. Companies can consult with stakeholders (hoteliers for hotel descriptions, tourist boards for destination descriptions) to confirm that brochures and communication campaigns reflect the aspirations of the visited communities.

4.3 PROTECT CUSTOMER RIGHTS

Tour operators also have the responsibility of protecting their clients' overall well-being while they are on holiday. Secure storage and handling of private personal and financial data is a basic priority in an age of electronic data, while ensuring that health and safety standards are met is a key aspect of tour operation activities at the destination.

The customer databases of tour operators include the names, addresses and holiday preferences of customers, and may also include bank and credit card details, information on health and family, and other personal statistics. This information has to be managed very carefully to ensure the privacy and financial safety of customers. Companies should already be aware of national data protection legislation and have compliant systems in place. Transparency about the way personal data are treated is key to ensure customer trust. If a breach of consumer privacy does occur, tour operators should keep a record of any complaints, including litigation.

Tour operators also need rigorous procedures to ensure customers' health and safety during their holidays and to comply with legislation both in the country where the holiday is sold and in the country where it takes place. In a growing culture of litigation, it is essential to show that all due care has been taken to ensure standards are met. Procedures may include health, safety and property audits conducted during supplier selection and contracting, as well as specification and quality assurance for sanitation and hygiene, food safety, bathing water, service providers' equipment and appliances, and vehicle conditions and maintenance.

4.4 PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CUSTOMERS TO EXPRESS SATISFACTION AND OFFER FEEDBACK

Assessing customer satisfaction is standard procedure for tour operators, through methods such as questionnaires, random interviews and written feedback on service and destination quality. Within these feedback procedures, specifically inviting comments on environmental and social aspects of the holiday experience is an indirect way to raise awareness and promote sustainability among customers.

The tour operator can further promote its strategy of making sustainability part of the total holiday experience by soliciting and compiling customer feedback on suppliers' performance and destination sustainability issues. Although these comments would not be directly related to the tour operator's performance, visitors

EXAMPLE: Using customer feedback

LTU Touristik, a German tour operator that specialises in package holidays to all continents, encourages customer feedback on destination sustainability via mail and e-mail both before and after a holiday. This system collects excellent qualitative information on customer expectations as well as satisfaction. The tour operator responds to all queries received, and then communicates the results to the appropriate department and suppliers.

Source: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)

4. Sustainability through Customer Relations

can be powerful voices in prompting local players (including suppliers and destination authorities) to take stronger measures to protect the local environment and communities. Tour operators are well-positioned to channel those voices back to suppliers and destination representatives.

Cooperation with Destinations



Tour operators can influence decisions that affect the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the destination. A tour operator's business depends on choices made at the local and national levels in terms of environmental, social and economic development and sustainability. If natural and cultural tourist attractions are not protected, tourists will no longer be willing to purchase holidays to those destinations, or at least they will be willing to pay far less.

Tour operators can use their business weight and influence to help create a long-term vision for a destination, working closely with local stakeholders to develop a better tourism experience that safeguards a destination's culture, economy and environment, and increases benefits for the local community. Tour operators can achieve this by establishing and strengthening links and developing partnerships with local authorities, the private sector, civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the destinations they visit, as well as through philanthropy and charitable donations.



5.1 BUILD PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

The power of tourism as an economic and societal development tool can be increased if tour operators work in partnership with local stakeholders in a destination. Dialogue and collaboration with relevant stakeholders can improve the quality of tourism services and the holiday experience while also benefiting the residents and the destination overall. These partnerships also allow companies to address impacts that fall outside contractual relationships with suppliers and help build trust between tour operators and individuals and organisations at the destination, opening doors for longer-term relationships.

INFLUENCING ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Tour operators may be able to influence the decisions of national and local authorities on environmental planning and management in a destination. Public decisions that improve the sustainability of a destination could include the creation of green areas, establishment of protected areas, development of pedestrian areas, seafront refurbishments, tree-planting, and the construction of waste management systems and infrastructure. Consultation and partnerships can help solve conflicts over public land-use and rights of access, and can help to identify sacred sites and traditional community livelihoods that should be protected from tourism development (if the community so desires).

Tour operators can take an active role in lobbying for sustainable development in the visited destinations either directly, by opening dialogues with national and local authorities, or indirectly, by joining force with active NGOs in the area. Working in co-operation with other tour operators (both outbound and inbound) operating in the same destination would also strengthen the voice of the company.

Companies should stay informed about the key sustainability issues in a destination, to ensure that impacts do not get out of control and allow them to be addressed before the sustainability of the area is compromised. The same channels for information gathering suggested in Section 2 (Product Development and Management) also apply here. A continuous dialogue with local representatives, inbound operators and key NGOs, as well as customers will ensure that, even if not physically present on the ground, the company is fully aware of what's going on.

EXAMPLE: Cooperation on waste management in Turkey


Several tour operators worked together to conduct a destination stakeholder workshop in the coastal resort of Side, Turkey, to identify sustainability challenges and seek solutions through cooperative action. The dumping of solid waste in the Side sand dunes, near an important archaeological site, was highlighted as an issue for priority action. Partnerships were formed to support a waste management system, and with financial contributions by the Turkish government, a waste separation scheme and a new landfill area 30 km inland were created. Training sessions on management of solid waste and waste separation techniques were held for more than 200 managers and staff from hotels and other accommodations, ten Side Municipality sanitation managers and workers, 30 members of the Garment Association, and 30 members of the Bar and Restaurant Association.

Commenting on the collective effort, Dr. Michael Iwand, Environment Director of TUI AG, noted that 'It was the collective action of many tour operators that made possible what we had been saying one by one for a long time'.

Source: <http://www.toinitiative.org>

CONSERVING NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

In addition to influencing overall destination planning and management systems, tour operators have a major stake in the sound management of individual protected areas, as well as in ensuring that valuable natural



and cultural sites are protected. Companies should focus their support for protected areas on sites in which tourism has been:

- Developed and implemented with the consensus of, and in close co-operation with, relevant stakeholders;
- Supported by effective policies, guidelines, management strategies and technical tools; and
- Focused on conserving the environment while ensuring economically, socially and culturally sound development.

In addition to lobbying to ensure that protected areas are managed in a sound and effective way, tour operators can support the generation of funds for tourism management at those sites. Companies can support the sites by promoting and marketing tours or excursions, providing information to clients about ways of supporting conservation, and encouraging direct donations by clients. Financial and in-kind corporate donations for conservation activities linked to tourism are discussed below.

PROMOTING LOCAL PRODUCTS - ADDING TRADE TO AID

Tour operators also have the opportunity to support local efforts through trade and achieve positive, long-term impacts on people's lives by bringing a source of income to charitable causes at the destination level. Companies can seek opportunities to help local projects become more financially independent and entrepreneurial by using the supply chain to spread economic benefits as widely as possible within the formal and informal economy.

For example, a tour operator can help local suppliers tailor the production of food and crafts to the requirements of the tourism industry by providing training in methods of producing food acceptable to tourists, and providing training in how to make crafts that are attractive to visitors. Tour operators can provide capital for start-up access to raw materials, help facilitate access to land, set up production and distribution channels such as cooperatives, and ask hotels to favour local produce or products above things imported from other countries or regions.

EXAMPLE: Support to destinations

TUI AG, the parent company of some 400 tour operators, hotel companies, airlines, travel agencies and other tourism-related businesses, contributes to the sustainability of tourist destinations through stakeholder dialogue and advice, as well as by actively contributing to a range of projects to protect threatened areas and species. In TUI model projects, co-operation activities and their dedication and commitment demonstrate that sustainable tourism development can make a valuable contribution to the conservation of biodiversity. TUI's partnerships and activities include:

- Work with UNESCO to accord special status to World Heritage Sites and support the sites in a variety of ways;
- Work with the EUROPARC Federation to support the long-term harmonisation of the protection of European biodiversity, landscapes and ecosystems with controlled tourism access;
- Support for the Loro Parque Fundación on the global protection of endangered parrot species;
- A cooperation agreement with GOB Majorca for the sustainable use of the La Trapa nature protection area on Majorca;
- A cooperation agreement with the Aldabra Marine Programme to support research on biodiversity and the impact of climate change on the Aldabra Atoll in the Seychelles;
- Support to the new national marine park on the Greek island of Zakynthos, to protect the breeding grounds of Caretta sea turtles;
- Cooperation with the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCC) to protect the population of the common dolphin in the Mediterranean;
- A model project (M.E.E.R. e.V.) on environmentally compatible whale watching on the Canary Islands of La Gomera and Tenerife; and
- Support for the Swiss environmental organisation, Tortugas, on the protection of sea turtles.

Source: http://www.tui.com/en/konzern/tui_umweltmanagement/umw_dest/biodiv/index.html

SPREADING SUSTAINABILITY MORE WIDELY

Larger tour operators can foster destination sustainability by sharing their supply chain management materials with others, either by working directly with other tourism enterprises or through the public sector. Many public authorities are interested in running environmental awareness campaigns for accommodations and other businesses, but do not always have resources available for producing suitable materials. Local officials can be approached and offered help with their campaigns.

In addition to contributing materials, it may be possible to consult with local authorities on sustainable approaches to infrastructure planning, sustainable construction, waste management, and community consultation. Contributions could take the form of training materials, access to data on market trends and provision of know-how manuals.

5.2 PHILANTHROPY AND CHARITABLE DONATIONS

Donations to sustainable development projects and programmes, either in cash or in kind (which includes staff time and any product or activity that will not require a direct expenditure for a company), can provide social and economic support for disadvantaged members of the local community or at fostering environmental conservation.

In order to ensure that any funds donated to a project or programme will have a genuine impact on sustainable development, it is normally essential to provide financial support over at least three to five years. There are many examples of projects that have shown initial promise, but which have failed because of the lack of continuing support. In theory, many projects can become self-sustaining, but in practice the barriers to this are simply too overwhelming and some sort of long-term subsidy is likely to be necessary.

Publicising the destination charities supported, encouraging tourists to contribute, and possibly enabling tourists to visit the project sites will help customers to understand the situation in the destination and improve their holiday experience by allowing them to feel that they have contributed in some way. In addition, allowing and encouraging staff in destinations to spend some time in philanthropic activities, such as

EXAMPLES: Support for local conservation and development

Exodus, a UK-based adventure tour operator, supports the Project Life Lion programme, in partnership with UK's Paradise Wildlife Park. In another initiative, clients travelling to Kenya and Tanzania help fund the vaccination of domestic dogs around the Serengeti National Park against the canine distemper virus and rabies. The main purpose of the programme is to prevent the spread of these diseases to wildlife by reducing their levels in the domestic dog population. Clients also have a chance to hear a talk from a member of the project. The company has also set up a 'clothing bank' for porters in Kathmandu, Nepal, where tourists can donate unwanted clothes and footwear to be distributed to the Himalayan trekking porters, many of whom work in extreme conditions without adequate protective gear.

Vasco Travel, which offers travel services and tours in Turkey to customers from Austria, Germany, Slovakia and Hungary, initiated and supported the restoration of a rock-cut church in Cappadocia with about US\$150,000 from its corporate budget. Support for this project has reinforced trust between the tourism industry and the public authorities.

Discovery Initiatives, a UK-based specialist outbound nature tour operator, offers holidays and tours that are specifically designed to support wildlife and conservation. For example, in Namibia, individual and small-group tours visit community wildlife conservation initiatives run by local people, and each tour contributes \$350 per client to these programmes. In return, the company's clients gain a privileged insight into wildlife or communities as part of their overall holiday itinerary. A further example is a tour that contributes \$1,000 per client to the Orang-utan Foundation in Tanjung Putung National Park in Kalimantan, Indonesia. This tour enables individual clients get actively involved as field assistants in the Foundation's work on orang-utan conservation.

Source: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)

teaching at a school or working with others to clear the local beach of litter, will improve employee morale and support for sustainability contributions while benefiting the community.

SELECTING PROJECTS TO SUPPORT

When developing a company strategy and action plan for philanthropic activities, it is important to ensure that any projects or programmes supported bring direct benefits to those living in the destination (see Box 14). Preference should be given to organisations that are based in the destination, such as a local hospital, a local development charity, or local co-operative that could become a supplier for the tour operator. In other cases, organisations that are based outside the destination, but operate there, such as an international environmental NGO or a charity supporting victims of natural disasters would also be appropriate choices. Companies can seek advice about possible organisations to support in the destination by consulting with local hotels and local environmental and development groups. The tour operator may also enter into a partnership with a local development organisation that will help with the selection of projects and distribution of money.

Destination audits carried out as part of product management and development will already have identified some environmental and social challenges that can be carried forward to the shortlist of impacts to address through charitable contributions. In addition, staff, suppliers and local stakeholders can be encouraged to propose schemes at any stage of development, from outline ideas to fully developed project plans. These can then be evaluated by the responsible tourism managers and considered for action, according to the resources available.

Ideally, proposals for support should be assessed according to a standard set of transparent criteria that address the project's suitability from various angles and its ability to deliver on any expected outcomes.

Points to consider with regard to the suitability of a project might include:

- Has there been a commitment to the issue in the company's sustainability policy?
- Will it contribute to environmental conservation?
- Will it bring commercial opportunities and assistance to non-contracted suppliers that support community development?
- Will it contribute to community development in a broader sense?
- Will tourists notice the difference?
- Will it help the company's image?
- Will it solve the problem in the long term?
- Is it cost-effective?

With regard to the project's ability to deliver, it may be relevant to ascertain if the company has the resources (time/funds) to make a significant difference, if a long-term commitment can be made to the project, and if the company has a regular local presence in the destination.



To ensure the success of a project, it is important to involve the destination community in selecting and delivering it. Working with local partners may also mean that new consultation and delivery frameworks will be unnecessary. However, partnerships must be supported by appropriate financial commitment and technical expertise.

BOX 14: Examples of philanthropic support

Tour operators can offer financial or in-kind support to projects and programmes addressing a wide variety of issues in their destinations, including:

- *Education:* Improved access to schools (awarding scholarships) and improved resources (building schools, providing materials, paying teachers);
- *Health:* Improved health and sanitation services and access to facilities and treatment;
- *Environment:* Educational materials or other resources to foster the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity;
- *Communities:* Community spaces and services;
- *Employment:* Skills training for disadvantaged and disabled workers; and
- *Entrepreneurship:* Support for co-operatives of farmers and craft-workers.

EXAMPLE: Aid for emergency relief

Ventaglio, one of the leading Italian outbound and domestic tour operators, funded repair work in the Dominican Republic after Hurricane George by earmarking US\$1 per bed-night to the effort. About US\$150,000 was raised and used to repair 40 houses in a fishing village and to reconstruct 63 houses and promote handicrafts on an island within a national park.

The day after the 26 December 2004 Tsunami, the 1500 employees of **Thomas Cook**, the number one leisure travel operator in France, started collecting funds. The 10.000 € collected were matched by the management of the company, which then decided to give 1 € for each package tour sold over the next 2 months (from January to March 2005). A total of 150.000 € was given to CARE France to help the community of fishermen in the north of Sri Lanka to repair their boats and to buy new ones.

Source: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)

FUNDRAISING

The principal ways that a tour operator can collect or generate funds for destination projects include:

- Giving charitable donations as a percentage of net profits;
- Adding a certain amount to the holiday price; and
- Encouraging customers to make donations individually, either by adding on an amount to their holiday price at the time of booking, or by making donations during or after their holiday.

While making a financial contribution to a project may be the most straightforward way to support sustainability in a destination, tour operators can also give assistance in kind, for example in the form of equipment, books or staff time. For example, a company might help a local NGO produce marketing materials, or provide seats on flights for South-South exchanges (i.e. people from one developing country visiting another for the purposes of non-formal education). Companies can also support lottery prizes or fundraising auctions by donating tours, hotel rooms or other services.


In-kind support to conservation can be particularly valuable in protected areas, which often lack the necessary equipment and facilities to effectively manage the site. The cost to the company may be relatively low, while the value of these contributions to conservation groups and protected areas authorities can be quite important. In-kind support for protected areas might include assistance with fundraising or donation of equipment such as computers, binoculars, field guides, or outdoor clothing for use by rangers and guides in protected areas (although some tour operators feel that organising donation of equipment is more complicated than donating money). The company might also provide technical advice on developing and promoting tourism activities and managing tourists, perhaps through work placements or training given by staff on secondment.

Tour operators can also provide voluntary assistance to destinations by reporting management problems that may be encountered by tour groups visiting protected areas, and any unusual activities that they may see, such as boats moored inappropriately, or maintenance problems with tourism facilities or trails. This can

EXAMPLE: Raising funds for environmental contributions

The **Hotelplan Swiss Group**, a Swiss tour operator that offers mainly outbound package holidays and guided tours, established an *Umweltfranken* (Eco-Fund) in January 2001. Funds are raised through a contribution of SFr 5 (about US\$3) per customer on packages in Hotelplan's 'Ferien am Meer' and 'Ferne Traumstrände' catalogues, which represents 40 percent of the company's sales. In 2002, the fund raised about US\$750,000. The money is distributed amongst sustainable tourism projects, environmental initiatives by partners at Hotelplan destinations, and emergency help or one-off projects after natural disasters.

Source: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)



help sites improve management and undertake enforcement activities, particularly where they have limited numbers of rangers and are unable to patrol the whole area each day.

A company can help build human capacity in a destination by sponsoring internships to train potential workers in the tourism industry, or allowing company staff to donate their time (as part of the working week) to voluntary activities such as teaching English or other tourist-useful foreign languages, or organising litter clean-ups. Providing information to customers about the charities supported will help tourists understand more about the destination. People will often feel more committed to a project if they have been given the opportunity to engage with it locally, and pleasant memories of holidays can increase people's propensity for charitable giving.



Encourage protected areas managers to set up opportunities for tourists to give money, for example by placing donation boxes in visitor centres. It is also important for sites to demonstrate how the money is used by reporting on progress with projects supported by donations, and by publishing accounts.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Because there is the risk in many countries that charitable donations will not always reach the intended beneficiary, it is essential to ensure that transparent and honest structures are in place for the management of funds, for instance through a trusted local individual or long-established NGO. Having confidence in the proper distribution of funds is much more likely to ensure that any donations will make a difference to people's lives or to conservation.

Records should be kept on both the overall value and scope of philanthropic and charitable donations made, as these can be used as evidence of contributions to sustainability during a company's auditing process.

Recorded information should include:

- The value of funds collected, and the source of these;
- The value of the funds distributed;
- Whether the donations are in cash or in kind;
- The type of projects assisted; and
- The location of the projects.

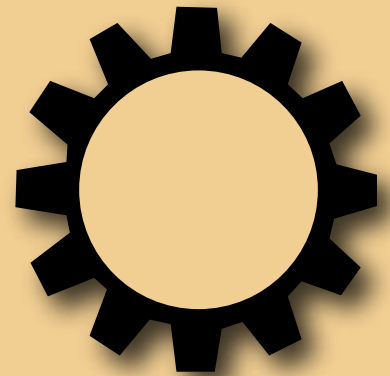
EXAMPLE: Monitoring charitable donations

Premier Tours, a US-based tour operator specialising in safari tours to Southern and East Africa, asks recipients of charitable funds from the company to provide feedback on the results of their conservation efforts. Representatives from the company also visit the projects to determine the level of success.

Source: Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operators' Contribution, UNEP / TOI (2003)



Appendices



Appendix 1 - Sources of Further Information

Appendix 2 - Glossary

Appendix 3 - About the Tour Operators' Initiative

APPENDIX 1: SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

TOUR OPERATORS' INITIATIVE RESOURCES: available at <http://www.toinitiative.org>

Supply Chain Management for Tour Operators – Three Steps Toward Sustainability. This guide presents a methodology for tour operators seeking to integrate economic, environmental and social sustainability criteria into their providers' service agreements. The document was developed using a participatory approach, involving TOI members already working on sustainability with their suppliers. The guide proposes a three-step approach for the integration of sustainability criteria in the selection of suppliers, and is supported by examples and tips.

A Practical Guide to Good Practice: Managing Environmental Impacts in the Marine Recreation Sector. Marine recreation providers are among the key players in the tourism industry. Scuba and snorkelling, wildlife viewing and recreational fishing are activities that are becoming more common for sun and sea lovers travelling to marine destinations. This guide aims at supporting tour operators and cruise lines, which often include the services of marine recreation providers in their packages, in integrating environmental aspects in their contracting process. The guide provides information in simple and direct language about the impacts on the environment from marine recreation, the rationale for good practice and suggestions on how to reduce the impacts related to anchoring; boat operation and maintenance; boat sewage and garbage disposal; snorkelling, diving and scuba; seafood consumption and souvenir purchasing; recreational fishing; and marine wildlife viewing. A self-assessment checklist is included to promote the practice of evaluating environmental performance among marine recreation providers. The guide is available in English and Spanish.

A Practical Guide to Good Practice – Managing Environmental and Social Issues in the Accommodations Sector. Jointly developed with the Center for Environmental Leadership in Business at Conservation International, the guide provides accommodation suppliers with information on energy consumption, water use, wastewater, solid waste management, chemical use, purchasing, contributions to biodiversity and nature conservation, contributions to community development, social issues in the workplace, and environmental management systems. The guide, issued in English in 2003, has been translated into Spanish, French, Arabic, Turkish, Italian and Portuguese (complemented by case studies from Brazilian small properties that are members of the Roteiros de Charme chain).

Sustainable Tourism: The Tour Operator's Contribution. This document showcases efforts to promote environmentally friendly and social responsible tourism in the tour operator sector. More than 30 case studies, grouped in the key business areas of supply chain management; internal management; product management and development; customer relations and co-operation with destinations, provide an overview of the diverse approaches and tools that tour operators can adopt. Each example provides an overview of the development and implementation processes as well as an analysis of the benefits generated for the company, the local community and the environment.

Communicating sustainable tourism to your customers. (Internal Report, 2001). The influence of tourists on sustainability starts with their selection of tour operators, hotels and transport and extends to such inconspicuous things as a phrase spoken in the host language or the choice to take a bath or a shower. Tourists often lack awareness of their impacts and therefore don't act in a sustainable way during their holidays. Because tour operators are often their only pre-departure source of information, tour operators can contribute greatly to customers' awareness and behaviour by communicating on social and environmental issues. This report provides an overview of how to communicate sustainability issues to the customers, providing examples of message themes, tools and dissemination channels.

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME RESOURCES: available at <http://www.uneptie.org/tourism>

POLICY SUPPORT

Tourism and Local Agenda 21- The Role of Local Authorities in Sustainable Tourism (2003), in collaboration with ICLEI

THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Renewable Energy Opportunities in the Tourism Industry (2003)

A Manual for Water and Waste Management: What the Tourism Industry Can Do to Improve Its Performance (2003)

Tourism and Biodiversity: Mapping Tourism's Footprint (2003), in collaboration with Conservation International

Industry as a Partner for Sustainable Development: Tourism (2002)

Environmental Teaching Pack for the Hospitality Industry (2001), in collaboration with IHRA

Ecolabels in the Tourism Industry (1998)

How the Hotel and Tourism Industry can Protect the Ozone Layer (1998)

Case Studies on Environmental Good Practice in Hotels (1996), in collaboration with IHRA and IHEI

The Environmental Action Pack for Hotels (1995), in collaboration with IHRA and IHEI

Environmental Codes of Conduct for Tourism (1995)

PROTECTED AREAS

Forging Links Between Protected Areas and the Tourism Sector: How tourism can benefit conservation (2005)

Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas: Guidelines for Planning and Management (2002), in collaboration with IUCN and WTO

Awards for Improving Coastal Environment: The example of the Blue Flag (1996), in collaboration with FEE and WTO

ECOTOURISM

Industry and Environment on Ecotourism and Sustainability, Vol. 24, No. 3-4, 2001

Ecotourism: Principles, Practices and Policies for Sustainability (2002), in collaboration with the International Ecotourism Society

Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism, (2002)

OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Marketing Sustainable Tourism Products (2004), in collaboration with Regione Toscana

"Does Sustainability Sell?" (2002), in collaboration with McCann Erickson World Group

Improving tour operator performance: The role of corporate social responsibility and reporting, an ABTA/TOI/Tearfund Fact Sheet (2003).

LINKS TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:

- Conservation International: <http://www.conservationinternational.org>
- ECPAT: <http://www.ecpat.org>
- Global Reporting Initiative (GRI): Sustainability Reporting Guidelines: <http://www.globalreporting.org>
- Institute of Social and Ethical Accounting: <http://www.accountability.org.uk>
- International Labour Organization: <http://www.ilo.org/>
- Pro-Poor Tourism: <http://www.propoortourism.org>
- Rainforest Alliance: <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org>
- Responsible Travel: <http://www.responsibletravel.com>
- SustainAbility: <http://www.sustainability.com>
- The International Ecotourism Society: <http://www.ecotourism.org>
- The Social Reporting Report: <http://www.sustainability.co.uk>
- Tourism Concern: <http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk>
- World Business Council for Sustainable Development: <http://www.wbcsd.ch>
- World Tourism Organization: <http://www.world-tourism.org>

RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS:

- Conservation International (1999). *The Green Host Effect: An Integrated Approach to Sustainable Tourism and Resort Development*, available at <http://www.conservationinternational.org>
- Cowe, Roger (2001). *Investing in Social Responsibility, Risks and Opportunities*. Association of British Insurers.
- Fussler, C. Crammer, A. & van der Vegt, S. (eds) (2004). *Raising the bar: creating value with the United Nations Global Compact*. Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing.
- Gössling, S. (2002). *Global Environmental Consequences of Tourism*. *Global Environmental Change* 12, 283-302.
- Grayson, D. & Hodges, A. (2004). *Corporate Social Opportunity! 7 steps to make corporate social responsibility work for your business*. Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing.
- Penner et al, (1999). *IPPC Special Report on Aviation and the Global Atmosphere*.
- SustainAbility (2002). *Developing Value – The business case for sustainability in emerging markets*, available at <http://www.sustainability.com>
- SustainAbility, UNEP (2001). *Buried Treasure – uncovering the business case for corporate sustainability*, available at <http://www.sustainability.com>
- Tearfund (2001). *Tourism – putting ethics into practice*, available at <http://www.tearfund.org>
- The World Bank (1996). *The World Bank Participation Sourcebook*, available at <http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/sourcebook/sbhome.htm>
- Tourism Concern (2002). *Corporate futures – Social responsibility in the tourism industry*, available at <http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk>
- World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2002). *Corporate Social Responsibility – making good business sense*, available at <http://www.wbcsd.ch>
- World Tourism Organization (2002). *Tourism and poverty alleviation*, available at <http://www.world-tourism.org>
- WWF (2000). *Stakeholder Collaboration – building bridges for conservation*, available at <http://www.panda.org>

APPENDIX 2: GLOSSARY

Biodiversity: The variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems (U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity, Article 2).

Biosphere Reserves: Areas of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems promoting solutions to reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. They are internationally recognised, nominated by national governments and remain under sovereign jurisdiction of the states where they are located. See <http://www.unesco.org/mab/wnbr.htm> for more information.

Certification: Guarantee of suppliers' performance provided by an independent third party in accordance with set criteria.

Consultation: Process of involving stakeholders in key sustainability issues.

Co-operation with destinations: Activities and decisions at the destination with stakeholders outside the direct suppliers of contracted services for holiday packages.

Criteria: Key issues used as a checklist to rank or otherwise assess the importance of actions, impacts or events.

Customer relations: Actions regarding the raising of consumer awareness of sustainability, including information and education, as well as safeguarding of consumer privacy, health and safety.

Customer: Here understood as a holidaymaker.

Destination: Identifiable geographical unit that satisfies the needs of a holidaymaker. The concept of destination varies and can range from a country to a municipality.

Feedback: Information about the outcomes of an event or action.

Guidelines: An indication or course to follow. GRI 2002 Guidelines is a generic document of application to all industries to report on sustainability issues.

Holiday package: The overall offer developed by tour operators, which could include transport to and at the destination, accommodation, meals, tours and excursions, sold as a single package to the client.

ILO: The International Labour Organization, which is the UN specialized agency that seeks the promotion of social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights.

Impacts: Changes to the destination, both positive or negative.

Cultural impacts: Changes to the social structure, behaviour, customs and traditions of the residents of a tourist destination.

Economic impacts: Key positive economic impacts are income and employment, while negative impacts include economic leakages and expenses incurred by the destination to manage the economy.

Economic multiplier: The additional economic impact of tourist expenditure on the economy, by aggregating direct, indirect and induced impacts.

Environmental impacts: Changes to the physical environment that can be attributed to tourism. The GRI breaks down key impacts by areas of priority (materials, energy, water, biodiversity, emissions, effluents and waste, suppliers, products and services).

Ecological impacts: Changes to specific species or sites of ecological value. A subset of environmental impacts.

Social impacts: Effects on local people, ranging from misunderstandings between hosts and guests, to sex tourism and child labour exploitation. Impacts are usually stronger where host-guest behaviour and culture is most different, where there is a higher proportion of tourists to the number of residents, and where tourism has developed quickly.

Implementation: Process of carrying out the activities laid out in a programme of actions. In order to report on sustainability issues, implementation also requires keeping records of actions undertaken as evidence.

Indicator: A sign or symptom of sustainability that can be used as a unit of measurement.

Indigenous people: In this context, native or traditional residents of a destination.

Internal management: Operations and activities that take place in the headquarters or country offices of a tour operator.

IUCN Protected Areas Classification System: Includes six categories, I. Strict Nature Reserve/Wilderness Area, II. National Park, III. Natural Monument, IV. Habitat/Species Management Area, V. Protected Landscape/Seascape, and VI. Managed Resource Protected Area. See www.iucn.org for more information

IUCN Red List: A system that catalogues and highlights taxa that are extinct, extinct in the wild, or facing a higher risk of global extinction, as well as those that are close to meeting threatened thresholds and under taxon-specific conservation programmes.

Longitudinal data: Data that is collected over a long period of time, to allow for comparisons.

Measurement: Action to identify the degree, extent or quantity of an impact.

Monitoring: Process of assessing changes in an indicator by comparing repeated measurements.

Policy: Document stating the sustainability commitments for an organization that acts as a mechanism to involve stakeholders and as a guide for taking actions.

Prioritise: Process to determine the ranking of impacts by their level of importance, the ability to influence suppliers or other stakeholders to address them, and the ease of solution in reducing or minimising the impact.

Product development and management: Activities undertaken by a tour operator with regards to designing and developing holiday products, including actions related to the choice of the destination as well as the type of services to be included.

Programme: A formal agenda for action, usually in the form of a document.

Protected Area: Land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means.

Report: A written statement of (in this case sustainability) actions undertaken by a company over a specified period of time. Reporting requires the generation of evidence to support claims.

Selection/de-selection: Inclusion of a supplier or destination in a tour operators' packages.

Significant: An impact that is considered as a priority by the tour operator, usually meaning that it can be identified, is a key threat to sustainability and can be managed.

Standard: Sustainability threshold, usually determined by a third party on the basis of benchmarking performance in the sector, as a tool to encourage improvement.

Supplier: Organization providing services or products on behalf of another organization.

Supply chain management: Management function that addresses actions related to the selection and contracting of service providers, summarised in this document as accommodation, transport to and from destination, ground transport, catering and restaurants, ground operators, and cultural / social events and excursions.

Target: A clear, achievable and measurable objective for a sustainability improvement.

World Heritage Sites: Sites considered to belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located. Approved on the basis of their merits as the best possible examples of the world's cultural and natural heritage. See <http://whc.unesco.org/nwhc/pages/home/pages/homepage.htm> for more information.

APPENDIX 3: ABOUT THE TOUR OPERATORS' INITIATIVE

The Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development (TOI) is a network of over 20 tour operators, of all sizes and specialities, that have committed to incorporate sustainability principles into their business operations. The Initiative was developed with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Tourism Organization (WTO/OMT), which are also full members of the Initiative, and actively support the Tour Operators' Initiative by providing it with resources and as well as guidance and technical advice. The Centre for Environmental Leadership in Business (at Conservation International) is an active partner of the TOI, providing technical and financial assistance in all of the Initiative's areas of activity.

Members of the Initiative are moving towards sustainable tourism by committing themselves to integrating sustainability into their business practices and by working together to promote and disseminate methods and practices compatible with sustainable development.

Together, the TOI members are taking action in three key areas:

- Supply chain management – to develop a common approach and tools for assessing suppliers.
- Co-operation with destinations – to exert a positive influence and speak with a collective voice on the actions of all partners, tourist boards, customers, suppliers, governments, and developers.
- Sustainability reporting – to develop and test reporting guidelines and performance indicators on sustainable development.

The TOI is co-ordinated by a Secretary – hosted by UNEP, which ensures the implementation of the programme of activities and continuous support to the members.

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About the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics

The UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) helps governments, local authorities and decision-makers in business and industry to develop and implement policies and practices focusing on sustainable development.

The Division works to promote:

- > sustainable consumption and production,
- > the efficient use of renewable energy,
- > adequate management of chemicals,
- > the integration of environmental costs in development policies.

The Office of the Director, located in Paris, coordinates activities through:

- > **The International Environmental Technology Centre** - IETC (Osaka, Shiga), which implements integrated waste, water and disaster management programmes, focusing in particular on Asia.
- > **Production and Consumption** (Paris), which promotes sustainable consumption and production patterns as a contribution to human development through global markets.
- > **Chemicals** (Geneva), which catalyzes global actions to bring about the sound management of chemicals and the improvement of chemical safety worldwide.
- > **Energy** (Paris), which fosters energy and transport policies for sustainable development and encourages investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- > **OzonAction** (Paris), which supports the phase-out of ozone depleting substances in developing countries and countries with economies in transition to ensure implementation of the Montreal Protocol.
- > **Economics and Trade** (Geneva), which helps countries to integrate environmental considerations into economic and trade policies, and works with the finance sector to incorporate sustainable development policies.

UNEP DTIE activities focus on raising awareness, improving the transfer of knowledge and information, fostering technological cooperation and partnerships, and implementing international conventions and agreements.

For more information,
see www.unep.fr

The effective integration of responsible environmental, social and socio-economic practices and principles into the day-to-day operations of a tourism company is a challenge that needs to be addressed with a coherent and integrated approach. The sustainability issues are many, and solutions can be very different depending on the situation. This manual aims at providing an overview of the many practices that have been explored by members of the Tour Operators' Initiative. This network of tour operators is committed to sustainable development and supported by UNEP, UNESCO and the World Tourism Organization.

The manual consists of two volumes. The 'Implementation Guide for Responsible Tourism Coordinators' is designed to help the individual in charge for promoting responsible tourism within a company to determine both what needs to be changed and how to facilitate those changes. The 'Management Guide for Responsible Tour Operations' is designed to provide an overview of best practices in the business areas of a tour operator, including product development and management, supply chain and internal management, customer relations, and external cooperation.

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