

CSR4 TOURISM

Module 6: EFFECTIVE ACTIONS FOR A GREENER INDUSTRY

1. INTRODUCTION

Creating and leading a greener, more sustainable Tourism industry has been an important topic over the years by some industry giants, such as the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). According to UNWTO (2005)¹, Sustainable and Corporate Socially Responsible Tourism industry should be able to do the following:

- 1) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
- 2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
- 3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

However, despite the obvious benefits of making the Tourism industry more sustainable and implementing CSR-principles within, various global markets are still faced with a major lack of awareness within the field. Through out various discussions with industry experts within Europe, it was noted that numerous limitations existed within the Sustainable Tourism field – such as financial limitations, lack of management tools, difficulties behind monitoring progress and most importantly, lack of training and experience by the industry's professionals.

It was documented that various aspects within society had led to a major lack of awareness of the importance of a greener, more sustainable Tourism sector, such as:

¹ <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development#:~:text=Thus%2C%20sustainable%20tourism%20should%3A,conserve%20natural%20heritage%20and%20biodiversity>



Figure 1 External and Internal Factors Leading to Lack of Awareness of Sustainable/Green Tourism

Each of the above elements, found within Figure 1, have been noted to lead to a lack of awareness which hinder the growth of a more Sustainable/Green Tourism industry. For example, governmental entities typically have a widespread ability to provide awareness of such important values – via providing trainings and incentives within the Tourism sector.

Also, concerning the expectations of Tourism providers and laborers, it can be noticed that Tourism companies/organizations lack a long-term vision and strategy in relation to CSR principles. In the case of Tourism providers, it can sometimes be seen that such organizations look for short-term benefits of implementing some CSR principles within their business activities as it is difficult to foresee the long-term benefits of doing so.

In addition, a simple lack of motivation and motive within Tourism companies/organizations is also widespread throughout various countries – which highlights a major shortcoming with mentalities.

Given the current progress of Sustainable/Green Tourism globally, it can be determined that two activities, such as raising awareness and partnering with industry experts, could be a beneficial way to increase the knowledge and benefits surrounding Sustainable/Green Tourism. Within this module, two major lessons are presented (Lesson 6.1 Raising Awareness and Lesson 6.2 Interdisciplinary Collaborations) in order to kick-start enhancements within local ecosystems today.

2. RAISING AWARENESS

(Rising awareness of sustainable CSR action among your employees, customers and industry by educating them.)

Raising awareness around implementing practices for a more Sustainable and Greener Tourism industry has been an on-going challenge over the years. As mentioned in the previous Lesson, various aspects sometimes hinder the awareness and acceptance of Sustainable/Green Tourism such as lack of governmental intervention, unclear understanding of the topic and lack of personal motivation.

It can be seen in various Tourism markets that Tourism providers often integrate various activities in order to increase the awareness of Sustainable/Green Tourism across its employees and customers. Some of the most used methods consist of the following activities:



Figure 2 Activities to Raise Awareness on Sustainability and CSR with the Tourism Sector

Each of the above mentioned activities are just some of the methods typically being used with the Tourism sector to shed light onto the importance of Sustainable Tourism and implementing CSR principles from within.

2.1 INTERNAL TRAINING ACTIVITIES

For example, through internal employee trainings, Tourism providers and companies typically find it beneficial to dedicate periodic training activities for its employees. By doing so, this helps the company's employees to better understand the principles around Sustainable Tourism and CSR-principles directly from an expert within the field. Such internal training sessions could take place over an extended period of time, such as a week-long activity, whereby practical activities are integrated within the training session. Also, some Tourism providers and companies sometimes result to a less-frequent rhythm of such training sessions by providing one yearly seminar on Sustainability/CSR within Tourism in order to have an expert share updated, new findings year-on-year. Also, according to Dr. Magarita Pavlova (2014)², she has listed standard green skills into three categories that are important to know and practice – which could also be integrated into training sessions surrounding the topic. As per Pavlova, Green Skills consist of the following elements:

1. Cognitive skills – having awareness and willingness to learn about the environment and sustainability, innovation skills, analytical skills, skills to identify opportunities, interpretation of new situations to answer to new social/green challenges.
2. Interpersonal skills – having communication skills, negotiation skills, management skills, business skills, a well-rounded personality and technical know-how which can be used for social/green challenges.
3. Intrapersonal skills – being adaptive, having the ability to train employees and transfer skills.

Each of the above Green Skills can allow employers and employees to integrate necessary soft skills into their businesses when aiming to become more Sustainable/Green and increase the awareness of Sustainable Development.

² <https://greenskillsresources.com/category/generic-green-skills>

2.2 SUSTAINABLE/GREEN BUSINESS MODEL

Adopting a Sustainable/Green business model is also another way of reinforcing the need and practice of such activities from within. By implementing such a business model, this allows the company's financial activities, sales, communications and ways of doing business to follow certain Sustainability and CSR-principles. In some cases, it can be seen that some European countries have a highly limited seasonal Tourism periods – whereby Tourism companies and providers are only active during a certain timeframe of the year. For example, in popular summer destinations, Tourism companies and providers typically make their highest profit during the months of May through late August. However, once Fall/Winter season comes about, the same Tourism companies and providers typically shut down or reduce their activities to the bare minimum. Such actions could potentially lead to various issues, such as lack of motivation and long-term interest from employees and even limiting the positioning of the business' image. In the case of Troodos Mountains in Cyprus, a recent study had mentioned that the geographical area is integrating Sustainable Developmental activities in order to create jobs and promote various types of tourism around the area. During Winter periods, Troodos Mountain is known as a ski-site while in Summer/Spring periods, the area is typically explored by hikers and tourists for its various monuments. Troodos Mountain is one of the few examples which smartly stabilize footfall throughout all seasons within the area in order to keep the area popular and relevant.

The National Strategy for the Development of Mountain Communities was adopted by the Council of Ministers in October 2019. The strategy aims to revitalise the region of the Troodos mountains and will breathe new life into the mountain communities, create jobs, promote tourism and support agriculture and cottage industries. The strategy envisions 250 actions to be taken until the year 2030 for boosting the quality of life and promoting sustainable development in mountain communities³ (Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development, 2021).

³ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/282512021_VNR_Report_Cyprus.pdf



2.3 SUSTAINABLE/GREEN RULES TO CUSTOMERS

In addition, providing rules related to Sustainability/Green actions is also a possibility to increase awareness of the topic within the minds of the customer. Non-invasive rules for the Tourism company's or provider's premises could be simply to install signs with rules aiming to promote Green actions on-site. As per the CBI Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2022)⁴, multiple notices for the company's customers can be installed in relevant areas in order to have the customer think twice before making a decision. Some examples from the CBI Ministry of Foreign Affairs can be found below:



Figure 3 Energy Saving Reminder



Figure 4 Waste Management Reminder – source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

⁴ <https://www.cbi.eu/market-information/tourism/how-be-sustainable-tourism-business>

Bedlinen and towels washed daily in hotels and B&Bs around the world use millions of litres of water and detergent.

Our standard is to change your bedlinen and towels every fourth day of your stay and again at checkout.

If you would like your bedlinen changed sooner, just place this card on your pillow.

We encourage you to reuse your towels by placing them on the towel rail or hooks.

If you wish for us to wash your towels, please place them on the bathroom floor.

Thank you

Figure 5 Water Conservation Reminder – source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

Such examples are able to persuade the site’s customers to act differently when on premises and even ignite mental questioning as to why the Tourism company or provider is applying such rules. Also, by implementing such rules on premises, it is also able to give the Tourism company or provider access to be able to monitor certain resources at the establishment. In addition, the company or provider’s employees will also be asked to follow and promote such guidelines for its guests – which also promotes Sustainability/CSR-principles with internal employees.

2.4 INCENTIVISING ACTIVITIES

Providing governmental or internal-business incentives towards nationals, employees and even tourists is typically an effective way to promote awareness around the topic of Sustainable and Green Tourism. As per an article developed by Mindsetco (2022)⁵, various governmental incentives were said to be highly promoted in 2023, such as the following:

- The Business Energy Investment Tax Credit (ITC)
- Small Business Innovation Grants
- Green Jobs Initiative
- Emission Reduction Credits (ERCs)
- Green Community Grants

Each of the above governmental schemes are available throughout various governmental institutions across Europe for local Businesses and Entrepreneurs to in turn provide benefits to their companies.

⁵ <https://mindsetco.co/government-incentives-for-sustainable-business/>



According to another article, *Incentivising Staff in a Green Economy: Green Benefits* by Shoosmiths (2022)⁶, incentives on a company-level as a Tourism provider also exist and are possible to implement by top management. Examples such as Sustainable Travel, Corporate Responsibility (in the sense of providing flexibility and paid-leaves for various reasons (such as charity work)), linking bonuses/financial rewards to ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) targets and offering diversity/inclusion within the workspace.

2.5 SUSTAINABLE/GREEN OPTIONS TO CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES

Finally, in some instances, by simply providing the Tourism company's or provider's customers various options leading to more Sustainable/Green solutions is also widely used across various Tourism organizations. For example, in various large chain Hospitality providers catering to a large influx of tourists on a yearly basis, the option to change bed linens and towels is not mandatory unless the customer specifically requests to have the service. Also, since water sanitation is not always a valid factor in some nations, some hotels have purposely installed signs within the hotel rooms of Tourists which indicate that the hotel's tap-water is safe to drink – which decreases the use of plastic in the long-run.

As for a Tourism company's or provider's employees, the option to cycling to work is recommended through various entities as a way to entice the employee into lesser carbon emissions and lower expenses in return for the employee.

2.6 “EDUTAINMENT” IN TOURISM

According to a study prepared by Del Baldo (2018)⁷ concerning Sustainability and CSR orientation within the Tourism industry, various findings were gathered via a fieldwork approach concerning the process and outcomes of Sustainable/Green business models within the Tourism industry. According to Del Baldo, a term called 'Edutainment' was coined during the observation of a Tourism provider who was looking to alternate his business model to become more Sustainable and Green. The Tourism

⁶ <https://www.shoosmiths.co.uk/insights/legal-updates/incentivising-staff-in-a-green-economy-green-benefits>

⁷ <https://jcsr.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40991-018-0027-2>



company's process for implementing 'Edutainment' onto his business consisted of imaging a customer's and employee's entire experience as a journey. Based on this process, the Tourism company focussed on the following elements:

- 1) *"Input: The resources (capitals) available to the company to carry out strategic objectives (financial, productive, organizational, human, relational, social and natural resources).*
- 2) *Objectives/organizational processes: Improvement goals related to the processes have been grouped together into four areas of value creation: governance and transparency, relations with key stakeholders, economic and financial sustainability and environmental protection.*
- 3) *Stakeholders: The main users of corporate objectives are not just clients, as in a traditional perspective, but an extended series of interlocutors.*
- 4) *Performance: Corporate results referring to capital typologies."*⁸

The Tourism company examined by Del Baldo continuously aimed to begin business ventures revolving around educational entertainment – in order to tie the firm's employees and consumers around the idea of Sustainability in a practical, non-invasive manner. For example, the Tourism provider had created a business venture called Aquarium of Livorno – which follows a logical approach to learn about marine sustainability in parallel. In order to increase awareness around Sustainable Tourism, the Tourism provider arranged leisure activities at the aquarium to allow its employees and customers to feel part of the business while increasing their knowledge of environmental awareness and protection.

⁸ Source: Costa Edutainment Integrated Report, 2014: 37

2.7 ADDITIONAL NEED FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND CSR INITIATIVES WITHIN THE TOURISM SECTOR: ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

According to the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (2019)⁹, making Tourism more Accessible and Inclusive is also an important factor when brainstorming on how to make Tourism more Sustainable/CSR-compliant. Persons with disabilities logically face different access needs during their travels to Touristic destinations – whereby, in some instances, they are unable to partake or travel comfortably when traveling. Hand in hand with Sustainable Tourism comes Accessible and Inclusive Tourism – which is a way to further benefit all members within societies and the global Tourism industry. By adapting to these persons needs, a Tourism provider or company must take into consideration the various accessibility restrictions and mobility requirements of its traveller in order to make the Tourism experience as successful one.

According to the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, who have coined the term “Universal Design, the definition is as follows:

“Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it. This is not a special requirement, for the benefit of only a minority of the population. It is a fundamental condition

⁹ <https://www.gstcouncil.org/accessible-inclusive-sustainable-tourism/>



of good design. If an environment is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use, everyone benefits.¹⁰

In order for a Tourism provider or company to understand the true needs of its customers, they must be able to imagine the customer’s entire journey and experience when travelling – especially of those with specific access and mobility needs. For example, questions such as, *“is my hotel easy to access for persons with limited mobility?”* and *“is my company’s official website suitable for persons with vision or hearing impairment?”*. Such questions are not just important for the provider’s/company’s customers but also for its current and future employees – as these are major key points when aiming to boost Inclusion within the workplace.

Various examples from popular Tourism destinations from across the world are acting as reference points of inspiration concerning such matters. For example, at the Lemon Tree Hotels based in India, this establishment has placed Inclusion at the top of its list when setting forth their business model. In the case of Lemon Tree Hotels, it has adopted a strategy of hiring “opportunity deprived” staff members – including persons with disabilities.

In addition, another Touristic and adventurous experience is hosted by a UK-based company, Jubilee Sailing Trust (JST), when operating their ship (the “SV Tenacious”). Through the SV Tenacious ship, sailing activities are made accessible for persons with disabilities – whereby the entire adventurous experience is catered to satisfy their crew members with disabilities. The aim of the experience is to be able to give an opportunity to persons with disabilities to partake in adventure, challenge and have their dignity intact throughout the entire journey.

¹⁰ <https://www.trainingaid.org/ideas-and-insights/accessible-tourism-solutions-businesses-and-destinations>

3. INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIONS

3.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATIONS

(Finding the right partners for further developments.)

Finding the relevant interdisciplinary partners within the Tourism industry is an essential action in order to spread Sustainable and CSR practices across the sector. Of course, a standalone Tourism business is capable of reaching certain KPIs in regard to Sustainability and CSR-related goals; however, through partnerships/collaborations, this could also potentially become a method of increasing awareness with new customers and employees.

As a first step, it is recommended to research for potential partners who share similar visions and values within the market of interest – in order to begin the collaborative journey. One method of doing so is via researching for public records or online databases of entities who deliver various forms of Sustainable Tourism initiatives within the local country. For example, such online databases and case studies exist in nations, such as (and not limited to) Canada and other global players, whereby the Tourism information and initiatives are available online for interested parties to receive knowledge and examples of similar partnerships within the region.

As an existing global initiative for Sustainable Tourism, a Canada-based online database (sustainabletourism.net¹¹), shares case studies collected from various Tourism companies and providers globally – which can potentially spark future partnerships and collaborations across entities. Via an online database, updated periodically, various Tourism initiatives can be seen via the sustainabletourism.net website across different types of activities¹². As per the below figure, Tourism providers promoting Sustainable Tourism can be found in various activity sectors such as:

¹¹ <https://sustainabletourism.net/>

¹² <https://sustainabletourism.net/companiesandorganizations/>



- 1** **Physical Locations:**
Such as hotels and accommodation.
- 2** **Adventure/Leisure Activities:**
Such as wineries, cruise ships, festivals, trails and ski resorts.
- 3** **Official Entities:**
Such as NGOs, F&B Tourism institutes, tour operators and tourism websites.
- 4** **Certificates/Standards:**
Available based on the local market and the interest of the Tourism provider.

Figure 6 Example of Sustainable Tourism initiatives – source: sustainabletourism.net

Another available global online source, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GTSC)¹³, is another public information bank for all matters related to Sustainable Tourism – divided into various categories based on the type of user in need. The informative website shares customized information for hotel/accommodation providers, tour operators, destinations, governments, corporate/business travellers, certification bodies and leisure travellers. The Global Sustainable Tourism Council website offers each user insight behind the Sustainable Tourism industry – including in-depth criteria on how to receive certifications as a business/company in the area of Sustainability and CSR. Users of the website also have access to onboarding as an official member – whereby this also allows the interested party to form fruitful collaborations and partnerships with other entities each sharing the same goal.

¹³ <https://www.gtscouncil.org>

4. CONCLUSIONS

Raising awareness through Tourism customers and relevant employees is one of the leading factors in shaping a more Sustainable Tourism sector with larger importance on CSR-principles. Alongside raising awareness, interdisciplinary collaborations could also spark enhancements and larger rates of success within the ecosystem due to expertise and division of work. Via these two activities/factors, the Tourism sector is noted to be able to lessen some of the limitations currently faced within the sector. By practicing and promoting each of the topics mentioned within Module 6. Effective Actions for a Greener Industry, Tourism providers and stakeholders could be able to benefit financially, increase their knowledge in management, identify and track new KPIs pertaining to Sustainability and increase the know-how/well-being of their staff in parallel.

